Vocabulary for the Study of Religion

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F–O

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Fairy Tale

Fairy-tale scholarship was initiated at the beginning of the nineteenth century when the Brothers Grimm begun their collecting, editing, and research activities in Germany. Because of the richness of the material, fairy tales are subject to various disciplines, such as folklore, anthropology, literature, history, psychology, and pedagogy. Most of the theoretical, analytical, and methodological tools derive from folklore and ethnology. Fairy-tale scholarship has national nuances; however, scholars from all over the world communicate with each other using as paradigm the European canon.

Terminology

The term "fairy tale" is a late-eighteenth-century English translation of the French term *conte de fées*, which appeared in 1697 in France (Haase 2008: 322). The term implies that fairies are included in the stories; this is a limiting criterion, since many of the fairy tales do not have fairies. Stith Thompson proposed that the German term for folktale (*Märchen*) should be catalogued in the English scholarship, and indeed the term is used by scholars universally to refer to folk and fairy tales. According to Thompson, "a Märchen is a tale of some length involving a succession of motifs or episodes. It moves in an unreal world without definite locality or definite characters and is filled with the marvelous. In this never-never land humble heroes kill adversaries, succeed to kingdoms, and marry princesses" (Thompson [2]1977: 8).

The term "fairy tale" is the most commonly used term in English countries and very often is interchangeable with the term "folktale." Indeed, scholars tend to differentiate these two. "Fairy tale" is used mostly for literary renditions of stories with magic character, whereas "folktale" refers to oral, unwritten versions of literature. However, the terms fairy tale or folktale refer more to the way stories are mediated (orally or written), and they do not answer the question, "What is a fairy tale?"

Definition—Relation with Other Oral Genres

One of the most difficult and tedious tasks for folklorists and literary scholars is to define the fairy tale. Academic definitions are intellectual constructions, thus do not always refer to reality. In practice, the storytellers' understanding of fairy tale is contradictory to the scholarly definitions. Narrators usually have a much broader and more general definition of the genre. Since the beginning of fairy-tale scholarship definitions of the fairy tale have been abundant. Some of the definitions relate to the length of the stories, others refer to the relation of the stories to reality and fantasy, other definitions try to clarify the style, some refer to the conveyed truth or the utopian escapism etc. What are the qualities of the genre which distinguish it from other oral or literary genres? What are the defining characteristics for fairy tales?

The definition of a fairy tale inevitably leads us to compare it with other genres of folklore. Even if the limits between the genres of oral literature are very fluid and elastic, scholars in order to define fairy tales have tried to demonstrate the similarities and differences with other genres. Fairy tales stand close to legends, myths, saints' legends, fables, and jokes (Lüthi [9]1996: 6–15). They are mostly paralleled with legends and myths. In common parlance, all above-mentioned oral genres bear the pejorative connotation of a falsity.

The Brothers Grimm were the first who distinguished *Märchen* (folk and fairy tales) from other oral narratives, especially their most closely related genre, the legend. The dichotomy between fairy tales and legends has been followed by scholars since then, not without criticism of course. For the Brothers Grimm "Märchen" are more poetic, whereas legends are more historical (Bausinger [2]1980: 180). The fact that they convey some historical truth make legends believable to the audience. Both genres employ numinous elements, but legends have a clear distinction between this world

and the other world. In legends the other world is distanced, and presented in an obscure way. On the contrary, in fairy tales there are no boundaries between the two worlds: fairy-tale heroes and heroines move from one world to another in a normal and natural manner. The numinous in fairy tales does not generate any metaphysical fear as it does in legends (Lüthi 1982: 7).

Another oral genre close to fairy tales are myths. According to folklorists, myths serve a function to the society, namely to explain the creation of the world. Myths belong to the collective memory and for some oral societies replace history. Myths are stories about a significant event which can take place either in the past, or in the present, or in future. Myths have personalities as main figures which can be divine, human, or even animals (Segal 2004: 5).

In everyday popular use of the term, fairy tales refer mostly to lengthy narratives where the fantastic element prevails. In the current era there are abundant modern adaptations of fairy tales in cinema, TV, art, poetry, modern literature, children's literature, advertisements, comics, video games and so on. Borders between genres are blurred and uses (and abuses) of fairy tales are evident.

Types of Fairy Tales

Practical reasons to study fairy tales systematically led to their classification. The historical/geographical method, as it began in Finland at the beginning of the twentieth century, offered the first systematization of the vast material. The result was the most influential work in fairy-tale scholarship, namely the international catalog of folktales (first edition 1910 by Antti Aarne, second edition 1928 enlarged by Stith Thompson, third edition 1961 edited by Thompson, and the most recent fourth 2004 by Hans-Jörg Uther). The catalog is divided into types, which means self-sufficient narratives with an independent existence. Each type is formed by accumulated motifs, which are the smallest units within such a narrative, and usually cannot stand by themselves. The catalog also mentions *oikotypes*, which are types thriving

only in a specific region. According to the catalog, which has a historical-comparative orientation, fairy tales are listed in following groups of types: animal tales, tales of magic, religious tales, realistic tales (novels), tales of the stupid ogre (giant, devil), anecdotes and jokes, and formula tales (Uther 2004). The catalog has had an enormous impact, and it functions as the orientation tool and the standard pattern for fairy-tale scholars internationally. To expand its scope beyond the European material, the latest edition offers material from other parts of the world.

The Brothers Grimm

The Brothers Grimm were the first who not only collected and edited but also commented and theorized on fairy tales. Thus, they can be called the founders of fairy-tale scholarship. Their *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (abbreviated as KHM, translated as *Children's and Household Tales*) collection, named now for its influence as the "Grimm genre" (Uther 2008a: 431), stands as paradigm for collections and editions of fairy tales, internationally. The Grimm fairy tales are among the most popular in the world, and are adapted and used by the film industry and all popular mass media.

The collection had, in total, seven editions (1812–1815, 1819, 1837, 1840, 1843, 1850, 1857). The final edition consisted of two hundred tales plus ten children legends. The stories included cover a variety of genres: "There are wonder tales, humorous tales and jests, etiologic tales, legends, exempla, moralistic stories, religious tales and legends, and various mixed forms. Despite the collection's title, not all of the tales are meant for children, and children are not always the main characters" (Uther 2008b: 535). Parallel with the Large Edition, a more affordable Small Edition of fifty stories (also included in the Large Edition but rewritten and edited by the brothers) was published too (1825, 1833, 1836, 1839, 1844, 1847, 1850, 1853, 1858). The Small Edition sold very well and, thus, contributed to the popularity of the stories.

The history behind the scenes of the world-known collection is complicated. The first edi-

tion of KHM appeared in 1812–1815 and was not successful. Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, like every publisher, editor, and author, were strongly interested in the sales of their collection. Thus the brothers decided to interfere with, change, and alter the stories of the first edition. For instance, they developed the stories for the sake of a more literary style, emended or, rather, removed violent or erotic scenes in order to appeal to a children's audience, etc. These changes had a positive financial impact on the next editions, which were a real triumph for the German brothers and their publisher. This revised edition constituted the beloved reading material of the following generations. According to Maria Tatar the main reason for the Brothers Grimm to make alterations to the original texts was not only the first financial failure but even more their intention to provide an educational book of manners (*Erziehungsbuch*) (Tatar [2]2003: 16, 19).

It must be noted that the dominant perception among scholars and readers for a long time was that the KHM collection is comprised of "authentic" oral tales. Research has shown, though, that, besides the fact that the brothers wanted to achieve a successful best-seller, the informants of the brothers-collectors were not as "authentic" as one would have expected. For instance, one of the main informants for their stories (Dorothea Viehman) was not an illiterate peasant woman, but rather a middle class, literate urban lady who had been influenced by French oral as well as written traditions. What is more, the Brothers Grimm collected the majority of their stories from older printed versions and not from "authentic" oral sources (see Rölleke 1988; Uther 2008).

Theoretical Approaches

Since the influential work of the Brothers Grimm, various theoretical approaches have been developed in order to analyze folk and fairy tales. Vladimir Propp with his seminal *Morphology of the Folktale* established himself as the father of formalism, set up the basis for structuralism, and

influenced folklorists, anthropologist, linguists, and literary critics. His book was published on 1928 in Russian; it took thirty years to be translated into English (1958). Propp studied one hundred Russian folktales from the A.N. Afanás'ev collection and came to the conclusion that all the fairy tales he scrutinized had a similar form. He noted thrity-one functions (to mention but a few: absentation, interdiction, violation, trickery, departure, provision of a magical agent, liquidation of initial misfortune, return, wedding) and seven *dramatis personae* in his material. "Functions of characters serve as stable, constant elements in a tale, independent of how and by whom they are fulfilled. They constitute the fundamental components of a tale" (Propp [2]1968: 21). For Propp, "a fairy tale is a story built upon the proper alteration of the above-cited functions in various forms, with some of them absent from each story and with others repeated" (Propp [2]1968: 99). Propp is the main advocate of the happy ending: the fairy-tale hero with the support of magic help has to overcome various obstacles throughout his journey, in order in the end to marry the bride, and potentially to ascend the throne. Formalism has been criticized in many ways. The main counter-argument is that Propp sees the text outside of its social and cultural context. Moreover, scholars criticized the fact that Propp analyzed only one kind of folktale, namely, fairy tales, and completely ignored other types of tales. Also the question arises to what extent Propp's syntagmatic method is applicable to other than European material, as well as to forms of folk narrative other than folktales (see Dundes, in Propp [2]1968: xi–xvii).

Whereas Propp concentrated on the form and structure of the fairy tale, the Swiss literary scholar Max Lüthi focused on its style. Lüthi seeks "to identify what makes the folktale a folktale." For him fairy tales can be paralleled with a piece of art: "The secret power of the folktale lies not in the motifs it employs, but in the manner in which it uses them—that is, in its form.... The form of folktales does not derive from their content but has a life of its own.... The folktale has the appearance of

a work of art" (1982: 3). Lüthi wants to "offer a literary interpretation of the folktale whose goal has been to establish the essential laws of the genre" (1982: 107). He singled out five stylistic properties, namely one-dimensionality, depthlessness, abstract style, isolation and universal interconnection, and sublimation and all-inclusiveness. Lüthi based his stylistic analysis on a corpus of European-edited versions of folk and fairy tales. His analytical approach, especially the constant comparisons with other oral genres such as legends and myths, is very fruitful. However, scholars criticized his disregard for the oral transmission of the material and the absence of their sociocultural context.

In contrast to folklorist and literature scholar Lüthi, who favors abstraction and one-dimensionality in fairy tales, psychoanalysts look towards the multiple layers and the emotional depth of the fairy tales, and try to interpret the various meanings are ascribed to them. Freud, the founding figure of psychoanalysis, used fairy tales—next to dreams—in order to interpret the human mind and unconscious. Freud and his followers searched for the symbolic language hidden in fairy tales which could explain sexual anxieties. The analytical psychologist Carl Gustav Jung focused on the universal archetypes contained in the fairy tales, something that offered his theory "quasi-religious or spiritual overtones" (Haase 2000: 405). Based on that premise, many popular fairy-tale interpretations combined theology and analytical psychology (Haase 2000: 404–408). Perhaps the most popular and most controversial fairy-tale analysis based on Freudian ideas is delivered by Bruno Bettelheim (*The Uses of Enchantment*, 1977). Bettelheim advocated that fairy tales are a useful tool for children's development and help them overcome maturation conflicts. Bettelheim was strongly criticized that he used a canonistic, moral, sexist view of society, and that he ignored the variants of the stories, as well as that he ignored completely the context in which the texts were created and disseminated.

The ignorance of the cultural, social, and historical context and the positioning of fairy tales in an a-historic time is in contrast with scholars who employed sociohistorical approaches to read and analyze fairy tales. First the German scholars Lutz Röhrich and Rudolf Schenda opened new paths interpreting how fairy tales were perceived within the society. Röhrich with his influential book *Märchen und Wirklichkeit* (German first version in 1956, in English *Folktales and Reality*) positioned the fairy tales in their local communities; for him fairy tales mirror the everyday reality as well as the wishes of their narrators. Röhrich speaks also about the internal reality of the symbols and of the idea of the magic world. Rudolf Schenda underlines the importance of printed sources in the dissemination of fairy tales, especially popular printings such as chapbooks, broadsides, almanacs, etc. (1970).

In the United States the historian Robert Darnton and the literature scholar Jack Zipes are the main followers of this approach. Darnton in his article *Peasants Tell Tales: The Meaning of Mother Goose* stated that "folktales are historical documents" (1984: 13), since they are rooted in the real world. Darnton recognized some characteristics of French peasants in the fairy tales, such as their struggle to survive (1984: 26), rural settings as the household and the village or the open road (1984: 34), or their mental world as humor and domesticity (1984: 22). Jack Zipes developed a social history of the fairy tale. For Zipes fairy tales can be regarded "as a symbolic act infused by the ideological viewpoint of the individual author" (1983: 3).

Fairy Tales and Religion

The relationship of fairy tales to faith and religion is ambiguous. Some scholars claim that fairy tales are "profane" or "unsanctified literature," thus not appropriate for religious education, even if they have some elements that can be used for religious didactic purposes (Lange 1981: 80–97). Others argue that fairy tales are intentionally pro-

duced by missionaries and catechists in order to expand Christian faith among non-educated people (Moser 1982: 113). Other voices position themselves somewhere in between by arguing that fairy tales do not convey specifically Christian ideas, but rather broadly religious ones. Ottilie Dinges says: "The fairy tale has obviously more or less a connection with myth which is besides and before Christian religiosity. It contains elements of old religions, but has nowhere integrated the figure of the historical Jesus, his concrete salvation act, and his request for love" (1986: 174). Lutz Röhrich asserts: "In many ways the inner essence of the fairy tale touches religious questions. Although notions like heaven and hell appear often totally secularized, and the afterlife is conceived very earthly, however a certain religiosity belongs to the fairy tale's key tone. But, by no means is a question of a special Christian, but of fairly universal religious ideas" (^{5}2001: 240).

Scholars detected the presence of God (Rölleke 1985) and religious meaning and the spiritual transformation of the protagonists in the Grimms' fairy tales (Murphy 2000). According to Murphy, "the purpose of the preacher and the purpose of telling fairy tales coincided for Wilhelm Grimm" (2000: 7). Ruth Bottigheimer extracted various interpolations of Christian admonitions in the Grimms' fairy tales. She remarks that Christian values are gender specific. "Christianized tales in the Grimms' collection separate the characters not so much into good and evil as into male and female, their fates determined and defined not according to the ethical and moral quality of their lives, but according to their sex" (Bottigheimer 1987: 155).

Death and the dead are common motifs in fairy tales. However, the world of the dead is illustrated as the same as the world of the living. Death is not definite; It is more of a temporary situation (Röhrich 1991: 69). Death is perceived as a deep sleep from which the protagonist can be awaked through various acts. Sleeping Beauty comes back to life through a kiss, the same happened to Snow White when the piece of apple was thrown away from her throat. In some folktales the female pro-

tagonist marries a dead man, but his resurrection is assured, if she stays awake for a long period of time next to him. Thus, the tragic of death is surmounted.

Although oral tradition has no fairy tales to offer which focus on religious holidays, some famous literary fairy tales on the other hand are centered around the religious feast of Christmas. Hans Christian Andersen's "The Little Match Girl," or the "The Fir Tree," as well as Charles Dickens's "A Christmas Carol Being a Ghost Story of Christmas," or the theatrical adaptations of such fairy tales as Hansel and Gretel, Cinderella, etc., which were performed in the Christmas period—all these contributed to the general belief that fairy tales are Christmas readings.

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Maria Kaliambou

Faith

Faith can mean "religion" or "true religion" ("the faith"), but above all it refers to the individual aspect of religious allegiance and practice. Faith has an especially central role in Protestantism. But in recent decades the term has widely been seen as problematic because of its associations with individualism, irrationalism, and hostility to ritual and to Judaism.

"Faith" is related to "trust." In everyday usage, faith is an intensification of trust. Whereas trust is a routine, habitual attitude, necessary for the functioning of society, faith is more remarkable. It may be a form of trust that takes a risk, defies the evidence, or even seems foolish.

Discussion of faith therefore bears on the question of the relationship of Christianity to reason. Theologians have always been divided on this question, some insisting that rationality must be central to God's nature, others warning that the quest to understand divine rationality will lead us away from the authentic biblical view of God, who makes himself known through a special series of historical events—revelation—rather than through a universal human faculty. A theology that emphasizes faith is very likely to highlight a basic tension between human reason and the content of Christianity. But the modern advocacy of faith has other associations as well, including suspicion of ritual tradition and sympathy with humanist individualism.

Biblical Perspectives

The Hebrew Bible commends an attitude of "trust" toward God (*emunah*). In the New Testament this term becomes *pistis*, which is normally translated as "faith" rather than as "trust." Does this shift reflect a substantial difference? Is Jewish piety supposedly more grounded in social reason, or "common sense," and thereby a less daring venture than Christian piety? To some extent, yes. When religion is a comprehensive cultural phenomenon,