

others which will enable them to conceive of work and play in a collective sense.

Needless to say, there are a multitude of ways one can write a liberating tale. Here I want to concentrate on just two major types of experimentation which have direct bearing on cultural patterns in the West. One type can be called the transfiguration of the classical fairy tale. Generally the author assumes that the young reader is already familiar with the classical tale and depicts the familiar in an estranging fashion. Consequently, the reader is compelled to consider the negative aspects of anachronistic forms and perhaps transcend them. The tendency is to break, shift, debunk, or rearrange the traditional motifs to liberate the reader from the contrived and programmed mode of literary reception. Transfiguration does not obliterate the recognizable features or values of the classical fairy tale but cancels their negativity by showing how a different aesthetic and social setting relativizes all values. To this extent the act of creative transfiguration by the author and the final artistic product as transfiguration are geared to make readers aware that civilization and life itself are processes which can be shaped to fulfill basic needs of the readers. Though the liberating and classical fairy tales may contain some of the same features and values, the emphasis placed on transfiguration as process, both as narrative form and substance, makes for a qualitative difference.

The second type of experimentation similar to transfiguration can be called the fusion of traditional configurations with contemporary references within settings and plotlines unfamiliar to readers yet designed to arouse their curiosity and interest. Fantastic projections are used here to demonstrate the changeability of contemporary social relations, and the fusion brings together all possible means for illuminating a concrete utopia. In effect, both the narrative techniques of fusion and transfiguration are aimed at disturbing and jarring readers so that they lose their complacent attitude toward the status quo of society and envision ways to realize their individuality within collective and democratic contexts. However, what distinguishes the contemporary writers of liberating tales is their strident, anti-sexist, and anti-authoritarian perspective.

For instance Harriet Herman's *The Forest Princess* varies the traditional *Rapunzel* fairy tale to question male domination and sexual stereotypes. Her story concerns 'a princess who lived alone in a tall tower deep in the woods. An invisible spirit had brought her there when she was just a little girl. The spirit watched over her bringing her food and clothing and giving her special gifts on her birthday.'<sup>20</sup> One day after a storm she saves a prince who had been shipwrecked. At first she

thinks that, she, too, is a prince since she looks very much like him and does not know that there are differences in sex. They begin living together and teaching each other their respective skills. But the prince misses his home, and the princess agrees to go to the golden castle if he will teach her the secrets of that place. However, the princess is compelled to change at the golden castle - to wear fancy clothes and make-up and to restrict her activities to the company of other girls. Against the orders of the king she teaches them how to read, and, since the prince does not want to go riding with her, she practices riding by herself. On the prince's fourteenth birthday she exhibits her astonishing riding skills to the entire court. The king decides to reward her with one wish, and she replies: 'Your majesty, what I have done today could have been done by any of the boys and girls in your land. As my reward I would like the boys and girls to ride horses together, to read books together and to play together.'<sup>21</sup> But, the king refuses to grant this wish, saying that the boys and girls are happy the way they are - despite their protests. The princess realizes that she must leave the golden castle, and nobody knows where she is today. However, we are told by the narrator that after her departure her wish came to be fulfilled because fairy tales must end happily.

The irony of the ending suggests a contrast: though fairy tales must end happily, life itself must not, and thus the reader is compelled to consider the reasons for a lack of happiness or home in reality.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, the possibility for a comparison with the traditional *Rapunzel* is given so that the authoritarian quality of the older tale becomes visible.

Similar to Herman's work, four women of the Merseyside Women's Liberation Movement in Liverpool, England, began publishing fairy tales to counter the values which had been carried by the traditional fairy tales - acquisitive aggression in men and dutiful nurturing of this aggression by women. They argued that 'fairy tales are political. They help to form children's values and teach them to accept our society and their roles in it. Central to this society is the assumption that domination and submission are the natural basis of all our relationships.'<sup>23</sup> In response they rewrote such well-known classics as *The Prince and the Swineherd*, *Rapunzel*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, and *Snow White*. In *The Prince and the Swineherd* a gluttonous prince is made into the laughing stock of the people by Samia the swineherd. In *Red Riding Hood* the setting is a timbermill town in the North, and the shy little girl Nadia learns to overcome her fear of the woods to save her great-grandmother from the wolf, whom she kills. His fur is used as the lining for Red Riding Hood's cloak, and the great-grandmother tells her:

'This cloak now has special powers. Whenever you meet another child who is shy and timid, lend that child the cloak to wear as you play together in the forest, and then, like you, they will grow brave.'<sup>24</sup> From then on Red Riding Hood explores and goes deeper and deeper into the forest.

In both these tales the small, oppressed protagonists learn to use their powers to free themselves from parasitical creatures. Life is depicted as an ongoing struggle and process so that the 'happy' end is not an illusion, i.e. not depicted as an end in itself but the actual beginning of a development. The emancipatory element comes about when the fantasy (imagination) of the protagonists themselves is projected within the tale as a means by which they can come into their own and help others in similar situations.

Like the Merseyside Group, Tomi Ungerer has been drawn to rewriting *Little Red Riding Hood*, which he entitled 'a reruminated tale.' Though his perspective is emancipatory, it is much different from that of the Merseyside group. As in his revision of Andersen's *The Little Match Girl*, which he entitled *Alumette*, he is irreverent, sly, and anarchistic. His wolf, dressed like a classy baron, is much different from the devious wolf of the traditional tale, and his Red Riding Hood is 'the real no-nonsense one,' which means that she is not gullible or afraid to voice her opinion. We learn that her grandmother is mean and cranky and even beats her sometimes. So she stops to pick berries to delay her visit. When the wolf appears, he states candidly: 'I know of your grandmother and all I can say is that her reputation is worse than mine.'<sup>25</sup> He offers to take her to his castle and treat her like a princess in a fairy tale. Red Riding Hood is suspicious. She begins to ask questions about the wolf's jowls and tongue, and he insists that she stop asking foolish questions. He overcomes her objections and tells her that her parents and grandmother will be able to care for themselves. So the wolf and Red Riding Hood marry, have children, and live happily, and the nasty grandmother shrinks in size and remains mean as ever.

Ungerer's tale uses irony and clever reversals to break the sexual taboos of the traditional tale. The 'uncanny' wolf becomes identified with familiar sexual longings of childhood pleasure instincts, and the transformations in the tale are calculated liberating effects, measured against the super-ego function of the parents and grandmother. The wolf allows Red Riding Hood to grow and enter into a mature sexual relationship. What becomes 'home' in this fairy tale is less social in implications than in other liberating tales, but it does make a claim for the autonomy of the young girl and wolf, who demonstrate that

'reputations' spread through rumors of old tales no longer hold true and should not be taken at surface value today.

For the most part, the post-1945 tales of *Little Red Riding Hood* transfigure and criticize the traditional transgression perpetuated against the girl as a helpless, naive, and sweet thing and against the wolf as evil predator and troublesome male rapist. In *Little Polly Riding Hood*,<sup>26</sup> Catherine Storr depicted a clever and independent girl, whom a bumbling wolf would like to eat. Time and again she outwits the comical wolf, who uses the old *Red Riding Hood* tale as a manual on how one should behave. Naturally his announced expectations are never fulfilled. In a more serious vein, Max von der Grün rewrote the tale to comment on prejudice and conformity.<sup>27</sup> His Red Riding Hood is ostracized by the community because of her red cap, which is strongly suggestive of the anti-Semitic and anti-Communist feelings which existed in Germany at one time. There have also been tales written in defense of the wolf, such as Iring Fetscher's *Little Redhead and the Wolf* and Philippe Dumas and Boris Moissard's *Little Aquia Riding Hood*.<sup>28</sup> Fetscher gives a wry, mock-psychological interpretation which depicts the father killing the wolf because the beast had befriended Red Riding Hood's brother, whom the neurotic father disliked. In the story by Dumas and Moissard there is another ironic portrayal; this time it is Red Riding Hood's granddaughter who frees the grandnephew of the wolf from the zoo in the Jardin des Plantes because she wants to relive the classical story and become a star in Parisian society. However, the wolf is wise, for he has learned a lesson from the tragedies which have occurred in his family. He flees to Siberia and warns young wolves about the dangers of 'civilization' in France.

The reversal of the classical fairy tales is at the center of the other stories in Dumas and Moissard's book *Conte à l'envers*, and it is the basis of such other collections as Jay Williams' *The Practical Princess and other Liberating Tales*,<sup>29</sup> Jane Yolen's *Dream Weaver*,<sup>30</sup> and Hans-Joachim Gelberg's *Neues vom Rumpelstilzchen*.<sup>31</sup> The traditional stories are transfigured so that their repressive substance is subverted. The reversal of form, characters, and motifs is intended to expand the possibilities to question the fairy-tale discourse within the civilizing process.

Aside from the transfiguration of fairy tales, the second most common manner in which writers of fairy tales have endeavored to suggest options to dominant cultural patterns is through the fusion of actual references to disturbing social occurrences in contemporary society. Here I want to focus on four remarkable fairy-tale experiments in Italy, Germany, France, and England. The *international* quest for liberation and a new sense of home manifested in different fairy tales is

clearly a reaction against *international* trends of domination, standardization, and exploitation.

In Italy there is a consistent protest for freedom in the creative work of Adela Turin, Francesca Cantarellis, Nella Bosnia, Margherita Soccaro, and Sylvie Selig. Seven of their books have been translated and distributed by the Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative in London.<sup>32</sup> Significant here is the tale entitled *Of Cannons and Caterpillars*. The very first paragraph sets the dramatic predicament of modern society:

No one in the palace of King Valour any longer remembered the first war. Not the ministers or the privy councillors, or the secretaries, observers, or the directors, or the reporters, the strategists or the diplomats; not even the generals, the colonels, the sergeants, the majors or the lieutenants. Not even Terence Wild, the very oldest soldier alive, stitched and re-stitched, with one glass eye, one wooden leg, and a hook in place of a hand. Because after the first war, there had been a second war, then a third, a fourth, a fifth, and then a twentieth and a twenty-first too, which was still going on. And no one in the palace of King Valour could remember anything about peaches or sparrows, or tortoise-shell cats, or bilberry marmalade, or radishes, or bed-sheets spread out to dry on green meadows. Besides, King Valour had become enthusiastic about his plans for a twenty-second war: 'Not a single tree will be left standing, not a blade of grass will survive; no, not one solitary shamrock or grasshopper,' so he predicted, 'because we have the ultimate weapon, diabolical defoliants, death-rays, paralyzing gas and cannons of perfect accuracy.'<sup>33</sup>

Grotesque and comically exaggerated as King Valour may seem, his manner of thinking is not unlike that of some of our contemporary statesmen. His menace and madness are sadly recognized by his own wife Queen Delphina, who is sentenced to live in the modern skyscraper castle behind bullet-proof windows with her daughter Princess Philippina and 174 widows and war orphans, both boys and girls. Confronted with a synthetic, suffocating technological life, Delphina endeavors to teach her daughter about nature, including caterpillars, flowers, animals, vegetables, etc., by writing illustrated stories for her. As her storybook expands, Philippina and all the widows and orphans of the skyscraper become less sad. Then one 'evening King Valour returned in excellent humour: a new war had just been declared, and it promised to be the longest most homicidal ever. . . . So he decided that the Queen, the Princess, widows, and orphans were to leave on a Saturday morning for the Castle of King Copious, which stood further away from the battlefields.'<sup>34</sup>

This decision turns out to be fortunate for the queen and her entourage. Along the way they stop at an abandoned castle ruined by wars, and because it is so beautifully situated in the country, they decide to renovate the buildings and cultivate the land. So they unpack the big Book, and all the dreams which had been pictured in the Book they now endeavor to realize in their surroundings. Many years pass, and we learn that King Valour and his wars are all but forgotten. However, the transformed castle flourishes in the middle of a busy, densely populated village, and everyone knows the name of Delphina, the legendary writer of the beautifully illustrated Book.

This extraordinary anti-war fairy tale is uniquely illustrated with pictures projecting a critique of authoritarianism and the possibility for collective democratic life: the entire concept of the fairy tale encourages the creative realization of peaceful coexistence. Moreover, it is a fairy tale in praise of the utopian power of fairy tales. Delphina manages to retain the principle of hope and humanism in the prison-castle of her husband by writing the illustrated Book for her compatriots. Given the opportunity to escape a sick situation, they become joyful and creative. Their sterile existence is exchanged for a life without fear and oppression. Thus finally they can come into touch with their own skills and harness technology to serve their collective needs in peace.

The dangerous potential of technology and bureaucracy to create means for enslaving humankind is portrayed with even greater insight and originality in Michael Ende's 270-page fairy-tale novel *Momo*.<sup>35</sup> This work was published in 1973, won the German Youth Book Prize, and has been translated into seventeen different languages. It recalls the struggles of a little Italian orphan, a wiry, ingenuous girl named Momo, somewhere between the ages of 8 and 12, who makes her home in the ruins of an ancient Roman amphitheater. Since she has the amazing gift of listening to people's problems in such a way that they are provided with the power to come to their own solutions, she is regarded as somewhat saintlike and is protected by everyone in the neighborhood. Surrounded by all sorts of children who play in the amphitheater, her two special friends, Beppo the street cleaner and Gigi the young con-artist, she lacks nothing and prospers through her wit and creativity. In general all the people in the district are poor, but they try to share and enjoy what they have with one another and struggle to improve the quality of their lives at their own pace and time. Unknown to them, however, their manner of living and playing is being threatened by the time-savers, men dressed in gray whose ash colored faces match their suits. They wear stiff round hats, smoke gray cigars, and carry blue-gray briefcases. Nobody knows who these men are, and

everyone forgets them once they enter and influence their lives to conduct themselves according to such principles as 'time is money,' 'time is costly,' or 'saved time is double time.' So great is their clandestine impact that the city gradually begins to transform itself into a smooth-functioning machine. Buildings and streets are torn down to make way for modern technology and automatization. Everyone rushes around seeking ways to save time and make more money. The total architecture of the city informs the psyche of people's minds which are now geared to work for work's sake. The gray men gain control over everyone and succeed in isolating Momo. Only after she finds her way to the 'nowhere house' of Master Secundus Minitus Hora is she safe from the threat of the gray men, for it is Master Hora, a wizened and humane guardian of time, who can explain the essence of time to Momo – that it resides in the heart of each individual and can become as beautiful as the individual decides. Given this realization, Momo seeks to struggle against the gray men, and, with Master Hora's help and that of a magic turtle, she eventually undermines the nefarious plans of the gray men: time is liberated so that human beings can determine their destiny.

Ende's colorful fairy-tale novel is told in such a fashion that the events could seemingly take place in the past, present, or future. In unusual symbolical form he incorporates a critique of instrumental rationalization so that it becomes comprehensible for readers between the ages of 8 and 15. As is the case in most contemporary fairy tales with liberating potential, Ende has a female protagonist bring about or point a way to change. While Momo comes into her own as an individual, social relations appear to be reconstituted in a manner that will allow time to blossom for everyone. Nevertheless, there are problems with the ending of *Momo*, which is deceptively emancipatory. That is, Ende employs the fantastic to celebrate individualistic action or the privatization of the imagination. Such individualism is supposed to be the answer to the growing rationalization of everyday life, and it is celebrated in Ende's second best-seller, *Die unendliche Geschichte* (*The Endless Story*, 1979),<sup>36</sup> in which a fat, fearful boy named Bastian discovers that he can use his imagination to invent a never-ending story which helps him adjust to reality. Ende has Bastian steal a book, and, as the boy reads it in a secluded place, he feels summoned by the troubled realm of Phantásien, where he has numerous adventures. Aided by his devoted friend Atréju and magical animals, he prevents Phantásien from being destroyed. Upon returning to reality, he has a reconciliation with his father and feels strong and courageous enough to take on the world. In contrast to *Momo*, *The Endless Story* depicts a pursuit of

home as a form of regression and compromise. Moreover, there are too many traditional clichés and stereotypes in Ende's endeavor to endorse the student revolt slogan 'all power to the imagination,' so that, in the final analysis, his story actually deludes readers and prevents them from seeing their potential and problems against the background of social forces manipulating and exploiting both consciousness and imagination.

Such delusion is not the case in Jean-Pierre Andreuon's remarkable fairy-tale novel *La Fée et le Géometre* (*The Fairy and the Land Surveyor*, 1981).<sup>37</sup> Andreuon describes an idyllic verdant country filled with fairies, dwarfs, gnomes, witches, magicians, elves, dragons, and sylphs, who live in harmony with one another without rules, money, or rationalized relations of production. Nor is nature threatened with gross exploitation. All creatures benefit from their interchange and exchange with one another, and sexual discrimination does not exist. Each individual works and plays according to his or her own need, that is, until Arthur Livingschwartz, an explorer, who works for an international conglomerate, discovers this paradise. From this point on, Andreuon portrays the gradual colonization of the verdant country. Technicians, scientists, soldiers, architects, and businessmen arrive and transform the small virgin land into a tourist resort with a tiny industrial capacity. Roads, towns, and factories are built. Nature is devastated and polluted. The gnomes, dwarfs, fairies, and elves are compelled to work for money and to regulate their time and lives according to the demands of outsiders, who now control the production of the country. There are intermarriages between humans and the fairy creatures, and some, like the fairy Sibialle and the land surveyor Loïc, try to oppose the onslaught of colonization and industrialization. However, it is not until their daughter and other children from mixed marriages grow up and experience human exploitation and ecological destruction in the name of progress that a strong organized protest movement develops. There are struggles over the construction of nuclear reactors, the encroachment of nature by industry and highways – all without violence. These struggles commence as Andreuon concludes his narration:

The country of the fairies will never be as it was before. The country of the fairies will not regress. To live does not mean to move backward but to move forward. It means to be like the shark and to advance unceasingly. And the shark is not a malicious creature. He must live like all of us. That's all.

The best thing that can happen to the country of the fairies is not a

return to the past, nor should it seek to model itself after the human world. It can become *different*, mixing the qualities of fairies and humans alike.<sup>38</sup>

Whether this can happen, whether the struggle of the people in the verdant country to change their lives can succeed remains an open question at the end of this fairy tale. Yet, Andreuon manages to raise most of the significant social and political questions for today's youth in a discourse that provides an inking of home. He does not paint rosy illusions by offering an individualistic solution to the instrumentalization of magic, fantasy, and natural needs the way Ende does in *The Endless Story*. In fact, he sees the collective opposition to possible ecological and social destruction arising out of the contradictions created by capitalist colonization itself. In this sense he views modern technology and industrialization as revolutionary, as transformative forces which can be beneficial to living creatures and nature, only if they are *not* employed for profit and exploitation. Unlike some romantic anti-capitalist writers of fairy tales like J.R.R. Tolkien and C.S. Lewis, who look back conservatively to the past for salvation, Andreuon knows that technology and industry are not evil *per se*. He assumes the viewpoint of the socialist ecologist and points toward the struggle for a qualitatively new type of 'homeland' with optimism.

Not all progressive fairy-tale writers are as optimistic as Andreuon is. For instance, Michael de Larrabeiti writes from the perspective of the urban lower class, and he draws different conclusions than Andreuon in his endeavor to subvert and satirize Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* and Richard Adams' *Watership Down*. In his first fairy-tale novel *The Borribles* (1978)<sup>39</sup> he created fictional characters from his own childhood in Battersea, who are notable for their social defiance. Borribles are outcasts or runaways who value their independence more than anything else because they take a deep delight in being what they are. They avoid adults and especially policemen who represent arbitrary authority. Their ears grow long and pointed, a sign of their non-conformism, and, if they are caught by the law, their ears are clipped and their will is broken. Borribles exist everywhere in the world, but de Larrabeiti writes mainly about the Borribles who inhabit London.

In his first novel he wrote about the Borribles' great struggle with the high and mighty Rumbles, representative of middle-class snobs, and the loss of a vast treasure in the River Wendle. In the sequel, *The Borribles Go for Broke* (1981),<sup>40</sup> he depicted the further adventures of a small group of Borribles, who are manipulated by Spiff, the irascible Borrible chief, to search for the lost treasure in the underground terri-

tory of the treacherous Wendles. Actually, the group of Borribles (consisting of the two tough girls Chalotte and Sidney, a Bangladeshi named Twilight, Stonks from Peckham and Vulge from Stepney) primarily wants to rescue the horse Sam, who had been of immense service to them on their Great Rumble Hunt. The police, however, have created a Special Borrible Group (SBG) under the command of the fanatic inspector Susworth, and the Borribles are pursued with vengeance. In fact, at one point they are even captured by the SBG but then rescued by an extraordinary tramp named Ben, who is a grown-up Borrible in his own way. Though the Borribles and Ben have no difficulty in making fools of the police, it is a different story with the Wendles in the sewers of London. Spiff has instigated everything so that the Borribles must help him search for the lost treasure and eliminate the tyrannical chieftain Flinthead, who turns out to be Spiff's brother. Ultimately, Spiff and Flinthead are both killed, the Borribles escape, and Sam is rescued. However, the Borribles are not happy in the end unless they can continue bickering and arguing among themselves about their next step in opposition to the normal routine of an oppressive society.

It is difficult to do justice to the style and manner in which de Larrabeiti makes the unbelievable believable. His starting point is obviously the young *lumpenproletariat*, the down and out of the London lower classes. In this novel he begins by focusing on the interaction between Chalotte as hard-nosed courageous girl and Twilight as sensitive and sensible Bangladeshi. His immediate concern is to establish the integrity and skills of these two characters, generally representative of females and minority groups. Thereafter, he expands the scope of his attention by depicting the relations between Ben as adult dropout and the Borribles as defiant young outsiders. At first the Borribles distrust Ben, but they learn quickly that his principles are similar to theirs: he lives from day to day contented with the waste and abundance of a wasteful society, abhors the deadliness of routine, shuns profit-making, and minds his own business. All this is proclaimed in his special song:

Let the world roll round an' round  
Wiv its hard-worked folk in fetters:  
All'oo think themselves yer betters,  
Money-mad and dooty bound.  
Make yer choice, there ain't so many,  
No ambition's worth a fart;  
Freedom is a work of art—  
Take yer stand with uncle Benny!<sup>41</sup>

Together Ben and the Borribles reveal how creative and adroit one must be to gain and protect one's independence. Not only are they surrounded by powerful social forces demanding law and order just for the sake of law and order,<sup>41</sup> but they must contend with each other's disrespectful and suspicious natures. De Larrabeiti's fantasy projection shows lower-class life more like it is than many so-called 'realistic' novels for young readers. He does not mince his words nor pull punches. His character portrayals and command of colloquial speech, especially Cockney, are remarkable. At times his plot lines are too contrived, and he lets his imagination carry him away. (Yes, even in fantasy literature this is possible.) Still he manages to employ the fairy-tale discourse to deal with themes pertaining to racial, sexual and political struggles of the present in such a way that young readers can comprehend the importance and urgency of protest by outsiders. There is no such thing as 'home' in this fairy-tale novel. It is the refusal of the Borribles to go home, to make a regular home, which demonstrates the false promises of the classical fairy tales that celebrate regressive notions of home in their so-called 'happy endings.'

### III

Most of the tales discussed up to this point - and there are many more one could discuss<sup>42</sup> - provide a social and political basis for the fantastic projection so that it is instilled with a liberating potential. The configurations of the experimental fairy-tale discourse shift the perspective and meaning of socialization through reading. The active, aggressive behavior of male types in the classical fairy tales gives way to a combined activism on the part of both males and females who uncover those wishes, dreams, and needs which have been denied by social structures and institutions. The fantastic projections carried by the plots, characters, and motifs of the tales reflect the possibility for a transformation of constraining social conditions through major changes in social relations. The fairy-tale discourse in general is confronted with a demand to transform itself and become more emancipatory and innovative. The question, however, remains as to whether the experimental tales are truly liberating and can achieve their object. That is: can they have the desired effect on young readers?

Several critics have pointed to the difficulties in predicting the effect which emancipatory literature can have on children.<sup>43</sup> For the most part, particularly in regard to the classical fairy tales, children resist change. If they have been reared with the old tales, they do not want them altered. If their social expectations have been determined by a

conservative socialization process, they find changes in fairy tales comical but often unjust and disturbing even though the tales purport to be in their interests and seek their emancipation.

Yet, it is exactly this *disturbance* which the liberating fairy tales seek on both a conscious and unconscious level. They interfere with the civilizing process in hope of creating change and a new awareness of social conditions. This provocation is why it is more important for critics to recognize the *upsetting* effect of emancipatory tales and to study their uncanny insinuations for old and young readers. The quality of emancipatory fairy tales cannot be judged by the manner in which they are accepted by readers but by the unique ways they bring undesirable social relations into question and force readers to question themselves. In this regard the liberating potential of the fantastic in experimental fairy tales will always be discomfiting, even when concrete utopias are illuminated through the narrative perspective.

With some exceptions, the emancipatory tales are skillfully written and employ humor and artwork in original, stimulating ways to accomplish their paradoxical kind of discomfiting comfort. The major difficulty facing the emancipatory fairy tales, it seems to me, lies in the system of distribution, circulation, and use of the tales, and all this is dependent on the educational views of teachers, librarians, parents, and those adults who work with children in community centers. The more regressive tales of Perrault, the Grimm Brothers, Andersen, and other conservative writers are used in schools, libraries, and homes without a blink of the eye, but the unusual, forward-looking, fantastic projections of the liberating fairy tales have not found general approval among the publishers and adults who circulate the tales.

This is not to say that there has been no headway made by the experimental fairy tales and by adults who experiment with fairy tales. Throughout the western world storytellers, writers, publishers, and educators have developed new methods and techniques to question and expand the classical fairy-tale discourse. In Italy, Gianni Rodari,<sup>44</sup> a well-known writer for children, has created a series of games intended to deconstruct classical fairy tales in the hope of stimulating children to create their own modern versions. By introducing unusual elements into the fairy tale, for instance, by making Cinderella disobedient and rebellious, or having Snow White meet giants instead of dwarfs and organizing a band of robbers, the child is compelled to shatter a certain uniform reception of fairy tales, to re-examine the elements of the classical tales, and to reconsider their function and meaning and whether it might not be better to alter them. In France, Georges Jean<sup>45</sup> has described various pedagogical means which he has used in schools

to enable children to become more creative in their use of fairy tales. He describes certain card games in which children are called upon to change characters or situations of the classical fairy tales so that they relate more directly to their own lives. Jean considers the reinvention of fairy tales as a means for children to become aware of traditional discourse and the necessity to modernize it.

The works of Rodari, Jean, and others make it quite clear that until progressive social ideas are set into practice among adults, the liberating fairy tales will remain restricted in their use and effect among children. In other words, until there is a more progressive shift within the civilizing process itself, the liberating potential of these tales will be confined to those social groups seeking that end. One thing, however, is certain: the writers themselves have experienced some sense of liberation in projecting their fantasies through the magic of the fairy tales. Home for them is achieved through the creative production of these tales which allow them to regain a sense of their familiar longings through the uncanny. It is this sensory experience that they want to share with us symbolically, for their sense of liberation can only be confirmed when others, especially children, read and benefit from the subversive power of their art.

### Notes

- 1 See Claire R. Farrer (ed.), *Women and Folklore* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1975); Madonna Kolbenschlag, *Kiss Sleeping Beauty Good-bye: Breaking the Spell of Feminine Myths and Models* (New York: Doubleday, 1979); Marcia Lieberman, 'Some day my prince will come': female acculturation through the fairy tale, *College English*, 34 (1972), pp. 383-95; Allison Lurie, 'Fairy tale liberation,' *The New York Review of Books*, 42 (17 December 1970); Heather Lyons, 'Some second thoughts on sexism in fairy tales,' in *Literature and Learning*, ed. by Elizabeth Gruegon and Peter Walden (London: Ward Lock Educational, 1978), pp. 42-58; Robert Moore, 'From rags to witches: stereotypes, distortions and anti-humanism in fairy tales,' *Interracial Books for Children*, 6 (1975), pp. 1-3; Jane Yolen, 'America's Cinderella,' *Children's Literature in Education*, 8 (1977), pp. 21-9; Heide Göttner-Abendroth, *Die Göttin und ihr Heros* (Munich: Frauenoffensive, 1981).
- 2 *The Renaissance of Wonder in Children's Literature* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1977), p. 154.
- 3 *Le Pouvoir des Contes* (Paris: Casterman, 1981), pp. 153-4.
- 4 *Ibid.*, pp. 206-9.
- 5 Reprinted in *New Literary History*, 7 (spring, 1976), pp. 619-45. See also Helene Cixous, 'Fiction and its phantoms: a reading of Freud's *Das Unheimliche*,' in this same issue, pp. 525-48.
- 6 *Ibid.*, p. 634.
- 7 *Ibid.*, p. 640.
- 8 See *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales* (New York: Knopf, 1976).

- 9 See my critique of Bettelheim's book, 'On the use and abuse of folk and fairy tales with children: Bruno Bettelheim's moralistic magic wand,' in *Breaking the Magic Spell: Radical Theories of Folk and Fairy Tales* (London: Heinemann, 1979), pp. 160-82.
- 10 Freud, 'The uncanny,' *New Literary History*, p. 630.
- 11 'Karl Marx and humanity: the material of hope,' in *On Karl Marx* (New York: Seabury, 1971), pp. 30-1.
- 12 *Ibid.*, pp. 44-5.
- 13 For a detailed discussion of Bloch's essays, see my chapter 'The utopian function of fairy tales and fantasy: Ernst Bloch the Marxist and J.R.R. Tolkien the Catholic,' in *Breaking the Magic Spell*, pp. 129-59.
- 14 *Ibid.*, p. 133.
- 15 *Ibid.*, p. 135.
- 16 See Charlotte Bühler, *Das Märchen und die Phantasie des Kindes* (Berlin: Springer, 1977), based on original 1918 edition; Alois Jalkotzy, *Märchen und Gegenwart* (Vienna: Junfermann und Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1930); Alois Kunzfeld, *Vom Märchenzähler und Märchenillustrieren* (Vienna: Deutscher Verlag für Jugend und Volk, 1926); Wilhelm Ledermann, *Das Märchen in Schule und Haus* (Langensalza: Schulbuchhandlung von F.G.L. Gressler, 1921); Erwin Müller, *Psychologie des deutschen Volksmärchens* (Munich: Kösel und Pustet, 1928); Reinhard Nolte, *Analyse der freien Märchenproduktion* (Langensalza: Beyer, 1931).
- 17 Urbana: National Council of Teachers of English, 1977.
- 18 *Ibid.*, p. 54.
- 19 There is a tendency to think that the patterns of folk tales and classical fairy tales do not vary much. However, this widespread belief, based on Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the Folk Tale*, 2nd rev. edn. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968) fails to consider the effects of cultural differences on the contents and configurations of the tales. For a more differentiated viewpoint, see August Nitzsche, *Soziale Ordnungen im Spiegel der Märchen*, 2 vols. (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog, 1976-7).
- 20 Berkeley: Rainbow Press, 1975, pp. 1-2.
- 21 *Ibid.*, p. 38.
- 22 Herman wrote a sequel to this story, *Return of the Forest Princess* (Berkeley: Rainbow Press, 1975), which is, however, not as stimulating and open-ended as her first tale.
- 23 *Red Riding Hood* (Liverpool: Fairy Story Collective, 1972), p. 6.
- 24 *Ibid.*, p. 5.
- 25 *A Storybook* (New York: Watts, 1974), p. 88.
- 26 *Clever Polly and the Stupid Wolf* (Harmondsworth: Puffin Books, 1967), pp. 17-23.
- 27 'Rotkäppchen,' in *Bilderbogensgeschichten. Märchen, Sagen, Abenteuer*, ed. by Jochen Jung (Munich: dtv, 1976), pp. 95-100.
- 28 See Iring Fetscher, *Wer hat Dornröschen wachgeküßt?* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1974), pp. 28-32, and Philippe Dumas and Boris Moissard, *Contes à l'envers* (Paris: l'école des loisirs, 1977), pp. 15-26.
- 29 London: Chatto & Windus, 1979.
- 30 Cleveland: Collins, 1979.
- 31 Weinheim: Beltz & Gelberg, 1976.
- 32 See Adela Turin and Margherita Saccaro, *The Breadtime Story*; Adela Turin, Francesca Cantarelli, and Nella Bosnia, *The Five Wives of Silverbeard*; Adela Turin and Sylvie Selig, *Of Cannons and Caterpillars*; Adela Turin and Nella Bosnia, *Arthur and Clementine, A Fortunate Catastrophe*, *The Real Story of the Bonobos Who Wore Spectacles*, and *Sugarpink Rose*. All were published by the Writers and

Readers Publishing Cooperative between 1975 and 1977. There have also been translations in German and French.

- 33 *Of Cannons and Caterpillars*, p. 1.
- 34 *Ibid.*, p. 17.
- 35 Stuttgart: Thienemann, 1973.
- 36 Stuttgart: Thienemann, 1979.
- 37 Paris: Casterman, 1981.
- 38 *Ibid.*, p. 264.
- 39 London: Bodley Head, 1978.
- 40 London: Bodley Head, 1981.
- 41 *Ibid.*, p. 80.
- 42 For example, see Christine Nöstlinger, *Wir pfeifen auf den Gurkenkönig (We Don't Give a Hoot for the Pickle King)*. Weinheim: Beltz & Gelberg, 1972; Ursula LeGuin, *The Wizard of Earthsea* (1968) and *Orsinian Tales* (1976); John Gardner, *Dragon, Dragon and Other Tales* (1975), *Gudgekin the Thistle Girl and Other Tales* (1976), and *The King of the Hummingbirds and Other Tales* (1977); Robin McKinley, *Beauty* (1980).
- 43 Cf. Nicholas Tucker, 'How children respond to fiction,' in *Writers, Critics, and Children* (New York: Agathon, 1976), pp. 177-8, and Maximilian Nutz, 'Die Macht des Faktischen und die Utopie. Zur Rezeption emanzipatorischen Märchen,' *Diskussion Deutsch*, 48 (1979), pp. 397-410.
- 44 See *Grammaire de l'imagination* (Paris: Francais Réunion, 1978).
- 45 *Le Pouvoir des Contes*, pp. 203-32.

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