HAGS, FROGS, DIAMONDS AND FAIRIES:
A HISTORY OF FEMALE REPRESENTATION IN FAIRY TALES

by

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ABSTRACT

This project examines how representations of the main female characters from a select group of fairy tales from the seventeenth century change over time. The tales studied are significant stories classified as tales of Magical Reward and Punishment for Good and Bad Girls. Instead of a single snapshot of a fairy tale re-imagined, my project captures an evolution of female representation by historically analyzing the fairy tales and reproducing the changes witnessed across the tales in the form of three original paintings. The artwork produced in my study creates new forms of knowledge that explore the validity and complexity of the fairy tale genre, reveal the underestimated power of gender representation, and challenge the audience to think critically about fairy tales not just as stories for children, but as important historical sources.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

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INTRODUCTION

In an effort to reclaim the fairy-tale genre, manipulated since the mid-twentieth century by an animated mouse in red trousers, many feminists re-wrote popularized fairy tales. Despite Mickey Mouse's harmless persona, Walt Disney's grandiose fairy-tale films combined tropes of the self-made American dreamer with the romantic ideals of true love and the appealing visuals of friendly animated animals.[1] The success of these sanitized fairy tales, modeled as stories for children, determined what would become known as "classic fairy tales" to the western world. The reproductions of these tales through film would also solidify the power of the fairy tale as an artistic and visual product.[2] Disney's animated films provided generations of children with fantastical worlds that inspired imagination and wonder. But between the talking mice, woodland creatures, and fire breathing dragons, these films were laden with influential gendered representations. The popular film remakes such as *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, *Sleeping Beauty*, and *Cinderella* presented heroines who were meek, naïve, obedient, vulnerable, and passive; indeed, two of the princesses listed are asleep for part or most of their tales. Such sugar-coated tales are precisely what authors Angela Carter and Gail Carson Levine critiqued in their works.

In 1979, Angela Carter wrote an innovative collection of feminist fairy tales. Titled *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories*, this collection challenges scholars and readers to think about fairy tales as more than stories for children. Carter uses the characters and plots from some of the most popular fairy tales such as *Blue Beard, Puss in Boots*, *Beauty and the Beast*, and *Snow White*, and re-writes the tales exploring feminist concerns like female sexuality, identity, violence, and

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[1] Naomi J. Wood, "Disney, Walt," *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales: The Western Fairy Tale Tradition from Medieval to Modern,* ed. Jack Zipes (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 129-133.
[2] *Ibid.*

abuse, not shying away from bloody or sexual scenes as significant story elements.[3] By re-writing fairy tales with dynamic female protagonists who are assertive, clever, evil, and sexy, Carter subverts the classic gendered representations found in traditional fairy tales and reveals the complex relationships existing between the male and female characters of the fairy-tale world.

Other authors similarly re-wrote fairy tales by manipulating the plots or providing new background to classic characters. *Ella Enchanted*, published in 1997, is Gail Carson Levine's feminist re-telling of the 'Cinderella' story. Ella's obedience is the result of a misguided fairy's 'gift' that forces her to obey any direct commands. Levine's tale is a clever critique about passivity and obedience as natural traits of female heroines.[4] Giving Ella new agency as a character who fights against obedience (eventually breaking the curse and saving the prince in the process), Levine disrupts the image of female fairy-tale figures as unquestionably biddable damsels in distress.

The need to re-write fairy tales, or more specifically, to re-frame how female characters are represented, suggests that the characters in fairy tales translate important cultural and social meaning. At the heart of these reproductions is a desire to remould the characters, twisting and tweaking their traits to appeal to contemporary interests. Prominent fairy-tale scholar Max Lüthi explains that fairy tales "have been modified by popular tellers, at times becoming shredded in the telling, spoiled, but at times being told better, polished and further developed."[5] This project aims similarly to provide a re-telling of a fairy tale, but from a unique historical and artistic perspective. My project asks how the representations of the main female characters from a group of fairy tales

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[3] *Ibid.* Many of Carter's re-written fairy tales explore sexuality as an important story element and acknowledge the violent nature of the fairy-tale genre.

[4] Gail Carson Levine, *Ella Enchanted* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1997).

[5] Max Lüthi, *The Fairytale as Art Form and Portrait of Man*, trans. Jon Erickson (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), x.

(classified as tales of Magical Reward and Punishment for Good and Bad Girls) change over time. Instead of a single snapshot of a fairy tale re-imagined, my project captures an evolution of female representation by historically analyzing a selection of fairy tales from the seventeenth century and reproducing the changes witnessed across the tales in the form of three paintings.[6]

The visual history of fairy tales has garnered significantly less academic attention than the history of the genre's formation and written reproduction. The early literary fairy tales published in Western Europe hardly ever contained illustrations; however, when publishers marketed fairy tales as children's literature, it became rare for them *not* to be fully or partially illustrated. Later, the Disney Corporation solidified the fairy tale's visual history through the animation of some of the most well-known tales from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. While there are recent publications like *The Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm* edited by Noel Daniel, which includes illustrations of the Grimms' stories, and works like Marina Warner's *From the Beast to the Blonde* that use visual evidence to examine the history of the story teller, there are few works that provide a comprehensive visual history of the fairy-tale tradition.[7] Despite a lack of scholarly interest, it is clear that fairy tales have long contributed inspiration for visual reproduction, as they are retold in art works, animations, graphic novels, video games, and film.[8] With memorable characters, marvelous plots, fantastical beings, and magical objects, fairy tales stimulated images that became

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[6] Maria Popova, www.*Brian Picking.com* "Gorgeous Grimm: 130 Years of Brothers Grimm Visual Legacy" https://www.brainpickings.org/2011/09/28/brothers-grimm-fairy-tales-taschen/

[7] Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm, *The Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm,* ed. Noel Daniel (Cologne: Taschen, 2011). Marina Warner, *From the Beast to the Blonde: On Fairy Tales and their Tellers* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux*,* 1994).

[8] One of the best examples of combining multiple visual media using fairy-tale themes is the video game *The Wolf Among Us.* The game plays as an episodic first-person adventure; however, the plot and game play move forward episodically like scenes in a movie. The main character that the player embodies is Bigby Wolf, the sheriff of Fabletown, who is investigating the disappearance and murders of fairy-tale characters that are now trying to fit into everyday society. *The Wolf Among Us* was developed by TellTale Games as a spin off of the comic series *Fables.* http://fables.wikia.com/wiki/The_Wolf_Among_Us

enduringly fixed in the minds of their readers well before Andrew Lang's coloured fairy books or Disney's animation monopoly.

Visual representation is necessary for this project as it is the most effective way of conveying the results of my research question. The three original paintings reconstruct the changes in representations observed from the first to the last fairy tales. These works draw inspiration from specific painters who were close in time and context to the writers of the fairy tales. The connection to time and place influences the information communicated visually, as the paintings express the cultural and social concerns of both the artists and the fairy-tale writers. The paintings engage in an artistic exercise that presents my interpretation of what the fairy tales *may* have looked like, were the content used as inspiration for illustration. The paintings simultaneously reveal those subjects and styles used to represent seventeenth-century culture. This project does not assert that the fairy tales *would* have been illustrated in this way, but rather shows the styles popular at the times and places in which the fairy tales were created. In choosing to incorporate the artistic styles of the popular artists Jusepe de Ribera, Jean-Antoine Watteau, and Hyacinthe Rigaud, the three paintings effectively complement the artistic atmospheres and socio-cultural situations of the seventeenth century.

The first visual reproduction, titled *The Fairies' Foundation of Cursed Creation,* is inspired by Jusepe de Ribera. A native Spaniard who travelled to Italy in the seventeenth century, Ribera studied among noteworthy masters like Caravaggio, Velázquez, and Carracia.[9] As Giambattista Basile wrote his collection of fairy tales, Ribera created works combining classical and Caravaggesque styles.[10] *The Fairies' Foundation of Cursed Creation* incorporates

[9] Trapier, 1.
[10] Stokstad, 765-766.

the two phases of Ribera's artistic activity that began before 1620 and continued through to the end of the 1630s.

Ribera's works often indulge in religious scenes, but the shift from a colourful praise of the Immaculate Conception to the dark depictions of martyrdoms highlights the mastery and diversity of his style. Ribera depicts beauty and ugliness by using colour, light, and darkness to exaggerate specific features of his subjects. The radiance of his colour palette from the second phase of his artistic career aided in forming the representation of the "good" girl. The first phase of his career, which includes dark and contrasting tones, made it effective to embrace visually the ugliness and punishment of the "bad" girls described in the fairy tales. The detailed representations from Basile's descriptive writing complement Ribera's thematic diversity and resulted in a more cohesive depiction of both the "good" and the "bad" girls from the fairy tales examined.

The artist Jean-Antoine Watteau inspires the representations from the second painting titled *Eloquent Experiments Neglected by a Boorish Brute.* The Rococo style of Watteau's paintings uses bright colours and pastels to create a feeling of scenic gaiety. The term Rococo describes the refined, fanciful, and often playful style that became fashionable in France and favoured among the aristocracy.[11] Though the Rococo movement began in architectural decoration, it was fashionable among the *salons* of Paris and shaped the aesthetic of *salon* culture. Many of Watteau's patrons were *salonnières* of the French aristocracy, and his works show interesting cultural exchange. Watteau's depiction of the elite class and their activities communicated a specific representation of that class and culture; yet the subjects he painted and observed inspired him to depict salon culture in new ways. This is most clearly illustrated in his

[11] Stokstad, 943.

works categorized as *Fête Galante,* in which he depicts contemporary men and women in idyllic outdoor scenes where they celebrated lighthearted elegance, entertainment and frivolity.

Watteau's depictions of young aristocratic women inspired my interpretations of beauty and ugliness by the standards which I observed in his works. Watteau's pieces depict young women with healthy white skin, each having individualistic physical features and unique colours and styles of dress. Watteau's pieces often use the colour provided by an outdoor scene and the elegant and shimmering clothing of the individuals to draw the eye of the viewer to specific figures.[12] Watteau's depictions of *Fête Galante* never delve into darkness or entertain ugliness; thus it was more effective to rely on the descriptions and punishments the "bad" girl receives to frame her likeness. However, Watteau's attention to detail when depicting the dress and attire of his subjects has proven valuable for emphasizing the "bad" girl's pompous attitude using extravagant clothing, as is discussed in more detail in Chapter Three.

The last painting of this project, titled *Portraits of Stabilized Beauty and Expected Ugliness,* was inspired by three portraits created by painter Hyacinthe Rigaud. The painting is firmly Baroque in inspiration, characterized by emotional rather than intellectual response to a work of art. Baroque pieces are often interested in the depiction of a dramatic moment.[13] Rigaud perfected this approach to portrait painting in his most famous piece, the *Portrait of King Louis XIV*. Though Rigaud's painting of the King is an accurate representation, it exaggerates those aspects which the monarch promoted throughout his reign, namely the idea of the King as the embodiment of the state through his divine right to rule. Rigaud brilliantly expresses the ruler's identity as absolute monarch, reflecting the conscious superiority of King Louis XIV.[14] Rigaud's

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[12] Kleiner, 733.
[13] Stokstad, 744.
[14] Ann Tzeutschler Lurie, "Hyacinthe Rigaud: Portrait of Cardinal Dubois," *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art* 54, 8 (1967): 234.

portraits capture an idealized likeness even of the subjects' less attractive features and give attention to the environment in which the subject is situated.[15]

Other artists from the Baroque period contemporary to Rigaud were creating realistic and un-smoothed portraits of their patrons that included "warts and all," like the portrait requested by Oliver Cromwell.[16] However, the portraits used as inspiration for the last paintings of this project maintain an idyllic approach to likeness for each of the subjects. For example, the serene and fair beauty of the *St. Magdalene* translates to the depiction of the "good" girl, while the handsome and fair features in the *Portrait of Pierre-Vincent Bertin* are reproduced for the depiction of the father. Even the fashionable depiction of the *Portrait of Marie-Anne Varice de la Ravoye née de Valière* inspires the likeness of the wicked mother and sister. The depiction of the "bad" girl relied on portraying the punishments she receives and applying the same techniques Rigaud used to project emotional responses. Representing the values and qualities of the subjects, while being aware of the idyllic style, were key goals in the painted reproductions of the "good" and "bad" girls from Perrault's tale. In the same way that Rigaud sought to portray specific qualities in King Louis XIV through colour, composition, dress, pose, and the props surrounding him, so too does *Portraits of Stabilized Beauty and Expected Ugliness* rely on the depiction of the main female figures' physical appearance, the gifts and punishments they receive, and environmental queues within the painting to indicate my interpretations of the values and roles they play within the fairy tales.

[15] Stokstad, 743.
[16] Stokstad, 744.

The paintings created literally show how the representations of the female characters change over time based on my research. Furthermore, the paintings contribute a history of female representation unlike those found in other traditional academic works. The paintings highlight the strong proclivity both women and fairy tales have for inspiring visual expression. The combination of female representation and the nature of fairy tales' transformation to visual media make the paintings a logical and effective method of expressing my research to academic and public audiences.

The visual component of this project combines with a written historical thesis. Interpreting the fairy tales' content required deciphering what information was significant and relevant for building the images of goodness and badness presented by the narratives. However, each of these analytical decisions, which inform the artistic creation, was necessarily mediated by the knowledge of how feminine goodness and badness were understood and expressed during the seventeenth century. Further, my analysis acknowledges that fairy tales are cultural literary sources and considers the influence of the writers' personal contexts and motivations for re-writing the tales. Within this project there intersect multiple axes of historical understanding; the project includes examining change over time, but also emphasizes the importance of using historical methods of analysis in the interpretation of cultural products like fairy tales.

My thesis project demonstrates that the fairy tales of Magical Reward and Punishment for Good and Bad Girls are important sources whose representations of the main female characters relate, reflect, and reproduce historical understandings of gender over time. Chapter One outlines the processes framing my interpretation of the fairy-tale content. Acknowledging past fairy-tale scholarship, utilizing efficient methods of analysis, and adopting specific theoretical frameworks were vital to my interpretations. A close reading of the fairy-tale content revealed a significant link

between the nuanced contexts of the writers and the traits used to portray the main female characters as the moral personifications of "good" or "bad." The writers' contexts and their influence on the representations of the main female characters are examined in three separate chapters. Chapter Two examines Giambattista Basile's two fairy tales "The Three Fairies" and "The Two Cakes," reproducing the representations of the main female characters on a single painting titled *The Fairies' Foundation of Cursed Creation* (Fig. 1).[17] Basile reveals a significant nostalgia for the courts of sixteenth-century Italy through his tales and reflects ideologies of beauty and ugliness that arose from the literary traditions of the Renaissance. Chapter Three examines the contexts of the French *salons* and the *mondain* culture as significant influences on Marie-Jeanne L'Héritier de Villandon's fairy tale "*Les Enchantements de L'Éloquence ou Les Effets de la Douceur"* and reproduces the representations of her main characters in the second painting titled *Eloquent Experiments Neglected by a Boorish Brute* (Fig. 5).[18] Chapter Four considers Charles Perrault's fairy tale variant "*Les Fées"* within the context of the *La Querelle des Anciens et Modernes* and examines the relationship between his representations of "goodness" and "badness" as gendered attributes inherited from the male and female sex. The findings from the content analysis and historical examination of Perrault's tale are reproduced in the last painting, titled *Portraits of Stabilized Beauty and Expected Ugliness* (Fig. 9).[19]

Artists living in the same period as the fairy tales' publications inspired the style and composition of the paintings. I chose the artists based on how their styles complemented the descriptive portrayals of the characters. Though the artists determined the style and composition

[17] Fig. 1, Alauna Brown, *The Fairies' Foundation of Cursed Creation*, acrylic on canvas, photographed by Dezeray Tomra (Aug 15, 2017).

[18] Fig. 5, Alauna Brown, *Eloquent Experiments Neglected by a Boorish Brute,* acrylic on canvas, photographed by Dezeray Tomra (Aug 15, 2017).

[19] Fig. 9, Alauna Brown, *Portraits of Stabilized Beauty and Expected Ugliness,* acrylic on canvas, photographed by Dezeray Tomra (Aug 15, 2017).

of the paintings, the descriptions of appearance and behaviour from the content determined most what is depicted in the paintings. *The Fairies' Foundation*, *Eloquent Experiments*, and *Portraits of Stabilized Beauty* provide clear examples of how the representations of the "good" and "bad" girls changed over time and show the relationship between fairy-tale description, artistic depiction, and the writer's context. The content analysis and artistic creations trace the changes in the representations of the characters. Consequently, by focusing on the differences between the visual reproductions, consistencies in representation emerged in the reproduced paintings. Chapter Five examines the consistencies in representation against the backdrop of the historic debates about women that remerged in the early modern period.

This project began by recognizing the benefits of creating a comparative visual history of female representation within the fairy-tale tradition and the potential of fairy tales as sources to investigate gender construction. By combining academic analysis with creative expression, my thesis has also allowed me to communicate my results to a broader public in an innovative way. The paintings are effective examples of how cultural products have the capacity to carry forward gendered constructions and concepts across time. My thesis fuses the fairy tale's capacity for visual inspiration with its rich written tradition and demonstrates that literary fairy tales are powerful social histories because the descriptions of magic beans, wondrous fairies, and marvelous objects intertwine with messages and images that become ingrained in the imaginations of men, women, and children.[20] This project takes steps toward understanding the broader histories of the fairy-tale tradition and presents a unique and sophisticated study apart from previous scholarship that is accessible outside academia. Like the tellers before me, whether sanitized by Mickey Mouse ears

[20] Jack Zipes, *The Trials and Tribulations of Little Red Riding Hood* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 14, 43.

or dramatized with bloody chambers, I embrace multiple means of producing and mobilizing knowledge and harness art as a powerful method to communicate historic themes and ideas.

CHAPTER ONE

Fairy Spells and Hags' Potions: Project Methodology and Theory

Fairy-Tale Classification

The rapid popularization of fairy-tale literature, art work, and film has fostered a misconception that retellings are a phenomenon of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries; that Walt Disney was the first creator to read a fairy tale, change its inner working to suit his context, and release it back polished and sanded to an attentive audience. However, the history of the fairy tale is one of constant re-telling. Despite some of the nineteenth-century writers' best efforts to market the fairy tale as authentic to a single origin, fairy tales are not perfectly preserved, unaltered stories, collected from the folk and townspeople of medieval Europe.[21] They are narratives that have survived significant periods of time in popular tradition by being passed on from storyteller to storyteller across cultures and communities, and from generation to generation.[22] Within the fairy tale's history of oral, written, and visual transmission, these narratives aided in constructing specific gendered ideologies through the portrayals of their characters.

The ancient Greek and Roman fables could be considered the earliest written fairy tales as they provided models for magic and heroes that were repeated for centuries. However, the genre

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[21] Jack Zipes explains that "educated writers purposefully appropriated the oral folk tale and converted it into a type of literary discourse about mores, values, and manners so that children would become civilized according to the social code of that time." This appropriation of the folk as the source of the tradition in Europe is also evident in Charles Perrault's *Les contes de temps passé* in which the frontispiece depicts an images of an older peasant women telling tales to a group of children around a hearth. See: Jack Zipes, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion: The Classical Genre for Children and the Process of Civilization* (New York: Routledge, 1988), 3. See also: Karen E. Rowe, "To Spin a Yarn: The Female Voice in Folklore and Fairy Tale" in *Fairy Tales and Society: Illusion, Allusion, and Paradigm,* ed. Ruth B. Bottigheimer (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986).

[22] Jack Zipes discusses how the naming of "conte de fée" or fairy tale is important to considering its definition. French writer Marie Catherine D'Aulnoy coined the term *"conte de fée"* in 1697, but never defined how to use the term. By 1750 the term "conte de fée" and fairy tale were in common usage. *The Oxford English Dictionary* first recorded the use of the specific formulation "fairy tale" in a letter dated 1749. Many tales, however, did not involve fairies, and thus the naming remains problematic for scholars. For more information, see: Jack Zipes, "The Meaning of Fairy Tale within the Evolution of Culture," *Marvels & Tales* 25, No. 2 (2011), 222; and Andrew Teverson, *Fairy Tale: The New Critical Idiom* (New York: Routledge, 2013). Specific reference from p. 30: Robyn McCallum, *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales*, ed. Jack Zipes (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 20.

of the literary fairy tale in Europe firmly emerged in the fourteenth century in Latin, Middle English, and old high forms of French, Spanish, Italian, and German.[23] By nature the fairy tale appropriates motifs, signs, and drawings from folklore, and writers embellish fairy tales with elements from other literary genres.[24] From the late Renaissance to the early modern period, literary fairy tales were generally written and read by the educated and elite upper classes, as pastime activities or for amusement, while the oral tales continued to circulate among lower classes.[25] As will be examined in greater detail in Chapter Two, the elite writers of the seventeenth century transformed previously known tales (oral and written), rearranging the motifs, characters, themes, functions, and configurations in ways that addressed the writers' concerns about society and culture.[26]

In the nineteenth century, fairy tales and folk narratives caught the eye of academics, the most famous being the Brothers Grimm. Their research on German folk tales and publication of the *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (Children's and Household Tales) would lay the foundation for historical study in German literature and culture.[27] The Grimm Brothers' interests in folktales and fairy tales as roots of cultural knowledge and identity defined nearly all academic study of fairy tales into the twentieth century. The most significant scholarship to come out of their research,

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[23] Jack Zipes, "Introduction," *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), xvi-xxi.

[24] From 1450 to 1700 four key developments provided the socio-cultural conditions helping the literary fairy tale flourish. The standardization and categorization of the vernacular languages gradually created nation-state languages and established norms of written communication; the invention of the printing press made reproduction more cost effective, requiring less labour; the growth of reading publics throughout Europe encouraged a taste for short narratives of different kinds for reading pleasure; and lastly, the conception of new literary genres in the vernacular and their acceptance by the educated elite classes aided in the diffusion of literary works between classes. Jack Zipes, "Introduction," xx.

[25] *Ibid*. See also: Lewis C. Seifert, "*Les Fées Modernes*: Women, Fairy Tales, and the Literary Field in Late Seventeenth-Century France," in *Going Public: Women and Publishing in Early Modern France,* eds. Elizabeth C. Goldsmith, and Dena Goodman (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995).

[26] Zipes, *The Fairy Tale and the Art of Subversion*, 6.

[27] Ruth B. Bottigheimer, "Grimm, Brothers," *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales,* ed. Jack Zipes (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000)*,* 218.

were the works by Antti Aarne. In 1910 Aarne wrote *Das Verzeichnis der Märchentypen* or *The Types of the Folktales,* establishing the historic-geographic method of analysis. He created a fantastic source containing thousands of folktales categorized into four principal groups that defined the general premise of the tales, then sub-categorized them based on a variety of attributes.[28] This referential index, initially called the Aarne Index, was indispensable for finding sources that fit the goals of this project and is extremely useful for comparative literary studies. Aarne's methods became more widely known after folklore scholar Stith Thompson translated his work into English in 1928.[29] Thompson's commitment to the revision of Aarne's index and its expansion further inspired research in folklore and fairy-tale studies. Following this 50-year long trail left by the historic-geographic method, I came across one breadcrumb dropped by the folklorist Warren E. Roberts. Dedicated to Stith Thompson— who acted as his mentor and colleague— Roberts followed in Thompson's footsteps and created a comprehensive collection of tales on a more focused scale. [30]

In 1953 Roberts wrote *The Tale of Kind and Unkind Girls,* which examined a group of tale variants from within a single tale type, classified by Aarne and Thompson as Type 480 or AT-480. Roberts meticulously catalogued over nine hundred texts, and took on the demanding and time-consuming task of translating the works into English. My interest in using the tales he catalogued

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[28] For more information about Antti Aarne's theory of narrative transmission see: Stith Thompson, *The Folktale* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1946), Stith Thompson, *The Folktale* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1946), 418.

[29] Thompson, 7. Between 1932 and 1936 he revised and compiled the motif index, and expanded it to include traditional tales whose geographical origin ranged from Europe to India and incorporated contemporary research into his revision. Aarne's index has since been revised again by Hans-Jörg Uther in 2004. Several changes appear in the three-volume set by Uther, including the creation of over 250 new tale types and rewritten synopses for all the tales listed in the previous indexes. See: Hans-Jörg Uther, *The Types of International Folktales: A Classification and Bibliography, Based on the System of Antti Aarne and Stith* Thompson (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, Academia Scientiarum Fennica, 2004).

[30] Warren E. Roberts, *Tale of Kind and Unkind Girls: AA-TH 480 and Related Titles* (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1994). The dedication reads: "This study is dedicated to Stith Thompson who has aided and encouraged me in all phases of my work."

was that AT-480 includes clear representations of good and evil personified in the characters of the young girls. These tales allow for an examination of representation as well as the potential to reveal historic discourse about women, as all the main actors in the tales are female. However, as might be expected of a methodology in use for nearly half a century, there are valid criticisms about the problematic typology schemes used in the Aarne-Thompson classification, which forced a re-evaluation of the sources categorized using this method. Concerns with the index were voiced over several decades from folklorists, scholars of literature, and feminist scholars.

Vladimir Propp was the most influential critic of the Aarne-Thompson classification system. Studying Russian folk and fairy tales or "wondertales," Propp developed his own theory of categorization. He noted that "classification within a group should be carried out per varieties of one feature and not several features at once."[31] He continues with a specific example from the Aarne-Thompson classification, pointing to the inconsistency in the system. The common theme of classification seems to be magic:

> the magic adversary; the magic spouse, brother and the like; the magic task; the magic helper; the magic object. All seems fine, for the categories are united by concepts of magic. […] However, the first two categories are defined by characters, the third by motif, and the fourth by object."[32]

This brings into question redundancy and multiplicity within certain tales themselves, when combinations of these categories are present. The fairy tales for this study, for instance, have

[31] Vladimir Propp, *Theory and History of Folklore,* trans**.** Ariadna Y. Martin and Richard P. Martin (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 46.

[32] Other criticisms of the Aarne-Thompson method of classification come from feminist fairy-tale scholarship. Author Torborg Lundell discusses how there is an inclination in the classification system to present heroines with passive and subordinate attributes. The ATU Index only attributes positive titles to male-centred tales and designates female characters 'helpers' despite several tales' having female characters as the main actor. Lundell also provides evidence of inconsistency in the titles proposed by the ATU Index and suggests that the plot synopsis often disfavours female characters. See: Torborg Lundell, "Folktale Heroines and the Type and Motif Indexes" *Folklore* 94, No. 2 (1983): 240.

magical characters (a group of fairies and magic figures in disguise) that act as adversary to one girl and magical helper to the next. Propp proposed applying basic considerations when grouping tales to solve the issues of inconsistency.[33] Three cases were possible: classification made per presence/absence of one particular feature; according with varieties of one feature; or according to mutually exclusive features."[34] While Propp's systematic study of the formation of the Russian "wondertale" has been extremely influential in folk-narrative studies, it also received some persuasive criticism which directly affected its usefulness for my project.

Critics took greatest issue with the sample size and lack of cultural variation of the tales classified by Propp's new method.[35] Propp tested his method with a relatively small sample of roughly one hundred tales and only used one cultural group of tales, the Russian folk and wonder tales. Propp also examined tales with exclusively male protagonists, which assumes a culturally specific model of gendered behaviour.[36] These limitations make applying his method to other tales of varying backgrounds with female protagonists questionable. As well, criticism from anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss pointed to Propp's tendency to distance content from classification. Levi-Strauss disagreed primarily with Propp's separation of form and content, arguing that abstracting the folktale to a formula of functions deprives the researcher of understanding how and why the tales differ and the relative importance of these differences in content.[37]

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[33] Propp, 45. Propp explains "First, the feature must reflect relevant aspects of the phenomenon, what is relevant is determined by the goal of the investigation. Second, the selected feature must remain the same throughout the classification, and lastly the basic feature must be formulated clearly, so as to preclude the possibility of different interpretations.

[34] *Ibid.*

[35] Teverson, *Fairy Tale: The New Critical Idiom*.

[36] Teverson, 103.

[37] Claude Lévi-Strauss, "Structure and Form: Reflections of a Work by Vladimir Propp," in *Theory and History of Folklore* by Vladimir Propp, trans. Ariadna Y. Martin and Richard P. Marin, eds. Anatoly Lieberman (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1984): 180-181.

Source Selection and Methodology

While my project is not an examination of the origins, classification, or diffusion of a tale variant, nor does it seek to revise classifications based on function, it does rely on the selection of appropriate sources for an investigation into the changing nature of representation (a distinctly historical approach) and historical discourses of gender (a distinctly gendered approach). I have therefore selected a group of tales traditionally classified as "The Tales of the Kind and Unkind Girls" following the Aarne-Thompson Method used by Roberts. However, it would not be possible in the space of this project to investigate all tales classified under this single type, whether based on magical criteria as is the Aarne-Thompson system, or the absence/presence or variety of exclusive features, as suggested by Propp. Instead, I set my own guidelines for selection and categorization, following the path that many scholars have taken since debates erupted about classification.

The tales chosen include Giambatistta Basile's "*Los Tre Fates*" or "The Three Fairies" and "*Le due pizzette"* or "The Two Cakes" from *Lo Cunto de li cunti overi Lo trattenemiento de peccerille* or *Il Pentamerone* (1634-1636);[38] Marie-Jeanne L'Héritier's "*Les enchantments de l'éloquence; ou, Les effets de la douceur*" or "The Enchantments of Eloquence; or, The Effects of

[38] The translations used for Giambattista Basile's tales include: Nancy Canepa, trans. "The Three Fairies: Tenth Entertainment of the Third Day," in *Giambatistta Basile's The Tale of Tales, or Entertainment for Little* Ones (Detroit: Wayne University State, 2007): 280-287. Nancy Canepa, trans. "The Two Little Pizzas: Seventh Entertainment of the Fourth Day," in *Giambatistta Basile's The Tale of Tales, or Entertainment for Little* Ones (Detroit: Wayne University State, 2007):344-349. Benedetto Corce, trans. "Tenth Diversion of the Third Day, The Three Fairies," in *The Pentamerone of Giambattista Basile* (New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, 1932): 292-299. Benedetto Corce, trans. "Seventh Diversion of the Fourth Day: The Two Cakes," in *The Pentamerone of Giambattista Basile* (New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, 1932): 54-60. Richard Burton, Trans. "The Three Fairies: Tenth Diversion of the Third Day" in *Il Pentamerone or the Tale of Tales* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 1943): 267-276. Richard Burton, Trans. "The Two Cakes: Seventh Diversion of the Fourth Day," in *Il Pentamerone or the Tale of Tales* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 1943): 339-345. Jack Zipes, *"*Giambattista Basile The Three Fairies" in *The Great Fairy Tale Tradition: From Straparola to the Brothers Grimm* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001): 544-550.

Sweetness" from *Oeuvres meslées* (1696);[39] and Charles Perrault's "*Les Fées*" or "The Fairies" from *Histoire ou contes du temps passé* (1697).[40] These tales were selected by adopting some of the criteria used in Jack Zipes' book *The Great Fairy Tale Tradition: From Straparola to the Brothers Grimm,* in which he collected, translated and published several fairy-tale variants and establishes his own method of categorization.

I have also established the use of magic for reward and punishment as a significant and necessary theme. This study examines four of the earliest literary fairy tales written in the seventeenth century, whose composition and functions fit effectively under the heading of Magical Rewards and Punishments for Good and Bad Girls.[41] Keeping my examination within one century allows for a more congruent historical examination of the fairy tales. Moreover, examining two versions written at the beginning of the seventeenth century and two written at the end of the same century allows for a clear comparison of the change in representations based on historical context, authorship, and changing notions of female representation.[42] Though Aarne's, Thompson's, and Roberts' scholarship formed an indispensable collection of sources that continue to be used in folklore, literature, and fairy-tale studies, their methods of classification left an overwhelming

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[39] Marie-Jeanne L'Héritier, "*Les Enchantments de L'Éloquence; ou, Les effets de la douceur*," in *Oeuvres meslées* (Paris: J. Guignard, 1969).

[40] Charles Perrault, "*Les Fées*," in *Histoire ou contes du temps passé* (Paris: Claude Barbin, 1697).

[41] Zipes, "Introduction," *The Great Fairy Tale Tradition*, xiii. This is a modified heading inspired by Jack Zipes who names his category "Rewards and Punishment for Good and Bad Girls." Zipes states, "I have purposefully not followed the traditional Aarne-Thompson method of cataloguing the tale types that folklorists use because their system pertains largely to oral folktales and because I have problems with the manner in which they defined their types." Zipes also explains that he ended his time line with the Brothers Grimm fairy tales because the genre of the fairy tale reached stability and equilibrium through their work. Their production of a large and stable body of tales created a foundational basis and stabilized the genre's literary components. The equilibrium of the genre resulted in nearly all subsequent fairy-tale writers' drawing from, emulating, or incorporating many of the plots and characters from the Grimms' tales. For further discussion on the stabilization of the fairy-tale tradition see: Zipes, *The Great Fairy Tale Tradition,* 544.

[42] While the Brothers Grimm published a version of this tale in 1812 that shares composition and function, it was cut from this examination as it would be extremely difficult to effectively compare the contexts of the seventeenth century in shaping the fairy tales to that of the nineteenth century. Europe underwent significant cultural, environmental, technological, and ideological changes that are too broad to be comparable in the space of this thesis.

number of sources to choose from, necessitating that I narrow my source base further than the parameters established with the traditional typologies. By creating my own criteria for selection inspired by Zipes' categorization, a manageable pool of data emerged that could focus on the changes in representation of the characters as well as draw out significant historical discourses about gender from the content of the tales.

I have similarly arranged the tales by theme sharing typology of composition and function. 'Composition' refers to the constant but basic structures that the plot develops around, or the sequence of functions as given to a fairy tale.[43] In the case of the fairy tales examined in this project, the composition is outlined as follows:

- A task is given to the "good" girl.
- The "good" girl leaves home.
- The "good" girl meets a magical figure/figures who secretly test her.
- The "good" girl succeeds and is magically rewarded
- The "good" girl returns home and her reward is discovered by an adversary.
- The adversary sends the "bad" girl to meet the magical figure/figures to reap the same rewards.
- The "bad" girl leaves home and meets the magical figure/ figures.
- The "bad" girl is tested by the magical figure/figures but fails and is magically punished.
- The "bad" girl returns home.

This is the basic outline of the composition of the tales under examination. The plots, however, do have variables such as the type of magical reward and punishment, the character of the adversary, events that transpire from each composition point, and auxiliary characters that do not move the plot forward.

'Function' denotes the action of the character from the point of view of its significance for the progress of the narrative.[44] For example, in the first tale under examination, the "good" girl is

[43] Propp, 74.
[44] *Ibid.* 75.

sent by her wicked stepmother to dispose of garbage, drops her basket down the cliff, and must retrieve it. Reaching the bottom of the cliff, she meets three beautiful fairies who bring her to an underground palace. The function is not the acts of throwing garbage and climbing down the hills, because they do not necessarily progress the narrative or move the plot forward, and replacing these details would not affect the overall narrative of leaving home and finding the magical figures. For example, the girl could be sent to fetch water and could meet a magical old woman. The action of throwing garbage or fetching water does not move the plot forward, but leaving the house and finding the magical figures does.

Choosing sources that maintain 'composition' and 'function' is important when using fairy tales as historical sources because such choice allows for an effective comparative examination. The consistency in structure brings to light how the writers shape the fairy tale's details, especially in the representations of the main actors. The decisions that the writers make in how their characters embody "goodness" and "badness" as female figures can be read through historical lenses, and reveal the underlying ideologies that informed representing the girls in specific ways.

Theoretical Frameworks: Socio-Historical and Feminist Approaches

This project recognizes the significance of Levi-Strauss' argument that content is as important as the functions and the order of the composition in a fairy tale. Propp advocated for a classification that mirrored scientific methods like those defining class, genus, and species, and wished to create a system that was relevant, stable and unambiguous.[45] However, the goals for his revision were rooted in his own understanding of the most significant flaws of then-contemporary classification systems. These flaws were viewed differently across literary and historical disciplines and in the process of questioning how to classify tales, academic conversations turned

[45] Propp, 45.

inward on the overall objectives in the study of folklore and fairy tales itself. Interests shifted from tracing fairy-tale origins, movement, and classification, as had been the trend since Aarne, to thinking about fairy tales as historical, social, and cultural products, whose content held broader meaning about society. Two theoretical approaches, the socio-historical and feminist, resulted from the objective discussion and have significantly supported my content analysis for the tales of Magical Reward and Punishment for Good and Bad Girls.

Propp was among the first scholars to discuss the broader implications of connecting folktales and wonder tales to reality and remarked that the wonder tale is derived from and reflects reality. However, due to the artistic nature of the wonder tale, the relationship between reality and fiction needs to be considered carefully.[46] Nonetheless, his arguments stress the importance of recognizing fairy tales as more than creative literary works and as reflecting the context in which they were produced. From this understanding, other disciplines would examine the fairy tale considering its historical context and assessing fairy tales as a powerful acculturating tool.

The socio-historical approach to fairy-tale studies is one of the dominant forms of critical thinking about the fairy tale as a genre. Scholars and theorists using socio-historical approaches argue that fairy tales are a form of fiction shaped by the environments they are created in. Fairy tales mediate the beliefs and the world-views that are current in those environments.[47] Four basic principles that underlie these methods of interpretation are applied in this project. First, fairy tales are historical documents with a specific material past; second, the meaning of fairy tales can only be understood in relation to the cultural contexts in which they have been produced and received; third, fairy tales do not have stable or universal meanings but mean different things in different contexts; and last, fairy tales, like all products of human culture, are not 'innocent' or 'naïve', but

[46] *Ibid.* See Page 49 for further information on Propp's three specific relations between folklore and reality.
[47] Teverson, 124.

reflect the priorities —the 'world-views,' 'ideologies' or *mentalités*— of the cultures that have shaped them.[48] Together these principles comprise what may be called the 'historicist' approach to fairy tales: an approach that comprehends the material dimensions of the folk-narrative text and the sociological dimensions of folk-narrative discourse.[49]

The theory that fairy tales can act as purveyors of more than just fictional narrative by illuminating social codes and beliefs is crucial to the interpretations of the fairy tales in this project. The tales are analyzed with the understanding that they convey certain messages about the attitudes and ideologies of the societies writing and reproducing them. The tales are formed and influenced by the writers' contexts but also the broader historical context in which they are created. However, this project examines the tales not solely as socializing forces for children but as artifacts that also reinforced and reproduced gendered ideologies in early modern society affecting both adults and children. If socio-historic perspectives are to be considered as analogous to the foundation of this analysis, feminist scholarship on fairy tales should be considered the structural supports.

It was not until the 1970s that gender was explored as a significant element of the ideologies and attitudes present in the fairy-tale tradition. Feminist interests in the fairy tale peaked after a debate exploded between two writers about the usefulness of fairy tales as positive stories for young girls. Allison Lurie fueled this debate by publishing "Fairy Tale Liberation" in the *New York Review of Books* in 1970 which argued, according to Donald Haase, "that folktales and fairy tales can advance the cause of women's liberation because they depict strong females."[50] She concluded that feminists ought to approve of fairy tales as they present competent, resourceful,

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[48] *Ibid.*

[49] This project drew specifically from Jack Zipes' *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion;* Jack Zipes, *The Trials and Tribulations of Little Red Riding Hood*; Marina Warner, *From the Beast to the Blonde;* and Ruth B. Bottigheimer, *Bold Boys and Bad Girls: The Moral and Social Vision of the Tales* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987).

[50] Donald Haase, "Feminists Fairy-Tale Scholarship: A Critical Survey and Bibliography," *Marvels &Tales,* 14, 1 (2000): 15. Allison Lurie, "Fairy Tale Liberation," *The New York Review of Books,* 17 (1970): 42-44.

and powerful female characters.[51] Her article provoked Marcia R. Lieberman to publish "Some Day My Prince Will Come: Female Acculturation through the Fairy Tale," which was a counter-argument stating that many of the best known stories in the fairy-tale tradition send particularly negative messages to young girls and do not provide positive examples for women's liberation, citing the passive, obedient, and subservient nature attributed to characters like Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty, and Snow White.[52]

The debate surrounding the portrayal of feminine nature and behaviour marked the focus of early feminist fairy-tale research and the advent of modern feminist fairy-tale studies, emphasizing the genre's sociopolitical and socio-historical contexts. Feminist scholarship examined the content as well as the process of canonization and the institutional control of the classical fairy-tale collections, looking at women's roles within the tradition as subject but also as writers of the genre.[53] Lieberman considered fairy tales to be powerful tools of acculturation because of their capacity to assign and promote specific gendered identities, behaviours, and roles.

My analysis combines several elements from the field of fairy-tale studies into a single project. I utilized Aarne's research and classification to find my sources, narrowed the sources by using Propp's definition of tale function, composition, and historic reality, and limited my time period using Zipe's modified classification. The socio-historical method of analysis and feminist scholarship of fairy tales frame my understandings of what information can be drawn from the fairy tales under examination as well as the context that informed the artistic creations. Three paintings present the results of my research question by visually illustrating how the

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[51] *Ibid.*

[52] Marcia R. Lieberman, "Some Day my Prince Will Come: Female Acculturation through the Fairy Tale," *College English* 34, 3 (1972): 384.

[53] Haase, 16.

representations of the main female characters changed over time and reveal the significant differences as well as similarities in how historical context shapes representation.

Looking at my three paintings, the viewer might be struck by the palpable changes in tone, colour and content of each work. The paintings shift in artistic style from a theatrical Caravaggesque piece, to a light-hearted rococo fête, and finally to static baroque portraits. The seventeenth-century painting styles were indeed diverse and plentiful. The representations of the "good" and "bad" girls reflect the same variety in their characterization. From Basile's most thorough details of kissable lips, creamy throats, swollen eyes, and warty noses to Perrault's single-word descriptions, *belle* and *brutale*, the descriptions of the "good" and "bad" girls change dramatically from the first to the last tales. The traits assigned to the characters signal specific historical influences unique to the writers' context. The goal of the following chapters is to show how the individual contexts of the writers had specific influence on how the characters were represented. By reading the content of the fairy tales against the historical background of the writers, I find that nuanced social and gendered commentaries are sprinkled like fairy dust between the moral lessons of reward and punishment, shaping the representations from tale to tale.

My first painting depicts Basile's tales, and combines the dominant physical descriptions present in "The Three Fairies" with descriptions of the gifts and curses from the "The Two Cakes." Because the historical context of the writer remains the same for both tales, a single painting depicts Basile's works. The second painting similarly depicts the descriptions of the girls from "*Les Enchantments de L'Éloquence*" by L'Héritier, and the third painting depicts the girls from Perrault's "*Les Fées.*" The choice of artists, the fairy-tale content, and the writers' contexts combine to create powerful examples of changing female representation informed by both historically minded gender ideologies and individual experience. The paintings are amalgamations

of several nuanced historical processes, but provide examples of how the fairy tales' representations of "good" and "bad" change — and stay the same — across time.

CHAPTER TWO

The Fairies' Foundation of Cursed Creation

Figure 1 – Alauna Brown, *The Fairies' Foundation of Cursed Creation* (2017)
Photographed by Dezeray Tomra

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tales titled *Lo Cunto de li Cunti* or The Tale of Tales, published later as *Il Pentamerone*, marked the foundation of the literary fairy-tale tradition.[54] The innovative fairy tales were the product of Basile's inspiration from other literary and oral traditions as well as the circumstances of his own historical context. Literary historian Nancy Canepa argues that Basile's works emerged as a sort of alter ego of the more public Basile, who was a courtier and champion of the Tuscan tradition.[55] Linguistically, but also thematically and ideologically, Basile's fairy tales served as a counterpoint to his official literary output.[56] In the following chapter I interpret the female representations present in the tales' content within the context of Basile's literary influences. First, I examine the parallels between the popular works describing beauty and those characterizing the "good" girls; then I compare the representations used to signify the "bad" girls to those of rustic poetry. Reproduced in visual format and read against the historic context, particular traits assigned to the "good" and "bad" girls reveal nuanced social commentaries unique to Basile's historical experience as an academic and writer of the courts of Naples. Basile's fairy tales also function as effective examples of historical products reproducing broader notions about femininity.

Though Basile incorporated folk elements into his writing, his ideological perspective was aristocratic, as he was a lifelong participant in court culture and acted as a feudal lord for most of his life.[57] Nancy Canepa further interprets Basile's tale collection *Lo Cunto* as a source that acted to express his dissatisfaction with the state of court life and his role as an administrator and writer. During Basile's lifetime, intellectuals in the courts of Italy and the Kingdom of Naples were

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[54] Nancy L. Canepa, *From Court to Forest: Giambattista Basile's* Lo cunto de li cunti *and the Birth of the Literary Fairy Tale* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 199), 39-46.

[55] Nancy L. Canepa, "From Court to Forest: The Literary Itineraries of Giambattista Basile" *Italica* 71, No. 3 (1994): 291.

[56] *Ibid.*

[57] Giambattista Basile entered the sphere of the court system in the early seventeenth century and would spend most of his professional life in the service at various courts in Italy as a man of letters. See: Canepa, *From Court to Forest*, 39-46 and Canepa, "From Court to Forest: The Literary Itineraries," 292.

increasingly isolated from academic expression, often required to perform monotonous tasks, and frequently considered little more than glorified secretaries who were sporadically hired and dismissed by fickle patrons.[58] Basile expressed his increasing frustration with his court patrons in a letter written in 1612. He suggests that offering one's service to a court lord is like throwing one's efforts to the wind:

> It would therefore be a good idea never to publish anything, or if this mistake really has to be made, my view is that the dedication should be to the wind. He must, indeed, be the greatest man in the world, for I hear him mentioned by everyone; they all say they work for him. Just look at those who serve in the courts, you serve now, you serve later, you serve today, you serve tomorrow, ... and then, suddenly, it's night for you, you're told to turn yourself around and get out! So that you can truly say that you've served the wind, and God only knows how many of them there are who, instead of awarding you satisfaction, at the last minute send you away with an accusation of theft. The lover paces the floor, coughs, sneezes, runs, perspires, pines away, swells up with emotion, and when he expects at least a wink of the eye from his coy sweetheart, he finds that he has labored in vain, for the wind![59]

As a reaction to changing roles within the court system, courtiers and intellectuals founded academies with the hope of providing an independent space for intellectual conversation.[60] They attempted to recapture the courtly atmosphere of the early sixteenth-century Renaissance in the civil discussions and dialogues of *lezioni* (lessons)*, composizioni* (compositions), and *questioni* (questions).[61] However, this attempt was often met with the unpleasant reality of their circumstance, as Canepa explains:

> The model of the multifaceted, "organic' courtier and of the court as a locus of civilized dialogue among equals, in which the prince or

[58] Intellectual writers were met with conditions and patronage that stifled creativity with monotonous tasks like determining "the right way to fold letters." Their main function became celebrating and praising in writing the princes, barons and nobles who hired them. See: Canepa, *From Court to Forest,* 47.

[59] Canepa, "From Court to Forest: The Literary Itineraries of Giambattista Basile," 298.

[60] Canepa, *From Court to Forest,* 50. Basile helped found one of the most prestigious academies of his time, the Academy of Oziosi.

[61] *Ibid.,* 49. Unfortunately, the "freedom" enjoyed by members of these academies was largely an illusion, and some scholars have argued that the academies were effective means of controlling intellectuals.

> *signore* was an interlocutor and not an absolute authority who merely gave orders to be carried out, contrasted with an empirical situation in which the intellectual occupied a subservient role with regard to his aristocratic employer.[62]

The fairy tales "The Three Fairies" and "The Two Cakes" reveal Basile's desire for a system rewarding virtue, honesty, loyalty, and courtesy, traits that are lacking or went unnoticed in the spheres of his own courts of the Neapolitan elite.[63] In his tales, Basile presented idealized worlds stabilized by the rule of magic. The fairy tales replace the idle princes and greedy barons that reward pandering and corrupt courtiers with benevolent fairies who justly dole out magical rewards and punishments. Just as Basile strove to recapture the Renaissance ideals in his professional life, the representations he created of the main female characters reflect inspiration from Renaissance literature and appeal to the Renaissance culture of courtly conduct.

In the Middle Ages, representations of women's physical beauty acquired systematic descriptive precision in literature, resulting in two dominant forms: the long canon (*canone lungo*) and the short canon (*canone breve*).[64] Patrizia Bettella argues that Franceso Petrarca and Giovanni Boccaccio are "the two authors who contribute the most to the formation and fixation of the conventions of feminine literary beauty."[65] The descriptions of the "good" girls Cicella and Marziella in Basile's tales echo Boccacian and Petrarchian descriptive styles of beauty and goodness based on neoplatonic conceptions of beauty popular in early humanism. Alongside the canonization of ideal beauty in literature, there existed a tradition of rustic poetry or *poesia rusticana*, which circulated in the Tuscan countryside dating back as far as the thirteenth century.[66]

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[62] *Ibid.,* 47.
[63] *Ibid.,* 159.
[64] Patrizia Bettella, *The Ugly Woman: Transgressive Aesthetic Models in Italian Poetry from the Middle Ages to the Baroque* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 84.
[65] *Ibid.*, 83.
[66] *Ibid.,* 87. The "mock encomium" also explored ugliness. The 'mock encomium' became popular in the early modern period as a literary style that described in "laudatory terms a female type that does not share the aesthetic qualities of conventional literary beauty; rather it turns the norms of the descriptive portrait upside-down.

Rustic poetry turned elite convention on its head and praised the ugliness of woman, exploring feminine ugliness in a carnivalesque fashion.[67] Rustic poets parodied conventional verbal portraits by Boccaccio and aimed to "transform the descriptions of the beloved in rustic terms."[68] As a champion of the Tuscan tradition, Basile would have been familiar with these peasant stories, which by the seventeenth century became a learned form of amusement.[69]

While the descriptions of appearance used in Basile's tales reflect the popular literary styles of the early seventeenth century, the "good" and "bad" girls of his tales also exhibit behaviours that embody the best and worst examples of courtly conduct. The behaviour of the sexes was a highly popular literary topic and became a widespread subject across Europe in the Renaissance period. Baldassare Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier*, published in 1528, remains one of the most extensively referenced sources when examining court culture and ideology. Castiglione's book, having at its peak between 8,000 and 10,000 copies in circulation, is one of the most influential printed sources of the early modern period to disseminate ideas about the ideals of courtly conduct. [70] Basile's tales reflect the essential habits and accomplishments expected of men and women in the courts of Europe outlined in Castiglione's book. It is clear that elite ideologies regarding the noble traits expected of young ladies as well as feminine qualities that were deemed either

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These works were interesting as on the one hand they attempt to criticize the excessive conventionality of literary beauty; on the other hand, they mock the uncouth manners of country people and their distortion of the dominant paradigms of female perfection." Because of the distinct inspiration Basile drew from Boccaccio and the reversal that is apparent in rustic poetry of Boccaccio's exploration of beauty, I consider it a primary influence to Basile's writing style.

[67] *Ibid.*

[68] *Ibid.,* 90.

[69] *Ibid.*

[70] Eugenia Paulicelli, *Writing Fashion in Early Modern Italy: From Sprezzatura to Satire* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2014), 51-52. Castiglione's book was most popular in Italy, Spain, France and England; see: Edith Snook, *Women, Beauty and Power in Early Modern England: A Feminist Literary History* (New York: Palgrave and Macmillan, 2000), 4.

admirable or deplorable had significant influence on the representations of the main female characters of Basile's tales. [71]

Beautiful Boccaccio and Pretty Petrarch

Many scholars convincingly argue that Basile's fairy-tale collection was influenced by the writing style and structure of the works by Giovanni Boccaccio.[72] Basile's choice of name for his collection specifically borrowed elements from Boccaccio's *Decameron*. Where Boccaccio's *Decameron* holds ten tales told over ten nights, Basile's *Lo Cunto de Li C*unti or *Il Pentamerone* contains ten tales told over five nights. Both collections are framed tales in which a series of characters tell fairy tales within a set number of days and in a similar manner, pausing at the end of each tale to reflect on the morals learned.[73]

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[71] Ronald G. Asch, *Nobilities in Transition 1550-1700: Courtiers and Rebels in Britain and Europe* (London: Oxford University Press, 2003), 80. Baldassare Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, trans. Thomas Hoby (New York: E.P Dutton & Co., 1528), 35-36, 59, 71. Castiglione's book also presented very distinct representations of men that through such a broad circulation affected early modern thought and culture. In the "First Book of the Courtier" Castiglione focuses in part on the duties and virtues on men focusing on the importance of training in arms, speech, and education. He writes, "I judge the principal and true profession of a Courtier ought to bee in feates of armes, the which above all I will have him practice lively, and to bee knowne among others of his hardiness, for his atchieving of enterprises, and for his fidelitie towarde him whom he servieth."p. 35-36; "The good use of speech therfor I believe, ariseth of men that have witte, and with learning and practise have gotten a good judgement, and with it consent and agree to receive the words that they thinke good, which are knowen by a certaine natural judgement, and not by art or any manner of rule." p 59; "…return againe unto our Courtier, whom in letters I will have to be more than indifferently well seene. At the least in those studies, which they call the Humanitie and to have not onely the understanding of the Latin tongue, but also of the Greek, because of the many and sundrie things that with great excellence are written in it" p.71. For the full discussion on virtue and the sexes see: Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*. For more information on early modern fashions see: Paulicelli, *Writing Fashion in Early Modern Italy* and Asch, *Nobilities in Transition*.

[72] Boccaccio's novellas would reach international readership and become the prototype of the modern novel. For interpretations of Boccaccio's *Decameron* and its influence on the literature see: David Wallace, *Boccacio: Decameron* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 3.

[73] Canepa, *From Court to Forest*, 56. Canepa goes into greater detail concerning the similarities between Basile and Boccaccio's writing, stating: "Both collections are framed, and both have ten tellers who are each responsible for a tale a day (five days in Basile, ten in Boccaccio). The tales are introduced by a rubric that sums up the plot, followed by a preamble that offers more general moral reflections on the tale about to be told as well as a summary of the group's reactions to the tale."

Elements of Basile's narrative also echo Boccaccio's descriptions of beauty. Boccaccio specialized in the long canon, which allowed for detailed descriptions of a heroine's or muse's body parts including form and proportion, colour, and brightness. Boccaccio portrays women with a systematic descriptive technique centered on the perfection of the body and their adherence to norms of beauty. These descriptions of the body are also imbued with qualities that indicate a moral position in line with elite ideals of superiority.[74] Elements from Boccaccio's portrait of Emilia from his work *Teseida* provides an interesting comparison in appearance to Basile's description of Cicella from "The Three Fairies." Boccaccio's description reads:

> The damsel was of a suitably tall and slender body, and if antiquity tells true, she was most candid and pleasing; and her tresses beneath a crown were long and full-bodied, and truly could be said to be made of gold, and her aspect was humble, and her movement upright and noble. I say that her tresses seemed gold, not tied back in braids but falling loose, and combed that not a single knot was in them, and they fell on the support of her shining white shoulders, and never before or after was hair of such beauty seen; nor did she wear over it anything but a crown, which was greatly esteemed. Her brow was ample and spacious, and white and level and very delicate, beneath which in a twisting arch terminating almost in a half circle were two eyebrows, more than any other thing most black and fine, between which one discerned a broad whiteness separating them, nor did they pass due measure in their extent. Beneath these were shining eyes and sparkling much more than a star.[75]

Basile introduces Cicella in multiple and shorter descriptions emphasizing her physical body and its effects on others in the presence of her beauty:

> Cicella, who was the most marvelous and beauteous creature in the world: her twinkling eye cast a spell on you, her little mouth made for kissing put you in a state of ecstasy, and her cream-colored throat sent you into spasms. She was, in short, so charming, savory, gay, and mouth watering, and she possessed so many little graces, lovely airs, dainty little mannerisms, and so much allure and appeal that she stole hearts from their breasts.[76]

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[74] Bettella, 85.

[75] *Ibid.*

[76] Giambattista Basile, "The Three Fairies: Tenth Entertainment of the Third Day," in *Giambattista Basile's: The Tale of Tales, or Entertainment for Little Ones,* trans. Nancy Canepa (Detroit: Wayne State University, 2007), 281.

Figure 2 – Jusepe de Ribera, *Immaculada Concepción* (1635)

He continues to describe Cicella throughout the tale: "she was as pretty as a picture and you couldn't find the slightest defect in her."[77] The enamoured prince Cuosemo also describes her as "that jewel in the mud, that phoenix among the pigs, and that lovely sun in the broken clouds of those rags."[78] Basile parcels Cicella's body into individual imaginative sections that personify her beauty in similar style to Boccaccio's writing. However, the shorter length of these descriptions is akin to the exaltations of beauty by Petrarch, which is found even more prevalently in Basile's second tale.

Basile's fairy tale "The Two Cakes" suggests a familiarity with Petrarch's description of his love Laura from his work the *Canzoniere*. [79]

[77] Basile, "The Two Little Pizzas: Seventh Entertainment of the Fourth Day," trans. Nancy Canepa, 281.
[78] *Ibid.,* 284.
[79] In the same letter written in 1612 in which Basile despairs of the efforts of the intellectual at the courts, Basile explicitly mentions Petrarch stating: "Petrarch complained of this, when he said: "Quante speranze se ne porta il vento!" And so the poor poet, sonnets over here, verses of every other sort over there, madrigals for this one and barzellette for one, as soon as he collects his wits he finds himself with an empty head, a shrunken stomach, and ragged elbows, one foot sunk in misery, . . . and always naked as a louse." See: Canepa, "From Court to Forest: The Literary Itineraries," 298-299.

According to Patrizia Bettella, "Laura provided the model of physical perfection and moral dignity in lyrical poetry, gaining the status of the universal paragon of beauty and elegance for centuries of lyrical poetry in Italy and abroad."[80] Although Laura possessed features expected of every woman of high rank and perfect grace, her body was never described in a full detailed portrait like Boccaccio's Emilia.[81] Instead there are fragmentary descriptions of her, such as golden curly hair, rosy cheeks, rosy lips, pearly teeth, and shiny eyes, and in longer poems, there are sometimes glimpses of Laura's "other noble parts": youthful breasts, gentle arms, white thin hands, and slender feet.[82]

Basile uses similar mystery in his imagery to describe the heroine of the second tale, Marziella, who is as "fair to look upon as she was good at heart."[83] When the King comes to search for her, she rises out of the sea "fair as day," and is a "lovely spectacle," "enchanting view" and "beautiful scene." [84] The overjoyed king finds her "three times more beautiful than he [her brother Cimmo] had described her."[85] As with Petrarch's writing, the descriptions in the fairy tale focus on Marziella's graceful aesthetic more than her actual physical appearance. The combined descriptions of Cicella and Marziella provide the main elements that dictated what is included in the first painting.

Basile's aesthetic ideals borrowed from Renaissance writing and Castiglione's ideals of courtly behaviour are translated visually in the first painting by drawing inspiration from the

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[80] Bettella, 86.
[81] *Ibid.*
[82] *Ibid.,* 86.
[83] Basile, "The Two Cakes," trans. John Edward Taylor, 147.
[84] Basile, "The Two Little Pizzas: Seventh Entertainment of the Fourth Day," trans. Canepa, 347. Basile, "The Two Cakes: Seventh Diversion of the Fourth Day," trans. Burton, 343. Basile, "Seventh Diversion of the Fourth Day: The Two Cakes," trans. Corce, 57.
[85] Basile, "The Two Cakes," trans. John Edward Taylor, 154.

famous artist Jusepe de Ribera.[86] The painting incorporates the two phases of Ribera's artistic activity that began before 1620 and continued through to the end of the 1630s. The upper half of the image depicts the features of the two "good" girls in a single figure. Jusepe de Ribera's painting the *Immaculada Concepcióne* inspired the depiction of the "good" girl hybrid because of the visual resonance it has with the metaphorical descriptions from both fairy tales (Fig. 2).[87] With the imagery of the phoenix, jewels, the sun, clouds and rising out of the sea, the *Immaculada Concepción* worked perfectly to frame the semi-celestial being prominently themed in the narrative. Vibrant colours, brightness and light surround the character to exaggerate the "good" girls' serene expressions and radiant beauty as the "good" girl hybrid stands poised like the Virgin Mary as a static beacon of beauty.

While the colour and composition of the painting help illustrate the effect that the "good" girls' beauty has, there are more specific descriptions of the clothing and hairstyle from "The Three Fairies" that are also considered in the painting. In the tale, Cicella accomplished the fairies' tasks and as part of her reward is adorned in beautiful clothing and has her hair fashionably dressed:

> Then the fairies, hugging and kissing her a thousand times, dressed her in a magnificent gown embroidered all over in gold and did her hair in the Scottish fashion, with braids that circled her head and so many ribbons and frills that it looked like a meadow of flowers. And with her padded rooster's crest and her rolled braids, they accompanied her to the door.[88]

The painting shows Cicella's hair in the manner described in the fairy tale. She has long blonde

[86] Ribera was a native Spaniard who travelled to Italy in the seventeenth century to study among noteworthy masters like Caravaggio, Velázquez, and Carracia. For more information about Ribera see: Elizabeth de Gué Trapier, *Ribera* (New York Hispanic Society of America, 1952), 1.

[87] José de Ribera, *Inmaculada Concepcíon*, Oil on Canvas, 1635, Arte Historia, accessed Aug. 15, 2017, http://www.artehistoria.com/v2/obras/10805.htm. Jusepe de Ribera is also known as José de Ribera, and *Immaculada* has several different titles with various spelling. The *Immaculada* was painted during the second period of Ribera's artistic activity between 1635 and 1639 which departed from the teachings of the *Caravaggisti* and enriched his almost monochromic palette with brilliant tones borrowed from the Venetians. Trapier, 3

[88] Basile, "The Two Little Pizzas: Seventh Entertainment of the Fourth Day*,"* trans. Nancy Canepa, 283.

hair, assuming the same characteristics as Boccaccio's Emilia whose "tresses seemed gold" and Petrarch's Laura who had "golden curly hair."[89] Painting the figures with blonde hair also matches associations made between beauty and blondeness, and, interestingly, associations of blondeness with virtue. Marina Warner discusses in her book *From the Beast to the Blonde* the contradictory nature of blondeness, explaining, "Although blondeness's most enduring associations are with beauty, with love and nobility, with erotic attraction, with value and fertility, its luminosity made it also the traditional colour of virgins' hair."[90] This aspect of erotic attraction is also present in the fairy tales. Cicella is described as "Charming, savory, gay, and mouth watering" and causes the noble lord Cuosemo to feel as though he is "dying of the desire to expand his impassioned heart by squeezing the beauties of his beloved."[91] Marziella also sends the King Chiunzo into tormented sleeplessness; "And thus plighting their love with a clasping of hands, she withdrew within the main, and he within the fire into such a fire indeed that he found no rest all the day…he never closed his eyes, but kept ruminating with the jaws of memory the beauty, grace and comeliness of Marziella."[92]

Warner explains further that after the fifteenth century, "the Virgin Mary herself, particularly under her apocalyptic aspect as the 'Woman clothed with the sun,' is frequently depicted as a blonde, and not only in Northern countries, but in France and Italy as well."[93] The "good" figure is thus painted with blonde hair dressed in the 'rooster's crest' hairstyle described in the tale, having her hair knotted on top of her head with a tail of golden curls hanging from it.[94]

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[89] Bettella, 86.
[90] Warner, 367.
[91] Basile, "The Two Little Pizzas: Seventh Entertainment of the Fourth Day," trans. Nancy Canepa, 285.
[92] Basile, "The Two Cakes: Seventh Diversion of the Fourth Day," trans. Richard Burton, 344.
[93] Warner, 367.
[94] Basile, "The Two Little Pizzas: Seventh Entertainment of the Fourth Day, trans. Nancy Canepa, 283.

The description of the "meadow of flowers" influenced the choice of pink, violet, and green ribbons that weave between braids in her hair and cascade behind her head.

Though the narrative describes Cicella wearing an embroidered gown, I chose to maintain the robes from Ribera's painting of the *Immaculada Concepcióne* of the Virgin Mary. This choice is more illustrative of Ribera's artistic style, as he often includes classical imagery and dress in theatrical scenes. The "good" girl wears a white tunic and blue mantle billowing out in great folds. The blonde hair, lavish hairstyle, and biblical robes imbue the "good" girl's appearance with associations of virtue and kindness, reminiscent of the Virgin Mary. The representation of the "good" girls would remain incomplete if physical appearance were the only feature considered. The "good" girls are also characterized by social sophistication, courtly manners, and the virtuous and graceful behaviours expected in Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier.*

Virtue and Courtly Countenance

In the painting, three chubby cherubs fly beside and below the "good" figure holding specific objects. One holds the comb, while another cherub, the furthest to the left, holds the simple tattered skirt. Though these objects seem innocuous, they are used in the reproduction to identify the tasks performed by both Cicella and Marziella and are symbolic of the virtuous qualities rewarded by the fairies. After scaling down a large precipice to retrieve the basket of trash she dropped, Cicella encounters three fairies who invite her into their magical underground palace. The beautiful and graceful fairies secretly perform three tests, first having Cicella comb their hair while asking "My lovely girl, what are you finding on this little head?" to which she replies, "I'm finding little nits, tiny lice, and pearls and garnets!" Second, they tell Cicella that she may "choose whatever she liked," from a large wardrobe full of rich and lavish clothing. Ignoring the most

valuable things, she "decided on a tattered little skirt that wasn't worth three cents."[95] Last, they ask "From which door would you like to leave, my little sweetie?" and Cicella responds, "Going out through the stable is good enough for me."[96] Based on the responses and choices she makes, Cicella is rewarded by the fairies because of her politeness, kindness, and humility. As she leaves the palace decked out, a golden star falls from the heavens and sticks to her forehead, shining and glittering.[97] Painted with a shining jewel pressed in the center of her forehead, the image shows the final reward for Cicella's respectful and humble exit from the palace.

In the "Two Cakes," Marziella encounters only one fairy who rewards her behaviour. In the painting, the fairy is painted sitting at the edge of a fountain in her disguised form as an old hag. Marziella encounters the hag after her mother asks her to fetch water, sending with her a cake as a snack for her journey. Upon arriving at the fountain, the old hag asks, "O my beauteous child, may Heaven send thee a good lot and fortune, give me a morsel of that cake."[98] Marziella replies, "Take it all, and eat it, my good woman; and I regret, that it is not made of sugar and almonds, for I would even so give it to thee with all my heart."[99] In seeing the loving kindness of Marziella, the fairy in disguise enchants her with a gift:

> Go, and may Heaven always prosper thee for this thy goodness which thou hast shown to me, and I pray all the stars that thou mayest be ever happy and content; that when thou breathest, from thy lips may come forth roses and jasmines; when thou combest thine hair, may ever from thine head drop pearls and garnets; and when thou settest thy foot upon the ground, may there spring up under thy step lilies and violets.[100]

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[95] *Ibid.*
[96] *Ibid.*
[97] Basile, "The Three Fairies: Tenth Entertainment of the Third Day," trans. Nancy Canepa, 283.
[98] Basile, "The Two Cakes: Seventh Diversion of the Fourth Day," trans. Richard Burton, 340.
[99] *Ibid.*
[100] Basile, "Seventh Diversion of the Fourth Day: The Two Cakes," trans. Corce, 55.

The painting shows the physical rewards of roses and jasmines floating from the "good" figure's mouth. Her hair is also flecked with the jewels and garnets, and behind her head they fall near the silken ribbons of her "rooster crest." The cake shared by Marziella sits on a plate next to the old woman at the fountain, and violets sprout below her feet and spread in the composition forward to the 'good' figure's feet, symbolic of the receiving of her gift.[101]

The qualities given to the girls in these tales are reminiscent of the discussions in Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier* regarding women's role in the courts. The *Book of the Courtier* is divided into four books written in the form of a dialogue in which the court of Urbino is presented to the reader as a model of the perfect court society.[102] Castiglione dedicates the Third Book to address women's contribution to the courts. The dialogue unfolds with various speakers arguing about the ideal qualities necessary for the perfect courtly woman. The speakers Lord Cesar Gonzaga and Lord Julian identify traits similar to those of the "good" girls, focusing on specific behavioural attributes and emphasizing beautiful appearance. The speaker Lord Cesar Gonzaga declares:

> no Court, how great soever it be, can have any sightliness or brightness in it, or mirth without women, nor any Courtier can be gracious, pleasant or hardie, nor any time undertake any galant enterprise of Chivalrie, unlesse he be stirred with the conversations and with the love and contentatio of woman, even so in like case, the Courtier's talk is most unperfect evermore, if the entercourse of woman give them not a part of the grace wherwithall they make perfect and decke out their playing the Courtier.[103]

Further in the conversation, and in great length, Lord Julian argues for the unique qualities of the ideal gentlewoman:

> I say of the exercises of the bodie: But principally in her fashions, manners, words, gestures and conversations (me thinke) the woman

[101] The fairy tale describes that violet and lilies spring from the ground. Violets are a national flower of Naples and white lilies represent purity.

[102] Asche, 81.

[103] Castiglione, 188.

> ought to be much unlike the man… it doth well a woman to have tenderness, soft and milde, with a kinde of womanlye sweetness in every gesture of hers, that in going, standing, and speaking what ever she lusteth, may always make her appear a woman without the likeness of a man.[104]

> Likewise noblesse of birth, avoiding affectation or curiositie, to have a good grace of nature in all her doings, to be of good conditions, wittie, forseeing, not haughtie, not envious, not ill tongued, not light, not contentious, not untowardly, to have the knowledge to winne and keepe the good will of her Ladie and of all others. To doe well and with good grace the exercises comely for a woman.[105]

> Leaving therefore a part the vertues of the minde that ought to be common to her with the Courtier, as wisedom, noblenesse of courage, staiedness, and many moe[sic], and likewise the conditions that are meet for all women, as to be good and discreete to have the understanding to order her husbands goodes and her house and children when she is married, and all those partes that belong to a good huswife. [106]

The underlying emphasis on maintaining discreet pleasant conversation, steady quiet manners and sober action, points to virtues of chastity and silence as well as social grace as the most important traits needed of the gentlewoman of the court, though beauty and appearance are still addressed as important in complementing these managed behaviours.[107] Lord Julian also declares that beauty is important for a gentle woman:

> Me thinke well beautie is more necessary in her than in the Courtier, for (to say the truth) there is great lacke in the woman that waneth beautie. She ought also to be more circumspect, and to take better heede that she give no occasion to bee ill reported of, and so behave her self, that she be not onely not spotted with any fault, but not so much as with suspition. Because a woman hath not so manie waies to defend her selfe from slanderous reports, as hath a man.[108]

The definition of 'virtue,' understood in part to mean 'chastity' —a quality nurtured by religious piety and sexual abstinence— is in Castiglione's conversation reformed to include qualities either

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[104] *Ibid.*, 189.
[105] *Ibid.,* 190.
[106] *Ibid.*
[107] *Ibid.* Asch, 80.
[108] Castiglione, 192.

naturally or innately acquired through appearance, or as the product of correct social conditioning and displayed by proper speech and gestures.[109] Pairing a desirable physical aesthetic with appropriate mannered behaviour supports the contradictory nature of virtue that Castiglione proposes as both innate and learned. Natural beauty resurfaced in the early modern period to signify an outward and visible sign of inner invisible goodness, while courteous behaviour enhanced its legitimacy. [110] Sara F. Matthew Grieco explains that for elite women, "Beauty was no longer considered a dangerous asset [as it was in the Middle Ages] but rather a necessary attribute of moral character and social position. It became an obligation to be beautiful, for ugliness was associated not only with social inferiority but also with vice."[111]

Even in the face of betrayal, the "good" girls are the epitome of courteous behaviour. The wicked stepmother Cardonia torments Cicella because in comparing the looks of her own daughter to Cicella, her daughter "looked like a kitchen rag next to a cushion of the finest velvet, the bottom of a greasy pot in front of a Venetian mirror, a harpy face-to-face with a Fata Morgana…" Cardonia thus "forced her stepdaughter to rush to and from like the shuttle on a loom and to sweep the house, wash the dishes, make the beds, do the laundry, feed the pig, take care of the donkey, and empty the chamber pot."[112] Despite this harsh treatment, Cicella takes the abuse all in stride: "the good girl, always eager and able, did [her tasks] in the most timely fashion, saving herself no effort in order to make her evil step mother happy" and "with great calm and patience worthy of Orlando, Cicella tolerated that wretched life."[113] Marziella, on the other hand, displays her own generous

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[109] Elizabeth C. Goldsmith, *Exclusive Conversations: The Art of Interactions in Seventeenth- Century France* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1988), 8.

[110] Sara F. Matthews Grieco, "The Body, Appearance, and Sexuality," *A History of Women in the West Volume III Renaissance and Enlightenment Paradoxes,* eds. Natalie Zemon Davis and Arlette Farge (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1993), 57.

[111] *Ibid.,* 58

[112] Basile, "The Three Fairies: Tenth Entertainment of the Third Day," trans. Nancy Canepa, 281.

[113] *Ibid.,* 282, 284.

nature after her wicked aunt pushes her off a boat, attempting to drown her in the perilous ocean. At the last minute, the girl is rescued and subsequently imprisoned by a mermaid. Despite being a prisoner of the mermaid, which might harden her disposition, Marziella rises every day from the waves to feed the King's geese delicious pastries, giving them rose water to drink until they "grew as large as rams," showing her continued charity and compassion.[114]

Both Cicella and Marziella are natural beauties who act benevolently and with the purest of intentions, matching closely the characteristics listed in Castiglione's dialogues. Cicella kindly and politely addresses the fairies at each of their tasks, the fairies being "ever so pleased with her fine manners," and she is humble in her choices and respectful of the fairies' wishes throughout the tour of the palace.[115] The old hag, "seeing the loving kindness of Marziella," rewards her behaviour as she acts charitably and with courteous intentions.[116] When the "good" girl addresses any authority figures— the fairies, Lord Cuosemo, the King of Chiunzo, Marziella's mother, and even wicked aunt Troccola and evil stepmother Cardonia—she does so with quiet obedience, politeness, kindness, and humility. The "good" girls represent the characteristics of ideal feminine behaviour and beauty, but it is the foil provided by the "bad" girls that really emphasizes the dichotomization of feminine representation in the tales.

Putrid Peasant Appearance

In contrast to exaltations of beauty, "The Three Fairies" also gives significant attention to the grotesque and deformity, while the "Two Cakes" indulges in disgusting and literally nauseating magical punishments. The style of Basile's descriptions of ugliness and badness shifts from

[114] Basile, "The Two Cakes: Seventh Diversion of the Forth Day," trans. Richard Burton, 343.
[115] Basile, "The Three Fairies: Tenth Entertainment of the Third Day," trans. Nancy Canepa, 282.
[116] Basile, "The Two Cakes: Seventh Diversion of the Forth Day," trans. Richard Burton, 340.

Boccaccian and Petrachain reflections of ideal beauty to exploring ugliness with techniques that ring of the "mock encomium" relayed through "poesia rusticana" or rustic poetry.[117] The 'mock encomium' became popular in the early modern period as a literary style that described a female type that did not share the aesthetic qualities of conventional literary beauty; rather it turns the norms of the descriptive portrait upside-down.[118] These works were interesting, as on the one hand they attempt to criticize the excessive conventionality of literary beauty; on the other hand, they mock the uncouth manners of country people through the distortion of the dominant paradigms of female perfection.[119] Renaissance rustic poetry embraces the world of the lower classes and ill-mannered peasants. The rustic portrayal of peasant women as ugly, uncivilized, immoral, sexualized, and boorish is reproduced in Basile's tales.[120] While Basile's descriptions of ugliness show significant parallels to rustic poetry, they continue to correlate with an influence from Boccacio's works. This is particularly noticeable in his comments on feminine beauty practices, specifically the use of cosmetics to enhance beauty, which echo sentiments from Boccaccio's *Corbaccio*, labelling not only female ugliness but manufactured beauty as immoral or inherently bad. The behavioural traits of the "bad" girls Grannizia and Puccia also reflect negative traits discussed in Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier.*

Basile's descriptions of Grannizia show stark similarities to rustic poetry like Niccolò Campani's "Delle bellezze della dama," whose form best defined the rustic genre in Italy.[121] In one of his poems Campani describes a peasant woman as follows:

> Her two hips were huffing like bellows, big and large like an oxen's;
> and they were shining as lard in the sun. I saw both her breasts, they

[117] Bettella, 87, 83. The "mock encomium" also explored ugliness. Because of the distinct inspiration Basile drew from Boccaccio and the reversal that is apparent in rustic poetry of Boccaccio's exploration of beauty it is considered as a primary influencer to Basile's writing style.
[118] *Ibid.,* 83.
[119] *Ibid.,* 82, 83,
[120] *Ibid.*, 83, 87.
[121] *Ibid.*, 90.

> were swollen like blisters; and drooping like in the goat. Her arms were long and dragging; they did not have too much scabies; her hands were hook-shaped like a rake: her neck was long like a stork's, her mouth is wide like a sack, she shaves her hairy chin out of shame.[122]

Basile's long-winded description of Grannizia from "The Three Fairies" comically emphasizes her disfigured form and unpleasant features, incorporating inanimate objects to describe her body:

> Grannizia, the quintessence of ugliness, the better part of a sea monster, the very flower of rotten casks. She had a headful of lice, ruffled hair, plucked temples, a smashed forehead, swollen eyes, a warty nose, decaying teeth, a mouth like a fish, a beard like a goat. The throat of a magpie, breasts like bags, a crooked back, arms like fish reels, bowed legs, and ankles like cauliflowers.[123]

The narrative continually describes Grannizia's appearance referencing peasant and rustic imagery, calling her "an ugly fright of a daughter," "the ugly peasant girl," "face like a gimlet," "an owl," "an ugly weed," "a cockchafer," "the ugly hag," "a kitchen rag," "the bottom of a greasy pot," and a "harpy."[124]

In the second tale, the 'bad' girl Puccia is also introduced in a very unflattering light. She is described as having "the face of illness and the heart of the plague."[125] Another translation declares, "the heart and face of Puccia, in following the same rule, had formed, on the contrary [to the good girl], a crabbed face and pestilential heart," [126] and "she had a face of ugliness and an heart of pestilence; and the damsel resembled her parent, for Troccola, her mother, was an harpy

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[122] *Ibid.,* 95.

[123] Giambattista Basile, "The Three Fairies" – "Le Tre Fate" (1634) *Decimo passatempo della terza giornate* in *Lo cunto de li cunti overo* Lo *Trattenemiento de peccerillle,* De Gian Abbenttutis 5 vols. (Naples: Ottavio Beltrano, 1634-36), in *The Great Fairy Tale Tradition: From Straparola and Basile to the Brother Grimm* by Jack Zipes (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001), 544.

[124] Basile, "Tenth Diversion: Of the Third Day The Three Fairies," trans. Corce, 295-297.

[125] Basile, "The Two Little Pizzas: Seventh Entertainment of the Fourth Day," trans. Nancy Canepa, 344.

[126] Basile, "Seventh Diversion of the Fourth Day: The Two Cakes," trans. Benedetto Corce, 292.

within and a bawd without."[127] The physical appearances of the 'bad' girls are much more specifically described in the two tales, and the painted reproduction maintains this greater detail.

The descriptions of Grannizia and Puccia are incorporated into the large figure in the lower third of the first painting. Their style and composition reflects Ribera's first period of artistry, characterized by dark radiance rather than flashing or vibrant tones. This style is particularly fitting when combining the traits from Grannizia and Puccia. Following Ribera's strong influence by Caravaggio, the painting pulls the 'bad' girl into the foreground using bright lighting but makes an intense contrast with the dark background. The 'bad' girls' facial features are exaggerated, fitting with their descriptions, but also reflect Ribera's tendency toward intense expression. Ribera's painting titled *Women Gladiators Fighting* (Fig.3)[128] inspired the 'bad' figure's dramatic pose, but his more recognized paintings depicting the martyrdom of saints, the crucifixion of Christ, and scenes from Greek mythology inspired the colour and tone (Fig. 4).[129]

The painting includes many of the unpleasant and unflattering features from the fairy tales' descriptions, but never strays too far from the style and composition of Ribera. Depicted as a large and overbearing figure, the hybrid Grannizia-Puccia occupies the bottom third of the canvas. The colours and shades of her Romanesque attire contrast with the background, drawing the eye of the viewer to her massive body. Most of the descriptions in the tale focus on the girls' physicality and bodily characteristics, metaphorically building their bodies piece by piece using comparisons to objects and animals. For example, using narrative descriptions like "tits like saddlebags" and "shoulders like cellar vaults," the painting depicts sagging breasts in the shape of saddlebags and

[127] Basile, "The Two Cakes: Seventh Diversion of the Forth Day," trans. Richard Burton, 267.

[128] Jusepe de Ribera, *Women Gladiators Fighting,* oil on canvas, Black Marke Melbourne Art and Culture Critic, accessed Aug. 15, 2017, https://melbourneartcritic.com/tag/jusepe-de-ribera/.

[129] Trapier, 3. Jusepe de Ribera, *Tityus,* oil on canvas, The Athenaeum, accessed Aug. 15, 2017, http://www.the-athenaeum.org/art/detail.php?ID=132276.

hunched shoulders rounded like a cellar vault. These physical descriptions align with negative behavioural associations that further define the girls as morally corrupt.

Commentary on Immoral Ugliness

Many of the descriptions harken back to the rustic style of poetry in order to provide the reader with comical and imaginative visuals of the "bad" girl's physical appearance. However, when interpreted against the historical context, some of these descriptions give greater significance to defining the morals and behaviours attributed to lower-class women in general. Part of the comic tradition of rustic poetry, in which the upper classes used imagery from the lower classes, involves representing peasants in ways that clearly separated them from the aristocracy. In other words, the peasant items and objects in "The Three Fairies" associate ugliness with a class distinction. Where the 'good' girls resemble the supernatural (suns, moons, stars) or holy figures (Virgin Mary), Grannizia's representation fits with a rustic domestic space or farm, in which kitchen rags, pots, and animals are common. Despite Grannizia's position in the tale as domineering Cicella, her power is mitigated by her ugliness and her association with the lower classes.[130]

[130] Umberto Eco, *On Ugliness* (New York: Rizzoli, 2007), 34. The use of animal parts as descriptors for her also rings of Medieval images of monsters who violate the laws of nature.

Figure 3 – Jusepe de Ribera,
Women Gladiators Fighting (1636)

Figure 4 – Jusepe de Ribera, *Tityus* (1632)

Puccia's greedy actions and impolite responses are the main reasons that the old woman magically punishes her in "The Two

Cakes." Puccia's mother sends her to the fountain to offer cakes to the mysterious figure who blessed Marziella. However, when the old woman asks for a piece of cake, Puccia replies "As if I should think of giving the cake to you! Do you take me for an ass, asking me for my own things? Look you, our teeth are nearer than our relatives."[131] The old woman responds with great wrath, saying "Go thy ways, and when thou breathest, mayest thou send forth froth, like a doctor's mule; when thou combest thine hair, may the lice fall from thine head in heaps; and wherever thou steppest may there spring forth wild herbs and prickly ferns."[132] Another translation details: "whenever you breathe may you foam at the mouth like a doctor's mule, may toads drop from your lips, and every time you set foot to the ground may there spring up ferns and thistles."[133] In one translation, Puccia has a "flood of alchemist animals, which stopped even quicksilver," come pouring from her hair when her mother combs it.[134] In another translation "a shower of toads" falls from her mouth.[135]

The painting recreates the punishments of the "bad" figure, generating tension as the viewer witnesses the disturbing process Puccia must endure. In the painting, the 'bad' figure looks in a state of panic, as lice crawl and small creatures fall from her dishevelled hair. Her mouth is agape and as she foams uncontrollably, regurgitating a large toad. A snake has slithered out her mouth and wrapped itself around her arm. Trying to shield herself from further punishment, she leans back on patches of smelly ferns and prickly vegetation that have sprouted around her.[136]

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[131] Basile, "Seventh Diversion of the Fourth Day: The Two Cakes," trans. Benedetto Corce, 55.
[132] Basile, "The Two Cakes: Seventh Diversion of the Forth Day," trans. Richard Burton, 341.
[133] Basile, "The Two Cakes," trans. John Edward Taylor, 150.
[134] Basile, "The Two Cakes: Seventh Diversion of the Forth Day," trans. Richard Burton, 341.
[135] Basile, "The Two Cakes," trans. John Edward Taylor, 150.
[136] The curse that Grannizia receives is having the testicle fall onto her head that will never come off. Puccia is cursed with lice falling from her hair, frothing at the mouth and thistles, and ferns sprouting where she walks.

Surrounded by stinking and stinging vegetation as a result of her punishments, the figure also crushes in her hand the cake that she refused to share, a symbol of her selfishness and greed.

Being greedy is an essential characterisation for the "bad" girls that is punished by the magical figures, but the sin of greed is also matched with a palpable tone of deceit. [137] In the two tales, both Grannizia's and Puccia's mothers attempt to marry their daughters in the place of the "good" girls. However, the magical punishments make it impossible to conceal the girls' vile and evil natures, and reveal their deception. The narrative also explores deceit through Grannizia's use of thick cosmetics in an attempt to cover her ugliness. If read in light of the historical period, the use of cosmetics works to further represent the "bad" girls as deceiving, and aligns with similar commentary about cosmetics made in the seventeenth century.[138] The last long physical description of Grannizia includes a significant moral statement about the use of cosmetics as deceitful, intertwining the appearance with moral choice. The tale describes Grannizia's ugliness as so prominent that:

> not all the trimmings, the cosmetics and the pinching and smoothing of her mother's efforts could take away the scruff from her head, the sties from her eyes, the freckles from her face, the blackness from her teeth, the warts from her neck, the pimples from her breast and the filth from her feet, and one might smell her a mile off.[139]

While these descriptions provide further material for visual representation in the painting, they show Grannizia as deceitful and emphasize her inability to erase or mask her true nature.

Cosmetics in the early modern period were as essential an accessory for the elite classes of Europe as powder, perfumes, and body linens, but received the greatest criticism in their

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[137] Basile, "The Three Fairies: Tenth Entertainment of the Third Day," trans. Nancy Canepa, 284. Grannizia is also characterized as greedy in "The Three Fairies." The fairies ask her to choose an item from their magical wardrobe and Grannizia "seeing herself offered a finger, took the whole hand and grabbed the most beautiful cloak that the wardrobes held."

[138] Grieco, "The Body, Appearance, and Sexuality," 60.

[139] Basile, "Tenth Diversion: Of the Third Day the Three Fairies," trans. Benedetto Corce, 297.

association with vanity and lust.[140] The use of cosmetics was also largely associated with deceit, and in some more serious accusations by religious individuals as "altering the face of God."[141] Grieco argues that "beneath many criticisms of paint also lay a masculine fear of deceptions. Was the youthful beauty they desired not perhaps an old hag or a disease-ridden body artfully camouflaged?"[142] Indeed, Boccaccio wrote of the deception of women and their cosmetics in *Corbaccio* (1363-1366), where the narrator, in love with a beautiful widow, meets the soul of her deceased husband. The husband reveals that the widow conceals her fifty years with creams and various masking muck:

> When she got out of bed in the morning her face was, and I believe still is, the revolting greenish colour of the fumes given off by stagnant pond, while her skin was as coarse as that of moulting birds, wrinkled, scabby, and flaccid all over….She painted her skin so heavily, creating such a thick outer skin that when the night arrived to reveal her true self to me, I, who had seen her before all this, could only wonder and marvel…. What more can I tell you? Her belly is also flabby and sagging, unlike her cheeks, pulled taut by her make-up, and is deeply wrinkled like the skin of young goats.[143]

Grannizia's cosmetics fail because her ugliness is an outer manifestation of her evil nature, and she is unable to hide using paltry cosmetics. Puccia also fails to deceive King Chiunzo because the curse given to her by the fairy reveals her true nature.[144]

Grannizia's use of cosmetics works to highlight another, and more taboo, aspect of the "bad" girl's representation; lust. The opening description in "The Two Cakes" implies that Puccia

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[140] Grieco, "The Body, Appearance, and Sexuality," 60.

[141] *Ibid.,* 61.

[142] *Ibid.*

[143] Giovanni Boccaccio, "*Corbaccio*," in *On Ugliness*, ed. Umberto Eco (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 2007), 164.

[144] When Puccia is presented to the King in place of Marziella, he demands to have the maiden's hair combed. Because Puccia has been cursed, little animals and lice fall instead of jewels. He then looks at her face and "saw that, breathing heavily from fatigue of her journey, she had foamed so much at the mouth that it looked like a soapy washtub." He then sees the plants at her feet and smells her noxious perfume. Puccia and her mother are sent away. See Basile, "Seventh Diversion of the Fourth Day: The Two Cakes," trans. Benedetto Corce, 57.

has an immoral and sexual nature by describing her as a "bawd" (the owner of a brothel), but does not expand on this characterization. However, "The Three Fairies" makes an explicit reference to Grannizia's sexual appetite. After the nobleman Cuesomo is tricked into marrying Grannizia, he spends a horrid night with his new bride who "coughed, and sneezed, and blew her nose and kicked, and sighed."[145] After her fits subside, the narrative hints, she makes sexual advances when "with silent words [she] sought for the wage of the house now let."[146] The scene ends with Cuosemo scrambling to the edge of the bed to avoid Grannizia's touch, all the while pretending to snore loudly. In his panic, he falls right off the edge of the mattress and into a chamber pot.[147] The facial cosmetics painted onto the "bad" figure in *The Fairies' Foundation* represent her immoral sexual appetite. The figure wears bright pink rouge dabbed across her cheeks and has lip stain mismatching the outline of her mouth and smudged onto her chin.

Greed, deceit, and sexuality are included in the content as traits that represent a "bad" girl, which most importantly go against appropriate courtly conduct. The girls' rude responses, presumption, and uncouth manners in the face of the magical figures seal their fate. Overall, the behaviours and traits represent the complete and total opposite of the ideal courtly lady and are in some cases listed in the *Book of the Couriter* as traits to avoid. In a single section of dialogue, Castiglione incorporates many of the inappropriate behaviours seen in the "bad" girls:

> Neither ought she againe (to shew her selfe free and pleasant) speak words of dishonestie, nor use a certaine familiaritie without measure and bridle, and fashions to make men believe that of her that perhaps is not: but being present at such kinda of talke, she ought to give hearing with a little blushing and shamefacednesse.[148]

[145] Basile, "The Three Fairies: Tenth Diversion of the Third Day," trans. Sir Richard Burton, 274.
[146] *Ibid.* There is some variation between translations but all indicate a sexual advance.
[147] *Ibid.*
[148] Castiglione, 191.

This passage incorporates the wrongs of deceitful speech and dishonesty towards men but also teaches women to refrain from acting "familiar," hinting at flirtatious or other lustful behaviour. This passage also warns women not to wear fashions that might present them falsely to a gentleman. Above all, politeness and courtesy are the most important qualities that the "bad" girls are lacking. The dialogue reiterates these qualities:

> I say that for her that liveth in Court, me thinke there belongeth unto her above all other thinges, a certaine sweetness in language that may delite, wherby she may gently entertain all kind of men with talke worthie the hearing and honest, and applied to the time and place, and to the degree of the person she comuneth withal.[149]

When presented with the task of combing the hair of the three fairies, Grannizia responds "Every louse is as big as a chickpea and every nit as big as a spoon." Later, when asked, "From which door would you like to leave, O lovely girl of mine, the golden door or the garden door?" She answers brazenly, "From the best there is!" After failing three tests posed by the fairies, wading through manure, and passing under a magical gold-framed gate, Grannizia receives the ultimate punishment for failing the social and behavioural tests posed by the fairies. Because of her greedy and deceitful behaviour, as well as her "uncouth manners," she is punished by having the testicle of an ass fall from above and stick permanently to her forehead.[150] The painting portrays the unpleasant animal genitalia on the face of the "bad" girl, sitting squarely in the centre of her forehead.

The representation of the main female characters from "The Three Fairies" and "The Two Cakes" culminates in a painting that expresses several commentaries about acceptable and unacceptable behaviours that were crucial to the Renaissance court systems and highly gendered. Basile's fairy tales capture the ideals of court society and the near-impossible standards expected

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[149] *Ibid.*, 190.
[150] Basile, "Tenth Diversion: Of the Third Day, the Three Fairies," trans. Benedetto Corce, 296.

of courtly ladies through his Boccacian and Petrarchian descriptions of the "good" girls, but also embrace rustic poetry for the grotesque and amusing descriptions it allows. Basile's descriptive style of the "bad" girls' seems to mock the very "ideals of beauty" Boccaccio made so popular. Even with outrageous descriptions, which are meant primarily as entertainment, Basile is able to use the beauty and ugliness of the girls as a vehicle for his own literary agenda, creating a commentary about the state of the court systems in Naples. The representations indicate types of features expected of certain classes of women, and further which class or type of woman should enter into the court. Rude speech, greed, deceit, immorality, sexual deviance, and ugliness indicate women undeserving or unfit for courtly duty, while eloquence, politeness, chastity, and beauty indicate the ideals necessary of a courtly lady.

The Renaissance writings that canonized specific types of appearance as beautiful or ugly strongly influenced the representations of the "good" and "bad" girls from Basile's fairy tales. Interestingly, the descriptions of both the "good" and "bad" girls use objectification to emphasize the curves, colours, and forms of the girls' physical make up. As a literary strategy objectifying the bodies of the girls effectively engages the reader to imagine the items and objects used to catalogue their features. However, the descriptions highlight how the concepts of beauty and ugliness became significantly linked to objectification. The fairy tale translates to its audience unrealistic constructions of femininity through this objectification and encourages assigning value based on these constructions. The combination of ideal aesthetics with courtly or virtuous behaviour used in Boccaccio's, Petrarch's, and Castiglione's writings made a lasting impression on the tradition of the literary fairy tales.

Though Basile's collection did not have a significant impact in the literary world of Naples, Italy, or even Europe at the time it was published, the ideals included in his version of the

fairy tale remain staples in later versions.[151] The following fairy tale by Marie-Jeanne L'Héritier de Villandon, written by a French noblewoman of the late seventeenth century, remarkably maintains certain tropes of "goodness" and "badness" similar to those of Basile, though her context necessitates new interpretation. There is evidence that Basile's tales found their way to the libraries of Parisian intellectuals by the second half of the 1680s through the strategic marketing networks established by printer Antonio Bulifon.[152] However, it would not be until 1696 that L'Héritier would pen her version titled *"Les Enchantements de L'Éloquence: Ou Les Effect de la Douceur."*

[151] Canepa, *From Court to Forest*, 39-46.

[152] Suzanne Magnanini, "Postulated Routes from Naples to Paris: The Printer Antonio Bulifon and Giambattista Basile's Fairy Tales in Seventeenth-Century France," *Marvels & Tales* 21, 1 (2007): 79.

CHAPTER THREE

Eloquent Experiments Neglected by a Boorish Brute

Figure 5 – Alauna Brown, *Eloquent Experiments Neglected by a Boorish Brute* (2017)
Photographed by Dezeray Tomra

Far from the intense contrasts of light and dark that distinguish Ribera's work, *Eloquent Experiments* reflects the more sunny, lighthearted, and natural depictions of the third fairy tale. Just as the style of painting transitioned from the beginning to the end of the seventeenth century, so too did the styles of writing and the historical contexts change the way Marie-Jeanne L'Hériter de Villandon would represent the "good" and "bad" girls in her fairy tale. Jack Zipes explains, "Up until the 1690s, the oral folk tale in France had not been deemed worthy enough to be transcribed and transformed into literature."[153] Folk stories told aloud were understood as part of the vulgar, common people's tradition, below the dignity of the upper classes.[154] Yet folk and fairy tales were not absented from elite knowledge and remained present as stories told by wet nurses, governesses, and servants to upper-class children.[155] Women remained key players in the diffusion of fairy tales. However, the traditional storytelling transformed in the late seventeenth century to fit burgeoning cultural practices of *mondain* culture fostered by aristocratic women of France. The tales they created originated in the conversations and games developed in the *salons* of Paris.[156] The *salon* was a space where women, and gradually men, gathered to discuss art, literature, and current topics such as love, marriage, and freedom.[157] Elite women hosted *salons* at their residences creating communities of culture distinguished from the lower classes. The popularity of *salon* stories prompted participants to write and publish the tales they created at these gatherings. By the 1690s and stretching to 1715 at the end of Louis XIV's reign, women writers dominated this "first vogue" of fairy-tale writing, with two thirds of the tales published by women writers.[158]

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[153] Jack Zipes, *When Dreams Came True: Classical Fairy Tales and Their Tradition* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 30.

[154] *Ibid.*, 31.

[155] *Ibid.* These oral traditions were also kept alive and circulated to elite men and women as talk by peasants, merchants and priests, with whom daily interactions were common.

[156] *Ibid.*

[157] *Ibid.*

[158] Goldsmith, 6. France experienced a series of 'vogues' in fairy-tale writing. The first 'vogue' has been established as most active from 1690-1715, the second vogue from 1722-1778. For more information, see: Lewis C.

The literary fairy tales written by *salonnières* were fostered within one of the few female-dominated spheres of elite society and incorporated commentaries about the specific aspects of women's roles within French society. L'Héritier's fairy tale "*Les Enchantements de L'Éloquence"* is no exception. The main female characters in "*Les Enchantements"* are framed by the degree to which they follow the protocols and practices expected of *salon* women. The characters' expressions of eloquence are the most significant indicators used to define the roles of the "good" and bad" girls in the narrative. Through the interpretation of the fairy tale and the visual reproduction, eloquence encompasses several facets including physical appearance (beauty and ugliness), demeanour, intelligence, behaviour and even language. An examination of the fairy tale within the specific context of L'Héritier's experience as a *salonnière* and member of *mondain culture* shows that the representations of "goodness" and "badness" of the characters are deeper examples of how elite society defined women's morality and status by specific cultural and social practice.

Born in Paris in 1664, L'Héritier was the daughter of Nicolas L'Héritier de Nouvelon, a historiographer for King Louis XIV and Francois Le Clerc.[159] L'Héritier's father exposed her to Greek and Roman history and mythology, poetry, and tragedy. An exceptionally well-educated woman for her time, L'Héritier became a prominent participant in the literary circles of the 1690s and 1700s. She contributed to the journal *Mercure Galant,* won prizes sponsored by the *Académie Francaise*, and received honorary memberships in literary academies.[160] L'Héritier was also one of the most active *salonnières* of her time, having inherited the prominent *salon* of Mme.

Seifert, *Fairy Tales, Sexuality and Gender in France 1690-1715: Nostalgic Utopias* (Cambridge: Combridge University Press, 1996); Lewis C. Seifert and Domna Stanton, *Enchanted Eloquence: Fairy Tales by Seventeenth-Century French Women Writers* (Toronto: Center for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2010), 6.

[159] Seifert and Stanton, *Enchanted Eloquence,* 62.

[160] Lewis C. Seifert, "L'Héritier de Villandon," in *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales: The Western Fairy Tale Tradition from Medieval to Modern,* eds. Jack Zipes (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 298.

Madeleine de Scudéry.[161] *Salon* women like L'Héritier came to be called *les précieuses* and were defined as people "capable of transforming the most banal thing into something brilliant and unique."[162] Within this cultural brewing of imagination and invention, the *précieuses* created and shared narratives spoken aloud that aimed to present a spontaneous but natural tale, usually with folk motifs or morals guiding the denouement. Jack Zipes further explains: "The teller of the tales was to make it 'seem' as though the tales were made up on the spot and as though it did not follow prescribed rules. Embellishment, improvisation, and experimentation with known folk or literary motifs were stressed."[163]

The *précieuses* who participated in *salon* conversations fit into an elite sociological group that exemplified an ideal of sociability. These individuals were known as *les mondains* and collectively created *mondain* culture.[164] Lewis C. Seifert explains that *mondain* could be used in parlance either negatively or positively, depending on one's opinion of *mondain* culture. Certain religious groups viewed the *mondain* negatively because of the excessive importance they placed on worldly possessions, while others understood *mondain* culture thus:

> The adjective *mondain,* then, referred to an exclusive public recognizable by the elevated socio-economic station, outward appearance, and demeanor of its members, as well as their coveted social contacts.[165]

The members of *mondain* society were both aristocrats and bourgeois, and read and produced most of the literature of the period.[166] They were the gentlemen and gentlewomen of 'the world' —*le*

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[161] Seifert and Stanton, *Enchanted Eloquence,* 61.

[162] Zipes, W*hen Dreams Came True,* 32. Molière also created satirical representations of the *salonnière,* calling them *précieuse,* as an attempt to devalue female speech and the art of conversation by women. However, the term *précieuse* was adopted by the *salonnières,* subverting it and changing ridicule to praise. For more on Molière and how his works addressing *salonnières* and les *précieuses* see: Maryann Tebben, "Speaking of Women: Molière and Conversation at the Court of Louis XIV," *Modern Language Studies*, 29, 2 (1999): 189-207.

[163] *Ibid.,* 32.

[164] Seifert and Stanton, *Enchanted Eloquence*, 68-69.

[165] *Ibid.*

[166] *Ibid.,* 69.

monde— and were known as worldly people by their way of living and conversing and as people of quality, clean, polite and well-dressed.[167] However, L'Héritier and her *salonnière* counterparts stood against the conservative views of femininity voiced by many other women. During the boom of female authorship of fairy tales, France also experienced an explosion in the print of moralist tracts and manuals dealing with family life and marriage, which emphasized the divinely appointed domestic and family duties as the most important roles of the female sex.[168]

In the last years of the seventeenth century, *mondain* culture came under increasing scrutiny and attack by religious critics. King Louis XIV experienced a shift in his religious practice, becoming more orthodox in his devotion to Catholicism and more arbitrary in his reign as an absolutist king.[169] In accordance with the new religious zeal of King Louis' court, moralist supporters directly attacked polite society and its practices of "worldly" pleasures and leisurely pastimes.[170] Seifert argues that although the fairy-tale vogue did not represent a direct reply to the pietistic condemnations of polite society and its pastimes, it attempted to revalorize the sociable ideals of the *mondain.*[171] This effort to assert the value of elite polite culture is prominent in L'Héritier's representations of the main female characters in her fairy tale "*Les Enchantments de L'Éloquence*." The abilities gained from constructive appropriate *mondain* practices versus inappropriate and wasteful practices, translate in her fairy tale to either rewardable virtues or punishable vices.

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[167] *Ibid.*
[168] Seifert, *Fairy Tales, Sexuality and Gender,* 203.
[169] Zipes, *When Dreams Came True*, 39*,* Seifert, *Fairy Tales, Sexuality and Gender,* 9.
[170] Seifert, *Fairy Tales, Sexuality and Gender*, 69-70.
[171] *Ibid.,* 71.

Eloquent Experiments took inspiration from Jean-Antoine Watteau, the most iconic painter of French high society in the late seventeenth century.[172] The main piece inspiring the reproduction of the fairy-tale figures was Watteau's painting titled *Pilgrimage to Cythera* (Fig. 6).[173] In 1717, the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture accepted Watteau's painting as entry into the Academy and were so impressed that a new category was named in its honour: *Fête Gallante*.[174] Watteau's 'amorous festivals' often placed contemporary men and women in idyllic outdoor scenes where they celebrated lighthearted elegance, entertainment and frivolity.[175] His pieces use the colour provided by an outdoor scene and the elegant and shimmering clothing of the individuals he depicts to draw the eye of the viewer to specific figures. Watteau's style and composition work perfectly to enhance the representations of the main female characters within L'Héritier's fairy tale, and provided examples of the contemporary styles of dress.

The *contes de fées* of the French elite have been interpreted historically as serving particular ideological functions, and as cultural products that served to celebrate the values of the self-contained social elite. The values of the *salonnière* and *mondain* culture are readily visible in the descriptions of the "good" and "bad" girls from L'Héritier's tales.[176] Instead of looking to the past for nostalgic remnants of Renaissance courtly conduct, the French authors firmly planted their fairy tales in contemporary terms, though traditional modes of behaviour still held an important place in the morals that their tales provided. "*Les Enchantments de L'Éloquence,"* in particular, embodies the conversational aesthetic of the salon culture. L'Héritier uses eloquent conversation

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[172] Fred S. Kleiner, eds. *Gardner's Art Through the Ages Volume 2*, 14th ed. (Boston: Wadsworth, 2013), 733.

[173] Jean-Antoine Watteau, *Pilgrimage to Cythera,* oil on canvas, The Athenaeum, accessed Aug. 15, 2017, http://www.the-athenaeum.org/art/detail.php?ID=43467.

[174] Marilyn Stokstad, *Art History,* 3rd Ed. (New Jersey: Pearson and Prentice Hall, 2008), 946.

[175] Kleiner, 733. Stokstad, 946.

[176] Lewis C. Seifert, "France," in *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 175.

and polite speech as the measures of the girls' levels of "goodness." The "good" and "bad" girls from the fairy tale also embody opposite representations of *mondain* society. The traits of physical appearance proposed in Basile's tales also shift distinctively in L'Héritier's tale, where virtue is expressed by combining complexion (skin tone) and dress.[177] L'Héritier's fairy tale could be termed an elitist proto-feminist work that uses the standard of ideal conversation promoted by salon culture to distinguish moral position. Her work also defends *mondain* society by presenting the best and worse examples through her representations of the "good" character Blanche and the "bad" character Alix.

Figure 6 – Jean-Antoine Watteau, *Pilgrimage to Cythera* (1717)

[177] Seifert and Stanton, *Enchanted Eloquence,* 63.

Speaking Like a *Salonnière*

In "*Les Enchantements de L'Éloquence,"* the good girl, Blanche, embodies the conversational aesthetic of *salon* culture representing the ideals of salon society, while the "bad" girl, Alix, provides an example of unsophisticated rudeness, and is made a caricature of false imitators of elite culture.[178] In the courts of King Louis XIV, female speech assumed a precise civilizing function and intelligent speech came to mark good breeding and virtue. The female-dominated *salons* provided invaluable training in the art of conversation so crucial to success at court.[179] Maryann Tebben explains that the practice of good conversation was not only a social indicator of status and virtue, but was used by the *salonnières* to prove their worth and as a means of validating education, writing, and even publication by and for women.[180] Blanche's speech is used as a means of symbolizing virtuous nature but also to highlight the importance of reading and education as necessary to foster good speech and thus goodness overall. The early modern literary scholar Allison Stedman interprets "*Les Enchantments de L'Éloquence"* as a work that provides deeper insight into the "idealized vision of the late seventeenth-century woman writer."[181] Stedman's interpretations help frame the importance of eloquent speech in Blanche's representation of goodness.

The fairy tale reflects aspects of L'Héritier's own career as a female writer, not just of fairy tales but of histories, which helped maintain her credibility and respect in a field dominated by

[178] *Ibid.*
[179] Tebben, 189-190. Goldsmith, 6.
[180] Tebben, 196.
[181] Allison Stedman, "Charmed Eloquence: L'Héritier's Representation of Female Literary Creativity in Late Seventeenth-Century France," *Cahier de Dix-Septième* 9 (2005): 112.

men. While the tale acknowledges the importance of other virtues like charity, kindness, and obedience, all of which Blanche displays, the ability of eloquent speech and intelligent speech is integral to L'Héritier's definition of virtue. Blanche is the only character in the fairy-tale variations to show intelligence and education as virtuous pursuits for the female characters. Before Blanche encounters the magical world beyond her father's household, her speech is already imbued with fairy-like powers that charm and enchant others around her. This becomes evident when Blanche encounters a prince and two fairies, distinct symbols of aristocracy.[182] Blanche is chased into the woods by a boar on her way to fetch water for her wicked stepmother. A prince hunting in the woods nearby accidentally shoots her as she flees the dangerous beast. Terribly distraught at the unfortunate mishap, the prince apologizes profusely and dresses her wound.[183] During their interaction, the prince is surprised by her elegant, well-spoken conversation and is touched by her soft and polite speech despite the awkward and painful situation she is in.[184] The narrator ruminates that the prince is enchanted by Blanche's responses, knowing that were he in her situation he would likely blame or feel angry towards the person who did him harm.[185] From this single encounter, the Prince is so enchanted by this young "*belle*" that he sits in stunned silence.[186] This scene introduces the reader to the power and importance of eloquent conversation in building Blanche's representation of goodness. This becomes more clearly manifested through the gifts given by the two fairies of the tale.

The fairies Dulcicula and Eloquentia Nativa give blessings that honour Blanche's eloquent

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[182] *Ibid.,* 114.

[183] L'Héritier, "Les Enchantments de L'Éloquence," 190. «Quoi! La belle Enfant, c'est vous que j'ai blesse au lieu du Sanglier! Que je suis malheureux!».

[184] *Ibid.,* 191. «le derniere surprise quand il entendit le tour don't elle parlait; mais il fut encore plus touché de sa douceur que de sa politesse».

[185] *Ibid.* «Si quelqu'un, quoy qu'innocenment luy avait fairt autant de mal qu'il venait d'en faire à cette Belle, il n'y aurait eu aucun égard qui l'eut empêché de s'emporter terriblement contre l'auteur de ce mal».

[186] *Ibid,* 197. «Le Prince était enchanté à un tel pointe, que la foule des pensées qui se présentaient à son imagination luy fit quelques momens garder le silence».

speech and kind manners. After Blanche recovers from her injury, she finds her way home and is put to bed by her father to heal. Meanwhile, once returning to his kingdom, the enamoured prince asks his fairy-aunt to give Blanche a healing balm. In disguise as an old hag, the fairy Dulcicula brings the magical healing balm to Blanche's household. Though Blanche initially refuses the treatment, politely arguing that her doctor advised against switching remedies, she concedes to the old hag's insistence. Blanche reasons that the salve is most likely a an 'innocent small remedy' used by the people of the village.[187] Dulcicula is charmed by Blanche's "sweetness and civil manners" and impressed by her honest and sincere responses.[188] Blanche's interaction with Dulcicula shows another aspect of *salon* culture reflected in the virtuous "good" figure; the ability to negotiate in polite and amicable conversation. Dulcicula gives Blanche the gift "to always be more sweet, lovable, beneficent, and to have the most beautiful voice in the world."[189] Allison Stedman discusses how the majority of this gift simply ensured the continuation of the heroine's natural qualities of kindness, goodness and amiability, but adds that giving Blanche "the most beautiful voice in the world" makes it "so that the eloquence she already possesses may sound all the more compelling to the person who hears her words."[190] This is indeed beneficial for her encounter with the second fairy Eloquentia Nativa.

Blanche meets the second fairy after her stepmother once again sends her to fetch water from the fountain. Arriving there, Blanche meets a beautifully dressed woman possessing an extraordinary air of grace. The mysterious woman approaches Blanche and asks for a drink of water from her vase, to which Blanche courteously obliges and apologizes that the vase is not to

[187] *Ibid.,* 206.
[188] *Ibid.* «Dulcicula, charmé de la douceur & des manière honêtes de Blanche.»
[189] *Ibid.* «d'être toûjours plus que jamais douce, aimable, bienfaisante & d'avoir le plus belle voix du monde».
[190] Stedman, 116.

the elegant standard of such a lovely lady. Eloquentia Nativa considers Blanche's manners and responses so civil that she stays to exchange in polite conversation. They sit and talk on hundreds of agreeable subjects to which Blanche responds "with so much spirit, sweetness and politeness, that she charmed the woman she spoke with."[191] Eloquentia Nativa is so impressed and charmed by Blanche's natural responses, good manners, and polite conversation that she wishes to repay her kind company with a magnificent gift. Putting her hand on Blanche's head, she gives her a magical reward that pearls, diamonds, rubies, and emeralds should fall from her mouth every time she finishes speaking.[192]

The eloquence of Blanche's speech and its effects on those around her are represented in *Eloquent Experiments* by a depiction of Blanche as a beacon of sophistication surrounded by admirers. The poses of the figures in *Eloquent Experiments* were inspired by Watteau's paintings

Figure 7 – Jean-Antoine Watteau, *Pastoral Gathering* (1718)

[191] L'Hériter, 208, 214. «repondit avec tant d'esprit, de douceur & de politesse, qu'elle acheva de charmer celle à qui elle parlait».

[192] L'Héritier, 209, 214. «qu'il sortirait de sa bouche des perles, des diamans, des rubis & des emerandes chaque fois qu'elle serait un sense fini en parlant».

titled *Pastoral Gathering* (Fig. 7) and *Fête Gallante in a Wooded Area* (Fig. 8).[193] A group of young bourgeois and aristocratic women sit around Blanche as if at an outdoor *salon* and listen to her story intently.[194] Blanche sits at the edge of the fountain where her adventures transpired, with a wooded area visible behind her. A vase sits next to her as a symbol of her kindness, and pearls, diamonds, rubies, and emeralds are scattered around on the ground and at the side of the fountain. Riches continue to fall from Blanche's mouth as she speaks to the group.

The rewards given to Blanche in the tale indicate superior conversational skills as a *salonnière*, but her eloquence was cultivated by reading novels. In a rare moment of bravery, Blanche's father, who usually ignores or cowers from his domineering wife, defends his daughter's reading habits and argues for the importance of reading and the superiority of reading novels. Blanche's father gives a lengthy speech to the wicked stepmother:

> on n'y trouve que de grands sentimens, que de beaux example; on y voit toûjour le vice puny, toûjour la vertu récompensée; & même l'on peut dire, que pour les personnes bien jeune, la lecture des Roman est en quelque façon meilleur que celle de l'Histoire même ; parce que l'Histore étant entirement assujettie à la verité, présente quelquefois des images bien choquantes pour les moeur: L'Histoire peint les hommes comme ils sont, & les Roman les répresentent tels qu'ils devraient être, & semblent par là les engager d'aspirer à la perfection.
>
> (We find only great sentiment, beautiful examples, vice is always punished and virtue is always rewarded. We could even argue that History, because it is always subjected to the truth, sometimes presents shocking images to our mores. History paints man as he is, and novels represent what he should be and thus engage man's aspiration for perfection).[195]

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[193] Jean-Antoine Watteau, *Fetes Champetre,* oil on canvas, The Athenaeum, accessed Aug 15, 2017, http://www.the-athenaeum.org/art/detail.php?ID=126807. Jean-Antoine Watteau, *Fête Galante in a Wooded Landscape*, oil on canvas, Art UK, accessed Aug 15, 2017, https://artuk.org/discover/artworks/fete-galante-in-a-wooded-landscape-209412.

[194] The mentorship between salon women is another significant theme encountered in L'Hériter's tales, by which an older woman teaches a younger the manners and modes of proper speech. For more information on mentorship in the Salon see: Stedman, "Charmed Eloquence."

[195] L'Hériter, 183.

In *Eloquent Experiments* Blanche sits in front of a fountain reading a book aloud, and stacks of books sit around her with specific titles from the seventeenth century. Each book is by a female writer contemporary to L'Héritier, acting as symbols of the growing literary voice of women in the seventeenth century.

In the fairy tale Blanche's intelligence and a love of reading are shown in one particular scene in which she comments on her daily chores. Blanche is forced to work within her own household to cook and clean, and made to fetch water daily. In the narrative, Blanche holds back painful tears at the frustration of her situation, turning instead to patience because she knows that her wicked stepmother only wishes to break her spirit and bring her to despair. Blanche is consoled by the presence of other village women who also travel to fetch water, and turns to the examples she has read in history: "she had read somewhere that the King's daughter did the washing in the

Figure 8 – Jean-Antoine Watteau, *Fête Galante* in Wooded Landscape (1719)

times of Homer and that Achilles cooked very nicely."[196] Blanche uses the experiences she observes and the knowledge gained from reading to improve her personal condition and rationally works through her situation, not giving in to emotional reactions or responses. Blanche uses her intellect to remain a steadfast example of goodness.

Blanche markedly reflects the qualities and training that L'Héritier herself experienced as a *salonnière*. The vast majority of literate women were denied direct access to formal education, especially classical learning.[197] The *salon* was a creative space that substituted for traditional learning areas like the university— to which women were not permitted —and fostered a creative environment, nurturing intellectual thought and questioning while simultaneously cultivating an elite culture distinguished by specific modes of conduct and speech.[198] The avid reading of novels and her knowledge of the classic fables foster Blanche's eloquence and good speech, qualities that the *salonnières* felt were crucial to a young woman's education.

Grumbling Like an Ogre

In defending Blanche's reading habits, her father also introduces Alix's preferred pastimes, establishing what is deemed inappropriate behaviour for a young *salon* woman:

> I am delighted to see young women of quality reading; if they all applied themselves to reading, we would not be embarrassed by their choice of leisure, and they would not run from spectacle to spectacle, or from game house to game house. [199]

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[196] *Ibid.*, 187-188. « D'ailleur elle voyait des Demoisselles qui allaient aussi:…non seulement elle avait l'example de ses voisines; mais elle avait lû dans quelque endroit que les fille des Roi faisaient la lessive du temps d'Homere, & qu'Achilles faisait la cuisine fort joliment.».

[197] Seifert, *Fairy Tales, Sexuality and Gender,* 91.

[198] *Ibid.* Seifert describes the situation of elite women's education stating, "The vast majority of the literate women were denied direct access to formal education— especially to the classical learning vaunted by the Ancients— and women writers excelled in genres, such as the novel and the letter, that lacked recognized classical models." Wendy Ayres-Bennett also provides a good summary of the educational opportunities for young girls and women in France during the seventeenth century. See: Wendy Ayres-Bennet, *Sociolinguistic Variation in Seventeenth-Century France: Methodology and Case Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2004), 116-118.

[199] L'Héritier, 181. « Je suis ravi quand je vois les filles de qualité s'occuper à lire ; si elles s'y appliquaient toutes, on ne les verrait pas si embarassées de leur loisir; elle ne couraient point tant de spectacle en spectacle, & de

The narrative makes a point of addressing these activities as Alix's favorite activities and thus the painting represents these vices in the form of specific objects.[200] Alix holds in one hand a goblet of wine that spills down the front of her dress, to represent the parties she attends, and from her other hand she drops a hand of cards symbolizing her love of gambling. Though these characteristics help define Alix's representation as a "bad" *salonnière*, her pastimes receive no further comment throughout the tale. Rather, the narrative focuses on Alix's total lack of conversational skills and eloquence as far more damning.

Many authors interpret Blanche as representing the paragon of ideal *salon* conversation, though unfortunately they neglect the features assigned to Alix.[201] Based on the dynamics of the fairy-tale variations, Alix is meant to resemble the total opposite of Blanche, showing the reader a tarnished version of *salon* culture. Alix reflects the satirical representations that became popular in the seventeenth century. The most popular and referenced literary satire of the false or fake *précieuses* was written by Jean-Baptiste Poquelin, known famously by his pen name Molière. In his satirical representation of the *salonnières* from the play *Les Précieuses Ridicules*, the main examples of false *précieuses* are two provincial women whose conversations are unintelligible to those around them.[202] Molière's false *précieuses* are embodied in two characters foreign to court

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berlan en berlan. » Translation of "berlan" was taken from Randle Cotgrave's 1611 French to English Dictionary Online. See: Randal Cotgrave, *A Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues* (London: Adam Islip, 1611). http://www.pbm.com/~lindahl/cotgrave/search/509r.html.

[200] L'Héritier, 181. The specific passages that indicate Alix's bad habits include: « La Marquise qui savait bien que sa fille était aussi avide du Jeu que de tous autres Plaisir » (The Marquise who knew full well that her daughter was eager to gamble and took part in every sort of game),181; «On la voyait incessamment aux promenades aux spectacle, aux bals » (She could be seen incessantly promenading and making herself a spectacle at balls), 175.

[201] Seifert, *Fairy Tales, Sexuality and Gender*; Seifert and Stanton, *Enchanted Eloquence*; Stedman, "Charmed Eloquence"; Anne-Marie Feat, "Playing the Game of Frivolity: Seventeenth-Century "*Conteuses*" and the Transformation of Female Identity," *The Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association* 45, 2 (2012): 217-242.

[202] Tebben, 194.

culture who live in the countryside and speak untraditionally, with words of their own making and ideas outside the norm of what author Maryann Tebben calls "the usual code" of French court culture.[203] As the narrator, L'Héritier comments on the unusual ideas that both Alix and her mother share. Alix's encounter with the two fairies shows her to be shrill and rude, and she speaks using terms unfamiliar to the fairies, due to the coarseness of her language.[204] Furthermore, Alix acts with an air of superiority despite being a brute in conversation, rude, presumptuous, and hateful.

The tale introduces Alix as being a unique girl like Blanche, but for very different reasons. While Blanche resembles her father, Alix shares many traits with her mother, the Marquise. Both mother and daughter are rude and strong characters, and the narrative describes them as rustic and common. Both women are illogical in their thinking, often plotting strange, ridiculous, and overly ambitious ideas, and succumb to extravagances and pomp highlighting their vanity.[205] Alix's rudeness and pompous attitude are brought to the extreme when she encounters the fairy Dulcicula. Disguised as an old hag to deliver the magical balm to Blanche, the fairy first encounters Alix in the house and asks where she might be directed to offer her services of healing for Blanche. Alix responds:

> What did this crazy Old hag just tell me? I believe that all these villager vermin are mad to interfere for this beastly wench Blanche. I don't know what has stirred everyone into such a fright: that little beast would do better as a mound in the cemetery: just as if it were a good shepherd dog, he would die just as soon as she. [206]

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[203] *Ibid.*

[204] Ayres-Bennett, 124, 132. According to Ayres Bennet, pleasing speech among the salons of France also depended on linguistic conformity, expressing thoughts and emotions in the same way that the listeners of your speech would.

[205] L'Héritier, 168. «se fille étant une caractere rude & fort proper à recevoir des impression grossiere.»

[206] *Ibid.,* 205. « Qu'est-ce que cette Vielle folle-là me vient conter?, Je croy que toute cette vermine de Villageois est enrage à faire les entremeteux pour cette guenon de Blanche; je ne sai pas à qui ils en on de se démener tretous comme des Ahuris: cette bonne bête-là n'aura garde d'aller faire une bosse au Cimetiere: si c'était quelque bon chien à Berger, il en mourait bien plutôt qu'elle.»

Dulcicula is confused by Alix's language and "was extremely surprised to see a Lady covered in gold and jewels speaking with such strange jargon."[207] Instead of addressing Alix further, Dulcicula finds the maid in charge of watching over Blanche's condition.[208] Though Alix's words are understandable, she does not speak in a manner that would be appropriate of a *salonnière,* especially by insulting Blanche's appearance, calling her '*cette guenon Blanche*.'[209] The irony, of course, is that these insults come from a person fitting this very definition. Dulcicula learns from Blanche's attendant more about Alix and how her poor manners and behaviour are infamous throughout the village:

> that Grumbler was also flirtatious, as well as ugly and mean: she always wore glittering apparel and made a hundred grimaces and a hundred contortions to please herself, she was everywhere ironically called 'Alix the beautiful.' She added that in a thousand places when someone sees a girl giving off impertinent airs and affected behaviour they say they are 'pulling a beautiful Alix.'[210]

Before leaving the household, Dulcicula interacts with Alix one last time, asking her politely where the rear exit is from the home. Alix again responds rudely, saying, "Can one see anything worse than this old doting fool, who has just addressed me for the sake of all these questions?"[211] Without responding to such a rude answer, Dulcicula follows behind Alix and gives her a curse with a

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[207] *Ibid.,* 205. «Dulcicula fut extrêment surprise de voir une Demoiselle toute couvert d'or & de piereries, parler un si estrange jargon».

[208] *Ibid.*, 205-206.

[209] Cotgrave, *A Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues*. The word "guenon" translates in English from Randle Cotgrave's dictionary to "a Monkie; also, an Ape" and the word "*Guenonnée*" translated to "A most beastlie wench; one that hath beene ridden by a monkie." The *Dictionnaire de l'Académie francaise* (1694) explains the "guenon" is a term used specifically to insult an ugly woman, usually phrased as "un visage de guenon." Based on the context of the tale that ugly or beastly seemed the most accurate.

[210] The translation from Randle Cotgrave's 1611 French to English dictionary translates '*coquette*' to mean "A prattling, or proud gossip; a fisking, or fliperous minx; a cocket, or tatling housewife; a titfill; a flegergebit." See: http://www.pbm.com/~lindahl/cotgrave/search/238r.html. 'Coquette' is also understood to mean a seductress, temptress or a flirt. Given the context of the *salon* culture I chose 'flirt' as the most appropriate translation as the conversation relates to her behaviour among her peers. «cette Grondeuse etait aussi coquette, que laide & méchante: que comme elle était toûjour dans une parure éclatante & faisait cent grimaces & cent contorsions pour le donner de l'agrément, on l'apellait en tous lieux par ironie *la belle Alix*: elle ajoûta, qu'en mille endroits, quand on voyait une fille se donner des aire impertinens & affectez, on disait *qu'elle faisait bien la belle Alix*» from L'Héritier, 209.

[211] L'Héritier, 210. « peut-on rien voir de plus mal apris que cette vielle Radoteuse-là, qui vient d'addresser moy pour fiare toutes ces sotes question? »

secret touch of her wand: "she will always convey a disagreeable and wicked attitude."[212] Dulcicula's curse on Alix fulfills the same intention as her previous gift to Blanche; to solidify the dominant characteristics already present in the character.

After discovering the miracles of Blanche's gift, the stepmother asks Alix to go fetch water from the fountain in hopes that she, too, will be rewarded. In typical fashion, Alix impertinently refuses but after "a thousand absurdities" and excuses, prepares to go to the fountain.[213] As with Blanche, Eloquentia Nativa asks for a drink from Alix's vase, being terribly thirsty from her walk, but instead of dressing in opulence as she had with Blanche, the fairy decides to disguise herself as a pleasant-looking villager dressed for the countryside.[214] Alix unleashes a string of insults, not knowing that the peasant woman before her is the fairy she is looking for: "Did I come here expressly to give you water, or do we need golden vases to put dogs' muzzles into? Go, twisted beast: turn your back and if you are thirsty go drink from the trough of our cows."[215] Eloquentia Nativa attempts to understand her cruel words, and asks if she has done something to offend her. Exasperated by the fairy's attempts to reason with her, Alix screams in anger: "I think you want to argue, you pestilent kitchen wench, but I advise you not to heat my temper because I'll knock you out should you pass by my door!"[216] Indignant at the young girl's responses, Eloquentia Nativa knocks Alix to the ground with a touch of her magic wand and gives her a curse: "that at every

[212] *Ibid.* « d'être toujour emportée, desagréable, & malfaisants»

[213] *Ibid.*, 217. «Enfin Alix, en disant mille sotises, le prepara à y aller»

[214] *Ibid.*, 218. «mas ce jour-là elle se promenait sous la figure d'une agréabl Paisane don't elle avait pris l'air naïf & l'habit champêtre».

[215] *Ibid.,* 219-220. «On vient icy tout exprés pour l'abreuver vraiment, il leur en faut des vases d'or pour mettre leur chien de museau : allez bête de tortillonne : tournez moy le dos, & si vous avait soif allez boire a l'auge de nos beouf».

[216] *Ibid.,* 220. «Je crois que tu veux raisonner, peste de Souillan: mais je ne te conseille pas de m'échaufer les oreilles; car je te ferais assommer de coups quand tu passeras devant nôtre porte»,

word that she spoke, there would fall from her mouth toads, snakes and spiders, and other villainous animals whose venom made the world tremble in fear."[217]

Eloquent Experiments reproduces the rude attitude and horrible demeanour of Alix and uses the curse's traits to highlight her rude speech and lack of eloquence. Alix is positioned in composition at the left side, away from the group of young women admiring Blanche. She looks down in terror as toads, snakes, and spiders spew from her mouth uncontrollably. The animals pool at her feet and grapple with one another, further symbolizing the vulgar and disturbing language used by Alix. The representations not only help express her speech as rude and uncivil but also cause an emotional reaction, representing how her speech offends the very foundations of *salon* culture.

Complexion and Attire Reflecting *Mondain* Culture

Proper speech and eloquence are behavioural traits that reflect L'Héritier's position as a member of *salon* culture. However, the physical appearance and dress of the "good" and "bad" girls also reflected the increasing influence of elite '*mondain* culture.' The development of *mondain* culture was part of an ideological shift that came to define the upper classes of European society for nearly three hundred years. Ronald G. Asch's book *Nobilities in Transition* explains that elite men and women developed "new cultural standards and ideals of noble conduct." [218] Specifically, the upper classes restructured elite culture by recognizing visible signs of sophistication and courtly manners as markers of elite status, weakening previous signifiers like

[217] L'Hériter, 65. «Qu'a chaque mot qu'elle dirait; il sortirait de sa bouche des crapaud, des serpent, & des araignées, & d'autre villain animaux don't le venin fait fremir tout le monde».

[218] Asch, 7.

noble birth and blood lines.[219] This opened the possibility for bourgeois classes to emulate and integrate themselves into high society that for generations was restricted to blue-blood families. Appearance along with behaviour came to signify social rank and moral superiority in the court systems of Europe.[220] The combining of courtly behaviour with Christian morality was further instilled and diffused throughout society in the form of civility manuals.[221] Nicholas Faret's book *L'Honnête homme or l'art de plaire à la cour* was the late seventeenth century's most popular guide in France.[222] Authors like Faret created "fixed" boundaries in the social hierarchy that were visible through the adherence to particular behaviours and comportment, as well as image. "To not adhere to those standards," writes James Farr, "was to invite exclusion and disgrace."[223] This however also involved demonstrating noble status but avoiding self-aggrandisement.[224] The appearance and dress of the girls in the fairy tale are important traits that dictate the position of the girls as "good" or "bad" members of *mondain* culture.

Unlike Basile's tales that use metaphor to describe the details of his characters from head to toe, L'Héritier's fairy tale focuses on only a few key aspects of the girls' physical appearances and attire. Appearance receives very little attention in the narrative in comparison to L'Héritier's focus on eloquence as complementing virtue. L'Héritier's descriptions assume a conformity to the standards of beauty expected of a *salon* woman and in no way challenge these modes of female

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[219] Grieco, "The Body, Appearance and Sexuality," 50. Norbert Elias provides a specific example of the blurring between bourgeois and aristocracy in France starting in the seventeenth century. See: Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process* (Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 32. This was occurring in France as well by the mid seventeenth century, changes occurred in how nobility was defined and included birth, but also education, personal cultivation, and techniques for social interaction. See: Goldsmith, 8.

[220] Grieco, "The Body, Appearance and Sexuality," 50.

[221] James R. Farr, "The Pure and Disciplined Body: Hierarchy, Morality, and Symbolism in France during the Catholic Reformation," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 21, 3 (1991): 396.

[222] Goldsmith, 19.

[223] Farr, 396.

[224] For more discussion on civility in French society see: Benet Davetian, *Civility: A Cultural History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 113.

beauty. The tale does, however, provide an interesting commentary on skin colour and complexion, which in the seventeenth century were crucial physical indicators of a women's social, racial, and cultural superiority.

Blanche's white skin is the only detailed aspect of appearance used to reinforce her goodness and purity. Her glowing complexion is, predictably, how Blanche receives her name. L'Héritier writes, "she had such a brilliantly white complexion that it inspired her name, and she was called Blanche."[225] Whiteness is used in L'Héritier's fairy tale as a sign of purity and goodness, but it is a very specific type of natural whiteness and complexion that is emphasized. In the seventeenth century, and throughout the early modern period, skin colour became a topic of religious, scientific, and social interest. These interests often overlapped with ideologies of western superiority, but also became gendered. As the whiteness of a woman's skin came to represent an ideal of feminine beauty and social superiority, the *salonnières* and upper-class women of France went to great lengths to adhere to these standards.[226]

Religious scriptures answered many of the questions early modern Europeans had about why populations were diverse in skin colour. Craig Koslofsky describes how the Book of Genesis provided explanations about the sacred history of the peoples of the Earth and their descent from Noah and his sons. It was believed by many Christian Europeans that Noah represented the ancestry of all humans on Earth. In this story, Noah cursed his grandson Canaan, son of Ham, saying: "Cursed be Canaan; lowest of the slaves shall he be to his brothers."[227] While there was initially no connection between skin tone and slavery, the curse of dark skin and the curse of slavery became one and the same as scholars and interpreters shifted this curse to Ham and all of

[225] L'Héritier, 166. «elle avait le teint d'une blancheur si eblouissaute qu'on en forma son nom, & qu'on la nomma Blanche».
[226] Grieco, "The Body, Appearance and Sexuality," 62.
[227] Craig Koslofsky, "Knowing Skin in Early Modern Europe," *History Compass* 12, 10 (2014): 796.

Ham's descendants. In shifting the curse to Ham, the story spoke to the anxieties the Church had about undisciplined youths and provided a moral lesson about the consequences of disobedient sons and a warning to children.[228] But it also squarely linked the ancestry of cursed dark skin to another of Ham's cursed sons Chus, who, per Genesis 10, settled in Africa. Many writers and scholars used the curse of Ham by Noah as means of explaining blackness in certain skin types and justifying the enslavement of darker-skinned people.[229] Dark skin and blackness became then a sign of moral corruption and social inferiority, indicating "bad" or cursed blood and servitude. This translated in gendered terms to a rhetoric that promoted a specific ideal of feminine beauty very difficult to achieve; white skin was a sign of ancestry from Noah and the moral good, whereas dark skin —which could include freckles, blemishes, or even uneven skin tone— was a sign of descending from his cursed brother, moral inferior and slave.[230]

Medical rhetoric also shaped understandings of the skin's function. Kimberly Poitevin describes how "Early modern men and women seemed peculiarly aware of the skin's changes in color and appearance. Skin tone was volatile, affected by changes in health, diet, or emotion."[231] The early modern physiognomist Thomas Hilll explained using Galenic humoral theory that complexion was affected by the balance between the humours, but also included changes based on the "Nature of the place and Country" of birth.[232] As a result, moral characteristics became linked to these scientific observations, and terms like "good complexion" (red and white skin tone of

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[228] *Ibid.*

[229] Koslofsky references Whitford, D.M., *The Curse of Ham in the Early Modern Era: The Bible and the Justifications for Slavery* (Farnham and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009).

[230] Koslofsky, 796.

[231] Kimberly Poitevin, "Inventing Whiteness: Cosmetics, Race and Women in Early Modern England," *Journal of Early Modern Cultural Studies* 11, 1 (2011): 68.

[232] *Ibid.* Physiognomy was a study developed by Giovan Battista Della Porta in the early seventeenth century. Della Porta presented an interpretative grid to understand human character as manifested in physiological and above all facial features. His study developed into a taxonomy of human physical characteristics that corelated with types of behaviour and personality. For more information of physiognomy see: Margo Hendricks and Patricia Parker, eds., *Women, "Race" and Writing in the Early Modern Period* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 57.

equal humour) and "bad complexion" (black, sallow, pale or white in unequal humours) supported existing religious debates about the superiority of white over dark.

L'Héritier emphasizes in her fairy tale Blanche's natural whiteness and inability to make her skin darker. Esthetically, whiteness was associated with purity, chastity, and femininity.[233] Having and maintaining a white complexion also demonstrated privilege and leisure as distinct from the sunburnt skin of working peasants or labourers.[234] In this way, Blanche's skin indicates her social superiority over her wicked stepsister and mother, despite their relegating her to work as a house maid. In *Eloquent Experiments* Blanche sits in full exposure to the sun, but her face is not red or blemished and in fact has a glowing effect. The fairy tale describes how Blanche's skin remains white even when working outdoors: "She [the stepmother] employed her to do the most rustic chores, but despite the care she [the step mother] took to expose her skin at every moment to the sun, her natural complexion never tanned, and remained white as ever."[235] Blanche's white skin automatically indicates her moral superiority over others, and her skin's immutability shows the resilience of purity within *mondain* culture.

Interestingly, Alix's complexion is not mentioned, and the descriptions of her physical appearance are just as vague: "Alix […] was a monster of ugliness, as well as rudeness" and "that grumbler was also flirtatious as well as ugly and mean."[236] In the context of the discussion of complexion, it could be interpreted that as a "monster of ugliness" Alix's skin would reflect the "blackness" within her heart, but without a description of her complexion, the painting instead depicts her with pale greyish looking skin. Alix is in a shaded area, further making her true skin

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[233] Grieco, "The Body Appearance and Sexuality," 62.

[234] *Ibid.*

[235] L'Héritier, 186. «Elle l'employait à tous les travaux les plus rustiques : mais malgré le soin qu'on prenait de l'exposé a tous moment au Soleil, sont teint qui était d'un naturel à ne se point hâler, conservait toujours sa blancheur».

[236] *Ibid.,* 171, 209. «Alix […] était un monstre en laideur, aussi-bien qu'en grossierete » «cette Grondeuse était aussi coquette, que laide & méchante».

colour and complexion more difficult to discern. Blanche's pure white skin remains an individualistic feature that Alix and her stepmother recognize as desirable; hence their efforts to alter or destroy it. The sun's rays will never taint Blanche's skin because she is good, has obviously and naturally balanced humours, and is a descendant of Noah, not Ham or Canaan, making her a paragon of *mondain* and *salon* culture.

As white skin shines as a distinct symbol of goodness, the clothes of the main female characters also act as indicators of which girl belongs within *mondain* society. In the early modern period and especially in the courts and *salons* of France, the association of political and social power with displays of wealth and ornamentation increased.[237] Veronique Nahoum-Grappe explains the influence of dress and glamorous appearance in solidifying power within the European courts:

> "European courts, whether sedentary or mobile, signaled power through visible signs […] Sumptuous dyed fabrics, precious gems, gold and stately ceremonial dazzled and awed the public. Power, holiness, sunlight, the Beautiful Woman— all were, in one way or another, social spectacles, means of captivating the gaze and dazzling the onlooker so as to dominate the social scene." [238]

All the great courts of Europe vied with one another in ostentation and luxury as each attempted to impose its aesthetic fashions and language, as well as its social and economic order. This pattern of using visible signs of wealth like expensive jewels or hair styles and clothing was characteristic of the Western conception of power as it developed in the early modern period.[239] However, the fairy tale indicates a social understanding of acceptable and unacceptable indulgence in fashion

[237] Veronique Nahoum-Grappe, "The Beautiful Woman," in *A History of Women Vol. 111: Renaissance and Enlightenment Paradoxes,* eds. Natalie Zemon Davis and Arlette Farge (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 1993), 88.

[238] *Ibid.*

[239] *Ibid.*

and spectacle, and over-ornamentation can render the wearer less attractive, according to L'Héritier's representations.

L'Héritier mentions the clothing and dress of both girls, and contrasts Alix's pompous ornamentation with Blanche's simple and rustic attire. Blanche's wicked stepmother is so hateful of her perfection because it highlights her own daughter's flaws: "Her stepmother had an inconceivable hatred for her; she despaired that her beauty made her daughter's deformity all the more noticeable."[240] In aggravation the stepmother attempts to sabotage Blanche's beauty but "despite the care that they [the stepmother and stepsister] took to dress her [Blanche] in ill fitted and deforming clothing, her flat hair and her large garment of coarse serge could not hide that she resembled the goddess of love."[241] *Eloquent Experiments* depicts Blanche's clothing following the above description, but with some changes in accordance with seventeenth-century fashion and art. Blanche's clothing is painted as a plain brown dress that has a drawstring and is pulled tight below her breasts. Linen peeks out from around the ties as would be accurate for the time period. Her dress falls unfashionably straight from under the ties and has no volume or extra embellishments. Blanche wears a head kerchief which ties back her hair, though loose strands of golden hair peek through and fall behind her head and over her shoulders.[242] In contrast to this rustic and simple wardrobe, Alix receives every luxury from her mother, who "would sacrifice everything for her satisfaction."[243] Over-indulgence becomes the focus of many of Alix's physical descriptions.

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[240] L'Héritier, 170- 171. «Sa belle mere avait pour elle une aversion inconcevable; elle etait au desespoir de voir que sa beauty faisait encore paoitre la diformite de sa fille».

[241] *Ibid.,* 175. «Malgré le soi qu'on prenait de luy donner des habits qui pussent la deformer, tout luy seait; la coiffure plate & son vêtement de grosse serrge n'empêchaient pas qu'elle ne parût belle come l'Amour».

[242] "Jean- Antoine Watteau Artworks," The Atheneum, accessed Jan 26/2017, //www.the-athenaeum.org/art/detail.php?ID=121798

[243] L'Héritier, 171. «aurait tout sacrifié à sa satisfaction».

Despite the rustic task of going to fetch water from a fountain, Alix dresses as if preparing for a ball and chooses to brings a vase made of gold.[244] However, even in her finest clothing Alix cannot match Blanche's beauty, "because her excessive ornamentation only increased her ugliness and bad grace."[245] Alix's vanity and excess sets her apart from the ideals of the *mondain* culture, in which there existed delicate rules of propriety, and over-dressing could be viewed as gaudy or ugly.

Eloquent Experiments depicts Alix at the left side of the composition standing apart from the group and in the shade of some small bushes and trees. She is painted wearing a highly fashionable dress covered in gold and jewels, with excessive ruffs, puffed sleeves, and bows, highlighting her constant pageantry and desire for spectacle. Despite being in a more shaded area, Alix's dress shines obnoxiously, in various tones of gold and silver. The bulk of her skirt drenched in wine helps to contrast against nasty creatures that fall from her mouth. No matter how beautiful the fabric appears, its is rendered worthless and ruined, stained by the vile animals that pile at her feet.

The image of Alix is gripping but intentionally removes her from the setting of bright and eloquent conversation depicted on the right side of the canvas. The painting draws the viewer's attention to Blanche through the use of lighter tones and brighter colours. Watteau's style perfectly captures Blanche's character as the ideal *salonnière* by providing a visual example that radiates an air of grace, eloquence, and intelligence. The image also manages to capture the nuanced commentaries about the superiority of whiteness over darkness in two artistic techniques that are

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[244] *Ibid.* «Elle se para avec autant de soin que si ceût été pour aller au Bal. prit un vase d'or le plus beau de toute la maison, & dans cet étalage pompeux elle arriva à la fountaine». (She took as much care as if she were preparing for a Ball. Took the golden vase, the most beautiful of the entire house and in her pompous attire she arrived at the fountain).

[245] *Ibid.,* 175. «pendant, qu'Alix toute couverte d'or & de pierreries, & avec un coiffure la plus étudiée, faisait peur à tous ceux qui la regardaient; car l'exés de la parure ne la rendait que plus laide & de plus mauvais air».

subtle but apparent. First, the painting combines specific contrasts in the lighting of Alix and Blanche. Shading is used more in Alix's depiction, making her overall complexion darker, while brighter light and texturizing around Blanche's white face are used, symbolizing her purity and emphasizing her white skin. Second, the lighter subject is depicted as superior, literally positioned on a higher horizon, and she is surrounded by aristocratic women of high fashion. The style and fabrics of the ladies' clothing indicate that they are all well-to-do ladies, but focusing their attention on Blanche shows her higher status among the group. Artistically the composition removes Alix from the focus of activity; she is ostracized, painted alone and on a lower plain of the horizon, depicted literally below the others, symbolizing her moral inferiority as well.

The representations of the "good" and "bad" girls in L'Hériter's tale change to incorporate new criteria demanded of both representations. The adherence to courtly conduct highlighted in Basile's tales must now be paired with the knowledge of salon etiquette, eloquence of conversation, and intelligence gained through reading. The Renaissance ideals of beauty that embraced extravagance and other worldly beauty, shift in "*Les Enchantements de L'Éloquence"* to include specific physical features of white complexion, that show a humoral and moral balance expected of elite women. The comic and ugly peasant or bawdy rustic of Renaissance poetry no longer symbolizes the "bad" girl. Rather, the "bad" girl is the member of elite society who ignores or is ignorant of social protocol. The girl who uses vulgar language or misuses conversation and over-dresses in her ruse to pass as a member of *mondain* society fits the most heinous definition of "badness."

CHAPTER FOUR

Portraits of Stabilized Beauty and Expected Ugliness

Figure 9 – Alauna Brown, *Portraits of Stabilized Beauty and Expected Ugliness* (2017)
Photographed by Dezeray Tomra

The representations from the final fairy tale under examination, "*Les Fées,"* written by Charles Perrault, have been the most difficult to interpret and conceptualize visually.[246] This seems fitting, as Perrault's journey to becoming a fairy-tale author was also slightly unorthodox. For many years, he worked as a lawyer and secretary, two occupations quite removed from imagining disguised fairies who give gifts or curse young girls. It was not until Perrault's dismissal from government service that he would join the ranks of the literary writers of France. In 1687 Perrault inaugurated the famous literary debate known as "*La Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes"* or "The Quarrel of the Ancients and Moderns."[247] In this debate Perrault championed the *Modernes'* view, arguing that "France and Christianity could progress only if they incorporated pagan beliefs and folklore and developed a culture of enlightenment."[248] Perrault's main adversaries in the debate, Nicolas Boileau-Despréaux (referred to commonly as Boileau) and Jean Racine, opposed this view and argued, "France had to imitate the great empires of Greece and Rome and maintain stringent classical rules in respect to the arts."[249]

Perrault actively defended the value of folkloric tales and strove to show that French culture had the same moral value as the classical fables of ancient mythology.[250] Perrault wrote a series of books defending modern literature called *Parallèle des Anciens et des Modernes*, in which he compared modern literature like French folktales to the myths and fables of antiquity.[251] However,

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[246] Jack Zipes, "Charles Perrault," in *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales: The Western Fairy Tale Tradition from Medieval to Modern,* Eds. Jack Zipes (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 380. Zipes, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion,* 379.

[247] Zipes, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion,* 21.

[248] Zipes, "Perrault, Charles," *The Oxford Companion,* 379.

[249] *Ibid.*

[250] Seifert, *Fairy Tales Sexuality and Gender*, 65-66.

[251] Charles Perrault, *Parallèle des Anciens et des Moderns en ce qui regard les arts et les sciences* (Paris: Jean Baptiste Coignare, 1693).

Perrault's collection of twelve fairy tales published under the title *Histoires ou Contes du Temps Passé* or *Les Contes de ma Mère L'Oye* is the most remarkable testament to his convictions.[252] The small collection of tales includes some of the most well known and iconic fairy tales such as *Le Petit Chaperon Rouge* (Little Red Riding Hood) and *Cendrillon* (Cinderella). These fairy tales remained popular in part because of specific adaptations Perrault applied to the fairy tales' structures. Perrault chose a format that shortened the tale narrative and framed the tales stylistically as moralistic lessons while maintaining elements of popular superstition, the marvelous, and folk tradition.[253] Perrault's tales were unlike those of his contemporaries in several ways. Perrault severely reduces all outlying dialogues and descriptions of the characters and includes only as much information as needed to convey the moral message. Put into perspective, L'Héritier's version (contemporary to Perrault) is an extensive 64 pages. Perrault reduces this to only four pages.[254] The reduction in length is the result of removing "needless flights of fantasy" and "rationalizing" incredible occurrences through a succinct and economical narrative.[255]

Perrault's choice to reform the fairy tale's structure and shorten the tales reduced the amount of information gained about the characters who function to present the moral message of the tale. These changes in format directly affected my own interpretations of the interaction among the main female figures, the historic context, and the visual reproduction. With few physical descriptions in the tales, the visual reproduction *Portraits of Stabilized Beauty* relied heavily on

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[252] Perrault's collection titled *Histoires et Contes du temps passé* or *Histoire de ma mère L'Oye*, includes several tales that continue to be popular, including *Le Petit Chaperon Rouge* (Little Red Riding Hood), *La Belle au Bois Dormant* (The Sleeping Beauty), *Le Chat botté* (Puss in Boots), *Cendrillon* (Cinderella), *Barbe Bleue* (BlueBeard) and of course, the tale under examination, "*Les Fées"* (The Fairies). See: Lydie Jean, "Charles Perrault's Paradox: How Aristocratic Fairy Tales Became Synonymous with Folklore Conservation," *Frames* 11, No. 3 (2007): 276.

[253] Zipes, "Charles Perrault," *The Oxford Companion,* 379-380.

[254] Between the translations Basile's "The Three Fairies" averages nine pages long, and his "Two Cakes" averages only five pages long.

[255] Teverson, 57-58.

translating the personalities and values emphasized by Perrault into visual features. The artist chosen for inspiration was portrait painter Hyacinthe Rigaud, who perfected this approach in his career as a royal portraitist; his most famous art piece, the *Portrait of King Louis XIV,* exemplifies his technique. Rigaud's painting of King Louis XIV is an accurate representation of the King, but strategically exaggerates features that the King himself promoted throughout his reign. Specifically, the painting visualized the idea of the King as the embodiment of the state through his divine right to rule. Rigaud brilliantly expresses the ruler's identity as an absolute monarch, and his portrait reflects this conscious superiority.[256]

In the same way that Rigaud sought to portray specific qualities of the King through colour, composition, dress, pose and props, so too does *Portraits of Stabilized Beauty* reflect the specific qualities of the characters used to define moral "good" and "bad." In my interpretations of the fairy tale's content, the "good" girl reflects Perrault's vision of the French fairy-tale tradition originating from the folksy, rural, and domestic household, but also perpetuates certain feminine virtues expected of upper-class French women. Interestingly, the "bad" girl embodies specific feminine vices and negative stereotypes of women, though with less connection to class. When placed in the historic context, the magical effects that the girls receive provide commentaries on how certain forms of female speech were acceptable and not acceptable in the seventeenth century. Finally, the fairy tale offers a gendered conception of progress and civility by presenting "goodness" and "badness" as inherited from different parents.

Section One - Goodness, Gracious, Great Vases of Water

[256] Ann Tzeutschler Lurie, "Hyacinthe Rigaud: Portrait of Cardinal Dubois," *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art* 54, 8 (1967): 234.

The following section explores the representation of the "good" girl as a symbol of Perrault's ideal *moderne* woman, and examines the relationship between Perrault's historical context and the characterisation of the "good" girl in the fairy tale. The visual reproduction presents Perrault's "good" girl and modernist views through the artistic style of Hyacinthe Rigaud. Lastly, this section examines the unique relationship between "goodness" and inheritance as expressed in the fairy tale, exposing a more nuanced understanding of seventeenth-century notions of gender embedded in the narrative.

As with the other versions of the tales of Magical Reward and Punishment for Good and Bad Girls, "*Les Fées"* begins by introducing the main characters and establishing the roles they will play as moral examples in the narrative. The "good" girl is introduced as "sweet" and "civil" and as "one of the most beautiful girls you've ever seen."[257] Despite her positive countenance, she is forced by her mean and unfair mother to do chores in the household. Among other things, the "good" girl must fetch water from a water fountain, twice a day, filling a large vase.[258] The initial representation of the "good" girl reflects the traits of hard work, self sacrifice, and obedience. However, she is also relegated to the role of a peasant or servant, despite her implied moral superiority. The "good" girl is pulled between two worlds where the dignity of her virtues heightens her morally, while the indignity of the work she performs lowers her socially. This initial representation of "goodness" split between two different definitions shows interesting parallels when compared to Perrault's own experiences with the courts of France.

[257] Perrault, "*Les Fées,"* 100. «une des plus belles filles qu'on eût su voir ».

[258] *Ibid.* «Elle la faisait manger à la cuisine, et travailler sans cesse. Il fallait entre autre chose, que cette pauvre enfant allât, deux fois le joir, puiser de l'eau à une grande demi-lieue du logic et qu'elle rapportât plein une grande cruche».

Figure 10 – Hyacinthe Rigaud, *St. Magdalene* (1710)

Under Jean-Baptiste Colbert's employment, Perrault was privy to the inner working of King Louis XIV's court.[259] But Perrault was not himself a courtier or member of the aristocracy. Rather, he belonged within the Parisian urban elites whose prestige depended on the successes of their careers. However, with access to Versailles, Perrault had an advantage in gaining social mobility and supporting his literary endeavours.[260] Perrault maintained a career as a writer, while also being an active member of the *Académie Française* and key member *of La Petite Académie*.[261] The diligent work ethic that he displayed in his publications and projects was also mediated by his unwavering support of the "manifest destiny" of the absolutist regime, which saw its mission as civilizing the rest of Europe.[262] Obediently, Perrault worked in the interest of the crown, and with *La Petite Academie* aided in the planning and production of art and architecture that propagated the superior civility of the King's regime.[263] My painting reflects the

[259] Perrault worked as secretary to Jean-Baptiste Colbert, who was the controller general of finances for the crown. Zipes, "Perrault, Charles," *The Oxford Companion*, 379.

[260] Oded Rabinovitch, "Versailles as a Family Enterprise: The Perraults, 1660-1700," *French Historical Studies* 36, 3 (2013): 388-390.

[261] Jeanne Morgan, *Perrault's Morals for Moderns* (New York: Peter Lang, 1985), 16. Morgan explains that the historical annals of the Academie revealed Perrault to be one of the group's most active and prolific members, attending virtually every session for over thirty years.

[262] Zipes, *Art of Subversion,* 21.

[263] *Ibid.*

similarity between Perrault's and the "good" girl's situations. The clothing depicted on the figure of the "good" girl in *Portraits of Stabilized Beauty* represents the similar contradictions that Perrault faced in his career and that the "good" girl faces as a character meant to represent morality. Perrault successfully navigated aristocratic culture while being a member of the lower urban classes; the "good' girl is of a superior moral character, but is placed in situations that demean her status.

Portraits of Stabilized Beauty is a multi-portrait inspired by specific paintings by Rigaud. The figure of the "good" girl takes inspiration from the portrait *St. Magdalene* (Fig. 10).[264] She wears a simple cream coloured linen dress that symbolizes the lower-class tasks she is forced to perform. The clothing also symbolizes Perrault's urban career, which does not allow the same leisure that an aristocrat might enjoy. However, a dark blue cloak of fine and rich fabric also surrounds the "good" girl figure. The cloak references her superior morality, and is blue like the cloak that surrounds the Virgin Mary in early modern imagery. The fine fabric also symbolizes Perrault's connection to the courts, as the deep blue colour is reminiscent of the cloak worn by King Louis XIV in his famous portrait. The narrative uses vague descriptors about the physical and behavioural qualities deserving of reward.

The "good" girl encounters a poor peasant hag on her way to fetch water. The hag approaches the "good" girl begging for a drink, and the "good" girl responds to her request saying "Yes, my good mother,"[265] sharing a pitcher of water with the old woman, taking the courtesy to find a clean spot from the fountain, and holding the pitcher so the hag can drink more easily. The old hag is a fairy in disguise, and gives a reward for the girl's act of kindness, saying, "you are so

[264] Hyacinthe Rigaud, *St. Magdalene*, oil on canvas, The Athenaeum, accessed Aug. 15, 2017, www.the-athenuem.org. http://www.the-athenaeum.org/art/detail.php?ID=122022

[265] Perrault, 100. «Oui-dà, ma bonne mère».

beautiful and so virtuous that I cannot help but give you a gift."[266] Kindness and politeness seems to be the traits that the fairy appreciates, but the narrative still provides no further indication of what exactly those "virtuous" or "*honnête*" traits are. Adding to the vagueness of the tale, the "good" girl remains nameless (From now on I will refer to her as Plus-Belle, for the sake of clarity) and the tale gives her appearance minimal attention. Plus-Belle is described as "*une des plus belles filles qu'on eût su voir*" (one of the most beautiful girls ever seen) and later is called: *belle fille* (pretty girl); *si belles et si honnête* (so pretty and so civil), and *jeune fille* (young girl), but this still provides no real context as to what she looks like in physical terms.[267]

Portraits of Stabilized Beauty is reliant on the artistic inspiration to fill the gaps in how Perrault may have imagined the appearance of "goodness." However, Rigaud's portrait of *St. Magdalena* works as an excellent example of vague beauty and ambiguous virtue, while the composition allows me to include what details we do have that inform the context of the period. In the painting, Plus-Belle sits at a desk with only her upper body visible and poses with her head tilted slightly upward in contemplation or prayer. Plus-Belle's face is modeled after Rigaud's painting and maintains the pale complexion and rosy cheeks he depicts in the *St. Magdalena*. The table holds a simple water pitcher and a drinking glass, both full of water as a symbols of Plus-Belle's generous and courteous manners. The reproduction represents Plus-Belle as an interchangeable symbol of goodness, as she reflects more the artistic standards of beauty and the figure in the *St. Magdalene* than an individual with distinct traits. In place of the character representing specific morals and virtues, the gift that Plus-Belle receives provides the best indication of Perrault's definition of "goodness."

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[266] *Ibid.,* 101. «Vous êtes si belle et si honnête que je ne puis m'empêcher de vous faire un don».
[267] *Ibid.,* 100.

After drinking the water offered by Plus-Belle, the disguised fairy states, "I will give you for a gift […] that with each word you speak a flower or precious stone will fall from your mouth."[268] As in the previous tales, the gift that the "good" girl receives is directly linked to her speech and makes a statement about the power and the moral weight behind that speech. However, Plus-Belle has only three parts of dialogue in the entire narrative. First, she responds politely and obediently to the hag's request for water; second, she apologizes to her mother for taking so long to fetch water; last, she answers a question asked by the King's son.[269] Perrault's fairy tale reveals how very differently he characterized the "good" girl despite participating in the same cultural sphere as the previous author Marie-Jeanne L'Héritier, who also happened to be his niece. Although Perrault supported the writings of women, participated in the *salons* of France, and even wrote a major poetic work that supported modern women called *Apologie des Femmes* (1694),[270] Perrault's version of the fairy tale shifts from praising the "good" girl's active and intelligent conversations, to emphasizing the "good" girl's passive conversation. Women's conversation and proper speech were crucial to maintaining social position and indicated rank and class. However, key features involved in proper speech included practising meekness and silence, which were understood as distinctly feminine virtues. In the *Ladies Dictionary (1694)* meekness is described as the following:

> *Meekness:* meekness may be ranked with humility, and both of them are very comely and adorning to birth and beauty, commanding love and affection from all… Meekness is not only enjoined to all as a

[268] *Ibid.,* 101. «Vous êtes si belle et si honnête que je ne puis m'empêcher de vous fair une don […] Je vous donne pour don, poursuivit la fée, qu'à chaque parole qur vous direz, il vous sortira de la bouche ou une fleur ou une pierre précieuse».

[269] *Ibid.,* 100, 101, 103. Plus-Belle's three instances of dialogue are: «Oui-dà, ma bonne mère,», «Je vous demande pardon, ma mère,…d'avoir tardé si longtemps.» «Hélas! Monsieur, c'est ma mère qui m'a chassé du logis.»

[270] Morgan, 24.

> Christian virtue but is a more peculiar manner enjoined to a woman as one main accomplishment of their sex…[271]

Soft-spoken words and meek conversation, according to this definition, enhance a woman's appearance, making her more comely and beautiful. The *Ladies Dictionary* describes women's silence as even more admirable:

> the true virtue of silence cannot be too much commended. It is such a quality that I want words to express its worth… Speech enricheth and corrupteth. But silence is poor, but honest. I am not so much against discourse as vain prattling, which consumes time and profiteth nobody.[272]

Plus-Belle's simple, meek, polite, and obedient conversation take precedence over the cultivation of intelligence or practising eloquent conversation. Perrault aimed in his works to defend modern women, and thus *modernist* views, which could act as example of the superiority of the modern era, but framed this within a very narrow definition of womanhood.

In *Portraits of Stabilized Beauty,* Plus-Belle sits at a table scattered with jewels and flower petals, indicating she has received the fairy's gift, but her mouth remains closed in quiet contemplation. Plus-Belle's hands rest clasped together on the top of a stack of books written by defenders of the *Moderniste* arguments. The image shows my interpretation of Perrault's conflicting message about women's roles in the *moderne* society he promotes. Plus-Belle sits with access to the knowledge of *moderniste* writing, but the books remain closed because she must uphold the virtues of meekness and silence promoted in Perrault's version of the fairy tale.

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[271] N. H. Keeble, eds. "The Ladies Dictionary (1694)" in *The Cultural Identity of Seventeenth-Century Woman* (New York: Routeledge, 1994), 105.

[272] *Ibid.*

Fatherly Virtues

The "good" girl represents a model of French civility; but her meek speech and demeanour are not all natural. The narrative attributes the moral and civilizing features of Plus-Belle's "goodness" to her father, implying that virtue is inherited through a male figure. In the first page of the fairy tale Plus-Belle is described as reflecting her father's sweetness and *honnêté*, while the older daughter, Fanchon, reflects her mean mother, hinting that certain characteristics originate from specific parents.[273] In the early modern period, the male perspective significantly conditioned understandings of the female body and women's social identity.[274] As a result, the biological male or the social "masculine" was categorized historically as the norm or superior element, while on the other hand, the biological female and "feminine" was defined as a defect, abnormality, or simply the product of an "imperfect male."[275] These notions extended to women's role in conception and generation. Author N. H. Keeble describes that whether adhering to Aristotelian thought which believes "women contributed nothing to generation save the womb or context and nourishment," or Galenic theory that believed "conception was the product of the combination of male and female seed," the male contribution was hot and active and the female cold and thus passive. Man was the agent of all positive production and woman the culprit of all negative or failed conception.[276] Monstrous or deformed births were the fault of women's uncontrollable wombs, or the result of menstruation's corrupting and polluting healthy sperm.[277]

Perrault's claim that the father is the origin of Plus-Belle's traits, while the older daughter Fanchon received her looks and temperament from the mother, fits within the cultural and

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[273] Perrault, "*Les Fées,"* 100.
[274] Grieco, "The Body, Appearance and Sexuality," 47.
[275] *Ibid.*
[276] N. H. Keeble, *The Cultural Identity of Seventeenth Century Woman* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 19.
[277] *Ibid.*

scientific narrative that promoted male superiority. Plus-Belle is framed as the most positive possibility for a female, as she inherited traits from her father while also being naturally blessed with beauty and enlightened with proper speech. *Portraits of Stabilized Beauty* expresses the relationship between Plus-Belle and her father. Borrowing features also seen in Rigaud's *St. Magdalena*,[278] the portrait depicts Plus-Belle with pale white skin, rosy cheeks, and pink lips imitating the traits shown in the original portrait, as there are no specific descriptions of her appearance aside from '*belle*' (pretty or beautiful).

Plus-Belle's father is depicted in a portrait hanging on the wall behind her. He poses proudly behind his daughter and exhibits the qualities of "*douceur*" (sweetness) and "*honnêteté*" (civility) that Perrault uses to describe the traits Plus-Belle inherited from her father.[279] The father's portrait is based on Rigaud's painting of Pierre-Vincent Bertin (Fig. 11) and depicts him with his hand outstretched towards Plus-Belle, symbolizing passing his masculine positive traits to his daughter. [280] The painting also portrays the father in soft lighting; he wears a light wig of similar colour to his daughter's hair and has the same complexion. The father wears sophisticated clothing befitting a French gentleman in the same style as in the original painting by Rigaud. Though he gestures downward, his head turns with a neutral but gentle expression.

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[278] Hyacinthe Rigaud, *St. Magdalena*, oil on canvas, The Athenaeum, accessed Aug. 15, 2017, http://www.the-athenaeum.org/art/list.php?m=a&s=tu&aid=300

[279] Cotgrave, *A Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues.* Based on translations from Cotgrave's French to English dictionary "douceur" most likely references sweetness, or gentility, and "honnêteté" is meant as virtuous, integrity, truthful, or gentleness.

[280] Hyacinthe Rigaud, *Portrait of Pierre-Vincent Bertin,* oil on canvas, The Athenaeum, http://www.the-athenaeum.org/art/detail.php?ID=120921.

The representation of Plus-Belle seems to promote an image of "goodness" that reflects several aspects of Perrault's own personal context as well as broader historic understandings of gender. Plus-Belle's concurrent situation as superior and inferior reflects the dynamic social positions Perrault held both as an insider and outsider in the courts of France. The rewards that Plus-Belle receives highlight her enlightenment, as she practices elite modern custom. The father's status as the origin of Plus-Belle's *"honnêteté"* or civility reflects seventeenth-century beliefs about masculine authority as leading others to civil prosperity. The details of what "goodness" resembles are much less clear than in other variants, and by leaving the main character nameless, the tale introduces the possibility that "goodness" could resemble whatever the reader imagines as

Figure 11 – Hyacinthe Rigaud, *Portrait of Pierre-Vincent Bertin* (c1654-1711)

beautiful. Perrault's fairy tale lures the interpreter to consider that "goodness" might be visualized differently from the previous tales. However, when relying on other visual sources from the seventeenth century to fill this image lacking in the content and description, they reflect similar attributes to these found in the previous tales, as will be discussed more thoroughly in Chapter Five. Importantly, though the link between appearance and behaviour as representing moral "goodness" seems to diminish, as evidenced by the minimal descriptions of Plus-Belle's physical appearance, Perrault explicitly associates beauty with goodness. By enhancing Plus-Belle's appearance through the gifts of precious and beautiful items, the link between beauty and goodness remains fundamental and emphasized.

Section Two - Bad Girl, Bad Girl, Whatcha Gonna Spew

As expected, the "bad" girl functions in the tale to oppose the traits of Plus-Belle. However, interpreting the content and visually reproducing "badness" remained challenging. This is in part because the tale was purposefully rewritten as an illustration of the superior moral character of modern culture, which more easily aligns the characterization of the good girl with Perrault's context and motivation.[281] The narrative neglects descriptions of appearance for both girls and focuses instead on the behaviours that indicate moral position, and the effects of the magical rewards and punishments. It was surprising to find that Perrault gives the "bad" girl a name, while there existed more clearly linear connections between promoting *Modernes* morality and representations of the "good" girl. The "bad" girl is named Fanchon, while the "good" girl remains anonymous. This difference in characterization of the main female characters raises the question of the significance of identifying "badness." I argue that naming Fanchon operates as a symbolic

[281] Morgan, 35.

and narrative function to emphasize the bond that the mother maintains with her eldest daughter while providing a commentary about the origin of sinful behaviour being the result of feminine guidance, or a lack of masculine authority.

In this section, I will explore the representation of the "bad" girl and the artistic inspiration used to visualize her appearance in the painted reproduction. I will also explore the significance of naming the "bad" girl and not the "good" girl, arguing that it implies a specific (and negative) relationship between mother and daughter. Following this, I will explore how the tale portrays the "bad" girl as a reflection of her mother, in both behaviour and appearance. When considering the relationship between mother and daughter in the broader context of the seventeenth century, the tale can be interpreted as translating early modern ideologies about the importance of men's roles as leader within the family unit and as the transmitters of knowledge. The tale may also indicate Perrault's own perspectives as a mentor to his niece, Marie-Jeanne L'Héritier. Her successful career knowledge shows the merit of education and counsel guided by male authority. Exploring each of these components helped to shape the overall visual reproduction of *Portraits of Stabilized Beauty* and shows how Perrault's unique historical context shapes the representation in the fairy tale.

Motherly Vice

The tale describes Fanchon entirely by association to her mother while omitting any indication of physical appearance or clothing. The tale begins, "Once upon a time there lived a widow who had two daughters: the oldest resembled so strongly the humour and face of her mother, that when you looked upon her, you saw her mother."[282] This is the extent of the physical

[282] Perrault, "*Les Fées,*" 100. « l'aînée lui rememblait si fort d'humeur et de visage, que qui la voiyait, voiyait la mère. »

imagery used to describe Fanchon. The lack of concrete imagery is replaced with the insistence that Fanchon resembles her mother in nature and appearance, both being "so disagreeable and conceited that you couldn't live with them."[283] This paralleling of attributes guided the likeness of both the mother and eldest daughter in *Portraits of Stabilized Beauty.*

Rigaud's painting titled *Portrait of Marie-Anne Varice de la Ravoye, née de Valière* (Fig. 12),[284] inspired the likeness of the wicked mother-daughter duo. Represented in *Portraits of Stabilized Beauty* in the form of a disturbing double portrait, both characters resemble the main

Figure 12 – Hyacinthe Rigaud,
Portrait of Marie-Anne Varice de la Ravoye, née de Valière (1702)

[283] *Ibid.*, 100. «désagréable et si orgueilleuses qu'on ne pouvait vivre avec elle».
[284] Hyacinthe Rigaud, *Portrait of Marie-Anne Varice de la Ravoye, née de Valière,* oil on canvas, The Athenaeum, accessed on Aug. 15 2017, http://www.the-athenaeum.org/art/detail.php?ID=122218.

subjects in the center of Rigaud's painting, imitating her distinct curled hair style. The same drawing was used to sketch the mother's and Alix's features. However, the mother is painted as an older version of Fanchon, having distinct wrinkles on her face and a slightly plumper build. Both characters wear the same dress, styled after Rigaud's portrait, but with the main colours and accents of their dresses inverted. The image of Fanchon is meant to represent a negative mirroring of Plus-Belle's attributes, in the same manner that the fairy-tale narrative describes them. Thus, Fanchon and her mother are depicted in a similar setting to Plus-Belle, having a desk in front of them with objects on the surface reflecting their behavioural traits. Fanchon is depicted sitting down behind the desk, uncontrollably spitting up snakes and toads, while her mother positioned to the left looks down in horror at Fanchon. Indeed, Fanchon's curse reflects her personality traits.

The interactions that Fanchon has with her doting mother reveal her to be rude, lazy, and vain. After Plus-Belle receives her magic gift, her mother tries to convince Fanchon also to bring water to the old hag from the fountain, so that she may reap the same rewards as her younger sister.[285] The narrative describes Fanchon's sarcastic response to the demands made by her mother: "That would be a nice sight (answered the beastly girl), for me to go to the fountain!"[286] She reluctantly gives in to her mother's wishes, but brings with her the most expensive and beautiful silver pitcher from the household.[287] The choice of the finest item to perform this task indicates Fanchon's vanity and pomp, while her disrespectful response to her own mother shows her arrogance.

While some of Fanchon's behavioural traits are exposed in her interactions with her mother, there are three key descriptors that summarize the principal reasons for Fanchon's magical

[285] *Ibid.*
[286] *Ibid.,* 101-102. «Il me serait beau voir, répondit la brutale, aller à la fontaine!»
[287] *Ibid.,* 102. «Elle prit le plus beau flacon d'argent qu'il y eût dans le logis.»

punishment. Once arriving at the fountain, Fanchon is greeted not by a begging old woman but by a beautiful lady magnificently dressed.[288] At the lady's request for a drink of water, Fanchon replies "Have I come here... to give you something to drink? Precisely, I have brought a silver pitcher expressly to give you a drink; in my opinion, you can find a drink yourself."[289] Failing the test miserably, Fanchon is described by the fairy as *orguielleuse* (surely, conceited or scornful), *brutale* (beastly, rude, or savage), and *malhonnête* (discourteous, dishonest, or uncivilized), all indicating a lack of cultural sophistication and polite conversation. Interpreted from Perrault's perspective, Fanchon represents a detriment to societal progress and enlightenment. Perrault operated within multiple spheres of French society, participating in academic writing, attending *salon* discussions and working as secretary to Colbert. The common thread across these diverse institutions, in the context of elite and upper class seventeenth-century French culture, was the necessary application of courtly courtesy, gentle civility, and polite conversation. In his writing Perrault lashes out against the supporters of the *Anciens,* arguing that many of the ancient tales of Greece and Rome were often without a moral plot and presented stories of heinous acts whose immoral and brutal descriptions had little value to the civilized French society.[290] Fanchon's inability to engage in civilizing processes necessary to maintain the superiority of French culture presents her as an obstacle to the prosperity of France. Fanchon is also an example of negative morality and thus a hindrance to enlightenment *Moderne* views.

Fanchon's uncouth manners and ill-tongued conversation result in her being cursed. Upon her pointed refusal to pull water from the fountain, the mysterious gentlewoman says, "Well! Since

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[288] *Ibid.*. «Elle ne fut pas plus tôt arrivée à la fontaine, qu'elle vit sortir du bois un dame magnifiquement vêtue, qui vint lui demander à boire.»

[289] *Ibid.,* 102. «Est-ce que je suis ici venue, lui dit cette brutale orqueilleuse, pour vous donner à boire? Justement, j'ai apporté un flacon d'argent tout exprès pour donner boire a madame; j'en suis d'avis: buvez a même si vous voulez»

[290] Morgan, 24.

you have been so obliging, I will give the gift that for every word you speak, there will fall from your mouth a snake or a toad."[291] *Portraits of Stabilized Beauty* vividly illustrates the curse Fanchon receives. Sitting behind the desk with her hands braced against it, Fanchon looks down surprised as a snake slithers out of her mouth. Meanwhile, her mother, positioned to the left in the composition, gasps and looks down in disgust at the evil creatures that hop and slither across the desk's surface. As with the previous tales, the curse brings to life the true nature of the character and reveals Fanchon's inner ugliness through the unpleasant, vile, and monstrous creatures she produces. Despite the narrative's lacking descriptions of Fanchon's physical appearance, the tale maintains the connection that "badness" produces ugliness and can have deforming or corrupting results. Though there is no indication from the narrative descriptions that Fanchon's appearance is ugly, the nature of the curse makes her ugly. By the end of the tale, Fanchon's horrible attitudes and disguising curse lead to her own demise because "She became so hated, that her own mother drove her from her home; and the unfortunate girl, after wandering without finding anyone who wished to receive her, went to die in the farthest corner of a lonely wood."[292]

Portraits of Stabilized Beauty incorporates symbolic objects representing the "bad" girl's behaviour and links Perrault's context to the visual product. In the left portion of the desk, there is a beautiful silver vase tipped over, its water spilling onto the surface. The vase is symbolic of Fanchon's vanity and greed, shown in her refusal to help the fairy. Snakes slither and toads hop across now wetted parchment and papers containing excerpts from ancient texts and the writings of Perrault's opponent in the *Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes*, Nicolas Boileau. Perrault's

[291] Perrault, 102. «Eh bien! Puisque vous êtes si obligeante, je vous done poyr don qu'à chaque parole que vous direz, il vous sortira de la bouche ou une serpent ou un crapaud.»

[292] Perrault, 103. « elle se fit tant haïr, que sa propre mere la chassa de chez elle; et la malheureuse, après avoir bien couru sans trouver personne qui avait bien couru sans trouver personne qui voulût la recevoir, alla mourir au coin d'un bois.»

criticism that ancient works lack moral constitution is visually symbolized by the sullied literature contaminated by the creatures born of Fanchon's immoral and uncivilized behaviour.

The most fascinating aspect of Perrault's representation of "badness" is that he chooses to name the "bad" girl and not name the "good" girl. I believe this serves symbolic and narrative functions giving credence to certain gendered attitudes of the historical period. Literary scholar Michael Ragussis argues that naming is very significant to the plots of narratives and can indicate the moral or message at the heart of works of literature. Ragussis begins his discussion by quoting Plato; "To bestow, find, reveal, or earn a name; to take away, hide, or prohibit a name; to slander and stain or protect and serve a name —I will argue that such acts are the means and ends of the characters in fiction, and as such lay bare the novel's deepest levels of plot."[293] Fanchon is a female diminutive form of François and means "free" or "whimsical."[294] Perrault's choice to name the "bad" girl Fanchon effectively connects the concept of female freedom with immorality and corruption. Further, the tale feminizes negative behaviour because Fanchon has inherited and learned her poor manners from her mother. Fanchon as a character reflects early modern anxieties surrounding households (or other practices outside the household) dominated by women or without leadership/supervision of a male figure. The tale warns the reader of the dangers of a household managed by only women.

The characterization of Fanchon recalls the negative portraits of *salionnières* used in the writings of Perrault's opponent Boileau. However, where Boileau saw the *salon* woman as the most threatening force to literary culture, as they might extend to other cultural or political spheres,

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[293] Michael Ragussis, *Acts of Naming: The Family Plot in Fiction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 3.

[294] "Dictionnaire d'autrefois," The ARTFL Project, (accessed Aug 16 2017), https://artflsrv03.uchicago.edu/philologic4/publicdicos/query?report=bibliography&head=fanchon. "Fanchon," *All Names Meanings: All About Names and Surnames*, (accessed Sept 25 2017), http://allnamemeanings.com/french-fanchon-name-meanings.

Perrault saw anti-*salonnières*, like Fanchon, as examples of the denigration of society.[295] Overall, *Les Fées* provides an interesting commentary about femininity and women's roles in French society, especially considering Perrault's role as teacher and guide to his niece Marie-Jeanne L'Héritier. Perrault viewed L'Héritier as his literary protégée and took exceptional interest in all aspects of her education and career. While L'Héritier squarely defends women's education in her version of the fairy tale, the situation of her characters also reflects her own experience as a woman writing and studying under male tutelage. Even in lands of magic and fantasy, her "good" girl Blanche can only continue to cultivate her education and eloquence with the support of a male figure; her father. In the same way that Perrault's "good" girl inherited the positive traits of her father, so too did Perrault pass his wisdom to L'Héritier.

Portraits of Stabilized Beauty and Expected Ugliness reflects my interpretations that Plus-Belle and Fanchon function as representations who support Perrault's *Moderne* views while also revealing historic understandings of gender. The character opposition allows Perrault to create a tale with a clear moral in support of the civilizing force of France. There are several parallels between the representation of the "good" girl and Perrault's own personal context, while the "bad" girl seems to act as a figure who confirms Perrault's beliefs about the consequences of failing to civilize society. The features of each girl hint at early modern notions regarding the inheritance of traits from distinct parents, providing a brief commentary on the importance of male guidance in creating moral offspring. The representations and visual reproductions show a departure from the previous variants in the diminished connection made between appearance and behaviour, but maintain the trend of the magic enhancing or deforming the character's appearance, thus indicating (or exaggerating) "goodness" or "badness." When relying on other visual sources from the

[295] Anne E. Duggan, *Salonnières, Furies and Fairies: The Politics of Gender and Cultural Change in Absolutist France* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2005), 129.

seventeenth century to fill the images of “goodness” and “badness” lacking from the content, L’Héritier’s and Perrault’s tales reflect similar attributes to those of the previous tales.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Worth of Feminine Beauty and the Ugly Nature of Women

The tales of Magical Reward and Punishment for Good and Bad Girls are cultural products that changed significantly over the course of the seventeenth century. According to their historical circumstances, the fairy-tale writers sought to retell a moral story about the benefits of being good and the consequences of being bad. The previous chapters' interpretations have shown that different historical influences and contexts, such as authors' occupation, motivations, social position, gender, and class, shaped traits assigned to the characters and affected the imagery and likeness of the characters.

Basile's "The Three Fairies" and "The Two Cakes" present the "good" girl as reflecting nostalgic Renaissance definitions of feminine beauty and virtue, borrowing from Boccaccian and Petrarchan exaltations of beauty and Castiglione's courtly conduct from his *Book of the Courtier*. Basile defines his "bad" girls by the standards of popular rustic poetry that linked ugliness with the lower classes and immorality. Though these descriptions are often amusing, and intended as such, they also reveal that specific traits such as greed, impolite speech, vanity, lust, and deceit are marked as negative feminine traits.

L'Héritier's "*Les Enchantements de L'Éloquence"* presents the "good" girl as reflecting the ideals of salon conversation and learning. The narrative also emphasizes virtue as dependent on certain physical distinctions, such as a white untarnished complexion, to indicate moral and social superiority. The stereotype of the shrewish or scolding woman who indulges in vanity and practises impolite, uncivilized, and poor conversation indicates the "bad" girl. The ugliness that characterized such behaviour translates to her outward appearance.

Finally, Perrault's "*Les Fées"* presents the "good" girl as equating to *modernes* morality informed by proper speech and positive masculine guidance and inheritance. The "bad" girl is overtly greedy, indulgent, vain, and idle, traits which, unchecked by masculine authority, can run rampant and become a threat to French civility and morality. Fanchon's curse reflects her inner personality, which causes the most devastating social consequence: exclusion from civil society.[296]

The fairy-tale variants are important sources that reflect different understandings about women as symbols of morality or immorality. The tales are examples of how important it is to acknowledge the historical context in shaping cultural products, even when the sources are stories of hags, frogs, diamonds, and fairies. However, the fairy tales also repeat specific historical understandings of gender. The stories indicate what is and is not appropriate feminine behaviour and appearance through their characters. Though the representations in the fairy-tale narratives manifest from different historical influences, the visual products make more obvious the consistencies in the portrayal of ideal femininity. Despite the changing contexts and motivation influencing the remaking of the fairy-tale variants, there are striking regularities in how the narratives assign worth to specific feminine features.

Each tale promotes the notion of a stable relationship between beauty (primarily characterized by fairness), goodness, and worth. Beauty is naturally apparent in the "good" characters and is enhanced by magical rewards, resulting in literal material wealth. Simultaneously, the fairy tales project an unstable relationship between ugliness and badness, which can together or individually determine the worth of the characters. Ugliness is more often the consequence of not adhering to feminine ideals of goodness, or personifies aspects of an already corrupt individual. The ugly appearance of a character was not used to argue for her

[296] Morgan, 90.

wickedness, unless evidence of immorality and vice distinctly backed that appearance. More often, the written and visual products associate a girl's bad nature with other symbols of evil, scandal or corruption. The curses in the fairy tales that associate snakes, toads, spiders, mice, and animal genitalia increase the "bad" girl's ugliness or sully her appearance.

The fairy tales textually and visually reflect broader ideologies and debates about women that resurfaced in the seventeenth century. The massive cultural, scientific, and social changes Europe experienced between the years of 1500 to 1750 had profound impacts on the way that individuals understood the world around them. The rise of humanist pursuits, religious reformation, scientific advancement, and further global exploration created a cultural atmosphere that fostered the critical re-examination of ideas inherited from the ancient and medieval past.[297] The cultural shift toward investigating the perceptions of past intellectual traditions created the opportunity to call into question the cultural prejudices and social subordination that women suffered. Referred to as *La Querelle des Femmes* or "The Woman Question," these historic debates were among the most active discussions in the literary world.[298] Debates and analysis about all aspects of women's lives, including women's roles in the public and domestic sphere, women's biological makeup, and even women's spiritual salvation, inspired the content of numerous printed and visual works. However, both pro-woman and anti-woman debaters depended on the stereotyping of specific traits of behaviour and appearance to support their arguments regarding women and used "feminine features" in diverse ways to prove either the "goodness" of women (pro-woman) or "badness" of women (anti-woman).[299]

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[297] Joan Kelly, "Early Feminist Theory and the *Querelle des Femmes,* 1400-1789*"* in *Women, History and Theory: The Essays of Joan Kelly* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), ix, xxvii.

[298] *Ibid.,* xix.

[299] For further discussion on the debates involved during *La Querelle des Femmes* see: Katherine Usher Henderson and Barbara F. McManus, *Half Humankind: Contexts and Texts of the Controversy about Women in England, 1540-1640* (Chicago: University of Illinois, 1985).

Despite the intellectual shifts and social reform that moved individuals to think about women differently, certain understandings about the ideals of femininity remained fairly fixed.[300] Poems, courtesy books, and recipes for cosmetics codified the physical attributes of female beauty.[301] Literate individuals referenced these and other examples from classic literature, perpetuating the definition of feminine beauty through conformity and practice.[302] Meanwhile, the lower illiterate classes turned to short manuals, printed pictures, broadsheets, paintings and other media that incorporated imagery. These media worked effectively to engage audiences in the messages they conveyed.[303] Print culture faithfully represented the stock precepts of current moral, theological, and scientific debates on the nature and social identity of women.[304] Sara F. Matthews Grieco writes that by the seventeenth century, there emerged a consistent formula that outlined the general standards of appearance expected of elite women:

> In Italy, France, Spain, Germany and England the basic aesthetic was the same: white skin, blonde hair, red lips and cheeks, black eyebrows. The neck and hands had to be long and slender, the feet small, the waist supple. Breasts were to be firm, round and white, with rosy nipples. The colour of the eyes might vary (the French were fond of green; the Italian preferred black or brown), and occasional concessions might be made to dark hair; but the canon of feminine appearance remained essentially the same for some three hundred years.[305]

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[300] Snook, 2.

[301] *Ibid.*, 3.

[302] *Ibid.*

[303] Sara F. Matthews Grieco, "Pedagogical Prints: Moralizing Broadsheets and Wayward Women in Counter Reformation Italy," *Picturing Women in Renaissance and Baroque Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 61

[304] *Ibid.*

[305] Grieco, "The Body Appearance and Sexuality," 58. It is important to note that art did not always reflect the same models of beauty celebrated in literature. Umberto Eco explains, "while the images made by painters and sculptors from the same periods seemed to celebrate a certain model of beauty (of human beings, of nature or of ideas), literature was celebrating another. It is possible that certain Greek lyric poets sang of a type of feminine grace that was only to be realized by the painting and sculptors of a later epoch." See: Umberto Eco, *History of Beauty* (New York: Rizzoli, 2004), 14.

The oral and literary tradition contributed lists of women's physical beauties, which involved defining specific bodily perfections. Grieco describes such a list from *El costume de la donne* by Morpurgo. His ideal woman possessed no less than thirty-three perfections:

> Three long: hair, hands, and legs,
> Three short: teeth, ears, and breasts
> Three wide: forehead, chest and hips
> Three narrow: waist, knees, and "where nature places all that is sweet"
> Three large: ("but well proportioned") height, arms, and thighs
> Three thin: eyebrows, fingers, lips
> Three round: neck, arms and…
> Three small: mouth, shin, and feet,
> Three white: teeth, throat, and hands
> Three red: cheeks, lips, and nipples
> Three black: eyebrows, eyes, and what you yourself should know.[306]

Whether informed by the narrative descriptions or informed by the artistic inspiration, the painted reproductions of the "good" girls reflect the physical standards listed by Morpugo with striking accuracy.[307]

The strength and pervasiveness of these feminine standards of beauty are also in part due to the relationship established between worth and beauty. Beauty is portrayed in the fairy tales as a gift that complements other "truer gifts" of personality but also gives value.[308] The fairy tales highlight this ideology of beauty by transforming the abstract symbols of ideal beauty into tangible displays of wealth and worth through the rewards and punishments the girls receive. The "good" girls' beauty is elevated through the blessing of material wealth (gold, golden star, precious stones,

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[306] Quote of Morpurgo was taken from Grieco, "The Body Appearance and Sexuality," 58. Original quote taken from Emmanuel Rodocanachi, *La Femme Italenne* Avant, *Pendant et Après la Renaissance* (Paris: Hachette, 1922).

[307] The first three fairy tales, "The Three Fairies," "The Two Cakes," and "*Les Enchantements de L'Éloquence,*" use the goddess Venus as a comparative when describing the appearance of the good girls, reflecting the criteria described by Grieco. In "*Les Fées,"* Perrault uses little description, but the artistic inspiration chosen as a template for the style and composition of the painting matches the Venus type characterization of beauty as well.

[308] Nahoum-Grappe, 89.

magnificent clothing, diamonds), signalling their increased value. Wealth becomes beauty's reward, and the surrounding characters of the tales — the mother, fathers, princes, kings, or villagers— accept wealth as a valid measure of the "good" girls' worth.

Diamonds and Fairies

In each of the tale variants, a male character confirms the worth of the "good" girls based on their beauty, and then the same or another male character re-introduces their worth as based on the precious items they produce. In Basile's first tale, the three fairies reward Cicella with fine clothing, have her hair beautifully dressed, and bestow a golden star that becomes a permanent sign of her value in material terms. Even when her stepmother takes away her jeweled clothes, Cicella's natural beauty arouses Lord Cuosemo's desires. Cicella is not only metaphorically described as "that jewel in the mud, that phoenix among pigs, and that beloved sun in the broken clouds of the rags" but is placed into real terms when Lord Cuosemo provides a literal translation of her value in the form of currency, offering her stepmother a counter-dowry of thousands of ducats for Cicella's hand in marriage.[309] While the fairies reward Cicella based on both her behaviour and beauty (which together reflect the historical context and the intended moral), Cuosemo only acknowledges Cicella's outer appearance as valuable, then gives her value based on the treasures she produces.

In "The Two Cakes" the magical reward enhances Marziella's beauty as her brother praises her enhancements and the King confirms her worth based on her gifts. Marziella's brother Ciommo brags to the King about his sister's beauty, claiming "besides the beauty of her form,

[309] *Ibid.,* 284. Basile, "The Three Fairies," *The Pentamerone of Giambattista Basile,* trans.Corce, 296. Basile, "The Two Cakes: Seventh Diversion of the Forth Day," trans. Burton, 272. Burton's translation writes: "promising to endow her with an hundred thousand ducats."

[she] possessed also a wonderful virtue of her hair, mouth and feet which was given to her by a fairy."[310] The language shifts to describe beauty in terms of material goods. Marziella is no longer just a beautiful maiden but a "rare jewel" that can also produce rare jewels.[311] Because of her gift, the King confirms her worth and finds "her three times more beautiful than he [Marziella's brother] had described her, thus deeming her worthy to be his wife."[312]

In *"Les Enchantments de L'Éloquence"* Blanche's father is the first to point to her appearance as giving her worth. After the death of Blanche's mother, her father is reduced to poverty, left with his daughter's whiteness and beauty as the only remaining indications of his good status in society. [313] The stepmother's and stepsister's desires to ruin Blanche's complexion indicate its value, though the diamond and pearls that pour from Blanche are given even greater value. The news of Blanche's magical gifts spreads far and wide to the villagers of her father's estate. The fairy tale inspires imagery of worshipping a goddess, as Blanche's magically enhanced speech draws an incredible crowd of people around her house, who wait and gather the wealth that she produces: the precious stones that fall from her mouth. While the villagers recognize her eloquence and kindness, her gift causes a frenzy in the town and serves to elevate the worth of Blanche's eloquence.

The fairy in disguise from Perrault's tale "*Les Fées"* gives Plus-Belle a reward because of her physical beauty. The gift of having flowers and precious stones fall from her mouth transforms Plus-Belle's qualities into material wealth. Though the King's son first notices Plus-Belle because of her beauty, the substantial financial value of her gift is what sways the Prince to marry her. Only after seeing five or six pearls and several diamonds fall from her mouth does the prince suddenly

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[310] Basile, "The Two Cakes," trans. John Edward Taylor, 151.
[311] *Ibid.*
[312] *Ibid.*
[313] L'Héritier, 167. «*blancheur et sa beauté*».

becomes enamoured with Plus-Belle and decide to marry her.[314] The tale translates Plus-Belle's beauty and grace into material wealth, which ends up being the ultimate reason the prince decides to take her as a wife.

While women were able to use beauty to defend their worth as they did in *La Querelles des Femmes*, feminine beauty was only recognized when it conformed to a masculine ideal perpetuated through a written and visual history. The fairy tales themselves are a commentary on how masculine desire and opinion directed the standards of feminine beauty in the seventeenth century. The visual representations illuminate the superficial nature of female goodness when defined in terms of beauty. If beauty acts as the consistent core of goodness within the fairy tale, woman's morality is reduced to the degree to which she can adhere to these standards of beauty, like maintaining blonde hair and a pale complexion, rather than being determined by the intentions, choices, or actions made as an individual. In the context of the seventeenth century, manipulating one's appearance to conform to the imposed standards was a legitimate means for some women (specifically elite white women) to gain power in social circles, though by no means did this act as a liberation from these imposed and limiting standards of beauty.[315]

The trends in representation within the fairy-tale variants act as significant examples of how beauty functioned to indicate women's worth during the seventeenth century. Whether the fairy tales were written by male or female authors, specific ideals of beauty are consistently maintained. While the latter tales by L'Héritier and Perrault used fewer descriptions of female beauty, they still insist on a relationship between beauty and worth. The metaphors of jewels and riches used by the princes, lords, and kings to describe the "good" girls indicate beauty as a

[314] Perrault, "*Les Fées*," 103. In Perrault's tale, the passage reads «Le fils du roi en devint amoureux, et, considérant qu'un tell don valait mieux que tout ce qu'on pouvait donner en marriage à une autre, l'emmena au palais de roi son père, où il l'épousa.».

[315] Nahoum-Grappe, 88.

valuable trait, but many of the girls also literally produce wealth in the form of jewels, pearls, diamonds, precious stones, and flowers. The "good" girls contribute vast wealth which their narrative counterpoints cannot. Thinking about the characters as objects of value places a new perspective on the attractiveness of the "good" girls; their unique contribution of wealth, rather than moral superiority or great beauty, becomes the most appealing consequence of "goodness."[316]

Fairy-tale narratives with similar structures do not hold male characters to the same standard of appearance and behaviour to define their moral worth. The only author who provides a similar story of reward and punishment, but for two boys, is Ludwig Berchstein, in his tale "*Der Garten im Brunnen* (The Garden in the Fountain)," published in 1845 in his collection *Deutches Märchenbuch* (*German Fairy Tale Book*).[317] In this tale a peasant man has three children. His first wife, sadly deceased, had given him a girl and a boy. His second wife, the wicked stepmother, bore him a second son named Kasperle. His two boys are put to the test in a magical world; the unnamed son is rewarded, while Kasperle is punished. However, unlike in the tales of Magical Reward and Punishment for Good and Bad Girls, the two boys perform the same task in the exact same way.

The firstborn son is constantly mistreated by his stepmother who, one day in a rage, throws him down a well. At the bottom of the well he lands in a garden and comes across a tree full of delicious red apples. The boy is hungry and asks the tree "Sweet little tree, shake and shake, and throw your apples over me!" The tree shakes and many red apples fall from the tree for the boy to

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[316] Perrault, "*Les Fées*," 100. Perrault's fairy tale makes a specific though brief comment on this notion. In "*Les Fées"* the narrative indicates that the Prince is curious about seeing such a beautiful girl alone in the woods and asks why she is alone and crying. Only after Plus-Belle explains her story, and the Prince sees the diamonds and pearls that her speech produces, does he become enamoured, and "considering that this gift was better than any other that could be given in marriage, he brought her to the palace of his father where he married her."

[317] Ruth B. Bottigheimer, "Bechstein, Ludwig," in *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales: The Western Fairy Tale Tradition from Medieval to Modern,* ed. Jack Zipes (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 49-50. Maria Tartar, *Off with Their Heads! Fairy Tales and the Culture of Childhood* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 57.

eat. Next, he comes across a tree covered in golden leaves and he again asks the tree "Sweet little tree, shake and shake, and throw gold leaflets over me." After these words, his clothes become covered with gold. Last, he laments that he is lonely and misses his father, sighing he says: "Oh, if only I were with my father!" Suddenly an old man appears and instructs him to go back to the place where he came, saying that his sister will draw up a bucket and pull him up out of the well. The evil stepmother becomes angry that he survived his fall down the well, but after hearing the tale of his rewards, sends her son Kasperle down the well. He repeats the exact words of the other boy but when the first tree shakes, the red apples fall on his head and are sour and full of worms. When Kasperle reaches the second tree he is covered in thick pitch instead of gold. Crying and screaming, he begs his mother to pull him up. Pulling her son from the well, the evil stepmother is enraged at his failure, so much so, that she scolds and strikes him. His bad luck continues as his mother tries to remove the pitch by putting him in the oven while she bakes bread, thinking she can bake and harden the layer of pitch. Tragically she forgets the boy, who suffocates in the oven and burns to death. The stepmother then dies of sorrow, but the father lives joyfully and splendidly with his two children.[318]

The boys' appearances and behaviours bear no relation as to the reward or punishments they face, and the tale does not follow the same moral structure as the tales with female heroines. Though published nearly 150 years after Perrault's "*Les Fées,"* the "Garden in the Fountain" echoes strongly the motif that wickedness of the mother seems to determine which boy is punished. Repeated in this tale is a warning about the consequences of a dominant female parentage in the household, providing a pertinent example of those characteristics used in *La Querelles des Femmes* to support the notion of feminine evil and corruption. The stereotypes assigned to the wicked

[318] Ludwig Bechstein, "Der Garten im Brunnen," *Maerchen.com,* (accessed Aug. 17 2017), https://maerchen.com/bechstein/der-garten-im-brunnen.php.

stepmothers of the fairy tale tradition were in the seventeenth century broadly attributed to women in general.

Hags and Frogs

The history of female representation in the early modern period is largely a narrative where the positive attributes of the fairer sex are systematically counterbalanced by incredibly negative traits, and for every virtue recognized there were usually as many, or more vices condemned.[319] While many sources defended women's worth, there was also a litany of materials that represented women in extremely negative ways and argued that women were naturally inferior and possessed an evil nature. These literary attackers relied on negative stereotypes about women and used them as proof of the natural evil of females.

Many of the core stereotypes assigned to women over the course of *La Querelle des Femmes* have origins in the story of Eve that repeat in the representations of the "bad" girls from the fairy-tale variants.[320] They are descendants of the biblical figure Eve, whose secondary creation, seduction of Adam, and culpability for the fall from the garden of Eden were evidence used to support woman's undeniably evil nature and inferiority.[321] The lustful woman (enticing, sexually unstable, and deceitful), the shrewish woman (scolding, willful, and domineering), and the vain woman (extravagant, shallow, and ambitious) form what Henderson and McManus argue are the three main groups of distinct stereotypes used against women. Each stereotype is evidence

[319] Sarah F. Matthews Grieco, *Anges ou Diabless: La Représentation de la Femmes au XVIe Siècle* (France: Fammarion, 1991), 65.
[320] Henderson and McManus, 47-48.
[321] *Ibid.*

of women's undeniable immorality, but all are used in the fairy tale to indicate which girls are deficient and worthless.[322]

The stereotype of the lustful, wanton, and deceitful woman is used to characterize the "bad" girls of the first two tales. Grannizia is described as sexually aggressive and dehumanized by being compared to the mythical harpy, the most lustful of the Greco-Roman mythical beasts.[323] Like the harpy, Grannizia is a fearsome sight and more animal than human, but unlike the harpy her lusty appetites are not sated. Rather, Grannizia is so unattractive in behaviour and appearance that instead of ensnaring her pray with lulling tones, she repulses Cuosemo, who sees her as disgusting and worthless. Further, the harpy is deceitful, acting on desire that cannot or will not be controlled. Grannizia and Puccia lie to attain their goals through the use of cosmetics and dressing in golden clothing, and Grannizia attempts to hide her physical deformity and wicked nature. Comparatively, Puccia's mother tries to fool the King by lying and pretending Puccia is Marziella. In both cases the girls' magical punishments reveal their true nature through the repugnance of their ugliness and deformity of their bodies. Puccia's fate of spewing of serpents and toads evokes imagery linking the "bad" girls to Eve and the devil, helping to solidify her role as the "bad" girl.

The "bad" girls strongly embrace the stereotype of the shrew or scold through their prominent representations as rude, impolite, and demanding. Though Alix provides the best example of the shrewish woman, insatiably demanding and disrespectful to everyone, the

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[322] *Ibid.*

[323] *Ibid.* Eco*,* 36. Matching this characterization of women, the fairy tale likens Grannizia to a harpy. Grannizia is described directly as a harpy, while Puccia is said to resemble her mother who is a harpy and a bawd. One of the most recognized stories of the harpies is in the legend of Phineus. The harpies are called by the gods to steal food from Phineus with the intent of having him starve to death. These myths imbue the harpy with attributes of enticing allure matched with greed and deceit, qualities that are further emphasized in the fairy tale's narratives and the representations of the "bad" girls. "Harpy," Encyclopaedia Britannica (accessed Jan 15/2017), http://proxy.library.unbc.ca:2700/levels/high/article/39327/related#nodeId=websites&page=1. For further information about the harpy in Greek mythology see website, "Harypyiai," Theoi Greek Mythology (accessed Jan 15/2017), http://www.theoi.com/Pontios/Harpyiai.html.

imbalanced temperament of each girl is suitable reason for magical punishment.[324] The "bad" girls' "cursed tongues" materialize in literal terms as their poisoned words and disrespect take the form of toads, snakes, and other nasty creatures. The "bad" girls from the fairy tales are all vain and display this vanity most commonly through extravagant dress, accessorizing, and ornamentation. Grannizia is doted on by her mother, and given all manner of expensive dresses and gifts, which fosters her greedy nature. Although Grannizia is constantly in fashion, her style is never enough to mask her hideous nature or appearance from onlookers. Alix wears the most fashionable dresses, but their extravagance becomes tacky and unsightly in the eyes of her peers.

The fairy tales rely heavily on the basic stereotypes of the lustful woman, the shrewish woman, and the vain woman to support their representations. The "bad" girls deserve their punishments, and the poisonous, revolting, and deadly creatures that become a part of the "bad" girls' characterization reinforce ugliness as a consequence of "badness." In material terms, the "bad" girls' vices literally deplete the wealth (thus worth) of the coffers of the princes they wish to ensnare. The visual reproductions indicate that the "bad" girls share a different relationship with appearance than do the "good" girls. The figure Eve herself is not ugly in her depictions throughout the early modern period and in fact maintains several features considered beautiful by seventeenth-century standards. Likewise, anti-woman writers in *La Querelle des Femmes* did not target ugliness as an indication of feminine evil and thus inferior worth. Rather, they argued that sinful, rude, or uncivilized behaviour could turn what might be a fine woman into a symbolically ugly

[324] It should be noted that the shrew was also used in a variety of ways in other sources. Anna Bayman and George Southcombe describe how in different contexts the shrew could be seen as a powerful female using speech as a tool of defence, but was as often used as a negative example indicating a shrill, transgressive scolding woman, more in line with verbal harassment and attack. "So that most distinctive of the shrewish traits, the "curst tongue', was something that early modern readers could understand as both damaging and beneficial, reprehensible and amusing, feminine and masculine, wasteful and profitable, and which they were invited to admire and condemn." See: Anna Bayman and George Southcombe, "Shrews in Pamphlets and Plays," in *Gender and Power in Shrew-Taming Narratives, 1500-1700*, edited by David Wootton and Graham Holderness (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 12-15.

one or make a woman unattractive. Appearance still manifests as a symbol of "badness" but is not, in itself, argued as distinct evidence of evil. Confirming the immorality of woman through appearance seems to require the inclusion of incontestable symbols of evil. In the case of recognizing a "bad" female figure as the embodiment of Eve, writers and artists depicted a woman alongside vile and evil creatures, the most prominent being the snake. The fairy tales similarly rely on specific female stereotypes to undercut feminine worth but also solidify this negative association with highly visual references to abhorrent features or hideous creatures.

Happily, Ever After?

The fairy tales examined are complicated cultural products whose representations reflect specific information about the context of their creation and reproduce gendered ideologies from the seventeenth century. They remain significant examples of changing moral definitions through the inclusion or removal of particular traits of "goodness" and "badness" from the first to the last tales. My research finds that while all the authors relied on the features of appearance and behaviour to frame both "goodness" and "badness," the relationship between the two features changes largely based on the motivations of the authors and the degree to which it is possible to read into the historical contexts that influenced the characterization. As the tales change from including exaggerated detail to vague descriptions, that information is more difficult to decipher, but is itself an indication of the relationship between physical appearance and moral representations. It reveals that there is an understood implication in shorter and simpler descriptions that remained valid to the readers of the seventeenth century, and no longer required explanation for audiences to grasp the meaning of such representations.

The fairy-tale variants are also a reminder of the pervasiveness and persistence of particular representations of gender. The paintings produced in this project highlight the tendency to separate women's nature into two contradictory definitions as either the paragons of virtue or the embodiment of evil. The writers of each side of the *La Querelle des Femmes* fought with pen and ink to defend their understandings of feminine nature, which encouraged this paradoxical definition. Both sides of the debate merge in the artistic reproductions of this project through the representations and characterization of the "good" and "bad" girls that mirror other visual works from the seventeenth century. The context in which *La Querelle des Femmes* began, and the definitions of beauty and women's nature that developed from the debate, frame the cultural norms that affected the representations in the fairy tales. Though these norms were established over three hundred years ago, fairy-tale remakes today continue to rely on the pairing of women's nature with specific visual features. While large corporations like Disney are now beginning to reconsider the manner in which they represent their female characters and have started to use a broader spectrum of appearance and behaviour to define their heroines, many of their characters continue to reflect the tropes seen across the tales of Magical Reward and Punishment for Good and Bad Girls.

Looking across these paintings, now with renewed understanding of how authorial intent and historic connection shape the images, one last observation is important when considering the impact of these types of cultural products in defining femininity. The fairy tales comment on how concepts of value and worth are tied significantly to understandings of gender roles. Each of the fairy tales promotes messages of conformity to the ideal standards of beauty established by Neoplatonic standards and maintained by past literary traditions. The fairy tales speak of the consequence of transgression against this norm. The inevitable deforming of the body as a result of not following the rules of behaviours and the association of feminine "badness" with creatures,

animals, and demons, dehumanizes those who cannot fit categorically to the standards of the "good." Looking at the images before me, I see how fairy tales convey a continued representation of femininity as binary. 'Woman' is represented in the paintings as a dual being, as good or bad, saint or demon, reflecting the Virgin Mary or embodying Eve. The representation of women pairs "goodness" with an ideal, and insinuates that "badness" reflects the reality of women's nature.[325]

[325] Grieco, *Anges ou Diablesse*, 71.

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