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## ONCE UPON A TIME THERE WAS A *PUSS* *IN BOOTS*: HANNA JANUSZEWSKA'S POLISH TRANSLATION AND ADAPTATION OF CHARLES PERRAULT'S FAIRY TALES

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**Abstract:** This article opens with an overview of the Polish reception of fairy tales, Perrault's in particular, since 1700. The introductory section investigates the long-established preference for adaptation rather than translation of this genre in Poland and provides the framework for an in-depth comparative analysis of the first Polish translation of *Mother Goose Tales* by Hanna Januszewska, published in 1961, as well as her adaptation of Perrault's tales ten years later. The examination focuses on two questions: first, the cultural distance between the original French text and Polish fairy-tales, which causes objective translation difficulties; second, the cultural, stylistic and linguistic shifts introduced by Januszewska in the process of transforming her earlier translation into a free adaptation of Perrault's work. These questions lead not only to comparing the originality or literary value of Januszewska's two proposals, but also to examining the reasons for the enormous popularity of the adapted version. The faithful translation, by all means a good text in itself, did not gain wide recognition and, if not exactly a failure, it was nevertheless an unsuccessful attempt to introduce Polish readers to the original spirit of *Mother Goose Tales*.

**Keywords:** translation, adaptation, fairy tale, Perrault, Januszewska

The suggestion that Charles Perrault and his fairy tales are unknown in Poland may at first seem absurd, since it would be rather difficult to imagine anyone who has not heard of Cinderella, Puss in Boots or Sleeping Beauty. Everyone knows that Charles Perrault wrote fairy tales which belong to the canon of children's literature. Colourful children's books with the French author's name printed in big letters on the cover may not

be as frequent as editions of fairy tales by the Brothers Grimm or Hans Christian Andersen, yet they are sufficiently noticeable in bookstores and libraries to guarantee Perrault's popularity. However, few Polish readers realise that the versions of his tales they read in childhood or bought for their own children usually have as little in common with their French original as Tim Burton's film adaptation of *Alice in Wonderland* has with its own original.

Literary rewritings, abbreviated versions and adaptations have, of course, a very long tradition and in children's literature they are often considered not only acceptable but also necessary. Fairy tales and fables as source texts are often objects of such free renditions, which also results from their connections with folklore and oral tradition. Even though – in theory – the fairy tale “functions as a highly objective written work, usually in the form of a book,” and its shape is “closed and unchanging” (Ługowska 1981: 33; trans. E.K.), in reality its text status is uncertain, since it is perceived as an adaptation or even “translation” into literary language of an earlier folklore tale, inherently subject to transformation. Such textual “unsteadiness” is partly due to authorial strategies. The Brothers Grimm emphasized that *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (*Children's and Household Tales*) were “collected” (*gesammelt*), not written by them; and although in the foreword to their first edition they declared, “We tried to present the fairy tales as faithfully as possible. No situation has been added or embellished or changed, because we were anxious not to add our own comparisons or memories to these tales, which are rich in themselves” (cf. Simonides 1989: 30; trans. E.K.), they actually corrected and retouched the gathered material, polished it stylistically and linguistically, combined various versions into one story and compounded them according to their own tastes. What is more, they modified subsequent editions (in their lifetime seven editions came out, the first in 1812 and the final in 1857): they removed and added texts, regrouped them, altered many plot elements and other details (suffice it to say that in the first version of *Snow White* the evil queen was not the protagonist's stepmother but her actual mother). For instance, the first English translation of *Kindermärchen* by Edgar Taylor was published in 1823, and so was based on the second, 1819, German edition, different from the 1812 version, but also from the final of 1857. Taylor's version, which introduced many adjustments itself, became highly popular and was frequently reissued; it also provided the basis for translations into other languages. Research

has indicated that, thanks to female storytellers of French descent, almost all of Charles Perrault's fairy tales found their way to the Grimm collection (cf. Blamires 2003).<sup>1</sup>

Textual manipulation employed by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm was and still is a rather common practice in literature for children: both authors and publishers resort to it. The reasons for it may vary. Sometimes they are external factors, for example, in her post-WWII Polish editions of *Cinderella* (*Kopciuszek*) Janina Porazińska modified the original religious elements, which were undesirable in socialist Poland. On other occasions modifications depended on the author's creative temperament: Hanna Januszewska, who is the subject of this analysis, edited and changed almost every subsequent edition of her translations, not always for the better (cf. Skrobiszewska 1987: 116–131).

One more factor undermines the textual status of fairy tales: the tendency to become “detached” from their author. Although fairy tales are created in a particular historical and literary context as a work of a given author, they do not belong to this author for long, and the more popular they become, the greater independence from their creator they gain. Who, apart from experts, would name without hesitation the authors of *The Swineherd*, *Donkeyskin*, or *Mother Hulda*? We could even argue that the loss of authorship and control over the fairy tale is an inevitable price to be paid for its success. The most popular tales circulate among readers in countless variations, and faithful translations constitute only a modest fraction of them; more common are free adaptations “adorned” with the name of the author whose tales they refer to or new versions. Dorota Simonides points out that among over fifty Polish translations of the fairy tales collected by the Brothers Grimm (published up to 1989) only two – by Zofia Kowerska (1896) and by Marceli Tarnowski and Ewa Bielicka (edited by Helena Kapeluś for a 1982 collection) – are genuine and complete translations from the German original (1989: 42–44).<sup>2</sup> The history of the Polish editions of Andersen's fairy tales has been equally complex (cf. Brzozowska 1970).

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<sup>1</sup> In the case of two fairy tales, *Bluebeard* and *Puss in Boots*, the similarities in their narrative and style were so obvious that both texts were already omitted from the German 1819 edition.

<sup>2</sup> In 2009 a new, complete and faithful Polish translation of *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* was published. The translator, Eliza Pieciul-Karminińska, discusses it herself in the present issue of *Przekładaniec*.

In Poland, among the classical authors of fairy tales Charles Perrault is arguably the one most strongly affected by this process, a real “author without the text” (cf. Soriano 1978), whose works have never managed to enter Polish literature as literary texts. It may seem incredible, but until the second half of the 20th century the Polish reception of Perrault was not so much complicated as practically nonexistent, and the fortunes of his fairy tales in the last half-century, since the 1961 publication of *Mother Goose Tales* (*Bajki babci Gąski*) translated by Hanna Januszewska, make for a truly exceptional case.

Perrault’s most famous work, *Histoires ou contes du temps passé avec des moralités*, known simply as *Contes de ma mère l’Oye*, was first published in 1697. The slim volume contained only eight fairy tales, therefore it could not compete with the wealth of collections assembled by the Brothers Grimm and Andersen, or even by Perrault’s contemporaries, authors of popular *contes des fées* such as Madame d’Aulnoy, François Fénelon and slightly younger Jeanne-Marie Leprince de Beaumont. Nevertheless, almost all the works from *Mother Goose Tales* have entered the basic international canon of fairy tales, while other French writers can boast no more than one work that is still remembered today, for instance, Madame d’Aulnoy’s *The Blue Bird* or Madame de Beaumont’s *Beauty and the Beast*. All the same, considering the fact that the best-known and most popular fairy tales by the Brothers Grimm and Andersen also amount to only a dozen or so texts,<sup>3</sup> the quantitative proportions between all these authors’ output become more even.

However, the astounding success of Perrault’s fairy tales came at a price. “No work has ever detached itself from its author more easily to lead an independent life after his death,” notices Jean-Pierre Collinet in his introduction to an annotated edition of *Contes* (Perrault 1981: 36; trans. E.K.). Besides losing their author, the fairy tales lost also their literary status, even in France: for instance, hardly anyone remembers that *Les Souhais ridicules* (*The Ridiculous Wishes*) and *Peau d’Âne* (*Donkeyskin*) were originally created as poems several years before the publication of *Histoires ou contes du temps passé avec des moralités*, and that the prose versions known today are later rewritings, mediocre in literary terms. This

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<sup>3</sup> The most popular post-WWII selection of the Grimms’ fairy tales in Poland was first issued in 1956 by Nasza Księgarnia (Our Bookstore – the oldest publishing house of children’s literature in Poland, established in 1921; translator’s note). Frequent reprints contain only twenty-two tales.

is especially true about *Donkeyskin*, which was first published as a prose text in 1781 and functions as such. In countries where the fairy tales were introduced via translation, the distortion obviously reached even further. What mattered was the diachronic factor, namely the time between the creation of the original and the publication of the first translation, and then the accumulation not only of rewritings and adaptations, but also of new works inspired by Perrault. In England the first edition of *Mother Goose Tales* appeared as early as in 1729, while in Italy, despite the fact that its first translation appeared in mid-18th century, it became popular only thanks to the 1875 translation by Carl Lorenzetti (Collodi), which is still reissued today. Earlier, the Italians associated *Cinderella* mainly with Gioacchino Rossini's opera, whose libretto is based on Perrault's fairy tale.

We can only speculate why in Poland Perrault remained practically unknown for over two hundred years. Undoubtedly, he reached elite circles of readers in the original French version; one piece of evidence is the fact that in 1775 Adam Kazimierz Czartoryski<sup>4</sup> recommended in his *Przepisy od Komisji Edukacji Narodowej pensjomistrzom i mistrzyniom dane* (Guidelines from the Commission of National Education for Housemasters and Housemistresses of All-Female Boarding Schools) that *Les Contes de fées* be read in French (cf. Sinko 1982: 36). In general, however, 18th-century literary culture did not favour "old wives' tales" and only a dozen or so were translated into Polish at that time. Several fairy tales by Fénelon appeared in *Monitor*<sup>5</sup> in 1765 and 1778, translated by Józef Minasowicz (who, fearing accusations of spreading superstition, supplied his own didactic introduction to the texts), and later in Franciszek Podoski's 1786 *Rozmowy wielkich królów i sławnych mężów* (Conversations of Great Kings and Eminent Men), in his own translation. In 1768 *Magazin des Enfants* (Magazine for Children) by Madame Leprince de Beaumont was published in Poland with several translations of her fairy tales, including the best-known *La Belle et la Bete* (*Beauty and the Beast*). In 1782 and 1784, as a separate booklet, came out two fairy tales by Paradis de Moncrif (cf. Sinko 1982: 42–44). But this is all. Perhaps some Polish versions of Perrault's tales appeared somewhere in Poland; however, most probably they were free rewritings that did not mention their authors' names.

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<sup>4</sup> Prince Czartoryski (1734–1823) was a Polish-Lithuanian nobleman, writer and statesman (translator's note).

<sup>5</sup> The first regularly issued Polish newspaper (1765–1785), inspired by the English *Spectator* (translator's note).

In the 19th century the situation was complicated by the fact that the Brothers Grimm presented their own versions of most of Perrault's fairy tales. The other factor was the publication of the first Polish *klechdas* (legends) and fairy tales such as *Klechdy, starożytne podania i powieści ludu polskiego i Rusi* (Legends, Ancient Myths and Stories of the Polish People and of Russia) by Kazimierz Wójcicki (1837), and especially the very popular four-volume *Bajarz polski* (The Polish Storyteller) by Antoni Gliński (1853), which included works that borrowed from Perrault's tales. Popularisation of the fairy tale was hindered by Polish educators' reluctance toward this genre, considered harmful and unhealthy for the imagination, and tolerated only as the folk legend steeped in national tradition.

When in the second half of the 19th century the Polish market for children's books was broadened and at last foreign fairy tales began to be published, they were mostly polonized and often distant from the source text.<sup>6</sup> Translation then meant at best free translation, more frequently adaptation, sometimes even appropriation, a complete stylistic and cultural distortion of the original. In editions of the Brothers Grimm and Andersen the authors' name on the cover was a sign of nominal ownership of the text and the existence of a source text. In contrast, stories derived from Perrault's fairy tales were customarily given no more than an annotation "from the original French," while Polish authors would rewrite them as they pleased, constrained only by their own talent (or its lack). A typical example here is *Trzy baśnie: Mądry kot, Księżniczka głogu, Kopciuszek* (Three Fairy Tales: Clever Cat, Briar Rose Princess,<sup>7</sup> Cinderella) published in 1878 by Gebethner and Wolff. The book's author, Władysław Ludwik Anczyc, wrote three absorbing tales, mixing motifs taken from various versions of the original fairy tales and decorating them liberally with his own additions. The chatty style brings to mind neither Perrault nor the Brothers Grimm: the fairy tales expand, offer new descriptions, dialogues, scenes and episodes – often comical. Anczyc's ideas are charming, for example in *Księżniczka głogu* the fairies invited by the king to his daughter's baptism appear at the

<sup>6</sup> For instance, in the preface to the 1859 edition of *Powiatki moralno-fantastyczne podług duńskiego H.C. Andersena* (Moral and Fantasy Tales after the Dane H.C. Andersen), the translator, Fryderyk Lewestam, explained: "By emulating these fantasy tales from the Danish original, by providing them with a purely Polish background, by both substituting the records of Danish history with similar native accounts and replacing fabulous Scandinavian legends with the fantasy world of Slavic culture (...) I believe I have rendered a dependable service" (qtd in Dunin 1991: 72; trans. E.K.).

<sup>7</sup> This was the Polish title of *Sleeping Beauty* in this collection.

castle unexpectedly at dawn, causing a great stir when *wszyscy zaspani i na wpół ubrani* (everyone half-asleep and half-dressed) rush to the courtyard to welcome them; in *Mądry kot*, the eponymous animal having drunk too much wine, recklessly promises the king that he will bring him partridges with red beaks and then has to accept help of an obliging mouse to fulfil the task. As a result, the texts depart from the original so much that it is impossible to call them adaptations: they are new versions of the traditional fairy tale plots, albeit not devoid of literary merit. Especially *Księżniczka głogu* gained popularity and soon was regularly included in collections of “Polish fairy tales”; in fact, it is still known among Polish readers as a “Polish” fairy tale written by Anczyc.

In the following decades more and more similar publications would emerge, even though often – especially when it comes to such fairy tales as *Sleeping Beauty* and *Little Red Riding Hood* – it is difficult to say whether they are adaptations of works by the Brothers Grimm or by Perrault. *Cinderella* is easier to judge thanks to characteristic differences in the narrative: although initially the Grimms’ version was more popular, it became superseded by Perrault’s version with the fairy-godmother and the pumpkin turned into a carriage. Polish adaptors usually followed Anczyc’s version (but with much less talent): they polonised and domesticated the fairy tale’s atmosphere, gave the characters Polish-sounding names (*Stach*, *Jaś*, *Kasia*, *Marysia*, etc.), emphasized the folkloric aura and introduced humorous elements. It is also worth mentioning that the texts usually appeared as single fairy tale editions or were included in larger collections such as *Świat baśni* (The World of Fairy Tales; 1889) and *Powieści i baśnie z różnych autorów* (Stories and Tales by Various Authors; 1890; cf. Waksmund 2000: 208). No Polish publisher came up with the idea of publishing *Mother Goose Tales* as a separate book for children; nor did they provide Perrault’s name in the single fairy tale editions. Accordingly, not all of Perrault’s stories were widely read. In fact, only three tales selected by Anczyc gained popularity: *Sleeping Beauty*, *Puss in Boots* and *Cinderella*. *Little Red Riding Hood* was associated with the Brothers Grimm; *Bluebeard* (*La barbe blue*, *Sinobrody*) appeared in a few publications but did not catch on, similarly to *Little Thumbling* or *Hop-o’-My-Thumb* (*Le Petit Pucet*, *Paluszek* or *Tomcio Paluch*) and *Donkeyskin* (*Ośła skórka*), perhaps because it was too similar to the Polish version of *Cinderella* titled *Dąb – Barani kozuszek* (The Oak or Sheepskin), popularised by Wójcicki. Other tales, such as *Diamonds and Toads* (*Les fées*, *Wróżki*), *Riquet with the Tuft* (*Riquet à la huppe*, *Frant*

z czubkiem) and *The Ridiculous Wishes* (*Śmiechu warte życzenia*), were practically unknown.

This situation did not change significantly in the interwar period, when free adaptations and rewritings of the most popular fairy tales still prevailed, departing from the originals to such an extent that it is impossible to identify their source as the works by the Brothers Grimm or by Perrault. Only in the case of *Cinderella* was Perrault's version clearly the more influential one: it became the basis for the adaptation by Janina Porazińska (1929) of the highest literary value. Other works, for instance by Antoni Gawiński, the author of *Bajki staroświeckie* (Old-fashioned Tales; 1921), and by Jan Marcin (Szancer) are based on it. In addition, *Kopciuszek* included in pre-WWII editions of the Grimms' fairy tales translated by Marcei Tarnowski is actually a free adaptation of Perrault's *Cendrillon*.<sup>8</sup>

The period immediately after WWII was not favourable to new translations of the French writer's fairy tales, and in the era of triumphant socialist realism hardly anyone was attracted to undeniably "backward" Perrault. In 1956 Nasza Księgarnia issued the first post-war collection of twenty-two fairy tales by the Brothers Grimm, which gained enormous popularity – regularly reprinted (ten editions till 1988) in one hundred thousand copies, it remained for a long time the most widely read collection of classical fairy tales on the Polish book market. When five years later the publishing house Czytelnik laudably undertook to publish the first Polish translation of Charles Perrault's fairy tales, the project was more modest: the print run was very low for that period and amounted to only twenty thousand copies (today they are very rare antiquarian items). The translator was Hanna Januszewska, a well-known author of children's books. The choice of the translator, as well as the graphic design and layout suggested very clearly that the book was addressed to the child reader, with all the implications of this fact. Admittedly, the title page displays the trust-inducing inscription "Charles Perrault, *Bajki babci Gąski. 1697*, przełożyła Hanna Januszewska" (Charles Perrault, *Mother Goose Tales. 1697*, translated by Hanna Januszewska), but the fact that source language is not mentioned at all is a little worrying, as is the imprecise information that the original title was *Contes de ma mère l'Oye*. A short introduction titled *Pan Charles Perrault*

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<sup>8</sup> The first post-WWII collection of fairy tales by the Brothers Grimm, published in 1956, contains a faithful translation of the German version of *Cinderella*: although Marcei Tarnowski is presented as the author of this translation, it has nothing in common with the version published in earlier editions up till 1944.



(Mr Charles Perrault), introducing the author to the young reader, presents an inaccurate portrait of an old man who *przed chwilą wyszedł z drukarni i niesie cienką książeczkę* (has just left the printing-house and is carrying a slim volume) with the inscription *Bajki Babci Gąski. Napisał Charles Perrault D'Armancourt. Paryż 1697* (*Mother Goose Tales. Written by Charles Perrault D'Armancourt. Paris 1697*). Januszewska obviously gave herself much poetic license, since the first edition of *Histoires ou contes du temps passé avec des moralités* was signed with the name P. Darmancourt, which suggested that the book's author was the writer's son, Pierre. However, this distortion of facts may be justified as a simplification meant to help the young reader avoid unnecessary confusion. Nonetheless, just a glance at the table of contents dispels our hope about the philological reliability of the Polish translation, since it lists as many as eleven fairy tales, whereas the 1697 edition included only eight. The Polish collection includes *The Ridiculous Wishes* and *Donkeyskin*, which in reality appeared earlier than *Mother Goose Tales* (the former in 1693, the latter in 1694), and were only added to the French collection in the 18th century, many years after Perrault's death. In the original version they were written as poems, while in the Polish edition *Donkeyskin* appears as prose, therefore it actually is a translation of an anonymous 1781 rewriting. Finally, *Sprytka księżniczka, czyli Przygody Filutki* (*The Discreet Princess; or, the Adventures of Finetta*), placed in the Polish collection between *Sleeping Beauty* and *Puss in Boots*,<sup>9</sup> is in fact an intruder, since it is based on *L'Adroite Princesse* by Madame L'Héritier de Villandon, a fairy tale that has been erroneously ascribed to Perrault since the 18th century and subsequently included in collections of his works.

Despite all these transgressions, the Polish versions of the fairy tales are actual translations from original French works, rather than their adaptations. Januszewska preserved the rhymed morals, frequently omitted even in contemporary French editions; she resisted the temptation to censor Perrault and did not cut or soften such drastic details as the evil queen's readiness to devour her own grandchildren (*Sleeping Beauty*), the werewolf's slitting of his seven daughters' throats by mistake (*Little Thumbling*), and a father's incestuous love for his daughter (*Donkeyskin*). Careful comparison of the translation and the original indicates also that the translation

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<sup>9</sup> What is more, the order of the fairy tales in the Polish edition differs from that in the French original, which is another example of the lack of concern for accuracy, undoubtedly because the book targeted the child reader.

contains very few errors due to the misunderstanding of the source text, while the few small omissions that do occur may have been present already in the French edition that the translator used as the basis for her work.

Is this enough to declare Januszewska's attempt a good translation? This is a delicate issue. In discussions of fairy tales, their meanings and qualities, the question of their status as literary works and their artistic value is hardly ever raised and, consequently, in assessing their translations the most important concern, in fact often the only concern, is fidelity or even literalness of a given translation, like establishing what exactly Little Red Riding Hood was carrying for her grandma in her basket, or what exactly Cinderella's slippers were made of.<sup>10</sup> Interestingly, also Hanna Januszewska did not resist the temptation to add a translator's endnote closing the fairy tale about Cinderella, where she explains:

Jak w bajce przysłało, do pantofelków Kopciuszka wkradł się chochlik, który pomylił szczegóły jej balowego stroju! Gdy w następnym (po 1697 roku) wydaniu składano tę uroczą książkę – w drukarni zamazały się czcionki. Pan Perrault napisał, że Kopciuszek miał *pantoufles de vair* (*vair* – popielica) – lecz złożono *pantoufles de verre* (*verre* – szkło). (...) W tłumaczeniu oparto się na pierwszym wydaniu – Kopciuszek tańczy w pantofelkach z popieliczki, jak w 1697 roku (Perrault 1961: 27).

As befits a fairy tale, a little pixie slipped into Cinderella's slippers and mixed up the details of her ball attire! When the next (after 1697) edition of this charming book was being set – the letters were blurred in the printing-house. Mr Perrault wrote that Cinderella wore *pantoufles de vair* (*vair* – fat dormouse) – but instead *pantoufles de verre* (*verre* – glass) appeared. (...) This translation is based on the first edition – Cinderella dances in slippers made of dormouse skin, as in 1697 (trans. E.K.).

This endnote deserves attention for several reasons. Firstly, it is a kind of mystification: it misleadingly (again, as it has been mentioned) convinces readers that they are dealing with a reliable rendition of Perrault's work. Secondly, it falsely states that the translation is based on the first French edition of the text. Thirdly, the translator is wrong: Perrault did mean glass slippers, and not dormouse leather slippers (cf. Bochnak 1999: 221). And finally, the endnote reflects the established way of thinking about fairy tale translation in terms of semantic and lexical fidelity to the original.

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<sup>10</sup> Anna Bochnak (1999) writes about amusing problems with determining whether Cinderella wore slippers made of glass (*verre*) or leather (*vair*).

The point is that Perrault's fairy tale collection is also an accomplished literary work. Admittedly, in many tales the author used motifs that existed in folk and literary tradition; however, he used them, as we learn from Marc Soriano, one of the few serious researchers of Perrault's work, by no means slavishly; rather, he followed his own literary vision (cf. Soriano 1977). Although research has indicated that Perrault may have drawn his inspiration from the collections *Le piacevoli notti* by Gian Francesco Straparola and *Lo cunto de li cunti* by Giambattista Basile (cf. Bottigheimer 2009), a comparison of his fairy tales with the texts by the Italian writers – as well as with other French authors of Perrault's time – allows us to fully appreciate the artistry of the author of *Mother Goose Tales*. Granted, earlier versions of “didactic” tales had been known, but it was only Perrault who clothed his character in the red hooded cape. We owe him also the brilliant idea of a clever cat wearing boots. Elegant style, refined simplicity, discreet irony – all these features derive from an artistic vision and a long process of honing the chosen form of expression.<sup>11</sup> At the same time, these works are firmly embedded in the socio-cultural context of their epoch; they reflect its reality and mentality. Everywhere we look we can find references to details and customs typical of the time and place of their origin: with her inheritance Bluebeard's widow buys captain ranks for her brothers, awoken Sleeping Beauty is wearing a now unfashionable dress “buttoned up to the collar,” the miller's sons in *Puss in Boots* do not want the judge and the notary to be present at the partition of property because their fees are too high. Descriptions of clothes, furniture, tableware, the food on the table – all these details are concrete and precisely mirror the reality of 17th-century France. Even more important is the set of concepts appearing in the fairy tales and crucial for the milieu and cultural climate of Perrault's times, for instance *gentil-homme*, *esprit*, *honnêteté*, *humeur*, *grâce*, *politesse*, *galanterie*, *société*,<sup>12</sup> which, despite common expectations, do not always have equivalents in other languages or the equivalents are misleading. For example, the word *honnêteté* is not equivalent to Polish *uczciwość* (honesty), since in the origi-

<sup>11</sup> Marc Soriano carried out a detailed analysis of the changes in the versions of Perrault's five fairy tales written in prose (*Sleeping Beauty*, *Puss in Boots*, *Diamonds and Toads*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Bluebeard*) that appeared in two editions: the 1695 manuscript and their final version from 1697. He indicated a series of modifications and stylistic corrections which testify to very careful work on the text intended to live up to the author's aesthetic taste.

<sup>12</sup> Interesting comments on the semantic complexity of these terms and the problems with their translation into other languages (in this case Italian) can be found in the monograph *La civiltà della conversazione* (Craveri 2001).

nal context it refers both to moral and aesthetic values: Richelet's dictionary (1680) defines *honnêteté* as *civilité, manière d'agir polie, civile et pleine d'honneur, procède honnête et qui marque de la bonté* (civility, acting politely, civilly and honourably, behaving honestly and kindly) (cf. Perrault 1981: 334). Likewise, the semantically complex term *politesse* cannot be simply brought down to Polish *grzeczność* (politeness).

Undertaking a translation of Perrault's fairy tales, Januszewska faced a difficult task of introducing culturally, historically and stylistically distant texts in such a way that they are comprehensible to the young reader and they do not depart from the spirit of the original. Undoubtedly, her own creative experience, interest in the past and love for stylisation were likely to assist her. "I am a great enthusiast of historical themes in the strictest sense in children's literature, as well as of themes based on folklore, fairy tales and legends," she said in an interview (qtd in Skrobiszewska 1987: 137; trans. E.K.). Episodes from Poland's history appeared already in Januszewska's pre-WWII poems for children,<sup>13</sup> and in 1958, three years before the publication of her translation of Perrault, her *Rękopis pani Fabulickiej* (Ms Fabulicka's Manuscript) appeared, a historical and fantasy novel set mainly in the times of Sigismund III Vasa.<sup>14</sup> This work provided the author with an opportunity to practice archaisation strategies and must have helped her prepare for the later translation of Perrault. Notwithstanding, Januszewska could rely only on her own linguistic intuition, having no Polish stylistic models to follow. She also had to tackle the problem that is faced by all Polish translators of works from distant historical epochs: 17th-century Polish is not just an archaic variety of the contemporary Polish language, but a variety that is very marked and homely, strongly associated with the atmosphere of the manors of the Polish landed gentry nobility's and the panache of the Polish Sarmatians captured in the memoirs of Jan Chryzostom Pasek.<sup>15</sup> Although the translator's use of archaisation is rather sparse (also for the sake of the child reader), the strategy very clearly influenced her style.

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<sup>13</sup> *Ele-mele dudki* (Eeny, meeny, miny, moe) published in 1932, her first volume of poetry for children, contained such works as *O trzech córkach szlachcianceczkach i Tatarach* (On Three Nobleman's Daughters and the Tatars) and *O ptaszkach pana Szambelana i o torcie pani Starościny* (On Mr Chamberlain's Birds and the Starost's Wife's Cake).

<sup>14</sup> King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania who ruled over the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth from 1587 to 1632 (translator's note).

<sup>15</sup> Pasek (ca. 1636–1701) was a Polish nobleman and writer, best known for his memoirs (*Pamiętniki*), a valuable historical source on everyday life of nobility in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (translator's note).

Let us now analyse a few passages in order to see how the problems signalled above affected the Polish translation. This is the original opening of a less known fairy tale, *Diamonds and Toads*:

Il était une fois une veuve qui avait deux filles : l'aînée lui ressemblait si fort d'humeur et de visage, que, qui la voyait, voyait la mère. Elles étaient toutes deux si désagréables et si orgueilleuses, qu'on ne pouvait vivre avec elles. La cadette, qui était le vrai portrait de son père pour la douceur et l'honnêteté, était avec cela une des plus belles filles qu'on eût su voir. Comme on aime naturellement son semblable, cette mère était folle de sa fille aînée, et, en même temps avait une aversion effroyable pour la cadette. Elle la faisait manger à la cuisine et travailler sans cesse (Perrault 1981: 165).<sup>16</sup>

Januszewska translated it thus:

Była sobie raz pewna wdowa. Miała ona dwie córki. Starsza – była to wykapaną matką, zarówno z twarzy, jak i z usposobienia. Jedna i druga były tak nieuprzejme, tak zawsze odęte, że nie sposób było z nimi wytrzymać.

Młodsza córka, istny obraz ojca – była miła i uprzejma, a ponadto – rzadkiej piękności dziewczyna.

Że w ludziach podoba nam się najbardziej to, co nas samych przypomina, matka do głupoty kochała starszą córkę, niezwyčajny wstręt zaś czuła do młodszej. Kazała jej jadać w kuchni i pracować bez ustanku (Perrault 1961: 76).

Once upon a time there was a widow. She had two daughters. The elder – the mother's spitting image, her face as well as her disposition. Both of them were so impolite, always in such a huff that one could not stand them.

The younger daughter, the very image of her father, was kind and polite, but also an exceptionally beautiful girl.

Since we appreciate in others that which we recognise in ourselves, the mother loved the elder daughter madly, while she felt an uncommon repulsion towards the younger. She ordered her to eat in the kitchen and work ceaselessly (trans. from the Polish E.K.).

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<sup>16</sup> Literal French-English translation: Once upon a time there was a widow who had two daughters: the elder resembled her in character and looks, and it was as if whoever saw her saw the mother. They were both so unpleasant to deal with and so haughty that it was impossible to live with them. The younger daughter, who was a true picture of her father due to her sweetness and righteousness, was also one of the most beautiful maidens what were ever seen. As one naturally loves those who resemble them, the mother loved the elder daughter madly, but felt insuperable repulsion towards the younger. She made her eat in the kitchen and work ceaselessly (trans. E.K.).

The Polish text, read without the reference to the original, sounds correct and is stylistically consistent; its discreet archaisation does not disrupt its readability. However, even the most cursory glance at the original reveals a considerable change in stylistic register which took place in the translation of the seemingly easy fragment. What is above all striking is the blurring of the key terms in the source text: *douceur* and *l'honnêteté*, the younger daughter's most significant traits, which in the Polish translation boil down to a banal piece of information that the girl was *mila i uprzejma* (kind and polite), while we learn about the mother and the elder daughter that they were *nieuprzejme* (impolite) and *odęte* (in a huff), which is far from the original depiction of the characters, who were *orgueilleuses* (proud, haughty) and *desagréables* (disagreeable, unpleasant in their demeanour). The whole tale is built upon the contrast between the characters of the two sisters, put to a test by a fairy who first appears to them as a poor old woman and asks the younger girl for some water because she wants to test her *honnêteté*, and then changes into a distinguished lady and turns to the older girl with the same request to prove her *malhonnêteté*. Also the rewards and forms of punishment that the fairy devises for the sisters match the nature of *honnêteté/malhonnêteté*: pearls and diamonds begin to pour out of the younger sister's mouth, while snakes and toads emerge from the mouth of the elder one. The praise of *honnêteté*, expressed in the second, "serious," moral of the tale (the first one, stressing the power of "glib words," is definitely ironic), constitutes the conclusion of the whole story. In the translation this well-calibrated structure disappears: the fairy first turns into a peasant woman to *przekonać się o uprzejmości dziewczyny* (find out about the girl's politeness) and the second time she assumes *postać i strój księżniczki* (the form and attire of a princess) also *aby przekonać się o uprzejmości dziewczyny* (to find out about the girl's politeness), which makes the fairy appear as a rather naïve character – in the original she intends to test the elder sister's *malhonnêteté*.

Together with the semantic imprecision goes the simplification of syntax and stylistic structures, for instance the first sentence of the fairy tale is divided in Januszewska's translation in as many as three simple sentences. Similarly, parallel structures typical of Perrault's style as well as repetitions and emphatic expressions (e.g. *une des plus belles filles qu'on eût su voir*) vanish in the Polish version. The resultant colloquialisation is particularly striking in dialogues. In the original the bad daughter says to the fairy asking for water:

Est-ce que je suis ici venue, – lui dit cette brutale orgueilleuse, – pour vous donner à boire? Justement j'ai apporté un flacon d'argent tout exprès pour donner à boire à Madame! J'en suis d'avis: buvez à même si vous voulez (Perrault 1981: 166).<sup>17</sup>

The girl speaks impolitely, but ironically rather than crudely: she employs no colloquial phrases and uses the correct form of courteous address *vous*; she also begins with a rhetorical question to which she provides a malicious answer. Two crucial words here are *brutale*<sup>18</sup> and *orgueilleuse*, describing vices which are antithetical to the younger daughter's virtues.

This is the Polish equivalent:

– Albom tu przyszła po to! – powiada ta prostacko. – Akurat! Nie na to wzięłam z sobą tę srebrną flaszkę, żeby pani z niej piła! Pij jejmość<sup>19</sup> wprost ze źródła, jeśli ci sucho w gębie! (Perrault 1961: 78)

“As if that's what I came here for!”<sup>20</sup> she replies crudely. “You wish! This silver flask that I brought here is not for you to drink from! You, my lady, drink from the spring, if your mug's dry! (trans. E.K.).

Here the elder daughter's words are not only impolite but also truly crude, which is additionally stressed by the shift to the informal and familiar form of address *ty*<sup>21</sup> in the last sentence and the use of the blunt expression *jeśli ci sucho w gębie* (if your mug's dry). Such a way of speaking, bringing to mind a peasant wench rather than a young lady from a respected family, considerably lowers the social status of the character as well as changes the context in which the story is set.

The above quotations illustrate modifications in style and tone of the Polish translation. One should probably add here that *Diamonds and Toads*

<sup>17</sup> Literal French-English translation: – Is this what I came here for – answered the rude and haughty girl – to give you something to drink? Naturally, I took the silver flask only to let *Madame* drink from it! My view is this: if you are thirsty, drink from the spring! (trans. E.K.).

<sup>18</sup> *Brutale* is as complex as *honnête*: Richelet's dictionary (1680) defines it as *ros-tre, sotté, grossière, rude et peu civile: una franche brutale* (boorish, stupid, rude, coarse, impolite: coarse honesty) (cf. Perrault 1981: 334).

<sup>19</sup> “Jejmość” is an archaic polite form of address to a Polish noblewoman (translator's note).

<sup>20</sup> The original grammatical form is not as neutral as this translation, which is literal only in terms of content (translator's note).

<sup>21</sup> Polish *ty* meaning “you” is equivalent to the French pronoun *tu* rather than *vous*, and so is disrespectful in this context (translator's note).

is one of the easiest texts in Perrault's oeuvre. In more elaborate texts, those more deeply rooted in 17th-century French culture, such lowering of the stylistic register and inconsistency in the lexical choices in the Polish version disrupt the artistic cohesion of the text and often distort its message. This is particularly visible in *Cinderella*, perhaps the most "courtly" or "Versailles-like" of Perrault's tales. Admittedly, the translator preserved the information that Cinderella's father was a nobleman (*szlachcic*);<sup>22</sup> however, she added many elements transferring the fairy tale to a poorer rural context typical of Polish fairy tales: the heroine *zamiata izby* (sweeps chambers), *śpi na przygórku, na wiązce słomy* (sleeps in a little room in the attic on a bundle of straw), sits on an ash-pan when she has finished her *roboty* (chores). Again, she speaks to her fairy-godmother more like a buxom wench than a refined young lady: *Com rada, tom rada! Ale jakże będą tańczyć w tej sukieneczynie?* (Perrault 1961: 22; How truly glad I am!<sup>23</sup> But how will I dance in this rag dress?), and on her way to the ball, the lizards accompanying her are turned into *hajduczki* (18th century Polish footmen in Hungarian dress) wearing *kabaty* (short caftans), rather than liveried butlers as in the original. As a result, *Kopciuszek – jejmościanka*,<sup>24</sup> as Januszewska calls her – inevitably begins to resemble a Polish noblewoman from a country manor, which in turn clashes with the elements of courtly life in 17th-century France preserved in the translation.

And it is this duality or stylistic indecisiveness that is probably the weakest point of Januszewska's 1961 translation. The translator on the one hand tried to faithfully render the original content, but on the other hand tried to adjust it to the habits and expectations of the Polish reader, especially the Polish child reader. Consequently, neither of these goals was fulfilled satisfactorily. Stylistically, the translation is too distant from the source text to give justice to its literary quality; on the other hand, it contains numerous elements too alien to the Polish fairy tale tradition to be appreciated by the Polish reader. Thus, it comes as no surprise that, unlike the fairy tale collection of the Brothers Grimm, *Bajki babci Gąski* failed to be a publishing success. The book received only two scant reviews – tell-

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<sup>22</sup> It is yet another matter that Polish *szlachcic* and French *gentilhomme* only seem to be synonymous, but they refer us to very different cultural realities.

<sup>23</sup> Again, this English version of archaic Polish is much more neutral-sounding than the original (translator's note).

<sup>24</sup> "Jejmościanka," a variant of "jejmość," refers to a young Polish noblewoman (translator's note).



ingly, one of them bore the title *Zapomniany bajkopisarz* (The Forgotten Fabulist) and was not reprinted until the 1990s.

The failure of the Polish translation of *Mother Goose Tales* did not end Hanna Januszewska's engagement with Charles Perrault's work, however. The translator clearly drew conclusions from her first attempt and in 1968 Nasza Księgarnia published her adaptations of two of Perrault's fairy tales, *Cinderella* and *Puss in Boots*, as two separate books. Encouraged by their good reception, she produced a volume entitled: Charles Perrault, *Bajki*, opracowała Hanna Januszewska (Charles Perrault, Fairy Tales, adapted by Hanna Januszewska), issued the same publishing house in 1971. Similarly to the collection published ten years earlier, this book contained the information (moved from the title page to its reverse): *Tytuł oryginału* Contes de ma mère l'Oye. *Data pierwszego wydania* 1697 (Original title: *Contes de ma mère l'Oye*. First published in 1967), and the introduction *Słowo o Panu Charles Perrault* (A Word about Mr Charles Perrault),<sup>25</sup> which is a slightly altered version of the 1961 introduction. Also the fairy tales themselves were not written from scratch: they reproduce whole passages from the previous translation. However, the tone and character of these two volumes are completely different. The 1971 collection contains only eight tales: *The Discreet Princess*, as well as *The Ridiculous Wishes* and *Bluebeard* (the least known and least liked of Perrault's tales in Poland) disappeared.

Changes introduced by Januszewska in her adaptation process can be divided into two categories: retouching of the plot and development of the narrative as well as shifts in stylistic register. The most radical transformation took place in *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Sleeping Beauty* and *Little Thumbling*; however, the content was modified in all the tales included in the collection. In *Donkeyskin* it is no longer the protagonist's father, but her stepfather that falls in love with her; in *Diamonds and Toads* the main character is ill-treated by her stepmother, not by her mother; also information about her bad elder sister's miserable death deep in the woods is omitted. In *Cinderella* the eponymous character does not go as far in her magnanimity as to look for husbands for her evil sisters; in *Riquet with the Tuft* the ugly but intelligent younger princess finds herself a husband and is no longer doomed, after her sister grows smarter, to remain a forgotten frump. Even in *Puss in Boots*, the relatively most faithful adaptation of the

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<sup>25</sup> The author's first name is not declined, against the rules of Polish grammar; consequently, it sounds unnatural (translator's note).

original fairy tale, the information that the main character initially intended to eat his cat and sell his skin is nowhere to be found.

All these corrections are quite moderate and do not considerably affect the form of the text as a whole. But this cannot be said about the three remaining tales. *Little Red Riding Hood* gained a new character, namely the amiable Kapitan Ruszt (Captain Grill), and the epilogue offers two alternative endings of the fairy tale: *Wielki Chaps* (The Great Snatch) or Captain Ruszt's, where he cuts the wolf's stomach open with his sword and saves grandma and Little Red Riding Hood. In *Sleeping Beauty* the second part of the tale is gone, except the werewolf mother-in-law who intends to devour the princess and her children; in accordance with the convention that had become established thanks to previous adaptations, the fairy tale ends with the princess's awakening and wedding. *Little Thumbling* changed completely: the hero and his brothers are no longer abandoned by their parents but simply lose their way in the woods; also the macabre episode with the werewolf mistakenly slitting the throats of his seven daughters disappears, and Little Thumbling does not use deception to convince the werewolf's wife to give away all her wealth, which in the original version was rather ungrateful of him, considering the kindness she showed to the protagonist and his brothers.

The distinctness of this version of Perrault's fairy tales in comparison with the earlier translation, however, results less from the interference into their plots than from a completely new narrative style. Januszewska expanded the plots by adding new dialogues and descriptions; she replaced irony with good-natured humour, removed rhymed morals and substituted them with cheerful poems weaved into the text, and substituted elements alien to Polish cultural tradition with elements close to the Polish child reader – perhaps not in terms of their own experience but rather in terms of the tradition preserved in Polish fairy tales. But above all she gave the tales a chattier, more intimate tone, turning the narrator into a friendly adult telling a child an absorbing story.

Let us consider the new opening of *Diamonds and Toads*:

Była sobie raz pewna wdowa. Miała córkę i pasierbicę. Jejmość była mocno nieuprzejma, odęta i pyskata, a jej córka Franusia całkiem wdała się w matkę. Pasierbica w niczym nie przypominała córki wdowy: nigdy nie była nieuprzejma, zawsze uśmiechnięta, dla każdego zawsze miała miłe słówko. Wszyscy w okolicy lubili ją szczerze i uśmiechali się na widok jej wdzięcznej postaci i pięknej twarzyczki.

Wdowa kochała jednak tylko swoją córkę, a pasierbicy nie lubiła i obarczała ją najcięższymi robotami.

Once upon a time there was a widow. She had a daughter and a stepdaughter. The woman was very impolite, huffy and pert, and her daughter Franny really took after her mother. The stepdaughter was nothing like the widow's daughter: she was never impolite, she always had a smile on her face and a kind word for everyone. Everybody in the neighbourhood liked her and smiled at her charming frame and beautiful face.

But the widow loved only her daughter, and disliked the stepdaughter and burdened her with the hardest chores (trans. E.K.).

The first sentence is identical to the one in the 1961 translation, but otherwise the change is striking: the style, already simplified in the previous version, has lost the elegance of the syntactic structures and rhetorical figures so typical of Perrault's prose. The content seems roughly the same; however, the similarity is apparent. The substitution of daughter with stepdaughter changes the text's meaning: there is nothing unusual in the fact that a biological daughter takes after her mother, while the stepmother's ill-treatment of a stepdaughter is one of the most clichéd fairy tale motifs,<sup>26</sup> which does not require any additional explanation. As a result, the disturbing idea that *naturalną kolejną rzeczy kocha się podobnych sobie* (naturally, we love those who resemble us) is replaced by a very rational and predictable conflict. Also the description of the main characters is more familiar: the widow becomes *pyskata jejmość* (a pert woman), the stepdaughter has *wdzięczna postać* (a charming frame) and *piękna twarzyczka* (a beautiful face), she always smiles and is polite, and liked by everyone *w okolicy* (in the neighbourhood). Finally, the original passage where to oppress the younger daughter the mother made her eat in the kitchen (which in the French context meant an obvious social degradation), in the translation is vaguely summed up by means of the information that the stepdaughter was burdened with *najcięższe roboty* (the hardest chores). Such semantic shifts, regarded separately, seem insignificant, but together they add up to a familiar image of Polish rural culture. Its elements, as mentioned before, appear also in the 1961 translation; however, in the new adaptation they

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<sup>26</sup> Indeed, in the first, 1695 version of the fairy tale, Perrault also used the traditional juxtaposition of a "bad" daughter and a "good" stepdaughter (which is almost identical with the starting point of *Cinderella*); however, he later gave it up in favour of a more original solution.

are emphasized and brought to the fore, while the omission of references to French courtly culture has given the story cohesion and has ushered it into the recognisable conventions of traditional Polish fairy tales for children.

Januszewska uses these strategies consistently throughout the collection. Cinderella is a *dziewuszka dobra i pracowita* (a good and hardworking lass), the fairy-godmother lives *w domku, obok gospodarstwa ojca* (in a cottage, next to the father's farm), Donkeyskin may *rozpuścić się jak dziadowski bicz* (become spoilt "like a beggarly whip," a Polish idiom), but eventually grows up to become a person who is *roztropna, zacna i rozumna* (prudent, kind-hearted and sensible) as well as *gospodarna* (thrifty). In *Riquet with the Tuft* cooks fry *kotlety* (pork chops) for a wedding reception; a young miller in *Puss in Boots gospodarzy dzielnie, rzetelnie i sprawiedliwie dobrami po czarodzieju* (resourcefully, fairly and justly husbands the goods left by the wizard), while the king in the same fairy tale feels like having a hare *z buraczkami* (with beetroot). In fairy tales where the court is part of the setting and so cannot be completely eliminated, the distant world of the story is reduced due to the introduction of humorous or trivial elements into the descriptions: for example, in *Cinderella* at the ball *skrzyły się kryształowe kielichy, w których pękały bąbelki najznakomitszej w świecie oranżady* (crystal goblets sparkled as bubbles of the world best orangeade burst in them); in *Sleeping Beauty* the castle is guarded by *okazali królewscy gwardziści, rumiani, pucółowaci, szerocy w barach, wąsaci i o czerwonych nosach* (robust king's guards, ruddy, chubby, broad-shouldered, mustached and with red noses). The main characters have been presented in a similar way: they look, behave and speak comically or in a very homely manner: for instance, the king in *Puss in Boots* is *thusty i okazały* (stout and stately); Donkeyskin excels at *umiejętność pieczenia przeróżnych obwarzanków, rogalików i placuszków* (the skill of baking various pretzels, croissants and pancakes); the fairy-godmother in *Sleeping Beauty* plays *Śmieszki i Chichotki* (Giggle and Chuckle), and the princess herself has to part with her female dog called *Pufcia*.

No doubt, Januszewska's goal was to adjust Perrault's fairy tale to the perceptive abilities and expectations of the child reader. The infantilisation of the style is emphasized by numerous diminutives: *twarzyczka, koszyczek, zajaczek, placuszek, cytrynka, wiaterek* (little face, little basket, little hare, little cake, little lemon, gentle breeze, etc.) as well as poems, or rather nursery rhymes, weaved into the text. The author is skilled at her craft, and so the narrative runs briskly and with charm, subject to the strategy of re-

peating well-known and recognisable stylistic formulas than to the search for new original forms of expression. The heroines have *wdzięczna postać* or *wdzięczna twarzączka* (a charming frame or a charming face), they are *śliczne dziewczuszki* (lovely lassies) driven to *roboty* (chores), horses, dresses, jewels, etc. are usually *najpiękniejsze w świecie* (the most beautiful in the world), although variations on the theme occur: the princess's carriage in *Donkeyskin* is *najlżejszy w świecie* (the lightest in the world), and Cinderella's slippers are *najmiększe w świecie* (the softest in the world), the stars in the sky *mrugają wesoło* (twinkle cheerfully), fairies are *wesołe* (cheerful), they speak *wesoło* (cheerfully), and cast *wesołe zaklęcia* (cheerful spells), princesses *nucają wesoło* (hum cheerfully), and even the spindle in *Sleeping Beauty* *furkotało wesoło* (whirred cheerfully)... The vocabulary is banal; syntactic structures are simple, short and clear (simple and compound sentences dominate); dialogues abound in onomatopoeias and exclamations: *Pac, Bang, Bum, Oooo, Ach, ach, ho ho* (Pat, Bang, Boom, Oooo, Ah, ah, Well well); all characters: Little Red Riding Hood, the king, the fairy-godmother speak the same colloquial language which the Polish child knows from everyday life: *W samą porę! – wykrzyknęła radośnie królowa. – Własnie siadamy do obiadu! Prosimy do stołu, kochana pani wróżko! Prosimy!* ("Just in time!" exclaimed the queen joyfully. "We're just sitting down for dinner! Do join us at the table, dear madam fairy! Please! (Perrault 1971: 25).

Despite the superficial fidelity to Perrault's plots, Januszewska's adaptation is, in fact, a completely polonised construct, light years away from the spirit of the original and its linguistic finesse. Still, it was only in this format that the fairy tales won over the Polish readers and gained popularity, which matched the earlier success of the 1956 collection of fairy tales by the Brothers Grimm. Up to 1989 the book was reprinted five times<sup>27</sup>; it has been translated into other languages, including German. Individual fairy tales, above all *Cinderella*, which is on the primary school reading list, have also been frequently reissued as separate books as well as printed in collections of fairy tales by various authors. To this day the only serious rivals of Januszewska's version have been translations of adaptations of

<sup>27</sup> It was reprinted again in the 1990s by Nasza Księgarnia, as well as by newly created private publishing houses, which was motivated mainly by the fact that the book is included in the school reading canon. In the 1990s the 1961 translation was republished as *Bajki Babci Gąski 1697*, with Anna Nikliborc's afterword and illustrations by Gustave Doré (a 1993 edition and later ones).

Perrault by the Walt Disney Company, which, of course, has nothing to do with their artistic quality and everything to do with the global show business market that supports them.

Despite its weaknesses, Januszewska's proposal remains the best Polish adaptation of Perrault's fairy tales in literary terms, unquestionably towering over the new versions which have been emerging since the 1990s.<sup>28</sup> Although it is regrettable that, for instance, the Biblioteka Narodowa (National Library of Poland) series does not include any "serious" translation of *Histoires ou contes du temps passé avec des moralités*, accompanied by reliable critical commentary, still the history of the Polish reception of *Mother Goose Tales* seems to be a fascinating example of the assimilative power of Polish literature: solving the problem of cultural incompatibility by reshaping and adapting the original material to meet its own needs and values. This is a particularly topical issue in the discussion about the ethics of translation and appropriation. Polish children's literature declined to accept Puss in Boots until it changed from a French knave into a Polish kitty-cat: does this fact testify to its provincialism and backwardness or – on the contrary – to the creative potential of its cultural identity?

**trans. Ewa Kowal**

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<sup>28</sup> Or rather it used to remain the best, since a new, faithful and good translation by Barbara Grzegorzewska, came out: Charles Perrault, *Baśnie, czyli opowieści z dawnych czasów* (Fairy Tales or Stories from Olden Times; Kalisz 2010).

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