

Charmed Eloquence: L'héritier's Representation of Female Literary Creativity in Late Seventeenth-Century France

by
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In 1690 when Marie-Catherine le Jumel de Barneville, comtesse d'Aulnoy decided to interpolate a fairy tale, "L'île de la félicité," into her first historical novel, *L'histoire d'Hypolite, comte de Douglas*, she did more than publish the first literary fairy tale of the French tradition.¹ *Hypolite* not only provided a framework for introducing the fairy tale as a literary genre; it also launched a new hybrid publication strategy that would soon sweep printing houses all over Paris. This unprecedented literary trend—which I have chosen to call the novel/fairy-tale hybrid—involved the combination of fairy tales and novels by means of interpolation, framing, layering or juxtaposition. More than thirteen authors developed the genre between 1690 and 1715, and they produced a total of twenty-seven original works, sometimes at the rapid rate of two to three per year.²

In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, novel/fairy-tale hybrids were incredibly popular, frequently reprinted and widely circulated, with translations of some appearing as far away as England, Spain and Czechoslovakia.³ D'Aulnoy's *Histoire d'Hypolite*, for example, achieved more editions over the course of the eighteenth century than any other seventeenth-century literary work, with the exception of *La Princesse de Clèves*.⁴ In fact, the genre was so popular that it even experienced a brief revival between 1747 and 1759 when six new examples appeared. During the final decades of the eighteenth century, however, anthologists began pillaging the original editions of these works. In some cases they discarded the novels and recompiled the fairy tales independently into popular, widely circulated collections like Mayer's forty-one volume *Le Cabinet des Fées* (1785) or Garnier's *Voyages imaginaires, songes, visions, et romans cabalistiques* (1785). In other cases, they abstracted the fairy tales and republished the novels in more purified generic forms. The novel component of Catherine

Bédacier Durand's novel/fairy-tale hybrid *La Comtesse de Mortane* (1699), for example, reappears as volume five of a late eighteenth-century collection of short novels, minus the seventy-page fairy tale that should have begun on page 103.⁵ As a result, during the nineteenth century, the once popular novel/fairy-tale hybrid lapsed into obscurity, to the point that even today, most late seventeenth-century French fairy tales are read and analyzed as independent stories—even in cases where such tales originally appeared as part of novel/fairy-tale hybrids, and thus were initially intended to be read in conjunction with novels or other companion narratives.

When late seventeenth-century French fairy tales are restored to the context of the narratives that originally framed and/or accompanied them, however, the meaning and import of the stories changes in several ways. In the first place, these fairy tales, rather than acting as isolated stories, instead present themselves as plot events situated in a pre-established diegesis, allowing authors to accompany their tales with pre-conceived rhetorical models for both the composition and reception of the particular story. In the second place, interpolated, framed or juxtaposed fairy tales become participants, not only in a broad variety of ideological discourses (such as Marxist, feminist, or early enlightenment-style political criticism, as recent scholarship has shown) but also these tales become participants in a highly self-conscious, self-reflexive literary genre—one that, in consistently presenting fairy tales against the backdrop of novels or other frame narratives, unvaryingly foregrounds the act of creative story-telling and the values associated with it as one of its primary narrative goals. Fairy tales, when contextualized in novels, thus constitute an entirely distinct literary genre whose most prominent, unifying characteristic is modeling the reception and perception of creative storytelling.

A third way that reading fairy tales in their original contexts changes our perception of such tales, however, results from the fact that the accompanying novels or frame narratives often train or encourage the extradiegetic reader to approach the interpolated fairy tale with a specific, predetermined set of cultural associations or value judgments. As Roger Chartier has pointed out in *The*

Cultural Uses of Print, since at the end of the seventeenth century in France, reading practices were in a state of transition, authors were generally uncertain of how their works would be approached by individual readers (5-11; 220-31).⁶ Thus, it was not uncommon for such authors to encourage a particular reading strategy by accompanying their works with either a direct or an indirect reading protocol or “protocole de lecture”—the goal of which was to, as Chartier states: “rallier le lecteur à une manière de lire qui lui est indiquée” (“Du Livre” 79).⁷ Here, I will examine the degree to which such a reading protocol was in operation in the genre of the novel/fairy-tale hybrid. In particular, I will examine how the frame narrative of one particular late seventeenth-century fairy tale encouraged the extradiegetic reader to acknowledge that fairy tales originating in novel/fairy-tale hybrids in fact represented a separate literary tradition—one whose origins, morals, form, publication strategies, social concerns and anticipated reader-response differed radically from those of the neo-classical fairy-tale tradition popularized by Perrault. As shall become apparent in the close reading that follows of Marie-Jeanne Lhéritier de Villandon’s *Oeuvres méslées*, the letters that frame the interpolated fairy tales not only encourage the extradiegetic reader to dissociate the tales from those of the classical literary tradition, but more specifically they encourage the reader to equivocate novel-reading with socio-economic advancement, the heroine with the figure of the late seventeenth-century female author-intellectual, and the interaction between the heroine and her fairy counterparts as an idealized representation of the late seventeenth-century female literary community.⁸

Lhéritier’s *Oeuvres méslées* comprises a collection of letters written to various members of the author’s real-life literary entourage. Two of these letters—addressed to Mademoiselle de Perrault or Madame Le Camus—contain short stories. Two more—addressed to the Duchesse d’Épernon and the Comtesse de Murat—contain fairy tales. Several others, such as those addressed to Madame de M*** and Mademoiselle de B. C.***, contain odes, sonnets and eclogues. Two more letters—addressed to Mademoiselle de Razilly and Madame D.G.***—philosophize on the process of literary creation but do not contain interpolated

narratives. And finally, towards the end of the work, Lhéritier includes a short correspondence between herself and an anonymous male admirer. Although the epistolary component of Lhéritier's work is consistently overlooked on the rare occasions in which the fairy tales from this novel/fairy-tale hybrid have been republished, the framing letters are in fact essential for an accurate reading of the interpolated tales. As shall become apparent, not only do these letters situate the fairy tales in a very specific intradiegetic context, but also they prepare the reader to approach the tales with a certain mindset and a certain set of expectations.

In the "Lettre à Madame la Duchesse d'Épérnon," for example, which frames the interpolated fairy tale "Les Enchantements de l'éloquence ou les effets de la douceur," Lhéritier's narrator makes a point of distancing her tale from stereotypes typically associated with the fairy-tale genre—assuring her intradiegetic reader that, unlike tales from collections such as Perrault's *Contes de ma mere l'Oye*,⁹ the story she is about to recount is not a neo-classical adaptation of a traditional oral folk-tale motif passed down from generation to generation by "des mères et des mères-grands" for the instruction and amusement of children (164). On the contrary, "Les Enchantements de l'éloquence" has come straight from the mouth of an educated and erudite female intellectual who told the tale to Lhéritier's narrator when she was young, as the narrator states: "Une Dame très-instruite des antiquités Grecques & Romains, & encore plus savante dans les Antiquitez Gauloises m'a fait ce conte quand j'étais petite" (165). In passing this tale along to another female intellectual like the Duchesse d'Épérnon, Lhéritier's narrator thus subverts the classical fairy-tale *translatio*, establishing in its place a parallel literary genealogy that is comprised of "dames savantes" rather than of mothers and children. This new assessment of the fairy tale's origins thus encourages the reader to approach the interpolated fairy tale with a new appreciation for the tale's intellectual sophistication and learned origins, while at the same time it discourages the reader from expecting a "bagatelle" (164), or "frivolous story" that has no greater purpose than the instruction and amusement of children.

A second way that Lhéritier uses her frame narrative to separate her fairy tale from those found in collections such as Perrault's is by emphasizing the untraditional nature of her tale's moral. Although the narrator claims her tale will not dispute the typical fairy-tale objective, acquiescing to the fact that: "les honnêtetés n'ont jamais fait tort à personne" (165), the true goal of the tale is not to emphasize the intrinsic importance of polite, deferential behavior. Rather it is intended to impress upon the reader that these admirable qualities, when reflected in language, are of more inherent value than riches or rank. As the narrator decrees: "Doux & courtois langage/ Vaux mieux que riche heritage" (165). By presenting her tale, not as an independent story but rather as an interpolated narrative, Lhéritier thus encourages her reader to approach the tale not only with a new appreciation for the tale's exceptional intellectual merit, but also with the acknowledgement that the following tale is not likely to reinforce a traditionally classical ideological agenda.

A third way that Lhéritier encourages the reader to separate "Les Enchantements" from the conventional fairy-tale model is by encouraging the extradiegetic reader to identify the narrator's fellow intellectual contemporary, the Duchesse d'Épernon, with the fairy-tale's intradiegetic heroine, Blanche, and her fairy counterparts, Dulcicula and Eloquentia. Candidly acknowledging her "fear" that anyone who reads the following fairy tale and who also knows the Duchess as a person will necessarily assume that the Duchess has been touched by some sort of enchantment, the narrator uses the frame of her tale to call attention to similarities between the charms of late seventeenth-century female intellectuals and those of actual fairies, as the narrator relates:

Ce que je crains c'est que ceux qui entendront ces Contes des Fées, & qui connaissent vos beaux talens, n'aillent s'imaginer que c'est par art de féerie que vous parlez avec tant d'agrément & de justesse. Cette pensée serait assez vraisemblable; oui, car en vous voyant tant de savoir et d'éloquence, on a quelque peine à croire qu'il n'y ait pas là un peu d'enchantement. (227-8)

As the narrator points out, however, such an assumption would be erroneous, not because such fairies no longer exist, but rather because the Duchesse d'Epéron, in possessing so many fine qualities, has not merely been "touched" by fairy enchantment. Rather, she is in fact the fairy Eloquentia "in person," as we see in the following quote: "Cependant il faut rendre justice, moi qui connais à fond en quoi consiste vos charmes, j'avertis ici de bonne foi qu'il n'y a point chez vous de Dons des Fées; mais seulement des Dons du Ciel, qui par sa faveur vous a rendu en personne *Eloquentia nativa*" (228). If the reader were tempted to interpret the fairy Eloquentia as being a purely fictional fairy, Lhéritier's narrator points out that such an assumption would be entirely erroneous. Eloquentia, the frame novel insists, still survives to this day, "en personne," in the form of late seventeenth-century female intellectuals like the Duchesse d'Epéron.

The emphasis that the epistolary component of Lhéritier's novel/fairy-tale hybrid places on the connection between the modern female author-intellectual, and the animated, eloquent and beneficent fairy enchantress of the Middle Ages, produces an interesting effect on the extradiegetic reader—encouraging this reader to approach the interpolated fairy tale, "Les Enchantements de l'éloquence" not simply as an isolated story, but rather as a cultural treasure trove from which it is possible to resurrect an idealized vision of the late seventeenth-century woman writer, the origins of her literary creation, her place in society, and the desired effects of her eloquence on others. In particular, in transforming the late seventeenth-century female author into a fairy-tale heroine, and in transforming the fairies into members of her ideal literary community, Lhéritier not only urges the reader to associate certain qualities with late seventeenth-century female literary production, but also she inscribes an arena of female literary creativity into the tale itself—an arena that serves to model the ideal interaction between late seventeenth-century women writers.

"Les Enchantements de l'éloquence" tells the story of a beautiful, kind and good natured heroine named Blanche, who after being orphaned by her mother at a fairly young age, sees her fortunes take a turn for the worse when her father—an

impoverished marquis— remarries a rich and tyrannical bourgeois widow in the hopes of saving himself from financial ruin. Although the widow spares no expense for her own ugly daughter, showering her with gifts, jewels and magnificent presents, Blanche is relegated to performing menial household tasks from sunrise to sunset. Thus, the heroine passes her days completely isolated from the rest of aristocratic society in a way that evokes the exile of the Comtesse de Murat, Lhéritier's close friend, from the court society of Versailles.

Despite her stepmother's oppression, however, Blanche proves herself to be a resourceful young woman with tremendous creative power and intellectual curiosity—qualities that greatly resemble those of the ideal late seventeenth-century woman writer. Like an author, for example, Blanche's creativity is most apparent in her ability to literally “put a shine” on everyday tasks and events. As the narrator points out, even with regard to menial household chores: “Blanche mettait tout ce qu'elle touchait dans tout son lustre” (173). In fact, Blanche's talent and creativity are so apparent that, according to the narrator, she most certainly would have attracted a salon-type entourage of female admirers had she lived at the end of the seventeenth-century: “Elle s'aqu Coastait si habilement de toutes ces choses que je suis sûre que si elle eut vécu dans ce temps-ci, elle...se serait attirée une grosse cour de tant de femmes ” (173).

Another way in which Blanche resembles the typical late seventeenth-century woman writer, however, is by her passion for reading novels. As the narrator points out, Blanche reads a tremendous amount, often at the expense of sleep:

Elle amassa un grand nombre de Romans je ne sais de quelle manière...[et] quoique'il fallut trancher de son sommeil pour avoir le temps de lire, cela ne l'empêchait pas: elle croiait se reposer en lisant, & quand elle pouvait dérober de jour quelques

moments, elle retournait avec empressement à ses livres. (178-9)

As a result of her reading, Blanche's natural talents and creativity become even more apparent, to the point that even her usually passive and timid father finds the courage to substantiate them in front of Blanche's stepmother, exclaiming: "Blanche fait fort bien de se divertir de cette lecture: ...elle ne peut pas mieux faire que d'en prendre un [Plaisir] qui lui donnera de l'ouverture d'esprit & de la politesse" (180-1). Novels thus provide the final impulsion necessary for Blanche to transform herself from a disfavored household servant into an eloquent and learned young woman, superior in intellect and refinement to most other young people her age. As the narrator points out, it would be impossible for someone to express themselves with more grace and ease than Blanche does, even if they were touched by some unquantifiable "quelque autre raison" such as enchantment, as we see in the following quote: "on ne peut pas s'exprimer avec plus d'agrément & plus de justesse que [Blanche] faisait, soit par le commerce qu'elle eut avec les productions de l'esprit, soit par quelque autre raison" (185). Reading, then, and reading novels in particular, is allotted a mysterious and undisclosed power similar to that of fairy magic.

Although characters who are described as "rude," "grossière," "rustique," and "populaire"—such as Blanche's stepmother and stepsister—are wholly unaffected by the eloquence that Blanche has acquired from reading so many novels, the fact that her avid reading has in fact given her a fairy-like power to enchant and charm others with her speech becomes evident the very first time that she encounters another aristocrat. One day, on an errand to a well deep in the forest, Blanche crosses the path of a hunting party and a young prince, in his efforts to shoot down a wild boar, strikes Blanche instead. This prince, whom the narrator describes as being "naturellement très violent" (196), is reduced to a paralyzed silence the moment that Blanche engages him in conversation. As the narrator points out, Blanche's speech is so eloquent and

mesmerizing that the prince becomes literally enchanted: “Le prince fut de la dernière surprise quand il entendit le tour dont elle parlait. Blanche se rendit absolument maîtresse de son âme.... Le Prince était enchanté à un tel point...que son imagination lui fit garder le silence” (197). It is as if Blanche’s words cast a spell on the prince, altering his personality and rendering him uncharacteristically speechless. However, Blanche’s words result in more than simply the enchantment of the prince. As the narrator points out, they ultimately result in the heroine’s own miraculous healing.

The prince, in fact, is not a typical prince, but rather the descendent of a family that is described as being: “forte savante dans l’art de féerie” (203). Thus, as soon as he recovers the ability to speak, he quickly pays a visit to Dulcicula, his fairy godmother, tells her of his adventure, and implores her to visit Blanche and to dress her wounds. Happy to oblige her godson, Dulcicula wastes no time preparing what the narrator describes as a “Baume merveilleux” (204). Then, dressed as an old peasant, she heads straight to Blanche’s home, applies the balm to her wounds and heals her straight away: “La Fée mit donc de son baume enchanté sur la plaie de Blanche, & par un effet merveilleux, il n’y fut pas plutôt que la Belle commença a se sentir soulagée” (208). In enchanting the prince with her speech, Blanche thus inspires the first of the tale’s miracles of fairy magic to her benefit.

The prince is not the only one charmed by Blanche’s eloquence, however. After healing Blanche’s wound, Dulcicula decides to engage Blanche in conversation, and it is at this point that Blanche’s kindness, beauty and other “belles qualités” overwhelm the fairy, to the point that the fairy herself becomes charmed, as if by the penetration of a magic potion which rapidly takes effect, as the narrator recounts: “Dulcicula, charmée de la douceur & des manières honnêtes de Blanche...ne cessait point d’admirer en elle même les autres belles qualités qu’elle voyait jointes à tant de beauté, & cette admiration produisit un bon effet.” (208). Just as the magic balm had penetrated Blanche’s wounds and healed her, so also do Blanche’s kind mannerisms and eloquent speech penetrate the mind of the fairy Dulcicula. Thus,

like an author touching the first stroke of her pen to a sheet of white paper, the fairy acts on her inspiration recreating Blanche in accordance with her art, as the narrator describes:

La Fée tenait un bâton sur quoi elle semblait s'appuyer: mais c'était la Baguette enchantée dont elle se servait à faire tous les prodiges de son art. Elle toucha Blanche de cette baguette, comme par hazard et lui fit un Don d'être toujours plus que jamais douce, aimable, bienfisante & d'avoir la plus belle voix du monde" (209).

Although the majority of the fairy's gift simply ensures the continuation of the heroine's natural qualities of kindness, goodness and amiability, it is significant that the one additional trait she bestows on Blanche is in relation to her eloquence, giving her "the most beautiful voice in the world" so that the eloquence that Blanche already possesses may sound all the more compelling to the person who hears her words.

The following day, still marveling about her encounter, Blanche returns to the fountain to get water for her stepmother. This time, however, she is welcomed, not by a snarling "sanglier" and a reckless young prince, but rather by a magnificent woman who literally glows with grace, elegance and opulence. After asking Blanche for a drink, the radiant being, who is in fact the fairy *Eloquentia nativa*, decides to engage Blanche in a conversation, as the narrator describes: "Elle la entra en conversation: la jetta sur mille sujets agreables & délicats, dont Blanche ne fut point embarrassée" (213). Once again, strikingly, it is Blanche, and not the fairy, who initiates the first act of enchantment, and Blanche does so once again by means of her gift of eloquence, as the narrator points out: "[Blanche] y répondit avec tant d'esprit, de douceur & de politesse, [qu'] elle acheva de charmer celle à qui elle parlait" (213-4). In fact, the "charm" of Blanche's eloquence penetrates the fairy to such a degree that she, like

Dulcicula, is inspired to bestow a gift on Blanche, as we see in the following quote:

Toute pénétrée de l'éloquence & des manières obligeants de Blanche, [la fée] se resolut de recompenser magnifiquement le petit plaisir que cette belle lui avait fait de si bon coeur & de si bonne grâce. La savante fée mit la main sur la tête de Blanche & lui donna pour Don qu'il soritirait de sa bouche de perles, des diamants, des rubis, et des emeraudes à chaque fois qu'elle ferait un sens fini en parlant. (214)

Once again, fairy magic is used as a sign of appreciation for eloquence, and once again it is directed at furnishing the heroine with qualities that, above all, will call attention to her words and most probably increase her audience.

The fact that Blanche, thanks to the generosity of her older fairy contemporaries has been at last initiated into what the narrator refers to as the "art de féerie" becomes clear the minute that she arrives home from the well. As the narrator emphasizes, when her stepmother asks Blanche why she has been away for so long, Blanche begins recounting her encounter in her usual eloquent and ingenuous manner. This time, however, the gift of eloquence that Blanche had initially gained from reading novels is infused with fairy magic—and precious jewels rain from her mouth at the end of every sentence:

Blanche lui raconta éloquemment & ingénûment la rencontre qu'elle avait fait de la Dame, & l'entretien qu'elle avait eu avec cette admirable inconnue: mais ce récit ne se fit pas sans qu'à la fin des periodes de Blanche...il ne tombât de sa bouche sur le plancher une pluie plus précieuse encore que celle qui vinquit Danaé. (215-6)

For Eloquentia the jewels that fall from Blanche's mouth are intended to act as a symbolic valorization of "la douceur et le brillant qu'on trouve dans ces paroles" (224). The end result is, however, that Blanche herself becomes a sort of fairy whose enchanted words now have the financial power to grant the wishes of other—and particularly those of her father, as we see at the end of the story.

In the letter "A Madame D.G.***" that concludes the prose portion to the *Oeuvres méslées*, Lhéritier reiterates the intended parallel between Blanche, the fairy godmothers and the late seventeenth-century female literary community. Describing the reason that she has decided to take up the task of composing a mixture of interpolated "contes et nouvelles," Lhéritier emphasizes her hope that, as in the case of Blanche, her eloquence will distinguish her as being worthy of acceptance into a circle of renowned, contemporary women writers—a assemblage whose talent and creativity is so superior that they themselves seem more like fairies than humans. As she remarks to Madame D. G***:

Je me souviens parfaitement combien vous vous étonniez qu'on ne s'avisât point de faire des Nouvelles, ou des Contes.... On y est enfin venu, & je me suis hazardée à me mettre sur les rangs, pour marquer mon attachement à de charmantes Dames, dont vous connaissez les belles qualités. Les personnes de leur mérite & de leurs caractères semblent nous ramener le temps des Fées, où l'on voyait tant de gens parfaits. (302)

The charming women who have revived the genre of what Lhéritier refers to as a combination of "des nouvelles ou des contes"—women such as d'Aulnoy, Bernard, Murat and La Force—are, according to Lhéritier, so gifted that their talent and charm evoke a time when actual fairies walked the earth. The fairy-tales that are inserted into novel/fairy-tale hybrids, then, according to the tale's frame narrative, are not intended to convey moral messages about proper codes of behavior. Rather they are intended to remind the reader of the admirable character traits

associated with the fairies of yore, thus enabling the reader to better identify the fairies of today—in this case, “modern fairies” like the women writers of the late seventeenth-century mondain literary community.

When we accept the urging of the fairy tale’s frame narrative—interpreting the heroine-turned-fairy in “*Les Enchantements de l’éloquence*” as a figure for the woman writer and enchantment as a metaphor for the process of literary creation—a powerful and distinctive vision of an idealized, late seventeenth-century, female literary community thus begins to emerge. In the first place, the tale calls attention to a shift from a salon-type, group model of literary collaboration, prevalent earlier in the seventeenth century, to a more individualized, one-on-one type of mentoring model, more prevalent in the eighteenth century. Most significant, however, is the fact that the mentoring model the fairy tale presents is one from which both experienced and inexperienced women benefit. While the younger “fairy figure” both assimilates and reproduces the gifts she acquires from her older, more sophisticated fairy godmothers, the younger heroine at the same time provides inspiration and motivation for the elder enchantresses to continue to create. The dynamic between these women-writer figures is thus not symmetrical or hierarchical, but rather symbiotic and egalitarian. Women with common creative interests and intellectual pursuits work together to inspire one another, irrespective of differences in talent or experience. By framing her fairy tale in a fragmented, epistolary correspondence, Lhéritier thus prompts the reader to notice and to admire the fairy tale as projecting an ideal ambiance of late seventeenth-century female literary production—an ambiance steeped mutual generosity, admiration, inspiration and collaboration.

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NOTES

¹ Marie-Catherine Le Jumel de Barneville, Comtesse d'Aulnoy, *L'histoire d'Hypolite, comte de Douglas*, 2 vols (Paris: L. Sylvestre, 1690); (Geneva: Slatkine Reprints, 1990).

² Authors who worked in the genre include Marie-Catherine Le Jumel de Barneville, Comtesse d'Aulnoy; Louise de Bossigny, Comtesse d'Auneuil; Catherine Bernard; Abbé Jean-Paul Bignon; François Timoléon Abbé de Choisy; Catherine Bédacier Durand; Thomas-Simon Gueullette; Marie-Jeanne Lhéritier de Villandon; François Augustin Paradis de Moncrif; Henriette-Julie de Castelnau, Comtesse de Murat; Eustache, Baron de Saint-Georges et de Tennesse Le Noble; Paul-François Nodot; Charles Perrault and several anonymous authors.

³ For more on the circulation of d'Aulnoy's works, see Raymond Foulché-Delbosc, "Madame d'Aulnoy et l'Espagne," *Revue hispanique*, 67 (1926): 1-152.

⁴ For more on d'Aulnoy's eighteenth-century reception see René Godenne, "Présentation," in *Histoire d'Hypolite, comte de Douglas*, by Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy (Geneva: Slatkine, 1979) pp. I-xxvi.

⁵ Catherine Bédacier Durand, *La Comtesse de Mortane* (Paris: Veuve de Claude Barbin, 1699). The fairy tale begins on page 225 of the original edition. A reprint of the 17-- edition is available on microfilm as part of the *Eighteenth-Century French Fiction*, volume V, series III, reel 13.

⁶ Roger Chartier, *The Cultural Uses of Print*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987).

⁷ Roger Chartier, "Du Livre au Lire," *Pratiques de la lecture*, edited by Roger Chartier (Paris: Rivages, 1985) 62-88.

⁸ Marie-Jeanne Lhéritier de Villandon, *Oeuvres meslées, contenant l'Innocente tromperie, l'Avare puni, les Enchantements de l'éloquence, les Aventures de Finette, nouvelles, et autres ouvrages, en vers et en prose, de Mlle de L'H*** -- avec le Triomphe de Mme Des-Houlières tel qu'il a été composé par Mlle L'H**** (Paris: J. Guignard, 1696). Page numbers cited in the text refer to this edition.

⁹ Although this collection was not published until 1697, under the title *Histoires ou contes du temps passé*, the manuscript version of these tales bore the title *Contes de ma mere l'oye*, and began

circulating as early as 1694. In the preface to this manuscript, Perrault insists that the folk-tales being passed down from the Middle Ages by mothers and grandmothers served a similarly beneficial, moral function as the fable of Antiquity—thus presenting the late seventeenth-century literary fairy tale as a classical, rather than a popular genre.

Seventeenth-century Venetian opera presented to its public an extraordinarily diverse group of heroines who embodied in both sound and deed those qualities most admired and feared in the female sex. Created in the ancient world and refashioned in early modern times to suit a variety of political and social purposes, these women are our witnesses to the enduring significance of ancient texts and images in opera, that most dramatic and baroque manifestation of the humanist project. seventeenth-century France were authored by female conteuses who recount the births of beautiful and virtuous princesses. Although little.Â term "conteuse" to refer to the vogue of female fairy tale writers in late seventeenth-century France.Â Examining literary discourses on female intimacy in seventeenth-century France, this study explores the effect of a homosocial and homoprivileged heritage on the deployment and constructions of female friendship and homoerotic relationships as thematic narratives in works by male and female writers. It reveals a new literary genealogy of female intimate bonds and adds to the research in lesbian and queer studies, fields in which pre-eighteenth-century French literary texts are rare. View. Show abstract. improve female condition in terms of education, opportunities to work outside their households, reform in laws affecting married women and, for the first time, for the right to vote.¹³ One of the first female groups was called the Ladies of Langham Palace, the name comes from their meeting place, and the movement was led by Barbara Leigh Smith.Â The greatest figures of British suffragettes were the Pankhurst family, Emily Davison or Emily Davies. Emily Davies contributed to female education, she believed women should get the same education as men, and she managed to form a committee to further the prospects of women taking the University Local Examinations, which was established in late 1850s.