

THE MORAL AUTHORITY OF THE CHILD IN TWO FAIRY TALES:  
PERRAULT'S *LE PETIT CHAPERON ROUGE* AND *CENDRILLON*,  
AND THE GRIMMS' *ROTKÄPPCHEN* AND *ASCHEPUTTEL*

by

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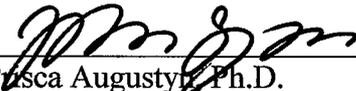
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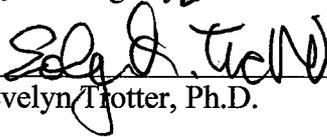
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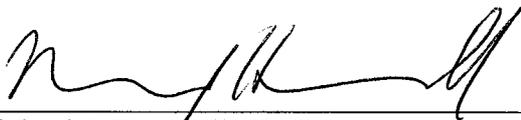
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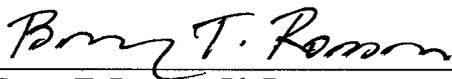
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## ABSTRACT

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Title: The Moral Authority of the Child in Two Fairy Tales: Perrault's *Le Petit Chaperon Rouge* and *Cendrillon*, and the Grimms' *Rotkäppchen* and *Aschenputtel*

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Although many studies focus specifically on the child's reception of fairy tales, few have considered whether the (step)child in the tales is more aware or more equipped with a knowledge of "moral authority" and "correct" conduct than the (step)parent. This thesis will consider the (step)parent/ (step)child relationship motif in two French and German fairy tales by Perrault and the Brothers Grimm: Perrault's *Cendrillon ou la petite pantoufle de verre* and *Le Petit Chaperon rouge*; and the Grimms' *Aschenputtel* and *Rotkäppchen*. In analyzing the genre's depiction of children, the thesis will examine the ways in which the narrative voice constructs the moral authority of the child (both as intradiegetic character *and* as extradiegetic reader), while simultaneously diminishing the moral authority of the parent as intradiegetic character.

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## INTRODUCTION

The word “fairy tale” instantly conjures memories of childhood, and in particular, the innocence and wonderment typically associated with this period of life. For noted fairy tale scholar Jack Zipes, the very capacity of the fairy tale to induce wonder is one of its most salient characteristics: “Wonder causes astonishment, and the marvellous object or phenomemon [around which the fairy tale focuses] is often regarded as a supernatural occurrence and can be an omen or a portent. It gives rise [both in the tale’s characters and in the tale’s external readers/auditors] to admiration, fear, awe, and reverence” (*Oxford Companion* xviii). As Zipes further notes, this “marvellous object or phenomenon” is usually what induces the fairy tale’s main character (nearly always a child or young person whose familial origins are obscured due to death or remarriage) to undergo a series of tests in order to gain higher status or regain a place of origin, and also to gain deeper knowledge of the self (xviii).

Other influential scholarship on fairy tales makes closely related points. For example, in the preface to *Fairy Tales as Ways of Knowing: Essays on Märchen in Psychology, Society and Literature*, Michael Metzger notes that the fairy tale is a unique genre in that it combines “two of the most essential and contradictory aspects of literature itself: aesthetic autonomy and psychological, indeed moral efficacy” (8). The fairy tale’s main characters encounter “fearful dangers and engage in actions requiring great valor” (18); in so doing, they provide a concrete model for “integrating the experiential world

with [the psyche's] own needs and desires" (8). It is perhaps the fairy tale's capacity for the demonstration of "moral efficacy" and self-discovery that explains the genre's intense concentration on familial origins and family dynamics—and in particular, the (step)parent/ (step)child relationship.

Indeed, the parent-child relationship is also the root of the literary fairy tale's typical mode(s) of transmission: these ubiquitous tales, such as the ones compiled and written by the Brothers Grimm and Charles Perrault, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves*, *Cinderella*, and *Sleeping Beauty*, are often told (or read) by a parent to a young child, and thus have become an iconic element of the "modern" (post-eighteenth century) Western childhood experience. The fairy tale's rise to cultural prominence was further extended, in the late twentieth century, to the realm of film and stage. Perhaps the most famous contemporary adaptations of the fairy tale are the Disney film masterpieces. The iconic characters from the Disney film masterpieces of yesteryear complement the original fairy tales with playful, visual imagery such as the animals who help the heroines clean the cottages, and the wicked stepmother and step-sisters who torture the young, naïve and helpless heroines/princesses who must be eventually saved by a handsome prince. Besides modifying the original narrative arc of fairy tales (which includes tempering some of the most disturbing elements from the original tales), the Disney film versions also organize entire narrative episodes around distinctive songs, such as *Some Day My Prince Will Come* and *A Dream Is a Wish Your Heart Makes* from the films *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves* (1937) and *Cinderella* (1950) respectively.

This thesis will compare the ways in which morality is configured and deployed in four of the most iconic literary fairy tales from the French and German traditions in

order to analyze the literary fairy tale's capacity to serve as pedagogical model for a child. Specific tales to be examined include Perrault's *Le Petit Chaperon rouge* and *Cendrillon ou la petite pantoufle de verre*; and the Grimms' *Rotkäppchen* and *Aschenputtel*. Importantly, this thesis will focus on the "literary fairy tale" and not the "folkloric fairy tale" whose origins are perceived as being uniquely oral. It will also focus on only two of the many national traditions, the French and the German. Furthermore, in order to better contextualize the French and German fairy tales of the late seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, it will also briefly explore the genre's origins.

Research on the Western European fairy tale canon conducted by numerous literary critics such as Lewis Seifert, Donald Haase, Max Lüthi, Jack Zipes, Maria Tatar, and Ruth B. Bottigheimer has predominantly focused on tales from the German, French, Italian, and Danish traditions. The fairy tale's precise origins are unclear; although there are countless theories, there is simply no "conclusive evidence" for any one of them (Zipes, *Classical Genre* 2). Zipes likens the genesis of the fairy tale to a biological process and to a "historical evolution" (3). In his reading of the tale's origins, it transitioned from a slowly-developed oral tradition to a flourishing literary tradition (with the aid of newer social methods of diffusion and the establishment of new technology including the printing press), gathering traces both of "marvelous and fantastic oral *and* literary tales" and "wonder" tales from different millennia along the way (2-3). Indeed, for Zipes, any analysis of the fairy tale must take into account its originary oral performativity: "If we consider that tales are mentally and physically conceived by human beings as material products of culture, then it is possible to analyze how special forms of telling originated as species or what literary critics call genres" (3). Mary Beth

Stein's contribution to *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales* offers further distinction between "folk tale" and "fairy tale":

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 to specifically to "magic tales," or tales listed under the tale-type numbers 300-749 in the Aarne-Thompson tale-type index [Finnish folklorist Antti Aarne classified international folktales in his *Verzeichnis der Märchentypen/Index of Types of Tales* (1910) and American folklorist Stith Thompson later translated Aarne's work in 1928 and modified it in 1961 ("Aarne-Thompson Index" 1)]. The term folktale 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. ("Folklore" 167)

Stein also adds that the earliest form of fairy-tale scholarship "was comparative in nature and grew out of the Grimms' understanding of oral tradition and interest in the problems of language and origin" ("Folklore" 168). Distinguished philosopher and scholar Walter J. Ong also touches upon the relationship between the spoken word (orality) and written word (literacy) in his seminal study *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*, and argues persuasively that it is inconceivable to just explore one or the other (orality or literacy), either synchronically or diachronically, without some examination of the other component because they are of equal importance in the fairy tale genre.

Such heavy emphasis on the tale as oral narrative is found in the writings of other

critics such as Bottigheimer (“Fairy Tales, Folk Narrative Research” 343-57; “Fertility Control and the Birth of the Modern European Fairy-Tale Heroine” 37) and Lüthi (*Märchen* 43-7), both of whom concur with Zipes on the indeterminacy of the origin of the fairy tale (“Cross-Cultural Connections” 845-69; see also *Why Fairy Tales Stick* 3; *Oxford Companion* xv-xxxii). These scholars are keen to situate the origins of the Western European form of the fairy tale during the early medieval period. For Zipes in particular, the literary fairy tale seems to have emerged from the new literary practices and widespread interest in literature in fourteenth-century Florence. New literary forms structured around oral stories such as the *novella* (Boccaccio’s *Decameron*) became fodder for new literary vistas: Giovan Francesco Straparola’s *Le piacevoli notti* (1550/1553) became the first European collection of *novelle* to include fairy tales, and Giambattista Basile’s characteristically Neapolitan *Lo cunto de li cunti/ Il Pentamerone* (1634-36) was also tremendously influential (Zipes, “Cross-Cultural Connections” 852). Straparola’s and Basile’s works, in turn, influenced French literary production of the late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, and in particular the fairy tales of Perrault and Madame Marie-Catherine Le Jumel de Barneville d’Aulnoy, the most celebrated French fairy tale author after Perrault (Zipes, “Cross-Cultural Connections” 857-8). In the 1790’s, the fairy tale (*conte de fées*) as such came into vogue, and as a result, authors for almost a century delved into folklore and used these sources for their own literary production. The 1790’s thus represents, for many fairy tale scholars, the birth of the genre all over Europe and North America (Zipes, “Cross-Cultural Connections” 858). Despite the widespread dissemination of the fairy tales throughout Europe and the Americas, this comparative project will focus exclusively on the French and German contexts.

In the French context, the cultural sources from which the fairy tales derive are more explicitly literary than those which predominate in the German context. In the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, the term *conte de fées* was invented by Madame Marie-Catherine Baronne d'Aulnoy, who also wrote the first literary fairy tale in France *L'Île de la félicité* taken from her novel *L'Histoire d'Hypolite, comte de Douglas* (1690). The term itself was first seen in the title of her 1697-8 collection entitled *Les Contes de fées* and Henriette-Julie de Murat's *Nouveaux contes de fées* (1698) (Seifert, "France" 175). In his insightful article on the question of ownership (or more precisely, the authorship) of French and German fairy tales by Perrault and the Grimms, Donald Haase points out that although French culture of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries held their fairy tales in high esteem, "the codification of their [the French populace's] self-image" is not contingent on their fairy tales, but rather on their outstanding literary canon, from which they would encounter more plausible "models of national ethos" ("Yours, Mine, or Ours?" 357). He continues: "France lacked—indeed, did not need—strong nationalistic voices such as those of the Brothers Grimm, who set the German precedent for folktale worship" ("Yours, Mine, or Ours?" 357), since France already had a strong national literary canon as defined by more than 500 years of literary production (indeed, French nationalism was built in large part through a long and largely stable literary history). In this light, it is perhaps not surprising that fairy tales in the French context have long been perceived as having strong ties to high literary forms.

For scholar Dorothy R. Thelander, it is precisely the socio-historical relationship between the French fairy tale and high French literary culture of the late seventeenth century that marks the French fairy tale so powerfully. Thelander notes that the narratives

of many preeminent French fairy tales were drawn from what might seem, given the oral roots of the genre, the unlikeliest of sources: not the illiterate, laborers and peasants, but the *précieux* (literary groups of mainly female writers) of the bourgeoisie and aristocracy, of which Perrault, his niece Marie-Jeanne L'Héritier de Villandon, and Madame d'Aulnoy were all members (468). In the French context, these first *contes de fées* were intended for an adult audience, and not children, due to the vulgarity of the language; Perrault alone collected/wrote tales for children and young adolescents (Thelander 468).

Even so, the origins of the French literary fairy tale were of course never solely literary. If the principal focus of the French upper-class authors was to entertain and educate themselves with their more mature and satirical literary versions of the fairy tales, such as those of Madame d'Aulnoy, the French fairy tale nevertheless also drew material from the oral stories of the functionally illiterate: peasants and laborers. Ruth Bottigheimer has nuanced our perception of “high literary culture” and its influence on the French fairy tale by studying the importance of peasant nursemaids on (fairy tale) storytelling in France during the 1500’s and 1600’s in her article concerning the print history of Straparola’s *Le piacevoli notti/ Les facetieuses nuictz du Seigneur François Straparole* in France. She sees not a monolithic expression of “high literary culture,” but instead, a mix of cultures, and argues for more detailed scholarly examination of the peasant nursemaids living in upper-class households because there was likely a distinct relationship, “a route [of] effective transmission [of fairy tales],” between them and the bourgeoisie and upper-class (“France’s First Fairy Tales” 19). The peasant storytellers of the *veillées* (evening gatherings) told their oral tales to the peasant nursemaids in upper-class residences, who then related these same stories to the upper-class authors

(Bottigheimer, “France’s First Fairy Tales” 18). Even in one of the earliest editions of Perrault’s *Contes*, the central figure illustrated in the frontispiece—a nursemaid—demonstrates this very link: a nursemaid (Bottigheimer 19). Arguably, Perrault himself recognized the literary tale’s oral origins and tremendous popularity. Notably, in choosing a nursemaid as the sole frontispiece decoration, he also clearly frames fairy-tale storytelling as a familiar activity for children, and quite possibly, a specifically familial activity too.

Perrault may have indeed wished to revolutionize the folk tales by making them more didactic but nevertheless maintaining their superstition and magic for children. Nevertheless, according to Zipes, this new focus on didacticism in fairy tales became a means for him to address the social and political concerns at that time, as well as the traditions and conduct of the upper class society. It was also a way for him to establish a progressive style of literature (Zipes, “Perrault” 379-80). The circumstances of publication of Perrault’s first volumes indicate his awareness of their controversial literary status; after publishing a prose version of “La Belle au bois dormant” in a serial called *Mercurie galant* in 1696, his subsequent, highly celebrated collection of (newly revised) fairy tales *Histoires ou contes du temps passé: Contes de ma Mère l’Oie* was published in 1697 under the pseudonym Pierre Perrault Darmancour (his son’s name) so as to avoid incurring further hostility and disagreement in the context of the “Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes”/ “Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns” (Zipes, “Perrault, Charles” 380; see also Seifert, *Sexuality* 59 and *passim*). He also supplemented these tales with “ironic verse morals” so as to permit his young readers (children and young “teenagers”) to reflect upon the “ambivalent meaning” of the tales (Zipes, “Perrault”

380). Notably, Perrault recognized in fairy tales their capacity for multiple meanings, as well as the child's capacity to grasp more than the literal level. In this model of reading, children themselves are capable of (and in fact, are required to be) active moral agents.

Literary transmission of the French literary fairy tale was extensive, with many or most of the tales becoming fully accessible to the public in print form over the course of several decades. Many of the fairy tales by Perrault, d'Aulnoy and other authors that appeared in *Mercurie galant* were included in reasonably priced separate volumes in the early eighteenth century, but their reputation in the upper-class literary circles soon waned with the increasing celebrity of oriental and erotic tales (Thelander 469), whose intended "new" audience was once again adults. Since the first (original) volumes became hard to acquire in subsequent decades, it was only with the reprinting of these same narratives in the *Cabinet des fées*, from 1785 to 1789, that copies of these fairy tales by Perrault and some by d'Aulnoy became more readily accessible to a larger (and less affluent) readership. Another common series of fairy tales with mass appeal was known as the *Bibliothèque bleue* and it became a dominant cultural icon: peddlers packed their sacks with the blue wrappers in which the booklets were encased (Thelander 469).

Concentrating now on the German context, the cultural sources from which this corpus of fairy tales commonly derive are certainly more oral in nature than in the French context where the dual relationship of the peasantry's oral narratives to the upper class' literary fairy tales predominates. Research on the historical progression of the Brothers Grimm's fairy tales is far more extensive than that of Perrault's fairy tales due in large part to their overwhelming popularity. When Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm began their compilation of *Märchen* or fairy tales in their homeland in 1805, in an effort to examine

and catalog German folk literature, they were young men of twenty-one, still university students, and, as Neumann says, “reacting to newly experienced stimuli” (25). Their intentions were overtly national (and nationalist) ones: to uphold German cultural heritage and to foster honor and respect for it in the general populace by creating a work that embodied “a German cultural spirit” as an explicit instrument of German unity against the French who invaded the country, most particularly in the Hessian (from which the Brothers Grimm originated) and Rhineland regions (Zipes, “German Obsession” 274). Maria Tatar elucidates further on the nationalistic impetus behind the Brothers’ fervor for the writing of the fairy tales in her brilliant study of the Grimms’ fairy tale narratives by noting that firstly, they wanted their tales to be part of the German literary canon and, secondly, they wanted uniquely German oral folk traditions to appear in books before they vanished (*Hard Facts* 11). Crucially, they also wanted both adults and children to enjoy their tales and derive benefit from them (22). The Grimms’ tales, like Perrault’s, thus also emphasize familial modes of transmission, albeit through largely oral means.

Citing the Grimms’ various influences for compiling the tales, Siegbert Praver, who discusses the importance of Friedrich Schlegel and Novalis in the German Romantic era in the introduction to his study of German Romanticism, enumerates the various forms the Grimms examined and interpreted: folk songs and folktales, the history of the German language and the German law, epics, lyrics, and visual arts from the Middle Ages, and art works of the Dürer period (12). In addition to what Praver itemizes, Zipes mentions that the brothers were certainly also influenced by the authors and lyricists of the early and late German Romantic era (*Frühromantiker* and *Spätromantiker*) like

Goethe, Novalis, Wackenroder, Tieck, Achim von Arnim, Clemens Bretano, and E. T. A. Hoffmann (“German Obsession” 280). For the early Romantics, like the Grimms themselves, the concept of “homeland” is equated to the concept of the “mother tongue”: the maternal language is that language spoken or written natively (and from the earliest days) by the author, who is also the “genius,” inspired by the feelings, emotions, and passions that the homeland evokes. But was the German fairy tale uniquely German in origin, and does it transmit a uniquely German voice? Many fairy tale scholars have pointed out that the *contes de fées* of the French authors from the classical period influenced the German Romantic authors who wrote *Märchen* (Seifert, “France” 182). Siegfried Neumann stresses that it was both the poet Bretano and Friedrich Karl von Seigny, a professor/legal historian at the University of Marburg, who had in part incited the Grimms’ curiosity in historical studies and “Old Germanic” literature, which, in turn, were probable influences on their fairy tale research (25). Nevertheless, one of the principle reasons for the Grimms’ quest for fairy tales was to document oral folkloric tradition for posterity, and in doing so, to remain faithful to their explicitly oral sources: storytellers (27).

The Grimms’ compilation of the fairy tales was in part intended for a scholarly audience, yet they also envisioned a specifically pedagogical purpose for the fairy tales: they believed the tales should also serve as explicit didactic learning tools for children. Although their pedagogical notions were strongly grounded in philology and linguistics, it is worth mentioning that the brothers provided an explanation for naming their seminal collection of fairy tales *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (*Children and Household Fairy Tales*), which was published in the second edition of 1819:

Children's tales (*Kindermärchen*) are told so that the thoughts and feelings of the heart can awaken and develop in their pure, mild light; but because their simple poetry can delight everyone and impart to them their truth and because they *stay in the home and are passed on from one generation to the next*, they are also called household tales (*Hausmärchen*). (qtd. in Tatar, *Hard Facts* 22; my emphasis)

Again, the emphasis on familial structures and modes of transmission is clear: The fairy tale is a distinctly important genre, in the Grimms' view, because not only is its subject matter and structure "simple," "true," and child-centric, but also because its intended mode of transmission is private, passed down from parents (or grandparents) to children. We might also note that the fairy tale's narrative emphasis on familial relationships creates a strong "mise-en-abîme" structure in which the very relationships under examination in the story are foregrounded by the way in which the text itself is typically transmitted.

Despite their "noble" intentions, the project that the Grimms intended to be both praiseworthy and pedagogically uplifting was given a caustic reception by fellow citizens. After the first volume of fairy tales appeared in 1812, the Brothers Grimm were compelled to revise their work due to the violent content and clumsy narrative style (as outlined in Neumann's article) and because of the myriad of objections from the German public (as cited in Tatar's book *Hard Facts*). According to Gunhild Ginschel (*Der junge Jacob Grimm: 1805-1819* 230-1) and Manfred Lemmer (*Grimms Märchen in ursprünglicher Gestalt* 107-16), the Brothers Grimm were merely amateurs and the writing style of some of the stories were inelegant and therefore, sales of the first nine

hundred copies of the first volume were unprofitable for quite a number of years (qtd. in Neumann 26-7). Contemporaries of the Grimms, like Johann Gustav Büsching, berated the 1812 volume in the “Wiener Literatur-Zeitung” (1813), saying that the brothers “once again [saw] themselves the sole source of salvation” and that they were oblivious to the fact that their fairy tales were derived from Italian and French tales, which made them “less German” (qtd. in Tatar *Hard Facts* 15). Even in his review in “Die Musen,” Friedrich Rühs said the volume contained “the most pathetic and tasteless material imaginable”—including passages of disturbing violence between parent and child (qtd. in Tatar, *Hard Facts* 15).

Bearing these acerbic critiques in mind, the Brothers Grimm sought to correct their oversights for the second volume by seeking to develop an “ideal fairy-tale form” that only an ingenious storyteller or “reteller” could narrate and a proficiently and superbly written narrative (Neumann 28). When the second volume of fairy tales was published in 1815, the child-focused critiques began again: Friedrich Rühs said in a review that the material would still be disturbing for children (qtd. in Tatar *Hard Facts* 15). So, once again, the second volume of fairy tales was reviewed and underwent a huge transformation with numerous modifications for the second edition that appeared in 1819 (Neumann 28). Tatar adds that of the two brothers, Wilhelm Grimm was more willing to revise the tales and delete anything that he deemed unsuitable for children, so that the book could teach children morals, values, lessons on life, and manners—becoming in short, an *Erziehungsbuch* for children (*Hard Facts* 18). The brothers finally obtained success with the 1825 “Small Edition” of the fairy tales, which targeted an audience of children specifically, and contained fifty carefully chosen tales and seven illustrations

(Neumann 29). Subsequently, a large edition was published, as well as more editions with more revisions of *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*; the seventh and final edition appeared in 1857 (Neumann 29).

Historical critique of individual fairy tale collections, such as the Grimms', finds an interesting parallel in modern scholarship: scholars and critics alike have written much about how the children are influenced by fairy tales, and in particular, those by Charles Perrault and the Brothers Grimm. Bruno Bettelheim touched on this area in his preeminent 1975 psychoanalytic exposition entitled *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*. He argues that a child looks to fairy tales to comprehend and handle problems in life and to ascertain his or her own moral character, but for this to occur, fairy tales "must state an existential dilemma briefly and pointedly" (*Enchantment* 8). The fairy tale must be straightforward, devoid of any extraneous details and with clear, polarized delineations of the characters (they must be either good or evil) in order to procure the child's understanding of personality, problem, and the differences between good and bad, since a child cannot identify "ambiguities" in a personality or a problem just yet (Bettelheim, *Enchantment* 8-9). Even Metzger further underscores this perspective: "tales possess a degree of independent epistemological validity, imparting a knowledge of the self and the world that would otherwise be inaccessible" (7). In this schema, the child is like a "tabula rasa," and from these tales, the child conceptualizes different models of "ideal" conduct in terms of morality for himself or herself.

Although many studies focus specifically on the child's reception of fairy tales, few have considered whether the (step)child in the tales is more aware or more equipped with a knowledge of "moral authority" and "correct" conduct than the (step)parent. This

thesis will consider the (step)parent/ (step)child relationship motif in the French and German fairy tales by Perrault and the Grimms. More specifically, it will analyze the genre's moral depiction of children and, in particular, will examine the ways in which the narrative voice constructs the moral authority of the child (both as intradiegetic character *and* as extradiegetic reader), while simultaneously diminishing the moral authority of the parent as intradiegetic character. It will contain two main chapters, an introduction, and a brief conclusion. The introduction has already provided a succinct synopsis of the history of the fairy tale as a genre, explored some of the historical significance and particularities of the French and German oral and literary traditions, offered a brief examination of the historical contexts of Charles Perrault's *Histoires ou contes du temps passé: Contes de ma Mère l'Oie* and the Brothers Grimm's *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, and provided historical overview of their reception as didactic texts—all bolstered by secondary sources from literary theorists such as Lüthi, Zipes, Tatar, Neumann, and Bottigheimer.

The thesis will then take as its fundamental point the idea that the connection between (step)parent and (step)child in the fairy tales serves as a microcosm for the larger social world, and that the microcosm's strong dualism is an important element of its composition. The first chapter will specifically concentrate on morality in the *Little Red Riding Hood* variants *Le Petit Chaperon rouge* (from *Contes* [1697]) and *Rotkäppchen* (from the 1837 edition) by both Perrault and the Grimms respectively. In doing so, the thesis will provide a detailed overview of various critics who deal with this subject, and highlight the ways in which fairy tale scholarship has approached the fairy tale genre's capacity to serve as pedagogical model of morality for the child reader in those tales from the French and German traditions. The second chapter will then take as case study the

*Cinderella* versions *Cendrillon ou la petite pantoufle de verre* (from Perrault's *Contes* [1697]) and *Aschenputtel* (from the Grimms' 1837 edition). In doing so, it will also present a comprehensive outline of several critics who address the antagonistic and dualistic (step)parent/ (step)child relationship in the French and German fairy tale variants, and again illustrate how fairy tale scholarship has approached morality in these literary tales as didactic model for the child. The chosen fairy tales and their variants are examined because they are among the most iconic in the Western fairy tale canon, remain among the most popular (and popularized) in the "modern" (post-eighteenth century) Western childhood experience, and most importantly, are among the most studied in fairy tale scholarship. All discussion of the French and German fairy tales' didacticism in terms of morality is presented through the lens of the (step)parent/ (step)child relationship as structuring element. Both main chapters will engage the arguments of Bettelheim, Hannon, Seifert, Betts, Laruccia, Thelander, Bottigheimer, Tatar, and Metzger. The thesis will also suggest that if, from the (step)parent character's perspective, the (step)child is deemed inadequate, vulnerable, and incapable of functioning rationally (realistically) in thought and behavior/action, the (step)child's character, in turn, is acutely aware of this injustice. Thus, despite the clear dominance of the (step)parent in terms of physical and social power, the (step)child character is almost always framed in a position of clear "moral authority" over the (step)parent. With respect to illustrations and fairy tales, the print narratives have from their beginnings been accompanied by illustrations depicting significant events in the tales. From time to time, the thesis will make reference to illustrations from these tales; nevertheless, we acknowledge that the images frequently cited in numerous post-modern critical studies in

fairy tale scholarship are not from the same time period as the literary texts themselves. Because of the similarities between illustrations, however, we will include brief reference to them for their pedagogical value; they steer the readers' attention to crucial moments and essential elements of the narratives. The conclusion will provide a concise recapitulation of the thesis.

## CHAPTER 1

### Perrault's *Le Petit Chaperon rouge* and the Grimms' *Rotkäppchen*

Even though most French literary fairy tales were originally intended for a specific adult audience of the late seventeenth century (the *précieux*), according to Christopher Betts in the introduction to his translation of Perrault's *Contes*, the delineation between folk-tale (adults as audience) and fairy tale (children as audience) was still not as transparent as in the modern period since both types were read and enjoyed by both adults and children alike (Betts xxii-xxiii). Adults now who re-read these tales in order to recapture or reacquaint themselves with this "pleasurable entertainment" of childhood, "concerning [them]selves with meaning sufficiently in order to enjoy the narrative, as the child does," are often astounded to discover the sexual undertones and stunning brutality of the tales (Betts xi), which were not necessarily evident to them as children. Twentieth-century fairy tale scholars who favor a psychoanalytic perspective, such as Bruno Bettelheim and Michael Metzger, share the perspective that children who read and re-read these tales perceive them as "autotelic as a lyric poem, apparently existing only itself in a world of its own devising, a kaleidoscopic construct of the real and the magical" (Metzger 8). Bettelheim even suggests further that the fairy tales should be read to children in their original form (i.e., literary tales derived from the oral sources) because they (the fairy tales) act as "major agents of [the child's] socialization" (*Enchantment* 19, 24). In other words, after reading these tales, the child learns how to

comport himself or herself in society by utilizing these tales as guidance.

Perrault himself seemed to have had the moral instrumentation of the fairy tale in the forefront of his mind as he worked on his tales, arduously seeking to purify them by purging “[their] ribald grotesqueries” and reconfiguring and readapting the events in the tales from the earliest peasant ones so as to demonstrate his famed didacticism in “a rational discursive mode [with] moral economy” (Tatar, *Classic* 4). By inserting explicit *moralités* (short explanatory morals in verse form) at the end of the fairy tales, he wanted young readers (children and young teenagers) to reflect upon the tales’ meaning and significance. Arguably, the moral didacticism of the fairy tale for children was a central objective for Perrault—not surprising, given the classical age’s focus on the dual goals of “plaire et instruire” [“to please and to teach”] as the explicit goals of all literary production seeking to meet literary standards as set forth by the “anciens.”

On the other hand, the Grimms’ stated objectives for the fairy tales were different from Perrault’s. Although they, like Perrault, favored a didactic approach to the compilation of their tales, they were nevertheless also guided by the Romantic insistence on the community-based oral authority of the tale as the “voice” of the people, and thus attempted to “capture the pure, artless simplicity of [the provincial storytellers and their oral authority of fairy tales] not yet tainted by the corrupting influence of civilization” for literary posterity (Tatar, *Classic* xi). Victor Laruccia’s structural analysis of *Little Red Riding Hood* highlights this dual goal of the Grimms and also the crucial function of the morality itself in the fairy tales by both Perrault and the Grimms. Laruccia’s study is also quite useful in drawing sharper contrast between the concept of morality employed in both sets of tales. While the morality in the Grimms’ tales is to be understood throughout

the fairy tale narrative, the morality in Perrault's tales is both present in the narrative and also clearly positioned after each tale. Reading *Little Red Riding Hood* in terms of semiotics and behavior and framing his notions and arguments via other structuralists such as Claude Lévi-Strauss, Laruccia posits:

In the case [both versions] of this tale . . . the moral puts the narrative outside itself and places it in the domain of behavior: it is didactic. A relationship is created between behavior and meaning, a relationship between the both the significance of the act—social context—and the connection of the subject and the other—psychological context.

(532)

Therefore, the moral and the literary context are complementary to each other and form a symbiotic relationship that is crucial to understanding the fairy tales and their teachings. Importantly, Laruccia sees this as valid for all variants of the tale.

Tatar, on the other hand, disagrees with Laruccia's viewpoint. In her critical exploration of the fairy tale genre and its relation to culture, society, and history, Tatar staunchly disapproves of any analysis of Perrault's *Le petit chaperon rouge* and the Grimms' *Rotkäppchen* that ignores earlier versions. She believes that Perrault's and the Grimms' versions lose the beauty and fascination of the original oral ones that featured "burlesque" and playfully erotic qualities and instead rely on the "pedagogy of fear" and overly bombastic violence in order to teach children morals (*Classic* 6, 9-10). Tatar notes that folklorist Paul Delarue may have located an 1885 Gallic *Little Red Riding Hood* peasant oral variant from Brittany (*Classic* 3-4). Called *The Story of Grandmother*, this tale was possibly faithful to an oral tradition that preceded the Perrauldian version itself

(Tatar, *Classic* 3-4). This oral tale, documented in his *Les Contes merveilleux de Perrault et la tradition populaire* (*Classic* 10-11), describes Little Red Riding Hood, who, at her grandmother's house, unknowingly drinks "wine" and feasts on "meat" (which were actually her grandmother's blood and flesh), gradually undresses in front of the wolf per the animal's savage, predatory bidding, gets into bed with the wolf, and ultimately escapes by telling the wolf that she needs to go outside to relieve herself (*Classic* 3, 10-11). According to Delarue, the existence of this version strongly suggests that in readjusting the tale, Perrault chose to excise undesirable elements of cannibalism, immodesty, double entendres, and denoting of bodily functions, and further supplemented the morality at the end of the tale, so as to not astound and distress the literary society at that time (qtd. in Tatar *Classic* 4). Tatar also argues that these changes remove much of the interest of the "original" tale. Interestingly, the Grimms also chose to omit many of these same elements in their version of the tale in their attempts to embed teaching lessons for the child characters and for the child readers (Tatar, *Classic* 5).

As Zohar Shavit discusses in his essay on the concepts of child and childhood in Western children's literature (an essay which makes extensive reference to the *Little Red Riding Hood* literary variants of Perrault and the Brothers Grimm), childhood is largely a twentieth-century construct, a period marked strongly by adults' concerns over the physical, psychological, and sexual development of the child. In numerous ways, childhood is deemed the most crucial phase of a person's life. With the popularization of psychoanalytic thought, it became commonplace to assume that the adult's actions could be deciphered by an examination of his or her childhood, whereas two hundred years ago, the notion of childhood was non-existent (131; see also Philippe Ariès' seminal work

*L'enfant et la vie familiale sous l'Ancien Régime*). In tandem with the new conceptions of childhood were the effects of modernization in the West: Compared to the twentieth century, children, as well as the adults, of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were not shielded from the macabre realities of life. Tatar herself outlines the omnipresence of corporeal displays of death and pain brought about by nature or social justice, such as “decaying corpses, decapitated torsos, mutilated limbs, diseased parts, faces disfigured by illness—children [and adults] were rarely spared the sight of physical suffering or of the body in a state of decomposition” (*Culture* 47). In the premodern era, there were also natural forces promoting the visibility of death: plagues, famines, and infanticide (Tatar, *Culture* 47). Philip Lewis’s critical analysis of Perrault’s fairy tales through the lens of seventeenth-century French culture, literature, history, and ideology also pinpoints historical cases of cannibalism, most likely motivated by famine in the sixteenth century and the Middle Ages, which may well have heightened people’s fears of being eaten during the seventeenth century, and served as fodder for oral folktales (171). Little surprise then that the extreme intensity of violence and undertones of fear which surrounded children and adults in their daily lives found strong parallel in the vivid descriptions punctuating Perrault’s and the Grimms’ literary variants.

In both *Le petit chaperon rouge* and *Rotkäppchen* by Perrault and the Brothers Grimm respectively, narrative elements, like the repetition of interrogative phrases, the wolf in disguise, and even the protagonist herself—a young girl in an early developmental stage of her life—appeal to small children (young child readers). Both versions first outline Little Red Riding Hood’s outer appeal and physical attractiveness: “Il était une fois une petite fille de Village, la plus jolie qu’on eût su voir” (Perrault

*Contes* 23) (“Once upon a time, in a village, there lived a little girl, the prettiest you could wish to see” [Betts 99]); “Es war einmal eine kleine süße Dirne, die hatte jedermann lieb, der sie nur ansah . . .” (Grimm *Märchen* 133) (“Once upon a time, there was a dear little girl. If you set eyes on her, you could not but love her” [Tatar, *Classic* 13]). Adult and child readers are also introduced to an entirely female familial environment: Little Red Riding Hood, her mother and grandmother. There are no males present to warn them of the dangers of men.

In both *Little Red Riding Hood* versions, the text frames the portending danger to the young protagonist whose mother is sending her to deliver food and drink to her ill grandmother who lives in the forest. In Perrault’s version, the mother herself does not warn her daughter of the dangers in the forest and Little Red Riding Hood herself does not sense this danger: even after meeting the wolf in the forest, she lingers around the forest for quite a while, picking flowers and enjoying nature (Perrault *Contes* 23-4; Betts 99; (Grimm *Märchen* 134; Tatar, *Classic* 14). Importantly, although Little Red Riding Hood herself does not comprehend the urgency of the situation, the young readers do. This is in part because the narrative voice gives them significant information, explaining overtly what Little Red Riding Hood herself does not know: “la pauvre enfant, qui ne savait pas qu’il est dangereux de s’arrêter à écouter un Loup, lui dit: ‘Je vais voir ma Mère-grand. . .’” (“the poor child, who did not know that it is dangerous to stay and listen to a wolf, told him: ‘I am going to see my grandmother. . .’”) (Perrault *Contes* 23; Betts 99)/ “Rotkäppchen aber wußte nicht was das für ein böses Tier war, und fürchtete sich nicht vor ihm” (“Little Red Cap had no idea what a wicked beast he was, and so she wasn’t in the least afraid of him”) (Grimm *Märchen* 134; Tatar, *Classic* 14). Hence, the

child readers of these stories become active participants, and are placed in a structural position of judgement. The task of the reader, young or otherwise, is to decide the judiciousness of Little Red Riding Hood's actions and, by extension, determine how to act judiciously for himself or herself.

An adult reader nowadays might find the actions of the mother atypical or even imprudent; why send a child into the expansive forest by herself, susceptible and green to society's dangers? Yet one must not think of this situation with a postmodern mindset, where societal perils are far more widely diffused and insidious. Yes, *Le petit chaperon rouge* does not know beforehand that it is unwise to stop and talk to a wolf (Perrault *Contes* 23; Betts 99), but conceivably, the mother has sent her child all alone in the forest to see her grandmother on a regular basis and has had no reason to advise the child of these particular types of menaces. The unseen masculine presence of woodcutters and hunters in the forest is noteworthy too: it is what explicitly deters the wolf from harming Little Red Riding Hood in the "public" space of the open forest.

On the other hand, Rotkäppchen's mother does caution her child on safety and other aspects of social deportment (to not wander from the path, to remember her manners when seeing her grandmother, and to not meddle in her grandmother's affairs or snooping around her house) (Grimm *Märchen* 133-4; Tatar, *Classic* 14). After hearing her words of warning, her child in turn promises: "ich will schon alles ausrichten" ("I'll do just as you say") (Grimm *Märchen* 134; Tatar, *Classic* 14). This particular scene implicitly represents Rotkäppchen being aware of (knowing beforehand) the dangers of the forest because, as Tatar advises, "prohibitions lead to violations, and the consequences of these violations are generally spelled out once the prohibition has been

stated” (*Culture* 36), which in sharp contrast to *Le petit chaperon rouge*’s blissful ignorance of the looming threats of the forest, since her mother has not thought to caution her. Subsequently and inevitably in fairy tale logic, the forest becomes the site of Rotkäppchen’s disobedience of her mother’s instructions: Off to her grandmother’s house and carrying a small piece of cake and wine (Grimm *Märchen* 134; Tatar, *Classic* 14), she of course tells the wolf where she is going and all that she is going to do, thus “court[ing] her own downfall” (Tatar, *Classic* 6). Also being asked to stand in as a maternal presence on her own mother’s behalf, *Le petit chaperon rouge* is off to her grandmother’s house in the woods with a bun and a little pot of butter (Perrault *Contes* 23; Betts 99), but she has not been given the information she needs to make sound decisions.

If *Little Red Riding Hood* functions as a domestic, and domesticating, presence, what does the wolf as the other half of the “social encounter” represent? In most illustrations from the nineteenth century, the wolf appears very well-dressed—not only in disguise, hiding his true identity, but taking on the appearance of a wealthy man. He meets *Little Red Riding Hood* in a social encounter, two people meeting in the forest, seemingly as equals. *Little Red Riding Hood* finds nothing odd about the wolf in this context, and is unafraid because she does not know he is a “méchant Loup” (“wicked Wolf”) (Perrault *Contes* 25; Betts 103)/ “böses Tier” (“wicked beast”) (Grimm *Märchen* 133; Tatar, *Classic* 14). We must note that in reading *Le petit chaperon rouge* to a child, the parent can in effect reconcile the negligence of the fictional mother character who never related to her own child the dangers of the world. Additionally, the child reader is positioned as active judge.

Continuing with the storyline, the wolf consciously and calculatingly tricks Little Red Riding Hood into taking a longer path to her grandmother's house and decides to do his crime within the private confines of her grandmother's house because he knows that woodcutters and hunters are present in the forest (Perrault *Contes* 23-5; Betts 99-103; Grimm *Märchen* 134-6; Tatar, *Classic* 14-15). In the Grimms' version, the narrative tells us that the crime will be even more gratifying for the wolf because he will have both the "junge zarte Mädchen"/ "Bissen" ("tender young thing"/ "dainty morsel") and the old lady (Grimm *Märchen* 134; Tatar, *Classic* 14). Not surprisingly, in most illustrations from the nineteenth century, the artists pay careful attention to the body language of the wolf that is ominously close to and circles around his prey, ready to pounce. The eyes of Little Red Riding Hood's grandmother in these same nineteenth-century illustrations project such abject fear since she, unlike Little Red Riding Hood, intuitively knows that she is the wolf's victim.

However, the wolf's true longing is reserved for the young maiden and not the old lady, which can be seen in the adjectives he utters to describe his young victim such as "junge zarte Mädchen" and "Bissen" ("tender young thing"/ "dainty morsel") (Grimm *Märchen* 134; Tatar, *Classic* 14)—adjectives that are practically rapacious. Tatar (*Culture* 38), Lewis (*Visual* 171), and Warner (*Mother Goose* 17) all subscribe to the interpretation that this fairy tale underscores masculine appetite, and the violence that sometimes might accompany it. Tatar believes that throughout the texts of both versions, Perrault and the Grimms frequently reconceptualize the young heroine as "sybaritic" (epicurean/ voluptuary) (*Culture* 38). Thus, for instance, when Little Red Riding Hood questions her "grandmother" (the wolf in disguise) on her outward appearance (Perrault

*Contes* 25; Betts 101-3; Grimm *Märchen* 135; Tatar, *Classic* 15), the description of his behavior emphasizes his body's "instrumental [and animalistic, primal] functions—grasping, running, listening, looking, eating—precisely the kind of physical activities of a beast of prey bent on satisfying its appetite" (Lewis 171).

Warner's perspective (*Mother Goose* 17) aligns with Tatar's (*Culture* 38) and Lewis' (*Visual* 171) viewpoints, especially in her study focusing primarily on the contrasting sociohistoricity of the *Mother Goose* figure in Perrault's (and his niece Mlle. Marie-Jeanne L'Héritier de Villandon's) fairy tales with the *Mother Goose* figure as symbol of women's lore, speech, and language. In this essay, Warner substantiates her perspectives with a curious commentary on the wolf's atrocious acts of consumption, which she explicitly likens to the oral transmission of tales:

There is a possible reading—among many possible readings—of [the *Little Red Riding Hood* variants]: like the children who grow up in the traditional lore and language, Little Red Riding Hood is incorporated [into the Wolf's body], the lineal and female descendant of her grandmother who has herself been ingested by the wolf beforehand, and the wolf does not regurgitate either of them. The wolf to whom they are thus assimilated could represent the indigenous inhabitants of the countryside, hairy, wild, unkempt, untrammled by imported acculturation, eating raw foods and meat, a native beast in the native landscape, where a specific age-old corpus of homegrown literature flourishes and is passed on. (*Mother Goose* 17)

Therefore, the food imagery in both fairy tale versions, though perhaps more clearly

evident in the Grimms' than in Perrault's, functions as a textual prompt signaling danger. However, whereas the Grimms weave in these cues throughout the entire fairy tale narrative, Perrault's cues are primarily found in the moral at the end of the story.

There is another textual cue in the fairy tale versions by Perrault and the Grimms that indicates danger. Whenever she goes to see her grandmother, Little Red Riding Hood presumably feels a sense of tranquility and security, but on this visit, the ambience is tainted. The wolf takes advantage of her susceptibility, defenselessness, and love for her grandmother when he disguises himself with her grandmother's clothing and takes on her form, affectations, mannerisms, and speech (Perrault *Contes* 25; Betts 101; Grimm *Märchen* 135; Tatar, *Classic* 15). The wolf even asks Le petit chaperon rouge to come to bed and she complies with his request (Perrault *Contes* 25; Betts 101). In numerous illustrations again, she has the same perplexed look as in her first meeting with the wolf, but now her movements and eyes are filled with trepidation and dread. However, in the Grimms' adaptation, Rotkäppchen—attentive to her intuition—has her suspicions as soon as she enters the house and feels that the serene milieu is also corrupted. Even her cherished grandmother's home appears strange to her: "Ei, du mein Gott, wie ängstlich wird mirs heut zu Mut, und bin sonst so gerne bei der Großmutter!" ("Oh my goodness, I'm usually so glad to be at grandmother's, but today I feel so nervous") (*Märchen* 135; Tatar, *Classic* 15). This shows that Little Red Riding Hood comes slowly to the realization that she is in danger. It is also noteworthy that Rotkäppchen senses that she is in danger more quickly than in Le petit chaperon rouge, where it is only her face-to-whisker contact with the Wolf's strange demeanor and responses which triggers her unease.

At the end of both versions, *Le petit chaperon rouge* and *Rotkäppchen* suffer the same initial act of voracity, but nevertheless have different ultimate fates. In Perrault's tale, the wolf devours her, along with her grandmother, and both die (Perrault *Contes* 24-5; Betts 101). In the Grimms' tale, the wolf ravenously eats both her and her grandmother, but the hunter saves them due to the wolf's indiscretion (he overhears his postprandial loud snoring) (*Märchen* 136; Tatar, *Classic* 15). Cutting the animal open, the hunter extracts the two from the wolf's abdomen, and *Rotkäppchen* then cunningly places heavy stones in his stomach, so that the animal will drown when the hunter throws him in the river (Grimm *Märchen* 136; Tatar, *Classic* 15). *Rotkäppchen* thus participates in ridding the community of the danger represented by the wolf, and also effectively demonstrates a keen comprehension of the symbolic connection between metaphors of eating/devouring and correct social comportment: The wolf's social indiscretion has been richly and poetically rewarded. For many critics (Tatar, Warner, Zipes), the hunter in *Rotkäppchen* is further linked to narratives of eating through his function as a dual figure: both as a synecdoche of "masculine civilisation who restores . . . life" (Warner, *Mother Goose* 18), a figure who rescues and protects Little Red Riding Hood and her grandmother, and as the embodiment of oral folkloric customs. In this mode of interpretation, the hunter could be said to represent the largely rural population, who must save the innocent from the plundering social practices of metropolis, as personified by the wolf (Warner, *Mother Goose* 18). Taking this idea further, could this hunter figure have also been intended to symbolize the Brothers Grimm themselves and their "documentary" practices? Might the Grimms' tales reflect a wider cultural discourse on the importance of documenting socio-political concerns of the time, as well as traditions and conduct of

the higher classes and of the peasantry? As Warner notes, the Grimms' seem to strive for a more realistic representation of living conditions among the lower classes (Warner, *Mother Goose* 17-18).

If the Grimms seem to portray class divisions somewhat more realistically than Perrault, what are we to make of the violence enacted upon Little Red Riding Hood in both versions? What about the fact that no formal justice occurs? Here, Tatar offers an interesting theory. She surmises that both Perrault and the Brothers Grimm are so focused on communicating to the readers a moral message, that the heroine is held accountable for the violence to which she is subjugated (*Classic* 6). As Tatar says:

Exemplary stories, like cautionary tales, combine didacticism with melodrama to create powerful dramatic tableaux. The spectacles of suffering we witness in cautionary tales are often excessively cruel and unusual, but they are usually embedded in a brutal context where the *lex talionis* [retributive justice] prevails. Far more disconcerting than the severe punishments visited on transgressors of explicit or implicit interdictions are the penalties imposed on those who adhere to the spirit and letter of what one would imagine to be 'good behavior' [i.e., behaving morally correct. (Tatar, *Culture* 42)

Interestingly, this notion of "good behavior" is further thrown into question in *Rotkäppchen*, by the disastrous results of her mother's admonishment to not meddle in her grandmother's business and to not ask too many questions of her. By demanding that her daughter behave "correctly" in this way, the wolf gains too much protection to accomplish his vile deeds. This becomes part of Tatar's overall argument: "In the case of

*Le petit chaperon rouge* and *Rotkäppchen*, it entails being compassionate, obliging, and helpful towards everybody, including mothers, grandmothers, and wolves” (Tatar, *Culture* 42)—and clearly, such compassion is not always well placed.

This narrative acknowledgment of the danger inherent in the mother’s advice, leads to one vital conclusion: Perrault and the Brothers Grimm do not hold the young protagonists liable for the violence to which she is subjected. Instead, they actually place *Le petit chaperon rouge* and *Rotkäppchen* in a position of “moral authority” over the wolf, and ultimately find the heroines innocent of the minor infraction of disobeying their mothers. Though both protagonists may be regarded as initially impulsive, vulnerable, and failing to follow the logical discrepancies they encounter, *Le Petit Chaperon Rouge* should not be blamed for her horrifyingly violent death, nor is it *Rotkäppchen*’s fault that she is swallowed greedily by the wolf, along with her grandmother, despite her clear disregard for her mother’s warnings. This is because the third-person (adult) narrative voice in both Perrault’s and the Grimm’s variants, a subtle presence throughout the tale, possesses a wider vision of what transpires, and constantly gives the reader indications of the protagonist’s innocence: “la pauvre enfant [. . .] ne savait pas qu’il est dangereux de s’arrêter à écouter un Loup . . .” (“the poor child [. . .] did not know that it was dangerous to stay and listen to a wolf . . .”) (Perrault *Contes* 23; Betts 99)/ “*Rotkäppchen* aber wußte nicht was das für ein böses Tier war, und fürchtete sich nicht vor ihm” (“Little Red Cap had no idea what a wicked beast he was, so she wasn’t in the least afraid of him”) (Grimm *Märchen* 134; Tatar, *Classic* 14). In the case of Perrault’s version, another element which emphasizes the relative innocence of young girls and their moral superiority, is the explicit verse *morale* serving as capstone for the entire tale.

We turn now to the morality present in both fairy tale versions by Perrault and the Brothers Grimm. While the main narrative of Perrault's *Le Petit Chaperon rouge* is geared towards children, it is the *moralité* at the end that is geared towards young teenaged girls. In other words, Perrault's tale contains warnings appropriate to two distinct ages: earlier childhood and prepubescence/ young adolescence. Strongly influenced by his predecessor Boccaccio and senior contemporary La Fontaine in terms of subject and form respectively, Perrault nevertheless frowned upon—and consequently eliminated from his narratives—their implicit criticism of women as depraved (because of their supposed possession of extreme sexual appetite) (Betts xvii). We therefore oppose Betts' viewpoint that Perrault's version is *singularly* directed to adults as “a brief and witty equivalent of our Freudian interpretations” (xxiii), and instead find that in Perrault's *Le Petit Chaperon rouge*, perhaps unlike the Grimms' *Rotkäppchen*, is explicitly intended for children as well as young adult readers. Perrault's morale is what demarcates the two intended audiences, for the morale imparts explicit advice to young, susceptible girls on the danger of encounters with men, i.e. *loups* (“wolves”). It is noteworthy that in French, the masculine noun *le loup* can also designate a skirt-chaser or a man who cannot be trusted.

Perrault's moral could not be clearer: *le loup* in the main portion of the fairy tale narrative must be interpreted in a particular light: He is not merely a wild beast of the forest looking to voraciously fill his stomach; he is also a certain type of man (“wellspoken seducer[s]” with “metropolitan manners” who are truly “urbane, not rustic” [Warner, *Mother Goose* 18]) and against whom all young ladies need to defend themselves and their honor:

On voit ici que de jeunes enfants,  
Surtout de jeunes filles  
Belles, bien faites, et gentilles,  
Font très mal d'écouter toute sorte de gens,  
Et que ce n'est pas chose étrange,  
S'il en est tant que le loup mange.  
Je dis le loup, car tous les loups  
Ne sont pas de la même sorte ;  
Il en est d'une humeur accorte,  
Sans bruit, sans fiel et sans courroux,  
Qui privés, complaisants et doux,  
Suivent les jeunes Demoiselles  
Jusque dans les maisons, jusque dans les ruelles ;  
Mais hélas ! qui ne sait que ces Loups doucereux,  
De tous les Loups sont les plus dangereux. (Perrault *Contes* 26)

Young children, as this tale would show,  
And mainly pretty girls with charm,  
Do wrong and often come to harm  
In letting those they do not know  
Stay talking to them when they meet.  
And if they don't do as they ought,  
It's no surprise that some are caught  
By wolves who take them off to eat.

I call them wolves, but you will find  
That some are not the savage kind,  
Not howling, ravening or raging;  
Their manners see, instead, engaging,  
They're softly spoken and discreet.  
Young ladies whom they talk to in the street  
They follow to their homes and through the hall,  
And upstairs to their rooms; when they're there  
They're not as friendly as they might appear:  
These are the most dangerous wolves of all. (Betts 103)

By placing the morality separate from the narrative, Perrault permits child readers and young adolescent readers to grasp an important moral: the need to be vigilant of specific social dangers (situations and people) that might lead to physical danger—in fact, the very explicit danger of being alone in one's room with a young man. At best, one's honor might be compromised; at worst, there could be a sexual encounter which, even if desired by the young lady, might lead to such disastrous consequences as pregnancy out of wedlock.

What parallel might we find here between Perrault's morale and the narrative of the fairy tale itself? In the body of the narrative, the wolf gains access to domestic (protected) female and (and familial) space through trickery, and then abuses that privilege of entry. This is exactly what the *moralité* warns the reader that young adolescent women have to fear from any man, soft-spoken or otherwise. As we have

mentioned, Perrault's presentation of women, especially when compared to those of his literary predecessors Boccaccio and La Fontaine, is much more sympathetic: young girls are apparently at heart virtuous, loving, sweet-natured, and obliging, and thus must be explicitly cautioned not to place their self-worth on outward signs or appearances, or on worldly externalities like physical attractiveness. Instead, they must be prudent and circumspect, and act judiciously when they meet menacing characters or when they need to resolve harmful situations. Interestingly, Perrault's version of the tale, with its extended didactic morale, thus seems less "shocking" than the Grimms' version in which the narrator practically jolts the reader back to reality by stating forcefully (and a bit threateningly): "du willst dein Lebtag nicht wieder allein vom We gab in den Wald laufen, wenn dirs die Mutter verboten hat" ("Never again will you stray from the path and go into the woods, when your mother has forbidden it" [Grimm *Märchen* 136; Tatar, *Classic* 16]).

Bettelheim posits in his seminal psychoanalytical study of fairy-tales that these narratives aptly exemplify the individual's (or the child's) internal struggles in the context of larger societal conflict in order to present resolutions to these struggles which will teach the child to function appropriately in society—for ultimately, the child will, in theory, have to contend with these conflicts in order to achieve full adulthood (*Enchantment* 5). Metzger affirms Bettelheim's point by declaring that "the fairy tale is capable of inducing in the hearer [or the young reader] a compelling sense of identification with its personæ, an unquestioning assent to the justness of its narrative process, a readiness, indeed, to change his [or her] own way of being" (8). Through this process, the child will understand moral reasoning and acquire a moral upbringing.

Ultimately the child reader comprehends what is written and taught in the tales, and learns to incorporate them into life itself because the tales aid them to use their own morals in whatever situation (horrible or otherwise) that they themselves will undoubtedly encounter in their daily lives.

Both Perrault's *Le petit chaperon rouge* and the Grimms' *Rotkäppchen* juxtapose the fanciful vagaries of the child's imagination with the substantiality of the moral authority of the child character of the fairy tales, in a curious reversal of the typical societal functions of both child and parent in which the child assents to adult authority, and the parent is the child's primary source of protection and nurturing. Here, as in so many other fairy tales, the roles are reversed. Red Riding Hood's mother is not presented as having moral authority, and in fact, both versions put the child (character and reader) in a structural position of moral authority over the parent characters due to the way in which the (adult) narrative voice functions. Although both Perrault and the Brothers Grimm employ different structural techniques in their tales—Perrault's separate morale; the Grimms' explicit narrative intervention and proscription (“du willst ... nicht”)— they achieve similar overall goals.

## CHAPTER 2

### Perrault's *Cendrillon* and the Grimms' *Aschenputtel*

As we have seen in Chapter One, both Perrault and the Brothers Grimm took into account the pedagogical dimensions of the fairy tale as genre while revising subsequent volumes for publication. They were also, arguably, keenly aware of how uniquely well-positioned the fairy tale as genre was for discussing the complexities of familial life. Indeed, in many of the tales, it is the structure of the inner family (the child/parent pairing) that serves as the initial point of conflict and by working through familial conflict, the child protagonist is able to articulate a new self.

Of all the fairy tales in Perrault's and the Grimms' collections respectively, few exemplify familial (and step-familial) relationships as concisely and fittingly as *Cendrillon ou la petite pantoufle de verre* by Perrault and *Aschenputtel* by the Brothers Grimm. Cinderella of course features a protagonist who is a child by a first marriage, and who suffers mightily at the hands of her step-mother and step-sisters. The historical accuracy of such familial tension is undeniable; throughout the entire early modern period, children of an original marriage were often seen as the explicit economic rivals of any new step-siblings or half-siblings (see Philippe Ariès' influential work *L'enfant et la vie familiale sous l'Ancien Régime*). Both Perrault's and the Grimms' versions of the tale emphasize this historic truth, but differ markedly in their endings: Whereas *Cendrillon* forgives her step-mother and step-sisters and even integrates them into the formal court

culture of which she is now a part, Aschenputtel's step-sisters are blinded as they attempt to ingratiate themselves into Aschenputtel's new royal life. In this *Aschenputtel* version, the sisters are specifically blinded by birds. Each variant of this fairy tale thus expresses a very different perspective on the process through which individual subjectivity is achieved and the role the family might play in this individuation of the adult self.

In focusing on *Cinderella* as a chief example of familial dynamics in fairy tales, this chapter will also pay close attention to the socio-historical dialectic between the upper classes in France and high literary culture of the late seventeenth century on the one hand, and on the other hand, the widespread appropriation of bourgeois narrative and societal concerns in nineteenth-century Germany (Zipes, *Enchanted* 54). In the case of both *Cendrillon* and *Aschenputtel*, the family unit serves as a strategic symbol for the conflict inherent in the creation and transference of social value and prestige. As Jack Zipes notes in regard to the rise of bourgeois culture in the eighteenth century: "Crucial for the development of this bourgeois culture was the family, which was regarded as a communal unit that decided its own purpose and was united by emotional bonds rather than by utilitarian and competitive relations in the public sphere" (*Enchanted* 54). Patricia Hannon's insightful 1998 study on the portrayal of gender relations in the seventeenth-century fairy tales written by women further underscores these previous points. She notes that as early as the seventeenth century, the fairy tale as literary narrative form had already developed a tradition of making extensive use of family and marriage as metaphors for the integrity (or lack of integrity) of the larger political state (*Heroes and Heroines* 935-6).

Other critics affirm Hannon's observation. Dorothy Thelander views the fairy

tale, in the context of Perrault's France, as revealing "a mood of hostility or ambivalence toward important elements in the official culture of the age of Louis XIV" (*Mother Goose* 492). Given that the highest honor in the court of Louis XIV was to be visible in the court itself and to be an official member of the courtly aristocracy, it seems significant that Cendrillon identifies the precious opportunity to make oneself into a participatory creature of the court as being at the heart of familial social discord—and employs explicit measures to minimize this social tension by reincorporating her step-family into her new courtly life. In the case of the Grimm Brothers' tales of nineteenth-century Germany, Zipes sees an explicit appropriation of bourgeois literary genres and cultural values, the better to conduct an acerbic critique of the upper classes (*Enchanted* 54).

This chapter will seek to demonstrate that the vastly different socio-political environments in which Perrault and the Grimms were writing result in different social critiques and outcomes for familial identity and unity. Nevertheless, both variants of the tale underscore the moral authority of the child protagonist (Cinderella) and place her in a position of moral authority over those in her immediate family, as well as those who inhabit courtly culture in general.

An initial consideration of the family in both *Cendrillon* and *Aschenputtel* highlights how certain narrative elements, like the repetition of rhymes and even the protagonist herself—a young teenaged girl in a later stage of human development, just before entering adulthood—seem designed to appeal to children, but more especially, girls. Indeed, as in *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Cinderella's* audience understands that this is an explicitly female familial environment that is notably controlled entirely by female figures: Cinderella, her step-mother and step-sisters, Cinderella's fairy godmother (in the

case of *Cendrillon*), and Cinderella's deceased mother (in the case of *Aschenputtel*). In Perrault's version, Cendrillon cannot appeal to her father for protection: "la pauvre fille souffrait tout avec patience, et n'osait s'en plaindre à son père qui l'aurait grondée, parce que sa femme le gouvernait entièrement" ("the poor girl put up with it all [of these cruel actions] patiently, and not daring to complain to her father, who would have scolded her, because he was completely under the thumb of his wife") (Perrault *Contes* 50; Betts 130). In the Grimms' version, the father never seems to notice Aschenputtel's piteous condition, and after his initial appearance at the outset of the tale, he is hardly ever mentioned again (though the readers learn that during his trip to the fair, he obtains and then brings Aschenputtel the twig that will be transformed by her tears into a living tree planted on her mother's grave) (Grimm *Märchen* 116-7; Tatar, *Classic* 117-8). In both cases, the father's rapport with his new wife and her offspring becomes his main focus, to the point of denying or ignoring his first child. Hannon further explains the importance of the nuclear family as frame:

New wives of widowers were particularly sensitive to the needs of their own children, whose interests could be compromised by the offspring of their husband's first marriage. In Perrault's tales, this negative figure [the step-mother] impinges on the sanctity of the noble household [of Cinderella's father . . . and] insinuates herself into the aristocratic milieu by rectifying the gentlemanly widower's financial distress. (*Heroes and Heroines* 947)

Hannon's previous observations lead to another elemental difference between Cendrillon's family and Aschenputtel's family. In the Perrauldian version, the father is

described as a “gentilhomme” (“gentleman”) (Perrault *Contes* 49; Betts 130), while in the Grimms’, he is simply “einem reichen Manne” (“ein reicher Mann”/ “a rich man”) (Grimm *Märchen* 116; Tatar, *Classic* 117). Cendrillon is thus the daughter of a nobleman, a man of the aristocracy, whereas Aschenputtel’s father is more generically rich. The fact of Cendrillon’s nobility leads to Hannon’s insight onto how the second wife (the step-mother) would favor her own children and also court favor for them and for herself in the courtly aristocracy in order to move upwards in society by superficial means. Goaded by greed and power, both step-mother and step-daughters wear their opulent garments, boast about their monetary worth, and proudly display their affluence in order to attain “class” (moral character), as if literally attempting to clothe themselves in supposed moral authority. Cendrillon, on the other hand, provides distinct contrast to her step-sisters. The product of her father’s first marriage, she is “d’une douceur et d’une bonté sans exemple” (“amazingly sweet-natured and kind”) (Perrault *Contes* 49; Betts 130), and as the text immediately explains, “elle tenait cela de sa Mère, qui était la meilleure personne du monde” (“[those] gifts she got from her mother, who had been the most charming person you could imagine”) (Perrault *Contes* 49; Betts 130). Furthermore, just as Cendrillon’s goodness is both inherent and inherited, so is the heartlessness of the step-sisters who have the same “humeur” (“nature”) as their mother, “qui rendaient ses filles encore plus haïssables” (“which made [them] appear even more detestable”) (Perrault *Contes* 49; Betts 130). This knowledge is presented at the beginning of Perrault’s tale, and when considered in conjunction with the tale’s ending of rehabilitation and forgiveness, it seems that the reader is meant to understand how Cendrillon is able to forgive: the stepdaughters do not know any better. In the Grimms’

version, the text does not offer the equivalent parallel for why they might be “garstig und schwarz von Herzen” (“[inherently] foul and black”) (Grimm *Märchen* 116; Tatar, *Classic* 117), but surprisingly, the narrative does not encourage young readers to consider forgiveness as a possible response on Cinderella’s part.

Let us now focus more closely on the interfamilial relationship between Cinderella and her step-mother and step-siblings in both *Cendrillon* and *Aschenputtel*. In both versions, the authoritative step-mother and step-sisters dictate every aspect of Cinderella’s life, from her uncomfortable sleeping arrangements to what leftover food she must eat, to which shabby clothing she must wear, to which physically laborious chores she must complete. In addition to fulfilling her duties in the household, Cinderella also has to tend to all her step-mother’s and step-sisters’ needs in terms of preparing their meals to eat and mending and organizing their ornate clothing if they need to attend certain engagements such as balls or fairs. The text thus highlights their collective covetous perceptions and assessments of Cinderella, showing how threatened they are by her underlying physical beauty and also by her role as a child of the first marriage. They relentlessly berate, belittle, and chastise Cinderella, and these actions and comments all focus on her outward appearance: her assumed physical unattractiveness and her frumpy, dingy apparel (Perrault *Contes* 49-51; Betts 130-1; Grimm *Märchen* 116-8; Tatar, *Classic* 117-9). Her nickname is derived from her callous mistreatment. In Perrault’s version, Cendrillon is also nicknamed “Cucendron” (a word in French which evokes not only an indiscreet term for the posterior—“Cinderbum,” as it is often translated—but also the Latinate roots of the word for pumpkin, *cucurbita*) (Perrault *Contes* 50; Betts 130). In the Grimms’ version, she becomes Aschenputtel (a name which, interestingly, evokes not the

object that is transformed magically to enable her to attend the ball, but instead the manual labor she is forced to endure). The step-daughters and step-mother in both versions equate external beauty with innate goodness because they themselves are materialistic, and at the same time, disparaging of people of a lower class than they are. All three figures endorse “an ideology fashioned on conspicuous wealth” (Hannon *Heroes and Heroines* 947), themselves of course choosing to proudly displaying their material and monetary wealth.

This familial dialectic, according to Thelander, essentially portrays a basic caste structure: “In Perrault’s [and the Grimms’] works, from the step-mother’s and the step-sisters’ perspectives], there are really only two social groups: peasants (who abandon children and wish sausages onto the ends of people’s noses) and the aristocracy (who go to balls and have elaborate christening parties)” (482). The step-mother character (and also the step-sisters), who are focused on attaining a higher position, presume that they will attain a position of (moral) authority, for they, as well as the courtly culture at large, believe that outer beauty is equated with inner moral goodness because to be noticed, respected, and honored in the aristocracy, according to Patricia Hannon, one has to be clothed with “ostentation and expense” (*Heroes and Heroines* 947).

Many nineteenth-century depictions of Cinderella at the hearth with her step-mother and step-siblings focus closely on outward appearance by depicting clothing, jewelry, and hairstyles in elaborate detail. In these images, the step-sisters’ elaborate clothing signifies their distorted moral reasoning. These illustrations thus mirror their despicable and disparaging comments aimed at their step-sibling. Cinderella, by contrast, is universally depicted with a downcast facial expression. Her clothes are an astonishing

contrast to her step-sisters' finery: Her clothes are torn and ragged, and the soot on her dowdy, threadbare clothing, though suggestive of her inner and outer goodness, explicitly mirrors not only her hateful nickname, but every other derisive comment from her step-family that she has to bear. For Hannon, "Cinderella's noble demeanor, ridiculed by the menial tasks imposed on her, is particularly challenged by a new set of power relations based on conspicuous consumption" (*Heroes and Heroines* 947). Cinderella herself does not place particular importance of her own outer appearance because she is inherently morally good.

It is doubly ironic that Cinderella is given her particular debasing name (Cendrillon and Aschenputtel), based on the ashes of the hearth, since the hearth is a place where many familial activities occur—especially the reading and telling of stories to children. The hearth, usually a symbol of warmth and security (both figurative and literal), is not a site of protection for Cinderella: it is frequently the site of her debasement and banishment, and may indeed have been all the much worse a punishment because that particular site may have been the location of many enjoyable times with her first "original" family. Bettelheim, in his famous psychoanalytic interpretation of this tale, even suggests that this tale may have had such a lasting impact on child readers (both historic and modern) because it allows them to explicitly commiserate with the protagonist: "children of both sexes [themselves] suffer equally from sibling rivalry, and have the same desire to be rescued from their lowly position and surpass those who seem superior to them" (*Enchantment* 239).

To encapsulate the principal components of our argument so far: In order to depict Cinderella in their tales as an explicit representation of "the people" and to place

her in a structural position of moral authority over the overt shallowness of courtly culture, as represented by her step-mother and her step-sisters, the narrator of Perrault's *Cendrillon* and the Grimms' *Aschenputtel* provides the child readers from the outset of the tales with explicit pertinent details about Cinderella's moral goodness, purity, and simplicity. In the French version, Cendrillon is portrayed from the beginning as: "[avec] d'une douceur et d'une bonté sans exemple; elle tenait cela de sa Mère, qui était la meilleure personne du monde" (Perrault *Contes* 49)/ "amazingly sweet-natured and kind, which gifts she got from her mother, who had been the most charming person you could imagine" (Betts 130). In *Cendrillon*, the mother is no longer able to reach out and become an active element in her daughter's life; instead, it is the Murraine (godmother) who has become the substitute mother. In *Aschenputtel*, on the other hand, her mother has promised to be a protecting presence even from beyond the grave:

[L]iebes Kind, bleib fromm und gut, so wird dir der liebe Gott immer beistehen, und ich will vom Himmel auf dich herab blicken, und will um dich sein. (Grimm *Märchen* 116)

(Dear child, if you are good and say your prayers, our dear Lord will always be with you, and I shall look down on you from heaven and always be with you [Tatar, *Classic* 117]).

Thus, although both Cendrillon and Aschenputtel inherit their moral goodness from the mother, whether through genetics or through example, it is noteworthy that Aschenputtel's deceased mother retains a position of supernatural, moral authority. She will be in a position to aid her throughout her life—as indeed she does throughout the narrative. Thelander provides a fascinating interpretation of the natural family as

portrayed in the fairy tale in general:

The natural parents of the hero or heroine are supposed to be loving and kind, though they can be induced to act cruelly by someone else or driven to do so by circumstances beyond their control. Some of Perrault's stories [and of the Grimms' also] are more ambiguous, presenting evil parents, but the stories are so constructed that the reader is [quite] aware of the situation . . . . Perrault's [and the Grimms'] manuscripts avoid the problem of a woman mistreating her natural daughter by portraying the good girl as the widow's stepdaughter. (*Mother Goose* 478)

In Thelander's interpretation, the power of this particular tale depends, in part, on its ability to allow a child to reflect on fundamental fears of mistreatment by a parent, while simultaneously displacing these fears onto a step-parent. This leads to remarkable consequences in the structural logic of the tale: members of the "natural order" of the nuclear family (i.e., Cinderella's biological mother, father, and of course Cinderella herself) are granted greater moral authority in the text, whereas the "unnatural order" of the step-family (step-mother and step-siblings) is equated with significantly dwindled moral authority. The "bonne grâce" ("charm and grace") (Perrault *Contes* 58; Betts 139) of Aschenputtel and of Cendrillon in particular (qualities with which she was born) underscores her moral authority even further, as does her "outward obedience (to unjust commands) rather than real obedience . . ." (Thelander 477-8).

The focal points of the *Cinderella* tales are unquestionably the ball thrown by the prince (as presented by Perrault) and the three-day festival thrown by the king (as presented by the Grimms), as well as the prince's frantic post-ball (or post-festival)

efforts to identify his mysterious new love (Perrault *Contes* 50-7; Betts 131-9; Grimm *Märchen* 117-22; Tatar, *Classic* 118-122). Both versions clearly indicate that the ball (or the festival) is a universal social event, and to be excluded from it is essentially to be excluded from all civilized society. Since no one from the family is willing to help Cinderella obtain a gown to attend the ball, she receives aid from “supernatural benefactresses” (Bottigheimer, *Moral and Social Vision* 36): the godmother, who is indeed a fairy, in the case of *Cendrillon* (Perrault *Contes* 51-3, 57; Betts 131-4, 139), and doves sent from heaven by the mother in *Aschenputtel* (Grimm *Märchen* 117-20; Tatar, *Classic* 118-20). Although *Cendrillon*’s godmother has been on the social scene there for her entire life, she has apparently never revealed her magical powers; these come as a surprise to *Cendrillon*, who only discovers them at the moment when the tale’s extradiegetic audience does. What might it mean that *Cendrillon*’s god-mother has been on the social scene there for her entire life, but both *Cendrillon* and the tale’s audience only discover her fairy identity at that moment of her appearance? In our reading, this element emphasizes *Cendrillon*’s relative passivity, and also underscores the fact that her fairy godmother now functions symbolically as a physically present mother.

Despite certain obvious parallels in each version (a protagonist orphaned by her mother; a mother who sought to provide her daughter with as much protection as possible before her own death), there is one fundamental difference: Whereas *Cendrillon*’s godmother comes to her and seeks her out, asking her what is wrong and then performing acts of magical transformation on her goddaughter’s behalf, *Aschenputtel* herself undertakes a series of deliberate actions designed to enable her to attend the ball. Clearly, *Aschenputtel* obtains her power much more actively: By purposely asking her father for a

branch as her only “gift” from his trip to the fair, and then by planting the tree at her mother’s grave and watering the branch with her tears to bring it to life (Grimm *Märchen* 116-17; Tatar, *Classic* 117-18), she proves herself worthy of her mother’s supernatural protection, for she has helped herself and seeks to nurture her maternal connection. As Ruth B. Bottigheimer notes: “[Aschenputtel] . . . forms her attachment and derives her strength from her biological parents, by planting a hazel twig her father brings her on her mother’s grave and watering it with her tears. From its branches a dove casts down ball gowns of extraordinary beauty” (*Moral and Social Vision* 36). The doves can be thus seen as moral agents for Aschenputtel’s departed mother, in somewhat the same way that the *Marraine* (“godmother”) (Perrault *Contes* 51; Betts 131) is Cendrillon’s mother’s agent. Bottigheimer’s analysis of this aspect of the tale gains insight from an extended discussion of the supernatural capabilities of water in various literary traditions:

As an integral component of the history of creation, water initiates the theogonies and cosmogonies of the Western world. In the Judeo-Christian tradition, water is mentioned even before light in the opening verses of the Bible [and] correspondingly, Oceanus represents primal matter in the Greek tradition . . . Some forms of water, such as wells and brooks, have been thought to be particularly holy and to have purifying capacities; others are supposed to have special attributes, like mantic springs. (*Moral and Social Vision* 30)

In the case of Aschenputtel, her clear and pure tears further signify her purity and morality (Bottigheimer 30). Yet this is not all: These clear tears also serve as structural antithesis to the shockingly bright red blood that will eventually flow down the white

stockings of both step-sisters as they each, at the persistent urging of their own mother, mutilate parts of their foot in order to get the prince's golden shoe to fit and thus claim themselves as his mystery love (Grimm *Märchen* 120-22; Tatar, *Classic* 120-22). The contrast is striking: Whereas Aschenputtel's tears remain an entirely private affair, witnessed only by her and her own mother, at a private site far removed from the collective eye, the bright red blood of the step-sisters is witnessed by those at court, including the Prince himself, and thus functions as a very public symbol of shame.

Of course, the courtly milieu (first represented in the ball and festival scenes, and then re-invoked with the prince's multiple attempts to seek out his mystery love) is one of the major structures in the tale. It is also the key environment which creates what Timothy Murray describes as *l'effet du miroir* (the mirror effect), a fundamental element of narrative logic in the *merveilleux* (the marvelous as genre) (1279). When Cinderella appears at the ball, every person in attendance is so enchanted and transfixed by Cinderella and her exquisite regalia, and she becomes the focus of all attention (Perrault *Contes* 53-6; Betts 134-8; Grimm *Märchen* 118-20; Tatar, *Classic* 119-20). Hannon astutely observes that when the court focuses entirely on the heroine Cinderella, her "individual identity is appropriated by the collective perspective . . . Once [she has] passed through the sieve of the civilizing gaze, the heroine's natural superiority is [foregrounded] (*Heroes and Heroines* 950) and the courtly aristocracy's "moral" authority is hence compromised. Hannon's observation here helps us comprehend one of the most transformative differences between Perrault's version and that of the Grimm Brothers. In Perrault's version, her entry into the ball is marked first by a collective halt and then by collective appreciation and admiration:

Il se fit alors un grand silence; on cessa de danser et les violons ne jouèrent plus, tant on était attentif à contempler les grandes beautés de cette inconnue. On n'entendait qu'un bruit confus: 'Ah, qu'elle est belle!' Le Roi même, tout vieux qu'il était, ne laissait pas de la regarder, et de dire tout bas à la Reine qu'il y avait longtemps qu'il n'avait vu une si belle et si aimable personne. Toutes les Dames étaient attentives à considérer sa coiffure et ses habits, pour en avoir dès le lendemain de semblables, pourvu qu'il se trouvât des étoffes assez belles, et des ouvriers assez habiles. (Perrault *Contes* 53-4)

A great silence fell; the dancers stop their dancing, the musicians stopped their music, so eagerly were they gazing at the great beauty of the unknown girl. The only thing that could be heard was a murmur of voices exclaiming: 'How beautiful she is!' Even the King old though he was, could not stop looking at her, and said quietly to the Queen that it was a long time since he had seen so beautiful and charming a girl. All the women were studying her hair and her dress, so that they could look the same themselves, provided they could find cloth sufficiently fine and dressmakers sufficiently skilled. (Perrault *Contes* 134)

The entire court admires her beauty and grace. Cendrillon has, in effect, earned her place in the king's court simply through her appearance and outward gracious mannerisms. As Hannon notes, this is a crucial element in the foregrounding of Cendrillon's moral authority—not just over her step-family, but also over those who surround her at court. In several illustrations, her morality is substantiated in both her magnificent outerwear and

her deferential disposition. In the Grimms' version, by contrast, the moment of the Aschenputtel's appearance at the court is quite different:

Der Königssohn kam ihm entgegen und nahm es bei der Hand, und tanzte mit ihm. Er wollte auch mit sonst niemand tanzen also daß er ihm die Hand nicht los ließ, und wenn ein anderer kam, es aufzufordern, sprach er 'das ist meine Tänzerin.' (Grimm *Märchen* 119)

The prince approached Cinderella, took her by the hand, and danced with her. He didn't intend to dance with anyone else and never let go her hand. Whenever anyone else asked her to dance, he would say: 'She is my partner.' (Tatar, *Classic* 119)

In the case of Aschenputtel, the prince's reaction to her is an entirely private one and the text foregrounds only his actions, and no one else's. The sole sign that the readers have of the collective appreciation of the outstandingly beautiful Aschenputtel is the indication of others wishing to dance with her as well.

Naturally, Cinderella's début at the prince's ball results in her marriage to the prince. In the history of fairy tale scholarship, much has been written about marriage (see Lewis C. Seifert's *Fairy Tales, Sexuality and Gender in France 1690-1715: Nostalgic Utopias* and Philippe Ariès' *L'enfant et la vie familiale sous l'Ancien Régime*). In the context of societies which place a high value on female "marriageability," which has been the case throughout most of the Western world for most of its history, Cinderella's marriage represents her true arrival, both in terms of the wider culture and in terms of her "female" destiny. Yet, Perrault's version and the Grimms' version vary in this important textual detail as well. The Perrauldian version of the tale places substantially greater

emphasis on marriage as tool for social reconciliation and integration: not only does Cendrillon marry the prince, but in forgiving her stepmother and step-sisters, she even bestows her step-sisters with husbands, “deux grands Seigneurs de la Cour” (“two great lords at the Court”) (Perrault *Contes* 57; Betts 139). For Tatar (*Classic* 101; *Hard Facts* 224), this one detail presents “the fullest elaboration of a reconciliation between the heroine and her stepsisters . . .” (*Classic* 101), which “seems more congenial to a culture that values compassion and reconciliation” (*Hard Facts* 224). On the other hand, in the Grimms’ *Aschenputtel*, her step-mother and step-sisters are punished very harshly in a “ghastly punitive note” (Bottigheimer *Moral and Social Vision* 36) by having their eyes pecked out by birds (Grimm *Märchen* 122; Tatar, *Classic* 122). The implication in the Grimms’ version is evident: Not only will the wicked stepsisters live lives of deep isolation, but they will also never again be able to attract potential husbands, courtly or otherwise. Furthermore, in both versions, the chain of mother-daughter (reproductive) transmission is once again highlighted: while Cendrillon lives up to the pure goodness of her mother’s nature, in *Aschenputtel*, where birds peck out the step-sisters’ eyes, the text highlights the moral authority of the departed mother figure since the birds are performing this action as moral agents of hers, so that she can give her daughter retributive justice.

How do the readers interpret this critical difference in narrative endings?

Throughout this chapter, we have argued that in Perrault’s tale, courtly culture itself is privileged and depicted as fully capable of “civilizing” even those who have not been a part of it for long. Might it be in effect the meaning of Cendrillon’s choice to forgive her step-sisters “[avec] de bon cœur, et [elle] les pria[it] de l’aimer bien toujours” (“with all her

heart, [begging] them to love her kindly always”) (Perrault *Contes* 57; Betts 139) and bring them into courtly life with her be the chance to provide a clear illustration of the redemptive power of the court as it trumps the actions either of the individual or of specific family ties? If so, then what do we make of the Grimms’ minimization of the collective courtly reception of Aschenputtel? Can we read this detail as one way in which the Grimms are in effect privileging the bourgeois classes by presenting the young Aschenputtel not only as an active agent capable of taking steps to direct her own destiny, but also as an explicit representation of the people—a young woman who is singularly capable of overturning the prince’s perceptions of his courtly surroundings? In this reading, Aschenputtel attains an even higher position of moral authority over the overt superficiality of courtly culture and the higher classes (as represented by her step-mother, her step-sisters, and the king’s court).

At both tales’ outset, Cinderella herself is the embodiment of moral authority because she is sincere, honest, sensible, and obedient towards her step-mother and her step-sisters, has inherited her goodness from her mother, and is thoroughly aware of the injustice of her situation inflicted on her by her new family. As each narrative progresses, it becomes apparent that an important element of her moral authority is also her explicit power to influence others in the courtly realm—the realm where her moral superiority (reflected in part through her diaphanous beauty) can be put on display and “mirrored” in the admiring and approving voyeuristic gaze of others. When Perrault’s Cendrillon puts on her glass slipper (Perrault *Contes* 56-7; Betts 138-9) and the Grimms’ Aschenputtel puts on her golden shoe (Grimm *Märchen* 120-2; Tatar, *Classic* 120-2), “the shimmering footwear alone remains intact, a promise of final integration into the space reserved for

the newly savvy heroine in the emerging order of things” (Hannon *Heroes and Heroines* 951). In other words, her inherent goodness and external beauty, as explicitly framed by Perrault and the Brothers Grimm in both versions, are reconciled implicitly and manifestly actualized in her radiant looks and upright, benevolent conduct. From the moment of her entry into the ball, she is now in a position of moral authority in full view of the courtly aristocracy.

## CONCLUSION

Stemming from a profound need to confront the inherent tensions in their environments, fairy tale protagonists deliberately seek solutions to deal with antagonistic situations and people. The fairy tale narrative typically leaves out any overtly explicit moral judgment of these actions, and instead implicitly asks the fairy tale audience to make these judgments. In this thesis, we have examined how *Le petit chaperon rouge* and *Rotkäppchen*, *Cendrillon ou la petite pantoufle de verre* and *Aschenputtel* show marked differences in terms of textual detail, narrative voice, and overall formal structure. These differences, we argue, suggest strongly that each tale accomplishes its goals of moral pedagogy for young readers in a different manner. These differences can be traced, in part, to the vastly different socio-political environments that existed at the time each set of tales was composed and/or revised. As Ruth B. Bottigheimer summarizes:

Different social or geographical environments harbor vastly different social views and tend to amend popular tales in accordance with familiar social codes. Basile's *Pentamerone* and Perrault's *Contes* both retain the same or very similar constituents to tell a 'Cinderella' story [for example], but the motivations and outcomes differ profoundly from the Grimms' version, illustrating quite neatly how contemporary mores, audience expectations, narrative voice, and authorial intentions color tale elements. (*Moral and Social Vision* 35)

The fundamentally distinct environments in which each collection is produced (a literary environment marked by the high literary *salons* of the *précieux* in seventeenth-century France under absolute monarchic control; the explicit drive to find and catalog popular or “bourgeois” literary forms and voices in the fragmented Germany of the nineteenth century) can explain many of the differences we have seen in these tales. Therefore, as we have seen in Chapter One, the innocent *Le petit chaperon rouge* and *Rotkäppchen* have dangerous, social encounters with the wolf in the forest, which can be interpreted as the socio-political clash between the traditions and conduct of the higher classes and of the peasantry (Warner, *Mother Goose* 17-18). In Chapter Two, we have seen as well that the family unit and its child/step-parental conflict, as depicted in Perrault’s *Cendrillon ou la petite pantoufle de verre* and the Grimms’ *Aschenputtel*, correlate with the socio-historical dialectic between the upper class and its high literary culture of the late seventeenth-century France and the extensive appropriation and consequent treatment of the bourgeois narrative and societal concerns of the nineteenth-century Germany (Zipes, *Enchanted* 54).

Yet despite these differences in versions, both fairy tale collections invest their young protagonists with considerable moral authority, while simultaneously discounting any moral authority on the part of the (step)parent characters. Perrault and the Grimms, as we have seen, formally concluded that child readers might, and indeed should, derive morally empirical solutions and lessons from these tales, so that they themselves can adapt them to their own unfavorable environments in society, since “. . . while romancing reality, [the fairy tale as narrative] is a medium deeply concerned with undoing prejudice [and injustice]” (Warner, *Old Wives’ Tales* 316). Bruno Bettelheim would agree with

both Perrault and the Grimms. As Bettelheim writes: “to the child [reader], and to the adult [reader] who, like Socrates, knows that there is still a child in the wisest of us, fairy tales reveal truths about mankind and oneself” (*Enchantment* 66); additionally, for the readers, they have “an emotional quality of ‘truth’” to them (*Enchantment* 237). The implications of this view of fairy tales are apparent: The moral authority of the child protagonist (intradiegetic character) is extended to those who are receiving the fairy tale as narrative (extradiegetic readers). The child as fairy tale reader, in becoming an active judge of the characters’ actions, is placed in a structural position of moral authority. The young child who is hearing a fairy tale for the first time is inducted into one of our culture’s most prominent and enduring forms of collective virtuous action.

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