JACK ZIPES

Fairy tales and the art of subversion: the classical genre for children and the process of civilization

Routledge, 1991; extract: Chapter 2 – Setting Standards for Civilization through Fairy Tales: Charles Perrault and his Associates, pp. 13-31

While reading the extract, answer the following questions:

p. 13

- What shift is Zipes describing? When and why did it happen?

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- In what way did this shift affect literature, and fairy tales in particular?

- What is the difference between literary and folk fairy tales?

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- What were the two major tendencies in fairy tale writing?

- What does the term "high art" refer to?

- Why is Perrault's contribution to the development of fairy tales "a contradictory one"? What was Perrault's main aim?

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- What were the literary fairy tales originally designed to do?

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- What does Zipes mean by the "ideology of harmlessness"? How was it achieved?

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- What happened by 1650s?

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- What was the connection between the homogenous French state, society and church?

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- What does Zipes refer to when discussing the fairy tales as "providing behavioural patterns and models for children"?

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- How do the heroes and heroines differ? Describe as many aspects as possible.

- What is Perrault's ideal *femme civilisée* like? What should be the ultimate goal of a woman according to Perrault?

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- How do the two versions of Cinderella differ? Why?

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- What did Perrault see as his task according to Zipes?

2 Setting Standards for Civilization through Fairy Tales: Charles Perrault and his Associates

> In the case of those cultures which I have named 'archaic', there is, in contrast to our own culture, a much clearer awareness extant that we can only always *be* that what we are when, at the same time, we are what we are *not*, that we can only know who we are when we have experienced our limits and thus have surpassed them, as Hegel might say.
>
> This does not mean, however, that we are to drive the stakes of our limits further and further into the wilderness, that we are perpetually to root out, cultivate, and categorize that which is 'outside' us. Rather this means that we ourselves are to become wild in order not to *place ourselves at the mercy* of our own wildness, in order to gain thereby an awareness of ourselves as tame, as cultural creatures.
>
> Hans Peter Duerr
> *Traumzeit* (1978)

I

Published in 1697, Charles Perrault's *Histoires ou contes du temps passé* appeared at a time when there was a major shift in social norms and manners. As Philippe Ariès has noted,

> although demographic conditions did not greatly change between the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries, and although child mortality remained at a very high level, a new sensibility granted these fragile, threatened creatures a characteristic which the world had hitherto failed to recognize in them: as if it were only then that the common conscience had discovered that the child's soul too was immortal. There can be no doubt that the importance accorded to the child's personality was linked to the growing influence of Christianity on life and manners.[1]

Thus, it is not by chance that Perrault directed his energies in writing his

fairy tales for the most part to civilize children and to prepare them for roles which he idealistically believed they should play in society.

Since Perrault's fairy tales were created at the point in history when more and more European writers began composing explicitly for children as separate entities and when standards were first being set for the development of modern children's literature, his works must be viewed as part of a larger social phenomenon. In fact, he and numerous friends and associates were responsible for a vertible deluge of literary fairy tales in the eighteenth century. To be sure, the majority of the tales still courted favor primarily with adults, but there was an overwhelming tendency in these fairy stories to provide models of behavior for the rearing and schooling of upper-class children. In fact, the literary fairy tales differed remarkably from their precursors, the oral folk tales, by the manner in which they portrayed children and appealed to them as a possibly distinct audience. The fairy tales were cultivated to assure that young people would be properly groomed for their social functions. At first the fairy tales were adapted from the oral tales of nurses, governesses and servants of the lower classes and then refined to be told in courtly circles. Some were even published randomly in the latter part of the seventeenth century. But, by the 1690s a tremendous vogue of writing and circulating literary fairy tales for children and adults had been set in motion.[2] In 1696, the year in which Perrault issued a separate edition of his prose *Sleeping Beauty*, his niece Marie-Jeanne Lhéritier published *L'Adroite Princesse ou les Aventures de Finette*, which was later to be celebrated as the work of Perrault due to its similar tone and style. About this time Mlle Catherine Bernard incorporated two fairy tales in her novel *Inès de Cordue*, and then in 1697 Perrault's prose tales appeared along with two volumes of fairy stories by Madame Marie-Catherine D'Aulnoy, and a smaller collection by Mlle Charlotte-Rose Caumont de la Force. In addition, fairy-tale plays were now produced. In 1698 Paul-François Nodot published his *Histoire de Melusine* followed by Jean de Prechac's *Contes moins Contes que les autres*, Madame Henriette-Julie de Murat's *Contes des Fées*, Madame D Aulnoy's four volumes *Contes Nouveaux ou les Fées à la Mode*, and other anonymous collections of fairy tales. In the ensuing one hundred years French high society was literally inundated with fairy tales. Not only did bourgeois and aristocratic writers explore and exploit the treasures of French folklore, but they also borrowed from the Italian literary tradition, especially the works by Giovanni Francesco Straporola (*Le piacevoli notti*, 1550) and Giambattista Basile (*Pentamerone*, 1634–6), and they began to translate oriental fairy tales which had a tremendous influence. In 1704 Galland published part of

the *Arabian Nights*, and in 1707 Petit de Lacroix edited a collection of Persian fairy tales under the title *A Thousand and One Days*.

There were innumerable polished writers in the eighteenth century who either experimented ingeniously with the fairy-tale genre or simply imitated the examples set by Perrault, D'Aulnoy, Murat, and Prechac at the end of the seventeenth century. Among the more unique and interesting writers were Gabrielle-Suzanne de Villeneuve (*Contes marins ou la Jeune Amériquaine*, 1740–3), Jacques Cazotte (*Mille et une fadaise, contes à dormir debout*, 1742), Claude-Philippe de Caylus (*Le Prince Courtebotte et la Princesse Zibeline*, 1741–3), Jeanne-Marie Leprince de Beaumont (*Magasin des enfants*, 1757), and Charles Duclos (*Acajou et Ziphile*, 1762). Even Jean-Jacques Rousseau wrote a tale entitled *La Reine Fantastique* in 1758. The fairy-tale vogue eventually culminated in Charles-Joseph de Mayer's remarkable collection of the major literary fairy tales published in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. He printed them in forty-one volumes as *Le Cabinet des fées ou Collection choisie des contes des fées et autres contes merveilleux* (1785–9).

Significantly the fairy-tale boom subsided with the outbreak of the French Revolution, when the interests of the lower classes were made more manifest, and the result was a shift in socio-cultural perspective. However, the French literary fairy tales did continue to exercise a powerful influence in Germany.[3] Certainly Mozart's *The Magic Flute* (1791) emanated from this tradition, and such writers as Wieland, Musäus, Goethe, Tieck, Novalis, Brentano, Eichendorff, Fouqué, Chamisso, Hoffmann and the Brothers Grimm were all beneficiaries of the French vogue in one form or another. In general the rise of the French literary fairy tale at the end of the seventeenth century can be regarded as the source of the flowering of fairy tales in Europe and America in the nineteenth century. More specifically, I am talking about a literary heritage which was first intended for the upper classes and gradually spread to lower social echelons, and I am concerned here more with the fairy tales as they became directed toward children to set exemplary standards of behavior in the civilizing process.

In France the development of those fairy tales which were to form the genre for children of breeding was initiated for the most part by Perrault, who had taken a special and active interest in the education of his own children. He was followed by such writers as Marie-Jeanne Lhéritier, Marie-Catherine D'Aulnoy, Gabrielle-Suzanne de Villeneuve and Jeanne-Marie Leprince de Beaumont, who cultivated the tales largely in a moral vein. That is, there were two major tendencies among French fairy-tale writers: either they took the genre

seriously and endeavored to incorporate ideas, norms, and values in the narrative structure that they considered worthy of emulation for both the child and adult reader; or they parodied the genre because they considered it trivial and associated magic and the miraculous with the superstitions of the lower classes who were not to be taken seriously anyway. Both sets of writers demonstrated remarkable finesse and literally transformed the common folk tale into 'high' art. To be sure, one could speak of authors who did in fact trivialize the fairy-tale genre by grossly imitating the more skilled writers just to become a social or what we would call today a commercial success. Yet, whatever their purpose of writing a fairy tale was, all the authors employed the tale to engage in an ongoing institutionalized discourse about mores and manners in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Perrault's own contribution to the development of the literary fairy tale for children is a contradictory one. He is responsible for shaping folklore into an exquisite literary form and endowing it with an earnest and moral purpose to influence the behavior of children in a tasteful way. However, at the same time he is also 'guilty' of setting stringent standards of comportment which were intended to regulate and limit the nature of children's development. This contradictory position is also evident in the works of Lhéritier, D'Aulnoy, Prechac, Leprince de Beaumont, and others: they sought to civilize children to inhibit them, and perhaps pervert their natural growth. This is not to argue that Perrault and his associates had nefarious plans and conspired to fill children's heads with false illusions. On the contrary, despite his ironic attitude toward folklore and his double intention of writing for children and adults with moral fervor and charm, Perrault was most sincere in his intentions to improve the minds and manners of young people. In the *Preface* to the *Contes en Vers* (1695), he argued that people of good taste have recognized the substantial value of the tales. 'They have noticed that these trifles [the tales] were not mere trifles, that they contained a useful moral, and that the playful narrative surrounding them had been chosen only to allow the stories to penetrate the mind more pleasantly and in such a manner to instruct and amuse at the same time.'[4] Perrault compared his tales with those of his forebears

> who always took care that their tales contained a praiseworthy and instructive moral. Virtue is rewarded everywhere, and vice is always punished. They all tend to reveal the advantage in being honest, patient, prudent, industrious, obedient and the evil which can befall them if they are not that way. Sometimes the fairies give a gift to a young girl who answers them with civility, and with each word that she speaks, a diamond or a pearl falls from her mouth. And another girl who answers them brutally has a frog or a toad fall from her mouth. Sometimes there are children who become great lords for having obeyed their father or mother, or others who experience terrible misfortune for having been vicious and disobedient. No matter how frivolous and bizarre all these fables are in their adventures, it is certain that they arouse a desire in children to resemble those whom they see become happy and at the same time a fear of the misfortunes which befall wicked characters because of their wickedness. Is it not praiseworthy of fathers and mothers when their children are still not capable of appreciating solid truths stripped of all ornaments to make them love these truths, and, as it were, to make them swallow them by enveloping them in charming narratives which correspond to the weakness of their age? It is incredible how avaraciously innocent souls whose natural rectitude has not yet been corrupted receive these hidden instructions.[5]

This argument was repeated in the 1697 dedication in the *Histoires ou contes du temps passé*,[6] and later, in the *Dedication* to the 1729 English translation of Perrault's tales, Robert Samber continued the didactic tradition by stressing their educational and moral value:

> It was however objected, that some of them were very low and childish, especially the first. It is very true, and therein consists their Excellency. They therefore who made this as an Objection, did not seem very well to understand what they said; they should have reflected they are designed for children: And yet the Author hath so ingeniously and masterly contrived them, that they insensibly grow up, gradually one after another, in Strength and Beauty, both as to their Narration and Moral, and are told with such a Naiveté, and natural innocent Simplicity, that not only children, but those of Maturity, will also find in them uncommon Pleasure and Delight.[7]

During the course of history, Perrault's tales and those of his associates succeeded admirably in their cultural mission: contemporary fairy tales have been greatly informed by the aesthetics and ideology of seventeenth and eighteenth century French fairy tales which have become part and parcel of a general civilizing process in the West. There is a direct line from the Perrault fairy tale of court society to the Walt Disney cinematic fairy tale of the culture industry. Obviously, many samples of the French fairy-tale vogue have not survived the test of time and have been replaced by more adequate modern-day equivalents. But, for the most part, Perrault and his associates stamped the very unreflective and uncritical manner in which we read and receive fairy tales to the present. What we praise as our classical fairy-tale heritage, however, has a dark side to it which I should like to discuss in terms of the modern western civilizing process. To penetrate this dark side of

fairy tales in relation to their socializing function for children, I want to elaborate upon the notions of civilization developed by Norbert Elias in his two-volume study *The Civilizing Process*[8] as they pertain to Perrault. Then I want to examine Perrault's major tales and some by his associates in light of their contradictory contribution to the education of children through literature.

My foremost concern is how fairy tales operate ideologically to indoctrinate children so that they will conform to dominant social standards which are not necessarily established in their behalf. Here I should like to make it clear that the ideology carried by the 'classical' literary fairy tales since the seventeenth century and their ideological impact on children are difficult to pinpoint in a specific scientific way. Given the constant changes in the classical tales, the socio-literary variables in different countries, and the relative nature of reception since the seventeenth century, one must pay close attention to the socio-psychological mechanisms through which ideology exercises an influence on readers of fairy tales. Therefore, it is advisable to uncover paradigmatic patterns, which may correspond to social configurations, to shed light on the way ideology works. As Christian Zimmer has said,

> to grapple with ideology is to grapple with a phantom since ideology has neither a body nor a face. It has neither origin nor base which one could recast to provide the battle against it with a precise and well-defined object. Ideology only manifests itself under the form of fluid, of the diffuse, of permanent polymorphism and acts through infiltration, insinuation and impregnation. . . Ideology does not have a real language and especially not one of violence. Its total lack of aggression, its capacity to transform itself into everything, its infinite malleability, permits it to assume the mask of innocence and neutrality. And above all, as I have said, to blend itself with reality itself. Finally, its most supreme ruse is to delimit a kind of preserved *secteur* which it has called amusement (*divertissement*) and which it has cut off from reality by decree – always *menaced* as such by subversion. . . (moreover it acts on two levels: that of daily life and that of the lapse of the daily, the dream, the imaginary). Amusement is thus a direct creation of ideology. It is always alienation in power. To amuse oneself is to disarm oneself.[9]

At its point of origin for children the literary fairy tale was designed both to divert as amusement and instruct ideologically as a means to mold the inner nature of young people. Like the ideology of amusement which it embraces, the classical fairy tale of Perrault and his associates was, and still is, considered harmless and entertaining. Yet, considered as one of the vital socializing elements in western civilization, the literary fairy tale has always been more a subject of concern and debate

than we tend to realize, for, as childhood assumed a more precious and distinct state of experience, the social forces dominating education constantly checked and investigated to see whether the 'standard' fairy tale maintained an 'ideology of harmlessness', that is, discreet inquiry and censorship have always been employed to guarantee that fairy tales were more or less constructed to follow the classical pattern and to reinforce the dominant social codes within the home and school. It is impossible and foolish to speak about a one-dimensional literary plot formed by the classical fairy tale and conservative guardians of culture. Yet, it is important to examine the complex patterns which have historically emerged in the civilizing process to trace how harmful or contradictory the literary fairy tale has been even though it has enjoyed a celebrated place in our hearts.

II

Norbert Elias' remarkable socio-historical study of the civilizing process is most useful for illuminating the dark socializing side of the classical fairy tales because he stresses the interrelationship between the sociogenetic evolution of society and the psychogenetic make-up of human beings:

> Even in civilized society no human being comes into the world civilized, and . . . the individual civilizing process that he compulsorily undergoes is a function of the social civilizing process. Therefore, the structure of the child's effects and consciousness no doubt bears a certain resemblance to that of 'uncivilized' peoples, and the same applies to the psychological stratum in grown-ups which, with the advance of civilization, is subjected to more or less heavy censorship and consequently finds an outlet in dreams, for example. But since in our society each human being is exposed from the first moment of life to the influence and the molding of civilized grown-ups, he must indeed pass through a civilizing process in order to reach the standard attained by his society in the course of its history, but not through the individual historical phases of the social civilizing process.[10]

Elias demonstrates that the major socio-political shift in favor of absolutism and religious orthodoxy in the latter part of the seventeenth century determined modern western attitudes toward civilization. The decentralized societies of the Middle Ages ceded to more centralized and regulated nation-states and principalities which abandoned lax notions of *courteoisie* (soon to be called barbaric) for more stringent notions of *civilité*, partly introduced and reinforced by the bourgeoisie, at least in France and England.

It is important to understand the cultural and political input of large *secteurs* of the bourgeoisie in France if we are to grasp Perrault's role in 'civilizing' the folk tale and transforming it into the literary fairy tale for upper-class children. The French aristocracy of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries displayed a unique capacity to adopt and use the best elements from other classes. The nobility provided access for a select group of reliable people of the third estate to its circles, which were expanded as the need arose to secure aristocratic rule throughout the nation. Perrault was among the fortunate members of the *haute bourgeoisie* to be honored by the court.[11] He was a high, royal civil servant, one of the first members of the Académie Française, a respected polemicist, and a significant figure in literary salons. Moreover, he endorsed the expansive political wars of Louis XIV and believed in the exalted mission of the French absolutist regime to 'civilize' Europe and the rest of the world. Perrault supported the 'manifest destiny' of seventeenth-century France not only as a public representative of the court but privately in his family and was also one of the first writers of children's books who explicitly sought to 'colonize' the internal and external development of children in the mutual interests of a bourgeois–aristocratic elite.

The interaction between the French nobility and bourgeoisie must be carefully studied to grasp the sociogenetic import of literary fairy tales for children in western culture. Elias makes this connection clear:

> Both the courtly bourgeoisie and the courtly aristocracy spoke the same language, read the same books, and had, with particular gradations, the same manners. And when the social and economical disproportionalities burst the institutional framework of the ancien regime, when the bourgeoisie became a nation, much of what had originally been the specific and distinctive social character of the courtly aristocracy and then also of the courtly-bourgeois groups, became, in an ever widening movement and doubtless with some modification, the national character. Stylistic conventions, the forms of social intercourse, effect-molding, esteem for courtesy, the importance of good speech and conversation, articulateness of language and much else – all this is first formed in France within courtly society, then slowly changes, in a continuous diffusion, from a social into a national character.[12]

By the time Perrault had begun writing his fairy tales, the major crises of the Reformation period which had been manifested drastically in the massive witchhunts between 1490 and 1650 had been temporarily resolved, and they resulted in greater rationalization and regulation of social and spiritual life. This civilizing process coincided with an increase in socioeconomic power by the bourgeoisie, particularly in France and England, so that the transformed social, religious, and political views represented a blend of bourgeois–aristocratic interests. The *homme civilisé* was the former *homme courteois*, whose polite manners and style of speech were altered to include bourgeois qualities of honesty, diligence, responsibility, and asceticism. To increase its influence and assume more political control the French bourgeoisie was confronted with a twofold task: to adapt courtly models in a manner which would allow greater *laissez-faire* for the expansion and consolidation of bourgeois interests; to appropriate folk customs and the most industrious, virtuous, and profitable components of the lower classes to strengthen the economic and cultural power of the bourgeoisie. In this regard the French bourgeoisie was indeed a middle or mediating class, although its ultimate goal was to become self-sufficient and to make the national interests identical with its own.

One way of disseminating its values and interests and of subliminally strengthening its hold on the civilizing process was through literary socialization. Since childhood had become more distinguished as a separate phase of growth and was considered as the crucial base for the future development of the individual character, special attention was now paid to children's manners, clothes, books, toys, and general education. Numerous books, pamphlets, and brochures appeared in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries which dealt with table manners, natural functions, bedroom etiquette, sexual relations, and correct speech.[13] The most classic example was Erasmus of Rotterdam's *De Civiltate morum puerilum* (*On Civility in Children*, 1530). Also important were the works of Giovanni della Casa (Galateo, 1558), C. Calviac (*Civilité*, 1560), Antoine de Courtin, (*Nouveau traité de civilité*, 1672), François de Callières (*De la science du monde des connoissances utiles à la conduite de la vie*, 1717) and LaSalle (*Les Règles de la bienséance et de la civilité chrétienne*, 1729). It was impossible for a member of the aristocratic or bourgeois class to escape the influence of such manuals which became part of the informal and formal schooling of all upper-class children. These same views were disseminated to the peasantry through the cheap pamphlets of *la bibliothèque bleue*. Coercion exerted by members of high society to act according to *new* precepts of good behavior increased so that the codes of dress and manner became extremely stringent and hierarchical by the end of the seventeenth century. Though not conspired, the rational purpose of such social pressure was to bring about an internalization of social norms and mores so that they would appear as second nature or habit. Yet, self-control was actual social control, and it was a mark of social distinction not to 'let go of oneself' or to 'lose one's senses' in

public. As Elias has noted, the system of standardization and social conditioning had assumed fairly concrete contours with multi-level controls by the mid-seventeenth century.

> There is a more or less limited courtly circle which first stamps the models only for the needs of its own social situation and in conformity with the psychological condition corresponding to it. But clearly the structure and development of French society as a whole gradually makes ever broader strata willing and anxious to adopt the models developed above them: they spread, also very gradually, throughout the whole of society, certainly not without undergoing some modification in the process.[14]

As French society became more regulated and as efforts were made to bring about a homogeneous state, the pressures placed on children to conform to role models became more severe. In keeping with rigid social standards which denounced open forms of sexual behavior, table manners, dress, and natural functioning as 'barbaric' and 'uncivilized' – that is, ways which had been commonly accepted by the upper classes prior to the sixteenth century – it became important to cultivate feelings of shame and to arouse anxiety in children when they did not conform to a more inhibiting way of social conduct. Restraint and renunciation of instinctual gratification were part of a socio-religious code which illuminated the proper way to shape human drives and ideas so that children would learn docilely to serve church and state. Perhaps one of the main reasons for the rise of a 'state of childhood' by the end of the seventeenth century was the rise of a greater discrepancy between adult and child as the civilizing process became geared more instrumentally to dominate nature. The entire period from 1480 to 1650 can be seen as a historical transition in which the Catholic Church and the reform movement of Protestantism combined efforts with the support of the rising mercantile and industrial classes to rationalize society and literally to exterminate social deviates who were associated with the devil such as female witches, male werewolves, Jews, and gipsies. In particular, women were linked to the potentially uncontrollable natural instincts,[15] and, as the image of the innocent, naive child susceptible to wild natural forces arose, the necessity to control and shelter children became more pronounced. Social non-conformism and deviation had to be punished brutally in the name of civility and Christianity. Hundreds of thousands if not millions of people, according to H. R. Trevor-Roper,[16] were executed to arouse fear and anxiety while new models of male and female behavior were created to exalt a more ascetic way of life. The standards of conduct, discipline, and punishment,[17] formed in the name of absolutist Christian rulers, helped create divisions which

were to operate in favor of the rising bourgeois industrial and mercantile classes. In order to make the overwhelming number of subjects in a given nation-state or principality pliable and serviceable, tests to control human instincts were first made among the members of the upper classes themselves and then spread to the lower classes. Thus, the introduction of the knife and fork as instrumental and dignified tools for eating, sitting straight at the table, hierarchical forms of serving, maintaining a certain posture while speaking or moving in a prescribed way,[18] repressing one's bodily functions, wearing special dress signifying one's social class – all these measures taken in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries were meant to transform positive pleasure components which had been formerly accepted and regarded as harmless into negative manners which caused displeasure, revulsion, and distaste in the seventeenth century.

Elias notes that 'precisely by this increased social proscription of many impulses, by their "repression" from the surface of social life and of consciousness, the distance between the personality structure and behavior of adults and children is necessarily increased'.[19] In other words, childhood became identified as a state of 'natural innocence' and potentially corruptible by the end of the seventeenth century, and the civilizing of children – social indoctrination through anxiety provoking effects and positive reinforcement – operated on all levels in manners, speech, sex, literature, and play. Instincts were to be trained and controlled for their socio-political use value. The supervised rearing of children was to lead to the *homme civilisé*.

Civilité is the codeword which can provide the key to understanding how Perrault's tales and those of his associates assumed a unique and powerful role within the French socialization process. Moreover, they incorporated standards of comportment for children and adults which have been adopted in our own time and are still of actual interest and concern. Let us, therefore, turn to Perrault's prose tales now to grasp what he meant by *civilité* and to question the underlying moral assumption of civilization in the classical fairy tales.

III

If we regard the seven prose fairy tales in *Histoires ou contes du temps passé* as providing behavioral patterns and models for children, then they can be divided into two distinct groups based on gender. *Sleeping Beauty, Little Red Riding Hood, Blue Beard, The Fairies,* and *Cinderella* are aimed directly at females; *Puss in Boots, Ricky of the Tuft* and *Little Tom Thumb* address males. By focusing on the

examplary qualities, which distinguish the heroines from the heroes, we shall see how carefully Perrault wove notions of *civilité* into the fabric of his tales.

In *Sleeping Beauty*, the princess is actually endowed with the following 'gifts' by the fairies: beauty, the temper of an angel, grace, the ability to dance perfectly, the voice of a nightingale, and musicality. In other words, she is bred to become the ideal aristocratic lady. Further, she is expected to be passive and patient for a hundred years until a prince rescues and resuscitates her. Her *manner* of speech is such that she charms the prince, and he marries her. Then she must demonstrate even more patience when her children are taken from her by the ogress. Such docility and self-abandonment are rewarded in the end when the prince returns to set things right. Perrault then added a verse moral which sings a hymn of praise to patience.

Little Red Riding Hood, the only warning tale of the volume, which ends on an unhappy note, still provides a model of behavior for girls. By giving expression to her fancy, she brings about both her grandmother's downfall and her own. Thus, by negative example, the reader learns what a good girl should be like. In fact, the moral tells us that young girls, who are pretty, well-bred, and courteous, should never talk to strangers or let themselves go. Otherwise, they will be swallowed by wolves. In other words, they must exercise control over their sexual and natural drives or else they will be devoured by their own sexuality in the form of a dangerous wolf.

In *Blue Beard* the message is almost the same except that the wife of Blue Beard is saved because she realizes her error and says her prayers. Here the heroine is beautiful, well-bred, but too curious. Again the moral explains that it is a sin to be curious and imaginative for a woman and that she must exercise self-control. This message is softened by a second moral which ironically implies that the relationship between men and women have changed: men are no longer the monsters they used to be and women have more power. Nevertheless, the female role is dictated by conditions that demand humility and self-discipline.

In *The Fairies* one daughter is played off against the other. The youngest is beautiful, gentle, sweet, and hard-working in the household. She never utters a complaint. The other is disagreeable, arrogant, and lazy. Since the younger exhibits the proper polite manners in helping a poor village dame, she is given a gift: with every word she utters, a flower or precious stone falls from her lips. She is eventually rewarded with a prince while her sister is banished from the house and dies. The moral celebrates kindness.

Just as the daughter in *The Fairies* is an industrious, self-effacing

housekeeper, so, too, Cinderella, who also has her negative counterparts. In the fairy tale named after her, Cinderella is described as sweet, gentle, and diligent. Later, when she is properly dressed as a type of fashion queen, she is also the most beautiful woman in the world. Her 'excellent' qualities are recognized by the prince who marries her, and the moral praises the *bonne grace* of Cinderella, which accounts for her winning ways.

Perrault's fairy tales which 'elevate' heroines reveal that he had a distinctly limited view of women. His ideal '*femme civilisée*' of upper-class society, the composite female, is beautiful, polite, graceful, industrious, properly groomed, and knows how to control herself at all times. If she fails the obedience test, she is punished, as in Red Riding Hood's case, but this girl's fate is exceptional and belongs to a particular genre of warning tales which will be discussed later in more detail. The task confronted by Perrault's model female is to show reserve and patience, that is, she must be passive until the right man comes along to recognize her virtues and marry her. She lives only through the male and for marriage. The male acts, the female waits. She must cloak her instinctual drives in polite speech, correct manners, and elegant clothes. If she is allowed to reveal anything, it is to demonstrate how submissive she can be.

In commenting on how Perrault portrays women in his tales, Lilyane Mourey has explained that 'the concept of "morality" assumes here a very particular value mixed with irony and satire. Perrault argues for the total submission of the woman to her husband. Feminine coquetry (which is only the privilege of the dominant class) disturbs and upsets him: it could be the sign of female independence. It opens the way for the amorous conquest which endangers one of the fundamental values of society – the couple, the family. As we have seen, the heroines of the tales are very pretty, loyal, dedicated to their household chores, modest and docile and sometimes a little stupid insofar as it is true that stupidity is almost a quality in women for Perrault. Intelligence could be dangerous. In his mind as in that of many men (and women) beauty is an attribute of woman, just as intelligence is the attribute of man.'[20]

Of course, Perrault's disposition was totally different in his fairy tales which focused on male protagonists. In *Puss in Boots* the actual hero of the story is Puss, who needs the proper implements (a pair of boots and a pouch) to serve his master. The cat is the epitome of the educated bourgeois secretary who serves his master with complete devotion and diligence. He has such correct manners and wit that he can impress the king, and he uses his intelligence to dispose of an ogre and arrange a royal marriage for his low-born master. Thus, he can end his

career by becoming a *grand seigneur*. Perrault provides us with a double moral here: one stresses the importance of possessing *industrie et savoir faire*, while the other extols the virtues of dress, countenance, and youth to win the heart of a princess.

In *Ricky of the Tuft* we learn again that it is not so much beauty and modesty which counts for men but brains and ambition. Prince Ricky is ugly and misshapen, but he has an abundance of intelligence and the power to bestow the same degree of intelligence on the person he loves best. As the tale would have it, Ricky meets a stupid beautiful princess who promises to marry him in a year if he endows her with brains. After she enjoys her new brains for a year, she wants to break her engagement, but Ricky's polite manners and ability lead her to believe that she now has the power to make him appear handsome. Mind wins over matter, and both short morals underline the virtue of good sense.

Certainly good sense and wit play a major role in *Little Tom Thumb*, too. Here the tiny hero, the youngest of seven sons, is described as kind and smart. Of all the brothers, he is the most prudent and most shrewd. Consequently he assumes leadership when the brothers are abandoned in the woods without food and money. He tricks the ogre and ogress, saves his brothers, and gains a fortune because he can outsmart everyone. Despite his size – and the moral emphasizes this – Tom Thumb demonstrates that brains are better to have than brawn.

The composite male hero of Perrault's tale is strikingly different from the composite female. None of the heroes is particularly good looking, but they all have remarkable minds, courage, and deft manners. Moreover, they are all ambitious and work their way up the social ladder: the cat becomes a *grand seigneur*; the prince acquires a beautiful princess to increase his social prestige; Tom Thumb becomes a rich and respected courtier. Unlike the fairy tales dealing with women where the primary goal is marriage, these tales demonstrate that social success and achievement are more important than winning a wife. In other words, women are incidental to the fates of the male characters whereas males endow the lives of females with purpose. The heroes are active, pursue their goals by using their minds, and exhibit a high degree of civility. If anything, their virtues reflect upon the courtly bourgeoisie during King Louis XIV's reign, if not upon Perrault's very own character.

By examining the major features and behavior of Perrault's male and female protagonists, it becomes crystal clear that he sought to portray ideal types to reinforce the standards of the civilizing process set by upper-class French society. Not only did Perrault inform his plots with normative patterns of behavior to describe an exemplary social

constellation, but he also employed a distinct bourgeois–aristocratic manner of speech which was purposely contrived to demonstrate the proper way to converse with eloquence and civility. Polite conventions, eloquent phrases, and rationalities were employed to distinguish the characters as having high social rank and proper breeding. In addition Perrault used formal description to show the exemplary nature of his protagonists. For instance, Cinderella's transformation from 'slutty/maid' to 'virtuous/princess', accomplished by the fairy godmother, was in part an exercise in fashion design. Perrault wanted to display what superior people should wear and how they should carry themselves. 'All the ladies paid close attention to her hairdo and clothes with the intention of resembling her on the morrow provided that they could find materials just as beautiful and tailors just as talented.'[21] Cinderella displays all the graces expected from a refined, aristocratic young lady. Moreover, she has perfect control over her feelings and movements. She does not disgrace her sisters but treats them with dignity. Her composure is most admirable, and, when it comes time to depart, she demonstrates great self-discipline tempered with politeness.

Perrault's narrative style matches the décor, characters, and virtues which he describes. Each fairy tale exudes a polished baroque air. As stylist, Perrault cultivated a simple, frank and graceful style which incorporated the eloquent turns of high French practiced in court society and bourgeois circles. His ironic sense of humor allowed him to distance himself from the magical world, to poke fun at certain incidents, especially in the verse morals, and yet, he could still plead a case for civilized behavior: he took these stories seriously as examples of modern literature in his debate about *les Anciens et les Modernes* with Boileau. In this respect he also took care to provide a blend of bourgeois–aristocratic standards to demonstrate how modern fairy tales could be used for morally and ideologically acceptable purposes.

More than he realized, Perrault was responsible for the literary 'bourgeoisification' of the oral folk tale,[22] and he paved the way for founding a children's literature which would be useful for introducing manners to children of breeding. If we examine the origins of the eight prose tales in *Histoires ou contes du temps passé*, we can trace most of the motifs to oral folk tales which circulated in Perrault's time and to literary works by Straporola, Basile, and French writers, who had already adapted folk material. In other words, Perrault amalgamated folk and literary motifs and shaped them in a unique way to present his particular bourgeois view of social manners. In doing this Perrault shifted the narrative perspective of the popular folk-tale genre from that of the peasantry to that of the bourgeois–aristocratic elite. This

may not seem so significant at first, but, viewed in terms of the socialization of children, it had dire consequences on the way children came to perceive their own status, sexuality, social roles, manners and politics. As we have already seen in the case of the heroes and heroines, the shifting of the narrative perspective was not a mere stylistic refining of uncouth expression and social views, but it meant a substantial transformation of the manner in which society or reality was to be depicted. In terms of the literary fairy-tale genre for children, Perrault radically changed familiar folk-tale characters, settings, and plots to correspond to a civilizing process aimed at regulating the inner and outer nature of children. As already demonstrated in the works of Ariès and Elias, the rearing of children was designed more and more to convey prescriptions and prohibitions, and Perrault shaped the tales to deprive the 'folk' of its say in the matter and at the same time to establish a social codex or manual by which young people were expected to abide. Just how crucial Perrault's shifting of the narrative perspective was for the socialization of children can be traced in each individual tale. Let us look at two which are most revealing: *Little Red Riding Hood* and *Cinderella*.

Until recently it was generally believed that Perrault did not use an oral folk tale as the basis for his literary rendition of *Little Red Riding Hood*. However, the research efforts of Paul Delarue, Marianne Rumpf, and Marc Soriano[23] have proven conclusively that Perrault was acquainted with an oral tale widely known in France which runs more or less as follows.

> A little peasant girl goes to visit her grandmother carrying freshly baked bread and butter. On her way she meets a werewolf who asks her where she is going and which path she is taking, the one of needles or the one of pins. He takes the shorter path, arrives at the grandmother's house, eats her, and puts part of her flesh in a bin and her blood in a bottle. Then the little girl arrives. The werewolf disguised as the grandmother gives her the flesh to eat and the blood to drink. A crow scolds her for doing this. The werewolf tells her to throw each article of clothing into the fire since she will not be needing her clothes anymore. She gets into bed and asks ritual questions, the first one concerned with how hairy the werewolf's body is. When the werewolf finally reveals that he intends to eat her, she alertly replies that she has to relieve herself outside. He tells her to do it in the bed. She insists that she must do it outside. So the werewolf ties a piece of rope around her leg and allows her to go outside to take care of her natural functions. However, she ties the rope around a tree and runs home. The deceived werewolf follows in hot pursuit but fails to catch her.

This tale which has a long French tradition was told from the late Middle Ages up to the present. It became so prominent between the

fifteenth and seventeenth centuries because of the great superstitious belief in werewolves[24] and the great witchhunt. There were numerous notorious cases of werewolf trials, and thousands of men and women were persecuted and exterminated because they were charged with being werewolves.[25] The tale about the girl *without* a red cap and name and with a werewolf was also popular in the region where Perrault's family had lived, and it is more than likely that he was influenced by some version of the folk tale when he wrote his unique literary story. Of course, he felt impelled to make many drastic changes, and Paul Delarue maintains

> the common elements that are lacking in the literary story are precisely those which would have shocked the society of his period by their cruelness (the flesh and blood of the grandmother tasted by the child), their puerility (Road of Pins, Road of Needles), and their impropriety (question of the girl on the hairy body of the grandmother). And it seems plausible that Perrault eliminated them while he kept in the tale a folk flavor and freshness which make it an imperishable masterpiece.[26]

While there is no doubt that Perrault took care not to offend the tastes of upper-class society, it is debatable whether he really retained the *folk* qualities, for he totally corrupted the perspective and import of the warning tale.

Instead of really warning girls against the dangers of predators in forests, the tale warns girls against their own natural desires which they must tame. The brave little peasant girl, who can fend for herself and shows qualities of courage and cleverness, is transformed into a delicate bourgeois type, who is helpless, naive and culpable, if not stupid. In the folk tale the little girl displays a natural, relaxed attitude toward her body and sex and meets the challenge of a would-be seducer. In Perrault's literary fairy tale Little Red Riding Hood is chastised because she is innocently disposed toward nature in the form of the wolf and woods, and she is *raped* or punished because she is guilty of not controlling her natural inclinations.

Guilt was never a question in the original folk tale. The little girl, who meets a werewolf and drinks the blood and eats the flesh of her grandmother, acts out an initiation ritual which has two aspects to it: the pattern of the ritual reflected a specific French peasant tradition and a general 'archaic' belief. In those regions of France, where the tale was popular, the tale was related to the needlework apprenticeship, which young peasant girls underwent, and designated the arrival of puberty and initiation into society.[27] The girl proves that she is mature and strong enough to *replace* the grandmother. This specific tradition is

connected to the general archaic belief about witches and wolves as crucial for self-understanding. Hans Peter Duerr has demonstrated that

> in the archaic mentality, the fence, the hedge, which separated the realm of wilderness from that of civilization did not represent limits which were insurpassable. On the contrary, this fence was even torn down at certain times. People who wanted to live within the fence *with awareness* had to leave this enclosure at least once in their lifetime. They had to have roamed the woods as wolves or 'wild persons'. That is, to put it in more modern terms: they had to have experienced the wildness in themselves, their *animal nature*. For their 'cultural nature' was only one side of their being, bound by fate to the animallike *fylgja*, which became visible to those people who went beyond the fence and abandoned themselves to their 'second face'.[28]

In facing the werewolf and temporarily abandoning herself to him, the little girl sees the animal side of her self. She crosses the border between civilization and wilderness, goes beyond the dividing line to face death in order to live. Her return home is a move forward as a whole person. She is a wo/man, self-aware, ready to integrate herself in society *with awareness*.

Such a symbolical ritual expressed in the original folk tale about a strong young woman confused and irritated Perrault. His hostility toward the pagan folk tradition and fear of women were exhibited in all his tales. In *Cinderella* it is important to recall that the different oral folk versions emanated from a matriarchal tradition which depicted the struggles of a young woman (aided by her dead mother as the conserver of society) to regain her stature and rights within society.[29] After Cinderella is humiliated, forced to put on rags, and compelled to perform hard labor, she does not turn her cheek but rebels and struggles to offset her disadvantages. In doing so she *actively* seeks help and uses her wits to attain her goal which is not marriage but recognition. She is not clothed in baroque manner, nor does she wear a glass slipper which could easily break. Rather, she is dressed in a way which will reveal her true identity. The recovering of the lost leather slipper and marriage with the prince is symbolically an affirmation of her strong independent character. In Perrault's literary fairy tale, Cinderella is changed to demonstrate how submissive and industrious she is. Only because she minds her manners is she rescued by a fairy godmother and a prince. Perrault ridicules the folk version while projecting another model of passive femininity which was to be taken seriously by the audience for which he was writing.

Lilyane Mourey has aptly remarked that 'Perrault's suppressions, omissions or additions to the folk tales allow us to conclude that he did not see his task as restoring them in their authenticity. Those stories which he found interesting and amusing became above all the privileged places where the man, the politician and the academician could put his ideas and his fantasies to work in a leisurely way and sometimes to make caricatures. For it is this tone which the moralities assume at times and which emerges from one moment to the next in the tales. This explains why Perrault selected only a small number from the ensemble of the folktale repertory. He retained the tales which "pleased" him, which "attracted" him for infinite and complex reasons because they offered him the possibility to develop (or to indicate at the very least) some of his preoccupations and some of his feelings on a literary, political, and social level. Since women were at the center of his reflections, Perrault spontaneously chose the tales which show the situation of women. The ideal "virtues" of a woman such as Perrault conceived them – beauty, sweetness, kindness, obedience to the husband, dedication to the maintenance of the home, lack of coquetry, and loyalty – are indissolubly linked with one another and reinforce one another in contrast to the behavior of women whom Perrault denounces, women of the aristocracy and *haute bourgeoisie* with whom he came in contact as reputable civil servant, academician, and *homme de cour*.'[30]

IV

Perrault's social views on manners and morality were not always shared by the other French writers of fairy tales. Yet, despite differences in intention and style, it is significant for the development of the fairy tale for children that there was general agreement in the ideological and aesthetical tendency among them. Here the crucial factor to consider is the social standard to which all French writers subscribed: the literary fairy tale was to be used as a vehicle to discuss proper breeding and behavior exemplified by models drawn from the practice in court society and bourgeois circles and the theoretical writings on manners. Each author distinguished himself or herself by the refined and original contribution he or she made to this discussion. The center of concern was civility, and the fairy-tale discourse reflected variations on this theme and became increasingly moralistic as children were regarded as the major audience.

It is almost impossible to examine the manifold ways in which Perrault's associates employed the literary fairy tale to set standards for civilization. Yet, it is possible to compare different works as representative of the general manner in which traditional motifs were