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IN DEFENSE OF CHARLES PERRAULT: Beyond the Feminist Perspective of Jack (David) Zipes & his Associates.

Analysis of chapter 2 - Setting Standards for Civilization through Fairy Tales: Charles Perrault and his Associates in Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion: The Classical Genre for Children and the Process of Civilization by Jack Zipes.

In this paper, I set out to demonstrate that by criticizing the “civilizing” project of Charles Perrault and Associates' fairy tales, Jack Zipes follows specific prescriptions for his own "civilizing" project finally not so different from that of Perrault and Co. In order to build his argument, in this work, Zipes depends on a limited and biased reading of the tales. In other words, his essay, even though considered to be scholarly, constitutes political propaganda. In his critique of one project he depends on the strict categorical guidelines of the American democratic/capitalist/feminist model, which has its own political agenda and limitations. In the subsequent chapters of the book, with which we are not concerned here but which for clarity reasons I still need to mention, Zipes proposes fairy tales that fit this project with prescriptions for a specific social model and he suggests that it is these tales that should be valued. Any such objective in itself constitutes propagandistic intentions.

Zipes' method relies on first demonstrating the context of Charles Perrault and then on the superficial discussion of Perrault's tales. I shall follow his order and shall therefore contextualize Zipes, drawing parallels between himself and the critique that he directs at Perrault. Further, I shall discuss Perrault's tales and shall demonstrate that Zipes' reading is often inaccurate and curtailed by his own vision.

Zipes delineates specific "feminist" categories and then he conveniently "chops-up" the stories and pushes them into these categories. I argue that such categorizing, in fact any categorization, is problematic and manipulative. The extensive examples from Perrault's tales themselves will illuminate the problems of categorization that result in skewed definitions.

In addition, I question Zipes' claim that Perrault's tales in themselves had an important impact on the civilizing project of France and the perception of children, their gender roles and sexuality.

I organize my essay in the following way:

1. I situate Zipes within the context of the civilizing project of American feminist capitalism and outline the inclusions and omissions that he allows in his project.
2. I review through Zipes' own agenda the myth of individualism and the shortcomings in attributing a major social constructivist role to an author, i.e. to Perrault. In this part, I draw a parallel between the positions of Zipes and Perrault and therefore whatever Zipes sets out to criticize in Perrault can be also applied to Zipes and interpreted as the battle for the elements and the scope of social control.
3. I turn to the reading of Perrault's tales that Zipes offers and argue that even though Perrault's rendition of the more complex folk tales is simplifying and problematic, a more "global" reading of the tales is still possible because they have been based on and contain the centuries of folk experience and wisdom. This exercise will further shed light on the problems of categorical organization of knowledge and data with its implications on definitions, logic and analysis as tools in the specific project of Zipes and Associates and by extension to any scientific undertaking in general. After all, science and academia depend on organizing and categorizing data and information.

Finally, for reasons of space and time limitations, I shall confine my illustrations to Charles Perrault's tales.

1. **Inclusions and Omissions: Situating Zipes**

In his work, Zipes distinguishes between what he calls the regressive and progressive aspects of the power of fairy tales in order to understand the liberating

potential of contemporary tales for children. I argue that the definitions at the basis of his argument are politically inspired and his argument is thus manipulated and manipulative. To break down these concepts of "regressive" and "progressive", subversive, etc., I would need to resort to the discussion of the context of the work itself, the author and the project: first, the context of the chapter within the scope of the project of the book and then the author's place in the larger context. This "situating" or "contextualising" is crucial to my examination of the definitions and concepts, which form the basis of any work and point to the fundamental ways in which we formulate an argument and construct logic.

Zipes is a feminist American scholar. First, he is the product of a Democratic/Capitalist system that has incorporated a specific type of feminism to which he subscribes. Here, I need to delineate this model.

American or capitalist feminism is a political/theoretical endeavour. Like all political theories, it has its assets but is concurrently confined by its own agenda. Hence, even though it acquired its modern form along, what we now read as, the revolutionary strides of the romantic epochs seeking change and turbulence, in its American incarnation it came against a blind wall. This can be explained not by the inherent faults of the theory itself, but by the fact that - like all political ideas - it is subject to the rules of the system of the status quo of the so-called social realities. In the context of the US, this system was organized to the benefit of the capitalist who relied upon labour in whatever form, age category, gender, faith or creed. In this way, we are able to speak of different feminisms, for example, in France, Sweden or Russia.

To return to Zipes, his feminism takes root in the context of American capitalism a system known to disregard natural, biological, earthly, psychological, emotional, and other factors in the well-being of not only women but also of children, men, animals, plants, earth and space and forced the various living species to adapt and mutate to artificial, experimental conditions with disregard to the continuity of the species¹ and for the benefit of the capitalist. Illustrations abound in media, anthropological, sociological and other work, but since the theme

¹ What I take as the highlights in the definition of contemporary capitalist system: The philosophy of capitalism is "profit". The profit is based on "product" and the product does not necessarily belong to the producer or the one who makes it but to the owner who owns the "product", "production process" and the profit. Pay in this system is not based on an exchange principle (i.e. so many units for so much effort) but on the competition to pay the least for the most and to gain the most from the least. Hence, the majority of people are coerced into giving more and more of their effort for less and less of compensation. Poor people create their own competition of poverty and accept the job because they are made aware that there is always someone poorer who will do it for less and leave them with nothing. Hence, the successful explosion of the corporations in the third world and the necessity of "unemployment" statistics in this "civilizing" project.

of this essay is the socializing of children through fairy tales, I shall illustrate this point with the effects of the American "incorporation" of feminist "ideals" into the mainstream on childhood and pedagogical methods.

Without getting into further elaboration about how desires can be forged and manipulated, one can say that conveniently, the desire of women to participate in the labour market coincided with the desire of the capitalist to exploit (it could also have been the other way round), it is approximately like the happy axiom that for every sadist there is a masochist and vice versa. Feminism grew into the mainstream; an indicator of this is that in the last decades it has become an important bone in the American academic curriculum. This case of "reclaiming" feminism by the masses resulted in the massive exploitation of female work force while for their physiological labour the system offered only 3 months of paid maternity leave. This of course is longer than the yearly vacation allowed the average labourer - which is at best 2 weeks/year and in rare cases 3 - and since time is money motherhood is more costly to all the parties concerned: parents, employers and those undefeatable and unrelenting "tax-payers".

If we disregard the stress and alienation that such societal organization causes to the mothers and infants, we find that economically this model serves the capitalist system well and that the 3 months of paid maternity leave after all pay back the capitalist forcing workers to abandon their own *protégés* to the unceasing claws of the products that they, themselves, slave to produce: pharmaceuticals produce the necessary synthetic life-force, psychologists and medical personnel offer their services to groom and work on the birthing mother and child instructing her on her nature and rights, "scientists" write the right and necessary books to confirm the psychologists and the medics², formula companies offer their chemical breast-milk substitutes for a profitable fee, day-care accepts infants as young as a month old, transportation profits from the extra daily trips to day-care, and a multitude of other parent-substitute companies offering their tricks and traps. Finally we arrive at the book industry, which sells itself into the heart and home and socializes in ways where any distinctions of any emotional, physiological, psychological characteristics have been effaced and caricaturized. That is why we are overwhelmed by masses of American children's books depicting flat, androgynous characters with flat, simplistic and flashy drawings. For an example, view any Disney book with all its own "inventions" and adaptations from the "classics". In a mass-culture society, in fact any profound differences across any

² For an indepth discussion on the role of medics, textbook writers, and scientists in general, read the excellent anthropological research by Emily Martin *The Woman in the Body*. Martin approaches the question through feminist linguistic theory and anthropological questioning and does an excellent job in demonstrating how these conspire to give a limited and biased view of the woman's body and health.

lines, except for race (these statistics are obsessive) are being wiped out. The moral: women and men are constantly been told that they are the SAME.

The point that concerns us here is that, even though feminist theory itself is complex, *nuancé*, and multifaceted, the American feminist project takes place within the American capitalist framework and produces theory to fit its own agenda. Thus, persons who succeed within this system are usually its good subjects who "see" or read expression of difference - as for example between the sexes or races - as "bad", or sexist or racist. Even though I realize that we live in a world that with each day seems to be getting further away from perfection, I nevertheless uphold that people and knowledge are much more complex than what the American feminist propaganda makes them out to be.

As for Zipes, this is the model in which he was born - as a scholar at least - and in which he fared well. This is the project that directs his work.

This leads us to my second point: Zipes has been a professor of American Literature in Germany, of Germanic studies and comparative literature in the US. Presently, he is the Director for German and European studies at the University of Minnesota, teaching contemporary German literature with a focus on German-Jewish topics. Also, he has been the general editor for *The Lion and the Unicorn* journal on children's literature. The book - from which the chapter for this exam comes - "was made possible by a Fulbright Grant from the International Exchange of Scholars which allowed me to spend a year at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität in Frankfurt am Main, where I taught and conducted research" (Acknowledgments).

To receive the Fulbright Grant, professorship, academic directorship and editorship in any country speaks for itself, namely, that the person is in tune with the "civilizing" project of those in power (i.e. the elite) to dictate the norms, curriculum, values and mores of his or her society. In other words, all this points not only to Zipes' mainstream academic milieu but also to the great extent of his control over the theoretical production on children's literature. There is an inherent paradox in his criticism of other elitist projects, specifically, in the case of this essay, that of Charles Perrault and Associates.

This paradox, I argue would perhaps be less so, if Zipes stated openly that the motivation behind his critique is not that of honest analysis of what upper class "authority" constructs, but a battle of the American capitalist hegemony (intellectual too) over all. But perhaps he is not aware of this implication and that the American feminist model fails to go beyond its economic and political limits dictated by capitalism in which such problematic and political notions as those of female activity, equality, passivity, intelligence, can be only culturally and politically

defined. Thus, the major problem of Zipes is his failure to examine the categories that he uses in order to question and analyze other models of social organization and control. It is these categories that define the terms applied in his gender critique that make the "gender" related "characteristics" such as "docile, "obedient", "active", "intelligent", "beauty", etc. problematic. In other words, these categories are politically defined and constructed to serve specific purposes and to fit in controllable categories - in other words to be managed and organized.

Applied to my own research, Zipes serves almost a meta-theoretical purpose: a theoretical problem of definitions in light of my primary text's questioning of definitions. In other words, I am almost reversing the usual roles of when customarily theoretical writing is used to illuminate the literary texts. Yet at the same time, the question that he raises, namely that of gender and the concepts of civility as defined by class in a literary work and as used socially, in itself is crucial to any study of literature and is to be considered seriously. This question, as I demonstrate later, had been raised before Zipes. However, Zipes developed it extensively, despite infusion it with political agenda.

Regardless of whether he is a genius or just a "children's literature theory magnate" (usually the two go together, since the "magnates" pick out and label the "geniuses" and the "geniuses" are then inaugurated as "magnates" and "capitalists" in their field³), and regardless of whether one would want to work with Zipes' theory or not - and just as it is difficult to ignore the big corporations when choice of work and consumption has been limited to almost nonexistence - it is impossible to ignore him as he controls most of the academic writing on children's theory in North America.

Due to the scarcity of free resources in English language on the internet today, I have to rely on the "authorized" publications. The books that are most available on children's writing in North America are published either in his book series called *Children's Literature and Culture* dating back to the 1980s (e.g. Natov, O'Malley, Nikolajeva, etc.) or in *The Lion and the Unicorn* journal that he edits (he and his wife even write children's literature - he uses a pseudonym and his wife is a popular author and a frequent reader in public schools). My search in the MLA listing of journals that publish on children's literature yielded only 13 titles,

³ Pierre Bourdieu gives an excellent discussion on the symbolic capital in his book *Distinction*, in which he demonstrates that even taste (in clothes, art, food, literature, etc.) and knowledge are "investments" and "capital". In other words, I would say that the production, consumption, and control of knowledge and taste are a capitalist venture in a system organized and governed by capitalist relations. In this system, there will always be those who control and profit and those who work for the profit of the overseer/master/possessor/capitalist (with the nuance that many of the tasks could be entrusted to other entities, sometimes to the "worker" her/himself).

most of which dealt with stories, book reviews and only 3 entries dealt with theory, the two mentioned⁴ above and one other titled: *Marvels and Tales - Journal of Fairy Tale Studies*. My intuition told me to look for Zipes' name in this journal and I was immediately rewarded: he is on the editorial board, publishes there frequently, in fact one special edition features his work, his complete bibliography, contributions and all.

The money that is obviously been pumped into these series (research grants, hard-cover editions, excellent publicity and resulting popularity and demand, among other indicators, finally the price itself) speaks for the "real" interests behind the so-called leftist and feminist perspectives – even if some of the books are interesting and helpful, such as the Canadian scholar's, Andrew O'Malley's *The Making of the Modern Child* (the MLA lists 39 titles in this series).

Other important elements to consider in Zipes' "influences" is Gillian Avery. In his bibliography in the book with which we are concerned here, Zipes includes Avery's *Childhood's Pattern: A study of the heroes and heroines of children's fiction 1770-1950* (1975)⁵. However, anyone who had read Avery's books on the British "project" for children's literature would recognize her in Zipes' project before even consulting his bibliography. In *Childhood's Pattern*, Avery offers a survey and an analysis of British literature used and written for children from the end of the 18th to mid 20th century. She argues that contemporary British children's literature came about as a specific civilizing and moralizing project and through her extensive research into British children's literature she provides an excellent illustration to her argument. The message for the poor and lower middle-classes in Avery's words entailed the following: be obedient, diligent, and hard working, regardless of gender.

Zipes applies Avery's theses on the "civilizing" and "moralizing" "project" of children's literature to continental Western European authored tales. "[I]t is not by chance that Perrault directed his energies in writing his fairy tales for the most part to *civilize* children and to *prepare* them for roles which he idealistically believed they should play in society" (14 - italics mine).

Throughout his book, Zipes sets out first to critique the (it turns out to be European) civilizing project and then to present more recent options and possibilities of subverting the sexist and bourgeois civilizing project of fairy tale authors, among whom were Hans Christian Andersson, The Brothers Grimm, and Charles Perrault with contemporary (mostly it turns out to be American or anglophone tales with a few European exceptions). What Zipes and Avery fail to

⁴ The book series that Zipes edits on *Children's Literature and Culture* is also listed in the MLA catalogue as a journal.

⁵ Avery's articles also appear in Zipes' journals.

mention is the effect that the Soviet "project" on children's literature had on both Avery and the "leftist" Western intellectual circles to which Zipes belongs.

In spite of the blatant pro-capitalist and British chauvinistic bias to the point of inaccuracy, this is what *The Oxford Companion to Children's Literature*⁶ mentions about **Russia and Soviet Union** in between the bragging on "the Soviet lagging behind the Very Great Britain":

... [C]hildren's literature has been taken very seriously throughout the USSR since the Revolution. Maxim GORKY was in the forefront of those who first declared that juvenile books could greatly influence the future of the country.

... A comparatively early example of this attitude may be found in *Moscow Has a Plan*, the title of the English translation (1931) of a Soviet school-book by 'M. Ilin', a pseudonym of Ilya Yakovlevich Marshak, engineer and writer of BOOKS OF INSTRUCTION and brother of the celebrated Samuel Marshak ... The book caused something of a stir in English left-wing circles, and encouraged Geoffrey TREASE to write radical literature for children.

The childhood project was equally seriously taken in Nazi Germany and Zipes being a Germanic scholar does make references to the Reich's choice of literature and reliance on the German folk literature. As to the general direction of the book, Zipes directs Avery's global (British) thesis into a narrower feminist perspective on the disequilibrium and differences in the portrayal of male and female roles in these tales. What Avery attributes to class subjugation, i.e. docility, diligence, and industry, Zipes takes to be socio-feminine characteristics and thus misuses the point that the overall underlying message in any hierarchical society is that all "citizens" need to be docile, diligent, and industrious. Perrault would however subvert this message by sneaking in ruse and cunning. Thus, even though Zipes does often make interesting observations, his analysis fails when one attempts to see beyond his lumped categories and not always clear illustrations.

In addition, even though he almost quotes Simone de Beauvoir verbatim, Zipes fails to mention in his critique of Perrault and Associates this important feminist's contribution to the criticism of the French and other European tales among whom those adapted by Perrault. This is what de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex*⁷ writes on Charles Perrault's adaptations of folk-tales:

⁶ ed. Carpenter, Humphrey and Mari Prichard. *The Oxford Companion to Children's Literature*. Oxford University Press; Oxford, New York: 1984.

⁷ de Beauvoir, Simone. *The Second Sex* in Kolbenschlag, *Madonna Kiss Sleeping Beauty Good-Bye: Breaking the Spell of Feminine Myths and Models*, Bantam Books; Toronto, New York, London, Sydney: 1977.

Woman is the Sleeping Beauty, Cinderella, Snow White, she who receives and submits. In song and story the young man is seen departing adventurously in search of a woman; he slays the dragon, he battles giants; she is locked in a tower, a palace, a garden, a cave, she is chained to a rock, a captive, sound asleep: she waits.

And it makes sense generally, for living in a post-de-Beauvoirian and post-feminist age this knowledge has almost become our instinct. For comparison, here is an example of what Zipes⁸ says about the male and female roles in these same tales:

The male acts, the female waits (page 25).

The composite male hero of Perrault's tale is strikingly different from the composite female ... Unlike the fairy tales dealing with women where the primary goal is marriage ... [t]he heroes are active, pursue their goals by using their minds, and exhibit a high degree of civility (page 26).

In Perrault's literary fairy tale, Cinderella is changed to demonstrate how submissive and industrious she is (page 30).

The similarity between Zipes' and de Beauvoir's characterization of French literary tale gender roles is striking: submission, inaction in female roles and action, movement in male roles. It is interesting that Zipes omits de Beauvoir's commentary on the Perrault and Associates project from his analysis.

To conclude this section, having accepted the "leftist" and "feminist" "agenda" or "project", and even though he purports to be critical of the White House and the Corporations' vile and perilous lies⁹, Zipes does not go as far as demolishing and redefining the pre-set "capitalist" definitions of his own semantic references and his logical categories. Perhaps we never can fully escape our pre-defined definitions and logic. But since my own definitions have been formed outside the context of Zipes, perhaps I can offer a curious juxtaposition to him, at least. This I set out to demonstrate.

2. **Jack Zipes' Agenda**

In the chapter that I picked for this test, Zipes takes upon himself to illustrate how "Charles Perrault and his Associates" set the bourgeois and sexist standard in

⁸ Zipes, Chapter 2, page 26.

⁹ See interview with Jack Zipes by Kenn Bannerman: April 2002.

the literary adaptations of the fairy tale as a project to socialize readers in the context of bourgeois mores.

One of the things that I find fascinating in this chapter is the discrepancy between what seemed to me to be, on the one hand, "common sense" and relative accuracy of his generalizations and at the same time the lack of coherent illustrations of his "theory". Perhaps, the generalized appeal to my "common sense" is due to the fact that having lived and studied in the US, I can share Zipes' "meaning" and "definitions" on a general level, while the lack of coherence between his examples and generalizations stems from the fact that he does not go far enough with his analysis and stops at a conveniently safe border where his study would not lead to a serious questioning of the status quo of American definitions.

Unlike Avery or O'Malley who both argued that British literature specifically addressed to young audiences was aimed at socializing the poor and the lower middle classes within the work ethic (e.g. at first through the cheap peddler chapbooks and later through "literature"), Zipes illustrates that in France it was the other way round. The literary authors of the late 17th century took the poor folks tales and adapted them to the civilizing project of the rich in which everyone, including the poor and the lower middle classes were "brain-washed" to accept the upper class standards of civility, manners and general values. "At first the fairy tales were adapted from the oral tales of nurses, governesses and servants of the lower classes and then refined to be told in courtly circles (14)".

Later he says that "[m]ore than he realized, Perrault was responsible for the literary 'bourgeoisification' of the oral folk tale, and he paved the way for founding a children's literature which would be useful for introducing manners to children of breeding (27)". Afterwards, he demonstrates convincingly the differences between the original and the adapted versions of the folk tales.

My question here concerns Zipes' categorical certainty that it is through the tales that the manners and breeding took place and not mainly through "upbringing" and perhaps then reinforced by the "right-kind-of-literature". Hence, the first part of the citation that follows makes sense, while its second part has never been proven beyond any doubt - neither by Zipes, nor by the various sociologists, anthropologists, psychologists, and other scientists of the human and social mystery.

In other words, Perrault amalgamated folk and literary motifs and shaped them in a unique way to present his particular bourgeois view of social manners. In doing this Perrault shifted the narrative perspective of the popular folk-tale genre from that of the peasantry to that of the bourgeois-aristocratic elite. This may not seem so

significant at first, but viewed in terms of the socialization of children, it had dire consequences on the way children came to perceive their own status, sexuality, social roles, manners and politics (27-28).

Even though reading affects us¹⁰, Zipes' confidence in that it is the 'Perrault phenomenon' that "had dire consequences on the way children came to perceive their own status, sexuality, social roles, manners and politics" is erroneous. His first oversight concerns the fact that literacy was not an important and widely spread activity in those days and did not play the role it plays today, namely as a substitute for parental and human contact in the lower classes. As Zipes writes in this essay, the folk versions of these stories have been circulating at the time and continued to do so among the illiterate "poor" masses for a while. Perhaps, his contention was more accurate to the case of the upper classes, where mothers were replaced by nurses and parental education was replaced by hired teachers who often lived on the premises. But then it was not Charles Perrault who set the standards in those upper classes, rather the other way round. Hence, children's status, sexuality, social roles, manners, politics and self-perception varied from experience to another, mostly across economic and social ranks and was worked out by those "conspiring"¹¹ to make that experience manageable and most profitable in all terms and senses.

To spell it out, if not Perrault or his associates, then any other candidate with the right aspirations and sensitivity to the desires of the powerful would have done the job of contributing to the monarcho-capitalist programme. Simply, anyone questioning this project would not have been given the chance and access to printing and dissemination of "questionable" ideas.

Zipes' major error, though, lies in his taking for granted the American myth or faith in the power of the individual. This is the myth that a more sensitive and responsible scholar would question. Such a scholar may be Andrew O'Malley in whose book on *The Making of the Modern Child* he demonstrates that in Britain it was precisely this (Protestant) myth that was used – consciously - to subjugate the

¹⁰ Textbooks on social-psychology, however, elaborate theory on how partial our processing of information is and that it depends on the already instilled values and meanings. Hence, "advertisements" for example can work only on territory that has been prepared before, mainly through economic and other social pressures. E.g. see Marilyn B. Brewer and William D. Crano on *Social Psychology*.

¹¹ Zipes, like many other - mostly middle to upper class - scholars, is terrified of the term "conspiracy". For example, on page 21: "Though not conspired, the rational purpose of such social pressure was to bring about an internalization of social norms and mores so that they would appear as second nature or habit". If he is afraid to be taken for a conpirologist, then he should propose at least possible directions in interpreting such a phenomenon: strong personalities, effect of writing, socializing project, etc. he says - yet it is not conspired. How and why did it happen, then?

poor by having them believe that their misery was due to their own "choice" and "failings" and that their material and other salvation in this world depended solely on them and on their will and capacity to work. The implication of such belief is to have the poor always labour, till their last breath. But as economic and political statistics show, no matter how hard, how much, and how long the poor work, they only get poorer in terms of food, other helpful matter, health, time, years of life, etc. The way this myth worked, I contend, was to establish specific figures and attribute great mytho-historical authority to them, manipulating them to illustrate individual achievement in the history of humankind. As an example, take any "important" historical, political, literary or other figure that you know of and believe that he or she has changed the course of history, literature, politics, art, or whatever.

Zipes, though, does not question his own belief in this myth and takes at face value that Charles Perrault - almost single-handedly (with the occasional help of Associates) - set the standard and by implication has influenced the course of French civilization and the future of manners and tastes not only in France, but also in all those places who found themselves dependent upon France for various instructions. It is as if Zipes disregards his own placement of Perrault in the upper classes and his characterization of this author as an ambitious social-ladder-climber (actually, not unlike Zipes himself) who accepted the noble and aristocratic project at face value and who participated (but only as a screw among others) in its reaffirmation (the other screws were the teachers, the upper class parents, the priests, the *commerçants* i.e. bourgeoisie, etc.).

Where Zipes' observation regarding the transformation of the fairy tales begins to make sense is when we turn to the stories themselves that Perrault and Associates have written: the theme is mostly royalty and nobility, the language as Zipes says has been refined, the aspirations without exception are geared towards the accumulation of wealth. Wealth can be material or social, aesthetic or intellectual (for example the almost 90% of control over the "production" (i.e. editorship) of theory on children's literature on the North American "market" makes the "producer" or the "editor" a billionaire on the "market" of "knowledge").

Indirectly and probably not intending to make a parallel with himself, Zipes sheds light on this connection in his essay: "... one could speak of authors who did in fact trivialize the fairy-tale genre by grossly imitating the more skilled writers just to become a *social* or what we would call today a *commercial success*" (16 - italics mine). In other words, "social", "financial", "material" or in contemporary American parlance "commercial" success indicates access to power and resources. In this sense, we see that Zipes' personal agenda in fact coincides with Perrault and Associates' only from a different geo-historical space.

Furthermore, Zipes' "foremost concern is how fairy tales operate ideologically to indoctrinate children so that they will conform to dominant social standards which are not necessarily established on their behalf" (18). Here and throughout the text, Zipes does not specify how he defines "child" (children), ideology, and civilization (or civilizing). These terms are political terms and are not self-evident. Is a child "passive", "sensitive", "active", "discriminating", "all-absorbent", etc.? He makes only one reference to defining what the child has become and that is when he cites Philippe Ariès' thesis that the child was suddenly begun to be viewed as innocent in the 17th and 18th centuries. Yet other important considerations in approaching the effect of literature on society and childhood were omitted; for example, what has the greater influence on the child, the fairy tale or the "drive" that guides her to seek particular meaning and to make specific sense of tales and experience? How do other written or oral literatures and their kaleidoscope of perspectives work? Does the type of family relationships and general education that the child receives play a more dominant role that provide the clues to the books or do the books really have this tremendous civilizing potential? And once again, by contrast to the literary power, how much do the economic and social conditions dictate values and norms? For example, if one really wants to eat and doesn't have access to food, eloquence and good manners fail to procure bread; on the other hand roughness, violence or cunning might be the more efficient tools and despite the widespread programme of *civilité* are still commonly used (bandits, generals and soldiers are all in it).

In other words, my question is whether fairy tales are not only one element in our culture which has created a specific method of dealing with meaning and of civilizing and that the "civilizing" meaning that Jack Zipes gets out of these terms is mostly because his culture in general, parents along with the medical and pedagogical sectors in specific, civilized him in order to derive that particular meaning from the tales.

All this is to urge the exercise of great caution in hasty categorizations. However, this is not to deny that books do contain what the author has imbued them with. And Perrault, as Zipes illustrates, belonged to the upper bourgeoisie. He frequented their circles and admired their manners. Probably, like most authors, he wrote about what he knew best and therefore Zipes is right to point out that folk tales in Perrault's hands were converted into a linguistic and stylistic literary venture meant to please no lesser than the kings and queens. However, it is not Charles Perrault who influenced the royalty and the rest of them with his books, rather he was allowed to exist and was entrusted with the job, because he catered for and served the elitist project. In this, Perrault served exactly the same

purpose as the British authors of the British civilizing project of Gillian Avery. In fact, any writer who gets published is usually chosen to "fit" in the "need": this need can be defined as "demand" or as anything else, but it obeys the established patterns of the social "project" imposed from the top, including in Zipes' own land.

For example, here's what one of the major American writers' manuals¹² says to the authors:

This is the part, as creative artists, we don't want to hear. "I'm a writer, not a businessman," we protest. Alas, if you want to be published regularly, you're going to **have to** grasp the fact that publishing is a business. At the most basic level, publishers simply supply products to consumers. In turn, you, as the writer, supply the product to the publisher....

OK, now pay attention; here's the key part: You **must** supply product that a publisher can use to satisfy the demands of its consumers, and you **must** do it in a businesslike way (p.14, stress is mine).

Key words: MUST, business, product, consumers, demand. Extensive anthropological, sociological and literary theoretical works have demonstrated convincingly how demand can be "conspired" and imposed by the powerful capitalists using the extensive means of "educating" and subordinating the "masses" by eliminating choice yet making them believe that they are masters of their choice and fate. The conditions that the capitalists create on the market allow only those who are persistent to "break" through, i.e. to follow the rules and the prescriptions spelled out by the writers' guide above and persist in the game, once again as screws. Here's what another American writers' manual says about the rate of "success" in the writing field:

"Please be realistic. For every published writer, there are, at minimum, several thousand waiting in line to get published. "Many are called, but few are chosen" " (p.713)¹³.

Key words here are: "chosen"! and the tiny percentage of them. Yet, in the next paragraph the author contradicts the passivity of the word: chosen, which means that someone chooses you if you cater the right thing, and indulges in the individualist myth:

¹² Brogan, Kathryn S. editor and assistant editor Robert Lee Brewer. *2004 Writer's Market*. Writer's Digest Books; Cincinnati, OH: 2003.

¹³ editor Jeff Herrman. *Guide to Book Publishers, Editors, and Literary Agents 2004*. The Writer Books; Kalmbach Publishing Co.; Waukesha WI: 2003.

"It's **completely** within your **power** to maximize your chances of getting published" (713).

Key words here are: COMPLETELY within your POWER.

However, if we believe the author's own statistics above, then the probability of one's power that yields success is between 0.001% and 0.0001%.

This little deviation to today's market regulations of Zipes' publishing reality is to reiterate the point that today just as it had been during Perrault's time, the "successful" author catered and SERVED the pre-defined project. He/she was CHOSEN by those who had the power to choose among hundreds and thousands and more. To return to Zipes, he says the following about Perrault and the key word here is "servant":

Perrault was among the fortunate members of the *haute bourgeoisie* to be honored by the court. He was a high, royal civil **servant**, one of the first members of the Académie Française, a respected polemicist, and a significant figure in literary salons. Moreover, he endorsed the expansive political wars of Louis XIV and believed in the exalted mission of the French absolutist regime to 'civilize' Europe and the rest of the world. Perrault supported the 'manifest destiny' of seventeenth-century France not only as a public representative of the court but privately in his family and was also one of the first writers of children's books who explicitly sought to 'colonize' the internal and external development of children in the mutual interests of a bourgeois-aristocratic elite (20).

Thus, Perrault as an obedient servant to the King, described with passion obedience, aspirations (to riches), beauty, intelligence, and ruse, among others. What is interesting and what Zipes fails to mention, is the fact that Perrault chose not to invent his own aristocratic tales and instead relied on the folk (mostly peasant) tradition. Paradoxically, this fact speaks of the incredible dependence of the rich classes on the peasants not only for food and dress, but also for spiritual and intellectual fulfillment, i.e. art. Hence, when Zipes following the American feminist agenda that calls for ALL, regardless of gender, sexual, ethnic, or religious creed, to be active and work for the benefit of capitalism (sometimes referred to as democracy), his critique of Perrault seems to lack total honesty.

Moreover, his critique of the supposedly "docile", "obedient", and "stupid" female figuring in the tales of Perrault could perhaps better apply to all those people who obediently serve unjust and exploitative systems only because they themselves aspire to a delicious piece of the pie at the expense of everyone's ultimate peril (Perrault, and ehem, Zipes included). Perrault's wisdom (aren't we all

wise after all) lies precisely in the fact that he bases his tales on folk wisdom and that aspect interweaves an endless element of complexity into his tales, which does not easily yield to a simplistic and choppy analysis.

At this point, it is appropriate to turn to the comparative (Zipes/mine) analysis of the fairy tales themselves.

3. *The real forces behind*

Zipes approaches Perrault's tales generally. In other words, he does not analyze the whole complex of characters of each tale and then of all the tales together, rather he splits them into two categories: those that he believes are geared at boys and those at girls by the title or the main character. Such an exercise, though, fails to consider that in real life, tales are not told in a vacuum or to strictly segregated groups, and that boys and girls, women and men all knew and were all exposed to not only the variety of Perrault's tales but also to the immense folk and other complex heritage that offered complex patterns, guidelines, descriptions, problematics, and what not. Moreover, identification with main characters occurs regardless of gender, otherwise, for example, how could the male readers of Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* identify with her as a main character and empathize with her suffering and pain? Perhaps, Zipes might say that Tolstoy was a misogynist and that he had written *Anna Karenina* explicitly for women in order to have their gushing brains splattered under rushing trains. I don't know. In any case, here Zipes groups "*Sleeping Beauty, Little Red Riding Hood, Blue Beard, The Fairies, and Cinderella* as directed at females; *Puss in Boots, Ricky of the Tuft* and *Little Thumb* address males" (p. 23). After that he focuses on "the exemplary qualities, which distinguish the heroines from the heroes" to expose the notions of *civilité* in the "fabric of [Perrault's] tales".

Narrowing down the factors risks simplification and disregard of other possible influences on the complexity of rendering gender. For example, the real forces behind the failure and success of almost all the characters in Perrault's tales - with the exception of *Red Riding Hood* (a bad-ending caution tail), *Puss in Boots* (with Puss being the active agent), and *Blue Beard* (with Blue Beard's wife as the main actor) – are fairies, mother-fairies, grand-mother-fairies, et al. The power of these female characters evokes different states and emotions in mortals such as trust, love, and fear. Those societies that value power equate fear with respect (for

example, the monotheistic faiths ask to fear and respect God) and thus entities that instill fear are respected. In this light, the fear of women of which feminists talk so much, could be read as consideration of power, so respected in this society in which the annihilation itself of power results harmless and docile beings not capable to cause competition or rebellion. Finally, when we examine the real forces behind *Cinderella*, *Ricky of the Tuft*, *Blue Beard*, *The Fairies*, and *The Sleeping Beauty* (with the exception of *Red Riding Hood*) - i.e. the stories that Zipes comments - we find that they are not as straightforward as they may seem to Zipes in terms of their gender problematics.

Zipes begins his textual analysis with *Sleeping Beauty* who, he says,

is actually endowed with the following 'gifts' by the fairies: beauty, the temper of an angel, grace, the ability to dance perfectly, the voice of a nightingale, and musicality. In other words, she is bred to become the ideal aristocratic lady. Further, she is expected to be passive and patient for a hundred years until a prince rescues and resuscitates her. Her *manner* of speech is such that she charms the prince, and he marries her. Then she must demonstrate even more patience when her children are taken from her by the ogress. Such docility and self-abandonment are rewarded in the end when the prince returns to set things right. Perrault then added a verse moral which sings a hymn of praise to patience (p. 24 - stress mine).

While it is true that Perrault lavishes his descriptions of royalty and the upper classes with endless admiration and seems to highly value the indefinable "grace" and "beauty", yet even Zipes admits in the paragraph above that whatever "gifts" the princess possessed was the works of fairies. In this sense, whatever they do, the king, the prince or whatever other male, the fairies' decisions remain unquestioned and in power - even other fairies cannot undo them - only modify a little. "Alors le roi, qui était monté au bruit, se souvint de la prédiction des fées et, jugeant bien qu'il fallait que cela arrivât, puisque les fées l'avaient dit..." (Perrault [French], p. 14). In fact, it is not only the princess who sleeps for a hundred years, except for the King and the Queen, everyone in the castle, women and men, went to sleep and await patiently the end of the disaster.

If anyone is really active in these tales, it is the fairies. Hence, when the princess gets hurt with the spindle, Perrault attributes this to the fact that "comme elle était fort vive, un peu étourdie, et que d'ailleurs l'arrêt des fées l'ordonnait ainsi" (Perrault [French], p. 12). Thus, whatever happens is because these little, magical, feminine, powerful and willful creatures have ordained. This aspect of the fairy tales and of the gender dynamics remains emphasized throughout the tales, including in the rhymed moral at the end of the *Sleeping Beauty* and which Zipes

says "sings hymn of praise to patience"¹⁴ and thus disregards the important "Yet" and the real moral that follows:

... Now, our story seems to show
That a century or so,
Late or early, matters not;
True love comes by fairy-lot.
Some old folk will even say
It grows better by delay.

Yet this good advice, I fear,
Helps us neither there nor here.
Though philosophers may prate
How much wiser 'tis to wait,
Maids will be a-sighing still---
Young blood must when young blood will!

The moral reiterates that even though "philosophers" may advise patience, it is not the question for "young blood". In addition, "true love" - as all else - "comes by fairy-lot". After all, it was not the prince who woke up the princess; rather he was brought there at the appropriate moment because the fairies had already sealed his fate. It was not something that he had any control over: he was drawn to the enchanted palace and was enchanted by it prior to seeing or knowing of the Sleeping Beauty. Zipes, however, falsely reads it as "Her *manner* of speech is such that she charms the prince, and he marries her" (ibid).

Thus, even though I do see where Zipes and de Beauvoir before him saw the passivity of the princess, yet I argue that it is not the main aspect of the story. For, there are other interesting details that Perrault takes the pain to mention several times in this tale. One is the fact that the prince was from an unrelated family. Perrault makes several references to this "unrelatedness". This detail could be stressing the importance of ignorance of the history of this clan, but also can be interpreted as the necessity to "clean" the blood, since royalty mostly marry within closed kin circles.

It is as if the princess needed to be severed from her family and not only as a punishment for having disrespected the old fairy, but also as a primordial

¹⁴ The French edition of the tales of Charles Perrault that I could get omits the morals, so do most of the English translations with the exception of that by A.E. Johnson. I checked the translation against the original that I found on the internet and found it to be livelier yet extremely accurate in terms of meaning or sense. However, Johnson's translation of also differs from others on some crucial points, such as the translation of *Cucendron* to which I shall pay attention in my discussion of *Cinderella*.

necessity. "[T]he king and queen kissed their dear child, without waking her, and left the castle. ... [W]ithin a quarter of an hour there grew up all round the park so vast a quantity of trees big and small, with interlacing brambles and thorns, that neither man nor beast could penetrate them" (Johnson, p. 9). Further down the page, Perrault says that "At the end of a hundred years the throne had passed to another family from that of the sleeping princess" (ibid). The prince does nothing active on his part, except for taking a walk and doing what the fairy had ordained. The trees have stepped aside to let him in, "he drew near and went on his knees beside her. At the same moment, the hour of disenchantment having come, the princess awoke" (ibid). Hence, in addition to being as useless and helpless in himself without the fairies, the prince is ignorant and a stranger and these seem to be his most important qualities. In reality, he really had no option.

Zipes has a point in as far as the descriptions of speech and charm in Perrault's tales confirm the thesis of Norbert Elias on the new ethics and manners of the "civilized" Europeans. Yet, even that Perrault contradicts a few sentences after he had praised speech. "The less there is of eloquence, the more there is of love" (Johnson, p. 15).

Another, even more important, detail which Zipes does not mention in his 'feminist' analysis is that whatever has happened in Sleeping Beauty's kingdom was the result of the terrible wrath evoked by the disregard to the old fairy, the symbol of matriarchal wisdom and power which Charles Perrault adopted from the folk tradition and which does not seem to conflict with his "royal mission". But added to that, was the stupidity of the prince who knew that his mother was an ogress and hid his family from her for years, yet, all of a sudden "entrusted his wife and children to her care" (ibid, p. 17).

Once again, in this story we see that the battling forces of nature are femininity and the war is between the feminine forces of good and evil - male forces are totally absent. If anything, Perrault shows the necessity of the prince to trust his wife and not entrust her to someone else, particularly his own mother. Zipes' analysis completely ignores these important aspects in the development of the tale and thus offers a partial and biased interpretation.

A similar problem of interpretation occurs in *Blue Beard*. Here, Zipes says that "the wife of Blue Beard is saved because she realizes her error and says her prayers" (p. 24). However, in the story itself her "signs of a true repentance for her disobedience" (Johnson, p. 38) fail to soften the "heart harder than any stone" - that of Blue Beard - and do nothing to save her.

"You must die, madam," he said; "and at once."

"Since I must die," she replied, gazing at him with eyes that were wet with tears, "give me a little time to say my prayers."

"I give you one quarter of an hour," replied Blue Beard, "but not a moment longer."

When the poor girl was alone, she called her sister to her and said:

"Sister Anne" ---for that was her name---"go up, I implore you, to the top of the tower, and see if my brothers are not approaching. They promised that they would come and visit me today. If you see them, make signs to them to hasten" (p.38).

After that she spent the time - not praying as Zipes claims - but hurrying her sister to spot the brothers and to rush them to her rescue. Here, Zipes' characterization of the female roles in Perrault as passive and restrained once again fails the test.

Even in *Blue Beard*, which at a superficial first glance may seem to be more of a "straightforward" message of the wife getting punished for prying into her husband's affairs, Perrault offers two contradictory morals at the end, one in which the wife is told that she does not need to know everything and the second is a feminist message in which the husband as master and lord is of the days of yore; today he needs to consult with his Missus because "Madam" has a say and right to her own opinion:

1. Moral

Ladies, you should never pry, ---
You'll repent it by and by!
'Tis the silliest of sins;
Trouble in a trice begins.
There are, surely ---more's the woe! ---
Lots of things you need not know.
Come, forswear it now and here ---
Joy so brief, that costs so dear!

2. Another Moral

You can tell this tale is old
By the very way it's told.
Those were days of derring-do;
Man was lord, and master too.
Then the husband ruled as king.
Now it's quite a different thing;
Be his beard what hue it may ---
Madam has a word to say!

In fact the ending of the story itself supports and favours the second moral. The wife parties, makes a mess of things, her brothers come to her rescue, but finally it is she who pays for her sister's marriage and purchased "a captain's commission for each of her brothers. The rest formed a dowry for her own marriage with a very worthy man, who banished from her mind all memory of the evil days she had spent with Blue Beard".

The last sentence suggests that Blue Beard was in fact not a worthy man and therefore we may all doubt the sense of his whimsical interdiction, which hid the ghastly aspect of his temper. The happy ending states blatantly that Blue Beard was evil and that therefore - even though she almost lost her life - his wife in fact did the right thing and with her curiosity, wit and activity provided for her brothers and sister, found her own happiness and took a good husband for herself. This once again challenges the statement that "Perrault argues for the total submission of the woman to her husband" and that "the heroines of the tales are very pretty, loyal, dedicated to their household chores, modest and docile and sometimes a little stupid insofar as it is true that stupidity is almost a quality in women for Perrault. Intelligence could be dangerous" (Mourey, Lilyane in Zipes, p. 25). In reality, Blue Beard's wife partied, had fun, was curious and saved herself by applying her resourcefulness and ruse and nowhere does the tale condemn her for doing it. In fact, she gets even more fun after she tricks then rids of her husband.

Another example of such problematic reading of the tales can be found in Zipes' analysis of *Cinderella*. This is how Zipes reads the story:

In the fairy tale named after her, Cinderella is described as sweet, gentle, and diligent. Later, when she is properly dressed as a type of fashion queen, she is also the most beautiful woman in the world. Her 'excellent' qualities are recognized by the prince who marries her, and the moral praises the *bonne grace* of Cinderella, which accounts for her winning ways (p. 25).

or

"For instance, Cinderella's transformation from 'slutty/maid' to 'virtuous/princess', accomplished by the fairy godmother, was in part an exercise in fashion design" (27).

Now, this is what Perrault says in his story: "Cependant, Cendrillon, avec ses méchants habits, ne laissait pas d'être cent fois plus belle que ses soeurs, quoique vêtues magnifiquement" (Perrault [french], p. 71).

Hence, it is not the fashion that makes Cinderella "beautiful" but her specific inner beauty. This is reiterated in the moral at the end and once more problematized by the fact that the real forces behind are not what the character does but the magical works of fairies. In other words, inner beauty stems from harmony and agreement with the fairies who incidentally are there not to punish but to help.

1. Moral

Beauty is a treasure rare.
Who complains of being fair?
Yet there's still a something more
That good fairies have in store.
'Tis that little gift called grace,
Weaves a spell round form and face,
Of each word makes magic, too,
Lends a charm to all you do.

This it was --- and nothing less ---
Cinderella's fairy dress! ...

2. Another Moral

Godmothers are useful things
Even when without the wings.
Wisdom may be yours and wit,
Courage, industry, and grit---
What's the use of these at all,
If you lack a friend at call?

Contrary to Zipes' claim that Perrault's tales summon female characters to hard work and subordination, the second moral spells out that these in fact mean nothing if you don't have a friend. The tale demonstrates that people have treated Cinderella unjustly, she worked hard, was abused, and that there was no one on whom she could count for help in her immediate social entourage. She had only her father but was afraid to complain to him because he was totally ruled by his wife. "La pauvre fille ... n'osait se plaindre à son père, qui l'aurait grondée, parce que sa femme le gouvernait entièrement" (Perrault [French], p. 71).

This once again shows the helplessness of most men and women equally before the forces of good and evil. Here, it would be wise to keep in mind some of the exceptions, such as Blue Beard's wife or Little Tom Thumb where smart/sly women and men can solve their own problems. In the case of Cinderella, though, Zipes has a point: Cinderella does not actively do anything to counteract the injustice, someone else does it for her. Yet, it would be unjust to characterize her as less active than her male counterparts in this or other tales and the forces that both abuse her and rescue her are in fact feminine.

Another injustice to which Cinderella was subjected was the name *Cucendron* given to her by the less "honest" or the more "spiteful" members of the household. "Lorsqu'elle avait fait son ouvrage, elle allait se mettre au coin de la cheminée, et s'asseoir dans les cendres, ce qui faisait qu'on l'appelait communément, dans le logis, *Cucendron*. La cadette, qui n'était pas si malhonnête que son aînée, l'appelait *Cendrillon*. Cependant, Cendrillon, avec ses méchants habits, ne laissait pas d'être cent fois plus belle que ses soeurs, quoique vêtues magnifiquement" (Perrault [french], p. 71).

Now, I'll repeat what Zipes says about Cinderella: "For instance, Cinderella's transformation from 'slutty/maid' to 'virtuous/princess', accomplished by the fairy godmother, was in part an exercise in fashion design" (27). What Perrault attributes to the speech of untrustworthy, spiteful, envious, known to lie characters, Zipes takes at face value and attributes it to be the nature itself of Cinderella whom he believes then transforms into a virtual princess when her clothes become fashionable. In fact, this is the interpretation of that same spiteful gang around Cinderella. Zipes totally disregards the story itself and the morals suggested by Perrault. Furthermore, there are at least two translations of the story into English and both offer different versions for the first name *Cucendron*. Johnson, the earlier translator, who is the more naughty, gives a more complete translation of the tales overall including all the morals in lively humorous verse. He translates *Cucendron* as *Cinder-slutt*, whereas Bierrhorst offers, in my opinion, the more accurate translation of the name as *Cinderbottom*. Regardless of the interpretation of *Cucendron*, though, Perrault's point is precisely that it does not matter what people say about one or do to her, since it is neither what they say nor how a person is clad that defines the individual in the end.

Finally, throughout the tale the subjugation of Cinderella was explicitly painted as unjust and the only obedience that was highlighted as positive was the obedience towards the fairy godmother: to bring her the pumpkin and the mice to make it possible for Cinderella to go to the ball and then to obey the curfew set by her. Even though Cinderella's disobedience and delay to leave the ball before

midnight *almost* cost her fun, her punishment turns out to her advantage in the final score: she is discovered as the owner of the lost crystal slipper, gets married to her prince and we get the two morals at the end where dress is not what really counts, rather it is the fairies' grace (whatever that may be) and that it is smarter to be friends with godmothers¹⁵ than with whoever else - even dads can be stupid enough to be led astray and forget their kin and blood. Basically, what I get from this monarchic and royalist hymn of praise is ironically: Women Unite!

Thus, the gender dynamics of the tale show no active characters, whether male or female except for Cinderella and her position and activity we know is the result of forced injustice and abuse. The "love" that the prince and Cinderella exchange is something abstract, indefinable, and, like in the case of Sleeping Beauty, magical. Neither the prince nor Cinderella do anything in particular to evoke it. They are just "wonderful" people we are told and so are drawn towards each other. It is here that we see Perrault's bias or weakness: the royal prince is good because a prince can never be bad and Cinderella has the "royal" "grace" whatever it may be and it is good because it is noble and royal. Yet, even here, Perrault manages to subvert his own royalist "project", since in the end it doesn't matter what social or economic class Cinderella comes from, since the first moral spells out that her magic dress was nothing "real" except for the reality of her inner being that shone even when smudged with hard work and cinder.

Zipes' reading of the rest of the tales is equally problematic and Perrault's tales themselves are equally complex. I do not have the possibility to examine thoroughly every single one of them, however, for the purposes of balancing my discussion of "female-audience" tales, I shall point to the problems of reading the tales that were supposedly addressed to male audiences.

In the story of the *Puss in Boots*, which Zipes categorizes as a "male" story, he reads the cat as "the epitome of the educated bourgeois secretary who serves his master with complete devotion and diligence. He has such correct manners and wit that he can impress the king, and he uses his intelligence to dispose of an ogre and arrange a royal marriage for his low-born master. Thus, he can end his career by becoming a *grand seigneur*" (Zipes, p. 25-6). Earlier in the same paragraph, Zipes says that all that the feline main character of this story needs is "the proper implements (a pair of boots and a pouch) to serve his master.

In reality, the cat tricks and lies. The main character of this story is not "really" "male" - a feline is a gender ambiguous figure. It is an animal and it is a charlatan. The major male character here is as passive as the princesses of the stories discussed above. Actually, he is more passive than Cinderella and the wife

¹⁵ The original French version also mentions godfathers.

of Blue Beard. The difference between him and Sleeping Beauty is that he is not asleep, but almost. He is neither rich, nor noble, nor royal. Actually, he is extremely poor. He is obedient and does as the cat tells him. The charlatan cat does a good job in lying to the king and to the ogre. It steals the riches from the latter and marries off the passive "master" to the king's daughter.

All the guy has to do is as he is told: get undressed, get dressed. His nature was shy, timid and passive. "The king received the marquis with many compliments, and as the fine clothes which the latter had just put on set off his good looks (for he was handsome and comely in appearance), the king's daughter found him very much to her liking. Indeed, the marquis of Carabas had not bestowed more than two or three respectful but sentimental glances upon her when she fell madly in love with him" (Johnson, p. 50). It is obvious that all the "marquis" needed was fancy clothes and good looks. Zipes' comments about fashion would have been more pertinent here. It isn't even he who does the falling in love. The princess decides that such a dressed up, timid and sentimental beauty is worthy of her.

Here, the main human/male character satisfies himself through marriage and it would therefore be unfair to claim that only Perrault's women realize themselves through marriage. Thus, once again, Perrault subverts his royalist project and intermarries the classes. Where he serves the project though, is when he first needs to make the poor man rich. Trickery is once more, like in Blue Beard, which was supposedly aimed at women, is presented as positive. However, unlike the active woman in *Blue Beard* who liked to party and chose her own happiness, this poor guy is married off at his cat's whim. The unspoken but taken for granted moral is that being married off to the king's daughter was something positive and to be desired.

The morals, however, subvert the story itself and here Zipes is *almost* right to sum up the two morals as: "one stresses the importance of possessing *industrie et savoir faire*, while the other extols the virtues of dress, countenance, and youth to win the heart of a princess" (Zipes, p. 26) - although, the dress is once again disqualified by Perrault, the second moral does praise youth and countenance and spells out that it was not important that he was a miller's son.

The more dangerous moral of the story, as well as of its "feminine counterpart" *Blue Beard*, unfortunately remains uncommented: namely, the lying and pretending to have accumulated riches, in fact the deceitful accumulation of capital (symbolic, sexual, material) is not only approved, but promoted. Capital in itself, whether acquired through "deceitful" or "undeceitful" means is problematic, I

contend, and neither Perrault nor Zipes question the notion of capital itself – for obvious reasons.

Even *Ricky of the Tuft* - a highly problematic tale in terms of gender attributes - has interesting and "subversive" morals. Zipes paraphrases them as follows: "Mind wins over matter, and both short morals underline the virtue of good sense" (p. 26). However, I did not find any mention of "good sense" in these rhymes (neither in the original nor in the translation):

1. Moral

Here's a fairy tale for you,
Which is just as good as true.
What we love is always fair,
Clever, deft, and debonair.

In other words, ugliness and beauty are whimsical qualities of the heart.

2. Another Moral

Nature oft, with open arms,
Lavishes a thousand charms;
But it is not these that bring
True love's truest offering.
'Tis some quality that lies
All unseen to other eyes---
Something in the heart or mind
Love alone knows how to find.

Here, *Ricky of the Tuft* shares parallels with the *Beauty and the Beast* and a Russian fairy tale by the name of *Tsarevna Frog*. Of course, it strikes the eye that the patriarchal versions of beast/beauty stories render the male as the beast and the female as the one who learns how to love him. In the Russian version, which is matriarchal, it is the youth, the *tsarevich*, the prince who falls in love with the frog only to learn that she is a princess. In whatever version, these bestiality tales have other important underlying morals, namely those of loyalty and dependence. The beast usually is under the control of the lover, the beast is vulnerable and depends with its life on the loyalty of the one who promises to love. Once that promise of loyalty is broken, the beast perishes.

Of course, Zipes has a point, the one who is asked to be loyal and responsible is the one who is asked to exert self-control. Yet Perrault does not

provide enough parallel contrast in terms of male characters to rule this as a specifically female characteristic.

In *Ricky of the Tuft* this moral is not so dramatic, Ricky does not die, yet the idea is present and once again it is much more complex than the simple thesis of female docility and male ugly superiority or superior ugliness.

In conclusion of this section of the work, I would like to point out that Perrault, although having bought into the "royal" project of his "civilization", nevertheless manages to subvert his own project with complex themes, characterizations and contradictory morals, which I don't see Zipes doing.

Thus, although Zipes deftly demonstrates in his essay that Perrault took his work seriously and imbued it with morality and civility, he does not pay enough attention to the fact that Perrault drew heavily on folk traditions. These traditions are based on the diverse and rich historical experience of the common people. This diversity and wisdom still lives in whatever form Perrault has given the stories and adds other dimensions to his project.

4. Conclusion

To recapitulate my undertaking; in this essay, I set out to highlight the problems of using politically or academically pre-set categories in order to analyze any given information. Zipes in his work appoints Perrault as the source of a civilizing project through the literary fairy tale. He further bases the subsequent "readings" or in this case rather "writings" and more accurately still "rewritings" of the same tales on the premise set out in the analysis of Perrault's stories. These subsequent versions of the tales Zipes attributes to Perrault's "Associates in the civilizing project". However, I hope that I have demonstrated successfully that this whole project is problematic because the analysis in the premise itself is politically biased, faulty and incomplete.

Of course, Zipes does not call for the simplistic assembly-line stories to dominate the readings of today's children. He values the more complex and literary books and is right to point to their assets and high quality. However, Zipes has grown and made his career within the context of American/feminist/capitalism. As Perrault served his hierarchical societal model before him, Zipes serves his. He takes the categories of this perspective for granted. Thus, although his intentions might be noble, he is held hostage to the above political and economic system and

interprets, defines and categorizes what he reads through the prism of that specific project. All the while, what is more dangerous with Perrault's stories, and which Zipes seems to ignore here, is not the gender aspect, but the values of servitude, commerce, cunning and cruelty. Unfortunately, these values still have too many proponents.

This exercise was to show how an analysis of a text is inevitably tainted by the values and meanings we attribute to various concepts. Unbroken down definitions will ultimately haunt our own text and incorporate the "project" to which we are all submitted in one way or another. In other words, although Zipes could be right to point out the sexism and the class problematics infused in the tales of Charles Perrault and Associates, he hurts his own analysis because he does not go further than the definitions provided to him by the civilizing project of the American 21st century capitalist system.

Finally, this exercise is to help review children's literary theory and literary theory in general. First, Zipes being a magnate in children's literary theory has imposed a specific perspective on the "market" of literary thought and I found it hard to ignore it. At the same time, this perspective has its value for it points to ways of manipulating texts. I am not being only ironic here; I also truly value this perspective when taken outside the context of any economic and current political frameworks. Children's books are rarely apolitical and aneconomic and the gender dynamic is always present even when expressed in different ways. The differences between the genders are conceptualized in various ways and there are some elements in these differences that are caused by the variation in physiological experiences while others develop as social or personal traits. In order to make sense of any experience, be it literary or anthropological, it would help to look beyond the words and to pay attention to how characters (real or imagined) act and to what they do. That is, in my own literary undertaking, I hope to venture beyond the theory of the word.

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