

Portrait of Man

When we raise the question of whether someone who listens to or reads fairytales receives in the process a particular view of man and the world, we are not concerned with the special effect of particular fairytale types or individual versions, say, of the *Snow-White* type, the *Hansel and Gretel* type, or the *dragon-slayer* type, or of the Grimms' version or an accidentally recorded Rhaeto-romance variant of "Snow White"; we are concerned with the fairytale as such, especially the European fairytale familiar to us: In addition, to the structural and stylistic similarities in the stories, is there a correspondence in content? Does the *genre* fairytale contain a portrait of man and the world which turns up somehow in all the individual stories, perhaps most clearly in what is, with striking unanimity, referred to as the "fairytale proper," the fairytale of magic, but also beyond the fairytale of magic in the groups designated as animal fairytales, novella fairytales, religious fairytales, and farce fairytales? Whoever intends to answer this question must look at the fairytale hero and his role, for the fairytale hero or heroine stands at the center of the stories; it is with them that the male and female listeners, readers, and narrators identify, even given a certain distance. It has been established by the observations of field researchers that women like to tell fairytales that have heroines, that soldiers often make their heroes soldiers, and, turning the situation around, that a shoemaker, for example, makes the villain a tailor.³⁴⁹ Our question is concerned with the general. We are essentially concerned with the portrait of man, and only incidentally with the variable pictures of men and women that turn up in fairytales. We are concerned with the features which hero and heroine have in common, only secondarily with those which differentiate them. What they have in common seems to stand out more strongly and clearly than what differentiates them.³⁵⁰

Hero and heroine are the dominating central figures. All others are

defined with reference to them; they are either their adversaries (dragon, serpent, witch, ogre, giant, older siblings, stepsisters, stepmothers, traveling companions, usurpers of whatever variety, etc.), their helpers (grateful animals, grateful dead, heavenly bodies and winds, old women, little men, and, again, siblings or traveling companions), their partners (bride or bridegroom), or simply contrast figures (older brothers or sisters—who do not necessarily have to actively play the role of adversary).

The fact that the interest both of the fairytale narrator and of his listener is focused on what happens to the hero, who, whether masculine or feminine, is generally human (leaving aside the special group of animal fairytales) has led individual scholars to call the fairytale a humanistic genre.^{351*} In the *local legend*, at least in the central group of so-called demonological legends, the intrusion of something "completely different" (*Ganz Anderes*) is central. Narrator and listener, to say nothing of the legend figures themselves, stare spellbound at otherworldly beings, at demons, ghosts, or some incomprehensible "it," and wonder why it has taken a hand in something or even appeared—it is exactly this attitude that is responsible for the fact that local legends so often contain only a single episode, while the fairytale, which distances itself from the "otherworldly" and is freer in its dealings with it, does not allow itself to be fettered to a single incident that would inhibit the unfolding of the plot, and thus episode follows episode. In the myth it is not even necessary for humans to appear—the *dramatis personae* can be limited to gods and demigods; where man does appear, he is mainly relegated to a secondary role, quite the opposite of the situation in the fairytale. And in the myth-like narratives of so-called primitive peoples (*Naturvölker*), it is often the animal that is prominent. It is in this sense, then, that the European/oriental fairytale can actually be called "humanistic." When we refer to the fairytale hero in the following discussion, we also include the fairytale heroine, even when it is not explicitly so stated. We will take hero and heroine to be the most characteristic representatives of man in the fairytale; secondary figures will be discussed briefly in the second segment of the chapter.

THE FAIRYTALE HERO

The first thing that is apparent in the fairytale, in contrast to the local legend, is that it portrays its hero as *isolated*. He is often an only child. The phrase "They had no children" is familiar to every fairytale listener. When the couple then finally do have a child, whether they are king and queen or poor people, this child is often set apart from its surroundings by some more or less obvious peculiarity—it is born as the result of some magical conception, for example, because the mother has eaten a magic apple or a magic fish, or it comes into the world in animal form, as a

snake, a hedgehog, or a "little donkey" (KHM 144); instead of an "animal child" (the common term in fairytale scholarship), it may also be a Thumbling or in some other way a "half" or unpromising human, in the farce fairytale even one that is deformed, or perhaps also a lazybones who has the gift of being able to "wish" for what he wants (he then conjures up a child for the princess, AT 675, KHM 54 A).

Even more often than an only child, the fairytale hero or heroine is the youngest child or a stepchild. In real, biological terms, the youngest, smallest child is also the weakest, but in the fairytale, a genre only partially constrained by considerations of realism, no scuffles between brothers or sisters are presented; the youngest is isolated by other means. He appears as a dumbbell or a (male or female) Cinderella, as underestimated, despised, or disadvantaged (the last is also true of the stepchild). The special status of the hero is also brought out through the use of the technical and esthetic principle of emphasis on the last element, of qualified intensification, which is also noticeable in the sequencing of tasks and in encounters with opponents (dragons) or partners (princesses): The last link in the chain is the decisive one. In this way, the technical, the esthetic, and the anthropological are interwoven, and the theme of appearance versus reality plays its part, too. Stylistic and structural elements virtually lead in and of themselves to a particular pronouncement.

Youngest children and stepchildren are the most peripheral members of the family; thus, looked at from the point of view of the structure of the system and also from a practical narrative point of view, they are easily detachable. The fairytale heroes are generally also the most peripheral members of society, children of those at the top or else of the very poor; they are prince and princess or swine-herd and goose-girl. From the point of view of both the family and society, the fairytale hero is in an extreme position, an outside position, thus isolated or easily isolatable and therefore relatively easy to draw into a central or an extreme opposite position.

The fairytale hero is also easily detachable in another sense: He departs from home. While the individuals in the local legend have their encounters mainly in their own village or city or in the environs, the fairytale hero generally leaves home, for one reason or another—often because of a family conflict,^{352*} at other times in order to fulfill a task, to bring about a disenchantment, or simply "to see the world." It may also happen that the hero returns home, but that is something relatively unimportant, failing to occur in many instances. The fairytale hero is not one who returns to his point of origin, like the title figures of epics, epic songs, ballads, and war-end narratives from the *Odyssey* up through the modern novels about returning home, but one who by nature leaves home to wander out into the world, in a sense out into the void. He does not know the world which he goes out into; at first he also does not know what means exist to enable him to accomplish the task he has been set—sometimes he does

not even know what his goals are. The real fairytale hero is no Lucky Hans who comes back home to mother—"Lucky Hans" is a farce fairytale, in a certain sense an anti-fairytale: The hero fails in the face of every difficulty, avoids everything requiring any effort, and always takes the easiest way out; he moves backward, not forward; he regresses. Lucky Hans is presented to us as one who returns, but the real fairytale hero is one who departs. And while that is primarily true for the masculine hero, it is an appropriate characterization of many heroines, as well, whether directly, as in the case of the sister of the seven ravens and of the very independent beauty in our model fairytale (pp. 2–5), or indirectly: Whoever succeeds in marrying a prince automatically enters a new world.

One feature to which we have just called attention, the fact that the fairytale hero does not know what means he can use to overcome the difficulties which he encounters, turns out to be a further significant characteristic of what we have designated the fundamentally "isolated" fairytale hero: The fairytale hero, even if he is a dragon-slayer, is time and again shown as one in need of help, often as one who is helpless, who sits down on the ground and weeps because he has no idea what to do. The fairytale hero is a deficient creature. He has no specific abilities; unlike the animals, which have inborn instincts, he is not equipped by nature for special tasks. The fairytale hero is in this way, just as in so many others, a general reflection of man, a being that has in fact been described by contemporary biologists and anthropologists as a deficient creature without specific abilities^{353*}—an essentially correct description, despite objections that might be raised to it. There are animals that swim better and run faster than man, and still others that can fly, something that man cannot do at all without technical aid—but in a roundabout way, indirectly, he achieves more than all the animals; thanks to the technical means that he (in concrete terms, other men) has invented and built, he can cover greater distances and faster than any animal, on land, in water and in the air. Prince, princess, and king are especially good representatives of man. They have no special trade; they have no special training and yet they can do everything. But even those with a special trade do not accomplish the decisive tasks by using their professional knowledge. "The miller's helper does not rise to prince consort on the basis of his milling nor the brave little tailor on the basis of his sewing," observes Volke Klotz.³⁵⁴ Fairytale figures are neither character nor professional types, but just figures, carriers of the action, which means that they are open to the most diverse possibilities, like man as man, not really restricted by particular character, background, or occupation.

The fairytale hero's fundamental isolation entails something further, however: Specifically because he is isolated and can easily detach himself he is also capable of entering into new constellations. He is not just dependent on helpers and help, he actually receives such help—helper

pop up. Differing from his siblings, the fairytales hero is capable of making contact with helpers, of accepting their gifts and advice. The fairytale hero is *the receiver* (*der Begabte*) par excellence.

The helpers are largely otherworldly beings, i.e., beings that belong to some other world (though they differ from the otherworldly beings of the local legend in lacking the terrifying or confounding aura associated with the "completely different"): a little old gray man, an old woman, an unfamiliar wanderer (who can later turn out to be one of the grateful dead), the dead mother, the dead father, or the daughter of the demon or the ogre (who accomplishes the apparently insoluble "impossible" tasks for the hero and runs away with him). Then there are the magical animals, the animal bride (a toad, for example) or bridegroom (a lion or simply a monster), who have been enchanted and who later, after being disenchanted and freed from their alien form, turn back into human beings. There are grateful animals with magic powers: an ant, a raven, a wolf, an eagle (see p. 14). Grateful dead in animal form (e.g., a fox) and animal brothers-in-law that stand by the hero in the fight with the dragon or bull, as in the case of the dogs that can snap steel or iron or other helpful animals like those that aid the dragon-slayer in the *two brothers* fairytale, belong to the same category. There can also be heavenly bodies—the sun, the moon, the stars—or winds, which show the hero or heroine the way or provide the indispensable gift, the golden spinning wheel or magnificent costume that leads to a reunion with the long-lost mate. Less often the helper appears in human form, as a faithful servant, the dragon-slayer's brother, or the faithful sister (when the brothers have been turned into some alien form or have fallen under the power of a witch). Even underworld beings can turn out to be helpful, like Frau Holle or the devil's grandmother, who functionally plays the same role as the robbers' housekeeper, or the beautiful daughter of the task-setting demon.

The fairytale hero, being isolated, thus enters, one might say, effortlessly into fruitful contact with distant worlds, with worlds above and below, with nature and with individual figures of our world. Isolated does not mean exposed or lonely; on the contrary, such isolation is the prerequisite for a fundamentally universal ability to enter into new constellations—it frees man to enter into any relationship that is somehow important, one which can just as easily be broken off again as soon as it is no longer important: Magical gifts are used only in situations of emergency; both before and after, the hero does not even think about them (except perhaps in the farce fairytale), and otherworldly beings fade from sight as soon as they have played their part. Nevertheless, the relationship with figures in animal form can be of remarkable duration and intensity: Animal helpers accompany many fairytale heroes over long stretches of their way. The hero never receives as a gift the ability to turn himself into a fairy or a helpful old man, but he can be given the ability to

take on the form of a helpful animal (see pp. 14–15). The helpful animals are also not just donors of gifts, like other helpful figures, but may intervene directly and stand by the hero during the action. On the other hand, such animal helpers, again in contrast to other figures of the otherworldly sort in the fairytale, can be dependent on the aid of mortals: They wish to be disenchanting, to leave behind their animal form and return to being human, whether it would result from the hero's chopping off their animal head or the heroine's slamming them against the wall or deciding to marry them. Thus even the relatively close relationship between human and animal helper or animal partner does not lack that moment of freedom, of change. The hero is capable of taking on the animal form; the beast, on the other hand, leaves behind his alien form and transforms back into a human. Fairytale heroes, being isolated and thus having no family or community ties, being neither tied down by personal characteristics nor limited by specific talents or training, are potentially always open to entering into new relationships (*altverbunden*).

Man has been designated by modern anthropologists as not only a creature of deficiencies but also a *creature of detours*.^{355*} The fairytale hero is as little the master of his own fate as is man in general. His dependence on help from without, especially from otherworldly sources, is parallel to what is referred to in theology as grace. To this degree, one can speak of a religious touch in the fairytale portrait of man. The fact that the fairytale hero is usually unable to reach his goals on the basis of his strength alone—here again we must look upon the farce fairytale as an exception—entails not only that he is dependent (in the religious sense) but also that he is one who makes detours. This characteristic is shown more clearly where he ignores advice and disregards commandments or interdictions. The tendency to make detours is beautifully illustrated in the Grimms' fairytale about the golden bird (KHM 57): it is a good representative of the entire story type (AT 550): The helpful fox, who puts all three brothers to the test and judges only the youngest to be worthy of his help, warns the boy not to take the golden bird, which he is to steal, out of the wooden cage and put it into the golden one. The boy does it anyway and is forced to undertake a second expedition: He now has to deliver the golden horse. Against the advice of the fox, he puts the golden saddle on it and is again caught in the act, and his life will be spared only if he kidnaps "the beautiful princess of the golden castle." Despite the warning of the fox, the boy allows her to take leave of her parents (in doing so he violates the interdiction against being moved to pity, an interdiction appearing in other fairytales as well), and now he must accomplish an absurd task (to carry away a whole mountain within eight days), something which, after seven of the days have elapsed (the embedding of a detour in a detour), the fox takes care of for him ("just lie down here and go to sleep.

I'll do the work for you"). In the end, all of the detours turn out to be good luck for the hero, for he gains in this manner progressively greater prizes, not only the golden bird (plus golden cage) and the golden horse (plus golden saddle), but the beautiful princess, as well, after he deceives each of the respective task setters in turn, again on the basis of the guidance of the fox. And in the second part of the fairytale a detour is again taken—the hero, against the advice of the fox, bails out his older brothers, who have been condemned to hang (again a violation of the interdiction against being moved to pity), and subsequently is robbed by them of his acquired prizes and pushed down a well. In light of all these detours, the well-known tendency of the fairytale to first allow the two older brothers to fail would also appear to be a detour. Thus just as in the case where the hero himself at first fails but finally reaches his goal, the fairytale, true to the technique of juxtaposition in place and in time, first presents two unsuccessful contenders and then brings the hero into the act after the second unsuccessful attempt, after this detour. Here again the narrative technique, the tendency to factoring, repetition, and variation, proves to be the basis not only of an esthetic effect but also of an anthropological statement: Man is a creature of detours. In the symbolic interpretation of C. G. Jung and his school, the various fairytale figures are seen to represent aspects of one and the same personality. From this point of view, the failure of the two older brothers would be a failure of the hero himself; their paths would be even more clearly recognizable as detours. Since these unsuccessful "preimitations" (see pp. 104–105) are a component of countless fairytales, to the degree that one accepts the Jungian interpretation, man shows himself in the fairytale to be yet more completely a creature of detours (in this regard, see pp. 160–162). (He would be seen as such in any case purely on the basis of the many detours that become necessary as a result of the breaking of taboos.) In the fairytale about the golden bird, the detour of the sort taken by brother figures is even illustrated twice: The older brothers in turn first unsuccessfully guard the tree with the golden apples; then they set off, again in turn, on an unsuccessful quest of the golden bird. In both instances the task is accomplished only on the third try, by the youngest brother, who himself then makes several tries.

Our fairytale has at the same time used the detours to make progressive escalations visible: Each detour brings the hero one step higher. There are numerous parallels—the tasks or battles become ever more difficult; the path leads to ever more dangerous witches, to ever more distant and more powerful heavenly bodies or winds, to ever wiser givers of advice, or to ever more beautiful princesses. In actual popular versions of "Rapunzel"—not in the Grimms—Rapunzel learns something from the witch, namely, useful magical arts; she moves out of the world of every day into the realm of the witch, and then on to a kingdom. If one, even

with reservations, recognizes the "biographical" character of this fairytale, it is a matter of "biography advancing progressively upward"; psychologists speak of a "fairytale of development" (*Entwicklungsmärchen*).³⁵⁶ In light of the fact that fairytale figures are drawn just as figures, not as living persons or individuals, this designation can be accepted only with reservation. It is more a case of step-stair progression than of development, just as one cannot really speak of change, though one can of transformation. One can speak of change, of fairytales of maturation or development, only with respect to their symbolic significance. But since the fairytale has the tendency to project everything that is within outward, one is correspondingly justified in looking at what has been projected outward as symbolic of what is within, at transformations as representations of inner change—step-stair progressions, movement from station to station, as an indication of development or of maturation. In this sense, the fairytales show their heroes—and, through them, man in general—not only as takers of detours, as ones who achieve their goals indirectly, but as ones who *develop*, who *change*. It is obvious that the fairytale hero is also one who *transgresses boundaries*, since he violates interdictions, and especially since he opens forbidden doors. The same is true for the hero who penetrates into distant realms, whether into the world above, the world below, or only into a kingdom on the other side of the "Operenzer Sea."³⁵⁷ The manipulating types of fairytale hero, which we discussed earlier (pp. 100–101, 131–133), are also creatures of detour in another sense.

The fairytale hero is a *traveler*, a *doer*. He is not a ponderer, an investigator, or a philosopher. It never occurs to him to try to find out what context his magical helpers belong to; he does not ask about the sources of their power. He explores neither the world within nor the world around him. He wanders through the world and acts. He runs into the most various figures and enters into relationships with them, as adversary, disenchanter, or suitor. He does what is right, without thinking much about it and often without realizing. Even when he sits down helplessly and weeps, he is acting properly: It is exactly his weeping which summons the helper. When the defiant little princess slams the frog against the wall, this act, though she does not know it, is exactly what must be done to fulfill the conditions for disenchantment. Antiheroes and anti-heroines exist for the purpose of contrast: They do what is false; they do not press the right lever. In the Jungian sense, one must again consider that these contrastive figures may be looked upon not only as figures in their own right but also as the other side of the hero. Whether the fairytale—which for reasons of narrative technique enjoys factoring complexes into their elements—has the hero himself do what is false or shows the possibility of failure through the actions of contrast figures, would, from the Jungian point of view, be basically the same thing. What is

obvious, however, is that the older brothers, the antiheroes, do what is false with the same self-confidence that the hero shows in doing what is right. They are also not ponderers, but doers.

The hero and heroine of the fairytale of magic, in particular, stand in the middle of a heavily charged tension field, as is apparent from the frequent occurrence of engagement or marriage to an animal partner. But the figure who has been changed into a beast, whether animal child, animal bridegroom, or animal bride, and is in need of disenchantment, is also a *carrier of extreme tension*. True to the style of the fairytale, this tension is again revealed mainly through action—one is told only of the immediate flight of the animal bridegroom when light falls upon him or when his animal pelt has been burnt up and of the abandoned bride's subsequent tireless wandering search, the strenuousness of which is again indicated by a concrete sign: Three pairs of iron shoes must be worn out. (That the fairytale may be open to humor at such a point, that it can lean toward the farcical, is shown by the—well-meaning and appropriate—advice of an "old woman" to the heroine that she should step into a warm cow pie with the shoes so that they will wear out more quickly).^{358*} The ability to endure such long-term tension is revealed not only in the wandering search—in individual cases the pregnant heroine goes along for years without being able to bear her child—but just as impressively in stubbornly remaining silent or persisting in a denial, something which can also continue for years (*The seven ravens* and *Our Lady's child* types respectively). We can see the same thing, though more weakly represented, in the patience of *Griselda* figures, whether they are slandered wives or tormented stepdaughters, underrated youngest children, Cinderellas, scald-heads (the golden-haired/scald-headed figure has been called a "male Cinderella"),³⁵⁹ or goose-girls who do not reveal who they really are, who at most reveal their sufferings to a stove or who are allowed to complain to a "whetstone of patience."³⁶⁰

It is, however, exactly the patient heroes and heroines who gather the strength and power unto themselves which allows them to be transformed into helpers, rescuers, and *disenchanters*. Significantly, it is precisely while in the alien form or circumstances that they acquire supernatural powers. And just as eyes that have been gouged out see seven times more sharply after they have been restored than they did previously, and a beautiful maiden who has been maliciously left hanging in a chimney for three years "has been made by the smoke much more beautiful than she was before,"³⁶¹ it is also the case that Little Parsley or Little Fennel (common names for the *Rapunzel* figure)³⁶² does not pine away in the witch's tower, but learns there the arts of magic with which she then saves not only herself but her lover, as well. The maiden who has to go about in the form of a swine up to the time of her wedding (AT 409 A, *animal child*)

is, after she has laid aside the swine's skin, so beautiful that the people "thought they were looking upon the Virgin Mary," and they "all fell on their knees." The pastor who performs the marriage ceremony cannot "bring himself to move from the spot. It got on to six o'clock, and time for him to read the mass, but he still cannot bring himself to move from the spot; he just sits there and looks at the bride."³⁶³ If here heavenly beauty is the result of years in the shadows, in other instances humans that have been changed into animals have the power to become magical helpers precisely when they are in alien form, during the period of their enchantment, and only during this time. As enchanted beings and only as such are they in a position to exercise extraordinary powers in the mastering of extraordinary situations. Whether that says something of anthropological significance with respect to the nature of suffering, we will leave open. It is dependent upon one's interpretation, on the explanation or the experiencing of the fairytale in symbolic terms. We will content ourselves with pointing out what is directly apparent—the fact that in the fairytale it is precisely the unpromising and the handicapped that can become rescuers and disenchanters, whether it is a case of underestimated central figures, grateful animals ("What will you ever be able to do for me, . . . poor little animal?"),³⁶⁴ or humans in animal form.

Certain fairytales are referred to as disenchantment fairytales (*Erlösungsmärchen*). In a broader sense, all fairytales of magic are somehow concerned with disenchantment. This conclusion follows not only from the large variety of forms that helpers take, but from the fact that the figures at the center of the action are often disenchanters or ones waiting to be disenchanted. Released from enchantment are animal children, animal brides, animal husbands, and those turned to stone or immersed in a magical sleep, at times their whole surroundings with them—the whole court, all their followers, a city, a kingdom, etc. Again it must remain an open question whether the inclusion of the surroundings in the enchantment should be interpreted as an indication that the shadow of evil can also fall across the lives of persons merely associated with those directly involved. In any case, collective disenchantments of this sort demonstrate the significance of the phenomenon of disenchantment in the fairytale, and the fact that it affects not only the individual but the group, as well. The reason for the enchantment is not always revealed. The emphasis lies clearly not on the enchantment but on the disenchantment; the source of the enchantment, where the responsibilities lie, is of less interest to the fairytale than the actual need for disenchantment. That man is a creature in need of deliverance is one of the pronouncements of the fairytale recognizable in many forms. In this regard, the fairytale comes close to the religious position.³⁶⁵

Help, rescue, and disenchantment can come from unfamiliar powers, but also from humans. The maiden kidnapped by demons or at the mercy

of a dragon is rescued and delivered by the hero. Those carried off to the glass mountain and transformed into animals are rescued by their own sister. Those faced with insoluble tasks are aided either by some figure belonging to the magical realm (in the *Amor and Psyche* type, by the vanished husband himself)³⁶⁶ or by a human in animal form. Deliverance consists not only in being released from some animal form (one speaks of mutual deliverance: the enchanted figure helps the hero, and the hero frees the enchanted figure from the alien form), but also in the deliverance of hero or heroine from a "shadowy state" (*Dunkelgestalt*),³⁶⁷ in their being allowed to emerge from the condition of being underestimated, or in the revelation of the magnificent reality hidden under the false appearance—the ugly kitchen maid in the wooden dress: "She cast aside the wooden skirt and stood there in full splendor in her golden dress."³⁶⁸ Whether the maiden's wooden skirt is a sign of the otherworldly suggesting a coffin is both esthetically and anthropologically unimportant. In the framework of the fairytale, the wooden skirt would not in and of itself lead one not otherwise conditioned to be reminded of a coffin. What is apparent is that she is released from her clattering dress and returned to her true being; in place of dark ugliness appears radiant beauty.

Propp considers the dragon-slayer fairytale to be the general prototype of all fairytales of magic. And all fairytale heroes and heroines are in fact somehow or other dragon-slayers, rescuers, disenchanters, or victims of "dragons," those rescued and freed.

SECONDARY FIGURES AND PROPS

From the discussion in the preceding section, it is already apparent that secondary figures have something in common with the main figures, that in many cases they also can be rescuers, disenchanters, or those in need of deliverance. Everyone who listens to or reads fairytales comes unconsciously to recognize that the presence of the many helpers, givers of advice, and providers of gifts likewise does its part in developing the picture of man. In the fairytale, man appears as one dependent upon helpers, of the normal and the otherworldly sort. In order to develop, however, he also requires adversaries or antagonists of some sort; every fairytale has human or nonhuman figures that threaten the hero or assign him tasks, set commissions, pronounce interdictions, formulate conditions, or issue orders. But it would not be appropriate to then conclude that man appears in the fairytale as someone directed from without. To begin with, both the hero and the secondary figures still display a goodly amount of individual initiative. The hero decides to rescue the maiden at the mercy of the dragon, but afterwards he sets off to travel around for a year before undertaking to expose the usurper. Or the youngest, after his two older brothers have not returned, still manages, despite the opposi-

tion of his parents, also to gain permission to set out. Secondary figures, on their own initiative, plot against the hero, malign him or usurp his place. The direction from without is thus anything but universal; fairytale figures, both central and otherwise, also set goals for themselves. And one should remember as well that it is the way of the fairytale to dramatize the action, and thus to present it outwardly—one may say, along with Carl Spitteler, Axel Olrik, and other theoreticians of the epic: Everything internal is so far as possible translated into something external.^{369*} This formulation allows one to conclude the converse, as do the psychological interpreters of the fairytale, and see everything external as a representation of the internal. For C. G. Jung and his students, as has already been indicated (see pp. 11, 97, 140–141, and 142), the various figures in the fairytale are aspects of one and the same personality. According to such an interpretation, when the hero is linked with the false bride, it means that a destructive force in his soul has temporarily pushed to the forefront; when he tricks giants out of their magical objects and adapts them to his own purposes, it would be an indication that he takes valuable powers away from indefinite forces within him and quite legitimately places them at the disposal of his conscious ego. In this way, what appears to be immoral in the fairytale allows itself to be rather convincingly neutralized and rationalized. It would, however, be a mistake (and the Jungian school does not do so) to assume that the external in fairytale literature is *only* a representation of the internal. Everything external, not just in literature but also in reality, can be or become a symbol. It is, however, still itself, as well, not only in reality but also in literature. It is significant that over against the hero in the fairytale one finds partners, helpers, those in need of help, rivals, adversaries, enemies, and task setters, figures either on his side or working against him.

It is just as significant that the fairytale hero interacts not only with human figures but with nonhuman, as well, with animals and monsters, with figures on the other side of everyday reality—and also with objects. The prop, the object, plays a larger role in the fairytale than in the local legend, the farce, or the fable first of all because the fairytale is a longer narrative of several episodes. But that is scarcely the only reason. The focus of the local legend is on the extraordinary; the farce shows individual situations; and the fable is intended to instruct—but the fairytale places man in a complete context, and objects belong to this context just as do heavenly bodies and winds, forest and sea, animals, and creatures born of belief or fantasy.

The *object*, like everything else in the fairytale, is first of all a carrier and mover of the action. Magical objects, especially, are, so to speak, predestined to be movers of the action—that magic plays such an important role in the fairytale is a direct result. But just as with other fairytale elements, the magical object has a life of its own above and beyond its plot

function—within the narrative, of course, but even more so in the later recollection of the listener: the wishing table, the cudgel in the sack, and the seven-league boots, as well as the ship that travels over both land and water, the ring that fulfills every wish or summons helpful otherworldly beings, the magic pipe that forces everyone to dance, or the water of life or the herb that restores the dead.^{370*} Props also play a certain role in the fable—in the Carolingian version of the fable of the sick lion and his court (AT 50), the fox that comes late to visit the ailing lion hangs a bunch of worn-out shoes over his shoulder, which are intended to demonstrate how widely he has traveled in search of the proper remedy.³⁷¹ Fables can involve interaction purely between animals, between humans and animals, or even between objects; in the last case, however, they are not props but personified main carriers of the plot. The object as prop has very much less significance in the fable than in the fairytale, where magical objects are lost and only with great effort recovered (AT 560), but where nonmagical things also have significant functions: as signs of recognition, as provisions—whether for use in case of the hero's own hunger, for use in appeasing, distracting, or restoring dangerous or helpful otherworldly beings, or as the basis of a test (the older brothers keep their cake for themselves, the youngest shares his with a beggar), as worthless (e.g., glass) tools, and as precious items which are either to be used (magnificent clothing or armor for appearing in public, objects of gold for manipulating a princess or the second wife of the lost husband) or to be sought and brought back—for example, the most beautiful fabric (KHM 63, AT 402) or the giant's magnificent bed coverlet (AT 328).³⁷²

"If I just had three drops of blood, I'd show you a thing or two!" shouts the dragon in the heated battle with the boy who has turned himself into a lion. The boy picks up the phrase and shouts, "If I just had a half of wine and a roasted joint . . . !" The dragon has to do without his restoring drops of blood, but the boy's servant instantly brings him a half of wine and a roasted turkey hen.³⁷³ In other cases a bit of bread is sufficient, or, instead of food, a kiss; the two can also be combined. "Ah," laments the exhausted wild sow, "if I could only return to the mudhole to wallow. When I came out, I would tear you to pieces." The princely contender then says, "Ah, if I just had the priest's little daughter here, she would hand me a glass of wine, and I could kiss her on both cheeks, and then I would dismember you like a fish!" While the wild pig wallows in the mudhole, the prince consumes the pita cake and the wine, kisses the priest's little daughter, and then rushes at the monster and kills it.³⁷⁴ Time and again in the fairytale there is talk of eating, of food in general. This eating does not always have a plot function, but it is mentioned nonetheless. Instead of the helper's telling the hero faced with carrying out an impossible task that he can lie down and go to sleep, we read in the Breton fairytale, which in general speaks happily of food, "You don't have to do anything

but eat and drink," and before the boy has finished eating, the magically gifted daughter of the task setter, who brought the hero his lunch, has cut down the forest for him, something he was supposed to accomplish with a wooden ax.³⁷⁵ The Rhaeto-romance narrator of a version of *Faithful John* does not miss the opportunity to mention breakfast (which is of no significance for the plot): "In the morning, after they had had breakfast . . . , all three of them departed." Later: "One day, he took his horse and something to eat" and rode to the wise "black ladies." When the faithful Giovan asks the oldest of the black ladies what he should do to disenchant her and her sisters, she answers, "First build yourself up again and take a vacation of a week to a fortnight. Eat and drink well, and then, when you're able to hold out for three nights. . . ." Then, after the *ferias*, when the three gruesome nights are to begin, the story continues: "After supper, he went upstairs and into that hall," and so it goes before the second and the third night as well ("After he was well rested and had eaten his fill. . . .").³⁷⁶

Eating and drinking are among the most common everyday activities of man, food and drink among the indispensable and daily realities of life. It is notable that in the fairytale everyday reality is omnipresent, and quite apart from its relevance to the plot. Objects belong to the world of man. In real life, the things made by man himself—even if they are not actually made by the one who uses them—appear in diverse forms and have an importance which can scarcely be overestimated. They offer us protection and support. We can make use of them, but we can also fall under their influence: They can enslave or threaten us. The American psychiatrist Harold F. Searles demonstrates in his book *The Nonhuman Environment* (New York, 1960) that our nonhuman surroundings, especially inanimate objects, help to create and maintain our feelings of identity by permitting us to define ourselves with respect to them; we neither stand in empty rooms nor are we exposed to constant change. Searles, like so many others before him, sees more a quantitative than a qualitative distinction between the healthy and the mentally ill; and he attributes to the "primitive," to man of the Middle Ages, and to the child a relatively natural relationship to the nonhuman environment (that produced by man as well as that of nature), but to our own times an "unhealthy" alienation from it (*an unhealthy psychological estrangement from the nonhuman environment*). He believes that the schizophrenic, with his attachment to an old shirt or his old wallet, indeed overvalues the importance of things, but that the "normal person," who changes automobiles and houses for reasons of prestige, actually undervalues them (pp. 386–389).³⁷⁷

One can also call natural the way the fairytale hero deals with things. They are there for him to use, but he does not become a slave to them. He can forget magical gifts that he has received as long as he does not need them, but he has kept them with him; they are at hand as soon as

they are needed. He is not weighed down by them; he handles them easily, and his relationship to them in general mirrors his basic isolation and ability to enter into any given constellation. Being chained to the possession of things as a pseudoguarantee of identity is not one of his characteristics; but that even everyday things may be helpful is something obvious to him, as is most clearly illustrated by his attitude toward food and drink, which was briefly described earlier. And the general convention of the fairytale that recognition markers (a ring knotted in the hair of the hero, a handkerchief, or a slipper) are more important for identification than the person himself, that a golden dress makes possible the revelation of the actual being of its wearer, reflects the importance of things, of props, in the spiritual organization of man. The possibility of using props for the purposes of self-identification and self-justification is shown especially clearly in the already-mentioned forms of confession to a stove (KHM 89, "The Goose-girl") and talking to the stone of patience, as we encounter it in Greek narratives: The heroine requests as little presents a murder knife, a (hangman's) noose, and the stone (or whetstone) of patience (AT 425 G, 437). Unappreciated and forced out of her legitimate place, she asks the knife, "Shall I kill myself?" and the noose, "Shall I hang myself?" "Kill yourself," "Hang yourself," are the answers. But finally (emphasis on the final element!) she asks the stone. It answers, "Have patience"—and everything turns out well, for the eavesdropping prince has now found out the truth (cf. pp. 59–60, 142).

The danger of becoming a slave to things is, for example, demonstrated in the fairytale in the uncontrollable desire of the second wife or the bride-to-be-won for beautiful objects of gold (see pp. 14–15). Whether one should look upon transformations into objects—into an iron stove (KHM 127); into a white stick, which is cast into the sea;³⁷⁸ into a block of wood, which is tossed on the fire (KHM 43, "Frau Trude," similar to the local legend); or into a toothpick or a hassock (similar to the farce, see p. 117)—as a reflection of abnormal deanimation impulses must remain an open question. The fairytale certainly also reflects psychological conflicts and abnormalities—the inflexible princess in the farce fairytale about King Thrushbeard (KHM 52, AT 900), who makes fun of "everybody" and especially of her suitors, and who is not really good for any sort of work, has been diagnosed by Hildegard Buder as a hysteric;³⁷⁹ it is certainly no accident that her husband makes use of objects to demonstrate to her her lack of finesse (the willow switches make her hands raw, the spinning thread cuts her fingers till they bleed, and her pots get broken: "I can well see that you're not good for any proper work"). The uselessness of glass or wooden tools may shed some light on the psychological state of the hero. And the story of Frau Trude, in which an ungovernable girl is transformed into a block of wood by the witch and burned on the fire, can be directly interpreted as a psychogram. On the other

hand, self-transformation into objects—into a ring or a needle in the magic contest, into a church or a skiff during the magical flight—attests rather to the close ties between man and object. (We have also interpreted the ability of the fairytale hero to take on the form of the animal helper as an expression of an especially close relationship to it. See pp. 138–139.) The transformation of a girl into a rose (AT 408; see p. 122) certainly need not represent an abnormal condition.

Every explanation of a symbolic or allegorical sort moves into the uncertain area of speculation. This much, however, can be stated with certainty: The everyday and the magical objects that are present in the fairytale stand for the everyday world and the supernatural world in general; the human figures in the fairytale have a relationship to both and stand in the tension field of both. By means of objects, contacts are made concrete; by means of props, relationships become visible. These functions are just as important as the role objects have as catalysts, as carriers of the action. The clarity of line of fairytale objects (a castle, a staircase, or a little box that can hold an entire city) shows plainly the power of the world of things to provide firmness and consistency, just as the availability of magical objects reveals a relaxed relationship to substances and powers, without there being any obsession with them. The broad range of everyday objects and happenings is the counterbalance to the (less frequent, but thus more noticeable) magical or supernatural happenings, just as the reverse, a small bit of realism in the midst of a surrealistic happening, is one of the particularly attractive features of the fairytale (see pp. 105–107). The real in the fairytale is not just esthetically important, as contrast and countercontrast, but anthropologically so, as well. The real, the common, the everyday things and happenings, reflect the world-incorporating character, the universalism, of the fairytale, which shows its figures in their relationship to the real as well as to the nonreal. Without them, the narrative would degenerate into the fantastic; its human figures, like many of the fable figures mounted for didactic purposes, would hang in a void. Everyday objects and magical objects (the stove to which a human confides her sorrow, the question-answering stone of patience, recognition markers, and the magnificent clothing deriving from otherworldly sources) aid in the achievement, recovery, or manifestation of identity; they speak especially clearly and representatively for the importance of the nonliving environment for man.

PROBLEMS

What about the effect of the portrait of man and the world which fairytale listeners or readers unconsciously take over? Is it beneficial for the most impressionable of today's fairytale listeners, the children; are fairytale proper fare for children, or must they be looked upon as dangerous, a