FORMULAS FOR CULTURAL SUCCESS: BEHAVIORAL PRESCRIPTIONS IN EARLY AMERICAN TRANSLATIONS OF PERRAULT'S CLASSIC FAIRY TALES

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ABSTRACT

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In 1697, Charles Perrault published a volume of seven fairy tales, which continue to be widely read in the present day: “Little Red Riding Hood,” “Cinderella, or the Glass Slipper” “Puss in Boots,” “Bluebeard,” “Riquet and the Tuft,” “The Fairy,” and “The Little Thumbling.” What did early Americans make of these fairy tales? Beginning in the late eighteenth century, American presses began publishing American editions of these fairy tales, indicating their cross-cultural appeal. I argue that by publishing these tales without changes, Americans accepted and endorsed European cultural norms and assumptions. This suggests that, despite political rhetoric about the United States creating itself anew, many American agreed with the formulas for cultural success as expressed in Charles Perrault’s original French fairy tales. Further, the cultural binaries not only were adopted by Americans without change, but these values clearly illuminate characteristics of American exceptionalism that was so important to early Americans during the revolutionary era.

Historical scholarship has largely ignored the significance of using fairy tales to analyze culture. Scholars of early modern literature focus primarily on the psychological interpretations of each tale. While a number of scholars have compared French and German fairy tales, none have compared French fairy tales to their American versions, and none have studied these seven tales in their comparative historical contexts.

I have identified four binaries which run through the tales and provide a formula for cultural success: beauty and ugliness; obedience and disobedience; knowledge and

ignorance; goodness and wickedness. I have found that the exportation and translation of the fairy tale did not change the basic narrative or the embedded prescriptions and ideals. The publication of these fairy tales show that Americans absorbed the cultural binaries and prescriptions that were embedded within the tales. Thus, from reading these tales, I argue that early Americans praised the traits of beauty, obedience to a benevolent authority (and disobedience to tyranny), intelligence, and goodness and therefore were hoping to pass these traits onto their younger generations.

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Tim and Laura Cross. To my father, who instilled in me a determination for excellence and an enthusiasm in history; to my mother, who cultivated in me a passion for education and a thirst for knowledge. Without their continuous love and support, none of this would be possible.

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INTRODUCTION

Fairy tales and children's literature often hold the key to understanding a particular culture's values. Children's literature can hold crucial morals as well as models of behavior for their readers. Oftentimes adults will read these stories to children simply because the stories' innate fantastic imagery captures the reader's attention and entertains them. When this happens, children and adults can read these stories and internalize their messages. Jack Zipes, a noted scholar of children's literature, explains that "[Fairy tales] play an intricate role in acculturation, that is, in forming and reflecting the tastes, manners, and ideologies of members of a particular society."[1] The types of messages that fairy tales pass on to their readers are vital to understanding the underlying accepted values and behavioral prescriptions of that culture.

My thesis focuses on Charles Perrault's seven classic fairy tales in *Tales and Stories of the Past, With Morals* (*Histoires ou Contes du temps passé*), published in 1697, made up of "The Little Red Riding Hood," "Cinderella, or the Little Glass Slipper," "Puss in Boots," "Bluebeard," "Riquet and the Tuft," "The Fairy," and "The Little Thumbling" (sometimes known as "Little Tom Thumb" or "The Little Thumb"). This thesis analyzes the fairy tales for their moral ideals and behavior models for cultural success, as prescribed for both girls and boys. I analyze these fairy tales as children's literature and as print literature, not as oral tales. The particular American edition that I chose to analyze for this project was published in 1798 as a complete compilation that included all seven of these fairy tales, published in New York by John Harrisson. Prior to the publication of this compilation of Perrault's tales, single versions of some of these tales had been published and circulated within early America, but this was one of the

[1] Jack Zipes, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion: the Classical Genre for Children and the Process of Civilization* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 1.

first publications that contained all seven of the fairy tales, and it occurred in an important era within early America. This compilation was published during a crucial era of America's national identity formation (1750s—1850s).

This publication was circulated during a time when many public figures were touting the creation of a new and special America, and these fairy tales appear to have been accepted as part of that vision. Since these fairy tales circulated in such a crucial era of identity formation, their content is highly significant. The tales were translated without revision of content, revealing a contradiction between what the popular figures in this era of national identity formation were arguing and what they were reading to their children. My findings show that exportation and translation of the fairy tale did not result in any changes of the basic narrative or the embedded prescriptions and ideals. Many prominent early American writers and orators were arguing that Americans were breaking away from their European counterparts and starting a new, superior culture when, in reality, they were adopting fairy tales directly from Europe. The cultural and behavioral prescriptions that early Americans valued for their "new" nation were the same as those from the French stories. To illustrate this, I draw upon popular writers of this time period (1700—1850) who wrote about the formation of American culture, such as Benjamin Franklin, Hector St. John de Crevecoeur, Thomas Paine, Noah Webster, and Alexis de Tocqueville. I also draw on George Washington's farewell address, which expressed his concern that Americans not entangle themselves in Europe.

A mandate for the United States to become distinct from Europe can be traced as far back as 1630, with John Winthrop's sermon "A Model of Christian Charity," when he urged early New Englanders to be morally separate from Europe, "For wee must consider that wee shall be

as a citty upon a hill. The eies of all people are uppon us."[2] 160 years later, during George Washington's farewell address, and only two years before the publication of the American fairy tales used in this work, Washington believed it a great risk for Americans to involve themselves with foreign affairs, as they might lose that which they had fought so hard to achieve during the Revolution: their independence. As Washington wrote, "attachments to European countries should be avoided" and that Americans should shield themselves from "the insidious wiles of foreign influence."[3] Winthrop, Washington, and many other prominent writers of early America speak out about the emergence of a distinctly American culture. Did the subsequent citizens of the United States embrace a culture that was removed and different from Europe? One way to answer this question is to examine the books these citizens read in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, particularly the books they read to their children.

Four binaries of virtue/vice run through the tales and provide a formula for cultural success in both the French and American versions: (1) beauty and ugliness, (2) obedience and disobedience, (3) knowledge and ignorance, and (4) goodness and wickedness. These binaries appear differently in each tale, as the vices and virtues are associated with different characters, depending on their gender, age, economic status, and marital status. Vices and virtues are assigned to characters in the same manner in the original French version as in the American translations.

The virtues and vices that appear in the French fairy tales that Americans read to their children illuminate what these same Americans deemed to be important cultural and behavioral prescriptions. Gordon Wood argues that "despite their rejection of the luxury and corruption of

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[2] John Winthrop, "A Modell of Christian Charity, 1630" *Massachusetts Historical* Society (pub. 1996).
[3] George Washington, "Farewell Address, 1796" *The Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History, and Diplomacy.* (Connecticut: Yale Law School, 2008) http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/washing.asp

the Old World, the American Revolutionaries never meant to repudiate the best of English and European culture, but rather to embrace and fulfill it."[4] These Americans were able to pick, choose, and alter whatever works of European literature that they chose to pass on to their younger generations. The cultural and behavioral prescriptions embedded in these fairy tales are especially significant because they were chosen to be reprinted by American publishers in a time when America was determined to reshape itself into a new world. Wood furthers this idea when he argues, "At the outset, Americans saw their Revolution as a heroic moral struggle for liberty against the evils of British tyranny, with the participants being larger-than-life heroes or villains."[5] Quite literally, because of their lofty intentions, these new Americans could be compared to these fantastical fairy tale characters. New Americans were determined to create their nation in a "more new" and "more noble" fashion.

In this thesis, I argue that early Americans praised the traits of beauty, obedience to a benevolent authority (and disobedience to tyranny), intelligence, and goodness. Beauty typically signifies good health and was often linked to an innate goodness. If new Americans were beautiful, then they were likely healthy and had access to proper food, nutrition, and recreation. If new Americans showed obedience to a just authority, or disobedience to tyranny, it would illustrate a dedication to fairness and truth. If new Americans were intelligent, it would attest to closer equality among social classes due to easy access to a good education. Finally, if new Americans had an innate goodness about them, then they could clearly claim moral superiority. These traits led the fairy tale characters to success and, thus, they would lead early Americans to success.

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[4] Gordon Wood, *The American Revolution: A History* (New York: Modern Library Edition, 2002), 96.
[5] Ibid., xxxiii.

The publication of these fairy tales shows that Americans absorbed the cultural binaries and prescriptions that were embedded within the tales. The fairy tale characters were able to achieve success and, ultimately, happiness because they behaved in a certain way and because they possessed a certain set of characteristics. These characteristics and behaviors, if they led to a character's success, are then considered "good" characteristics and behaviors for an early American to have. From reading these tales, I argue that early Americans praised the traits of beauty, obedience to a benevolent authority (and disobedience to tyranny), intelligence, and goodness and were hoping to pass these traits on to their younger generations.

I employ an interdisciplinary methodology to compare these French original tales with an American edition published 100 years later. I subject each tale to a close textual analysis in order to identify and explain the cultural structures which the tale supports and to tease out the moral ideals and behavioral prescriptions embedded within. Further, I examine each tale in the context of another language, culture, and historical era. American publishers, such as John Harrisson, adopted the French originals without amendment. This suggests that, despite political rhetoric about the United States needing to be a new creation that turns its back on the ways of Europe, many Americans agreed with the formulas for cultural success as expressed in Charles Perrault's original French fairy tales. Further, the cultural values not only were adopted by Americans without change, but these values clearly illuminate characteristics of American exceptionalism that was so important to many Americans during the Revolutionary era. Many Americans may have identified these characteristics as "exceptional" *American* values, but Perrault presented them as widely accepted core values, straight from the heart of Europe.

Fairy tales are still a mostly undiscovered gem within the historical field, and they deserve much more attention as essential documents to understanding a particular culture. Fairy

tales are by nature descriptive documents -- they are constructed to tell a story with characters and a plot. However, fairy tales are also prescriptive documents, created intentionally to model particular behaviors for their readers, and those behaviors result in either success or failure in the stories. These modeled behaviors indicate what the originating culture desired (or rejected) at the time when they were created and published. Just as with a court document or other historical record, these materials were created for a particular audience and convey essential information about the time in which they were written. They should be considered ideal documents for historians to scrutinize and analyze.

But what is "culture"? In this work, I define culture as the sum of the political, religious, literary, social, and moral structures of society. These structural threads, woven together, constitute what most people accept as social norms, and conforming to those norms promises "success" within the culture. Further, these structural threads shape ideas about a group identity, even a "national identity" in early modern Western thought. In America, two particular elements of a national identity emerged early and have persisted to the present: essentialism and exceptionalism. This project relies on a clear understanding of these cultural concepts. I will discuss and explain these two concepts further within chapter two.

I also argue for the validity of using the fairy tale as a historical document. Fairy tales are ripe for analysis by historians, because they hold so many new opportunities for analyzing culture and the education of children. Jack Zipes, in *Breaking the Magic Spell: Radical Theories of Folk & Fairy Tales,* argues that "literature and art cannot be fully understood without

considering the socio-political-cultural context in which they are produced."[6] According to Zipes, fairy tales and historical study should not be separated. They can enrich each other.

Zipes continues this argument in *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion: the Classical Genre for Children and the Process of Civilization,* where he explains that Perrault's *Histoires ou contes du temps passe* was published during a major shift in social norms, when European society put greater emphasis on writing to and for children. Zipes argues that "it is not by chance that Perrault directed his energies in writing his fairy tales for the most part to civilize children and to prepare them for roles which he idealistically believed they should play in society."[7] Charles Perrault's fairy tales were influenced by the time period in which they were written. Zipes draws upon Perrault's own words when he emphasizes that Perrault's tales were indeed written with behavioral instruction in mind. Perrault stated in his preface to an early work, the *Contes en Vers,* that,

> [society has] noticed that these trifles [the tales] were not mere trifles, that they contained a useful moral, and that the playful narrative surrounding them had been chosen only to allow the stories to penetrate the mind more pleasantly and in such a manner to instruct and amuse at the same time.[8]

Perrault himself admitted that his fairy tales were written with the purpose of instructing children on the culturally accepted norms of his society, while entertaining them as well. Even the authors admit that their works of literature do attempt to play a role within the society that they were created. This in itself makes these fairy tales essential to historians for study.

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[6] Jack Zipes, *Breaking the Magic Spell: Radical Theories of Folk & Fairy Tales* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1979), ix.
[7] Jack Zipes, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion: the Classical Genre for Children and the Process of Civilization* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 13-14.
[8] Ibid., 16.

I echo Jack Zipes' assertion that scholars have not done enough work analyzing fairy tales in a historical fashion. Zipes states, "Even though the fairy tale may be the most important cultural and social event in most children's lives, critics and scholars have failed to study its historical development as a genre."[9] That is, historians have not yet done enough work using fairy tales as windows into the culture of a particular society. Zipes began to lay the groundwork, but he focuses primarily on German fairy tales written by the Brothers Grimm. Scholars of early modern literature focus primarily on the psychological interpretations of each tale and theory. While a number of scholars have compared French and German fairy tales, none have compared French fairy tales to their American versions, and none have studied these seven tales in their comparative historical contexts. This work is also significant because it shows that fairy tales can act as historical tools that help historians gain a better understanding of behavioral expectations presented within a culture. My thesis shows that these French fairy tales were translated from their original French into American English with little to no revision. There were absolutely no American additions to the text, which illustrates Americans' readiness to adopt European values in their children's books, despite political rhetoric that dominated in the early American Republic.

In the first chapter, I discuss fairy tales and their role within the historical field, their uses as a cultural document, and Charles Perrault's intentions with his particular tales. I argue that fairy tales are a crucial element to understanding a society's culture and should be analyzed by historians. I assert that historians can use fairy tales to enrich their understanding of a particular culture by widening their definition of what constitutes a historic document and employing interdisciplinary methodology to further nuance their study. Further, I argue that Charles

[9] Jack Zipes, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 1.

Perrault's tales are particularly well suited for this task, as he has been quoted discussing his intentions to influence society with his morality tales.

In the second chapter, I focus on American exceptionalism. I analyze the writings of prominent figures of the Revolutionary era (1750—1850), and show how they envisioned the formation of America's new identity. In the time leading up to, during, and for some years after the Revolutionary War, prominent speakers in America were particularly concerned with what sort of nation that the new United States would be after its break from England. Americans saw this break as the perfect opportunity to reshape themselves into a new and better society by casting off the corruption of Europe. I reference sources that describe new Americans who turned from the ways of Europe and instead focused on creating a new and special nation.

In the third chapter, I show that, even though Americans spoke publicly about breaking away from European influence, they preserved European values in their American ideas about exceptionalism. They adopted Charles Perrault's French fairy tales without change. They did not "Americanize" the tales in any way, aside from translating them into English. This undermines the claims of every prominent writer who described "new" Americans. I reveal the cultural binary in each fairy tale: (1) beauty and ugliness, (2) obedience and disobedience, (3) knowledge and ignorance, and (4) goodness and wickedness. I show how these characteristics matched the qualities Americans claimed to possess during the time period in which the compilation was published (1798). I show that the cultural binaries in the tales actually represent American exceptionalism quite well. The traits that the fairy tales value (beauty, educated obedience (or disobedience), knowledge, and goodness) are all traits that new Americans wanted in their new and noble nation. These characteristics are certainly ones that new Americans would want to cultivate in their younger generation to ensure a better nation.

This project reflects my understanding of History as scholarship. I see History as an interdisciplinary study. My first priority is to enrich my historical research by linking it to literature. The historical discipline would greatly benefit from a greater willingness to broaden the definition of what constitutes a historical document. I analyze past cultures by studying both conventional historical documents and unconventional sources from other disciplines. This thesis illustrates this interdisciplinary method of linking sources and shows how this method can be used for further studies of an interdisciplinary nature. Allowing other academic fields to enrich a work within history can only improve it by introducing a more complex and nuanced array of evidence to analyze.

This work is significant because it questions the "accepted story" of how America as a nation was formed. Our master narrative powerfully influences how we think about ourselves. Americans in the present generally look for cultural affirmation by appealing to a national story that emphasizes the valor and originality of founding generations. In this project, I engage this narrative, using the very documents of those generations shaping American culture in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Rather than accepting the master narrative uncritically, I look for and listen to the silences in our "usual story." By highlighting these silences in my writing, I aim to move the field of History more into the public eye so that historians will have an increasingly important impact on our society. Critically examining American exceptionalism, as well as documents that are not usually studied within history (namely, the fairy tales), is crucial to being able to continuously check and deepen our understanding of early American history.

CHAPTER 1: ABSTRACT

In the first chapter, I discuss fairy tales and their role within the historical field, their uses as a cultural document, and Charles Perrault's intentions with his particular tales. I argue that fairy tales are a crucial element to understanding a society's culture and should be analyzed by historians. I assert that historians can use fairy tales to enrich their understanding of a particular culture by widening their definition of what constitutes a historic document and employing interdisciplinary methodology to further nuance their study. Further, I argue that Charles Perrault's tales are particularly well suited for this task, as he has been quoted discussing his intentions to influence society with his morality tales.

CHAPTER 1: HISTORICAL DOCUMENT OR CULTURAL DOCUMENT?: FAIRY TALES AS A LOOKING GLASS

Even if their individual minds preserve some private history, it is difficult to see how they could have a collective one without being able to tell it to each other and to their young. All human cultures can, do, and probably must.

–Melvin Konner, *The Evolution of Childhood* (2010)

Fairy tales and children's literature often hold the key to understanding a particular culture's values. These types of literature can hold crucial morals and models of behavior for their readers. Oftentimes adults will read these stories to children because the stories' fanciful, sometimes even fantastical, nature captures the readers' attention and entertains them. In this way, children and adults read these stories and internalize their messages. Jack Zipes, a noted scholar of children's literature, explains that "Even though the fairy tale may be the most important cultural and social event in most children's lives, critics and scholars have failed to study its historical development as a genre."[10] I echo Jack Zipes' assertion that scholars have not done enough work analyzing fairy tales in a historical fashion; that is, historians have not yet done enough work using fairy tales as windows into the culture of a particular society. Zipes laid the groundwork, but he focuses primarily on German fairy tales written by the Brothers Grimm. Scholars of early modern literature focus primarily on the psychological interpretations of each tale and theory. While a number of scholars have compared French and German fairy tales, no one has compared French fairy tales to their American versions, and or studied Perrault's seven tales in their comparative historical contexts. This thesis breaks new ground by analyzing how

[10] Jack Zipes, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 1.

moral ideals and prescriptions for behavior, as presented in the fairy tales, might change once they are adopted by American readers. This project is also significant because it shows that fairy tales are useful historical sources that give us a better understanding of a culture's behavioral expectations.

First, it is necessary to situate this work within the scholarship. Whether or not Charles Perrault's fairy tales should be considered within the realm of folklore or if they should only be discussed under the heading of "children's literature" is constantly under debate. Some scholars argue that this work should only be considered children's literature, and others argue that fairy tales are inextricably linked to folklore and thus folktales. I analyze these fairy tales as children's print literature, not as oral tales. I purposefully analyze fairy tales as documents of cultural history, but many scholars I cite in this chapter refer to them as objects of folklore. Jack Zipes, in *The Irresistible Fairy Tale: the Cultural and Social History of a Genre*, argues that fairy tales should indeed be included within the folklore sphere because they are culturally significant. Zipes asserts that "the cultural evolution of the fairy tale is closely bound historically to all kinds of storytelling and different civilizing processes that have undergirded the formation of nation-states."[11] Zipes states that fairy tales evolved from folklore stories and serve as a foundation for the formation of many cultures. Zipes also states, "I tried to ground the fairy tale's development in oral traditions based on the biological and cultural dispositions of human beings."[12] Zipes argues that fairy tales cannot be separated entirely from folklore.

William Bascom also argues that fairy tales are folklore. In his work, "Four Functions of Folklore," Bascom explains that folklore has four primary cultural functions: (1) to escape reality

[11] Jack Zipes, *The Irresistible Fairy Tale: the Cultural and Social History of a Genre* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), xi.
[12] Ibid., xii.

or injustices imposed by society, (2) to reinforce a culture's rituals and traditions, (3) to reinforce a culture's morals and values, and (4) as a "means of applying social pressure and exercising social control."[13] All four of these functions can be applied to fairy tales, and it is the last two qualifications (reinforcing morals and values, and applying social pressure) that will be the chief concern of this project. Bascom explains,

> Folklore is also used to express social approval of those who conform.…In many societies folklore is employed to control, influence, or direct the activities of others from the time the first lullaby is sung or ogre tale is told them. Folklore may also become an internalized check on behavior.[14]

According to Bascom, folklore has been used for centuries as something more than entertainment or story-telling, it is a way to model and influence particular behaviors and morals within a society.

Bascom expands his argument to explore the connection between folklore and culture. He explains that "the problem of the 'cultural context' or the relationship between folklore and other aspects of culture is in itself far more significant. This problem has two distinct facets, the first of which concerns the extent to which folklore, like language, is a mirror of culture."[15] Bascom warns against the tendency to take folklore at face value – to assume that the surface level qualities of the performance/tale/ritual is exactly representative of the culture. He asserts that it is still essential for a scholar to use folklore as one method of analyzing culture, and emphasizes that one must still study other aspects of a culture along with the folklore in order to get a well-rounded study of any culture. This study of fairy tales is anchored in the multi-faceted scholarly approach that Bascom recommends. Fairy tales undoubtedly hold within them important facets

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[13] William Bascom, "Four Functions of Folklore," *The Journal of American Folklore* 67:266 (1954): 348-349.
[14] Ibid., 346.
[15] Ibid., 336-337.

of the culture that created them and, because of this, at the very least contain *elements* of folklore, if they are not entirely defined as folkloric material. Whether or not fairy tales are indeed a form of folk tale is a highly contested issue and is out of the scope of this project; however, Zipes' point about the manner in which fairy tales serve as a window into a culture remains essential to this project.

As mentioned previously, fairy tales are not given enough credence within the historical field, and they deserve much more attention as essential documents to understanding a particular culture. Fairy tales are by nature descriptive documents – they are constructed to tell a story with characters and a plot. However, fairy tales are also prescriptive documents, created intentionally to model particular behaviors for their readers, and those behaviors result in either success or failure in the stories. These modeled behaviors indicate what the originating culture desired (or rejected) at the time in which they were created and published. Therefore, just as with a court document or other historical record, these materials were created for a particular audience and convey essential information about the time in which they were written. Thus, they should be considered ideal documents for historians to scrutinize and analyze.

Ruth Bottigheimer, in her article "Fairy-Tale Origins, Fairy-Tale Dissemination, and Folk Narrative Theory," also includes fairy tales as one small element in the larger realm of folklore. She, like many scholars who study fairy tales, accounts for the similarity among the tales of the Brothers Grimm, Charles Perrault, Giambattista Basile, and Giovanfrancesco Straparola – all famous writers of fairy tales in Germany, France, and Italy respectively. Bottigheimer concerns herself particularly with understanding the origins and distribution of European fairy tales. Overall, Bottigheimer argues that these fairy tales all were adopted and adapted for each culture from oral folk tales that existed long before the fairy tales were written down. Bottigheimer

asserts that "in this new theoretical structure, print processes and print culture are central to the creation and the dissemination of European fairy tales."[16] Even though she argues that many fairy tales within Europe are similar to one another, her last of four different sub arguments on the subject states that publishers would often "contour book contents to the taste of local buyers. This results in culturally varying versions of single tales, that is, of oicotypes."[17] This shows that, despite some surface-level plot similarities in European fairy tales, oftentimes publishers and authors would tailor their fairy tales to be acceptable for the culture in which they were writing to procure higher profits.

Early New England print culture helps to explain how Charles Perrault's French fairy tales or their translations could end up in the hands of colonial New Englanders. Matthew Brown, in *The Pilgrim and the Bee: Reading Rituals and Book Culture in Early New England,* advocates history of the book as "an especially rich tool for humanities scholarship."[18] He particularly focuses on devotional reading habits of colonial New Englanders, but his argument applies to fairy tales as well. Brown argues that what people read greatly influence a society at any particular time. He asserts that what was read by the people of a society greatly influenced its people. Brown states that "the read word is a realm of action and feeling, of conduct practical, moral, and emotional, a speaking-paper that admonishes and punishes, heartens and consoles."[19] Literature, especially in early New England, had an immense effect on the people who read it, and a "story" is not merely a story, but an opportunity to educate and model behavior.

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[16] Ruth Bottigheimer, "Fairy-Tale Origins, Fairy-Tale Dissemination, and Folk Narrative Theory," *Fabula* 47:4 (2006): abstract.
[17] Ibid., 220.
[18] Matthew Brown, *The Pilgrim and the Bee: Reading Rituals and Book Culture in Early New England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 13.
[19] Ibid., 13.

Some scholars have promoted the study of literature in its historic context. David Hall, in *Cultures of Print: Essays in the History of the Book,* through his collections of essays on the history of printing and literacy in Colonial America, examines an evidentiary basis for understanding the culture of the book in the same time period. He states that the issue he studies and its products are "recurrently transatlantic" and thus, much that he studies and comments upon in Colonial America also applies to early modern Europe. He furthers his argument by noting that underneath this research of the empirical and tangible logistics of print is another discussion on authority and agency within cultures, as affected by literacy and the book. He narrows his focus by centering particularly on "the intellectual and religious history of Puritan New England"[20] and challenges the assumption that Puritan clergy stood apart from the rest of the community, and that the community was largely illiterate and uninterested in the topics the clergy discussed. He uses the history of printing and the records of community courts as well as publishing records to better determine the mentalite of the average person in Puritan New England and how these people interacted with print.

Thomas Goddard Wright, in *Literary Culture in Early New England*, explains that his work "will attempt to determine that which lies back of any literature, the culture of the people themselves, and to study the relation between their culture and the literature which they produced."[21] Wright sees the importance of studying literature as a way to analyze culture. Wright acknowledges the fact that early New England culture, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, lowered the amount of social interaction with the culture of England. Despite this, Wright warns that "it would be a mistake, however, to think of the colonies as

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[20] David C Hall, *Cultures of Print: Essays in the History of the Book* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996), 3.
[21] Thomas Goddard Wright, *Literary Culture in Early New England, 1620-1730* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1966), 11.

isolated from the outside world even during this period."[22] Not only does Thomas Wright argue for the further study of literature as an element of culture, but he asserts that when studying early New England culture, one must take into account European literary influences as well.

Johanna Bradley, in her dissertation "From Chapbooks to Plumb Cake: The History of Children's Literature," tackles the often ignored role that "chapbooks" played in early modern England and early New England. Her work primarily focuses on the rise of literacy, book publications, and public education, but she acknowledges the need for further study within children's literature, especially in the early modern era. Bradley asserts that "the history of children's literature reflects the conflicting societal impulse between educating and socializing the child, in opposition to the desire to simply amuse the young."[23] She, too, argues that these chapbooks, which almost always held fairy tales within its pages, had more than simply an entertainment value. These stories were used to educate and inform children on morality and culturally accepted behavior, in a format that captured the child's attention.

Literature and fairy tales do indeed have a purpose beyond entertainment value; they were created often with the intention of educating readers on modes of behavior. Consequently, these tales have historical value and deserve historical analysis. Bruno Bettelheim, in *The Uses of Enchantment: the Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*, argues that what best carries information concerning personal meaning and cultural heritage to children is found within children's literature. He states that "…Nothing can be as enriching and satisfying to child and

[22] Thomas Goddard Wright, *Literary Culture in Early New England, 1620-1730* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1966), 152.
[23] Johanna Bradley, "From Chapbooks to Plumb Cake: The History of Children's Literature" (PhD Diss. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, UMI Dissertations Publishing, 2007): 1.

adult alike as the folk fairy tale."[24] Bettelheim argues that fairy tales are particularly suited to getting across messages of conduct, meaning, and morality to children. He explains how each facet of the fairy tale (i.e., whether a character is good or evil, relatable or distant, and the dilemma of the plot) is presented in a way that allows a child to navigate various moral choices and conflicts. Fairy tales are created purposefully with the intent to instruct children and to provide an entertaining sphere in which to examine various moral dilemmas and conflicts.

Jack Zipes calls for scholars to analyze fairy tales beyond a psychological or literary approach. In his article, "Towards a Social History of the Literary Fairy Tale for Children," Zipes asserts,

> Despite the numerous essays and books written about fairy tales during the past ten years, we still lack an adequate social history of the literary fairy tale for children. Or, in other words, we have reached a point in scholarly research where a thorough historical study is warranted, for there have been many different claims made about the function, use, and aesthetics of the fairy tale for children without sufficient attention having been paid to the social development of the genre in relation to the process of western civilization.[25]

Zipes, too, sees a need for further analysis of fairy tales as cultural documents within a historical context. He notes that "history shows that it is not so much children but adults who have created, cultivated, needed and continue to need fairy tales."[26] Zipes claims that these fairy tales have a

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[24] Bruno Bettelheim, *The Uses of Enchantment: the Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* (New York: Vintage Books, 1989), 5.
[25] Jack Zipes, "Towards a Social History of the Literary Fairy Tale for Children," *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* 7:2 (1982): 23.
[26] Ibid., 23.

vast importance in understanding culture as a whole because the effects of the fairy tale go far beyond the instruction of the child, they also show the mindset of the parent.

Zipes continues to argue for the significance of the fairy tale in the instruction of the child in the culturally accepted mores of a society. He adds to his argument by explaining the purpose of fairy tales, especially concerning Charles Perrault's *Histoires ou Contes du temps passé.* Zipes explains that,

> It was also about this time, just when childhood was in the process of being distinguished as a separate sphere of existence and training, that the literary fairy tale was instituted for children as a cultural mode of discourse to convey Christian virtues, ideas, and etiquette to children. This was certainly one of the purposes of Charles Perrault's *Histoires ou Contes du temps passé* (*Stories of the Past*, 1697), and, though it may be argued that Perrault did not write exclusively for children, his tales became accepted and were used in nurseries and households soon after their publication, not only in France, but throughout Europe, England, and America in the 18th century.[27]

Zipes argues that fairy tales, like Perrault's in 1697, were purposefully written to instruct children in Christian ideals and morals. Zipes asserts that Charles Perrault's fairy tales not only influenced culture in France, but were shared and published throughout Europe and even in America in the eighteenth century. The cultural implications of this one set of fairy tales stretches even further.

Fairy tales are indeed studied in other disciplines, such as in psychology and literature. Ruth Bottigheimer, in *Fairy Tales and Society: Illusion, Allusion, and Paradigm*, analyzes the varying ways in which fairy tales are used and studied within other societies as well as in other

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[27] Jack Zipes, "Towards a Social History of the Literary Fairy Tale for Children," *Children's Literature Association Quarterly* 7:2 (1982): 23.

disciplines. She concludes that there are three primary ways that fairy tales are typically viewed: as an illusion, as an allusion, and as a paradigm.[28] For this project, the paradigm fits well. A paradigm is a particular pattern or formula which reveals cultural behavior and expectations. It is a lens through which historians can view and analyze a culture.[29] In this instance, fairy tales are the document which illustrates the theory of how successful citizens should behave. Bottigheimer argues that "in many societies fairy tales function as a paradigm both for understanding the community and for determining and developing individual behavior and personality within that community."[30] Studying fairy tales as a paradigm brings into focus the culture that created the fairy tale and enables a historical analysis of that culture. This manner of studying fairy tales is essential for their use within history, as it allows for the best position from which to analyze culture. In this case, if the American versions of the fairy tales had reflected a true paradigm shift, then the fairy tales would have been altered significantly. After reading both translations of the tales, one can see this is not the case. The fairy tales do not show a significant paradigm shift from "old" European to "new" and uniquely American cultural values.

Jack Zipes vigorously supports the idea that fairy tales play a prescriptive role in a child's education. In *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion: the Classical Genre for Children and the Process of Civilization*, Zipes explains that, "[Fairy tales] play an intricate role in acculturation, that is, in forming and reflecting the tastes, manners, and ideologies of members of a particular society."[31] The types of messages that fairy tales pass on to their readers are crucial to

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[28] Ruth Bottigheimer, *Fairy Tales and Society: Illusion, Allusion, and Paradigm* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986), xi.
[29] For further definition, see also: Thomas Kuhn, *Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).
[30] Ibid., xii.
[31] Jack Zipes, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion: the Classical Genre for Children and the Process of Civilization* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 1.

understanding the underlying accepted cultural values and behavioral prescriptions of that culture. Zipes asserts,

> Almost all critics who have studied the emergence of the literary fairy tale in Europe agree 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 at that time.[32]

Scholars who have studied European fairy tales agree that these tales play a significant role in the instruction of children and reflect socially accepted behaviors of the time period. This in and of itself should pique a historian's interest.

According to Zipes, the rising popularity of fairy tales in the seventeenth through eighteenth centuries reflected the new role that children were playing in European cultures:

> Children were now being taken seriously as a separate age group with a special set of characteristics, and it was considered most important to advance the cause of *civilite* with explicit and implicit rules of pedagogization so that the manners and mores of the young would reflect the social power, prestige, and hierarchy of the ruling classes. Socialization through fairy tales.[33]

However, Zipes warns against seeing fairy tales as *only* a conspiratorial tool of manipulation. Zipes asserts that it is important to see such manipulation only as one of the many facets of the fairy tale, and one that is imperative to understanding its true implications as a tool for analyzing the society that created the fairy tale.

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[32] Jack Zipes, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion: the Classical Genre for Children and the Process of Civilization* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 3.
[33] Ibid., 9.

Hansjorg Hohr argues that the fairy tale is particularly suited to connecting with its reader and imparting its prescriptive material to children. In "Dynamic Aspects of Fairy Tales: Social and Emotional Competence through Fairy Tales," Hohr explains how the elements of a fairy tale allow children to maneuver through and understand the moral and ethical material, while still being entertained. Hohr studies three different fairy tale authors, Giambattista Basile, Charles Perrault, and the Grimm Brothers. Hohr argues that,

> The combination of simplicity of form and complexity of content makes the fairy tale a powerful tool for perception of and reflection on emotions. The former renders openness to the text and a feeling of control to the child, thus allowing the child to relate to his or her own experiences. The latter offers substantial contributions to reflection on emotions. This is shown on different levels of meaning, the artistic, the mythical and the ludic, each having specific cognitive and emotional functions.[34]

The elements that make a fairy tale also are also what make fairy tales particularly effective in entertaining and instructing children about cultural norms.

A few educators have argued that fairy tales are a good way to teach culture to students. Sandra Obergfell, in "Fairy Tales as a Cultural Context in the French Classroom," acknowledges the need for the further analysis of culture. Obergfell states, "In short, nearly everyone recognizes the need to teach 'culture,' but few agree on the nature of materials and methods to be used."[35] Obergfell argues that it is necessary to teach and analyze culture within the classroom setting, but notes that many educators find it difficult to figure out the best manner in which to do so. Obergfell asserts that fairy tales provide an excellent starting point from which to analyze

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[34] Hansjorg Hohr, "Dynamic Aspects of Fairy Tales: Social and Emotional Competence through Fairy Tales," *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research* 44:1 (2000): abstract.
[35] Sandra Obergfell, "Fairy Tales as a Cultural Context in the French Classroom," *The French Review* 56:3 (1983): 439.

French culture. She argues that "It has long been recognized that the fairy tale is one of the richest sources of the culture values and deep, traditional patterns of behavior of a people."[36] Obergfell not only sees the importance of fairy tales for studying culture, but she echoes Jack Zipes when she states that "Societies have, both intentionally and unconsciously, socialized their youth through the production of a fairy tale literature or folklore destined for consumption by that youth."[37] Both Obergfell and Zipes agree that fairy tales are purposefully written to teach children significant cultural lessons and prescriptive behavior, and thus are rich materials for cultural analysis.

Zipes continues this argument in *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion: the Classical Genre for Children and the Process of Civilization,* where he explains that Perrault's *Histoires ou Contes du Temps Passe* was published during a major shift in social norms, when European society put greater emphasis on writing to and for children. Zipes argues that "it is not by chance that Perrault directed his energies in writing his fairy tales for the most part to civilize children and to prepare them for roles which he idealistically believed they should play in society."[38] Charles Perrault's fairy tales were influenced by the time period in which they were written. Zipes draws upon Perrault's own words when he emphasizes that Perrault's tales were indeed written with behavioral instruction in mind. Perrault stated in his preface to an early work, the *Contes en Vers,* that,

> [society has] noticed that these trifles [the tales] were not mere trifles, that they contained a useful moral, and that the playful narrative surrounding them had

[36] Ibid., 440.
[37] Sandra Obergfell, "Fairy Tales as a Cultural Context in the French Classroom," *The French Review* 56:3 (1983): 440.
[38] Jack Zipes, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion: the Classical Genre for Children and the Process of Civilization* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 13-14.

> been chosen only to allow the stories to penetrate the mind more pleasantly and in such a manner to instruct and amuse at the same time.[39]

Perrault himself admitted that his fairy tales were written with the purpose of instructing children on the culturally accepted norms of his society, while entertaining them as well.

Fairy tales are ripe for analysis by historians, because they hold so many new opportunities for analyzing culture and the education of children. Jack Zipes, in *Breaking the Magic Spell: Radical Theories of Folk & Fairy Tales,* argues that "literature and art cannot be fully understood without considering the socio-political-cultural context in which they are produced."[40] According to Zipes, fairy tales and historical study should not be separated. They can enrich each other. In "Cross Cultural Connections and the Contamination of the Classical Fairy Tale," Zipes argues,

> For a long time it has commonly been assumed that our classical fairy tales were representative of particular cultures. Charles Perrault's tales are considered very French, the Grimm's collection is clearly German, and Hans Christian Anderson's stories are certainly Danish. While there is some truth to these assumptions, they conceal the cross-cultural and multilayered origins and meanings of these pan-European tales…[41]

Zipes asserts that fairy tales are constantly being affected, adopted, and adapted by other cultures. As a result, the fairy tale and its historical context cannot and should not be separated from one another and is begging for further study by historians.

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[39] Ibid., 16.
[40] Jack Zipes, *Breaking the Magic Spell: Radical Theories of Folk & Fairy Tales* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1979), ix.
[41] Jack Zipes, "Cross Cultural Connections and the Contamination of the Classical Fairy Tale," in *The Great Fairy Tale Tradition: from Straparola and Basile to the Brothers Grimm: Texts and Criticism* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2001), 845.

Folklorist Lutz Rohrich proclaims that "fairy tales always reflect the society in which they are told."[42] Fairy tales hold within them essential material for historians to analyze culture. They represent an opportunity for historians to break out of the previously accepted mold of typical historical documents, and enrich their source base to include a vast and rich database of cultural material. But these fairy tales hold even more than information about behavioral prescriptions for children, they also hold significant information about cultural identity formation. James W. Fernandez, in "Folklorists as Agents of Nationalism," explains this best when he states,

> But there is a larger question that folklorists, and that is the question of the degree to which in our generalizations about the folklore of nations – French folklore, German folklore, Spanish folklore – we oversimplify the complexities of folklore dynamics, that is, the vast reservoir of motifs and tale-types which is rarely if ever neatly distributed by the national boundaries of recent centuries. The rising nationalism of the nineteenth century made much use of folklore to typify and thus create new national identities around new national boundaries, but there is no reason for folklorists to be the acquiescent agents of such nationalisms.[43]

Historians should familiarize themselves with the study of fairy tales in a historical and cultural context. Fairy tales provide a rich and nuanced source base which historians can use to study culture, how a society wished to instruct and educate children in behavior and morals, and how national culture and identity form. These tales give historians a crucial opportunity to enrich their work for the future.

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[42] Lutz Rohrich, quoted in Ruth Bottigheimer, *Fairy Tales and Society: Illusion, Allusion, and Paradigm* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986), 5.
[43] James W. Fernandez, "Folklorists as Agents of Nationalism" in Ruth Bottigheimer, *Fairy Tales and Society: Illusion, Allusion, and Paradigm* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986), 135.

CHAPTER 2: ABSTRACT

In the second chapter, I focus on American exceptionalism. I analyze the writings of prominent figures of the Revolutionary era (1750—1850), and show how they envisioned the formation of America's new identity. In the time leading up to, during, and for some years after the Revolutionary War, prominent speakers in America were particularly concerned with what sort of nation that the new United States would be after its break from England. Americans saw this break as the perfect opportunity to reshape themselves into a new and better society by casting off the corruption of Europe. I reference sources that describe new Americans who turned from the ways of Europe and instead focused on creating a new and special nation.

CHAPTER 2: "MORE NEW, MORE NOBLE"[44]: THE CREATION OF A NEW AMERICAN CULTURE

"Among the novel objects that attracted my attention during my stay in the United States, nothing struck me more forcibly than the general equality of condition among the people… I soon perceived that the influence of this fact extends far beyond the political character and the laws of the country, and that it has no less effect on civil society than on the government; it creates opinions, gives birth to new sentiments, founds novel customs, and modifies whatever it does not produce."[45]

--Alexis de Tocqueville, 1835

As early as 1630, travelers to North America stated their intention to be religiously and morally separate. John Winthrop's 1630 sermon, "A Model of Christian Charity," urged early New Englanders to distinguish themselves: "For wee must consider that wee shall be as a citty upon a hill. The eies of all people are uppon us."[46] More than 200 years later, de Tocqueville observed that the United States appeared to be a place of "new sentiments" and "novel customs." Forty years before deTocqueville wrote *Democracy in America*, George Washington wrote his 1796 farewell address, which identified foreign affairs as a great risk for Americans, who needed to shield themselves from "the insidious wiles of foreign influence."[47] George Washington and Alexis de Tocqueville, when he wrote *Democracy in America* in 1835, gave voice to the prevailing notion during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that the United States had

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[44] Phillip Freneau, "A Poem, On the Rising Glory of America" (1772), Ed. Harry Hayden Clark (New York: Hafner Publishing Co., 1929), stanza 2.
[45] Alexis de Tocqueville, "Democracy in America" (USA: Penguin Classics, 2003), 1.
[46] John Winthrop, "A Modell of Christian Charity, 1630" *Massachusetts Historical* Society (pub. 1996).
[47] George Washington, "Farewell Address, 1796" *The Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History, and Diplomacy.* (Connecticut: Yale Law School, 2008) http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/washing.asp

created not only a separate nation, but a separate culture. They, like Winthrop in 1630, wrote about the emergence of a distinctly American culture.

What is "culture"? In this work, I define culture as the sum of the political, religious, literary, social, and moral structures of society. These structural threads, woven together, constitute what most people accept as social norms, and conforming to those norms promises "success" within the culture. Further, these structural threads shape ideas about a group identity, even a "national identity" in early modern Western thought. In America, two particular elements of a national identity emerged early and have persisted to the present: essentialism and exceptionalism. This project relies on a clear understanding of these cultural concepts.

Essentialism, first named and described by Edward Said and other mid-twentieth-century thinkers, has since been closely studied by historians, social scientists, and literary scholars. They typically define essentialism as the "the attribution of certain characteristics to everyone subsumed within a particular category."[48] It is the assumption that everyone included in a certain group (e.g., race, gender, nationality) thinks, acts, and values the same things. Further, essentialism assumes that these attitudes, behaviors, and values are inherent in the group and do not change over time. Essentialism reveals a great deal about those who make these assumptions, especially their desire to define themselves in contrast to others. According to Luciano L'Abate, in *Paradigms in Theory Construction*,

> People tend to explain differences between groups by attributing them different essences (Leyens et al., 2001). Given a pervasive ethnocentrism, this tendency implies that the human essence will be restricted to the ingroup whereas outgroups will receive a lesser degree of humanity. Therefore, it is argued that

[48] Anne Phillips, "What's Wrong with Essentialism?" *Distinktion: Scandinavian Journal of Social Theory* 11:1 (2010): 47.

> people attribute more uniquely human characteristics to the ingroup than to the outgroup.[49]

So, essentialism is a way to construct one's own group as superior to other groups. In this case, many early Americans saw themselves as essentially distinct from Europeans, even though they had descended from Europeans. The essentialist view states that Europeans as a group had inferior morals and Americans as a group had superior morals, highlighting Americans' own humanity.

This assumption of moral superiority fed the concept now termed "exceptionalism," which emerged early in the colonial period. In *American Exceptionalism,* Deborah Madsen explains that,

> Exceptionalism describes the perception of the Massachusetts Bay colonists that, as Puritans, they were charged with a special spiritual and political destiny: to create in the New World a church and a society that would provide the model for all the nations of Europe as they struggled to reform themselves... Thus America and Americans are special, exceptional, because they are charged with saving the world from itself.[50]

While Puritanism particularly encouraged exceptionalism, many other early Americans viewed themselves as having a special task to create a model nation for the rest of the world. Prominent American commentators during the period of 1700—1850 expressed their belief that Americans were close to achieving that goal. These writers championed America as a wondrous example for the rest of the world.

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[49] Luciano L'Abate, "Essentialism," *Paradigms in Theory Construction* (NY: Springer Publishing, 2012), 427.
[50] Deborah Madsen, *American Exceptionalism* (University of Mississippi Press, 1998), 1-2.

From the Puritans to the present day, American exceptionalism has essentialized the "American" citizen as having particular characteristics; it has disregarded the true depth and complexity of human behavior and individual identity. This chapter focuses on writers of an earlier era who left documents describing this essentialized American in an exceptional society. Each of the writers discussed below were prominent commentators on American society; each followed a different thread of culture, yet reached the same conclusion: that America was exceptional. Ironically, despite their commentaries on an essentialized American who was a "new creation," distinct from an essentialized, otherized European, these writers consumed European literature, especially in children's literature that they read to their sons and daughters.

Fairy tales and children's literature can often act as a window into understanding a particular culture's behavioral and moral expectations. Oftentimes adults will read these stories to children because the stories' entertaining nature captures the readers' attention, while instilling the message of the story within the minds of the readers. In this way, children and adults read these stories and internalize their messages. Jack Zipes explains that "[Fairy tales] play an intricate role in acculturation, that is, in forming and reflecting the tastes, manners, and ideologies of members of a particular society."[51] The messages that fairy tales passed on to their readers are crucial to understanding the underlying accepted cultural values and behavioral prescriptions of that culture. Fairy tales function as a window onto the more tightly held and visceral assumptions about gender roles and behavior. David C. Hall, a noted print history scholar, emphasizes the significance of print culture in early America in particular. Hall argues that print during this time period (1700—1850) is "recurrently transatlantic" and thus, much that he studies and comments upon in early America also applies to early modern Europe. In his

[51] Jack Zipes, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion* (New York: Routledge, 2012), introduction.

introduction, Hall states that "Everyone seemed to share a stock of stories…Because these same stories embodied a patchwork of ideas partly inconsistent with orthodox theology, they offered an intriguing demonstration of the middle ground between learned and popular religion."[52] Even though this particular section does not especially emphasize fairy tales, it does further the argument that literature affected culture within early America and vice versa.

Richard Slotkin's work, *Regeneration through Violence: the Mythology of the American Frontier 1600—1850,* helps to illuminate the importance of the blending of children's literature and culture in early America. His text analyzes the creation of myth and, by default, children's literature in America.[53] Slotkin begins his work by stating that "the mythology of a nation is the intelligible mask of that enigma called the 'national character.'"[54] He argues that by analyzing the myths and literature that are created and adopted by a particular nation, historians can begin to understand the characteristics that define that nation --i.e., its culture. Analyzing myths and literature during the time that a nation is still creating its national character is extremely significant to understanding its culture formation. However, Slotkin notes that American myth formation is particularly complex and often misunderstood, due to the nature in which the country was formed. Slotkin argues that,

> Three critical problems lie in the path of any study of the so-called myth of America. The first is the question of the Americanness of its origin. Myths are

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[52] David C. Hall, *Cultures of Print: Essays in the History of the Book* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1996), 3.

[53] The concept of myth and folklore is one that is quite separate from children's literature and should not be confused with one another. My thesis will deal only with fairy tales as a form of children's literature, not as folk tales derived from oral tradition. However, in this section, it is necessary to talk about myth and children's literature as a similar concept due to their use in both entertaining and educating children about methods for cultural success.

[54] Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration through Violence: the Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000), 1.

> human creations, and the people who composed the vast majority of the American population before 1800 were European by ancestry, by language, and by religious and literary heritage... Did those same conditions, operating on European immigrants, impose on or induce in the colonial mind a similarly "American" mythology? … It seems important to question whether our national experience has "Americanized" us or whether we are simply an idiosyncratic offshoot of English civilization.[55]

Slotkin explains the problem of many who analyze myth and literature of early America -- are these works truly a new creation or, in the case of the fairy tales, a version that reflects new cultural ideals, or are they simply adoptions of the same European notions that Americans thought they had left behind?

David Hackett Fischer attempts to answer this question definitively when he explores what he sees as the main building blocks of American culture. In *Albion's Seed*, Fischer argues that American culture is made up of four "folkways." He defines folkways as "the normative structure of values, customs, and meanings that exist in any culture."[56] Fischer argues that American culture is actually heavily influenced by European, specifically British, characteristics. He asserts that,

> Today, less than 20 percent of the American population have any British ancestors at all. But in a cultural sense, most Americans are Albion's seed, no matter who their own forebears may have been … the legacy of four British folkways in early America remains the most powerful determinant of a voluntary society in the United States today.[57]

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[55] Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration through Violence: the Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2000), 5-6.
[56] David Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 7.
[57] Ibid., 6-7.

Fischer believes that American culture is rooted in British culture. He does not believe that Americans formed their own culture without adoption from the Europeans. Few early American public figures or their European contemporaries would have agreed with Fischer's assertions.

The U.S. Constitution of 1787 is *the* document that strove to define what America would stand for after its break from England. The preamble to the Constitution is arguably one of the most recognizable lines from the foundation of America as a nation, and the first permanent political thread of national identity of the United States. Even in the first line, exceptionalism stands out. "**We the people** of the United States, in order to form a **more perfect** union…" [emphasis mine] explicitly states that as a collective unit, the United States was creating a national identity that would be a "more perfect union" than other nations.

Alexis de Tocqueville, an active author during the early formation of America, penned many of his observations of this new America in *Journey to America,* written during his trip throughout the United States and Canada from 1830 to 1832. De Tocqueville discussed several different cultural threads within his work, but he expanded most thoroughly on the social, political, and moral threads. Throughout his journals, de Tocqueville often expressed surprise that Americans were aware of European concerns. He commented that "so far I have been astonished to see to what extent enlightened men in America are capable of accurately discussing French affairs."[58] Despite Washington's warning to stay out of European business, apparently the "enlightened thinkers" of America were very much tuned in to the concerns of European nations. Alexis de Tocqueville found three main distinctions between American and European society. First, he noted that financial change was extraordinarily fast-paced in American society

[58] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Journey to America* (1831), Trans. George Lawrence, ed. J.P. Mayer (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1971), 34

during this time. In an interview with a planter from Georgia known as Mr. Clay, de Tocqueville wrote that "Mr. Clay…added that fortunes change hands here at an incredible rate. It has been noted that a poor son almost always succeeds a rich father and that a family only stays down for one generation."[59] So, according to de Tocqueville, while families may not keep their wealth for long, the rate at which they could rebuild and re-achieve economic success was much faster than it would have been in Europe.

He also commented that since Americans had much easier access to financial mobility, they also had quicker access to social change than Europeans did. In one of de Tocqueville's journal reflections, he mused that,

> What gives us most trouble in Europe is men born in a lower station in life, who have received an education which makes them long to get out of it without giving them the means to do so. In America, this disadvantage is hardly noticeable. Education always provides the means needed to grow rich and does not create any social malaise.[60]

Hence, Americans were set apart from Europeans because they had both the means and the opportunity for social change, particularly through education.

Finally, de Tocqueville asserted that morality in America was quite different than it was in Europe. He argued that "American morals are, I think, the most chaste that exist in any nation, a fact which can, it seems to me be attributed to five chief causes."[61] The first cause for Americans' superior morality was their physical constitution; de Tocqueville put much stock in the idea that Americans originally belonged to a "northern race," but lived in a much more

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[59] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Journey to America* (1831), Trans. George Lawrence, ed. J.P. Mayer (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1971), 36.
[60] Ibid., 45.
[61] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Journey to America* (1831), Trans. George Lawrence, ed. J.P. Mayer (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1971), 230.

temperate climate, resulting in better morality.[62] Secondly, he argued that religion "holds great sway over their souls," making them chaste and pious. [63] Next, de Tocqueville noted that Americans were "entirely absorbed with the preoccupation with making a fortune" and had no time for immorality due to idleness, as Europeans did.[64] He also argued that, due to easier social mobility and equality, Americans were free to marry for love, rather than financial necessity. This, de Tocqueville asserted, was far different from the case in Europe and added to Americans' superior morality. Finally, the last cause for Americans' lofty morals was that women were given a "rational education," which made them much better suited for adult life.[65]

According to de Tocqueville, Americans were blessed with faster financial and social mobility, as well as a higher standard of morals. However, at times de Tocqueville contradicted himself and appeared not fully convinced that Americans were truly exceptional and separate from their European neighbors. In *Democracy in America,* de Tocqueville allowed that "It is clear that the whole of English and, in consequence, American law is an ancient fabric made out of elements brought in at different periods, and in which we must look neither for any new idea, nor deduction from principle, nor methodical order."[66] So while he continuously asserted that American life and culture was much different from that of Europe, he could not fully argue that American government was an entirely new concept.

Gilbert du Motier de Lafayette also was a prominent speaker at this time on the formation of this new America. In Lloyd Kramer's text, *Lafayette in Two Worlds: Public Cultures and*

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[62] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Journey to America* (1831), Trans. George Lawrence, ed. J.P. Mayer (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1971), 230.
[63] Ibid., 231.
[64] Ibid., 231.
[65] Ibid., 231.
[66] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (1835) (USA: Penguin Classics, 2003), 313.

Personal Identities in an Age of Revolutions, Kramer identifies many key issues that Lafayette illustrated about the cross-cultural interactions between America and France and how American culture was formed. Kramer asserts that "Lafayette tended to accept the dichotomy of American innocence and European corruption, or what might now be called provincialism versus sophistication."[67] Further, Kramer adds that Lafayette originally did not want American troops to have anything to do with the French volunteer troops during the Revolution. Lafayette argued that the French would have a negative effect on the Americans as the French "have seen the world and bring among them all the vices [and] corruptions they have taken in the way."[68] Lafayette, though he is often criticized today for holding an idealized portrayal of Americans, believed that American life and culture was certainly exceptional and emphasized it as wholly separate from the negative effects of Europe.

J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur serves as an excellent link between the two cultures of America and France, because while he was born in France, Crevecoeur moved to and made his life in America. Lafayette and de Tocqueville were both of French origin and made their homes primarily in France, and thus were looking at America from an outsider's perspective. Perhaps their view of American cultural and political formation was clouded by their experiences in Europe. However, Americans too often held this attitude of American exceptionalism. In particular, Crèvecoeur in his memoirs, *Letters from an American Farmer*, illustrated a strong patriotism and belief in Americans' remarkability. Throughout his letters, Crevecoeur emphasized the closer social equality that Americans enjoyed as opposed to Europeans. In his third letter, titled "What is an American?" Crevecoeur stated,

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[67] Lloyd Kramer, *Lafayette in Two Worlds* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 23.
[68] Lafayette to William Carmichael (December 30, 1778) in *Lafayette in Two Worlds*, by Lloyd Kramer (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 23.

> He is an American who, leaving behind him all his ancient prejudices and manners, receives new ones from the new mode of life he has embraced, the new government he obeys, and the new rank he holds.… Here individuals of all nations are melted into a new race of men, whose labours and posterity will one day cause great changes in the world.[69]

This excerpt exemplifies the larger concept that Crevecoeur emphasized throughout his letters: Americans had stripped away the confines of their European past and had created a new nation where one could embrace a new life that they chose. Crevecoeur did not simply establish the fact that there was a difference between the life of an American and that of a European, but he argued that the American life was much better, thus strengthening the idea of superior social and political threads of culture within America. Another excerpt of his letter read,

> Happy those to whom this transition has served as a powerful spur to labor, to prosperity and to the good establishment of children, born in the days of their poverty and who had no other portion to expect but the rags of their parents, had it not been for their happy emigration.[70]

This illustrates not only Crevecoeur's assurance that American life was changed for the better from Europe, but that part of the new culture of American life was for the betterment of American children.

Thomas Paine also represents a vocal faction of Americans who viewed it as a necessity to consider themselves as separate from Europe. Thomas Paine seems an easy person to choose to illustrate these ideals because he was in the forefront of the activism to separate from England

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[69]J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur, *Letters from an American Farmer and Other Essays*. Ed. Dennis D. Moore (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2013), 31.
[70] Ibid., 43-44.

in the eighteenth century. In his famous work, *Common Sense*, when he extensively laid out his reasoning for the separation of England from the American colonies, Paine stated "I challenge the warmest advocate for reconciliation, to shew a single advantage that this continent can reap, by being connected with Great Britain."[71] He vehemently called for Americans to cast off their English connections and start anew as their own country with their own political threads of identity. As this was written in 1776, perhaps this impassioned ideology can be expected. But Paine continued to write under this belief throughout the Revolutionary War in his articles, *The American Crisis*, written from 1776 to 1783. Even in 1782, Paine argued for the importance of establishing and protecting and American national character. He argued, echoing the words of John Winthrop's sermon, that,

> Character is to us, in our present circumstances, of more importance than interest. We are a young nation, just stepping upon the stage of public life, and the eye of the world is upon us to see how we act. We have an enemy who is watching to destroy our reputation, and who will go any length to gain some evidence against us, that may serve to render our conduct suspected, and our character odious; because, could she accomplish this, wicked as it is, the world would withdraw from us, as from a people not to be trusted, and our task would then become difficult.[72]

Not only did Paine argue that Americans should separate themselves from England, he asserted that the failure to do so could wholly ruin America's chances for establishing connections with other nations and becoming a strong nation on its own. The establishment of a new, separate American identity was crucial to its ultimate success.

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[71] Thomas Paine, *Common Sense (1776)* (New York: Penguin Group, 1986), 86.
[72] Thomas Paine, *The American Crisis* (Philadelphia May 31, 1782).

Even contemporary historians look back on the formation of early American culture and argue that Americans formed a new and significant culture. Jill Lepore, in her text *A is for American: Letters and Other Characteristics in the Newly United States*, argues that the people of the early United States (roughly the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in her work) were unified and set apart by the creation of a common language. The development of a common language, or literary aspects of culture, Lepore argues, either helped to unify the many diverse segments of the population or further alienated them if they did not take up this language. Lepore focuses on seven different men, each with his own chapter, who influenced the national language during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: Noah Webster, William Thornton, Sequoyah, Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet, Abd al-Rahman Ibrahima, Samuel F. B. Morse, and Alexander Graham Bell.

In a particularly significant chapter, Lepore asserts that Noah Webster influenced the development of a uniquely American language, especially when it came to the spelling of words, in order to unite Americans under one language that was distinct from European English. It was this new language that was accepted by the American people, which aided in the creation of a new American identity that was separate from Europe. Lepore illustrated Noah Webster's intent to highlight the differences between Americans and Europeans. She argued that "even more significantly, Americans would benefit from knowing, at a glance, whether a writer was an American or an Englishman."[73] She quotes Noah Webster afterward, stating that he asserted,

[73] Jill Lepore, *A is for American: Letters and Other Characters in the Newly United States* (New York: Vintage Books, 2003), 37.

> A national language is a band of national union…every engine should be employed to render the people of this country *national*; to call their attachments home to their own country, and to inspire them with the pride of national character.[74]

Both Webster and Lepore argue for the importance of language and a national identity during the momentous era of the formation of America. Further, both emphasize the significance of creating a national identity that is separate from that of Europe.

Contemporary survey texts used within high school and college classrooms also often promote the idea that, during this time, Americans formed a significantly different culture. Oftentimes these texts devote an entire chapter to explain a "uniquely American" culture that emerged during and after the Revolutionary War. One such survey text, *The United States: Conquering a Continent Vol 1*, devotes an entire chapter to "American Qualities." The editors assert that,

> Most Americans agreed about certain distinguishing qualities in their society. They were quite willing to admit that they were a restless people, constantly moving, forever chasing the dollar or a new style of life. They regarded themselves as committed to progress, whether progress came in the form of making money, eradicating violence, inventing things, establishing new forms of entertainment, or finding a new zeal in religion.[75]

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[74] Noah Webster, *Dissertations* 397-98, in *A is for American: Letters and Other Characters in the Newly United States* by Jill Lepore (New York: Vintage Books, 2003), 37.
[75] Winthrop Jordan and Leon F. Litwack, *The United States: Conquering a Continent- Volume 1* (USA: North West Publishing LLC, 2003), 216.

According to this text, "most Americans" agreed that they were a new breed that had distinctive qualities to create a new culture. This is a perfect example of essentializing a group of people and asserting that they all believed and acted in a particular manner.

Survey texts continue to emphasize the idea of American exceptionalism even when narrowing the focus of American culture to the creation of literature. The text *Liberty, Equality, Power: A History of the American People* argues that "Americans in these years [after 1815] created distinctive forms of popular literature and art, and they found new ways of having fun."[76] According to these editors, culture was newly created in early America, even in the sphere of literature and art. Another survey text, *The American Journey: Volume 1*, confirms this assertion of American exceptionalism within literature and culture as a whole. The text dedicates an entire section to the formation of "a distinctly national literature."[77] Textbooks that are used to educate the next generation of American thinkers still insist the exceptionalism of American culture.

Gordon Wood, in his work *The American Revolution: A History*, explains the many different, often contradictory, and complex issues that led to and from the American Revolution. He argues that, "At the outset, Americans saw their Revolution as a heroic moral struggle for liberty against the evils of British tyranny, with the participants being larger-than-life heroes or villains."[78] This shows how important it was for Americans to see themselves as breaking away from a corrupt nation and recasting themselves into something far more virtuous and noble. Further, in one particular section, Wood highlights the importance of the formation of a new national character within the newly united states. He entitles this chapter "The Rising Glory of

[76] John M. Murrin, *Liberty, Equality, Power: A History of the American People* (USA: Harcourt Inc, 2001), 274.
[77] David Goldfield, *The American Journey: Volume 1* (New Jersey: Pearson, 2006), 344.
[78] Gordon Wood, *The American Revolution: A History* (New York: Modern Library Edition, 2002), xxiii.

America," which perfectly highlights his main point -- that Americans were attempting to create a new, glorious nation by reshaping themselves as they saw necessary.

Joyce Appleby, in her text *Inheriting the Revolution*, perhaps best explains these ideas of American exceptionalism within early America when she clarifies the intense significance that the belief in a distinct American culture had for early Americans. Appleby explains that for early Americans, "America's departure from English norms had enormous appeal."[79] Prominent American speakers and writers were continuously promoting the idea of America's unique and special qualities, and this appealed to the American people. Appleby argues,

> The vision of America as having a special destiny for the human race provided the raw material for creating a national myth, an elaboration of enlightenment themes, or what might be called the poor person's enlightenment, directed as it was to liberating ordinary men from the flagrant injuries of inherited privilege.[80]

The idea of American exceptionalism, whether true or myth, had meaning for early Americans as they were beginning life as a separate country. This could account for the fervor that was dedicated to the discussion of exceptionalism in early America.

Ultimately, luminaries and historians from both Europe and America agreed that early American culture was formed in a way that was entirely new and separate from Europe. Public commenters on early American life and identity emphasized a new America, which was distinct and exceptional. However, fairy tales chosen and produced during this same time period tell a

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[79] Joyce Appleby, *Inheriting the Revolution* (USA: Harvard College, 2000), 249.
[80] Ibid., 249.

different story, one that includes virtually all the accoutrements of European culture. Alexis de Tocqueville explained it best when he argued,

> I should say more than I mean if I were to assert that the literature of a nation is always subordinate to its social condition and its political constitution. I am aware that, independently of these causes, there are several others which confer certain characteristics on literary productions; but these appear to me to be the chief. The relations which exist between the social and political condition of a people and the genius of its authors are always very numerous: whoever knows the one is never completely ignorant of the other.[81]

As de Tocqueville states, the literature and the culture of a nation are inextricably linked. How then, does one account for the stark contrast within the essentialist exceptionalism shown by the testament of commenters on early American culture and those shown within the fairy tales themselves?

[81] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America (1835)* (USA: Penguin Classics, 2003), part 2.

CHAPTER 3: ABSTRACT

In the third chapter, I show that, even though Americans spoke publicly about breaking away from European influence, they preserved European values in their American ideas about exceptionalism. They adopted Charles Perrault's French fairy tales without change. They did not "Americanize" the tales in any way, aside from translating them into English. This undermines the claims of every prominent writer who described "new" Americans. I reveal the cultural binary in each fairy tale: (1) beauty and ugliness, (2) obedience and disobedience, (3) knowledge and ignorance, and (4) goodness and wickedness. I show how these characteristics matched the qualities Americans claimed to possess during the time period in which the compilation was published (1798). I show that the cultural binaries in the tales actually represent American exceptionalism quite well. The traits that the fairy tales value (beauty, educated obedience (or disobedience), knowledge, and goodness) are all traits that new Americans wanted in their new and noble nation. These characteristics are certainly ones that new Americans would want to cultivate in their younger generation to ensure a better nation.

CHAPTER 3: AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM AND CHARLES PERRAULT'S FAIRY TALES: CULTURAL BINARIES

It is not by chance that Perrault directed his energies in writing his fairy tales for the most part to civilize children and to prepare them for roles which he idealistically believed they should play in society.[82]

--Jack Zipes

This work focuses on Charles Perrault's seven classic fairy tales in *Tales and Stories of the Past, With Morals* (*Histoires ou Contes du temps passé*), published in 1697, made up of "The Little Red Riding Hood," "Cinderella, or the Little Glass Slipper" "Puss in Boots," "Bluebeard," "Riquet and the Tuft," "The Fairy," and "The Little Thumbling" (sometimes known as "Little Tom Thumb" or "The Little Thumb"). It analyzes the fairy tales for their behavior models and moral ideals for cultural success, as prescribed for both girls and boys within the original tales, as well as within an early American compilation published in 1798. One hundred years later, the behavioral prescriptions and themes of morality are identical. The only change between the two publications is the deletion of the "Morals" that existed at the end of Perrault's original tales.

The particular American edition that I chose to analyze for this project was published in 1798 in New York by John Harrisson as a complete compilation that included all seven of these fairy tales. Prior to the publication of this compilation of Perrault's tales, single versions of *some* of these tales had been published and circulated within early America, but this was one of the first publications that contained all seven, and it occurred in an important period. This 1798 compilation was published in the middle of a crucial era of America's national identity formation, which took place from the 1750s to the 1850s. This publication, then, was circulated

[82] Jack Zipes, Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion (New York: Routledge, 2012), 13-14.

during a time when many public figures were touting the creation of a new and special America, and these fairy tales appear to be part of that vision. Since these fairy tales were distributed in such a crucial era of identity formation, it becomes even more important to analyze what sort of cultural prescriptions those tales carried. The fact that the tales were adopted without transformation from the French version is extremely important because it reveals a contradiction between what the popular figures in this era of national identity formation were arguing and what was actually being taken in by the public. These writers were arguing that Americans were breaking away from their European counterparts and starting a new, superior culture when, in reality, they were adopting fairy tales directly from Europe.

Four binaries of virtue/vice run through the tales, provide a formula for cultural success in both the French and American versions of the tales, and suggest what the "new" American valued: (1) beauty and ugliness, (2) obedience and disobedience, (3) knowledge and ignorance, and (4) goodness and wickedness. Typically, a moral binary refers to a cultural value with two predominant options; for example, beauty and ugliness. Oftentimes these options (such as beauty and ugliness) oppose one another, but this is not always the case. These binaries appear differently in each tale, as the vices and virtues are associated with different characters, depending on their gender, age, economic status, and marital status. Vices and virtues are assigned to characters in the same manner in the original French version as in the American translations. The virtues and vices that Americans chose to represent in the fairy tales they read to their children illuminate what these same Americans deemed to be important cultural and behavioral prescriptions. Gordon Wood argues that "despite their rejection of the luxury and corruption of the Old World, the American Revolutionaries never meant to repudiate the best of

English and European culture, but rather to embrace and fulfill it."[83] These Americans were able to pick, choose, and alter whatever works of European literature that they chose to pass on to their younger generations. The types of messages that fairy tales gave their readers are crucial to understanding the underlying accepted cultural values and behavioral prescriptions of that culture. The cultural and behavioral prescriptions embedded in these fairy tales are especially significant because they were chosen to be reprinted by American publishers in a time when America was determined to reshape itself into a new world. Perrault presented these prescriptions as widely accepted core values, straight from the heart of Europe. But to many Americans, these prescriptions highlighted "exceptional" characteristics that new citizens of a new nation needed to be successful. The fairy tales themselves provided a "formula for success" for new American generations.

[83] Gordon Wood, *The American Revolution: A History* (New York: Modern Library Edition, 2002), 96.

BEAUTY AND UGLINESS

Beauty and ugliness are perhaps the most self-explanatory of the binaries concerning virtue and vice within Charles Perrault's fairy tales. This concept does not refer, however, completely to one's outward physical appearance. In many cases, a character's beauty or ugliness reflects the goodness or wickedness of the character's inner nature. Typically, in Perrault's tales, beauty is found in conjunction with goodness, and ugliness with wickedness, but this does not fit all the fairy tales. In a small number of the tales, a character's less-than-ideal outward appearance masks an inner goodness or cleverness that allows them to achieve success in the end. Typically, however, especially with female characters, goodness and beauty are found to be inextricably linked.

It is certainly the case in "Cinderella, or the Little Glass Slipper" where the main character, Cinderella's, beauty is always discussed in tandem with her goodness. In the tale, Cinderella is prized as a most beautiful girl, described as "of unparalleled goodness and sweetness of temper."[84] Her stepsisters and stepmother, on the other hand, were described as "odious and disagreeable."[85] Cinderella is clearly written as being beautiful and full of goodness, while her step-sisters are ugly and mean of heart. The stepsisters' ugliness mirrored their inner personality defects, while Cinderella's beauty mirrored her good graces. Cinderella is despised and forced to work as a housemaid because her stepmother "could not bear the good qualities of this pretty girl, and the less because they made her own daughters appear the more odious."[86] Through all of this, the tale intimated that "Cinderella, notwithstanding her coarse apparel, was a

[84] Charles Perrault, "Cinderella, or the Glass Slipper," in *Fairy Tales, or History of Past Times*, Editor John Harrisson (Harrisson: New York, 1798), 58.
[85] Ibid., 58.
[86] Ibid., 58.

hundred times more beautiful than her sisters."[87] Both versions of the tale found it necessary to constantly remind the reader that Cinderella was beautiful, no matter how much housework she had to do. Although Cinderella was cast as a lowly housemaid, she was still able to capture the heart of her prince and become his wife due to her beauty, grace, and sweetness. When she entered the ballroom, the entire room cried, "How handsome she is!"[88] Again, her grace and sweetness was discovered and prized later on, but the first thing that readers are told and the first thing that the ball attendees notice is Cinderella's beauty. This illustrates that in this tale, beauty captures the eye and shows the character as special. It then seemed obvious that due to her beauty, a sweetness of character would follow. Beauty and sweetness, then, mattered far more than riches or fashion when attempting to win the hand of a husband.

The emphasis on beauty is continued within the tale of "Little Red Riding Hood." The title character is introduced as "the prettiest creature who was ever seen."[89] This decision to emphasize the girl's beauty immediately set a tone of sympathy for her character, because she was just a little, pretty girl. It was her pretty looks and naïve behavior that caught the eye of the wolf, who wanted very much to eat her. This established the tale's plot, which revolved around the wolf attempting to talk with the girl, rushing to arrive to her grandmother's house first, and masquerading as her grandmother in order to eat the little girl. Little Red Riding Hood's beauty was the catalyst for the tale, and the reason that she caught the eye of the wolf.

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[87] Charles Perrault, "Cinderella, or the Glass Slipper," in *Fairy Tales, or History of Past Times*, Editor John Harrisson (Harrisson: New York, 1798), 59.
[88] Ibid., 64.
[89] Charles Perrault, "Little Red Riding Hood," in *Fairy Tales, or History of Past Times*, Editor John Harrisson (Harrisson: New York, 1798), 5.

The title character in the tale "Bluebeard" is described as a rich, but "frightfully ugly" man with a blue beard who wanted to take a wife.[90] He invited two sisters, who are described as "perfect beauties" to his castle to entreat one of them to marry him, but both refused him.[91] After entertaining them at the castle for a week, the youngest girl agreed to marry him. This story again emphasizes beauty as opposed to ugliness to show "goodness." The man with the blue beard is highlighted as ugly and hideous and, because of this, no girl wanted to have him despite his riches. His heart is only later said to be hard as well, but this was never mentioned in the first half of the story. The story opened with a discussion of his ugliness: "There was once a man who had fine houses, both in town and country, a deal of silver and gold plate, embroidered furniture, and coaches gilded all over with gold. But this man was so unlucky as to have a blue beard, which made him so frightfully ugly that all the women and girls ran away from him."[92] His ugliness is the chief concern when women are deciding whether or not to marry him, rather than his kindness or intelligence. Then, the girl whom he eventually does marry is supposed to be a "perfect beauty," which makes the reader assume *she* is the sympathetic character, rather than the title character who has shown no meanness of heart up to that point. It is his appearance enough that suggested a less than perfect personality, which ends up being the case later on in the tale. Yet again, beauty and goodness are paired with one another.

This trope is continued within the tale, "The Fairy." In this story, there is a widow with two daughters, one of whom is described as being proud and disagreeable, while the other is full of sweetness and "one of the most beautiful girls anyone had ever seen."[93] As in many tales, the

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[90] Charles Perrault, "Bluebeard," in *Fairy Tales, or History of Past Times*, Editor John Harrisson (Harrisson: New York, 1798), 16.
[91] Ibid., 16.
[92] Ibid., 16.
[93] Charles Perrault, "The Fairy," in *Fairy Tales, or History of Past Times*, Editor John Harrisson (Harrisson: New York, 1798), 10.

mother took to the eldest, disagreeable daughter, who was said to be most like herself, and despised the beautiful and sweet daughter. One day, a poor woman asked the good daughter for a drink of water. When the girl complied, the poor woman, who was truly a fairy, gave her a present of two roses, two pearls, and two large diamonds, commenting that it was because the girl was "so very pretty" and "so good and so mannerly."[94] When she told her mother what had happened, the mother quickly sent her other daughter out to find the fairy to get another gift. When that daughter returned home with snakes and toads, as the fairy told her she was "an ill-bred minx," the good daughter was blamed for it and the mother chased her into the forest.[95] However, while the good daughter cried in the forest, a prince discovered her there and fell in love with her. This story emphasizes the necessity of goodness in order to find success, represented by jewels, flowers, and love, but still the daughter had beauty to confirm all of these things. Again, beauty and goodness seem to be tied inextricably with one another.

Finally, the idea of beauty and ugliness is complicated within the tale "Riquet and the Tuft." The main character, called Riquet, was immediately identified as horribly ugly and deformed. The tale opened with,

> There was once upon a time, a queen who was brought to bed of a son, so hideously ugly, that it was long disputed whether he had human form. A fairy, who was at his birth, affirmed he would be very amiable for all that, since he should be endured with abundance of wit: She even added that it would be in his power, by virtue of the gift she had just then given him, to bestow on the person he loved, as much wit as he pleased. All this somewhat comforted the

[94] Charles Perrault, "The Fairy," in *Fairy Tales, or History of Past Times*, Editor John Harrisson (New York: Harrisson, 1798), 11.
[95] Ibid., 14.

> poor queen, who was under a grievous affliction for having brought into the world such a deformed marmot.[96]

So Riquet, although he possessed wit and intelligence, was horribly ugly. Then, about seven years later, the queen of a neighboring kingdom had two daughters, one who was "more beautiful than the day" but had no intelligence, and another daughter who had great wit but was very ugly.[97] As they grew up, their respective characteristics only grew stronger. In the meanwhile, Riquet had fallen in love with the beautiful daughter's portrait and complimented her on her beauty upon meeting her. However, the beautiful girl was painfully aware that she had no wit and felt ashamed. All of the main characters are portrayed as being good, sympathetic characters, no matter what their looks. However, if one character was ugly, they were compensated by having high intelligence, and vice versa. No character had the misfortune of being both ugly *and* without intelligence.

However, the fairy gave Riquet the ability to bestow his level of intelligence upon anyone whom he loved, so he offered to give the beautiful daughter wit if she agreed to marry him in one year. She agreed then, and enjoyed all the gifts of intelligence. But when it came time to marry him, she told him she had doubts due to his ugliness. To this, Riquet told her that she had the power to make him as beautiful as she wished, as he had done for her with intelligence, if she loved him. In that moment, she saw him transformed into "the handsomest and most amiable man she ever beheld."[98] They then married and lived happily. But toward the end of the tale, it suggests that Riquet's transformation into a handsome man did not happen by magic, but through love. It is implied that Riquet never literally transformed, but because the princess loved him, she

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[96] Charles Perrault, "Riquet and the Tuft," in *Fairy Tales, or History of Past Times*, Editor John Harrisson (New York: Harrisson, 1798), 72-73.
[97] Ibid., 73.
[98] Ibid., 85.

no longer saw his deformities as ugly and instead saw him as beautiful. This is certainly a more nuanced description of beauty and ugliness than any of the previous tales. The characters' outward appearance gave no indication of their inner morality, but Riquet's ugliness did give the beautiful princess pause in marrying him until her love for him overpowered his ugliness. Only then did she fully accept him. So the idea of beauty is still important in this tale, but ugliness apparently can be compensated with great intelligence.

Beauty and ugliness is also a little bit more complicated within the tale, "The Little Thumbling" (also written as "Little Thumb" or "Tom Thumb"). In this tale, a woodcutter and his wife had seven boys; the youngest was very small and sickly and named Tom Thumb, or the Little Thumb. As the boys grew up, the family was very poor and Tom Thumb overheard his father telling his mother that he planned on "losing" the boys in the woods so he would not have to see them starve. Tom Thumb made up a plan to lead his brothers back home after this occurred, so the second time, his father led them deep into the forest where they did get lost. But then, the brothers came across a house in the woods where they met a woman. This woman saw that the children were "so very pretty," and resolved to help them.[99] It was blatant that the woman only helped the children because they were good-looking. Tom was able to use his wits to get himself and his brothers out of the forest and back to his parents, with a good amount of money. Further, in the French version, the moral at the end of the tale read,

> It is no affliction to have many children, if they all are good looking,
> courteous, and strong, but if one is sickly or slow-witted, he will be scorned,

[99] Charles Perrault, "The Little Thumbling," in *Fairy Tales, or History of Past Times*, Editor John Harrisson (New York: Harrisson, 1798), 96.

> ridiculed, and despised. However, it is often the little urchin who brings good fortune to the entire family.[100]

So, on one hand, the tale emphasizes the need for the children to be good-looking in order to bring the family success; but it allows that if one is slightly lacking in good looks or health, then he might be the one to bring the family to their ultimate success, especially if he possesses wit or cleverness. This again shows a marked interest in the concept of beauty, but it does not necessarily equate beauty with goodness.

It seems that in both the American and French versions of these tales, beauty and ugliness are extremely important concepts to consider when assessing the value of a person. Four out of the seven tales link the characters' beauty or ugliness with their inner character. Those who possess beauty also possess sweetness or goodness, while those characters who are ugly typically possess meanness of heart or some sort of immorality. Beauty and goodness, as well as wickedness and immorality, are shown to be linked within these fairy tales. However, at least two of the tales do show that there are ways to overcome the flaw of ugliness and still have a good heart, and that is by possessing intelligence or cleverness.

The fact that American audiences accepted the importance of beauty and ugliness within their children's literature highlights an important part of the American ideal. Characters in these fairy tales who are beautiful are typically also full of goodness. For example, in Cinderella, her character descriptions rarely mentioned her goodness without also mentioning her pleasing beauty. Both traits helped her win the heart of the prince and the kingdom. So, Americans value beauty as an important part of their essential character. Alexis de Tocqueville argues that

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[100] Charles Perrault, *Histoires ou Contes du Temps Passe, Avec Des Moralites*, 1697 (Bordas: Bantam Book-Peacok Press, 1978), 91.

Americans are naturally healthier and of hardier stock than Europeans, since they are descended from a "northern race."[101] De Tocqueville, too, sees a direct correlation between Americans' good health and their superior goodness. In his work, *Journey to America,* he outlines five different reasons that contribute to what he sees as Americans' moral superiority, and their good health is the first listed. America and its children's literature, as well as popular writers of the day, praise characters of beauty, health, and goodness. Thus, New Americans should continue to strive for similar values of beauty and goodness.

[101] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Journey to America* (1831), Trans. George Lawrence, ed. J.P. Mayer (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1971), 230.

OBEDIENCE AND DISOBEDIENCE

In Charles Perrault's fairy tales, obedience and disobedience are written in many different ways. Obedience can mean anything from following the orders of a king or the wishes of your parents, to understanding one's culturally accepted place in a society. Disobedience, therefore, has similar multifaceted meanings. One can be disobedient and be punished, or disobedient and be rewarded, depending on the character's goodness and fate. Neither obedience nor disobedience seem to be attributed one hundred percent to either good or bad characters; their success depends on the reason that they obeyed or disobeyed.

In "Cinderella, or the Little Glass Slipper," obedience is portrayed in a rather contradictory manner. On one hand, Cinderella is praised for her "patience" and grace for obeying her stepmothers' demands and handling the housework, despite the unfair situation. Cinderella's willingness to help her family, despite the mean and dismissive way they treated her, is praised as one of her great qualities. At one point in the story, while Cinderella's stepsisters were getting ready to go to the ball, they taunted Cinderella and teased her for not being allowed to go. The tale then comments, "Anyone but Cinderella would have dressed their heads awry, but she was very good, and dressed them perfectly well."[102] Hence, Cinderella is praised for obeying her duties and not straying from those expectations. However, it is Cinderella's disobedience that eventually leads her to her success in life. She is not allowed to go to the ball because of her lowly station. She is told that people would laugh to see her at a ball, but after her Godmother changes her clothing and gives her a coach, Cinderella disobeys custom and goes to the ball. It is here that she is praised as beautiful and captures the eye of the prince,

[102] Charles Perrault, "Cinderella, or the Glass Slipper" in *Fairy Tales, or History of Past Times*, Editor John Harrisson (New York: Harrisson, 1798), 61.

whom she eventually marries. Had she obeyed societal custom and stayed home, she would have never met the prince and risen above the station her stepmother gave to her.

In "Little Red Riding Hood," obedience and disobedience is not necessarily presented in such a cut-and-dried manner. Little Red Riding Hood obeys her mother's request to go into the forest to deliver food to her sick grandmother. Nevertheless, along the way, she gets sidetracked by the wolf, who asks her questions about where she is going. The little girl answers, but continues to obey her mother's wishes. However, instead of taking the fastest, most direct route, Little Red Riding Hood meanders along the path. The tale states, "The wolf began to run as fast as he could, taking the nearest way, and the little girl went by that farthest about, diverting herself by gathering nuts, running after butterflies, and making nosegays of each little flower she met with."[103] Because she wandered along the farthest past, amusing herself, the wolf was able to get to the grandmother's house first and eat her, which led to Little Red Riding Hood's death as well. Although taking the farthest path was not directly disobedient to her mother's wishes, it still caused a delay in Little Red Riding Hood's travel, which eventually caused her demise. This sends a clear message that children should obey their parents or terrible things could happen.

"The Little Thumbling" lightly touches upon disobedience and obedience throughout the tale. When Tom overheard his father's decision to leave him and his seven sons in the woods, he came up with an idea to thwart that plan. He snuck out of the house, filled his pockets with pebbles, and left a trail to lead his brothers back to their parents' house. Although his father never told him outright to not return, Tom knew his father's intentions but disobeyed them in order to return his brothers home to safety. He continued to try to return home even after his

[103] Charles Perrault, "Little Red Riding Hood" in *Fairy Tales, or History of Past Times*, Editor John Harrisson (New York: Harrisson, 1798), 7.

father took the sons even deeper into the woods the next day. Then, it by tricking an ogre and his wife, Tom was able to find his way back to his parents. Because of Tom's insistence to disobey his father's wishes, he and his brothers returned to their parents, armed with treasure that they had stolen from the ogre. It seems that Tom's disobedience is a positive thing in this tale because it is what granted Tom and his family safety as well as wealth. In this case, the child knew better than the parent as to the best course of safety and prosperity for their family.

Disobedience of societal norms is essentially praised in "Puss in Boots." In this tale, a miller's third son is left with only a talking cat and no wealth or hopes of social standing. This makes the son quite upset until he learns that the cat is so clever that it had convinced a nearby king into thinking that the son was really a marquis who was assisting the king throughout the past few months. The cat was able to steal fashionable, rich clothing for the son to wear when he met the king's daughter, who immediately fell in love with the young man. The cat then tricked an ogre who owned nearby lands and killed him, taking the lands under the name of the marquis, who was really the miller's son. This led the king to accept the miller's son as his son-in-law and as a real marquis. The cat's deceit and disobedience of social law (which would never have allowed a poor miller's son to marry a princess or rule over so much land) allowed the son to rise far above his social standing and achieve happiness.

Obedience and disobedience is a key concept within the tale, "Bluebeard." After Bluebeard and the youngest daughter had been married for several months, he announced he has to go on a business trip and would leave her in the castle for a short time. He told her that, in his absence, she may have run of the entire castle and host as many parties as she wishes, as long as she did not enter one small closet in the castle. He told her that she could have access to all his money and keys "but for this little one here, it is the key of the closet, which I forbid you, and

forbid it in such a manner, that if you happen to open it there is nothing but what you may expect from my just anger and resentment."[104] After he left, she amused herself for several days, but eventually her curiosity overtook her and she opened the forbidden closet door. But when she opened the door, she saw blood and the mutilated bodies of Bluebeard's past wives. She attempted to clean the key, which had blood on it, but was unsuccessful. So, when Bluebeard returned and demanded to see the key, he knew she had disobeyed his orders and told her she would now join his past wives in the closet. However, she convinced Bluebeard to give her some time before he killed her and, in that time, she was able to call for help from her brothers. Her brothers burst in and saved her by killing Bluebeard, and the now-widow became heir to the estate, remarries, and lived happily in Bluebeard's castle for the rest of her days.

This is an interesting turn of events because, typically, one would assume from the first half of the tale that the moral is for a wife to always obey her husband. But since the tale ultimately results in the wife's favor – she escapes her murderous husband, gains all of his riches, and remarried – it seems that her act of disobedience actually helped her win a happier life. Her disobedience revealed that her husband's true nature was one of a murderer, and that certainly seems to show that her disobedience led to a positive outcome.

Interestingly, in the American and French versions of these tales, it seems that obedience and disobedience are given equal approval, depending on the situation. The tales do emphasize the need for children to be aware of the rules of society in order to maintain their safety, as in "Little Red Riding Hood," but aside from this, in situations that are dangerous or unfair, the tales seem to approve of disobedience in order to protect one's own safety or the safety of their

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[104] Charles Perrault, "Bluebeard" in *Fairy Tales, or History of Past Times*, Editor John Harrisson (New York: Harrisson, 1798), 18.

families. For example, if Bluebeard's wife had not disobeyed his orders, she would have never discovered her husband's murderous secrets. Further, if the cat in "Puss and Boots" had never deceived the king, the poor miller's son would not have defied social class and achieved the heart of the princess. Therefore, a bit of disobedience seems to be a good thing if the situation calls for it.

These fairy tales show a key theme of obedience and disobedience as it relates to early American culture. These tales praise disobedience to tyranny or unfairness, but urge patience and obedience to justice and fair rules. To a country that recently was embroiled in a war to break away from their King, this seems highly significant. For example, within "The Little Thumbling," Tom Thumb disobeyed his father's wish that he and his brothers should stay lost in the woods. Tom knew better than his father and continuously tried to lead all the sons back home, finding treasure in the process. Because Tom disobeyed his father, his entire family benefitted. This certainly could be applied to the way many Americans viewed their break with England. Many colonists felt they knew better than the king as to what was good for them and the country. In Thomas Paine's famous work, *Common Sense*, he calls for the separation of England from the American colonies -- a direct act of disobedience. Paine stated, "I challenge the warmest advocate for reconciliation, to shew a single advantage that this continent can reap, by being connected with Great Britain."[105] They disobeyed, leading to even more prosperity. The tales emphasize the positivity of obeying one's parents or superiors, as long as they are being just and fair. Then, taking it further, the idea that people are justified in their disobedience as long as they are disobeying oppression is something that is deeply embedded within the American ideal.

[105] Thomas Paine, *Common Sense (1776)* (New York: Penguin Group, 1986), 86.

KNOWLEDGE AND IGNORANCE

Knowledge and ignorance are not always presented in the same manner within Charles Perrault's tales. At face value, knowledge means having intelligence, whereas ignorance is a lack of intelligence. This is true in some of the tales, but not for all. In some, "knowledge" means an awareness of the realities of the world, so its counterpart, "ignorance," refers more to a naiveté rather than a stupidity. Further, in other tales, knowledge can mean cleverness, or cunning, and the ability to trick other characters. Neither knowledge nor ignorance is synonymous with a character's being good or bad; both types of characters can be seen as possessing either knowledge or ignorance, and it depends on other factors whether they are considered good or evil.

Knowledge and ignorance are not emphasized in "Cinderella, or the Little Glass Slipper." Nevertheless, the absence of interest about intelligence is still significant. Intelligence or lack thereof is not mentioned in the personalities of any of the main characters, even the magical godmother. Physical appearance and kindness of heart is emphasized instead throughout the tale.

Knowledge and ignorance are certainly present within the "Little Red Riding Hood." In this case, ignorance is less a form of stupidity, but takes the form of childish naiveté. During the tale, it said "the poor child, who did not know that it was dangerous to stay and hear a Wolf talk…"[106] Because Little Red Riding Hood did not know that she should not listen or talk to wolves (whether literal or figurative), she told him where she was going. This led the wolf directly to her grandmother's house, where he killed her grandmother and eventually Little Red Riding Hood herself. Since Little Red Riding Hood was ignorant to safety conventions, she led

[106] Charles Perrault, "Little Red Riding Hood" in *Fairy Tales, or History of Past Times*, Editor John Harrisson (New York: Harrisson, 1798), 6.

herself into a dangerous situation that caused her death. This definitely emphasizes a need for children to be aware of how to stay safe and not to talk with strangers.

Knowledge and ignorance within "Bluebeard" are presented as something closer akin to curiosity. At face value, Bluebeard's wife was ignorant because she was unaware of the fact that Bluebeard killed his previous wives who disobeyed him. Then, once she disobeyed his orders, she gained the knowledge of his true inner nature. But the tale digs deeper into this moral binary with the concept of curiosity. The fact that Bluebeard had killed several wives before this occasion implies that all of these women possessed an insatiable curiosity that overcame them and made the women disobey him. This further implies that all women possess this flaw, in Bluebeard's eyes, as he felt the need to test his wives to see if they would obey him. Then, the moral at the end of the French tale reads, "Curiosity, in spite of its appeal, often leads to deep regret. To the displeasure of many a maiden, its enjoyment is short lived. Once satisfied, it ceases to exist, and always costs dearly."[107] Hence, the tale itself warns against curiosity, as it will "cost dearly," but this curiosity led to Bluebeard's wife knowing her husband's character, and although it put her life at risk, it ultimately led to gaining her late husband's riches.

"Riquet and the Tuft" closely examined the concept of knowledge and ignorance. As explained earlier, the title character possessed a great amount of intelligence, but was extremely ugly. Further, two princesses living in the neighboring kingdom possessed beauty and ignorance, and wit and ugliness, respectively. At first, Riquet's ugliness horrified his mother, but after a fairy bestowed intelligence on him, his fate began to change. The tale states, "it is true, that this child, no sooner began to prattle, but he said a thousand pretty things, and had something of such

[107]Charles Perrault, *Histoires ou Contes du Temps Passe, Avec Des Moralites*, 1697 (Bordas: Bantam Book-Peacok Press, 1978), 42.

a wittiness, that he charmed everybody."[108] Therefore, despite Riquet's ugliness, he was able to charm everyone around him due to his wit and intelligence.

In the neighboring kingdom, the daughter who was given beauty but no intelligence was very upset because she realized that she was ignorant. Riquet had fallen in love with her portrait and, upon their meeting, told her of her beauty and advantages. Their conversation went as follows,

> 'Beauty,' said Riquet, 'is such a good advantage that it ought to take place of all things; and since you possess this treasure, I see nothing can possibly very much afflict you.' 'I had far rather' (cried the princess,) 'be as ugly as you are, and have wit, than have the beauty I possess, and be so stupid as I am.'[109]

The princess emphasized that she would gladly give up her beauty for his wit. Riquet then told her of his power to bestow intelligence on someone he loved, and said that if she agreed to marry him in one year, he would give her intelligence. She agreed and becomes one of the most intelligent women in the kingdom. However, after one year, the princess conveniently forgo5 about her promise to marry Riquet and confessed that she didn't think she wanted to marry him anymore, because she now had good sense, which made it more difficult to be pleased. In the end, the princess's love for Riquet overpowered his ugliness and made him look beautiful to her, and they married and enjoyed their intelligence together.

So it seems as if the tale praises the gift of intelligence, as the princess continuously wishes for wit, and is very satisfied once Riquet gives her the gift of intelligence. However, if intelligence were what matters most, why didn't Riquet immediately bestow his attentions on the

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[108] Charles Perrault, "Riquet and the Tuft" in *Fairy Tales, or History of Past Times*, Editor John Harrisson (New York: Harrisson, 1798), 73.
[109] Ibid., 77.

already intelligent, but ugly, other sister? She is a brief side character to the story, because Riquet is so infatuated by the other princess's beauty. He never even considers the daughter who already possesses wit, because he knows he can bestow intelligence on the one he loves; therefore, he can have both beauty and intelligence in his wife. So while this tale may seem convincingly approving of knowledge, it still gives heavy credence to the importance of beauty as well.

Knowledge is represented in "Puss in Boots" as something more closely akin to cleverness. The main character, a miller's third son, was left only a cat when his father passed away. After feeling dejected about his economic and social status, the son realized that this cat possessed an immense amount of cunning and knowledge. The cat told him that he could make all of the boy's dreams come true, if he just followed the cat's directions. The cat led the miller's son through a variety of different tasks that eventually set him up as the prince of the entire kingdom, as well as the owner of a large castle and many lands.[110] The cat's cunning and knowledgeable directions allowed the miller's son (who was also handsome) to pull himself out of his low-class standing and win the heart of a princess. Without the cat, who possessed cleverness and knowledge, the miller's son would have remained poor and without the love of a princess and a kingdom.

Knowledge is again presented as both cunning and good sense within "The Little Thumbling." As explained earlier, a woodcutter and his wife had seven sons, the youngest of whom was very small. The tale states that "the youngest was very sickly" and it was said that he "scarcely ever spoke a word, which they considered to be a sign of stupidity, although it was in

[110] Charles Perrault, "Puss in Boots" in *Fairy Tales, or History of Past Times*, Editor John Harrisson (New York: Harrisson, 1798), 70.

truth a mark of good sense."[111] Right away, readers are presented with the knowledge that this main character possesses knowledge and is misunderstood by his family. Because of his small size and perceived ignorance, Little Tom Thumb was blamed for everything that goes wrong in the family's life and is often scorned. After his father resolved to lose his children in the woods so he wouldn't see them starve, Tom took it upon himself to figure out how to lead himself and his brothers back home. After the second time the boys were returned to the woods, they came upon a house that belonged to an ogre and his wife. The wife took pity on the boys because they were handsome. She tried to hide the boys from the ogre, but they were found out, and the ogre was determined to eat them after a night's rest. Interestingly, the ogre had seven daughters who each wore a little gold crown. Little Thumb cleverly decided to steal their crowns while they were sleeping, in order to trick the ogre into thinking the seven brothers were really the seven daughters. This worked and, in the night, the ogre blindly cut the throats of his seven daughters, allowing the seven brothers to escape. Later, Little Thumb returned and tricked the ogre's wife into giving him all their riches, which he brought back to his family who lived happily thereon. It was Little Thumb's cleverness that allowed him to trick the ogre and his wife, gain their riches, and return to the safety of their parents' home.

All of these tales do emphasize a high regard for intelligence and cleverness. This shows that both cultures (American and French) see the benefits of intelligence. However, not all of the tales regard intelligence as the highest quality, because many characters would prefer to have both intelligence and beauty. In any case, in all the tales, if the character possesses intelligence, they are able to achieve to success through that intelligence.

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[111] Charles Perrault, "The Little Thumbling" in *Fairy Tales, or History of Past Times*, Editor John Harrisson (New York: Harrisson, 1798), 88.

The pursuit of knowledge and intelligence is certainly important to the early American ideal. Americans were touted as having better upward social mobility than the oppressed in Europe; therefore they would not only have access to better financial opportunity, but also better educational opportunities. Gordon Wood, in his work *The American Revolution,* illuminated the immense importance of the concept of intelligence on early Americans. He notes that "many American intellectuals came to believe that the torch of civilization was being passed across the Atlantic to the New World, where it would burn even more brightly."[112] During this age of rebirth after the Revolution, Americans were highly conscious of the importance of intelligence and the pursuit of knowledge. Americans were expected to take advantage of these new educational opportunities, and these fairy tales reflect this. Characters with intelligence and wit are able to overcome any and all of their various obstacles by using that wit and achieving success. For example, the poor miller's son was able to overcome his poverty and seemingly hopeless social situation by taking advantage of his cat's cleverness. This cleverness led to the miller's son becoming the marquis over many lands as well as the husband of a beautiful princess. This is something virtually impossible for a man of his station had he not had access to his cat's intelligence. To Americans, intelligence and wit are an indelible aspect of their success.

[112] Gordon Wood, *The American Revolution: A History* (New York: Modern Library Edition, 2002), 96.

GOODNESS AND WICKEDNESS

Within Charles Perrault's tales, goodness and wickedness seem to have very specific meanings. "Goodness" tends to represent the gentleness or sweetness of personality. When a character is described as "good," it typically denotes a kindness and a sweetness about their temperament. Wickedness, however, focuses primarily on the character's intentions and actions. If a character is described as "wicked," they are usually tempted to cause harm or pain to another character for their own benefit or amusement. Goodness and wickedness seem to be all-encompassing personality traits. A character is rarely "a little good" or "a little wicked." Rarely does one change from good to wicked or from wicked to good. It is a permanent, innate quality in a character's make-up. Their respective goodness or wickedness describes their entire being and sets up that character for success or failure.

Goodness is emphasized throughout "Cinderella." As mentioned before, Cinderella is prized as a most beautiful girl, but she is also described as "of unparalleled goodness and sweetness of temper."[113] Her stepsisters, on the other hand, are "odious and disagreeable."[114] Her stepmother is described, not as the "wicked stepmother" that many know in today's popular culture, but as "the proudest and most haughty woman any has ever seen."[115] It is her actions that show her as a wicked character rather than the word "wicked." Throughout the tale, Cinderella's sweetness, grace, and goodness are discussed alongside her beauty. In Perrault's original tale, the moral at the end of the story states,

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[113] Charles Perrault, "Cinderella, or the Glass Slipper" in *Fairy Tales, or History of Past Times*, Editor John Harrisson (New York: Harrisson, 1798), 58.
[114] Ibid., 58.
[115] Ibid., 58.

> Beauty in a woman is a rare treasure that will always be admired. Graciousness, however, is priceless and of even greater value. This is what Cinderella's godmother gave to her when she taught her to behave like a queen. Young women, in the winning of a heart, graciousness is more important than a beautiful hairdo. It is a true gift of the fairies. Without it nothing is possible; with it, one can do anything.[116]

Here is where Perrault directly states that it is Cinderella's goodness that raises her above the rest. Her beauty should be prized, but her goodness and graciousness helped her win the heart of the prince and free her from her stepmother.

It is even easier to see the good and wicked binary within "Little Red Riding Hood," because main characters are often described with the adjectives "good" and "wicked." Little Red Riding Hood is not referred to as "good" but she is oftentimes referred to as pretty, "the little girl," or "the poor little girl."[117] This label emphasizes the point that the character is a naive child and therefore a sympathetic character. However, each time the mother or grandmother is mentioned, they are referred to as "the good woman" or "the good grandmother."[118] This could refer to the common titles given to older women during this time period, but it could also connote a moral goodness within the women that show they too are sympathetic characters. The wolf, then, is often referred to as "the wicked wolf." In the last line of the tale, it states, "And, saying these words, this wicked wolf fell upon Little Red Riding Hood, and ate her all up."[119] This explicitly shows the reader that the wolf character is wicked and, consequently, bad.

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[116] Charles Perrault, *Histoires ou Contes du Temps Passe, Avec Des Moralites*, 1697 (Bordas: Bantam Book-Peacok Press, 1978), 66.
[117] Charles Perrault, "Little Red Riding Hood" in *Fairy Tales, or History of Past Times*, Editor John Harrisson (New York: Harrisson, 1798), 5-9.
[118] Ibid., 5, 7.
[119] Ibid., 9.

Goodness and wickedness are treated with a bit more subtlety in "Bluebeard." The reader does not get any indication of Bluebeard's wickedness until the latter half of the tale. In the beginning, Bluebeard was shown as quite jovial and inviting, despite his ugliness. He was almost a sympathetic character because it seemed like he is honestly just trying to find a wife to make happy, but they all ran from him due to his odd outward appearance. Only after his wife disobeyed him did the reader find out that Bluebeard had been murdering his past wives and hiding them in a small closet in his castle. When he confronted his wife, she immediately burst in to tears and begs him to have mercy on her. The tale states "she would have melted a rock, so beautiful and sorrowful was she; but Blue Beard had a heart harder than any rock!"[120] It is here that the reader is certain that Bluebeard is wicked, because his murderous past and hard heart is uncovered. When he is eventually killed, the reader is left with no sympathy for him and they triumph in the wife's ability to inherit his fortune and eventually remarry. Bluebeard's wickedness should have been apparent with the introduction of his ugliness, if the tale followed typical tropes, but his joviality and seemingly generous nature overshadowed this feature and hid his wickedness until the end of the tale.

Goodness and wickedness are again presented clearly in "The Fairy." As explained earlier, a widow had two daughters, one of whom was described as being proud and disagreeable, while the other was described as full of sweetness and "one of the most beautiful girls anyone had ever seen."[121] When the good daughter agreed to give water to a poor woman, the woman, who was truly a fairy, gave her a present of two roses, two pearls, and two large diamonds, commenting that it was because the girl was "so very pretty" and "so good and so

[120] Charles Perrault, "Bluebeard" in *Fairy Tales, or History of Past Times*, Editor John Harrisson (New York: Harrisson, 1798), 23.
[121] Charles Perrault, "The Fairy" in *Fairy Tales, or History of Past Times*, Editor John Harrisson (New York: Harrisson, 1798), 10.

mannerly."[122] When the girl told her mother what had happened, the mother quickly sent her other daughter out to find the fairy to get another gift. When the other daughter returned home with snakes and toads, as the fairy told her she was "an ill-bred minx," the good daughter was blamed for it and chased into the forest.[123] However, while the good daughter cried in the forest, a prince happened upon her and fell in love with her. Without the daughter's goodness, the fairy would never have given her gifts, and her mother would not have made her leave the house. This led to the prince finding her and them both achieving happiness. This story emphasizes the necessity of goodness in order to find success, represented by jewels, flowers, and love. The daughter who did not possess goodness did not achieve success, and was given only snakes and toads from the fairy.

Clearly, both the American and the French versions of these tales show that goodness is the primary necessity for achieving success in their society. Without goodness or sweetness of heart, none of the characters would have achieved happiness, nor would they have been perceived as sympathetic characters by the reader. Wicked characters, or characters who did not possess good intentions, did not achieve success. True, many of the successful characters had their goodness heightened with the addition of great beauty, grace, or intelligence, but their original goodness of heart ultimately made them successful in life.

Gordon Wood argues that it was the decision of Americans to create a republic that necessitated a focus on virtue and goodness. Wood asserts,

> Republics demanded far more morally from their citizens than monarchies did of their subjects. Republics lacked all the accouterments of patronage and

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[122] Ibid., 11.
[123] Charles Perrault, "The Fairy," in *Fairy Tales, or History of Past Times*, Editor John Harrisson (New York: Harrisson, 1798), 14.

> power possessed by monarchies. If republics were to have order, it would have to come from below, from the people themselves, from their consent and their virtue, that is, from their willingness to surrender their personal desires to the public good.[124]

It was imperative to the success of the nation as a whole that each of its citizens was concerned with being a moral and virtuous person. Otherwise, the entire fabric of the new nation could fall apart. A monumental part of early Americans' national mantra was that their new nation was one of higher morals. The concept of goodness and wickedness as presented in fairy tales clearly reflects this ideal. America is supposed to be morally superior because of its innate goodness and opposition to wickedness. It is only right that the characters within American fairy tales also possess this innate goodness in order to be happy and successful.

[124] Gordon Wood, *The American Revolution: A History* (New York: Modern Library Edition, 2002), 93-94.

PERRAULT'S TALES AND AMERICAN EXCEPTIONALISM

As I have introduced in earlier chapters, Americans have been clear about their intentions to be a new, more moral nation since the early days of colonization. The fairy tales that they read certainly reflect cultural expectations for their readers. Beauty, educated obedience (or disobedience), intelligence, and goodness are all key concepts within the ideal New American. Even as early as 1630, in John Winthrop's sermon, "A Model of Christian Charity," he urged early New Englanders to remain obedient to God alone:

> In that we are commanded this day to love the Lord our God, and to love one another, to walk in his ways and to keep his Commandments and his ordinance and his laws, and the articles of our Covenant with Him, that we may live and be multiplied, and that the Lord our God may bless us in the land whither we go to possess it. But if our hearts shall turn away, so that we will not obey, but shall be seduced, and worship other Gods, our pleasure and profits, and serve them; it is propounded unto us this day, we shall surely perish out of the good land whither we pass over this vast sea to possess it."[125]

It was crucial that New Englanders then knew the importance of obedience to the correct authority, and the same remained true after the Revolution. Americans were even more vigilant about who deserved their obedience and the importance of becoming a separate nation. More than 200 years later, de Tocqueville observed that the United States was filled with people who were morally superior. He argued that one of the causes for Americans' superior morality was their physical constitution; de Tocqueville put much stock in the idea that Americans originally belonged to a "northern race," but lived in a much more temperate climate, resulting in better

[125] John Winthrop, "A Modell of Christian Charity, 1630" *Massachusetts Historical* Society (pub. 1996).

morality.[126] He not only believed that Americans were more moral, but he also believed they were healthier and of a hardier constitution. Further, according to de Tocqueville, the Americans' good health was in direct correlation to their moral goodness. George Washington's farewell address continues to echo this need for superior morality. In it, Washington states,

> Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle. It is substantially true that virtue or morality is a necessary spring of popular government.[127]

The concept that there are key characteristics that should be cultivated within each New American was highly relevant to these citizens, and makes the cultural binaries within Perrault's fairy tales that much more crucial.

The fact that the tales were adopted without transformation from the French version is extremely significant because it reveals a contradiction between what the important commenters during this era of national identity formation were arguing and what was actually being taken in by the public via children's literature. These writers and orators were insisting that America was breaking away from European counterparts and starting a new, superior culture when, in reality, they were adopting fairy tales directly from Europe. The publication of these fairy tales shows that Americans accepted the cultural binaries and prescriptions that were embedded within the tales. The fairy tale characters were able to achieve success and ultimately happiness because they behaved a certain way and because they possessed a certain set of characteristics. These

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[126] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Journey to America* (1831), Trans. George Lawrence, ed. J.P. Mayer (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1971), 230.
[127] George Washington, "Farewell Address, 1796" *The Avalon Project: Documents in Law, History, and Diplomacy.* (Connecticut: Yale Law School, 2008) http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/washing.asp

characteristics and behaviors, if they led to a character's success, were then considered "good" characteristics and behaviors for an early American to have. After reading these tales along with the literature that describes an exceptional America, I argue that early Americans praised the traits of beauty, obedience to a benevolent authority (and disobedience to tyranny), intelligence, and goodness, and were hoping to pass these traits onto their younger generations.

Beauty typically signifies good health and was often linked to an innate goodness. If new Americans were beautiful, then they were healthy and likely had access to proper food, nutrition, and recreation. If new Americans showed an educated obedience to a benevolent authority, or disobedience to tyranny, it would illustrate they possessed a dedication to justice and truth. If new Americans were intelligent, it would attest to closer equality among social classes due to easy access to a good education. Finally, if new Americans had an innate goodness about them, then they could clearly claim moral superiority. These traits led the fairy tale characters to success and, thus, they would lead early Americans to success and prove them to be a "more new and more noble" nation. [128]

[128] Phillip Freneau, "A Poem, On the Rising Glory of America" (1772), Ed. Harry Hayden Clark (New York: Hafner Publishing Co., 1929), stanza 2.

CONCLUSION

My thesis demonstrates that exportation and translation of the fairy tale did not result in any changes of the basic narrative or the embedded prescriptions and ideals. American publishers adopted the French originals without amendment. This suggests that, despite political rhetoric about the United States needing to be a new creation that turned its back on the ways of Europe, many American agreed with European formulas for cultural success as expressed in Charles Perrault's original French fairy tales. Further, the cultural binaries not only were adopted by Americans without change, but these values clearly illuminated characteristics of American exceptionalism that were so important to many Americans during the Revolutionary era. I employ an interdisciplinary methodology to compare these original French tales with an American compilation published 100 years later. I subject each tale to a close textual analysis in order to identify and explain the cultural structures that each tale supports and to tease out the moral ideals and behavioral prescriptions embedded within. I follow four binaries that run through the tales and provide a formula for cultural success: beauty and ugliness, obedience and disobedience, knowledge and ignorance, goodness and wickedness.

The publication of these fairy tales shows that Americans accepted the cultural binaries and prescriptions that were embedded within the tales. The fairy tale characters were able to achieve success and ultimately happiness because they behaved a certain way and because they possessed a certain set of characteristics. These characteristics and behaviors, if they led to a character's success, were then considered "good" characteristics and behaviors for an early American to have. I argue that early Americans praised these traits of beauty, obedience to a benevolent authority (and disobedience to tyranny), intelligence, and goodness, and were hoping

to pass these traits on to their younger generations. These traits would lead new Americans to success.

This project could develop by widening the primary source base. Examining more publications of these same seven fairy tales, or by analyzing more European-to-American versions of fairy tales in general, would allow me to continue to document the manner in which Americans adopted, absorbed, or rejected European ideals. For example, I could track every edition of these seven tales published in America before 1850 and analyze them for these same four cultural binaries. Whether or not the cultural binaries changed in *any* of those publications would indicate changes in American idealism. Further, I could analyze whether this theme continued within fairy tales created in other European countries. Analyzing how early Americans adopted the Grimm Brothers' fairy tales from Germany could also provide fascinating insight. Did early Americans adopt the cultural values that were produced by these two German writers? Or did the French Charles Perrault capture a unique array of values that spoke to early American sensibilities? By looking at more examples of early American children's literature, I will receive an even more nuanced view of early American values and behavioral prescriptions.

This thesis has significance in the public sphere and in academic circles. First, American exceptionalism is a ubiquitous part of contemporary politics. It is rare to listen to congressional speeches without hearing politicians draw upon the remarkable qualities of the Founding Fathers and early America. Many Americans' master narrative assumes that America was formed in a way that was special, distinct, and unique. My analysis of American exceptionalism provides more complexity to the current master narrative concerning the formation of early America's national identity.

Secondly, this work is significant because it urges historians to add to their repertoire of historical material for analysis. I argue that the employment of interdisciplinary methods, such as the analysis of fairy tales, enriches the historical field. By broadening the definition of what constitutes a historical document, historians can add depth and complexity to their analyses. As stated, fairy tales are by nature descriptive documents – they are constructed to tell a story with characters and a plot. However, fairy tales are also prescriptive documents, created intentionally to model particular behaviors for their readers, and those behaviors result in either success or failure in the stories. These modeled behaviors indicate what the originating culture desired (or rejected) at the time in which they were created and published.

Perrault created his tales with a French audience in mind –he wanted to instruct the children of his country how to properly behave. Little could he know that just 100 years later, American children would be reading translated English versions of these same stories and soaking in their behavioral prescriptions. American readers saw value within these French children's tales, which allowed them to be published in a significant era of America's national identity formation. Early Americans wanted to create an exceptional nation -- one that surpassed European nations. Despite this insistence to leave behind European entanglements, some of the material that these early Americans used to instill exceptional values within their younger generations came directly from those European nations. In this case, the cultural values and prescriptions that Charles Perrault wrote in 1697 to instruct French children were being used in 1798 to teach early American children the values of their exceptional "new" nation.

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