# **Fairy Tales: a world between the imaginary-Metaphor at play in *Lo cunto de li cunti* by Giambattista Basile**

by

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Abstract

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The purpose of this dissertation is to investigate Basile's contribution to the establishment of fairytales as a literary genre; the focus is on his masterpiece *Lo cunto de li cunti*. This thesis examines its debt to tradition and its influence on posterity, while also studying Basile's unique use of metaphors in the rich Neapolitan dialect. As this study reveals metaphors in *Lo cunto de li cunti* are not used simply as a mean of embellishment; rather they are employed as a way to inform the reader of the rich folkloric tradition of Naples during the baroque period as well as of Basile's discontent with the socio-political situation of his times. The use of metaphors is so pervasive that one could argue that the book is itself a metaphor through which Basile conveys his ideals and his utopia of a liberated Naples and of more just society; as well as the importance of the Neapolitan dialect and its linguistic registers. Furthermore, this dissertation proposes a new interpretation of the female characters of the tales and it raises a discussion on gender roles both in modern and past societies.

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**"*poeta che mi guidi, guarda la mia virtù se ella è possente,***

***prima ch'a l'alto passo tu mi fidi*" (*Inf,II, vv.10-12*)**

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## Introduction

*Lo cunto de li cunti* is an intriguing fairy-tales collection that represents a milestone in the establishment of fairytales as a genre. This dissertation proposes a detailed analysis of how Basile uses, and manipulates, metaphors not only to stimulate the wonderment of his readers but also to vocalize his discontent with society. It also explores the link between Basile and the tradition before him; as well as his influence on posterity. Furthermore it proposes a new interpretation of the female characters of the tales and it raises a discussion on gender roles both in modern and past societies.

The first chapter "*Lo cunto de li cunti* between tradition and innovation" focuses on Basile's opus, *Lo cunto de li cunti, overo Lo trattenemiento de peccerille,* and *its* debt to tradition. It explores the stylistic and narrative innovations introduced to the fairy-tale form; innovations which have contributed to the establishment of the fairy-tale as a literary genre. This important text, indeed, represents the first integrated collection of fairy-tales, not only in Italy but also in Western Europe and despite its short lived success right after it was published, it was then largely ignored, more so in Italy. In this chapter I also intend to demonstrate how much Basile borrowed from his predecessors, especially from Boccaccio, to whom he has been often compared. The structure of *Lo cunto,* in fact, has received much attention due to its noticeable resemblance with Boccaccio's *Decameron.* Indeed, Basile's work is often referred to as the *Pentamerone*, and Croce was among the first scholars to use this term in the introduction to his translation of *Lo cunto,* where he writes:

> "…il Basile disegnò più vasta tela, che fu di raccogliere in una sorta di decamerone il tesoro delle fiabe popolari che si narravano a Napoli: un <<pentamerone>>, veramente, perchè le fiabe sarebbero state cinquanta e divise in cinque giornate …"[1]

Furthermore I discuss Basile's debt to Straparola, who was the first Italian author to include 'real' fairy-tales in his collection of tales *Le piacevoli notti*, and to Giovanni Secambi author of *Il Novelliere*.

The second chapter, "The Baroque metaphor and the metaphor in Basile**"** is a study on the role that metaphors play in Basile's work, and it aims to demonstrate how the use of metaphors in *Lo cunto* goes beyond the traditional Baroque implementation of this device. I approach the study of metaphors taking into consideration both classical, (traditional) and modern theories on rhetoric. Particularly, I refer to Aristotle's ideas on metaphors as presented in the third book of the *Rhetoric,* and Emanuele Tesauro's classification of metaphors in his *Cannochiale Aristotelico.* Vis-à-vis this canonical text, I include Guido Morpurgo-Tagliabue's *Anatomia del Barocco,* which presents a reinterpretation of the Aristotelian rhetoric, as well as, some of the most important modern treatises on the topic of metaphor and rhetoric in general such as, for example, Gérard Genette's *Figure I, II; Manuale di Retorica* by Bice Mortare-Garavelli and *Elementi di Retorica* by Heinrich Lausberg, *Retorica Generale. Le Figure della Comunicazione* by Gruppo μ and *The New Rhetoric A Treatise on Argumentation* by Ch. Perelman and L. Olbrechts-Tyteca. Furthermore, I have also consulted Genette's *Palinsesti* for the notion of "parody" and *Figure III* to discuss the narratological aspect of *Lo cunto.*

Finally in this second chapter, while investigating the role of the metaphors in Basile's work I also inquire about the role that games and food play in the collection and about the origin and the significance of the names of the many protagonists and the kingdoms of *Lo cunto.* These names, indeed, also fall under the spell of the Baroque metaphor as often times they hide a meaning that indicates a quality pertinent to the personality or the social extraction of the character.

The third chapter, "Gender ambiguities in Basile's *cunti"* presents a psychoanalytical reading of the female protagonists in particular, which seem to possess androgynous attributes. Indeed, Basile's *cunti* offer a good example of how the androgynous being is presented as superior compared to the stereotypical *man* and *woman*. In his tales he shies away from the representation of the man as a courageous, strong and resilient hero, and that of the woman as a remissive, submissive and 'immobile'being, who exceeds solely for her beauty and grace. In fact, even though the princesses and the heroines of his *cunti* are still beautiful and graceful they are also endowed with a strong and resolute personality. On the contrary men, though still invested with the traditionally gendered role of 'hero', are often weaker than their female counterpart. Ultimately, each of Basile's characters stands betwixt and between the male and the female universe; they all seem to have androgynous attributes. In this chapter I expand this idea and I argue that the 'hybrid human being' is possibly the perfect being.

The fourth chapter, "Fairytales in and out of time" deals with the difficulty in establishing the historicity of fairytales and maintains that they are in their nature both "in and out time", hence they are immortal. To prove this I propose a close reading of one of the most famous tales, *Cinderella*, as written by Basile, Perrault and the brothers Grimms, showing how each author 'reshaped' the tale and adapted it to his time and his culture. Furthermore, I discuss the representation of *Cinderella* in the performing arts and in particular I analyze Disney's cinematic adaptations. Ultimately, I have included a brief appendix on the most modern and contemporary authors who continue to write in this genre proving the perennial importance of fairy-tales.

**Basile's life.**

Giambattista Basile was born in Naples between 1566 and 1575[2], very little is known about his childhood and his family. Possibly he had six siblings and his family belonged to the Neapolitan middle class that emerged in the city during the sixteenth century. Around 1603 he joined the army of the Venetian Republic and left Naples in search of a better fortune. Basile's expressed his disappointment at his departure both in *Le avventurose disavventure* (The adventurous misadventure, 1611) and in one of the *cunti*, "Lo Mercante", (The Merchant, 1.7); the protagonists of these two texts, respectively Nifeo and Cienzo, lend their voice to Basile's thoughts and sadness. He was sent to Candia, a Turkish city under the Venetian government, and while serving there he probably acquired much of the material that he would use later in his *cunti;* for example, he learned the Turkish people accent when they spoke Italian, and he applied this knowledge in the shaping of the black slave character, who 'speaks' exactly with that particular accent. During his service in Candia he earned the respect and the affection of Andrea Cornaro, a Venetian nobleman, who invited him to join the Accademia degli Stravaganti, marking Basile's entrance into the literary world.

In 1604 Basile wrote some letters in Neapolitan dialect, that he would then use as a proem to *La Vaiasseide* (The epic of the servant girls, 1612), a poem written by his friend and countryman Giulio Cesare Cortese; these letters represent the first document of his literary career[3]. Basile also experimented in the writing of popular songs and in 1605 he wrote a *villanella*[4] *Smorza crudel Amor* for which Giovanni Domenico Montella wrote the music.

In 1607 he was able to return to Italy following the expedition lead by Pietro Bembo and in 1608 he was again in Naples, where he continued to be a courtier. In this same year he published his first work in Italian *Il pianto della vergine* (The tears of the virgin) that he had

mostly prepared during his years in Crete. The following year he published the first edition of *Madriali et ode* (Madrigals and odes) and subsequently, in 1610, he published a volume of *canzonette* set to music by his brother Donato, and dedicated to Lugi Carafa di Stigliano, at whose court he was working at the time. To his 'master' Basile also dedicated his poem *Le avventurose disavventure*, published a year later, 1611; in this same year he became a member of the Accademia degli Oziosi, with the name of Il Pigro (The Lazy), the same he had used for the Accademia degli Stravaganti in Candia.

In 1612 he followed his sister Adriana in Mantua and became a courtier for the Gonzaga's family, for whom his sister had been working for several years. Here, in 1613, he published the *Egloghe amorose e lugubri* (Amorous and lugubrious eclogues), the *Venere addolorata* (Venus afflicted), a musical drama in five acts, and the first edition of *Opere poetiche*, (Poetic works), which included all the works he had written between 1608-12 and also the edited version of *Madriali et ode*, to which he add a dedication to the Gonzaga's family. At the end of the year 1613 Basile returned to Naples and here he served at various courts: in 1615 he was at Montemarano, (in the province of Avellino); in 1617 was in Zuncoli, working for the Marquis of Trevico, Cecco di Loffredo; in 1618 he worked for Marino Caracciolo, the prince of Avellino; and in 1619 he became governor of Avellino. During these wandering years he was dedicated to the philological studies of some classics texts, in particular he worked on texts of Petrarchan and mannerist traditions and on authors such as Pietro Bembo, Giovanni della Casa, Galezzo di Tarsia; among the works he published there are: *Rime di M. Pietro Bembo e de gli errori di tutte l'altre impressioni purgate. Aggiuntovi l'osservationi, la varietà de' testi e la tavola di tutte le desinenze delle rime,* 1616; *Tavola di tutte le desineze delle rime di Pitero Bembo, co' versi intieri sotto le lettere vocali raccolte già da Tommaso Porcacchi. Or in miglior*

In 1631 he was elected governor of Giugliano, a city in the province of Naples and there he died on February 23rd 1632, because of an epidemic flu. After his death his sister Adriana promoted the publication of Basile unpublished and maybe incomplete works: *Del Teagene,* 1637; *Le muse napoletane,* 1635; and *Lo cunto de li cunti*, 1634-1636.

## *Lo cunto de li cunti* between tradition and innovation

> *"Non è chiù cosa goliosa a lo munno, magne femmene meie, quanto lo sentire li fatti d'autro, né senza ragione veduta chillo gran felosofo mese l'utema felicità dell'ommo in sentire cunte piacevole…"* [5]
>
> *" There is nothing in the world more delicious, my illustrious women, than to hear about the doings of others, nor without obvious reason did that great philosopher set the supreme happiness of man in hearing pleasant tales;…"*[6]

The telling of stories is one of the oldest pastimes ever existed and it belongs to the earliest societies as well as to very complex and modern ones. Often the stories were passed down from one generation to the other orally and this originated the long literary tradition of folktales, myth and legends depending on the protagonists and the subject matter of the narrative. There are sensible differences between these types of oral narrative,

> "Some scholars use the term *folktale* very generally and literally, to designate any tale shared orally in folk communities. More commonly, however, folklorists use the term for works of oral fiction told to entertain or educate, thus separating them from *legends*, tales which are usually told as true, even if their truth is often debated."[7]

The classification of the folktale presents some difficulties especially because there are not many documents on which we can rely to affirm, without any reasonable doubt, that there were any written versions of it; however there is plenty of evidence that oral folktales were very popular during the Middle Ages, although much of it is "negative". In fact, as Carl Lindahl points out often times the authors of saint's lives would mention the existence of folktales but only "to trivialize" them, also many authors seemed almost ashamed to admit that they enjoyed listening to oral tales. Nonetheless some of them did, which testifies to the popularity of this genre,

> "More rarely, writers intimate that they enjoy oral tales: Alvar of Cordova, a twelfth-century Spanish Christian, laments the fact that his country is under the control of the Arabs, than adds "and yet we are delighted by a thousand of their verses and tales"-but note that even this satisfied listener did not retell the Arabs' stories."[8]

Another problem in the classification of the folktale is to establish if the tales were fictional or real. If we assume that they were fictional narratives than we must also believe that both the author and the audience were 'receiving' them as such and, as Lindhal emphasizes, we don't have enough evidence to do that. The modern readers, actually, often erroneously assume a medieval tale to be a fictional folktale only because "it shares its plot with well-known oral fiction forms from more recent times"; an example of this is "Red Riding Hood", mostly known in the version given by Charles Perrault and the brothers Grimms. The modern reader considers this tale as a purely entertaining story, and yet as Catherine Velay-Vallantin demonstrates in her essay *From "Little Red Riding Hood" to the "Beast of Gévaudan": The Tale in the Long Term Continuum"*[9]*,* this story is embedded in reality and it originates from a local news story. Notwithstanding the lack of 'certain' proofs of the existence of folktale in the Middle Ages, it is still possible to date folktales back to that period thanks to some 'minor' but still important information. It is known, in fact, that during the Middle Ages "oral entertainment was the norm", even for the "sophisticated" writers,

> "Because they heard tales both told oral and read aloud, they tended to rewrite their literary sources much as an old artist would retell them, changing details and emphasizing styles suitable not only to their own tastes but also to the audience that would hear the tale performed aloud."[10]

Furthermore, in support of the theory that it is possible to date folktales there is the Historic-Geographical School, also known as the Finnish School, according to which it is possible to

discover the 'urform' of a folktale by studying all the variants of the plot, all the written versions of it, and classifying them by motifs, language and region in which they were told.

> "Using the methods and cataloging principles outline above, folklorists began assembling versions of a given tale type attempting to reconstruct its life history. Kurt Ranke, for example, examined more than 800 variants related to the Grimms'tale of "The Two Brothers" (AT 303), which incorporated the "Dragon Slayer" tale type, Ranke concluded that the ultimate source of the complex tale was medieval France and its plot has preserved a remarkable continuity in oral storytelling communities without significant influence from written versions."[11]

Lastly, as Max Luthi observes in his essay "Aspects of the Marchen and Legend"[12], folktales have not been created by "any mystical folk", rather they have been invented by "a certain individual"; hence they must have a precise 'origin'. Some scholars, however, are skeptical about the possibility to reconstruct the 'life' of a folktale and to establish exactly 'its' place and date of birth as well as the way it spread. For example, Calvino states,

"Datare una fiaba è arbitrario, se non con un' approssimazione di secoli, quando non di milenni"[13]

Jack Zipes agrees and he also tries to explain why fairytales cannot be 'dated'; he writes,

> "It is next to impossible because the fairy tale is similar to a mysterious biological species that appeared at one point in history, began to evolve almost naturally, and has continued to transform itself vigorously to the present day."[14]

Nevertheless, aside from the different opinions on the historicity of folktale, it remains safe to assume that fairy-tales represent the literary version of folktales featuring the presence of enchanted princes and princesses, kings and queens, and many characters belonging to the supernatural such as fairies, ogres, elves, goblins, as well as talking animals and plants all borrowed from the universe of fables. One of the most famous fairytale appears in *The Golden Ass* by Apuleius, indeed the story of Psyche and Cupid could be considered one of the oldest examples of it. Other famous fairy –tales appear in the following collections: *Arabian Nights*, which became popular in Europe thanks to Antoine Galland's transaltion, (1704-1717); in, *Le*

*Piacevoli Notti,* (1550-53), by the Italian author Giovan Francesco Straparola who included fairy-tales in his collection of *novelle*. This genre, notwithstanding its artistry, had for long been ignored and resurfaced in Europe only during the seventeenth century thanks, especially, to the work of Gianbattista Basile, (c.1575), author of *Lo cunto de li cunti,* (1634-36) and Charles Perrault, who in the writing of his *Contes,* (1697), borrowed from Basile adapting, though, the material to his characteristics and his French culture. Also important was the contribution of Marie-Jeanne Lhéritier with *Oeuvres meslées,* (1696); Marie-Catherine Le Jumel de Barnaville, comtesse d'Aulnoy, with *L'île de la félicité*, (1660), and *Les Contes de fée,* (1698); Jean de Mailly with *Les illustres fée,* (1698); Mada me de Murat with *Histoires sublimes et allégoriques,* (1699) among other French fairytale writers of the time. Subsequently, the work of the German 'folklorists' the Brothers Grimm[15], *Children's and Household Tales,* (1812-15), was fundamental in the emergence of the modern literary fairy tale.[16] In Italy as Calvino suggests in *Le Fiabe Italiane*, (1980), the most important contributions came from Gherardo Nerucci with *Sessanta novelle popolari montalesi*, (1880), a collection of sixty tales written in Tuscan dialect, (specifically 'pistoiese' dialect) and from Giuseppe Pitrè, one of the most important Italian folklorists, author of a great collection of Sicilian tales *Fiabe novelle popolari e racconti siciliani*, (1875)[17].

The focus of this chapter is on Basile's opus *Lo cunto de li cunti, overo Lo trattenemiento de peccerille*, its debt to tradition and its innovations which have contributed to the establishment of the fairy-tale as a literary genre. *Lo cunto,* a literary masterpiece that represents the first integral collection of fairy-tales, not only in Italy but also in Western Europe in general, had a short lived success right after it was published, but subsequently it was largely ignored. Nancy Canepa has defined *Lo cunto de li Cunti* as the "Cinderella of literary history", thus emphasizing

the fact that, despite its grandiosity, this book has for long time been left in the shadows in Italy more than in other countries. As a matter of fact the first modern, integral and annotated translation of Basile's masterpiece, which was published posthumously in 1634-36, was issued in Italy only in 1925 thanks to Benedetto Croce, who highly admired Basile and considered *Lo cunto* a masterpiece that illuminated the Baroque period. Croce declared Basile's collection as:

> "the greatest literary work of the Baroque because in it the Baroque executes a merry dance and appears on the verge of dissolving: before Basile the Baroque was torpid; with him it has become limpid gaiety."[18]

Prior to Croce's translation, in Italy, there had been other translations [19], but none of them was as complete; in Europe, exemplary translations were circulating as early as the first half of the nineteenth century, indeed in German *Lo cunto* was first translated integrally in 1846 by Felix Liebrecht , while the first English translation appeared in 1848 by John Edward Taylor.

According to Canepa there are four possible causes for the scarce success of the book. First of all, she believes, and I concur, that one of the biggest impediments for a better reception of Basile's work was the dialect employed. Basile, who was a courtier and a renowned 'Tuscan' writer at his time[20], decided to write *Lo cunto de li cunti* in Neapolitan dialect, which made the book intelligible only to a limited group of people. The second reason she adduces is the negative disposition that the Italian literary world has long had towards the Baroque period and its artistic productions, an attitude that has changed only in the last few decades. Furthermore, the scant success of *Lo cunto* was due to a general misunderstanding by the early modern world because it identified fairytales with children literature, (Children literature was actually recognized as a genre only in the late Eighteenth early Nineteenth century). Modern scholarship, however, has finally agreed that *Lo cunto de li cunti- Overo Lo Trattenemiento de' Peccerille*

was intended for an adult audience, namely the courtiers and friends of the author to whom he probably read parts of the book before it was even finished. This approach justifies and explains the language that is often coarse, vulgar or complicated by myriads of metaphors, hyperboles and by all the elements typical of Baroque prose, but still leaves doubts on how to interpret the subtitle of the text. The most plausible explanation for the subtitle is that for *peccerille* Basile intended the simple people, the populace, considered 'little' when compared to the inhabitants of the court or the members of the higher classes for whom the *cunti* were recited.

Canepa, also attributes the scarce popularity of *Lo cunto* to its hybrid nature, she writes:

> "Furthermore, *Lo cunto* occupies the somewhat paradoxical position of being the fairy-tale collection that is, at the same time, both the closest to its origins in the oral folktale and the most stylized and artistically sophisticated of all these collections."[21]

I believe that another plausible reason for the lack of success of *Lo cunto* is its polemical and quarrelsome attitude towards court society. Indeed, *Lo cunto* can be read as a harsh critique of the society of Basile's time, and this probably affected negatively the way people reacted to it, (at least in the 17$^{th}$ and the subsequent centuries, but not in the 20$^{th}$ century and today.)[22]

Ironically it is this hybrid composition of the collection, together with its Baroque stylistic features and also the vividness and vitality of its Neapolitan language, that makes *Lo cunto de li cunti* an original and unparalleled masterpiece. Once the barriers posed by the language and the censorious viewpoint towards the Baroque have been banished, this collection has become the subject of numerous scholarly studies that have investigated the relationship between Basile's text and the narrative tradition, highlighting both the debt of the Neapolitan author to it, as well as the innovation he brought to the writing of tales. We shall now discuss Basile's 'debt' towards its predecessors.

In Italy the tradition of story telling dates back to the medieval *exemplum* and anecdotes, which were told with no artistic pretension but just for the fun of revealing something new, (*nova* in Provençal from which the word *novella* originated in the west). Many of the plots for the anecdotes came from the Orient as they were told by merchants who used to go back and forth and imported into Italy not only the material goods but also bits and pieces of Indian and Arabic culture; it was actually through the Indian literary tradition that the device of the *cornice,* the frame-tale, was introduced. The oriental *cornice* differed considerably from the later form developed by Boccaccio, (1315-1375) who in the fourteenth century wrote his masterpiece the *Decameron,*(c.1350), to which Basile's work, as we will discuss later, has often been compared. The Indian *cornice* was a sort of circular tale that would 'embrace' the different tales that made up the collection; an example of it is found in the already mentioned *Arabian Nights,* where the *cornice* actually originates, and thus opens and closes, the entire collection of tales. Instead, in the *Decameron* the *cornice* is an independent story whose only purpose is to provide a setting for the *brigata* made up of ten young aristocrats so that they can conveniently spend their time 'novellando', (telling stories). Basile's cornice, as we will see, replicates the frame-tale of the *Arabian Nights,* more than that of the *Decameron.* Furthermore the influence of Indian and Arabic culture on European narrative is testified by the popularity of some tales collections such as *Il libro dei sette savi* and *Libro di Calila e Dimna*, which were amply translated and rewritten. These oriental collections provided a great source of themes and motifs for the Italian *novelle*; however, what made them so successful in Europe were their brevity and their moral content which were in perfect harmony with the western tradition of *exempla*. Indeed, the oriental tales and the *exempla* were so similar that often writers would chose to quote an oriental tale, instead

of an exemplum, to convey a moral teaching as it happens, for example, in the *Disciplina Clericalis*, a sort of manual to educate clerics, written by Petrus Alfonsi.[23]

The transition from the tradition of the *exempla* to that of the *novella* was almost natural it started with the rewriting in the vernacular of some of the most popular tale collections. Besides translating the tales from Latin, the authors also added details to the stories making them more realistic, with a typical popular taste.

> "Ma bisogna notare che l'enciclopedia medievale degli exampla si arricchì a mano a mano anche dei casi osservati dallo stesso predicatore nella vita quotidiana, episodi di carità di santità da esaltare, o di cupidigia di lussuria di malvagità, da condannare. Il moralista cercherà dunque la realtà nelle sue vicende, nelle sue apparenze più crude per testimoniare il male nelle sue vicende, nelle sue apparenze più crude per testimoniare il male nelle sue brutture ai suoi ascoltatori."[24]

Furthermore, the tales style became more dialogic as dialogues came to occupy the majority of the narrative text. All of these innovations are found then in the *Novellino* a collection of one hundred tales[25] that appeared in Italy towards the end of the thirteenth century. The author, (or the authors), as well as the original editor of the collection are unknown but they were certainly Florentines as the language of the tales attests. The topics of the tales were not always original; some of them actually derived from the old Latin and medieval tradition. The stories were written in a simple style both from a strictly grammatical point of view and a stylistic one. Indeed, the space dedicated to the description of the psychology of the protagonists or of the environment where the stories were set, is very limited; the simplicity of the *Novellino* made it easy to read and granted its popularity, and before the *Decameron* it remains one of the milestones in the emergence of the literary Italian novella. The appearance of the *Decameron* indeed marks the 'birth' of the modern Italian novella. With the *Novellino,* in fact, given the brevity of the tales and the lack of details, we were still in the 'realm' of the exemplum.

Boccaccio stretches the length of the novella and embellishes it with a more sophisticated prose and plenty of details both on the psychology of his protagonists and on the places where his stories are set. After the *Decameron,* there were the *Trecentonovelle* by Franco Sacchetti, (c. 1335), and the *Novelliere* by Giovanni Sercambi, (1347-1424), two collections based on the Boccacian tradition. Giovanni Sercambi will be dealt in more details later in the chapter as I believe that he might have had a strong impact on Basile, even though this influence has been overlooked by many scholars who preferred to concentrate on the more obvious echo of Boccaccio and Straparola, whom I discuss below.

The tradition of story telling in the 1400s penetrated the epic narrative which recovered many of the fairy tale motifs present in the previous tradition of the *cantari.* Indeed, in 1483 Luigi Pulci wrote his comic epic *Morgante* in which we can identify many common fairytale themes and protagonists such as dragons and wild men who resembled a bit the ogre of fairy-tale land, and indeed the story of "Florinetta" has many similarities with two of Basile's *cunti* "The Flea", (1.5) and " Cannetella", (3.1). Also of the fifteenth century is Matteo Maria Boiardo's *Orlando Innamorato,* (1495), in which we find many ogres, fairies and other sorts of 'magical' happenings. Finally, Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* is extremely rich in fairytales elements[26], *episodes* and characters; one only needs to think of Astolfo who goes to recuperate Orlando's 'wit' up to the moon, or of Alcina, the *maga,* (witch), who enchants all the knights who enter her castle[27]. This tradition continues then through the Renaissance, when the imitation of the Boccaccian novella continued, flourishing even if only during the first half of the century; subsequently the discovery of the Aesopian fables aroused strong interest and provided new subject matter for the narrations. The first collection of tales that incorporated not only the traditional *novellas* but also the first rudimentary example of 'real' fairy tales was *Le piacevoli*

*notti, (The pleasant nights)* of Giovan Francesco Straparola, which appeared between 1530 and 1533. It had definitely an important influence on Basile, and also on Perrault and other French writers of the time, and on the Brothers Grimm later. After Straparola, came the one who, in my view, can be considered the true *father* of the literary fairytale: Gian Battista Basile, whose work unquestionably designates the passage from the oral folk tale to the its "authored" and sophisticated literary version. This is concisely the history of the tradition before Basile, but what exactly does Basile owe to his predecessors?

Particularly the structure of *Lo cunto* has received much attention due to its noticeable resemblance with Boccaccio's *Decameron.* Indeed, Basile's work is often referred to as the *Pentamerone*, and Croce was among the first scholars to use this term in the introduction to his translation of *Lo cunto,* where he writes:

> " Dopo queste *Muse napolitane*, o ad una con esse, il Basile disegnò più vasta tela, che fu di raccogliere in una sorta di decamerone il tesoro delle fiabe popolari che si narravano a Napoli*:* un <<pentamerone>>, veramente, perchè le fiabe sarebbero state cinquanta e divise in cinque giornate …" ["After the *Muse napolitane,* or at the same time he was writing them, Basile had a greater project which was to collect in a sort of decameron the treasure of popular fairy tales narrated in Naples: a <<pentamerone>>, really, as the fairy tales would have been fifty divided in five days…"][28]

Michelangelo Picone deals with this issue in his essay *La Cornice Novellistica dal "Decameron" al "Pentamerone"* which clearly illustrates the similarities but also the many differences between these two masterpieces of Italian literature, and at the end recognizes Basile as the Neapolitan Boccaccio, who showed reverence towards but not submission to the great master and thus created his own original work of art. While this might seem evident today, in the past, the collection of Neapolitan fairy tales was reputed to be an imitation or a parody of the *Decameron*; as an imitation it has been severely criticized and has often been considered far

inferior to Boccaccio's *Decameron*. Particularly harsh in his judgment of *Lo cunto* was Ferdinando Galiani who wrote the following about Basile:

> "A costui venne disgraziatamente per noi il capriccio di contraffare l'incomparabile *Decamerone* di Giovanni Boccaccio, e comporre un <<pentamerone>> da lui intitolato *Lo cunto de li cunti* nel dialetto napoletano, e così divenire il Boccaccio, o sia il testo di esso. A tanta impresa mancavagli intieramente i talenti per eseguirla. Privo in tutto e di genio elevato e di filosofia e di felicità d'invenzione e di richezza di cognizioni a potere immaginare e adornare novelle graziose o interessanti o tragiche o lepide o morali, altro non seppe pensare che d'accozzare raccconti di fate e dell'orco così insipidi, mostruosi e sconci, che gli stessi arabi, fondatori di questo depravatissimo gusto, si sarebbero arrositi d'avergli immaginati."[29]

It is clear that this judgment of Basile's work is strongly influenced by the negative attitude toward the Baroque and toward the dialect literature typical of the Enlightenment. Although Basile rejected the idea to passively imitate tradition, he had no intention to ridicule or negate the literary importance of what had been written before him; nor was he advocating the superiority of the more modern productions. On the contrary as Getto states, Basile favored both and probably, while working on *Lo cunto*, had in mind both "the perfection of Boccaccio's model" and the need to experiment and innovate, "the inclination towards the eccentric", proper to the Baroque.[30] Basile didn't simply write a book of tales, he actually brought forth a completely new genre, namely the genre of written fairy-tales, and being a pioneer allotted him the freedom to play with the language, the narrative style and the structures of the plots satisfying all the impulses of his restless creative genius.

Basile looked at the *Decameron* with a critical eye and also borrowed themes from it, for example the *cunto* "Sapia" (5.6) has a strong resemblance to *Decameron* 3.9. In both stories, in fact, the women, Sapia[31] and Giletta di Norbona respectively, conquer their lovers thanks to their

endeavors and ingenuity. More generally Basile often uses the exemplum of Griselda, (*Decameron* 10.10), for his heroines who patiently endure maltreatments longer than normal human beings could do, as it happens for example in "La schiavetta", (The Little Slave Girl, 2.8). In this tale the jealous aunt is taken over by envy after entering 'the forbidden' room and finding in there the beautiful Lisa[32], her husband's niece who awakens after she had fallen asleep, almost as if she were dead, because of an enchantment,

> "…Và, ca te voglio dare mamma e tata! respose la baronessa e, 'nfelata comm'a schiava, arraggiata comm'e cana figliata, 'ntossecosa comm'a serpe, le tagliaie subeto li capille e facennole na 'ntosa de zuco le mese no vestito stracciato ed ogne iuorno le carrecava vrognole a lo caruso, molegnane all'uocchie, mierche'n face, facennole la vocca comm'avesse magnato pecciune crude.", (Rak, 402)

> "…Come on, I'll give you mommy and daddy! Answered the baroness and, as full of bile as a slave, as angry as a bitch that had just pupped, as full of poison as a serpent, she immediately cut off Lisa's hair, gave her a juicy beating, put her in a ragged dress, and *every day unloaded lumps on her head, eggplants on her eyes, brands on her face, and gave her a mouth that looked like she had eaten raw pigeons*.", (Canepa, 197. Emphasis is mine)

The poor girl passively accepts the abuses while awaiting her 'restoration' to happiness and freedom. In the *Decameron* there is also another tale of particular interest that could have influenced Basile even if in a more subtle way, and it is the story of Nastagio degli Onesti, 5.8[33], which is echoed in Basile's "La superbia punita", (Pride Punished, 4.10). The resemblance of these two tales, though not as evident as in the examples given above, is significant. The common trait in the two *novelle* is the punishment of the unworthy and ungrateful woman who rejects and ridicules the love of a fine gentleman. In fact, in the tale of "Nastagio degli Onesti" we find a young gentleman who has inherited a great fortune from his father and his uncle and falls in love with a " a girl of far more noble lineage than his own, whose love he hoped to win by dint of his accomplishments."[34] The girl, however, rejects and ridicules all of his attempts. At

the end Nastagio gains the love, or at least the devotion, of his beloved without punishing her directly but by showing her trough a mirror image what could happen to her if she continues to be wicked and cruel. This tale is also interesting for the supernatural elements it features. In Basile the protagonist of the tale ‘il re di Belpaese’, (the king of Lovely Land), also falls in love with an extraordinarily beautiful but wicked girl,

> “Cinziella, bella comme na luna, ma non aveva drama de bellezza che non fosse contrapesata da na livra de soperbia…”(Rak, 838)

> “Cinziella … was as beautiful as the moon, but she hadn’t a dram of beauty that wasn’t counterbalanced by a pound of pride…” (Canepa, 371)

Like Nastagio he tries all that it is possible to win her love but then at the end he gives up and leaves her kingdom swearing to come back and take revenge on her, and so he does. His revenge ends only when the queen mother talks some sense into him and softens his heart by showing him the two beautiful children the princess has given birth to.

Basile knew the *Decameron* well and found some sort of inspiration in it; however he had no intention of “contraffare”, (as Galiani sustained), the Florentine masterpiece. Indeed, even if the structure of *Lo cunto* can appear at first glance a faithful copy of Boccaccio’s collection, under closer inspection it reveals a strong incongruence with its ‘progenitor’. The first evident difference between the two, as noted above, is found in the structure of the frame tale. The “cornice” in the *Decameron* represents a tale in and of itself in which the author informs the reader of the background of the ten tellers and contextualizes the stories and the events of the deadly plague that afflicted Florence in 1348, leading to the decision of leaving Florence to take refuge into a villa in the country. The narrative of the cornice, furthermore, links all the other stories together as it provides for them a common reason to exist. The “brigata” comes together because of a

desire to survive the pestilence and the stories are told because the young aristocrats need a useful pastime to entertain themselves while away from everyday life. Ultimately, from a structural point of view, the cornice of the *Decameron* remains a complete tale, as it has a definite beginning, a body and an ending and it is highly significant in its content and rhetorical construction. On the contrary the "cornice' of *Lo cunto* is not a simple introduction separated by the rest of the narration, nor has the same function that the *Intoduzione* has in Boccaccio. Picone writes:

> "Questa pagina, con la quale la raccolta basiliana si apre, non corrisponde all' *Introduzione* alla prima giornata del *Decameron*, ( contenente la famosa descrizione della peste fiorentina del 1348, occasione storica da cui si era originato il libro di novelle), e non corrisponde nemmeno al *Proemio* (dove Boccaccio si rivolge al suo pubblico privilegiato di lettrici innamorate e malinconiche); mentre questi sono infatti dei testi non-narrativi, appartendono al mondo commentato, la '*Ntroduzzione* al *Pentamerone* è un testo narrativo: non solo appartiene al mondo narrato, ma genera la narrazione stessa.[35]

Furthermore, in the *Pentamerone* the cornice is not a complete tale, indeed it has a beginning, and it has a body, but it definitely does not have and end as the body of the narrative extends itself to all the other tales. In fact, the other *cunti* are a continuation of the frame-tale as in each of them Basile evokes the presence of its protagonist: Tadeo is always present through the image of the inept kings, Zoza lives in each wronged princess and Lucia in each of the evil stepmothers, mothers-in-law and ogresses. The conclusion of the introductory narrative in Basile coincides with the end of the book and the end of story-telling. This atypical "cornice" reveals indeed the Baroque substrate of Basile's work, as it clearly represents the idea of the *mise en abime,* that is the idea of "art within art" very much pursued during that period. The "cornice" indeed represents the tale that generates and contains all the other tales, so *Lo cunto* is a collection of 'tales within a tale'. Furthermore, the introduction functions as a mirror to the other *cunti* and this characteristic makes *Lo cunto* a specular narrative, a "story within a story" which further

clarifies the meaning of the title *Lo cunto de li Cunti* ,( "The tale of the tales"). Essentially, the "cornice" in the *Pentamerone* is the eggshell that contains the yolk. Picone writes:

> "Il testo liminare del *Pentamerone*, insomma non serve a contestualizzare l'opera rispetto al suo pubblico o alla realtà referenziale, come i luoghi omologhi del *Decameron*: esso articola bensì il *cunto* primario dentro il quale sono inseriti i 49 *cunti* secondari; è la novella fondamentale che giustifica tutte le altre novelle che vengono affabulate al suo interno. A questa funzione vuole precisamente alludere anche il titolo. Titolo che di conseguenza implica una presa di posizione teorica e una scelta di campo narratologica, grazie alla quale Basile può differenziarsi rispetto a Boccaccio."[36]

Another element that is often seen as a point of agreement, but that actually represents a point of variation and separation between the *Decameron* and *Lo cunto* is the presence of what Boccaccio calls "la brigata" and Basile calls "la marmaglia". In point of fact, in both collections we find ten narrators who, everyday, for ten days in the *Decameron* and five in *Lo cunto*, alternate in the telling of stories; nevertheless, the similarities between the "brigata" and the "marmaglia" begin and end with the number. Indeed, while Boccaccio's "brigata" willingly comes together in the church of Santa Croce and decides to leave the city to escape the death and suffering caused by the plague, "la marmaglia" in *Lo cunto,* is summoned to come to court, to satisfy one of the many whims of the slave-princess, and is chosen by prince Tadeo. In the *Decameron*, furthermore, a king or a queen is elected everyday and he /she has the responsibility of choosing the topic for the tales of that particular day and the order in which the tellers will speak. Most significant is the difference between the presence of the slave-princess in *Lo cunto* and that of a king and a queen, which is 'real' royalty, in the *Decameron.* In *Lo cunto* there is only one king, Tadeo, who decides the order in which the tellers will speak but has no say about the topic. Moreover, the "brigata" of the *Decameron* is made of ten young aristocrats, more precisely, it is composed of "seven young ladies…all were intelligent, gently bred, fair to look

upon, graceful in bearing, and charmingly unaffected"[37]and "three young men. …Each of them was most agreeable and gentle bred…"[38] In contrast, in the *Pentamerone* the group of tellers is composed of ten old hags, poor and uncouth in their manners, whose only ability is to know how to narrate better than anybody in their town,

> "Ma non parenno a Tadeo de tenere tanta marmaglia 'mpeduta pe no gusto particolare de la mogliere… ne sciegliette solamente dece, le meglio de la cetate, che le parzero chiù provecete a parlettare" (Rak, 22)
>
> "But since Tadeo did not think it proper to detain such a mob to satisfy his wife's whim…he chose just ten women, the best of the city, the ones who appeared to be the most expert and quick tongued" (Canepa, 41)

It is difficult not to read in the "marmaglia" chosen by Basile the *topos* of the world upside down so dear to the Baroque. The Neapolitan author ironically turns upside down the noble "brigata" of the *Decameron* and transforms it into a more vulgar and unsophisticated bunch. Furthermore, while in Boccaccio there are males and females tellers, in *Lo cunto* there are only females. Possibly, Basile's tellers are only women due to the author's intent to oppose the medieval tradition, which forced women in a silent role. Indeed, women who talked a lot were looked upon with suspicion, even more so if they were old. It also probable, however, that Basile, like Perrault will do later, was feeding into the popular tradition according to which tales are always told by women who spend their time knitting, sowing, spinning or simply sitting around the fireplace, often with the children; undeniably, entertaining stories have always made the time go fast.

Another difference in the two works is in the onomastics of the storytellers. Boccaccio chooses names of literary and mythological origin, such as Pampinea, which means the "rigogliosa", the luxuriant one; Fiammetta, little flame, clearly inspired by the woman loved by the author; Filomena "l'amata o amante del canto", the loved one, or the lover of singing,

(because of its connection to the nightingale); Emilia, that is "la lusinghiera", the flattering one; Lauretta, a literary reference this time though alluding at the woman loved by Petrarch in the *Canzoniere;* Neifile, which means "nuova innamorata o l'amante di amor nuovo", new in love, and clearly alludes to the Sweet New Style; and finally Elisa, the name used for Dido[39] in Boccaccio's *De mulieribus claribus* and in the *Esposizioni sopra la Commedia di Dante,* where the unfortunate queen is identified as the prototype of the tragic lover. These are names chosen by the author intentionally:

> "E però, acciò che quello che ciascuna dicesse senza confusione si possa comprendere appresso, per nomi alle qualità di ciascuna convenienti o in tutto o in parte intendo di nominarle"[40]

Basile, on the contrary, uses names and nicknames that tend to highlight the low birth and both the physical and behavioral distortions of the women,

> "Ma non parenno a Tadeo de tenere tanta marmaglia ... ne scegliette solamente dece, le meglio de la cetate, che le parzero cchiù provecete a parlettere, Zeza scioffata, Cecca storta, Meneca a vozzolosa, Tolla nasuta, Popa scartellata, Antonella vavosa, Ciulla mussuta, Paola sgargiata, Ciommetella zellosa e Iacova squacquarata."(Rak, 22)

> "But since Tadeo did not think it proper to detain such a mob…he chose just ten women, the best of the city, the ones who appeared to be the most expert and quick-tongued. They were: lame Zeza, twisted Cecca, goitered Meneca, big-nosed Tolla, hunchback Popa, drooling Antonella, snout- faced Ciulla, cross-eyed Paola, mangy Ciommetella, and shitty Iacova"(Canepa, 42)

The names chosen by Basile as Canepa points out are all derived by nobility,

> "These are all derivatives of noble names common in Naples (Lucrezia, Francesca, Domenica, Vittoria, Porzia, Antonia, Giulia, Paola, Girolama, Giacoma), which Basile ironically distorts, just as the women themselves are "deformed" versions of the conventional group of noble tale-tellers found in the frames of many novella collections (e.g., Boccaccio's *Decameron*), as is evidenced by both their social class and their physical irregularities."(Canepa, 42)

Zeza, Tolla, Ciulla and Iacova could be considered the most interesting names out of the ten as they are also linked to popular traditions. Zeza is a name borrowed from the theater, and in the

Neapolitan theater it is the name of Pulcinella's wife. Zeza showered her husband with excessive courtesy and caresses to make him comply with her requests, and he could barely stand all of her attentions. Her behavior originated the popular saying "fa' 'a Zeza" which is used to indicate a simpering or affected person. Tolla is also a name that finds its origin in the theater, in fact Tolla is Pulcinella's daughter, and she is also a symbol of the contrasted love as her father opposed her marriage to Don Nicola, a student from Calabria. The name Ciulla is also interesting for the meaning it has, in fact in Neapolitan dialect "ciulla" means snail. It is possible that Basile chose this name to emphasize the contrast between the slowness with which the 'old hag' probably moved and the speed with which she could move her mouth, as after all she is nicknamed the "mussuta". Finally, Iacova, also Jacuvélla, in Neapolitan, as already mentioned derives from Giacoma. The name Giacomo/a in Neapolitan has always been used to indicate a simpleton, a person with simpering ways and with the habit of talking too much[41]. Hence, it is possible that the adjective "squacquarata" does not only refer to the intestinal incontinece of the old woman but also to her mouth's incontinence.

Significant is also the difference in the way the male protagonists are named in the two collections. The three young men in Boccaccio carry names that allude to their nobility and to their character. We have Panfilo, "tutto amore", (all love); Filostrato, "abbattuto d'amore", (the defeated by love), and also the title of a poem in octaves written by Boccaccio; and Dioneo, "il lussurioso", (the lustful). In Basile the king is named Tadeo, which etymologically means stupid, and thus emphasizes the ineptitude of the king who never imposes orders, never chooses which teller would speak first or the topic of the stories; in fact,

> "He is a good-natured but rather ineffectual simpleton (after all he is asleep during the central action of the frame tale, and once he wakes up he is generally portrayed in the guise of a henpecked husband)"[42]

Tadeo is simply a puppet that Zoza manipulates at her will and this represents another major difference between Boccaccio and Basile. In the *Decameron* the three young men are needed by the women in part because of what Filomena says about them:

> "We are fickle, quarrelsome, suspicious, cowardly, and easily frightened; hence I greatly fear that if we have none but ourselves to guide us, our little band will break up much more swiftly…
> Then Elisa said:
> It is certainly true than man is the head of the woman, and that without a man to guide us it rarely happens that any enterprise of ours is brought to a worthy conclusion."[43]

In *Lo cunto* Zoza is the 'head' of the man, she is not afraid to fight for what she wants and at the end her "enterprise…is brought to a worthy conclusion."

Basile turns the idyllic world of the Florentine master upside down and in doing so he makes a strong ideological statement as wanting to break with the tradition and start a new literary trend. Thus, *Lo cunto* could be read as an ideological manifesto of its author. Right at the beginning of the collection we find the following proverb:

> "Fu proverbeio de chille stascionate, de la maglia antica, che che cerca chello che non deve trova chello che non vole e chiara cosa è che la scigna pe cauzare stivale restaie 'ncappata pe lo pede, come soccesse a na schiava pezzente, che non avenno portato maie scarpe a li piede voze portare corona 'n capo." (Rak,10)

> "A seasoned proverb of the ancient coinage says that those who look for what they should not find what they should not, and it's clear that when the monkey tried putting on boots it got its food stuck, just like what happened to a ragged slave girl who although she had never worn shoes on her feet wanted to wear a crown on her head."(Canepa, 35)

As Nancy Canepa points out[44], the choice of opening the collection with a proverb does not only warn the readers that the author will heavily rely on popular traditions to find sources for his *cunti,* but, according to my own view, it also echoes what will happen to Lucia who will be punished for her attempt to imitate the princess and play a role that she was not fit for.

Furthermore, the second part of the proverb[45], (when Basile refers to a common tradition among hunters of taking off their boots and putting them back on in the presence of an ape, then filling the boots with glue and leaving them at the disposal of the ape that will then, in its attempt to passively imitate the hunters, put them on and remain stuck in the boots), could be read as a subtle, but at the same time strong, protest against "slavish" imitation of the tradition

> "With this information in mind, a very different reading emerges: what causes the ape's downfall is its slavish imitation of the human model; the proverb cautions against unquestionably "aping" a model, and thus dramatizes the necessity of *not* assuming popular tradition as an absolute authority. This short but significant example of the multiple, and often contrasting, layers that permeate *Lo cunto* is both a statement of artistic intent (Basile, in his relation to popular tradition that supplies shim with the primary material for his work, will not merely imitate) and exhortation to read the text in an equally creative fashion"[46]

I believe, however, that the real innovation of *Lo cunto*, featured already in this opening proverb, is the presence of the Moorish slave, as one of the main protagonists of the collection. Lucia[47] is an intricate figure as she stands in-between the two worlds of reality and fairy-tale. From a historical point of view, she stands as the representative of the many slaves present in Naples during Basile's time; in the world of fairy-tales, she replaces the atavic enemy represented by the evil mother-in-law or step-mother. Zoza, in fact, does not have a step-mother; we can't even be sure whether or not her father was a widower because it is not clearly stated by Basile. Furthermore she does not have a mother-in-law and not even after she marries Tadeo will she have one; indeed nothing is ever mention about Tadeo's family and considering that he probably laid asleep for a long time we could assume that his parents have both passed away.

Basile thus takes his distance from literary tradition; however, it is also true that the structure of the single *cunti* resembles that of the Boccaccian *novella.* He mirrors Boccaccio in a parodic mode and reproduces the same structure of the stories as in the *Decameron*. In *Lo cunto*

*de li cunti* each tale, except the introduction, opens with the summary of the *cunto* that it is about to be told, followed by a commentary of the women on the *cunto* that they have just heard, followed then by a proverb, (a motto in Boccaccio), that introduces the new story that they are getting ready to hear. Then there is the actual *cunto* that is concluded, (except for the introductive and the conclusive tale), with a proverb, (again a motto in Boccaccio), which represents a sort of moral, (sometimes ironic), about the story[48]. In Boccaccio we find more or less the same structure. Indeed, each tale is introduced by a summary of the story the "brigata" will hear, followed by a commentary on the previous tale,(except for the first tale), followed then by a motto, an admonitions to capture the attention of the listeners. Finally, there is the actual tale, which is always concluded with a motto, a moral teaching. The two works are however very different in some important aspects. In fact, while in Boccaccio there is always a direct address to the women[49], to whom the entire collection is dedicated, in Basile there is not. Also, Boccaccio becomes himself a narrator when on the fourth day he has a *Defense*[50], creating thus a tale within a tale; Basile, on the contrary, never interferes with the narrators and speaks always through them. The two collections differ also in the conclusion. In Basile the last tale, the one told by Zoza, concludes not only the activity of story-telling but also the book, whereas in Boccaccio the last tale is then followed by the "Conclusione" of the author. Furthermore, another difference between the two works is that Basile's tales are intertwined with myriads of metaphors that originate other stories within the main tales. As Rak says, the metaphors in *Lo cunto*, especially the ones pertaining to the alternation between the sun and the moon, form "micro-racconti", (micro-tales), populated with their own characters and stories, that are completely independent from the main narrative,( I will discuss the metaphors and the proverbs in chapter 2). In the *Decameron* the tales are more linear and there are fewer metaphors.

Boccaccio was definitely a model for Basile, in fact, stylistically he wanted to excel in the narrative form in dialect as Boccaccio did in Tuscan[51]; nonetheless to consider the Decameron as the only source for Basile's work would be a mistake,

> "In *Lo cunto* are intertwined diverse traditions of narrative and non narrative forms. Among the sources from which Basile drew his materials were <<the fireside tales of the popular store of legends; the Greek novel; …Baroque narrative; the late-medieval exempla traditions; jokes; the erudite humanistic novella; street theater 'numbers'; the semi-literate narratives of public notices and gazettes; the micro-chronicles of pamphlets;…the 'open' narration of conversation around country hearths, in taverns, at fairs, in the marketplace, in military camps, at villages bonfires; and traveler's tales>>"[52]

More importantly, though, we cannot ignore the debt that Basile owes to the other Italian narrators mentioned above, and most of all we can not neglect the influence of Giovanni Sercambi, the author of *Il Novelliere* , (1399-1400ca), and of Giovan Francesco Straparola, the author of *Le piacevoli notti,* (1550-53).

The influence of Sercambi on Basile has been generally overlooked or just mentioned *en passant* but it has never been really studied. Nonetheless, in reading *Il Novelliere*, (a collection of 155 tales), we find at least seven tales that have elements typical of the fairy-tale and four of them are particularly interesting because they have a strong resemblance with some of Basile's *cunti.* The tales that carry fairy-tale's features are II, V, XV, XXVIIII, CXXII, CXL, and CXLII.[53] In all of these tales we find the triplication of the action, (the obstacles that the main protagonist has to overcome.) Moreover, in XXVIIII we find the motif of the discovery of the princess's birthmarks, (AARNE 850), in CXXII we have the presence of dragon, and in CXLII there are magical animals with their magical gifts that help the 'hero' to succeed in his enterprise.

On the other hand, Sercambi differs from the traditional fairy-tale in the characterization of the 'hero'. Indeed, as Sinicropi points out there are some differences between the classical fairy-tale hero and the one in Sercambi. The hero in the fairy-tale often succeeds only thanks to the help provided by his magical 'assistants', (magical animals, good fairies, dragon, magical stones,…); whether he behaves properly or not, whether he is courageous or not does not affect the happy ending of his adventure. In Sercambi, instead, the hero is more in charge of his own destiny and to succeed not only he needs the magical helps but, most importantly, he needs his ingenuity and determination. This image of the simpleton, the poor boy who succeeds mostly thanks to his cleverness and strong will was unknown before but it had then a great legacy and indeed most likely it inspired Straparola for his "raising tale", (a tale where the hero, an underprivileged boy from the populace, is able to change his social status thanks to his talent and ingenuity.)[54]

Sercambi's tales[55] that are strongly echoed in some of Basile's *cunti* are: XV "De bono Facto", XXVIIII "De astutia in juvene", CXXII "De Apetito canino et non temperato", CXL "De bona et justa fortuna". "De bono facto" is a tale in two parts, and the second part could possibly have been a source for Basile's cunto "Lo 'ngnorante", (The ignoramus, 3.8), for it bears many similarities to Sercambi's tale. In the first part "De bono facto" tells the story of Pincaruolo, a young boy from a country town near Milan, who is sent by the mother to do some business in Milan and through many vicissitudes, ends up being rich. The change of fortune for the protagonist is manifested also through a change of name, indeed Pincaruolo becomes Torre[56] in the second part of the tale. After all, the name Pincaruolo suited a farmer but not a rich and powerful man, who is what the protagonist has become,

> "Pincaruolo, montato a cavallo co' fiorini 800, dice fra se medesmo :<<Io posso esser un gran signore; e poi che io sono a cavallo et ho tanti denari, da qui innanti mi potrò far chiamare Torre e non Pincaruolo"
>
> [Pincaruolo, riding his horse and with 800 florins, says to himself :<< I could be a great gentleman; and as I have a horse and I have a lot of money from now on I could call myself Torre and not Picaruolo.][57]

Torre continues his journey heading towards France, during which he meets four men with exceptional powers whom he takes with him. He meets: Rondello, who runs faster than a roe; Sentimento, who has a supernatural sense of hearing; Diritto, who has an extraordinary aim and with his arrow can catch a bird while it is flying; and finally he meets Macino, who is able to create wind with his breath[58]. With his four companions he reaches Paris where he learns that the king has posted a proclamation where he promised his daughter in marriage to whoever will beat her in a race, but he promised death to the looser. Torre enters the competition and thanks to the help of his gifted companions, and in spite of the princess's tricks, wins the race and marries her.

The structure and content of Basile's cunto "Lo 'ngnorante", ("The Ignoramus", 3.8) is almost the mirror image of Sercambi's tale. Moscicone is sent by his father to do some business in Cairo and during his journey he meets men with extraordinary powers and takes them along with him. He meets: Furgolo,(Flash),who runs faster than lighting; Aurecchia-a- leparo,(Hare's-Ear), who "…can hear what's going on all over the world without moving a hair"; Cecaderitto, (Sharpshooter), who like Diritto has a extraordinary aim; Shioshiariello, (Blowboy), who can "blow down houses"; and finally he meets Forte Schena, (Stronback), who can carry a mountain on his back[59]. With his five friends he reaches the kingdom of Bello Shiore, (Bel Flower) where there is a king who has a daughter who runs faster than any other human being. The king has issued a proclamation promising his daughter in marriage to anyone who could defeat her in a race; however, if the challenger should lose, he would be killed. Obviously, Moscicone enters the

race and with the help of his five friends, notwithstanding the princess's tricks, he wins. Here the two stories diverge; indeed, while in Sercambi the king keeps his word and gives his daughter in marriage to Torre, in Basile's *cunto* the king, who at the end listens to his advisors rather than obey the 'code of honor' according to which once a man gives his word he must keep it, does not fulfill his promise,

> "Lo re, vedenno la vettoria de na paposcia, la parma de no vozzacchio, lo triunfo de no caccialo-pascere, fece gran penziere si dovevale dare o no la filgia,e fatto conziglio co li sapute de corte soia, le fu respuosto che Ciannettela non era voccone pe li diente de no scauzacane e de n'auciello pierde-iornata e che senza macchia de mancatore poteva commutare la promessa de la figlia a no donativo de scure, che sarria stato chiù sfazione de sto brutto pezzentone che tutte le femmene de lo munno" (Rak,592)
>
> "Upon seeing that the victory had gone to a booby head, the palm to a featherbrain, and the triumph to a big sheep, the king thought long and hard about giving his daughter to Moscicone. He called the wise men of his court to council, and they told him that Ciannetella was not a morsel for the teeth of a scoundrel and a good-for-nothing birdbrain, and that without the stain of going against his word he could commute the promise of his daughter into a monetary gift, which would satisfy this big ugly ragamuffin more than all the women in the world." (Canepa, 271)

The king follows his courtiers' advice and asks Moscicone how much money he wants in exchange for the princess's hand. Moscicone, who knows how much weight Forte Schena could carry on his back, tells the king that he wants as "much gold and silver" as Forte Schena could hold. The king agrees and Moscicone ends up taking home a fortune and he shares it with his father and his companions. Hence, even without marrying the princess, as Torre does, he still becomes rich and lives happily ever after.

Upon comparison the two tales' resemblance is evident: the men encountered by Torre have the same powers as the men encountered by Moscicone, the only difference in this part of the tale is that while Torre meets four men, Moscicone meets five. I believe that in a way Forte Schena at

the end replaces the princess in the role of "giver of fortune". Torre obtains his fortune by marrying the princess, while Moscicone, who is not considered a suitable husband for such royalty, earns his fortune thanks to the extraordinary strength of his companion. Other noticeable differences between the two tales are that Pincaruolo/Torre is sent on a journey by his mother, while Moscicone is sent by his father; also while Moscicone returns home and shares his good fortune with the father, Torre never returns to his mother, or if he does Sercambi does not tell us. The first divergence could be read again as a reversal operated by Basile probably to distance himself from the source; the second difference instead is justified by the fact that while Basile is following strictly the protocol of the fairy-tale where the hero, after his adventurous journey, always goes back home, Sercambi is not.

"De astutia in juvene", is suggestive on different levels. First of all it presents the typical fairytale motif of the princess who does not laugh but then burst into laughter at the sight of a comic spectacle, (AARNE 559), present also in Basile not only in the frame tale but also in the tale of "Peruonto", (1.3) and in "Lo Scarafone, Lo Sorece e Lo Grillo", (The Cockroach, the Mouse, and the Cricket, 5.3). Secondly it introduces the figure of the son who is constantly financed, (at least three times, in line with the traditional triplication of the fairytale), by the parent to perform a task that is never actually accomplishes. This figure is present also in Basile in 5.3 and "Vardiello", (1.4). However the most interesting aspect of this tale in its relation to the *Pentamerone* is the triplication of the action that leads Andriolo, the protagonist, to conquer his beloved princess. Andriolo is in love with a princess and knowing that he does not have a chance with her, as he is of a lower social rank, he devises a plan to win her love. He offers money to obtain little pleasures from her: on the first night he kisses her foot; on the second night he kisses her leg and on the third night he kisses her lips, then he gets to sleep with her and make

her his wife. A similar situation is represented both in Basile's "La soperbia casticata", (Pride Punished, 4.10) and "Pinto Smauto", (Pretty as a picture, 5.3). In "La soperbia casticata", we find a prince, disguised as a gardener, who, by giving the princess expensive gifts, in three[60] nights conquers the bed of his beloved and makes her his wife; in "Pinto Smauto", there is a princess who, by bribing the wicked queen who has usurped her husband, wins him back in three nights. Basile replaces the money paid by Adriolo with expensive gifts but the unfolding of the action is the same as in Sercambi.

Another noteworthy tale is "De Apetito canino et non temperato", CXXII, especially for the motif of understanding the language of animals, which give the heroes/heroine the cure to save the beloved (AARNE 432;516;613;670;6730.) In Sercambi's tale Paulo[61], the protagonist, receives the gift of understanding the animals' language from a dragon as a token of his gratitude[62] for Paulo having saved his life. Thanks to this gift Paulo is capable of understanding a dialogue between the frog in the princess's stomach and other frogs in a pond, and so he is able to save the life of the princess who had swallowed it and was dying because the animal now lived in her stomach and was eating up all the food she consumed. Clearly Paulo marries the princess and lives happily ever after. More or less the same story line is reproduced by Basile in "Lo serpe", (The serpent, 2.5), where Grannonia, a princess, with the help of a fox understands the dialogue between two birds that are discussing the cure to save the prince who is dying because of severe wounds. The only cure to save his life is to cover the wounds with birds' fat and also with a fox's fat. Grannonia has the fox kill the birds for her but then, in spite of the generosity the animal has shown her, she kills the fox and so is able to cure her prince. Also "Verde prato", (Green meadow, 2.2), proposes the same *topos* even if with a slight difference. In "Verde prato", Nella whose beloved is dying because of an accident caused by her wicked

sisters, learns of the cure to save his life by listening to a conversation between two ogres, who even though are not animals belong to a species other than human. The solution is the same as in "Lo serpe": the princess needs to anoint the wounds with 'animal' fat, so, just like Grannonia kills the birds and then the fox (who helped her in finding the cure), Nella kills the two ogres who welcomed her into the house. All three tales present the same situation: the hero/heroine learns of the cure by accident, because he/she happens to be in the right place at the right moment, (even if in Sercambi's tale the paragraph where the frogs discuss the actual cure is missing, due to manuscript imperfection, we still learn that at the end as a result of the cure the frog is dead, just like the fox and the ogres.)

Finally, "De bona et justa fortuna", CXL could have been one of the sources for "Lo dragone", (The dragon, 4.5) in *Lo cunto.* Sercambi tells the story of Nibbio, the son of the king of England, who after his father's death, because he is still a child, is given to the care of his cousin, the king of France. Nibbio is very talented and he excels in everything he does, even in beauty, thus his cousin becomes jealous of him and forces him to become a stable-boy. One day the king of France receives a letter from the king of Spain who informs him that he intends to give his daughter in marriage to whoever will win a three day battle competition. Feeling strong and confident, the king of France decides to participate in the tournament and thus goes to Spain together with his servants and of course with Nibbio. The king of Spain, to prevent any attempt, by the participants, to usurp his daughter honor, builds a pavilion right on the square where the tournament will take place and decides that the princess, Biancamontagna, will sleep in there watched over by his guards. Also he issues a proclamation implementing a curfew and promises the death penalty to whoever disobeys the rules. The king of France, sure of the fact that he will win the princess's hand, already envisions himself as the king of France and Spain together, and

moreover he dreams of becoming also the king of England, which will make him the most powerful sovereign on earth. The only obstacle between him and his dream is Nibbio, so the king decides to kill him, but he wants it to look like an accident. Having heard the proclamation he decides to send Nibbio out at night in the hope that he will be caught by the royal guards and killed. However, even if he is stopped by the guards, Nibbio avoids death as he tells the guards that not only he is the cousin of the king of France but he is also the son of the king of England. Hence Nibbio walks freely during the night, when no one else is around, and he has also access to the pavilion where the princess sleeps, and lays with her enjoying the pleasures of love, (this happens for three nights). During the day the king cannot worry about Nibbio as he is busy with the tournament, but even here something odd happens. The king of France is able to defeat all the contestants but everyday, (for the three days of tournament) when he is about to celebrate his victory a mysterious knight appears and defeats him. On the third day it is discovered that this mysterious knight is Nibbio, who, at the end, marries Biancamontagna and is officially recognized by the cousin as the king of England. After a few years the king of France dies and leaves his kingdom to Nibbio who becomes thus the most powerful king on earth, being the ruler of three nations: England, France and Spain.

"Lo dragone" is the story of Minuccio the son of a beautiful woman, Porziella, who had been raped and impregnated by a king and then walled up in an attic of the royal palace. Left there to starve to death, Porziella survives thanks to the help of an enchanted bird, (the same type that helps Minuccio), and thus is able to give birth to her son and raise him properly. When the child grows up, with the help of the bird, he leaves the attic and enters the king's palace. The king becomes soon fond of the lovely boy and this triggers the jealousy of his wicked wife who tries everything to get rid of him. Minuccio, because of the evil queen, is sent out on three

'impossible' enterprises, the last one being that of killing a terrible dragon that no one had ever been able to defeat. Minuccio, thanks to the aid of the enchanted bird, succeeds in all of the tasks assigned to him and so at the end not only he is able to free his mother but he is also recognized as the son of the king and marries a beautiful fairy who had disguised herself as the enchanted bird.

Hence, Nibbio and Minuccio seem to have the same fate: they are both of royal birth but forced to leave a meager life; they are both sent off to face various dangers and they both succeed and at the end get reinstituted to their royal status.

Of interest is also tale LXXII "De justa responsione" which bears a strong resemblance to "Corvetto", (3.7). In "De justa responsione", Dante[63] who is known for his wisdom is invited to the court of the king of Naples, "re Umberto". The king, in spite of the fact he has witnessed Dante's wisdom, wants more proofs of it so he orders the jesters of his court to ridicule and provoke the 'young genius' to see how he will react. Dante successfully wins every 'debate' as he never loses his temper and always answers properly to the jokes of the jesters, and the king is so impressed by his immense wisdom that he welcomes him to live in his court forever and treats him as his peer.

Corvetto is a courtier of great talent and much loved by his king for his honorable qualities but for the same reason envied by the other courtiers. The courtiers convince the king to put Corvetto's loyalty to him to the test and suggest that to do so he sends him out to perform dangerous tasks. Corvetto obeys his king and, given the fact that he is enchanted, succeeds even in the impossible enterprise of conquering the ogre's palace. When the king sees the worth and the loyalty of his faithful courtier he concedes his daughter's hand to him. The similarities

between the two stories are evident: both tales are based on the "tasks motif" typical of fairy-tale, (AT 328) and both Dante and Corvetto face dangers because of the jealousy that their talent awakes in others. Finally, it is important to notice a significant difference in the characterization of the two protagonists. Dante succeeds only thanks to his ingenuity, (which is typical of Sercambi's protagonists), whereas Corvetto succeeds thanks to magical aids.

The influence of Sercambi's *Novelliere* on Basile is thus somewhat significant even though it has been overshadowed by Straparola's collection. *Le piacevoli notti* is a collection of seventy-three tales, only thirteen of which are fairy-tales, and it represents the most eminent prototype of *Lo cunto.* It has given us one of the most famous fairytales "Il gatto con gli stivali", (The Puss in the boots), recuperated, translated and transformed by Basile, in "Cagliuso", (4.2) and also by Perrault, in "Master Cat". However, Basile owes Straparola much more in that Zoza's story in *Lo cunto,* has similarities with the story "Biancabella", (night 3, story3), in *Le piacevoli notti;* indeed they both present the "false bride motif".[64] Biancabella, like Zoza looses her prince because of a jealous and envious woman, and to win him back, just like Zoza, goes to live in a palace across from the royal residence of her prince. At the end thanks to the 'art' of recounting stories she is recognized by her estranged husband and reinstituted as queen, while her adversary, together with her bewitched mother, dies of a terrible death. The same motif is also present in "Le tre Cetra", ("The Three Cintrons, 5.9), which is a mirror image of the frame tale. Furthermore, Basile inherited from Straparola a series of motifs and episodes; in fact, as Bottigheimer points out, Biancabella "also produced a stock of pearls and stones whenever she combed her hair. In so doing, she set a style for countless fairy tale good sisters' wealth producing bodies"[65] In Basile's, we find the same *motif* as for example in "Le due Pizzette", (The Two Little Pizzas, 4.7) where Marziella receives the gift of producing pearls and flowers

whenever she comes her hair or breathes, as a reward for showing kindness to an old woman who turns out to be a fairy in disguise:

> "Vista la vecchia l'amorosanza de Marziella, le disse: << Và, che te pozza 'mprofecare sempre lo cielo de sto buono ammore che m'hai mostrato! e prego tutte le stelle che…quanno shiate t'escano rose e gesommine dalla vocca, quanno te piettene cadano sempre perne e granetelle da ssa capo e quanno miette lo pede 'n terra aggiano da sguigliare giglie e viole.>>"(Rak, 774)
>
> "When the old woman saw how loving Marziella was, she said to her: 'Go, and may the heavens always make you prosper for the generous love that you've shown me! I pray to all the stars that … when you breathe roses and jasmines may come out of your mouth, when you comb your hair pearls and garnets may fall from your head, and when you put your foot to the earth lilies and violets may spring forth."(Canepa, 345)

Biancabella also contains the motif of the princess with chopped hands which returns in Basile's "Penta Mano Mozza", ("Penta with chopped-off hands", 3.2)[66]

Moreover Straparola's "Peter the Fool", (night 3, story1), and "The Magic Doll", (night 5, story 2) are the prototype for all the fools' stories, particularly for that of "Peruonto", (1.3) and "La papera", (The Goose, 5.1), respectively. Finally, in Basile we find an abundance of "rise tales", like "Il racconto dell'Orco", (The Tale of the Ogre, 1.1) and "Peruonto", (1.3), which tell the stories of two ugly, poor and rather stupid boys who become rich and beautiful thanks to some magical intervention; "Cagliuso", (2.4),also, is a "rise tale", and it is about a poor fellow who becomes rich thanks to the help of an enchanted cat he has inherited from his father. Additionally there are "restoration tales", which were introduced for the first time in *Le piacevoli notti*; these are the stories of people who have seen their 'legitimate role' usurped but at the end are reinstituted, and regain the power, the happiness and the wealth they had been deprived of throughout the tale, [see the story of princess Zoza, which begins in the " 'Ntroduzzione" and ends with the "Scompetura de Lo cunto de li cunte", (End of The Tale of Tales, 5.10) ,"La gatta

Cenerentola", (The Cinderella Cat, 1.6), "La Penta Mano-Mozza", (Penta with the Chopped-Off Hands, 3.2), "Lo Dragone", (The Dragon, 4.5), and " La soperbia casticata", ( Pride Punished, 4.10.)] Moreover, the story of Fortunio, (PN 3.4), bears some similarities with "La Cerva Fatata", (The Enchanted Doe, 1.9) and with "Le doie pizzelle", (The Two Little Pizzas, 4.7). In Fortunio, the illegitimate son leaves his home in search of his destiny, and the same happens to Canneloro, in *Lo cunti*, who is forced to leave his house because of the wicked and jealous queen. The presence of the "sirena-carcieriera" is the common theme of PN 3.4 and "Le doie pizzette"[67] The likeness of the two collections goes further; Rak indeed believes that Straparola and Basile not only shared a fertile imagination, but most importantly they shared a 'library', and they possibly studied the same texts.[68] Although Basile borrows from the *Piacevoli Notti*, he does not submissively imitate his predecessor, just as he did not simply imitate Boccaccio. On the contrary, he reworks the borrowed material; Rak writes,

> "Questi materiali erano lavorati nel *Cunto* con un humor paradossale e teatrale, comico e solenne nello stesso tempo, e, soprattutto, ridisposti in una tavola di conversioni di intrecci e figure, luoghi e storia regolate da un codice ferreo. Ogni racconto era nello stesso tempo assolutamente irreale e innocente e nello stesso tempo a cifra, da raccontare- o da ascoltare- modulandone i messaggi possibili a seconda della circostanza e degli ascoltatori."[69]

Basile also follows tradition in terms of the organization of his tales and he adopts a structure that resembles the one delineated by Vladimir Yakovlevich Propp, (1895-1970).[70] Propp assigned to fairy-tales a precise structure, according to him the starting action of fairy-tales, (identified with the departure of the hero or heroine), is generated by a *villainy* or a "*lack"*. The hero/heroine then starts his/her solitary journey with the intent to resolve the situation of "*lack"* by finding the desired object. The success of the enterprise is granted by the presence of magical figures or objects that help the hero/heroine overcome all the obstacles he/she encounters. The fairytale ends with the return of the hero/heroine in the family, (sometimes

he/she creates a new family, but the important thing is that the hero/heroine will not live in isolation anymore). If we look closely at the *Pentamerone* we soon realize that almost all of Basile's heroes and heroines embark in the same journey described above.

Basile, however, does not passively imitate, but, rather, he departs from tradition by accomplishing a complete innovation, a true revolution, of the genre, particularly regarding the characterization of the personages, the setting of the tales and the language. The fairytales of Basile's *Pentamerone* are a hybrid between the typical fantastic elements, proper to the folktales, and the remarkable realistic features that the author introduces in the frame tale. The tale opens with the king of Vallepelosa (Hairy Valley), who is desperate because he has a daughter, Zoza[71], who never laughs, and has never laughed. This king does everything in his power to change this situation

> "facenno venire a provocarle lo gusto mo chille che camminano 'ncoppa a le maze, mo chille che passano dinto a lo chirchio, mo li mattacine, mo Mastro Roggiero, mo chille che fanno iouche de manoo, mo le Forze d'Ercole, mo lo cane che adanza, mo Vraconeche sauta, mo l'aseno che beve a lo bicchiero, mo Lucia canazza e mo na cosa e mo nautra. Ma tutto era tempo pierduto…Tanto che lo povero patre, pe tentare l'utema prova, non sapenno autroche fare dette oredene che se facesse na gran Fontana d'ueglio 'nante la porta de lo palazzo , co disegno che sghizzanno a lo passare de la gente, che facevano comm'a formiche lo vacaviene pe chella strata, pe no se sdognere li vestite averriano fatto zumpe de grille, sbauze de crapeio e corzete de leparo sciulianno e morrannose chisto e chillo,potesse soccedere cosa pe la quale se scoppasse a ridere."(Rak, p. 10)

> "He tried to wet her appetite first with still walkers, then with hoop jumpers, acrobats, Master Ruggiero, jugglers, strongmen, a dancing dog, Vracone the jumping monkey, the ass that drinks from a glass, bitchy Lucia, and then with this an the with the other thing. But all was a waste of time…Finally, not knowing what else to do, as a last resort her poor father ordered that a great fountain of oil be erected before the palace gate, with the idea that as the passerby came and went like ants along the street they would hop about like crickets, and that in this way something might happen to make his daughter laugh." (Canepa, 36)

In this first part of the tale clearly we have elements typical of the fairy tale world: there is the presence of royal personages and there is the theme of the princess who would not laugh[72], of which Propp talks about in his "Theory and History of Folklore"[73]; moreover the name, Vallepelosa, to identify the kingdom where the initial events take place is in perfect harmony with fairy tale contest as it respects the canon of the 'no place' and 'no real name'[74]. The remedies sought out by the king involve spectacles and games, as well as characters, typical of Basile's Naples. In fact, as Croce explains in the notes to his translation, the games mentioned in this tale were typically played by the Neapolitan children as entertaining pastime, and the still walkers and hoop jumpers were familiar to the Neapolitans people as they animated their festivals, also "bitchy Lucia"[75], although it originated in Malta, had become a popular dance in Naples; however the most interesting of the expedients employed by the desperate father is the oil fountain that works like a sort of bridge between the fairytale world and the real one. In fact while fountains are typically found in fairytales and, as we will see, always generate a pivotal scene for the resolution of the *villainy*, the insertion of the oil element makes it 'dramatically Baroque' and actual for Basile's time, as Canepa writes

> "In many traditional versions of the "princess who would not laugh" motif, slippery obstacles are the source of the desired laughter…The King of Valle Pelosa enacts a very Baroque transformation of this motif, in which the "natural" body of water becomes an elaborate oil-spewing fountain, a reference to the trick or decorative fountains that were so often a part of Renaissance and Baroque courtly spectacles, and which did indeed spew oil, though more commonly wine."[76]

Moreover, this kind of fountain could also be considered a variation on the theme of the Land of Cockaigne[77], (Il paese della Cuccagna), which stood for sensual bliss, a heaven, where people were paid to sleep, while food and drinks would *magically* appear and all the dwellings or ornaments of the city were made of food. Such a spectacle was reproduced in Naples usually

during carnivals in the form of "Mount Vesuvius that spewed macaroni, sausages, and other delicacies into the eagerly awaiting (and often famished) crowds."[78] Up to this point, we are not yet in fairy-tale territory for the actual entrance into the fairy-tale world is marked by "la scena voscareccia", (the "woodsy scene") where the old *popolana* shows the young rascal her "wood" by lifting her skirt. Upon seeing an old woman who, without decorum and modesty, shows her private parts to the public, Zoza bursts out in an uncontrollable laughter and causes, as a chain reaction, the rejoinder of the old hag who curses the princess by saying:

> "Va, che non puozze vedere mai sporchia de marito, si non piglie lo prencepe the Campo Retunno" (Rak,12)

> "Begone, and may you never pluck a blossom of a husband unless you take the prince of Round Field" (Canepa, 37)

Zoza upon learning that she has been cursed and that her prince lies enchanted in a deep sleep very similar to death in the middle of a forest, and that the only way of waking him is to fill a pitcher with tears in three days[79], departs and goes into the woods searching for her beautiful prince. The entrance of Zoza into the forest, as Canepa points out, marks the entrance of *Lo cunto* into the world of fairy-tales, a world that remains, however, very much grounded in reality as the setting for the narrative is totally realistic: Naples, with its provinces, its culture, its people and, more importantly, its language.

All of Basile's heroes and heroines are originally from Naples or its province, for example Antuono, the hero of the first *cunto*, is from Marigliano, a small town in the periphery of Naples; the prince of "La Palomma", (The Dove,2.7), lives "lontano otto miglia da Napole", (eight miles from Naples), Nardiello ,(3.5) is from "lo Vommaro"[80], and in "Cagliuso",(2.4), Tolla opens her story saying " Era na vota a la cettà de Napole mio"[81], ('There was once in my city of Naples…" ). Naples is ever present and a major protagonist in Cienzo's farewell, who is

forced to leave his beloved city because during an unfortunate game he has broken the head of the king's son, [see "Lo Mercante" tale, (The Merchant, 1.7)]:

> "Cercannole la benedidione, se mese a cavallo, e, puostose la cagnola 'mbraccio, commenzaie a camminare fora de la cetate, ma, comme fu sciuto Porta Capoana, votatose capo dereto commenzaie a dicere: <<Tienete, ca te lasso, bello Napole mio! chi sa se v'aggio da vedere chiù, mautune de zuccaro e mura de pasta reale? dove le prete so' de manna 'n cuorpo, lit rave de cannamele, le porte e finestre de pizze sfogliate! Ohimè, che spartennome da te, bello Pennino, me pare de ire co lo pennone! Scostannome da te, Chiazza Larga, me se stregno lo spireto!... scrastannome da te, Forcella, me se scrasta lo spireto da la forcella de st'arma! dove trovarraggio n'autro Puorto, doce puorto de tuto lo bene de lo munno?... a dio Napoli no plus, dove ha puosto le termene la vertute e li confine la grazia! Me parto pe stare sempre vidolo de le pignatte maretate, io sfratto da sto bello casale; torze meie, ve lasso dereto.>>" (Rak, 142-144)

> "After asking for his blessing Cienzo mounted the horse, put the little bitch under his arm, and began to trot out of the city. But as soon as he had gone through Porta Capuana, he looked back and began to say, 'Here I go, my beautiful Naples, I'm leaving you! Who knows if I'll ever be able to see you again, bricks of sugar and walls of sweet pastry, where the stones are manna in your stomach, the rafters are sugarcane, the doors and windows puff pastry? Alas, separating from you, lovely Pennino, is like walking behind a funeral pennant! Taking my leave of you Piazza Larga, my spirit is squeezed narrow! ....Where shall I find another Porto, sweet port of the world's riches? Tearing my self away from you , O Forcella, my spirit tears itself away from the wishbone of my soul!....Farewell Naples, the *non plus ultra* where virtue has set her limits and grace the boundaries! I leave you to become a widower of your vegetable soups; driven out of this dear village, O my cabbage stalks, I must leave you behind!" (Canepa, 92-93)

The passage betrays a strong autobiographical reference as the author, a wandering courtier, deeply experienced the pain of having to leave the much-loved native soil; an experience recalled in an episode of *Le avventurose disavventure,*( The Adventurous Misadventures), written in 1611.

As the tale shows, when the city is not openly mentioned or introduced through its surrounding cities, it is present through its foods and/or traditions, as for example in "Le tre cetra", (The Three Citrons, 5. 9) where the fairy is compared to a neapolitan culinary delight

> "Cossì dicenno talgia lo terzo citro ... e le resta 'mano na figliola tennera e ianca commo a ghioncata, con na 'ntrafilata de russo che pareva no presutto d'Abruzzo on na sopressata de Nola" (Rak, 1002)
>
> " As he was saying this he cut the third citron … and there in his hands was a girl as tender and white as curds and whey, with a streak of read on her face that made her look like an Abruzzo ham or a Nola salami" (Canepa, 437)

(Nola is a city in the outskirts of Naples where traditionally people made the best *sopressate).* In the tale of "La gatta Cenerentola", ("The Cinderella Cat", 1.6), moreover, there is an abundance of Neapolitan delicacies: "…pastiere e casatielle … porpette,… macarune e gravioule*"*[82]*,* ("…pastries and casserole…meatballs…macaroni and ravioli."[83]) , and the examples could continue ad infinitum.

Basile often introduces Naples through traditional games, songs and festivals and indeed, already in the " 'Ntroduzzione" we find references to a Neapolitan card game: describing Zoza's beauty, the author says that she is "lo scassone de li privilegie de la Natura e lo fore-me-ne-chiammo de li termene de la bellezza"[84],("that monster of nature's bounty, that "I'm out" of the game of beauty"[85] ) Croce explains that "fore- me-ne-chiammo" is an expression used by players during a card game once they have gained the winning points and they throw the cards on the table as a sign of victory; this expression is still used today in a very popular Neapolitan card game 'tre sette',(the three seven), in which the ace, the two and the three of the same color constitute the "napoletana". The mentions of games, foods,(culinary practices), abound throughout the text, and this profusion is particularly evident in the introduction to Day II for there is a long list of games and dances typical of the time, some of these games and dances will be discussed in chapter 2.

Let us now turn our attention to the most innovative feature of *Lo cunto*, the language[86]. Marco Petrini considers Basile's choice to write in Neapolitan as one of the most important

characteristics of *Lo cunto.* He believes that Neapolitan dialect was particularly fit for the fairytale world and also granted a natural comical spirit to the stories.[87] *Lo cunto* is not the first literary work to be written completely in Neapolitan, in fact before Basile there had been his friend and countryman Giulio Cesare Cortese author of *La Vaiasseide*, for which Basile wrote as a preface a letter titled *A lo Re de li Viente,* (To the king of the winds). Neapolitan was used also as a comic relief in Baroque plays, but what makes the difference is that Basile's dialect is a highly stylized and erudite Neapolitan, embellished with myriads of metaphors and hyperboles and with a richer vocabulary, as we can see in "Lo cunto dell'uerco", (The Tale of The Ogre, 1.1),

> "Antuono, che quanno manco se credeva se vedde stecconeiare, pettenare e 'nforrare, comme le potte scappare da le mano le votaie le carcagne e tanto camminaie fiche sommiero le 24 ore-quanno commenzavano pe le poteche de la Cinzia ad allommarese le locernelle- arrivaie a la pedamentina de na montagna, cossì auta che faceva a tozza-martino co le nuvole, dove,'ncoppa a no radecone de chiuppo a pede na grotto lavorata de preta pommece,'nc'era seduto n'uerco, o mamma mia quanto era brutto!" (Rak, 34)

> "Antuono found himself fenced in, stockaded, and staked when he least expected it, and as soon as he could get out of her hands he threw up his heels and walked so far that around dusk-when the lamps began to lit in Cynthia's shop-he reached the foothills of a mountain so high that it butted horns with the clouds. Here, atop an enormous poplar root at the foot of a grotto decorated in pumice stone, there sat an ogre; and oh, dear mother, what an ugly one he was!" (Canepa, 44)

Moreover, while it was customary at the time to have only characters representing the people, *il popolino*[88], speaking dialect, in *Lo cunto* we find kings, queens, princes and princesses speaking in the same manner, with the same vernacular language, (a sort of Rabeleian language), as the petty villains. For example in "Lo Polece", (The Flea, 1.5), the king angered at his daughters' remarks answers:

> "Senza collera, ca lo zuccaro vale caro! chiano, ca li broccoli so' de chiuppo! appila, ca esce feccia! zitto, non pipitare, ca sì troppo mozzecutola, lengoruta e

> forcelluta! chello, che faccio io è ben fatto!no ‘mezzare lo patre de fare figlia! scumpela, e ‘nficcate ssa lengua dereto e non fare che me daglio lo senapo, ca si te mecco ste granfe adduosso non le zervola sana e te faccio pigliar sto terreno a diente! vide fieto de lo culo mio ca vo’ fare dell’ommo e mettere legge a lo patre! da quanno niccà una c’ancora le fete la vocca de latte ha da leprecare a le voglie mie? Priesto, toccale la mano e a sta medesema pedata tocca a la vota de la casa soia, ca non voglio tenere manco no quarto d’ora ’nnante all’uocchies sta faccie sfrontata e presentosa.” (Rak, 112)

> “Enough with the anger; sugar is expensive! Slow down there; your shields are made of poplar! Plug your mouth; it’s spewing filth! Shut up, not a peep; you are so sharp-tongued, spiteful big-mouth! Whatever I do is done well! Don’t try to teach a father how to have daughters! Cut it out; stick that tongue back in and take care the mustard doesn’t reach my nose, since if I get my paws on you I won’t leave a hair on your head, and I’ll sow this earth with your teeth! Just look at the stink of my own ass who wants to play the man and lay down the law for her father! Since when does a girl whose mouth still reeks of milk have the right to question my will? Hurry up. Give him your hand, and get off to his house this instant; I don’t want to see your impudent and presumptuous face in front of my eyes for even another quarter of an hour.” (Canepa, 78-79)

Never did royalty speak in such a fashion, which makes us question Basile’s intent, why indeed did he dare so much in choosing such a language? In the first place, it is probable that Basile was reacting to the tradition of using the Neapolitan tongue simply as a mean to ‘spice up’ things in a sort of theatrical representation[89]. It was time to demonstrate that dialect literature should be considered equal to traditional literature, not simply by translating into dialect some of the most renowned Italian masterpieces but by creating original masterpieces in the *lingua piccola* that could rival and surpass the tradition. While Cortese had paved the way, Basile achieved the longed-for objective. Indeed both Cortese and Basile are often celebrated as the founders of the Neapolitan literary tradition and Croce credits them with having created an “artistically elaborated dialect literature” as opposed to their forerunners who simply had written a “spontaneous dialect literature”; furthermore Croce adds that these two “were in the process of creating a literary language”,

> "Basile and Cortese did not write in a dialect that had a defined literary form, but in a dialect that they were in the process of creating as a literary language, in its grammar and orthography."[90]

Basile therefore was reacting to the tradition, of which he had also been part with his works in standard Italian, and turned it up-side down by creating a collection of tales written in a "*minor"* language, yet enriched with highly stylistic devices often borrowed from tradition and from contemporary Baroque poetry. The seventeenth century, with its obsession with experimentation in virtually every field of rhetoric, was indeed a fertile time for the flourishing of dialect literature in general, and not only in Naples[91]; compared with the standard Italian, dialect, allowed much more freedom to play with the words so to be able to create metaphors and images that would fully satisfy the Baroque poetic of the marvelous and its imagination.

Aside from the desire to revolutionize the literary tradition the choice of dialect responded also to other needs. We cannot ignore that *Lo cunto* is a collection of "popular tales" told by the people in street markets, inns, or in the town squares, uttered or spoken originally in their dialect, the only language the people knew how to speak fluently. Hence, in order to keep the literary fairy-tale as faithful as possible to its original form and really represent the culture whence this tales had originated, Basile had to maintain the language of the people, as the language mirrors the culture of the people who speak it. Secondly, the Neapolitan vernacular which at the time was generally understood only by Neapolitans, not so much by the rest of the Italians, or by the Spaniards, who occupied the city, served well the polemical and political intent that underlines the whole collection. In his opus, Basile openly, and the same time in perfect Baroque style[92], criticizes the royal court; in fact many of the kings, and officers in general, are presented as idiots, inept rulers who can not even make the simplest decision without the counseling of their courtiers. It is, significant that the most important king of the collection,

Tadeo, as mentioned before, sleeps throughout the first part of the frame tale when the main action takes place. It is even more significant because the name the author chose for him, as already mentioned, etymologically means *stupid.*[93] Tadeo, however, is in good company for the king in "Peruonto", (1.3) relies on his courtiers to decide if and how he has to kill his daughter who is pregnant out of wedlock;

> "Già sapite ca la luna de lo'nore mio ha fatto le corna; già sapite ca fare scrivere croneche, overo corneche, delle vergogne meie, m'ha provisto figliama de materia de calamari; già sapite ca pe carrecareme la fronte s'ha fatto carrecare lo ventre: perzò deciteme, consigliateme. Io sarria de pensiero de farele figliare l'arma primma de partorire na mala razza; io sarria d'omore de farele sentire primma le doglie de la morte che li dolure de partoro; io sarria de capriccio che primma sporchiasse da sto munno, che facesse sporchia e semmenta" (Rak,78)
>
> "You already know that the moon of my honor has given me horns; you already know that my daughter has supplied me with ample material for the inkwell that will be used to write the chronicles, or should I say the hornicles of my disgrace; you already know that she has laden her stomach in order to lade my forehead. And so tell me what you think; counsel me. I would be of the mind to make her deliver her soul before she gives birth to bad stock; I would be of the mood to make her feel the pain of the death before the pangs of birth; I would be of the whim to cut off her buds and uproot her from this world before she can bud and produce seeds." (Canepa, 64-65)

Basile, moreover, strongly emphasizes the unjust manner in which the courtiers, (he was one himself), are rewarded for their services for when they are not needed anymore they are discarded, tossed away like litter. A case in point is "Cagliuso", (2.4), the pauper who is enriched thanks to the wit and the hard work of his magic cat and shows no gratitude whatsoever toward his faithful servant. In fact, when he thinks that the cat is dead he orders his servant to "throw her out the window!", even though he had previously promised that, to repay 'her' for all the hard work, he would have had 'her' embalmed and kept forever in his house. Nonetheless, the cat remains suspicious and to test her master's devotion "she" devises a plan to trick him. She fakes her death and so she learns of the destiny that would await her, should she stay with

Cagliuso. She is hurt and disappointed and lashes out on the ungrateful master in the following manner,

> " Chesta è l'*a gran merzè* de li peducchie che t'aggio levato da cuollo? Chesta è l'*a mille grazie* de le petacce che t'aggio fatto iettare, che 'nce potive appennere le fusa? Chisto è lo cammio d'averete puosto 'n forma de ragno e d'averete sbrammato dove avive ;'allanca, pezzente, stracciavrache? Che iere no sbrenzolato , sdellenzato, spetacciato, perogliuso,spoglianpise? Cossì va, chi lava la capo a l'aseno! Và, che te sia marditto quanto t'aggio fatto,ca no mierete che te sia sputato 'n canna!" (Rak,332)

> "This is the great gratitude for the fleas that I picked off your neck? There are the thousand thanks for those rags I got you to throw away, so worn out you could have hang them on spindles? This is what I get back, after having dressed you elegantly as a spider and fed you when you were hungry, miserable and threadbare? When you were in tatters, covered with shreds, all patched up, and coming apart at the seams, you corpse stripper? This is the fate of those who try to wash an ass's head! Get lost, and may everything I have done for you be damned; your throat doesn't deserve to be spit in it!"(Canepa, 168)

Allegorically speaking the cat in this tale represents the courtier who is often mistreated and berated by the king, and whose hard work goes unappreciated. The ingratitude towards the faithful servants of the court is also a main theme in "Corvetto", (3.7), where the good courtier, precisely Corvetto, in spite of his irreproachable conduct toward his master, is tested over and over again because the king gives in to the gossips and the insinuations of the other jealous courtiers who populated his court. This bitter criticism of courtly life and society not only comes forth in the tales but is singled out and more plainly expressed in the four eclogues that Basile uses as *intermezzi* between the five days of tale telling[94].

Furthermore, I would like to consider the innovations Basile's brought in the treatment of the fairytale personae, specifically regarding the heroes and heroines in *Lo cunto.* One of the most complete studies on the characteristics of the fairytale hero is the one proposed by Max Luthi[95] in which he defines the fundamental traits of the hero. Luthi maintains that the fairytale hero is typified by "one dimensionality", which indicates the attitude of the fairy tale personae to

treat the supernatural beings they encounter as if they were part of the same physical and spiritual universe. Indeed, the fairy tale protagonists do not act surprised or frightened whenever they meet a fairy, an ogre or a talking animal; rather they behave naturally as if these beings were everyday companions,

> "An encounter with the otherworldly is cause for neither surprise nor fear. The terror which experiencing the numinous calls forth in the local legend is absent in the fairytale, because its actors are not complete humans, whose psychological reactions could be wholly captured or suggested in their subtly depth, but figures without nonsurface characteristics."[96]

The critic adds, furthermore, that the fairy tale protagonist is also distinguished by a complete lack of psychological insight, a trait called "depthlessness". This "depthlessness" indicates that the protagonists of fairytales do not have an inner life; they do not have a psychological dimension, Luthi writes;

> "Not internal emotions but external impulses propel the characters of the folktale onward. They are impelled and guided by gifts, discoveries, tasks, suggestion, prohibitions, miraculous aids, challenges, difficulties, and lucky happenstances, not by the prompting of their hearts. When is important to stay awake the antiheroes can be counted upon to fall asleep as mechanically as puppets. No mentioned is made of their having struggled to stay awake. If the hero wishes to stay awake, however, he sits down on an ant heap or in a thicket of thorns. Here again he relies not on the strength and persistence of his own will but on a form of external "help". Wherever possible, the folktale expresses internal feelings through external events, psychological motivations through external impulses. In essence, folktale characters always act with composure."[97]

Lastly, he says that the hero lives in "isolation", which means that he/she is always singled out from his/her group. A case in point is the youngest sibling who is forced to leave his/her home and departs on an adventurous voyage that would eventually result in finding the *lack*, or what is missing. Upon examining closely Basile's tales one soon realizes that while the criteria such as isolation and "one dimensionality" are present the one of "depthlessness" is not. In fact Basile's

characters are far from plain, they have a strong psychological depth. Indeed they often manifest their rage and distress through an extremely colorful speech abundant in hyperboles, exaggerations and vulgar terminology, which obviously sets Basile apart from the traditional fairy tale writers. Additionally, always in opposition to the idea of “depthlessness”, many of Basile’s heroes, and especially heroines, do not passively accept their destiny; rather they frequently take charge of it, as in the already mentioned *cunto* of “Lo polece”, (The Flea, 1.5). In this tale the princess, because of her father’s stupidity and childish behavior, is forced to marry an ugly and distasteful ogre. However she doesn’t simply bow her head and silently accept her fate “with composure”; rather she shows her disagreement not only with the speech she utters but also in her facial expression when she learns her destiny:

> “ A Porziella sentendo st’ammara resoluzione s’ascoraro l’uocchie, se ‘ngiallette la faccia, cascara le lavra e tremmaro le gamme e fu ‘m pizzo de dare vuolo a lo farcone de l’arma dereto a la quaglia de lo dolore. All’utemo, rompenno a chiangnere e sparanno la voce, disse a lo patre:<< E che male servizie aggio fatto a la casa, che me sia data sta pena? Che male termene aggio usato con vuie, che sia data ‘n mano sto paputo? O negrecata Porziella! Ed ecco che volontariamente comm’a donnola ire ‘n canna de sto ruospo; ed ecco pecora sbentorata essere furto de no lupo menaro! Chesta è l’affezzione che puorte a lo sango tuio? Chisto è l’ammore che mustre a chi chiammave popella de l’arma toia? Cossì scraste da lo core chi è parte de lo sango tuio? Cossì te lieve da’ nanze l’uocchie chi è la visola dell’uocchie tuoie?O patre, opatre crodele, non sì nato cierto decarne omana!”(Rak, 110-111)

> “When Porziella heard this bitter decision her eyes grew dark, her face became yellow, her lips drooped, her legs trembled, and she was on the verge of sending the falcon of her soul off to pursue the quail of her suffering. Finally, breaking out in tears and raising her voice, she said to her father, ‘Just what kind of bad service have I performed in this house to receive such punishment? What sort of bad manners have I used with you to be delivered into the hands of this bogeyman? O miserable Porziella! Here you are, about to go into the throat of this toad of your own will, like a weasel; here you are, an unfortunate sheep about to be stolen away by the werewolf! Is this the affection you have for your own blood? Is this the love you show toward she whom you called the pupil of your soul? In this way you rip from your heart she who shares your own blood? In this way you remove from your sight she who is the apple of your eyes? O father, cruel father, you could not possibly have been born of human flesh!”(Canepa, 78)

The notion of "depthlessness" is also disproved by the initiative most of Basile's characters take in shaping their destiny, for example Betta in "Pinto Smauto", (Pretty as Picture, 3.5), who refuses to marry any of the men her father proposes to her at the end forges her own "perfect man" out of almond paste and precious stones. In addition, Penta, in "La Penta Mano-Mozza", (Penta with the Chopped-Off Hands, 3.2), prefers to cut her hands off rather than surrender to her brother's incestuous love; and Grannoia in "Vardiello", (1.4), makes her own fortune by playing a trick on her foolish son and using his idiocy to her advantage. *Lo cunto* is also not-traditional for it defeats the notion of "abstract style" introduced by Luthi and somewhat endorsed by Propp who, in fact, allows a certain freedom in the use of the *attributes* that he defines as " the totality of all external qualities of the characters: their age, sex, status, external appearance, peculiarities of this appearance, and so forth". While many authors did follow the rule of the "abstract style", Basile did not; rather he freely exploits it creating endless lists of adjectives, metaphors, and conceits to describe the character's emotion or simply to describe a place or a situation. In point of fact, this abundance of metaphors strongly contradicts Luthi's notion of the "abstract style", which requires a linear, simple style of writing, without excessive rhetorical embellishment, and with no too many metaphors, if not without them at all,

> "The European folktale is not addicted to description. When it has its hero set off in search of his brother and sister and come upon a town made of iron, it does not waste a single word describing the iron buildings. Looking neither left nor right, and without the slightest trace of astonishment, the hero pursues his goal…Only what is essential to the plot is mentioned; nothing is stated for its own sake, and nothing is amplified. As a rule only one attribute goes with each noun: a town made all of iron, a big house, a big dragon, the young king, a bloody struggle."[98]

What we find in Basile, conversely, is a tendency toward *accumulation,* together with his predilection for the scatological language, proper to Bakthin's *carnivalesque style*, which calls to

mind Rabelais, the forerunner of laughter, satire and scatological literature. There are doubts that Basile actually read Rabelais given the unpopularity of this writer during the seventeenth century and after, in Italy and abroad, "of all great writers of world literature, Rabelais is the least popular, the least understood and appreciated"[99], says Bakthin; however the resemblance between their styles is undeniable. They both employ extremely long and detailed description characterized by an incredible *accumulation* of adjectives, metaphors and other literary devices; moreover food plays a major role in their literature and, ultimately, they both have a penchant for the representation of deformed bodies or bodies caught in the most intimate moment, (while urinating, defecating or vomiting), which are not usual part of canonical literary texts. Truthfully, the mention of these very intimate actions should not completely surprise the reader as Bakthin states:

> "The urine and other eliminations (excrement, vomit, sweat) had in ancient medicine the connotation of life and death (in addition to their link with the lower stratum of the body and with earth)[100]

However if the French represents mostly people of the populace in this embarrassing moments[101], Basile takes it a step further and he actually portrays a prince in the act of defecating,

> " Ma comme voze la sciorte, che dove manco te cride fa nascere la fava, passaie da chella parte no figlio de re che ieva a caccia, dove se le moppe lo cuorpo de manera che, dato tenere la spade e lo cavallo a no servitore, trasette a chillo vicuozzolo a scarricare l o ventre; e, fatto c'appe lo servizio, non trovannose carta a la saccocciola pe stoiarse, visto chella papara accisa de frisco se ne serviette pe pezza."(Rak, 892)

> "But as fate, which sends up beans where you least expect it, would have it, a king's son was passing by those parts on his way to the hunt, and his intestines began to rumble so badly that he gave his sword and horse to a servant and entered into that little alley to unload his belly. When he had completed the service, he couldn't find any paper in his pocket with which to wipe himself and, seeing the freshly killed goose, he used it as a rag" (Canepa, 391)

In Rabelais, on the contrary, we find a woman, Gargantua's mother, caught in the act of giving birth and while pushing to let the baby out she lets out "the mollification of her right intestine" instead,

> "A few moments later, she began to groan, lament and cry out. Suddenly crowds of midwives came rushing up from all directions. Feeling and groping her below, they found certain loose shred of skin, of rather unsavory odor, which they took to be the child. It was on the contrary, her fundament which had escaped with the mollification of her right intestine (you call it the bumgut) because she had eaten too much tripe, as I explained above. (Book one Chapter 6)"[102]

What is the implication of Basile's daring choice? Representing people while they perform the most natural bodily functions is a way to stress their "being human" and mortal; thus it is plausible that representing a prince, a member of the *untouchable* royalty, was a way for Basile to launch a *veiled* message to the real kings and princes of the time, a way to remind them that in spite of their power and wealth they were still only *humans*; which actually would fit perfectly with the critical vein that pervades the collection and that becomes ever so clear in the satire of the four eclogues. Bakthin defines the significance of excrements in Rabelais as follows,

> "In grotesque realism and in Rabelais work the image of excrement, for instance, did not have the trivial, narrowly physiological connotation of today. Excrement was conceived as an essential element in the life of a body and of the earth in the struggle against death. It was part of man's vivid awareness of his materiality, of his bodily nature, closely related to the life of the earth."[103]

Lastly I would like to point out how the act of defecating also indicates a moment of 'transformation' or better yet 'creation'. It is known that the excrements are among the best fertilizers and once they are absorbed by the earth they contribute to the generation of a new crop, [new-life]; in literature, and more so in Basile's case, the action of defecating is not an isolated episode, rather it is a pivotal moment and generates new events that would radically

transform the life of the protagonist of the tale. In the case of "La papara", (The Goose, 5.1), for instance, the consequences of this demeaning function are remarkable. In fact the goose the prince wanted to use as toilet paper because he thought 'she' was lifeless was not dead after all; hence, when the prince brings her close to his buttock, she grabs it and bites it so hard that it is impossible to free the poor man from her grip. Obviously, as tradition wants it, the only one able to liberate the prince from his pain is the owner of the enchanted animal, the poor Lolla, who as a reward for her good deed will then marry the prince and become a princess, turning her life, in perfect Baroque style, up-side-down.

As I have sought to prove, Basile, obviously, read and studied the writers who came before him but not for the purpose of imitating them, rather with the intention to depart from them and distance his own work from the old tradition in order to create a new literary genre; he succeeded, hence the literary fairytale came into being. Basile also strived to affirm his unique style enriched with complicated and marvelous metaphors, which allowed him to express his creativity and show his immense knowledge of classical and popular traditions. All of this will be discussed in chapter 2.

## The Baroque metaphor and the metaphor in Basile

*And new Philosophy cals all in doubt,*
*The Element of fire is quite put out;*
*The Sunne is lost, and th'earth, and no mans wit*
*Can well direct him where to looke for it.*
*And freely men confesse that this world's spent,*
*When in the Planets, and the Firmament*
*They seeke so many new; they see that this*
*Is crumbled out againe to his Atomis.*
*'Tis all in pieces, all coherence gone*;*"*[104]
*(John Donne)*

### a.) The Baroque Metaphor and the Metaphor in Basile.

As these verses by Donne point out, in the seventeenth century there is a collapse of all the principles and scientific beliefs that had been considered undisputable axioms till then. The man of this century finds himself without a solid ground to stand on as he has lost all the old "truths" and he cannot find new ones to replace them, but must continue to seek them[105]. The breakthrough of the heliocentric theory, the discovery of the four rings hovering around Jupiter and also the invention of the telescope made clear to the world that the earth was no longer the center of the universe, nor the biggest planet in it. Thus the old planet earth is dethroned, it is no more the alpha and the omega of the universe, the center around which every other planets revolves, it is now just another minuscule particle of an *infinite* and, most of all, yet unknown cosmos[106]. These new theories  aroused feelings of displacement, further sharpened by the chaotic socio-political situation around Europe, as most of the contintent was devastated and impoverished by the Thirty Years war, one of the worst that ever occurred in the old continent. This war particularly affected Italy as it was promoted by the Spanish government, and during that time the Spaniards were present in Italy as they ruled Naples. The deep economic and

demographic crisis, caused by the vast numbers of deaths and the famine brought by the war, made people realize the ephemeral essence of the human existence

> "La Guerra dei Trent'Anni, tra le più terribili mai avvenute nel vecchio continente, si abbatte sull'Europa con il tragico corteggio di carestie, saccheggi, pestilenze, crisi demografica, procurando instabilità e conflitti sociali senza precedenti, di cui la rivolta di Masaniello, avvenuta nel 1647, è solo una delle tante sedizioni che turbarono la vita del Seicento, un'età segnata da grandi rivolre soprattutto contadine dovute all'inasprimento della pressione dei proprietari terrieri, sempre più indotti a incrementare le spese militari e di rappresentanza, per giunta improduttive."[107]

The need to cope with the unmooring of traditional values and the ensuing lack of stability, to exorcise the fear of death and emptiness is at the root of an entirely new way to approach both life and art that emerged during the 17th century. Living became a spectacle and ostentation became the rule.

> "E uno dei temi più ricorrenti nel Seicento è proprio quello che uguaglia il mondo a un teatro e l'esistenza a una recita piena di inganni e travestimenti con cui smarrisce ogni salda identità, fino al finale inevitabilmente tragico, come sancisce un distico di Giuseppe Artale: <<mondo è un teatro, in cui tragica scena/ha nel'atto final crudo accidente.>> Venendo meno i valori incrollabili, si ritiene di vivere come attori che recitano una parte, in una confusione tra essere e apparire."[108]

Feasts and festivals with all sorts of pastimes and installations became part of everyday life. The court was often transformed into a magical amusement park with jugglers and acrobats going around to entertain the guests. Also it became a custom to build enormous fountains and to conclude every festivity with fireworks; in fact water and fire could be considered major symbols of the Baroque[109] viewpoint. Water represented the movement, the ever changing reality, the passing of time and the oblivion of all that took place before. Pyrotechnics, on the other hand, with their superb and enchanting beauty combined with their brief duration were a perfect metaphorical representation of human life: a magnificent but short-lived spectacle. Movement, ostentation and "excess" became sought after even in art, in all of its manifestations, (i.e.

architecture, painting, sculpture and literature.)[110] Art became the mirror image of life. In the sixteenth century life and art were the same, "life as art; art as life"; if there was no equilibrium in life that there could not be symmetry in art. Thus the linear structure of the Renaissance completely disappeared, as the perfection of that art could not convey the dissatisfaction of this society. The Baroque 'man'[111] conscious of his fickle nature was constantly in search for the 'new', the 'unexplored,' something that would bring pleasure once conquered and he would achieve this by experimenting with the bizarre and the unconventional, as expressed in Battistini "Il Barocco".[112]

These innovations and experimentations took place within a society that was oppressed by very conservative governments that drastically limited the religious and political freedom .of its subjects[113]. It seems almost as if, during the Baroque, authoritarianism naturally generated a more creative and daring artistic spirit, indeed while the political and religious world of time was misoneistic[114], in art, specifically in literature, the rule was 'to break the rules'; as Marino said "la vera regola […] è saper rompere le regole a tempo e a luogo, accomodandosi al costume corrente del secolo"[115]. Consequently the Renaissance canon of aesthetics and beauty is dismissed, and to quench the thirst for novelty the artists did not disdain to celebrate also that which was ugly and macabre. This new trend especially affected the canon of feminine beauty and graciousness, which was completely distorted; the celebration of beauty was replaced by the commemoration of ugly and disfigured women. The goddess- like beauty of the Petrarchist canon was replaced by the old crone who was so exquisitely Baroque[116]. However, what was most affected by the new taste for the "excess" and the marvelous was the language of the Baroque prose and poetry. The more complicated the structure of the sentence and abstruse the meaning of the words the better; nothing was more pleasing to Baroque authors than making

their writing difficult to grasp at first. One of the reasons for this was the idea that knowledge would be more satisfying if one had to struggle to find it; thus, according to the Baroque mentality, there was more pleasure in discovering the new when the novelty was not 'served on a golden plate'. The understanding of an abstruse message, (riddles, enigmas, anagrams, rebuses were abundant in Baroque prose and poetry), would evoke the feeling of astonishment, "la meraviglia", that was, as Marino simply put it: "del poeta il fin", (the final aim of the artist). However the idea that the 'surprise' element would make a speech written or spoken much more engaging was not an original of the Baroque period, indeed, Aristotle in his *Rhetoric* had already pointed out that the use of metaphors, thus of complex language, will make the speech much more interesting and lively,

> "Liveliness is specially conveyed by metaphor, and by the further power of surprising the hearer; because the hearer expected something different, his acquisition of the new idea impresses him all the more"[117]

Among all of the rhetorical devices, such as simile, hyperbole, anagram, synecdoche, the one abused beyond limits by Baroque writers was, actually, the metaphor. Clearly the *Rhetoric* was widely read during the Baroque period and Tesauro's *"Il Cannocchiale Aristotelico",* (1654), reflects the fame of Aristotle's book. Tesauro's work is the principle treatise on *concettismo* and *marinismo;* the author stresses "l'argutezza", (acuteness, shrewdness), a completely new kind of metaphor. The fact is, as Morpurgo-Tagliabue points out, that sixteenth century intellectuals had re-interpreted the Aristotelian text in a very unique way: they had taken some principles and totally ignored others. In particular, they ignored Aristole's admonition to always use metaphor, and other rhetorical devices within a sensible "measure"[118].

Aristotle states:

> "It is also good to use metaphorical words; but the metaphors must not be far-fetched, or they will be difficult to grasp, nor obvious or they will have no effect. The words, too, ought to set the scene before our eyes; for events ought to be seen in progress rather than in prospect. So we must aim at these three points: Antithesis, Metaphor, and Actuality."[119]

Baroque writers completely ignored the first part of this advice where Aristotle warns against the implementation of figures that are too complicated. Teasing the reader was acceptable, but, according to the philosopher, making him completely lost in the labyrinth of a complicated trope defeated the purpose of speech. On the other hand, Baroque authors took literally the second part of the Aristotelian idea, and accentuated it; in fact the Baroque metaphors are never too obvious, rather they tend to be too complicated at times. What Aristotle said about words is also interesting—that, they "ought to set the scene before our eyes...events ought to be seen in progress." If we were not aware of the authorship of this statement we could easily assume that it was the product of a Baroque mind; in fact the pursuit of movement in art was a typical Baroque theme. Human nature as mentioned above is fickle and life is a constant flow that ceases only at death, thus it was believed that nothing could represent human beings, and life, better than movement. There is an exemplary anecdote involving Bernini and Louis XIV that proves the importance of movement in Baroque art. When Bernini was asked to make a bust of the king, he requested that Louis XIV move while he was sculpting because he would have been able to catch the 'life' in the king only through movement and thus reproduce in the sculpture the 'real' Louis XIV[120].

Basile among others fell under the spell of the 'marvelous' as defined in Tesauro

> *"Metafora:* cioè, PAROLA PELLEGRINA, VELOCEMENTE SIGNIFICANTE UN'OBBIETTO PER MEZZO di UN'ALTRO. Et questa medesima Diffinitione è quell sommo genere che noi cerchiamo."[121]

In this chapter, therefore, I intend to discuss the role that metaphors play in Basile's work. Through the use of metaphors he manages to bring together the fantastic, proper of the fairy tales, and the "reality" of life. This hybrid essence of *Lo cunto* represents one of its most typical Baroque characteristics; in fact dichotomy was at the base of the Baroque art and interpretation of life. Metaphors allow Basile the possibility to denounce and criticize the corruption of the Neapolitan court and the indecent living conditions and abuses the Spanish domination had created in Naples, without any consequence; metaphors help him to avoid censorship. The choice to write in the fairytale genre is in itself a 'device' to be able to express his criticisms freely as fairytales were not perceived as serious literature. In fact, besides the more explicit tales such as "Cagliuso", (2.4), and "Corvetto", (3.7), and the eclogues where he openly attacks the court, many tales[122] in the collection contain criticism of the courts and the way courtiers are treated. In the introduction to "Corvetto" Basile comments,

> "ma si uno me dicesse dove veramente se porria trovare lo fegnemiento e la fraude io non saperria 'mezzarele autro luoco che la corte, dove fanno sempre mascare, la mormorazione da Trastullo, la maledecenza de Graziano, lo trademiento de Zanne e la forfanteria de Pollicinella[123], dove a no stisso tiempo se taglia e cose, se pogne e ogne, se rompe e 'ncolla." (Rak, 570)
>
> Then he continues
>
> "Oh negrecato che è connennato a sto 'nfierno de la corte, dove le losegne se venneno a quatretto, le malegnitate e li male afficie se mesurano a tommola, li 'nganne e li trademiente se pesano a cantara!"(Rak, 572)
>
> "But if I were asked where one could really find feigning and fraud, I could indicate no better place than the court, where everyone dons mask, and where Trastullo's gossip, Graziano's backbiting, Zanni's betrayals, and Pulcinella's roguery thrive, where at one and the same time people snip and sew, sting and salve, break and glue" (Canepa, 261)
>
> "Oh, hapless is he who is condemned to live in that hell that goes by the name of court, where flattery is sold by the basket, malice and bad services measured by the quintal, and deceit and betrayal weighed by the bushel!"(Canepa, 262).

His negative disposition toward the nobility and its life-style can be seen also in the way he portrays the kings in his collection. They are all inept, easily corruptible, gullible and oblivious to their duty[124].

The study of the metaphors in Basile is challenging because *Lo cunto* is in itself a huge metaphor. It is not only, as has been said, a sort of manifesto of Basile's literary quest for innovation, but it is also a representation of his intellectual and psychological growth. It represents Basile's utopian dream of seeing justice and freedom restored in his beloved city, Naples, which is, I believe, the main protagonist of the collection. The city, in fact, is present in every *cunto*, whether because it is explicitly mentioned or because it is evoked through its traditions, customs, food and provinces. Thus, while entertaining the reader with the marvelous images created by his original metaphors, Basile also delivers a philosophical, informative, polemical message; hence, he embraces the Baroque's idea that art should possess both the functions of *docere* and *delectare.* Aristotle had also underlined the pleasure that comes from learning new things as he writes in Book I, chapter eleven of the *Rhetoric,*

> "Learning things and wondering at things are also pleasant as a rule; wondering implies the desire of learning, so that the object of wonder is an object of desire; while in learning one is brought into one's natural condition. … Again, since learning and wondering are pleasant, it follows that such things as acts of imitation must be pleasant -- for instance, painting, sculpture, poetry -- and every product of skilful imitation; this latter, even if the object imitated is not itself pleasant; for it is not the object itself which here gives delight; the spectator draws inferences ("That is a so-and-so") and thus learns something fresh."[125]

The Baroque artist took this principle a bit further and twisted it, to justify his own interpretation of art. Aristotle, in fact, simply wanted to prove that learning new things would always bring pleasure, regardless of the author's intention to create it. Baroque artists, instead, would create art specifically to arouse pleasure and wonder, thus the abundance of rhetorical figures in

literature, vivid colors in painting[126] and movement in architecture[127]. However, the hedonistic aspect represented only one 'side of the medal'; the other was represented by the pedagogical aspect. As Morpurgo states, Baroque art originates in the combination of these two functions,

> "Non c'è via di mezzo. …Questo dilemma è su per giù quello che…ispirò tesi vivacemente contrapposte, quella edonistica e quella pedagogica… Non ci si inganni infatti, non si pensi che dall'una esca il Barocco e dall'altra il classicismo; da entrambe esce il Barocco, perchè ciascuna d'esse è anfibia, scambievole, e il Barocco è proprio questo equivoco. Il Barocco conosce un'arte edonistica e un'arte pedagogica, condotte sino alla lascivia e sino all'edificazione, le quali tuttavia sono entrambe ambivalenti. …In questa fusione del *docere-delectare* consiste il carattere del Barocco…"[128]

Basile scholars have been intrigued by the vast amount of metaphors that permeates *Lo cunto* and especially by the diversity of the ones that describe the alternation of day and night. Croce was particularly captivated by this cornucopia and he regarded *Lo cunto* as a unique and inimitable Baroque masterpiece; he states,

> " E per questo *Il Cunto de li cunti* è un libro vivo e non ha che vedere con una mera raccolta di fiabe siciliane, toscane o veneziane, come se ne hanno ora tante, e piuttosto si ricongiunge idealmente alla letteratura italiana d'arte che aveva col Pulci, col magnifico Lorenzo, col Folengo, e per alcuni rispetti col Boiardo e con l'Ariosto, preso a rifoggiare celiando, la materia dei romanzi cavallereschi e della letteratura popolare, e, in certo senso, è l'ultima opera schietta di questa linea, venuta fuori in ritardo a Napoli, non più nell'ambiente della Rinascenza, ma in quello del seicento e del barocco"[129]

Let us explore some examples taken only from the first day, in particular the first two from the "'Ntroduzzione" (Introduction) and the second two from "Lo cunto dell'uerco" (The Tale of the Ogre 1.1):

> …la matina-quanno la Notte fa iettare lo banno dall'aucielle a chi avesse visto na morra d'ombre nere sperdute , che se le farrà no buono veveraggio… (Rak, 14)

> ...the next morning- when Night had the birds emit the proclamation that whoever had seen a herd of wandering black shadows would be amply rewarded... (Canepa, 38)

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> …appunto quanno lo Sole ha puosto sella pe correre le solite poste, scetato da le cornette de li galli… (Rak,16)
>
> ...just when the Sun, having been awakened by the rooster's trumpets, was putting on its saddle and preparing to make the usual deliveries... (Canepa, 38)

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> …quanno commenzavano pe le poteche de Cinzia ad allommarese le locerenelle… (Rak, 34)
>
> ...when the lamps began to be lit in Cynthia's shop... (Canepa, 44)

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> Perzò scetato che fu la matina-quanno esce l'Aurora a iettare l'aurinale de lo vecchio suio tutto arenella rossa a la fenestra d'Oriente-…(Rak, 38)
>
> And so, upon waking the next morning-when Aurora went on empty her old man's urinal, full of fine red sand, at the window of the Orient... (Canepa, 46)

The vividness of these metaphors is remarkable; in each of them, Basile paints a sketch of Naples with its people and the challenges they face every day. The expression "ombre nere sperdute", for example, echoes the presence of the bandits in Naples. These outlaws walked the city's streets hidden in the darkness of the night in search of a place or a person to rob; they were desperate men lost, "sperdute", in their fear and their need to survive. In the second metaphor "lo Sole" that "was putting on its saddle and preparing to make the usual deliveries" reminds the reader of the many people who would wake up at dawn and start their hard day of work. Also the trumpets that the roosters play to wake up the sleeping workers bring to mind the idea of a military regime where often the sound of this instrument is used to recall the soldiers to order. The roosters in this case could be considered a metaphor to represents the presence of the invading army in the streets of Naples. The next metaphor is a sample of Basile's ability to combine harmoniously high literacy with everyday life. Cynthia, in fact, is another name for

Diana, who in Greek mythology was the goddess of the moon; for Basile she becomes the owner of a shop caught in the moment when her new shift begins. This reversal of Cynthia's 'rank' could also be considered the umpteenth example of how the author applies the Baroque idea of the world upside down. The last cited metaphor falls into the same category as the one just mentioned; again Basile creates a hybrid where elegance and coarseness come together. The enchanting image of the Aurora rising at the "window of Orient" is contrasted by the 'vulgarity' of the act she performs. Aurora is thus at the same time the goddess that lights up the sky and brings forth another day, and a 'simple' woman of the populace who, in the morning has to empty out her "old men's urinal, full of fine red sand."

These animated descriptions of the alternating 'game' between the sun and the moon would be classified by Tesauro as metaphors of movement that he describes as

> "tanto più belle, e vivaci; quanto (come ditto è) meglio ci rappresentano gli obietti dinanzi agli occhi. Et primieramente, i Movimenti naturali della FACULTA VEGETATIVA...Il simile de' Movimenti Naturali PROGRESSIVI...Cicerone: Errantes stellae Progrediuntur: come se tu dicessi, *Le Stelle van passeggiando per quella soglia celeste.*[130]

Rak defines these descriptions "microracconti del tempo", as they present their own tales where the sun and the moon are 'transformed' in animated characters that interact, creating movement and actions. These metaphors exemplify how through this rhetorical device Basile brings together the realm of fairytales and the real world. In fact, as we can see from the few examples given above, the subjects of these 'micro-tales' vary and embrace everyday life, mythological beliefs and folklore as well as references to social conditions such as the presence of bandits and thieves in Naples at that time (the "ombre nere" of the first cited metaphor). Indeed, popular traditions, in the form of dances, religious celebrations, names and nicknames, games and proverbs and other elements are very much present in the text. *Lo cunto,* as mentioned above,

reflects the rich life of Naples and its people, but also the traditional customs of the different places Basile had visited during his wandering years, as well as those acquired through literary knowledge.

In order to better understand the importance and originality of the metaphorical component in Basile, I propose a close analysis of the " 'Ntroduzzione"[131] which will emphasize the extraordinary role metaphors play in Basile's text. In the second section of this chapter, I will also investigate the origin and the significance of the names of the many protagonists of *Lo cunto.* These names, indeed, also fall under the spell of the Baroque metaphor as often times they hide a meaning that indicates a quality pertinent to the personality or the social extraction of the character, (in dealing with names I also include the nicknames the author uses to further identify the different protagonists and the names of places where the action unfolds.) Finally, I will focus specifically on the three main characters of the collection, (Tadeo, Zoza and Lucia), and discuss how each of them represents Naples, I dare say, the real protagonist of *Lo cunto*.

The "'Ntroduzzione" immediately opens with a proverb,

> " Fu proverbio de chille stascioniate, de la maglia antica, che chi cerca chello che non deve trova chello che non vole e chiara cosa è che la scigna pe cauzare stivale restaie 'ncappata pe lo pede[132], come soccesse a na schiava pezzente, che non avenno portato maie scarpe a li piede voze portare corona 'n capo."(Rak, 10)
>
> "A seasoned proverb of ancient coinage says that those who look for what they should not find what they would not, and it's clear that when the monkey tried putting on boots it got its foot stuck, just like what happened to a ragged slave girl who although she had never worn shoes on her feet wanted to wear a crown on her head."(Canepa, 35)

As discussed in chapter one, this incipit sets the tone for the entire collection, by opening with an ancient popular proverb, Basile immediately tells the reader that folk culture would be the main source of his *cunti*. Furthermore, through the image of the monkey, who, blindly imitating the

action that hunters had performed, falls into the trap and remains captive, the author not only mocks the Aristotelian canon of imitation highly pursued by classical tradition, but also conveys his intention to explore new horizons, which lead to the land of fairy tales. Interesting is also the image of the slave who “wanted to wear a crown” even though she had never “worn shoes”. This grotesque image echoes the *topos* of the world upside down, moreover it hints at Basile’s personal quest. In fact, what the slave tried to do in vain, (revolutionize the *status* quo), he would do successfully through his fairytales collection. *Lo cunto de li cunti* is, indeed, a milestone in the literary world as it breaks away from tradition and paves the way for a completely new canon[133].

In the same opening paragraph we read,

> “Ma perché tutto lo stuorto ne porta la mola e una vene che sconta tutte, all’utemo, avennose pe mala strata osorpato chello che toccava ad autro, ‘ncappaie a la rota de li cauce e quanto se n’era sagliuta ’mperecuoccolo tanto fu maggiore la vrociolara, da la manera che secota.” (Rak, 10)
>
> “But since the millstone grinds out the chaff and sooner or later everything is paid for, she who deceitfully took from others what was theirs ended up caught in the circle of heels, and however steep her climb up was, her tumble down was even greater. It happened in the manner that follows.”(Canepa, 35)

In order to fully appreciate Basile’s genius I will try to deconstruct this small paragraph and show how many ‘levels of reading’ are there to be explored.

In the first line we read “ma perchè tutto lo stuorto ne porta la mola e una vene che sconta tutte…” this is a perfect example where the three most important qualities of a metaphor, *Brevità-Novità e Chiarezza*[134], are illustrated. The *brevità* that “accoglie in una Voce sola più di un concetto”, is epitomized in the word “mola”, (millstone). The millstone with its rotating

motion evokes the passing of time especially that of human life. In fact, if we were to represent the unfolding of human life with an image we would probably choose to draw a circle, as often old age is identified as a return to our infant stage. At the same time the "millstone's" rotating movement exemplifies the inevitable life transformation that human beings experience. As the millstone grinds the grain and turns it into flour, time changes them and transforms them into different beings day after day. No person is the same from one day to the next: he/she is a day older, he/she has lived new experiences, and he/she has eaten a different meal, talked to a different person and maybe learned something new. After all, it would not be surprising if Basile had used the image of the millstone to exemplify 'change,' as the millstone[135] was used as a symbol of 'transformation' already in medieval culture when the "burlesque image of *The Mill of Old Wives* was very common [136]. In the medieval imagination *The Mill of the Old Wifes* was a place where tired and unsatisfied husbands would bring their old, garrulous wives for them to be're-polished', indeed in the story the old wives would be

> "fed into the mill, ground and whittled, until they re-emerged whole and young and vigorous and amorous- again."[137]

Hence the unhappy husbands can smile again because at the end they are presented with a 'new' wife; they are thrilled by the novelty and look at the future with a more positive outlook. The concept of *novità* becomes very important also in the field of rhetorical devices; in fact it created the *meraviglia*, (wonder) making literature much more enjoyable for the readers. Furthermore, as suggested by Teasuro, combined with *brevità,* it creates clarity, that is it contributes to a better understanding of the text at hand. Tesauro writes,

> "Da queste due Virtù nasce la terza, cioè la CHIAREZZA. Peroche un 'obbietto rattamente illuminato dall'altro, ti vibra come un lampo nell'intelletto: & la Novità cagiona *Maraviglia: la qual'è una Reflessione attenta,* che t'imprime nella

> mente il Concetto : onde tu sperimenti, che le parole *Metaforiche* più altamente scolpite ti rimangono nella memoria."[138]

Basile continues, in the next sentence, "avennose pe mala strata osorpato chello che toccava ad autro, 'ncappaie a la rota de li cauce…" Croce in his translation[139] has already explained that "la rota de li cauce" was a typical Neapolitan game played by children. In this game children would hold hands in a circle and would keep another player outside of it by kicking him. The child who would let the outsider into the circle would then have to go outside and leave the game. This is only the first of the many games Basile's mentions in *Lo cunto,* and is a good example of how he brings the contemporary Neapolitan life into a fantasy world where the action supposedly took place centuries before. It is worthy to explain why Basile chose this game and not another to represent the destiny of the deceiving slave. If we jump ahead into the story, we will find Tadeo, Lucia and the ten old cronies sitting in a circle telling stories, while Zoza is kept out of it; however, at the end, Zoza has to be allowed to enter the circle because one of the tellers has fallen sick. Even though it could be argued that Zoza gets into the circle because of the need to replace someone else, we cannot ignore that the game of storytelling originated from the uncontrollable desire of the pregnant slave who forced Tadeo to agree into satisfying her by threatening him,

> "Si no venire gente e cunte contare, mi punia a ventre dare e Giorgitiello mazzoccare." (Rak, 22)
>
> "If people no come and with tales my ears fill, me punch belly and little Georgie kill." (Canepa, 41)

The 'game' began to satisfy Lucia's desire to hear stories, and it has to last until she delivers the baby or she will "punch belly" and kill the child. Conseguently, when, on the last day, one of the old hags falls ill, Zoza has to be allowed into the circle as this seems to be the only way to

continue the game and keep Lucia's desire abate. Therefore, in a sense Lucia is responsible for Zoza's entrance into the circle; thus, as she lets the 'outsider' in, she must then go out of the circle. Hence, the reason why Basile chose this game and not another to describe what would happen to the slave is that in this ludic collection the main action progresses in the same manner as "la rota de li cauce"; furthermore, the playful tone of the collection is also emphasized in the title where Basile calls it "lo trattenemiento de' Peccerille." The last part of this paragraph, which states "e quanto se n'era sagliuta 'mperecuoccolo tanto fu maggiore la vrociolara, da la manera che secota" falls under the category of "metafora del movimento". As Tesauro states:

> " Da' *Movimenti* riguardanti il sito DELL'UNIVERSO: come il muoversi *Da un luogo, Ad un luogo, Per un luogo, Dentro, Fuori, Dintorno, Scendere, Salire, Vacillare."*[140]

> Immediately after we find one of the most ambiguous similes[141] of *Lo cunto,*

> "Dice ch'era na vota lo re de Valle Pelosa, lo quale aveva na figlia chiammata Zoza, che, comme n'autro Zoroastro o n'autro Eracleto, non se vedeva maie ridere."(Rak, 10)

> "It is said that there once was a king, the king of Hairy Valley, who had a daughter named Zoza, who, like a second Zoroaster or Heraclitus, had never been seen to laugh."(Canepa, 35-36)

The reference to Heraclitus can be easily explained since he was known, in Roman times, as the "weeping philosopher"[142]; and as he was always unhappy, he went to live in the wilderness, isolated from the rest of the world. The comparison of Zoza to Zoroaster remains to be further explored, however. Zoroaster was the prophet of the Mazdaic religion, also known as the Good Religion. The religion was so called because Zoroaster was a follower of the god Ahura Madza, (or Ormuzd who is the Supreme Creator), the 'good god' who had created the universe. According to the prophet teachings the 'good god' was opposed by the spirit of evil called Ahriman, who at the end was defeated, (in this religion good always overcomes evil)[143]

Zoroaster had three commandments: good thoughts, good words, good deeds. Man, who has free will, by living a life following these commandments will strengthen the power of goodness and weaken evil. When Ormuzd, with the help of man, will achieve final victory, the kingdom of God will be established on earth and the blessed will live in perpetual sunshine with Orzmud forever[144]. There are many legends around this figure, the one that most interest here is the one that tells that Zoroaster right after he was born started talking with the god Ahura Madza and was seen *smiling* in his cradle while surrounded by light[145]. Why then the comparison between Zoza and Zoroaster? The thesis that Basile did not know the story and the legends about the prophet it is not plausible, as the oracles of the prophet and the various legends about his life were widely known in the seventeenth century[146]. However, it is probable that thorough this oxymoronic association Basile was trying to create "irony" and specifically he was aiming at the strongest form of this device called "antifrasi", (antiphrasis)[147] The result of this technique is that the reader's intellect is stimulated by the surprise of finding something he did not expect. This surprise, as the Baroque artists believe, generates "la meraviglia", (the astonishment), and makes learning fun[148]. Furthermore, it might not be farfetched to believe that the mention of Zoroaster, the prophet who believed that good always overcomes evil, stands as an announcement of the happy ending that awaits Zoza.

In the desperate attempt to cure his daughter's melancholy the king of Valle Pelosa, (Hairy Valley), transforms his court into an amusement park; he welcomes to court all the entertainers and all the spectacles available,

> "Pe la quale cosa lo scuro patre…non lassava cosa da fare pe levarle la malenconia, faceno venire a provocarle lo gusto mo chille che camminano 'ncoppa ale maze, mo chille che passano dinto a lo chirchio, mo li mattacine, mo Mastro Ruggiero, mo chille chef anno iouche de mano, mo le Forze d'Ercole, mo lo cane che daze, mo Racine che sauté, mo l'aseno che beve a lo bicchiero, mo Lucia canazza e mo na cosa e mo n'autra." (Rak, 10)

> "Hence her miserable father…left nothing undone in his attempts to banish her melancholy. He tried to whet her appetite first with stilt walkers, then with hoop jumpers, acrobats, Master Ruggiero, jugglers, strongmen, a dancing dog, Vracone the jumping monkey, the ass that drinks from a glass, bitchy Lucia, and then with this and then with the other things." (Canepa,36)

In this paragraph Basile utilizes the rhetorical device of "accumulazione"[149], (accumulation), that, as Mortara-Garavelli writes, "is an agglomeration of a number of different words, (in one period), all with the purpose to describe the same subject"[150]. The most interesting form of entertainment[151] mentioned by Basile in this passage is "Lucia canazza". De Simone[152] explains that this was a dance performed by a man dressed up as a Moorish woman; while he was dancing with very agitated movements, the accompanying chorus would insult him ("Lucia") with offensive epithets. The dance movements would evoke sexual intercourse, birth, death and resurrection, the entire cycle of life. What makes the mentioning of this dance very significant is the fact that Basile referes to it again in the conclusion, the *Scompetura de lo cunto de li cunte,*

> "Ma Lucia fece veramente la Lucia, cernennose tutta menre se contava sto cunto, che a l'arteteca de lo cuorpo se conzideraie la borrasca c'aveva dintro a lo core" (Rak, 1016)

> "And Lucia truly acted like a Lucia, wiggling all over as the tale was told, and from the agitation of her body could be understood the tempest in her heart" (Canepa, 443)

The repetition of the same metaphor at the beginning and at the end of the collection enhances the specularity of Basile's work already implied in the title. Furthermore it creates the so called "metafora di OPPOSITIONE" that Aristotle deemed the strongest kind of metaphor and that was also accepted as such by the Baroque artists. Teasuro writes,

> "Bellissima forma di Opposito è principalmente quellla che ti fa sonar l'istessa Voce due volte: come questa ch'ei ci mette davanti: *Non oportet PEREGRINUM semper esse PEREGRINUM.* Dove una voce contrariamente a se stessa; nel primo luogo significa un *Forese*: nell'altro, un'*Ignorante"*[153]

In this case the "metafora di OPPOSIZIONE" concerns, *in primis*, the relationship between the "Lucia canazza" mentioned in the "'Ntroduzzione" and the "Lucia che fece veramente la Lucia" in the *Scompetura.* The first term signifies the dance in itself, and in the conclusion the expression alludes to the contortions of the black princess's body that resembled the movement of the popular dance. Nevertheless, the expression "Lucia fece veramente la Lucia" also represents a "metafora di OPPOSIZIONE", where the first "Lucia" represents the slave, the second evokes the dance. The meaning of the dance itself has also arrested my attention. The dance, in fact, as mentioned above, was meant to evoke the life and death cycle in every one's existence: sexual intercourse, birth, death and resurrection. These are indeed the same 'crucial moments' represented in *Lo cunto* through the tale of the black princess. Lucia, after marrying Tadeo, becomes pregnant which presumably means she had sexual intercourse with the prince; through her and because of her craving to hear tales the "birth of the literary fairy tales",(metatext), takes place; finally, her death coincides with the resurrection of Zoza who can finally 'live' her life.

After all the attempts to make Zoza laugh have failed the father tries one last thing. He orders that a fountain of oil be built in front of the palace hoping that the comic spectacle of passersby trying to avoid to be sprayed with oil and slipping would somehow bring his daughter to laugh. The construction of luxurious fountains was very common in the Baroque period, (even though more often these fountains would be of wine and not of oil.)[154] These fountains, clearly, were ostentatious displays of wealth[155] but they also epitomized the habit of the nobility to squander, ignoring the famine and the poverty that affected the small people. In order to create tension in the reading and to emphasize the abyssal difference between the sumptuous life style of the kings and the poverty of the populace[156], Basile introduces into the scene an old woman

who is seen sopping up the oil with a sponge and depositing it in a jar she had brought with her. This image subtly communicates Basile's disaccord with the nobility's nonchalant attitude towards the inhumane conditions that reigned in the kingdom and provides an example of how metaphors in Basile are more than just rhetorical devices meant to embellish the prose. While the old woman is filling up her jar, a scoundrel, a young page from the court, throws a stone aimed at the jar, breaking it into pieces; hence all the hard work of the old woman goes to waste: she was left without oil and without jar. The old woman could not contain her anger and cursed the little boy who retaliated in kind. At this point the pivotal scene of the frame tale unfolds:

> "La vecchia, che se sentette la nova de la casa soia, venne 'n tanta zirria che, perdenno la vusciola de la fremma e scapolanno d la stalla de la pacienza, auzato la tela de l'apparato fece vedere la scena voscareccia…" (Rak, 12)

> "When this news hit home the old woman became so angry that losing her phlegmatic compass bearings and charging from the stable of patience, she raised her stage curtain and revealed a woodsy scene..." (Canepa, 37)

Canepa has interpreted the "woodsy scene" shown by the woman as a metaphorical representation of the fairytale's woods we are about to enter. In this precise moment Zoza finally laughs, breaking the spell of her melancholy; nevertheless, she breaks one spell only to fall into another one[157]. The old woman, feeling that Zoza was belittling her, became extremely angry and she cursed the princess. Zoza would never marry unless she was able to wake the prince of Campo Rotondo who lay asleep in the forest, victim of an evil spell. Upon hearing the old hag's words Zoza leaves the court and starts her adventurous journey in search of her prince. We have then clearly entered the universe of the fairytale. This scene also represents a sexual metaphor, in fact by revealing her pubis, the old woman initiates Zoza to sex. However, notwithstanding the relevance of this scene, I would like to return to the scene where the page breaks the oil jar as I consider this to be also a pivotal scene of the frame tale. I believe that it is

with this scene that Basile announces his literary innovation for the breaking of the jar metaphorically represents Basile's breaking with tradition. It is, in fact, the breaking of the jar that sets into motion all the events that lead to Zoza's departure into the fairytale world.

Noteworthy is also the figurative speech the old woman uses to tell Zoza that Tadeo is immersed in a profound sleep that keeps him hanging between life and death. She says

> "Ora sacce ca sto prencepe, che t'aggio mentovato, è na pentata criatura chiammato Tadeo, lo quale, pe na iastemma de na fata, *avenno dato l'utema mano a lo quarto de la vita,* è stato puosto dinto a sa sebetura" (Rak, 12. The emphasis is mine)

> "Now you should know that the prince I mentioned is a splendid creature named Tadeo, who on account of a fairy's curse *gave the last brushstroke to the canvas of his life* and was laid in a tomb" (Canepa,37)

The Baroque artists expanded on Aristotle's idea of *mimesis*, "defined as the perfection and imitation of nature", and developed the idea that life was a work of art, that is life must imitate art, (and vice versa art was life). This became one of the most famous Baroque themes, and clearly Basile here is bringing that *topos* into his narrative. However, I would like to call attention to the expression "*l'utema mano", ("the last brushstroke").* The view of the Baroque man was not only that life was like a work of art, but most importantly, that it was a work of art in progress. The human being in himself was considered a sort of "work in progress", always moving and changing, it was believed that only death, perhaps, could put an end to this ongoing progress. Hence, Basile says that Tadeo has given the last "brushstroke" to his 'life' because, at the moment, he is trapped in a deep sleep very similar to death; he is frozen in time between life and death, waiting for a 'worthy' princess to rescue him.

The old woman's words are like fire for Zoza's heart. She immediately feels inside an uncontrollable passion, a deep love for this "stranger" and without hesitation she leaves her safe home and embarks on a perilous adventure in search of her prince. A deeper analytical reading

of this episode might reveal that Zoza's sudden and uncontainable love for the unknown prince represents Basile's love for the "new". The curiosity to explore a new literary style and to discover new limits for his imagination pushed Basile to challenge and actually abandon tradition all at once, so he created an assembly of signs and metaphors expressed in the "noble" Neapolitan dialect.[158] The whole Baroque society was fascinated with innovation and discovery, indeed during this time, as mentioned above, there was an impressive scientific progress[159], there were important inventions such as Galileo's telescope which changed the way the universe was perceived,

> "The Baroque proclaimed cultivated and exalted novelty. It recommended it. …Baroque declarations in favor of the new were not less fervent that those of the sixteenth century, but to the extent that they were permitted they were limited to poetic game playing, literary outlandishness, and tick effects machinated on stage…"[160]

As the story continues, after her hasty departure, Zoza finds herself alone in the forest. She arrives at the castle of a fairy and there she unloads her heavy spirit to the good woman,

> "a la quale erano dui sperune a farela precipitare la poca etate e l'ammore sopierchio a cosa non conosciuta, le deze na lettera de raccomannazione a na sore soia puro fatata"(Rak, 14)

> "out of compassion for such a beautiful young woman, who had been thrown off her horse by the two spurs of her tender age and her blinding love for things unknown, the fairy gave her a letter of presentation for a sister of hers, also a fairy."(Canepa, 38)

The second sister does the same thing and recommends Zoza to another. Each of them gives the princess a gift, a magical little object that would help her in the moment of need[161]. It is plausible to think that the fairies represent Basile's friends, to whom he sent sample of his work and who probably encouraged him to continue in his own adventure in the world of fairytales.[162] Also, the wandering from one castle to another, definitely calls to mind Basile's own wandering from court to court and the recommendation letters could metaphorically represent the good

reputation Basile acquired during the years working as a courtier [163]; a reputation that was 'his own recommendation letter' when moving from one court to another. After seven[164] years Zoza finally arrives at the place where the prince was asleep. Next to Tadeo's tomb there was a fountain, as Basile writes,

> "Aute ste cose, Zoza se mese le gambe 'n cuollo e tanta votaie paise, tanta passaie vuosche e shiommare, che dapo' sette anne-appunto quanno lo Sole ha puosto sell ape correre le solite poste, scetato da le cornette de li galli- arrivaie quase scodata a Campo Retunno, dove, primma che trasire la cetate, vedde na sebetura de marmoro a pede na Fontana che, pe vederse dinto no cremmenale de porfeto,chiagneva lacreme de cristallo", (Rak, 14-16)

> "Once she had these objects, Zoza threw up her legs and traveled through so many countries and crossed so many woods and rivers that after seven years – just when the Sun, having been awakened by the roosters' trumpets, was putting on its saddle and preparing to make the usual deliveries- she reached Round Field with barely a tail left on her. And there, before entering the city, she saw a marble tomb at the foot of a fountain that, imprisoned in porphyry, was crying crystal tears" (Canepa, 38)

The cry of the fountain is a reminder of the tears the princess would have to shed to wake up the prince. Zoza sits by the fountain and starts filling up the pitcher with her tears; the princess, however, does not simply cry, rather

> "Da dove levato la lancella che 'nc'era appersa e postasella 'miezo a le gamme, commenzaie a fare Li dui simele co la Fontana" (Rak, 16)

> "She took the pitcher that was hanging there, put it between her legs, and began to trade lines from *Menaechmi* with the fountain" (Canepa, 38)

*Menaechmi*[165] is a comedy written by Plautus and it deals with many cases of mistaken identity. The main plot tells the story of two identical twin brothers, Menaechmus.I and Menaechmus II, separated by destiny when still really young. Menaechmus II spends his life looking for his brother and after many years of wandering from city to city he arrives at Epidamnus, where his brother, who has forgotten his past, has taken on a new identity and started a new life. His arrival in town causes many misunderstandings as no one knew that Menaechmus I had a twin,

hence when they meet Menaechmus II, they treat him as if he were his brother. The mystery is solved at last when the two brothers finally meet face to face. In Basile, Zoza cries so much that she becomes the ‘twin sister’ of the fountain standing next to Tadeo; however, I believe that the reference to Plautus’ play can also be explained on another level. *Menaechmi* as we have said deals with mistaken identities and the whole play revolves around this misunderstanding creating bizarre and comical situations. *Lo cunto* is also based on a case of mistaken identity; in fact Tadeo marries the slave under the false impression that she was the one who filled the pitcher with tears, she was, thus, the worthy princess who had come to his rescue. The error is solved at the end when the two women ‘meet face to face’. Basile creates a parallel between his work and the tradition, but still defends the uniqueness of his work by introducing original elements. In this case he uses the idea of the mistaken identity but substitutes the two ‘identical’ twin brothers with two ‘opposite’ women, a black slave and a fair princess. Again he is turning the ‘world’ upside down.

The reference to Plautus might also be an example of Tesauro’s

> “METAFORA DI PROPORTIONE…VOCE INGEGNOSA CHE TI FA VELOCEMENTE CONOSCERE UN’OBBIETTO, PER VIA DEL SUO SIMILE”[166]

Basile uses often this type of metaphor, and later in the same tale he will use it again. Zoza, who had fallen victim of the ‘dark sleep’, wakes up and realizes that her love has been ‘stolen’; hence she sinks into despair but she knows that

> “non se poteva lamentare d’autro che *dell’uocchie suoie, che avevano male guardato la vitella* de le speranze soie” (Rak, 16. The emphasis is mine and it underlines the power of the metaphor.)
>
> “she had to complain about *her own eyes, which had insufficiently guarded* the calf of her hopes” (Canepa, 39)

In fact, it was because her eyes had become tired that she felt the need to close them and rest, and while she was lost into the darkness a dark shadow came and stole her prince.

And then again to describe Lucia's longing to hear *cunti* Basile writes

> "E tornato a lo palazzo dette la pi pata a la mogliere, che non cossì priesto se la mese 'n zino pe ioquaresenne, *che parze n'Ammore in forma d'Ascanio 'n zino a Dedone…*" (Rak, 20)

> "He returned to the palace and gave the doll to his wife; as soon as she took it in her arms to play with it assumed the appearance of Cupid, in the form of Ascanius, in Dido's arms."(Canepa, 41)

The metaphor in the first passage, as noted, alludes to the myth of Argus who could not guard his own cow that was stolen from him. In the second citation the metaphor refers to the episode of Book I of the *Aeneid,* where Virgil recounts how Cupid caused Dido to fall in love. These metaphors are meaningful especially because, in my view, they demonstrate that Basile was not only writing for the "little people", but rather, that he was also writing about them while addressing a large educated audience.[167] These metaphors, as many others in *Lo cunto*, could be fully understood only by people who had a solid literary background; hence, in Basile's time, mostly by the aristocrats and the nobility. Although the 'simple people' knew Plautus, Ovid, Virgil and other classical authors because they were part of their oral tradition, they probably did not have the literary background to appreciate the subtleness and the satire in Basile's writing. It is unlikely that the "popolino", which was so preoccupied with the mere task of surviving, had time to really focus on scholarly issues; however, because of the language the "popolino" was at least able to grasp the superficial, immediate, meaning of Basile's complicated metaphors. At the same time, Basile is ironically engaging his cultured audience to a level that requires knowledge of common life, about which they knew very little.

*Lo cunto* also employs the metaphors of "OPPOSIZIONE", (opposition), considered "genere supremo"[168] of all the metaphors; in the frame tale we have few notable examples. The first example is in the description of Tadeo's awakening

> "lo prencipe, comme si se scetasse da no gran suonno s'auzaie da chella cascia de preta ianca e s'afferaie a chella massa de carne negra" (Rak, 16)
>
> "the prince got out of his coffin of white stone as if he were awaking from a long sleep, took hold of that mass of black flesh" (Canepa, 39)

It is ironic and interesting to notice that Tadeo escapes the dark danger of death only to fall into an even darker 'place', the arms of the black slave[169]. This might be a way to warn us that Tadeo's awakening simply concerns his body; his mind at this point is still enchanted, wandering in the darkness of the unknown. Zoza will bring his mind and spirit back to life; she will restore the light of his intellect, thus bringing the tale to a happy ending[170]. Zoza's role as the 'restorer' of light does not surprise especially if we consider her connection to Zoroaster that we have explained before, and the fact that her name, of Oriental origin, refers to light[171].

Later on, describing Tadeo's reaction at the appearance of Zoza on the balcony of the palace facing the court, Basile writes,

> "Ma essenno vista no iuorno da Tadeo, che comm'a sporteglione volava sempre 'n tuorno a chella negra note de la schiava, diventaie n'acquila in tener mente fitto ne la perzona di Zoza, lo scassone de li privilegie de la Natura e lo fore-me-ne-chiammo de li termene de la bellezza." (Rak, 18)
>
> "And one day she was sighted by Tadeo, who like a bat was always flying round that black night of a slave but became an eagle when he fixed his eyes upon Zoza- the monster of nature's bounty, that "I'm out" of the game of beauty."(Canepa, 39)

Tadeo goes from being a bat, the darkest of all birds[172], the king of the night, to being an eagle, the bird associate with power, which dominates the sky, flies mostly during the day and is

renowned for its incredible eyesight. It is as if Zoza with her beauty and her grace has the power to better Tadeo solely with her physical presence. If we accept the theory proposed by De Simone that Zoza means light, then the princess for the intrinsic meaning of her name, represents also knowledge[173], which is the only 'power' that can transform a man from a brute to a distinguished human being; and by extension she could also be representing the "meraviglia" that makes learning so much more pleasurable. Furthermore, in this passage, we can see an example of hyperbole, in which *Lo cunto*, is also rich; as here the princess is compared to "lo scassone de la privilegie de la Natura", the most beautiful prize nature could give to human race. Zoza is so beautiful that she calls herself out of the 'game', ("I'm out", she says), as she knows no one would match her magnificence.

Basile's language becomes vivid not only thanks to the various rhetorical devices implemented by him, but also for the lexicon he uses. The words in *Lo cunto* are carefully chosen to match the feelings and almost 'paint' the struggles or the joy the different characters are experiencing at the moment of their utterance. The sound of the words in itself evokes in the reader the same emotions of the personages. For example, when Tadeo is forced by his jealous wicked wife to 'remove his eyes' from Zoza, his feeling are described as follows,

> "Tadeo… tremanno comm'a iunco de darele desgusto se *scrastaie* comm'arma sa lo cuorpo da la vista de Zoza" (Rak, 18. The emphasis is mine)
>
> "Tadeo … trembled like a reed at the thought of causing his wife any displeasure and tore himself from the sight of Zoza like a soul from its body."(Canepa, 40)

The simple word "scrastaie"[174] paints for us the expression Tadeo must have had when he was forced to look away from the beautiful princess. We can almost imagine a grimace on his face and rage in his eyes. The word, indeed, when pronounce aloud has a very harsh sound created by

the association of the consonants *s-c-r*, which immediately links it to a feeling of discomfort, anger or sadness, all of which Tadeo is experiencing in this particular scene.

Another example of the evocative power of Basile's words is found shortly after to describe Lucia's desire to obtain the magical objects Zoza has exposed on her window. The author says the 'black' princess "se … 'mprenaie", that is she became pregnant with desire; the utterance of the word *'mprenaie* requires a full movement of the mouth[175] and thus it evokes a sense of fullness, that "ready to explode" feeling that Lucia feels. Tadeo would satisfy his wife whim and would welcome to his court ten old crones able to tell entertaining tales. The *marmaglia* gathers in the court garden next to a fountain, that is defined as "na gran Fontana mastro de scola de li cortesciani che le mezzava ogne iuorno de mormorare", ("a large fountain, schoolmaster of courtiers whom it daily instructed in the art of murmuring"). Canepa explained that the fountain in Tadeo's garden

> "is a figure of ambivalence: originally described as a burbling model for Tadeo's courtiers in their gossipy murmuring and the arts of dissimulation, it is the central prop of the stage on which the flood of *cunti* will flow. The immediate function of these *cunti* is to feed Lucia's pregnant cravings, but as the seasoned fairy-tale reader knows, they will ultimately serve to unmask the dissimulation and lies by means of which she has taken Zoza's place, and thereby restore truth and justice."[176]

The fountain is thus a materialization of the Baroque's *topos* that nothing in the world appears really for what it is; that appearance is always deceitful. However, I also believe that in this particular scene the flow of water, epitomized in the fountain, represents the 'continuous flow' of the oral wonder tales and the folkloristic tales, not only the ones the old women are about to tell, but tales in general. Indeed, the tradition of tale telling has been a 'continuous flow' in the history of mankind and by making tales into a literary canon Basile is trying to perpetuate their

role. The *cunti* are important in the lives of all as they incorporate the two principles literature must follow, they are both pedagogical, (informative), and enjoyable, as Tadeo underscores:

> "Non è chiù cosa goliosa a lo munno, magne femmene meie, quanto lo sentire li fatti d'autro, né senza ragione veduta chillo gran felosofo mese l'utema felicità dell'ommo in sentire cunte piacevole, pocca ausolianno cose de gusto se spapurano l'affanne, se da sfratto a li penziere fastidiuse e s'allonga la vita[177]" (Rak, 22)

> "There is nothing in the world more delicious, my illustrious women, than to hear about doings of others, nor without obvious reason did that great philosopher set the supreme happiness of man in hearing pleasant tales; since when you lend an ear to tasty items, cares evaporate, irksome thoughts are dispelled, and life is prolonged." (Canepa, 42)

In the proverb mentioned in the first line of the paragraph, Basile employs two more metaphors of "opposizione". In fact, the reference to Aristotle is not supposed to be taken seriously; it is a way to create sarcasm and irony. Furthermore, the reference to the women as "illustrious" is clearly ironic and creates false expectations if taken seriously; indeed, if we take "illustrious" at face value we would expect to find beautiful, elegantly dressed women and our anticipations would be deflated by the reality of the old, loutish women.

**b.) The significance of names[178]**

Names, (both onomastical and toponymic), also fall under the spell of the Baroque metaphor; indeed, virtually no name, whether a proper name or a nickname or a toponym, is casually assigned in *Lo cunto*. In this section I will give some examples of how Basile chose names and I will try to demonstrate how often the names conform to the characters' personality, (whereas sometimes they do not), and they are used to reinforce irony and satire. Furthermore, I intend to emphasize how through toponymy Basile creates interesting and witty metaphors. I will deal with names and nicknames first, focusing only on the most significant ones and on those

that have not been fully explored by other scholars; I will look at the masculine name first and then at the feminine ones.

The first masculine name that appears in the collection is that of Tadeo. Nancy Canepa has observed that Tadeo[179] etymologically means "stupid", hence, she believes that the name hints at the prince 'non-active' role in the unraveling of the plot of which he is one of the main protagonists. Tadeo, in fact, behaves like a puppet in the hands of Lucia and Zoza, able orchestrators of the entire stratagem that originates *Lo cunto.* However, of interest is the fact that the Greek for Tadeo, Theudas, means "praise" which is a meaning opposite to the one proposed by Canepa. Also significant is the religious meaning of the name. Tadeo is a biblical name; it is the name of one of the apostles, Saint Jude Thaddeus, (San Giuda Tadeo), who then became the patron saint of lost causes and desperate situations[180]. Furthermore the name Thaddeus has an Aramaic variation "tadda"[181] which means magnanimous, or kind at heart, and relates well to the character of the saint who was known to be kind and generous. The legends on San Tadeo were well known in Europe by the seventeenth century, thus it is reasonable to think that Basile was acquainted with them. How do all the meanings of Tadeo relate to the prince of *Lo cunto?* We could say that all of them are consistent with the prince's personality; they simply refer to a different stage of his 'persona'. Tadeo, as many of Basile's protagonist is not a static figure; on the contrary he changes and evolves as the story moves along[182]. Hence, he might appear 'stupid' at the beginning of the tale as he is dormant while the action unravels, but he 'wakes up' at the end and becomes a leader. Finally, he sheds his idleness, becoming aware of what is happening around him, and makes the final, decisive move. Tadeo restores justice and for this he deserves 'praise'. Moreover, the fact that Saint Tadeo is the patron of hopeless causes could hint at the impossibility that Lucia's plan could ever succeed in the end.

After Tadeo we find Antuono, who together with Peruonto, Vardiello, Nardiello and Moscione makes up the category of the fools in the collection. Notwithstanding that Antuono, Peruonto, Vardiello, Nardiello and Moscione might have been typical names of fools in Basile's Naples, there are some interesting peculiarities about these protagonist that I would like to discuss. The five fools are described as "birdbrain", "solemn idiot", "good-for-nothing simpleton", lazy and inept, yet they were all born and lived in the so called Terra di Lavoro, (Land of Work). The first four come respectively from Marigliano, Casoria, Aprano, a small town in the province of Aversa, and Vomero, ("a hilly near Naples") and during Basile's time these were all territories of the Kingdom of Naples which was part of Terra di Lavoro, (Basile does not say where Moscione comes from, but since *Lo* cunto is set in Naples it is reasonable to believe that he was from the Kingdom of Naples as well.) The irony is clear, their homeland toponym celebrates the industriousness of its own citizens while Antuono, Peruonto, Vardiello and Nardiello are the most indolent and sluggish young men of their towns. Furthermore, especially for Antuono, Vardiello, Nardiello and Moscione, there are some important correlations between the significance of the names and the characters' personality; in the case of Peruonto, instead, of interest are the attributes his mother uses to describe him. Let us begin with the name Antuono.

Sant' Antuono in Naples, and elsewhere, is considered the patron saint of animals and lovers [183]. He is considered the protector against epidemic diseases that affect both human beings and animals; he is also invoked as a protector against the danger of fire, consequently the saint has been recognized as the patron of fire as well. According to some legends about the saint many rituals dedicated to him originated in the pre-Christian era. These rituals were performed during an annual festival and they were meant to ban the bad energy and propitiate a good year;

it was believed that the apotropaic element of the fire[184] could defeat evil and prevent all sorts of epidemic diseases. Moreover, the saint's name was also linked to the Carnevale; in fact in the popular tradition the festivities for the celebration of the saint coincided with the beginning of the festivities for the Carnival. It was an old custom, in Naples, to kill the pig on the day of Sant'Antuono[185], (with the pig's meat the people would produce sausages, *pancetta*, prosciutto, *sanguinaccio*[186]), marking thus the beginning of the "periodo grasso", (the fat period), that would last until Lent. In "Lo cunto dell'uerco", ("The Tale of the Ogre", 1.1), Antuono, after many vicissitudes, becomes the "propitiator" of the "periodo grasso" for his family as when he goes back home

> "fatto cemiento reiale de lo tafanario dell'aseno e prova secura de lo tovagliuolo, se mese buone cuoccole sotto e maritanno le sore e facenno ricca la mamma …" (Rak, 46)

> "after performing a royal trial on the donkey's ass and a thorough test of the tablecloth, he put together a good store of money, married off his sister, and made his mother rich…"(Canepa, 51)

This might explain the link between the character and his name and all that develops in the tale.

Vardiello is interesting because it seems that his troublesome personality is implied in the name which probably derives from the Arabic "barda's", (Italian "barda"), "varda" in Neapolitan. The word "barda"[187] literally means "pack saddle", in Neapolitan, however, it indicates specifically a very rough pack saddle used on horses or donkeys usually to transport heavy loads. Afterward, besides the literal meaning, in the Neapolitan culture the word acquired a metaphorical significance and it was used to indicate a heavy burden a person might have to carry during the course of life. Vardiello[188], (1.4), who is a simpleton with a 'birdbrain' and a

complete idiot, is clearly a burden to his mother and the name evidently brings to mind this aspect of his personality.

The name Nardiello, (which is the name of the protagonist of "Lo Scarafone, lo Sorece e lo Grillo", ["The Cockroach, the Mouse and the Cricket", 3.5]), probably originates as a diminutive of Bernardo or Leonardo, two names of German origin. The meaning of both names has to do with courage; Bernardo means 'courageous bear' and Leonardo means 'strong/courageous like a lion'[189]. Perhaps, Basile chose this name for the protagonist to hint at his resilience in the moment of danger. Nardiello never really feels fear, or at least he does not appear like someone who is ever afraid. He might seem desperate at times but he never whines or screams out of panick, rather in the worse moment of his life, when he is thrown in the lion's pit, he still shows some sense and sensibility by freeing the three little animals that had been so good to him,

> "Nardiello vedennose arreddutto, aperze la scatola de l'anemale, decenno:<<Pocca la sciorte mia m'have carriato con n'ammaro straolo a sto nigro passo, non avenno autro che ve lassare, o belle anemale mieie, io ve faccio franche, azzò pozzate ire dove ve pare e piace>>."(Rak, 544)

> "Nardiello, realizing he was nearing his end, opened the animal's box and said, 'Since my fate has dregged me with a bitter towline to this wretched impasse, and since I have nothing else to leave to you, O lovely animals of mine, I will free you, so that you can go where best you please.' " (Canepa, 250)

Interesting it also the fact that San Leonardo is considered the patron saint of the inmates, whom he frees, and Nardiello, even if for a short time, is held as a prisoner. Hence, the meaning of his name possibly suggests the positive resolution of his adventure. The name Nardiello appears again in *Lo cunto* even if in a different variant. The protagonist of the following *cunto* is also named after one of these saints[190], in fact he is called Narduccio[191]; this young man is also a prisoner, even if only on a metaphorical level. He is trapped first in a mysterious disease which

weakens him to the point that he cannot get out of bed and subsequently he becomes prisoner of his love and passion for the young and beautiful Belluccia, the youngest daughter of a "rustic man" sent to him, disguised as a man, to keep him company. In this *cunto,* the name of Belluccia's father, Ambruoso, is worthy of attention especially if we consider the role he plays in the story. Ambruoso was, (and still his), a popular name and surname in the Neapolitan province; it is of Greek origin[192] and it means 'immortality'. In the story Ambruoso might not grant immortality, but he definitely brings back life and defeats death. In fact, it is because of his generosity and his will to help a friend in need that Belluccia arrives at Narduccio' death bed and, with her extraordinary beauty that not even a masquerade could conceal, reawakens the spirit of the moribund man. Hence, Ambruoso is the *deus ex-machina,* who sets the action in motion and contributes to the victory of life over death, granting at least a temporary 'immortality'.

Moscione[193] carries a more obvious correlation between the meaning of the name and the character's personality. Moscione derives from the Latin 'mustens' which literally means 'flabby, flaccid'. In Italian the adjective is translated as 'moscio', which, when applied to people, indicates a weak, boneless and lazy person; in "L'Ignorante", ("The Ignorant", 3.8), the protagonist Moscione is exactly like that and stays the same through the end. The success and the happy ending of his enterprise are not the product of his hard work; rather, they come from the ingenuity and artfulness of the helpers he found on his path. Moscicone ascends to success without struggle and one could say that he arrives at the end of his 'perilous' adventure "dolce e fresco come il mosto", ("sweet and fresh like must") which is also consistent with the meaning of his name, if we consider that the Latin 'mustens' is a derivative of 'mustum', which means 'like mustum'.

The name Peruonto, (1.3), at last, probably derives from the name Piero or Pero and could be a variation of it. If one accepts this interpretation of the name, then Basile's irony becomes clear. In fact, Peter, (Latin *Petrus*; Greek *Petros*) etymologically means 'stone' and it is also the name Jesus gave to one of his apostles, St. Peter. There are two common variations of this name, one is obviously Peter, among the Christians, and the other is Peres, very popular in medieval England[194]. A 'stone' usually is associated with firmness and strength, hence it obvious that Basile in this case chose the name not to indicate a quality the protagonist has, but rather to emphasize the very quality he does not have 'stability'. Furthermore, the name is a clear reference to"Peter the Fool", (PN III, 1), one of the most famous characters of *Le piacevoli Notti,* and actually Straparola's Peter could be considered the prototype of Basile's Peruonto. However, what creates even more interest for this character is one of the adjectives Basile uses to describe him;

> "Aveva na magna femmena de Casoria chiammata Ceccarella non figlio nommenato Peruonto, lo quale era lo chiù scuro cuorpo, lo chiù granne sarchiopio, lo chiù sollene sarchiapone c'avesse creato la Natura." (Rak, 74)
>
> "An illustrious woman of Casoria named Ceccarella had a son named Peruonto, who was the most dismal creature, the greatest yokel, and the most solemn idiot that Nature had ever created."(Canepa, 61-62)

The epithet I would like to discuss is "lo chiù scuro cuorpo" ("the most dismal creature"); in fact Basile by describing Peruonto as 'gloomy' and 'dark' creates a strong contrast between the poor boy and his homeland but simultaneously establishes a correspondence between the two. The 'dark creature' in fact comes from Casoria. The toponym Casoria originates from the Latin "casa aurea" which means "golden house"; the noun "casa" probably refers to the rural homes typical of the area, while "oro" hints at the fertility of the territory. Peruonto, with his 'dark body and mind' stands in contrast to the splendor of his 'golden house' but, at the same time, he

shares in its fertility as he is able to impregnate the princess. Basile created a combination of the "metafora di OPPOSITIONE" (as defined by Tesauro), plus the "metafora di ATTRIBUTIONE"[195], in particular here the author uses an example of "Translati" which consist in transferring the quality of one character to another, specifically the fertility of the land is transferred over to Peruonto.

Another meaningful name is Corvetto[196], protagonist of the homonymous *cunto*, (3.7). The name originates from the Latin 'corvus', Italian 'corvo', (raven or crow) and it is a diminutive of it. The raven has a profound and ambiguous allegorical meaning, in some cultures it indicates bad luck and it annunciates death or troubles. However,

> "Recent comparatives studies of the customs and beliefs of a wide range of peoples would seem to show that the purely negative aspect of the symbolism of the raven is very late and an accretion almost entirely localized to Europe"[197]

Furthermore in Ancient Greece it was a bird sacred to Apollo; while in his nocturnal aspect as a crow was sacred to Athene. Pliny explains the difference between the crow and the raven in book X of his *Natural History.* He describes the crow as a bird who feeds mostly on flesh and has "a persistent croak that is unlucky" even more so during "its breeding season, that is, after midsummer."[198]Furthermore, the crow is the only bird of its "class" that feeds his offsprings even after they have learnt to fly. The raven, on the contrary, stops feeding its chicks as soon as they are able to fly; however, as Pliny writes, there are other differences between the two birds,

> "There are certain points of difference between this bird and the one mentioned above. Ravens breed before midsummer, also they have 60 days of ill-health, principally owing to thirst, before the figs ripen in autumn; whereas the crow is seized with sickness from that day onward."

Moreover,

> "Ravens seem to be the only birds that have an understanding of the meaning thay convey in auspicies. …It is specially a bad omen when they gulp down their croak as if they were choking." [199]

The raven and the crow, however, have one thing in common; in fact, both birds seem to possess a great ability to learn human language. Ravens, in addition, could also be trained and learn certain behaviors. Pliny gives examples of a talking raven and a talking crow, as well as of ravens that helped Romans during their hunting expeditions. In the Bible the raven is presented as a "symbol of clear-sightedness", as it is the bird Noah sends out "to see if the lowlands had emerged". Finally, in the Neapolitan culture both the raven and the crow hold a negative connotation; their image carries an ill omen, hence they are birds that many people dislike and avoid, theirfore they could both be seen as a symbol of isolation and solitude. In the "smorfia napoletana"[200], for example, a raven (or a crow) that appears in a dream is interpreted as a presage of a difficult period during which one would have to face many unpleasant situations and might incur in economic and financial disaster. The only positive note of a dream that involves a raven is to chase him away.

The raven, however, could also be seen as a symbol of intelligence and ingenuity as Pliny anectodote confirms,

> "Certain persons have tought it worth recording that a raven was seen during a drought dropping stones into a monumental urn in which some rain water still remains but so that the bird was unable to reach it; in this way as it was afraid to go down into the urn, the bird by piling up stones in the manner described raised the water high enough to supply itself with a drink."[201]

Basile was probably aware of this ambiguous significance and in the protagonist of his *cunto* he brings together his own Neapolitan culture and other popular beliefs belonging to different cultures he might have learned while travelling. Corvetto, in fact, is a double edge figure as he evokes dark feelings in the heart of the envious courtesans, but at the same time he demonstrates to be a positive figure for the loyalty and love he shows for his king. He also exemplifies the image of solitude and isolation; in fact he is lonely as he is isolated by the other courtiers who

envy, (and dislike), him; moreover he 'self-isolates' himself as he stands out from the crowd because he decides to live on a 'higher-level' following honesty instead of corruption. Basile writes,

> "Era na vota a li servizie de lo re de Shiummo Largo no giovane muto da bene chiammato Corvetto, lo quale pe li buone portamiente suoie essenno tenuto drinto lo core da lo patrone era pe sta casusa odiati e tenuto 'n savuorrio da tutte li cortisciane, li quali essenno sportegliune de 'gnoranzia non potevano mirare lo sguardo lustro de la virtù de Corvetto, c'a denate contante de buone termene s'accattava la grazia de lo patrone." (Rak, 570)

> "There was once, in the service of the king of Wide river, a most respectable young man named Corvetto. His admirable behavior had earned him a place in his master's heart, and for this reason he inspired hate and nausea in all of the king's courtiers, who were bats of ignorance and thus incapable of beholding the shining virtue of Corvetto, who with the cash of his good actions bought the grace of his master." (Canepa, 261)

Corvetto stands in contrast to his fellow courtiers who Basile describes as "bats of ignorance".

The bat shares with raven the ambiguity correlated to its symbolisms; in fact there are contrasting theories on the meaning of this bird. In the Bible it is presented as an impure bird, while Aristotle and Pliny emphasize its double nature; in *Natural History* Pliny describes the bat as follows:

> "The only viviparous creature that flies is the bat, which actually has membranes like wings; it is also the only flyer that nourishes its young with milk, bringing them to its teats. It bears twins, and flits about with its children in its arms, carrying them with it. The bat is said to have a single hipbone. Gnats are its favorite fodder."[202]

The blood and the heart of the bat have healing proprieties; as Pliny exaplains, for example, its blood can be used a remedy for the venom of certain ants and serpents. Furthermore, as explainded in book XXIX, the bat can also be used as a 'talisman', a charm against bad luck; indeed, if carried around the house three times, and then fasted head with its head downwards, while still alive, the bat acts as a "countercharm."

Furthermore in Germanic tradition the bat is held as a symbol of envy; in fact envious people are blinded by the presence of the people just as 'the bat is naturally blinded by daylight." Basile courtiers hold all the negative qualities of the bat, they are foes of the light and indeed "non potevano mirare lo sguardo lustro de la virtù de Corvetto", hence they act "topsy-turvy" trying to eliminate him, (they try to "ate up light") and instill the suspect of betrayal in the king's heart. Fortunately, Corvetto is able to crush their envy and prove his loyalty; nevertheless his success is not just the result of his own fights and efforts because in fact the young man "was enchanted",

> "Ma Corvetto, ch'era fatato, e vedeva le trapole e scopreva le tappolle e canosceva le matasse e s'addonava de le 'ntriche, de li agguaiete, de li mastrille, de le tagliole, de le tramme e de le 'mbroglie de l'averzarie, steva sempre co l'arecchie pesole e coll'uocchio apierte pe no sgarrare lo filato, sapenno che la fortuna de li cortesciane è vitriola." (Rak, 572)
>
> "But Corvetto was enchanted, and he took notice of the traps and uncovered the treachery and recognized the fraud and sensed the intrigue, ambushes, mousetraps, snares, plotting, and tricks of his enemies. He always kept his ears pricked up and his eyes wide open so as not to lis his thread, for he knew that the courtier's fortune is made of glass." (Canepa, 262)

In this paragraph Corvetto's story clearly echoes Basile's life; once again fiction and reality come together in *Lo cunto*. Basile as we know was also a courtier and during his wandering years he served many 'masters'; hence he experienced on his own skin the volatility and the uncertainty of the courtier's life[203]. In this tale he 'vocalizes' his disappointment for the corruption and the pettiness of the courtiers and the court at large; also through the image of the gullible king, he denounces the dullness of the political leaders of his time, probably he was referring in particular to the Neapolitan leaders who let the 'strangers' take complete control of their city.

In the realm of the feminine names in *Lo cunto* the most interesting ones are Zoza, Lucia, Zeza, (and its variant Zezolla), and Iacova.[204] One interpretation of Zoza's name is that it

originates from an oriental root and it means light[205]. I, however, would like to concentrate on a different meaning assigned to this name. In the Neapolitan dialect the word 'zoza' is used as an adjective and it is defined as follows:

> "zoza: fanghiglia; feccia di vino…cosa di pessima qualità"("zoza: slush/mud; wine dregs…a rotten thing/person" )[206]

It is justified to believe that the Neapolitan crowd that read *Lo cunto* in the past, and also to the one that reads it today, would interpret 'zoza' in a negative way and probably translate the name with 'scum'. The existence of an oriental root for this name it is (and was) known to few, in fact among all Basile's scholars that I have consulted[207] only De Simone refers to this origin of the name and he does not provide a source for his statement. Basile is perhaps playing with the double meaning of the name to create amusement and ambiguity. In fact, if we accept 'zoza' in the meaning of 'slush/mud', then we will see how the author created the kind of metaphor defined by Tesauro as "equivoco", (misunderstanding), which guarantees the astonishment of the reader once he/she discovers the truth. In fact "Zoza' is a name that immediately evokes a negative representation of the person who carries it; the first reaction is to imagine an ugly, dirty and ill-mannered woman. Once we discover that Zoza is in reality an extraordinary beautiful and gracious princess, the surprise is immense and provokes astonishment.[208]

The name Lucia, in Basile's collection, falls under the same category as Zoza, but for the opposite reason. This name comes from the Latin word *lux* which means light,

> "Light is beautiful to look upon; for, as Ambrose says, it is the nature of light that all grace is in its appearance. Light also radiates without being soiled; no matter how unclean may be the places where its beams penetrate, it is still clean. …Thus we are shown that the blessed virgin Lucy possessed the beauty of virginity without trace of corruption….the name is interpreted "way of light."[209]

Lucia is also the name of one of the most celebrated saint in Christianity[210]. Saint Lucy is often linked with the special gifts of the Holy Spirit; she also represents the "illuminating grace" and

the messenger of God[211]. She was a martyr and sacrificed her life to God and gave up all her earthly possession to serve Him. Therefore, the name Lucia rouses divine and positive feelings. We would imagine that the one carrying this name was a fair, beautiful, honest and honorable woman; instead we have a black, ugly, deceitful slave. Basile is again using the device of the "equivoco"; he is creating a game based on false expectations and startling truths. It is almost as if he purposely switched the names of the two women. Lucia, in fact, has nothing in common with the significance of her name or with the saint whose name she carries. She does not only have a hideous appearance she also has a foul soul; she is cunning, greedy and evil and does not hesitate to hurt others to attain her goals.

Zeza, as has been stated is a derivative of Lucrezia a noble name very common in Naples. In fact Lucrezia is a typical character of the Neapolitan theater; she is Pulcinella's[212] wife, a simpering, flattering woman who would allure her husband with malicious tricks and gratifying gossips. Zeza became then a way to describe a mincing and affected person, a flatterer who would use charming words and manners solely to fool people and persuade them to satisfy his/her will. This name appears in *Lo cunto* not only as the name of one of the ten tellers but also as the name of the protagonist of one of the most famous *cunti* "La gatta Cenerentola", ("The Cinderella Cat", 1.60), and within this cunto it becomes very interesting. Cinderella at the beginning of the tale is named Zezolla, (a derivative of Zeza), and she carries all the faults her name indicates. Zezolla despised her wicked step-mother and she constantly whined about to her teacher

> "O dio, e non potisse essere tu la mammarella mia, che me fait ante vruoccole e cassesie?"(Rak, 124)

> "Oh, God couldn't you be my little mommy, you who give me so many smooches and squeezes."(Canepa, 84)

She repeated this lament so much that she instilled an evil thought in the mind of her teacher, who, then, excogitated a plan to eliminate the despicable stepmother so that she could become Zezolla's "mommy". She instructs Zezolla to kill her stepmother and then to beg and persuade her father to marry her, (the teacher). Zezolla obeys and after her stepmother's death she begins to pester her father to convince him to marry the teacher.

> "commenzaie a toccare li taste[213] a lo patre, che se 'zorasse[214] co la maiestra. Da principio lo principe lo pigliaie a burla; ma la figliola tanto tiraie de chiatto fi' che couze de ponta, che a l'utemo se chiegaie a le parole de Zezolla e pigliatose Carmosina, ch'era la maiestra, pe mogliere fece na festa granne." (Rak, 126)

> "She began playing the tune of marrying the teacher. At first the prince thought it was a joke, but his daughter beat so hard that she finally broke the door down, and in the end he yielded to Zezolla's words. He took Carmosina, the teacher, for his wife, and held grand festivities." (Canepa, 84)

Zezolla manipulates her father's will with her coaxing and wheedling attitude; she is aware that he loves her deeply and she 'abuses' that love to get what she wants. Unfortunately, her scheme, although successful at first, causes her more harm than good; she has to endure a lot of sufferance before she is able to bring happiness again in her life. Thus the name Zezolla suits the protagonist well as she seems to have all the flaws that the name indicates.

Iacova is the name of one of the ten tellers, specifically is the name of the one who falls ill the last day allowing Zoza to come into the game and tell her tale, which reveals Lucia's conniving design. Accordingly, she can be looked upon as the punisher, the one who sets the scene for the sinner's fall. It is interesting that Iacova is a derivative of Giacomo, the Italian for James. The name James originates from the Latin Jacopus and Jacobus,

> "it is interpreted as one who causes to fall, or trips someone who is in a hurry, or as one who prepares. Or Jacobus comes from *Ja* a name of God, and *cobar,* which means burden or weight. Or again, as if the name were Jacopus, it might come from *jaculum,* lance, and *cope*, a cutting, so one cut down with lances. *James therefore was the one who brought the world to a fall by his contempt for it, he*

> *tripped up the devil who is always in a hurry*, and he prepared his body for every good work."[215]

Iacova, in *Lo cunto,* seems to play the role of Saint James[216], after all she is the one, who by not showing up, causes Lucia to 'trip' and 'fall'; and because Lucia had climbed so high, her fall is fatal; therefore Iacova's behavior is consistent with the significance of her name.

The next and last category of names to be discussed is that of the toponymy of the collection. Many of the toponyms Basile creates[217] for the setting of his *cunti* seem to carry a meaning that alludes to some of the personality traits or flaws of the dwellers; and, if that's not case, through the toponym he invents witty and subtle sexual metaphors.

In the frame tale there are two interesting locations: Vallepelosa, (Hairy-Valley) and Camporotondo, (Round Field). Vallepelosa[218] is the princess's kingdom, Zoza, who after many adventures marries Tadeo the king of Camporotondo.[219] The sexual undertone of these two names is evident; Vallepelosa refers to the female genitalia while Camporotondo might hint at the masculine sex. The opening scene of the old hag who, by showing her 'bushy scene', causes Zoza to laugh enhances the sexual innuendos present in this tale. That scene could, in fact, be interpreted as a sort of sexual initiation, a ritual to show Zoza the road to womanhood. It is indeed after she witnesses that spectacle that the princess embarks in the journey that would lead her to Camporotondo where she finds Tadeo, her husband and sexual mate.

In "Lo Polece", ("The Flea", 1.5), the action is set in Automonte, (High Mountain), a kingdom where the princess, Porziella, leads a peaceful and wealthy life. Her calm existence is upset when, because of her father stupid bet, she is forced to marry an ogre and to go live with him "down" in the woods,

> "La negra Porziella…pigliaie pe mano l'uerco, da lo quale, senza campagnia, fu strascinata a no vosco-dove l'arvole facevano palazzo a lo prato che non fosse

> scopierto da lo Sole…-dove non ci arrivava mai ommo si non aveva sperduto la strata." (Rak, 112)
>
> "Poor Porziella…took the ogre's hand and was dragged by him, without company, into a wood-where the trees formed a palace for the meadow so that it wouldn't be discovered by the Sun…- in which no one ever entered unless he had lost his way." (Canepa, 79)

She goes from a radiant home and a joyful life, to a dark hole where she cries everyday longing to go back to her beautiful palace. So while Porziella is glowing in Automonte, she becomes "negra", that is to say miserable, when living in the forest. Basile creates a strict correspondence between the princess welfare and her surroundings. In fact, at the end of the tale when she is rescued from the ogre and her happiness is restored, the princess goes back to her sunny kingdom where serenity reigns.

Next we find the kingdom of Pierde Sinno, (Lose-Your-Mind, 1.7) a name appropriate for Cienzo who towards the end of the story 'loses his mind' twice. First he is blinded by the magic powers of a beautiful witch and then anger obscures his brain when he believes that his brother Meo has slept with his wife. Noteworthy is also the name of the protagonist of this tale. Cienzo is a diminutive of Vincenzo, (Vincent); the name Vincent etymologically means victory, in fact

> "The name Vincent may be interpreted as burning up vice, or as conquering fires, or as holding on to victory. Saint Vincent did indeed burn up vices, getting rid of them by mortification of the flesh; he conquered the fires of torture by dauntless endurance of pain and held on to victory over the world by despising it. He conquered three things that were in the world, namely, false errors, impure loves, and worldly fears, which he overcame by wisdom, purity and constancy."[220]

Cienzo, during his wandering in the woods, experiences many difficulties and faces many dangerous situations and in each of them he is able to prove his courage, he shows his moral integrity and generosity, and most importantly always achieves 'victory'. For example he rescues a nymph attacked by a group of scoundrels who wanted to usurp her honor (thus he

fights and conquers “impure love”); also he courageously fights a dragon and kills him, saving the life of a beautiful princess who then becomes his wife. Cienzo killing the dragon with seven heads resembles Saint Vincent defeating the ‘human vices’ epitomized in the seven deadly sins; probably the seven heads of the dragons metaphorically represent the deadly sins. Hence Cienzo seems to posses all the qualities that his name suggests[221].

Subsequently, in “La vecchia scortecata”, (“The Old Woman Who Was Skinned”, 10.10), there is the kingdom of Roccaforte, (Strong Fortress). The name of this kingdom evokes strength and power, yet the king who lives in it is not so strong or powerful. He is, actually, easily fooled by the tricks of two old ‘fragile’ women. Hence the contrast between the name of the realm and its leader creates irony.

Another pair of interesting toponyms is found in “Lo serpe”, (“The Serpent”, 2.5), in this *cunto* we find the two kingdoms of Starza Longa and Vallone Gruosso, (Long Acres and Wide Ravine). As for the frame tale, also here we can perceive a sexual innuendo as the two names seem to allude at human genitalia, Starza Longa could hint at the male sex while Vallone Grosso could refer to the female one. It is as if the two territory need to come together to form a perfect whole, to complete each other just like male and female do when they unite. The same idea could be applied to the realms in “L’Orza”, (“The She-Bear”, 2.6), where the princess of Rocca Aspra, (Dry Rock), marries the king of Acqua Corrente,( Running Water); clearly the dry land of the princess kingdom needs the ‘water’ of the king to become fertile and (re-)produce. Furthermore, this underline theme is present in “La Penta Mano-Mozza”, (“Penta with the Chopped-Off Hands”, 3.2). In this tale the princess of “Petra Secca”, (Dry Rock), marries the king of “Terra Verde”, (Green Earth); once again the dry land can become fertile only through its union with ‘green earth’, the two territories are opposites, like men and women are, and they compensate

and complete each other. Similar is the situation in "Lo viso", ("The Face", 3.3.), where the daughter of the king of "Fuosso Stritto", (Narrow Ditch), falls for the son of the queen of Vigna Larga, (Wide Vineyard), also in this case the sexual allusions is palpable. Lastly in "La Superbia Punita", ("Pride Punished", 4.10), there is a union between the princess of Solco Lungo, (Long Furrow), and the king of Bel Paese, (Lovely Land), that also evokes sexual implications. There is, however, one tale that stands out because it escapes this opposition between the names of the realms, it is "Li Tre Ri Animale", ("The Three Animal Kings", 4.3), where there is a triple marriage between the princesses of Verde Colle, (Green Knoll), and the kings of Bel Prato, (Lovely Meadow); both toponym seem to refer to a fruitful land, actually the kingdoms seem to be the specular image of each other. Their union can only enhance the lushness of the land and bring more wealth for its inhabitants.

The list of interesting names continues. In "La Schiavottella", ("The Little Slave Girl", 2.8), there is the "barone di Serva Scura", (the baron of Dark Wood) and the name of his estate seems to evoke the secrecy that surrounds the baron's house. In his house there is a room that he promised never to open, therefore he ignores what's in it. Furthermore he is also unaware of the fact that his wife opened that door while he was away and found in there a beautiful young girl,(his niece), who she now keeps as a slave. The 'serva scura' then refers to the obscurity of the unknown and the blindness of the baron's mind. Similarly in "Sapia Liccarda", (3.4), the name of the city Villa Aperta, (Open Villa), carries a strong correlation with the unfolding of the action. In the land of Villa Aperta lives a very rich merchant who has three daughters Bella, Cenzolla and Sapia Liccarda. The merchant is very protective of his girls and keeps them on a close guard, (especially the first two who he knows are fickle and troublesome), and thus he keeps his home virtually 'closed'. However, one day he has to leave town to take care of some

business and with his departure the 'villa', (his house), is not protected anymore, consequently it becomes symbolically the 'villa aperta' of the title.

In tale 3.9, *Rossella*, Basile plays again the game of opposition. There is the Gran Turco[222], (Grand Turk), who has leprosy and to be cured he has "to bathe in the blood of a great prince"[223]. The Gran Turco anxious to get his health back immediately sends his fleet to sea in an expedition with the precise command to search every corner of the world in order to find a noble price. While navigating the coast of Fonte Chiaro (Clear Fountain) they notice on a small boat the young prince of that kingdom, so they capture him and bring him back to their master, so that he can be killed and his blood be used to cure the Grand Turk. It seems that Basile is recreating here the contrast between the 'evil black', in the specific the Gran Turco, and the 'good white', the prince of Fonte Chiaro; once again only 'light',(purity), can cleanse a wretched, 'dark', soul, (just like Zoza, the fair princess, 'the light', would defeat Lucia the 'black' evil, preposterous princess.)

"La preta de lo gallo", ("The Rooster's Stone", 4.1) is also interesting. It is set in a town called Grotta Nera, (Black Grotto), and the protagonist Mineco Aniello is so beaten by bad luck that his only possession "consisted of a miniature rooster he had raised on bread crumbs." In popular belief, the color black is often associated with bad luck and misfortune, thus it could be argued that the name of the town is linked to the sad life Mineco Aniello lives there.

Later on in "Le tre corone", ("The Three Crowns", 4.6), we find the kingdom of Valletescuosse, (Shaken Valley) where there is a king who is desperate to have an heir. He prays so much that at the end he is blessed with a child, a daughter, whom he keeps "locked in a strong and well-guarded palace" till the day of her wedding with the king of "Pierdesinno", ( Lose-Your-Mind). The day of her departure to the court of her husband, as soon as she steps out of her

palace, she is kidnapped by the wind a brought to an ogress' house. Hence the name Valetescuosse could hint at the fact that the wind 'shakes' the peace of the territory and destroys the king's plan. The young princess, Marchetta, after a serious of accidents leaves the ogress' house dressed like a man. In the woods she meets the king of Perdisinno who thinking she is really a man takes her as his page. At the court of this generous king lives his vicious wife who immediately feels attraction for 'the page'. She courts 'him' and when, for obvious reasons, Marchetta/the page rejects her enticement the queen avenges 'the offense' by telling her husband that the page had tried to seduce her. The king without further ado, 'losing his mind', blinded by anger, condemns the poor page to be hanged. Luckily, Marchetta is magically rescued and when her real gender is revealed the evil queen is killed and the 'poor' girl marries the king of Pierdisinno[224]. The name of the kingdom probably alludes at the quickness with which the king loses his temper and lets anger impair his judgment.

The territory of "Sapia", (5.6), also carries a name that reflects the flaws of the male protagonist of this tale. In the land called Castiello Chiuso, (Closed Castel), lives a king who has a son "so tick-headed that there was no way to get him to learn the ABC's". Carluccio, (this was his name), has 'closed' his mind to knowledge so probably the toponym Castiello Chiuso implies this particular trait of his personality. His 'castle' will then be 'opened' by a young girl who for her knowledge and wisdom was called Sapia[225].

There are many other imaginary toponyms in *Lo cunto,* which contribute in creating a fantastic and surreal setting for the tales.[226] .  I would say that they might have a particular meaning but this is a work by itself and too exhaustive.

**c.) Tadeo, Zoza, Lucia and Naples.**

In this section of the chapter I will propose a metaphorical interpretation of the main characters of *Lo cunto.* I believe that they each represent Naples, both in its particular historical moment and in the utopian vision of the author, who longed to see his city free from the invaders. Basile's opus belongs to "counter tradition" and I see it as part of that 'Literature of Dissent', both in content, language and style that has marked authors outside of the canon of the politically correct[227].

Zoza at the beginning of the story symbolizes the oppressed and usurped city. She is, in fact, deprived of her 'legitimate' husband and territory because of the greed and presumptuousness of an undeserving false bride, Lucia. Hence, the latter allegorically represents the Spaniards, the historical oppressors of the city of Naples. Lucia shares with them the dark features and, most importantly, the illegitimacy of their sovereign. Tadeo also symbolizes the city, more specifically though he represents the Neapolitan political class, the powerful citizens, who 'slept', (that is they did not fight enough), while the foreigners took possession of their territory.

Basile, as many Neapolitans of the time, yearned for the freedom of his city and also hoped that it could flourish again so that he, and other fellow citizens, would not have to abandon it. Although he was a wandering courtier his love for Naples always remained intact, so did the torment of living far away. His anguish comes across vividly in many of his writings, even in *Lo cunto* Basile, uses one of his protagonist to talk about the agony that accompanies the citizen who is forced to leave his beloved homeland. In the tale "Lo mercante", ("The Merchant", 1.7), Cienzo has to flee Naples after he accidently broke the head of the king's son, and while he walks away, he sobs and laments his dark destiny,

> "Tienete, ca te lasso, bello Napole mio! Chi sa si v'aggio da vedere chiù, mautune de  zuccaro e mura de pasta reale? Dove le prete so' de manna 'n cuorpo, lit rave de cannamele, le porte e le finestre de pizze sfogliate! Ohimè, che spartennome d ate, bello Pennino, me pare de  ire co lo pennone! Scostannome da te Chiazza Larga, me se stregne lo spireto! allontanannome d ate, Chiazza de l'Urmo me sento spartire l'arma! Separannome da vui, Lanziere, me passa lanzata catalana! Scrasrannome d ate, Forcella, me se scrasta lo spireto de la forcella de st'arma!dove trovaraggio n'autro Puorto, doce puorto de tutto lo bene de lo munno?...ohimè, ca no pozzo allontanarme da re, Lavinaro mio, se no faccio lava da st'uocchie! No te pozzo lassare, o Mercato, senza ire mercato de doglie!"(Rak,144)

> "Here I go, my beautiful Naples, I'm leaving you! Who knows if I'll ever be able to see you again, bricks of sugar and walls of sweet pastry, where the stones are manna in your stomach, the rafters are sugarcane, the doors and windows puffs pastry? Alas! Separating from you, lovely Pennino, is like walking behind a funeral pennant! Taking my leave of you, Piazza Larga, my spirit is squeezed narrow! Removing myself from, Piazza dell'Olmo, I feel my soul split in two! Parting from you, Lancieri, is like being pierced by Catalan lance! Where shall I find another Porto, sweet port of all the world's riches? Tearing myself away from you, O Forcella, my spirit tears itself away from the wishbone of my soul! Where is there another Gelsi, where the silkworms for love weave never-ending coccons of leisure? … Alas! My Lavinaro, I cannot remove myself from you without a stream of tears flowing from my eyes! I cannot leave you, O Mercato, without a load of grief as merchandise!"(Canepa, 92-93)

In a sense it seems that his dream of a liberated Naples comes true, metaphorically, in *Lo cunto.* In fact, at last Zoza rises to her victory over Lucia; she defeats the oppressor and regains her power and her freedom. Also, Tadeo finally awakens and for the first time in the story he takes action, sentencing Lucia to a terrible death.  Allegorically speaking, Zoza is again Naples, the city that with its resilience defeats the enemy represented by Lucia, while Tadeo embodies the citizens who finally find the strength and the courage to oppose their foe.  Furthermore, this utopian ending establishes once again a parallel with the Florentine master, Boccaccio. *Lo cunto* like the *Decameron* is a comedy, more specifically a 'human comedy'. It is a comedy because follows the canonical style of a sad beginning and a happy ending; it is a human comedy because it explores the vices and the virtues of humanity and it does that with sarcasm and irony.  The

parallel, though, regards more specifically the structure and the message of the two books. Boccaccio opens his collection with a tale about a usurer, a thief, a cunning liar, the epitome of sins and vices, called Ser Ciappelletto. This man fools society till his death and thanks to a fake confession he convinces a dull priest that he lived the life of a saint , thus after his death he is actually proclaimed saint. Through Ser Ciappelletto and through the dullness of the priest Boccaccio is obviously criticizing the lack of values and morals in the society of his time. He then concludes his collection with the story of Griselda, a woman who possesses all of the human virtues. She is honest, pious, forgiving, patient, humble, respectful, saintly and absolutely beautiful; thus she is the opposite of Ser Ciappelletto in every aspect, (she is a woman he is a man, she is virtuous he is a sinner.) The position of this two tales is certainly not casual, rather it is strategic. Indeed, I believe that Ser Ciappelletto at the beginning of the *Decameron* equals Lucia at the beginning of *Lo cunto* , for the fact that they both represents the corruption and the immorality that had spread in Florence and Naples respectively. Griselda, in the last tale, corresponds to the image of the victorious Zoza at the end of the neapolitan collection; Griselda like Zoza represents the utopian dream of the author to see justice and freedom restored in his beloved city. (I will address this topic later on in an essay.)

**d. The significance of the games**

Games in general do not simply indicate fun and relaxation rather they often represent the challenges that men face throughout their life,

> "Basically games are a symbol of struggle, against death (funeral games), against the elements (country games), against hostile powers (war games) and against the individual's fears, weakness, doubts and so on. Even when they are pure rejoicing, they bring the glow of the victory at least to the cheeks of the winner."[228]

Basile's "marmaglia" together with the courtiers, the prince and the princess, while waiting for dinner, spends the mornings by playing various games[229], all very popular at that time. Basile provides an extensive list of such games in the introductions to the second day, fourth day and fifth day of storytelling; however pastimes are mentioned throughout *Lo cunto*, which is I dare say a 'big' game itself[230]. The games mentioned in the collection share an ancient origin but they are not exclusively Neapolitan, in fact as Rak points out in his notes many of them were also present in other Italian regions. While the origin and the unwinding of the games have been explained[231], when possible, no attempt has been made to explain their probable metaphorical meaning; in this section I will propose a possible explanation at least for some of them.

The second day of storytelling Taddeo, Lucia and the ten tellers gather in the garden of the courts and as usual engage in many fun games while waiting for dinner; as Basile writes, when the prince and the princess arrived in the garden where the "marmaglia" was already waiting,

> " commenzaro mille iouche oe gabbare lo iempo fi' all'ora de lo mazzecare: no lassandose nè Anca Nicola, nè Rota de li cauce, nè Guarda Mogliere, nè Covalera, nè Compagno mio feruto so', nè Banno e commandamiento, nè Ben venga lo maestro, nè Rentinola mia Rentinola, nè Scarreca la votta, nè Sauta parmo, nè Preta 'n zino, nè Pesce marino 'ncagnalo, nè Anola Tranola, pizza fontanola, nè Re mazziero, nè Gatta ceccata, nè La lampa e la lampa, nè Stienne mia Cortina, nè Tafaro e tamburro, nè Travo luongo, nè Le Gallinelle, nè Lo vecchio no è

venuto, nè Scarreca varrile, nè Mammara e nocella, nè Sagliepengola, nè Li forasciute, nè Scarriglia Mastrodatto, nè Vienela, vienela, nè Che tiene 'mano, l'aco e lo filo, nè Auciello auciello maneca de fierro, nè Grieco o acito, nè Aprite le porte a povero farcone." (Rak, 278)

"a thousand games' commenced so that the time left before eating might be deceived. And they overlooked neither Anca Nicola, nor the Wheel of Kicks; nor Watch Your Wife; nor Covalera; nor Buddy of Mine, I'm Wounded; nor Proclamation and Command; nor the Master Is Welcome; nor Little Swallow, My Little Swallow; nor Empty the Cask; nor Jump a Palm's Length; nor Stone in Your Lamp; nor Fish in the Sea, Go After Him; nor Anola Tranola, Pizza Fontanola, nor King Macebearer, nor Blinded Cat; nor Lamp to Lamp; nor Hang My Curtain; nor Butt and Drum; nor Long Beam; nor The Little Hens; nor the Old Man Hasn't Come; nor Empty the Barrel; nor Mammara and Hazelntu; nor Seesaw; not the Outlaws; nor Argue the Case, Court Clerk; nor Come Out, Come Out; nor What's in Your Hand, the Needle and Thread; nor Bird, Bird, Sleeve of Iron; nor Greco Wine or Vinegar; nor Open the Door for the Poor Falcon." (Canepa, 143-45)

[232]"Anca Nicola" is a very ancient game and involves three players; one them bends down resting his head on the laps on another child, who then covers the eyes of the first child with his hand. The third player then jumps on the back of the child bending down and he sings "Anca Nicola, si' bella e si' bona/ e si'maretata/ Quante corna tiene ncapa?" ("Anca Nicola, you're beautiful and you're good. And you're married: How many horns do you have on your head?") The blinded child has to guess how many fingers the other has put up; if he fails the round is repeated.[233] The interesting aspect of this game is that in a sense it echoes the unfolding of *Lo cunto.* In the collection there also 'three players', namely Tadeo, Lucia e Zoza; Tadeo would be the one with his eyes covered and subjugated; Lucia would be the player who blinds Tadeo's eyes with her hand so that he cannot see the 'truth' and discover in her an impostor. Lastly, Zoza would be the third player the one who tries to show Tadeo "how many horns" he has on his head. The name of the third game "Guarda Mogliere", ("Watch your Wife") seems almost a warning to the prince. This game as both Rak and Canepa observed is similar to "A varda mugghieri" mentioned by Pitrè and it proceeds as follows;

> "One person kneels, and plays the part of the 'wife'. The 'mother' (game-leader) walks around him, just as the other players are doing, and defends the wife's head from their blows, which come in the form of punches, kicks, and shoves. If the mother who has the role of 'wife watchers', touches on of them, the touched person is 'it' and the previous wife becomes the game leader" (Canepa, 144)

The procedure of this game reminds of the ancient despicable practice of punishing 'sinful' women by stoning or beating them to death[234], hence it is probable that it has oriental roots. This entertainment is interesting for its relation to the frame story of *Lo cunto*; the first similarity is the unwinding of the two pastimes. The storytelling happens in a circular motion just like the game, the ten hags sit in a circle and 'go around' telling their tales. Furthermore, Basile's collection revolves around two women, Lucia and Zoza, and the game also sees two women figures, the wife and the mother, trapped in the center. Outside of the 'center' there is also another woman, who throughout the course of the events seems to be a marginal figure but at the end becomes the 'leader"; I believe that Iacova somehow resembles this marginal figure, while Zoza and Lucia echo the wife and the 'mother' respectively, although the function of the 'mother' is reversed. The relation between Zoza and the 'wife' is that they are both abused, Zoza is psychologically abused by Lucia who has taken her 'life', and the 'wife' is being physically abused by people who try to hit her. The 'mother' tries to protect her from the punches and the kicks so that she will not get hurt, (or worse killed!) On the contrary Lucia stands before Zoza not to protect her, the legitimate wife and princess, rather to protect herself. Iacova, who until the end remains anonymous, lost in the loud "marmaglia", at the end becomes the one who serves Zoza her chance to restore justice. In fact, it is because Iacova becomes ill and doesn't show-up to tell her story that Zoza has the chance to become part of the 'game' and tell her sad tale thanks to which she is recognized as the lawful 'wife' and "becomes the game leader"; while Lucia becomes "it" and receives the just punishment.

The third game I would like to discuss is "Aprite le porte a povero farcone", (Open the Door to the Poor Falcon"). The game, played exclusively by women, unfolds as follows,

> "Everybody holds hands and moves in a circle, leaving one in the middle who has to try to escape by passing under the arms of one of the couples. When she has sung
> 'Open the door for the poor falcon', all of the others lift their arms as high as they can and reply: 'The doors are open, if the falcon wants to come in.' If in that moment the one in the middle is able to escape through one of the openings before being stopped b the joined hands, which quickly lower to block her way, she wins; if not, she goes back and the game continues…The name of falcon is given to the one in the middle, as if she were in a cage." (Canepa, 145)

Zoza is the falcon; at first she is 'caged' in her royal palace, trapped in a life she has not chosen; later she is 'caged' in a 'lie' imposed on her by the deceitful slave. Also interesting is the symbolism of the falcon and the fact that it appears often in fairytales,

> "In Ancient Egypt, where its strength and beauty made it prince of birds, the falcon symbolizes the principle of LIGHT."

Furthermore,

> "the falcon, in the symbolic category of the solar, celestial, male and bright, is an accessional symbol on every level, material, intellectual and moral. It signifies superiority and conquest either acquired or in process of attainment."[235]

The woman trapped in the middle of the circle begs the other women to let the 'poor falcon come in', hence, in a way, according to the metaphorical meaning of the bird she is pleading for truth to come in her life; her plea is Zoza's plea who also 'fights' for 'light' to come in her life. Furthermore, if the falcon stands as a symbol of 'conquest acquired or in the process of attainment" that it is plausible to see it as a metaphor of Zoza's 'conquest' which will come at the end of the storytelling. At last, if we consider that the falcon also as a 'male symbol' then the sexual innuendo[236] underling the game becomes clearer and the game could be interpreted as a

sort of ritual to initiate a young girl to sex and womanhood, which will be consistent with idea that playing games is a way to prepare for reality,

> "To play with something implies surrender to the plaything, the player endowing, to some extent, the object with which he plays with his own libido. As a result the game becomes a magical activity which brings to life. … To play is to build a bridge between the imaginary and the real through the magic workings of the libido play is, therefore, a rite of passage and prepares the way for adaptation to reality"[237]

The last game that I will analyze is "lo iuoco de li iuoche" (the game of games) which appears in the introduction to the last day and it is "a sort of truth-telling society game", (Canepa, 385). Noteworthy is the name of the game which strongly echoes the title of the collection and, maybe, hints at the fact that *Lo cunto* is in itself a big game; "Lo iuoco de li iuoche" and "Lo cunto de li cunti" also share the pursuit of the truth. The game is proposed by Cola Iacovo one of the Tadeo's courtiers, who introduces as follows,

> "io proponerraggio a quarche femmena de chesse na sorte de iouco, la quale senza penzarence m'ha da dicere subeto ca no le piace e la causa perchè no le dace l'omore; e chi tardarrà a responnere o responnerà fore de proposito aggia da pagare la pena, che darrà fare chella penetenza che commannarrà la segnora prencepessa." (Rak, 880)
>
> "I'll propose to one of these women here a sort of game, and she, without thinking about it, will immediately have to tell me that she does not like it and the reason why it is not to her liking and whoever takes too long to answer or does not answer to the point must pay a penalty, which will be whatever penance our lady princess commands." (Canepa, 385-86)

The game is intriguing for two reasons; first of all it is nearly paradoxical that a 'liar' , Lucia, is called to judge upon other 'liars' who cannot see deception and fall into the trap prepared for them by the courtier. Secondly, it is ironic that the only one to fail the test is Zoza, the woman who represents truth and knowledge in the collection. However, the princess' failure in the game

turns into a victory in real life and it is a pivotal moment in the course of action of the story. Indeed the punishment Lucia assigns Zoza is the first chance the princess has to let her rival know that her 'castle of lies' is about to be destroyed and she is about to be dethroned. The "villanella" sang by Zoza is a clear warning to the 'slave-princess',

> "Si te credisse dareme martiello/ e c'aggia filatiello,/ ca fai la granne e 'ncriccheme lo naso,/và, figlia mia, ca marzo te n'ha raso!/ Passaie lo tiempo che Berta filava/ e che l'auciello arava/e non sento d'Ammore o frezza o shiamma:/spelata è Patria, mo non 'ng'è chiù mamma!/ Và, c'hanno apierto l'uocchie li gattile,/so' scetate li grille./ si faie niente speranza a sse bellezze./ và ca n'hai scesa, quanto curre e 'mpizze!/ Aggio puosto la mola de lo sinno,/ nè chiù me movo a zinno,/ e già conosco dalla fico l'aglio!/ Non 'nge pensare chiù, ca non ng'è taglio!" (Rak, 882-84)
>
> "If you thought you could hammer on me/ and I would get the runs/ just because you put on airs and wrinkle your nose,/ go on, my girl, for March has ruined you!/ The time is past when Berta spun/ and the bird ploughed,/and I feel neither the arrow nor the flam of Love:/ Patria has opened up; there's no more mother now! / Go on, even the kittens have opened their eyes,/ and the crickets are now awake;/ if you give no hope to this beauty,/ be on the watch for misfortunes, wherever you run and stick it!/ I've cut my wisdom teeth,/ and I move to your nod no more./and by now I can tell the figs from the garlic!/ Get it out of your head: there'll be no more cuts for you!" (Canepa, 387-88)

Through the song Zoza initiates a secret dialogue with the 'false-princess' as she is the only one who can 'receive' and understand the true essence of her words. The 'real' princess announces to her rival that 'nemesis' is coming soon; Lucia's time is running out and the worse is that she cannot escape her destiny. She is 'caged' and has been trapped by her own uncontainable avarice and by her jealousy for Zoza and for everything she had. Her plan to destroy the princess and rob her of her life and her love, turn into a boomerang; at the end she, (Lucia), loses everything and Zoza is restored in her legitimate place. Lucia climbed too high hence her fall is going to be deadly, just like Basile announces in the opening paragraph of the collection, she has no hope because "misfortune" will follow her wherever she goes. At the end Basile reverses the

role completely, Lucia who was the ‘punisher’ in the game and chastised Zoza for giving the wrong answer and failing to ‘read the truth’ becomes the ‘accused’; Zoza , on the contrary, becomes the ‘punisher’, by telling her story she unmasks the usurper and determines her death.

**e. The significance of food.[238]**

Food is an essential factor of every culture thus its presence in art often pays tribute to the folklore of the different people around the world. Furthermore, the language of food is frequently employed on a metaphorical and allegorical level, more so in literature and fairytales. I propose an analysis of the significance and the allegorical meaning of food in the context of Basile’s fairytales collection. The author establishes a parallel between his opus and food already in the frame-tale where Tadeo addressing “la marmaglia” reunited around him and his ‘slave/princess’ says,

> “Non è cosa cchiù goliosa a lo munno, magne femmene meie, quanto lo sentire li fatti d’autro, nè senza ragione veduta chillo gran felosofo mese l’utema felicità dell’ommo in sentire cunte piacevole, pocca ausolianno cose de gusto se spapurano l’affanne, se da sfratto a li penziere fastidiuse e s’allonga la vita, pe lo quale desiderio vide l’artisciane lassare le funnache, li mercante li trafiche, li dotture le cause, li potecare le facenne; e vanno canne aperte pe le varvarie e pe li rotielle de li chiacchiarune sentenno nove fauze, avise ’mentate e gazette ’n aiero.” (Rak, 22)

> “There is nothing in the world more delicious, my illustrious women, that to hear about the doings of the others, not without obvious reason did that great philosopher set the supreme happiness of man in hearing pleasant tales; since when you lend an ear to tasty items, cares evaporate, irksome thoughts are dispelled, and life is prolonged. And it is because of this desire that you see artisans leave their workshops, merchants their commerce, lawyers their cases, and shopkeepers their businesses, and go open-mouthed to barbershops and gossip circle to hear fake news, invented broadsides, and airy gazettes.” (Canepa, 42)

Tales are described as “delicious” and “tasty” as if they were food and the effect of these “tasty items” is as beneficial and relaxing as the act of eating. In fact, when hearing “pleasant tale”

men forget about their troubles and their fatigues, just like they do when they sit around the table and enjoy a delicious dinner.

Notwithstanding the importance of food as a recreational moment, Basile utilizes it in differ manners and with different meanings; if we were to catalogue the various metaphors he creates around food we would find at least five main categories: 1) food as 'power'; 2) food as 'eros'; 3) food as 'therapy'; 4) food as 'cosmetic' and 'beauty'; 5) food as 'resolving' factor of the tales.

1. **Food as 'power'**

Food establishes its dominant role in the collection right at the beginning of the "'Ntroduzzione", where the desperate king of Vallepelosa orders an oil fountain to be built in front of his court in the hope that his sad daughter, by witnessing the comic spectacle of people slipping and falling in the attempt to avoid the squirts of oil, would finally smile. This fountain is particularly interesting because it bears different metaphorical meanings, (which I will explain), but *in primis* it stands as a symbol of 'power'. In spite of the fact that oil was, and still is, a typical ingredient of the Mediterranean diet, one cannot overlook the fact that it is expensive and indeed, it was even more expensive in the Naples of Basile's time that had been exploited and impoverished by the Spanish domination. Hence the act of squandering so much of it by using it in a fountain could be seen as a way to affirm and solidify the power of the king(s), both financial and political. The food becomes a *status symbol*, an element of division between the aristocrats and the *popolino* that was nearly starving. Basile emphasizes this aspect by introducing in the tale the figure of an old poor woman who was so famished that instead of avoiding the spurts of oil, kneels down and starts collecting it from the street floor with a sponge. Thus, food was not considered as one of the basic human right; it was a 'conquest' something the poor people had to earn by means

of hard work and humiliations. The metaphor of food as wealth and power occurs also in the tale "La serva d'aglie", ("The Garlic Patch", 3, 6), where the king talks about his wealth in culinary terms and to his humble and unfortunate friend says

> "Pocca lo cielo t'ha dato tante figlie femmene, ed a me tante mascole, affè ca volimmo fare no viaggio e sette servizie! Va carreiale adonca a sta casa, ca te le voglio dotare, pocca, lo dato sia lo cielo, aggio agresta che basta pe tante fregaglie." (Rak, 566)

> "Since the heavens gave you so many girls, and me so many boys, on my word, let's perform seven services in one trip! Go, then, and bring them to this house; I want to give them all dowries since, praise the heavens, I have enough sauce for the whole fish-fry." (Canepa, 260).

**2. Food as 'eros'.**

Once again we would have to refer to the oil fountain in the frame tale where we'll find the first example of food as 'eros'; the oil, in fact, is also a lubricant and hence it holds sexual innuendos. If we consider then the scene that develops around the fountain, with the old lady, that angry at the page who had made fun of her, lifts her skirts and reveals her pubis, the sexual allusion is even stronger. It is after Zoza witnesses this scene that she laughs; her laughter testifies that her sexual curiosity has awoken and she is now ready to explore her sexuality. It is, indeed, because she laughs at the 'woodsy scene' of the old lady that she is propelled to embark in a journey searching for her prince. Also in "Peruonto", (1.3), the embrace between the princess and her lover, (who has finally been transformed into an handsome and elegant prince), is described with a culinary metaphor,

> "La quale cosa veduto Vastolla se ne iette 'n secoloro per allegrezza e, stringennolo drinto le braccia, ne cacciaie zuco de contentezza." (Rak, 86).

> "When Vastolla saw this she was in the seventh heaven of happiness, and pressing him in her arms, she squeezed a juice of pleasure." (Canepa, 68)

Furthermore, in “Lo mercante”, (“The Merchant”, 1. 7), the sexual intercourse, (the presence of absence of it) is represented through the act o eating and having sex is like savoring food at a banquet. Menechella upset at the man who she believes is her husband because he refuses to please her at night says to him,

> “T’aggio ’ntiso: la dieta de lo lietto mio è pe fare banchetto a la casa d’autro! Ma si chesso vedo, voglio fare cose da pazza e che ne vaiano l’asche pe l’aiero!” (Rak, 158)
>
> “Now I understand: you diet in my bed so you can have a banquet in the house of others! But if I see that happen, I intend to do crazy things and send sparks flying!” (Canepa, 99)

Also in “Le tre fate”, (“The Three Fairies”, 3, 10), the prince who has a burning desire to see and possess his beloved is described as distraught because of his ‘hunger’ for her,

> “Ma, essenno oramaie abrocato l’aiero e fatto lo cielo commo a bocca de lupo, Cuosemo, c’aveva li parasiseme e moreva allancato, pe dare co na stretta a l’amate bellezze na allargata a l’appasionato core, co na preiezza granne abbiannose cossì deceva: <<Chesta è l’ora a punto da ire a ’ntaccare l’arvolo che ha chiantato Ammore drinto a sto pietto pe cacciarene manna de docezze amorose” (Rak, 624-26)
>
> “The air had already grown dark and the sky like a wolf’s mouth when Cuosemo, who was having convulsions and dying o the desire to expand his impassionate heart by squeezing the beauties of his beloved, set off with great joy, saying, ‘The hour had finally come to tap the tree that Love has planted in this breast so that it may send forth the sap of amorous sweetness” (Canepa, 285)

Considering that ‘allancato’[239] in Neapolitan means ‘hungry’ the relation between sex and food becomes more explicit. As these last two example demonstrate in Basile, the sexual intercourse is represented as a ‘gustative’ experience; the beloved is ‘tasted’, ‘bitten’ savored through the mouth which becomes the epicenter or as Noëlle Châtelet would say the unopposed “queen of pleasure” as it is with the mouth that we perform the most pleasurable and ‘essential’ actions in life: eating, loving, and talking.

## 3. **Food as 'therapy'**

There are at least three episodes in *Lo cunto* where food is used as a therapeutically device. The first appearance of food as a curative expedient is in the "'Ntrodduzzione", with the oil fountain, as in a sense it is the oil that cures the melancholic princess. Again in "La Mortella", ("The Myrtle", 1, 2), the only cure for a broken heart seems to be a poultice made of eggs and turpentine oil,

> "O bell'uocchie, che co no trionfiello de luce facite ioquare a banco falluto le stele, vui sulo, vui avite spertusato sto core, vui sulo potite comme ova fresche farele na stoppata; e tu bella medeca mia, muovete, muove a pietate de no malato d'ammore" (Rak, 58)

> "O lovely eyes, which with a triumph of light make the stars break the bank; you and only you have pierced a hole in this heart, and only you like fresh eggs, can make a poultice of tow to treat it. My lovely doctor, be moved to pity for one so lovesick" (Canepa, 55)

Finally in "Verde Prato", ("Green Meadow", 2, 2), Nella the beautiful protagonist is able to cure the deadly wounds on the body of her beloved prince only by spreading ogre's fat on them. The ogre is something other than "human" so it could be seen an animal; hence Nella cures her lover with 'animal fat' which is a typical ingredient[240] of the Neapolitan cuisine.

## 4. **Food as 'cosmetic' and 'beauty'**

In "La gatta Cenerentola", ("The Cinderella Cat", 1, 6), Basile writes

> "Venne l'autra festa e, sciute le sore tutte aparate e galante, lassaro la desprezzata Zezolla a lo focolaro; la quale subeto corre a lo dattolo e, ditto le parole solete, ecco che scettero na mano de dammecelle: chi co lo schiecco, che co la carrafella d'acqua de cocozze, chi co lo fierro de li rice, chi co la pezza de russo, chi co lo pettene, chi con le spingole, chi co li vestite,chi co la cannacca e collane e, fattala bella comme a no sole la mesero a na carrozza e sei cavalla…" (Rak, 132)

> "The next feast day arrived, and after the sisters went out, all decorated and elegant, and left the despised Zezolla at the hearth, she immediately ran to the date tree. Once she had said the usual words, a band of damsels came out: one

> held a mirror, one a little bottle of squash water, one curling iron, one rouge cloth, one a comb, one some brooches, one the clothes, and one pendants and necklaces. They made her as beautiful as a sun and then put her in a coach drawn by six horses..." (Canepa, 86-87)

The "carafella d'acqua de cocozze" was a cosmetic, (and also a medicine), derived from squash, and it was oily, hence most likely it was used as a moisturizing cream to smoothen and lighten the skin.

The metaphor of food as beauty is present especially in "I tre cedri", ("The Three Citrons", 5.9). Ciullone, a spoiled and unsatisfiable prince, has hard time finding his 'perfect' woman hence he refuses to get married. One day while cutting a nice piece of ricotta the prince cuts his finger and the blood from his hands falls onto the white cheese; the sight of the white ricotta stained by the red of the blood ignites a fire in the heart of the young man who decides that he would marry only the woman who was as red and white as the ricotta he beheld in front of his eyes. The prince then decides to set out on a journey in search of such woman and tells his father,

> "Messere mio, s'io non aggio na chelleta de sta perena io so' varato! mai femmena m'appe sango, e mo desidero femmena comm'a lo sango mio. Perzò resuorvete, si me vuoi sano e vivo, a dareme commodità de ire pe sso munno cercanno bellezza che vaga a pilo co sta ricotta; autramente fenerraggio lo curzo e iarraggio a spaluorcio."(Rak, 96)

> "My sir if I do not have a little something with this sort of complexion, I'm done for! Never has a woman moved my blood, and now I desire a woman like my own blood. Resolve yourself, therefore: if you want me healthy and alive, allow me the comfort of wandering through the world in search of a beauty that may equal that of this ricotta; otherwise I will finish my race and go to ruin." (Canepa, 434)

Furthermore, once he finds his princess who is born from a citron, Basile describes her beauty as follows,

> "lo prencepe subbeto le porse l'acqua e ecco le resta 'mano na figliola tennera e ianca commo a ghioncata, co na 'ntrafilata de russo che pareva no presutto

> d'Abruzzo o na sopressata de Nola, cosa non vista maie a lo munno, bellezza senza misura, ianchezza fore de li fore, grazia de lo chiù" (Rak, 1002)

> "The prince immediately held the water out to her, and there in his hands was a girl as tender and white as curds and whey, with a streak of red on her face that made her look like an Abruzzo ham or a Nola salami. Never has such a thing been seen in the world: it was a beauty without measure, whitness beyond all imagination, a grace superior to others." (Canepa, 437)

Once again in "Pinto Smauto", ("Pretty as a Picture", 5, 3) food is employed as a symbol of beauty and perfection. In this *cunto* the beautiful protagonist, Betta, behaves a little like Ciullone as, just like him, she rejects all the bachelors her father proposes to her because no one meets her standards. She is very demanding and believes that there is no man who is worthy of her, so she resolves to forge her own 'prince' and by mixing together "pasta d'ammennole e zuccaro", ("almond paste and sugar") she creates a beautiful man.

**5. Food as food as 'resolving' factor of the tales.**

The food is employed as the 'function' that unties the knots of the plot since the opening of Basile's collection. In fact in the frame tale, at the beginning of her journey, Zoza receives as gifts: a walnut, a hazelnut and a chestnut and the princess access to Tadeo's court and her chance to restore justice is granted by the marvelous objects that come out of three fruits. In a way food is the 'aid' that allows the princess to untangle the hunk and restore justice. Also in "Le doie pizzelle", ("The Two Little Pizzas", 4,7), it is food that determines the destiny of the two protagonists; in fact Marziella, who accepts to share her 'little pizza', with an old woman, who is poor and hungry, receives then magical powers and at the end marries a rich prince living her life happily ever after. On the contrary, Puccia who proves to be greedy and glutton, is punished with a sad destiny of solitude and hunger, at the end of the tales Basile concludes

> "trovato Marziella co la limma che avevano portato lo re secaie de mano propia la catena da lo pede de la cosa amata, ma se ne fravecaie n'autra chiù forte a lo core …E 'nguadiatosella co na festa granne, tra tante vutte che s'ardèro pe

> lommenaria, voze che 'nce fosse 'ncruso pe carratiello la perzona de Troccola, azzò pagasse lo 'nganno ch'aveva fatto a Marziella. E mannato a chiammare Luceta, dette ad essa ed a Ciommo da vivere da signure; e Puccia, cacciata da chillo regno, iette sempre pezzzenno e pe n'avere semmenato no poccorillo de pizza appe sempre carestia de pane."(Rak, 782-84)
>
> "When they found Marziella, the king took out the file they has bought and with his own hands sawed the chain off the foot of his loved one, at the same time, however, fabricating another, even stronger chain in his own heart. They got married with great festivities, and the king requested that, along with the numerous barrels that were burned in the light displays, Troccola herself be included in a little cask, as payment for the trick she had played on Marziella. He then sent for Luceta and gave her Ciommo everything they needed to live a lord's life. Puccia was banished from the kingdom and spent the rest of her life begging; for not having sowed a little piece of pizza she had for the rest of her life a dearth of bread." (Canepa, 349)

In this particular tale we can see how Basile uses food as a mean of reward or punishment, hence also as a source of 'power'. Marziella is rewarded for her gentleness and obedience not only with magical powers, but obviously with an abundance of food exemplified in the royal banquet with which she celebrates her wedding to the prince. Puccia, instead, is punished and her penalty is represented by the negation of food. It seems as if Basile is applying for Puccia the same law of *contrappasso* utilized by Dante to punish sinners in his *Inferno,* indeed the wretched maiden "for not having sowed a little piece of pizza she had for the rest of her life a dearth of bread." She receives the same treatment she has reserved for others.

Finally, another significant example of how through food the plot of the tale unfolds, is found in "I tre cedri", ("The Three Citrons", 5, 9) where the astonishing princess, who conquers at last the heart of the unrestrainable prince, is born from a citron. She is thus a 'fruit', a 'sweet fruit', originated from a 'bitter one', that the prince choses to 'taste'. She is the only woman who could conquer the price's heart as she is 'the' one who looks like the ricotta stained with blood that had aroused the passion in his soul: the 'citron' princess is beautiful, because she has a perfectly 'white' complexion with exquisite 'red' cicks, hence resembling the colors of the

ricotta that captured his heart and stimulated his ‘appetite’. (These are just few examples of the food metaphors in *Lo cunto* for this would be a treatise by itself. I should develop this theme in the future in an essay.)

**Gender ambiguities in Basile's *cunti***

*"Woman is, along with man, the direct and intentional creation of God and the crown of his creation. Man and woman were made for each other**. Together they constitute humankind, which is in its full and essential nature bisexual**"* [241]
*(R.R. Ruether, p.72)*

### a. Androgyny as perfection

Do we "*truly* need *true"* gender? That is do we really need the binary opposition between male and female? Is it accurate to classify human beings as *either* male *or* female? "With a persistence that borders on stubbornness, modern Western societies have answered in the affirmative."[242] Nevertheless, while society censures the idea of androgyny literature does not,

> "Literature has availed itself of a claimed relationship to the divine through inspiration and of its privileged negotiation of the symbolic to represent the androgyne postitively even when society condemns it. Artists and poets can praise androgyne as an inspired, superior, divinely-infused creative being while, applied to the social arena, the term may remain hostile."[243]

Basile's *cunti* offer a good example of how the androgynous being is presented as superior compared to the stereotypical *man* and *woman*. He shies away from the representation of the man as a courageous, strong and resilient hero, and that of the woman as a submissive and 'immobile'being, who excels solely for her beauty and grace. Indeed, even though the princesses and the heroines of his *cunti* are still beautiful and graceful they are also endowed with a strong and resolute personality. On the contrary men, while still invested with the traditionally gendered role of 'hero', are often weaker than their female counterpart. Ultimately, each of Basile's characters stands betwixt and between the male and the female universe; they all seem to have androgynous attributes. In this chapter I will try to support this idea and also I will argue that the 'hybrid human being' is possibly the perfect being. It is useful to go back to the feminine image of God and to the androgynous conception of humans before discussing the tales in *Lo cunto.*

The image of the androgynous God originates from ancient myths and religions that present God not just as a father but as a mother as well. For example, a text of the Pagan Gnostic

tradition talks about God as a bisexual being and goes further by saying that "all kinds of beings, whether endowed with soul or soulless" are bisexual,

> "For either sex is filled with procreative force; and in that conjunction of the two sexes, or, to speak more truly, that fusion of them into one, which might be rightly named Eros or Aphrodite, or both at once, there is a deeper meaning than man can comprehend"[244].

Furthermore, the idea of androgyny is present also in Christianity; in fact, if one considers that Eve was created from a 'rib' taken from Adam then one can conclude that Adam, the 'father' of humanity, was also androgynous as he had a woman in him; this would also corroborate the theory of an androgynous God. In the Old Testament it is written that God created man "in his image. Man and female he created them", hence if both male and female are created in the image of the Almighty then it seems plausible to conclude that the Divine had in his nature both maleness and femaleness. Throughout the Bible there are many references to God as an androgynous being. Often God is mentioned in conjunction with "Sapientia", (wisdom) his female counterpart; in fact in the Old Testament as Joan Ferrante writes

> "Sapientia, the female figure of Wisdom who has her own book in the Old Testament, is associated with Christ as the Logos; the New Testament … adds other abstractions of feminine gender, Caritas, vita, veritas, and early theology adds still more, the most important of which is the Trinitas with its three "persona." The Old Testament imagery of God as mother can be quite explicit: Dominus ad utero vocavit me. …Numquid potest mulier infantem suum, ut museratur filio utieri sui? (Isa. 49:1, 15)
> [The Lord called me forth from [his] womb…Can a mother ever forget her infant so that she not have compassion for the child of her womb?]"[245]

The myth of Sapientia is also present in the Gnostic Gospel, more specifically in *The Gospel of Truth*, attributed to Valentinus the founder of one of the most important schools of "Gnostic speculation"[246]. In this scripture the "Invisible Father", the Creator, is identified as an "androgynous combination of Mind, (*nous*, which in Greek is masculine) and Thought, (*ennoia* or *epinoia*, which are feminine)." Thus Thought can be identified as the 'female principle', who

is “also identified with Mother Sophia or Sophia-Prunikos[247](Wisdom-Whore) and also the Mother of Life”[248] According to this Gospel Sophia had an active role in the creation of the world, as, while the Demiurge, her son, created heavens and earth modeled after himself, “that is, with psyche and matter”, she infused ‘spirit’ into beings giving them the “source of their salvation”. Consequently, for the vital role Sophia played in the creation of the world, God is called “Mother-Father.”[249] Also of Gnostic tradition is the figure of Protennoia, a “heavenly redeemer” who seems to have a trimorphic form as she first appears “as Father, or Voice; secondly, as mother, or Sound; and thirdly as Son, or Word (logos).” In the Gnostic texts this ‘goddess’ pronounces a discourse in which she proclaims to be androgynous, she says:

> “I am androgynous. I am both Mother and Father since I copulate with myself. I copulate with myself and with those who love me, and it is through me alone that the All stands firm. I am the Womb that gives shape to the All by giving birth t the Light that shines in splendor. I am the Aeon to come. I am the fulfillment of the All, that is, Meirothea, the glory of the Mother. I cast a Sound of the Voice into the ears of those who know me.”[250]

Additionally, traces of androgyny can be found in Ancient Greece, in fact “all deities were bisexual, which meant that they did not need a mate to bear children.” There are also some interesting “male connections to the legends of Aphrodite” one of the most prominent goddesses of the Greek tradition. As Canadé-Sautman points out,

> “She consorts with god of war, Ares, killer of Adonis, for whose love she must compete with Persephone, Queen of the dead. Adonis is gored by Ares, and from his blood spring red Otherworld flower, a menstrual metaphor suggesting inversion. Sexual inversion creates an androgynous product, linked to the cult of Aphrodite and of her Latin equivalent. Venus. Ancient Crete knew a cult of Aphroditos, bearded and endowed with male sexual organs. Latin commentators refer to an ambiguous Venus: “pollens dues” says Calvus, and Lavinius honors a nutritive Venus “whether male or female” Servius mentions a bald Venus” who is bearded, has male organs, holds a comb and protects births.”[251]

Furhtermore, as Plato informs us human beings were originally ‘double’, (they had four arms, four legs, and two faces) and they were classified into three categories; besides male and female

> "There was also a third one, a combination of these two; now its name survives, although the gender has vanished. Then "androgynous" was a distinct gender as well as a name, combining male and female; now nothing is left by the name which is used as an insult."[252]

Subsequently, Zeus, who felt threatened by these powerful but irreverent beings, decided to divide them in half; "that's how long ago, the innate desire of human beings for each other started."[253] After their separation men and women never felt 'complete' again, thus they longed to regain that primordial state of unity and wholeness and in fact, "the goal of human life is to become one."[254] It seems that human beings live their life trying to recuperate the natural state of 'ambiguity' that society has taken away from them.

Besides the myth of Sapientia a female goddess, mother and giver of life, and of Protennoia, in the Middle Ages[255] there was also the myth of "the goddess Natura", the female correspondent of the creator God who is described as

> "the age-old Mother of All; father, mother, nurse, sustainer; all-wise, all-bestowing, all-ruling; regulator ; creator; first-born; eternal life and immortal providence. This universal goddess is not the personification of an intellectual concept. She is one of the last religious experiences of the late-pagan world."[256]

Finally, in Hinduism there is the god Shiva who is often referred to as Ardhnarishvara[257] which means 'half-man' and it refers to the androgynous form of the god and symbolizes the male and female energy of the cosmos. This brief overview indicates that the theme of androgyny and the debate on the 'real' nature of God and human beings has ancient roots and has been discussed for centuries. However, regardless of the fact that androgyny is, (and has been), amply present in religion, art and literature, it is still stigmatized as being negative, especially because of the ambiguity proper of the androgynous being[258].

The androgynous person features both male and female gender characteristics and as Canadé-Sautman writes,

> "The androgyne may display both male and female characteristics at once, but often remains overall so sexually ambiguous that these traits blend into each other and sexual identification is impossible."[259]

The impossibility to distinguish the man and the woman in the androgyne is well exemplified by Ovid in his *Methamorphoses,* when he tells the story of the unfortunate love Salmacis bears for the son of Atlas. She is desperately in love with the beautiful boy who refuses her attention and rejects her repeatedly; at the end she dives into the waters where her love is bathing and "clings to him". She begs the gods to satisfy her thirst for love; she prays that there will never be a day in which they should be separated again.

> "The gods heard the prayer. For their bodies, joined together as they were, were merged in one, with one face and form for both. As when one grafts a twig on some tree, he sees the branches grow one, and with common life come maturity, so were these two bodies knit in close embrace: they were no longer two, nor such as to be called, one, woman, and one, man. They seemed neither, and yet both."[260]

The ambiguity of the androgynous subject does not fit well with a society that relies so heavily on 'gender roles'; in many cultures, in fact, there are distinct roles for men and women that are hard to break and change and are strictly enforced. As indicated by Sandra Bem, in modern times (see table in endnote 261), there are specific behaviors associated specifically with one gender or the other.[261] For example, the list of male characteristics features adjectives such as aggressive, forceful, self-reliant, and self-sufficient; while the females are described as childlike, shy, gullible, tender, and as unable to use harsh language. We will see in the course of this chapter how often in Basile the male and female roles are completely reversed.

One of the problems with gender- role stereotyping is that it freezes the individual in being 'just one thing'; for example 'real' men are expected to be always aggressive whereas 'real' women are expected to be sensitive and emotional, and diverting from these fixed roles causes the man or the woman to be labeled as 'weird' if not altogether 'queer'. Also the

diversification of gender based on certain specific attitudes and habits is mostly artificial; it has been established by society, and not by nature. Simone de Beauvoir famously affirmed, indeed, that no one is born a "woman", and I would add no one is born a man; her theory, as discussed and expanded upon by Judith Butler in a foundational work of gender theory, is that

> "One "becomes" a woman but always under a cultural compulsion to become one. And clearly, the compulsion does not come from "sex". There is nothing in her account that guarantees that "one" who becomes a woman is necessarily female."[262]

This idea could be easily applied to man, and one could say that one "becomes" a man "always under a cultural compulsion". Our society compels us to be one thing or the other since the moment we are born; in fact "a new born baby is not only classified immediately by sex: it is also assigned a gender."[263] Doctors, nurses and parents immediately define the gender of infants by reacting differently to them according to their sex, for example, as discussed by Ann Oakley in a study conducted by H. A. Moss, researchers showed that 'new' mothers tend to have a more 'active' behavior towards their baby boys than towards their baby girls,

> "Even with babies who were in the same state (awake or asleep, crying or not crying) the mothers tended to stimulate and arouse the males more, both tactile and visual stimulation. Conversely they responded to the girls by imitation more than they did to the boys-repeating the babies' actions and noises back to them. This is direct evidence of a maternal tendency to reinforce behavior differently in the two sexes and it may perhaps help to explain the verbal superiority of the female: if female babies receive imitative reinforcement of their early noises, this may continue into a more highly verbal relationship with the mother that the male child has."[264]

The infant has no choice regarding the 'making' of his/her own gender; and subsequently he/she continues to learn the 'proper' behaviors for his/her gender, and it thus could happen that the child grows up to be what others want her/him to be, not necessarily what he/she intend to be. There are times, however, when the 'gender' imposed on the child is not the 'gender' he/she feels or connects to from within and this can cause serious problems to his/her psychological

development, especially when the parents are not supportive of his/her need to explore and 'live' his/her true identity. .

The difference between man and woman is not as sharp as our culture wants us to believe; man and woman are not two separate universes, and they don't belong to different 'planets'. Ultimately, we cannot really regard man and woman as two opposites; in spite of the fact that our society relies on the assumption that the dissimilarities between men and women are more significant than the qualities they have in common. Hence, if one were to look at men and women outside of the 'roles' society has set for them, one would argue, that they are simply two faces of the same 'medal', two halves of one balanced 'whole'. Indeed, Jung has argued that each man carries inside the image of a "woman" which constitutes his *anima*, his feminine side; in the same way, each woman carries in her the image of a "man", her *animus* or her masculine side. Hence, we could assert that there is not an 'absolute male' or 'absolute female' and the human being is, for his/her own nature, androgynous. Moreover, being in touch with the *animus* or the *anima*, as advocated by Jungian analysis, guarantees a psychological balance and facilitates the passage into adulthood. On the relationship between consciousness and unconsciousness Jung states the following,

> "The anima, being of feminine gender, is exclusively a figure that compensates the masculine consciousness. In woman the compensating figure is of the masculine character and can therefore appropriately be termed the animus"[265]

There is a risk, sometimes, that the *anima* and the *animus* might take over, creating an individual who completely rejects the sex/gender structure imposed by society; hence he/she will opt for a complete 'reversal' of his/her sexuality. This does not necessarily means that he/she will decide to undergo a sex change; it simply means that he/she will live his/her life following a completely re-defined 'gender-role' agenda which will inevitably incorporate many of the behaviors that

society prescribed to the opposite sex[266]. Hence the inner 'self' must be kept at bay because for the individual to be 'whole' the inner self and the 'outer' self must blend together harmoniously, each respecting the boundaries of the other: the male and female self must live peacefully within, (this however is not always possible.) Reconciling the masculine and the feminine aspects of the personality, achieving thus the androgynous state, is a long and difficult process that requires a lengthy and sometimes difficult 'journey' into one's sub-conscious. This adventurous journey into the 'self' becomes the fairytale journey in Basile's collection; in particular, it becomes the journey of Zoza and many other maidens in search of 'themselves'. I will first discuss the tales where androgyny is more evidently present and at last I will analyze Zoza's story which presents more ambiguities.

**b. Androgynous women.**

> "On the bed was a princess, a young girl of fifteen or sixteen whose untarnished beauty seemed to shine with an unearthly radiance. He approached in trembling admiration and fell on his knees before her. And so, as the spell had now been broken, the princess woke."
>
> "Moral
> …For Sleeping Beauty there was nothing lost/by waiting before getting hitched;/ a girl can dally without counting cost/for a groom who's handsome, kind, and rich."[267]

For the "typical" heroine this moral would be true, in fact in many traditional fairytales waiting is the key to achieve the dream of marrying 'prince charming'. In Basile's *cunti* the situation is completely different, in fact 'dallying' does not bring any result, and women have to be active and aggressive to succeed. The women in *Lo cunto* speak up, they know how to make their voice heard, and often they surmount and annihilate the male counterpart by taking over tasks and responsibilities that are typically labeled as masculine[268]. Some of them do this by keeping their

femininity and their beauty intact, others go to the extreme of disguising themselves. However what most of the women in Basile have in common is that in their personality they show all of the characteristics that are normally assigned to men, (see chart in endnote 261); but simultaneously, in time of need, they also know how to show and use their pure feminine side. Ultimately, in the heroines of *Lo cunto*, the feminine and the masculine come together, generating the perfect androgynous being. In this section I intend to present and discuss some of the female protagonists that best represent the idea of androgyny, and I will first consider the tales where the heroines are disguised[269] and then the ones where 'masculinity' is expressed through their behavior rather than through outward appearance.

The first camouflage of the collection appears in the second day in "La Palomma", ("The Dove", 2.7)[270]; however the disguise is only the final revelation of an androgynous character that had been latent throughout the tale. The ambiguity starts with the name of the beautiful maiden; she is called Filadoro. Usually in Italian, feminine names end in 'a' while the masculine ones end in 'o'; consequently Filadoro, to an Italian reader, might sound masculine, and in reality it is plausible that this name could be used for a man too, hence the name can be considered gender flexible.[271]. In the previous chapter I have explained the importance names have in *Lo cunto* and the attentiveness with which Basile assigned them. In fact, the name often hints at a trait of the character's personality; hence the ambiguous name Filadoro could have been assigned to her to indicate her androgynous nature.

Since the first encounter between the prince and Filadoro, Basile tries to communicate the feeling that the woman will be the leader in the tale, in fact he writes,

> "Lo prencepe, che se vedde comparare 'nante sto scrittorio[272] de le cose chiù preziose de la Natura, sto banco de lo chiù ricche deposete de lo cielo, st'arzenale de le chiù spotestate forze d 'Ammore,non sapeva che l'era socciesso e da chella facce tonna de cristallo trapassanno li ragge dell'uocchie all'esca de lo core suio,

> allommai tutto de la manera che deventaie na carcara, dove se cocevano le prete de li designe pe fravecare la casa de le speranze. Filadoro, che cossì se chiammava la giovane, non monnava nespole"[273] (Rak, p. 376)
>
> "When the prince saw before him this writing desk full of Nature's most precious possessions, this bank of the heavens' richest deposits, and this arsenal of Love's most almighty forces, he did not know what had happened to him, and the rays of her eyes, passing through that round crystal face until they reached the bait of his heart, lit him up to such a degree that he became a furnace that fired the stones of the plans for the construction of the house of his hopes . Filadoro, for that was the young lady's name, did not waste her time peeling medlars."(Canepa, p. 186)

It is interesting to observe that the metaphors Basile uses to describe Filadoro's beauty and its effect recall what might have been the main activities of a prince: accumulate wealth and conquer new territories. The prince is accustomed only to the language of 'business' and 'war'[274] hence he can only express his feelings in these terms, that is why Filadoro is described as a "desk" that holds the "most precious possessions of Nature", or as a "bank" where all the "richest deposits" are preserved, and finally as an "arsenal" a great resource of weapons. The prince looks at the girl as a 'territory of war', a 'precious object', which must be conquered to increase his power and patrimony, but also used for the transactions of trade and power, which is interesting. This also gives an idea of the way women were considered, a sort of merchandise to be used as barter and not exactly as a person to be loved

Filadoro, who is smart and cunning, quickly realizes that her beauty has captured the prince and she does not hesitate to take advantage of it and to exploit the situation. She reciprocates the prince's feelings. She is fascinated by a "bravo mostaccio de giovane", ("a nice hunk of a young man"), and maybe 'in him' she also perceives the possibility of a brilliant future full of comforts, hence she does not want to lose him, and thus plays the game of the submissive and humble maiden who would gladly surrender to her prince's will, knowing that this attitude will surely grant her his love,

> “<<Vascia sse mano, cavaliere mio>>, respose Filadoro, <<non tanto de grazia,ca so’ le vertù voste, no li mierete mieie, sto spetaffio de laude che m'avite dato, ca io so’ femmena che me mesuro, ne voglio c’autro me serva de meza-canna[275], ma tale quale songo, o bella o brutta, o nizzola o ianca, o sfrisata o chiantuta, o pueceta o petosa, o cernia o fata, o pipatella o votracone, io songo tutta a lo commano vuostro, pocca sso bello taglio d’ommo dall’uno all’autro canto, e me te do pe schiavottola ’ncatenata, da mo pe sempre>>” (Rak, pp. 376-78)

> “‘Keep your hands down, my dear knight’, answered Filadoro, ‘you’re far too kind, for the epitaph of praise that you have given me refers to your virtue and not to my merits. I am a woman who knows how to take her own measure, and I do not need others to serve my ruler. But whatever I am, beautiful or ugly, dark or light, disfigured or stocky, quick or lazy, a grouper fish or a fairy, a little doll or a swollen toad, I am entirely at your commend. This lovely cut of a man has filleted my heart; this handsome face of a lord has run me through from my back to front; I give myself to you like a little slave girl in chains, now and forever after’ ”, (Canepa, p. 186)

Filadoro in her discourse epitomizes the modesty that was expected from a woman, she humbles herself in front of such a man and awards him his role as a superior being; in fact, according to what she says, her beauty is not something she ‘really’ possesses but is simply the projection of the prince’s ‘virtue’ on her, she is ‘just’ a woman who ‘knows’ her limits and faults. It is also remarkable that at the end Filadoro, to explain her feelings for the prince, uses the same kind of ‘war metaphors’ he had used to express his own feelings for her; she is aware that this is the only language he can really understand and she complies with it. The face of her beloved becomes a sword that ‘has run through’ her, he has ‘captured’ her like he would capture a prisoner of war, and now she is ready to be his ‘slave’ and serve him as he wishes it.

Ironically, it is the prince who will be soon reduced to slavery by Filadoro’s mother, who is an evil ogress; and he will be freed at last by the same woman who had surrendered herself to his mercy. In fact, Filadoro’s pledge to her lover is the only moment in which she shows ‘signs’ of the typical feminine weakness; once the scene moves to the ogress’ house, the roles are reversed, the prince becomes a sort of ‘winey little girl’, acting like a child appearing helpless

and in need of assistance, which are behaviors associated usually with women; on the contrary, Filadoro remains resolute and confident, showing qualities considered typically 'masculine characteristics." The prince is easily taken over by fear when he is confronted with the ogress and with the very difficult tasks she assigns him. He doesn't even try to carry out the assignments; rather he turns to Filadoro and complains about his sad destiny. In these moments the prince has nothing of the typical fairy tale hero, he lacks confidence and courage and has lost his ability to be a leader and think rationally. Filadoro, on the contrary, appears secure and tries to reassure him by reminding him that she is enchanted and can virtually make everything happen; she is forceful and dynamic, she "has leadership abilities". Nevertheless the prince remains distressed and fearful and at last the beautiful maiden loses her temper and scolds him severely,

> "<<Comme sì cacasotta! ben'aggia aguanno! tut e cacarisse de l'ombra toia!>> <<E che te pare cosa de no lippolo[276]>>, respose Nardo Aniello, <<spaccare sei canne de legna a Quattro piezzo dacccà a stasera? Ohimè, ca 'nanze saraggio spaccato da miezo a miezo pe 'nchire lo cannorone de sta negra vecchia! >> <<Non dubetare>>, leprecaie Filadoro, <<ca, senza pigliarete fatica, le legna se trovarranno spaccate e bone; ma fra sto miezo stamme de bona voglia e no me spaccare st'arma co tante lamiente>> (Rak, p.382)

> "'What a pants shitter you are! Bless the New Year! You'd shit at the sight of your own shadow!' 'What it seems like nothing to you' answered Nardo Aniello, 'to have to split six piles of logs into four pieces each between now and this evening? Alas, before that happens I myself will be split in half so that I can fit into that wretched old woman's gullet!' 'Don't worry', replied Filadoro, 'the wood will find itself nice and split without a bit of effort on your part; but in the meantime be a little more pleasant and don't split this soul of mine with so much complaining.' " (Canepa, p. 190)

Fialdoro's words to the prince are extremely abrasive, especially the expression "no me spaccare st'arma" which sounds harsh and has a strong meaning. In fact "spaccare" means more than "split", it means 'to crush something"; hence what Filadoro is really saying is "do not crush my soul to pieces", as to warn the prince that his behavior could compromise, and 'crush', her

feelings for him. Traditionally the beautiful maidens and princesses of fairytales do not speak like this, they do not use coarse language, and indeed the constraint of not using "harsh language" is listed as a typical feminine characteristics. Filadoro, while maintaining her outer appearance as perfectly feminine, lashes out with her inner masculinity and begins to look more and more androgynous, anticipating her final disguise. Ultimately she frees her prince and together with him leaves her mother's house. The two arrive at an inn and decide to rest there for the night; the morning after the prince announces to his lover that he would rather go to his palace alone because he believes that it would not be proper to have his future wife arrive at the court on foot and dressed with poor and dirty clothes. Before he leaves, he promises that he will be back for her with carriages, horses and clothes worthy of a princess. Unfortunately once he arrives at the palace and receives a kiss from his mother he forgets immediately about Filadoro and about his promises to her, moreover, in order to please his mother, he agrees to marry the woman she chose for him[277]. . The immediate cause of this development was a curse uttered by the ogress against her daughter and the prince, in her anger when she discovered their flight: "preganno lo cielo che lo primo vase che recevesse lo 'nammorato suoio se scordasse d'essa", ("praying the heavens that at the first kiss her daughter's lover received he would forget about her.") After waiting a while the young woman becomes suspicious, and "vedenno Fialdoro ca lo marito tricava troppo e siscannole non saccio comme l'aurecchie de sta fest ache se ieva spobrecanno pe tutto", (Rak, 386), ("Filadoro saw that her husband was taking too long, and her ears started buzzing-I don't know how- with the news of the festivities that everybody was talking about." Canepa, 191) She waits until night comes, then she steals the clothes of the "innkeeper's errand boy" and, dressed like a man, heads towards the palace, resolute in her intent to win back her lover. Throughout the tale she had been acting like a man, now, finally, she

'becomes' a man, as no one at the palace could tell that she was in fact a woman. Masculinity and femininity blend perfectly in her, originating a being whose gender is so ambiguous that it is nearly impossible to define. Her new condition filtrates also through her behavior. The androgynous person is more flexible, more adaptable to situations and is gifted with a more balanced temperament. Fundamentally the androgyne has a better sense of judgment, probably because in 'its' nature sense, (stereotypically a masculine trait) and sensibility, (stereotypically a feminine trait) are harmoniously combined. Filadoro features all of these qualities while she carries out her plan to re-conquer her legitimate husband, and probably that is the key to her success. If she had listened solely to her feminine side, she might have allowed her emotions to rule her, which would have prevented her from being able to think rationally and devise a successful plan. On the other hand, had she listened only to her masculine self, she would have been too aggressive and perhaps too analytical or too self absorbed, which would have impaired her ability to succeed. Filadoro breaks away from tradition and acts independently following a path unknown to all, underscoring Basile's intent to break away from tradition and start 'his own particular' literary genre.

Belluccia, in "La Foresta d'Aglie"[278], ("The Garlic Patch", 3.6), is also an androgynous woman who, disguised as a man, is able to conquer the heart of a rich and handsome young man. In the same manner as Filadoro, Belluccia's first act in the tale is that of surrendering herself to a man's will; specifically the heroine chooses to satisfy her father's request. Belluccia accepts to cross-dress so that her father, (who had lied about having four sons and three daughters while in reality he had seven daughters[279] and no sons), would not be caught in a lie by his friend, Biasillo Guallecchia, who is also the richest man in town. Biasillo has seven sons and the oldest one falls ill and needs company, so he asks Ambruoso to send one of his 'sons' to live at his estate for a

little while to help his son get better. Once Belluccia agrees to comply with her father's plea, Ambruoso cuts her golden hair, dresses her with "few shreds of men's clothes" and takes her to Biasillo's residence. She is received and treated like a young boy by everybody except for Narduccio, "the invalid". In fact, Narduccio recognizes in Belluccia his inner *anima* and is immediately attracted to her but not knowing for sure if she is really a woman, he becomes desperate and his illness worsens. [280]The mother comes to his rescue and suggests that the only way to find out the real gender of the 'boy' is to have 'him' perform typical masculine tasks and see how 'he' manages them. She says to Narduccio,

> "<<Chiano! >>, disee la mamma, ca pe quetarte sso cellevriello, volimmo fare quarche prova pe scoprire s'è femmena o mascolo, s'è campagna rasa o arvostata[281]. Facimmolo scennere a la stalla e cravaccare quarche pollitro de chille 'nge songo, lo chiù sarvateco, perchè si sarrà femmena, essenno le femmene de poco spireto, la vedarraie filare sottile e subeto scannagliarimmo sti pise>>."[282], (Rak, p. 560.)

> "'Slow down!' said his mother. If we want to put your mind to rest we'll first need to perform a few tests to discover if this is a woman or a man, flat or hilly countryside. Let's have him go down to the stable and mount one of the colts, the wildest one there; if she is a woman you'll see her spin the thin thread of fear, *since woman don't have much courage*, and then we'll check which way those weights fall.' " (Canepa, p. 257, emphasis is mine.)

Belluccia rides the "little demon of a colt" like a man; furthermore "with the courage of a lion" she performs a few acrobatics moves and jumps. After seeing this amazing spectacle the mother is even more convinced that Belluccia is actually a man. Narduccio's heart, though, does not fall in the trap and in fact the young boy remains with the doubt that the 'boy' is indeed a girl. Therefore, the patient mother thinks of another test; she suggests having the 'boy' shoot a gun and having witnessed the dexterity and the skill with which 'he' handled the weapon, she says to her son

> "Levate sta doglia de capo e penza puro ca na fe mmena non po' fare tanto!" (Rak, p. 562)

> "Get rid of that headache; you must realize that *a woman could never do that!*" (Canepa, p. 258. Emphasis is mine)

The beautiful girl excels in tasks that according to society "woman could never do"; she is not just like a man, rather she is better than a man, as the mother says she "is steadier on his horse that the old saddle shitter of Porta Reale!"[283] Notwithstanding her manly strength and power, she still preserves the elegance and the grace proper to a young and beautiful girl; and her ability to perform masculine activities makes her more appealing and attractive. In fact, Narduccio seems to fall in love more and more as his beloved rides a crazy horse and graciously handles a gun. Belluccia is fascinating to the young boy probably because in her he recognizes a perfect combination of *animus* and *anima*, she represents the ideal companion as she is able to please Narduccio at all levels; in fact she can be his lover, his caretaker and his 'play mate' all at once Furthermore, Bellucia is alluring to the modern reader too because she personifies the new ideal of what a woman should be, a good mixture of grace and strength, a 'woman' and not a 'wo-man' anymore. It is in fact true that the women of our time (for the most part) depend less and less on man; they have achieved an extraordinary level of independence. From the Middle Age to part of the modern era, the identity of a woman was defined by the men in her life; she was the 'daughter of', 'the sister of', 'the wife of', as Mary Astell writes "A woman was subject to her father in youth, her husband in marriage, and her son in widowhood."[284] Today, notwithstanding certain stereotypes and prescriptive canons[285] that still need to be abolished or at least changed, at least in the West, a woman is simply recognized for what and who she is, and is granted more opportunities for success.

Marchetta, the protagonist of "Le Tre Corone"[286], ("The Three Crowns", 6.4), is also androgynous and like Belluccia and Filadoro conceals her gender by wearing men's clothes.

However, the pattern that brings Marchetta to androgyny is very different. In fact she sets out on her journey dressed like a man not to please another man's request or to follow her male love/lover, but she does so in order to go in search of her destiny and to expiate her mistakes. Marchetta decides to camouflage herself after she disobeyed the orders of her host, a gentle ogress, by yielding to her curiosity. The ogress had forbidden Marchetta to open a certain room, but the young girl cannot fight her desire to find out what is hidden in that room so she opens the forbidden door. Marchetta's disobedience echoes that of Bluebeard's[287] wife, who also surrenders to her curiosity and opens the forbidden door. Both maidens are tested on their obedience and both fail, but the difference is that while in "Bluebeard" the prohibition comes from a male, in Basile's tale it comes from a female ogress. The reaction of the two 'betrayed' beings is also similar, they are enraged and let down and feel that the transgressor must be punished. However while Bluebeard's rage escalates to murder[288], the ogress settles for a much milder punishment. Upon discovering her guest's misdeed, she is so "incensed that she gave Marchetta a nice big slap on the face"; this offends the young girl so much that she decides to leave the house in spite of the ogress's apologies and regrets,

> "Pe quanto cercai l'orca d'accordarela de belle parole, decenno c'aveva abborlato[289] e ca no lo voleva fare chiù, non fu possibile a levarela de pede, tanto che fu costretta a lasciarela partire, dannole n'aniello- e decennole che lo portasse co la preta dintro la mano e non ce tenesse mente mai, si non quanno, trovannose a gran pericolo, sentesse lo nomme suoio leprecare da l'Ecco e, otra a chesto no bello vestito d'ommo, che le cercaio Marchetta. La quale, cossì vestuta, se mese 'n camino…" (Rak, p.762)

> "And however much the ogress tried to soothe her with nice words, saying that she had been joking and wouldn't do it again, it was not possible to get her to change her mind, until she was finally forced to let her leave. She gave the girl a ring and told her to wear it with the stone on the side of her hand and never to look at it unless she found herself in great danger and heard her name repeated as an echo-; she also gave her a fine suit of men's clothes, which Marchetta had requested. So dressed, Marchetta set off on her way." (Canepa, pp. 340-341)

Marchetta behaved like a typical woman when she succumbed to her curiosity and for that she got in trouble. The slap she received from the ogress made her aware of her mistake; consequently she felt that she needed to cleanse herself from the hideous vice of being nosey. Her reaction could also be interpreted as another sign of her hidden masculinity; she interprets the slap as an offence to her honor, (like a man would) and not as a punishment for her disobedience. Indeed, it is as if she needs to leave because her honor has been impugned, hence she cannot forgive the offense. She needs to withdraw in solitude, but the ogress, like a 'good' mother, can't let the girl go without giving her something that would protect her against evil, in fact, she gives the girl a magic ring[290], with a magic stone. However, Marchetta has to hide the stone so than no one can see it; moreover she can't look at it, either, unless she finds herself in a dangerous situation. The custom of hiding the lucky charm, besides being a fairytale topos, also reflects a common Neapolitan superstitious tradition. In fact in Naples, still today, people believe that all talismans must be hidden in order to really bring good luck, and that if other people see them they will lose their 'magic' power.

Given the fact that, traditionally, 'curiosity' is a typical feminine trait, for Marchetta to succeed in her intent, she needs to 'give up' her femininity, even if only temporarily, hence she resolves to dress like a man[291]. She gets involved in her new self so much that it becomes nearly impossible to recognize the woman in her, to the point that a woman falls madly in love with her[292]. Wandering in the woods Marchetta encounters a king who, believing her to be a young boy, takes her to his palace where the queen awaits and, as Basile writes, "la regina lo vedde a pen ache se sentette da na mena de grazie mannare pell'aiero tutte le voglie soie" ("as soon as the queen saw her she felt all her longings blown up by a bomb of grace.") The queen repeatedly harasses the poor girl, and in spite of Marchetta's reticence, she never realizes that the person she

is so desperately trying to seduce is a woman. She then becomes so angry for all the rejections that she accuses the young girl of attempted rape. Marchetta is condemned to death without trial; she is carried to the gallows and still no one realizes that she is a woman. Her life is spared only thanks to the magic powers of the ring that the ogress had given her; the ring, in fact, produces a voice that says "Let her go, she is a woman!" and upon hearing this words the king liberates her. At the end of her cathartic journey Marchetta makes peace with her feminine side and is ready to embrace her missing half, thus she marries the king.

In this tale love creates madness and turns the ordinary life of a married couple into a chaotic farce in which it is nearly impossible to distinguish fiction from reality. It was typical of the Baroque novel mostly to present love as an overwhelming and devastating force, and as Roberta Colombi points out, romance was always a source of suffering and distress for the people involved in the relationship. She writes

> "Le capacità razionali di questi personaggi-amanti infine subiscono un indebolimento tale da condurre quegli stessi all'infermità e al delirio."[293]

The queen is clearly overcome by her insane passion for the young maiden she believes to be a boy, and loses her reason and her regal demeanor in trying to conquer Marchetta. Finally, the unhealthy and irrational love brings her into a vortex of mistakes and lies which lead to a horrible death.

Dressing up like a man, however, it is not enough to claim androgyny. Indeed androgyny starts from within the self and to be really androgynous, the *anima* and the *animus* must blend in complete harmony; while letting one overpower the other can have drastic effects on the wellbeing of the person and on his/her ability to succeed. Renza, the protagonist of "Lo Viso"[294], ("The Face", 3.3), well exemplifies the dire consequences of an unbalanced self. The storyline of this tale is very similar to that of "La Palomma"; Renza, like Filadoro, leaves her

house dressed like a man to follow her lover, and in both tales, the prince has been promised to another woman. Nevertheless, the narrative of this tale deserves some special attention. The story opens as follows,

> "Era na vota lo re de Fuosso Stritto c'aveva ne bella fegliola e, desideranno sapere quale sorte le stesse scritta a lo libro de le stelle, chiammaie tutte li negromante, astrolache e zingare de chillo paiese, li quale, venute a la corte reiale e visto chi le line de la mano, chi li singhe, de la facce, chi li nieghe de la perzona de Renza, che cossì se chiammava la figlia, ogni uno disse lo parere suoio, ma la maggiore parte concruse ca passava pericolo pe n'uosso maestro spilarese la chiaveca maestra de la vita. La quale cosa sentuto lo re voze iettarse 'nante per non cadere, facenno fravecare na bella torre, dove 'nchiuse la figlia cu dudece damigelle e na femmana de covierno che la servessero con ordene, sotto pena de la vita, che se le portasse sempre carne senz'uosso, pe gavetare sto male chianeta." (Rak, 501-02)

> "There was once a king, the king of Narrow Ditch, who had a beautiful daughter. Since he wanted to know what sort of destiny was written for her in the book of stars, he summoned all the necromancers, astrologers and gypsies of the land. They came to the royal court and when some had examined the lines of her hand, others the signs on her face, and other the birthmarks on Renza's body, for this was her name, each of them spoke their opinion; and the majority of them concluded that she was in danger of tapping the sewer main of her life because of a big bone. When the king heard this he decided to duck his daughter together with twelve ladies-in-waiting and a governess to serve her; and gave the order that, under penalty of death, they were always to bring her meat without bones so as to bypass that unlocked planet." (Canepa, 233-34)

The king of Fuosso Stritto[295] by imprisoning his daughter in a tower behaves like the ogress in "Petrosinella"[296] (2.1), both are trying to protect the girls but not form 'death' rather from 'sex'; they are protecting the maidens' chastity. In "Lo viso" the sexual innuendo is emphasized also because the reason the father decides to lock up his daughter in a tower with no windows, to which only women have access, is to defend her from a 'big bone' that could kill her. The 'big bone', in fact, could be interpreted as a sexual metaphor representing the penis; hence the king needs to protect his daughter from the temptation of experiencing sex before she is actually completely ready to embrace her femininity and womanhood. Furthermore, the king's concern is also justified by the fact

that in ancient society, as well as in relatively modern society, (and still today in some countries of the Middle East), an 'unchaste' daughter represented a dishonor for the entire household as her shame would fall not only on her but also on the parents and on her sisters, who would then have hard time finding suitors willing to marry them.

Despite the king's precautions, Renza can't resist the 'curiosity' of experiencing the male universe and gives in to the prince's advances. She flees the tower to follow her lover and Cecio, (this is the name of the prince) has a chance to plant 'his stakes in the lovely farmland'; however the couple's idyll does not last long. Cecio soon abandons Renza to go back to his kingdom to see his mother who, he believes, is ill. The princess "who saw herself ditched like a cucumber seed" decided to follow the prince, and, not to be recognized, she dresses like a man. Cecio, like the prince of "La Palomma", is also easily deceived by the disguise and does not realize that the "little monk" he meets on his way back to the palace, is actually Renza; however, the storylines of the two tales are different once the maidens reach the court. Filadoro, in spite of the pain that she feels in seeing her lover with another woman, is able to remain lucid and carry out her plan. On the contrary, Renza gives in to pain and allows her feelings to overcome her. She cannot control her feminine soul and allows her insecurity and timidity to lead her action; she cries, instead of fighting, and she acts like a victim,

> "Ma, levato le tavole e retiratose le zite a no retretto pe parlare da sulo a sulo, avenno campo Renza de sfocare sola la passion de lo core, trasuta drinto a n'uorto ch'eran'n chiano de la sala e retiratose sotto a no cieuzo, cossì commenzaie a gualiarese: <<Ohimè, Cecio crudele, chesta è l'a *mille grazie* dell'ammore che te porto? Chesta è la *gran merzé* de lo bene che te voglio? chisto è lo veveraggio dell'affrezzione che te mostro? eccote chiantato patremo, lassato la casa, scarpisato lo 'nore e datome 'm potere de no cane perro pe vedereme staglato li passé, serrate la porta' n faccie e auzato lo ponte quanno credeva pigliare dominio de ssa bella fortezza! pe vedereme scritto a la gabella de la sgratitudene toia, mentre me pensava de syare qietamente a la Dochesca de la grazia toia! pe vedereme fatto lo iuoco de peccerille, *Banno e commannamiento da parte de mastro Iommiento*, mentre me 'magenava de ioquare ad *Anca Nicola* co tico!

aggione semmenato speranze e mo recoglio casecavalle! aggione iettato rezze de desiderio, e mo tiro 'n terra arene de sgratetudene! aggione fatto castielle 'n aiero pe schiaffare, *tuppete*, de cuorpo 'n terra! Ecco 'o pagamiento che ne porto! aggio calato lo cato a lo puzzo de le voglie aorose e me n'è restate la maneca 'mano; aggio spaso la colata de li designe mieie e me 'nc'è chiuoppeto a cielo aperto; aggio puosto a cocinare lo pignato de li pensieri a lo fuoco de lo desiderio e me 'nc'è cascata la folinia de le desgrazie! ma chi credeba, o cagna-vannera, ca la fede toia s'avesse da scoperire a rammo? Ca la vote de le promesse calasse a la feccia? lo pane de la Bona pigliasse de muffa? bello tratto d'ommo da bene, belle prove de perzona 'norata, bello termene de figlio de re! coffiarme, 'mpapocchiareme, 'nsavorrareme, facennome la cappa larga pe fareme trovare curto lo ieppone, prometterme mare e munte pe schiaffareme drinto a no fuosso, fareme le facce lavate perchè io me trovasse lo core nigro!"[297](Rak, 508-510)

"But when the tables had been cleared and the newlyweds retired to a little room so that they could talk in private, the field was open for Renza to pour her heart's passion in solitude. She went into a garden outside the hall and retired under a mulberry tree, where she began to lament in this manner, 'Alas, cruel Cecio, is this thousand thanks for the love I bear you? Is this the deposit of the fondness I feel for you? Is this the reward for the affection I show you? There you have it: I dumped my father, left home, trampled on my honor, and let myself fall under the power of a rabid dog, and all so that I can see my steps stayed, the door slammed in my face, and the bridge raised, and just when I believed I would take possession of this lovely fortress! So that I can see myself put on the tax list of your ingratitude, when I thought I would live quietly at the Duchesca of your graces! So that I can see myself made to play Master Iommiento Proclaims and Orders, when I imagined I'd be playing Anca Nicola with you! I sowed hope, and now I am harvesting bits of cheese! I threw out nets of desire, and now I'm pulling in sands of ingratitude! I built castles in the air, and now my body is knocked down-boom-to the ground! So this is what I get in exchange! This is the trade-off I'm given! This is the payment I've gotten out of all this! I lowered the bucket into the well of amorous longing and I'm left with the handle in my hand; I hung out the laundry of my plans and out of the blue it started to rain; I put the pot of my thoughts on the fire of desire and the soot of disgrace fell in! But who would have thought, you turncoat, that your words would reveal themselves to be copper? That the barrel of your promises would be drained to its dregs? That the bread of your goodness would turn moldy? Nice manners for a respectable man, nice example for an honorable person, nice habits for a king's son to have! You tricked me, you hoodwinked me, you gave me a stomachache, you cut me a wide cape only to leave me with a jacket that's too short, you promised me the sea and the mountains only to hurl me into a ditch, you washed my face clean only to leave me with a black heart!" (Canepa, 236-237)

This somewhat long passage nevertheless must be quoted in its entirety for the richness of its content. In fact, it is a perfect example of how Basile employs the rhetorical device of

'accumulation' typical of the Baroque prose and present throughout *Lo cunto.* Furthermore it shows how Naples, through its culture and customs, often becomes one of the protagonists of the tales; and it also proves how Basile 'hides' his critiques of the leading class behind marvelous and refined metaphors. Renza laments that her prince, after seducing her into following him, has denied her the access to his fortress and has, on the contrary put her on 'the tax list" Through this metaphors, perhaps the author is denouncing the false promises that the leaders of his time had made to the populace. The king's main interest should have been that of protecting the city and its inhabitants and probably that is what the people expected of him. On the contrary the king ignored his duty at home to satisfy his expansionistic needs and 'forced' Naples into a bloody and devastating thirty years war, 'taxing' the people, (impoverishing them even more), to bring more money into the state treasury. The criticism towards the dishonest monarchs continues also at the end of the cited passage when Renza openly accuses the prince of being a "cagna-vannera" ("turncoat"). Moreover, through her cry we also learn some of the chores women were probably expected to do in the household: get water from the well, ("I lowered the bucket into the well"); do the laundry, ("I hung out the laundry"); and cook, (I put the pot…on the fire"). At the same time we are informed of some common jobs during that time: fishing, ("I threw out nets") and harvesting, ("I sowed hope, and now I'm harvesting bits of cheese!"). Lastly through the mention of popular games[298] and of a renowned neighborhood, the Duchesca, Basile 'paints' a *bozzetto* of his Naples. It is noteworthy that the mention of the Duchesca corroborates the sexual tension that pervades this tale; indeed this was the neighborhood where the prostitutes hung out, hence Renza, by complaining that she did not get to "live quietly at the Duchesca", is actually regretting the impossibility for her to have sexual intercourse with the prince. Finally, I would

like to point out how, once again, love is discussed in terms of business and war, in compliance with the reality of what a prince's main interests might have been.

At the end Renza is left with no more tears and no more words to alleviate her pain, thus she kills herself. Although dressed like a man, Renza cannot connect with her masculine soul, thus she lacks the qualities that would have allowed her to find balance, control her emotion and win the battle. Indeed, at the end not only does she lose her prince, she also 'loses' her life. On a psychological level, her death could also be interpreted as a sign that, after all, she was not ready yet to embrace marriage and, eventually, motherhood. However, another interpretation is also possible. Renza's death, in fact, could be interpreted as a punishment imposed on her by the author for having given up her virginity out of wedlock.

The women in *Lo cunto*, like Zoza, might be perceived as being androgynous even when their outer appearance is kept perfectly feminine. Their masculinity transpires through their outrageous behavior which may appall the reader, because notwithstanding the presence of many female poets of the 1500, during the 17$^{th}$ century, women were still being treated socially as inferior creatures; they had no right to decide their own destiny, no right to say 'no' to their male superiors, they practically had no right to think. Women were regarded as and handled like property to be used to 'buy' strong alliances or to increase the family patrimony[299]. Surprisingly, in *Lo cunto* there are women who say 'no' to men and take the chance to be in control of their own lives and forge their destiny as they please. Furthermore, often women outshine and outsmart men for their wit, resilience and intelligence and are able to manipulate them, whether explicitly or subtly.[300] One of these women is Viola, the protagonist of the homonymous *cunto*, (2.3), which opens as follows:

> "Era na vota no buono ommo da bene chiammato Colaniello, lo quale aveva tre figlie femmene: Rosa, Garofano e Viola; ma l'utmea era tanto bell ache faceva

sceruppe solutive de desiderio pe purgare li core d'ogne tormiento, pe la quale cosa ne ieva cuotto e arzo Ciullone, filgio de lo re, che ogne vota che passave pe 'nante no vascio dove lavoravano stet re sore, cacciatose la coppola deceva:<<Bonnì,bonnì, Viola." (Rak, 310)

"There was once a good and respectable man by the name of Colaniello, who had three daughters: Rosa, Garofano and Viola. The last of the three was so beautiful that she prepared syrups of desire to purge hearts of their every torment, and for this reason Ciullone, the king's son, was smoldering and burning for her, and every time he passed by the room on the street where the three sisters worked, he would take off his hat and say, 'Good day, good day to you, Viola.' " (Canepa, 157)

Viola not only is beautiful but she is also extremely intelligent, sagacious, intuitive, prudent and assertive; and her well balanced personality is also reflected by her name. Viola, (violet in English) in fact is the color of 'temperance',

"Composed of equal proportions of red and blue, violet is the color of temperance, clarity of mind, deliberate action, of balance between Heaven and Earth, senses and spirit, passion and reason, love and wisdom."[301]

Also of interest is the name of the prince. Ciullone possibly originates from the last name Ciulla, which is very common in Naples, and a derivative of the 'Calabrese' *ciullu* which means stupid[302]; hence, the prince's name reflects his personality and justifies his compliance with Viola. Ciullone allows her to ridicule him although she is a simple woman and he is the king's son; every time he greets her, in fact, she responds with a sarcastic remark saying : "Bonnì, figlio de lo re. Io saccio chiù de te.", ("Son of the king, good day. I know more than you, hey!") Her arrogance makes her stand out, even more so because in the tale she is opposed by three typical female characters, her two sisters and her aunt, Cucevannela. The sisters look at her with suspicion and a hint of jealousy,[303]they often reprimand Viola and advise her to be more humble and 'respectful', in other words they solicit her to behave more like a typical woman towards the prince. However, Viola does not listen to them, so they appeal to their father, begging him to punish her because her attitude could bring dreadful consequences; as Basile writes

> "De le quale parole abbottavano e mormoriavano l'autre sore, decenno :<<Tu sì male criata e farrai scorrucciare lo prencepe, de mala manera!>> E Viola semenannose pe dereto le parole de le sore le fu fatto da chelle pe despietto male affizio co lo patre, dennole che era troppo sfacciata e presentosa e che responneva senza respetto a lo prencepe comme si fossero tuttouno e quarche iuorno 'nce sarria 'ntorzato e ne paterrà lo iusto pe lo peccatore."[304](Rak, pp.310-312)

> "At these words the other sisters would swell up with rage and grumble, saying, 'You'r an ill-bred girl and you're going to tick the prince off in a bad way!' But Viola just left her sisters' word in the dust. And so to spite her they did her the bad service of going to their father and telling him that she was too fresh and presumptuous, and that she answered the prince without respect, as if she and he were the same thing, and that one day he was going to fly off the handle and give the sinner her just punishment." (Canepa, pp.157-158)

The father who was "ommo de iodizio" ("a man of good judgment") punishes the rebellious Viola by banning her from home and sending her to live with another 'good' woman, her old aunt who would teach her a trade and behavior proper for a 'good' girl. The old aunt is the stereotypical gossiper of fairytales; she embodies perfectly the traditional image of the old crone who spends her day sitting by the fireplace, knitting and gossiping, and would give anything for a little excitement and more 'thread to knit'. Hence, she is easily enticed by the prince's request to help him trick Viola and make her fall into his arms, and together they set three traps for her. Nonetheless, the young lady proves to be smarter than both of them and vanquishes all their tricks, "E Viola, correnno e piglianno lo filo, sciuliaie come Anguilla da mano de lo prencepe", ("Viola ran and got the thread, and then slithered through the prince's hands like an eel.") Considering that the eel, (which is akin to serpents for its shape and its habitat), represents temptation and sexual desire, the metaphor could be interpreted in two ways. On one hand, in fact, it could symbolize that Viola is not ready to experience sex, thus she 'runs' from the prince to escape temptation; on the other hand it could indicate the inability of the prince to 'capture' his lover due to the fact that he doesn't know how to court a such emancipated and smart woman. Hence, always on a metaphorical level, Viola's victory has two important meanings.

First of all Viola defeats a man, she affirms her superiority and she reverses the roles society had established for male and female. She is a woman and acts like a leader, while the prince, who should be a leader, is submissive. Secondly, by defeating her old aunt, (who embodies tradition), Viola establishes, once and for all, her 'rebellious' role; she disagrees with what society expects of her and fights to break free. She dislikes whoever tries to deceive her, but she gets more upset at her aunt than at the prince; evidently, for her, a woman's betrayal is more hurtful that the petty attempt the prince makes to fool her. Viola, in fact, vents her anger only with her aunt and punishes her by cutting off her ears and then she scolds her severely,

> "Tienete sso buono veveraggio de la sansaria: ogni fatica cerca premio; a sfrisate de 'nore sgarrate d'aurecchie, e s'io non te taglio lo naso perzì è perchè puozze sentire lo malo adore de la fama toia, roffiana, accorda-messere, porta-pollastre[305], mancia-mancia, 'mezzeia-peccerille." (Rak, p.314)

> "Here's a generous tip for your matchmaking. Every job deserves a rewards: for honor disfigured, ears damaged; and if I don't cut off your nose as well it's only so you can smell the stench of your reputation, you go-between, panderer, chicken carrier, eat-it-all-up, baby spoiler." (Canepa, pp.158-160)

Viola's reaction towards her aunt is violent and brutal, and once again betrays her masculine side. In fact she defends her honor just like a man would and her misdeed is vindicated by her society's belief in honor.

The three traps set by the prince and the old aunt represent only the first battle Viola has to fight; she will have to endure many more trials before being able to attain the freedom to live her life simply being what she wants to be and not as others want . Throughout the tale she and the prince engage in numerous pranks and squabbles, they antagonize each other waiting for one of them to surrender and end the 'war'. Ciullone is the first to capitulate as he realizes that he cannot compete with Viola's intelligence, and at the end he openly admits his inferiority,

> "Me l'hai fatta, me l'hai calata! Io te cedo e hai vinto e, canoscenno veramente ca sai chiù de me, io te voglio senz'autro per mogliere!" (Rak, p.318)

> "You've got me; the game is yours! I give up and you win, and now that I truly realize that you know more than I do, I want you without further ado for my wife!" (Canepa, p. 162)

Ultimately, Viola, notwithstanding her outrageous behavior, attains a handsome and rich husband, which, it seems, was what every woman in her society would have loved to have. Nevertheless, her victory over Ciullone grants her more than a comfortable marriage; by defeating 'man's power' she earns the right to live "her" life, she fulfilled her personal quest rather than passively accepting the role imposed by society.

Betta, the protagonist of "Pinto Smauto", ("Pretty as a Picture", 5.3)[306], takes the quarrel against conformity a step further. She refuses to marry all the men the father chooses for her,

> "Era na vota no mercante che aveva na figlia uneca e sola, la quale desiderava grannemente de vedere maretata, ma, pe quanto tastiava sto liuto la trovava ciento miglia lontano da le recercate soie, pocca sta capo sbentata comm'a scigna de le femmene odiava la coda e comm'a territorio vannuto de caccia riservata negava lo commerzio d'ogn'ommo e voleva sempre feste de corte a lo banco, tanto che lo patre ne steva lo chiù affritto e desperato de lo munno."(Rak, 910)

> "There was once a merchant who had a single, only daughter, whom he greatly wanted to see married. But however much he played this lute he always found her a hundred miles away from his motifs, since that monkey brain of a woman hated all tails. She banned the passage of any man through her territory as if it were a no-trespass zone or a private hunting ground: her tribunal was always shut down for court festivities, so that her father was the most afflicted and desperate man in the world."(Canepa, 399)

In this passage the woman is described as a territory, a garrison, to be conquered and explored, and in fact men who intend to court her would have to "consciously" plan "the approach as if it were a military campaign"[307] as they would have to surpass the barricades she has put up to block the passage through her territory. She strongly rejects the popular custom according to which she should marry in order to 'fulfill' her purpose in life. Betta is clearly not ready to embrace her womanhood and more importantly has no desire to move from one subjection, that

of the father, to another, that of the husband, unless she is allowed to marry whom she pleases. She dethrones her father and men in general from their position of authority; the father is, and feels, powerless thus he must surrender in front of her firmness.

At last, Betta creates her own perfect soul mate, in Basile words "se ne 'mpasta uno se mano soia", ("models a husband with her own hands"), extraordinarily handsome but also completely naïve and innocent. Betta creates the 'anti-hero', a man who needs her guidance to 'open his eyes to life'. Pinto Smauto is not aware of the corruption and the evil of the world so he represents an easy target for a malicious woman, a queen nonetheless, who falls in love with his beauty as soon as she sees him,

> "E perchè Pinto Smauto, che n'aveva tre or ache aveva apierto l'uocchie a le malizie de lo munno, non sapeva 'ntrovolare l'acqua accompagnaie pe fi' a le scale le forastere ch'erano venute a 'norare le nozze, che cossì l'aveva ditto la zita, e, facenno lo stisso co chella segnora, essa pigliatolo pe la mano lo trasportaie chiano chiano fi' a la carrozza a sei cavalla che teneva a lo cortiglio, dove tiratolo drinto fece toccare a la vota de le terre soie, dove lo nsemprece de Pinto Smauto, non sapenno che l'era soccieso, le deventaie marito." (Rak, 912-14)

> "Pretty as a Picture, who had opened his eyes to the wickedness of the world only three hours before, wasn't yet capable of muddying any waters, and he accompanied the female guests who had come to celebrate the marriage to the stairs, just as his bride had told him to. As he was doing the same with that lady, the queen, she grabbed his hand and took him very quietly out to the coach-and six that was waiting for her in the courtyard and she pulled him in and gave orders to leave for her own land, where that simpleton Pretty as a Picture, not understanding what had happened to him, became her husband." (Canepa, 400)

Pinto Samuto is a puppet in the hands of the woman; he lets her take complete control of him without showing the least opposition or reaction. He appears 'brainless' and 'empty' and it will be only thanks to Betta's efforts that, at the end, he will acquire the knowledge he needs to survive in the world. It is plausible that once again Basile, by representing a prince so inept, was criticizing, and not so subtly, the leaders of his time.

Furthermore, the pretty prince could also be considered as the embodiment of her inner *animus*, the mirror image of her subconscious and masculinity. Betta cannot connect with any man around her , nevertheless she does not want to live without her missing half; a person, in fact, needs both 'souls' in order to be a complete and well balanced human being. Hence her decision to mold her man with her own hands; in him she reversers her inner self and creates precisely the specular image of what she has inside, she breathes life into her *animus* allowing it to live freely.

Sapia[308] Liccarda[309], (3.4), is also an exception within the female universe of *Lo cunto;* she is the youngest daughter of a rich merchant who outshines her older sisters, Bella and Cenzolla, for her moral integrity and intelligence. She also outsmarts a prince, Tore, who tries in vain to seduce her, as his two older brothers, Ceccariello and Grazullo, have seduced her two older sisters. The three maidens live in Villa Aperta, (Open Villa), with their father, Marcone, who is very protective, and extremely worried about the 'honor' of his household, particularly because he is distrustful of his two older daughters; and in fact on the day he has to leave his house to take care of some business matters, before departing, he 'locks' all the entrance of the villa,

> "Era na vota no mercante ricco ricco chiamato Marcone, che aveva tre belle figlie, Bella, Cenzolla e Sapia Liccarda; lo quale, avenno da ire for a pe certe mercanzie e canoscenno le figlie più granne pe cavalless fenestrere, le 'nchiovaie tutte le fenestre e, lassannole n'aniello pe uno co certe prete che deventavano tutte macchie si chi le portava 'n ditto faceva triste vergogne, se partette. Ma non cossì priesto fu allontanato da Villa Aperta, che cossì se chiammava chella terra, che accomenzaro a scaliare le fenestre e ad affacciarse pe li portielle, co tutto che Sapia Liccarda, ch'era la chiù picciola, facesse cose dell'autro munno e gridasse ca n'era la casa loro né Ceuze né Dochesca né funneco de lo Cetrangolo né Pisciaturo, da fare ste guattarelle e coccovaie co li vecine."(Rak, 522-24)

> "There was once a very rich merchant named Marcone, who had three beautiful daughters: Bella, Cenzolla, and Sapia Liccarda. One day he had to leave town on some business, and knowing well that the two older daughters were window-

> mounting mares, he nailed shut all the windows and left them each a ring set with certain stoned that became spotted all over if whoever wore it on her finger performed shameful acts. And then he left. But no sooner was he away from Open Villa, which was the name of the town, than the two older daughters began to scale the windows and peek out from behind the shutters, even if Sapia Liccarda, who was the youngest, was beside herself and shouted that their house was neither the Gelsi nor the Duschesca nor the Cetrangelo warehouse nor Pisciaturo[310], and that they shouldn't be joking and flirting with the neighbors."(Canepa, 241-42)

Basile creates an opposition between the ultraconservative mind-set of the father, who 'nails shut' the windows of the villa, and the name of the town he lives in, Villa Aperta, (Open Villa). Nonetheless the name of the town agrees perfectly with the 'open' attitude of the two older sisters, who are eager to break free from the prison that Marcone has built for them. Bella and Cenzolla behave like two typical women and give in to their curiosity, metaphorically opening the 'forbidden door' that accesses the world they intend to discover; they are akin to Bluebeard's wife and to Marchetta, the protagonist of "Le tre corone" ("The Three Crowns, 6.4), whose adventure had been discussed above. The two girls do not listen to their younger sister's advice and allow Ceccariello and Grazullo to use their 'key' to open their (the maidens') door. Sapia, on the contrary, embodies the rationality that her sisters are lacking; she refuses to surrender to curiosity and to 'open the door' with the 'magic key' provided by Tore. She remains honest and defeats all the attempts Tore makes to seduce her; he is so intrigued by her stubbornness and so attracted by her beauty that he decides to join forces with her two libertine sisters to trick Sapia into falling in his trap. Nonetheless all of his attempts fail and his 'hunger' remains unsatisfied and keeps on growing. In the meantime, Bella and Cenzolla give birth to two wonderful boys, the living proofs of their disobedience and ask Sapia to deliver the boys to their respective fathers; Sapia agrees,

> "Sapia Liccarda, ch'era tutta mmore, si be' le parze a forte de portare sto travaglio pe l'asenetate de le sore, tuttavota se lassaie arreducere de scennere a bascio e, fattose Calare li figliule, le portaie a le cammare de lo patre, dove, non trovannolo, le mese uno pe lietto, secunno s'era destramente 'nformata e, trasuto a le cammere de Tore, mese na grossa preta a la travacca soia e se ne tornaie a la casa."(Rak, 528)

> "Sapia Liccarda was full of love, and although this seemed like a heavy load to bear for the asininity of her sisters, she nonetheless let herself be convinced to go downstairs. The babies were lowered and she brought them to their fathers' chambers; finding no one there, she put each of them in the proper father's bed, using, using information she has expertly obtained. Then she went into Tore's chambers, put a large stone in his bed, and returned home."(Canepa, 244)

In this passage Basile doesn't fail to emphasize the difference between the sisters and Sapia, they are in fact guilty for their "asininity" while she shines for her intelligence, thanks to which she is also able to "expertly" obtain information that allow her to know exactly which bed belongs to whom and to put the babies in the 'right' one. More intriguing, though, is the symbolism of the stone that she puts in Tore's bed. Stones hold a prominent place in folkloric traditions, and among the various meanings of these objects two are of particular interests for our discussion. If we assume that the stone Sapia places in the prince's bed is a 'raw stone', then we could interpret her action as a way to claim and reiterate her freedom and independence; as well as her 'perfection',

> "The raw stone was also a symbol of freedom, dressed stone of slavery and darkness. Raw stone was also regarded as Hermaphrodite, this property comprising the perfection of the primeval state. Once dressed, its principles were separated." [311]

Furthermore, considering that, in Brittany for instance, stones were regarded as means to cure women's sterility[312], then, through the stone, Sapia might be sending Tore's the message that when the time will be right she also will be able to deliver a gorgeous child. Moreover, the fertility implied by the stone could also be a forewarning that his efforts soon will be repaid with and abundant 'harvest' of love.

Shortly after the birth of the little 'cherubs,' Marcone, the father, returns home and, thanks to the magic rings, he discovers that his two older daughters have misbehaved. He is angry and wants to punish them but, luckily for Bella and Cenzolla, the two princes ask for their hands in marriage. Tore, in spite of the fact that Sapia Liccarda has always rejected him, also asks Marcone for her hand in marriage. The merchant is obviously overjoyed and organizes the wedding for 'that same' night. Everybody seems happy except Sapia,

> "Sapia che se menava la mano pe lo stommaco e sapeva li strazie fatte a Tore, si be' se 'ntese cercare co tanta 'stanzia, tuttavota se 'magenaie ca ogn'era non è menta e ca non era senza pile lo manto: pe la quale cosa fece subeto na bella statola de pasta de zuccaro e, postola drinto no granne sportone la coperze co cierte vestite. E fattose la sera balle e feste, essa, trovatose certa scusa ca l'era pigliato no sopressauto de core, se ne ieze 'mprimma de tutte a lo lietto, dove, fattose portare la sporta ca scusa de mutarese e corcata la statola drinto le lenzole, essa se mese dereta lo sproviero aspettanno l'eseto de lo negozio."(Rak, 530)

> "Sapia rubbed her stomach and remembered the way she had tormented Tore, and although she was herself pursued with so much insistence, she imagined nonetheless that all grass is not mint and that the coat was not without bristles. For this reason she immediately made a lovely statue of sugar paste, put it in a large basket, and covered it up with some clothes. And after they danced and celebrated all evening, Sapia made up the excuse that she was having palpitations and went off to bed before everyone else. Then, with the excuse that she had to get changed, she has the basket brought in, tucked the statue under the sheets, and hid behind a curtain to await the results of this business."(Canepa, 244)

Once again the woman surpasses the man; indeed, Sapia's suspicions are proven right by Tore's behavior. The prince, in fact, approaches the bed and after venting his rage with harsh and offensive words, reminiscing all the pain she has caused him, stabs her and to celebrate his triumph, licks 'her blood' off the dagger. When Tore tastes the sweetness of Sapia's 'blood' he regrets his action and becomes desperate for "avere sficcagliato na giovane cossì 'nzoccarata ed addorosa", ("having impaled such a sugary and fragrant girl"). He is completely blinded by his pain, and he is about to kill himself when Sapia, who is now sure of his love, comes out of her hiding and reveals herself to him. She explains that she "che st'utemo 'nganno l'aveva puosto"

("had orchestrated this final trick") because she knew that his anger would have caused him to act irrationally and then she asks him for forgiveness. Tore, who is now more enamored than before, embraces his lover and enjoys the 'fruit' of his love. In her final act Sapia Liccarda demonstrate great tactical and planning ability, she shows the ability to rationalize *typical* of men, and has the lucidity of a soldier or a hunter, who hides in wait for the prey to fall into his trap. She is not the *typical* girl, enthralled and captured by the magic of an enchanting wedding, and does not allow her emotions to impair her intellect, and it is this balance that grants her victory.

In *Lo cunto*, there is also another Sapia, (5.6), who could be considered even more revolutionary than Viola Betta and Sapia Liccarda. She is educated in a world where women were relegated to the household, she is witty and most of all, she is a perfect strategist and, more importantly, she overpowers her male counterpart in all of these qualities. As Basile tells us, she was called Sapia because of her immense knowledge[313] and was asked to tutor the son of the king, who was "thickheaded" and ignorant,

> "Era na vota lo re de Castiello Chiuso[314], c'aveva no figlio cossì capotuosto che no 'nce era remmedio che bolesse tenere a mente l' *abcd*, e, sempre che se le parlava de leiere e de 'mparare, faceva cose de fuoco, che non iovavano strille né mazziate né minaccie, de manera che lo negrecato patre ne stave abbottato come a ruospo e non sapeva che partito pigliare pe scetare lo 'nciegno de sto figlio sciaurato e non lassare lo regno 'mano a li Mammalucche, sapenno essere 'mpossibele cosa fare lega la 'gnoranzia e lo dominio de lo regno. A sto medesemo tiempo 'nc'era na fegliola de la baronessa Cenza, che, pe tanto sapere a lo quale era arrivata 'n tridece[315] anne, n'acquistaie lo nomme de Sapia e bertolose qualetà, le quale essenno detto a lo re, fece penziero de dare lo figlio a la baronessa, che lo facesse 'mezzare da la fegliola avesse quarche bene. (Rak, pp. 956-958)

> "There was a king, the king of Closed Castle, who had a so son so thickheaded that there was no way to get him to learn the ABC's , and whenever anyone talked to him about reading or learning, he would blow up; neither screaming nor beatings nor threats served any purpose. And so his poor father was swollen like a toad with anger, and he didn't know what to do to stimulate the wits of his

> wretch of a son as not to have to leave his kingdom in the hand of the Mamelukes, for he knew that it was impossible to fuse ignorance and the governance of a kingdom. During those same times there lived a daughter of the baroness Cenza, who due to the great knowledge that she had accumulated in thirteen years, had acquired the name of Sapia. Word of her virtuous qualities got to the king, and he came up with the idea of entrusting his son to the baroness so that the girl's company and competence could have some positive effects." (Canepa. pp. 418-419)

The name of the kingdom, Castel Chiuso, (Closed Castle) hints at the 'closed mind' of the young prince, who refuses to welcome any knowledge that might 'open' his mind and make him aware of the world around him. Perhaps, on a psychological level, the prince's stubbornness is related to an inner fear of growing up and become an adult; maybe Carluccio, (this is the prince's name), is trying to postpone the moment in which he would have to face adulthood and all the responsibilities that come with it. The young prince still needs to be nurtured and guided and maybe is in need of a female figure, a mother-surrogate, who can help him grow up; his father evidently understand this and that is why he accepts Sapia's help.

The king's hopes are soon disappointed as his son shows neither improvement nor interest in learning. Carluccio's not caring attitude irritates Sapia and "le scappaie la mano e le dette no boffettone" ("she couldn't help but give him a nice slap on the face.") The prince was so humiliated by this slap that "chello che non aveva fatto pe carizzielle e gnuoccole fece pe breogna e despietto",("out of disgrace and spite he did what he had refused to do for caresses and kindness"); in a few months he not only learned grammar but he became the wisest man in the kingdom. Sapia's slap stayed with him, he could not stop thinking and dreaming about it, and every time he re-lived that pivotal moment in his life he felt overwhelmed with shame and anger so that "fece penziero de morire o de vennecarese" ("he decided either to die or to avenge himself.") Once he reached a marriageable age Carluccio asked to marry Sapia and he convinced everybody that he was in love with her as she was the woman who had given him "lo

buono essere" ("the good life.") In reality, his plan was to subjugate and abuse her to the point that she would feel compelled to apologize to him for the slap and beg for his forgiveness. However, notwithstanding the suffering her husband causes her, Sapia never bows her head; she remains proud, firm and strong. She never apologizes nor repents for the slap she gave Ciullone, on the contrary she reminds him of all the good that came from that bold gesture and reprimands him for treating her so badly,

> " <<Adonca>>, leprecaie Sapia, <<arrecoglio male ped avere semmenato bene! S'io te dette, lo fice ca ieri n'aseno, pe farete deventare sapio: tu saie ca chi te vole bene te fa chiagnere e chi te vole male te fa ridere.>>" (Rak, p. 960)

> "'And so,' replied Sapia, 'after I sowed so well, I'm harvesting so poorly! If I slapped you, I did it because you were an ass and I thought it would wisen you up: you know that those who love make you cry, and those who do not make you laugh'." (Canepa, p. 420)

It is noteworthy to emphasize how Basile brings to the page some typical Neapolitan customs of his time. Indeed, he employs a typical Italian and Neapolitan proverb "chi te vole bene te fa chiagnere e chi te vole male te fa ridere" ("who love make you cry, and those who do not make you laugh") which was often used, (and it is still used today) by parents, or educators in general, to justify their strictness. Her resilience fuels the rage Carluccio has in his heart; angrier than ever, he leaves her behind "in a worse state than before" and sets out to claim new territories. The prince has to remove himself from Sapia because he does not know how to control and manage her. She escapes all the familiar categories, she is not a conventional woman for she acts very differently, and yet, for sure she is not a man. Sapia is a sort of 'hybrid', she has the beauty and grace of a woman but she holds the strength and the determination of a man. The prince metaphorically represents society, namely the patriarchal society that is not ready to accept Sapia because she is different and does not conform to the rules set for women. In fact she refuses to passively obey authority and when she is abandoned and mistreated never falls into despair, like

a 'woman' stereotypically would do. On the contrary, she reacts with determination and embarks in a long journey to re-claim her husband and, most importantly, to earn the right to be herself. The interesting aspect of Sapia's adventure is that in order to be even considered by her husband she has to deceive him. Indeed, she pretends to be 'another' woman more familiar to the husband's perception of femininity, one he can easily control. Carluccio does not realize that the woman who seduces him three times is his wife, which means that he is not really in love with the 'woman', (the human being he kisses and hugs), as much as he is in love with the 'stereotype' she embodies. The prince is completely blinded by his male pride and cannot see that he is being fooled by the same woman he had rejected; thus when Sapia comes clean and reveals to him who she really is, Carluccio cannot help but recognize her intelligence and skills,

> "Lo re pe no piezzo stette comme a n'ommo che se 'nzonna; all'utemo vedenno ca lo sapere de Sapia arrivava a le stelle e bisto appresentarse, quanno manco se lo credeva, tre pontelle de la vecchiezza soia, se le 'ntennerette lo core e, dato chella signora pe mogliere a lo frate co gruosso stato, se pigliaie Sapia, facenno canoscere a la gente de munno ca *l'ommo sapio dommena le stelle.*"(Rak, p.964)

> "For a long time the king just stood there like a man who was dreaming. Finally, realizing that Sapia's wisdom reached the stars and seeing that when he least imagined it he was being presented with three bastions for his old age, his heart grew tender, and, after giving that other lady a great kingdom and a marriage to his brother, he took Sapia for his wife, thus letting everyone in the world know that *the wise man dominates the stars.*"(Canepa, p.421)

Sapia, with her rebellious behavior, with her courage to 'slap' a man and educate him, was able to break the codes of the patriarchal society that wanted women to be submissive and obedient. She paved the way for a better life for her and other women; she broke the tradition and started her own legacy. Hence, she reminds us of Basile who also broke the tradition and started his own legacy with literary fairytales. However, through his subversive fairytales Basile does not simply communicate his literary innovation, he also conveys his utopian dream for a more just

and balanced society which is exemplified by the androgynous persona he creates in his collection.

### c. Zoza's journey

Zoza's personal quest is in search of her other 'half', the masculine side she needs to finally cross the bridge that would bring her into womanhood.[316]At the beginning of the story Zoza is sad, incapable of smiling; if, for a moment, we leave aside the fairy-tale type of "the princess who would not laugh" (AARNE 559), the explanation for the princess's distress might be of a psychological nature. She is a young girl growing up in a patriarchal society where she is expected to be a daughter, first, and a wife and mother afterwards. Hence her role in society is framed for her and she has nothing to say in deciding her own destiny. This situation of social immobility and emotional distress is metaphorically represented by the first image of Zoza in the tale; the princess appears sitting at a window staring, with an empty look, at the life that goes on outside, in the 'real world'. The window's frame symbolically represents the imagined frame that society has put around Zoza; her empty stare and her sad expression communicate her discontent with the role society arbitrarily has assigned to her. The princess's melancholy, however, could also symbolize the fear of entering womanhood without being ready to do so. Zoza is 'displaced' on two levels: on a personal level, as she is not in touch with her inner self, her *animus*, thus she is not ready to become an adult; and on a social level because she feels constrained into being something she has not chosen to be. In order to overcome this apathy she needs to embark on a journey that will take her through the darkness of the unknown, (her sub-conscious metaphorically represented by the woods), into the light of 'self discovery'. She must face and defeat her shadow, (Lucia), which represents all that is negative in her, to be able to discover and 'recognize' her *animus,* (Tadeo), which will give her the 'masculine side' she lacks

in order to be a 'whole', (a complete human being.) The princess, however, needs a motivation to react and rebel against the stillness of her destiny and she finds it in the discovery of sexuality, metaphorically represented by the 'scena boscareccia'[317] in which the old hag reveals her private parts. The old crone not only awakens Zoza to sexuality but also informs her that out there 'into the woods' there is a masculine universe, represented by Tadeo, dormant still, waiting for her. The curiosity of discovering sex and the urge to explore her sexuality ignite in the princess an incontrollable desire to break away from convention; thus she leaves her secure, but oppressive, nest and starts out in search of herself and her 'half'.

Zoza's decision to leave the court and venture on a perilous journey alone into the woods could be considered as the first sign of her androgynous nature. The patriarchal society in which she lived, in fact, relegated women to the household, allowing them to leave only upon permission of the 'man of the house'. The princess in *Lo cunto* doesn't ask or wait for permission by her father; she simply follows her instinct, as Basile writes

> "Ma Zoza, a lo medesemo punto romenanno e mazzecanno le parole de la vecchia, le trasette racecotena a la catarozzola e, votato no centimmolo de penziere e no molino de dubbie sopra sto fatto, all'utemo, tirata co no straolo de chella passion che ceca lo iodizio e 'ncanta lo descurzo dell'ommo, pigliatose na mano de scute da li scrigne de lo patre se ne sfilaie fora de lo palazzo, e tanto camminnaie che arrivaie a no castiello da na fata." (Rak, 14)

> "At the same moment Zoza began to ruminate and chew over the old woman's words, and a little demon entered her lovely head ... she finally found herself pulled by the winch of that passion that blinds the judgment and enchants discourse, and when she had taken a fistful of gold coins from her father's treasury, she slipped out of the palace and kept on walking until she came to the castle of a fairy." (Canepa, 38)

The fairy of this castle is the first of three[318] fairies she meets at the beginning of her journey; aside from the ever present ritualistic number three in fairytales tradition the presence of the three fairies could also be interpreted allegorically. They could represent the Trinity in reverse[319],

or a parody of it, whose role is to assist and guide her through the darkness of the forest, just as the three Ladies come to rescue Dante when he is lost in the 'dark wood'[320]. If we accept this interpretation, it is also plausible to assume that the three fairies are there to legitimize Zoza's adventure; hence in a way they grant the permission that she should have received from the father; once again 'women' take over a male role. Also, considering that spiritual activities are traditionally classified in triads, it is possible that each of the three fairies represents one of the spiritual activities, namely: thinking, willing, and feeling, or according to Augustine: being, recognizing and willing[321]. Furthermore, three is also the symbol of unity and completeness[322] thus the presence of this number right at the beginning of the journey could be a sort of auspicious signal to the positive ending of Zoza's adventure; in fact at the end of all her troubles, she will finally conquer her 'man' and with him her 'masculine' soul, hence she will achieve the 'wholeness' she was missing. The princess, then, continues on her journey and wanders for seven years before reaching the location where her sleeping prince awaits; she approaches the tomb, positioned next to a fountain, and begins to weep. Her tears, instead of the traditional fairytale kiss, will wake up the prince and bring him back to life. This episode is rich with symbolism. For example, the presence of the number seven suggests a particular meaning beyond the limits of the traditional recurrence of this number in fairytales.

Seven is indeed a mystical number that has "fascinated humankind for time immemorial."[323] Its religious symbolism is well known and it is very important role in Christianity. It is associated with perfection, as the 'seventh day' is the day dedicated to God, in fact the seventh day is when He rested; seven is also the number that "points to the passing of time, since eternal life begins only with Christ's resurrection on the eight day"[324]. It also represents the seven capital sins and the seven cardinal virtues; most importantly, though, in

relation to this tale, is that seven are also the terraces of Dante's *Purgatorio*. In this *cantica* each terrace corresponds to one of the capital sins[325], and only after the poet has passed through all seven terraces will he be allowed to ascend to *Paradiso.* Indeed, the poet during his journey in the 'other world' is not only a witness to the punishments assigned to other sinners, he is also a 'sinner' who, in the course of his ascent through *Inferno*, *Purgatorio,* and *Paradiso,* is purged of all his sins. In fact, at the beginning, Dante is lost in the "selva oscura", (the dark wood), which symbolizes the obscurity of the sinner's soul, and he is rescued thanks to the intervention of the three Ladies, (Mary, Lucy and Beatrice), who call Virgil as his guide and mentor. Virgil accompanies the pilgrim Dante through the nine circles of hell and the seven terraces of *Purgatorio*, but he cannot enter *Paradiso* because he was born before the advent of Christ and thus he was not baptized. After the pilgrim has gone through the seven terraces he finds himself in the "Divina Foresta", (Earthly Paradise), where he meets Matelda, "the bella donna," the custodian of earthly Paradise and, for some, symbol of Earthly Felicity in the Endemic State. She is the one who administers the new baptism of the pilgrim by immersing his full body into the river Lete[326] and then leads him to the opposite river where Beatrice, with her seven "ancelle", and the other *beati* await for him,

> "Poi, quando il cor virtù di fuor rendemmi,
> La donna ch'io aveva trovata dola
> Sopra me vidi, e dicea :<<Tiemmi, tiemmi!>>
> Tratto m'aveea nel fiume infin la gola,
> E tirandosi me dietro sen giva,
> Sovressso l'acqua lieve come scola/
> Quando fui presso la beata riva,
> "*Asperges me"* sì dolcemente udissi,
> Che nol so rimembrar, non ch'io lo scriva"[327]

And in *Purgaorio* 33, after he has drank the water of the Eunoè River, Dante writes,

> "Io ritornai da la santissima onda

> rifatto sí come piante novella
> rinovellate di novella fronda,
> puro e disposto a sale a le stelle"[328]

Thus when he reaches 'heaven' his soul is cleansed and pure and he is ready to embrace eternal grace and eternal love[329]. Zoza in *Lo cunto* has a similar journey; she moves from the court of her father, where she feels oppressed and heavy at heart, (in fact she 'never' smiles), and goes into the 'woods' which can be seen as a correspondent of the "selva oscura" in the *Divine Comedy.* The princess wanders in the woods for seven years, and it would be plausible to believe that for each year Zoza spends in the forest she expiates a sin, just like Dante the pilgrim expiates his sins moving from one terrace to the other; hence her journey becomes a cathartic experience as well. The presence of the fountain and the tears she sheds once she reaches her destination also support the idea of the cathartic voyage as they evoke the water with which Christians are cleansed of their sin when they are baptized[330]. However, even after 'purification' there is still something blocking her way to happiness, and that obstacle is symbolized by the presence of the dark slave who steals her lover. Zoza might be purged of her sins but she still has not reached the level of maturity required to embark into one of the most important adventures of human life: marriage; that is probably because she has not yet 'united' with her *animus,* thus she is still incomplete. In order to become 'whole' she needs to find herself completely by recognizing and accepting her masculine soul, and the only way to do that is to face and destroy her dark 'self' metaphorically represented by Lucia[331], the black slave, who stands between her and her male counterpart. The princess, though, cannot fight the 'darkness' alone and in fact she receives help form the three fairies who provide her with three magical objects that ultimately enable her to re-conquer her beloved, (as seen before, Dante is also

rescued by three women, thus the presence of the 'female trinity' represents another parallel between the two 'pilgrims')

It is interesting, at this point, to observe the opposite symbolic meaning Lucia has in Dante and in Basile. In the *Divine Comedy,* Lucia stands as a symbol of light and salvation; she is the poet's guide and rescuer. Furthermore, in *Purgatorio*, she is associated with the eagle which means that she also stands as a "Christological symbol",

> "If Lucy is identified with the eagle, which besides being a symbol of the Emperor is also a Christological symbol, it stands to reason that she is to be associated with the Second Person of the Trinity. The three blessed ladies, Mary, Lucy, and Beatrice, are by analogy the figures of the Female Trinity."[332]

Indeed, for this particular function Dante's Lucia is the complete opposite of Basile's slave; and in fact in *Lo cunto* Lucia epitomizes injustice and deceit. Moreover, while in the *Divine Comedy* she represents light and her presence 'illuminates' and facilitates the pilgrim's journey, for Zoza the situation is quite different. Lucia brings a 'dark shadow' on the princess' path delaying her happiness and her union with Tadeo, (the masculine side she needs to be complete.); thus she is an enemy that must be defeated, annihilated. In the telling of Zoza's adventure Basile is playing with this Dantean material, creating a parody of it.

The battle with her dark self begins when Zoza, who had fallen asleep, re-opens her eyes. Once awakened the poor princess realizes that Lucia has stolen her husband, (her dark self overpowered her), but she does not fall into despair. She appeals to her 'rationality' and understands that the best thing to do is to react 'aggressively'. Normally, women, more so in what have become classical fairytales, (i.e. "Cinderella", "Sleeping Beauty"), are not expected to be rational or aggressive; rather they are often described as extremely emotional and submissive, men are the rational and practical ones, (see chart, note 261), consequently we could say that also in this occasion the princess surprises the reader by taking on a masculine behavior. Zoza does

not wait for a hero to come and rescue her, she acts alone and she is the only one in charge of her destiny. In this moment of need, her only support comes from the three gifts she received from the fairies, so that, essentially she calls on her 'will', on her ability to 'think' rationally and on her 'feelings' in order to make the best moves to succeed. Implementing her resources, she devises a plan that allows her to enter the court and face her dark-self. Once in front of Lucia, she retraces her steps by re-living each moment that has brought her to where she is now and that have prepared her to be 'whole' and really wake up her latent masculine self, Tadeo. Zoza's tale is a sort of introspective journey through which the princess puts her past experience in perspective and gains the courage she needs to take her final step into womanhood. In order to conquer the prince and claim her masculine soul, the dark self must be completely destroyed and that is why Lucia must be killed. The removal of the dark shadow allows Zoza to embrace her *animus*; *anima* and *animus* finally unite and from this union originates the androgynous being, balance is established and happiness is restored. At the end perfection is achieved, Zoza smiles again because she has found her missing half, and also because she has been able to break free from the oppressive tradition of a male-dominated society, in her new court she is the 'Princess' who rules together with her prince in harmony.

The idea of perfection is reinforced also by the ritual numerology of the tale. As mentioned above, Zoza reaches Tadeo's tomb after seven years of wandering, besides all its rich meanings and biblical symbolisms, seven also symbolizes human life, and it is especially connected with females life, as Anne Marie Schimmel writes,

> "The girl gets her milk teeth at 7 months and loses them at the age of 7; in 2 X 7 years … she reaches puberty, and at 7 X 7 = 49 menopause sets in…and one can add that menstruation regularly comes every 7 X 4 days. Likewise, pregnancy is counted by summing up 7 X 40 days from the first day after the last menstruation"[333]

Considering that typically heroines in fairytales are eligible for marriage by the age of fourteen[334], and that this, at least in Italy, was true also for real women from the Middle Ages to the whole pre-modern period it would be reasonable to believe that at the beginning of the tale Zoza is about fourteen years old, which means that she is in the second heptad of her life, the time associated with puberty. Consequently she reaches Tadeo when she is in the third heptad of her life, she is about 21, and hence she is an adult woman, more mature and ready to start her life. Thus we have three and seven dominating the plot. While seven is associated with female' life, the number three could be associated with masculinity because it equals the number of parts of the male sexual organ.[335] When Zoza and Tadeo come together we end up with a ten, (7 + 3 = 10), which is the number that indicates sexual unity, completeness and perfection. Furthermore, the number ten is also present on another level, Zoza in fact, by replacing Iacova who becomes sick the last day of tale-telling, becomes the tenth teller therefore, ultimately, she herself is a ten: perfect and complete. Finally, surrogating this idea of perfection there is also the structure of the entire collection. Graphically *Lo cunto* could be represented with a circle, as the quest works in a circular way[336]; in fact it starts in a court and ends in a court, it is as if Zoza ends her journey right where she started it. The circle, just like the number ten, is traditionally the symbol of perfection; ultimately the idea of the circle is also echoed in the name of the kingdom, Camporotondo, (Round Field). Moreover, in the court of Tadeo, Basile reproduces a specular image of the initial court of Vallepelosa, (Hairy Valley). In Vallepelosa, aside from the minor characters, there were a king, a princess and an evil woman; in Camporotondo again the three main figures are a king, a princess and an evil woman, this echo image creates harmony and brings closure.

**Fairytales in and out of time**

*"Tales are marks that leave traces of the human struggle for immortality. Tales are human marks invested with desire. They are formed like musical compositions, except that the notes constitute words and are chosen to enunciate the speaker/writer's position in the world, including his or her dreams, needs, wishes, and experiences. "*[337]
*(J. Zipes, Title p. XII)*

Fairytales have been around for 'ever', in fact tracing their origin to a definite time and place is practically impossible. In spite of their longevity, however, fairytales have been often misinterpreted and misunderstood. One common misconception is that they were originally created for children "but nothing could be further from the truth."[338] Fairytales have been introduced by ancient people to explain the unexplainable, to deal with death and fear, to promote customs and morals and throughout the centuries they have continued to serve that purpose in different cultures and places, until today when "fairytales are written and told to provide hope in a world seemingly on the brink of catastrophe."[339] The difficulty of establishing where and when the first tale was ever told is also due to the fact that one cannot rely on a "Ur-text" to decode this information since the tales we read today have been reworked and edited by each author who has collected and told them so that they could serve the needs of his/her people and culture. Consequently fairytales cannot be considered as 'authentic' historical documents, as Calvino writes,

> "Prima obiezione all'uso della fiaba come documento storico è la difficoltà di localizzarla e datarla: quando lo storico (o il geografo, l'etnografo, il sociologo) cita una fiaba come significativa d'un'epoca o d'una situazione ambientale o sociale, il folklorista può subito dimostrargli che lo stesso schema narrativo si ritrova pressochè identico in un paese lontanissimo e in una situazione storico-sociale assolutamente diversa."[340]

Notwithstanding, the unfeasibility to use fairytales as 'original' historical document and the impossibility that indicate the date and the place of 'birth' of fairytales, which makes them eternal, hence in a sense 'out of time', it is undeniable that the unique 'micro-history' that

encompasses each single version of the same tale, reveals a profound relationship between the tales and the people who uttered them, framing them 'in' time. We have already seen, in chapter one, how Basile's tales are both timeless and yet historical, in this chapter, instead, I will focus on Perrault and the two brothers Grimm and I will investigate how they have edited and adapted some of ?questions the stories they have borrowed from *Lo cunto*, making them 'their own.' Before turning to the analysis of the tales I would like to discuss the milieus where both Perrault's and the brothers Grimms' collections originated.

**a.) Perrault, (1628 –1703), and the French fairytales.**

Basile's collection although written in Neapolitan had an extraordinary success in the years right after it was published and during the seventeenth century. It was avidly translated into standard Italian and French, and it was probably through these translations that it became popular not only in Italy but also in France. As Zipes suggests,

> "We do not know all the channels of transmission and dissemination, but there are clear signs that Basile's and Straparola's tales were picked up and passed on by storytellers and writers because they were memorable and spoke relevantly to the needs and interests of people from different backgrounds. In France, it is apparent that Mlle. Lhéritier was familiar with his tales, and three of hers, "The Discreet Princess", "The Enchantment of Eloquence" and "Ricdin-Ricdon", depend heavily on three of his stories. In fact, the Italian influence in France during the 1790s was much more profound that scholars have suspected."[341]

The seventeenth century was golden for the flourishing of the literary fairytale in France; the French writers were fascinated by the marvelous and the magic of the folk and fairy tales hence they began to write their own tales, establishing a vogue "that was to last approximately a century and brought about the institutionalization of the fairytale as a literary genre in Europe and North America."[342]

The institutionalization of the literary fairytales, at least at the beginning, was promoted mainly by women writers, in particular by Mme. d'Aulnoy. She initiated the trend with her tale "L'Isle de la Félicité", ("The Island of Happiness") which appeared in her novel *L'Histoire d'Hipolyte, comte de Duglas*, (1690) After this first tale Mme. d'Aulnoy wrote other sixteen tales collected in *Les Contes de Fée* and *Contes Nouveaux ou les Fée à la Mode,* (1696-98); it was thanks to her, and Henriette Julie de Murat, that the term "conte de fèe" was introduced. Her tales were characterized by being extremely long and intricate and while discussing the importance of love and tenderness; they also presented a veiled critique of the court life seen from the point of view of an aristocratic woman. Mme. d'Alnoy also established a literary salon, and literary salons were very common in France at that time, where leading aristocrats and her friends would gather together and spent the time in pleasant conversations or by telling tales. It was mainly in the literary salons that the French literary fairytale became a 'genre' and in fact all the most important writers frequented the salons and knew each other; among the regular guests of this literary circles there were: Marie-Jeanne Lhéritier, Catherine Bernard, Charlotte-Rose Caumont de la Force, Henriette Julie de Murat, Jean de Mailly, Eustache Le Noble, Charles Perrault[343]. They engaged mainly in discussions about the modern culture in France, the role of women in society and the process of civilization and modernization in France, without forgetting to express their discontent and concerns for the reckless behavior of Louis XIV. All of these writers understood the metaphorical power of fairytales, so they began writing tales where while apparently talking about romantic encounters between enchanted princes and princesses, they were actually advocating justice and criticizing society; as Zipes points out

> "these writers produced remarkable collections of tale within a short period of time: Mlle. Lhéritier, *Oeuvres meslées* (1695); Mlle. Bernard, *Inès de Cordoue* (1695), a novel that includes *Riquet à la houppe*; Mlle. de la Force, *Les Contes des Contes* (1697); Charles Perrault, *Histoires ou contes du temps passé* (1697);

> Chevalier Jean de Mailly, *Les Illustres Fée, contes galans* (1698); Mme. de Murat, *Contes de fée* (1698); Paul-Francois Nodot, *Histoire de Mélusine* (1698); Sieur de Prechác, *Contes moins contes que les autres* (1698); Mme. Durand, *La Comtesse de Mortane* (1699); Mme. de Murat, *Histoires Sublimes et Allégoriques* (1699); Eustache Le Noble, *Le Gage touché* (1700); Mme. d'Auneuil, *La Tiranie des fees détruite* (1702); and Mme. Durand, *Les Petits Soupers de l'année* 1699 (1702)."[344]

However, among all of these names the one that everybody associates with fairytales is that of Charles Perrault.

Charles Perrault had an eclectic personality very much involved in the court's life of Louis XIV. He was the Inspector of Royal Buildings for about twenty years; his job required him to supervise building sites which helped him to acquire a significant knowledge of architecture. He was also very close to the King's persona and promoted his glory by writing the inscriptions for medals and monuments made in honor of Louis XIV. Furthermore, he was highly respected in the world of the French Academies and as a member of the Academia he was in charge of promoting the development of the "belles lettres". In addition he was one of the main protagonist of one of the most heated debate of the century the *Querell des Anciens et des Modernes*; he and Mlle. Lhéritier, sided with the moderns and opposed Boileau who sided with the ancients,

> "Complex in its aims and ramifications, this Quarrel centered around the status of modern cultural artifacts in relation to those inherited from Greek and Roman antiquity. Whereas the Ancients maintained that the latter were a universal bench-mark against which all artistic endeavors should be measured, the Moderns promoted the ideal of progress, which allowed the possibility that modern artistic creation could surpass that of antiquity. Where the Ancient saw a fundamental *stasis* and unchanging essence as the norm for cultural productions, the Moderns perceived historical and cultural relativity."[345]

Perrault defended the new vogue of writing fairytales and he went as far as to compare the modern tales with the classical antique tales as he believed that they were legitimated by the same sense of morality and had the same educational potential. Perrault also took a stand in the

'unofficial' and "infamous" *Querelle des femmes* and he defended the women writers against the merciless criticism of Boileau and his followers. He wrote three tales in verse, "Griseldis" (1691), "Les Souhaits Ridicules", ("The Foolish Wishes", 1693) and "Peau d'Ane" ("Donkey Skin", 1694), in which he celebrated women's' qualities and virtues; he also published a poem "Apologie des femmes" (1694). While his intention was clearly to 'defend' and redeem women, "whether these works can be considered pro-women today is another question"; in fact Perrault celebrated the intelligence and the capabilities of women, but he stressed the fact that these virtues should be put into use within the "domestic and social realms" not so much into the Academia and political field. Clearly he was a versatile person with many interests and many talents; above all, though, he was a prolific writer,

> "As an official author, Perrault wrote and abundant-rather mediocre, one must add- amount of literature, the ultimate goal of which was to proclaim to the world that the century of Louis le Grand was superior to Greek and Roman antiquity."[346]

If the 'official author' of the royal court left superficial writings that had not much to say to posterity, the work he produced as a 'private author' were by far more thoughtful; in fact they revealed a much more profound personality and gave a better sense of what the century of Louis XIV was really about. His 'private' works include the *Pensées chrétiennes* and *Mémoires de ma vie* however his legacy has been established by his small collection of fairytales the *Contes* which as Jacques Barchilon says,

> "are among the most meaningful [stories] ever written and link Perrault's name to the mythology folklore and psychology of modern man."[347]

The difference between Perrault and other contemporary French fairytale writers, (the majority of which were women) was substantial. The women, as for example Mme. d'Alnoy, (who was the most prolific of the fairytales writers, she published four volumes of tales), wrote incredibly long and complex tales. Their writings were abundant in details and embellishments that were

supposed to make the stories more enchanting and entertaining. All of these women writers we also very concerned about the stylishness and the fluidity of their language, they belonged to the so called "précieux", a group of writers that were extremely concerned with the purity of the language and the messages transmitted through their tales. As Dorothy R. Thelander writes,

> "A *precieux* is, of course, more than a person who spoke or wrote in a particular style. Though the *precieux* movement is usually remembered for its excess in the purification of language and manners, it included serious men and particularly women who wanted legal reform to give women the right to marry or remain single, to refuse to have children, and to look after their own affairs."[348]

Perrault, on the contrary, while still careful at maintaining the limpidness of the language, rejected the formula of the exceedingly long an adorned tales. He made his fairytale slim and elegant and polished them from any vulgarity or obscenity so that they could be read not only by the adults for the adults, but also for the children, or better yet for the aristocratic adolescents he meant to instruct through his writings. He had the ability to adapt the folktales of the populace to the taste of the French literary salons and to transform his 'humble' collection in a French literary masterpiece; as Neil states

> "He set them in a form that still defines for us what we mean when we say something is 'just like a fairy tale.' "[349]

Notwithstanding the differences in style, Perrault and the other writers had in common the purpose for which they wrote the tales. Through their stories they wanted to vocalize their concerns with the manners and the life style of the aristocracy and the people in general; they sought to express the common discontent that hovered around the court of the king, in other words they liked their tales to be educational as well as informative. This is even more evident in Perrault's tales where at the end we often find not one, but two morals intended to emphasize and unveil the 'hidden' pedagogical message of his stories.

Perrault's *Contes* mirrored the hybrid personality of the author as they represent a harmonic combination of classical and Baroque taste. The classicism of Perrault's tale is expressed through the elegance of their style and language; and also by the linear and simple structure of the plots. The Baroque, on the other hand, imposes itself not only through the presence of the marvelous and metaphors but, as Claire-Lise Malarte-Feldman points out, the substrate of the *Contes* is intrinsically Baroque. Perrault relied on popular narratives to find material for his stories, furthermore

> "His literary sources, nonetheless, come from the Italian Renaissance and Baroque tradition. Perrault borrowed freely from the *Piacevoli Notti* by the Venetian novelist Straparola and sought inspiration for his own fairy tales in *Lo cunto de li cunti* or *Pentamerone* by the Neapolitan Giambattista Basile. Herein lies one of the many paradoxes of Perrault's *Contes*: what we call today a "calssique de la littérature" originated in the various folklores of France and Italy."[350]

This coexistence of the two styles best represents the reality of seventeenth century France, where officially the Baroque was rejected for its extreme 'excesses', while classicism was welcomed for its linearity and simplicity. Notwithstanding, this overt aversion the Baroque made its way into the 'classicist' French society. A perfect example of the contamination of the two styles is the court of Versailles , where the sublime elegance of the external architecture is 'enriched' with the presence of numerous fancy fountains in the royal gardens, and fountains as we know were a typical element of the Baroque architecture. In addition to this, there were also the many theatrical events organized at court that brought an undeniable breath of Baroque taste into the *glamorous* French society; these "sumptuous" representations involved "complex stage machinery, extravagant costumes, the inclusion of special effects" that together with "the music of the hundred fountains scattered throughout the park helped turn theater into a complete

spectacle that put all the emphasis on appearance"[351], all in perfect harmony with the Baroque style.

The great vogue of fairytales in France was then followed by a "second phase" dominated by the influence of Oriental tales. By the end of the seventeenth century, many of the 'old' fairytales writers had left Paris and hence had abandoned the literary salons, mostly because of legal problems due to their disagreement with the politic al views of the court. Consequently the 'new' writers decided to write less compromising stories straying away from any sort of explicit criticism. The charm of the Oriental culture captivated the 'new' generation of fairytales authors who started to look at it as a source for their own stories. The most important works of this period were authored by Antoine Galland (1646-1715) who translated into French the Arabic tales collection *The Thousand and One Nights.* In reality, Galland did not simply translate the tales, he edited and adapted them to meet the demands and the taste of the French readers; he also borrowed themes from them to invent his own fairytales. This sudden interest into the Oriental culture might seem odd but as Zipes explains it was justified by the emptiness that the decline of the magnificent century of King Louis XVI had left. Zipes writes

> "Why all this interest in Oriental fairy tales? One explanation is that the diminishing grandeur of King Louis XVI's court and the decline of France in general compelled writers to seek compensation in portrayals of exotic countries. Certainly, for the readers of that time, the Oriental tales had a unique appeal because so little was known about the Middle East."[352]

The interest in fairytales diminished in France toward the middle of the eighteenth century and writers began to write parodies of the 'classical fairytale' "developing it along conventional lines or utilizing it for children's literature". In fact it was during this century that children's literature was established thanks to the tales of Mme Leprince de Beaumont.

**b.) The brothers Grimm**

The translation and the diffusion of the *Arabian Nights* and the literary French fairytale in general had a huge impact on German culture. Writers, following the French vogue, started their own production of fairy tales that helped to establish the canonization of the genre in the whole of Western Europe. Although the idea of German fairytales is usually associated with the brothers Grimm it is erroneous to believe that it all started with them, as Zipes states,

> "Though the Grimms made important discoveries in their research on ancient German literature and customs, they were neither the founders of folklore as a study in Germany, nor the first to begin collecting and publishing folk and fairy tales"[353]

Before the Grimms there were other extraordinary writers who created interesting collection through which, in spite of the palpable French influence, they aimed to promote and celebrate German folklore. Among these authors were: Johann Karl August Musaus with his *Volksmarchen der Deutschen* (1782-86); Christof Martin who translate and edited several tales from the *Cabinet des Fées* and collected them in *Dschnnistan* , "The Philosophers` Stone" (1786-89). Then there were the romantic writers such as Clemens Brentano, E.T.A. Hoffman and Wolfgang Goethe who used fairy tales to vocalize their disagreement with the idea promoted by the Enlightenment and absolutism rather than with the intent to entertain. It is exactly for the seriousness of the theme treated in the fairy tales during the romantic period that the German tale came to be known as *Kunstmarchen*, (art tale)[354].

Jacob Ludwing Grimm (1785-1863) and Wilhelm Carl Grimm (1786-1859), became interested in folklore and in old German literature while studying law at the University of Marburg. Isolated by the rest of the students who enjoyed an higher economical and social status and looked down at the two brothers, their dedication and intelligence caught the attention of Professor Friedrich Karl von Savigny who was convinced that

> "the spirit of law could be comprehended only by tracing its origins to the development of the customs and language of the people and by paying attention to the changing historical context in which laws developed."[355]

It was thanks to the professor's interest in this 'folkloric' aspect of law that influenced the brothers' choice to pursue the study of ancient German folklore and literature, their decision to dedicate their life to this purpose came in 1805 after the pivotal experience, (for them), to assist their professor in Paris while he conducted research on Roman law. The chance to start collecting tales was given to them, at first, by Clemens Brentano who asked the Grimm to collect folk and popular tales for a volume he intended to publish later in the future; hence between 1807 and 1812 they began researching and collecting tales to then send them to their friend Brentano, this was their chances to gain a vast historical knowledge and understanding of their national language and customs. It is a common belief that the Grimms wandered around the country talking to the peasants and collecting their 'testimonial tales', but the truth is different. The brothers usually received their tellers in their house and took down the stories after having heard them once or twice. The popular tales they collected were not necessarily dictated by 'popular voices', on the contrary they were recounted by aristocratic and educated young women. Among them there were the women of the Wild family, (a fairly renown family in Kassel, the brothers' home town); women of the Hassenpflug family and some members of the Haxthusen family, with whom Wilhelm had become acquainted. Many of the storytellers were from Hessia such as the greatest contributor to the Grimm collection was Dorother Viehmann "who used to sell fruit in Kassel" and "would visit the Grimms and told them a good many significant tales."[356]

When it was time for the brothers to send the tales they had collected to Brentano, they did so but not without making copies for themselves first. They were concerned with the

possibility that Brentano would revise and edit the tales to make them more poetical, divesting them of their genuine popular taste. As history would prove, their preoccupation was groundless because Brentano never actually published the tales the Grimms had sent him. This gave the brothers the opportunity to do it themselves and in 1812-15 the first of the seven editions of *Kinder-un hausmarchen (Children's and Household Tales)* was published. Both brothers worked really hard to polish the language and refine the structure of the tales; Wilhelm seemed to be more concerned about making the contents of the tales more suitable for children. However as they both had the same objective of creating an ideal narrative style from a stylistic, structural and linguistic point of view; to achieve this, as Zipes points out, the brothers worked 'together' following the same ideologically path that involved

> "the endeavor to make the tales stylistically smoother; the concern for clear sequential structure; the desire to make the stories more lively and pictorial by adding adjectives, old proverbs, and direct dialogue; the reinforcement of motives for action in the plot; the infusion of psychological motifs; and the elimination of elements that might detract from a rustic tone."[357]

This first edition was not critically acclaimed because of the "problematic content" and the rough narrative style. The brothers took this critique into account and hence for their second edition in 1819 they 'polished' the narrative, added new stories and eliminated some of the infamous tales, (especially the ones that were too cruel). It was practically a new book that established the distinctive fairy tales' voice of the two German brothers. Notwithstanding their dedication and hard work the collection, still they did not receive the recognition and the success Jacob and Wilhelm had hoped for. The well deserved acknowledgment came finally in 1825 thanks to the publication of the Small Edition of their collection which was realized exclusively for children and included fifty of the most famous tales as well as some engravings which made it more appealing for the young audience. After the Small Edition there were other five editions of the

integral collection, the last one is dated 1857 and comprises 211 fairytales, in this last edition the tales had been reworked to accommodate the taste of the pretentious and guarded bourgeois. *Children's and Household Tales* has achieved an incredible popularity not only in Germany but around the world and this incredible success is the just recognition to the "Grimm's uncanny sense of how folk narrative inform culture"[358]. The brothers were convinced that their tales were the depository of the 'real' German culture and were the testimony of the civilization of their country. They also hoped that by learning about their folklore and ancient customs the Germans would develop a healthy sense of nationalistic love. Furthermore, their intent was to make the tales educational both from a political and from a social point of view; through the examples of the rewarded heroes and heroines, and the punishment of the villains they hoped that children and adolescents would learn how to behave properly and in fact

> "Their book is not so much a book of magic as it is a manual for education that seeks to go beyond the irrational. It is their impulse to educate, to pass on the experiences of a variety of people who knew the lore of survival that we may find the reasons why we are still drawn to the tales today."[359]

The brothers Grimm have left a legacy that lives still strong today all around the world; their stories together with Perrault's tales are also well represented in the cinema and media arts, hence whoever approaches the study of folklore today cannot leave them out of consideration.

### c.) From the Neapolitan to the French court to the Grimms' house: how have the tales changed?

Basile, Perrault and the brothers Grimm as we have seen, while sharing a great fascination with folklore and popular traditions, approached fairytales with different intents and dispositions, as it shows through their editing and rewritings of the tales. In this section I will compare and contrast a tale as written by the three authors; I will use Basile as the 'reference' text and I will analyze what has been changed and possibly why, in tales produced by Perrault

and the brothers Grimms. I chose to focus on one of the most 'classical' fairytales known to the world as *Cinderella*[360]. There are many versions of this tale and in fact the first story of *Cinderella* dates back to A.D. 850(ca) and it appeared in China; the heroine was called *Yeh-hsien* and the tale was collected by Tuan Ch'eng-shih. There are numerous versions of this fairy tale and folklorists have tried to classify them in groups according to the different motifs. Maria Roalfe Cox, for example, has collected forty-one variants in her work titled *Cinderella*, (1892) and she has classified the different tales into three major groups, "by specific differentiating incidents",

> "A-Cinderella (ill-treated heroine, recognition by means of shoe); B-Catskin (unnatural father, heroine flight); C-Cap o'Rushes (King Lear judgment, outcast hero- ine). Regardless of the presence of other "common" incidents, the variants that lack these essential incidents are classed as D-Indetermi- nate, while those with a hero instead of a heroine are given the designation of E-Hero tales. Group"[361]

The classical *Cinderella* by Perrault, as well as Basile's "La gatta Cenerentola", ("The Cinderella Cat, 1.6) and the Grimms' "Aschenputtel" clearly belong to group A. Cinderella, definitely, had a great impact in Italy and it actually seems to be the most popular fairytale type there. However, more interesting that the popularity of the story is the fact that the Italians seem to stray away from the 'proper' tale form and gravitate more towards the tales that Cox has relegate to group B, she writes,

> "The most popular motif occurring in the greatest number in the Italian tradition is wooden covering as disguise. …While the variants with old-woman skin motif are equally divided between Catskin and Cap o'Rushes, the wooden covering appears only in Catskin and the Indeterminate group (260, 261, 272). That is to say, the wooden covering is definitely related to the unnatural father and heroine flight."[362]

Already in Basile we can see the main role of the 'wood' as the princess shoe is not made of glass or gold but of wood (I shall comment more on this later). The magnetism of this tale still

lives strong today and it has become a worldwide phenomenon. The last decade of the twentieth century has witnessed an incredible amount of publications, ranging from storybooks to hipertext[363] and plays. There has also been an increased in the production of toys and film representations of this enchanting princess who "proves herself to be beautiful and a winner survivor despite all the ashes and cinder that are heaped upon her."[364] It seems almost impossible, however, to establish a definite identity for this contemporary heroine as she has become "totally multicultural" and has assumed different shapes and forms according to the taste of the different nations. She does not longer hide behind the dark and dirty ashes; rather she takes on different animal shapes and often she is transformed into a "dog, penguin, dinosaur, or hog." In one of the most successful and romantic film of our time, "Pretty Woman", (1990), she appears in the 'form' of prostitute, who is redeemed by a rich business man, the modern version of 'prince charming'. It is important to point out that already in Basile Cinderella is associated with the image of a prostitute as seen in this passage:

> "Venne l'autra festa e, sciute le sore, essa tornaie a lo dattorlo e, continovanno la canzone fatata, fu vestuta soperbamente e posta drinto na carrozza d'oro, co tante serviture atuorno che pareva *pottana pigliata a lo spassiggio* 'ntorniata de tammare"[365] (The emphasis in mine.)

> "The next feast day arrived, and after the sisters went out, Zezolla returned to the date tree and repeated the enchanted song, at which she was magnificently dressed and placed in a golden coach accompanied by so many savants that she looked like a whore arrested in the public promenade and surrounded by police agents."[366]

It is noteworthy that during that time in Naples prostitutes were not allowed to circulate in public streets or even in gondolas along the bay, they were prohibited from socializing with the 'honest' people, probably to maintain at least an appearance of decorum. Many courtesans ignored this prohibition hence they were apprehended and taken to prison[367].

Notwithstanding 'her' longevity Cinderella remains young into our hearts and still appeals to generations of children and adolescents as if it had been written yesterday. The reason for this 'ever-green' success is due to the fact that her tale touches upon primordial feelings and fears, such as envy, jealousy, siblings' rivalry, loneliness, but also love and hope. Moreover, her domestic situation is "iconic', as Zipes writes

> "Indeed, there is an iconic constellation that pertains to familial relations where there is a stepmother or stepfather. Daly and Wilson demonstrate that there is something about the human condition, which explains why biological parents are more inclined to treat their children with more kindness and love that stepparents give their stepchildren."[368]

Always in the realm of psychology Bruno Bettelheim gives a Freudian interpretation of the tale and presents it not only as an example of siblings' rivalry but also as a tale representing the development and the overcoming of the oedipal complex. According to Bettelheim when the child enters the "oedipal disappointments", which begin at the end of the developmental stage that psychoanalysis defines as "primary narcissisms", he begins to feel guilty about his 'dirty' thoughts and desires hence he is no longer sure that he deserves his parents love. During the oedipal period the child develops a strong desire "to replace the parent of the same sex in the love other parent" and this makes him feel unworthy of his parents love,

> "Here again, lack of objective knowledge leads the child to think that he is the only bad one in all these respects- the only child how has such desires. It makes every child identify with Cinderella, who is relegated to sit among the cinders. Since the child has such "dirty" wishes, that is where he also belongs, and where he would end up if his parents knew of his desires. This is why every child needs to believe that even if he were thus degraded, eventually he would be rescued from such degradation and experience the most wonderful exaltation- as Cinderella does." [369]

Cinderella also appeals to the religious reader, as she seems to give the message that endurance and good deeds are always repaid; for the Christian Catholic reader she echoes the image of Job,

the faithful servant of God who suffers incredibly but is then rewarded with infinite joy. Ultimately the tale captures much attention because it is about survival, overcoming life`s difficulties and its ordeals. Cinderella is indeed a 'survivor", she endures pain, she cries and at times in despair , but at the end she 'succeeds' and defeats her adverse destiny; the heroine is able to shake off the ashes and rise to 'power' following the "rags to riches trajectory". The path she takes to get there is different in each of the versions that have been produced over the centuries and even more so in the three versions I will now analyze.

Basile opens his *cunto* "La gatta Cennerentola", as follows,

> "You should know then, that there once[370] was a widowed prince who had a daughter so dear to him that he had eyes for no one else. He had taken on a first-rate sewing teacher for her, who taught her how to do the chain-stitch, openwork, fringes, and the hem-stitch[371], and showed her more affection than words can express. But the father had just remarried; he had taken a fiery, wicked, and demonic thing for his wife, and her stepdaughter soon began to make this accursed woman's stomach turn. She gave the girl sour looks, made awful faces at her, and knitted her eyebrows in such a frightful manner that the poor little thing was always complaining to the teacher for her stepmother's ill treatment, saying, 'Oh, God, couldn't you be my little mommy, you who give me so many smooches and squeezes?"[372]

The author maintains the traditional fairytale opening setting the story in a timeless frame while preparing the audience for the magical happenings that are about to unfold. In this opening paragraph there is no mention of the biological mother, we learn immediately that the father is a widower and that he is very fond of his daughter; he still stands by her side and gives her all the attentions she needs and "had eyes for no one else" even though he has remarried to a "fiery, wicked" woman who clearly hates her stepdaughter. What is odd is that the father, at this point, is not dominated by his wife rather he is subjugated by the love he has for his daughter while in other versions of *Cinderella* we learn at very beginning that the stepmother has taken complete control of the household. This discrepancy puzzles the reader who is accustomed to the classical

version of the tale, while it raises curiosity about the role this dominant daughter will play in the story. Also unusual is the presence of the teacher and the relevance Basile assigns her; she stands in opposition to the stepmother: one is goodhearted and 'loves' the young girl; the other is evil and mistreats the child. In effect we could conclude that evil woman is none other than the alter-ego of the benevolent teacher, they represent the two 'faces' of a single being as the change of heart of the teacher would then prove. Bettelheim suggests, instead, that the teacher is a reincarnation of the real mother, he writes

> "It is possible that in "cat Cinderella", real mother and first stepmother are one and the same person at different developmental periods; and her murder and replacement are an oedipal fantasy rather that a reality. If so, it makes good sense that Zezolla is not punished for crimes she only imagined"[373]

Hence , while the inexperienced reader might be puzzled by this unexpected presence the expert would soon suspect that this 'mysterious' woman will assume a major role later on in the story. Basile creates a sort of 'female triangle' that dominates the scene entrapping the man in the middle which confirms that he is not the leading force of the events; rather he is a malleable soul easily manipulated by the women around him. The weakness and powerlessness of the father is not surprising within the context of *Lo cunto.* Basile normally mocks kings, princes and powerful men throughout his collection ridiculing them for their inability to perform as *real* monarchs should. One cannot forget that Tadeo, the protagonist of the frame tale, is also depicted as being silly and gullible; as discussed in the previous chapters he is a 'toy' in the hands of Lucia and Zoza.

Perrault opens his tale in this fashion:

> "There was once[374] a man who took for his second wife most haughty, stuck-up woman you ever saw. She had two daughters of her own just like her in everything. The husband for his part had a young daughter, but she was gentle and sweet-natured, taking after her mother, who had been the best person in the world. The wedding was barely over when the stepmother let her temper show; she

> couldn't bear the young girl's goodness, for it made her own daughters seem even more hateful. She gave her the vilest household chores: it was she who cleaned the dishes and the stairs, she who scrubbed Madam's chamber, and the chambers of those little madams, her stepsisters; she slept at the top of the house in an attic, on a shabby mattress, while her sisters had luxurious boudoirs, with beds of the latest fashion, and mirrors in which they could study themselves from head to toe. The poor girl suffered it all patiently and didn't dare to complain to her father, who would have scolded her, because he was completely under the woman's sway."[375]

The Grimms' version reads as follows:

> "The wife of a rich man fell ill one day. When she realizes that the end was near, she called her only daughter to her bedside and said: "Dear child, if you are good and say your prayers faithfully, our dear Lord will always help you, and I shall look down from heaven and always be with you." Then she closed her eyes and passed away. Every day the little girl went to her mother's grave and wept. She was always good and said her prayers. When winter came, snow covered the grave with a white blanket, and when the sun took it off again in the spring, the rich man remarried. The man's new wife brought with her two daughters with beautiful faces and fair skin, but with hearts that were foul and black."[376]

Perrault, like Basile, maintains the traditional opening line while the Grimms do not, their starting sentence, indeed, sounds more like the first line of a chronicle. The French author also produces a very slim and svelte narrative in only few lines we learn the 'life story' of the young protagonist: she had a mom who was "the best person in the world" and she resembles her in every aspect; now she oppressed by her stepsisters and her stepmother whom Perrault defines simply as haughty and proud, instead of evil and "wicked" as we read in the first version. Basile is, after all, a Baroque writer and likes to 'exaggerate'; also he was writing to denounce the corruption and the frivolousness of his society, hence he intended to be as harsh as possible in the description of vices and immorality. Perrault, at least apparently rejects the Baroque for the sake of classicism, consequently he tends to be more delicate and less poignant; in fact he doesn't really talk about hate or pure evil as Basile does. Perrault deals with feelings more common among human beings, and also less frightful, such as jealousy. The stepmother does

not hate her stepdaughter she is 'simply' afraid that her grace and elegance would enhance her own daughters' faults that is why she mistreats her. Moreover, he alleviates Cinderella's persecution by presenting the younger stepsister as not "quite so rude as the elder". Furthermore, he was not writing exclusively for an adult audience; he had in mind 'his' young aristocrats and was writing to educate them and teach 'proper gender' behavior. That might explain also why rather than portray the father as a cruel and heartless parent, (which would have shed a bad light on the position of men in the household), he chose to eliminate him completely. Perrault concentrates on women, and shows how *bad* girls are punished and *good* ones are rewarded. At the end the arrogant, pretentious stepsisters and stepmother are overpowered by the spiritual beauty of Cinderella which demonstrates that if a girl behaves 'humbly' she will be granted happiness.

The Grimms present a more extensive and elaborated narrative in terms of the detail they provide. The main difference between their version and that of Basile and Perrault is the presence of the dying mother who assumes the role of the 'orchestrator' of the daughter's feature. In fact she instructs her young child on how to behave in order to have a good life, also she reassures the frighten girl that she would never be alone as her (the mother) will look upon her from heaven. The brothers put a strong emphasis on religion and on good Christian behavior; following God and his commandments seems the only way to achieve success, this detail betrays the deeply religious education they had received. In addition, the father in the Grimms' tale does not remarry right away, winter goes by, and only when spring comes back he takes a second wife; he has to pay his respect to the memory of his beloved. Furthermore, the coldness and solitude of the snowy winter days are associated with the emptiness the mother had left in her daughter's heart and with the mourning period that follows the loss of a loved one;

spring, obviously, celebrates the re-birth of nature, hence the awaking of senses and desires which could explain why the father remarries at this point. Peculiar in the German version is also the description of the stepsisters, (two like in Perrault), and the stepmother, who are beautiful with 'fair' skin but with a 'black' heart. Neither Basile nor Perrault make any reference to the skin tone of the stepsisters, while in the Grimms' version that seems to be a valuable detail, and not only to create the opposition between good (fair) and bad (black). Beauty is strictly correlated with fair, (white), skin; and while this might have also been true for Basile and Perrault, the Grimms are the only ones to openly mention this detail. Although harmless at the time the tale was written, considering that the brothers through their collection intended to celebrate the greatness of German folklore and people, it is easy to understand how during Nazism their tales might have been misunderstood or willingly misused, and how their overt association of beauty with 'fairness' of skin was interpreted as a mark of the German people and served to promote the idea that only the 'fair' skinned German 'race' was perfect. The opening of the German tale is also dominated by women, at this point the father is still simply a fuzzy image, however while in Perrault he completely disappears, in the Grimms, like in Basile, he will have his part in the making of the daughter's fortune.

We had left the Neapolitan Cinderella crying to her teacher complaining about her stepmother, what happens next? The lamentations and the simpering of the young girl "planted a wasp" into the teacher's head, consequently she devices a plan to 'become' the little girl's mother; hence granting her prayers. The teacher instructs Zezolla, (for this was the initial name of the heroine) on how to get rid of the evil step mother; she must kill her and "once that's done" she must hassle her father, begging him to marry the 'good' teacher. The father, who after the

loss of his second wife, will be even more vulnerable will easily surrender to his daughter's request, and he would do anything to make her happy. The girl is excited about the idea, in fact

> "After Zezolla heard this, every hour seemed like a thousand years to her. She followed her teacher's instructions to a tee, and once the mourning period for the stepmother's accident was over, she began to play her father's key to the tune of marrying the teacher. At first the prince thought it was a joke, but his daughter bit so hard that she finally broke the door down, and in the end he yielded to Zezolla's words. He took Carmosina, the teacher, for his wife, and held grand festivities."[377]

The Neapolitan Cinderella has the unique characteristic of being an 'active' participant in the making of her own fate. Zezolla, especially in this first part of the story, is in charge of her destiny: *she* kills the first stepmother and *she* persuades her father to marry the teacher; she is not the victim yet nor she is the passive innocent girl we traditionally know. For a little while she also enjoys the peace of a good life and a warm household, which makes her stepmother a little more humane than the others who show their true color right after entering their husbands' home and since the very beginning start mistreating the poor 'Cinderellas' In the *Contes* we read

> "The wedding was barely over when the stepmother let her temper show."[378]

In the *Children's and Household Tales* the brothers, after having announced the arrival of the stepmother, state:

> "This marked the beginning of a hard time for the poor stepchild."[379]

Moreover, Basile's tale is different from the others also because it is the only one where Cinderella, 'the' antagonistic stepmother and her six stepsisters, have a real name; they are called respectively Zezolla, Carmosina and Imperia, Calamita, Shiorella[380], Diamante, Colombina and Pascarella. The only characters without names are the two leading men: the father and the prince. The reason for leaving the male protagonist nameless could betray Basile's intention to make them the iconic representation of the leading class, (by "leading class" in this case I mean

'political leaders') in Naples, so corrupted and at times useless that they didn't even deserve a name. Assigning real names, instead, feeds into his design to constantly mix reality and fantasy, to create tales that are magical and timeless while still imbued with the Neapolitan culture of which the names are a testimony. On the contrary, the choice to leave the victimized girl and the evil women without a name could indicate the intention of the authors to present the rivalry between the stepdaughter and the stepmother almost as an atavist and inevitable conflict.

Carmosina showers Zezolla with love and attentions for only few days, afterwards she finally reveals her true face and becomes like all the other fairytale stepmothers,

> "The new stepmother smoked Zezolla with caresses for five or six days, …But in no time at all she annulled and completely forgot about the service rendered (oh, sad the soul housed in a wicked mistress!), and began to raise to all heights six daughters of her own who she had kept secret up until them."[381]

The first thing that catches our attention is that in this version the stepsisters are six and not two; also captivating is the moral in parenthesis: to whom is that admonition addressed? One plausible explanation for Basile's choice to have six stepsisters rather than two is that through them and their mother he intended to represent, or at least hint at, the seven capital sins (or the opposite, the seven virtues), (6+1=7). It is common in fairytales to represent women as 'Eve'; as the ones who can ruin a happy house or waist the generosity of a 'questionable' kind husband by giving in to curiosity (i.e. Bluebeard). Deprived of religious or ethical virtues, beauty is often the only accessory of fairytales heroine, as Maria Tatar writes:

> "It is one of the lesser-known facts of folkloric life that women are rarely as virtuous as they are beautiful. Cinderella and Snow White may combine good behavior with good looks, but they are exceptional in that respect. Wherever, we look in folklore, we can find disagreeable heroines."[382]

Furthermore, is also possible that Basile wanted to make Zezolla's final victory even more grandiose by having her defeat the force of seven evil women all teamed up against her. As far

as the warning in parenthesis, "(oh, sad the soul housed in a wicked mistress!)", I believe that it could be addressed to both Zezolla and Carmosina. In fact, it is plausible to think that the admonition is a sort of premonition for the hard times that await the young woman, as well as it is a sort of omen for the final defeat that the evil stepmother will suffer. In a sense, unlike her French and German 'sisters', Basile's Cinderella deserves to be punished and to suffer as she has murdered a woman and deceived her loving father simply to satisfy her own egotistical fancy. Her punishment comes rather soon as, once Carmosina is assured of her dominant position in the house, she uses all her feminine resources to enthrall the husband and make him forget about his beloved little girl. She persuades him to devote all of his love and attention to her and her daughters; it is when the mistress succeeds in her maneuver that Zezolla loses her real name and is re-baptized as the "Cinderella Cat"[383]. This is a destiny she shares with her other companions, of whom however we never learned the real names. They also, after their fathers have forsaken them, are re-named Cinderella; the new name indicates their fallen status. Luckily, in this miserable life the three girls are not completely left alone; they all receive help from some 'super natural' beings. In Basile and in the Grimms' the helper is a bird, while in Perrault it is a fairy godmother. For the episode involving the helper, and the way in which 'it' delivers his assistance to the heroine, the tales of Basile and the Grimms have much in common, while Perrault stands on total different ground.

The bird, "a little dove", appears to Zezolla during the festivities of her father's wedding, and says to her

> "If ever you should wish for something, send your request to the dove of the fairies on the island of Sardinia, and you will be immediately satisfied"[384]

It happens that her father has to go to Sardinia to take care of some business and before he leaves he asks his stepdaughters what gift they would like for him to bring back. They all asked for

dresses, jewelry, ornaments and make up; when he asked his daughter she requested that he would give her regards to the "dove of the fairies and tell her to send something" to her; then she added "and if you forget, may you be unable to go forward or backward." Naturally on his way back the father forgets about Zezolla's request, hence when he is about to sail back home "his ship was unable to move" as a reminder of his broken promise. He then goes to the "fairies' grotto", and having given them, his daughter's regard he asks them to send her something,

> " And lo and behold, a lovely young woman who was a banner to beauty came out of the cavern…she gave him a date tree, a hoe, a golden pail, and a silk cloth, and told him that the date tree was for planting and the other things to cultivate it."[385]

When the father comes back, Zezolla immediately plants the date tree[386] and starts taking good care of it, and in just four days "the plant had grown as tall as a woman" and "a fairy came out of it and say to her,

> "What is you wish? Zezolla answered that she wished to leave the house now and then but didn't want her sisters to know. The fairy replied, 'Whenever you like, go to the pot and say,
> Golden date of mine
> I've weeded you with the little hoe of gold,
> I've watered you with the little pail of gold,
> I've dried you with the cloth of silk,
> Now strip yourself and dress me!"
> And when you want to undress, change the last verse to:" Strip me and dress yourself!"[387]

Before she receives the magic formula that would grant her wishes, Zezolla has to prove herself worthy of it by caring for the plant helping it to blossom. Also unusual is the request she makes to the fairy. We have been accustomed to hear that Cinderella begs the fairy to give her dresses so that she can go to the ball, together with all the other girls, to see the prince; here she simply asks to be able to go out sometimes without everybody knowing. Hence, she does not want to

meet 'the' prince, she probably just wants to get out in order to explore life and meet 'a' prince who will free her sexuality.

In the Grimms 'version, similarly, the father has to leave the house to go to a fair, and as we would expect he asks the two step daughters and his daughter what would they like him to bring back. The stepdaughters ask for jewelry and clothes, while Cinderella asks him to "break off the first branch that brushes against" his hat, and so he did. When she receives the branch, the girl goes to her mother's grave and plants it there and then

> "She wept so hard that her tears fell to the ground and watered it. It grew to become a beautiful tree. Three times a day Cinderella went and sat under it and wept and prayed. Each time a little white bird would also fly to the tree, and whenever she made a wish, the little bird would toss down what she has wished for."[388]

Aschenputtel[389] has to weep and mourn in order to nurture the plant that would help her wishes become a reality; in essence she has to pay respect to her late mother. She stands as a moral example for the children and the adolescents who would read the tale. Furthermore, through the plant that grows on her mother's grave, she is able to establish a connection with the mother who then 'reincarnates' into the little white bird who fulfill each one of her wish; in fact the mother before dying had promised that she would be watching upon her from heaven. The bird, in fact, provides the poor girl with all she needs to survive, we don't really know what the girl actually demands, but we can assume that she is asking for the strength to go on, or for some food and clothes. We are only sure that at this point she is not yet asking for the prince , probably because she is not ready for marriage, she needs to find her identity and metabolize her sorrow before she can embrace womanhood completely.

Perrault's tale evolves differently; the father never appears in the tale and he has absolutely no merit into the making of his daughter's fortune. The little girl lives bravely

through her ordeal; she faces the evil forces all alone, for at this point she has no helper. Nonetheless, in spite of all the injustices she receives, Cinderella still manages to remain pure and gentle towards her wicked stepsisters. She is the epitome of kindness, almost a martyr, perhaps the image the author intended to portray in order to emphasize even more the opposition between good and evil. The monotony of her existence is interrupted by the news that the prince is having a ball where he invited all the 'good' girls; in Perrault's words

> "It happened that the king's son gave a ball, to which he asked all the quality our two misses were also asked, as they cut quite a sash in the district."[390]

The realization that because of her 'dirty look' she would not be able to go to the ball sends Cinderella into despair. Indeed, when she sees her stepsisters taking off to go the royal palace, she breaks down in tears. This is the first time we see her cry. Coincidentally it is when she cries, that her godmother, a fairy in disguise, appears for the first time. In all the three tales it is water that brings forth the helper; although it assumes different meaning each time. We could argue that the water is the symbol of purification and repentance for Zezolla; for Aschenputtel, instead, her tears represent catharsis and finally free the girl from the anguish caused for the untimely loss of her beloved mother; lastly for Cinderella weeping is simply a way to give an outlet to her sorrow and desperation and to open up her soul to receive help and hope. Perrault's Cinderella appears as the most vulnerable and helpless of the three maidens, she does not even attempt to ask her stepmother and stepsisters to take her to the ball she simply weeps. Aschenputtel, on the other hand, at least tries to convince her stepmother to let her go along; she successfully performs, (with the help of the birds), two impossible tasks in the hope that the wicked mistress would allow her to attend the ball. Only when she understands that in spite of her efforts and fatigues she would not be allowed to go along she falls into despair, runs to her mother's grave and cries her heart out. Zezolla is different; she never becomes so desperate and

also her meeting with the prince happens by pure chance. While the other two heroines want to go to the ball with the only intent to meet the prince, whom they secretly wish to marry, Zezolla goes to the feast only because she wants to enjoy herself and be free. The prince, in Basile's *cunto*, 'happens to be' at the street festival, as "fate willed it."

We have already seen how the magic happens in "La Gatta Cenerentola", let us now see how it occurs in Perrault and the brothers Grimm. In the French version the godmother is the 'magic-maker'; she appears as if she were a ghost, in fact, until the moment Cinderella cries we have never heard of her. The mysterious appearance leads us to believe that she represents the spirit of the dead mother that has reincarnated into and old fairy to be able to rescue her abandoned daughter in a moment of profound desperation. The correspondence between the girl and the metaphysical world it intrinsic in the name she is assigned. 'Cinder' or ash,(as the German name more clearly shows), and

> "Ashes derive their symbolism first form the fact they are preeminently a residue-what remains after the fire goes out-hence, anthropocentrically, what remains of the body after life is extinguished."[391]

Ashes, however, have also a positive symbolism especially in religious writings and teachings, where everything that is associated with life is inevitably associated with the idea of "eternal Return". This would explain the various religious and pagan rituals that employ ash as a mean to keep away ritual spirits and propitiate fertility and prosperity[392]. It is obviously present in the Catholic rite of receiving ashes on the Wednesday after Mardi Gras which marks the beginning of Lent, the penance period. The Catholic are 'covered' in ashes and carry it while they expiate their sins and purify their soul, then at the end of the forty days, on Easter, they will receive the 'water' of forgiveness and re-born to a new life, just like Cinderella.

When the godmother appears and asks the girl what she wanted, Cinderella was sobbing so much that could not even utter the words to express her wish; however the godmother knew exactly what the young maiden desired,

> "Her godmother, who was a fairy, said you want to go to the ball, isn't that it? 'Yes, sighed Cinderella.' 'Well if you're a good girl, I shall send you', said her godmother.[393]

Once again there is an emphasis on morality that we do not see in the Neapolitan text. Zezolla does not have to promise to be a good girl in order to get her wish granted, she simply has to ask. Cinderella needs to earn it by demonstrating that she is 'really' a good girl; basically she has to reassure the godmother that she would be able to behave properly and resist temptation. Furthermore, Cinderella has to actively participate into the making of the magic; she has to go fetch the pumpkin that the fairy would transform into a magnificent carriage, she has to free the mice that would be transformed into six 'dappled horses', finally when her godmother is having trouble "finding something she could turn into a coachman" it is Cinderella who finds the solution,

> "Cinderella said, "I'll go and see if there is a rat in the rat trap, and we can make a coach man of him." "Good idea," said her godmother. "go and see". Cinderella brought her the rat trap, in which there were three fat rats. The fairy chose the one with the finest whiskers and with a touch transformed him into a portly coachman, with the most lavish moustache you ever saw."[394]

Then she goes into the garden to fetch six lizards that the godmother will transform into six footmen; and only when she has obediently helped the old woman she will receive the magic touch that would transform her from a rag lady into a princess. As Perrault writes, the godmother touches her and

> "her clothes changed into garment of gold and silver cloth, richly embroidered with jewels. The she gave her a pair of glass slippers, the prettiest in the world."[395]

She is thus ready to go the ball, but she has to promise that she will be back by midnight as after that time the magic will disappear; this is yet another way to test her obedience. The German tale unfolds differently, and is closer to Basile's version. Aschenputtel, like Zezolla, merely has to utter the magic formula to receive her gifts. She prays to the tree,

> "'Shake your branches, little tree,
> Toss gold and silver down on me'
> The bird threw down to her a dress of gold and silver, along with slippers embroidered with silk and silver" [396]

The Cinderellas are ready to go to the ball; obviously all of them except Zezolla for in the Neapolitan story there is no ball, which must have been an innovation introduced by Perrault, rather there is a town feast, which is much more Baroque and of popular taste. Nevertheless, the wonder their beauty causes once they appear on the scene wearing their magnificent dresses is the same for Zezolla, Cinderella and Aschenputtel; also same is the effect they have on the princes: in all three cases he falls madly in love with the unknown princess; what differs is the attitude of the single princesses toward their prince. While they all show to be attracted by the handsome man, the only one who seems to be 'really' in love with her partner is the French Cinderella. She is the one who loses track of time and while dancing with the prince the second night of the ball forgets about what the godmother had told her. The other two Cinderellas 'willingly' leave the prince, as far as we know, in fact, no one had set a curfew for them. Possibly they wanted to be home before their stepmothers and stepsisters but had they really been in love, like their French companion, they probably would have stayed a little longer. The Grimms especially emphasizes the girl's will to leave the ball as they repeatedly say "she wanted to go home", while in Perrault we read

> "the young lady wasn't at all bored, and forgot what her godmother had told her, with the result that she heat the first stroke of midnight when she thought it as still only eleven."[397]

The brothers' adaptation is also closer to Basile's *cunto* in regard to the number of times the prince and Cinderella meet before she loses her shows. In Basile there are three 'feast days', just like in the Grimms there are three "weddings"; Perrault chooses to have only two "weddings".

Our ladies, whether because of lateness or because of fear, leave the festivities in a rush, and they all loose a 'shoe'. The shoe that has become more famous is the 'glass shoe' that appears in Perrault's tale, however it is significant to point out that the shoes of the other two versions were not made of glass. In Basile, in reality, it is not a shoe that Zezolla looses rather it is a "patten", "chianiello" in Neapolitan, a sort of overshoes with extremely high heels, worn by ladies, (usually courtesans), to protect the hem of their dresses. [398] Obviously such a shoe was far from beautiful, hence the fact that the prince is mesmerized by the beauty of this little 'precious thing' is meant to create irony ; even more so if we considered that the prince must have known that pattens were usually worn by courtesans. The patten also symbolizes the questionable morality of Zezolla who as we know has proven to be shrewd and pitiless in her ascent to power. The glass shoe represents a complete transformation in the symbolism assigned to it. If it is true that the slippers represents the girl's sexuality, then Perrault, by choosing a 'glass shoe', probably wanted to stress the limpidness of the girl's heart as well as the fact that she was still 'pure' from a sexual point of view. The fact that she leaves it behind, could mean, then, that even though she is still afraid she is nonetheless prepared to embrace her sexuality; she is basically inviting the prince to look for her as she will be ready for him once he finds her. The sexual innuendo that underlines Perrault'd tale is evident also in the name the stepsisters originally chose for our heroine, *Cucendron,* (in English, *Cinder-butt*), then changed into Cendrillon to "spare her".[399]

Furthermore, glass is a material that cannot stretch, if any attempt is made to 'widen' it, it will break and its value will be lost forever. Hence the shoe will fit only the 'right' foot; with this the author intended to stress the fact Cinderella was the only woman worthy to be is bride; she was still the "perfect fit", in fact her "shoe" was still intact and had not been 'stretched' by any another *foot*. The same reasoning could have been behind the Grimms' choice to have a shoe made of gold; indeed as Tatar also points out, gold, like glass, cannot stretch, consequently a "golden shoe cannot stretch to fit its wearer." More importantly gold is "traditionally regarded as the most precious of all metals, is the perfect medal"[400], hence the one, who wears, once again, is the perfect match, and her morality is also 'perfect' she is untouched and pure. As W.R.S. Ralston observes there has always been a little of confusion on the material of the slipper, he writes

> "As to the material of the slipper there has been much dispute. In the greater part of what are apparently the older forms of the story, it is made of gold. This may perhaps be merely a figure of speech, but there are instances on record of shoes, or at least sandals, being made of precious metals. …Glass is an all but unknown material for shoemaking in the genuine folk-tales of any country except France. …Even in France itself the slipper is not always of glass. Madame d'Aulnoy's Finette Cendron for instance, wore one 'of red velvet embroidered with pearls.'"[401]

Ralston also mentions the ambiguity that exists around the French term *verre* used by Perrault in his tale. This term has been explained in two ways, some critics sustain that it indicates *tissue en verre* a material in vogue in Perrault's time. Others claim that the term *verre* originated by a mistake made by some transcribers who were not familiar with the term *vair* ,which was the name of a fur and supposedly the original word used in the tale, hence they changed into the more familiar and current *verre*[402].

Towards the end the Grimms' tale becomes more cruel and gory. First there is the bloody episode of the stepsisters cutting off their toes and their heel in order to fit into the shoe.

When the prince shows up with the shoe, the two evil misses are very excited as "they both have beautiful feet", but as we know in fairytales beauty is not always synonym of perfection. The mother is also filled with hope that one of her daughters would become a princess so she incites them to try the shoe and forces them to 'fit' into it,

> "the elder went with her mother into a special room to cry it on. But the shoe was too small for her, and she couldn't get her big toe into it. Her mother handed her a knife and said: 'Cut your toe off. Once you're queen, you won't need to go on foot anymore.' The girl sliced off her toe, forced her foot into the shoe, gritted her teeth, and went to meet the prince. …When the prince looked at the girl's foot, he saw that blood was spurting from the shoe, and he turned his horse around. He brought the false bride back home, and said that since she was not the true bride; her sister should try the shoe on. The shoe went into her room and succeeded into getting her toes into the shoe, but her heel was way too big. Her mother handed her a knife too and said: 'Cut off part of your heel. Once you're queen you won't need to go on foot anymore.' The girl sliced off a piece of her heel, forced her foot into the shoe, gritted her teeth, and went out to meet the prince."[403]

The prince clearly will bring back the second sister as well, and at this point Cinderella would get her chance to try the shoe. The prince, who has not yet given up his hopes of finding his beloved, asks the man of the house if perhaps he has another daughter. The father's response echoes his old Neapolitan ancestor's reply; he admits to have another daughter but he soon adds "she can't possibly become your bride". The Neapolitan father had basically given the same answer even if in a more elaborated, "Baroque", style. He had said,

> "I have a daughter, but she looks after the hearth and is an unworthy wretch and does not deserve to sit at the same table at which you eat."[404]

How could a father have forsaken his daughter like this? This was a moral issue that did not concern Basile at all; his prince was the typical weak-willed leader that he liked to portray in his *cunti* as a way to express his discontent with the kings of his own time. The German brothers on the other hand, were very preoccupied with morality that is possibly why they 'polished' the father's discourse and rendered it less cruel. Aschenputtel's father seems to speak out of fear

that the presence of his 'dirty' daughter might offend the prince; Zezolla's father is just pitiless. The enamored man, however, insists in seeing the 'hidden' girl and asks that she be called in the room. Her demeanor when she is summoned to appear before the prince indicates a little malice. Aschenputtel does not rush to meet her destiny, she knows perfectly that 'she is the one' hence there is no need to hurry; no one else could ever replace her. She washes her hands, but most importantly she washes her face to reveal her beauty in its entire splendor; she is confident that the prince has not forgotten that exquisite spectacle. Once she goes into the room she calmly sits down, takes her shoe off, and slips her foot into the slipper, "it fit perfectly"

> "and when she stood up the prince looked her straight in the face, he recognized the beautiful girl with who he had danced, and he shouted 'She is the true bride'"[405]

The most striking thing about this episode is the extreme cruelty of the mother who forces her daughters to mutilate themselves so that she can satisfy her thirst for money and prestige, and yet at the end she does not received any punishment, at least not on the physical level. Her retribution will be that of seeing her two daughters disfigured and blinded for life, with no hope of ever finding a husband, poor or rich. The two stepsisters try to obtain forgiveness by being nice to Cinderella the day of her wedding; however this 'good girl' has no compassion for them and does not intend to share her fortune with her abusers. She does nothing to stop the doves, her helpers all along, from pecking the girls' eyes out leaving them with "blindness for the rest of their lives." Evidently the brothers wanted to set a strong example showing how avarice, jealousy, and wickedness are harshly punished. Their tale is an admonition to behave always in a proper manner, showing obedience, patience and decency in every moment even during hard times, exactly like Aschenputtel had done.

Pitilessness is also the underlying sentiment of Zezolla's story. After the poor girl tries on the patten, that "no sooner was it drawn close to Zezolla's foot that it hurled itself with no help at all onto the foot of that painted egg of Love, just like iron runs to a magnet", and is recognized as the true bride she proudly steps up into her new position of power. Now that she is respected and venerated by all the other women as "she was their queen" she completely forgets her stepsisters and shows no intention to include them into her new life and glory. As a punishment the stepsisters "nearly died of anger" and are forced to admit that "those who oppose the stars are crazy." Zezolla wants to leave her past behind, including her father whom she compensates with the same indifference he had shown her.

On the contrary the stepsisters have better destinies in Perrault' tale, for Cinderella not only forgives them, but even marries them off to two rich gentlemen; she is "a model of compassion". Nevertheless, she shares with Aschenputtel the smirk that appears on her face while she looks at the stepsisters desperately trying to fit their feet into the glass slipper,

> "The slipper was brought to the two sisters, who tried everything to force their feet into the slipper, but they couldn't manage it. Cinderella, who was watching, and who recognized her own slipper, laughed and said, 'Let me see if it fits me.'"[406]

She is not summoned to try the shoe; she volunteers to do so and for the first time in Perrault's tale we see her taking charge of her life. The little girl has finally grown up and is ready to embrace womanhood; hence she is ready to be a bride as also shown by the audacity she shows by stepping forward. Also proper of Perrault's tale is that it does not end with the marriage like the other two versions. In order to validate the pedagogical value of his collection he adds two morals that deserve some attention.

The first moral reads as follows,

> "Beauty in woman is a very rare treasure:
> Of it we can never tire.
> But what's worth more, a priceless pleasure,
> Is charm, which we must all admire.
> That wise instructress, the godmother;
> while dressing her for a queen
> Was giving her power to charm another;
> That is what this story means.
> Ladies, better that teased-up hair is
> To win a heart, and conquer a ball.
> Charm is the true gift of the fairies;
> Without it you've got nothing; with it, all." [407]

Since the very begging Perrault' tales underlines the moral and materialistic concerns of his middle-class audience and this moral serves to stress even more such concerns. The most important quality for the aristocratic society of the time was to ' appear'; look was everything and if beauty was not a gift of nature, then it had to be 'faked' as good as possible through charm and good manners, both of which could be acquired with proper training. Usually the old governesses were in charge of educating the young aristocratic girls, and Perrault believed that his fairytales could be used as a 'manual' of proper manners. The fairytale princesses should be used as a role model, a woman should do nothing more than sit quietly and wait for her 'prince' to raise her to a highly regarded position in society: that of wife and eventually mother. Furthermore, even when she achieves that respectable position all of her abilities and intelligence should be used exclusively to benefit the household. Throughout the tale Perrault obviously connects with the materialistc ambitions of his middle-class audience, as we can see when he emphasizes the fact that the "king's son gave a ball, to which he asked all the *quality*[408]" or when he describes in depth the indulging lifestyle of Cinderella's stepsisters who sleep in rooms elegantly furnished and are *extremely* concerned with fashion. As he writes,

> "her sisters had luxurious boudoirs, with beds of the latest fashion, and mirrors in which they could study themselves from head to toe."[409]

The two misses when invited to the ball, keep themselves busy "choosing the clothes and hairstyles which would show them off best." Interesting are also the trivial details he provides about the fabric and the style of the outfits the two ladies will wear. It is after all the presence of these apparently minor details, which lend the version of 'Cinderella' its French flavor and makes it different from all the other versions. Neither in Basile nor in the Grimms have we encountered this minutia in the description of the clothes. We just know that the two heroines wear marvelous gowns as shiny as the sun, embroidered with gold and silver; no mention is made of the style or the exact fabric. That is because the other two authors had a different audience in mind. Basile was targeting an adult audience, specifically the friends to whom he read his *cunti*; and he meant to share with them his own critical point of view on the political, economical and social reality of his time. The Grimms, in contrast, were dealing with the harsh realities of life associated with the peasant culture and their aim was to educate the youth to live honestly and humbly, while also forging a healthy patriotic feeling, which was missing in Germany at that time of political unsteadiness and division.

The second moral is

> "It is no doubt a great advantage
> To have shrewdness, wit, and courage;
> To be well born, with every sense
> And have all sorts of other talents
> Which Heaven gives you for your share.
> But with or without them, when all is said,
> They'll never help you get ahead
> Unless to spread your talents farther
> You've a willing godmother, or godfather"[410]

This moral seems to have a subtle critical tone as Perrault stresses the fact that personal qualities and merits are never enough to break the 'glass ceiling' of success. In order to achieve a higher status in society one must always be sponsored and protected by some powerful person. Even

Cinderella, in spite of her virtues and her extraordinary beauty, would not have been able to re-climb the social-ladder had she not had her godmother. More than a moral this seems like a warning to the young girls to curb their enthusiasm and dismiss the belief that everybody, as long as they are virtuous and beautiful, will always end up like Cinderella. Undeniably being honest and attractive might help to get a little ahead of the game, but one always needs a "willing" and I would add a powerful "godmother or godfather".

In some aspects Perrault's morals are valid even today confirming the eternal value of fairytales. Our society revolves around appearance, following the style in vogue has become a categorical imperative; wearing the right clothes is still, in many instances, the key that opens the door to greater opportunities. It also true that our world puts a strong emphasis on beauty or on 'being' beautiful. We are constantly bombarded with commercials and ads that invite us to 'better our outer appearance', but what about our spirit? Perrault, thanks to his concern for morality and honesty, doesn't fail to mention that beauty alone is not enough, one also needs charm and prudence to reach his/her goal, but today too often these qualities are forgotten. Morality is not anymore a major concern, the attention has shift to ambition and arrivism.

At the end of our analysis of a tale that has crossed centuries and continents, we can see how, each author has given an original and unique tone to the story making each of the versions a unique work of art. In reality, Perrault's Cinderella has very little in common with her 'progenitor' Zezolla or her later 'sister' Aschenputtel, The first remarkable difference is that while the Neapolitan and the German 'sisters' are wronged by the father, and not only by the stepmother, the French Cinderella is wronged solely by the stepmother and the stepsisters. The father is merely an image and it is mentioned only one time at the very beginning, there are no other references to him throughout Furthermore, the 'nature' of Perrault's heroine is

fundamentally different compared to the other two Cinderellas. Cinderella,[411] remains untainted by the evil that surrenders her and preserves her good spirit to the point that not only she grants forgiveness to her atavist enemies; she also takes care of them. She has it all, beauty, grace and a good heart; she is almost 'divine'. Her pure nature makes her an alien also to the modern reader. In essence, while we might still be enchanted by the marvelous story of the French author, it is undeniable that the heroine he portrays is too far from our idea of a 'good' girl, she is too idealistically perfect. In addition, her passivity and almost pretentious kindness contribute in making her a stranger to us. Whether a feminist or not, one would agree on the fact that being passive is not what a woman should do in order to achieve success or "conquer a heart"; nowadays women are in charge of their own fortune they don't necessarily have to wait for prince charming to come to their rescue; often, is the prince who is rescued by the princess. Zezolla and Aschenputtel are certainly less 'ideal' but in return they are more human and to an extent 'believable'. In spite of the fact that they receive magical help to facilitate their ascent on the social ladder, what strikes the modern reader is the fact that they actually take part into the making of their life. They are in charge of their fate, they know exactly what they want and how to get it and for this they are definitely more modern and appealing to our contemporary taste. Moreover, these two girls are extremely independent, while their other 'twin' is completely reliant on her godmother. Zezolla and Aschenputtel act on their own will, they are determined to go respectively to the feast and to the ball and not only they manage to get there, they also stay as long as they please leaving the premises on their own schedule, unlike Perrault's Cinderella who is ordered by her godmother to be back by twelve. Even more surprising is the fact that both the Neapolitan and the German maiden leave the ball always on foot, and never on a carriage. They don't need protection and are not afraid of dark solitary streets, they are not afraid

of the unknown; rather they are curious about what lies beyond their confined existence. Zezolla and Aschenputtle are capable of protecting themselves from dangers and from 'wrong' predators and in fact they demonstrate their agility and resourcefulness by escaping the royal servants who tries to stop them. Ultimately, Basile and the Grimms created two extraordinary autonomous and self-reliant women who can speak to us better than the remissive and subjected "Cinderella"; although, the sweet and generous maiden of Perrault's tale will forever remain in our hearts.

**d.) Cinderella and the performing arts.**

The legacy of this marvelous tale has crossed the borders imposed by the written page and has reached the stage of theater, opera and ballet, as well as the big screen of Hollywood productions. Already in 1870 there was a first attempt to bring Cinderella on stage, in fact the Bolshoi Theater asked Tchaikovsky to compose the music for the ballet though he never did. It was many decades later that Sergei Prokofiev finally wrote the music for a ballet representation of *Cinderella*. He began his work in 1940, but then he interrupted and completed it only in 1945,

> "Since then, there have been a number of men to stage *Cinderella* to Prokofiev's score, most notably Fredrick Ashton, the first person to stage a full-length production using Prokofiev's music in the West, and Ben Stevenson whose production remains the most popular in the United States since its premier in 1970."[412]

In 1817, however, Gioacchino Rossini had already composed the Opera *La Cenerentola*, which was performed for the first time January 25th 1817 at the Teatro Valle in Rome, and did not encounter success at all, rather "the night still ended in a feast of booing and whistling- a bad thing in Italy."[413] It took years for *La Cenerentola* to be acclaimed, but the time came "when *Cenerentola* eclipsed even the *Barber* and the nineteen other operas he went on to write."[414] In 1899 there was a film rendition of the tale by Méliès and ever since then there have been "over 50 adaptations"[415] of this immortal tale. There have also been some television productions

dedicated to Cinderella, one of the most famous ones was certainly that of Rodgers and Hammersteins, (1957), a "full-scale musical comedy" titled, obviously, *Cinderella.*

> "The approach is essentially that of pantomime: the stepsisters are vain and repellent, the godmother is eccentric, and the prince is charming. The whole production revolves round the songs, which explore the character's situations."[416]

The most famous and acclaimed cinematic renditions of Cinderella are clearly those created by Walt Disney who realized three movies based on this enchanting tale: *Cinderella*, (1950), *Cinderella II Dreams Come True*,(2002), the sequel to the 1950's film, *Cinderella III A Twist In Time,*(2007), a second sequel to the 1950's version.

Walt Disney based his production on Perrault's version but he made some significant changes. In the film the narrating voice at the beginning announces that the 'father', a widowed aristocrat who had remarried a proud and arrogant woman named Lady Tremaine, with two daughters of her own, unfortunately for the little Cinderella dies. In the literary version, the death of the father is never clearly mention, he simply disappears from the main scene but nothing is said about what has really happened to him. Furthermore, Cinderella in the movie is gifted with the ability to understand animals' language; in fact she talks to the birds that help her making her bed in the morning and to the mice that help throughout to face her vicissitudes. There is also a cat, Lucifer, that spites her and joins force with the stepmother and stepsisters in making her life miserable, in Perrault there is no mention of all this. Also, in the movie the ball is organized to celebrate the return of the prince, who had been away a long time, while in the literary version we never learn what the motive for organizing the ball was. At this point the script of the movie is considerably different from the storyline of the literary version. In the film once the invitation for the ball arrives, Cinderella asks permission to go along with her stepmother, and her two stepsisters, Anastasia and Drizella. The stepmother fools the poor girl,

by setting 'impossible tasks' her, while promising that if she is able to finish on time she will be allowed to go to the ball. Cinderella, thanks to her animal helpers, completes the tasks assigned to her; moreover, she also has the right dress as, while she was busy cleaning, ironing, sewing and attending to the maidens' needs, the birds and the mice fixed her a beautiful gown. Cinderella gets ready quickly and just when the three evil women are about to leave for the ball, she runs down the stairs in her beautiful dress, looking absolutely stunning and prepared to join the royal banquet. The stepmother is taken over by rage and jealousy, because Cinderella's beauty outshines her daughters, hence she tore her dress apart. This particular episode is absent in the tale. Perrault's Cinderella does not dare to ask to go the ball; hence she is not assigned any impossible tasks. On the contrary, in the Grimms' version Aschenputell asks her stepmother the permission to attend the ball, and she receives exactly the same response as in the movie. The evil woman assigns her impossible tasks and even though, thanks to her animal helper, the girl is able to accomplish everything at the end she is still left behind, alone in her misery. It seems evident, that the directors and the producers of the movie were well acquainted with the different versions of the tale and mixed them together. Different is also the way the magic takes place in the film. In the French literary tale Cinderella has to help her fairy godmother in the making of the magic spell by fetching for her the pumpkin and the animals she needs to perform the enchantment; in the film she simply stands there while the generous godmother creates the magic. Also peculiar in the movie is the restlessness the viewer perceives in Cinderella's character. Indeed, she is so eager to be transformed into a princess that cannot hide her disappointment each time the godmother strokes the magic wand but not to transform her, rather to transform the pumpkin first, and then the mice, the dog, the horse. Only at the end, the fairy godmother turns her stick towards the fidgety girls turning her into an enchanting princess;

Cinderella is ready to go but traditionally, before she runs off to the ball, the godmother orders her to be back before midnight. Another difference in the movie is the fact that, while in the tale there were two balls, in the film there is only one; it only takes one night for the prince and Cinderella to fall in love. Finally, significant is that while in the literary version Cinderella knows that she is dancing with the prince, in the film she does not realize that the man who has run to welcome her and then 'imprisoned' her for the whole night in his embrace was indeed 'his majesty'. She learns his identity only when the Grand Duke arrives at her house for the trying of the glass slipper. Perrault's version could have left some doubts on the sincerity of Cinderella's love for the prince, in fact it is natural to ask how and to what extent knowing that the man she was dancing with was a prince, has contributed to her falling in love with him, so fast. Disney clears all the possible shadows on the genuineness of Cinderella's love, as she falls in love with the prince without knowing his real identity. The film distance itself from the tale also in the finale of the story. The movie ends with the royal wedding, no mention is made of what happens to the stepmother and the stepsisters, there is no indication of the fact that Cinderella took the sisters with her to the royal palace and married them off to two rich gentlemen. Nevertheless, Walt Disney makes amend for this mishap in his *Cinderella II Dreams Come True.*

This 2001 sequel, tells us what happens after the "Happily Ever After"; the mice, Cinderella faithful friends in the 1950 version, under the fairy godmother's surveillance, write a new Cinderella's book which weaves three plots together. In the first segment of the movie we see how Cinderella learns to be a princess and how she turns the court into a more democratic environment, closer to her character and her beliefs. At the beginning she tries to obey the 'etiquette' imposed by the old governess of the palace, Prudence, but then she understands that she would never be able to be a good princess unless she remains herself. Hence she breaks

away from the rigidity of the old rules, and opens the palace's doors to the commoners and to a completely new life style. In the second segment we learn the tale of Jag the mouse, a total innovation compared to the literary version. Jag is one of the faithful mice that have always helped the beautiful Cinderella, and now that she has dozens people helping her, he feels useless. Jag, blames his inability to help his beloved maiden, on the fact that he is a mouse and is too small to do anything so he asks the fairy godmother to transform him into a human. However, after several accidents he is happy to return to his original shape, and learns to be happy by just being himself. The third part is about Anastasia the 'good' stepsister and her romance with a baker; this is the only episode in the film that echoes Perrault's tale. As we have seen in the French tale Cinderella at the end helps her stepsisters to find two suitable men, a detail that was missing in the 1950's film. Walt Disney, thus, by introducing this episode in which Cinderella helps her stepsister in the realization of her romantic dream, recuperates that part of the original tale that he had ignored in the first cinematic adaptation.

It is important to point out that the three episodes although apparently 'separated' are linked by a common message. In all three stories, the protagonists reach their happy ending only by 'remaining true' to themselves, that is by listening to their hearts and feelings. Cinderella becomes a successful princess by remaining the simple and generous person she had always been; Jag realizes that to be happy one needs to accept the life and the 'shape' that has been assigned to him; Anastasia is able to conquer her love only by refusing to listen to the evil thoughts her mother has instilled in her head, and by daring to set free her 'real good and romantic' nature.

*Cinderella III a Twist in Time* has in common with Perrault's tale only the name of the heroine, but still maintains some typical motifs of traditional fairytales. The film opens with the

anniversary of Cinderella and the Prince; for the occasion Jag, (the faithful mouse) and the fairy godmother have organized a surprise dinner for the young couple in the middle of the woods. In the meantime her stepsisters are in their old house performing, under their mother's command, all the chores that were once assigned to Cinderella. It happens, by chance, that the younger stepsister, Anastasia, wondering in the woods arrives at the place the fairy godmother and the mouse have chosen for the couple's celebration and she witnesses the fairy performing her magic. In this scene there are two motifs of the Cinderella's tale that were not present in the literary version, in fact there is: [N825.3], "a wise old woman provides the maiden with a magic table [D1153] and food [D1031]" and there is also the motif of the stepsister who spies on the "wise woman", [D830.1][417]. The godmother accidentally drops her magic wand and immediately Anastasia takes it and brings it to her mother, Lady Tremaine. Anastasia trying to show her mother the magic powers of the baton turns the fairy godmother into stone; subsequently her evil mother takes possession of the wand and decides to take revenge on Cinderella. She reverses the course of time and goes back to a year before exactly to the day when the Duke came to their house with the glass slipper. Lady Tremaine uses her magic to enlarge the little shoe so that it fits Anastasia's foot; hence the Duke proclaims that she is the one who will be marrying the prince. Anastasia is carried to the palace to get ready for the imminent wedding, meanwhile Cinderella is desperate also because the evil stepmother has broken the other glass shoe that could have proven the real identify of the bride[418]. The story unfolds with Cinderella who enters the palace disguised as a maiden and at the end thanks to the help of her faithful mice and birds, to her perseverance and the intensity of the love that unites her and the prince, she is able to win back her lover; in spite of Lady Tremaine's evil spells. However while Cinderella is preparing for her wedding she is surprised by another of her stepmother's

mischievous moves.: the wicked woman still in posses of the magic wand has transformed her daughter Anastasia into Cinderella; she, Anastasia, will take Cinderella place during the wedding ceremony; in the meantime the real bride is magically transferred into the belly of a rotten pumpkin in a faraway meadow. Interesting in the Disney's story is the complete reversal of Cinderella's character. In this version the quiet and remissive girl, who patiently waited for her godmother to solve her problems, leaves the scene to a very resourceful and strong-minded young woman. Cinderella never gives up hope and fights against her misfortune and the evil spell with all her strength. This Cinderella is in complete charge of her destiny, for this reason she is more appealing to the modern reader and in a sense much more believable. Also remarkable is the change of heart of Anastasia; in fact the young lady cant' go along with her mother's plan and at the end when the minister asks her if she is willing to take the prince as her spouse she, surprisingly, say "I don't". Anastasia has seen the way the prince looks at Cinderella and has also learned through the stories the king, father, shared with her that true love does, indeed, exist. She has finally realized that it is not worth to marry a man who clearly loves another woman; she wants a man who loves her for what she really is, and not because he thinks she is 'someone else'. At the end the message seems to be that love conquers it all and defeats all the evil forces.

Ultimately, regardless of the similarities with the classical version of Cinderella and the innovations Disney has introduced in the making of his movies, the three films stand as a testimony of the actuality and vitality of this marvelous tale.

## Appendix

### Brief survey of Italian authors after Basile.

The Italian fairytale's tradition is rather singular; after Basile there has been a considerable production of fairytales collections, however they all have a distinct regional flavor whether because written in dialect or because embedded with local customs and culture. For example, in the seventeenth hundred, when in France there was already Perrault with his 'French' collection of fairytales, in Italy, as Calvino points out in his introduction to *Fiabe Italiane,* there was Carlo Gozzi (1720–1806) who brought fairytales on the stage of the *commedia dell'arte* and infused them of his 'Venetian society'. Later on, in the nineteenth century, while the Grimms were working on their 'German' collection, in Italy, again as observed by Calvino, we had many authors working on 'regional' collections, such as the countess Caterina Percoto (1812-1887) who was collecting tales in Friulan dialect; Angelo De Gubernatis (1840 -1913) who collected tales from Siena; Vittorio Imbriani (1840-1886) who gathered tales from Florence, Campania and Lombardy; Domenico Camparetti (1835-1927)who collected tales from Pisa and Giuseppe Pitrè (1841-1916) a collector of Sicilian tales. Pitrè deserves a little more attention as he was the most important figure in the Italian folklore studies during the nineteenth century,

> "Pitrè's major works include the 25-volume *Biblioteca delle tradizioni popolari siciliane (Library of Popular Sicilian Traditions,* 1870-1913*); Fiabe novelle e racconti popolari siciliani (Fairy Tales, Novellas, and Popular Tales of Sicily,* 1875*);* the journal *Archivio per lo studio delle tradizioni popolari (Archive for the Study of Popular Traditions,* 1882-1909*)*, which he founded and edited; the 16-volume *Curiosità popolari tradizionali (Curiosities of Popular Traditions,* 1885-99); and *Bibliografia delle tradizioni popolari d'Italia (Bibliography of Italian Popular Traditions,*1894)."[419]

The main source for his tales was an old Sicilian woman, Agatuzza Messia, who did not know how to read or write, but surely knew how to tell tales and how to adapt her vocabulary to the different situations she recounted in her stories, as Pitrè writes

> "La Messia non sa leggere, ma la Messia sa tante cose che non le sa nessuno, e le ripete con una proprietà di lingua che è un piacere a sentirla. Questa è una delle caratteristiche sue, sullla quale chiamo l'attenzione dei miei lettori."[420]

Pitrè's merit is that he was able to write down the tales just as the woman had told them; he did not change anything and did not attempt to refine the narrative and the style. He basically did what the Grimms had unsuccessfully tried to do: collect tales that would remain as a 'document' of the popular culture. Around the same time in Sicily we find also Laura Gonzenbach (1842-1878) who realized a collection of Sicilian tales *Sicilianische Marchen* (*Sicilian Fairy Tales*, 1870) that was, maybe, superior to the Grimms' Kinder-und Hausmarchen, (1857)[421].

In Tuscany there is Gherardo Nerucci (1828-1906) who wrote *Sessanta novelle popolari montalesi,* (*Sixty Popular Tales from Montale,* 1880); like Pitrè he also relied mainly on a woman, Luisa Ginanni, as a source for his tales. In Venice the most important name is that of Giuseppe Bernoni (1828-?) who in 1873, 1875, and 1893 dedicated some of his pamphlets entirely to fairytales. In Abruzzo there are two names to be mentioned: Gennaro Finamore (1836-1923) and Antonio De Nino, (1836-1907), who collected various popular tales. In Puglia, Pietro Pellizzari created one of the finest collections of the time *Fiabe e canzoni popolari del contado di Maglie in terra d'Otranto* (*Fairy Tales and Popular Songs of the countryside in the land of Otranto,* 1881).

The real 'Italian' fairytales collection[422] came only in 1956 thanks to Calvino who in his *Fiabe Italiane,* translated and edited tales from all around the peninsula, finally granting Italy a tale-collection that celebrated the millenary tradition of Italian folklore. In this collection of 200

tales, fairytales are predominant but there are also various animal tales, religious and local legends as well as anecdotes. Clearly Calvino relied on the work of the many authors mentioned above and

> "by 'touching up', imposing 'stylistic unity', and often translating from Italian dialects created his own versions o the tales. This procedure has been likened to the Grimm's, but Calvino is entirely self-conscious about his 'half-way scientific' method, discussing at length his techniques of recasting the tales and integrating variants so as to produce the 'most unusual, beautiful, and original texts and often specifying changes in the extensive notes that accompany the tales."[423]

The perennial importance of fairy tales is revealed in the many modern and contemporary authors who continue to write in this genre; other important authors, in alphabetical order are:

Giovanni Arpino (1927–1987), who among other works authored two fairytales *Shiff il Verme' (Shiff the Worm)* and *I peccati di Pinocchio* (*The Sins of Pinocchio*), in which he discusses freedom and self-identity.[424]

Antonio Baldini (1889-1962), who wrote *La strada della meraviglia* (The *Road of Wonders,* 1923) which contains fairytales. [425]

Giuseppe Bonaviri, (1924-2009),who among other works, realized several collections of tales, as: " *La contrada degli ulivi,* (*Where Olives Trees Grow,* 1958), *Il treno blu* (*The Blue Train,*1978) and *Novelle Saracene* (*Saracen Stories,* 1980), the characters of which are derived from the folklore of Sicily and its heritage of multicultural civilizations."[426]

Carlo Collodi (1826-1890), mostly remembered for *Storia di un Burattino* also known as *Le avventure di Pinocchio,* (*The Story of a Marionette,* or *The Adventures of Pinocchio,* 1883, the latest English translation has just appeared as *The Adventures of Pinocchio,* translated by Geoffrey Brock, with a forward by Umberto Eco and an afterword by Rebecca West, New York: New York Review of Books, 2009). More importantly

Collodi also translated into Italian Perrault, Mme d'Aulnoy, Mme Le prince de Beaumont and collected the tales in *I racconti delle fate voltati in italiano*, (*Fairy Tales,* 1876)[427].

Bruno Cicognani, (1879-1971), who authored a version of the classical tale of Beauty and the Beast, titled *Bellinda e il mostro* (*Bellinda and the monster*, 1927).[428]

Carlo Emilio Gadda (1893-1973), who wrote more than 186 fairytales and collected some of them in *Favole inedite di Carlo Emilio Gadda*, (*Unpublished Fairy Tales by Carlo Emilio Gadda*, published posthumously in 1983.)[429]

Corrado Govoni, (1884-1965), a futurist poet who also experimented with writing tales, where he mixes "the classical fairy tale and a Boccaciesque taste for the joke that victimizes the villain, as seen in *La burla del nanino della Tofana* (*The Prank of the Little Dwarf from Tofana*), included in *I racconti della ghirlandaia* (*The Jay's Tales,* 1932)."[430]

Guido Gozzano, (1883-1916), known mostly for his poetry, also contributed to the Italian fairytale tradition with four collections of tales published after his death. These collections are: "*L'altare del passato* (*The Altar of the Past,* 1918), *L'ultima traccia* (*The Last Trace,* 1919), *I tre talismani* (*The Three Talismans,* 1914), and *La principessa si sposa* (*The Princess Gets Married,* 1916), which contains the classical tale 'Il re porco' ('The Pig King')"[431]

Tommaso Landolfi (1908-80) among his many accomplishments also wrote "allegorical fables for young readers such as *La ragnatela d'oro* (The *Cobweb of Gold,* 1950) and *Il principe felice*, (*The Happy Prince*, 1950)"[432].

Luigi Malerba (1927-2008), shows the interest for the fantastic since his first publication *La scoperta dell'Alfabeto* (*The Discovery of the Alphabet,* 1963). He wrote a series of stories for children titled *Millemosche* (*A Thousand Flies*) that was then published in a

collection of tales *Storie dell'anno Mille* (*Stories of the Year One Thousand,* 7 vols., 1973). He also published other collections of tales among which *Le rose imperiali,* (*The Imperial Roses,* 1975), *Storiette*, (*Little Stories,* 1977) and *Nuove storie dell'anno Mille* (*New Stories of the Year 1000*, 1981)[433].

Angelo Silvio Novaro, (1868-1938) opened his literary carrier with a collection of tales titled *Sul mare*, (*At Sea*, 1889). He then published another collection *La bottega dello stregone* (*The Sorcerer's Shop*, 1911)[434].

Alfredo Panzini, (1863-1939) published three collections of tales where he showed his interest for the fantastic: *Le Fiabe della Virtù* (*The Fairy Tales of Virtues*, 1911); *I tre re con Gelsomino buffone del re* (*The Three Kings with Gelsomino, the Kings' Clown*, 1927); and *Novelline per bambini intelligenti* (*Amusing Stories for Intelligent Children*, 1937)[435].

Giuseppe Pontiggia (1934-2003) wrote the preface to Carlo Collodi's *I racconti delle fate* (*Fairy Tales*) and also authored *Il giocatore invisibile* (*The Invisible Player,*1978), *La grande sera* (*The Great Evening,*1978) and *L'isola volante* (*The Flying Isalnd,* 1996) where his interest for the fantastic is evident[436].

Francesca Sanvitale (1928-), she is an essayist, a play writer and a translator but also wrote original fairytales collected in various volumes such as *La realtà è un dono,* (*Reality Is a Gift,* 1987), *Tre favole dell'ansia e dell'ombra* (*Three Fairy of Anxiety and Shadow*, 1994; *La principessa Rosalinda,* one of Sanvitale's most famous tales is part of this collection), and *Separazioni* (*Separations,* 1997).[437]

Italo Svevo (1861-1928) mostly known for his *La coscienza di Zeno*, (*Zeno's Conscience,* 1923), also "had a predilection for fairy tales and wrote *La madre* (1910, rev. 1927), a

tale about chicks who are very upset because they were hatched in an incubator and do have a mother."[438]

Finally we need to mention an important Neapolitan writer Roberto De Simone, (1933- ), a composer, a play-writer, a theatrical director and a writer. He has been the artistic director of the San Carlo theater in Naples and published several tales' collections and folkloristic books such as: *La gatta Cenerentola* (1977); *Fiabe campane* (1994); *Il presepe popolare napoletano* (1998); *L'opera buffa del giovedì santo* (1999); *La Cantata dei pastori* (2000). In 2001 he published a re-writing of Basile's *Lo cunto de li cunti*, a modern version of the Baroque masterpiece.

**Conclusions:**

*Lo cunto de li Cunti,* as shown in this dissertation, is an endless resource for both scholars interested in folklore and in the studies of metaphors. The text is extremely rich and Basile exhibits not only a profound knowledge of Neapolitan traditions, but also demonstrates his familiarity with European and Oriental mores which he mixes and reinterprets in his collection. (See chapter 1). His creativity, however, explodes in the creation of the metaphors which permeate the entire book.

Basile's scholars have been intrigued by the vast amount of metaphors and especially by the diversity of the ones that describe the alternation of day and night in *Lo cunto.* Croce states that in Basile "the sun doesn't simply rise", there is always a story to be told to describe its cycle. Rak then defines these descriptions "microracconti del tempo", as they present their own tales where the sun and the moon are 'transformed' in animated characters that interact, creating movement and actions. In this dissertation, while acknowledging the previous scholarship, I have integrated the study on metaphors, emphasizing how Basile employs metaphors not only to describe the alternation between night and day, but also to depict every single aspect of life. In *Lo cunto*, for example, food and the act of consuming it become metaphors to talk about power and wealth, (and the wrong distribution of it), or about sex and beauty; food is also employed as the 'element' that unties the knots of the plot. Furthermore, as I have demonstrated, names are invested with significant meanings which hint at the qualities, or the lack of it, of the protagonists. (See chapter 2).

The real innovation, I have found in the collection, (which is also the novelty this thesis brings to Basile's scholarship), is in the description of the female protagonists of the tales, often depicted as androgynous beings who hold both female and male characteristics which grant them

a perfectly balanced personality where *animus* and *anima* are harmoniously intertwined. Of interest is, particularly, the way Basile through them expresses his utopist dream of a more balanced and just society. (See chapter 3).

Basile has also the merit of having established a 'legacy' of writers who have looked at his collection as a model to emulate. Some of the greatest European fairytales writers of the past, indeed, have looked at *Lo cunto* as a reference and a resource, among them there are Charles Perrault and the brothers Grimm. The fascination with fairytales and their enchanted world continues even today, as the large number of authors who still write in this genre testifies; and it has, also, captivated the universe of performing arts and in particular the movie industry. Walt Disney, for example, has built his career based on the production of fairytales movies, often adding his own 'twist' to the stories making them more modern and appealing to the current generation. (See chapter 4)

**Introduction**
[1] Benedetto Croce, *Giambattista Basile e l'Elaborazione Artistica delle Fiabe Popolari,* in *Il Pentamerone Ossia La Fiaba delle Fiabe,* tradotta dall'antico dialetto napoletano e corredata di note storiche da Benedetto Croce, Napoli: Bibliopoli, 2001, p. XVI.
[2] There are no documents that attest the exact date of Basile's birth. Scholars have approximated his date of birth and each has arrived at a different conclusion: Bendetto Croce affirms that Basile was born in 1575; Emmanuele Coppola in 1566 and Giorgio Fulco in 1572.
[3] In the proem for *La Vaiasseide,* Basile used for the first time his pseudonym Gian Alessio Abbattutis.
[4] The *villanella* is a type of popula and secular music that originated in Italy, and first appeared in Naples, during the sixteenth century; the subject of this kind of song is rustic, comic and often also satirical; it was introduced in opposition to the *madrigal*.
**Chapter 1**
[5] Michele Rak, *Giambattista Basile. Lo cunto de li cunti,* a cura di Michele Rak, Milano: Garzanti, 2006, p. 22. (Unless otherwise stated I will be using Rak's edition henceforth.)
[6] Nancy Canepa, *Giambattista Basile's The Tale of Tales, or Entertainment for Little Ones,* translated by Nancy Canepa, illustrated by C. Lettere, foreword by J. Zipes, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2007, p.42. (Unless otherwise stated, I will be using Canepa's translation henceforth.)
[7] Carl Lindahl, John McNamara, John Lindow *Medieval Folklore A Guide to Myths, Legends, Tales, Beliefs, and Customs*, Oxford and New York: 2002, 142.
[8] Ibid, p. 143.
[9] See, *Telling Tales Medieval Narratives and the Folk Tradition*, edited by Francesca Canadé Sautaman, Diana Conchado and Giuseppe Carlo Di Scipio, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998, pp. 269-295.
[10] Lindahl et al., 2002, p. 143.
[11] Ibid. p. 145.
[12] Dan Ben-Amos, *Folklore Genres*, edited by Dan Ben-Amos, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1976, 17-33.
[13] Italo Calvino, *La tradizione popolare delle fiabe*, in Sulla Fiaba, Milano: Oscar Mondadori, 1996, p. 126.
[14] Jack Zipes, *The Great Fairy Tale Tradition-From Straparola and Basile to the Brothers Grimm,* selected, translated and edited by J. Zipes, New York-London: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2001, p. XI.; for more information on the history of tales see *Formes Médiévales Du Conte Merveilleux*, textes traduits et presents sous la direction de Jacques Berlioz, Claude Bremond, Catherine Velay-Vallantin, Paris: Stock, 1989; Catherine Velay-Vallantin, *L'histoire des contes*. Paris: Fayard, 1992.
[15] The Grimms cannot really be considered folklorists in the proper sense of the word and this will be discussed further in chapter 4.
[16] I shall deal with these writers in chapter 4.
[17] As Calvino indicates Pitrè contributions to folkloric studies also include : *Saggio di fiabe e novella popolari siciliane,* Palermo, 1873; *Nuovo Saggio di Fiabe e novella popolari siciliane,* Imola, 1873; *Otto fiabe e novelle popolari siciliane,* Bologna 1873. See I. Calvino *Le fiabe Italiane*, in Sulla Fiaba, 1996, p.48.
[18] Nancy Canepa, From *Court to Forest. Giambattista Basile's Lo cunto de li cunti and the Birth of the Literary Fairy Tale*, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1997, p. 14.
[19] The first translation of *Lo cunto de li cunti* was in Bolognese dialect and it appeared in 1713 and it was authored by M. and T. Manfredi and T. and A. Zanzotti. This same translation was edited several times and was published in different editions in 1742, 1777, 1813, 1827-28, 1839-1840 and 1883. In 1747 appeared the first anonymous Florentine translation that was then re-edited several times: 1754, 1769, 1784, 1792, 1794, 1804, 1821, and 1863. See Rak, 2006, p. XII.
[20] Basile's first work in Italian was *Il pianto della vergine*,( 1608), subsequently he published *Madrigali et* ode, (1609); a marine pastoral *Le avventurose disavventure,* (1611); *Egloghe amorose e lugubri,*(1612); *Venere* addolorata, (1613);Opere *poetiche*, (1613) which contained re-editions of most of his works written between 1608 - 1612. Basile was also a member of the Neapolitan Accademia degli Oziosi, which was one of the most important academies of his time; his academic name was "Il Pigro", (The Lazy). During the years he spent as a member of the Accademia he worked on some classical mannerists poets and wrote *Rime di Pietro Bembo de gli errori di tutte l'altre impressioni purgate. Aggiuntovi l'osservazioni, la varietà de' testi e la tavola di tutte le desinenze delle rime,* (1616), *Varietà dei testi nelle rime del Bembo,*(1616)*; Tavole di tutte le desinenze delle rime di Pietro Bembo, co' versi intieri sotto le lettere vocali raccolte già da Tommaso Porcacchi, Or in miglior ordine disposte,* (1617);*Rime di M. Giovanni della Casa riscontrate co' migliori originali e ricorrette,*(1617); *Rime di Galeazzo di Tarsia nobile cosentino*, (1617); *Tavola di tutte le desinenze delle rime del Casa. Co' versi intieri sotto le lettere vocali*,(1618);

*Osservazioni intorno alle rime del Bembo e del Casa*, (1618). After he left the Accademia degli Oziosi he published: *Aretusa,* (1619); *Il guerriero amante,*( a theatrical drama in five acts, 1620); *Imagini delle più belle dame napoletane ritratte da' lor propri nomi in tanti anagrammi*, (1624); *Ode,*(1627); *Monte Parnaso*, (1630); *Del Tegame*,(1630). Basile also worked on a manuscript of a *Canzoniere* written in Italian and Spanish, (1622-29).

[21] Canepa, 1997, p. 14.

[22] For the literary tradition of the satire against the 'villans' see Domenico Morlini, *Saggio di ricerca contro il villano,* Torino: Loescher, 1898.

[23] Lucia Battaglia Ricci, *Introduzione*, in *Novelle Italiane. Il Duecento Il Trecento,* Milano: Garzanti, 1982, p. IX-X.

[24] Goffredo Bellonci *Il Novelliere Sette Secoli di Novelle Italiane,* a cura di Goffredo Bellonci con una premessa di Geno Pampaloni, vol. I, Roma: Sansoni, 1973, p.V. ("However, it is important to note that the medieval encyclopedia of the exempla became richer as it included the cases observed by the preacher in everyday life: episodes of charity, of sanctity to be exalted, or of cupidity and lust to be condemned. The moralist will look at reality in its events, in its most cruel appearances and would incorporate it in his sermon in order to show to his listeners evil in all its wickedness" The translation is mine; unless otherwise stated all the transaltions will be mine henceforth.)

[25] Originally the tales were 130.

[26] Some of the fantastic elements present in the *Orlando Furioso*, were employed by La Fontaine in his fairy-tales.

[27] P. Rajna, *Le fonti dell' <<Orlando Furioso>>,* Firenze: F. Mazzoni, II edition, 1900.

[28] Benedetto Croce, *Giambattista Basile e l'Elaborazione Artistica delle Fiabe Popolari,* in *Il Pentamerone Ossia La Fiaba delle Fiabe,* tradotta dall'antico dialetto napoletano e corredata di note storiche da Benedetto Croce, Napoli: Bibliopoli, 2001, p. XVI.

[29] Ferdinando Galiani, *Del dialetto napoletano,* a cura di F. Nicolini, Napoli 1923, p. 160-62, in Mario Petrini, *Il Gran Basile,* Roma: Bulzoni Editore, 1989, p. 175. ("Unfortunately for us this fellow had the whim to counterfeit the incomparable *Decameron* by Giovanni Boccaccio, and he wrote a <<pentamerone>> in Neapolitan dialect titled *Lo cunto de li cunti* and by doing that he wanted to imitate Boccaccio, more precisely his text. However, he lacked talent to realize such endeavor. He lacked everything: skill, philosophy, inventiveness and richness in thinking and imagination. He was unable to imagine and ornate gracious, interesting, tragic, witty or moral novellas; he was only able to conceive and huddle tales of fairies and ogres so dull, monstrous and obscene, that the same Arabs, who had invented this unfortunate genre, would have become red had they read them. " (The translation is mine. Unless otherwise stated the translation of critics are mine henceforth.) It seems that Galiani was criticizing not only Basile and his writing style but also the fairytale genre itself which he in fact calls "unfortunate genre".

[30] G. Getto in Nancy Canepa, 1997, p. 57. ("Basile believes in one and the other. One could even say that he aims to translate the experience of one into the other. The frame and tales are conceived as if the author had in mind, on the one hand, the immobile perfection of Boccaccio's model and on the other, the restless worldview of the contemporary Baroque civilization. There is thus a variation on the earlier model, which evolves in a direction imposed by the new sensibility; a variation that is in itself the fruit of that inclination towards the eccentric, of that desire for breaking old schemes, that distinguishes the Baroque.")

[31]The name Sapia is a reference to Dante where we find Sapia Senese, see *Purgatorio,* Canto 13, v.109: " Savia non fui, avvenga che Sapia/fossi chiamata…"

[32] I will discuss the feminine protagonists in a later chapter.

[33] The theme of this novella comes from Dante, *Inferno* 13, vv. 108-151, where the "scialaquatori" are punished.

[34] G.H. McWiliam, *Giovanni Boccaccio.The Decameron,* translated with an introduction by G.H. McWilliam, New York: Penguin, 1972, p. 457.

[35] Michelangelo Picone, *La Cornice Novellistica dal Decameron al Pentamerone,* in *Giovan Battista Basile e L'Invenzione della Fiaba,* a cura di M. Picone e A. Messerli, Ravenna: Longo Editore, p. 107. (This page, with which Basile's collection opens, does not correspond to the *Introduzione* to the first day of the *Decameron*, (where there is the famous description of the pestilence that affected Florence in 1348 that became then the pretext from which the book originated), and it does not even correspond to the *Proemio*, (where Boccaccio addresses his privileged audience composed of enamored and melancholic female readers). Indeed, while these are more commentators than narrative texts, the *"Ntroduzzione* to the *Pentamerone* is a narrative text: not only it belongs to the narrated world but it generates the narration itself.")

[36] Ibid, p.107, ("In other words, the introductory text of the *Pentamerone* does not provide a contextualization for the collection with respect to its audience or its referenzial environment, as it happens in the frame-tale of the *Decameron*: rather, it articulates the main *cunto* that contains the 49 secondary *cunti;* it is the basic tale that justifies

all the other tales uttered within it.The title refers clearly to this function. Consequently, the title assumes a theoretical stand and a stylistic choice, thanks to which Basile is able to distance himself from Boccaccio.")
[37] G.H. McWiliam, 1972, p. 58.
[38] Ibid, p.62.
[39] Dido and Ascanius, ironically, are mentioned in Basile, in the 'Ntroduzzione. Rak, 2006, p.20.
[40] Giovanni, Boccaccio *Decameron*, a cura di Vittore Branca, Milano: I Meridiani, 2001,p. 21 "And, therefore, so that we may perceive distinctly what each of them had to say, I propose to refer to them by names which are either wholly or partially appropriate to the qualities of each." G.H. McWiliam, 1972, p. 58.
[41] Sergio Zazzera, *Proverbi e modi di dire Napoletani,* Roma: Newton Compton Editori, 2007, p. 166.
[42] Canepa, 1997, p. 91.
[43] G.H. McWiliam, 1972, p.62.
[44] Canepa, 1997, p. 82.
[45] Also other *novellieri* like Sacchetti and Sercambi use proverbs, (or allude to them), at the beginning or at the end of their tales.
[46] Canepa 1997, p.83.
[47] Lucia's fgure will be explored in more detailed in chapter 2 and chapter 3.
[48] As an example see *cunto* 1.2 "La Mortella".
[49] See for example G.H. McWiliam, 1972, "dearest ladies", p.68; "delectable ladies", p. 169; "fair ladies", p. 241.
[50] Boccaccio defends his work against the many critiques made to the single novellas that had been circulating before the publication of the *Decameron.*
[51] Tuscan was later recognized as the national language, (Italian).
[52] Canepa, 1997, p. 53.
[53] This is the numeration used by Sinicropi in *Giovanni Sercambi*, *Novelle*, nuovo testo critico con studio introduttivo e note a cura di Giovanni Sinicropi, Firenze: Casa Editrice Le Lettere, 1995. There are two editions of Sercambi's collection, one is *Novelle*, edited by Sinicropi, the other is *Il Novelliere*, edited by Luciano Rossi. It is interesting to note the different titles the two editors give to Sercambi's collection. The first editor calls it *Novelle* which seems to stress the variety of the tales it contains; the second calls it *Il Novelliere* which seems to emphasize the coherence of the entire collection, ( Unless otherwise noted I will be referring ro Sinicropi's edition henceforth.)
[54] For more information on the figure of the *fool*, and on Sercambi's sources see Giuseppe C. Di Scipio, *Literary Models and Folk Tradition: Ganfo The Fool In Giovanni Sercambi's Novelliere*, in Medieval Folklore, General Editor Francesca Canadé Sautman, Lewiston: N.Y: The Edwin Mellen Press, v.1, 1991, p.119.
[55] Sercambi's *Novelliere* resembles the *Decameron* more than *Lo cunti* especially for the structure and the function of the frame tale. The organization of the single *novellas* varies; most of them seem to have a linear structure: introduction-body-conclusion, (which sometimes is represented by a proverb others simply by the end of the anecdote); however there are some tales whose structure includes: introduction-moral or apostrophe to the author,- body- conclusion, one of these is "CXXII "De Apetito canino et non temperato." For more information on Sercambi's tales see Giovanni Sinicropi, *Le classificazioni tematiche nelle Novelle del Sercambi,* in Quaderni Lucchesi. Di Studi Sul Medioevo e Sul Rinascimento, Lucca: Istituto Storico Lucchese, Anno II, N. I, 2001. The collections are different from one another for the location where the tales are told. In the *Decameron* the story-telling takes place in a villa; in *Il Novelliere* we find an iterant group thus the story-telling takes place every day in a different location; finally in *Lo Cunto* "la marmaglia" is entertained at court.
[56] Torre means tower and it symbolizes strength and power.
[57] Sinicropi, p. 202. (The translation is mine.)
[58] "I nomi degli "aiutanti" magici"(secondo la celebre definizione di Propp) alludono alle loro particolari doti fisiche:*Rondello*, 'rondinotto', è così chiamato perchè sfreccia veloce come un Uccello; *Sentimento*, per il suo finissimo udito; *Diritto*, per la sua abitlità nel mirare con l'arco; *Spassa*, perchè emette il fiato con tanta violenza da macinare il grano *col suo soffio*" [ The names of the "magical helpers", (according to Propp's famous definition), refer to their peculiar physical qualities: *Rondello,* 'little swallow', is so called because he runs as fast as bird can fly; *Sentimento*, is so called because of his extraordinary sense of hearing; *Diritto*, is so called for his great ability to aim with the bow; *Spassa,* is so called because when he breaths his breath is so violent that it can grind wheat with *his gust.",* Luciano Rossi, *Giovanni Sercambi, Il Novelliere,* a cura di Luciano Rossi, Roma: Salerno Editrice, 1974, Tomo 1, p113.
[59] In Basile, like in Sercambi, it is interesting to note the symbolism of the names; each name echoes the peculiar quality of the protagonist.
[60] The significance of this number will be discussed in chapter 3.

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[61] Paulo's father is Taddeo, a name that recurs also in "De Amicisia Provata",LXXIIII where Taddeo is the 'faithful' friend; this name is significant as in Basile's the king is called Tadeo. I will discuss the significance of the name in chapter 2.
[62] This tale has two motifs: B350 Grateful animal and B215.4 Frog language; see ANTTI AARNE'S Verzeichnis der Marchentypen, *The Types Of The Folktale. A Classification and Bibliography,* translated and enlarged by Stith Thompson, Helsinki: Indiana University, 1987, p. 233- 234.
[63] There are tales about Dante also in Sacchetti's *Trecentonovelle*, (tales VII, CXIV, CXV). The type is also present in Boccaccio, see 1.7.
[64] Aarne/Thompson tale type 437.
[65] Ruth B. Bottigheimer, *Fairy Godfather. Straparola, Venice, and the Fairy Tale Tradition*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002, p. 131.
[66] The motif of this tale is AT 706; in particular Basile's variation could also be listed as AT 706B Presnt to the Lover. For this type the "maiden sends to her lecherous lover (brother) her eyes (hands, breasts) which he has admired. ANTTI AARNE'S, 1987, p. 242.
[67] In "Le doie pizzelle " there is also motif AT 403: The Black and The White Bride also present in PN 3.3, (Biancabella.)
[68] Michele Rak, *Da Cenerentola a Cappuccetto rosso. Breve storia illustrata della fiaba barocca*, Milano: Mondadori, 2007, p.34.
[69] Ibid, p. 35. "These materials were re-worked in the *Cunto* with paradoxical e theatrical humor, comical and solemn at the same time; most importantly these materials have been re-disposed in a table of intricated plots and figures, places and stories regulated by a strict code. Each tales is, at the same time, absolutely unrealistic and innocent and yet it is a tale to be told, or heard, trying to decipher the hidden messages which vary accordingly with the circumstance and the audience."
[70] V.Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale,* first edition translated by Laurence Scott with an introduction by Svatava Pirkova-Jakobson. Second edition revised and edited with a preface by Louis A.Wagner/new introduction by Alan Dundes, Austin, (TX): University of Texas Pess, 1996.
[71] It is interesting to point out tha "Zoza" in Neapolitan dialect means soft (or wer mud), slush; it is used to indicate people and things that are worthless. See Zazzera, 2007.
[72] Aarne/Thompson tale type 437
[73] V. Propp, *Theory and History of Folklore*, translated by Ariadna Y. Martin and Richard P. Martin. Edited, with an Introduction and Notes, by Anatoly Liberman, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.
[74] In Boccaccio there is"La valle delle donne", which represents a utopic place, see the conclusion of day VI in the *Decameron*.
[75] This dance will be discussed in chapter 2.
[76] Canepa, 1997, p. 85.
[77] The theme of the "Land of Cockaigne" is present also in Boccaccio, 8.3, the tale of Calandrino. Also see Matilde Serao in *Legende Napoletane*, Napoli: Edizioni Bideri, 1970; Piero Camporesi *Bread of Dreams and Fantasy in Early Modern Europe,* translated by David Gentilcore, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989; *La terra e la luna: alimentazione, folclore e società,* Milano: Il Saggiatore, 1989; *Il sugo della vita,* Milano: Garzanti, 1997; Cocchiara Giuseppa, *Il paese della Cuccagna. E altri studi sul folklore*, presentazione di Leonardo Sciascia, Torino: Boringhieri, 1980.
[78] Canepa, 1997, p.85.
[79] The triplication of the action is a typical element of the fairytale.
[80] "lo Vommoro", that is the Vomero is a neighborhood in the upper side of Naples.
[81] Rak, 2006, p.325.
[82] Rak, 2006, p. 134.
[83] Canepa, 2007, p. 88.
[84] Rak, 2006, p.18.
[85] Canepa, 2007, p. 39.
[86] For more information on Neapolitan -dialect literature see Hermann W. Haller, *The Other Italy: The Literary Canon in Dialect*, Toronto, Ont. and Buffalo: University of Toronto, c1999, (Chapter 12 and specifically on Basile see pp. 253-255; 275-276); and *La festa delle Lingue la letteratura dialettale in Italia*, Roma: Carocci, 2002, (specifically on Basile see pp. 252-255.) In his books Herman Haller gives an interesting and scholarly appraisal of dialect literature.
[87] Marco Petrini *Il Gran Basile*, Roma: Bulzoni Editore, 1989, p. 133.

[88] See for example *La Vaiasseide* by Giulio Cesare Cortese; this is a poem in octave about the life of female servants in Naples and the protagonists, who speak, dialect are part of the *popolino.*
[89] Canepa, 1997, p. 65.
[90]Ibid, p. 66-67.
[91] Other famous dialect writers of the period are, among others, Folengo and Ruzzante.
[92] That is through the use of metaphors, allegories, and other rhetorical devices apt to arouse wonder and enjoyment; but also to protect the author from censorship.
[93]Canepa, 1997, p. 91. I have not found any proof for this etymology during my research; however I found other meanings of the name Tadeo which will be discussed in chapter 2.
[94] See for example "La Tenta" the second eclogue.
[95] See,*The Fairytale as Art Form and Portrait of Man,* translated by Jon Erickson, Bloomington: Indiana University Press,1987
[96] Ibid. p.37.
[97] Max Luthi, *The European Folktale. Form and Nature*, translated by John D. Niles, Bloomington& Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1982, p.14.
[98] Ibid, p. 15.
[99] Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World,* translated by Helene Iswolsky, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984, p. 1.
[100] Ibid, p. 180.
[101] Also in Boccaccio there are simple people represented in embarrassing moments, see the story of Andreuccio da Perugia, 2.5. See also Dante's *Inferno*, canto XVIII vv.127-132, " <<Fa che pinghe>>/ mi disse <<il viso un poco più avante,/sì che la faccia ben con l'occhio attinghe/di quella sozza e scapigliata fante/ che là si graffia con *l'unghie merdose*,/ e or s'accoscia e ora è in piedi stante." (Emphasis is mine.)
[102] Bakhtin, 1984, p. 225.
[103] Ibid, p. 224.

**Chapter 2**

[104] J. Donne, *The First Anniversary (1612),* in *The Complete English Poems,* edited by A.J. Smith, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973, p. 276.
[105] For more information on the historical background of the Baroque see: Andrea Battistini *Il Barocco, Cultura, Miti, Immagini*, Roma: Salerno editrie, 2000; Giovanni Getto, *Il Baroccolo Letterario*, premessa di Marziano Guglielminetti, Milano, Mondadori, 2000; Maravall, José Antonio *Culture of the Baroque-Analysis of a Historical Structure*. Translation by Terry Cochran Foreword by Wlad Godzich and Nicholas Spadaccini, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986; Praz, Mario *Studies in Seventeenth-Century Imagery,* Roma: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1964; Raimondi, Ezio *Il colore eloquente letteratura e arte Barocca,* Bologna: Il Mulino, 1995; Scaglione, Aldo et al. *The Image Of The Baroque,* edited by Aldo Scaglione and Gianni Eugenio Viola, New York; Washington, D.C./Baltimore; San Fransisco; Bern; Frankfurt am Main; Berlin; Vienna; Paris: Peter Lang, 1995; specifically on Italy see Benedetto Croce *Storia della Età Barocca in Italia,* Bari: Gius. Laterza & Figli, 1946.
[106]The thinkers of the period got around Church prohibitions by keeping the theory of the infinite world and the doctrine of geogentrism separate.
[107] Andrea Battistini *Il Barocco, cultura, miti, immagini*, Roma: Salerno editrice, 2000, p. 22, (The Thirty Years War, one of the worse wars that ever took place in the old continent, affected Europe with a series of tragic events such as famine, ransacking, plagues, and demographic crisis, which caused instability and social conflicts as never seen before. The revolt of Masaniello in 1647 is just one of the many unprisings that affected the society in the seixteen-hundred. This was an age marked by a significant number of pesants' revolts provoked by the rising of the taxes imposed by the land-owners who needed to gather more money to finance the military enterprises, even though the war was a failure,"). On the topic see also Piero Camporesi *Bread of Dreams:Ffood and Fantasy in Erly Modern Europe,* translated by David Gentilcore, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1989, p. 14
[108] Battistini, 2000, p. 82. See also Jean Rousset, *La letteratura dell'età barocca in Francia Circe e il Pavone*, Bologna: Il Mulino, 1985, (on this topic see specifically pp. 30-31.)
[109] Battistini explains the meaning of the word 'baroque' as follows : " D'altro canto anche l'etimo della parola "Barocco", per quanto lingusticamente controverso, è trasparente nel suo significato volto a sottolineare la sua componente irregolare, soprendente, spettacolare, inattesa nella ricerca dell'insolito e nella volontà di stupire. Sia che risalga a una figura eccentrica del sillogismo aristotelico impiegato dagli Scolastici del XIII secolo, sia che provenga dal porteghese *barocco* per designare una perla difettosa nelle sue forme, sia ancora, con assai minore

plausibilità, che si rifaccia a un lemma designante un raggiro, un imbroglio, un inganno, il termine "Barocco", di là dalle già viste intenzioni polemiche di chi in origine li impiegò, implica un fenomeno culturale che profonde le sue energie creative alla ricerca dell'anomalia, lontana dai territori comuni del risaputo e del prevedibile." See Battistini, 2000, p. 21-22.

[110] See Figure 1&2.

[111] 'Man' is used here in the meaning of 'human being'.

[112] "Vale insomma ciò che ha sentenziato in altri tempi Kant, per il quale <<tutto ciò che ha una regolarità rigida (che si avvicina alla regolarità della matematica) ha qualcosa di contrario al gusto>>. E l'esplorazione spasmodica dello stupefacente che eccita e sbalordisce nasceva per l'uomo barocco dalla diagnosi che non tutto era stato detto, che non era arrivato troppo tardi, nonostante la grande epoca creativa che lo aveva preceduto suscitando in lui l'<<angoscia dell'influenza>>", Battistini, 2000, p. 51.

[113] Particulary oppressive were the Spanish and the Italian governments where the role of the Inquisition was strong and extremely controlling. See Maravall, 1986, p.XIX and Croce, 1946, pp. 3-19 and pp 469-490. Also see Benzoni Gino *Gli affanni della cultura: Intellettuali e potere nell'Italia della Controriforma e barocca*, Milano: Feltrinelli, 1978.

[114] "Misoneism: hatred or dislike of what is new or represents change. [1885-90; It. *Misoneismo*.", in *Webster's New Universal Unabridged Dictionary*, New York: Barnes & Noble, 1993

[115] G. Marino, *Lettere*, a cura di M. Guglielminetti, Torino: Einaudi, 1966, p. 396. (Giammbattista Marino was the greatest poet of the Italian baroque.)

[116] See for example "La bella zoppa" and "La bella nana" by Giovan Leone Sempronio, in *Selva poetica*, 1633**;** Anton Maria Narducci "O bella pidocchiosa", 1623; and also G.B. Marino *Adone*, canto XIV, octave 290.

[117] Aristotle, *Rhetoric,* Translated by W. Rhys Roberts, in Aristotle's Rhetoric and Poetics, (*Rhetoric* translated by W. Rhys Roberts; *Poetics* translated by Ingram Bywater), Introduction by Friederich Solmsen, New York : The Modern Library, 1954, Book III, Ch.XI, p. 192.

[118] See Guido Morpurgo-Tagliabue, *Anatomia del Barocco,* Palermo: Aesthetica edizioni, 1998.

[119] Ibid, Ch. 10, p. 187.

[120] See Figure 3.

[121] Emanuele Tesauro, *Il Cannocchiale Aristotelico*, Herausgegeben und eingeleitet von August Buck, Berlin-Zurich: Verlag Gehlen-Bad Homburg v.d.H., 1968, p. 302.

[122] I will give some examples later in the chapter.

[123] Trastullo, Graziano, Zanni and Pulcinella were famous masks of the *commedia dell'arte.*

[124]For more details on this subject see Nancy Canepa, *From Court to Forest. Giambattista Basile's Lo cunto de li cunti and the Birth of the Literary Fairy Tale*, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1997, chapter 5.

[125] Aristotle, p. 71

[126] See Figure 4 & 5.

[127] See Figure 6.

[128] Morpurgo-Tagliabue, 1998, p. 55. ("There is no meeting half way…This dilemma is more or less that which…inspired highly contradictory thesis such as the hedonistic one and the pedagogical one. Let's not fool ourselves indeed, let's not think that Baroque originates from the latter and the Classicism originates from the former, because each of them is amphibious, changeable, and the Baroque is just that, a misunderstanding. The Baroque knows a hedonistic art as well as a pedagogical art, explored in a lustful and uplifting manner; nevertheless both 'arts' are ambivalent. ..In this fusion of *docere-delectare* consists the Baroque.")

[129] Benedetto Croce, *Il Pentamerone ossia Le Fiabe delle Fiabe,* Tradotta dall'antico dialetto napoletano e corredata di note storiche da Benedetto Croce, Napoli: Biblipolis, 2001, p. XVIII. ("It is for this reason that *Il Cunto de li cunti* is a vibrant book and has nothing to do with a simple collection of Sicilian, Tuscan or Venetian fairytales, like the many we have today. On the contrary it ideally connects with the Italian literature of art that was re-flourishing thanks to Pulci, the magnificent Lorenzo, Folengo, and for certain aspects thanks to Boiardo and Ariosto, hidden in chivalry novels and popular literature. *Lo cunto* is in a way the last example of this literary tradition and it came out in Naples late, not during the Renaissance, rather during the sixteen hundred and the Baroque. ) [The passage continues: "Il barocco vi entra dappertutto; e il Basile non si sta pago a dignificare i *cunti* degli orchi e delle fate presentandoli nella disposizione diventata classica mercé il classico *Decamerone*, e dando posto, che già tennero Pampinea e Fiammetta e Neifile ed Elisa, alle sue Zeze e Ciulle e Pope e Ciommetelle, ma li cosparge tutti dei piú forti olezzi della letteratura secentesca. Non sorge l'Alba e non tramonta il Sole, in questi racconti, che egli non trovi un nuovo e bizzaro modo di metaforeggiare quelle fasi del giorno…" (The Baroque pervades the collection; Basile is not happy with simply dignifying the ogres and the fairies by presenting them in the classical fashion

proposed by the *Decameron*. It gives the place once assigned to Pampinea, Fiammetta, Neifile and Elisa to his Zeze, Ciulle, Pope, Ciommetelle and he adorns them with all the embellishments typical of the literature of the sixteen hundred. In this tales the Sun does not simply rise or set, Basile always finds new and bizarre metaphors to describe these moments…")]

[130] Tesauro, 1968, p. 330. ("more beautiful and vivacious as they present the object in front of our eyes. Primarily, the natural Movements of the Vegetative Faculty … Similar to the Progressive Natural Movements…Cicerone: Errantes stellae Pregrediuntur: as if you were saying, *The Stars go walking for through the celestial threshold")*

[131] I chose to discuss the *'Ntroduzzione* simply because it stands as a model for all the other tales. The style and the rhetorical techniques applied in this first tale are then repeated in the others. Hence, I believe that a close analysis of the frame tale would give an idea of the grandiosity of Basile's use of metaphor and other stylistic devices.

[132] As Rak indicates this proverbs comes from the "storie di animali", "animals' tales". A Firenzuola in *Consigli degli animali cioè ragionamenti civili […]ne' quali con maraviglioso e vago arteficio tra loro parlando raccontano simboli, avertimenti, istorie, proverbi e motti che insegnano il viver civile e a governare altri con prudenza,* tells the story of monkey that in the attempt to imitate a woodman in the act of cutting wood remains trapped and is then killed by the man. From this episode, Firenzuola says, originates the saying "che mal fanno coloro che voglion far, come si dice, l'altrui mestiere", (silly are the ones who pretend to do someone else's job). Also in Pulci's *Morgante* there is the episode of Margutte who literally 'bursts' out laughing when he witnesses a monkey who, trying to imitate hunters in the act of putting on boots, remains trapped and is captured. See Rak, 2006, p. 26 note 1. Canepa adds that, as Croce reported, "Travelers and naturalists narrate that hunters, when they see a monkey, put on and take off a pair of boots, which they then leave in sight of the monkey after having smeared them with birdlime. The monkey, attempting to imitate them, remains ensnared in the unusual footwear.", see Canepa, 2007, p. 35, note 1.

[133] *Lo cunto* could also be seen as a socio-political manifesto in which Basile brings forth his utopist dream of Naples liberated from the oppressors and from injustice.

[134] Brevity-Novelty-Clarity.

[135] The millstone is also associated with Christ: the millstone grinds the flour. The flour then becomes bread/*ostie sacre*, thus it virtually becomes the *body of Christ.* Christ is the bread of life. In the Christian tradition St. Paul collects the flour and Jesus gives it to the crowds. For more information see *Dictionary of Symbolism* by Hans Biedermann & James Hulbert, New York: Penguin, 1994, pp. 221-222. For the millstone see also *Paradiso* XII, vv.1- "Sì tosto come l'ultima parola/ la benedetta fiamma per dir tolse,/ a rotar cominciò la santa mola." (I thank Professor Di Scipio for this information.)

[136] See Marina Warner *From the BEAST to the BLONDE On Fairy Tales and Their Tellers,* New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1994, p. 43-44.

[137] Marina Warner, *From the Beast to the Blonde- On Fairy Tales and their Tellers,* New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1994, p. 45.

[138] Emanuele Tesauro, p. 302. ("From these two virtues the third one is born, that is Clarity. In fact an object rapidly illuminated by another, vibrates in the intellect: and the Novelty causes Wonder: which is an attentive Reflection, which impresses the Concept in your mind: hence you experience that the Metaphorical words are the ones that remain sculpted in your mind.")

[139] Benedetto Croce, *Il Pentamerone Ossia La Fiaba delle Fiabe,* Napoli: Bibliopolis, 1957, p. 3.

[140] Tesauro, 1968, p. 331. (" From the Movement regarding the Universe: such as moving From one place, To a place, Trough a place, In, Out Around, Going down, Going Up, Shaking.")

[141] According to Aristotle "The Simile also is a metaphor." For this see also Ignazio Baldelli *Lingua e Stile della Commedia* in Enciclopedia Dantesca, ed. Roma: U. Bosco, 1970-78, vol. VI, pp. 93-112

[142] Canepa, 2007, p. 36.

[143] Willis Barnstone, *The Other Bible, Jewish Pseudepigrapha, Christian Apocrypha, Gnostic Scriptures, Kabbalah, Dead Sea Scrolls,* Edited with Introductions by Willis Barnstone, New York: HarperSanFrancisco, p. 669-674.

[144] See E. Royston Pike, *Zoroaster and Zoroastrianismo* in Encyclopedia of Religion and Religious, New York, Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1969, pp. 402-403.

[145] Pliny the Elder is one the sources who relates that Zoroaster laughed on the day he was born and lived 30 years in the wilderness eating only cheese. Pliny the Elder, *Natural History,* translated by H. Rackham, Cambridge, Mass. : Harvard University Press, 1962;1971.

[146] Rak also explains this in the notes to the '*Ntrodduzione*.

[147] The antiphrasis "si ha quando un'espressione viene usata per dire l'opposto di ciò che essa significa, ("*Bella* giornata, oggi" per dire "brutta, pessima"; "*Bravo, bene*!, per rimproverare o disapprovare.)" Bice Mortara Garavelli, *Manuale di Retorica,* Milano: Tascabili Bompiani, 2006, p.168.

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[148] Basile's writing would have been less effective if for example he had written "like a second Demeter…had never been seen to laugh". In fact, when talking about the legend of the "princess who would not laugh" the first myth that comes to mind is that of Demeter and Persephone. Demeter was the goddess of fertility, also known as "the one who does not laugh"; indeed, once her daughter Persephone was kidnapped by Hades, the god of the underworld, Demeter gave up laughing while searching for her. She was seen laughing again only when she witnessed a bizarre show performed by her servant Iambe. The similarities between Zoza and Demeter are obvious: the laughter in both cases will be brought by a grotesque spectacle. See *Dizionario Universale dei Miti e delle Leggende*, by Anthony S. Mercatante, translated by Rita Gatti and Lucilla Rondinò, Roma: Newton&Compton, 2002, pp. 206-207.
[149] The rhetorical figure of "accumulazione" is actually very common in Basile and it appears virtually in every *cunto*.
[150] Mortara Garavelli, 2006, p. 168.
[151] The other spectacles performed for the princess were all typical of the popular folkloristic celebrations; see Rak 2006, pp. 26-27.
[152] Roberto De Simone, *Il Cunto de li Cunti di Giambattista Basile nella Riscrittura di Roberto De Simone*, Torino: Einaudi, 2002, p. 7.
[153] Tesauro, 1968, p. 292. ("The most beautiful for of Opposition is mainly that one which makes the same voice resounds twice: like this one that he gives as example: *Non oportet PEREGRINUM semper esse PEREGRINUM*. Where the same word is used with two opposite meanings; in the first case it means Foreigner; in the second case it means Ignorant.")
[154] For an example of Baroque architecture see Bernini's fountains and others in Rome, see pictures 7 & 8 at the end. See, *Art and Architecture in Italy, 1600-1750,* by Rudolf Wittkower, Joseph Connors, Jennifer Montagu , New Haven, CT : Yale University Press, 1999; *The architecture of modern Italy*, by Terry Kirk, Princenton: Princeton Architectural Press, 2005.
[155] These fountains were "a concrete realization of the fantastic *paese di Cuccagna* [Land of Cockaigne], long a favorite topos of the popular imagination", Canepa, 1997, p. 85.
[156] For information on the history of Italy at that time see Beneddetto Croce *Storia del regno di Napoli,* 5th edition, Bari: La Terza, 1927 & *Storia della Età Barocca in Italia,* Bari: Gius. Laterza & Figli, 1946.
[157]Jack Zipes points out that Basile is the first one "to use an old folktale motif about the laughter to frame an entire collection.", see J. Zipes *Spells of Enchantment The Wondrous Fairy Tales of Western Culture",* edited by J. Zipes, New York: Penguin Books, 1991, p. XVII.
[158] Other great dialect authors of the time were: Giulio Cesare Cortese with *La Vaiasseide,* (1612); the 'bolognese' G.B. Croce with *Bertoldo,*(1606) and the 'milanese' C.M. Maggi with his dialect comedies among which *I consigli di Meneghino.*
[159] Authors like Kepler, Bacon, Bruno, Campanella, Copernicus, lived just before or about this time, preceded by the work of writers such as Duns Scotus (d. 1308)
[160] José Antonio Maravall, *Culture of the Baroque-Analysis of a Historical Structure*. Translation by Terry Cochran Foreword by Wlad Godzich and Nicholas Spadaccini, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986, p. 227.
[161] The motif of receiving gifts from the faries is frequent fairy in tales. The motif is also one of the constitutive elements of tale type 425B which is an extension of the Psyche story in which the young woman goes out to seek the long-lost husband or lover and is given magic gifts to facilitate her task, see "Rites de mariage et parcours magique: le Conte 425B." *Actes du IIe Colloque International du CERMEIL: Merveilleux. Mythe et Initiation*, Narbonne, August 27-30, 1985; CERMEIL. nos. 5-6: 58-75; updated version in the special issue of *Marvels and Tales: Beauty and the Beast*, May 1989. ( I thank Prof. Canadé-Sautman for this information)
[162] See Canepa, 1997, p. 43. "Croce believes that Basile had started to work on his two dialect works, *Le Muse Napoletane* and *Lo cunto*, as early as 1615, and suggests that, although they were published posthumously, he read parts of both to friends and in the Neapolitans academies. Croce makes reference, as supporting evidence, to Francisco de Quevedo's 1626 work *Cuento de los cuentos, donde se leen juntas la vulgaridades rùsticas, que aun duran en nuestra habla barridas de la conversacion* [Tale of Tales, in Which Are Collected the Rustic Vulgarities that Still Exist in Our Language, Though Banished from Conversation] which, although, of very different nature from *Lo cunto*…he believes took its title from Basile's work. Quevedo, in Naples from 1616 to 1620, most likely knew Basile and had the opportunity to read or hear passages from *Lo cunto* at the Oziosi."
[163] Basile's wanderings years begun in the 1600 when he left Naples to find his fortune elsewhere. In 1603 Basile joined the army of the Venice Republic; in 1604 he is in Crete and in 1607 took part in a naval battle by Corfu. In 1608 he went back to Naples where he stayed until 1612 when he moved to Mantua. In Mantua he remained for

only one year and in fact in 1613 he was back in Naples. In 1617 he was at the service of the marquis of Trevico in the city of Zuncoli and in 1619 he became governor of Avellino but the following year he was back in Naples. From 1621 to 1622 he was in Basilicata serving as a governor in Logolibero; then in 1626 he moved to Aversa where he also was governor. For more details on this topic see N. Canepa 1997, pp.39-46.

[164] It is important to remark that the number seven is a sort of 'magical number' for its recurrence in fairytales and the *novellistica* and because of its rich numerological tradition in religion, for example, seven equals both the number of the cardinal virtues and the capital sins; as in the number of the terraces (cornici) in Dante's *Purgatory.*

[165] Also known as *The Brothers Menaechmus or the Two Menaechmuses.*

[166] Tesauro, 1968, p. 306. (Metaphor of Proportion …Ingenious voice that rapidly reveals an object through its like")

[167] As mentioned the subtitle of the collection *Lo trattenemiennto de piccerille*, (*Entertrainment for the Little Ones),* had raised doubts about whom Basile had in mind as 'readers' for his text.

[168] Tesauro, 1968, p. 303.

[169] In this passage as in many others in *Lo cunto* one can read an underlining racism, not surprisingly given the times; Basile seems to imply that the the white 'race' is superior to the black 'race'. In fact, Zoza who is 'white' is a beautiful and virtuous princess; on the contrary Lucia, who is black, is ugly and dishonest, and is a slave.

[170] Happy ending for Zoza, as Tadeo takes her for his legitimate wife, but not for the slave, Lucia, who is put to death even if she was pregnant.

[171] See Roberto De Simone, *Il cunto de li cunti di Giambattista Basile nella riscrittura di Roberto De Simone,* Torino: Einaudi, 2002, p.5

[172] As we know today the bat is not a bird, it is a hybrid between a rat and a bird; however, it was considered as one at that time.

[173] In fact oftentimes knowledge is represented by light or is defined as the light of the intellect.

[174] "scrastaie', absolute past of the infinitive "scrasta" derives from the Latin word "decorticare" from the "cortex-icis"; in Italian the verb became "scorticare".

[175] This is typical for the Neapolitan pronunciation.

[176] Canepa, 1997, p.90.

[177] "s'allonga la vita" just like the process of telling tales in a frame of "novella portante".

[178] Clearly Boccaccio's *Decameron* was a great inspiration for Basile's creative onomastic.

[179] The name Tadeo is used as an adjective signifying *stupid* later on in *Lo cunto dell'uerco,* (The Tale of the Ogre, 1.1), see Rak, 2006, p. 38 & Canepa, 2007, p. 47 where she translates the Neapolitan "tadeo" with "idiot". For Taddeo see also the *Novellino*, tale 35, where a doctor called Taddeo is ridiculed as follows: "Maestro Taddeo, leggendo a' suoi scolari in medicina, trovò che, chi continuo mangiasse nove dì di petronciani, che diverrebbe matto. E provavalo secondo fisica.Un suo scolaro, udendo quel capitolo, propuosesi di volerlo provare: prese a mangiare de' petronciani, et in capo de' nove dì venne dinanzi al maestro e disse: "*Maestro, il cotale capitolo che leggeste non è vero, però ch' io l' hoe provato, e non sono matto."* E pure alzasi e mostrolli il culo. "*Iscrivete"* disse il maestro "*che provato è; e facciasene nuova chiosa." (*Master Thaddeus, as he was instructing his medical scholars, propounded that whoever should continue for nine days to eat eggplant would go mad. And he proved it according to the law of physics. One of his scholars, hearing this lesson, decided to put it to the test. He began to eat eggplant, and at the end of nine days went before his master and said: "*Master, that lesson your read us is not true, because I have put it to the test, and I am not mad*." And he rose and showed him his behind. "*Write*," said the master, "*that all this about the eggplant has been proved*," and he wrote a fresh essay on the subject.), see http://scrineum.unipv.it/wight/novellino.htm#35. Taddeo is also present in Dante's *Paradiso XII, v. 82-84,* "Non per lo mondo, per cui mo s'affanna/ di retro as Ostiense e a Taddeo,/ in picciol tempo gran dottore si feo", where Taddeo is Taddeo d'Alderotto a famous doctor of the thirtheenth century. Furthrmore, the sound of the name Taddeo is very similar to the sound of the word 'babbeo' which means stupid.

[180] The patronage of St. Jude Thaddeus was in effect at that time and he was recognized as the patron of desperate situations already in the New Testament.

[181] See, http://www.sangiudataddeo.net/home.htm. On the name Taddeo see also Enxo La Stella *Santi e fonti: Dizionario dei nomi di persona*, Bologna: Zanichelli, 1993, p. 340 where Taddeo is presented as a name of Aramaic origin. It became popular thanks to the cult of the Apostle Taddeo, who was martyrized in Persia because of his Christian faith. La Stella also explains that Taddeo is, possibly, a variation of two greek names: Teo(dosio) and Do(rotea) = "donated by God" or "the gift of God". The name Taddeo must have been very popular in Basile's time and it probably was so also in the Renaissance, see for example, *Renaissance Florence A Social History,* edited by

Roger J. Crum & John T. Paoletti, Cambridge Univeristy Press, 2006, p. 203, where a known Florentine wool merchant "Taddeo di Cecco da Barberino" is mentioned.
[182] Just like a baroque metaphor and the idea of wander.
[183] Sant Antuono is better known as Sant Antonio Abbate, see Paolo Toschi, *Invito al Folklore Italiano: Le regioni e le feste* Roma: ed. Studium, 1963, pp. 261-2, 264. See also G. Pitrè *Archivio delle Tradizioni Popolari,* 1887 vol. VI, p.19; 1906-07, vol. XXIII, p. 508-509. On Saints see also G. Pitrè *Archivio delle Tradizioni Popolari*, (each volume has a listing on saints' legends) and Francesca Canadé- Sautman, *La Religion Du Quotidien. Rites Et Croyances Populaires De La Fin Du Moyen Age*, Firenze: Leo S. Olschki, 1995.
[184] In Campania, in Italy and other countries, the herpes zoster, better known as shingles, is called *fuoco di Sant' Antonio*, because of the painful burning sensation the disease causes. See Jacobus da Voragine *The Golden Legend. Reading on the Saints.* Translated by William Granger Ryan, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993; John Mason Good, *The Study of Medicine*, Boston: Wells and Lillym 1823; Di Carlo Gelmetti, *Il Fuoco Di Sant'Antonio*: *storia, tradizione e medicina*, SpringerLink (on line service), 2007.
[185] See, http://www.casertamusica.com/rubriche/articoli/2006-A/060117_fuoco_antonio.htm; http://www.solofrastorica.it/Carnevale.htm
[186] *Sanguinaccio* was a cake made with the blood of the pig, chocolate, sugar pinoli-nuts and candied fruit.
[187] According to "Il Dizionario Garzanti della Lingua Italiana" "bardare" e "bardatura" also refer to the act of dressing in loud and adorned manner.
[188] The diminutive suffix *–iello,* however, leads to think that the boy is likeable, small and cute, in a way lovable in spite of his stupidity, (same applies for Nardiello).
[189] For more info in the origin of the name see Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend. Reading on the Saints.* Translated by William Granger Ryan, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993.
[190]Considering the peculiarities of their situations and personalities I am inclined to believe that both Nardiello and Narduccio were named after San Leonardo rather that San Bernardo.
[191] The suffix *–uccio* has the same meaning as *–iello*, see note 61.
[192] Originates from the name Ambrosias, see http://www.cognomiitaliani.org/cognomi/cognomi0001m.htm
[193] The suffix *–one* has usually a depreciative and augmentative meaning.
[194] See http://www.etymonline.com.
[195] Tesauro, 1968, p. 342.
[196] *-etto* is a diminutive suffix.
[197]"In some other cultures, instead, it is the symbol of power and triumph, "the Chou regarded it as a bird of good omen, the herald of their victories and the mark of their virtues." In Japan it is considered the symbol of filial love and respect and it also regarded as "a messenger of the gods" Jean Chevalier & Alain Gheerbrant, *The Penguin Dictionary of Symbols,* translated from the French by John Buchanan-Brown, New York: Penguin Books, 1996, p. 789.
[198] Pliny, *Natural History*, with an English translation in ten volumes by H. Rackham, M.A., and London: William Heinemm LTD and Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, MCMXL, vol. III, p. 311.
[199] Ibid, p. 313.
[200] "La smorfia napoletana", is a book that interprets dreams and associates them with numbers to be played at the game of lotto. See *Il Libro dei Sogni,* edited by Anna Maria Paglione, Roma: Grandi Tascabili Economici Newton, 1995.
[201] Pliny, p. 373.
[202]Ibid, p. 399.
[203] See also Ecloga 1, "La coppella" in *Lo cunto de li cunti*, (vv.170-219); where Iacovuccio talks about the war and its dramatic consequences, (as Professor Di Scipio suggested for this social-civic conscience Basile reminds us of another great dialect writer Ruzante.)
[204] Other names that might arouse interest are Saporita, Sapia and Betta. Saporita is the protagonist of "Le sette cotenelle", (The Seven Little Pork Rinds, 4.4); her name means 'tasty' and suits her well as she is a glutton. Sapia is the name of tow protagonists of *Lo cunto.* The name originates from 'sapienza" and it means 'knowledge-wisdom'. In fact, both the women carrying this name prove to be very wise and knowledgeable, (see "Sapia Liccarda, 3.4; "La Sapia", 6.5). Betta is the protagonist of "Pinto Smauto", ("Pretty as a Picture", 3.5); the name is a derivative of Elisabetta, (Elizabeth). Etymologically Elisabetta means "God is known", and it indicates a person who strives for perfection. Betta is a girl that cannot find a husband because no one is good enough for her, ultimately she 'forges' a

husband with her own hands and marries 'the perfect man'. For more information on Saint Elizabeth see *The Golden Legend* by Jacobus de Voragine.
[205] This has been discussed on the first part of the chapter,
[206] Zazzera, Sergio *Dizionario Napoletano,* Roma: Newton Compton editori, 2007, p.423. (The translation is mine). Also according to *Il Grande Dizionario Garzanti della Lingua Italiana,* 'zozza' in Tuscan indicates a mix of cheap alcoholic beverages; it can also mean "gentaglia", "scum".
[207] Such as Canepa, Croce, Petrini, Rak, Zipes.
[208] The importance of Zoza in the entire collection will be discussed later in the chapter; also other aspects of her character will be dealt with in chapter 3.
[209] Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend. Reading on the Saints*, translated by William Granger Ryan, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993, vol. 1, p.27.
[210]It is important to notice that during that time Lucia was a very common name for slaves. Lucia is the baptized name of many slaves as seen in the register of Venice, Florence and Genoa, (I thank Professor Di Scipio for this information)
[211] In Dante's *Divine Comedy,* Saint Lucy is called upon three times and at all times she is invoked as the messenger of God and the Holy Spirit and as illuminating grace. (*Inf.* II, 49-142; Purg. IX, 55; Par. XXXII, 137-38.) For "Lucia" see also G. Pitrè, *Archivio delle Tradizioni Popolari,* vol. XIV, p. 206.
[212] Pulcinella is the antonomastic Neapolitan mask.
[213] This expression emphasizes even more the manipulative nature of the character; indeed she 'plays' the father knowing exactly what note to hit first.
[214] '*zorasse* comes from the Neapolitan verb '*nzurarse*, which originates from the Latin *inuxorare* and it means "to get married- to take a wife"; see Zazzera, 2007, p. 235.
[215] Jacobus de Voragine, 1993, vol.1, p. 269-70. (The emphasis is mine.)
[216] A famous pilgrim's site for the saint is Santiago de Compostela, also very rich in popular traditions.
[217] He does not always use fictional names, as seen before; he often sets his tales in real cities.
[218] Boccaccio in 2.7 also uses an equivocal toponym Valcava, (translated as Hidden Valley or Deep Hole), which holds a sexual innuendo.
[219] This is an example of Tales of Tricksters and Tricks. Boccaccio excelled in this art as can be seen in the tales of Chichibio, (VI, 4), Frate Cipolla, (VI, 10) and Calandrino, (IX, 3) just to mention a few.
[220] Jacobus de Voragine, 1993, v.1, p. 105
[221] For his action of killing the dragon Cienzo also reminds us of St George; so he could be considered a sort on 'Neapolitan' Saint George.
[222] Basile was well acquainted for Turkish culture in fact he fought against the Turks in Crete while he was in the army. He was thus familiar also with the language they spoke, especially with the way they spoke 'Italian' as Lucia's character proves.
[223] The original tale, from which Basile probably borrowed the idea, is that of the *dame lépreuse* of medieval Arthurian legend. It is interesting that in the original exampla there was a woman who needed to be cured with the blood of another woman, specifically a vergin. Basile, 'turns' the original story 'upside-down', in fact the leprous is a man and he needs the blood of another man. Also Basile eliminates the cruelty of the sacrifice of a virgin and adapts the story to his own time, making it a tale about kidnapping and piracy. ( I thank Prof. Canadé-Sautman for this information.)
[224] Gender issues will be discussed in chapter 3.
[225] See note 101.
[226] Examples of such names and toponyms are: Verde Prato, (Green Meadow), the name of the kingdom in the homonymous tale (2.2); Filadoro, protagonist of "La colomba", (The dove, 2.7), whose name simply seems to hint at her beauty; Bel Puoio, (Lovely Knoll), the name of the kingdom in "Cannetella", (3.1); Fioravante the ogre/king in "Cannetella", etc.
[227] For more information on the topic of the Literature of Dissent, see *Counter Tradition: The Literature of Dissent and Alternatives,* editor Sheila Delany, New York: Basic Books, 1971. It is also interesting that Giordano Bruno uses Naples as a metaphor for the world in his *Candelaio***,** Milano: Rizzoli, 1976, p. 217: "Di sorte che, chi volesse vedere come sta fatto il mondo, derebbe desiderare di essere stato presente."
[228] Jean Chevalier & Alain Gheerbrant, p. 414.
[229] Occupying time with leisure activities was customary in the courts of the aristocrats and this is definitely one of their roles in Basile's collection.

[230] Rak in his translation provides rich notes on the games, see pp. 280-282. On games see G. Pitrè *Archivio per le Tradizioni Popolari, (1880-1906)*, 1893 vol. XII "Di alcuni giochi bolognesi dal XIII al XVI secolo", pp. 457-482 and 1894, vol. XI pp. 426-433 and pp.513-533.
[231] Ibid, also see Canepa, 2007, p.144-145.
[232] As Professor Di Scipio suggested to me it is known that in the symbolic language of Alchemy easy operations are named *ludus puerorum*, (children's games). Many games of chance (betting) originated in the oracular arts. See Paolo Toschi, *Tradizioni Popolari Italiane,* chapter XVIII "Giochi e giocattoli"; Torino: Edizioni Rai, 1959, pp.150-57.
[233] Ibid.
[234] In the Bible there are many examples of this practice, [i.e.: the episode of Mary Magdalene: "Now the Scribes and Pharisees brough a woman caught in adultery, and setting her in the midst, said to him "Master, this woman has just now been caught in adultery. And the Law Moses commanded us to stone such a person. What, therefore, dost thou say?" (John, 8)], which is still common in some countries of the Middle East.
[235] Jean Chevalier & Alain Gheerbrant, p. 370-71.
[236] See also Boccaccio's tale V, 9 where the falcon definitely carries a sexual symbolism.
[237]Jean Chevalier & Alain Gheerbrant, p. 417.
[238] On food see: Milillo A., "Il sistema alimentare nelle fiabe popolari", in Turci M. (a cura di), *La ricerca folklorica, antropologia dell'alimentazione*, Brescia, Grafo Edizioni, 1994, n° 30; Scafoglio D. e Lombardi Satriani L., *Pulcinella. Il mito e la storia*; Milano, Leonardo Ed., 1992 and Stefano Jossa, "Il cibo della mente. Appunti per una metafora", http://www.disp.let.uniroma1.it/fileservices/filesDISP/035-041_JOSSA.pdf; Noëlle CHÂTELET, "Le corps à corps culinaire" Paris, Seuil, 1977;Camporesi, Piero, *Bread of Drams Food and Fantasy in Early Modern Europe,* Translated by David Gentilcore, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980.
[239] Sergio, Zazzera *Dizionario Napoletano,* Roma: Newton Compton Editori, 2007, p. 29.
[240] The traditional Neapolitan sauce known as 'ragù' is made with lard, or pork fat, (i.e. animal fat.)

**Chapter 3**

[241] Rosmary Radford Ruether, *Religion and Sexism-Images of Woman in the Jewish and Christian Tradition*, New York: Simon and Shuster, 1974, p. 72, (the emphasis is mine.)
[242] Michel Foucault *Herculine Barbine* translated by Richard McDougall, Brighton, Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1980, p. VII.
[243] Francesca Canadé-Sautman, *Androgyny,* in Encyclopedia of Sex and Gender*,* Fedwa Malti-Douglas, Editor in Chief, Detroit, New York, San Francisco, New Haven, Conn, Waterville, Maine, London: MACMILLAN REFERENCE USA, ( An imprint of Thomas Gale, a part of The Thomson Corporation), 2007, vol. 1, p.66.
[244] Willis Barnstone, *The Other Bible. Jewish Pseudepigrapha, Christian Apocrypha, Gnostic Scriptures, Kabbalah, Dead Sea Scrolls,* edited with an introduction of W. Barnstone, New York, NY : Harper SanFrancisco,( a division of HarperCollins Publishers), 2005, p.581.
[245] Joan M. Ferrante, *Dante's Beatrice Priest of An Androgyny God*, in Occasional Papers, NO.2, Medieval & Renaissance Text & Studies, Center For Medieval & Early Renaissance Studies, Binghmanton,New York: State University of New York at Binghamton, 1992, p.23.
[246] Willis Barnstone, 2005, p. 286.
[247] Sophia does not need a male companion to reproduce; she generates her offspring "out of herself", she is male and female in nature.
[248] Willis Barnstone, 2005, p.287.
[249] Ibid, p. 288.
[250] Ibid, p. 591.
[251] Francesca Canadé-Sautman, *Woman as Birth-and-Death-Giver in Folk Ttradition: a Cross Cultural Persepective*, in –Women's Studies, (1986), vol.12, p. 215.
[252] Plato, *The Symposium*, translated with an introduction and notes by Christopher Gill, New York: Penguin Books, 1999, p. 22.
[253] Plato, p. 24.
[254]Canadé-Sautman, 1986, p. 499.
[255] The myth of androgyny was reflected also in the literature of the Middle Ages, for example Dante in Purgatorio 30 refers to his beloved Beatrice with a masculine appellation calling her "ammiraglio",('admiral") : " Quasi ammiraglio che in poppa e in propra/viene a veder la gente che ministra/per li altri legni, e a ben far l'incora;/ in su la sponda del carro sinistra,/ quando mi volsi al suon del nome mio, / che di necessità qui si registra, /vidi la donna che pria m'apparío/ velata sotto l'angelica festa, / drizzar li occhi ver me di qua dal rio.", (vv.58-66).

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[256] E. R., Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages,* translated from the German by Willard R. Trask, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1990, 106-07.
[257] See Figure 9.
[258] Nonetheless, the androgyne in myth and religion, remains quite acceptable, even in cultures that are extremely repressive of women and strictly enforce gender rules;
[259] Francesca Canadé-Sautman, *Androgyny,* in Encyclopedia of Sex and Gender,. 2007, vol. 1, p. 64. The main point of this essay is to underscore the contrasts between forms of androgyny and the vastly different social values placed on them, which means that all androgyny does not affect that blending and some remains totally binary. (I thank Professor Canadé-Sautman for this explanation)
[260] Ovid, *The Metamorphoses,* edited with an Introduction and Notes by Robert Squillace-Translated by Frank Justus Miller, New York, NY.: Barnes & Noble Classics, 2005, p. 74.
[261]Sandra Lipsitz Bem, *Probing the Promise of Androgyny,* in The Psychology of Women-Ongoing Debates, edited by Mary Roth Walsh, New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1987, p.211.

| **Masculine Characteristics** | **Feminine Characteristics** |
|---|---|
| Act as leader | Affectionate |
| Aggressive | Cheerful |
| Ambitious | Childlike |
| Analytical | Compassionate |
| Assertive | Does not use harsh language |
| Athletic | Eager to soothe hurt feelings |
| Competitive | Feminine |
| Dominant | Gentle |
| Makes decision easily | Shy |
| Forceful | Gullible |
| Independent | Loyal |
| Individualistic | Sensitive to the need of others |
| Self – reliant | Sympathetic |
| Self-sufficient | Tender |
| Willing to take a stand | Warm |
| Willing to take a risk | Yielding |
| Strong personality | Understanding |

[262] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble Feminism and the Subversion of Identity,* New York and London: Routledge Classics, 2007, p.11.
[263] Ann Oakley *Sex, Gender & Society* Aldershot, Hants., England: Gower/Maurice Temple Smith, 1985, p.173.

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[264] Ibid, p. 173-174..
[265] C.G. Jung, *Two Essay on Analytical Psychology,* translated by R.F.C. Hull, New York: Meridian Books, 1956, p. 216.
[266] For more information on this topic, see Butler, 2007.
[267] Charles Perrault, *The Complete Fairy Tales of Charles Perrault*. Illustrated by Sally Holmes-Newly Translated by Neil Philip and Nicoletta Simboroswski, with an introduction and notes on the stories by Neil Philip, New York: Clarion Books, p. 22 & p. 29.
[268] Basile was fascinated by the themes of power and fortune, and of how hey correlate to each other, just like Boccaccio, Straparola and Machiavelli had been before him.
[269] As Zipes indicates "The disguise of a young woman as man became a common motif in European literature by nineteenth century and reflected the difficulties that women encountered when they sought to travel alone or wanted to lead independent lives. However, the disguise was always fraught with difficulties because it challenged traditional gender roles and identities.", *The Great Fairy Tale Tradition From Straparola and Basile to the Brothers Grimm"*, selected and edited by Jack Zipes, New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001, p. 159.
[270] AT 884: "*The Forsaken Fiancée: Service as Menial.* A prince forsakes his fiancée in order to pledge himself to another of his father's choice. In men's clothes [K1837], the first fiancée along with her companions goes into the service of the prince. The prince marries his first fiancée [T102]" ANTTI AARNE *Verzeichnis der Marchentypen*, *The Types Of The Folktale*. *A Classification and Bibliography* translated and enlarged by Stith Thompson, Helsinki: Indiana University, 1987, p. 301.
[271] It is important to point out that also Boccaccio assigned ambiguous names to some female characters. For example, in the *Decameron* there is tale 2: 9 that talks about the adventure of Donna Zinevra who, in order to escape the death sentence pronounced by her husband against her, escapes dressed as a man and also changes her name to Sicurano, ( which means "a secure person"), which she considered more proper for her new identity. Moreover, there also other 'ambiguous' names assigned to female such as Fiordaliso, (2: 5); Madonna Belcolore, (8:2); Iancofiore, (8:10).
[272] The *scrittorio* appears to be an adaptation of a medieval (French but probably Italian too) erotic pun, about writing on parchment—the woman's skin, (I thank Professor Canadé-Sautman for this information.
[273] The expression "non monnava nespole" is still a very popular saying in Naples and it is used to indicated people who do not waste time in preliminaries and go straight 'inot action' ; it is especially used to refer to a person who moves fast in the relationship with the other sex.
[274] For more on "military" metaphors, see John Aktins *Sex In Literature The Medieval Experience*, vol.3, London : Calder, 1978, p. 173.
[275] The 'mezza-canna', (literally 'half-cane') was a measurement, for all the different types of measurement in *Lo cunto* see Rak, 2006, *Cunto 1 4 4* p 106.
[276] Lippolo from the Latin *lippus* indicates a ficus, *an over-ripe fig, dropping with juice.* Obviously a fruit that is 'over-ripe' and has lost its juice is not good anymore; hence the over ripe ficus, translated into Italian as 'fico secco', (dry ficus) has become, in Italy at least, a synonym of 'something useless'; there is, in fact, the expression "non me ne importa un fico secco", (I don't care at all; I can care less about it). There is also the saying "Non vali un fico secco" (You are worth nothing) in which the expression 'fico secco' (over ripe ficus) means 'nothing'. and this is , precisely, the significance of the word *lippolo* in *Lo cunto*.
[277] This tale also echoes tale-type 315 and 425B.
[278] AT 884; H1578.1; T102, see Aarne, 1987, p. 301.
[279] Having seven daughters or seven sons is a typical fairytale *topos*.
[280] The fact that it is the mother who suggests the tasks for Belluccia, makes the tale even more interesting as it reinforces, once again, the 'solidity' of gender stereotypes during Basile's time; and it makes Belluccia even more 'revolutionary.'
[281] This is a sexual metaphor, as the "campagna rasa", ("the flat countryside") could symbolize the vagina, while the "campagna arvostata", ("hilly countryside") could refer to the penis.
[282] "Scannagliarimmo" is the future of the neapolitan verb "scanagliare", and probabily comes from the italian "scandagliare" which means "to probe, to sound out, to fathom". In the neapolitan dialect this verb is used especially when someone secretely investigates to final private information on a person, (who is also unware of the fact that some one is pying on him/her.)
[283] Ibid. p. 257.

[284] See Hilary Mantel, *The War Against Women,* in The New York Review, April 30, 2009, p.20. For information on this topic see Marilyn French, *From Eve to Dawn: A History of Women*, with a foreword by Margaret Atwood, New York: Feminist Press, 2008, 4 volumes.
[285] For example the canon of beauty publicized by magazines, TV shows and movies, which often seem to identify 'real 'beauty with the size a woman wears, and the measurements of her body.
[286] AT 884A, K1837; K 2111; H1578.1.
[287] Bluebeard tale is listed as AT 312.
[288] His attempt to murder the disobedient wife fails thanks to the timely arrival of her two brothers who rescued the woman by killing the man.
[289] "Abborlato" is a perfect example of the innovation Basile brought to his Neapolitan dialect. In fact this term is not common in the Neapolitan dialect which to express the same concept would use the verb 'pazzià'( pazziato). "Abborlato" probably comes from the Italian "burlare" which means "to joke; to kid to pretend". Basile took the Italian term and turn it into 'Neapolitan' creating a neologism. The author often does that in order to create a unique language that is not 'Italian' and yet not 'Neapolitan'.
[290] AT 560.
[291]The development of this tale is clearly of the model followed by the Roman de Silence, which is a medieval romance; see Heldris de Cornuaille., *Le Roman de Silence: a Thirteenth-Century Arthurian Verse-Romance*; edited by Lewis Thorpe. Cambridge, Heffer, 1972 and *Silence : a Thirteenth-Century French Romance* , newly edited and translated with introduction and notes by Sarah Roche-Mahdi., East Lansing : Colleagues Press, c1992; Molly Meijer Wertheimer, , *Listening to Their Voices : the Rhetorical Activities of Historical Women,* edited by Molly Meijer Wertheimer, Columbia : University of South Carolina Press, c1997.
[292] The *topos* of cross-dressing was highly exploited in Baroque literature; it was part of the attempt to create 'meraviglia' and spectacle.
[293] "Il primo dato che mi sembra interessante sottolineare, all'interno di queste sofferte relazioni d'amore, è l'effetto di spossamento e di totale turbamento che la passione produce al soggetto. Se Metaneone di fronte alla sua amata Eromilia appare come <<scordato di se stesso>> (Er 65) e dovrà infine ammettere: << non posso sen'errore dire d'esser più mio>> (Er 80), così pure Clarice dirà di essere <<fuori di se medesima>> (Cl 219), <<lontana dall'esser proprio>> (Cl 209) quando si accorgerà che Amore gli ha fatto perdere <<il governo>> di se stessa (Cl 211). La potenza delle passioni descritte in questi romanzi si esprime infatti in termini di incontinenza. La <<gravità reale>> risulta impotente a <<contrastare à moti gli spiriti>> (Er 185), e non è raro imbattersi in personaggi che come il Re Sleuco a causa <<dell'alterazione>> effetto della passione amorosa, rischiano di veder <<naufragar il (loro) decoro.>> (Str 30)", see Roberta Colombi, *Lo sguardo che <<s'interna>>-Personaggi e immaginario interiore nel romanzo italiano del Seicento-Studi su Biondi, Donno, Assarino, Lengueglia, Morando*, Roma: Aracne, 2002, p. 161-62.
[294] AT 313: The Girl as A Hepler in the Hero's Flight, but also AT 884; K1837 and At 410: Sleeping Beauty.
[295] The sexual metaphor behind the name of the two kingdoms present in this tale, Fuosso Stritto (Narrow Ditch), Renza's kingdom, and Vigna Larga (Wide Vineyard), the prince's kingdom, has been explained in chapter 2.
[296] There is also a French version of this tale *Persinette* written by Charlotte-Rose de La Force; also Madame d'Alnoy included the plot in *The chatte blanche*, (The White Catm *Contes nouveaux ou les fées à la mode,* 1698). Finally the brothers Grimm included their own version *Rapunzel,* in the *Kinder-und Hausmarchen,* (*Children and the House of Tales,* 1812.) For more information on *Rapunzel,* see Jack Zipes *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales*, edited by Jack Zipes, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 416.
[297] With the expression "fareme le facce lavate perchè io me trovasse lo core nigro!" Basile creates the "metafora del contrasto", (the metaphor of opposition) between the 'brightness' of a cleaned face and the 'darkness' of a suffering heart. This metaphor is intended to emphasize the pain Renza is bearing in her heart.
[298] Games have been discussed in chapter 2.
[299] As Stanley Choinacki writes in *"The Most Serious Duty": Motherhood, Gender, and Patrician Culture in Renaissance Venice",* although fathers (and mothers) loved their daughter "Nevertheless, practical interest blended with cultural principles to make daughters instruments of the family strategies pursued by their fathers. Prevailing values tied men's honor to control over their womenfolk's sexuality; in practice, that limited women's approved gender roles to wifehood or enclosure in a convent. Even te restricted vocational choice generally seems to have been made by the father, not the daughter." See Paula Findlen, *The Italian Renassaince. Essential Readings,* Oxford: Blackwell, 2002, chapter 7, p. 182-83.

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[300] Possibly, by presenting his women in this unusual and untraditional role Basile is questioning the social order and the practices at the Court.
[301] Jean Chevalier & Alain Gheerbant, 1996, p. 1068-69.
[302] See http://www.cognomiitaliani.org/cognomi/cognomi0003cio.htm
[303] Which contrasts with the meaning of their names, (Rosa and Garofano can both be a symbol of love) and creates irony.
[304]"'nce sarria 'ntorzato e ne paterrà lo iusto pe lo peccatore", "'nce sarria 'ntorzato" is the conditional past of "'ntorzare ('nturzare)" which means "to blow up- to; to fill, to inflate." Basile is using the verb in a figurative way; he means to say that one day, if Viola keeps up with her rude behavior, the prince will 'blow up' with anger, loose his discernment and explode in a blind wrath which will make him punish the innocent together with the sinner. There is also another Neapolitan expression in which "'ntorzare" is used and it is the following "Té 'ntorzato!" which means "it went down the wrong way!" and it is used when something that seemed to be going smoothly ended up going awfully wrong. . If we take this meaning then Viola would be the subject of the verbal expression "quarche iuorno 'nce sarria 'ntorzato", which would have to be translated as "one day things would go terribly wrong for her". Indeed the prince could grow tired of her imolite manner and decide to punish not only her but also her father and sisters, ("paterrà lo iusto pe lo peccatore.")
[305] "porta-pollastre" is an expression used to indicate a person who favors and helps illicit love affairs. The idea of 'pollastro' (chicken) comes from the habit of folding the love notes in the two opposite angles which will make it look like the wing of the chicken. However, this expression could also come from the habit of donating "pollastri' in exchange for a favor. "accorda-messere" means "bootlicker", (literally it means to please [accordare] my lord [messere]);"'mezzeia-peccerille" indicates a person who 'makes children cunning', meaning a person who teaches them how to bribe and trick people. ("'mezzeia" comes from "'mezzeiare", "ammaliziare" in Italian which in English means "to make cunning".) [I know of these popular sayings because they are part of my cultural background.]
[306] AT 403: The Black and the White Bride; AT 425: The Search for the Lost Husband; AT 533: The Speaking of Horsehead. (More than "Pretty as a Picture" the title could be translated as "Shining Picture")
[307] John Atkins, *Sex in Literature the Medieval Experience,* London: Calder, Volume 3, 1978, p.173.
[308] In Italian Sapia means "wise", for information on the name see note 85.
[309] AT 879: The Basil Maiden.
[310] These are all neighborhoods populated mostly by prostitutes.
[311] Jean Chevalier & Alain Gheerbant, 1996
[312] See Ibid. p. 937. Also in *La Mandragola,* (The Mandrake), written by Machiavelli, to cure the beautiful Lucrezia's infertility the doctors order that a hot stone be placed on her belly.
[313] The name Sapia stands for *sapientia*, knowledge/wisdom, which is also the meaning of the name Sophia. Sophia is traditionally recognized as the female side of God and also as an androgynous being. As written in *The Gnostic Drama* "Our fellow sister, Wisdom (*sophia)* …, conceived a thought from herself./and in the conception of the Spirit and Foreknowledge./She wanted to bring forth the likeness out of hersef,/ although the Spirit had not agreed with her not consented. Nor had her consort (*syzygos*) approved, /namely, the male virginal Spirit. / She, however, did not find her partner/as she was about to decide/without the good will of the Spirit/ and the knowledge of her partner, / and as she brought forth because of the sexual knowledge (*prounikon*) which is in her."… "Wisdom… relies solely on herself: not only does she not ask for permission, but she also generates her offspring out of herself, without any collaboration of her male partner." Peter Schafer, *Mirror Of His Beauty. Feminine Images of God from the Early Bible to the Early Kabbalah*, Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2002, p.66.
[314] It is interesting that the other Sapia lived in "Villa Aperta" (Open Villa).
[315] According to Medieval theories on numbers 13 can be considered a sacred number as it represents the sum of 10 (10 commandments) plus 3 (the Trinity); but it can also be a 'sin' number as it exceeds the number of the apostles, Christ's chosen men. Furthermore, as Hillel ben David writes "Thirteen is the number that bonds multiplicity into oneness." For example there are twelve tribes that are bonded into their father Israel (Yaagov) Israel is the thirteenth. The meaning of the number thirteen is the *bonding of many into one",* http://www.betemunah.org/thirteen.html.
[316] On jungian interpretation of fairy-tales see: Von Franz, Marie Louise, *The Psychological Meaning of Redemption Motifs in Fairytales,* Toronto: Inner City Books, 1980; *The Feminine in Fairy Tales,* revised edition, Boston & London: Shambhala, 1993; *The Interpretation Of Fairy Tales*, revised edition, Boston and London: Shambhala, 1996; Steven Swann Jones, *The fairy tale: the magic mirror of the imagination*, New York: Routledge, 2002.

[317] Before the ‘scena boscareccia’ there is a ‘fervent’ exchange of words between the old woman and the young page. The passion and the vehemence that underlines their dialogue echo the passion and the fervor of a sexual encounter; and might have awoken Zoza’s curiosity even before she saw the exposed sexuality of the old crone. The baroque writers were very much interested into the power of words, and they often played with language to create powerful images and metaphors. As we have seen in chapter 2 Basile definitely shared this interest with his contemporaries, however on the power of words and on their different ‘levels’ of meanings it is interesting to note that the Dogon people divided words into two categories. They had the category of “dry words” and that of “moist words”. The “dry, or primordial, word was an attribute of the primeval Spirit, Amma, before he had begun the task of creation, and was undifferentiated speech, unaware of itself. It resides within mankind, but mankind does not know it. It has the potential property of divine thought, but at our microcosmic level is the unconscious. *‘Moist’ words germinated, like the principle of life itself, within the Cosmic Egg and they were the words given to mankind. They comprise audible sounds, regarded as one of the ways in which the procreative powers of the male are expressed, on a par with his semen. The word enters the woman’s EAR- her other sexual organ-and then tines down into her womb to fertilize the seed and create the embryo”,* Jean Chevalier & Alain Gheerbant, *Dictionary of Symbols*, translated from the French by John Buchanan-Brown, New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1996, p. 1125. (The emphasis is mine.)
[318] Three is a recurrent number in fairytales; for example, three is usually the number of attempts a hero/heroine has to make before succeeding in his/her enterprise. Also often the hero is ‘part of a triad, for example see in Basile “Le tre fate”, (The Three Fairies, 3.10), “Li tre re animale”, (The Three Animal Kings, 4.3), “Le tre corone”, (The Three Crowns, 4.6), “Sole, Luna e Talia”, (5.5.) “Le tre cetra”, (The Three Citrons, 5.9). Also see Grimms, “The Three Little Brids”, “The Three Princesses”, “The Three Little Men in the Woods”, among others.
[319] The feminine trinity is also present in Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, (i.e. *Inferno,* canto II, where Maria, Lucia and Beatrice are in opposition to the three-headed Lucifer of *Inferno* 34.).
[320] “Donna è gentil nel ciel che si compiange/di questo ’mpedimento ov’io ti mando,/ sí che duro giudicio là sú frange./ Questa chiese Lucia in suo dimando/ e disse :-Or ha bisogno il tuo fedele/ di te, e io a te lo raccomando-./ Lucia, nimica di ciascun crudele,/ si mosse, e venne al loco dov’i’ era,/ che mi sedea con l’antica Rachele./ Disse:- Beatrice, loda di Dio vera,/ chè non soccorri quei che t’amò tanto,/ ch’uscí per te de la volgare schiera?/ non odi tu la pieta del suo pianto?/ non vedi tu la morte che ’l combatte/ su la fiumana ove ’l mar non ha vanto?-“, Inferno II, vv. 94-108.
[321] Anne Marie Schimmel, *The Mystery of Numbers,* New York-Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993, p.65.
[322] According to the Sufis, in fact, “lover and beloved are united in the overarching concept of love”. Ibid. p. 68.
[323] Ibid, p. 127.
[324] Ibid, p. 135.
[325] The seven terraces are organized as follows: 1: The Proud; 2: The Envious; 3: The Wrathful; 4: The Slothful; 5: The Avaricious; 6: The Gluttonous; 7: The Lustful.
[326] Beatrice also asks Matelda to bring Dante (and Stazio) to the Eunoè River, the water of good remembrance, after Dante drinks the water his memory is restored and his purification is complete, thus he is ready to acces *Paradiso.* See *Purgaorio* 28 and 33.
[327] Dante Alighieri, *Purgatorio*, in La Divina Commedia, a cura di Natalino Sapegno, Milano: La Nuova Italia, 2004, Canto XXXI, vv.91-99, p. 336.
[328] Ibid, Canto XXXIII, vv. 142-145,p. 361.
[329] Numerically, the baptism is represented by the number eight which is a very significant number in Dante’s opus, “The numerical symbolism of the Rose is provided and established by the *personae* present in it. The first circle or tier of the Rose has eight blessed souls. The poet has, therefore, chosen this number of blessed souls to *represent resurrection and eternal life,* symbols which… are well established in the patristic tradition.” Giuseppe, Di Scipio *The Symbolic Rose in Dante’s Paradiso,* Ravenna: Longo Editore, 1984, p.133, ( the emphasis is mine.)
[330] Also the presence of water further reinforces the similarities with Dante’s journey; in fact as we have seen when Dante reaches the Earthly Paradise he finds two rivers and from the water of the Lete he receives his baptism.
[331] As Professor DiScipio suggested Lucia was the most common name assigned to slaves that were brought to Italy during the fifteenth century. There are 26 Tartar slaves named Lucia who were sold in the market of Genova from 1400 to 1487 and there are also 48 Circassian slaves named Lucia. Other common names were: Maddalena, Margherita, Caterina, Marta, Maria, etc. See *Il Mercato degli Schiavi a Genova nel secolo XV*, Domenico Gioffré, Genova: Fratelli Bozzi, 1971.
[332] Giuseppe, Di Scipio *The Symbolic Rose in Dante’s Paradiso,* Ravenna: Longo Editore, 1984, p. 106-07. Even more interesting is the idea that Lucia incarnates the virtue of Justice proposed by Di Scipio , “If Lucia is a *typus*

*Christi*, and if faith … is a Christocentric virtue, Lucy "nimica di ciascun crudele", implies another virtue, namely Justice.", p. 108.
[333] Anne Marie Shimmel, 1993, p. 129.
[334] In the *Decameron*, Boccaccio tells a story of a young beautiful girl Caterina da Valbon,(5.4), who marries her lover when she is still a teenager. Also see David Herlihy *La famiglia nel medioevo*. Bari: Laterza, 1994, p. 134 where the author indicates that the marriable age for girls in the Middle Ages varied between 12 and 15 years old. See also the English edition of the book, *Medieval Household*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985.
[335] "The Dogon and Bambara regard three as the number symbolizing the male principle and depict it in a hieroglyphic showing the penis and two testicles." Jean Chevalier & Alain Gheerbant, *Dictionary of Symbols*, translated from the French by John Buchanan-Brown, New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1996, p. 995.
[336] The circular motion of Zoza's journey brings the mind the image of The Wheel Of Fortune which was very popular in medieval tradition. Also the idea of the circle as a symbol of perfection returns in Dante's *Vita Nuova,* where in chapter 4 he writes "E quella mi dicea queste parole :<<Ergo tanquam centrum ciculi, cui simil modo se habent circumferentie partes; tu autem non sic. >>: See, *La Vita Nuova,* introduzione di Giorgio Petrocchi, commento di Marcello Ciccuto, Milano: Biblioteca Universale Rizzoli, 1984, p. 124.

**Chapter 4**

[337] Jack Zipes *Spells of Enchantment The Wondrous Fairy Tales of Western Culture*, edited by Jack Zipes, New York: Penguin Books, 1992, p. XII.
[338] Zipes, p. XI.
[339] Zipes, 1992, p. XI.
[340] Italo Calvino, *La Tradizione popolare nelle fiabe*, in Sulla Fiaba, Milano: Oscar Mondadori, 1996, p. 117. ("The first objection to use a fairytale as historical document originates from the difficulty in identifying the location and the date where it was first uttered: when the historian ( or the geographer, the ethnographer, the sociologist) refers to a fairytale as representative of an épოch or of a specific environment and society, the folklorist can prove right away that the same tale, with the same narrative scheme can be found, more or less identical, in a far away country and in a historical-social reality completely different." The translation is mine.)
[341] Jack Zipes *Why Fairy Tales Stick-The Evolution and Relevance of a Genre*, New York and London: Routledge, 2006, p. 68.
[342] Ibid, p. 68.
[343] Ibid, p. 69.
[344] Ibid, p.70.
[345] Lewis Seifert, *The Marvelous in Context: The Place of the Contes de Fées in Late Seventeenth-Century France*, in "The Great Fairy Tale Tradition From Straparola and Basile to the Brothers Grimm", selected and edited by Jack Zipes, New York & London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001, p. 906.
[346] Claire-Lise Malarte-Feldman, *Perrault's Contes: an Irregular Pearl of Classical Literature*, in "Out of the Woods The Origins of the Literary Fairy Tale in Italy and France", edited by Nancy Canepa, introduced by Nancy L. Canepa and Antonella Ansani, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1997, p.100.
[347] Jacques, Barchilon and Peter Flinders, *Charles Perrault*, Boston: Twayne, 1981, p. 30.
[348] Thelander, Dorothy R., *Mother Goose and Her Goslings: The France of Louis XVI as Seen Through Fairy Tale*, in Journal of Modern History 54, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, September 1982, p. 467-496.
[349] Neil, Philip, *Introduction* in The Complete Fairy Tales of Charles Perrault, illustrated by Sally Holmes, Newly Translated by Neil Philip and Nicolette Simborowski, with an introduction and notes on the stories by Neil Philip, New York: Clairon Books, 1993, p. 11.
[350] Claire-Lise Malarte-Feldman, 1997, p. 103.
[351] Ibid, p. 104.
[352] Jack Zipes *When Dreams Came True Classical Fairy Tales and Their Tradition,* New York & London: Routledge, 2007, 2nd edition, p. 48.
[353] Ibid, p. 73.
[354] See Zipes, 1992, p. XXIII.
[355] Zipes, 2007, p. 67.
[356] Jack, Zipes *The Brothers Grimm from Enchanted Forests to The Modern World*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002, 2nd ed Zipes, 2003, p. 29
[357] Zipes, 2007, p. 75.
[358] Ibid, p. 83.

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[359] Ibid, p. 83.
[360] Antti Aarne classifies the various versions of Cinderella as follows: "510 *Cinderella and Cap o' Rushes.*
I. *The persecuted heroine.* (a) The heroine is abused by her stepmother and stepsisters and (a1) stays on the hearth or in the ashes and, (a2) is dressed in rough clothing-cap rushes, wooden cloak, etc. , (b) flees in disguise from her father who wants to marry her, or (c) is cast out by him because she has said that she loved him like salt, or (d) is to be killed by a servant.
II. *Magic Help.* While she is acting as servant (at home or among strangers) she is advised, provided for, and fed 9a) by her dead mother, (b) by a tree on the mother's grave, or 9c) by a supernatural being or (d) by birds, or 9e) by a goat, a sheep, or a cow. (f) When the goat (cow) is killed there springs u from remains a magic tree.
III. *Meeting the prince.* (a) She dances in beautiful clothing several times with a prince who seeks in vain to keep her, or she is seen by him in church. (b) She gives hints of the abuse she has endured as servant girl, or (c) she is seen in her beautiful clothing in her room or in the church.
IV. *Proof of Identity.* (a) She is discovered through a slipper-test or (b) through a ring which she throws into the prince's drink or bakes in his bread. (c) She alone is able to pluck the gold apple desired by the knight.
V. *Marriage with the Prince*
VI. *Value of Salt.* Her father is served unsalted food and thus learns the meaning of the earlier answer." There is then a list of motifs usually present in the tale; the ones of interest in regard to the tales we will be discussing are: "I: S31. Cruel Stepmother; II: E323.2 Dead mother returns to aid persecuted daughter; E 631. Reincarnation in plant (tree) growing on the grave; N810 Supernatural helpers; F311.1 Fairy Godmother; N815. Fairy as helper; D813 magic object received from fairy; D1473.1 Magic wand furnishes clothes; D1050.1. Clothes produced by magic. D1111.1. Carriage produced by magic; F861.4.3. Carriage form pumpkin; D411.6.1. Transformation: mouse to a horse; D315.1. Transformation: rat into a person; B450 Helpful bird; D1470.1 magic wishing object causes wishes to be fulfilled; D1470.2. Provisions received from magic object; D1470.2.1 Provisions received from magic tree; III: N711.6. Prince sees heroine at ball and is enamored; C761.3. Tabu: staying too long at ball. Must leave before certain hour; R221. Heroine's three-fold flight from ball; VI: K2212.1 Treacherous stepsisters; H36.1. Slipper test. Identification by fitting of slipper; K1911.3.3.1. False bride's mutilated feet; F823.2. Glass shoes; J1146.1 Detection by pitch-trap. Pitch is spread so that footprints are left in it, or that shoe is left behind as clue; V.: L162. Lowly heroine marries the prince." For more information see Antti Aarnes's *Verzeichnis der Marchentypen*, translated and enlarged by Stith Thompson, Indiana University, Helsinki: Academia Scientifica Fennica, 1987, second edition, pp. 175-77.
[361] Chieko Irie Mulhern, *Analysis of Cinderella Motifs, Italian and Japanese,* in Asian Folklore Studies, Vol. 44, No. 1 (1985); Published by: Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/1177981, p. 2-3.
[362] Ibid, p.5-6.
[363] Meaning that fairytales have been largly published on the internet and have also been released on CDs.
[364] Jack Zipes *Why Fairy Tales Stick The Evolution and Relevance of a Genre*, New York and London: Routledge, 2006, p.107.
[365] Michele Rak Michele Rak, *Giambattista Basile. Lo cunto de li cunti,* a cura di Michele Rak, Milano: Garzanti, 2006, p.132.
[366] Nancy, Canepa *Giambattista Basile's The Tale of Tales, or Entertainment for Little Ones,* translated by Nancy Canepa, illustrated by C. Lettere, foreword by J. Zipes, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2007, p. 87
[367] See Ibid, p. 87.
[368] Ibid, p. 112-13.
[369] Bruno Bettelheim, *Cinderella* in The Uses of Enchantment The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales, New York: Vintage Books, 1989, p.242-43/
[370] Other translations read as follows "Once upon a time there was a prince who was a widower…"maintaining the traditional fairytales begging, see Jack Zipes *The Great Fairy Tale Tradition From Straparola and Basile to the Brothers Grimm*, selected and edited by Jack Zipes, New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001, p.445.
[371] All of these were traditional teaching for Basile's time; every girl of marriageable age had to learn, among other things, how to sew, embroider by hand and to crochet.
[372] Canepa, 2007, p. 83. (Henceforth, to facilitate the comparison among the three versions, I will cite Basile only in translation and I will always use Canepa unless otherwise noted.)
[373] Bettelheim, p. 245.

[374] Other translations read “Once upon a time there was a gentleman who took the haughtiest and proudest woman in the world for his second wife. …”. See Zipes, 2001, p. 449.
[375] Neil Philip and Nicoletta Simborowski, *The Complete Fairy Tales of Charles Perrault*, Illustrated by Sally Holmes, newly translated by Neil Philip and Nicoletta Simborowski; with an introduction and notes on the stories by Neil Philip, New York: Clarion Books, 1993, p. 60.
[376] Maria Tatar, *The Annotated Brothers Grimm, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm*, edited with a preface and notes by Maria Tatar, translated by Maria Tatar, Introduction by A.S. Byatt, New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004, p.115-16.
[377] Canepa, 2007, p. 84.
[378] Neil, p. 60.
[379] Tatar, 2004, p. 116.
[380] In Neapolitan dialect Shiorella means little flower.
[381] Canepa, 2007, p. 84.
[382] Maria Tatar *Off With Their Heads! Fairy Tales And The Culture Of Childhood*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992, p.98.
[383] One plausible explanation for the fact that the girls was re-names “Cat Cinderella” is that the cat is an animal that typical sits by the fire place near the ashes.
[384] Canepa, 2007, p. 84.
[385] Ibid, p. 85.
[386] “The date-palm was the Assyro-babylonians’ sacred Tree. In the Old Testament it is a symbol of the just man, enriched by the blessings of God. (The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree.” (Psalm 91:12).)”, Chevalier, Jean & Alain Gheerbrant, *The Penguin Dictionary of Symbols,* translated from the French by John Buchanan-Brown, New York: Penguin Books, 1996, p. 274.
[387] Ibid, p. 86.
[388] Tatar, 2004, p.119.
[389] This is the German for Cinderella. As Maria Tatar explains, “The term was originally used to designate a lowly kitchen maid, a servant who had to tend to ashes at the hearth. In German, the prefix “aschen-” can also be attached to “brother” or “sister” to designate a sibling who had been degraded or forced into a subordinate role.” See Tatar 2004, p. 113.
[390] Neil, p. 61.
[391] Chevalier, 1996, p. 49.
[392] Ibid., p. 49
[393] Ibid, p. 62.
[394] Ibid, p. 63.
[395] Ibid, p. 64.
[396] Tatar, 2004, p. 122.
[397] Neil, p. 66-67.
[398] See Rak, *Cunto* I.6 9*,* p. 138
[399] Marina Warner, *The Wronged Daughter Aspects of Cinderella,* in Grand Street, Vol. &, No. 3, Ben Sonnnberg: Spring 1998, p. 148. Stable URL: http://jstor.org/stable/25007112.
[400] Chevalier, p. 439.
[401] Alan Dundes, *Cinderella A Folklore Casebook*, see W.R.S. Ralston *Cinderella,* New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1982, p.37-38.
[402] For more information see Ibid, p. 38. [Note in old Italian there is *vaio*, a dress made with animal fur from the Latin *varius*, today it means *colore variegato*, (variegated color)]
[403] Tatar, 2004, p. 125-26.
[404] Canepa, 2007, p. 89.
[405] Ibid, p. 127.
[406] Neil, p. 67.
[407] Ibid, 69.
[408] The emphasis is mine.
[409] Neil, p. 60.
[410] Ibid, p. 69.
[411] I am referring to Perrault’s heroine.

[412] http://classicalmusic.about.com/od/historyofballet/a/cinderellaproa.htm
[413] Manuela Hoelterhoff, *Cinderella and Company Backstage at The Opera with Cecilia Bartoli*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999, p. 6.
[414] Ibid, p.6
[415] Terry Staples *Cinderella* in The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales, edited by Jack Zipes, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 100.
[416] Ibid, p. 98.
[417] Antti Aarne, 1961, p. 178.
[418] This is the motif of the false bride, K1911, Ibid, 136.
**Appendix**
[419]Jack Zipes, *Pitrè, Giuseppe*, in The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales The Western Fairy Tale Tradition From Medieval To Modern, edited by Jack Zipes, Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 386.
[420] See Italo Calvino *Le Fiabe Italiane,* in Sulla Fiaba, Milano: Mondadori, 19996, p. 52. ("Messia doesn't know to read, but she knows many things that nobody knows, and she tells them with propriety of language that it is a pleasure to listen to her. This is one of her characteristics, and to this characteristic I want to call my readers' attention." The translation is mine.)
[421] For more information on this author see Jack Zipes *Laura Gonzenbach and Her Forgotten Treasure of Sicilian Fairy Tales*, in Marvels & Tales: Journal of Fairy-Tale Studies, Vol. 17, No 2 (2003), Detroit: Wayne University Press, pp. 239-250.
[422] Calvino's *Fiabe Italiane* was the first collection written in Italian but not the first collection of Italian tales. In fact, before him in 1885 the American scholar Thomas Frederick Crane published an anthology of Italian tales translated into English, which established the "significance of Italian folklore in the English-speaking world.", see Thomas Frederick Crane, *Italian Popular Tales*, Edited with an introduction by Jack Zipes, Santa Barbara, California; Denver, Colorado; Oxford, England: AABC CLIO, 2001. On Italian and European folklore in general see also Giuseppe Cocchiara *Storia del folklore in Europa*, Torino: Einaudi, 1952 and *Genesi di leggende,* Palermo: Palumbo, 1949.
[423] Zipes, *Encyclopedia of Fairy Tales* p. 83.
[424] Ibid, p. 27.
[425] Ibid, p. 34.
[426] Ibid, p. 59.
[427] See, Italo Calvino *Le fiabe italiane,* in Sulla Fiaba, Milano: Mondadori, 1996, 34.
[428] Zipes, *Encyclopedia of Fairy Tales* p. 95.
[429] Ibid, p.190.
[430] Ibid, p. 214.
[431] Ibid, p. 214.
[432] Ibid, p. 288.
[433] Ibid, p. 312.
[434] Ibid, p. 358.
[435] Ibid, p. 376.
[436] Ibid, p. 392.
[437] Ibid, p. 434-35.
[438] Ibid, p. 508-509.

Figure 1- Rubens, “The fall of the rebel angels” (http://www.oceansbridge.com/paintings/collections/16-17th-century-european-paintings/small/Peter-Paul-Rubens-xx-Fall-of-the-Rebel-Angels-1620-xx-Pinakot.jpg)

Figure 2- Arcimboldo, “Portrait with vegetables"
(http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/49/Arcimboldo_Vegetables.jpg)

Figure 3-Bernini, " Portrait bust of Louis XIV", (http://www.lib-art.com/imgpainting/0/2/7020-bust-of-louis-xiv-gian-lorenzo-bernini.jpg)

Figure 4 - Caravaggio, “Assumption of the Virgin Mary”,( http://emptyeasel.com/wp-content/uploads/2007/10/assumptionofthevirginmarybyannibalecarracci.jpg)

Figure 5- Arcimboldo, “Portrait of Rodolfo II as Vertunno",
(http://www.pedagogies.net/Baroque/Images/ArcimboldoGD.jpg)

Figure 6-Basilica di Santa Maria della Salute,
(http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/7/77/Basilica_di_Santa_Maria_della_Salute.JPG)

Figure 7- N. Salvi, Trevi Fountain, (www.gothereguide.com)

Figure 8- Bernini, Triton Fountain, (http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/6f/RomaBerniniFontanaTritone.JPG)

Figure 9- Ardhnarishvara (Shiva and Shakti), (http://farm4.static.flickr.com/3614/3434747488_7662c135b2_o.jpg)

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