

University of Pardubice

Faculty of Arts and Philosophy

Stereotypical Female Roles in Selected Traditional Fairy Tales and Their  
Modern Adaptations

Veronika Barčíková

Master Thesis

2015

Univerzita Pardubice  
Fakulta filozofická  
Akademický rok: 2013/2014

## ZADÁNÍ DIPLOMOVÉ PRÁCE

(PROJEKTU, UMĚLECKÉHO DÍLA, UMĚLECKÉHO VÝKONU)

Jméno a příjmení: Bc. Veronika Barčíková  
Osobní číslo: H13500  
Studijní program: N7503 Učitelství pro základní školy  
Studijní obor: Učitelství anglického jazyka  
Název tématu: Stereotypical Female Roles in Selected Traditional Fairy-tales and their Modern Adaptations  
Zadávající katedra: Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky

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Rozsah grafických prací:  
Rozsah pracovní zprávy:  
Forma zpracování diplomové práce: **tištěná**  
Jazyk zpracování diplomové práce: **Angličtina**  
Seznam odborné literatury: **viz příloha**

Vedoucí diplomové práce: **doc. Šárka Bubíková, Ph.D.**  
Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky

Datum zadání diplomové práce: **30. června 2014**  
Termín odevzdání diplomové práce: **30. června 2015**



prof. PhDr. Petr Vorel, CSz.  
děkan



doc. Šárka Bubíková, Ph.D.  
vedoucí katedry

V Pardubicích dne 30. listopadu 2014

## Příloha zadání diplomové práce

### Seznam odborné literatury:

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V Pardubicích dne 24. 6. 2015

Veronika Barčíková

**Acknowledgement:**

I would like to express my gratitude to doc. Mgr. Šárka Bubíková, Ph.D., for her valuable advice and support.

## **Annotation**

This master thesis deals with stereotypical female roles in three selected fairy tales: Cinderella, Snow White and Little Red Riding Hood. A brief history of the development of the genre is introduced in the theoretical part of the thesis, together with the overview of the most influential literary theories applicable on fairy tales. Feminist criticism is discussed in a greater detail, since it is the essential theory for the analysis of the tales. Particular examples of gender-biased portrayals of women in the fairy tales are discussed in the analytical part of the thesis, followed by the comparison of the traditional tales with the modern, alternative versions of the selected fairy tales.

## **Keywords**

Classic fairy tales, alternative fairy tales, feminist literary criticism, gender stereotypes

## **Anotace**

Tato diplomová práce se zabývá stereotypním zobrazením žen ve třech vybraných pohádkách: Popelce, Sněhurce a Červené Karkulce. Teoretická část práce je věnována vývoji žánru a vybraným literárním teoriím, které se dají použít při analýze pohádek, s důrazem na feministickou literární kritiku, která je základní teorií následné analýzy. Konkrétní příklady stereotypních zobrazování a charakteristik ženských pohádkových postav na základě jejich pohlaví jsou diskutovány v následující analytické části. Poslední část práce se zabývá porovnáním tradičních a alternativních verzí vybraných pohádek.

## **Klíčová slova**

Klasické pohádky, alternativní pohádky, feministický literární kriticismus, genderové stereotypy

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## Introduction

In the introductory part of the book *Don't Bet on the Prince: The Contemporary Feminist Fairy Tales in North America and England*, Jack Zipes writes that many scholars have already wondered “whether children should be exposed to the cruelty, violence and superstition of make-believe worlds.”<sup>1</sup> What is not included in this listing of inappropriate features of fairy-tale worlds is gender inequality. Fairy-tale characters of both sexes are often forced to fit into certain repetitive patterns, and these patterns frequently involve gender-based roles and character qualities. Therefore, the aim of this master thesis is to analyze three selected classic fairy tales by the Grimms: Cinderella, Snow White and Little Red Riding Hood, in terms of stereotypical depiction of women and their assigned roles, and compare them with their new, modern versions.

In order to analyze specific fairy tales, it is inevitable to clarify the terminology and definition of the fairy-tale genre. Also, brief overview of children's literature is presented in order to set the literary and cultural background for the subsequent subchapters that deal with the beginnings of fairy tales in Italy, France and Germany. The theoretical part also includes introduction of several literary theories that are frequently related to fairy tales. Namely, these are psychoanalytic, Marxist and feminist criticism, the latter being the most important since it is the most essential theory of the following analysis of the tales. Some of the most influential representatives of the feminist debate about fairy tales in the 1970s and their attitudes towards classic fairy tales are mentioned in the last subchapter of the theoretical part.

The analytical part of the thesis is focused on particular examples of gender bias in the selected fairy tales. For illustration of the development of these tales, versions by Charles Perrault are exceptionally discussed as well. Firstly, the most obvious general traits of patriarchal social arrangement reflected in literature, including fairy tales, are mentioned. These traits are further divided into three subchapters which deal with specific examples of each area of gender bias in the fairy tales: passiveness and obedience of heroines; their sexuality and objectification on the basis of their attractiveness; and the conflict between young, good and beautiful girls and their older, wicked and frequently ugly female

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<sup>1</sup>Jack Zipes, ed., *Don't Bet on the Prince: Contemporary Feminist Fairy Tales in North America and England* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 1.

counterparts. The possible effects of these features on children and women readers are discussed as well.

The following chapter deals with the alternative, modern fairy tales. *The Paper Bag Princess* is a representative of the emancipatory fairy tales for children that use all the traditional characters, yet the impression they create is liberating. The other tales are aimed at adult readers: *Sleeping Beauty* by Günter Kunert represents rather a postmodern interpretation of a classic fairy tale, *Not So Little Red Riding Hood* by Anne Shape provides adult readers with a pro-feminist view on Red Riding Hood and finally, a collection of satirical tales *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories* exaggerates feminist and political appropriateness to the highest level of absurdity. These alternative fairy tales are compared to the classic ones in the last chapter of the thesis, in which the possible merits of emancipatory literature are discussed as well.

# 1. Fairy Tales: Definition and Terminology

Before the historical development of the fairy-tale genre is presented, it is necessary to establish a functioning definition of what a fairy tale is and how it differs from other types of short narratives. Carpenter and Prichard in *The Oxford Companion to Children's Literature* give the following description:

Fairy stories or fairy tales [are] narratives, set in the distant past, of events that would be impossible in real world. They often include magical happenings and the appearance of fairies, but the supernatural does not always feature in them, and the heroes and heroines are usually mortal human beings.<sup>2</sup>

Ruth Bottigheimer partly agrees with their definition, though her own one is rather more complex. She admits that fairy tales are distinguishable and recognizable for the presence of supernatural beings and happenings, use of magic, happy endings and certain repetitive structure in which good beats evil. However, she also adds: “[...] it is not motifs, structure or happy endings alone that define fairy tales, but the overall plot trajectory of individual tales in conjunction with those fairy tale elements all brought together within a compact narrative [...]”<sup>3</sup> (Bottigheimer 2009, 9) It can be assumed on the basis of her description that there are the following common features of fairy tales: narratives with certain plot patterns, repetitive structures and various supernatural motifs.

Stating the definition of what is now considered a typical fairy tale is only a part of the problem; there awaits an important distinction to be made before giving the explanation of historical and cultural background of fairy tales: Where is the difference between folk tales and fairy tales, if there is any? The answer is quite complicated and partially depends on the opinion of the scholar one chooses to consult. For example, Jack Zipes comments that “the confusion is so great that most literary critics continually confound the oral folk tale with the literary fairy tale and vice versa.”<sup>4</sup> He further suggests that it is inevitable to distinguish folk tales from fairy tales, as these two narratives have different meanings. To make his division complex, he provides the following description of differences:

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<sup>2</sup> Humphrey Carpenter and Mari Prichard, *The Oxford Companion to Children's Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 177.

<sup>3</sup> Ruth B. Bottigheimer, *Fairy Tales: A New History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009), 9.

<sup>4</sup> Jack Zipes, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), xv.

The words *fairy tale* can refer to both a category of oral folk tale and a genre of prose literature. As a term, it is often used by folk narrative scholars when referring specifically to 'magic tales' [...]. The term *folk tale* is reserved for any tale deriving from or existing in oral tradition and is generally preferred by folklorists and anthropologists. Literary scholars tend to use the word fairy tale to refer to a genre of prose literature, which may or may not be based on oral tradition.<sup>5</sup>

What seems to bother Zipes more than the division of tales itself is the distinction between their literary and oral forms. He uses the term *wonder tales*, which are those particular oral tales that “prefigured the literary fairy tales”<sup>6</sup> and states that these wonder tales firstly circulated orally before they (or at least some of them) became established literally. In his book *When Dreams Came True* Zipes illustrates the development and functions of wonder tales by using Propp’s well-known *Morphology of the Folk Tale*, in which the Russian literary theoretician stated 31 repetitive patterns, by which most of the Russian wonder tales are told, emphasizing the fact that those analyzed tales rarely end without a happy end.<sup>7</sup> The patterns together with typical characters and settings “induce wonder. It is this sense of wonder that distinguished the wonder tales from other oral tales such as the myth, the legend, the fable, the anecdote, and the exemplum.”<sup>8</sup> The conclusion derived from Zipes’s understanding of the distinction of tales may be following: *Folk tales* have oral tradition, parts of which are also *wonder tales*. Wonder tales are, according to Zipes, real predecessors of today’s fairy tales, which usually end happily and follow some kind of structural patterns. *Fairy tales* may be based on oral tradition, but do not necessarily have to. Those fairy tales that are not proved to be based on wonder-tale origin or are artificially created or rearranged are called *literary fairy tales*.

Jack Zipes’s division is not the only one used in literary and folkloristic circles. According to Ruth Bottigheimer,<sup>9</sup> there are altogether 3 types of tales that can be distinguished: *folk tales*, *tales of magic and fairy tales*, *oral and literary*. *Folk tales* are those tales reflecting a certain world’s arrangement of the time of their creation, and their typical characters are spouses, servants or peasants and people of certain distinctive occupation (priests, lawyers, doctors). As Bottigheimer comments on the common features of folk tales, “a very large proportion of

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<sup>5</sup> Zipes, *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales*, 167.

<sup>6</sup> Jack Zipes, *Why Fairy Tales Stick: The Evolution and Relevance of the Genre* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 3.

<sup>7</sup> Jack Zipes, *When Dreams Came True: Classical Fairy Tales and Their Tradition* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 3-4.

<sup>8</sup> Zipes, *When Dreams Came True*, 5.

<sup>9</sup> Ruth B. Bottigheimer, *Fairy Tales*, 3-6.

folk tales *don't* have a happy ending. [...] Typical folk tales that include a married couple are not about the joys of *getting* married, but about the difficulties of *being* married.”<sup>10</sup> Another common feature of the folk tales is that one character usually makes fortune to the detriment of another and someone's dreams and illusions are often destroyed at the end of the tale.

When Bottigheimer<sup>11</sup> deals with the origin of fairy tales, she presents the same opinion as Jack Zipes does, i.e. *folk tales* are believed to be the ancestors of *fairy tales*. It seems to be a common belief of many other authors as well.<sup>12,13</sup> Although Bottigheimer and some other scholars quoted in this paper do not use the term *wonder tale* and others, like Zipes or David Russel<sup>14</sup> do use this term for (early) fairy tales, most of the authors tend to agree with the usual conception of the origin of fairy tales: for example, John Stephens writes about fairy tales being “a sub-set of folk tales.”<sup>15</sup>

Another group of tales according to Bottigheimer<sup>16</sup> are *tales of magic*. This group includes stories about main natural entities like sun, wind, night and day etc. as well as oriental stories from *Thousand and One Night*. What is not included here are the stories dealing with some kind of a religion-related miracle, these she considers rather religious tales than tales of magic. The terms *tale of magic* or *magic tale* is used by Jack Zipes<sup>17</sup> too, but in his interpretation it is probably meant more generally; Zipes may refer to the Aarne-Thompson Index, the international classification system of all types of folk tales, in which the term *magic tale* is used instead of the whole term *fairy tale*.<sup>18</sup>

The last group in Bottigheimer's division of tales is, of course, *fairy tales*. There are included all the tales that do not meet the descriptions of folk tales or tales of magic and at the same time, it can be assumed that they fit into the general definition of fairy tales by Carpenter and Prichard mentioned above. Dealing with the distinction between the oral and literary form of

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<sup>10</sup> Bottigheimer, *Fairy Tales*, 4.

<sup>11</sup> Bottigheimer, *Fairy Tales*, 4.

<sup>12</sup> Seth Lerer, *Children's Literature: A Reader's History From Aesop to Harry Potter* (London: The University of Chicago Press, Ltd, 2009), 210.

<sup>13</sup> Lewis C. Seifert, *Fairy Tales, Sexuality, and Gender in France 1690 – 1715: Nostalgic Utopias* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 61.

<sup>14</sup> David L. Russell, “Fairy Tales,” in *The Continuum Encyclopedia of Children's Literature*, eds. Bernice E. Cullinan and Diane G. Person (New York: Continuum, 2003), 271.

<sup>15</sup> John Stephens, “Folktales,” in *The Routledge Companion to Children's Literature*, ed. David Rudd (London: Routledge, 2010), 175.

<sup>16</sup> Bottigheimer, *Fairy Tales*, 6.

<sup>17</sup> Mary Beth Stein, “Folklore and Fairy Tales,” in *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales*, ed. Jack Zipes (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 167.

<sup>18</sup> Ruth B. Bottigheimer, *Fairy Tales*, 8.

tales, both Bottigheimer and Carpenter with Prichard write about the fact, that “though fairy stories have often been passed on by word of mouth, they frequently show the influence of literary treatment.”<sup>19</sup> Bottigheimer calls these two categories “real, pure, genuine”, i.e. oral, and “contaminated” literary fairy tales.<sup>20</sup>

As has been already mentioned, there are some theoreticians, who do not consider the distinction between folk and fairy tales important; Carpenter and Prichard, for example, include the stories with “magical happenings”<sup>21</sup> in the group of fairy tales, while Bottigheimer would probably include them among tales of magic. Another example of different attitudes towards the classification is a mention of the Indian collection of stories *Panchatantra*, which represents folk tales in Bottigheimer’s writing<sup>22</sup> but Carpenter and Prichard<sup>23</sup> write about *Panchatantra* in the paragraph describing fairy tales. In fact, they do not mention folk tales or tales of magic as a category at all. Additionally, in the *Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales*, there is written about *Panchatantra*: “[It is] famous Indian collection of fables and other morally instructive tales. [...] Neither *Panchatantra* nor its later versions contain fairy tales in the narrow sense, nor even tales of magic.”<sup>24</sup>

As it is obvious from what was written above, inconsistency of terminology among experts is quite significant. For the purposes of this thesis, a combination of both main presented distinctions will be used. The division between the folk and fairy tales will follow Bottigheimer’s (in my opinion) more practical categorization based on the typical characters and storylines of both types of tales, since it makes the specific features of the tales less interchangeable, which is a fact that has been already recognized by some other authors.<sup>25</sup> In the question of oral and literal forms, I will rather follow the way Jack Zipes regards it, i.e. consider all the fairy tales that will be analyzed in the practical part of this thesis to be literary, as they are provably partially artificially created by French and German writers.

After the concrete decisions regarding the division of tales have been made, and after being exposed to basic strategies theoreticians use to distinguish the terminology, there remains the last, complex question unanswered: When, how and why were the oral folk tales transformed

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<sup>19</sup> Carpenter and Prichard, *The Oxford Companion to Children’s Literature*, 177.

<sup>20</sup> Bottigheimer, *Fairy Tales*, 6-7.

<sup>21</sup> Carpenter and Prichard, *The Oxford Companion to Children’s Literature*, 177.

<sup>22</sup> Bottigheimer, *Fairy Tales*, 5.

<sup>23</sup> Carpenter and Prichard, *The Oxford Companion to Children’s Literature*, 177.

<sup>24</sup> Zipes, *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales*, 375.

<sup>25</sup> David Rudd, ed., *The Routledge Companion to Children’s Literature*, (London: Routledge, 2010), 256.

into the literary fairy tales, and by whom? Trying to answer this question, Jack Zipes is convinced that: “Whereas it is extremely difficult to study the historical origins and social significance of a folktale [...] because we lack a great deal of information about storytelling in primitive tribes and societies, it is not so difficult to define the historical rise of the literary fairy tale for children.”<sup>26</sup> Therefore, in the following parts of the chapter, I will try to prove his words to be true and define the origins and rise of the literary fairy tales.

### **1.1. Development of the Genre: Outline of Children’s Literature**

For a complex and clear understanding of the beginnings of a literary fairy tale, it is necessary to overview at least a part of children’s literature as a concept firstly. That is not an easy thing to do; as Peter Hunt suggests, children’s literature is “literature whose boundaries are very hazy; it cannot be defined by textual characteristics either of style or content.”<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, at least the most significant literary works that are widely accepted to be a part of the children’s literary canon should be presented here. Thus I have created the following shortened and simplified version of the history of children’s literature, dealing with European literature of the late 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries mainly. This summary is exclusively focused on few significant representatives of that specific period in children’s literature which preceded the first collections of fairy tales published in Europe; still, fables and medieval *Books of Courtesy* and *Books of Instruction* are taken into account as an obvious part of the early history of children’s literature in Europe and a possible source for some distinctive features present in later wonder / fairy tales.<sup>28,29</sup>

The starting point of this outline is the invention of printing and its introduction to Western European public (in England particularly by William Caxton) at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, which was the event that “change[d] dramatically the making and dissemination of what children read.”<sup>30</sup> Caxton himself published *Aesop’s Fables*, one of the first books “to be seen as most suitable for [children].”<sup>31</sup> Some of the medieval books were also newly printed, such

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<sup>26</sup> Jack Zipes, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion: The Classical Genre for Children and the Process of Civilization* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 6.

<sup>27</sup> Peter Hunt, *Children’s Literature: The Development of Criticism* (London: Routledge, 1993), 1.

<sup>28</sup> Carpenter and Prichard, *The Oxford Companion to Children’s Literature*, 72-73,173.

<sup>29</sup> Margaret Evans, “Texts in English Used by Children, 1550 – 1800,” in *International Companion Encyclopedia of Children’s Literature, Volume 1*, ed. Peter Hunt (London: Routledge, 2004), 240.

<sup>30</sup> Lerer, *Children’s Literature*, 76.

<sup>31</sup> Rudd, *The Routledge Companion to Children’s Literature*, 260.

as the *Book of Courtesy* or Chaucer's *Treatise on the Astrolabe*, though they had been already known some time before the actual printing in the form of written manuscripts. By printing the already existing writings, children's literature was recognized as "a commercial item – in the fact, for the first time we may talk of children's books."<sup>32</sup> On the other hand, not all the authors agree with what Lerer describes as the commercial recognition of children's literature; Jack Zipes, for example, writes that: "For the most part, these early fairy tales [and therefore supposedly anything considered a part of children's literature] were not intended for children. In fact, they were not intended for most people since most people could not read."<sup>33</sup>

Nevertheless, during the decades after the invention of printing, there were some serious attempts to create literary works for children in England by Caxton's followers. They began to seek other themes apart from romances and those instructive and didactic writings which have been already mentioned. They became interested in what Lerer calls "folk heritage of English narrative."<sup>34</sup> One of them was the tale of Robin Hood, printed by Wynkyn de Worde under the name "*Gest of Robyn Hode*", at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century or beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>35</sup> However, contemporary critics did not consider Robin Hood's tale appropriate for children. Lerer writes<sup>36</sup> that although de Worde obviously recognized certain features of literature for children in the story such as simple plot, morals and easily-recognizable characters, which made him produce it and offer it to the children audience, scholars and moralists of that time condemned the story. The attitude towards its appropriateness was evidently long-lasting, since Carpenter and Prichard<sup>37</sup> write that it was not earlier than in the 19th century that a convenient version of Robin Hood's tale for children was published, though they admit children had always somehow reached and read it.

Another important milestone in children's literature is the period of Puritanism in the Anglo-American context. Although British literature had been quite prolific in terms of fairies and fairy-tale-like features, Puritan tendencies led more towards practical literary works than leisure-time reading.<sup>38</sup> It became evident especially in America, where Puritans needed literature for establishing a new society with its economic and political arrangements in order

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<sup>32</sup> Lerer, *Children's Literature*, 76.

<sup>33</sup> Zipes, *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales*, xxi.

<sup>34</sup> Lerer, *Children's Literature*, 78.

<sup>35</sup> Carpenter and Prichard, *The Oxford Companion to Children's Literature*, 455.

<sup>36</sup> Lerer, *Children's Literature*, 78.

<sup>37</sup> Carpenter and Prichard, *The Oxford Companion to Children's Literature*, 455.

<sup>38</sup> Zipes, *When Dreams Came True*, 12.



to be able to live their lives efficiently. For this reason American Puritans became highly interested in teaching and learning reading, and thus one of the most significant books of that time is a school-book *The New England Primer* (published in some time from 1686 to 1690). “[It] became the most popular work of instruction for children in America during the next 100 years.”<sup>39</sup> Also *Pilgrim’s Progress* by John Bunyan, though not primarily aimed at children, was widely read young Puritan readers, thanks to its didactical and explanatory qualities regarding not only religious topics but also family issues.<sup>40</sup> Meanwhile, one of the most famous early picture books in Europe, *Orbis Sensualium Pictus*, was written by Johann Comenius and published in 1658. This influential book, translated into English by Charles Hoole under the name *A World of Things Obvious to the Senses*, is generally recognized as the first picture book ever.<sup>41,42</sup>

At this stage, the general background of children’s literature is sufficient for the purposes of this sub-chapter, since the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century witnessed many collectors and writers of the new genre which we now call a *literary fairy tale*. The most significant origins and predecessors of the famous fairy tales and the literary influence on writings of the most popular writers and collectors are to be discussed in the last part of this chapter, dealing with the development of the genre in Italy, France and Germany.

### **1.1.1. Beginnings of Fairy Tales in Italy**

Those who never thought about the history of the Western fairy tales and concluded that the Brothers Grimm created them or at least collected them from exclusively uneducated illiterate people, are to be undeceived by this part of the chapter, which deals with the Italian origins of the modern West-European literary fairy tales. Many other countries contributed to the development of the fairy-tale genre as well, for example, *Gesta Romanorum*, a favorite European medieval collection of tales published in Latin and later in English by Wynkyn de Worde,<sup>43</sup> also included some fairy-tale-like features. Most of the scholars recognize also

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<sup>39</sup> Carpenter and Prichard, *The Oxford Companion to Children’s Literature*, 432.

<sup>40</sup> Lerer, *Children’s Literature*, 94-95.

<sup>41</sup> Carpenter and Prichard, *The Oxford Companion to Children’s Literature*, 388.

<sup>42</sup> Donarita Vocca, “American (United States) Literature Before 1900,” in *The Continuum Encyclopedia of Children’s Literature*, eds. Bernice E. Cullinan and Diane G. Person (New York: Continuum, 2003), 25.

<sup>43</sup> Carpenter and Prichard, *The Oxford Companion to Children’s Literature*, 204.

English and French primers, catechisms and other literary forms mentioned in the outline of children's literature above as the rudiments of the fairy-tale genre.<sup>44,45</sup>

However, it was due to the frame narrative of Boccaccio's *Decamerone*, which itself was influenced and inspired by medieval fabliaux and chansons de geste, and because of the uprising interest in the new genre of *novella* among Italian writers and tale-collectors that Giovan Francesco Straparola published his collection of tales *Le piacevoli notti* (*The Pleasant Nights*) in the 1550s. Straparola wrote his collection in one of the late-medieval Italian dialects; Jack Zipes writes about "succinct Tuscan,"<sup>46</sup> Carpenter and Prichard conclude it was "Neapolitan dialect."<sup>47</sup> The collection consisted of seventy-four tales, fourteen of which were fairy tales, including his original version of Puss in Boots. According to Zipes,<sup>48</sup> Straparola was the first European writer who not only collected the tales from the old oral tradition but also created his own literary fairy tales. He was also the first one to use the new plot of tales in which an originally unfortunate individual 'climbs up the social ladder' not by marrying a rich person as it might happen in a folk tale, but as a result of some magical happening, i.e. a highly distinctive fairy-tale feature.<sup>49</sup> *The Pleasant Nights* were spread and translated throughout Southern and Western Europe, "they were reprinted several times in Italian during the next few centuries and were translated into French in the eighteenth century and German and English in the nineteenth century."<sup>50</sup>

Nevertheless, it was not Straparola who brought the most popular and widely-known fairy tales into the Western culture; it was another Italian, Giambattista Basile. Basile was a man of many professions connected to administration, and a courtier, who wrote his most famous collection of fifty tales *Lo cunto de li cunti* (*The tale of tales*), often called *Il Pentamerone* (1630s) in Neapolitan dialect.<sup>51,52</sup> Basile himself was provably inspired by Straparola; for example, he further developed Straparola's Puss in Boots. But it was his, not Straparola's, collection of tales that became widely known and distinctive due to its language and content. Bottigheimer comments on the literary characteristics of the collection as follows: "By

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<sup>44</sup> Zipes, *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales*, xx-xxi.

<sup>45</sup> Carpenter and Prichard, *The Oxford Companion to Children's Literature*, 190.

<sup>46</sup> Zipes, *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales*, xxi.

<sup>47</sup> Carpenter and Prichard, *The Oxford Companion to Children's Literature*, 272.

<sup>48</sup> Zipes, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*, 14.

<sup>49</sup> Bottigheimer, *Fairy Tales*, 93.

<sup>50</sup> Zipes, *When Dreams Came True*, 9.

<sup>51</sup> Zipes, *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales*, xxi.

<sup>52</sup> Carpenter and Prichard, *The Oxford Companion to Children's Literature*, 401.

choosing dialect over elite usage, Basile was making a conscious literary and aesthetic choice. But he also laced his Neapolitan dialect with a comically elevated Baroque superfluity. Basile-as-author heaped up metaphors and piled on nouns, adjectives, and verbs.”<sup>53</sup>

Not only the innovative usage of language made the *Pentamerone* unique; also the fact, that Basile’s collection consisted mostly, if not entirely, of fairy tales and thus it “mark[ed] the passage from the oral tradition of folk tales to the artful and sophisticated ‘authored’ fairy tales”<sup>54</sup> had predetermined it to become a highly influential piece of literature in the following decades. Its significance for the development of the genre was great. Despite the fact that it was written in a specific dialect of the Neapolitan area, it was reprinted in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and translated into standard Italian and French.<sup>55</sup> Subsequently, many authors in France were inspired by his early versions of Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty and Rapunzel. Although there are some scholars who do not believe that later French authors might have read and copied the *Pentamerone* and they claim instead that the French versions of the same tales are being only a coincidence based on the sources of the same oral traditions,<sup>56</sup> I rather tend to agree with the opinion<sup>57</sup> that the Italian collections, either in Italian or translated, were used and re-arranged by French fairy-tale authors, who were in most cases highly educated and had access to libraries and literary ‘salons’.

### **1.1.2. Beginnings of Fairy Tales in France**

As it has been already suggested, there are some hints and partial evidence of the fact that the French conteurs and conteuses (i.e. male and female fairy-tale writers), were inspired by their Italian predecessors. They used to meet in salons and it is most likely that they used to discuss new literary works together. Therefore, it is natural to assume that they encountered any form of the Italian versions of contes de fées (i.e. fairy tales) by Straparola or Basile. Lewis Seifert writes about the atmosphere during the first vogue, i.e. a wave of publishing fairy-tale collections between 1690 and 1715, in France:

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<sup>53</sup> Bottigheimer, *Fairy Tales*, 81.

<sup>54</sup> Nancy Canepa, “Basile, Giambattista,” in *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales*, ed. Jack Zipes (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 41.

<sup>55</sup> Zipes, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*, 18.

<sup>56</sup> Carpenter and Prichard, *The Oxford Companion to Children’s Literature*, 401.

<sup>57</sup> Bottigheimer, *Fairy Tales*, 72-73.

Perhaps the most enduring legacy of the vogue was the mythic origin and the aesthetic its initiators created for the genre. Frontispieces and prefaces accompanying [their] tales model the conte de fées on the storytelling by grandmothers, governesses, and nurses to young children. [...] More than by oral traditions, the fairy tales of the first vogue were influenced directly or indirectly by Italian models, including the tales of Straparola and Basile.<sup>58</sup>

But even though the French fairy-tale authors might not have been extremely original in terms of subject matters and even narratives, as many of them used also the frame narrative known from the Italian literary works, their fairy tales “first gained a measure of respectability.”<sup>59</sup> In France of Louis XIV, fairy tales occupied not only peasants’ homes but also royal court and many aristocratic salons; they were being created for upper-class educated adults mainly. What is the most remarkable about the whole ‘dawn’ of fairy tales in France is the fact that for the first time in the history of European literature, women writers outnumbered men writers. Jack Zipes writes about the French conteuses: “They almost single-handedly transformed the Italian and Oriental tales as well as oral tales into marvelous fairy tales that were serious commentaries on court life and cultural struggles.”<sup>60</sup> Although only few names are to be mentioned in this chapter, Lewis Seifert points out that there were no less than sixteen leading fairy tale writers, both male and female, in the first vogue of the fairy-tale publishing in France.

The first of the female conteuses and also the first author to publish a literary fairy tale in France at all was Madame Marie-Catherine d’Aulnoy. The first French fairy tale ever was published within a novel *Histoire d’Hypolite, comte de Douglas* (*Story of Hypolitus, Count of Douglas*); nevertheless, Mme d’Aulnoy is best known for her two subsequent collections of fairy tales published in 1697 and 1698. Her fairy tales were still significantly influenced by romances and Italian novellas of her time but they already contained fairy-tale-like and folkloric features.<sup>61</sup> Another conteuse of the first vogue was Marie-Jean Lhéritier. According to Ruth Bottigheimer,<sup>62</sup> she was one of those French authors who used Straparola’s and Basile’s fairy tales and adapted them for the French audience. Lhéritier is probably best

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<sup>58</sup> Lewis C. Seifert, “France,” in *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales*, ed. Jack Zipes (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 175.

<sup>59</sup> Russell, “Fairy Tales,” 272.

<sup>60</sup> Zipes, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*, 19.

<sup>61</sup> Lewis C. Seifert, “D’Aulnoy, Marie-Catherine Le Jumel De Barneville, Baronne,” in *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales*, ed. Jack Zipes (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 31.

<sup>62</sup> Bottigheimer, *Fairy Tales*, 62-63.

known for two reasons: firstly, she rewrote a tale called Ricdin-Ricdon, which later became famous as the Grimms' fairy tale Rumpelstiltskin. Secondly, she was a niece of the most well-known French fairy tale writer of the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Charles Perrault.

Perrault was, as well as the most of the French fairy tale authors of his time, of upper-class origin and secured himself a great career by being "appointed a secretary to Jean Baptiste Colbert, controller general of finances, perhaps the most influential minister in Louis XIV's government. For the next twenty years, until Colbert's death, Perrault was able to accomplish a great deal in the arts and sciences due to Colbert's power and influence."<sup>63</sup> His first two fairy tales were written in verse, but he is most famous for his tiny collection of the prose fairy tales which included Cinderella, Little Red Riding Hood and Sleeping Beauty. It was published in 1697 and the original name of the collection was *Histoires ou contes du temps passé*, though it is better known as *Contes de ma Mère l'Oye* (*Mother Goose's Tales*). This collection had a great success despite being the least aristocratic and aesthetic of all the fairy-tale collections of the vogue, which would have normally driven away noble readers, and the least Romantic, which would have made it more appealing for the common, peasant audience. Perrault's heroes and heroines were rarely of royal origin, which means, according to Seifert,<sup>64</sup> that Perrault did not tend so strongly to compensate for the unwanted social changes in the aristocratic circles in his tales as some other authors did during the reign of Louis XIV, when aristocracy begun to lose power in favor of rising bourgeois middle class. The form of his tales was more oral-based-like and created the image of folkloristic heritage he claimed to have collected; the simplicity and common-like appearance of his tales had probably largely contributed to the fact that a lot of scholars believed in their idiosyncrasy decades, even centuries later.

Ruth Bottigheimer provides readers with strong arguments on the case of rewriting the Italian fairy tales by the French authors, including Perrault. In her book *Fairy Tales: A New History*, a whole chapter is dedicated to the textual and topical analysis of the Italian tales and themes found in the work of d'Aulnoy, Lhéritier and Perrault, leading to the following conclusions:

Mlle Lhéritier, Charles Perrault, [...] Mme d'Aulnoy shared a common source. [...] The source turned to by the four authors could not have

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<sup>63</sup> Zipes, *When Dreams Came True*, 38.

<sup>64</sup> Seifert, "France," 175-176.

been the French peasantry, the content of whose oral tradition - if it had existed - would have been equally available to later authors and would have emerged among their tales as well. Therefore, the common sources [...] was one to which they had exclusive access. That kind of limited and exclusive source was in all likelihood a single copy of Basile's Pentamerone.<sup>65</sup>

These conclusions are indirectly confirmed by some other scholars; for example Jack Zipes does not state the exact origin of the themes used by Perrault but he admits that his fairy tales "were based on oral and literary motifs."<sup>66</sup> Nonetheless, Perrault is rightfully considered the most significant writer of the French fairy tale vogue of the turn of the 17<sup>th</sup> and the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, since he put the greatest effort in establishing fairy tales in the French literary scene,<sup>67</sup> though this effort was not propelled by his desire to create tales primarily for children's amusement, since the main aim of the tales was to provide the society with an effective tool for civilizing via fairy-tales' morals.<sup>68</sup>

Perrault, obviously, was not the only one to use his fairy tales as a tool for civilizing his audience. After the main vogue had finished, approximately fifty years after publishing of *Mother Goose's Tales*, fairy tales by Jeanne-Marie Leprince de Beaumont became very popular. She published her most renowned collection of tales, *Le Magasin des Enfants (The Young Misses' Magazine)* in England, where she worked as a governess. Probably influenced by Puritan attitude towards children's literature, the collection featured several fairy tales with strong didactic meaning and was intermixed with biblical stories.<sup>69</sup> It was very popular not only in France, but also in England, Germany and other European countries. Its success was partially caused by the well-known frame narrative she had chosen, since the readers were familiar with the format and the form helped the already existing process of civilizing through fairy-tale morals. Jack Zipes comments on de Beaumont's role in this process:

[She] used a frame story to transmit different kinds of didactic tales in which a governess engaged several young girls between six and ten in discussions about morals, manners, ethics, and gender roles that lead her to tell stories to illustrate her points. [...] The frame was set up to be copied by other adults

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<sup>65</sup> Bottigheimer, *Fairy Tales*, 73.

<sup>66</sup> Zipes, *When Dreams Came True*, 39.

<sup>67</sup> Jack Zipes, *The Spells of Enchantment: The Wondrous Fairy Tales of Western Culture* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1991), xix.

<sup>68</sup> Ruth B. Bottigheimer, *Grimms' Bad Girls and Bold Boys: The Moral and Social Vision of the Tales* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 2.

<sup>69</sup> Ruth B. Bottigheimer, "Fairy Tales and Folk Tales," in *International Companion Encyclopedia of Children's Literature*, Volume 1, ed. Peter Hunt (London: Routledge, 2004), 261.

to institutionalize a type of storytelling in homes of the upper classes. It was only as part of the civilizing process that storytelling developed within the aristocratic and bourgeois homes in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, first through governesses and nannies, and later in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries through mothers who told good-night stories.<sup>70</sup>

Apparently, fairy tales had not been considered just a leisure-time reading without any deeper meaning, not even half a century after the first ones had served the civilization. Due to the possibility to educate and form new generations through them, the commercialization of children's literature occurred very quickly (if it had not been there before, as e.g. Seth Lerer suggested, in the subchapter 1.2.1.), and "a new dimension which now included concerns about how to socialize children and indoctrinate them through literary products that were appropriate for their age, mentality, and morals [emerged]."<sup>71</sup> It is because of the need to socialize, indoctrinate and form children that we now have our beloved versions of what is generally called 'the classic fairy tales'; the earlier versions of tales circulating throughout Europe were collected and neatened by two German brothers, who, similarly to Perrault in France, believed in social value of their literary interventions.

### **1.1.3. Beginnings of Fairy Tales in Germany**

If the most famous representative of the French fairy tales is Perrault, Germany would definitely be represented by the Grimm brothers. However, it would be incorrect not to mention some other German authors of fairy-tale-like pieces of literature. Origins of fairy tales in Germany are similar to those in England or France; they were preceded by didactic books and primers; also picture books were quite popular after the *Orbis Sensualium Pictus* had become known to the German-speaking audience.<sup>72</sup> In 1600s, some of the tales later appearing in the Grimms' collections emerged, for example a folk tale The Three Spinners, or a wonder tale which was featuring devil-connected happenings known in its modern version as Bearskin.<sup>73</sup>

One of the first German authors to become highly interested in oral tradition for national and folkloristic purposes was Johann Gottfried Herder, who invented the theory of German folk poetry. Bottigheimer writes that "his conception of folk poetry was subsequently understood

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<sup>70</sup> Zipes, *When Dreams Came True*, 17.

<sup>71</sup> Zipes, *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales*, xxiii.

<sup>72</sup> Carpenter and Prichard, *The Oxford Companion to Children's Literature*, 203.

<sup>73</sup> Bottigheimer, "Germany," 200.

in terms of anonymous folk authorship of fairy tales, and later, when growing nationalism had reshaped thinking about the folk in the 19th-century, this diffuse notion was transformed into the idea of national folk memory.”<sup>74</sup> Of course, there were also female writers of fairy tales in the 18<sup>th</sup> century Germany; Jeannine Blackwell mentions some of the first women authors such as Catherine the Great and Sophie Albrecht, and also some members of the next generation of writers, publishing at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century: Bettina von Arnim or Ludowine von Haxthausen. Their fairy tales were “used for introspection, life narration, as metaphor for traumatic psychosocial events, social criticism and – above all – entertainment.”<sup>75</sup>

Several collections of folk tales occurred during the 18<sup>th</sup> century; their origin is sometimes questionable, and it is widely believed that at least few of them were rather romanticized literary works than tales of the collected oral tradition.<sup>76</sup> Some of these collections were written by Clemens Brentano, a contemporary of the Brothers Grimm and the author of poetry and fairy tales. His writings are recognized as a significant influence on the development of the genre in the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century Germany. However, what he is most valuable for is not his poetry; it is his connection to the Grimms, whom he knew from the Heidelberg literary circle. They sent him an early manuscript of some of the tales later included in their collection and therefore, the manuscript, when later found in Brentano’s legacy, “has offered subsequent generations of scholars invaluable insights into the editorial practices of the Brothers Grimm.”<sup>77</sup>

Who, then, were Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm? Usually, they are described as folklorists, writers and philologists. Both attended law schools and struggled to make the living for the family after their father and subsequently their mother had died. Eventually, they both ended up working as librarians, a profession closely related to the field of their interest – old German literature. They firstly begun searching and collecting oral tales during the first decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, besides other reasons also on the request of already mentioned Clemens Brentano, who sought help in looking for tales he originally intended to publish himself.<sup>78</sup> The Grimms’ most famous contribution to the fairy-tale genre is undoubtedly the

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<sup>74</sup> Bottigheimer, “Germany,” 201.

<sup>75</sup> Jeannine Blackwell, “German Fairy Tales: A User’s Manual. Translations of Six Frames and Fragments by Romantic Women,” in *Fairy Tales and Feminism: New Approaches*, ed. Donald Haase (Wayne State University Press, 2004), 73-74.

<sup>76</sup> Carpenter and Prichard, *The Oxford Companion to Children’s Literature*, 203.

<sup>77</sup> Zipes, *The Oxford Companion to Fairy*, 62.

<sup>78</sup> Zipes, *When Dreams Came True*, 68.



two-volume collection of tales, the *Kinder-und Hausmarchen* (firstly translated into English by Edward Taylor as the *German Popular Stories* in 1823, now usually translated as the *Children's and Household Tales*), published in the years 1812 and 1815. It contained, along with over 200 tales of magic and religious content, the most popular fairy tales of the Western culture, i.e. Snow White, Cinderella, Little Red Cap (Little Red Riding Hood), Hansel and Gretel, Rapunzel or The Frog Prince.

The two volumes of the *Children's and Household Tales* differed radically: the first one was based on tales collected from bourgeois sources and therefore most likely influenced by the Italian and French literary fairy tales. The Grimms probably were not aware of that, since they were raised in a very rigid way and did not have access to the copies of such literary works.<sup>79</sup> The second volume was created on completely different basis. Ruth Bottigheimer explains the differences:

They had originally intended to translate Basile's *Pentamerone* as the second part of their collection, but with the appearance of their little volume in 1812 people began to send the Grimms the stories they had heard or read. And the brothers themselves recorded numerous tales told by Dorothea Viehmann, a market woman (...). In addition, Napoleon's defeat (...) in 1813 spurred a general outpouring of loyalist and nationalist sentiment, shared by the Grimms (...). Jacob was sent off (...), while Wilhelm was left alone to edit volume 2 of the *Kinder-und Hausmarchen*.<sup>80</sup>

It was not only on account of Jacob's work duties that Wilhelm was being more responsible for the second volume and the subsequent revisions than his brother; Jacob also became more "absorbed in his philological studies,"<sup>81</sup> while Wilhelm began to be highly interested in the notion of the folkloristic purity of the tales they had collected and published; he took "more care to refine the style and make the contents of the tales more acceptable for a children's audience or, really, for adults who wanted the tales censored for children."

The issue of 'indoctrination and socialization of children' via fairy tales, already mentioned at the end of the previous subchapter, has been widely discussed in connection with the Grimms' literary products. It is not surprising that the brothers, likewise their French predecessors, saw fairy tales as a civilizing tool; as Bottigheimer writes, they "labeled their

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<sup>79</sup> Bottigheimer, *Fairy Tales*, 50.

<sup>80</sup> Bottigheimer, *Grimms' Bad Girls and Bold Boys*, 5.

<sup>81</sup> David L. Russell, "Grimm, Wilhelm," in *The Continuum Encyclopedia of Children's Literature*, ed. Bernice E. Cullinan and Diane G. Person (New York: Continuum, 2003), 337.

collection a childrearing manual.”<sup>82</sup> In their case, the desire to civilize future German generations was closely related to the growing nationalistic tendencies in Germany of the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Jack Zipes concludes<sup>83</sup> that not only did they collect the already existing (either literary or oral) tales for the purposes of folkloristic studies, they wanted to create a new ideal paradigm of fairy tales which would resemble oral tales but would be stylistically and linguistically flawless and would aim at middle-class readers. In other words, “they wanted the rich cultural tradition of the common people to be used and accepted by the rising middle classes. It is for this reason that they spent their lives conducting research on myths, customs and the language of the German people.”<sup>84</sup>

Language itself was very important to the brothers. According to Bottigheimer, “they developed [...] the conviction that a common language defined national identity, and that these tales were, themselves, linguistic monuments of a common culture.”<sup>85</sup> And they really were, as Jack Zipes confirms in his article *The Enchanted Forest of the Brothers Grimm*: “Historically the Grimms did indeed succeed in creating a monument in honor of the German cultural heritage by collecting and shaping their tales into an “enchanted forest,” so to speak, that has brought great fame to Germany and has even transcended Germany.”<sup>86</sup> Considering that “great fame”, there had circulated many myths about the origin of their tales; it was widely believed until 1970s that the Brothers Grimm worked in a very romantic fashion, i.e. that they visited peasants’ house after house and collected the tales from the lowest, ‘eligible’ (in the sense of purity of the oral tradition) and mostly illiterate sources. The reality was little less appealing, since those sources were mostly bourgeois, educated and most likely acquainted with the earlier Italian and French literary fairy tales, and the purposes of collecting rather political and social than solely children-oriented as a layperson would think. The Grimms, as well as Perrault, added a great amount of their personal attitudes and beliefs to the tales, as will be discussed in more detail in the analysis of the differences between the Italian, French and German versions of the selected classic fairy tales in the practical part of this thesis.

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<sup>82</sup> Bottigheimer, “Fairy Tales and Folk Tales,” 264.

<sup>83</sup> Zipes, *When Dreams Came True*, 75.

<sup>84</sup> Zipes, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*, 61.

<sup>85</sup> Bottigheimer, *Grimms’ Bad Girls and Bold Boys*, 7.

<sup>86</sup> Jack Zipes, *The Enchanted Forest of the Brothers Grimm: New Modes of Approaching the Grimms’ Fairy Tales*, *The Germanic Review: Literature, Culture, Theory*, 62:2 (1987): 67, accessed December 10, 2014, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00168890.1987.9934193>.

After 1819, the number of tales in the collection increased by sixty-nine new tales in five more editions; some of the original tales were excluded. Content of majority of the tales that remained from the first edition was neatened, together with the new-coming tales that Wilhelm received from people reacting to the first volume and which might have been based on literary sources in most cases, and they were stylistically and linguistically modified. Despite the new revelations of the origins of the tales and quite radical editing they had gone through, the Brothers Grimms' collection still remains one of the basics of the world children's literature. The book was extremely successful at the time of the first publishing and "it soon became the second most widely read work in the world, superseded only by the Bible."<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Russell, "Grimm, Wilhelm," 337.

## 2. Fairy Tales and Literary Criticism

Fairy tales, as well as any other literary genre, have been questioned by literary critics and scholars. One of the theories that have significantly influenced fairy-tale criticism is psychoanalytic theory. Despite the fact that this approach is related to the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, psychological interest in fairy tales had begun even earlier; Donald Haase writes that

it actually had its beginnings in the previous century, when nationalistic awareness motivated collectors and scholars to study folk tales as expressions of the folk soul or psyche. Focusing on the relationship of folk tales to myth, scholars looked to these stories for evidence of the values, customs, and beliefs that expressed a specific people's cultural identity.<sup>88</sup>

Nevertheless, psychoanalytic criticism is still mostly connected with the names of Sigmund Freud and Carl Gustav Jung, who were primarily interested in the literary characters' behavior and its connection with their inner anxiety, fears, complexes and sexuality. This literary theory is also known for its attempts to reveal and decode hidden symbols and their possible meanings and messages to the readers. One of the most famous proponents of this theory in the later 20<sup>th</sup> century was Bruno Bettelheim, who became quite a controversial person in the field. He believed that “[when] applying the psychoanalytic model of the human personality, fairy tales carry important messages on the conscious, the preconscious and the unconscious mind, on whatever level each is functioning at the time.”<sup>89</sup> His book *The Uses of Enchantment* is a complex study of the popular fairy tales in which he “asserted that the apparently cruel and arbitrary nature of many folk fairy stories is actually an instructive reflection of the child’s natural and necessary ‘killing off’ of successive phases of development and initiation.”<sup>90</sup> However, Bettelheim has been reprehended for being moralistic, sexist and indifferent to the historical development of the fairy tales he had analyzed in his book.<sup>91</sup>

Another theory applicable in a fairy-tale analysis is Marxist criticism. After a period of time in which literary criticism had been interested in psychology of the characters and structure of

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<sup>88</sup> Donald Haase, “Psychology and Fairy Tales,” in *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales*, ed. Jack Zipes (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 404.

<sup>89</sup> Bruno Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1976), 6.

<sup>90</sup> “Fairy Tale,” Encyclopædia Britannica, accessed May 12, 2015, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/200491/fairy-tale>

<sup>91</sup> Haase, “Psychology and Fairy Tales,” 407.

the literary works, political and social issues became the most discussed topics with majority of the points of view based on leftist ideas.<sup>92</sup> The basic Marxist paradigm is that “getting and keeping economic power is the motive behind all social and political activities, including education, Marxist criticism philosophy, [...] the arts [...]”<sup>93</sup> One of the most renowned contemporary representatives of the Marxist critical theory is Jack Zipes, who focuses on social and historical backgrounds of the European and American fairy tales, with strong connections to feminist criticism, which is not surprising since the two theories are quite similar – both deal with oppression of a certain group of people, in Marxism determined by class and economic power, in feminism by gender.

## 2.1. Feminist Literary Criticism

In the introduction of *Don't Bet on the Prince*, Jack Zipes writes: “I would claim that it is impossible today to be a critic without being a feminist.”<sup>94</sup> Whether the contemporaries of Perrault and the Grimms were aware of this and questioned the stereotypical depiction of women in their fairy tales is not known and not likely; the serious feminist scholarly critiques did not appear earlier than in the late 1960s and early 1970s, together with the second wave of feminism in the U.S.A. and Western Europe. At this time, feminists became interested in fairy tales, which turned out to be a very fruitful source for feminist literary criticism. Feminist theory does not deal only with the portrayals of stereotypical gender roles in fairy tales, feminist critics have also tried to explore to what extent female writers contributed to the development of the genre and they have even produced their own feminist versions of fairy tales. Shawn Jarvis suggests:

Feminist theory about fairy tales is fundamentally a critique of patriarchal literary and cultural practices in Western societies and concerns itself primarily with canonical tales, issues of gender, voice, and power in these tales, their impact on socialization and acculturation, as well as broader social issues like women's access to public discourse, the representation of women in literature and scholarship, and women's contribution to the fairy-tale tradition.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Roderick McGillis, “Criticism Is the Theory of Literature: Theory Is the Criticism of Literature,” in *The Routledge Companion to Children's Literature*, ed. David Rudd (London: Routledge, 2010), 21.

<sup>93</sup> Lois Tyson, *Critical Theory Today: A User-Friendly Guide* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 53-54.

<sup>94</sup> Zipes, *Don't Bet on the Prince*, xiii.

<sup>95</sup> Shawn Jarvis, “Feminism and Fairy Tales,” in *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales*, ed. Jack Zipes (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 158.

What are, then, the most significant subjects of interest and the loudest voices in the field of feminist criticism applied on the classic literary fairy tales? Donald Haase comments on the main direction of feminist criticism as follows: "From the beginning, the feminist critique of fairy tales has centered on depictions of fairy-tale heroine. Perhaps it was inevitable that the fictional stereotype identified in classic fairy tales would also become a critical stereotype."<sup>96</sup> Regarding this main interest, there have emerged two main attitudes towards heroines in fairy tales: the one that praises those female characters that do not follow stereotypical characterization of women in fairy tales, and the opposite approach which focuses exclusively on the most stereotypical females and criticizes their contribution to the common view of women in the society.

The greatest debate about this topic was begun in early 1970s when a feminist writer, Alison Lurie, suggested that feminist criticism should not deal with the classic fairy tales that show women in a traditional way; instead, she wrote about many folk and wonder tales that should be celebrated because their heroines were depicted as strong, independent and therefore good female role models. In the introduction to her collection of these tales called *Clever Gretchen and Other Forgotten Folktales* she writes:

Why don't we know these stories as well as the others? It is because the first collections of fairy tales for children were put together over a hundred years ago, when women and girls were supposed to be weak and helpless; and the editors who picked the stories out of the many that were available chose ones like "Snow White," "Cinderella," "Sleeping Beauty," and "Little Red Riding-Hood." I have tried to rescue some of almost forgotten tales from among the many recorded by scholars during the last century in all the countries of Europe.<sup>97</sup>

Obviously, Lurie claimed that concentrating on other tales, not the classic ones, would bring more pro-feminist reading possibilities to young readers, since she saw "the tales as reflecting a commendable level of gender equality, along with a power asymmetry tilted in favor of older women."<sup>98</sup> However, Lurie's suggestion that the stereotypical depiction of women created in fairy tales could be violated by reading less famous and well-known tales has been questioned several times since then.

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<sup>96</sup> Donald Haase, ed., *Fairy Tales and Feminism: New Approaches* (Wayne State University Press, 2004), x.

<sup>97</sup> Alison Lurie, *Clever Gretchen and Other Forgotten Folktales* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1980), xii.

<sup>98</sup> Maria Tatar, *The Classic Fairy Tales* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1998), xiii.

One of the biggest opponents of Lurie's idea was Marcia Lieberman, who in her famous essay *Some Day My Prince Will Come* argued that: "Only the best-known stories, those that everyone has read or heard, indeed, those that Disney has popularized, have affected masses of children in our culture. [...] The 'folk tales recorded in the field by scholars,' to which Ms. Lurie refers [...] are so relatively unknown that they cannot seriously be considered in a study of the meaning of fairy tales to women."<sup>99</sup> She further presented the results of her textual analysis of certain classic fairy tales: the heroines are passive, dependent and function as a prize for heroes. Some Lieberman's contemporaries have developed her research and supported her ideas; for example, Andrea Dworkin claimed that adults probably have been influenced by the popular classic fairy tales, since "we have taken the fairy tales of childhood with us into maturity, chewed but still lying in the stomach, as real identity."<sup>100</sup> For Tess Cosslett "it is easy to see these stories as reinforcing the messages of patriarchy to women: women function as passive objects and as rivals for male attention; marriage is their only goal; a good woman stays in the domestic sphere."<sup>101</sup> Most of these typical portrayals and gender-related characterizations will be discussed in the analysis of the selected classic fairy tales in the following chapters; both approaches are surely to be discussed again.

As was already mentioned, the question of stereotypical gender roles of fairy-tale heroines was only a part of the problem. The sex of the fairy-tale authors in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries is also an issue. Therefore, feminist literary criticism also "may trace the history of relatively unknown or undervalued women writers, potentially earning them their rightful place within the literary canon, and helps create a climate in which women's creativity may be fully realized and appreciated."<sup>102</sup> As Shawn Jarvis writes,<sup>103</sup> feminist critics were concerned with the fact that though female writers in the French vogue outnumbered men, male collections of tales have always become more enforced to the public. The French conteuses set the direction of the fairy-tale genre in Europe; they criticized and parodied the contemporary social situation and craftily fed the demand for non-classicist upper-class reading material. Still,

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<sup>99</sup> Marcia Lieberman, "Some Day My Prince Will Come: Female Acculturation through the Fairy Tale," *College English*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (1972): 384.

<sup>100</sup> Andrea Dworkin, "Woman-Hating," in *The Classic Fairy Tales*, Maria Tatar (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1998), xiii.

<sup>101</sup> Tess Cosslett, Alison Easton and Penny Summerfield, *Women, Power and Resistance: An Introduction to Women Studies* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1996), 82.

<sup>102</sup> "Introduction to Literature: Feminist Criticism," Delahoyde, Michael, accessed April 4, 2015, <http://public.wsu.edu/~delahoyd/feminist.crit.html>.

<sup>103</sup> Jarvis, "Feminism and Fairy Tales," 156-158.

their popularity has never reached that of the male authors. Also, male editors (not only French, the Grimms brothers including) have shown strong gender bias in choosing and adjusting tales for their collections. Speaking about gender inequality, even the terminology of tales itself has been considered sexist by some critics, who have judged the apparatus of the genre:

Torborg Lundell, for example, argued that primary texts in folklore and fairytale research, like Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson's *The Types of the Folktale* and Thompson's *Motif Index of Folk Literature*, have an inherent gender bias, ignoring strong heroines through selective labelling, misleading plot summaries, and placing the focus on male rather than female characters. Her concluding statement: there is work to be done, evidenced by the following cross-references the Motif Index: 'Man, see also Person'. 'Woman, see also Wife'.<sup>104</sup>

The last main area of interest of feminist literary criticism is actual creating of the new, pro-feminist fairy tales. A trend of writing such stories was begun already at the end of the 19th century by such authors as Evelyn Scharp, continuing with works of Edith Nesbit, and Frank Baum. In the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Anne Sexton is usually considered one of the first authors to recognize the influence of fairy tales on the process of civilizing and socializing women in the patriarchal society and therefore one of the first writers to create intentionally feminist writings.<sup>105</sup> Angela Carter and Margaret Atwood are other well-known writers who wrote tales with fairy-tale-like features; the first one aiming at breaking the 'magic spell' of the classic fairy tales and showing a possible social change, the latter focused on fairy tales pre-constructing our responses to every-day life.<sup>106</sup> According to Maria Tatar, "feminist writers have resisted the temptation to move in the imitative mode, choosing instead the route of critique and parody in their recastings of tales."<sup>107</sup> These new fairy tales have employed a wide variety of topics and themes, as well as methods of suppressing gender bias in their original versions. I will discuss the new fairy tales in the final chapters of this thesis.

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<sup>104</sup> Jarvis, "Feminism and Fairy Tales," 158.

<sup>105</sup> Jarvis, "Feminism and Fairy Tales," 157.

<sup>106</sup> Tatar, *The Classic Fairy Tales*, xvii.

<sup>107</sup> Tatar, *The Classic Fairy Tales*, xv.



### 3. Patriarchy in the Fairy Tales by Perrault and the Grimm Brothers

I have chosen three classic fairy tales for the purposes of the critical analysis: Cinderella, Snow White and Little Red Riding Hood. The selection has been based deliberately on the level of their popularity; I consider them to be the most demonstrative representatives of the stereotypical portrayal of women in the fairy tales of the 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries' origins and the most popular ones at the same time. The fact that they have been already frequently analyzed by feminist scholars does not interfere with the intentions of this paper; on the contrary, it may contribute to my effort to provide a complex insight into the matter. The popularity of the chosen fairy tales also enables the subsequent comparison with their modern versions, since there are many of the new stories dedicated to rewriting/restructuring/reusing the themes of Cinderella, Snow White or Little Red Riding Hood; probably more than there are new versions of any other tale.

While analyzing the fairy tales, I will use primarily texts from the book *The Complete Grimms' Fairy Tales* published by Routledge, translator of which is not known. When the texts from this publication are compared to those available on the internet, they seem to be those translated by Margaret Hunt<sup>108</sup>, and thus it might be supposed that she is the author of the translation. For the illustration of some textual and editorial changes, I may also refer to newer versions of the tales translated by D. L. Alishman, a professor of folklore at the University of Pittsburgh, representing the current translational tendencies. Discussing the changes made by Wilhelm and Jacob Grimm in the tales that demonstrably came from or were influenced by the French literary sources, the fairy-tale versions by Perrault will be used. The following criticism is not exclusively based on the linguistic analysis, since proper textual research has not been made and, as Maria Tatar writes, "close textual analysis is a skill that does not always pay off in interpreting folktales."<sup>109</sup> I will rather use the quotations from the fairy tales as examples of wording that could possibly convey certain meanings on certain circumstances.

Since feminist criticism is highly interested in analyzing and dissecting depictions of (differences between) heroes and heroines that encourage the stereotypical patriarchal

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<sup>108</sup> "Grimms' Fairy Tales," Carnegie Mellon University, accessed March 25, 2015, <http://www.cs.cmu.edu/~spok/grimtmp/>.

<sup>109</sup> Maria Tatar, *The Hard Facts of the Grimm's Fairy Tales* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), xix.

arrangement of the Western society, it is necessary to explain the term “patriarchy.” Within a broader meaning, not the one referring only to the power distribution in families or tribes, we can use the definition by Oxford Learner’s Dictionary: “a society, system or country that is ruled or controlled by men.”<sup>110</sup> This definition, when applied to fairy tales, has two possible interpretations, both equally valid: patriarchy in fairy tales has caused that heroines, no matter how capable they are, always need to rely on a man – a father, a husband or just a passer-by; while patriarchy outside the fairy tales at the same time ensured the female authors could not surpass the male authors in their popularity.

Feminist critics claim that patriarchal ideology, when applied to fairy tales, employs “a masculine heroic paradigm based on patriarchal values which privilege action over inaction, aggression over submission and individualism over collectivism.”<sup>111</sup> According to Margaret Andersen, we are influenced by the patriarchal system even before or soon after we are born, as there are certain expectations parents have towards their children on the basis of their sex.<sup>112</sup> Andersen suggests that when parents are asked to describe their newborn babies, men tend to use more stereotypical characterizations like ‘alert’ and ‘strong’ when speaking about boys, and words like ‘delicate’ and ‘weak’ when speaking about girls. Later in their lives, children are exposed to sex-related stereotypes at schools:

Textbooks convey limited images of females that subtly communicate the idea that women and girls are less important than men and boys. Studies of textbooks show that men and women are portrayed in sex-stereotypic roles. [...] boys are more often shown as solving problems, displaying aggression and being physically active. Compared to boys, girls are shown to be more conforming, more engaged in fantasy, and more involved in verbal rather than physical behavior.<sup>113</sup>

The process of socializing and getting accustomed to the stereotypical division of the society does not end in infancy. Women are universally expected to take care of their families and homes; since the family is a rapidly changing social unit today, women do not share exactly the same values they used to two or three centuries ago, yet the traditional image of a man as a breadwinner and a woman as a child-bearer seems to persist in many families. Patriarchy is

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<sup>110</sup> Oxford Learner’s Dictionary, accessed March 25, 2015, <http://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/patriarchy>.

<sup>111</sup> Rudd, *The Routledge Companion to Children’s Literature*, 225.

<sup>112</sup> Margaret L. Andersen, *Thinking About Women: Sociological Perspectives on Sex and Gender* (New York: MacMillan Publishing Company, 1988), 81.

<sup>113</sup> Andersen, *Thinking About Women*, 85.

simply too deeply rooted in our society – we see it in commercials, television programs, we read novels which participate in spreading the patriarchal attributes almost as if they were biologically given, hereditary and not only a part of a social construct.

When speaking about patriarchy in literature, there is another feature that is related to its impact on (female) audience – most of the literary works by men were written and are supposed to be read from the male point of view. This system of favoring male members of the society in literary works is called phallocentrism, since it is a theory based on a struggle for dominance in the society, part of which is disadvantaged by not having male genitals. This group of disadvantaged, which, obviously, consists exclusively of women, is “culturally conditioned to read as if they were men.”<sup>114</sup> Typical example of phallocentrism in literature would be the already mentioned story of Robin Hood; it focuses on male characters, who are praised for their action and represent the typical qualities of a man of that time. The manner in which the tale was written did not provide female readers (if there were any) with an opportunity to identify with it.<sup>115</sup> Of course, it seems rather absurd to claim that e.g. Snow White is phallogentric; the story is all about a girl, and male characters are mostly represented by seven likeable dwarfs. On the other hand, the fact that any girl reading this fairy tale cannot easily create a bond with the prince or the hunter, since they only represent the values and traits of male characters, whereas she is definitely expected to identify with the passive princess, could be seen as a proof of pervasive influence of patriarchy on literature.

The question is why and because of whom did the patriarchal system enter the genre of fairy tales? For there certainly were folk tales and wonder tales that did not necessarily depict women as dull and incompetent; for example, in a well-known French folk-tale version of Little Red Riding Hood, a girl encounters a wolf and manages to escape by outwitting him.<sup>116</sup> Why, then, does Little Red Riding Hood eventually ‘swallow the bait’ and needs to be saved by a man in the classic version? Some changes had happened already during the Middle Ages. According to Jack Zipes, the first transformation from matriarchal to patriarchal systems, presumably influenced by Christianity, was introduced into the original folk tales

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<sup>114</sup> Rudd, *The Routledge Companion to Children's Literature*, 227.

<sup>115</sup> Rudd, *The Routledge Companion to Children's Literature*, 227.

<sup>116</sup> Zipes, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*, 44.

that circulated throughout Europe not long before the first literary fairy tales occurred. He writes that

The goddess became a witch, an evil fairy, or a stepmother; the active, young princess was changed into an active hero; matrilineal marriage and family ties became patrilineal; the essence of the symbols, based on matriarchal rites, was depleted and made benign; and the pattern of action that concerned maturation and integration was gradually recast to stress domination and wealth.<sup>117</sup>

Nevertheless, as the example with Little Red Riding Hood above shows, not all the folk tales have undergone such a change and persisted in their original versions until the beginnings of the literary fairy tales in France. When uncovering the process of introducing patriarchal attributes into the fairy tales, it is important to bear in mind the socio-cultural context of that time; during the reign of Louis XIV, the fairy tales served as a tool for creating delicate balance between rising bourgeoisie and the aristocracy in decline. As Lewis Seifert comments,

For writers and readers of late 17th-century France, both the fairy tale's mythic origin and its aesthetic served a particular ideological function. The archetypal storytelling of lower-class women assimilated the popular oral tradition into elite literary practice so as to obscure the reality of hierarchical social relations. At the same time, the seemingly fantastical aesthetic of the *contes de fées* none the less served to celebrate the values of the self-contained social elite.<sup>118</sup>

There is no doubt that the authors intended to pass their beliefs and ideas via fairy tales. Both male and female writers "sought to socialize their readers to inhibit them."<sup>119</sup> However, the male standpoints showed themselves to be more powerful, while the female authors "also sought to subvert the male code and replace it with a more liberal one favorable to the predilections of educated women, who wanted more power to determine their lives."<sup>120</sup> The patriarchal system, of course, did not enable women and their ideas to be determinant and therefore the fairy-tale genre, as well as many other genres, became a men-dominated sphere, in which "the literary works of (white) male authors describing experience from a (white) male point of view was considered the standard of universality."<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Zipes, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*, 7.

<sup>118</sup> Seifert, "France," 175.

<sup>119</sup> Zipes, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*, 32.

<sup>120</sup> Zipes, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*, 32.

<sup>121</sup> Tyson, *Critical Theory Today*, 84.

Charles Perrault, in particular, is the most significant representative of patriarchy in the French fairy-tale genre. Not only is he the most frequently mentioned French fairy-tale author; he also demonstrably edited and adjusted his tales in order to represent his ideas. Since he grew up and lived at the time when the French society was experiencing a high level of (before unseen) rationalization and moralization; he identified the concurrent values and supported general efforts to “cultivate feelings of shame and to arouse anxiety in children when they did not conform to a more inhibiting way of social conduct.”<sup>122</sup> It has been already mentioned in the first chapter that Ruth Bottigheimer has elucidated the prevalingly Italian origin of Perrault’s fairy tales; and it is the difference between the Italian and his versions that shows the changes made in favor of the patriarchal arrangement of the concurrent society. She has found several textual proofs that “Perrault’s writing was sexually modest, socially decent, and, in the end, highly moral.”<sup>123</sup> His versions of *Donkeyskin*, *Sleeping Beauty* or *Cinderella* were certainly based on Basile’s and Straparola’s tales; however, he intentionally omitted or toned down most of the allusions to sexual activity of the heroines (in *Sleeping Beauty*) and transformed them into passive, obedient women (in *Cinderella*).<sup>124</sup> Jack Zipes comments on the stereotypical features in the tales as follows:

The task confronted by Perrault’s model female is to show reserve and patience; that is, she must be passive until the right man comes along to recognize her virtues and marry her. She lives only through the male and for marriage. The male acts, the female waits. She must cloak her instinctual drives in polite speech, correct manners, and elegant clothes. If she is allowed to reveal anything, it is to demonstrate how submissive she can be.<sup>125</sup>

Submissiveness, frequently in direct connection with the attractive appearance of a heroine, was highly important for Perrault. In the English translation of the *Cinderella* tale, there are two verses in the final moral that say: “Beauty’s to the sex a treasure, we still admire it without measure. [...] And [godmother] gave her [meaning *Cinderella*] such a graceful mien, that she became thereby a Queen.”<sup>126</sup> The tales, which he rewrote and composed, reveal that Perrault was generally unwilling to show his heroines as strong and capable of self-protection.

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<sup>122</sup> Zipes, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*, 38.

<sup>123</sup> Bottigheimer, *Fairy Tales*, 58.

<sup>124</sup> Bottigheimer, *Fairy Tales*, 68-69.

<sup>125</sup> Zipes, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*, 41.

<sup>126</sup> Charles Perrault, “*Cinderilla, or The Little Glass Slipper*,” transl. Robert Amber (London: J. Pote & R. Montagu, 1729), accessed March 7, 2015, <http://www.usm.edu/media/english/fairytales/cinderella/cind5.html#Episode1>.

It might have been due to his fear of female activity and independence, which did not correspond to his attitudes, that he felt compelled to produce new, more appropriate versions of the tales. He shared a common belief that “women were linked to the potentially uncontrollable natural instincts,”<sup>127</sup> and therefore children were in need to be protected from such behavioral examples. As he “sought to portray ideal types [of male and female protagonists] to reinforce the standards of the civilizing process,”<sup>128</sup> fairy tales turned out to be a perfect tool for propagation of patriarchal messages.

At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Grimm Brothers edited and reworked the fairy tales they collected for the first volume of their collection as well, if not because of the fear of women, then at least for the civilizing reasons. It has been generally acknowledged by many literary critics that the Grimms’ fairy tales “contained sexist and racist attitudes and served a socialization process that placed great emphasis on passivity [...] and self-sacrifice for girls and on activity, competition and accumulation of wealth for boys.”<sup>129</sup> Similarly to the case of Perrault’s fairy tales, the editorial works on the tales had been made on purpose. Shawn Jarvis summarizes the conclusions of Bottigheimer’s research on linguistic features present in the Grimms’ tales as follows: “the *Kinder-und Hausmärchen* were designed to acculturate children and women into roles and models of behaviour patriarchy wanted to maintain.”<sup>130</sup>

Bottigheimer is not the only scholar who has analyzed Grimms’ tales. Theda Detlor wrote a book about her experience in using the Grimms’ fairy tales in the classroom with first and second-graders. In her experiment, she decided to draw children’s attention to the various patriarchal attributes in fairy tales. As a result, “children were developing the ability to react perceptively to the stories and to the writers, to discern implied messages about gender roles in the tales, and to become critical thinkers by habit.”<sup>131</sup> In cooperation with her pupils, she created a list of repetitive features they had observed in the tales, most of them directly supporting inequality and propagating patriarchy: “The girls cry when they are in trouble. Men go only for beauty. Princesses are always pretty. Princesses do not think for themselves. Women need to be saved. Only boys go into the woods to seek their fortunes. Usually, beauty

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<sup>127</sup> Zipes, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*, 38.

<sup>128</sup> Zipes, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*, 42.

<sup>129</sup> Zipes, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*, 60.

<sup>130</sup> Jarvis, “Feminism and Fairy Tales,” 159.

<sup>131</sup> Theda Detlor, *A Fresh Look at Fairy Tales: A Thematic Unit Exploring Gender Bias in Classic Stories* (New York: Scholastic Professional Books, 1995), 37.

on the outside means being good inside. Boys speak up more. Only the girls do the housework.”<sup>132</sup>

All of the features quoted above are the results of the Grimms’, and Wilhelm’s in particular, intentional and purposeful editorial practice, which is characterized by “diligent work, gender specific roles, a generally punitive stance toward girls and women.”<sup>133</sup> Jack Zipes comments on the results of editing:

They eliminated erotic and sexual elements that might be offensive to middle-class morality, added numerous Christian expressions and references, emphasized specific role models for male and female protagonists according to the dominant patriarchal code of that time [...]. Moreover, though the collection was not originally printed with children in mind as the primary audience [...] Wilhelm made all the editions from 1819 on more appropriate for children, or rather, to what he thought would be proper for children to learn.<sup>134</sup>

Patriarchy in connection with religion was the norm of that time and the Grimms strained to support it. In their tales, they rationalized unequal relations in the society, not only between men and women but also class-based distinctions.<sup>135</sup> It is possible to say that all the adjustments by the Grimm Brothers show the same tendency as those of Perrault’s more than a century earlier. As their tales became extremely popular all over Europe and North America, the stereotypical features which they contained were being reinforced over a long period. The following subchapters will deal with the specific examples of gender bias and stereotypes in the selected fairy tales.

### **3.1. Passiveness and Obedience of Heroines**

The issue of docility and submissiveness in fairy tales as a typical representation of gender bias based on patriarchal arrangements reflected in literature has been already partially discussed in the previous subchapter. As regards this feature present in the three selected fairy tales, the most evident illustration is provided in the Snow White story. The analysis, therefore, should begin with her. The first example of Snow White’s helplessness can be found soon after beginning of the story, when a hunter saves her life. “The poor child was all

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<sup>132</sup> Detlor, *A Fresh Look at Fairy Tales*, 36.

<sup>133</sup> Bottigheimer, *Grimms’ Bad Girls and Bald Boys*, 19.

<sup>134</sup> Zipes, *When Dreams Came True*, 78.

<sup>135</sup> Zipes, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*, 72.

alone in the great forest, and so terrified [...] and did not know what to do.”<sup>136</sup> It is not only that her life depends on a male decision; from here on, readers are aware of the fact that Snow White is defenseless and tend to regard her as such throughout the story. An example of the Grimms’ expectation of female obedience is obvious when the heroine is found in dwarfs’ house. After the information exchange has taken place, the dwarfs come to the conclusion: “If you will take care of our house, cook, make the beds, wash, sew, and knit, and if you will keep everything neat and clean, you can stay with us and you shall want for nothing.”<sup>137</sup> The message to readers is clear here: Men justly expect women to do the housework. The quoted dwarfs’ demand is undoubtedly a product of Wilhelm’s editorial practice. As Maria Tatar writes:

When Snow White meets the dwarves for the first time in the Grimms’ earliest version of the tale, the dwarves ask nothing more of her than that she cook their meals in exchange for shelter. But by the first printed edition of the *Nursery and Household Tales*, the dwarves have already escalated their demands and propose different terms for the contract, terms that no doubt reflect the Grimms’ notions on contractual relations between men and women.<sup>138</sup>

According to Jack Zipes, this part of the tale shows that the Grimms’ aims of the socialization process had changed throughout the years, mostly during the pause between the two volumes. There is a noticeable shift from the simple effort to collect and maintain the German folklore (though largely based on bourgeois and French sources) to the stage in which “morals are used to justify a division of labor and the separation of the sexes.”<sup>139</sup> However, household chores that are expected to be done despite her (probably very) young age are not the only attribute of gender-based oppression which Snow White is forced to face by her unfortunate situation.

As the dwarfs have invited her to stay with them, she obeys their requests and keeps the house clean and nice. She spends the days alone, and since the dwarfs feel the need to protect her, they warn her: “Let no one come in when we are not with you.”<sup>140</sup> Later, after the Queen has outwitted her for the second time, Snow White answers to knocking at the door by saying:

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<sup>136</sup> Wilhelm Grimm, Jacob Grimm, *The Complete Grimm’s Fairy Tales* (London: Routledge, 1993), 251.

<sup>137</sup> Grimms, *The Complete Grimm’s Fairy Tales*, 252.

<sup>138</sup> Tatar, *The Hard Facts of the Grimms’ Fairy Tales*, 29.

<sup>139</sup> Zipes, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*, 66.

<sup>140</sup> Grimms, *The Complete Grimm’s Fairy Tales*, 254.



“I cannot let anyone in.”<sup>141</sup> According to Ruth Bottigheimer, loneliness and isolation might be another of repressive features in the Grimms’ fairy tales; “visits that might relieve the daily tedium of solitude are more often perceived as sources of danger than as forms of amusement.”<sup>142</sup> Interestingly, newer translation of the tale by D. L. Ashliman contains the word ‘allow’ in the sentence: “I am not allowed to let anyone in.”<sup>143</sup> ‘Allow’ conveys even more negative meaning in the new translation than ‘cannot’ did in the older one. According to the definition in Merriam-Webster Dictionary, ‘allow’ literally means “to permit (someone) to have or do something,”<sup>144</sup> therefore the usage of the word here implies that Snow White really would have to ask dwarves for permission to invite anyone in the house and, possibly, even to leave the house. This wording issue illustrates how tenaciously patriarchy has been entering the genre of fairy tales, although the authors and translators may employ oppressive features in the tales inadvertently.

Apart from Snow White, Cinderella is a great source of examples when speaking about submissiveness of the heroines and their obedience regarding household chores. In the Cinderella fairy tale, the heroine is not expected to do the housework by her father or husband or any other male person; it is her stepmother and stepsisters who compel her to labor. At the very beginning of the story, Cinderella’s mother dies, and her last words towards her daughter are: “Dear child, be good and pious.”<sup>145</sup> And Cinderella certainly does remain pious and good. Even when the new relatives are mean to her, she willingly endures all the iniquities. Why is she so defenseless and does not rebel against the other women in the family? Jack Zipes writes that according to Jane Yolen, Cinderella in the original folk tales usually managed to defend herself.<sup>146</sup> Even in the early literary version by Basile, Cinderella is not passive; on the contrary, “Basile’s Cinderella-heroine was not a poor girl who rose to riches, but a princess who was restored to the royal station from which first one and then another stepmother had displaced her.”<sup>147</sup>

It is the result of Perrault’s and the Grimms’ adjustments of the tale that she has been portrayed as docile and submissive in the past three centuries. Her inactivity in self-defense

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<sup>141</sup> Grimms, *The Complete Grimm’s Fairy Tales*, 255.

<sup>142</sup> Bottigheimer, *Grimms’ Bad Boys and Bald Boys*, 102.

<sup>143</sup> “Snow White,” transl. D. L. Ashliman, accessed March 16, 2015. <http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/grimm053.html>.

<sup>144</sup> Merriam-Webster Dictionary, accessed April 24, 2015, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/allow>.

<sup>145</sup> Grimms, *The Complete Grimm’s Fairy Tales*, 121.

<sup>146</sup> Zipes, *Don’t Bet on the Prince*, 7.

<sup>147</sup> Bottigheimer, *Fairy Tales*, 88.

against other women, in parallel with her excessive obedience towards housework might be considered another example of omnipresent influence of the patriarchy of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Since the Roman era, Western families have prevalingly been patriarchal. By the 17<sup>th</sup> century, management (but not the performance) of the household and the housework depended on a husband, a father. The general necessity to respect him as a breadwinner, whose “roles have traditionally been defined as instrumental,”<sup>148</sup> is reflected in the fairy tales, even though they were created a bit later; it is because majority of Europeans had not entered the levels of social and economic development of the 17<sup>th</sup>-century upper classes before the 19<sup>th</sup> century; in other words, the common people were “still poor and lived like the medieval family, with children separated from their parents.”<sup>149</sup> Thus, patriarchy of the late medieval time might have affected the early modern versions of the fairy tales. Although fathers were rarely at home,<sup>150</sup> as “their gender role [which must have been even more distinctive at the time of the first literary fairy tales than it is now] is one of detachment and distance,” the aura of their economic power and status in the family was undeniable. Fairy-tale heroines, therefore, tend to obey the patriarchal expectations and follow the prescribed behavioral patterns regardless their fathers’ actual absence.

In Cinderella tale, the girl is astoundingly passive and tolerant of her own suffering due to this persistent awareness of the necessity to fulfill the (possibly non-existent) expectations. According to Marcia Lieberman, “[Cinderella’s] name is partly synonymous with female martyrdom. [...] Ultimately, her loneliness and her suffering are sentimentalized and become and integral part of her glamor.”<sup>151</sup> Owing to her glamorous yet passive self-representation, she marries a prince at the end of the story and the message behind this long-term tolerated oppression, which eventually has a happy ending, is that

Suffering goodness can afford to remain meek, and need not and perhaps should not strive to defend itself, for if it did so perhaps the fairy godmother would not turn up for once, to set things right at the end. Moreover, the special thrill of persecution, bordering at once upon self-pity and self-righteousness, would have to be surrendered. Submissive, meek, passive female behavior is suggested and rewarded by the action.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> Andersen, *Thinking About Women*, 167.

<sup>149</sup> Andersen, *Thinking About Women*, 150.

<sup>150</sup> Andersen, *Thinking About Women*, 166.

<sup>151</sup> Lieberman, “Some Day My Prince Will Come,” 390.

<sup>152</sup> Lieberman, “Some Day My Prince Will Come,” 390.

Another example of accepting the submissive role, influenced by the patriarchal values, is found in the tale of Little Red Cap (the original Grimms' title, Rotkäppchen in German). The whole fairy tale points out to readers how important it is to obey the rules; a girl is told to "walk nicely and quietly,"<sup>153</sup> but she does not and she puts herself into a dangerous situation by her disobedience. When she meets a wolf, she is "not at all afraid of him;"<sup>154</sup> nevertheless, she needs to be saved by a huntsman in the end. Finally, she admits that although she had not feared the wolf before, she was really terrified and helpless until the hunter came to save her.

Before the Grimms introduced the hunter into the tale, there was no one to save the girl and her grandmother. In the original versions of the indigenous folk tale, Little Red Riding Hood sometimes manages to escape, as in the French version already mentioned at the beginning of the previous subchapter; sometimes the girl (or a boy) is being endangered and even eaten by ogres, wild animals or werewolves. Some of these tales must have inspired Perrault when he composed his own version of the tale.<sup>155</sup> His version of Little Red Riding Hood ended with the words: "this wicked Wolfe fell upon the little Red Riding-Hood, and eat her up."<sup>156</sup> Jack Zipes has noted that: "Perrault, who appears to have had a low opinion of women [...], changed all [of the original folk-tale plots], and his 'contaminated' upper-class version of the 'pure' lower-class version makes the little girl totally helpless."<sup>157</sup> This representative example of deliberate editorial practice in favor of the patriarchal arrangement of the society and personal preferences of the author illustrates how "forthright, brave and shrewd" heroines were being changed into "pretty, spoiled, gullible, and helpless"<sup>158</sup> ones. As Maria Tatar comments, Perrault "intended to send a message about vanity, idleness, and ignorance,"<sup>159</sup> encoded in the moral of the story, which in the original French version said that pretty girls need to beware of the strangers; otherwise they themselves are "responsible for the violence to which [they are] subjected."<sup>160</sup>

Perrault's literary version of Little Red Riding Hood most likely seemed too rough to the Grimms. Their textual adjustments resulted in the tale in which "the pretty little girl becomes

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<sup>153</sup> Grimms, *The Complete Grimm's Fairy Tales*, 139.

<sup>154</sup> Grimms, *The Complete Grimm's Fairy Tales*, 140.

<sup>155</sup> Jack Zipes, *The Trials and Tribulations of Little Red Riding Hood* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 19-20.

<sup>156</sup> Charles Perrault, "Little Red Riding Hood," transl. Robert Amber (London: J. Pote & R. Montagu, 1729), accessed April 2, 2015, <http://www.usm.edu/media/english/fairytales/lrrh/lrrhm.htm#episode1>

<sup>157</sup> Zipes, *The Trials and Tribulations of Little Red Riding Hood*, 25.

<sup>158</sup> Zipes, *The Trials and Tribulations of Little Red Riding Hood*, 26.

<sup>159</sup> Tatar, *The Classic Fairy Tales*, 4.

<sup>160</sup> Tatar, *The Classic Fairy Tales*, 6.

even more naive, and the connection between her punishment and her disobedience [...] becomes explicit.”<sup>161</sup> Moreover, they employed a complete new character, which was not used in the French model of the tale. The hunter

is connected to a social activity, hunting or looking after woods, both of which entail strength and, to some extent, courage; indeed he is functionalized, and the reader’s attention is focused on his role in society, which gives him the right to a personal identity. He is never passivated; on the contrary, the processes in relation to which he is activated and which characterize the figure emphasize these qualities.<sup>162</sup>

The salvation of Little Red Riding Hood by the hunter, who represents “the savior and rebirth motif<sup>163</sup> and “a father figure devoid of sexuality,”<sup>164</sup> is similar to the one of Snow White. Both girls are depicted as helpless and both would not have survived if it were not for the male character with the qualities described above. All the Grimms’ editorial changes made in Little Red Riding Hood, which helped to diminish indications of sexual activity and maturity, and obviate cruelty, have contributed to the creation of a “prudent and puritanical”<sup>165</sup> version of the fairy tale. As Levorato rightly comments, “the fact that this version is still so popular (more than Perrault’s) means that the ideological message it conveys, after all this time, still appeals to our society’s ideas of gender roles.”<sup>166</sup>

In this subchapter, I have illustrated how the fairy tales covertly convey the patriarchal ideas of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, paradoxically not reduced but even reinforced by the Grimms’ early 19<sup>th</sup> century editing. These “editorial interventions,”<sup>167</sup> as Donald Haase writes, “weakened once-strong female characters, demonized female power, imposed a male perspective on stories voicing women’s discontents, and rendered heroines powerless by depriving them of speech, all in accord with the social values of their time,”<sup>168</sup> since the expectation of women to be obedient, passive, and, in fact, legally dependent was of course not only a literary motif. In the following part of the paper I will discuss sexuality and attractiveness of the heroines, another feature of gender bias present in fairy tales.

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<sup>161</sup> Alessandra Levorato, *Language and Gender in the Fairy Tale Tradition: A Linguistic Analysis of Old and New Story Telling* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), 8.

<sup>162</sup> Levorato, *Language and Gender in the Fairy Tale Tradition*, 43.

<sup>163</sup> Zipes, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*, 66.

<sup>164</sup> Zipes, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*, 66.

<sup>165</sup> Zipes, *The Trials and Tribulations of Little Red Riding Hood*, 36.

<sup>166</sup> Levorato, *Language and Gender in the Fairy Tale Tradition*, 8.

<sup>167</sup> Haase, *Fairy Tales and Feminism*, 11.

<sup>168</sup> Haase, *Fairy Tales and Feminism*, 11.

### 3.2. Sexuality and Attractiveness

The male expectation of women's roles within the Western society has been questioned since the mid-eighteenth century when "pioneers of 'protofeminism': writers and activists [...] challenged the tenets of patriarchal social organisation and questioned the prescriptive norms of gender."<sup>169</sup> One of the first British feminists, Mary Wollstonecraft, noticed that many male authors and philosophers such as Milton and Rousseau, who were praised for making "liberty an object of almost universal aspiration,"<sup>170</sup> sentimentally idealized and objectified women.<sup>171</sup> These otherwise innovative thinkers, who attempted to create a generally better world for men in accordance with their own beliefs, failed to include women in their ideas and concepts. Consequently, in the three selected fairy tales, there is no important task awaiting the heroines besides household chores; however, the heroines themselves are being subjects of objectification and appearance-based rating by their male counterparts.

The issues of attractiveness, beauty, sexuality (or its hints) and objectification are closely interrelated in the fairy tales. As has been already mentioned, Theda Detlor concluded that two of the basic paradigms present in the Grimms' fairy tales are "Men go only for beauty" and "Usually, beauty on the outside means being good inside."<sup>172</sup> These two repetitive motifs create the notion that the most important quality, apart from submissiveness, is heroines' prettiness. When the pleasant appearance is recognized by a potential husband, nothing hinders the newly-created couple from marrying. Since the marriage seems to be "the primary goal"<sup>173</sup> of the fairy-tale heroines, beauty is highly desirable, not only beauty of the body but also of the mind, clearly represented by the qualities described in the previous subchapter. Jack Zipes comments on this tendency, which had begun already during the French fairy-tale vogue: "The mark of beauty for a female is to be found in her submission, obedience, humility, industry and patience. [...] By denying herself, she could obtain what all women supposedly wanted and want – namely, marriage in the form of male domination."<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> Gill Plain, Susan Sellers, *A History of Feminist Literary Criticism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 7.

<sup>170</sup> „Jean-Jacques Rousseau,“ *Encyclopædia Britannica*, accessed May 12, 2015, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/510932/Jean-Jacques-Rousseau>

<sup>171</sup> Plain, *A History of Feminist Literary Criticism*, 8.

<sup>172</sup> Detlor, *A Fresh Look at Fairy Tales*, 36.

<sup>173</sup> Zipes, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*, 42.

<sup>174</sup> Zipes, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*, 56.

In the Snow White fairy tale, after the queen has finally defeated the princess and the dwarfs assume that she has died, Snow White is put in “a transparent coffin of glass made, so that she could be seen from all sides.”<sup>175</sup> While she is lying in the coffin like in a shop window, a prince passes by. He immediately falls in love with her, although she seems to be dead, and demands: “Let me have the coffin [...] for I cannot live without seeing Snow-white. I will honour and prize her as my dearest possession.”<sup>176</sup> Even if we ignore the fact that a man who is meant to represent certain ideal qualities, such as “self-control, politeness, reason, and perseverance,”<sup>177</sup> is attracted to a woman who is purportedly dead, no one can doubt that the attraction was solely caused by Snow White’s appearance. Lewis Seifert writes about the specific role of portraits in fairy tales that enable heroes or heroines to fall in love with their counterparts without actually knowing them. The same situation happens basically in Snow White tale; by falling in love with a ‘live portrait’ of Snow White, the prince demonstrates “the control [he possesses], or lack of [Snow White’s] control, over their gendered and sexual destinies.”<sup>178</sup>

The attraction, which is based on the physical appearance merely, is so strong, that when Snow White comes to life again after they have “stumbled over a tree-stump and with the shock the poisonous piece of apple which Snow-white had bitten off came out of her throat,”<sup>179</sup> he asks her to marry him without even trying to get to know each other, and, not surprisingly, “Snow-white was willing.”<sup>180</sup> Although the authors, Perrault and the Grimms, made another female cause Snow White’s catatonic state by offering the poisoned apple, the patriarchy is still indirectly involved in it. As Gilbert and Gubar write in *The Madwoman in the Attic*, “strengthening the chaste maiden in her passivity, [offering of the apple has] made her into precisely the eternally beautiful, inanimate *objet d’art* patriarchal aesthetics want a girl to be.”<sup>181</sup> Maria Tatar concludes that “the choice of a catatonic Snow White [...] as the fairest and most desirable of them all may offer a sobering statement on folkloristic visions of the ideal bride,”<sup>182</sup> which once again illustrates, how proper and important women’s docility

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<sup>175</sup> Grimms, *The Complete Grimm’s Fairy Tales*, 256.

<sup>176</sup> Grimms, *The Complete Grimm’s Fairy Tales*, 257.

<sup>177</sup> Zipes, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*, 56.

<sup>178</sup> Seifert, *Fairy Tales, Sexuality, and Gender in France 1690-1715*, 166.

<sup>179</sup> Grimms, *The Complete Grimm’s Fairy Tales*, 257.

<sup>180</sup> Grimms, *The Complete Grimm’s Fairy Tales*, 258.

<sup>181</sup> Sandra M. Gilbert, Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-century Literary Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 40.

<sup>182</sup> Tatar, *The Hard Facts of the Grimms’ Fairy Tales*, 146.

and passiveness seemed to be for the development of the society at the time of the first literary fairy tales.

Speaking about the significance of female prettiness in fairy tales, at the beginning of the tale the hunter saves Snow White's life because "she was so beautiful."<sup>183</sup> The obvious importance of woman's beauty for her own sake is a repetitive feature; Snow White is not the only heroine who faces this kind of treatment. The whole Cinderella-tale plot is based on the premise that Cinderella is the most beautiful one and thus she deserves to be married to the prince, though she has lived in very poor conditions and had not tried to raise her social status herself. In this fairy tale, unlike in the original folk version I have already mentioned, the connection between marriage and wealth is especially patent. Marcia Lieberman criticizes this relation as follows:

Marriage is associated with getting rich [...]. Good, poor, and pretty girls always win rich and handsome princes, never merely handsome, good, but poor men. [...] Since girls are chosen for their beauty, it is easy for a child to infer that beauty leads to wealth, that being chosen means getting rich. Beauty has an obviously commercial advantage [...].<sup>184</sup>

As Lieberman noticed, the messages which are conveyed via these fairy tales create the idea of a straight correlation between wealth and appealing appearance. In the tale, "all the beautiful young girls"<sup>185</sup> are invited to the ball; does it mean that those not-so-beautiful young girls must stay at home? Beauty seems to be "a girl's most valuable asset, perhaps her only valuable asset."<sup>186</sup> In the fairy tale, the prince only notices Cinderella because she is the most beautiful of all; he might not have even asked about her name or identity, it is completely sufficient for him that "every one was astonished at her beauty."<sup>187</sup> The prince does not even manage to identify his beloved dance partner until he recognizes her face while she is standing right in front of him. The whole ending of the tale acknowledges that "the immediate and predictable result of being beautiful is being chosen."<sup>188</sup>

Additionally, there is even more extreme example of the absurd relation between beauty and success that is marked by inaction instead of action – the two stepsisters, who also attempt to

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<sup>183</sup> Grimms, *The Complete Grimm's Fairy Tales*, 250.

<sup>184</sup> Lieberman, "Some Day My Prince Will Come," 386.

<sup>185</sup> Grimms, *The Complete Grimm's Fairy Tales*, 122.

<sup>186</sup> Lieberman, "Some Day My Prince Will Come," 385.

<sup>187</sup> Grimms, *The Complete Grimm's Fairy Tales*, 125.

<sup>188</sup> Lieberman, "Some Day My Prince Will Come," 386.

be chosen by the prince, cut of parts of their feet in order to fit in the slipper. Their desperate desire might illustrate that the Grimms would probably consider only the real, natural and passive beauty as acceptable, not the artificial one, which does not manifest the coveted character qualities. The unhealthy connection between women's appearance and their destiny is another patriarchal attribute that has, most likely intentionally, intruded into fairy tales. From Perrault's version on, Cinderella has been objectified similarly to Snow White; although she was not put in the shop window; however it was still only due to her lovely face that the prince decided to search for her and marry her eventually.

The last of the heroines to be analyzed in terms of sexuality is Little Red Riding Hood. Obviously, there is no evident relationship with a male; there is no prince she would be involved with. Yet, according to Jack Zipes, there is a lot of (once suppressed, and recently again highlighted) sexuality in the story. As has been already mentioned several times, some original versions of the tale featured a girl who managed to outwit a wolf. These tales also included allusions of certain bodily functions. Together with the presence of a grandmother as a representative of the old, wise and matriarchal, and the girl's ability to overcome dangerous situation, all these features of the old indigenous folk tales referred to the process of initiation, and "celebrate[d] the self-reliance of a young peasant girl."<sup>189</sup>

However, when Perrault edited the tale, he "eliminated vulgarities, coarse turns of phrase, and unmotivated plot elements. Gone are the references to bodily functions, the racy double entendres, and the gaps in narrative logic."<sup>190</sup> His Little Red Riding Hood is pretty but frivolous. He was the first one to put the red cap on the girls head, probably as a representation of sinful behavior. Although "folk raconteurs had probably already gleefully taken advantage of the metaphorical possibilities of Little Red Riding Hood's encounter with the wolf and also exploited the full range and play of the tale's potential for sexual innuendo,"<sup>191</sup> Perrault managed to use this motif as a tool for the process of socialization his readers. He "obviously intended to warn little girls that [a girl] could be 'spoiled' [...] by a wolf/man who sought to ravish her."<sup>192</sup> He projected his own fears of women and their independence into the tale by drawing readers' attention to the motif in which a young, helpless girl encountering a strange and voracious male figure could be taken advantage off

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<sup>189</sup> Zipes, *The Trials and Tribulations of Little Red Riding Hood*, 25.

<sup>190</sup> Tatar, *The Classic Fairy Tales*, 4.

<sup>191</sup> Tatar, *The Classic Fairy Tales*, 5.

<sup>192</sup> Zipes, *The Trials and Tribulations of Little Red Riding Hood*, 26.



and, in the worst-case scenario, she might like it. Thus he put in considerable effort to prevent girls from these encounters, using the story in which the girl is eaten for her surfeit of sexual energy and lack of passiveness.

The Grimms, as they did with many other tales, expunged all sexual indications in the story, focusing exclusively on the portrayal of desirable manners of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Unlike in the Perrault's version, in which the wolf says: "come into bed with me,"<sup>193</sup> German Little Red Cap does not lay down with the wolf, nor she has to undress herself. If she took off her clothes, like her French cousin did, the manifestation of her sexuality would be much more obvious, since "nakedness provides fortuitously erotic opportunity and occasions."<sup>194</sup> According to Jack Zipes, the Grimms' effort to eliminate all the unwanted features in Little Red Cap is indisputable: "They eliminated the cruelty and sexuality from the tale, demanded that the child repress her own sensuality, and obligated her to meet the normative standards of responsibility set by adults."<sup>195</sup> There is a major shift in the moral of the tale from Perrault's intended impression to the Grimms' one, in which the wolf no more represents a sexual threat; he instead "exploits the unsuspecting nature of the innocent child. [...] Thus the conflict between freedom/wilderness/nature on the one hand versus school/straight path/order on the other is set up [...] to illustrate a social-political situation."<sup>196</sup>

Even though Little Red Riding Hood was de-sexualized by the Grimm Brothers at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, our modern Western society has always seen something sexual and tempting in the image of a helpless girl being threatened by a beast. Jack Zipes concludes that the fairy tale as it is perceived now has become an illustration of unequal male-female relation and the pervasive rape theme; Little Red Riding Hood has been portrayed as a naive, partly luscious and partly innocent girl who might be even flattered to receive the unsolicited attention of a wolf/man.<sup>197</sup> These portrayals, containing clear sexual allusions, are presented in current commercials, movies and books, and even if the particular medium attempts to eliminate these allusions,

they always imply that, if Red Riding Hood herself had not strayed off the straight path to her grandmother's house, to domesticity, she would

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<sup>193</sup> Perrault, "Little Red Riding Hood."

<sup>194</sup> Bottigheimer, *Grimms' Bad Girls and Bald Boys*, 159.

<sup>195</sup> Zipes, *The Trials and Tribulations of Little Red Riding Hood*, 34.

<sup>196</sup> Zipes, *The Trials and Tribulations of Little Red Riding Hood*, 35.

<sup>197</sup> Zipes, *The Trials and Tribulations of Little Red Riding Hood*, 8-10.

not have brought about the trouble she experiences. Whether sex or sanitized object, Red Riding Hood is compelled to assume responsibility for the ‘predatory acts’ of her creators themselves.<sup>198</sup>

Apart from the question of the heroines’ objectification by the male part of the society, or, rather – their objectification as a result of phallogentric attributes found in the fairy-tale genre, there is a significant feature of femininity in terms of reproduction and motherhood. The three selected fairy tales, Cinderella, Snow White and Little Red Riding Hood, do not specifically include this feature, although we might conclude that at least two of them would have to deal with the motif if the fairy tales were just slightly longer. However, some other fairy tales by the Grimms feature this topic, and as Ruth Bottigheimer writes in her essay about fertility in folk and fairy tales, the women’s impossibility to control their own reproductive functions and their suffering during and after the labor was a typical women’s trait of the time of the first literary fairy tales. She concludes that the body pain and suffering, together with the allusion of weakness that surrounded women at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, helped to create the image of a modern literary fairy-tale heroine:

Why did the Grimms’ girls suffer? In part it was because popular “knowledge” willed it so. The proverb was “Männer tun, Frauen leiden” (men act, women are acted upon). The proverb meant that women are passive, but the word “leiden” allows a second meaning, “suffer,” [...]. Women in tale collections no longer survived by their wits and had sexual pleasure along the way. Instead, their bodies became vehicles of “honor” and “dishonor”. [...] As the genre [of fairy tales] developed towards its modern form, two notable changes occurred in their plots. Men became a danger to women, and newly disempowered women cowered in fear. [...] The dangers that men posed sexually were generalized into a fairy-tale world in which women suffered wicked abductors, relentless captors, long captivity, and increasing isolation. In short, the modern fairy-tale heroine was born.<sup>199</sup>

As evident from the quotation above, and as has been discussed in the previous subchapters, the concurrent socio-economic and even political consequences of the first literary fairy tales played an extremely significant role in forming and shaping of the heroines, who were supposed to convey certain messages about the expected women’s role of that time. Beauty and passiveness were the most desirable qualities indicating the absurd, yet highly appreciated connection between one’s appearance and character. However, in the Grimms’ fairy tales,

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<sup>198</sup> Zipes, *The Trials and Tribulations of Little Red Riding Hood*, 9-10.

<sup>199</sup> Bottigheimer, “Fertility Control and the Modern European Fairy-Tale Heroine,” in *Fairy Tales and Feminism*, ed. Donald Haase (Wayne State University Press, 2004), 50.

there are some female characters that are not passive; I will discuss the possible meanings of their presence in the selected fairy tales in the following subchapter.

### **3.3. Young and Beautiful, Older and Wicked**

When dealing with specific examples of the contrast between the young, passive, and beautiful girls and old(er), wicked, and active women, the stories of Snow White and Cinderella are especially useful; I will not include Little Red Riding Hood in this part of the analysis, since the only female characters except the girl herself are her mother and grandmother, representing the good, proper, obedient and well-behaving women. The character of a godmother, which is featured in some versions of Cinderella, will not be included as well, since in the Grimms' version I work with she is replaced with birds and the spirit of her dead mother. Good female characters in general are excluded, as they do not violate the image of a perfect woman; on the contrary, they are shown as almost "mythical," not belonging to the 'real' world,<sup>200</sup> since they are so flawless and they represent the ideal arrangements of the patriarchal society. Besides that, "they are not examples of powerful women with whom children can identify as role models; they do not provide meaningful alternatives to the stereotype of the younger, passive heroine."<sup>201</sup> Therefore, this subchapter focuses exclusively on the portrayal of mature, calculating and generally negatively depicted women who seem to provide an exemplary dichotomy between good and evil.

The Grimms based a lot of their stories on the preceding process of patriarchalization of folk tales; they utilized and further developed the already existing images of (old) women. These women would have been described as healers and herbalists if it were not for the church and its hard effort to portray them in the worst possible light.<sup>202</sup> Eventually, fairy-tale characters such as the queen in Snow White developed from the (perhaps positive) matriarchal origin into something marked and doomed; it is evidenced by Bottigheimer's research, in which she observed that the Grimms' "female characters became increasingly mute [which was very appropriate] [...], while evil female characters used their tongues with ever-increasing acerbity [and as a result did not act appropriately]."<sup>203</sup> The evil female characters are frequently represented by mothers (in the original, folk versions) and later replaced by

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<sup>200</sup> Andersen, *Thinking About Women*, 83.

<sup>201</sup> Lieberman, "Some Day My Prince Will Come," 391.

<sup>202</sup> Andersen, *Thinking About Women*, 227.

<sup>203</sup> Jarvis, "Feminism and Fairy Tales," 158-159.

stepmothers. Maria Tatar states that “the fantasy of rivalry with the mother [...] has become a prominent, virtually undisguised theme in popular tales [...]. (Step)mothers are habitually demonized as nags at home and witches in the woods.”<sup>204</sup>

The stepmother in Cinderella is definitely a nag, while the queen in Snow White is probably the most representative example of a vicious and cunning stepmother who is more a witch, though being mostly set at home. She is “a beautiful woman, but proud and haughty, and she could not bear that anyone else should surpass her in beauty.”<sup>205</sup> The question of appearance has been already discussed; once again, attractiveness is presented as the most important quality. The new motif here is the queen’s beauty negatively related to unpleasant character qualities such as haughtiness. The same description can be observed in Cinderella: the two stepsisters are “beautiful and fair of face, but vile and black of heart.”<sup>206</sup> What is the difference between the prettiness of the queen and the stepsisters and the one of Snow White or Cinderella has been, in fact, already indirectly answered in the previous subchapter. Power and happiness in fairy tales are often closely related to beauty,<sup>207</sup> nonetheless, these women lack the acceptable inner beauty represented by certain behavior. Although Cinderella’s stepsisters are described as pretty, they are lordly, vain and unduly ambitious and greedy in terms of marriage and thus they could never surpass Cinderella, who is patient, deferential and submissive.

In the case of the queen in Snow White, who is “fairest of all,”<sup>208</sup> the desire to be the most beautiful, and, more importantly, prettier than her stepdaughter, might be, according to Tatar, a symbol for the unuttered fight for the attention of an absent father and husband figure.<sup>209</sup> Although it is possible that “the competition between the two women results from a patriarchal culture that pits woman against woman for the favor of a male,”<sup>210</sup> when analyzing the character of the queen from the same point of view as Cinderella’s stepsisters, the explanation of the rivalry based on the appearance may be almost the same here. The queen does not possess the desirable qualities; she is “jealous of beauty and greedy for wealth,”<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>204</sup> Tatar, *The Hard Facts of the Grimms’ Fairy Tales*, 152.

<sup>205</sup> Grimms, *The Complete Grimm’s Fairy Tales*, 249.

<sup>206</sup> Grimms, *The Complete Grimm’s Fairy Tales*, 121.

<sup>207</sup> Lieberman, “Some Day My Prince Will Come,” 392.

<sup>208</sup> Grimms, *The Complete Grimm’s Fairy Tales*, 253.

<sup>209</sup> Tatar, *The Hard Facts of the Grimms’ Fairy Tales*, 154.

<sup>210</sup> Zipes, *Why Fairy Tales Stick*, 134.

<sup>211</sup> Lieberman, “Some Day My Prince Will Come,” 392.

and she fights for a certain kind of power represented by attractiveness. The fact that “being powerful is mainly associated with being unwomanly,”<sup>212</sup> may be the logical reason why she is, despite her beauty, regarded as a negative character. As Lieberman puts it, active female characters are not generally positively received; the stories with such heroines

reflect a bias against the active, ambitious, ‘pushy’ woman [...]. They establish a dichotomy between those women who are gentle, passive and fair and those who are active, wicked, and ugly. [...] Those women who are human, and who have power or seek it, are nearly always portrayed as repulsive.<sup>213</sup>

Another attribute of the queen that patriarchy might not be delighted with is her knowledge of magic. “By the help of witchcraft, which she understood, she made a poisonous comb.”<sup>214</sup> And when the comb did not work, “she went into a quite secret, lonely room, where no one ever came, and there she made a very poisonous apple.”<sup>215</sup> Being a representative of witchcraft and a haughty, greedy female at the same time, the queen could not have ever been regarded as a positive character. As written in previous subchapters, “the transformations in the portrayal of [...] cultural patterns [in fairy tales] were connected to significant changes within the civilization process.”<sup>216</sup> Some of these cultural patterns included witchcraft and magic, which might have been a favorite topic of the oral tradition until the Middle Ages, but when several thousands (maybe even millions) of people, mostly women, were tortured and killed during the witch hunts, those who perform magic in order to hurt and harm definitely could not be depicted positively in fairy tales

The relation of the negative fairy-tale characters to magic they use may stem from the time of the biggest ‘anti-witch’ fever, when “women who were singled out as witches were women who deviated from the religious norms of the time.”<sup>217</sup> Margaret Andersen concludes that it is also possible to assume that witchcraft symbolized women’s sexuality and independence which men feared.<sup>218</sup> As there was a need for a profoundly negative representative in the fairy tales at the time of their creation, witches were a good choice – they symbolized all the unwanted qualities and provided readers with the purposeful opportunity to compare the bad

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<sup>212</sup> Lieberman, “Some Day My Prince Will Come,” 392.

<sup>213</sup> Lieberman, “Some Day My Prince Will Come,” 393.

<sup>214</sup> Grimms, *The Complete Grimm’s Fairy Tales*, 254.

<sup>215</sup> Grimms, *The Complete Grimm’s Fairy Tales*, 255.

<sup>216</sup> Zipes, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*, 49.

<sup>217</sup> Andersen, *Thinking About Women*, 226-227.

<sup>218</sup> Andersen, *Thinking About Women*, 227.

women with the good ones. Gilbert and Gubar, authors of a famous critical book *The Madwoman in the Attic*, describe the comparison of the two females in Snow White as follows:

The Queen is [...] a witch, an artist, an impersonator, a woman of almost infinite creative energy, witty, wily, and self-absorbed [...]. On the other hand, in her absolute chastity, her frozen innocence, her sweet nullity, Snow White represents precisely the ideal of “contemplative purity” [...]. An angel in the house of myth, Snow White is not only a child but [...] childlike, docile, submissive, the heroine of a life that has no story. But the Queen, adult and demonic, plainly wants a life of “significant action,” by definition an “unfeminine” life.<sup>219</sup>

Such comparisons were presumably inserted into the fairy tales by their authors with the intention to highlight the acceptable behavioral patterns of the young, submissive heroines. Patriarchy has intruded into fairy tales and as a result, any women who are either too nonconformist or too ugly are considered villains; among the most memorable of which are stepmothers, who “stand as an abiding source of evil in countless fairy tales.”<sup>220</sup> There are, of course, also possible psychological and socio-cultural interpretations behind the themes including a power fight of two women in fairy tales. Apart from the theory of the oedipal complex mentioned above, Jack Zipes states another possible reason for depiction of the evil stepmother in fairy tales:

[Snow White is a] story dealing with competition and selection, and the relevance of the tale - the reason why it remains with us today and is passed on in a discursive strain - is marked by the manner in which females cope with one another to select or attract a male whom they consider worthy of their eggs.<sup>221</sup>

In his interpretation, Snow White is “a dangerous competition” to the queen, who “must maintain her status in her family and in the realm as the most beautiful woman.”<sup>222</sup> Although this explanation is based more on the natural processes and socio-cultural patterns than on gender bias reflected in the tale, Zipes admits that “the moral code is predicated on male hegemony and thus ruthlessly punishes women who actively pursue their self-interest.”<sup>223</sup>

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<sup>219</sup> Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, 39.

<sup>220</sup> Tatar, *The Hard Facts of the Grimms' Fairy Tales*, 141.

<sup>221</sup> Zipes, *Why Fairy Tales Stick*, 135.

<sup>222</sup> Zipes, *Why Fairy Tales Stick*, 135.

<sup>223</sup> Zipes, *Why Fairy Tales Stick*, 136.

### 3.4. Impacts of Patriarchy in Fairy Tales on Readers

The previous subchapters have attempted to provide a concise overview of the three main areas through which patriarchy intruded into fairy tales. Passiveness and inactivity of the heroines have been highlighted, since they represent the most appreciated character qualities; and the expected relation between the outer and inner beauty has been suggested. Those females in the selected fairy tales who lack one of these two basic components cannot be regarded as heroines; they are either too ugly, too mean or too active. Those who are beautiful are being chosen to become wives; they are not allowed to decide about their marriage by themselves. As Marcia Lieberman puts it, “beautiful girls are never ignored; they may be oppressed at first by wicked figures [...], but ultimately they are chosen for reward.”<sup>224</sup> What she is concerned about, and many other feminist critics as well, is the fact that certain appearance is described to have connection with certain character qualities in fairy tales, and that such a description might influence children and consequently make them prejudiced:

If a child identifies with the beauty, she may learn to be suspicious of ugly girls, who are portrayed as cruel, sly, and unscrupulous in these stories; if she identifies with the plain girls, she may learn to be suspicious of and jealous of pretty girls, beauty being a gift of fate, not something that can be attained.<sup>225</sup>

All the patriarchal attributes discussed earlier in this chapter contribute to the possible situation in which “girls may be predisposed to imagine that there is a link between the lovable character, and to fear, if plain themselves, that they will also prove to be unpleasant, thus using the patterns to set up self-fulfilling prophecies.”<sup>226</sup> This connection between beauty and success is not the only potentially harmful paradigm children may attain; fairy tales also “prescribe restrictive social roles for women and perpetuate ‘alluring fantasies’ of punishment and reward: passivity, beauty, and helplessness lead to marriage, conferring wealth and status, whereas self-aware, ‘aggressive,’ and powerful women reap opprobrium and are either ostracized or killed.”<sup>227</sup>

The problem is, as Donald Haase suggests, that even though these possibly detrimental features have already been highlighted and discussed by scholars and critics, the real

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<sup>224</sup> Lieberman, “Some Day My Prince Will Come,” 385.

<sup>225</sup> Lieberman, “Some Day My Prince Will Come,” 385.

<sup>226</sup> Lieberman, “Some Day My Prince Will Come,” 385.

<sup>227</sup> Jarvis, “Feminism and Fairy Tales,” 159.

influence they might have on women who are acquainted with classic fairy tales is not easy to trace and document.<sup>228</sup> Haase points out that there has not been a long-term recent research on this topic, although Kay Stone tried to address the perception of fairy-tale readers, both men and women, in the 1970s. Her study showed that “being influenced by the passive heroines [the respondents] have encountered seemed to substantiate the role played by the classical fairy tale in promulgating gender stereotypes.”<sup>229</sup> Twenty years later, research by Rita Comtois followed Stone’s work. Comtois concluded that “women perceive fairy tales not as helpful but as problematic because of the discrepancies between their own life circumstances and those described for the fairy-tale heroine.”<sup>230</sup> Therefore, although the research was conducted with a limited number of respondents and there definitely are women who do not consider themselves affected by their childhood fairy-tale listening and reading, the words of many feminist critics have proven true in this particular case: fairy tales might be considered to “manipulate our notions about sex roles.”<sup>231</sup>

Kay Stone also tried to compare older versions of selected tales with their modern translations, and as Jack Zipes comments, “the results of her study reveal that the products of the modern culture industry specify that a woman can only be considered a heroine if she is patient, industrious, calm, beautiful and passive.”<sup>232</sup> Moreover, the results based on Stone’s interviews with American women show that the only fairy-tale heroines generally known were those popularized by Disney, which are, unfortunately, “mass-marketed fairy tales [...] [that] have undergone a sanitization process according to the sexual preferences of males and the conservative norms of the dominant classes [...].”<sup>233</sup> It is a trend that is, in fact, in accordance with the tendency of media since the 1950s. Margaret Andersen describes the typical situation in media in the late 1980s as follows: “Women tend to be portrayed in roles in which they are trivialized, condemned or narrowly defined;”<sup>234</sup> in television shows, “women are cast as glamorous objects, scheming villains, or servants. And for every contemporary show that includes more positive images of women, there are numerous others

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<sup>228</sup> Haase, *Fairy Tales and Feminism*, 26.

<sup>229</sup> Haase, *Fairy Tales and Feminism*, 26.

<sup>230</sup> Haase, *Fairy Tales and Feminism*, 27.

<sup>231</sup> Zipes, *Don’t Bet on the Prince*, 5.

<sup>232</sup> Zipes, *Don’t Bet on the Prince*, 7.

<sup>233</sup> Zipes, *Don’t Bet on the Prince*, 7.

<sup>234</sup> Andersen, *Thinking About Women*, 25.



[...] where women are shown as either sidekicks to men, sexual objects, or helpless imbeciles.”<sup>235</sup>

However, the typical depiction of women in fairy tales improved during the last few decades, since one of the aims of the feminist critics was to create new versions of the classic fairy tales, and therefore it is possible now to find unbiased, considerate tales which address the most recent issues. In the research by Ella Westland conducted in 1993, certain results of the twenty-year effort to raise young readers’ awareness of gender roles in fairy tales were shown. Shawn Jarvis summarizes the research outcomes as follows:

While the boys appeared to have little incentive to alter the standard fairytale structure (beyond enriching the mixture with added violence) because they had more to lose than to gain from the changes, the girls argued they would not want to be a princess because it was simply too boring and restrictive; their [own] stories were closely moulded on published upside-down stories with independent, plain, and active heroines. The work of the past 30 years has indeed created a generation of ‘resisting readers.’<sup>236</sup>

To explore what exactly has made the “upside-down stories with independent, plain, and active heroines”<sup>237</sup> appealing to some readers of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, I will introduce some of these alternative versions, compare them to the classic ones and try to assess their contribution to the ‘revival’ of the fairy-tale genre in the following chapters.

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<sup>235</sup> Andersen, *Thinking About Women*, 25-26.

<sup>236</sup> Jarvis, “Feminism and Fairy Tales,” 159.

<sup>237</sup> Jarvis, “Feminism and Fairy Tales,” 159.

## 4. Modern Versions of the Classic Fairy Tales

The fairy-tale genre has an interesting history; it has never stopped developing and transforming. During and after the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the literary fairy tales were created by authors who were not so interested in folklore and whose area of interest was beyond fairy tales as such; Oscar Wilde for example employed fairy-tale-like features in some of his short stories but these tales do not resemble the classic fairy tales by Perrault or the Grimms, if they were to be compared. I have already mentioned that works by Frank Baum, Angela Carter and Margaret Atwood, or Lewis Carroll, Thomas Mann, and J.R.R. Tolkien represent the fairy-tale genre, but also many other authors from various areas of culture, such as ballet, opera or film have contributed to its development, especially since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. One could argue that the literary works by the authors above are not fairy tales; however, Elizabeth Harries claims that there have always been two types of fairy tales, “one the compact model Perrault and the Grimms favored; one the longer, more complex, and more self-referential model.”<sup>238</sup> She states that the tales she calls ‘compact’ are “foundational or original [...]. Their carefully constructed simplicity works as an implicit guarantee of their traditional and authentic status.”<sup>239</sup> On the other hand, tales which she calls ‘complex’ “work to reveal the stories behind other stories.”<sup>240</sup> According to this division, all three fairy tales discussed in the previous chapter would be, obviously, compact ones, unlike works by the authors above.

The new, modern versions that are to be introduced and compared with their older predecessors were all written in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, specifically between 1970s and 1990s. They all were certainly influenced by new approaches and literary critiques of that time. I tried to choose examples of not only typical pro-feminist and unbiased rewriting but also of different attitudes towards the original sources, such as more political and satirical ones. When the feminist authors began writing their own versions of the classic fairy tales, they also developed the following categorization: “1. anthologies of active heroines to counter the negative impact of passive female stereotypes promulgated by canonical texts on maturing adolescent girls; 2. ‘alternative’ or ‘upside-down’ stories with reversed plot lines and/or rearranged motifs; and 3. collections of feminist works or original

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<sup>238</sup> Elizabeth Wanning Harries, *Twice Upon a Time* (Princeton University Press, 2001), 16.

<sup>239</sup> Harries, *Twice Upon a Time*, 17.

<sup>240</sup> Harries, *Twice Upon a Time*, 17.

tales based on well-known motifs.”<sup>241</sup> The tales chosen to be analyzed in this chapter mostly belong to the second and third categories.

There are versions of the three classical fairy tales (Cinderella, Snow White and Little Red Riding Hood), found in the collection of tales *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories* (1994) by James Finn Garner, who represents satirical writing, mocking “the language and politics of political correctness.”<sup>242</sup> Another book I will refer to is *The Paper Bag Princess* (1980) by Robert Munsch, Canadian author of children’s literature, whose fairy tale represents an unbiased fairy tale, aimed primarily at children. Anne Sharpe’s *Not So Little Red Riding Hood* (1985), a typical role-reversal-based feminist tale, will be also included. I also provide a brief analysis of Günter Kunert’s *Sleeping Beauty* (1972) as a representation of a unique attitude towards fairy tales featuring any type of a passive princess or young girl. When speaking generally about the feminist fairy tales, Jack Zipes writes:

The contemporary feminist fairy tales have drawn upon a rich tradition of feminist tales or tales with strong women which may not be widely known but have nevertheless provided models and the impetus [...] to challenge the dominant male discourse. [...] All the tales emanate from a basic impulse for change within society, and though the writers have reacted to this impulse on different levels, they share the same purpose of questioning socialization, have influenced one another to some degree, and have been stimulated by feminist criticism to rethink both fairy tales as aesthetic compositions and the role they play in conditioning themselves and children.<sup>243</sup>

As obvious from the quotation above, feminist authors “promote the values of gender equality and women’s assertiveness in contrast to the dominant pattern of women’s oppression as seen in the Perrault or Disney fairy-tale classics.”<sup>244</sup> A great example of such promoting efforts within recent literary works is found in Munsch’s *Paper Bag Princess*. Munsch, who “writes about various controversial topics with a wry sense of humour and a propensity for the fantastic,”<sup>245</sup> created a clever, self-confident princess Elizabeth in this upside-down fairy tale. Elizabeth is going to marry Prince Ronald and she probably likes her expensive clothes, but when a dragon comes, destroys everything and kidnaps Ronald, Elizabeth does not hesitate

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<sup>241</sup> Jarvis, “Feminism and Fairy Tales,” 157.

<sup>242</sup> Zipes, *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales*, 196.

<sup>243</sup> Zipes, *Don’t Bet on the Prince*, 13-14.

<sup>244</sup> Cristina Bacchilega, “North American and Canadian Fairy Tales, 1900 to Present,” in *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales*, ed. Jack Zipes (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 349.

<sup>245</sup> Zipes, *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales*, 328.

and “decide[s] to chase the dragon and get Ronald back.”<sup>246</sup> By making this decision, she becomes an active heroine who does not wait for the prince to save her; on the contrary, she realizes that there is no one to help and it is up to her to save the prince.

Since it is not appropriate for a princess to go around naked, as her clothes were burnt by the dragon, Elizabeth puts on a paper bag. She soon reaches the cave where the dragon lives. She gains his attention and by flattering him and asking for exhibition of his strength – which might be considered as a slight innuendo of men’s vanity, since the dragon probably represents the most masculine figure in the tale – she totally exhausts the dragon so that he ultimately becomes defenseless. When she finally finds Ronald, he shows neither surprise nor relief; he looks at Elizabeth and says: “Elizabeth, you are a mess! You smell like ashes, your hair is all tangled and you are wearing a dirty old paper bag. Come back when you are dressed like a real princess.”<sup>247</sup> However, the princess, who is no passive and obedient heroine, replies: “You look like a real prince, but you are a bum.”<sup>248</sup> And breaking all the classic happy-ending paradigms of the Grimms’ fairy tales, Elizabeth claims her right to participate in the decision about her own future, and chooses not to marry Ronald in the end.

The conclusion is quite an extraordinary for a classic fairy tale but totally understandable and appropriate for the alternative one, and it is especially important, because typically, classical fairy tales’ endings reinforce “a way of predicting outcome or fate according to sex.”<sup>249</sup> Switching the roles between the princess and the prince in terms of the attitude towards one’s appearance and its importance is also very significant; the idea of interconnected beauty and goodness, observed in Cinderella and Snow White, is no more foisted on readers in this fairy tale. Yet, the story includes probably the most typical representatives of fairy-tale characters: a princess, a prince and a dragon, therefore it does not lose its natural appeal to children.

#### **4.1. Fairy Tales Not So For Children**

Sleeping Beauty by Günter Kunert, German poet and writer, violates all the patterns of the Grimms’ or Perrault’s fairy tales we, as readers, have been used to. It starts as an essay: “It is

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<sup>246</sup> Robert N. Munsch, *The Paper Bag Princess* (Annick Press Ltd., 2010), 3.

<sup>247</sup> Munsch, *The Paper Bag Princess*, 11.

<sup>248</sup> Munsch, *The Paper Bag Princess*, 12.

<sup>249</sup> Lieberman, “Some Day My Prince Will Come,” 384.

precisely this fairy tale that fascinated generations of children [...],<sup>250</sup> rather than a fairy tale, there is no “Once upon a time” at the beginning of the tale. His writing is short; it consists only of one longer and one very short paragraph. He uses words that would not typically appear in a fairy tales, such as “vertical,” “impenetrable,” “trollop.” He begins his writing by mocking the classical story of Sleeping Beauty, in which despite “doubt as to whether there actually was such a desirable princess”<sup>251</sup> princes kept coming and “all remained stuck along the way.”<sup>252</sup>

The relation between prettiness and blissfulness in classic fairy tales is completely disarrayed in this version. When it comes to the description of the princess, who is “beautiful even in [her] dormant, enchanted state”<sup>253</sup> in the classic version, Kunert describes her as follows: “The sleeping princess was resting, her toothless mouth half opened, slaving, her eyelids sunken, her hairless forehead crimped with blue, wormlike veins, spotted, dirty, a snoring trollop.”<sup>254</sup> This scene would not be pleasant for those princes; therefore, according to Kunert, “blessed be all those who, dreaming of Sleeping Beauty, died in the hedge and in the belief [...]”<sup>255</sup> Male chase for female beauty present in the classic fairy tales has become vain and abortive in this version; moreover, it is rewarded with a horrifying sight. Kunert exhausted his literary possibilities, which Jack Zipes specifies as “tendency [...] to break, shift, debunk, or rearrange the traditional motifs to liberate the reader,”<sup>256</sup> while the reader “is compelled to consider the negative aspects of anachronistic forms and perhaps transcend them.”<sup>257</sup> Kunert does so in order to draw readers’ attention to the pointless endeavors of the princes who were “speared by thorns, entangled, caught and bound by vines; attacked by poisonous vermin and paralyzed,”<sup>258</sup> without even knowing if they really want or appreciate the reward (i.e. the princess) they suffer for. Kunert’s work is also highly political at the same time. Jack Zipes states that Kunert

has often experimented with fairy tales in his work and endowed them with subtle social and political meanings. [In Sleeping Beauty] he

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<sup>250</sup> Günter Kunert, “Sleeping Beauty,” in *The Spells of Enchantment: The Wondrous Fairy Tales of Western Culture*, ed. Jack Zipes (New York: Viking Penguin, 1991), 701.

<sup>251</sup> Kunert, “Sleeping Beauty,” 701.

<sup>252</sup> Kunert, “Sleeping Beauty,” 701.

<sup>253</sup> Tatar, *The Hard Facts of the Grimms’ Fairy Tales*, 146.

<sup>254</sup> Kunert, “Sleeping Beauty,” 701.

<sup>255</sup> Kunert, “Sleeping Beauty,” 701.

<sup>256</sup> Zipes, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*, 178.

<sup>257</sup> Zipes, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*, 178.

<sup>258</sup> Kunert, “Sleeping Beauty,” 701.

alludes to the hedge as the Berlin Wall that conceals not a Utopian socialist society in the figure of the sleeping princess but a snoring trollop.<sup>259</sup>

Similarly to Kunert's *Sleeping Beauty*, *Not So Little Red Riding Hood* by Anne Sharpe also does not represent a typical 'compact', flat, classic fairy tale. Similarly to the case of *Sleeping Beauty*, *Not So Little Red Riding Hood* was not meant primarily for children but for adults. As Jack Zipes comments, in these types of tales, "uncomfortable questions about arbitrary authoritarianism, sexual domination, and social oppression are raised to show situations that call for change and can be changed."<sup>260</sup> In this version of *Red Riding Hood*, it is the situation in which a man is presented as a threat and a woman (or a girl) as a victim that is to be questioned. The tale begins according to the well-known pattern: a girl, whose name is Scarlet in this version, walks through the forest, not "concerned that the dusk had fallen."<sup>261</sup> The wolf, however, is depicted as a "man in perfectly cut grey suit,"<sup>262</sup> eager to seduce any woman that passes by. Women have resisted him so far; nevertheless, "he had not given up on the entire sex yet"<sup>263</sup> and he has been trying his moves – "a show of dusting down his jacket and straightening his collar, flick[ing] back his tinted hair with carefully manicured nails"<sup>264</sup> – in order to "offer a courteous invitation,"<sup>265</sup> as he calls it. When Scarlet refuses and indifferently walks away, he rages and decides "to make sure that she never forgot him."<sup>266</sup> What he does not know is that Scarlet is karate-trained; she eliminates him quickly and eventually the wolf begs for mercy.

Sandra Beckett suggests that Sharpe's ironical story "inverts the socially constructed binary opposites of masculine and feminine gender roles in the kind of "see-saw" feminist parody."<sup>267</sup> It staunchly refuses "the limitations that are imposed by sex upon a person's chances of success in various endeavors"<sup>268</sup> by portraying *Little Red Riding Hood* as a completely self-sufficient and fearless heroine and the wolf as a pleading, wretched creature. The wolf gives readers the impression of a strong, determined animal, but in the end he fails

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<sup>259</sup> Zipes, *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales*, 283.

<sup>260</sup> Zipes, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*, 178.

<sup>261</sup> Anne Sharpe, "Not So Little Red Riding Hood," in *The Trials and Tribulations of Little Red Riding Hood*, ed. Jack Zipes (New York: Routledge, 1993), 324.

<sup>262</sup> Sharpe, "Not So Little Red Riding Hood," 324.

<sup>263</sup> Sharpe, "Not So Little Red Riding Hood," 325.

<sup>264</sup> Sharpe, "Not So Little Red Riding Hood," 325.

<sup>265</sup> Sharpe, "Not So Little Red Riding Hood," 326.

<sup>266</sup> Sharpe, "Not So Little Red Riding Hood," 327.

<sup>267</sup> Sandra L. Beckett, *Recycling Red Riding Hood* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 119.

<sup>268</sup> Lieberman, "Some Day My Prince Will Come," 384.

to prove his strength (either physical or mental); the girl is expected to be weak and helpless but eventually she beats the wolf with minimal effort. There is a victor and a loser but none of them, even not the victor, are happy in the end; Scarlet just shrugs her shoulders when being asked how her day was, the wolf crawls to drown the experience in alcohol. The last sentence of the story says: “It was best for both of them that way really,”<sup>269</sup> obviously lacking a happy ending or a moral. What might be encoded in this version of the tale, which is not really fairy-tale-like and the only link with the original version is provided by the two characters and the setting, is probably a certain warning that things and people are not always as they seem, and that “though fairy tales must end happily, life does not have to.”<sup>270</sup>

The three fairy tales, Cinderella, Snow White and Little Red Riding Hood, in *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories* by James F. Garner resemble the previously mentioned alternative version in their nonconformity, but rather than from the feministic point of view, Garner wrote his famous parodies with the growing tendencies of politically correct ways of expressing in mind. He overuses politically correct terms and phrases where there is no need for neutral language, which creates the intentional notion of this language being senseless in a way. Jack Zipes comments on his specific style: “Garner’s hyperbole is most evident in his penchant for neologism.”<sup>271</sup> The author purposefully exaggerates from the very beginning of the book, in the introduction there is a following apology to the readers:

If, through omission or commission, I have inadvertently displayed any sexist, racist, culturalist, nationalist, regionalist, ageist, lookist, ableist, sizeist, speciesist, intellectualist, socioeconomicist, ethnocentrist, phallogocentrist, heteropatriarchalist, or other type of bias as yet unnamed, I apologize and encourage your suggestion for rectification. In the quest to develop meaningful literature that is totally free from bias and purged from the influences of its flawed cultural past, I doubtless have made some mistakes.<sup>272</sup>

His tales are full of references and hints; he uses topics and motifs which have already been employed either in the classic or even in the new fairy tales to mock them. For example, in the first tale about Little Red Riding Hood, he explains that the girl was not afraid to go to the forest, though “many people believed that the forest was a foreboding and dangerous

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<sup>269</sup> Sharpe, “Not So Little Red Riding Hood,” 327.

<sup>270</sup> Zipes, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*, 179.

<sup>271</sup> Zipes, *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales*, 196.

<sup>272</sup> James F. Garner, *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories* (London: Souvenir Press Ltd, 2013), viii.

place,”<sup>273</sup> because she “was confident enough in her own budding sexuality that such obvious Freudian imagery did not intimidate her.”<sup>274</sup> The funniest moments in Garner’s tales are probably those, in which he deliberately prolongs obvious situations and dialogues and the characters speak to each other using professional and specialized terms in their direct speeches. When Little Red Riding Hood meets the wolf who warns her about being alone in the forest, she replies: “I find your sexist remark offensive in the extreme, but I will ignore it because your traditional status as an outcast from society, the stress of which has caused you to develop your own, entirely valid, worldview.”<sup>275</sup>

The tale continues as in the classic version, the wolf eats a grandmother and he puts on her clothes, “unhampered by rigid, traditionalist notions of what was masculine or feminine.”<sup>276</sup> When Little Red Riding Hood enters into the house, they quarrel and as a result, the girl starts to scream “because of his willful invasion of her personal space.”<sup>277</sup> A “passing woodcutter-person (or log-fuel technician, as he preferred to be called)”<sup>278</sup> hears the scream and bursts in, ready to help the girl in a distress. However, his presence in the cottage is not appreciated at all, since Little Red Riding Hood shouts at him: “Sexist! Speciesist! How dare you assume that womyn and wolves can’t solve their own problems without a man’s help!”<sup>279</sup> Finally, the grandmother jumps out of the wolf’s mouth, cuts the woodcutter’s head off and they “set up an alternative household based on mutual respect and cooperation.”<sup>280</sup>

Similar ironical attitude is employed in Snow White. In the tale, Garner points out and ridicules several attributes of the classic patriarchal fairy tales: for example, Snow White’s name is “indicative of the discriminatory notions of associating pleasant or attractive with light, and unpleasant or unattractive qualities with darkness;”<sup>281</sup> the queen is, after “the years of conditioning in a male hierarchical dictatorship, [...] insecure about her own self-worth”<sup>282</sup> and therefore she adopts “masculine power trip”<sup>283</sup> when she orders Snow White be killed. The latter is a reference to the already mentioned typical feature of female fairy-tale

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<sup>273</sup> Garner, *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories*, 2.

<sup>274</sup> Garner, *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories*, 2.

<sup>275</sup> Garner, *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories*, 2.

<sup>276</sup> Garner, *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories*, 3.

<sup>277</sup> Garner, *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories*, 4.

<sup>278</sup> Garner, *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories*, 4.

<sup>279</sup> Garner, *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories*, 4.

<sup>280</sup> Garner, *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories*, 4.

<sup>281</sup> Garner, *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories*, 43.

<sup>282</sup> Garner, *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories*, 44.

<sup>283</sup> Garner, *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories*, 45.



characters – “women who are either partially or thoroughly evil are generally shown as active, ambitious, strong-willed.”<sup>284</sup>

In the last tale, Cinderella, Garner becomes more interested in class system. He focuses on mocking and satirizing class-distinctions and affiliation of the particular characters; he comments on the social classes with allusions to exaggerated Marxist criticism. The prince, for example, “was celebrating his exploitation of the dispossessed and marginalized peasantry by throwing a fancy dress ball.”<sup>285</sup> However, although there are many “classist” references in the tale (“gilded carriage painfully pulled by a team of horse-slaves,”<sup>286</sup> Cinderella “walk[ing] with her head high and carry[ing] herself like a wommon of eminent social standing,”<sup>287</sup>), the overall impression of the story is, like in Little Red Riding Hood, feminist, and reduced to absurdity. The females “enslave their natural body images to emulate an unrealistic standard of feminine beauty,”<sup>288</sup> while males are depicted as “sex-crazed human animals”<sup>289</sup> fighting for Cinderella and shocking women “by this vicious display of testosterone.”<sup>290</sup> In both tales, Cinderella and Snow White, Garner makes the female characters cooperate in the end and renounce men for their own common good.

To conclude the main emancipatory and liberating traits of these tales, it is possible to say that Garner’s fairy tales are, in a way, fulfilling the original purpose of the first literary fairy tales in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries; they are intended to entertain adults, for whom they were written, and they convey certain messages and ideas of the author. Garner’s intention to draw readers’ attention to exorbitant and absurd usage of political correctness in today’s means of communication parallels with Perrault’s and the Grimms’ efforts to civilize and socialize their contemporaries. In a similar way to Garner’s tales, Anne Sharpe’s story points out stereotypes which some adults, parents especially, may strain to avoid. Finally, *The Paper Bag Princess* sets reasonable standards for parents who might want to involve new, modern, innovative stories when selecting fairy tales for their children.

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<sup>284</sup> Lieberman, “Some Day My Prince Will Come,” 392.

<sup>285</sup> Garner, *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories*, 31.

<sup>286</sup> Garner, *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories*, 33.

<sup>287</sup> Garner, *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories*, 34.

<sup>288</sup> Garner, *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories*, 32.

<sup>289</sup> Garner, *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories*, 35.

<sup>290</sup> Garner, *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories*, 35.

## 5. Alternative Fairy Tales: Fashion or Necessity?

When dealing with the alternative fairy tales, it is necessary to bear in mind that “most writers on fairy tales assume, whatever their ideological position, that tales will have effects on their child audiences; reader response always includes reader acculturation.”<sup>291</sup> As I have already suggested at the end of the previous chapter, authors transfer their ideas and values onto their readers; in the case of the classic literary fairy tales, this particular transmission is not time-limited and therefore readers have been exposed to the influence of the traditional fairy-tale arrangement since their first publication until now. The features and values praised in the traditional tales may not be desirable for the modern Western society, since they provide controversial demonstrations of gender inequality and stereotypization of women’s and men’s roles. As Marcia Lieberman concludes, in many classic fairy tales the morals are clearly sex-linked;<sup>292</sup> for example, one of the main traditional paradigms is that “the boy who sets out to seek his fortune [...] is a stock figure [unlike girls]. What is praiseworthy in males, however, is rejected in females.”<sup>293</sup> Other repetitive patterns include girls seeking marriage or male saviors, but only very rarely (or rather never) the paradigms function vice versa.

I have demonstrated in the previous part of the thesis that the portrayal of females in the three selected traditional fairy tales is tightly restricted. The heroines are intended by the authors to be favorably accepted by the audience only if they possess such qualities as beauty, submissiveness, patience to wait for the salvation, and willingness to be (sexually) objectified, which is a result of patriarchal influencing; and “as fairy tales became primarily a genre for children, their socializing function becomes more and more explicit.”<sup>294</sup> Such authors as Walt Disney, who “managed to have such a profound influence on civilizing children and adults,”<sup>295</sup> helped to spread the regressive images of helpless, passive heroines that were not known to the first fairy-tale authors such as Basile and Straparola; they were only introduced by Perrault and the Grimms to gradually fade into obscurity until Disney rescued them from oblivion. Although it was already long after the works by Lewis Carroll, Frank L. Baum or E. Nesbit with a new type of female characters were published, Disney

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<sup>291</sup> Zipes, *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales*, 481.

<sup>292</sup> Lieberman, “Some Day My Prince Will Come,” 392.

<sup>293</sup> Lieberman, “Some Day My Prince Will Come,” 392.

<sup>294</sup> Zipes, *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales*, 480.

<sup>295</sup> Zipes, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*, 193.

once again drew the audience's attention towards his heroines, portrayed as "young women, always virginal and sweet, [...] [who] cannot save herself."<sup>296</sup>

In the research by Kay Stone, majority of female respondents only knew the versions of fairy tales by Disney and "were surprised to learn that there were tales about independent women to which they could relate in a more satisfying manner."<sup>297</sup> Therefore, it is not surprising that girls and women who grew up knowing only these versions may be influenced by many misconceptions; Cathy L. Preston states the quote of one of her female students participating in her course on folklore and women studies in 1999 that illustrates the questionable impact of patriarchal fairy tales on girls and young women:

Little girls that are told again and again of princes who come to save a beautiful but foolish princess may be learning that, in order to get a prince, they must be outwardly rich with beauty, but do not need to possess the common sense that is essential in keeping them from needing to be saved in the first place. The fairy tales of the past are permeated with the ideals of the past, and could be updated in a way that would keep the integrity of the story, while relaying behavior that is now socially acceptable.<sup>298</sup>

I would not put it better myself, the quotation above neatly summarizes the situation that accompanies the traditional versions of Cinderella, Snow White and partially (as there is no prince, but a male figure is present) Little Red Riding Hood since the debates concerning the gender bias and inequality in fairy tales appeared in the 1960s. In order to introduce that "socially acceptable" behavior, alternative versions were made, such as those I have discussed in the previous chapter.

I believe that there is a great benefit of reading these fairy tales to children, especially regarding what Jack Zipes calls "disturbance."<sup>299</sup> He admits that it is extremely difficult to anticipate the impact of the alternative, emancipatory literature on children, mainly when we take into consideration the fact that "if their social expectations have been determined by a conservative socialization process, they find changes in fairy tales comical but often unjust and disturbing, even though the tales purport to be in their interests and seek their

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<sup>296</sup> Zipes, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*, 209.

<sup>297</sup> Zipes, *Don't Bet on the Prince*, 7.

<sup>298</sup> Cathy Lynn Preston, "Disrupting the Boundaries of Genre and Gender: Postmodernism and the Fairy Tale," in *Fairy Tales and Feminism: New Approaches*, ed. Donald Haase (Wayne State University Press, 2004), 203.

<sup>299</sup> Zipes, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*, 188.

emancipation.”<sup>300</sup> The same opinion is shared by Preston, who claims that by using certain fixed phrases and structures traditionally observed in classic fairy tales in new, modern, alternative literary surrounding, the conflict of the “authoritative” with new tales could result in the situation, in which the new texts would “stand alongside the older ones, competing for social space but ultimately not displacing their authority.”<sup>301</sup> In other words, she presumes that traditional patterns, when used seriously but not in a typical, traditional fairy-tale arrangement, might lead to misunderstanding; readers are used to recall certain images when hearing or reading e.g. “Once upon a time,” and when the story does not continue as they expect, they might easily conclude that it is just a satirical, not a serious piece of literary work.<sup>302</sup>

The disturbance, however, which comes with introducing the alternative tales to children, is intentional and helps to create more critical environment for their readers. Zipes suggests that:

This provocation is why it is more important to [...] recognize the upsetting effect of emancipatory tales. The quality of [these tales] should be judged not by the manner in which they are accepted by readers but by the unique ways they bring undesirable social relations into question and force readers to question themselves.

The most important, according to Zipes, is the way of distribution of these tales; it is necessary to provide children with objective and supportive reading leadership if we intend to introduce the alternative fairy tales to them, after they have been already exposed to the classic ones. Theda Detlor managed to present some of the modern versions to her pupils. Consequently, they created a new list of patterns observed in less gender-biased tales: “Boys and girls can learn to make their own decisions. Both women and men can stand up for themselves. Girls and boys can decide not to marry. Who you are is more important than how you look. Girls can be confident.”<sup>303</sup> As Detlor comments, the most important thing is the reader’s possibility of choice. She states that she believes her lessons have “freed children to think more flexibly about characters’ roles and behavior;”<sup>304</sup> however, “children also need to feel free to cast characters in traditional roles, if they so choose.”<sup>305</sup>

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<sup>300</sup> Zipes, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion*, 188.

<sup>301</sup> Preston, “Disrupting the Boundaries of Genre and Gender, 199.

<sup>302</sup> Preston, “Disrupting the Boundaries of Genre and Gender, 198-199.

<sup>303</sup> Theda Detlor, *A Fresh Look at Fairy Tales*, 43.

<sup>304</sup> Theda Detlor, *A Fresh Look at Fairy Tales*, 42.

<sup>305</sup> Theda Detlor, *A Fresh Look at Fairy Tales*, 42.

## 6. Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to analyze three typical fairy tales by the Grimms', discuss their possible influence on children readers in general, and women in particular; and compare them with the alternative, modern fairy tales by contemporary authors. Specific traits of gender bias in the tales of Cinderella, Snow White and Little Red Riding Hood have been highlighted and divided into three main areas of gender-based oppression and stereotypization of women in the classic fairy tales: emphasis on passivity of heroines and their obedience to men; sexual attractiveness representing the most valuable quality and consequent objectification of heroines; and artificially constructed notion of a link between age, appearance and desirable character qualities of women in fairy tales. These areas are, of course, closely interrelated with each other; appearance of Cinderella attracts potential husband but, in fact, it is her passivity that is rewarded with marriage. Disobedient Red Riding Hood is left at the mercy of a male savior, while Snow White's life is spared by the hunter only because she is young and pleasant to look at. Later, she is objectified by the prince who, not regarding her dead-like condition, insists on keeping her body for whatever his purposes are.

The modern versions of fairy tales provide readers with alternatives, varying from slightly 'alerting' stories in which the plot does not follow the typical patterns, yet they include typical characters, such as *The Paper Bag Princess*; and tales similar to *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories*, which are primarily aimed at adults and attempt to raise awareness of the concurrent issues; to postmodern upside-down stories, (sometimes also set in urban or industrial surrounding) employing only few fairy-tale-like features, reminiscing fairy tales in order to deepen their own ideas and purposes, like in *Not So Little Red Riding Hood*. The modern versions may be liberating, emancipatory and even educational, as they convey ideas and attitudes that are not only fashionable but inevitable for the functioning of the 21<sup>st</sup>-century society (or at least its Western part). Unfortunately, they have not reached the point in which they would be considered an equal constituent of children's literary canon yet. As it was mentioned in the last chapter, some readers might tend to regard them as an attempt to ridicule the traditional tales only; they may seem to lack other purpose than the entertaining one to the people who have never thought of such issues as gender (in)equality in children's literature.

To abandon the indigenous, original tales would not be effective at all. Children, who are used to the traditional fairy tales with the traditional, gender-based roles, would perhaps struggle with the idea of the liberating, emancipatory tales at first, but they would definitely accept them ultimately. Moreover, it is probably inevitable for us, readers, to know the classic tales along with the new ones, otherwise we would not be able to identify the differences and discuss them. The classic versions are not harmful by themselves; it is the lack of dialogue and explanation on the adults' side that helps to inadvertently spread the ideas which the Western society has officially struggled to eliminate for the past decades. I am convinced that the more often we encounter the alternative fairy tales, offering children and adults of both gender alternatives to the concurrent situation in the society which seems to employ equality but still inclines towards the old, patriarchal social construct, the more easily and peacefully we become accustomed to them. As a desirable result, future generations of readers will be provided with the possibility to make the decision on their own acculturation without the necessity to reprobate traditional fairy tales.

## Resumé

Tato diplomová práce se zabývá stereotypním zobrazováním ženských postav v klasických pohádkách od bratří Grimmů: Popelce, Sněhurce a Červené Karkulce. Účelem práce bylo demonstrovat, jak tyto pohádky šíří patriarchální myšlenky sedmnáctého až devatenáctého století mezi čtenáře ve století jednadvacátém, a zda jsou tyto myšlenky a názory pro současné dětské čtenáře (a čtenářky v dospělém věku) nějakým způsobem nevhodné. Práce také řeší moderní, alternativní verze klasických pohádek a zkoumá, zda tyto nové pohádky mají šanci zaujmout a získat si své místo v tak specifické literární oblasti, jakou je dětská literatura. Před samotnou analýzou zmíněných pohádek je samozřejmě nutné specifikovat terminologii a definice. Anglické výrazy „folk tale“, „wonder tale“ a „fairy tale“ lze do českého jazyka překládat jednotně jako „pohádka“, ovšem v anglo-americkém kontextu bylo nutné v první podkapitole vymezit použití těchto termínů pro konkrétní útvary lidové slovesnosti. Je zde také zařazen stručný přehled vývoje dětské literatury od vynálezu knihtisku a jeho rozšíření v západní Evropě do vydání prvních sbírek pohádek. Následující podkapitoly již pojednávají o historickém vývoji pohádek.

Základem pohádky jako literárního žánru byla díla italských autorů Francesca Straparoly a Giambattisty Basile. Jejich sbírky, ovlivněné lidovou slovesností z přelomu šestnáctého a sedmnáctého století, se staly předobrazem a zároveň zdrojem pro pozdější francouzské autory a autorky. Ve Francii za doby vlády Ludvíka XIV. se pohádky staly žádaným a módním literárním útvarem; nikoliv mezi dětmi, nýbrž mezi dospělými z vyšších, často aristokratických, kruhů. Mezi první autorky těchto pohádkových novel patřila Madame Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy, následována například Marií-Jean Lhéritier, autorkou první kompletní literární verze pohádky známé v češtině pod názvem Rumpelcimprcampr. Ovšem nejznámějším francouzským autorem pohádek byl Charles Perrault, který v roce 1697 vydal sbírku krátkých pohádek, *Histoires ou contes du temps passé*, známou nejen ve Francii ale i v anglicky mluvících zemích jako *Příběhy matky husy*, obsahující verze Popelky, Červené Karkulky a Šípkové Růženky. Zemí, kde byl vývoj klasických literárních pohádek dokončen, bylo Německo první poloviny devatenáctého století. Nejznámějšími a bezesporu (pro pohádkový žánr) nejvýznamnějšími autory byli bratři Grimmové. Wilhelm a Jacob Grimmové se zajímali o pohádky a folklór z několika důvodů: jako lingvisté v nich hledali důkazy o vývoji německého jazyka, jako folkloristé se zajímali o národní bohatství, které lidová slovesnost poskytovala, a jako autoři dokázali v pohádkách rozpoznat příležitost, jak

promlouvat k masám jednoduchým a účinným způsobem; jinými slovy, umně využili pohádky, stejně jako sto let před nimi Perrault, pro šíření svých názorů a idejí v rámci socializace svých čtenářů.

Jak je zřejmé z následné analýzy konkrétních pohádek, tyto názory byly poplatné době svého vzniku. Ženy jsou v nich obecně zobrazovány a pojmány jako hříšné osoby s nižším společenským statutem, které musí být hlídány a vychovávány podobně jako děti. A právě těmito postoji, které dnes nazýváme genderově stereotypní, neboli stereotypní na základě pohlavních rozdílů, se mimo jiné zabývá feministická literární teorie. Ta je společně s psychoanalytickou a marxistickou teorií diskutována v druhé kapitole práce. Jsou zde uvedeny hlavní myšlenky feministické literární kritiky, která se snaží upozornit na pozůstatky patriarchálního uspořádání společnosti v literatuře a následně je nahradit literaturou, v tomto případě pohádkami, s přijatelnějšími postoji a závěry. Podle mnohých autorů a kritiků, kteří se feministickému pojetí literární kritiky věnují od sedmdesátých let dvacátého století, jsou to právě ty nejznámější pohádkové hrdinky, díky nimž se šíří patriarchální myšlenky mezi nové generace. Přestože někteří odborníci zastávají opačný názor a hlásají, že existují i samostatné, aktivní hrdinky v zapomenutých příbězích, jimž by se měla věnovat pozornost, je logické, že nejnvlivnější a nejpůsobivější jsou právě ty, které najdeme v každé sbírce pohádek od dob Grimmů až po současnost, a se kterými přijde do kontaktu největší počet dětských čtenářů.

S tímto teoretickým úvodem započiná ve třetí kapitole vlastní analýza tří zmíněných pohádek. Zde jsou nejdříve vysvětleny pojmy jako patriarchát (nadvláda mužů) či teorie falocentrismu (tendence literárních autorů tvořit svá díla z mužského pohledu na danou problematiku, nutící ženské čtenáře přijímat mužskou identitu z důvodu porozumění textu). V úvodu této kapitoly je také nutné zodpovědět otázku, proč, nebo spíše kdy a kvůli komu se do pohádek dostaly patriarchální rysy. První verze nyní známých pohádek, jako je Karkulka a Popelka, totiž pracovaly s neohroženými, schopnými hrdinkami, které ale po Perraultově zásahu a po literárních úpravách bratry Grimmovými získaly mnohem pasivnější role. Ke změnám tedy došlo pravděpodobně v důsledku oněch zmiňovaných socializačních snah, které se zakládaly na morálce a zvyklostech dané doby a společnosti, jakož i na vlastním náboženském a společenském přesvědčení a sociálním statusu autorů.

Pokud mluvíme o obecných znacích patriarchální společnosti v klasických pohádkách, za zmínku jistě stojí experiment americké učitelky a folkloristky Thedy Detlor, která se svými žáky prvního stupně vypracovala seznam opakujících se vzorců v pohádkách bratří Grimmů.



Nikoliv překvapivě v něm nalezneme takováto hesla: Děvčata pláčou, když jsou v nesnázích. Muži volí pouze krásu. Princezny jsou vždy krásné. Princezny nikdy nerozhodují samy za sebe. Pouze děvčata dělají domácí práce apod. Tyto vzorce dokazují, že myšlenky a názory patriarchální společnosti, v níž vznikaly první literární pohádky, stále ovlivňují nové a nové generace čtenářů. Konkrétní příklady stereotypizace žen v pohádkách jsou uvedeny ve třech podkapitolách: první se věnuje všeobecné pasivitě pohádkových hrdinek a jejich poslušnosti vůči mužům a patriarchálnímu uspořádání společnosti; druhá se zabývá vlastním přístupem mužských postav k hrdinkám jako k předmětům, lákajícím pouze svým vzhledem, a potlačenou sexualitou hrdinek; třetí podkapitola řeší konflikt mezi mladými, krásnými a favorizovanými hrdinkami a staršími nebo zlými, v obou případech však demonizovanými ženskými postavami, jako jsou královna ve Sněhurce či nevlastní sestry a matka v Popelce.

Z analýz konkrétních příkladů v těchto třech podkapitolách vyplývá, že ženská pasivita, trpělivost a poslušnost byly účelně zobrazovány jako vítané charakterové vlastnosti 'pravých' hrdinek, kdežto ženské postavy, které se aktivně zasazovaly o svůj vlastní úspěch a nebyly tedy nečinné, byly v různých verzích pohádek postupně vykreslovány jako stále více zlé a špatné, nebo přinejmenším výjimečně ošklivé. V obou případech jsou tyto zlé a/či ošklivé ženy vnímány negativně, zatímco spojení krásy a poslušnosti, trpělivosti a jakési dobrovolné nečinnosti je v pohádkách oslavováno. Dívky, které se prokází těmito zmíněnými vlastnostmi, jsou následně odměněny manželstvím, což vytváří klamný dojem, že úspěšnost ženy je závislá na jejím neaktivním přístupu a líbivém vzhledu, jako v případě Popelky či Sněhurky. Jsou také stavěny do pozice „zboží,“ což je nejvíce zřejmé v případě Sněhurky, která přežívá v téměř mrtvolném stavu, zatímco princ a trpaslíci řeší, kdo bude vlastnit její tělo. Červená Karkulka, na rozdíl od Popelky a Sněhurky, sice nezaujme myslivce, který ji posléze zachrání, svým vzhledem, i zde se však uplatňuje určitý patriarchální vzorec, ve kterém muž jakožto představitel silnějšího a schopnějšího pohlaví musí ochránit bezmocnou ženu/dívku. Zajímavé v případě pohádky o Červené Karkulce je také fakt, že oproti původní slovesné, a pozdější francouzské verzi, je německá (tzn. ta, kterou známe i v současnosti) Karkulka zbavená veškerých odkazů na sexualitu, dospívání a nahotu, což jen dále ilustruje snahy bratří Grimmů vytvořit a šířit příběhy obsahující pouze témata a myšlenky, o nichž se oni sami domnívali, že jsou vhodné pro tehdejší čtenáře.

V poslední podkapitole týkající se analýzy klasických pohádek se řeší, jestli a do jaké míry ovlivňují klasické pohádkové hrdinky sebeuvědomění a očekávání dětí a dospělých žen, které

s nimi byly v dětství seznámeny. Jedna z největších kritiček klasických pohádek, Marcia Lieberman, zformulovala možné následky vlivu výše zmíněných charakteristických vzorců ve svém eseji na počátku sedmdesátých let. Vyjádřila zde svou obavu, že děti, a především dívky, které znají pouze klasické pohádky, mohou získat mylnou představu, že krása je vždy odměněna bohatstvím a úspěchem, což by mohlo vést k jejich nedůvěřivosti a averzi vůči „méně krásným lidem,“ pokud by samy sebe za krásné považovaly, anebo k nízkému sebevědomí a závisti vůči „více krásným lidem,“ pokud by se cítily méně hezké. Rita Comtois zjistila na základě rozhovorů s několika desítkami žen v devadesátých letech, že pociťovaly frustraci z nenaplněného „pohádkového“ snu, ve který doufaly jako dívky, čímž se potvrdila teorie, že pohádky opravdu mohou manipulovat s naším očekáváním, zejména co se týče přijímání sociálních rolí na základě pohlavních rozdílů.

Jako reakce na výše uvedené diskutabilní patriarchální vzorce, které jsou obsažené v analyzovaných pohádkách, se začaly od sedmdesátých let dvacátého století objevovat alternativní moderní pohádky, v angličtině často nazývané „emancipatory,“ čili „emancipační.“ Tyto příběhy buď sledovaly stejnou dějovou linku jako klasické pohádky, ale snažily se eliminovat stereotypní prvky v nich obsažené, nebo vytvářely vlastní, nové zápletky v moderním dějišti, s moderními postavami. Velice často se také začala objevovat díla, která využívala jen jeden konkrétní aspekt pohádky v úplně odlišném kontextu. Pro potřeby této práce byla vybrána čtyři alternativní díla, která vznikla v rozmezí sedmdesátých a devadesátých let. Velice oblíbenými se v této době staly také různé sbírky a antologie, které obsahovaly nejen původní tvorbu feministických autorů, ale také zapomenuté, respektive běžným čtenářem opomíjené pohádkové příběhy, mýty a povídky z celého světa, v nichž lze, na rozdíl od klasických pohádek, nalézt neohrožené hrdinky.

*The Paper Bag Princess* (do češtiny přeložitelné jako *Princezna papírového sáčku*) od autora Roberta Munsche, zastupuje alternativní pohádky využívající pohádkové postavy charakteristické pro klasické pohádky, jako jsou princezna, princ a drak, které však dějově nepodléhají stereotypům. Použitím známých postav neztrácí tato pohádka na zajímavosti pro dětské čtenáře, její vyznění je však veskrze „emancipační“ – princezna Elizabeth se vydává hledat prince Ronalda, svým rozumem přemůže draka a poté, co jí Ronald místo vděčnosti vyčte její vzhled, se Elizabeth rozhodne, že se za Ronalda nevdá. Naopak Šípková Růženka Güntera Kunerta, německého básníka a prozaika, je první z několika alternativních pohádek, uváděných v této práci, které jsou ve skutečnosti zamýšleny výhradně pro dospělého čtenáře.

Kunert v pouhých dvou odstavcích popírá všechny typické znaky a zákonitosti pohádek; nepoužívá obvyklé fráze jako „kdysi dávno,“ či „bylo nebylo,“ a v podstatě nevypráví žádný děj – jeho dílo je spíše popisem marného snažení mnoha princů, kteří se, s vidinou krásné princezny ve věži, nechali přemoci rostlinou, jež věž obklopuje. Princeznu navíc vykresluje jako ohavnou mrtvolnou bytost, o níž ve skutečnosti není co stát. Pro feministickou analýzu méně podstatný, avšak obecně nikoliv nezajímavý je fakt, že mnozí kritici v Kunertově Růžence nachází metaforické ztvárnění Berlínské zdi.

Politický podtext mají také příběhy z knihy *Politically Correct Bedtime Stories (Politicky korektní příběhy na dobrou noc)* od Jamese Garnera. Politická korektnost, jak název napovídá, je zde dovedena do absurdního maxima, čímž Garner paroduje současné tendence být za každou cenu korektní, mnohdy i na úkor obsahu. Jeho Červená Karkulka si uvědomuje, že způsob, jakým k ní promlouvá vlk, není jeho osobní volba, nýbrž vliv patriarchální společnosti, v níž byl vychován, a je velice rozladěna, když se kolemjdoucí myslivec pokusí zasáhnout do jejího sporu s vlkem, čímž se v jejích očích projeví jako typický šovinista. Sněhurka je nucena utéct před svojí frustrovanou macechou do lesů, kde narazí na trpaslíky, kteří učí zženštilé muže být opět mužnými pány tvorstva; a o Popelku se na bále poperou všichni muži hnáni svými nízkými pudy, následkem čehož se všechny přítomné dámy rozhodnou raději se věnovat podnikání a zanechat muže jejich primitivním potyčkám.

V poslední ukázce alternativní pohádky, *Not So Little Red Riding Hood* (volně přeloženo jako *Ne tak malá Červená Karkulka, či Tak trochu jiná Červená Karkulka*) od autorky Anne Sharpe, se výjimečně setkáváme se stejným dějištěm i postavami, které na začátku příběhu vytváří dojem podobnosti s původní verzí, záhy se však čtenář dozví, že vlk je v této pohádce zosobněn mužem v dobře šitém šedém obleku. Tento muž se snaží svést Scarlet, což je jméno Karkulky v tomto příběhu, na což ona nereaguje a bezelstně pokračuje v cestě za svojí babičkou. To muže rozzuří a rozhodne se, že se postará, aby na něj dívka nezapomněla. Co však netuší je, že dívka je nositelka černého pásu v karate, a tudíž jí nečiní žádný problém muže vyřídit. Tato verze měla, jako ostatně většina feministických pohádek pro dospělé čtenáře, upozornit na samozřejmost, s jakou přijímáme předepsané sociální role a vlastnosti, a jak je, jako rodiče a pedagogové, šíříme dál mezi dětmi, aniž bychom se nad jejich významem a původem zamysleli.

V poslední kapitole je věnován prostor k zamyšlení, zda mají alternativní pohádky vůbec jiný význam kromě toho zábavného, a jak může jejich četba ovlivnit dětské čtenáře. Jelikož, stejně

jako před několika sty lety, i dnes vznikají pohádky s úmyslem šířit určitá autorova stanoviska, tyto moderní pohádky mají v dnešní době určitě své místo v dětském literárním kánonu. Existuje zde sice stále riziko, že jejich vzdělávací a socializační atributy zůstanou nepochopeny, ovšem už jen ona snaha jejich autorů nabídnout čtenářům jinou, osvobozující četbu je krok správným směrem. Již zmíněná pedagožka Theda Detlor vypracovala se svými žáky po společném přečtení několika alternativních příběhů další seznam vzorců, které ale v tomto případě nejsou zatížené genderovými předsudky a stereotypy. Tyto dětmi navržené vzorce pak zahrnovaly například: Dívky a chlapci se mohou naučit dělat svá vlastní rozhodnutí. Dívky se nemusí vdát za prince. Muži mohou také dělat domácí práce. Dívky mohou být sebevědomé, či velice důležité: Kdo jsi je důležitější, než jak vypadáš. Na tomto příkladu lze demonstrovat, že dětské čtenáři mohou znát klasické i alternativní verze, a že tato oboustranná znalost je vysoce žádoucí, protože vede k rozvoji kritického myšlení.

V závěru bych proto výsledky této práce shrnula následovně: Tradiční pohádky nejsou samy o sobě nijak škodlivé. Škodlivý je nedostatek rozmanitosti a jednostrannost pohádkových hrdinů a hrdinek, které se dostanou k běžnému dětskému čtenáři. Bohužel, s rozmachem masových médií, zejména filmu a televize, se ještě více prohloubila propast mezi původní tradiční lidovou slovesností a tím, co dnes považujeme za klasické pohádky; Walt Disney je bezesporu jedním z hlavních strůjců cílené popularizace typizovaných pohádkových hrdinek. Po stovky let sloužily klasické pohádky k šíření myšlenek, které se v současnosti snaží západní společnost potlačit a vyvrátit; zároveň je však nevědomky šíříme mezi nové a nové generace dětských čtenářů a diváků. Alternativní pohádky proto představují skvělý protipól, díky kterému by mohlo více dětí klást více otázek. Protože není řešením klasické pohádky zavrhnout, nýbrž je porovnávat s alternativními, a diskutovat nad důvody jejich rozdílnosti.

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