WORLDS THAT MAKE STORIES AND STORIES THAT MAKE WORLDS: IMAGINED SOCIETIES OF FAIRY TALES AND FOLKTALES

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ABSTRACT

That fact that fairy tales and folktales are produced in a certain time and space and intended for a specific audience has, until now, often been neglected. In the past they performed specific social or political functions, such as for instance, being a part of nation building, they were meant to discipline a certain population or educate. The author claims that fairy tales and folktales arise from social needs and tell of imagined societies. Their social and political functions can be analyzed through the relation between the structural features and the specificities of individual versions, considered in regard to social needs.

Keywords: fairy tale studies, folktale studies, critical theory, computational folktale studies, storytelling, formalism, structuralism, utopianism, social criticism, psychoanalytical studies, performance and communication studies

MONDI CHE CREANO STORIE E STORIE CHE CREANO MONDI: SOCIETÀ IMMAGINARIE DELLE FIABE E DEI RACCONTI

SINTESI

Spesso viene trascurato il fatto che le fiabe e i racconti popolari siano prodotti di determinati periodi e luoghi, destinati a un pubblico specifico. In passato, queste narrazioni svolgevano funzioni sociali o politiche specifiche, fungendo, per esempio, da supporto nel processo di costruzione della nazione, mezzi per disciplinare certe popolazioni o strumenti di educazione. L'autrice sostiene che le fiabe e i racconti popolari nascono da esigenze sociali e narrano di società immaginarie. Le loro funzioni sociali e politiche si possono comprendere attraverso un'analisi della relazione tra le caratteristiche strutturali e le specificità delle singole versioni, valutate in riferimento ai bisogni sociali.

Parole chiave: studi sulle fiabe, studi sui racconti popolari, teoria critica, studi computazionali sui racconti popolari, affabulazione, formalismo, strutturalismo, utopismo, critica sociale, studi psicoanalitici, scienze dello spettacolo e della comunicazione

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INTRODUCTION

The great social changes that took place in the transition from the Middle Ages to the Modern Period in Europe were reflected in the establishment of fairy tales as a genre.[1] Fairy tales have played a significant role in shaping modern society. As a literary genre, fairy tales took shape in the late seventeenth century in France. "Contes de fee" arose from the culture of storytelling in salons. The emergence of the literary tale as a shorter story took place in fourteenth-century Florence, leading to various collections of stories called novelle in Italian and Latin, influenced by Boccaccio's *Decameron*. Novelle were influenced by oral wonder tales, folktales, fabliaux, chivalric romances, epic poetry, and fables (Zipes, 2012a, 12). Jack Zipes connects the consolidation of literary fairy tales as a genre with the spread of the "civilizing process" (a notion taken from Norbert Elias) in Europe (Zipes, 2012a, 33). To comprehend the meaning of this notion, the origin of the word *civilité* is significant as it was consolidated during the disintegration of chivalric society and acquired a special character of refinement and an educational function in the sixteenth century (in 1530 Erasmus of Rotterdam published a treatise on the upbringing of boys *De civilitate morum puerilium*) (Elias, 2000, 47). By "civilizing process" Norbert Elias was referring primarily to 1.) systematic behavioral education and refinement (higher social classes in seventeenth century France), as well as 2.) nation-building i.e. state building (the case of Germany and the introduction of the concept of culture in the nineteenth century). The development of the press was an important factor in the consolidation of literary fairy tales as a genre and which facilitated their existence, development, distribution and popularity – and thus the function of "civilizing" society.

Literary theorists have interest in literary fairy tales that are considered to be canonized in the modern era (cf. Wanning Harries, 2001). Folklorists "make a distinction between wonder folk tales, which originated in oral traditions throughout the world and still exist, and literary fairy tales, which emanated from the oral traditions through the mediation of manuscripts and print, and continue to be created today in various mediated forms around the world" (Zipes, 2012b, 2–3). However, the historical relations between the oral tradition of storytelling and the literary tradition of fairy tales are complex and connec-

tions exist among them. The stories traversed geographically across different cultures, from literary genre to folklore and vice versa, as well as from different sorts of ancient tales to literary genres and folktales. Accordingly, literary fairy tales and folktales often share similarities amongst themselves and with other types of narratives, such as myths and legends, and other literary genres such as novellas and short stories. At times it is even difficult to differentiate between different genres, although attempts to do so frequently re-appear. In addition, certain fairy tales or parts of fairy tales and similar narratives appear in different cultural contexts and at different times. This fact has been acknowledged by evolutionary theory. Zipes introduced the theory of memetics and cultural evolution, inspired by genetically oriented evolutionary theory. In his view, only some fairy tale memes, defined as a unit of cultural transmission that can be a motif or a plot, a simple idea, story, phrase, or key information, are capable of surviving cultural evolution – these are memes that are repeated and that we remember. These memes are universal as they are immediately understood by people in different cultural environments, which is why they persist (Zipes, 2006, 5).

The theory of memetics speaks of persisting elements that can be preserved over centuries and in different cultural environments, and acknowledges that other elements change in different social contexts, but it does not explain how or why this happens. At the same time, the concept of the meme is too broad, as it can refer to a motif (such as the lost shoe in Cinderella) or to the structure of the tale (such as that of the dragon slayer). Accordingly, evolutionary theory does not say much about why particular fairy tales were interesting in some social circumstances nor what role they played. However, this characteristic testifies to the fact that fairy tales are obviously a flexible matter in their essence, so that through certain adaptations they can serve different needs in different social circumstances. Some schools of thought saw this characteristic of fairy tales but failed to recognize that changes in narratives are not arbitrary. The purpose of this article is to link fairy tales and folktales with cultural and political reality in order to show that it is precisely this flexibility of fairy tales and folktales that makes different societies adapt fairy tale narratives in such a way that through discourse they perform certain functions that are all related to building imagined societies, such as disciplining, nation-building, and education.

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A CRITICAL NOTE TO THE PSYCHOANALYTICAL STUDIES OF FAIRY TALES

The psychoanalytic method of studying fairy tales, introduced by Bruno Bettelheim (1976) which emphasizes the importance of fairy tales to a child's upbringing, has achieved great popularity, but also harsh criticism (Zipes, 2002, 179–205). Fairy tales as models for navigating reality, helping children develop the brightness and courage they need in an adult-ruled world have also been studied by Maria Tatar (Tatar, 1992), who has also psychoanalytically studied the darker dimensions of the tales written by the brothers Grimm (Tatar, 2003). The problem of the psychoanalytic approach introduced by Bettelheim is that it disregards the conditions of production and reception. Instead, it employs a universalist perspective which appears in the writing of another psychoanalytic scholar of fairy tales, Carl-Heinz Mallet, in the following statement: "Human beings *per se* are the focal point of the fairy tales, and people are pretty much alike no matter when or where they have lived" (Mallet, 1984, 38). A similar problem with universalization appears with the theory of archetypes. Jungian psychoanalysts tend to disregard the fact that "archetypes" can have diverse meanings in different cultures, as the meanings of symbols vary in different cultures and can shift with cultural changes and advancements in science. The view introduced by the psychoanalytic, archetypal, and anthroposophical-spiritualist (the Waldorf school) readers of fairy tales, of the folk and their world-view was thus informed by a universalizing tendency that completely disregards social, historical, and cultural factors. This is again expressed by the thoughts of Carl-Heinz Mallet: "Fairy tales developed outside the great world, beyond the centers of political and cultural power. They absorbed nothing from these areas, no historical events, no political facts, no cultural trends. They remained free of the moral views, behavioral standards, and manners of the various epochs" (Mallet, 1984, 38). In accordance with this perspective, psychoanalysis tends to treat fairy tales regardless of the social circumstances of their origin or of whom they addressed. Bruno Bettelheim completely disregarded the fact that before the twentieth century, literary fairy tales were mostly not intended for children. The brothers Grimm published seven editions of the tales between 1812 and 1857, which they censored, revised and reworked to conform to "positive" cultural values and adjusting in order to achieve popular approval (Tatar, 1997, 10), yet not as children literature, such as they were taken by
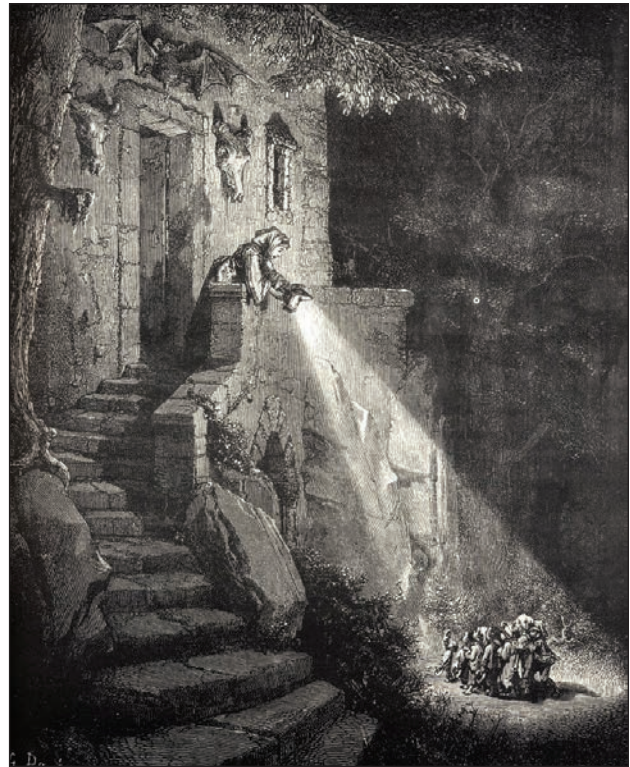
Figure 1: Illustration for Charles Perrault's "Le Petit Poucet" from Histoires ou Contes du Temps passé: Les Contes de ma Mère l'Oye (1697). Gustave Doré's illustrations appear in an 1867 edition entitled Les Contes de Perrault. Seventh of eleven engravings (Wikimedia Commons).

Bettelheim. As reading for adults, their tales functioned as many genres later taken over by the culture industry within the process of industrialization. Bettelheim treats fairy tales, such as those of the brothers Grimm, as universal factors in the growth of children and does not consider the primary functions they might also have had for those other than children in the circumstances of their origin, such as disciplining women, consolidating national identities, etc. His "point of view is problematic, because what he believes to be universal truths ultimately turns out to be the values of nineteenth-century Europe" (Haase, 1993, 391).

Many, particularly early studies of fairy tales, neglect the fact that fairy tales and/or folktales appear in different cultural contexts in different versions and focus on particular versions of fairy tales that they proclaim to be classic – usually those from the seventh edition of *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* of the brothers Grimm, ignoring the fact that the Grimms were changing details and editing each edition, most significantly the fifth edition from 1843,

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which they also Christianized, and the collection of fairy tales from *Histoires ou contes du temps passé* by Charles Perrault (cf. Opie & Opie, 1974; Tatar, 2002). Studies of this kind reproduce cultural hegemony, as they give priority to cases from Western Europe. Recently, however, fairy tale studies have begun to pay more attention to the non-Western versions of the so-called classical fairy tales (cf. Teverson, 2019; Joosen & Lathey, 2014; Hennard Dutheil de la Rochère et al., 2016).

ISSUES AND PERSPECTIVES OF TRADITIONAL AND COMPUTATIONAL FOLKTALE STUDIES

Because the "same" folktales appear in different variants, folklorists have organized folktales into types. The type index of folktales or commonly known as the ATU index[2] has become an internationally established classification system of narrative tradition. The type index could be taken as principally open to evidencing ever new versions of the registered tale types, the initial setting of the type index is essentially related to cultural hegemony. Although the last version of the type index upgraded by Uther has been significantly enriched, it still classifies folktales based on the supposedly "representative" versions of folktales, which as a rule originate from Western Europe. In such a manner, it consolidates certain versions as the dominant ones, while at the same time ignores many others. The types are conceptualized around certain key features, such as enchantment, which might not be present in another version set as a mere variation of the dominant one or is even neglected.

The earliest studies of folktales appeared in the nineteenth century with the so-called "mythological theory" of folktales, which studied the mythological significance of folktales.[3] At the end of the nineteenth century, however, younger folklorists diverted research away from this theory and introduced more realistic approaches. Folklorists began to collect versions of the folktale types. Marina Roalfe Cox published a historical-geographical study of 345 versions of Cinderella in 1893 (Roalfe Cox, 1893), in which she listed many versions, mostly from western European countries. Soon after Aarne drafted the first type index, an extensive comparative study of Grimm's fairy tales was conducted by Johannes Bolte and Jiři Polivka (Bolte & Polivka, 1912–32). The Cinderella variants were further examined by Anna Birgitta Rooth (Rooth, 1951). Her

organization of Cinderella types was recently used to conduct a phylomemetic case study derived from computational biology to oral traditions with the aim to trace the mutation and diversification of folk narratives (Sakamoto Martini et al., 2023). Gerhard Lauer, the editor of a thematic volume of the journal Fabula (summer 2023) on computational folktale studies classified the articles into three blocks that also denoted three phases of computational folktale studies: 1. collecting, which means building reliable databases, 2. annotating collected data and metadata and 3. analyzing the data with analytical methods and data visualizations (Lauer, 2023, 3). An ambitious collaborative program Transatlantic Digging into Data funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities (USA) and the European Union enabled three partner institutions (the Meertens Institute from Amsterdam, UCLA, and the University of Rostok/Wossidlo Research Center) to conduct the ISEBEL project: Intelligent Search Engine for Belief Legends (2017–2020), within which the research group harvested three databases of folktales: The Dutch Folktale Database (Meertens Institute), the Danish Folktale Database (UC Berkeley) and the Wossidlo Digital Archive (Rostock). The aim of the project was to create a European database with an intelligent search function and geographic visualizations. To illustrate the capacities of ISEBEL as a research tool or "a platform to support research," the research team presented the dispersion of mermaids and werewolves in the region of Denmark and Northeast Germany (Meder et al., 2023). There are further possibilities for the visual representation of different aspects of werewolf legends, such as narrative repertoire by motif, gender, place etc.

Marina Warner, Jan M. Ziolkowski and Graham Anderson traced selected fairy tale motifs to the ancient past. Warner drew connections with legends and myths, as well as with representations in the visual arts (Warner, 1994), while Ziolkowski searched for the roots of the modern fairy tales in the medieval past (Ziolkowski, 2007). Anderson finds variants of the "classical" modern fairy tales in ancient tales that were not meant for children (Anderson, 2000). Compared to the computational folktale studies, Warner, Ziolkowski and Anderson offer humanistic interpretations originating from a diachronic examination of motifs. The approach of the ISEBEL search engine is synchronic and does not assure qualitative interpretation. Instead, results from ISEBEL "can provide an alternative starting

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2   The Finns Kaarl Krohn and Julius Krohn promoted the comparative method, a student of this school Antti Aarne drafted a type index in 1910 (Aarne, 1910) which was perfected in 1928 (Aarne & Thompson, 1928) and 1961 (Thompson, 1961) by an American, Stith Thompson, and in 2004 by a German, Hans-Jörg Uther (2004).

3   Especially Jacob Grimm and Max Müller, while Theodor Benfey and E. B. Tylor, and initially also Andrew Lang, represented the anthropological school; Andrew Lang then pointed out the similarity of folktales with Greek myths and myths, customs and habits of the indigenous peoples, similarly to Hermann Oldenberg and J. G. Frazer that also focused on ancient customs and primitive religions.

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Figure 2: Hänsel and Gretel depicted by Alexander Zick (1845–1907), circa 1900 (Zick, 1975, n. p. (4–5)).

point for the researcher" by "complementing traditional analysis with graph analysis techniques and clustering algorithms," especially in the cases of larger corpuses composed of thousands of stories, when manual analysis becomes a challenge (Meder et al., 2023, 122). As computational studies do not provide final interpretations, combing traditional interpretative methods with contemporary computational folktale and fairy tale studies that basically provide quantitative results, promises to open the

door for such innovative humanistic interpretations as were not possible before, especially because of the scope that can be much broader when using digital tools. Computational analysis might help surpass the issues with cultural hegemony, at least as long as reliable and equally qualitative databases can be digitally built for different regions. The task to conduct qualitative research remains for humanities researchers. Still more, one can establish that with computational folktale studies it has become

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clearer what tasks a computer can do better than a human, and what the real research objectives of the humanities are.

DEFICIENCY OF THE FORMALIST AND STRUCTURALIST APPROACH

When Vladimir Propp examined wonder tales, he established that many legends, some animal tales and novellas have the same structure. Considered from the historical perspective, they merit the name "mythical tales" (Propp, 2009, 100). Many of the archaic myths present the same structure as wonder tales, thus this is the realm back to which the tale may be traced. At the same time, "the very same structure is exhibited, for example, by certain novels of chivalry. This is very likely a realm which itself may be traced back to the tale" (Propp, 2009, 101). Propp differentiated between the structure of the tale, the theme (Rus. sjužét), composition and variants. The content can be summarized in a few sentences. The tale consists of constants and variables. The attributes of the dramatis personae change, while their actions and functions do not. "Function is understood as an act of a character, defined from the point of view of its significance for the course of the action" (Propp, 2009, 21). The functions of the dramatis personae are thus the constants and are to be considered the basic components of the tale. It often happens that identical actions are attributed to various personages. "This makes possible the study of the tale *according to the functions of its dramatis personae*" (Propp, 2009, 20). The composition of the tale is set by the predicates. From the point of view of composition, it is irrelevant, whether a dragon kidnaps a princess or a devil a peasant's daughter. The subjects, objects and other elements define the theme. "In other words, the same composition may lie at the base of various themes" (Propp, 2009, 113). A variant differentiates from the theme. Another variant appears when a sequence or some sequences of the form are altered, while retaining all the others. The question of quantity turns to one of quality. It is impossible to draw a strict dividing line between the theme and variant. With his formalistic method, Propp studied the form of wonder tales that he ascertained can be linked to some ancient forms as wonder tales are reflections of myths and legends. He examined the inner structure and elements of the wonder tale, yet he did not continue by studying the meaning that the tales had for the societies that produced them: "Following the study of separate elements, there must be a genetic study of the axis on which all fairy tales are formed. Certainly the norms and forms of metamorphoses must be studied. Only after this can one proceed to the study of the question of

how separate themes were formed, and what they represent" (Propp, 2009, 115).

Claude Lévi-Strauss structurally studied myth. He ascertained that:

> *Whether the myth is re-created by the individual or borrowed from tradition, it derives from its sources – individual or collective (between which interpenetrations and exchanges constantly occur) – only the stock of representations with which it operates. But the structure remains the same, and through it the symbolic function is fulfilled. If we add that these structures are not only the same for everyone and for all areas to which the function applies, but that they are few in number, we shall understand why the world of symbolism is infinitely varied in content, but always limited in its laws. There are many languages, but very few structural laws which are valid for all languages.* (Lévi-Strauss, 1963, 203)

Myth is, like the rest of language, made up of constituent units, wherein each gross constituent unit consists of a relation. Within the structure of a myth, essential are the relations between the gross constituent unit, so that Lévi-Strauss concluded: "The true constituent units of a myth are not the isolated relations but *bundles of such relations*, and it is only as bundles that these relations can be put to use and combined so as to produce a meaning" (Lévi-Strauss, 1963, 211). Claude Lévi-Strauss connected the structure of a fairy tale to that of a myth. He compared the American Ash-Boy cycle with the Indo-European Cinderella and found out that the trickster plays the role of mediator in a similar manner as the emergence of myth "provides us with a series of mediating devices, each of which generates the next one by a process of opposition and correlation" (Lévi-Strauss, 1963, 226).
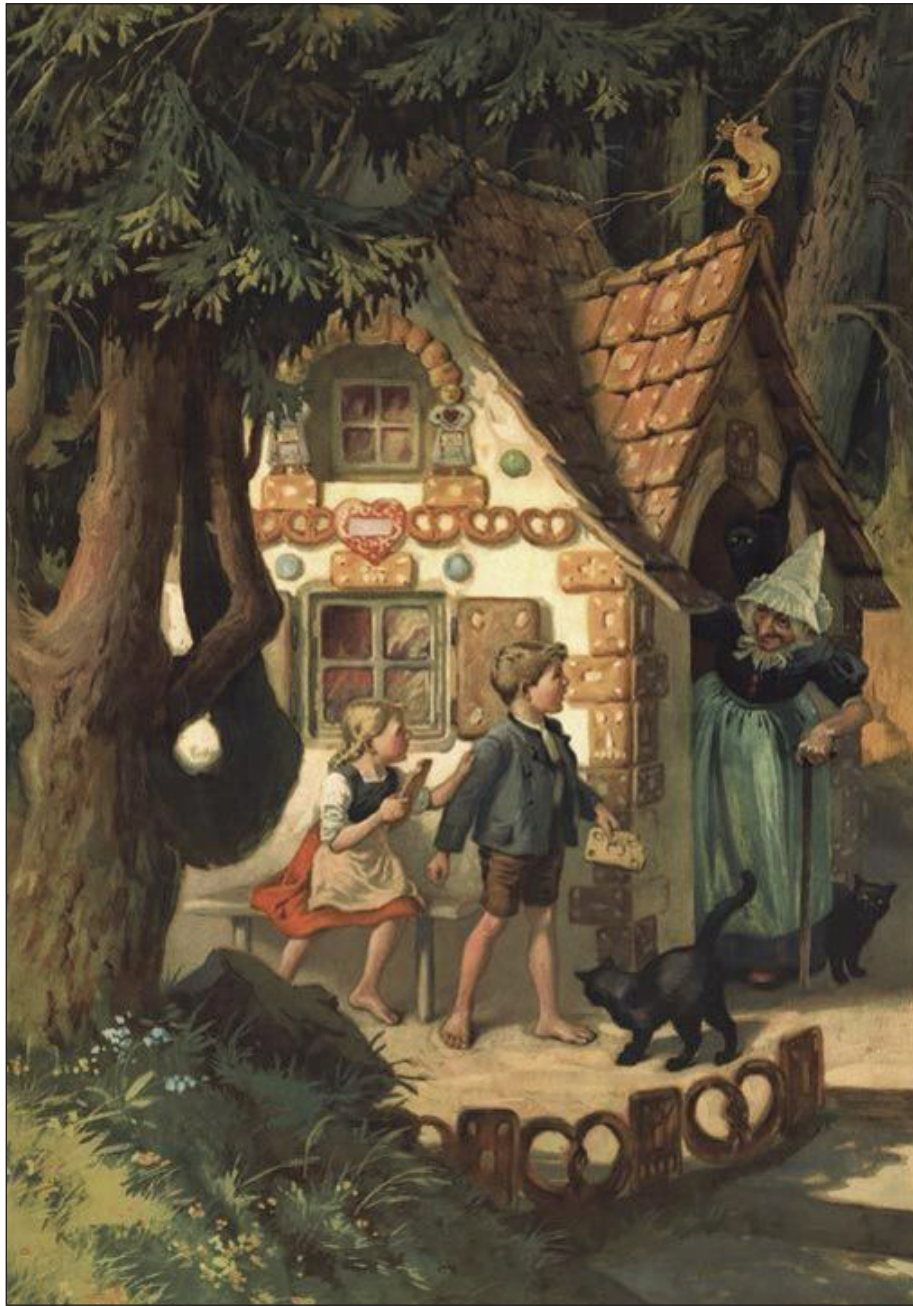
Formalist and structuralist theory considered the concept of an inner or underlying structure determined by internal relationships and functionalities of the elements. The notion of such a structure can explain the fact that different fairy tales have a uniform general structure, a composition structured by the actions a character takes, the predicates, although some sequences might be altered or subjects change. Formalism and structuralism open the realm of fairy tales so as to connect it to other kinds of narratives, such as myths and legends. Both schools consider the structure as universal, i.e. that it always remains the same, only the content (Lévi-Strauss) or the theme (Propp) change. Although Claude Lévi-Strauss avoided this issue to a certain degree, as he primarily studied myth, both schools disregard the fact that the needs for narratives

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Figure 3: Arthur Rackham illustration of Hansel and Gretel which appeared in Grimm, Jacob and Wilhelm (1909): The Fairy Tales of the Brothers Grimm. Translated by Edgar Lucas. London, Constable & Company Ltd. (Wikimedia Commons).

such as folktales differ with societies. Both schools acknowledged that narratives such as folktales and wonder folktales do change as regards the contents or themes, but they did not question, why this takes place nor did they study what different functions these narratives play in different social contexts. This relationship between the underlying structure and the theme on the one hand and the function the particular variant or group of variants of a certain type of narrative played in a particular society on the other, was neglected by formalist and structuralist scholars. They simply did not pay attention to the social circumstances that are key to understanding why a particular narrative appeared at a certain time. They did not study the need for these narratives in societies nor their social function.

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Figure 4: Illustration of Hansel and Gretel in front of the witch's house by Otto Kubel (1868–1951) from 1930 (Wikimedia Commons).

SOCIAL ORDER AND UTOPIANISM AS SOCIAL CRITICISM

Scholars originating from various disciplines have analyzed how fairy tales and folktales reflect the way of living, social order and roles, as well as social changes. Lewis Seifert analyzed representations of sexuality, masculinity and femininity in the late seventeenth-century French fairy tales. He acknowl-

edged the rise of literary fairy tales and interest in the marvelous was related to the establishment of the awareness of the importance of motherhood as a sign of deeper social change at the decline of the reign of Louis XIV (Seifert, 1996). Ruth Bottigheimer connected the origin of the modern fairy tale heroine with the declining control of women over their own fertility, which appears simultaneously with the rise of capitalism. Around 1700, modern attributes

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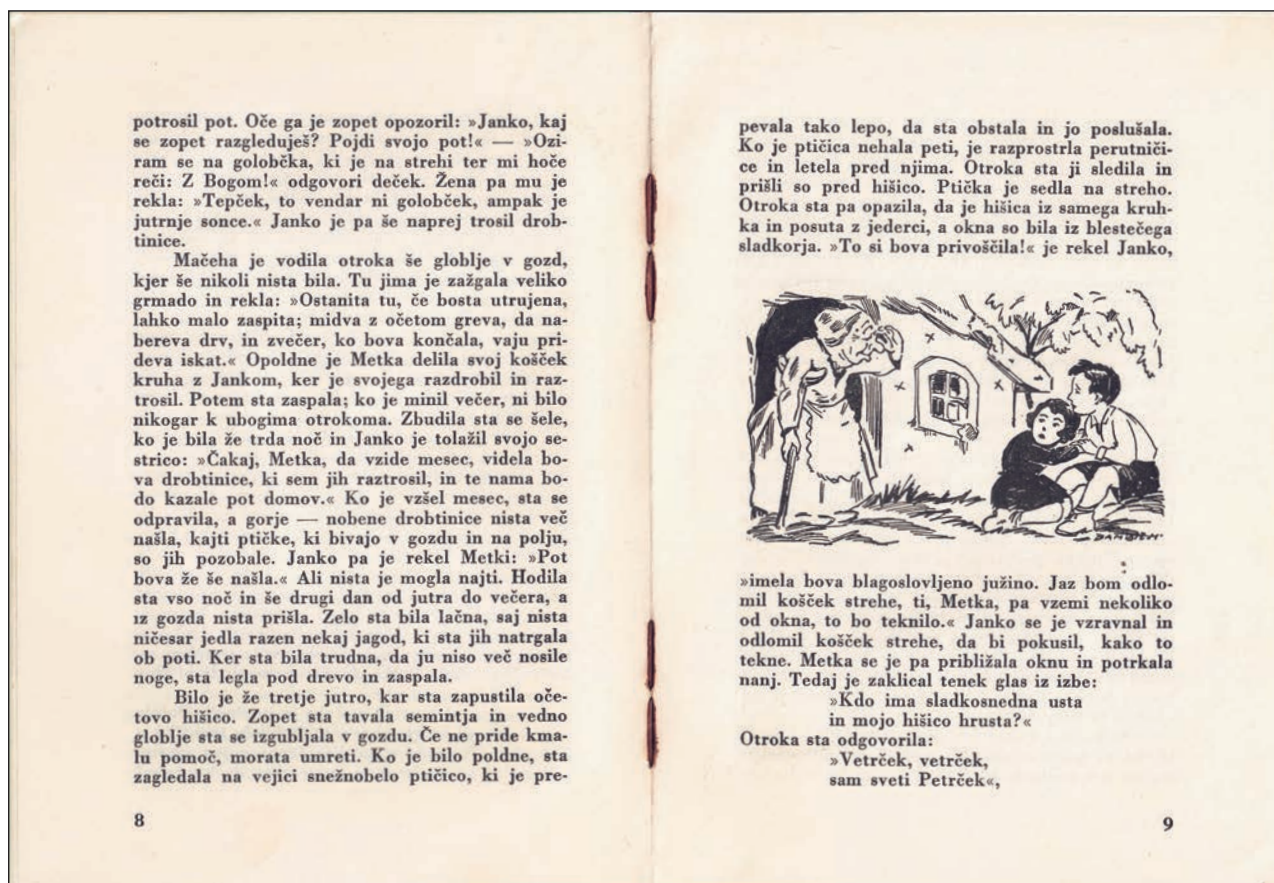

Figure 5: Illustration of Janko and Metka at the witch's house by Milko Bambič, which appeared in 1932 Alojzij Bolhar's translation of selected tales from Kinder- und Hausmärchen (Grimm, 1932, 8–9).

of femininity were formed that were understood as normal until recently (Bottigheimer, 2000, 64). Holly Tucker connected scientific research and marvelous fictions of early-modern France in order to illuminate the gender politics underlying dramatic changes in reproductive theory and practice (Tucker, 2010). Monika Kropej Telban analyzed folklore and culture as the way of living as represented in the folktales from the legacy of the collector Karel Štrekelj (1859–1912) (Kropej, 1992). Folktales can inform their audience regarding diseases and epidemics in times of medical deprivation.[4] Jack Zipes illuminated the cross-cultural connections of the "classical" fairy tales (Zipes, 2001).

Anja Mlakar analyzed religiosity and nationalism as reflected in nineteenth-century Slovenian literary folklore (Mlakar, 2022), the role of religion in the legends of Turkish attacks (Mlakar, 2021) and the representation of the Other as a mysterious stranger and a demonic enemy in the Slovenian literary folklore (Mlakar, 2019). Maria Nikolajeva showed how Russian fairy tales promoted communist ideas (Nikolajeva, 2002).

Fairy tales and folktales often express utopian aspirations. In Ernst Bloch's view, magical wish-fulfillment and utopian fantasies make folktales essentially utopian as a genre: "the future that folklore tells about, as it is in prophecy, is a totally false one" (Bloch, 1988, 104). The utopian longing is however relevant for the present time: "possibility as a philosophical category must be regarded seriously, and both Bloch and Adorno

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4 Mojca Ramšak studied how the nineteenth and early twentieth century folktales from Pohorje thematize "human mortality in all of its' physical and mental decline, with ageing and dying, disabled, injured and defective bodies, social stigmatizing of disabled people, times without disability, pension or old-age insurance, dependence from the goodwill of the relatives or the community, hard work until the very end, mutual help, the social outcasts because of their physical or mental impairment and Christian values together with the patriarchal notions of gender roles. Stigma attached to the disabled and impaired in the past, is a niche into the process of assigning or denying social values and managing identity" (Ramšak, 2022, 675).

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agreed that the utopian wish-image, even when it is false, conveys a critique of what is present and points at the same time to what could and should be" (Zipes, 2015, 189). Giovan Francesco Straparola's fairy tale type rags-to-riches no longer spoke of the restoration of royal social status as did many ancient and medieval tales, but "his newly invented tales were the first to address the aspirations of an urban artisanal readership" (Bottigheimer, 2002, 2), as they depicted marriages between people from low and high social classes that were not allowed in the context of the sixteenth century Venetian Republic. The utopian element has remained relevant in the culture industry, which has taken over the motto that anyone can succeed in an upward social rise, having become a constituent part of the myth of the American dream. One important role fairy tales play in societies is that they convey subversive criticism. For instance, writers from the Weimar Republic recovered the utopian spirit of fairy tales and fables for the present (Zipes, 1997b, 3). Furthermore, two-thirds of the published late seventeenth century fairy tales were written by women. As male authors were more interested in other, "higher" literary forms, women appropriated this genre as their own and used it for social criticism, to question the representation of gender roles in the context of royal absolutism and materialism (Hannon, 1998). The representations of gender roles by female writers were often quite different than the dominant cultural and political setting of the gender roles in the court society as women were often keen on attributing autonomy in actions to heroines. *Contes de fées* expressed nostalgia that also served "subversive utopian longings expressed through the marvelous" (Seifert, 1996, 222).

THE ROLE OF STORYTELLING IN SOCIAL COHESION

Folktales and fairy tales shape identities and build communities. They play a vital role in the socialization of individuals, since they build values as the foundation of culture and, therefore, of society, thus being distinctly socially cohesive. "From the very beginning, thousands of years ago, when all types of tales were told to create communal bonds in the face of inexplicable forces of nature, to the present, when fairy tales are written and told to provide hope in a world seemingly on the brink of catastrophe, mature men and women have been the creators and cultivators of the fairytale tradition" (Zipes, 2007, 1). Before industrialization

and the dominance of mass media, the practice of oral distribution and reception of folktales was the dominant means for conveying ideas that speak of the proper social order. In rural parts of Slovenia and its neighboring countries, oral storytelling was preserved until recently. A renowned folktale collector Milko Matičetov noticed, when he lived in Ter (Slavia Friulana) for a month in 1940, that no one held a book, nor did people read newspapers. The only book he saw in Ter was *The Tenth Brother*, the first Slovenian novel written by Josip Jurčič (Matičetov, 1948, 3). Reading was not widespread, while on the contrary, the practice of storytelling was very popular and had a significant role in community building. A known Resian storyteller Valentina Pielich Negro (born in 1900) also known as Tina Wajtawa from Solbica in Resia died not long ago, that is in 1984.

Considering fairy tales and folktales as a means of communication, their primary communication function, understood according to classification of communication functions of language by Roman Jakobson (Jakobson, 1981), is not the referential function, which is to speak of or report on historical events in a truthful manner. This is not the case because of the fictional dimensions,[5] as fairy tales and folktales also speak of society in their themes, as well as they speak of the society that produced it. Historian Robert Darnton even claimed that "folktales are historical documents" (Darnton, 1999, 13). Fairy tales and folktales need to be considered a discourse, within which they convey relevant messages from one social subject to another by addressing the recipients and thus also directing them to certain behavior. Accordingly, the conative function is a very relevant feature of fairy tales and folktales, which especially comes to the fore when telling a story. The moment of performance arises from the need for counsel and lessons from the preceding generations on the one hand and the urge to convey those counsels and lessons condensed in the community lore on the other, under special social, technical and other conditions that enable the tale's oral distribution. A storyteller is not the ultimate source, the origin of the narration. A "folk" storyteller is, however, not to be considered an unconscious mediator between the truth and the community. In folklore, the personality, the ability to narrate and perform, aesthetic qualities, the overall integrity of the storyteller are factors in storytelling, as well as are the specifics of language, culture, the message conveyed, the counsel, the individual and collective wisdom.

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5   Fairy tales are often regarded as fiction literature (cf. Nikolajeva, 2000), while wonder tales (according to Propp) are expected to contain wonders. According to Jakobson, there is no difference between fiction and truthful reporting as concerns the definition of the referential function. Still more, the most common primary communication function of fiction literature is referential.

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Figure 6: Illustration of Janko and Metka eating the house of Grandma and Grandpa by Roža Piščanec, which first appeared in 1963 edition of Janko and Metka written by France Bevk (Bevk, 1975, n. p. (5)).

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All these radiates from a tale told by an excellent "folk" storyteller and co-creates the outcome. The renowned folktale collector Milko Matičetov believed that a genuine "folk" storyteller holds more aesthetic sense and authenticity than an educated writer. He took an example of storyteller Regina Karmaro and compared her virtues of storytelling to the professional skills of educated author Josip Jurčič. The barriers of folklore, wrote Matičetov, partly accept, partly deny the ancient tradition that they are familiar with, and creatively reshape it by adding their own experiences and experiences of their contemporaries, or even create the stories anew – in any case they mediate their inner richness to their surroundings and in such a manner to future generations (Matičetov, 1948, 10–11). According to Walter Benjamin, the storyteller conveys "counsel" to his audience, wherein the storyteller is the one that first has to tell the story. "Counsel woven into the fabric of real life is wisdom. The art of storytelling is reaching its end because the epic side of truth, wisdom, is dying out" (Benjamin, 2007, 86–87). Storytellers had relevance in transmitting knowledge and experiences from past to future generations of active social subjects. Folktales thus invoke the "underlying cognitive matrices through which the political community traditionally thinks itself" (Horvat, 2022a, 620).

INDUCING POLITICAL IDEOLOGY THROUGH FAIRY TALES

Folktales and fairy tales can be a relevant political means. A very generalized theoretical view could differentiate between the bottom-up practice of folklore storytelling that represents the unmediated communication of community members to other community members on the one hand, and the top-down distribution of fairy tales, which means the production (writing and publishing) of fairy tales controlled or directed by the dominant power forces on the other. The obvious case of the latter is the culture industry and especially obvious is the case of fairy tale production in totalitarian political regimes, when the government directs cultural production through a mechanism of control, although one might not neglect that different sorts of appropriation and ideological adaptation are at work also in democratic regimes. In practice, the boundary between the former and the latter is difficult to draw as critical voices can also appear in the dominant production, such as in the case of the "feminist" voices of the French salon fairy tale culture, as well as fairy tales written with a tendency to build society as imagined by the ruling elite, could also be written with genuine intentions to contribute to building a better society and later taken as a means to foster certain political ideologies (such as in the case of the brothers Grimm; cf. Bottigheimer, 2009, 40). Given the importance that fairy tales played in the German socialization process, particularly the Grimms' tales, it was not by chance that the occupation forces, led by the British, banned the publication of fairy tales in 1945 (Bastian, 1981).

The socio-political circumstances condition the production of folktales and fairy tales. Folktales and fairy tales are cultural products which are distributed according to the politics of aesthetics, composed of a priori laws which condition what is possible to produce. The distribution of the sensible delimits forms of inclusion and exclusion in a community, and the politics of aesthetics define the ideological inclinations and erasures.[6] When translated into other languages and cultures, the narrative is adjusted to the specific cultural context in which it appears in order to play a role in building the society as imagined by the community members or leaders. Totalitarian regimes were explicit, but not exclusive in adjusting the "classical" tales to their needs in the sense of censoring and erasing elements they considered improper for the imagined communities. Nike Kocijančič Pokorn paid attention to how the production of children's literature was directed in the context of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and how the translations of fairy tales by the brothers Grimm were cleansed of additions considered unhealthy (Kocijančič Pokorn, 2012). Marijana Hameršak related the politics of the early translations of the Grimms' fairy tales into Croatian, such as omitting the authors, with the ambitions to build a society of its own kind (Hameršak, 2014).

A short survey of the translations and adaptations of Hansel and Gretel into Slovene shows how the tale was adjusted to correspond to the needs of the changing political regimes. The Grimms' tale Hansel and Gretel was first translated into Slovene as Janezek and Jerica in 1887 (trans. J. Markič), while in 1932 (trans. A. Bolhar) the names were changed to Janko and Metka, which remain to the present day. The early translations of the Grimms' tales were quite literal, while in the Socialist Republic of Slovenia the religious elements were removed in the translations by

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6   According to Jacques Rancière, the "distribution of the sensible" is "the system of self-evident facts of sense perception that simultaneously discloses the existence of something in common and the delimitations that define the respective parts and positions within it" (Rancière, 2004, 12).

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Figure 7: Illustration of Janko and Metka meeting the witch in front of her house by Jelka Godec Schmidt from a comprehensive edition of Kinder- und Hausmärchen translated to Slovene by Polonca Kovač (Grimm, 2012, 52).

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Fran Albreht and Jože Zupančič. They however returned in 1993 with the literal translation by Polonca Kovač. The translators of the socialist era censored content not considered appropriate for a socialist society. From 1954 onwards, the Socialist Alliance of the Working People of Slovenia (SAWPS) established various committees that monitored publishing activity. Each publishing house in Slovenia was obliged to have a publishing council, whose members were selected by the SAWPS printing committee, and the decision-making positions in these councils were given to trustworthy party members. The main goal of the publishing councils was to approve the yearly publishing program (Gabrič, 1995, 72–73). In addition, a sui generis version of Janko and Metka was written by renowned writer France Bevk and published as a picture book equipped with illustrations by Roža Piščanec in 1963 by Mladinska knjiga, a socialist publishing house covering the domain of children's literature. In France Bevk's fairy tale Janko and Metka there is no mother or step-mother, but only a father who takes care of the children and does not abandon them, while this motif is central to the Grimms' fairy tale. There is no witch that wants to eat the children and who the children kill and rob as in the Grimms' version. The analysis of this tale by Bruno Bettelheim does not apply to France Bevk's version, nor can it be classified as a tale of magic under the type ATU 327A, which refers to Hansel and Gretel.

Translation is a process of familiarization, of appropriation of someone else's language (Zipes, 1997a, 198). Zipes considers translation in a very broad sense, thus facilitating a discussion on how some memes survive in different cultural contexts. Translation could still be considered a transference of texts produced in one cultural context into texts that appear in another cultural context. In other words, a certain version of the tale is transferred to another cultural context, where it is made understandable to a different social group. The translation is, in this case, supposed to preserve the message of the tale that is being translated. However, as the case of the translations of the Grimms' tales into other languages, especially in the context of socialism shows, translation is more than making a certain story taken from one cultural context understandable to another social group. The decision to translate a narration and the mode of translating it are defined by the politics of aesthetics dominating the context of its production. Translation is thus related to the social function of the product distributed to a certain population. The cultural context into which a tale is translated might be different to such a degree from the one in which the tale being translated was produced that both tales can no longer play the same social role. For instance, the Grimms fulfilled various functions by the publications of their fairy tales. Their tales were not (only) meant to be instructive for children, but were also interesting for adults because of the entertaining manner in which they were written, later adopted by the culture industry. Today the tales as they had been published by the Grimms have lost the function of entertainment and their pedagogical role has decreased, while their historical and even archeological value has increased. However, their tales are repeatedly recycled by the culture industry to fulfill various entertainment functions such as horror, romance, and adventure. In addition to translating, there are also other sorts of cultural appropriation at work in producing fairy tales. The goal is often not to transfer a certain version of the tale to another audience, to familiarize it, but adaptations of the tales could range from subversions to complex political appropriations, where the messages the tales convey could radically change. Zipes has shown how far the revisions of the Grimms' tales reached in the FDR and GDR after 1966, especially after the 1970's radical break in the reception of the Grimms' fairy tales, related in West Germany to the student movement, rediscovery of the radical left-wing writers of the Weimar period, the interest of publishing houses in progressive children's literature and the emergence of a new generation of young teachers, as well as the desire to produce new radical fairy tales,[7] and how much those depended on the political context (Zipes, 1993). Such "recycling" does not only mean "translating" certain fairy tales from one language to another. The case of the FDR and GDR speaks of the difficulties the Germans had with the legacy of the Grimms' fairy tales, which were considered in relation to building the nineteenth and early twentieth century German nation, as well as of the post-second World War nations to build a different kind of society.

Fairy tales that "stick," to borrow a term from Zipes and his theory of cultural evolution, are often quite newly designed according to the anticipated reception and the intention related to its production. Additionally, there are also the interests of publishing houses or other parties concerned involved in the production. These could

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7   Zipes classifies basic types of these tales: 1. the social satire, 2. utopian, 3. pedagogical, 4. feminist, 5. comic parody and 6. spiritual.

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be political, economic or other. The messages and social functions can change in the distribution of the sensible, which is conditioned by the politics of production and the anticipated reception. In those cases, fairy tales may begin to perform different social functions than the earlier versions, which, though serving as a reference or these new ones, cannot be considered the "original" versions.

The writer's and publisher's motives and intentions, as well as the anticipation of the addressee are relevant factors for the production of particular variants of fairy tales and folktales. The interests of publishing houses and other parties involved, such as the state or sponsors, also play a role in the production of a fairy tale edition. These interests may be political economic or social. The messages and social functions can change in the distribution of the sensible, which is conditioned by the politics of production and the anticipated reception. In the cases of translations or appropriations, fairy tales may begin to perform different social functions than the earlier versions, which, though serving as a reference for these new ones, cannot be considered the "original" versions, as each edition is unique. Scholars highlighted the relevance fairy tales had in nation building (Snyder, 1951; Crowther, 2022; Norberg, 2022; Zima, 2022).[8] Jack Zipes analyzed aspects of socialization and politicization through fairy tales, especially in reference to the brothers Grimm, paying regard to the social atmosphere that conditioned the production of their fairy tales (Zipes, 2012a). Different regimes aimed to induce specific views of society (cf. the case of the Soviet Union in Balina et al., 2005) and used folktales to legitimate socio-political transformation (for Yugoslav self-governing socialism, cf. Horvat, 2022b).

Fairy tale narratives create heroes for political needs. With Martin Krpan (1858), Fran Levstik intentionally created "a national literary character that would constitute a foundation for both further literary creation and the national political struggle" (Darovec, 2021, 457). Martin Krpan corresponded to Levstik's political agenda to implement an outlaw hero, Martin Krpan, for the needs of Slovenia's nation-building process. In 1954 Walt Disney created the all-American hero Davy Crockett, a frontier fighter who became a pop culture symbol in the context of the cold war. In addition, the culture industry appropriates "classical" fairy tales, such as when Walt Disney production took

Cinderella and Snow White from Charles Perrault's legacy, and re-created them according to the socio-political needs. Walt Disney announced that in March 2024 they plan to release a remake of the 1937 animated film Snow White, this time in a movie with real actors, a racially diverse set of actors to play the dwarves with only one actor who has dwarfism and a Hispanic actress Rachel Zegler depicting the titular princess. The movie makers claim the product will be modernized, the princess is not going to be saved by the prince and she is not going to dream about true love, but she is dreaming of becoming a leader. The critics claim the producers have racialized the characters to check every box they can. The remakes of the known fairy tales are becoming increasingly "woke" for embracing diverse casting and feminist themes and turning off many fans. According to critics, in doing so, they also further divide people (Murray, 2023). However, the production of modernized remakes of classical fairy tales is obviously considered a profitable business (Reid, 2023).

CONCLUSION: APPROPRIATING FAIRY TALE STRUCTURES ACCORDING TO THE NEEDS OF COMMUNITIES

If fairy tales were considered only children's literature, the role of which is to introduce a minor to the world of the adult, as is the current, widespread understanding of this genre, the variety of roles that fairy tales and folktales played in societies would be neglected. Fairy tales and folktales can perform important political functions. They are important factors in building imagined communities – not only nations, as analyzed by Benedict Anderson (Anderson, 2006), but also as other sorts of communities that understand themselves as communities. Analyzing fairy tales and folktales can provide insight into how a particular society understood itself, which were the issues of people's concern and what messages they aimed to transmit to the members of their community and to their ancestors. Folktales and fairy tales have a double social functionality: 1. They reflect society or they can be understood as texts that show how society understands itself. 2. They address social subjects and thus direct them to certain behavior, they are didactic tools, not only for children, but also for adults (cf. Toplak, 2022).

The existing studies have illuminated fairy tales and folktales as an incredibly rich domain, worthy of study, contrary to the obsolete prejudice that

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8   While on the other hand the case studied by Cristina Fossaluzza shows that the decision to use the form of a fairy tale to "mythologize the social" in times of historical urge for cultural production to serve political needs, such as in war, seems to be "a conscious stand against the culture and society of the time" (Fossaluzza, 2022, 730).

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they are less scientifically interesting than the aesthetically "superior" forms of literature, written by esteemed authors. A fairy tale is embedded in society, it is interwoven with diachronic and synchronic connections to the related tales, and at the same time it radiates the spirit of its age and social context, which is the one that establishes the real need for it. What Roland Barthes wrote about what is a text, applies to the structural logic of fairy tales or folktales: a "text is not a line of words releasing a single 'theological' meaning (the 'message' of the Author-God) a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture" (Barthes, 1977, 146). It makes no sense to look for the origin of fairy tales, to search for the beginning, as each version is original in terms of its embeddedness and the function it has in society. Fairy tales or folktales lead not to one, but to numerous references. This is exactly the opposite of the methods that look for the final reference, as Fredric Jameson critically reads Claude Lévi-Strauss's insistence on the underlying deep narrative structure and Vladimir Propp's deep structure of the fairy tale that rejoin Northrop Frye's perspective (Jameson, 2002, 108). According to Frye in Jameson's reading, "the oral tales of tribal society, the fairy tales that are the irrepressible voice and expression of the underclasses of the great systems of domination, adventure stories and melodrama, and the popular or mass culture of our own time are all syllables and broken fragments of some single immense story" (Jameson, 2002, 91). These methods tend to subsume all fairy tales or similar narratives to one grand underlying narrative, rather than in terms of a synchronic system (Jameson, 2002, 108).

Folktales have historical dimensions. Their psychological dimension is not to be denied, however they also reflect social mentalities and show how they changed, precisely because of the characteristic of folktales to re-appear in different cultural contexts

in different variants: "They have evolved over many centuries and have taken different turns in different cultural traditions. Far from expressing the unchanging operations of man's inner being, they suggest that *mentalités* themselves have changed" (Darnton, 1999, 13). If we connect them diachronically with earlier versions of that type of tale or similar tales from the past, some folktales and fairy tales might not change their inner structure, yet they do change the themes and their subjects. There could be synchronic links established among similar tales appearing in different cultural contexts, in different geographic regions. Both diachronic and synchronic perspectives enable one to make comparisons, to detect similarities and differences, elements that persist and those that are specific. The narrative of the dragon slayer could be traced back to the ancient mythological past and to modern popular films. These connections might not be relevant in order to understand the meaning a particular version had for those who produced it and those whom it addressed. The variety of otherwise similar tales played very different social functions. The Mesopotamian myth of the dragon slayer explained the formation of the world and civilization in particular. In Christian legends of Saint George or Saint Michael, the dragon slayer served to promote Christianity, while in the pre-Enlightenment Carniola region, it served the needs of building memory and the local community's identity. In the context of the national revival, it was used in nation building. The tales of the dragon slayer might be similar or one might refer to an earlier one and that to the one preceding, but they do not repeat one and the same message. Each singular tale brings its own references and thoughts. Each singular version matters, as "It matters what matters we use to think other matters with; it matters what stories we tell to tell other stories with; it matters what knots knot knots, what thoughts think thoughts, what descriptions describe descriptions, what ties tie ties. It matters what stories make worlds, what worlds make stories" (Haraway, 2016, 12).

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SVETOVI, KI USTVARJAJO ZGODBE, IN ZGODBE, KI USTVARJAJO SVETOVE: ZAMIŠLJENE DRUŽBE PRAVLJIC IN LJUDSKIH PRIPOVEDI

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POVZETEK

Dosedanje raziskave pravljic so vse prepogosto spregledovale dejstvo, da pravljica vselej nastane v določenem času in prostoru, da izhaja iz družbe in je namenjena družbi. Avtorica v prispevku zagovarja tezo, da so pravljice izvajale specifične družbene in politične funkcije, kot na primer, da so prispevale h grajenju naroda, bile so sredstvo discipliniranja in izobraževalno orodje. Pravljice izhajajo iz družbenih potreb in pripovedujejo o zamišljenih družbah. Čeprav se folkloristika ukvarja z evidentiranjem različic istega tipa pravljice, nastalih v različnih družbenih okoliščinah, pa se ne posveča družbenim potrebam po določenih sporočilih, ki jih prinaša posamična inačica. Evolucijska teorija sicer razlaga, da se skozi čas in v različnih okoljih ohranjajo le določeni memi, toda ne pojasni, zakaj družbe uporabijo določene meme. Literarna zgodovina umesti pričetek literarne pravljice v novi vek, ko se ta žanr kanonizira. Toda literarne pravljice se bogato navezujejo na ljudske pripovedi, antične mite in legende ter srednjeveške romance. Formalistična in strukturalistična teorija sta iskali spodaj ležečo strukturo, ki opredeljuje vse pravljične inačice. Pri tem pa sta zanemarili diskurzivno analizo variant, ki bi pokazala posebnosti inačic. Te so tiste, ki govorijo o vsebinah in problematikah, ki zanimajo določeno družbo, v kateri so nastale in ki so jo nagovorile. Avtorica v prispevku zagovarja tezo, da lahko družbene in politične funkcije pravljic razumemo na podlagi primerjave različic, ki pokaže strukturne podobnosti, pa tudi vsebinske posebnosti posamičnih inačic. Prek opredelitve strukture s temeljnimi notranjimi funkcijami, ki se razbere na osnovi primerjave različic, obravnave posebnosti inačice z metodo diskurzivne analize ter analizo konativne funkcije te inačice v kombinaciji z analizo družbenih potreb je moč podati razlago družbene funkcije, ki jo je imela določena inačica pravljice v družbi, ki ji je bila podana.

Ključne besede: študije pravljic, študije ljudskih pravljic, kritična teorija, računalniške študije ljudskih pravljic, pripovedništvo, formalizem, strukturalizem, utopizem, družbena kritika, psihoanalitične študije, študije performansa in komunikacije

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