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## LITERARY CRITICISM

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### HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF FAIRY TALES

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**Abstract.** Fairy tales are important tools in formulating children's social, mental development and emotional growth. Fairy tales have forged unbreakable bonds between parents and children from generation to generation, influencing their relationship and providing a delightful way for them to spend quality time together. The youngster develops his worldview, moral principles, positive role models, and readiness for a life with the help of fairy tales. The article highlights the fairy tale's historical development and important influence on a child's growth. Also, characteristics of traditional and modern fairy tales are discussed focusing on the variations between its conventional and modern forms.

**Keywords:** child; fairy tale; tradition; traditional, historical, modernity, character;

### ИСТОРИЧЕСКОЕ РАЗВИТИЕ СКАЗКИ

**Аннотация.** Сказки являются важными инструментами для формулирования социального, психического развития детей и эмоционального роста. Сказки установили неразрывные связи между родителями и детьми от поколения до поколения, влияя на их отношения и предоставив им восхитительный способ провести качественное время вместе. Младший развивает свое мировоззрение, моральные принципы, позитивные образцы для подражания и готовность к жизни с помощью сказок. В статье подчеркивается историческое развитие сказки и важное влияние на рост ребенка. Кроме того, обсуждаются характеристики традиционных и современных сказок, сосредоточенные на различиях между его обычными и современными формами.

**Ключевые слова:** ребенок; сказка; традиция; Традиционная, историческая, современность, характер;

### ERTAKLARNING TARIXIY RIVOJLANISHI

**Annotatsiya.** Ertaklar bolalarning ijtimoiy, aqliy rivojlanishi va hissiy o'sishini shakllantirish uchun muhim vositadir. Ertaklar avlodlararo munosabatlarni mustahkamlab ota-onalar va bolalar o'rtasidagi munosabatlarga ijobiy ta'sir ko'rsatadi va bolalarning dunyoqarashi, axloqi, tarbiyasi ertaklar vositasida rivojlantiriladi. Ushbu maqolada ertakning tarixiy taraqqiyoti va bolalar tarbiyasidagi ahamiyati yoritilgan. Bundan tashqari, an'anaviy va zamonaviy ertaklar o'rtasidagi farqlar ochib berilgan.

**Kalit so'zlar:** bola; ertak; an'ana; an'anaviy, tarixiy, zamonaviylik, xarakter;

**Introduction.** For centuries, fairy tales have been a staple of children's literature, and as a didactic tool as well as a kind of entertainment, they are still regarded as the best books for young readers. It is widely accepted that the oral folk tale served as the fairy tale's processor, primarily transmitting dominant ideologies and creating discourse that gave rise to subversive ideas and ideologies. These roles were later taken up by the literary fairy tale.

Fairy tales are not born as the literary genre we all know today, neither have they always been called "fairy tales" during the different phases of their development. Similar plots and stories "begin[s] to appear in writing between 1250 and 2000 years before the birth of Christ". They were normally told and spread orally, in antiquity recorded in writing just by chance or embedded in other narratives. They continued to be told until the modern era, so that we can say that fairy tales - in their motifs and themes - are as old as the human practice of telling stories. However, as a set of literary conventions perfectly recognizable by the reader, their origin can be traced to Western Europe during the last few centuries: what was just a narrative commonly spread orally became then, through some phases, a literary genre destined to have a great success among its public [8;195].

The origins of the fairy tale as a genre are linked to the phenomenon of the wonder or oral folk tale, which is thought to be the fairy tale's forerunner. Due to the difficulty in distinguishing between the two, the fairy tale is sometimes confused with or regarded as indiscriminate of the folk tale. Nevertheless, scholars

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commonly differentiate between wonder folk tales and literary fairy tales, and usually consider them separate entities in a symbiotic relationship [4;25].

A particular type of folktale known as a “fairy tale” is one that is typically told orally to all members of the community by storytellers. Their primary characteristic is that they accept miraculous or magnificent occurrences as genuine aspects of the human experience. Fairy tales typically depict amazing and strange escapades and occurrences, in which a hero embarks on a mission or quest after experiencing a shift in his circumstances and leaves his surroundings to make a difficult journey to foreign worlds. The protagonist typically overcomes a number of obstacles and has amazing encounters along the way that either briefly distract him from the goal of the voyage or grant him magical assistance and the knowledge he needs to pass the tests.

**Research methods.** Since the form is a part of a larger body of research on the history of oral storytelling, the origins of oral folk tales are unclear. Nonetheless, it is widely believed that it originated from a multitude of stories that have been passed down through the ages in various communities, told to both adults and children to address how society is perceived and its problems. According to Zipes, folktales originated as oral narratives that people, both literate and illiterate, cultivated to express how they saw and understood nature, their social order, and their desire to fulfill their needs and desires [4;29].

Each community chose the right changes to the stories as they were passed down through the ages to properly reflect the needs and norms of the society. Zipes believes that the supernatural and pagan divinities that were prevalent in these antecedents of oral folk tales were the ancestors of the creatures found in fairy tales. The motif of a “miraculous transformation” set the oral wonder tale apart from other simple narrative forms of the period [4;28].

The literary fairy tale was first widely used in Italian literature during the 14th century by authors Giovanni Francesco Straparola and Giambattista Basile, who presented a number of fairy tales using frame narratives influenced by Boccaccio and Chaucer. According to Zipes, the works of Straparola and Basile are the source of the fairy tale genre that will be defined and institutionalized in the 17th century. Their works also established the precedent for using fairy tales to influence the process of civilisation.

The translations of *The Arabian Nights*, a compilation of oral folktales related to Arab, Persian, and Indian cultures that were recorded sometime between the ninth and the fourteenth centuries, are another significant source. According to the narrative framework, Sheherazade is a cruel ruler who kills a woman every night for three years until she confronts him at the age of ten and tells him a fantastic story every night to prevent her from dying. The *Sheherazade* stories are part of the story structure and were written by different storytellers with different themes and styles over time. Antoine Galland, an orientalist scholar, translated the collection for the first time in France at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

*The Arabian Nights* proved to be a major inspiration for the creation of collections of literary fairy tales during the period of French and German Romanticism, which romanticized the ethereal cultures of the East and found inspiration in orientalism.

**Results and discussion.** “*Le Magasin des enfants*”, a didactic collection of children's fairy tales by Jeanne-Marie Leprince de Beaumont, published in 1743, is credited with starting the literary fairy tale genre that is written only for children. Through literary fairy tales, children are being brought closer to civilization. According to Zipes, the term “fairy tale” was first used in 1697 by Madame d'Aulnoy, a French writer of fairy tales. It was later adopted as a way to denote the narrative power of women, since the fairies and the writers/tellers of these texts control the fates of all the characters. The phrase “fairy tale” was accepted as a standard translation and used in English during the 1750s.

However, until the 1820s, fairy tales meant for children came under intense criticism because they “were not considered to be ‘healthy’ for the development of young people's 15 minds” [1;12]. The Brothers Grimm made several changes to the fairy tales they collected, making them “cleans[ed] their narratives of erotic and bawdy passages and more appropriate for children than they had done in the beginning” [1;12].

By the end of the Nineteenth century, in most Western countries fairy tales were a fully-fledged, socially institutionalized literary genre meant for a young audience.<sup>62</sup> Their main aim was to educate and to that purpose they toned down the traditional stories in order to abate any negative influences such as gruesome plots might have on children. Moreover, fairy tales began to be successfully adapted for the theatre and they were used in schools as didactic material. Yet, especially as far as experimental and performative adaptations were concerned, fairy tales were enjoyed by adults as well. In general printed tales, very often accompanied by illustrations, acquired more legitimacy than the oral tradition.

The growing perception of children as a distinct age group is what gave rise to the idea of the fairy tale as a genre of children's bedtime stories: Children were gradually seen as a distinct age group with unique

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characteristics throughout the Middle Ages, and it was thought to be crucial to further the cause of civility with explicit and implicit pedagogical rules in order to have young people's manners and mores reflect the social power, prestige, and hierarchy of the ruling classes. As a result, it became crucial to use fairy tales to socialize children and to help them internalize particular values and gender roles.

Fairy tales proved to be an effective medium for transmitting the process of civilisation to the next generation of society's members, since children were viewed as more vulnerable, "a special kind of creature, almost a different race, rather than as normal, if immature, members of a particular family, and of the human family at large" [2;50]. In addition to being entertaining, they contributed to the formation and internalization of dominant social values and viewpoints, particularly those related to gender roles and stereotypes. According to Tolkien, the value of the fairy tale has been reduced as a result of its rejection as a worthwhile genre of adult literature.

Because they are works of pure imagination, contemporary fairy tales are referred to as "modern fantasy". They occasionally feature an unreal setting along with humans or other creatures. Children's fantasy literature that is at its best exhibits two qualities [3;21]: firstly, it presents a vividly imagined fantasy world. Even in fantastical worlds, there must be logic and typically a lesson or moral to be learned. Symbolism is often used to illustrate themes.

As may be noted from the history of the genre, the fairy tale provided a useful tool for discussion about the civilising process. The waves of subversive fairy tale writing never abated and attempts at furthering the discourse on the issues of the civilising processes present in the canonised fairy tales appear, for example, in the works of authors such as Oscar Wilde, George MacDonald, and Lyman Frank Baum.

Three factors are manipulated by the author to create fantasy.

**1. Setting:** The land of Narnia in Clive Staples Lewis' *The Chronicles of Narnia* is an example of a setting that is both of this world and not easily accessible. The setting could also be absolutely amazing, like in John Ronald Reuel Tolkien's *The Hobbit*.

**2. Time:** Setting and time have a close relationship. The plot might take place in the present day, the protagonists could travel in the past, or both. When the characters return to reality, they are frequently taken aback by how little time has passed. Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* serves as a classic example.

**3. Characters:** characters can be personified animals, like in Hans Christian Andersen's *The Ugly Duckling*, or they can be humanized creatures, like the hobbits in Tolkien's *The Hobbit*. Humanized characters include Alice in *Wonderland*.

Vladimir Propp outlined basic functions that constitute the formation of the model narrative in a fairy tale. Function is understood as an act of character, defined from the point of view of its significance for the course of the action. Functions of characters serve as stable, constant elements in a tale, independent of how and by whom they are fulfilled.

1. The protagonist is confronted with an interdiction or prohibition that he or she violates in some way. Often the protagonist commits an error or seeks to improve his Justyna Sala-Suszyńska 196 *Prima Educatione* or her social status by embarking on a journey. One way or another, the protagonist is commissioned – sent on a mission.

2. Departure or banishment of the protagonist, who is either given a task or assumes a task related to the interdiction and prohibition, or to the desire for improvement and self-transformation. The protagonist is assigned a task, and the task is a sign. That is, his or her character will be marked by the task that is his or her sign.

3. The protagonist then encounters: (a) the villain; (b) a mysterious individual or creature, who gives the protagonist gifts; (c) three different animals or creatures who are helped by the protagonist and promise to repay him or her; or (d) three different animals or creatures who offer gifts to help the protagonist, who is in trouble. The gifts are often magical agents, which bring about miraculous change.

4. The endowed protagonist is tested and moves on to battle and conquer the villain or inimical forces.

5. The peripety or sudden fall in the protagonist's fortunes is generally only a temporary setback. A wonder or miracle is needed to reverse the wheel of fortune. Sometimes a fairy, hermit, wise man or woman, or magically endowed human or animal will intervene to benefit the protagonist.

6. The protagonist makes use of gifts (and this includes the magical agents and cunning) to achieve his or her goal. The result is (a) three battles with the villain; (b) three impossible tasks that are nevertheless made possible; and/or (c) the breaking of a magic spell.

7. The villain is punished or the inimical forces are vanquished.

8. The success of the protagonist usually leads to (a) marriage; (b) the acquisition of money; (c) survival and wisdom; or (d) any combination of the first three. Typically, fairy tales also have the "happy

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ending” that most people are familiar with today. They triumph over death. The tale begins with “once upon a time” or “once there was” and never really ends when it ends. The ending is actually the true beginning. [8;195]

Modern fantasy is braided into a number of subgroups, based on themes [2:144-156].

**Stories of pure imagination:** these can be picture books or longer, more intricate narratives. The adventures of the character take place in completely made-up settings, even though they start and end on realistic notes. Tales of talking beasts are not new; they date back a long way. Both old fables and numerous modern fantasy tales contain them. Modern talking-beast stories depict animals as being close to people and frequently residing in human-like environments. Kenneth Grahame's *The Wind in the Willows* is a contemporary story about a talking beast.

**Personified toys:** The first stories about toys that came to life were written by Hans Christian Andersen. His story, *The Steadfast Tin Soldier*, is a well-known illustration of a toy that performs heroic feats.

**Humorous fantasy:** A lot of fantasy has a humorous element. Younger kids enjoy humor that is more open-minded and slapstick. In those stories, the situations happen frequently and easily, and there is no magical explanation for them. The dynamics develop very smoothly. All of the heroic actions, metamorphoses, extraordinarily long-distance teleportations, and other frequent breaking of natural laws found in fairy tales are nothing more than miracles that call for an explanation from the audience.

The genre of fairy tales is ever changing and the characteristics differ from one story to the next. Although these unique distinctions make it challenging to confine fairy tales to any particular demographic, they attribute to the power that fairy tales maintain. The similarities between the stories are what truly classify them as one within this vast and continually evolving genre: The evolution of the fairy tale as a literary genre is marked by dialectical appropriation that set the cultural conditions for its institutionalization and its expansion as a mass-mediated form through radio, film, and television. Fairy tales were first told by gifted tellers and were based on rituals intended to endow with meaning the daily lives of members of a tribe [7; 333-334].

The genre of fairy-tale expands to include so many memorable stories and so many beloved characters. Fairy tales across time have had the unique ability to teach their listeners about life, expectation, and the importance of various virtues that pertain to the time and society in which they are told. The stories find a way to draw innate urges, darkness, and messed-up perceptions from the readers in a compelling way that demonstrates the hidden and sometimes disturbing feelings within all. Fairy tales break the boundaries of age, culture, and time. The everlasting power of the genre explains its exceptional ability to enter into the hearts of all.

As this quote asserts, the genre of fairy tale has evolved in unbelievable ways to better reflect the mediums used in the times of their telling. Beginning as an oral tradition and transforming into a variety of films and theatre performances, the genre lends itself to capture the attention of so many individuals and societies, encouraging them to recognize the moral claims within.

**Conclusion.** Children's literature aids in a young child's understanding of the world and what it means to be human. Children can learn valuable lessons through the genre of fairy tales. Even though fairy tales contain some unrealistic themes, they generally have a positive impact and provide essential components for children's development. For the foreseeable future, the traditional fairy tales will likely continue to hold the same significance for people as they did when they first came out. It is possible to refer to some of the contemporary versions as “fairy tales” but that does not make them unneeded or bad. These modifications are appropriate in a culture that values entertainment. For difference to truly emerge, identity must pass through it. Therefore, even though these tales might mimic fairy tales but never fully replace them, they might also be the beginning of something else that will eventually be valued and appreciated by people all over the world.

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