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DIPLOMAMUNKA

MA THESIS

*Női beavatás egy kortárs, amerikai, ifjúsági irodalmi,
Grimm-meseadaptációban – “Beszéd-mágia,”
történetmesélés és társadalmi nem Shannon Hale
ifjúsági Grimm-meseadaptációjában*

*Coming of Age As a Woman in a Contemporary
American Young Adult Adaptation of a Grimms’ Tale –
“Speech-gifts,” Storytelling, and Gender in Shannon
Hale’s Young Adult Novelization of the Grimms’ “The
Goose-Girl”*

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By my signature below, I pledge and certify that my ELTE MA thesis, entitled “Coming of Age As a Woman in a Contemporary American, Young Adult Adaptation of a Grimms’ Tale – ‘Speech-gifts,’ Storytelling, and Gender in Shannon Hale’s Young Adult Novelization of the Grimms’ ‘The Goose-Girl’” is entirely my own work. That is to say, the framing ideas are substantially my own and I have faithfully and exactly cited all the sources I have used, whether from conversations, books, letters, and other media, including the Internet. If this pledge is found to be false, I realize that I will be subject to penalties up to and including the forfeiture of the degree earned by my thesis.

Szentpály Dalma Tímea 2015.04.14.

Abstract

Feminist critics of young adult literature are concerned with how texts targeted for adolescent audiences assert normative gender roles. Similarly to feminist fairy tale criticism, that interrogates how classic fairy tale narratives, especially narratives popularized by the publication of Brothers Grimm's *Kinder und Hausmärchen* in the 19th century, stabilized conventional patriarchal structures and glorified established gender stereotypes. Therefore the subversion of traditional female roles through the reconfiguration of such tales as "Cinderella", "Sleeping Beauty" or "Snow White" have been on the forefront of adult feminist literature since the 70's; and in the last twenty years the rewriting of Grimm's tales, employing an active heroine, has been one of the most popular genres of American Young Adult Fantasy.

Even though "The Goose-Girl" (Die Gänsemagd) is present in every Grimm selection, it has nowhere near the number of adaptations than the more popular tales. This paper investigates this less known tale of the Grimm Brothers and its recent young adult fantasy rewriting of the tale, *The Goose Girl*, written by American author, Shannon Hale.

In particular, it analyzes how Shannon Hale's young adult novel addresses the immanent connection of the goose-girl to nature and how her heroine's ability to speak to animals and manage natural elements revive the active quality of the "The Goose-Girl's" heroine instead of supporting the canonical passivity present in most Grimm fairy tale heroines. Moreover, it also studies how Hale's narrative rediscovers elements from the historical tradition of female storytelling and how this discovery supports the deconstruction of the figure of the passive, complacent and silent fairy tale heroine.

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Introduction

While many adults may not remember and many children may not have been exposed to versions of 'Snow White' or 'Beauty and the Beast' other than Disney's, we nevertheless respond to stereotyped and institutionalized fragments of these narratives sufficiently for them to be good bait in jokes, commercials, songs, cartoons, and other elements of popular and consumer culture. (Bacchilega 2)

I have selected Cristina Bacchilega's sentence from her collection of essays titled *Postmodern Fairy Tales: Gender and Narrative Strategies* as an inspiration for the various issues I would like to reflect on and explore in the following study. No matter how little people are aware of the effect the exposure to canonical fairy tale narratives have had on them Bacchilega's quote reveals that referencing the normalized images of these narratives is a common device in modern media communication.

The focal point of feminist fairy tale criticism, on the one hand is to condemn and revise those parts of institutionalized Western folklore that glorifies "the image of the passive, somnolent beauty [...]; the helpless woman; the connection of women's power and action with evil and ugliness" (Ragan 227). On the other hand, feminist criticism of Brothers Grimm fairy tales reflect on the power dynamics encoded in the relationship of gender, speech and authorship connected to Grimm texts, which ultimately boils down to a phenomenon that men can choose to be silent but women were forced to stay silent in traditional fairy tales. (Bottigheimer "Silenced Women" 118) Accordingly, such feminist writers, from both side of the Atlantic, as Angela Carter, Margaret Atwood, Joyce Carol Oates or A.S. Byatt employed canonized fairy tales tropes in adult literature in order to deconstruct these patriarchal narrative conventions. Lately, more and more writers in children's and young adult literature join this trend of reconfiguring the normative image of the fairy tale heroine.

The majority of these retellings focus on the most well known fairy tales in Western canon such as “Cinderella,” “Sleeping Beauty,” or “Snow White.” According to Jack Zipes, the prominent fairy tale scholar, all these rewritings try to change our interpretations of what he calls, “the privileged narratives that have formed the canon in Western culture” (“The Contemporary American Fairytale” 147). However, there are tales in the Brothers Grimm’s collections, which have not received the same attention as more popular tales. One of these tales is “The Goose-Girl.”

Although, some authoritative feminist voices credited the tale having traces of female empowerment only the last two decades produced retellings of the tale. Ruth B. Bottigheimer, one of most influential feminist Grimm critics, calls it the “ultimate tale of powerful womanhood” (*Grimms’ Bad Girls* 53). Also, bell hooks, feminist critic and writer of both adult and young adult fiction, claims that “The Goose-Girl” contains a severe criticism of patriarchy and it also proposes a system where the dominance of the female body by male control meets resistance (172). Nevertheless, the last few decades produced only a few short stories¹ and two novels that reinterpreted this tale of the Brothers Grimm.

In particular, Shannon Hale’s young adult fantasy *The Goose Girl*, published in 2003, and its following sequels, the series *Books of Bayern*, expand and reconfigure the narrative of the Brothers Grimm’s pretext. My aim in this thesis is to present how the “speech-gifts”² in Shannon Hale’s *The Goose Girl*, in Shannon Hale’s interpretation of the “Goose Girl” not only significantly enhance those powers that Bottigheimer in reference to the Grimms’ “The Goose-Girl” explains as, “the peculiarly female ability to control, direct or affect natural powers” (*Grimms’ Bad Girls* 43) but together with the main character’s

¹ Although, I will only write about Hale’s novels connected to the tale I find it important to

² “Speech-gift” is a term for a magical linguistic skill that allows the gifted to influence elements of nature (wind, fire, water or trees), animals and/or people introduced first in Shannon Hale’s *Goose Girl*, further definition and analysis of this ability will constitute the first part of the third chapter of my thesis.

acts of storytelling subvert the image of the silent, passive, powerless heroine of canonical Western folklore and provides opportunity for the female protagonist of the fairy tale to author her own narrative.

In the first chapter of my Thesis I would like to establish theoretical background for my analysis of Shannon Hale's *The Goose Girl*. First, I will define the frames of young adult literature, how the genre has approached questions of gender in the past and how gender bias slowly decreased in children's and young adult literature. Following the portrayal of gender in young adult literature I will turn to feminist criticism of fairy tales, in particular, how feminist discourse addresses representation of gender roles in canonical fairy tale narratives and then how feminist fairy tale scholarship confronts the problem of oppressive male authorship and feminine speechlessness related to the Brothers Grimm corpus. The introduction of the traditions of gender representation in contemporary young adult literature will help me in the analysis part of my Thesis to show whether Hale's narrative in *The Goose Girl* follows these conventions. Additionally, I will employ those terms and classic critical texts of feminist fairy tale criticism that I introduced in this theoretical part of my Thesis in my analysis of *The Goose Girl*.

Continuing the general theoretical part I would like to shift my attention to the Brothers Grimm's text of the "The Goose-Girl." I will review relevant critical readings that I will utilize in the analytical part of my thesis where I will demonstrate how certain parts of Hale's narrative establish the Brothers Grimm's pretext in order to subvert it. In particular, I would like to detail Bottigheimer's interpretation of the Grimm Brothers' narrative, which studies the female heroine's conjuring powers.

Afterwards, I will divide the analytical chapter of the thesis into two parts. In both parts I will study the book, *The Goose Girl*, from different aspects while focusing on the main character, Hale's interpretation of the female protagonist of the Brothers Grimm's

narrative, Ani. In the first part of the analysis I am going to define and discuss Ani's "speech-gifts" and how the power to be able to speak to elements of nature and animals relates to the other female characters in the series, who have similar also have "speech-gifts" and how these "speech-gifts" deconstruct the figure of the passive and silent fairy tale heroine. In the second part of my analysis I would like to examine the role of storytelling in *The Goose Girl* and the different ways in which Hale revives silenced traditions of female storytelling. Also, I will present how Ani's character reconfigures her own and the "The Goose-Girl" narrative while at the same time reshaping the cultural narrative of the silent fairy tale heroine.

To conclude, in the last part of my thesis, I will sum up my examination of *The Goose Girl* and connect it to how it corresponds with representation of gender in young adult literature and feminist fairy tale criticism concerned with the image of the fairy tale heroine in Brothers Grimm corpus and male authorship of feminine narratives.

I. Representation of Gender in Young Adult Literature and Fairy Tales

Feminist discourse and children's and young adult literature scholarship have a close relationship. Deborah Thacker, leading children's literature scholar, claims that since female voices in literature and literary discussion have been marginalized for the longer part of history, so did the closeness of children's literature to the nursery or the household, in Thacker's words "to the feminine sphere," played a part in the trivialization of children's literature in literary scholarship ("Feminine Language" 3). In addition to the fact that both of these fields of study have been isolated from mainstream cultural dialogue, their central questions are closely related. According to Roberta Seelinger Trites, the author of two of the most well-known volumes of children's literature theory (*Disturbing the Universe: Power and Repression in Adolescent Literature* and *Waking Sleeping Beauty: Feminist Voices in Children's Novels*), one of the most crucial purposes of children's literature is to feature children in novels who perform the power that real children might not possess (*Waking Sleeping Beauty* 29). Therefore, Trites claims, "since feminism is so often involved with examining who holds power, [...] the purposes of feminism and children's literature are easily united" (29).

In particular, the cross-examination of traditional fairy-tale narratives is a field where children's and young adult literature scholarship and feminist discourse interact. Marcia K. Lieberman, in her breakthrough essay "Some Day My Prince Will Come: Female Acculturation through Fairy Tale," discusses that popular fairy tales operate heavily in how children build their expectations about their own gender and the restrictions that society places on gender. She says, "fairy tales [...] played a major contribution in forming the sexual role concept of children, and in suggesting to them the limitations that are imposed by sex upon a person's chances of success in various endeavors" (187). Accordingly, as the main inquiry of my Thesis is to study the relations of gender, speech and storytelling in the

young adult adaptation of the Brothers Grimm's "The Goose-Girl" in the first chapter I would like to briefly explore the definition of children's and young adult literature, its conventions of the treatment of the issue of gender and how this treatment changed in the last two decades. After investigating the role of gender in young adult literature I will continue my observation with the feminist criticism of fairy tale narratives. In particular, how the Brothers Grimm treat female agency in their most famous volume *Kinder und Hausmärchen*, the voicelessness and the lack of female authorship connected to the volume and how these issues influenced current trends in recent feminist young adult rewrites of the Grimms tales.

I.1 Children's Literature, Young Adult Fiction and Traditional Gender Roles

The academic field and terminology connected to the analysis of texts within children's literature and young adult fiction are fairly recent developments. One needs only to look at the publication dates of the academic volumes and journals appearing within these fields, a few of them date back only to the late '80s, early '90s and most of them to the 2000s. Graduate and PhD degrees in these fields are offered only at a handful of universities both in Europe and the United States. Nevertheless, Peter Hunt, currently one of the most prominent scholars of the field stated last year that the "analysis of childhood in culture is on the increase [...] this is the ideal time to be starting a career in children's literature criticism. The next 10 to 15 years will revolutionize the field" ("Peter Hunt and David Rudd: Masterclass").

Since the academic inquiry is ever so new, standardized terminology and boundaries of categories within the field of children's and young adult literature are constantly debated. Julia Eccleshare, in an introduction to teenage fiction, explains that what we call young

adulthood or teenage years have been identified as the liminal phase between childhood and adulthood, associated both with reliance on parenting figures and a struggle to achieve autonomy, only in the second half of the 20th century. She states that this realization resulted on the part of the publishing industry to create books for young adults as a distinct category with its own preference in writing style and marketing strategy (543). Nevertheless, up until the late '90s and 2000s young adult fiction was only discussed within the boundaries of children's fiction. However, since a change in publishing, starting in 1997 with the appearance of J.K. Rowling's fantasy novels, resulted in the fact that in 2012 over half of the books published for 12-17 year-olds in the US have been bought by adults, with a larger, twenty-eight percent between thirty and forty-four years old (Publisher's Weekly), more and more critical texts focused on the definition and characteristics of young adult fiction independent from children's literature.

Trites, in *Disturbing the Universe: Power and Repression in Adolescent Literature*, claims, "children's literature often affirms the child's sense of Self and her or his personal power. But in the adolescent novel, protagonists must learn about the social forces that have made them what they are" (3). In the Introduction to the *Ideologies of Identity in Adolescent Fiction* Robyn McCallum also suggests that the liminal phase that young adulthood means in modern society is a time when concepts of, what McCallum calls "selfhood," go through sudden and extreme changes. Therefore, she elucidates, coming of age narratives, or how the self interacts with the norms of civilization is an inherent problem in adolescent fiction (3). The dividing line between young adult fiction and children's literature is then that adolescent fiction endeavors to represent the constant negotiation between teenagers and societal norms, while the focus of children's literature is not so openly the manifestation of the struggle between conventions of civilization and the self.

If young adult books are not clearly children's literature nor are they only read by teenagers then the question arises, where does adult fiction about adolescents diverge from young adult fiction? Laura M. Robinson, in an essay where she discusses Trites' and Butler's theories on gender and self construction's, claims, "perhaps one of the key differences between adolescent novels and adult novels about adolescents is [...] the adolescent's successful bid for power" (212). Robinson's uses Trites' term of "potency"³ within young adult literature and further explains, "adolescent fiction shows that teens have the ability to affect their surroundings; the characters are, literally, role models, both for other characters within the world of their novel and potentially, for the reader" (214).

Moreover, young adult fiction became a scene of experimental fiction. As Michael Cart states, "[e]ver since 1989, when Francesca Lia Block, in her first novel *Weetzie Bat*, introduced magical realism and the verbal strategies of imagist poetry to YA literature, the field has become increasingly open to experiments in style, structure, and narrative form"(235). Experiments in formal matters of the genre are mirrored in the daring interrogation of social norms, which is the crux of today's trend in young adult literature. As Trites summarizes her definition of the genre: "[y]oung adult literature has exploded as an institution in the postmodern era because although it affirms modernity's belief in the power of the individual (...) it very self-consciously problematizes the relationship of the individual to the institutions that construct her or his subjectivity" (*Disturbing the Universe* 7).

Mediating and questioning the process of constructing gender roles during adolescence is one of the key issues of today's young adult fiction. In the following section of my Thesis I would like to explore the gender bias existing in early young adult narratives

³ "That so many narratives written for adolescents systematically depict teenagers engaged in power-repression dynamics indicates to me that the genre carries embedded within it a tacit understanding that adolescents are potentially quite – well – potent." (Trites *Disturbing the Universe* 35)

and then reflect on how the introduction of feminist criticism changed prevailing ideas in the genre, changes that can be experienced today more than ever.

As Trites claims that for the most part of publishing history children's books were either marketed for boys or for girls. She claims, "Alcott wrote 'girl' books of domestic drama, while [...] Stevenson wrote 'boy' books of adventures outside the home. And those authors, who wrote for both sexes [...] wrote adventure tales that included both male and female characters, but the males were more active" (*Waking Sleeping Beauty* 22). This classic trend continued when at the onset of the young adult genre the female characters of adolescent fiction had to meet the expectations attached to traditional gender positions. A good example for this phenomenon is Diane Wynne Jones account of her childhood reading experiences in post World War II Britain. She states that in her childhood she was unable to find female heroes who she could turn to for empowerment. She writes, "I was saddened to find that as an eldest child and a *girl* I was barred from heroism entirely" (129). As Julia Eccleshare writes, "[t]eenage fiction emerged almost simultaneously with the first soundings of the women's liberation movement but it remained unaffected by it for a long time [despite the fact that] the majority of novels written at the time were by women and directed predominantly at girls" (545).

The gender bias inherent in these early young adult books clearly established the limits of female experience. Peterson problematizes the training that adolescent girls had to go through in order to be accepted into womanhood. She states, "training for the female role consisted of the following orders: be attractive, be a lady, be unselfish and of service, make relationships work and be competent, but not too competent" (2). She further elaborates on the meaning of not too competent by claiming that most adolescent female characters in the young adult books of the 50s, 60s and 70s, "have been depicted as weak, needing to seek solutions to problems from others rather than finding the answers within themselves" (2). If

these heroines, by some chance, do act they have to act perfectly as Peterson claims, “girls are condemned if they make mistakes, and males are excused from mistakes because they are allowed the ‘boys-will-be-boys’ maxim” (3). Moreover, Trites makes the observation that before the introduction of feminism into young adult literature novels of the genre had heroines who became less and less eloquent and articulate as they gradually accept society’s encouragement of the lack of female agency. She claims, “[p]refeminist have a deplorable number of female characters who lose their articulateness as they learn to conform to societal expectations and so lose their agency” (*Waking Sleeping Beauty* 21). To conclude, pre-feminist young adult novels presented female characters, whose merits were based on their physical attributes or their level of compliance, who were generally passive (in their passivity, couldn’t make mistakes) and if they had voice and opinion at the beginning of the novel they lost it by the end.

Some children’s literature scholars suggest that the tomboy character in classic literature is the first attempt at subverting gender roles in fiction about young adults. The ‘tomboy’ character is a girl rejecting clothes and activities stereotypically associated with girlhood and instead choosing to pursue hobbies and dressing normatively associated with boyhood. These characters have been present in classic literature since the 19th century; most celebrated among them, according to children’s literature scholar Judy Simmons, are George in Enid Blyton’s *The Famous Five* series and Jo March in Alcott’s *Little Women* (156).

Yet, Judy Simmons, in the same essay refutes the idea that ‘tomboys’ should be perceived as true manifestation of feminism in young adult literature. She explains that even though a lot of novels incorporating tomboy characters disturb established ideas about gender roles, they also suggest that after the characters experience adolescence without accepting their gender’s customary responsibilities they eventually consent to normative

gender roles in adulthood. Simmons details the effects of what reading about a tomboy character might have on the adolescent reader, “young girls may always have enjoyed reading about tomboys, but they don’t want to grow up in that image. If anything, the fantasy of tomboyhood provides not a challenge to but a necessary preparatory stage for their adult roles as wives and mothers” (156).

As a contrast, gradual materialization of feminism is detectable in adolescent fiction in the past few decades. Instead of impressing normative gender roles or returning to them in adulthood this fairly recent trend of feminist young adult and children’s literature aims to reflect on and transcend these norms. The arrival of feminism both in children’s and young adult literature centers on encouraging adolescent girls to become more confident, inspire them to discover themselves, and its most important aim is to present literary worlds where girls do not have to settle for the conventional but are able to choose unorthodoxly (Burns 19).

In her essay *Waking Sleeping Beauty* Trites presents the attributes of feminist writing in children and adolescent literature. Ultimately, she points out that adolescent fiction founded on feminist principles introduce female characters who at least partially triumphs over whatever is subjugating her. She explains that the protagonist of a feminist young adult book in the course of the novel and becomes more self-confident and acknowledges her selfhood. She claims, “[in feminist novels] the protagonist is more aware of her agency, more aware of her ability to assert her own personality and to enact her own decisions” (8).

One particular aspect of gaining agency, specified by Trites, is for the heroine to hold on to her own voice. Gender biased young adult novels, where the narrative silences their female protagonists in order to impress conformity and compliance upon them. As a contrast feminist protagonists in young adult novels maintain voicing their views, moreover,

“they are often more articulate by the end of the novel than they were at its inception” (8).

Trites also elaborates on how main characters of feminist novels learn to be more expressive and freer of the traditionally passive female role. She specifies that in order to realize her power fully a feminist protagonist’s “awakening is not bestowed on her by a male awakener: instead she wakes herself and discovers herself to be strong, independent and articulate person” (9). Therefore, the male consent to female agency is no longer present in these narratives.

In this subchapter of my Thesis my intention was to introduce young adult literature and to present a brief survey of the evolution of gender representation in the novels of the genre. With the help of critical texts I established that the most important concern of adolescent fiction is how in the transitional period between childhood and adulthood the hero of the novel interacts with the norms of society. One of the norms questioned in adolescent fiction are expectations associated with gender.

Early texts of young adult fiction employed the genre as an instructive surface for young generation to learn expected gender behavior. Therefore, adolescent books targeted at young girls featured heroines who were beautiful but passive, complacent and lost their initial eloquence by the end of the novel. However, in the last few decades a new trend emerged in adolescent fiction in which novels with self-assertive and outspoken heroines show solutions for inspire young readers to claim their agency.

In the analytical part of my essay I would like to prove that Hale’s *The Goose Girl* is part of this new trend. As a young adult fantasy Hale’s book follows the journey of a teenage princess who struggles to separate from expectations of society and by the end of the book she becomes independent, confident in her opinions, and powerful.

I.2 Female Silence and Passivity in Grimms' Fairy Tales

As I have detailed in the last subchapter, early young adult literature presented traditional gender roles to its adolescent girl readers in order to train them to conform to conventional expectations of female behavior. Scholars of young adult literature started to comment on issues of gender representation in adolescent fiction in the middle of the 1980s, which eventually influenced publishing companies to circulate books presenting active heroines free to make unconventional choices. A similar, albeit earlier, evolution of discourse presented itself in fairy tale criticism.

In the 1970s a constantly growing field of study emerged in fairy tale criticism exploring issues connected to gender politics in fairy tales and the genre's socializing effect on children (Haase 1-4). Since a survey of the vast amount of critical texts written on the subject would exceed the limits of my Thesis (also there are fairly recent studies on the evolution of feminist fairy tale discourse⁴) it is not my intention to reflect on the history of feminist fairy tale criticism. Instead, in this chapter of my Thesis I plan to examine the relationship of silence and female characters in fairy tale tradition, through the presentation and interpretation of various critical texts. Meanwhile, as the process of the image of the silent woman becoming a norm in gender representation in fairy tales was part of the process of silencing female oral storytellers, I also aim to present briefly the cultural history of the connection between female tellers and the publishing and distribution of fairy tale collections.

I believe that exploring the figure of the silent woman will support my survey of the heroine of the "The Goose-Girl;" i.e. it will provide basis for presenting the ways the heroine of the tale follows the assumptions attached to this fairy tale tradition and help

⁴ E.g.: Donald Haase's "Feminist Fairy Tale Scholarship" and Kathleen Ragan's "What Happened to Heroines in Fairy Tales" both provide a detailed history of the discourse.

showing how the heroine's behavior diverts from the expected actions of the silent woman figure. Additionally, the conclusions of this chapter will also help me show in the analytical part of my Thesis how Shannon Hale's *The Goose Girl*, while recounting a Grimms' tale, concurrently subverts the trope of the silent fairy tale heroine and revives the traditions of female oral storytelling.

Therefore, I would like to revisit classic critical texts in feminist fairy tale discourse that are specifically connected to silencing the feminine voice in Grimms' fairy tales and how this silence is connected to the figure of the passive fairy tale heroine. I will summarize the most important aspects of feminist fairy tale studies connected to the gender representation and the gendered history of fairy tale distribution, while juxtaposing them to the image of the silent woman while illustrating these points with textual examples from critical essays.

The texts that I would like to review all investigate the utilization of fairy tales as a socializing device. Most fairy tale critics claim that popular fairy tale narratives uphold and distribute patriarchal social norms in order to affirm traditional concepts of gender roles. As I have previously quoted Lieberman, in one of the first articles launching feminist fairy tales discourse, pronouns that modes of behavior displayed by fairy tale heroines have a major influence on how children learn the boundaries of the socially accepted conduct of their gender (187). A decade later Karen E. Rowe confirmed the genre as one of most effective channels informing young girls how to act within the confines of society. She states, "tales prescribe approved cultural paradigms which ease the female's assimilation into the adult community" ("Feminism and Fairy Tales" 212). In current feminist fairy tale discourse, Cristina Bacchilega is of the opinion that fairy tales participate in ascribing gender roles. She says, "fairy tales continue to play a privileged role in the production of gender" (10). Writing on feminist fairy tale criticism, Stephen Benson observed that most scholars treat

fairy tale as a genre “which embodies and prescribes a particular set of culturally dominant ideologies centered on the codes and paradigms of patriarchy. They are read as suggesting and symbolically rewarding gendered patterns of behavior particularly pertinent for young readers” (168).

As a consequence of the fairy tale genre’s influential role in the construction of gender in society, feminist fairy tale criticism studies the concept of beauty, expected female behavior and the narrative function of the fairy tale heroines in fairy tales. One of the most pronounced observations of feminist fairy tale scholarship is that the well-known tales of the Brothers Grimm, such as “Snow White,” “Cinderella,” or “The Frog Prince,” glorify the figure of the passive, compliant beauty, whose sole option for a reward at the end of the tale is marriage. Lieberman’s commentary on the fairy tale narrative is that “submissive, meek, passive female behavior is suggested and rewarded by the action of these stories” (197). In Lieberman’s view the only requirement for the heroine to achieve this goal is to be chosen as the most beautiful among the other female characters of the tale. She elucidates on this phenomenon, “the immediate and predictable result of being beautiful is being chosen [...] The beautiful girl does not have to do anything to merit being chosen; she does not have to show pluck, resourcefulness, or wit; she is chosen because she is beautiful” (188).

Another claim of early feminist fairy tale scholars connected to fairy tale heroines was that as the value of beauty is measured by the male figures, there is no demand for heroines to be active participants of the narrative. Instead, they silently endure the hardships presented in the tale until external help, either in form of a magical helper, the prince or both, appears and aids them in entering matrimony. In Jane Yolen’s observation the Grimms’ “Cinderella”, compared to her older folkloric versions, is a “passive princess” in wait for a prince to retrieve her from her evil stepmother (297). Moreover, Gilbert and

Gubar argue that the Grimms' "Snow White" presents the expected female behavior by punishing the actively plotting Queen and rewarding Snow White, after she patiently waits, "dead and self-less" to be rescued by the prince (296-97).

Rowe warns that presenting the act of waiting for external help for young girl readers as the only solution could raise unrealistic expectations during puberty. She claims, "led to believe in fairy godmothers, [...] that is, in external powers rather than internal self-initiative as the key which brings release, the reader may feel that maturational traumas will disappear with the wave of s prince's fortuitous arrival" ("Feminism and Fairy Tales" 219). Additionally, Maria Tatar comments on how fairy tale texts grant help, from external sources, for different reasons to heroes and heroines. She claims, "heroes receive gifts and assistance once they actively prove their compassion and humility; heroines, in contrast, become the beneficiaries of helpers and rescuers only after they have been abased and forced to earn humility" ("Tests Tasks and Trials" 38).

Some feminist fairy tale scholars insist that heroine's journey ends with becoming married. According to Lieberman, after being rewarded in marriage she becomes fully dependent on her husband's social and financial position as she accepts her place in the domestic sphere, where her sole role is to be responsible for the household and to look after the offspring (199-200). Rowe summarizes the patriarchal ideology presented by fairy tales by stating, "these tales which glorify passivity, dependency and self-sacrifice as a heroine's cardinal virtues suggest that culture's very survival depends upon a woman's acceptance of roles which relegate her to motherhood and domesticity" ("Feminism and Fairy Tales" 210).

Connected to the issue of female character's passivity in fairy tales scholars claim that the main reason behind the biased portrayal of women in fairy tales is the gendered history of fairy tale publishing and distribution. Jack Zipes accurately summarizes the

history of gender appropriation in fairy tales as he observes, “the voices of the non-literate tellers were submerged, and since women in most cases were not allowed to be scribes, the tales were scripted according to male dictates or fantasies, even though they may have been told by women” (“Spells of enchantment” 7). Additionally, Marina Warner’s volume *From the Beast to the Blonde: On Fairy Tales and Their Tellers* extensively explores the issue of female storytelling. In the volume she claims, slightly differing from Zipes perspective, “that although male writers and collectors have dominated the production and dissemination of popular wonder tales, they often pass on women’s stories from intimate or domestic milieu” (17).

While exploring the heritage of popular narratives and the cultural history of oral storytelling numerous scholars have attempted to recover the deep-rooted tradition of female oral storytelling in European cultural history. On some level both Rowe’s essay “To Spin a Yarn,” Ruth B. Bottigheimer’s article “Tale Spinners: Submerged Voices in Grimms’ Fairy Tales,” and Marina Warner’s book *From the Beast to the Blond* all connect female storytelling to the image of the working woman, who while carrying out some monotonous task shares her story in an almost exclusively female community.

Rowe explains the hidden metaphors in the expressions “weaving” or “spinning” the tales when she says, “when women become tale-tellers (...) their ‘audible’ art is associated with their cultural function as silent spinners or weavers” (“To Spin a Yarn” 300). The historical reality of these expressions comes to light in Warner’s book, when she explains how the formal attributes of the fairy tale genre reveal the mechanics of women’s primary occupation in preceding centuries. She states: “Spinning a tale, weaving a plot: the metaphors illuminate the relation; while the structure of fairy stories, with their repetitions, reprises, elaboration and minutiae, replicates the thread and fabric of [...] the making of textiles from wool or the flax to the finished bolt of cloth” (23).

Moreover, Bottigheimer's essay is particularly interested in what the so-called "spinner tales" of the Grimms reveal about the female storytellers of the Grimms' time. She concludes that tales like "Rumpelstiltskin," "Mother Holle" or "The Three Spinner" reveal that even though the German tradition associated wisdom and respect with the figure of the wise spinning woman included in the tales, the occupation itself is "highly undesirable" ("Tale Spinners" 150), suggesting that storytelling for women a despicable art on a metaphorical level. Bottigheimer's study of the treatment of spinning in *Kinder und Hausmärchen* uncovers the reality of how the dominance of men in the publishing and distribution of fairy tales affected the image of the female storyteller.

These studies all illustrate how male dominance promoted the preservation of patriarchal status quo in fairy tales. Male collectors and editors of the most well known collections, such as Perrault's *Mother Goose Tales*, or the Grimm's *Kinder und Hausmärchen*, exercised control over those narratives that they originally collected from female tellers and silenced fairy tale heroines.

Curiously, Warner explains, while they silenced the actual tellers both Perrault and Grimm used female storytellers as icons to authenticate their collections (115-135). It helps understanding Warner's argument if we take into account Tatar's observation about the intentions behind the first editions of Grimms' collection. She claims that today's practice of circulating fairy tales as bedtime stories for children started in the same era as the appearance of Grimm's *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*. Additionally, Tatar also observes that child rearing was closely associated with the proximity of the domestic/feminine sphere (*Hard Facts of Grimms' Tales* 7-8). Consequently, Warner's argument is justifiable as she claims that in order to prove the relevance of these narratives in nurseries male publishers needed the illusion of female figures recounting these stories (118).

One of these icons was Dorothea Viehmann. The Grimms collected a large number of their tales, among them “Mother Holle,” “The Twelve Brothers” and “The Goose-Girl,” from a middle-aged woman who was born as an innkeeper’s daughter. Even though, she soon died after she finished recounting her tales to the Grimms’ they used an idealized portray of her on the early editions of *Kinder and Hausmärchen*. As Warner describes, the portray was meant to send the message that the tales included in the collection were authentic bedtime stories from a motherly peasant woman from the heart of the German country. (Warner 190 -93)

Moreover, while recovering the genealogy of female storytelling in folklore feminist fairy tale criticism exposed the stages of how silencing women became the socially accepted norm in such cultural channels as the fairy tale genre. After tracing the legitimizing process of the cultural paradigm of the threat of the speaking woman back to early interpretation of the Fall narrative, scholars identified the pejorative assumption of women gossiping and telling tales as part of the same historical process (Warner 29-31).

By the time of the Grimm’s publishing *Kinder und Hausmärchen* the image of the silent woman was a fully accepted social and cultural paradigm. As a result the Brothers have edited their collection suited to the expectations attached to this paradigm. Employing different narrative strategies they have almost completely muted most of their heroines (Bottigheimer, “Silenced Women in Grimms’ Fairy Tales” 116-18).

Silence became an inherent part of the image of the fairy tale heroine. Her appearance and behavior mirrors the fairy tale heroine’s silence. She is a passive beauty, without assertively manipulating her body, not actively participating in her own fate. Throughout the narrative she completely depends on help from others. Her prize for quietly suffering through tribulations, while waiting to be rescued, is marriage. In this marriage the

heroine's social and economical status fully relies on her husband, while she is restricted to remain at home and nurture the children (Lieberman 185-87).

In contrast, the female character that actively uses her voice is cast in the position of the villain of the fairy tale. Portrayed as undesirable and dangerous, she is either punished or her reward is withheld for breaching the limits of expected female behavior. Such character is the Evil Queen in the Grimms' "Snow White". Gilbert and Gubar delve into what they believe she represents in patriarchy. They ruminate on her creativity and wit, her plots against Snow White and the mirror that causes the violent jealousy she feels towards Snow White. They come to the conclusion that the mirror is the masculine voice that decides who is the "fairest of them all" and the Queen integrates the concept of beauty from male perspective, when she starts to act on her murderous intentions. Since the Queen devises complex plots to kill Snow White her assertiveness and creativity is undeniable. However, her creativity is cast in a negative light that she has to atone for in the end (291-96). In Gilbert' and Gubar's words, she is also silenced by the end of the tale. They conclude their thoughts on the Evil Queen, "her only deed [...] can be a deed of death, her only action the pernicious deed of self-destruction. [...] It seems especially important that the Queen's dance of death is a silent one" (297).

My aim in this chapter was to briefly present the discoveries of feminist fairy tale discourse on the literary practices associated with and the cultural evolution of the paradigm of the silent woman in Grimms' fairy tales. This cultural image has an extensive history deep-rooted in scriptural interpretation. Understanding the Fall narrative as Eve seducing Adam with her words, early Christian theology informed the assumption that a speaking woman poses a threat. Therefore, throughout European cultural history female storytelling, even though it had its traditions, had its limits in written literature.

Male collectors and editors of folk and fairy tales assured to dominate the narratives, they have gathered from female tellers, by silencing female voices in fairy tales. Paradoxically, since the tales had meant to be read in nurseries, close to the domestic sphere, there was a demand for male collectors to use female icons (in Grimms' case the portrait of Dorothea Viehmann was plastered on the early editions of *Kinder und Hausmärchen*) as a device to foster the illusion that the tales came from female tellers. However, the actual tellers of the tales and the heroines of the tales had to be silenced.

The inherent silence of the heroine instigated the female characters' passivity in fairy tales. The most popular female protagonists of fairy tales were found to be submissive and self-sacrificing by feminist fairy tale scholars. They claim that their beauty is intrinsically linked to their passivity and silence. For their sacrifices and sufferings their only reward is marriage. In contrast, the active, speaking woman of tales is cast in the role of the villain.

My goal in this first chapter of my Thesis was to grant a theoretical foundation for my analysis of *The Goose Girl*. Hale's novel is a young adult rewriting of the Grimms' fairy tale "The Goose-Girl." Consequently, in this chapter, I reviewed how both young adult fiction and the fairy tale genre connect to my Thesis' inquiry. In the first part of his chapter I surveyed how a new trend of young adult fiction attempts to question normative expectations of gender. In the second half of this chapter, I reviewed those critical texts of feminist fairy tale criticism that are concerned with problems of normative gender behavior in fairy tales, the speechlessness of the heroine and male editorship of female fairy tale narration. My intention is to build my analysis to the critical background that I established in this chapter and prove that *The Goose Girl* not only features a young adult fairy tale heroine who becomes more confident and outspoken by the end of the novel than she was in the beginning but that she subverts the figure of the passive and silent heroine. Moreover, I

will present that *The Goose Girl* rediscovers the submerged traditions of female fairy tale storytelling.

II. Empowered or Passive: The Brothers Grimm's Tale of "The Goose-Girl"

As I have presented in the last chapter, feminist fairy tale criticism centers on the condemnation of Western folklore praising the figure of the mute and passive fairy tale heroine. Accordingly, feminist writers and, lately children's and young adult literature writers made an effort to reconfigure canonized Grimm narratives. However, there are tales in the Brothers Grimms' collections that have not received the same attention as more popular tales, such as "Cinderella" or "Snow White." One of these tales is the "The Goose-Girl."⁵

In this chapter of my dissertation I would like to present the main plot of "The Goose-Girl" and briefly survey the critical literature written on the tale. There are numerous fields of study that examine the tales of Brothers Grimm; such as psychoanalysis, sociology, or folklore. However, as my Thesis focus is how Shannon Hale's young adult rewriting of the "The Goose-Girl" subverts conventional gender roles associated with Western fairy tale narratives, I would only review those critical texts on the tale that are relevant to my topic.

Firstly, I will briefly summarize the plot of the Grimms' "The Goose-Girl."⁶ This will provide a foundation both for the critical texts that I will study in this chapter and a basis for the third chapter, where I will analyze how Hale's *The Goose Girl* subverts the old narrative while employing the Grimms' text. Secondly, I will present summaries of critical texts that either consider the role of gender representation in the tale or comment on the

⁵There are many spellings of the tale's title. As I will use the Margaret Hunt translation in the summary of the tale I will use "The Goose-Girl" spelling in my analysis and my titles. However, when I use those other scholar's quotation who write about this tale, I remain faithful to their spelling.

⁶For the quotations I have used Margaret Hunt's popular translation. My reason for using this particular translation is that Hale, according to her official website, also used Hunt's translation as a reference while writing *The Goose Girl*.

heroine's conjuring abilities. Finally, I will present a brief review of the critical texts in order to introduce relevant issues to the analytical chapter of my analysis.

The Grimm's tale starts with a queen sending her daughter away to a far away land to be married. At the time of her departure, the queen gives a handkerchief to the princess with three drops of her blood as protection. While presenting the handkerchief she says to the princess, "dear child, preserve this carefully, it will be of service to you on your way." The princess starts her journey on Falada, her white horse, who can speak. Aside from Falada, only her maid-in-waiting accompanies the princess to help her on the journey to her bridegroom (Grimm 431).

While travelling, the princess feels a "burning thirst" and says to the maid, "dismount, and take my cup which thou hast brought with thee for me, and get me some water from the stream, for I should like to drink." To her surprise and humiliation the maid refuses to serve her, "If you are thirsty, get off your horse yourself, and lie down and drink out of the water, I don't choose to be your servant." When the princess lies down next to the water to drink, her mother's blood cries out, "If thy mother knew, her heart would break." This happens two more times; on the third occasion the princess accidentally loses the handkerchief in the water. Realizing that the princess no longer has her mother's protection, the maid forces the princess to change horses and clothes with her. Moreover, the maid coerces the princess to swear "by the sky above her" not to tell anyone about the deceit (432).

When they arrive to the palace the prince believes the maid to be his betrothed. But the old king, noticing that the girl is "dainty and delicate and beautiful," asks the false bride about her companion. The maid-in-disguise answers, "I picked her up on my way for a companion; give the girl something to work at, that she may not stand idle." Then the king assigns her to work as a goose-girl, next to a young boy named Conrad (433).

As Falada's talk could expose the true identity of the maid, she asks the prince to kill the horse, "Dearest husband, I beg you to do me a favor [...] Tend for the knacker, and have the head of the horse on which I rode here cut off, for it vexed me on the way" (433). After the true princess discovers Falada's fate she pays the knacker to hang Falada's head over the gate she passes every morning with the geese. So each morning the princess calls out to Falada, "Alas, Falada, hanging there!" and each morning Falada's head answers back,

Alas, young Queen, how ill you fare!
If this your tender mother knew,
Her heart would surely break in two.

Witnessing the peculiar conversation, Conrad starts to spy on the princess. When they are tending to the geese on the meadow and she is combing her golden hair, he tries to steal a lock of it. She refuses him and summons the wind to blow Conrad's hat off his head,

Blow, blow, thou gentle wind I say,
Blow Conrad's little hat away,
And make it chase it here and there,
Until I braided all my hair,
And bound it up again.

Conrad tells the old king of these events. The king decides to follow the goose girl and Conrad to the gate, where he hears her conversation with Falada's head and then to the meadow, where he sees the goose girl blowing Conrad's hat off. When he asks the girl to tell him about her past she refuses, "I may not tell you that, and I dare not lament my sorrows to any human being for I have sworn not to do so by the heaven which is above me; if I had not done that, I should have lost my life." The king then persuades the true princess to tell her story to the iron-stove. Inside the stove the princess starts to talk, "Here I am deserted by the whole world, and yet I am a King's daughter, and a false waiting-maid has by force brought me to such a pass that I have been compelled to put off my royal apparel, and she has taken my place with my bridegroom, and I have to perform menial service as a goose-girl. If my mother did but know that, her heart would break" (433- 37).

The king overhears the princess's story. When the girl climbs out of the stove he orders his servants to dress her in "royal garments." In the end, the king tricks the impostor maid to reveal herself and forces her to name her own punishment. Finally, the maid is severely punished and the true princess and the prince live happily ever after (438).

Bottigheimer singles out the tale of "The Goose-Girl" in her monograph on the Brothers Grimm corpus *Grimms' Bad Girls and Bold Boys*. She explains that even though most of the Grimms' tales represent old evil women as witches, those who act as actual conjurers and spell casters are young women. She expounds her point, "at its most powerful, conjuring power resides within the conjurer, who generates her own incantation rather than having it prescribed for her" (44). In the case of "The Goose-Girl" she claims that the heroine's ability to summon the wind at will and speak to her horse "derive from her femaleness" (45), and interprets the spells used by the heroine as remnants of ancient incantations, as old as the "pre-Christian Merseburg Spells [...] which bear witness to an early and perhaps continuous belief [...] a peculiarly female ability to control, direct or affect natural powers" (43). In Bottigheimer's opinion all these characteristics indicate that "The Goose-Girl" is the "ultimate tale of powerful womanhood"(53).

Why did the Grimms' editing allow the tale's heroine to retain her abilities if most of the female characters of their collection are chosen and recognized only for their beauty? Bottigheimer presents a reason for this idiosyncrasy in another study. In this essay she studies the iconography of the different illustrations the tale has been published with, and argues that only two "narrative moments" of the tale have been illustrated in every edition of the Grimm's collection ("Iconographic Continuity" 52). One of them is the episode where the princess talks to Falada's head at the gate as a goose-girl, and the other is when she summons the wind to blow Conrad's hat off as he attempts to steal a lock of her hair. Bottigheimer maintains that this fact illustrates that the reason why the tale has been left

unedited by the Grimms is that the verses present in both these scene are “the crux of the tale [...] removing or altering the verses’ content would free the teller to initiate change in other aspects of the tale, but as long as these verses remain intact, the tale itself retains its traditional form and resists change” (“Iconographic Continuity” 51). Consequently, Bottigheimer claims, these verses allow “The Goose-Girl” to be one of the “very few of the Grimms’ tales in which the magic powers of a female character have withstood conversion into the malevolent abilities of a witch figure”(Grimms’ *Bad Girls* 50).

Corresponding to Bottigheimer’s interrogation of the tale Tatar reviews the role of spells in “The Goose Girl” in an essay concerning how magical language in fairy tales effects children. In the beginning of the essay Tatar asserts that since the only device authors have are words, “writers are deeply committed to demonstrating the power of language. Words and thoughts, they teach children, can enable not just movement but also mutability” (“The Magic Art of the Great Humbug” 140). Continuing, Tatar claims that only fairy tales, in the form of spells and curses, have words that actually transform reality or as she explains it, “[i]t is only in fairy tales that (words) are endowed with the capacity to go *poof!* And produce actual physical transformations, signaling to their readers that wishing makes it so” (142). Furthermore, Tatar suggests that even though children eventually learn that spells only work in fairy tales, reading fairy tales make them realize that words have transformative powers. Therefore, she concludes that reading fairy tales containing spells, such as “The Goose-Girl,” encourages children to realize that instead of using spells they need to find the right words and learn how to use them in order to “effect change” in reality (143).

One of the people inspired by “The Goose-Girl” as a child have been American feminist author, bell hooks. Feminist fairy tale critic Kate Bernheimer asked female authors to write short essays on their favorite fairy tales and edited it into the volume, *Mirror*,

Mirror. In this volume bell hooks writes about “The Goose-Girl” in an essay titled “To Love Justice.” She says that for a girl living in a rural territory of the United States, the goose-girl’s transcendental connection with nature was very easy to understand.

Moreover, Hooks indicates that she found the power of the heroine motivating. She believes that the tale contains a heroine with formidable strength; a heroine, who is able to transfer the energy she receives from nature in order to chase away undesired pursuers. She says,

It is in the pastures, during her sojourn with nature, that the princess regains her inner strength and her intuitive powers. She exercises those powers to ward off unwanted sexual overtures of the lad. This image, of the female empowered by the strength of her will to protect herself from unwanted advances, was especially enchanting to me as a girl (172).

Hooks continues her opinion of the tale, “[e]mbedded in this story is a sharp critique of patriarchy—of a female resistance and the disempowerment of the male who would seize control over the female body and dominate”(172).

In contrast to these enthusiastic accounts of the tale Lieberman states that “The Goose-Girl” follows the patterns of most patriarchal fairy tale narratives. Lieberman neglects addressing the heroine’s powers and instead focuses only on how the princess’ reward for enduring humiliation in silence. Moreover, she states that instead of reclaiming her identity on her own, she becomes a princess, “due solely to the intervention of others” (193). In Lieberman’s opinion, abused heroines, such as the goose-girl or Cinderella, are most of the time “rescued and rewarded”(193). She states that these tales encourage the assumption in children “that suffering goodness can afford to remain meek, and need not perhaps should not strive to defend itself, for if it did so perhaps the fairy godmother would not turn up for once, to set things right at the end” (193).

Philip Pullman, in his recent translation of the Brothers’ Grimm’s *Kinder und Hausmärchen* has a similarly condemning opinion of the heroine portrayed in “The Goose-

Girl.” As a writer his view is that even though the true bride has many virtues she is too meek and silent to warrant her own story. He would prefer to explore the narrative of the villainous maid in waiting. He says, “It’s hard for a storyteller to make an attractive character out of a meek and docile victim who doesn’t argue or fight back once” (“The Goose Girl”).

There are two main issues mentioned in these critical texts concerning gender representation in “The Goose-Girl.” On the one hand, Bottigheimer, Tatar and bell hooks all agree that the heroine depicted in the tale is powerful and through magic she is able to protect herself from a sexual pursuer who she does not desire. On the other hand, Lieberman and Pullman’s views of the goose-girl’s character paint a different image of the heroine. They both characterize the heroine as a passive victim, who only repossesses her position because an external power supports her.

Both views will be important in my analysis of Hale’s novelization of the tale. In the next chapter of my Thesis I will show that Hale’s text focuses on a princess who, despite the fact that she has formidable powers, assumes the role of the silent and passive fairy tale heroine Lieberman and Pullman interprets the character of the goose-girl to be. However, I would also like to prove that *The Goose Girl’s* central theme is how the heroine explores the natural power, that both Bottigheimer and bell hooks mention, in order to protect and save herself. Finally, I will analyze Hale’s novel in order to show how by learning the power of magical language the heroine develops enough confidence to eloquently use words without magic to create change, in a similar way that Tatar assumes children react to reading fairy tales.

III. Re-Configuring the Silent Woman and the Revival of Tradition of Female Storytelling in Shannon Hale's *The Goose Girl*

Shannon Hale's *Books of Bayern* series, especially its first installment *The Goose Girl*, received favorable reviews from critics of the young adult genre.⁷ Most of them admired Hale's poetic language, surpassing the standards of the YA genre (a genre usually focusing more on content than form). Moreover, a fair amount of reviews were delighted by the positive effect the inspirational rite of passage narrative each of these books present for adolescent girl readers. However, aside from mentioning that Hale's inspiration for the series was the Brothers Grimm's tale "The Goose-Girl" not many essays analyze *The Goose Girl* and its sequels as fairy tale retellings.⁸ My intention is to tend to this neglect and discuss how *The Goose Girl* relates to the Grimms' tale; i.e. how the Grimms' heroine's powers are further developed in Hale's series of books. Furthermore, I would like to interrogate how the progression of the heroine's powers defies the conventional gender expectations attached to the paradigm of the silent fairy tale heroine.

In the first chapter of my Thesis I presented the traditions of gender representation in the young adult genre and how these traditions are gradually being deconstructed. Also, I summarized how classic texts of feminist fairy tale criticism argued that the editorial work of the Brothers Grimm vanquished female storytelling traditions and in turn praised the concept of the passive and silent heroine. At the end of the chapter I summarized that both feminist fairy tale criticism and young adult scholarship influenced the way adolescent

⁷E.g.: The American Library Association included the novel in its "Top 10 Teen Books" of 2004. ("Awards and Reviews") Also, the review in the New York Times Book Review writes about the novel, "In layer upon layer of detail a beautiful coming-of-age story emerges, a tale about learning to rescue yourself rather than falling accidentally into happily-ever-after"("Awards and Reviews").

⁸ There is a remarkable essay by Susan Remington Bobby "Embracing Equality: Class Reversals and Social Reform in Shannon Hale's *The Goose Girl* and *Princess Academy*" that studies the Grimms' tale's unique awareness of class difference and how Hale's novels develops this theme in her novels.

fiction and fairy tale retellings attempt to overwrite existing cultural paradigms of female passivity and silence. I aim in this chapter to present how Hale's *The Goose Girl* series is a part of this trend.

In the second chapter of my Thesis I focused my attention to surveying the critical responses to the Grimms' version of "The Goose-Girl" narrative. In particular, I emphasized the importance of Bottigheimer's and Bell Hook's interpretation of the tale; i.e. how they remarked upon the uncommon powers of the heroine and how these powers partly subvert the paradigm of the passive fairy tale heroine. On the other hand, I also presented Liebermann's and Pullman's view that the tale ultimately presents a heroine who is rewarded for her silent endurance of humiliation.

My aim in this chapter is to present how Shannon Hale employs the narrative of "The Goose-Girl" to create a universe where female characters fully explore their inherent potential and refuse the paradigm of the passive, silenced heroine. Moreover, I would like to analyze the act of storytelling by female characters in *The Goose Girl* in order to show how Hale's text revives a tradition of female storytelling without the surveillance and need of approval from a male authority. As the detailed analysis of all the female characters with speech-gifts would exceed the limits of my Thesis my main focus will be the examination of the protagonist of *The Goose Girl*, Princess Anidora Kilandra Talianna Isilee (from now on Ani).⁹

The first part of this chapter will deal with Ani's relationship with speech-gifts. As most of this chapter will discuss the concept of speech-gifts I will not go into detail on what

⁹Despite the fact that Ani's character strongly features in the sequels of *The Goose Girl* (*Enna Burning* and *Forest Born*) I decided to closely analyze only the first book of the series and venture into the sequels on only a few occasions. My decision was partly influenced by the fact that a close examination of all the books would exceed the limits of this Thesis and also by the fact that only the first book could be considered a rewriting of "The Goose-Girl."

the term means here. However providing a brief summary will help me clarify what I intend to achieve in this chapter.

There are three varieties of speech-gifts in the *Books of Bayern* universe. The first one is people-speaking: a person who possesses this gift has the ability to easily and successfully persuade and convince people to do as she or he says. The second is animal-speaking: having this gift means that one has the potential to learn animal languages. The third is nature-speaking: possessing this gift entails being able to correspond and affect different elements of nature. Additionally, it is important to note that one person can have multiple speech-gifts.

Firstly, this chapter will center on Ani's relationship with her power of animal- and nature-speaking and how claiming and using these speech-gifts support her in her ultimate denial to be silenced. Moreover, I will discuss the bond she develops with other characters having similar speech-gifts. Also, how she relates to women possessing the gift of people-speaking. The second part will inspect Ani's connection to the act of storytelling. I would like to review how the reintroduction of the female storytelling figure provides proof that Hale's rewriting of the narrative of "The Goose-Girl" aims to reestablish forgotten traditions of female storytelling. Those traditions that were neglected ever since narratives told by female tellers of fairy tales were overwhelmed by male surveillance.

III.1 Speech-Gifts in Shannon Hale's *The Goose Girl*

Before I delve into the discussion of how Ani's character connects to the three kinds of speech-gifts I would like to briefly present how Ani's character is introduced in *The Goose Girl* and how she learns about speech-gifts. Princess Anidora Kilandra Talianna

Isilee, the Crown Princess of Kildenree¹⁰ is considered a peculiar child from the moment she is born. As she is intended to succeed her mother, the queen of Kildenree, on the throne, her manners and actions are carefully monitored. When she does not open her eyes for three days after she is born her behavior already confounds expectations. Even though her mother, the queen tries to persuade the baby to open her eyes by whispering “You are a princess [...] open your eyes” (1) the baby is only willing to react to her aunts words. Her aunt, after becoming Ani’s nurse, encourages Ani to embrace her peculiarity and explore her potentials, despite the queen’s disapproval.

Ani begins to speak full sentences at one year. This upsets the queen and provides material for people living in Kildenree to be suspicious of Ani’s aunt. People living in the court gossip that Ani’s aunt “possesses unnatural methods of awakening a child’s words” (2). Hale’s text here suggests that Kildenrean society is very conventional and dislikes behavior outside of the norm. Moreover, the text’s focus on Ani’s early speech development foreshadows that issues connected to speech and the censure of speech will be further investigated in the novel.

Walking the castle grounds while listening to her aunt’s stories becomes a regular routine in Ani’s childhood. One day, when Ani is five years old, it is her aunt, who tells her the story of speech-gifts:

The Creator spoke the first word, and all that lived on the earth awoke and stretched and opened their mouths and minds to say the word. Through many patterns of stars, they all spoke to one another [...] but after many deaths, the languages were forgotten. [...] Some people are born with the first word of a language resting on their tongue, though it may take some time before they can taste it (5).

¹⁰As the description of the setting of Hale’s universe would take up too much space and is not necessarily relevant concerning the topic of my Thesis I do not intend to detail the geographical aspects of Hale’s world. However, I provide a detailed landscape of the setting of the *Books of Bayern* printed in every edition of each of the books to clarify the position of countries I write about in this chapter. (fig.1)

This tale communicates an idea that persists throughout the series; i.e. everything that seems silent has its own language. Moreover, as ‘The Creator’ has given the first word to every entity, no one and nothing has the sole privilege to communicate.

Ani’s aunt continues her tale by explaining that there are three kinds of first words one can taste and therefore, three different types of speech-gifts:

Did you know your mother has the first? The gift of people-speaking. Many rulers do. [...] And people listen to them, and believe them, and love them. I remember as children it was difficult to argue with your mother—her words confused me, and our parents always believed her over me. [...] [People-speaking] can be powerful and good, and it can be also dangerous. [...] The second gift is the gift of animal speaking. I’ve met a few who are able to learn animal languages, but like me, those people feel more comfortable [...] among the trees and places where animals are not in cages. It’s not a pleasant life [...]. Others are suspicious of those who can speak to wild things. [...] The third is lost or rare. I’ve never known one with the gift of nature-speaking, though there are tales that insist it once was. I strain my ears and my eyes and my insides [...] but I don’t know the tongue of fire or wind or tree (5-6).

Ani’s aunt finishes her explanation by telling Ani that the reason why she did not open her eyes for three days after she had been born is because, similarly to Ani’s aunt, Ani was “born with the word on [her] tongue” and for those three days she tried to taste which one it was before she woke up (6). Furthermore, she claims that it is still unknown which of the speech-gifts Ani possesses, but in time, without her aunt’s help she will be able to recognize it.

The introduction Ani receives from her aunt about speech-gifts is extremely biased. Her aunt’s views will significantly influence how Ani will perceive her own gifts and others’ gifts throughout the first novel. Essentially, she implies that there is an existing dichotomy between people-speakers and animal-speakers. She suggests that while people-speaking is accepted in society animal-speaking is condemned by it.

The aunt’s depiction of people-speaking is informed by her own experiences as a child. While talking about the queen she mentions that as children their parents always

believed the queen over her because of the queen's gift of people-speaking (5). Even though the aunt describes people-speaking as a gift that can be beneficial she indicates that people-speakers are manipulative.

Ani up to this point spends most of her time with her aunt and easily identifies with her. Conclusively, her aunt's bias towards people-speaking will make Ani suspicious and wary about people-speakers for a big part of her life. Additionally, she will try to isolate herself from society as her aunt does and view herself unable to win arguments with her mother and comply with her mother's wishes.

Another important aspect of the aunt's explanation is that she insists that Ani's powers will come as a reward without external help. When she says that Ani has a speech-gift she stresses that Ani has to discover on her own, without help. The aunt's insistence on this point is crucial in defying a patriarchal paradigm in fairy tales. As I have already mentioned in the first chapter of my Thesis, in the most popular fairy tales heroines never get their reward without someone helping them confirming the need for female passivity. By insisting that Ani have to recognize and learn to use her speech-gift on her own Hale's text changes a crucial component in a patriarchal fairy tale narrative.

Following this short introduction on speech-gifts I would first like to turn my attention to the initial speech-gift Ani learns to govern; animal-speaking. Then, I will continue my inspection with nature speaking, since becoming an animal-speaker starts Ani on her journey to discover that she is able to listen to and effect wind. Finally, I will discuss people-speaking. As Ani is not a people-speaker I intend to focus on what this lack means in her character's development and how she relates to people with the gift of people-speaking.

III.1.a Losing the Handkerchief – Disclaiming the Power of the Mother and Becoming an Animal-Speaker in *The Goose Girl*

My intention in this subchapter is to present Ani's development in speaking with different types of birds and her horse, Falada. Moreover, I would like to review how animal-speaking at the beginning of *The Goose Girl* separates her from society in Kildenree and later on in the novel how this speech-gift helps her become an independent woman, who is able to rescue herself. I will investigate how the embrace of the gift of animal speaking affects Ani's connection to her mother; specifically, how emphasis in *The Goose Girl* on the animal-speaking powers of the Grimms' heroine re-configures the power dynamic of the mother-daughter relationship present in the "The Goose-Girl."

Her aunt tells Ani about speech-gifts right after she discovers that Ani is able and willing to mimic bird language. They are sitting near the pond at the castle, feeding swans when Ani's aunt starts to speak to them. Ani perfects the sounds the swans make in a couple of tries and inquires after what the sounds mean. After telling her how swans communicate Ani's aunt continues to teach Ani about speech-gifts and passes on her knowledge of animal-speaking (4).

Apart from instructing her how to speak to different kinds of birds Ani's aunt tells her how to interact with horses. The aunt explains that each foal is born with its name on its tongue and if one is able to hear the name at the moment of the foal's birth that person will be able to speak to that horse for the rest of its life (8).

After a long while, but still in Ani's childhood her aunt becomes restless and leaves for the hills, where she could be close to animals, but not without cautioning Ani about not showing her gift around her mother or anyone else. She says, "if your mother discovers what I have taught you, she will take it away"(10), she adds that even though the queen will

never understand Ani's wishes to explore her gift Ani will still be happier in a life, where she is not ostracized by society.

These early teachings of her aunt will provide how Ani views her powers for a long period. Even though, her aunt is willing to teach Ani bird languages and explain how it is possible to interact with horses she never makes an attempt to show how Ani can possess and practice her gift while being active in her community and interact with people at the same time. The aunt's views and attitude regarding the practice of animal-speaking emphasize the dichotomy she has depicted when she told Ani about speech-gifts between animal-speakers and people-speakers.

The aunt's departure from Ani's life signifies the start of the burial of Ani's speech-gifts for a longer period. As it has been foreshadowed by the previous events and her aunt's words the queen and Kildenrean society do not tolerate uncommon abilities, especially in their future queen. When Ani tries to show animal-speaking to one of the nurses the nurse runs to the queen and explains the event in "hushed and hurried tones that made Ani feel that she had done something unspeakable" (12).

After this incident Ani is strictly forbidden by the queen to go near birds. With rebellious intent she tries to talk to her puppy, but the queen takes it away. This occasion leads to the most violent confrontation between the queen and Ani. When Ani orders her mother to give her back the puppy the queen slaps Ani on the mouth and says, "it is time you learn your place, Crown Princess. You will be the next queen, and your people will not trust a queen who makes up stories and seems to talk to wild things" (13).

While being enthusiastic about showing her gift Ani receives hostile reactions to her speech-gift. The nurse's and the queen's actions further confirm the existing dichotomy that Ani's aunt indicated before. The unspeakable nature of Ani's gift and the queen's action of slapping Ani on the mouth symbolize the enforced silence Ani will have to endure for a

larger part of the novel. However, Ani will not limit this silence to her gift. Even though, she will try hard to fit into the role of the Crown Princess she will not be able to defend herself or communicate her opinion.

After she is forced to abandon publically exercising her gift of animal-speaking, the only connection to her speech-gift is speaking to her horse, Falada. In the text her initial connection with Falada is portrayed in the following manner: "she had listened when he spoke his name, that word that had lain on his tongue while he still slept in the tomb. After this initial connection, it was not long before she discovered they could speak to each other without other people hearing a sound"(23).

Hale's text positions Falada's and the princess' relationship differently than the Grimms' narrative. In the Grimm's tale Falada is given to the princess as a royal to accompany and protect her on her journey to the foreign kingdom by the queen. Sheldon Cashdan, in a psychoanalytical reading of the tale, mentions that Falada can be seen as a transitional object for the queen's maternal protection (138). As the voice of the queen he warns the princess about danger and her position. However, until the scene where Falada's severed head is talking with the princess from the wall of the gate the Grimms' tale does not allow the princess to engage in a correspondence with Falada. In contrast, Hale's text emphasizes that there is constant exchange between Ani and her horse, without the knowledge of the queen. His figure is utilized as testimony that Ani does not necessarily comply with her mother and society's rules, even though her rebellion is in silence.

Despite the fact that Ani has been preparing for her role as the future queen all her life, after she turns sixteen the queen appoints Ani's younger brother to succeed her on the throne of Kildenree. When Ani approaches the queen demanding answers it is revealed that since the age of ten Ani has been betrothed to the Bayern's king son to protect Kildenree from being invaded by the stronger state. Ani tries to argue for her birthright and oppose her

mother. She warns herself, "not to fall into the role of the complacent listener" (34). Even though, the queen attempts to persuade Ani that her position will be unchanged, i.e. Ani will still become a queen through marriage Ani argues, "You know it's not the same. It will not be my crown. It will not be my home. I'll be a stranger, a foreigner wife of a king" (36). Eventually, Ani accepts her fate and agrees to prepare for the journey, "She did as she was told. She rarely gave thought to her duties or spent long hours or acted alone. She realized she would never have been capable of taking her mother's place"(38).

Ani's position and authority is shown as a stark contrast to her mother's. While this scene implies that Ani is willing to challenge her mother's decisions she is not sufficiently independent to either overturn or ignore her mother's resolve. Moreover, she is convinced that she is not only unmotivated to fulfill her duties but is overly passive to occupy her mother's position.

Even though Hale's text preserves significant elements from the Grimms' tale *The Goose Girl* closely investigates and re-interprets these elements. One of these elements is the mother's handkerchief. In a similar fashion to the Grimms' tale the queen in *The Goose Girl* presents the princess with a handkerchief containing three drops of blood from the queen. However, additionally to functioning as an object providing magical protection it is a symbol of maternal heritage. When the queen hands the handkerchief over to Ani, she says "My mother used to carry it, and then she gave it to me before she died. I have always felt it held a part of her. When I held it, I feel her eyes on me, approving, guiding, and protecting. So I send you with my protection" (44).

The queen's love apparent in the Grimm narrative is seriously questioned in Shannon Hale's narrative so is the willingness to fulfill the duty of the princess marrying a stranger. Despite the promise of protection from the queen the handkerchief does not bridge the distance and betrayal Ani feels from her mother's decision to send her off to become the

wife of a foreign prince. Wondering about her journey Ani thinks, "the long road intimidated her, [...] a distant place, warlike people, a shadowed husband with a face she couldn't imagine. Tales of naive young girls marrying murderous men performed grimly in her mind" (43). Additionally, Ani longs for a different gift from her mother than protection, "Ani felt the crowd shudder at the power in the queen's voice. *Would that voice accompany me*¹¹, thought Ani, *and not a stained handkerchief*"(45).

As Ani examines her prospects and questions the protective powers in the handkerchief *The Goose Girl's* text destabilizes traditional gender behavior in fairy tale narrative. Firstly, Ani does not blindly embrace the expectation of marrying a "shadowed husband" thereby subtly subverting the fairy tale heroine's inherent complacency. Secondly, instead of feeling grateful for the handkerchief passively providing her protection through magical needs she wishes for the active power behind her words. This wish indicates that Ani's character desires to break out from the silent status she has been positioned into by her mother and herself.

As Ani and the people accompanying her start on the journey she realizes that she finds herself more comfortable travelling through the woods than being at her mother's court. Additionally, she is able to practice her gift of animal-speaking again. Hale's text is significantly different from the Grimm's tale in this episode. Ani is not only travelling with Falada and her maid (whose name is Selia in Hale's version) but with a handful of male guards from the castle. As the company passes through the woods they seem to be ill-at-ease with the environment. The text indicates their uneasiness as most guards feel that, "the sweet smell of pine mix in their heads with the tales of dark deeds and unnatural things" (50). However Falada's calmness and connection with nature passes to Ani.

¹¹The author indicates Ani's thoughts by using italicized words.

While it seems that the others' withdraw into themselves Ani becomes more and more observant and connected to their environment, as they range deeper into the woods, remote from the court and the queen. Moreover, far from the disapproving looks of the mother she is able to exercise her speech-gift. The text portrays her mood by describing the way she, "liked how she felt surrounded by trees, mixing the feeling of safety in close quarters with open possibilities. [...] Birds conversed in spiny branches. Ani's ears reached for the sounds of their chatter, and she felt like smiling to discover that she understood"(51).

Ani is not afraid to employ her speech-gift in the dangerous journey to avoid perilous situations. However, instead of thanking her, the guards treat her with apprehensively as they treat the forest. After Ani discovers that a pack of rabid wolves is near their camp, through her conversation with Falada, she does not hesitate to pass the warning on. Instead of being grateful to her for the warning the guards began to treat with reluctance and suspicion. The following morning the wolf attack is evaded Ani notices "how many of the guards now looked at her with the same wariness that marked their eyes when they contemplated the dark profundities of the forest" (52). Her immediate reaction is to withdraw into herself and refuse to use her gifts. She embodies the concept of passivity by performing shame and declining her speech-gift. The text finishes these scenes with the sentence, "Ani looked down and refused to listen"(52).

During the six-month journey it becomes apparent that Ani's maid, Selia is the person, who encourages the distrust towards Ani in the guards. In a confrontation, where Selia admits to being jealous of Ani's position as a princess Ani refuses to undertake Selia's abuse of Ani's character. Later, she begins to wonder how she was able to gain an authoritative voice. Instead of acknowledging the power in her own voice she attributes her eloquence due to the fact that she carries her mother's handkerchief.

Selia's and Ani's confrontation is a turning point in *The Goose Girl*. Even though, Ani is yet incapable of completely believing that it was her own voice that prevented Selia from overpowering her she acknowledges that she does not have to be compliant. It is suggested by the text that Ani attributes her triumph to the protection she believes her mother's handkerchief provides her, "A warm breath of wind came from the deeper trees and ran across Ani's neck. A corner of her mother's handkerchief stood out from her bodice, and the wind tapped it against her breastbone. [...] *A gift from my mother*, Ani thought. *Protection, she had said.*" (65)

There are number of scenarios after her confrontation with Selia, when she becomes bolder in conversations, yet, she ascribes these occasions to the power residing in the handkerchief. However, there are hints in the text that it is the gift of animal-speaking that provides her with a more eloquence. An example for these scenarios occurs when she reacts to one of the guard's, Ungolad's insolent remarks. After Ani jokes that Ungolad's riding and horse indicate that he wishes to be in complete control Ungolad retorts, "You are a student of men and horses then, and I had heard that all you were fit for was to be married off and produce princelings" (72). Asking Falada silently to inquire about Ungolad's character from his horse Ani proceeds to humiliate Ungolad. Among other remarks she implies that Ungolad's horse "is as docile as a cow" (72) because although she used to be wild but was beaten into submission by him in order to be completely submissive. To cause him further embarrassment she ends her speech, "she thinks you are unpredictable, heavier than used to be, and smell unpleasantly" (72).

By refusing to be identified by the duties society placed on her Ani begins to undermine the assumptions associated with gender behavior. Although, Ani still associates her newfound assertiveness with her mother's handkerchief ("*My mother's blood is protecting me*, she thought. *I have nothing to fear*") she employs her gift of animal-

speaking, by talking to Falada, in order to refute Ungolad's offensive remarks. She disproves the presumptions implied by Ungolad's comments that she is a docile bride by verbally defeating him with the help of her speech-gift. (73)

Similar to the Grimms' tale the princess loses her mother's handkerchief and her position at the same time. However, the text suggests that the reason why Ani loses her position is mainly her lack of assertiveness, instead of it being the loss of her mother's protection. Believing herself to be defenseless against a whole army of men lead by Selia she flees from the rebellion. Not only does she lose her mother's handkerchief but she has to leave behind Falada as well. Eventually, she manages to escape from the riot. By the end of the first part of *The Goose Girl*, titled "Crown Princess," she is left to her own devices in the forest.

Isolation in the forest fosters Ani to reflect on her own powers and the power of the handkerchief. First, she berates herself for finding her mother's gift enchanted. Moreover, even though she acknowledges that the handkerchief did not provide protection on its own, she does not realize that the reason she is alive is because she was willing to use her animal speaking power. Additionally, instead of finding her own powers inspiring she reprimands herself for not having enough power to save Falada. She chastises herself, "*I thought it was magic. I thought I was safe. A bird warned me at the waterfall. And Falada. And my own weak reason*"(88).

Nonetheless, after some self-reflection she starts actively using her gift of animal-speaking. Relying on her memories (speaking with swans in the palace) she asks an owl about directions. With the owl's help she is able to find her way out of the forest.

Ever since her mother banned her from speaking to animals she has not attempted to speak aloud to any kind of animal. She either spoke to Falada, whom she speaks to in her mind, silently or listened to birds. Her passive approach to her speech-gift is not adequate in

a situation where she can rely no more on external help. The time she spends alone in the forest is the stage in her separation from her mother.

After successfully arriving at the edge of the forest and into Bayern she meets a widow and her son. They provide her with clothes, help her readjust to a working life and assist her in travelling to the city, where the king resides. She manages to disguise herself (covers up her long blond hair) and her speech (Kildenreans and Bayern people speak the same language but different dialects) efficiently enough to assimilate into the city crowd in Bayern.

She intends reclaim her position as the Princess of Kildenree from Selia, who poses as her in the Bayern court. However, when she approaches the king Ani loses her confidence and instead of pleading her case she asks for a place of work. She is placed to mind the geese alongside a boy, called Conrad.

Ani's independent arrival to the palace, without the presence of Selia, is a major alteration to the narrative of "The Goose-Girl." In the Grimms' tale the humiliated princess silently suffers while she watches the maid enjoying the privileges attached to the position of a princess. The princess from the tale has no decision over her fate. The maid asks the old king to give her some work in the palace to which the king answers by giving her the position of the goose-girl. As a contrast, *The Goose Girl* never depicts Ani's status as the position of the humiliated princess.

Ani is assigned to tend to the geese by the king. Nonetheless, she gains the position of an animal worker because she asks whether she is knowledgeable about horse-care. Ani decides to work because she wants to gain enough credibility and power to reclaim her position. Minding the geese is an optimal position for her to explore her budding gift of animal-speaking. Additionally, the persona of the goose-girl provides her with anonymity until she decides she is strong enough to retrieve her name from Selia.

In the position of the goose-girl she is left on her own to determine the rules of communication, without external negotiators. Initially, Ani has difficulties understanding the speech of geese, “The jabber of housed geese greeted her entrance, and immediately Ani realized that their language was far different from swan”(127). When she started to speak with swans her aunt had instructed her. Nonetheless, as she progresses in speaking with the geese she is soon recognized as a talented goose-girl among animal-workers. She earns the respect and acceptance through actively using her speech-gift. This fuels her self-confidence and inspires her to be more eloquent, not only with animals, but with people.

Ani’s novel self-assuredness produces an unorthodox incident, where Ani meets the prince, in disguise. One afternoon while Ani is tending to the geese a rider unable to control his horse gallops into the field. As the horse runs away from the rider Ani, without asking permission, manages to climb onto the horse’s back and whisper, "Some riders are beneath you, aren't they? I want to be your equal. I want to meet you” (148). After Ani successfully calms the horse down she continues to ride it. During her ride she uninhibitedly seeks connection with nature:

The wind fought her hat brim and filled up her ears, speaking words that she thought she could almost hear, and she rode faster, wanting to get closer to the source, to get inside the wind and saw what it saw. [...]The wind died as the horse slowed and she felt its words leave her skin unspoken. (150)

When she climbs down to meet with the furious rider, she does not become shy and silent. Instead, she wittily retorts to the rider’s angry comments and succeeds in alleviating the tension. After this episode they start to spend afternoons together and become close friends. The man tells Ani that he is the prince’s personal guard and his name is Geric. However, before they can become romantically involved the guard disappears, sending a vague note to Ani. Only at the end of the book, when they reunite and save each other is it revealed that Geric is the prince Ani is betrothed to.

Gender relationship represented in most fairy tales are subtly overturned in this episode. The Grimm's "The Goose-Girl" is no different from most fairy tale narratives, as it does not require the princess to give her consent or her own opinion on the prince's pursuit. She is chosen for her beauty and her passivity. However, in Hale's text the meeting between Ani and Geric, and their subsequent relationship subverts the Grimms' narrative by suggesting that Geric's interest in her is due to her assertiveness and wit. Moreover, Ani gives her consent to be pursued.

Moreover, Ani's first connection with nature-speaking begins in this scene. After spending months within an environment where her animal-speaking is accepted and appreciated she is able to instantly, and without restraints, use her speech gift. She is the one who creates the wind around her that begins to respond to her. Her boldness and voice generates her first connection with a hidden potential that will eventually provide her with enough power to regain her position and her name.

By exploring Ani's relationship with the gift of animal-speaking I wanted to illustrate how *The Goose Girl* expounds the inherent connection between Falada and the princess present in the Grimms' narrative. Through the analysis of relevant scenes in the novel I found that even though Ani's character seems to relate to the passive and silent heroine paradigm in the beginning of the novel exploring her gift of animal-speaking transforms her into a bold, eloquent and confident heroine. Conclusively, converting the motif of the one-sided communication of Falada and the princess, from the Grimms' text, into Ani's active command of animal languages subverts the passive and silent fairy tale heroine paradigm.

III.1.b The Gift of Nature-Speaking – Destabilizing the Concept of the Victimized Fairy Tale Heroine in *The Goose Girl*

My second subchapter regarding speech-gifts in Hale's *The Goose Girl* will focus on Ani's gift of nature-speaking, i.e. her ability to listen to and command wind. As I have elaborated in the second chapter of my Thesis Bottigheimer praised "The Goose-Girl" for its unique trait among the tales of *KHM* of presenting a heroine who actively engages with her environment. Moreover, she argued that the way the princess defends herself against the unwanted pursuit of Conrad by commanding the wind to chase Conrad away makes the story "the ultimate tale of powerful womanhood" (Bottigheimer *Grimms' Bad Girls* 53). As I have previously explained while I agree with Bottigheimer that the princess' power singles the "The Goose Girl's" heroine out from the passive beauties of other Grimms' tales I also agree with Lieberman's view of the tale that the ending of "The Goose-Girl" follows the patterns of patriarchal narratives. Instead of rescuing herself with her magical abilities the goose-girl is rescued by the old king. My aim in this subchapter is to present how in Hale's text Ani employs her wind-speaking in order to rescue not only herself but the prince as well, thereby unsettling the expected gender behavior portrayed in the Grimms' narrative.

Ani's wind-speaking ability awakens when she says goodbye to Falada, after the horse had been killed and his head was put on the palace's wall. As Selia begins to suspect that Ani is living in the capital of Bayern she puts Falada to death in order to drive her out from hiding. As Ani copes with Falada's loss she visits the wall where Falada's head hangs. She calls out to Falada as a farewell in her mind in a similar fashion they used to communicate with each other. First, she hears the echo of her former title in Falada's voice but after she repeats Falada's name the word Princess is echoed by the wind:

Falada, she said.

Princess.

Ani started. She had been expecting to hear that word, but this time the tone did not carry the distant echo of Falada.

A new voice.

She struggled to hear more.

A winter breeze still brushed against her cheek, and again she heard her name —*Princess*—and what had lain on her tongue since the morning of her birth loosened. (237)

This re-interpretation of the similar scene in the Grimms' narrative completely subverts the paradigm of the silently suffering fairy tale heroine. Bottigheimer claims that this narrative moment is the exposition of the princess' desolate position. She writes that this scene "emphasizes (the princess') misery and powerlessness or, at the very least, her temporary loss of power. [...] The goose girl is suffering great deprivation [...] and she is constrained from revealing her true nature unless—as with Falada—a third person overhears" ("Iconography" 53). As a contrast, in Hale's text the bold acknowledgment of Ani's gift of animal-speaking, when she visits Falada, allows Ani to unlock a previously unrealized power. Therefore, this scene instead of glorifying the goose-girl's weakness and docility praises her power and confidence.

Even though, she realizes her gift by herself she receives support from one of the workers, who becomes her best friend, Enna. One evening, at the gathering hall of the animal workers, Ani catches Enna looking deeply into the fire. Enna explains that she has always been fascinated by fire and desires the ability to understand its language. Ani smiles at Enna and feels "comfort that there were others who listened for language in what was supposed to be mute"(158). This scene is the foreshadowing of Enna's character development. In *Enna Burning*, the second book of the series, Enna uncovers that she is a fire-speaker and together with Ani they teach each other their respective speech-gifts.

Ani's and Enna's friendship trespasses several boundaries of gender norms presented in fairy tales. Firstly, the close bond between Ani and Enna strengthens their resolution to appreciate and realize their inherent powers. Therefore, instead of confirming

that the only relationship two young women can have is competitive in nature, as in most fairy tales, Hale's text presents a strong supportive female bond based. Moreover, the basis of their friendship is their mutual refusal to accept entities to be silenced. Consequently, their relationship undermines the validity of the paradigm of the silent heroine who passively competes with other women for the hero's desire.

With the support of Enna Ani is gradually welcomed by most of the animal-workers. However, Conrad, the goose boy, prevails acting hostile towards her. He is jealous about her gift of animal-speaking and his unrequited attraction towards her. On one occasion, when Ani is tending to the geese she wanders off to wash her hair in the nearby river. Conrad notices that her usually covered hair is visible and asks her to give him a lock of it. Even after Ani refuses his request Conrad persists. Shielding herself from further advances Ani asks the wind to chase Conrad's hat away.

This episode bears the closest resemblance to the corresponding scene in the Grimms' narrative. I have described in my second chapter that both Bottigheimer and Bell Hooks characterize this scene as the triumph of the goose-girl's power. Bottigheimer remarks that the heroine's ability to shield herself with her own magic and voice from the undesired pursuit of Conrad singles the "The Goose-Girl" out from the silent and compliant heroines of the other tales in *Kinder und Hausmärchen*. Hale's *The Goose Girl* preserves this narrative moment from the Grimms' story, as it is a marker of Ani's development in realizing the true potential of her considerable power.

Not long after her confrontation with Conrad five men come to attack them of the pasture. They attempt to steal the king's geese. While Conrad runs for reinforcement Ani creates a cluster of wind and biting and honking geese to overpower the thieves, "The men, blinded by dust, confused the wind and the geese until it all seemed one monster, screaming

in their ears, shoving them with stinging hands and biting their legs"(256). By the time Conrad reappears Ani have defeated and chased off the men.

While the Grimms' text after this incident abandons the goose-girl's powers *The Goose Girl* presents additional scenes where Ani's powers progress further. This scene is one of the occasions in the novel, where Ani employs not only her wind-speaking but her animal-speaking powers as well. This episode signs Ani's triumph over her insecurities, as she is no longer afraid to utilize her speech-gifts in order to rescue herself.

In this subchapter I presented how Ani's wind-speaking subverts the paradigm of the passive fairy tale heroine. Even though Hale's narrative correspond with the Grimms' story on several occasions, while the Grimms' tale eventually silences the goose-girl's powers Hale expounds them. Moreover, Ani's bond with Enna (a bond with an equally powerful female character) supports her in developing her power. This is a relationship that subverts the expectation confirmed by most fairy tales that only competitive relationship could exist between young women of marriageable age.

III.1.c The Gift of People-Speaking or Possibilities of Female Leadership in *The Goose Girl*

As the last part of my discussion concerning the relationship between Ani and speech-gifts I would like to reflect on how Ani relates to people with the gift of people-speaking and how she develops her own authoritative voice. Firstly, I would like to briefly comment on her relationships with her mother and Selia; i.e. I would like to review how these relationships are affected by the fact that both her mother and Selia are people-speakers. Additionally, as Ani's aunt associated the gift of people-speaking with leadership I will review the difference between how Ani as an animal- and nature-speaker and Selia as a people-speaker utilized their powers to gain leadership. Finally, I will reflect on how Ani's own voice as a leader develops parallel to her animal- and nature-speaking gifts.

As I have described previously in this chapter Ani views the gift of people-speaking through her aunt's biased account of this speech-gift. In the beginning of the novel Ani's aunt tells Ani that her mother is a people-speaker. The aunt explains that her mother's gift is extremely beneficial for their kingdom, "The first gift is the only reason this little land was not taken over by other kingdoms long ago. Rulers like your mother have talked themselves out of war for centuries" (5). However, she also implies that her mother, as a child, used to utilize her powers in order to manipulate their parents.

On one occasion, when her aunt and Ani are walking in the palace's gardens they meet with Selia and Selia's mother, who is a lady-in-waiting for the queen. Ani is surprised to find that despite the fact that Selia used to throw temper tantrums as a little child now she is perfectly poised, polite and always knows what to say. After the meeting the aunt warns Ani that she should be wary of Selia, because she is a people-speaker.

Nonetheless, after Ani's aunt leaves Selia becomes Ani's lady-in-waiting and pretends to be her friend. Despite their close relationship a power dynamic is suggested by the text. More than once Ani notices that Selia has similar powers to persuade as her mother. Whenever Selia suggest that Ani should do something differently in order to be respected at the palace Ani feels "at once willing to do whatever Selia asked and eager to escape her notice. The same way in fact, that she felt around her mother" (10).

Even though they have different personalities in appearance they resemble each other. When they are already on the road to Bayern Ani observes, "In appearance, they were almost as alike as sisters" (19). This similarity in appearance will help Selia when impersonates Ani at the Bayern court. The hint of this betrayal is reflected in Ani's inner monologue, "*She would be better at playing princess as I am*"(19).

First sign of Selia's betrayal is the scene, where Ani discovers Selia trying on her royal dresses in her tent. Feeling confused Ani asks Selia why did she start to behave

differently ever since they have left the court. Selia reveals that she was always envious of Ani's position, "What a horrid title, lady-in-waiting. I have waited until I thought my bones would crack and my muscles freeze and my mind shrivel like a raisin. And there you were, with horses and tutors and gowns and servants, and all you did was hide in your room"(64). She continues to justify her opinion, "There is no such thing as royal blood. I believe we are what we make ourselves, and as such, you Crown Princess are nothing"(64). Ani is momentarily stunned by Selia's words, "Her thoughts spun and bumped against one another like dizzy children. Was this the effect of the gift of people-speaking? Every word Selia spoke seemed to be the purest truth. *You are nothing. You make yourself nothing*" (65).

Ani's instinct would be to withdraw from the conversation but the illusory power of her mother's blood on the handkerchief helps her to use her voice and refuse the silent woman persona. Ani orders Selia to drop her dress and asks her not to speak to her anymore, as she desires neither Selia's service nor her fraudulent friendship. This is the first occasion where she compares her own authoritative voice to her mothers, "For a moment, she had almost sounded as confident as her mother"(66). Not long after this episode Selia persuades the guards accompanying them to choose her as princess and kill Ani in order to pose as the Kildenrean princess in the Bayern palace.

Even though Selia's methods are morally wrong her refusal of hereditary privilege and insistence to achieve one's own success without the support of this privilege prove valid in Ani's narrative. When Ani starts working as a goose-girl she begins to understand how people with different social and financial background live. One evening, in the workers' hall, Enna explains the animal workers' position in Bayern society to Ani. She describes the people living in the city, "We watch their animals. We're almost, almost like animals to them"(159). After hearing Enna's complaints Ani begins to wonder, "[she] felt a

moment of regret that she would not be queen of this country after all, would not have a chance to set this injustice right"(160).

Her desire to regain her position in order to alleviate the harsh circumstances her fellow workers live in intensifies throughout the novel. She decides to take action to regain her name and title from Selia, when she hears that Selia convinced the Bayern king that Kildenree threatens to attack Bayern. In order to stop a war Ani, with the support of animal workers, faces the king, Selia, the traitorous Kildenrean guard Ungolad and Geric who is revealed to be the prince she was supposed to marry.

In order to break an established fairy tale pattern Hale's text builds on expectations associated with fairy tale narratives by hinting that Geric will be the one to rescue Ani from Selia's accusations and wrath. It seems first that the king and Geric believe Selia's explanations due to her gift of people-speaking. However, after the king and Geric eavesdrop on Selia and Ungolad as they threaten Ani with death if Ani does not confirm Selia's identity they intervene and try to fight Selia and Ungolad.

The conventional fairy tale pattern of the prince rescuing the princess from perilous situation is abandoned in the following battle between Ani, Ungolad and Geric where Ani does not only rescues herself but helps Geric defeat Ungolad and Selia by using her gift of wind-speaking. As the king and Geric enter the room they see Ungolad holding a knife to Ani's throat. In order to free herself from Ungolad she begins to utilize her speech-gift,

She felt a draft from high walls and beckoned it near, and a new breeze from the door that pulled in a wind from out-of-doors on its tail, and they all merged at her feet and rustled her hem. The room was still as they watched her gather wind, Geric watched her face, his lips parted in awe.

Quickly, the wind climbed, circling her hips and waist, pushing itself between her body and Ungolad's arms and attempting to press his blade away from her throat. His hold on her tightened, and the blade slid a little across her skin.

"Stop it! Stop it!" he said, his voice edged with terror.

That new source of wind touched the back of her head. Ani beckoned it, and it came, the very breath out of Ungolad's mouth, one long string of wind unhooked from his lungs and throat, drawn out like a snake from its shell. Breathless, he choked and stumbled, and his hold slackened. The circling wind fattened and, rising, pressed itself between his hand and her throat. As he gasped for air, Ani punched hard backward with her elbow and stepped out of his reach. (356)

After she manages to break from Ungolad a battle ensues where Bayern animal-workers and Kildenrean guards fight each other. In the midst of the battle Ungolad and Geric are left alone to fight to the death. Ani fearing for Geric's death asks one of the animal workers why no one intervenes when Geric is failing to defeat his component, "Why do you all stand still and let the traitor fight him?"(360) all the answer she receives is "It's the prince's battle and his first. It's his honor, and I won't interfere"(361). When Geric is close to defeat Ani dismisses the concept of male honor and intervenes,

Ungolad pulled back his sword for a deathblow.

"Honor," whispered Ani.

Wrapped around her hand and wrist were every breeze and draft, every movement of air that had touched her since Geric left her side, and she begged of it now a new course, quick and sure. A bolt of wind like a dull arrow thumped Ungolad in his chest (362).

These scenes prove that *The Goose Girl* establishes expectation attached to conventional fairy tale narratives in order to disrupt them. In the beginning of this narrative moment of the novel recalling the Grimms' story the king and the prince intervene in order to reestablish the position of the debased and humiliated princess and punish the maid. However, it is Ani who rescues herself and reclaims her name by using her own speech-gift. Moreover, undermining normative gender behavior Ani does not passively observe the princess' battle but intervenes and helps the prince defeat the male villain of the story. Furthermore, instead of receiving punishment by a male authority Selia escapes her punishment and is only defeated in the last book of the series by Ani, Enna a fire-speaker, Dasha a water-speaker and Rin a tree- and people-speaker. Conclusively, Hale's text

deconstructs male authority against female power that is glorified in most fairy-tale narratives (*Forest Born* 375-78).

After the battle the king and his consorts are still convinced that Kildenree plans to attack Bayern. Furious, Ani delivers an eloquent speech, where she accuses the king of being more interested in fighting unnecessary wars than addressing issues of class and privilege in his own country. She finishes her speech, “If you don’t believe me, then send me back [to Kildenree.] Or if you don’t trust me to leave, I’ll return to my little room on the west wall and tend to your geese, and you can be sure that on my watch no thieves will touch my flock”(374).

Ani’s speech signifies the transformation her character went through. In the beginning of the book she was a Crown Princess isolated from her peers due to her aunt and mother’s influence. Moreover, she was afraid to use her voice, as she believed her mother’s authority would never suit her. However, after she distanced herself from the court and was forced to abandon the expectations attached to her privilege she reconnected with her gift of animal-speaking and discovered her aptitude in wind-speaking. These powers allowed her to claim her authority regardless of her position and oppose authority.

Moreover, it is important to note that her opposition to authority is different than Selia’s intentions to use authority to her advantage. While Selia uses the authority associated with people-speaking in order to claim the privileges belonging to Ani’s title Ani utilizes the authority she claimed to prevent a war and to better the living conditions of the workers she has lived with.

Her speech to the king completely subverts the image of the silent woman. She does not accept the decision of a male authority and refuses to silence her own views. Furthermore, her ending message implies that she is more capable to complete her work

than the king his own tasks. Her confidence and eloquence is a stark contrast to the docile and silent princess fairy tale narratives provide as an example.

After her speech Geric informs her that she was successful, “I’ve never seen anyone make the king and his entire council feel like utter fools. [...] You, my lady, have stopped an unnecessary war”(377). As a culmination of the novel Geric apologizes for his disappearance from Ani’s life and for his vague note. He also professes his admiration and love for her and acknowledging that she had never given her consent to their betrothal asks her whether she would like to marry him. When Ani reciprocates his feelings and agrees to marry him he exclaims,

You were amazing in there [...] Growing up I tried to imagine what my mysterious betrothed princess would be like [...] I hope she’s clever, and I hope we have things to say to each other, and I wouldn’t cry if she was a beauty. But I never imagined that I could marry a girl who was all those things and knew Bayern’s needs better than I, who would truly be a partner on the throne. What this kingdom sorely misses is a queen, and you are exactly what they, and I, what we all need. (378)

Geric’s romantic speech invalidates the presumptions attached to male desire in fairy tales. As I have discussed in the second chapter of my Thesis most feminist fairy tale scholars claim that the most popular fairy tale narratives portray silence, passivity and compliance as the most desired qualities in a heroine. These attributes are the sole requirements for a heroine to have in a fairy tale in order to gain her reward, marriage. In marriage, her identity will merge with her husband’s position and her function will be reduced to tending to household needs and the rearing of children. Even Ani feared this fate when her mother changed Ani’s position from waiting to be reigning queen to “the foreign wife of a king”(36).

However, Geric not only admires Ani for being confident and outspoken but offers Ani an equal position on the throne. His closing sentiment reveals that he does not expect

Ani to function in the conventional position of a wife but asks her to be a “partner on the throne.” In the following three books Geric and Ani not only reign together on the throne but Geric encourages and supports Ani in discovering further speech-gifts.

In these three subchapters my intention was to show how Ani’s relationship with speech-gifts subverts the normative gender roles affirmed by popular fairy tale narratives. In the first part, I focused on Ani’s gradual acceptance of her gift of animal-speaking and how she separates her power from her mother’s influence. In the second part I presented how Ani embraces her gift of wind-speaking and manages to protect her geese and rescue herself by actively utilizing her speech-gifts. In the last part of this analysis I have focused on how Ani’s relationship with people-speakers, her mother and Selia, and her use of wind-speaking transforms her into an authoritative and self-confident woman.

Conclusively, I discovered that expounding the heroine’s conjuring power present in the Grimms’ narrative into a more active and constantly utilized power in Hale’s *The Goose Girl* subverts the normative gender positions present in the popular Grimm fairy tale narratives. While most Grimm fairy tales praise meekness, passive beauty and silence to be the most desired traits of a heroine Ani’s character succeeds and is rewarded by abandoning these traits in order to be confident, opinionated and out-spoken.

III.2 Traces of the History of Female Storytelling in Shannon Hale’s *The Goose Girl*

In the second, shorter, part of the analytical chapter of my Thesis I will discuss how *The Goose Girl* revives the forgotten traditions of female storytelling and therefore, provides a possible solution for reclaiming those fairy tale narratives that were told by women but were rewritten by male collectors, like the Brothers Grimm. Firstly, I will review how the figure of Ani’s aunt as the nurse shows a resemblance to those iconic

female tellers; those female tellers whose portraits were printed on the editions of *Kinder und Hausmärchen* to prove the collections' appropriateness for child readers. Secondly, I will analyze how the portrayal of Ani as the storyteller among the animal workers returns to the historical roots of female fairy tale tellers. Finally I would like to reflect on how Hale's text dismisses the conventional function of the male mediator, whose role is to appropriate female narratives to meet the rules of patriarchal society, by allowing Ani to continuously revise her own narrative and therefore transforming her to be the author of her own story. *The Goose Girl* provides a significant amount of textual material to analyze regarding these issues. However, to study each of these paragraphs would exceed the limits of my Thesis. Therefore, I have chosen four scenes to illustrate my points.

As a child Ani learns to speak through listening to stories and nursery rhymes. The attentive nurse who recounts them is her aunt, "In cold weather or spring rain, the aunt sat on the nursery floor and told Ani stories of fantastic and faraway things" (3). When later Ani recalls these tales, she remembers that they:

Spoke of mothers and blood. A mother who nurses her baby on one breast of milk and one breast of blood, and her child grows to be a powerful warrior. A young girl is cursed to never become a woman, and when her mother lies dying of old age, she cuts her wrist and washes her daughter in the blood, and the curse is undone. These stories had intrigued her with their strange mix of violence and love. (66)

Ani's aunt is the realization of the icon of the female teller the Grimms employed in order to create the illusion that their tales were told by real nurses to real children. As I elaborated in the first chapter of my Thesis Warner and Tatar both claim that the Brothers' Grimm along with Perrault initiated the practice that collection of fairy tales should be marketed for parents with children. Warner explains that in order to ensure that their collection would appear appropriate for nurseries the Brothers published *KHM* with the motherly figure of Dorothea Viehmann printed on the inside of the collection. Warner

continues that even though, a large amount of tales were first told by Dorothea Viehmann (among them “The Goose-Girl”) by the time the Grimms’ finished editing the tales the voice of the female narrator was submerged by male control (Warner 190-193).

In *The Goose Girl* the motherly figure from the Grimms’ imagined nursery materializes. However, the tales told by the figure do not appropriate normative gender roles, as the Grimms’ teller, but depict strong bond between mother and child. Hale’s text portrays the iconic female teller of the Grimms’ nursery stories telling tales of female power. Therefore, *The Goose Girl* realizes the Grimms’ female teller while subverting her function.

The novel also recalls the historical setting of storytelling by presenting a scene where Ani exchanges traditional nursery rhymes with the Bayern woman, who she stays with after she escaped from Selia in the forest. Ani stays with Gilsa and her son for a short period before she heads for the Bayern capital. During her stay she adjusts to working around the house. While they work together Gilsa begins to hum a tune that reminds Ani of the origin story that her aunt told her years ago,

Gilsa was finishing the sleeve of one last pullover [...] She hummed a tune, light and sleepy, a lullaby. It tugged at the lip of Ani's memory, and she stopped her packing and watched the singer.

“I know that song. Does it have words here? Do you say, ‘The tales that trees could tell, the stories wind would sing?’”

“Hear the tree a-listening, feel the fire whispering. See the wind a-telling me all the forest dreams.”

“What does it mean?” said Ani.

Gilsa's metal needles clicked together, a sound like a strange beast feeding.

“It talks about old tales, I guess. How in faraway places there are people who talk to things not people, but to the wind and trees and such. [...] And to animals, too, I gather. I've always wondered.” (97-8)

In this scene, *The Goose Girl* references the traditional setting of female storytelling. As I have discussed in the first chapter of my Thesis Rowe, Bottigheimer and Warner all argued that tale telling was closely associated with female spinning circles and textile

workers. Bottigheimer claims that this cultural practice was forgotten after the Grimms and Perrault edited the tales in their collection so that spinning became a disagreeable activity and the spinning wheel was transformed into a gloomy and unpleasant object (especially in “Sleeping Beauty” or “Rumpelstiltskin”) (“Tale Spinners” 149-50). Rowe explains that the only element that remains from this tradition today, are the phrases “weaving” or “spinning” a tale (“To Spin a Yarn” 301).

The episode of Ani and Gilsa exchanging nursery songs, while Gilsa is knitting revives the long forgotten tradition of female storytelling. Just as Warner implies, while discussing the relationship of textile workers and fairy tales, the monotonous work of handling textiles urges Ani and Gilsa to exchange creative cultural material.

Furthermore, this scene foreshadows, that while in Kildenree songs and tales told by Ani’s aunt were strictly restricted to the nursery as her mother forbade the aunt from telling them anywhere else in Bayern these stories are common knowledge. Moreover, considering that at this point of the narrative Ani is already actively using her gift of animal-speaking but not yet confident in her speech-gift her inquiry about the song is in part pursuit for acceptance. Gilsa’s familiarity with the song and her belief that the song’s lyrics have basis in reality reassures Ani in her exploration of animal-speaking.

Ani’s function as the storyteller among the animal-workers resuscitates another part in the historical evolution of female storytelling. After Ani settles into her position as an animal worker she starts to recount the stories she heard from her aunt. One evening when Ani starts to tell Enna the tale of the origin of speech-gifts Enna asks Ani to tell more tales to all the workers gathered in the hall, "She took a deep breath and fought to remember her aunt's words, but she could remember only images. The words were her own. She let them come" (162). Ani tells a story her aunt used to tell her about daughters, mothers and magic. It’s about the desire of a girl to break free from a hard working life. The girl succeeds in the

pursuit of her desire and she achieves her goal without external help. After this occasion, Ani tells a tale every night.

This scene invokes the events collectors like Perrault attended to listen to tales and meet with talented storytellers. They were called *veillées*. Warner explains that “*veillées*, or evening gatherings for gossip, news, and stories, were part of artisan as well as agricultural working life, in cities as well as the country. [...] These gatherings offered men and women an opportunity to talk—to preach—which was forbidden them in other situations”(20). Warner continues that even though storytelling was not solely a female pass-time in these gatherings a lot of women exchanged tales on these occasions.

These evenings in *The Goose Girl* invoke the “hearthside sessions” (21) Warner discusses. Hale’s text models how most fairy tales spread before the arrival of Perrault or Grimm. Placing a re-configured version of a Grimm fairy tale heroine as the central female teller of these gatherings provides a narrative solution to restore the voice of female tellers. Those voices that, according to Rowe, Warner or Bottigheimer have been muted by male collectors, like the Brothers Grimm.

Finally, I would like to comment on how *The Goose Girl* and the whole of the *Books of Bayern* series grants multiple opportunities for the heroine to write her own narrative. Throughout the four books every time Ani tells the story of how she became a goose-girl and the origin of her speech-gift she claim her narrative without the mediation of a male editor or narrator. In the following paragraph she is in her room looking in the mirror and wondering what her mother would say how her daughter’s fate altered from the path the queen envisioned for her,

The reflection was not unkind, though it appeared raw and untested in the bleached light. She thought now it was time to be tested, to make decisions and find her own roads, to stop falling where she was told to fall and to stand only when allowed to stand. [...]“I would break my mother's heart”[...] She was little like her mother, though that was all she had ever

longed to be. She lacked the gift of people-speaking, that power to convince and control that laced every word her mother uttered. [...] But had the queen ever told a nursery story to a room full of captivated listeners? Or handled fifty head of geese? Ani smiled at the thought, and then she surprised herself by feeling proud. *I've done that much what more can I do?* (166)

In this internal monologue Ani references one of the most famous lines from the Grimms' text. In the Grimms' text when the princess and the maid are travelling through the forest and the maid refuses to bring water to the thirsty princess the princess is left alone to gather water in a cup from the river by herself. As this role-reversal means great humiliation for the princess her mother's blood speaks to her from the handkerchief, "If thy mother knew her heart would break"(Grimm 432). Moreover, a Falada's head echoes a variation of this line, "If your tender mother knew,/Her heart would surely break in two"(Grimm 435). Both times the line signifies the level of degradation the princess suffers. Eventually, through silent suffering the princess regains the position that was chosen for her.

In Hale's text Ani changes the line from "If thy mother knew her heart would break," into "I would break my mother's heart." This alteration insinuates that while in the Grimms' tale the princess endured the fate that was cast upon her, here Ani chooses to "break her mother's heart" in order to choose a different fate than was prescribed for her. This interpretation is also supported by Ani's thought, "it was time to be tested, to make decisions and find her own roads, to stop falling where she was told to fall" (166).

The remainder of Ani's monologue testifies her eagerness to embrace the story she actively participates in. While, until this moment in the narrative she missed her mother's guidance and missed the ability of people-speaking here she rejoices in her own actions. Moreover, instead of experiencing the humiliation for tending to the geese and living

among animal-workers, as the Grimm heroine Ani feels triumphant and proud to entertain workers with stories and working as a goose-girl.

Ani's reinterpretation of the line and how it appears in the text signifies Ani's willingness to free herself from the narrative her mother prescribed for her. Moreover, if we view *The Goose Girl* as a fairy tale rewrite this paragraph mirrors how Hale's text rewrites the suffering passive heroine's narrative presented by the Grimms and positions the goose-girl as an active heroine assertively altering her own story.

In the second part of the analysis of *The Goose Girl* I focused on how female storytelling appears in the novel. Firstly, I found that the character of Ani's aunt is the realization of the icon of the motherly nurse figure employed by the Grimms and Perrault to ensure the appropriateness of their fairy tale collections for children. However, instead of authenticated a male control over a muted female narrative Ani's aunts tales communicate strong female narratives without the looming presence of patriarchal surveillance.

Furthermore, I proved that *The Goose Girl* revives forgotten elements from the history of the relationship between female tellers and fairy tales. Mainly, it recovers two settings where female tellers used to narrate their tales. One of them is the working environment of female textile workers and the other is the evening gathering of agricultural workers. In both cases Hale's text provides an interpretation of the female storytelling tradition, i.e. how female narratives were told without the mediation of a male narrator.

Finally, I analyzed a specific scene from *The Goose Girl*, where Ani decides to rewrite the script of the narrative that was imposed upon her. I argued that Ani's reinterpretation of the Grimm's text offers her the possibility to rewrite and tell her own tale without mediators. As a continuation of this observation I claimed that *The Goose Girl* as a Grimm fairy tale rewrite by providing a fairy tale heroine her own voice and right to create her own narrative subverts the passive and silent fairy tale heroine paradigm.

In the analytical chapter of my Thesis I have studied how Hale's reconfiguration of the heroine in the Brothers Grimm's "The Goose Girl" overthrows the passive and silent heroine archetype present in most Grimm narratives. In the first part I found that the novel's reinterpretation of the goose-girl's powers as Ani's gifts of animal-speaking and wind-speaking transform the passively suffering, silent goose-girl of the tale into an active and vocal heroine in *The Goose Girl*. In the second part I discovered that the reinvigoration of female storytelling tradition in *The Goose Girl* not only restores the voice of the female tellers muted by male collectors and editing but gives an opportunity to the heroine to rewrite and narrate her own story.

Conclusion

In the beginning of the Introduction I have used Bacchilega's quote to illustrate how deep-rooted society's connection is with fairy tale narratives. She implies that even though a person might not be aware of the impact these narrative have on Western culture nonetheless, they seem to have an important enough position in cultural correspondence to be employed as common reference points in mainstream media. As Bacchilega's observation centered on how powerful an influence fairy tale narratives have on channels of cultural correspondence it provided me an ideal starting point to my investigation of how a lesser known fairy tale narrative, "The Goose-Girl," is used as a reference point in Shannon Hale's young adult novel *The Goose Girl* in order to first establish then undermine assumptions of normative gender behavior.

In the first chapter of my Thesis, "Representation of Gender in Young Adult Literature and Fairy Tales" my intention was to provide a firm theoretical background on which I can rely when I present my analysis of Hale's text. First, as Shannon Hale's text is part of the young adult genre I briefly defined the frame of the genre. I found that since the period of life adolescent fiction targets is a liminal phase, where a person is in constant negotiation with the rules and expectations of society, one of the major themes of young adult literature is questioning those rules and expectations that one has to negotiate with in order to be accepted as an adult.

Then I have focused my attention to how expectations associated with gender are represented in adolescent fiction. Through a survey of various critical texts I presented that early young adult fiction have been employed as a device to educate teenagers about the social expectations attached to their gender. Young women were instructed to be passive, meek and inarticulate and wait for their male peers to help them find a solution to their problems. However, a few decades ago a new tendency appeared in young adult fiction.

This tendency started to deconstruct the accepted paradigm of female behavior and started to produce novels featuring female protagonist who, over the course of the novel, evolve into assertive, outspoken, and confident people aware of their agency.

Continuing this observation I have turned my attention to an almost identical, albeit earlier evolution in a scholarly discourse. I begin to discuss the findings of fairy tale criticism that played a crucial part in the production of those fairy tale retellings that purposefully questioned the traditional norms of female behavior presented in fairy tales.

Primarily, I presented a brief review of those critical texts of feminist fairy tale criticism that are either concerned with how fairy tales contribute to the construction of gender or deal with the ramifications of male editing of those fairy tale narratives that were originally told by female tellers. I found that, similarly to early young adult literature Western fairy tale canon glorify the figure of the silent and passive fairy tale heroine, who is unable and unwilling to rescue herself without eternal help. The dominance of this female figure in the most popular fairy tales, according to feminist fairy tale criticism, is due to the fact that throughout history female narratives and narrators were submerged by male dominance. For example, curiously, even though, a large amount of fairy tales were collected from female tellers by the Grimms the Grimms only used an idealized, domestic and maternal portrait of the teller to validate the appropriateness of their collections to be considered bed time story material while changing the narratives to confirm the accepted social rules attached to female behavior.

In the second chapter, I specifically focused on the Grimms' tale, "The Goose-Girl," and the Grimms' text's portrayal of the heroine. I presented two groups of critics in regard to this particular tale of the Grimms. The first group, consisting of Bottigheimer and Bell hooks, rejoices in the heroine's inherent power and her willingness to shield herself from unwanted male attention. Additionally, Tatar observes that fairy tales, such as "The Goose-

Girl” inspire children to learn to use words as devices to create change in their environment. In contrast, the second group, Lieberman and Pullman, claim that “The Goose-Girl’s” heroine is the epitome of docility and silent victim, who is unable to rescue herself without external help.

In the third chapter of my Thesis, I turned to the analysis Hale’s texts based on the survey of critical literature I presented in the previous chapters. There were two aspects of my interrogation of *The Goose Girl*. First, how does the development of the pretext’s heroine’s powers change the Grimms’ narrative and thus undermine accepted gender behavior inherent in Western fairy tale narratives? Secondly, how does *The Goose Girl’s* revival of the history of female storytelling tradition support the heroine’s intention of reclaiming her own narrative?

Through the detailed analysis of the text I found that Shannon Hale’s young adult adaptation of the Grimm’s tale of “The Goose-Girl” uses the Grimms’ narrative in order to first establish the expectations attached to fairy tale genre and how it conventionally represents female behavior in order to deconstruct them, by providing a heroine who is willing to explore her inherent powers and not only saves herself but her prince as well. Moreover, I suggested that *The Goose Girl’s* text’s different narrative strategies of invoking elements of a submerged history of female fairy tale telling helps the heroine to discover how she will be able to rewrite her own story thereby transcending the passive and silent figure of the fairy tale heroine.

Appendix



Fig. 1 This illustration appears before the title page of the printed version of Shannon Hale's *The Goose Girl*. Ani's voyage is marked with a dotted line from Great City Valley in Kildenree to Lake Meginhard where the final confrontation between Ungolad, Selia, Ani and Geric takes place. (Hale "Map of Kildenree and Bayern")

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