

Crucial Approaches to Fairy Tales from History Up to Now

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ABSTRACT

Article deals with birth of one of the essential genres of literature: "Fairy tales". A massive data was accumulated about fairy tales over the more decades. Since the existence of folklore as an academic motion in the late eighteenth century, academics have gained a number of approaches and methodologies in order to shed light on various complexions of folk traditions. Folk tales have been analyzed from different angles, ranging from folkloristic, mythological, anthropological, and ethnographic, to psychological, linguistic, literary, sociohistorical, and feminist notions. The sheer abundance of approaches to the study demonstrates essential aspects and the richness of options underlying the tales. The motive of this paper is to display an overview of these approaches and the vital figures, as well as to provide a representative bibliographical list for the aim of assisting further scholarly efforts.

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Introduction

Fairy tales are a genre of literature with a long history. A **fairy tale** (alternative names include **fairy tale**, **fairy story**, **magic tale**, or **wonder tale**) is a brief story that belongs to the folklore type. Such stories typically demonstrate elements of magic, myth, and enchantment or fanciful beings. In most cultures, a gist aim of fairy tales was to teach humanity to distinguish good from evil. Prevalent elements consist of dragons, elves, giants, goblins, gnomes, griffins, unicorn, witches. The history of the fairy tale is particularly difficult to trace because only the literary forms can survive. Still, according to researchers at universities in Durham and Lisbon, such stories may date back thousands of years, some to the Bronze age. Fairy tales, and works derived from fairy tales, are still written today, early as the eleventh century, a potential ancestor of the well-known fairy tale 'Little Red Riding Hood' was presented in Latin verse by the medieval teacher Egbert of Liège in his schoolbook *Fecunda ratis* (1022-1024) with the purpose of religious instruction. Its plot only vaguely resembles that of the modern tale, but, according to Jan M. Ziolkowski, Egbert "remains a folklore collector of the only sort who could have been encountered around the millennium – a male member of the literate class who, to indoctrinate youths, drew upon material that had currency among common people" (1992: 559). Although tales existing in manuscripts are relatively rare before modern times, towards the end of the eighteenth and during the nineteenth century a fashion for collecting them developed, and with the first collector's attempts, first scholarly attempts at studying them appeared as well. Nevertheless, it was not until well into the nineteenth century that these attempts became more organized and the first scientific methods and scholarly approaches came into existence, spurred by the newly-established interest in folklore. There are seven vital elements:

1. Beginning/Ending. Once upon a time/They lived happily ever after.
2. Good/Evil. Virtuous Protagonist/Malevolent Antagonist.
3. Magic: talking animals, magical food, special objects, fairy godmothers.

4. Conflict. Antagonist tries to thwart the protagonist.
5. Resolution. ...
6. Magic Numbers. ...
7. Teaching Morals.

Fairy tales have been a staple in literature for centuries, captivating audiences with their magical and whimsical tales. However, not many people know that fairy tales have evolved significantly over time, adapting to the cultural and social norms of each era. From their origins in ancient folklore to their modern interpretations in children's books and movies, fairy tales have undergone significant changes that reflect the values and beliefs of the society in which they were created.

One crucial access for analyzing fairy tales is examining their historical complexions. Many of the fairy tales we know today have roots in historical folklore and mythology. These stories were often passed down through oral tradition, with each generation adding their own spin to the tale. For example, the story of Cinderella can be traced back to ancient Greece, where a similar tale of a young woman overcoming adversity and marrying into royalty was told. By comprehending the historical context in which these stories were created, we can gain a deeper appreciation for the themes and messages they convey. Another essential treatment to studying fairy tales is examining the ways in which they have been inherited and reinterpreted over a long period of time. As societies have evolved, so too possess the stories they tell. In the 19th century, authors like the Brothers Grimm and Hans Christian Andersen conjoined and published fairy tales those were darker and more moralistic than their earlier counterparts. These tales often contained cautionary messages about the consequences of greed, vanity, and disobedience. In more recent years, fairy tales have been reimagined in popular culture, with Disney movies like "Frozen" and "Moana" putting a modern twist on classic stories. One of the most important aspects of studying fairy tales is understanding the underlying themes and symbols that make them so enduring. Fairy tales often explore universal themes such as love, betrayal, and redemption, using fantastical elements to convey deeper truths about the human experience. For example, the tale of "Little Red Riding Hood" can be seen as a cautionary tale about the dangers of trusting strangers, while "Beauty and the Beast" explores themes of inner beauty and true love. By analyzing these themes and symbols, we can gain a greater understanding of the lessons and values that fairy tales impart to their audiences. Several approaches were analyzed while demonstrating term:

One of the most prominent psychological approaches to fairy tales is the psychoanalytic perspective, championed by the renowned psychologist Sigmund Freud. Freud believed that fairy tales function as a form of wish fulfillment, allowing individuals to explore their deepest desires and fears in a safe and controlled environment. According to Freud, characters in fairy tales often represent various aspects of the self, with the hero or heroine symbolizing the ego, the villain representing the id, and the wise mentor embodying the superego. In addition to Freudian psychoanalysis, Jungian psychology also offers a unique perspective on fairy tales. Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung posited that fairy tales are manifestations of the collective unconscious, a shared reservoir of universal symbols, archetypes, and motifs that are common to all human beings. According to Jung, fairy tales serve as a means of accessing the collective unconscious and exploring the depths of the human psyche.

Beyond psychoanalytic and Jungian perspectives, fairy tales have also been analyzed through the lens of cognitive psychology. Cognitive psychologists study how individuals perceive, process, and interpret information, and how this influences their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. By examining the cognitive processes involved in reading and interpreting fairy tales, researchers can gain valuable insights into how individuals make meaning of these stories and how they impact their emotional and psychological well-being.

Overall, the psychological approaches to fairy tales offer a rich and nuanced understanding of these timeless narratives. By delving into the deepest recesses of the human mind, these perspectives shed light on the complex interplay between fantasy and reality, desire and fear, and conscious and unconscious thoughts. Through the study of fairy tales from a psychological standpoint, we can gain a deeper appreciation for the ways in which these stories continue to captivate and resonate with audiences of all

ages.

Psychological approaches, anthropological approaches, socio-historical approaches, Literary and linguistic approaches, feminist approaches. All approaches have got own impact on making the fairy tales. Psychological approaches, this claim for psychic unity is remarkably similar to Carl Gustav Jung's theories of the collective unconscious and its archetypes. The collective unconscious, according to Jung, manifested itself through archetypal characters, some of which he analyzed in 'The Phenomenology of the Spirit in Fairytales' (1948) (e.g. the old man as helper, animal as helper) and in 'On the Psychology of the Trickster-Figure' (1954). His disciple, Marie-Louise von Franz focused much of her work on the matter of fairy tales, emphasizing their symbolic meaning. Her numerous books on the subject cover a wide range of topics: from the concept of the shadow, the anima, and the animus, specific motifs (e.g. motif of redemption, bird motif, cross-cultural motifs) to the problem of evil in fairy tales and the representation of feminine images (e.g. mother as an archetypal image). Social, historical and cultural contexts play an important role in interpreting the meaning of tales within the scope of socio-historical approaches. Specific variants of tales are considered to be reflections of the conditions within a society at the time of their production and reception. The German folklorist Lutz Röhrich was an advocate of this view, although he did allow for the fact that "ideas from various ages may merge in a single folktale". In his essay 'The Quest of Meaning in Folk Narrative Research', he also warned against dogmatic interpretations of the meaning of a text, since it is "determined by the development of culture and ideas, fashions and trends, and dependent on rulers and ruling ideologies, [as well as] the education and cultural awareness, the sex, age, religion, and ethnic group of the consumer". Establishing the difference between oral narratives and their literary counterparts was the aim of the Danish folklorist Axel Olrik, whose article 'Epic Laws of Folk Narrative'¹² (1908) presents an effort to uncover universal regularities in traditional tales, and, as such, can be viewed as a precursor of Propp's study of fairy tales' structure. A literary approach has also been adopted by the Swiss scholar Max Lüthi, who chose searching for regularities in style of the folktale as the focal point of his work. His goal was "to establish the essential laws" (1982: 107) and "delineate the principal formal traits of the European folktale" (3) which, according to him, are one-dimensionality, depthlessness, abstract style, isolation and universal interconnection, and sublimation and all-inclusiveness. Unlike Olrik, Lüthi does not lay a claim to universality; his stylistic features are deemed culturally specific, restricted to Europe. Furthermore, in *The Fairy Tale as Art Form and Portrait of Man* (1984), he combines aesthetic with an anthropological approach, considering fairy tales to be expressions of a certain worldview. Feminist approaches to fairy tales grew out of the seed planted by the early 1970s debate of Alison Lurie and Marcia R. Lieberman. Lurie's two articles 'defended' fairy tales as stories which "suggest a society in which women are as competent and active as men, at every age and in every class" (1970: 42). Lieberman countered her view, stating that popular fairy tales "serve to acculturate women to traditional social roles" (1972: 383) and represent a significant factor "in forming the sexual role concept of children and in suggesting to them the limitations that are imposed by sex upon a person's chances of success in various endeavors" (383). She dismissed as unimportant Lurie's argument that the best-known tales, with passive and pretty heroines, present an 'unrepresentative selection' because they "reflect the taste of the refined literary men who edited the first popular collections of fairy tales for children" (1971: 6). However, later scholars found this insight significant and built upon it by analyzing differences between successive editions and the implications of the changes introduced (e.g. Stone 1975, 1981; Bottigheimer 1987; Tatar 1987)

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