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***SUMMARY OF DOCTORAL THESIS***

***FAIRY TALES –***

***INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH AND INTEGRATED TEACHING***

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**KEY WORDS: folk tales, literary fairy tales, discourse analysis, cognitivism, pattern recognition, interdisciplinarity, multimedia, fairy-tale schemata, cultural pedagogy, integrated curriculum**

## Introduction

The present thesis was born out of the problems I was confronted with in my teaching career, the search of a solution taking me, however, beyond the arguments and debates going on in the area of studies in education and curricular programmes and into their foundation in a legitimating epistemological ground and theoretical accountability.

The epistemological foci considered to be worth examining by the academic community are related in the present discourse of knowledge, and that happens less on the basis of taxonomic categories, as they are specific to each disciplinary domain, as through thematic relations which foreground possibilities for collocation among concepts organizing knowledge in different disciplines.

In our age of globally interfaced computers, knowledge is mainly organized through an artificial memory structure of various scripts and combined schemata. The literary discourse itself, which used to be associated with the exceptionally imaginative mind of an author, writing an autonomous fictional universe into being, has been for years now a matter of dialogic production of new texts out of old, of playing with codes and of applying transformative operations on precedents.

In Ch. 11 of her enlightening book, *The Parallel Worlds of Classical Art and Text*, Jocelyn Penny Small discusses the Roman copies of Greek paintings from the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC which were probably based upon the reproduction of a grid originally incorporated in the original. By leaving out certain elements, scenes or characters, the copyist altered the

meaning of the basic sketch, but the connection could still be identified. The academic from Princeton uses the example of this ancient and massive practice of mould-made objects to support her allegation that “we live in a world of copies not just of books and art”. Perfect copies are only the simulacra produced by technology, whereas the copies described by Jocelyn Penny Small are equivalent: they dig up the grid on which the original is based, and it is only in relation to that grid that the new artefact can affirm its distance. A science of a culture’s encoding practices seems to be more enabling in a person’s education, including the eventuality of conscious departure from inherited narratives, than the guess-work of doubtful individualistic endeavour to invent something absolutely new.

It is in artefacts that have come a long way that we can identify the rules of historical change, processes and mechanisms at work in culture, in the history of the spirit. Myths and legends are among the earliest, but it would be wrong to consider them invariant along time. The fairy tale is a topic frequently discussed in a variety of contemporary studies: cognitive psychology, genre studies, gender studies, discourse analysis, media studies, a.o. We are going to assess their comparative relevance to the topic, while collecting arguments in support of our option for the New Historicist approach. After the long tradition of fairy tale studies emphasizing the prototypical character of events, the typology of characters, the narrative types – that is, formalist and static descriptions – we see Jack Zipes (1983) and other critics redefining the genre in light of historicist assumptions about the subversive social relevance of the first fairy tales published by professional writers in the dawn of the Age of Enlightenment, at the climactic point of the conflict between aristocratic and bourgeois values.

Our comparative reading of the same narrative plot woven around a famous character, the Nutcracker, by E.T.A. Hoffmann, Alexandre Dumas the Elder, and Marius Petipa, who wrote the libretto for Tchaikovsky’s Ballet in two acts, points to important changes that were shared with the other generic forms of art in the passage from romantic to positivist poetics, requiring that the miraculous events be contained and tamed within a realist setting and narrator frame, and from here to the late nineteenth century cosmopolitan aestheticism with the concomitant effects of the change from word to sound and dramatic representation.

Feminist poetics and politics can be seen as the only appropriate interpretive grid to be applied on Angela Carter’s reinscription of famous fairy tales and romances in [\*The Bloody Chamber\*](#) (1979), and *Black Venus* (1985), two collections of stories. The elements that are changed vary from few in “Bluebeard” in the former to feminist rewriting and representation

in the travesty of Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* as "Overture and Incidental Music for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*" in the latter.

We have opted for interdisciplinarity over other methods employed in literary studies, an option which is shared with the majority of discourse makers in the field, the name of the discipline having shifted on this account to cultural studies and even to studies in the humanities. The reason behind our choice is not the fact that interdisciplinarity is the buzz word of the day, but its enhanced potential for providing, not only a description, but also a genealogy and a contextualization of the literary text, which has come, in this way, to be assimilated to other types of discourse, function and convention weighing more heavily than formal features in the generic classification. We also use, however, another term, "integrated", by analogy with the crossdisciplinary curriculum in education, as, within our critical tool kit, we carry, not only notions borrowed from various disciplines, but also terms and reading patterns contributed by the poststructuralist and postmodernist map of critical theory, which for the first time abandoned aesthetic and formal autonomy bringing to the discussion of literature concepts from non-literary fields: philosophy (deconstruction), psychoanalysis and psychology (Lacanian unconscious, Girardian desire, cognitivist scripts...), history, social criticism, a.o. This sort of generalized semiotics is subsumed by Jørgen Dines Johansen and Svend Erik Larsen (*Sign in Use*, 2002) under the name of a new discipline, discourse analysis, which emerged in the mid-eighties, born of current researches in functional linguistics, AI, and cognitivism. Being oriented to the use of language in concrete contexts of communication, bringing language to the centre of the literature class, as Roger Fowler says in *Linguistic Criticism*, and allowing the speaker to make inferences, not only about the meaning and function of texts, but also about their interaction with the world, the method recommended itself as the royal way to an efficient socializing of students, as well as to the crafting of a world of harmonious social relationships. Last but not least, the multifaceted approach to texts as discourse (in contexts of communication), on several levels of analysis (cognitive- social- linguistic), makes discourse analysis one of the most rewarding reading models in an age of total scepticism fuelled by deconstructionist theories of linguistic indeterminacy. The mechanism whereby texts make meaning in light of discourse analysis is the use of prototypes by the speakers of a linguistic community, both in the interpretation of new experience and in constructing fresh meanings through deliberate departure from the norm.

The prototypical scripts of fairy tales remain basically the same through time thanks to their constitution through cognitive schemata and the reference frames (or a community of speakers' encyclopaedic knowledge) that structure our perception of the world and of social relationships. Cognitive schemata are the premises we need to fit in this world, and fairy tales introduce them to us. How are they constituted?

Recent research in cognitive psychology has proved that links in the brain are not taxonomically but thematically realized: "For example, when presented with the four items squirrel, mouse, nut, and cheese, people may sort them into pairs of animal and type of food (squirrel – nut; mouse – cheese) instead of animals and foods. Since such thematic relations have already been shown to play a very prominent role in similarity judgments of abstract item pairs, chances are good that they will provide dominant information to their categorization as well. The main concern of this paper is the question why people do not effectively use taxonomic abstract item categories, such as emotions, cognitive processes, actions, attitudes, attributes, and so on in category-related tasks such as similarity ratings." (Wiemer-Hastings: web).

Thematically linked topics prepare students for research which, according to the current regime of knowledge, cuts across disciplinary boundaries. It encourages students to establish meaningful connections among the elements of their experience, or among the elements of texts or images provided in advance and studied in class through tasks:

At the meeting on this topic (integrated curriculum- our specification) organized by Unesco in Bangkok in 1981, it was noted that 'the term curriculum integration was used conventionally to denote combining two or more subjects to form a meaningful learning area that would help effective integration of learning experiences in the learner' (APEID 1982:10). ( UNESCO, 1986)

The method used in our paper resides in correlating discourse analysis, cognitive psychology and integrated teaching, as all meet on a common ground. A theme, topic, idea found in literature can be replicated in ballet, theatre, animation, film, computer games, etc, while the same theme can be found in literature, art, biology, psychology, etc.

There is nothing outside the text (*Il n'y a rien hors du texte*): Jacques Derrida's famous affirmation in *De la grammatologie* (1967) was castigated by the "new historicists" of the ninth decade of the last century, coming out of Michel Foucault's cloak, in the sense of the



importance given by them to the context in the interpretation of any text. This context is not one of the material social existence, but a discursive one. Nothing escapes the condition mediated by language in social relationships in the order of culture. Our specification, that we are only interested in the written tradition of fairy tales, is, therefore, superfluous.

Unlike the typological approaches, the historical or interdisciplinary studies take as their object the genesis of a cultural phenomenon and the context of each disciplinary domain. From this perspective, fairytales are no longer associated with the archetypal imaginary, the Jungian collective unconscious, which would render them timeless and lost in the "abyss of time", as magician Prospero says in the opening of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, or with the migratory, oral society. The genealogy of the literary fairytale is explained in relation to the ideology of the Enlightenment (the critique of the patriarchal family and support for women's emancipation), and the genre is analyzed in its transformations from one phase of cultural history to another.

Lewis C. Seifert undertakes a study of the fairy tale from two points of view: the representation of the two biological genders and the relationships between them, and the fairy tale as a literary genre (*Fairy Tales, Sexuality, and Gender in France. 1690-1715*). He shows that the fairytale was created and imposed in 17th century France, either in the way of transcription, or as an authorial creation, during the period which Paul Hazard characterises as the "great crisis of European consciousness". It was the century of the confrontation between the Ancients and the Moderns, the fairytales appearing as a symptom of the fight against the postfigurative cult of the classics of the Antiquity. The fairytales were associated with the modern world, when peoples were searching for their self identity in folklore, in history and outside the reference frame of the Roman-German Empire. That century ended with *le grand renfermement*, which confined women to the narrow sphere of domestic life within the patriarchal society. It is not by chance that the first collection of fairytales belongs to a woman, Marie Catherine d'Aulnoy, who included a *conte de fée* in her novel entitled *Histoire de Hypolite* (1690).

### **Fairy Tales and Identitarian Ontology**

The link between culture and nationhood is sometimes quite explicit, as in the Preface written by E.B. Mawr for her collections of *Roumanian Fairy Tales and Legends* published in 1881. The new political identity acquired by the united principalities under Carol I (Karl Eitel Friedrich, Prinz Von Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen) in 1866 had drawn upon itself the attention

of the big powers in Europe. Mawr is looking for the cultural narratives legitimating the new kingdom, associating politics and textuality, great rulers of the country's past – Brancoveanu and Stephen the Great – and their literary representations (See Annexes 4-6):

By its bravery, and its steadfast perseverance on its onward path, ROUMANIA has raised itself into a KINGDOM; and I have thought it well to insert in this little book "The Martyrdom of Brancovan," and the Spartan courage of the "Mother of Stefan the Great" to show of what blood the true sons and daughter of Roumania are made.

The fabled founders are seen by Mawr to be as important as the historical ones, the contents of her collection including "Manioli, A Legend of the 13th Century". A people's identity is also defined, according to Mawr, in concert with other nations, her book of *Analogous Proverbs in Ten Languages* coming out in 1885. She draws the readers' attention to the similarities as well as the differences in meaning conveyed by the proverbs, inviting them to a comparative reading of these instances of the peoples' lore.

The contents of the book will discriminate between pure fantasy (fairy tales), fables spun around real places, events (legends) and historical fabulation, or romance history:

- Fairy Tales
  - The Slippers of the Twelve Princesses
  - The Ungrateful Wood-Cutter
  - The Hermit's Foundling with the Golden Hair
  - The Daughter of the Rose
  - The Twelve-Headed Griffin
  - Vasilica The Brave
  - Handsome is as Handsome Does
  - The Fisherman and the Boyard's Daughter
- Legends
  - Manioli, A Legend of the 13th Century
  - The Fortress of Poinarii
  - The Gentle Shepherd
- Historic Tales
  - Death of Constantin II. Brancovan
  - The Mother of Stephen the Great

### **Fairytales and the Awakening of National Awareness**

In Romania, the blend of the postfigurative cult of the past and of social utopia was even more obvious than in France. Petre Ispirescu is associated with the revolutionary

movements breaking out between 1820-1860, with the liberal politics and the first labour organisations of the trade union type, such as the foundation, with the help of Constantin A. Rossetti - writer and politician, one of the leaders of the 1848 Revolution - of a *Mutual Aid Committee* of the typographers. He was supported by V. Alecsandri, another collector of folklore, B. P. Haşdeu, the national language researcher, and Alexandru Odobescu, the worshipper and verbal painter of the picturesque Romanian landscapes. Ispirescu is a prominent figure in the history of Romanticism.

### **A discourse analyst's approach to fairy tales**

The second chapter is an approach to fairy tales through the method of discourse analysis, which emerged in the eighties as a kind of generalised semiotics and as a synthesis of critical theories with a linguistic basis in functional grammar. Discourse analysis studies language in a three-dimensional framework: (1) the worldview incorporated in a stretch of text (cognitive values), (2) the social relationships constructed through language, and (3) the formal characteristics and the connectives that construct a text's cohesion "according to a certain world-view" (Levarato 2003: 13).

In the subchapter entitled "Cognitive Values, or Discourse as the Repository of Experience", we applied the Subjective Knowledge Theory to a fairy tale by Mihai Eminescu, *Făt Frumos din lacrimă*, translated by A. I. Marin as *The Tear Drop Prince*, but to which we refer using the better known version of the title: *Prince Charming of the Tear*.

We support Scott R. Stroud's argument against Peter Lamarque and Stein Olsen, who deny the validity of the Subjective Knowledge Theory considering that a literary text capitalizes on perennial themes, not on the readers' knowledge. In his article, "Simulation, Subjective Knowledge, and the Cognitive Value of Literary Narrative" (2008), Stroud insists that the value of a literary narrative is proportional to the incorporated truths and knowledge. Our interpretation of Eminescu's fairytale is meant to prove that its meaning can only be understood by readers with a good knowledge of myths, alchemical and Biblical tropes, or even of history.

Eminescu's highly imaginative and poetic tale is built, in romantic fashion, on a basic antinomy: warfare versus brotherly communion, spiritual barrenness versus spiritual plenitude. Kingship is set within a frame reminding one of characteristic medieval features which are

part of any schoolchild's knowledge of history: blood feuds, inherited from one generation to another, the right to heritage, including the throne, along male lines. Literary narratives, however, demand cognition, not only of the world, but also of "member resources", as Fairclough calls them, that is, knowledge of the world's library of mythopoetic tradition. The circumstance that it is the queen who redeems the two rulers' lives is related to the reader's knowledge of the Bible: it was Virgin Mary who reversed the fall through Eve. The Virgin sheds a tear from its icon, which the queen "sucks into the depths of her soul". As in alchemy, redemption starts with *ablutio* (washing, ritual of purification), and ends in the appearance of *argentum vitae (lapis philosophorum)*. Prince Charming is born, like Jesus, of an immaculate conception. The two mythological matrices – alchemical and Biblical - merge together so that the unity and universality of the spirit might be emphasized:

The Prince followed with his gaze the face of St. Peter and could no longer see God as any more than a bright light on the horizon, as if the sun were setting. He understood the miracle of his resurrection and kneeled towards the Holy Sunset.

### **Ideology Revisited**

Our objective in this subchapter is to highlight the way fairytales contribute to promoting subliminal ideology, the inscription in the unconscious of attitudes, taboos, values that are accepted by a society's authority structures or power system. In this respect, we are following in the footsteps of Jack Zipes, who revolutionized the theory and criticism of the genre by ceasing to treat it as a subject for universal and timeless typologies and taxonomies, of the Aarne/ Thompson school, and more as encodings characterising a type of society and the discursive practises within it: "My foremost concern is how fairytales operate ideologically to indoctrinate children so that they will confirm to dominant social standards which are not necessarily established in their behalf." (Zipes, 2003: 18). Perrault's fairy tales appeared at a time when French society was passing through a forced process of civilization introduced and reinforced by the bourgeoisie in France and England. Against this historical and social background, we find some of the earliest forms of introducing ideology into mass channels of communication:

This civilising process coincided with an increase in socioeconomic power by the bourgeoisie, particularly in France and England, so that the transformed social, religious, and political views represented a blend of bourgeois- aristocratic interests.

The *homme civilise* was the former *homme* courteous, whose polite manners and style of speech were altered to include bourgeois qualities of honesty, diligence, responsibility, and ascetism. To increase its influence and assume more political control the French bourgeoisie was confronted with a twofold task: to adapt courtly models in a manner which would allow greater *laissez-faire* for the expansion and consolidation of bourgeois interests; to appropriate folk customs and the most industrious, virtuous, and profitable components of the lower classes to strengthen the economic and cultural power of the bourgeoisie. In this regard the French bourgeoisie was indeed a middle or mediating class, although its ultimate goal was to become self-sufficient and to make the national interests identical with its own. One way of disseminating its values and interests and of subliminally strengthening its hold on the civilizing process was through literary socialization.”(Zipes 2003: 21).

These behavioural patterns and models for children that reveal cognitive values (or knowledge about the world) are expressed in fairy tales in the form of general ideas. Most of them are focused on gender division: *Sleeping Beauty*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Blue Beard*, *The Fairies* and *Cinderella* construct the male-dependent female, actually depending with life and death upon a male partner, while *Puss in Boots*, *Ricky of the Tuft* and *Little Tom Thumb* show males the mirror of exemplary conduct.

The mental operation Perrault’s readers were expected to perform was what today is understood by **pattern recognition**, which is a key phrase in cognitive sciences, IT technology, information science, data analysis, etc. The theoretical interest is no longer directed to rhetorical or thematic aspects of the fairy tale, but to cognitive schemes, encodings of scripts which are shared by a community: social roles (master, servant), typical events and their structure (the unfolding of a wedding ceremony, for instance), types of exchanges (dialogue) between community members, reflecting on power relationships (between equals or asymmetric power relationships). It is discourse analysis that studies language in relation to social signifying practices. It is their highly patterned structure that makes fairy tales the ideal texts for reinscription, variation, parody, etc., as the basic plot will still be recognized through transformations. It is transformations that point to changes in society’s values or world outlook, as well as in the morphology of the genre. As far as ideology is concerned, we bring forward an example of changes in the construction of femininity which became obvious at the end of the last century after several decades of feminist criticism of patriarchy. It is a comparative analysis of the same fairytale, ”Rapunzel”, with two versions, one of 1968 and

The 1968 version is closer to traditionally constructed gender roles, whereas the 1993 version brings to the fore a powerful female figure inspiring man with the fear of castration. This woman seems to be taking revenge on a long history of slavery and self-sacrifice in the name of her biological mission. That is why she is now obliterating family and regenerating relationships, bereaving a man of his child and another man of his bride. one of 1993, which were brought out by the Wills and Hepworth publishing house in the UK.

The **third chapter** changes focus and the theoretical grid again, taking “a cognitivist approach to fairy tales”, grounded in contemporary studies of cognitive psychology.

### **Pattern Recognition in Fairy Tales**

In human pattern recognition we make use of the perception process which is based on prior knowledge and experience:

Generally, pattern recognition refers to a process of inputting stimulating (pattern) information and matching with the information in long-term memory, then recognizing the category which the stimulation belongs to. Therefore, pattern recognition depends on people’s knowledge and experience. Without involving individual’s knowledge and experience, people cannot understand the meanings of the stimulating information pattern inputted, then neither possible to recognize the patterns, which means to recognize the objects. Current cognitive psychology has proposed such theoretical models or hypothesis as the Theory of Template (Model of Template Matching), the Theory of Prototype (Model of Prototype Matching), the Theory of Feature (Model of Feature Analysis), and so on” (Youguo Pi et al. 2008: 434-435).

Pattern recognition uses templates, prototypes and features. They all have in common the idea of pattern, make use of prior information in the memory and work through matching. **Templates** are mini copies of exterior patterns formed in the past in long term memory and work by simulation acts on the senses, the simulating information being coded, compared and matched one-by-one with patterns in the brain. The notion of ”template” corresponds roughly to Immanuel Kant’s Schema which structures the perception of new information into Representation (Vorstellung).

A **prototype**, unlike a template, is the inside copy of a certain pattern, *that is*, it possesses the abstract characteristics of all the individuals in a certain type of category.

Pattern recognition is realised by matching input information with the prototype in an up-down processing. Each fairy tale is based on such a prototype.

**Features**, unlike templates and prototypes which apply to the entire pattern, represent constitutive elements. In pattern recognition, features of a pattern are matched to those stored in the memory in a bottom-up processing model.

No matter how a folktale might change under historical, cultural or any other conditions, one could still recognize the original plot it had stemmed out of. The topological invariance occurs because "as long as the image information of the object is sufficient to determine its pattern, the geometry changing in the size and shape does not affect people's perception of the object" (Youguo Pi et al. 2008: 441). The above issue refers to a special kind of properties in geometry, which involve the property of the geometric overall structure, named topological property. Obviously, these topological properties are not related to such aspects of geometry as the size, the shape and the straight or curved lines and so on, which means that they cannot be dealt with by ordinary geometric methods. Topology is the study of the invariable properties when geometry makes elastic deformation, the same as the perceptive constancy evinced by the circumstance that the changing in size and shape of the perceived image does not affect people's perception of the object.

In his chapter on "The Interpretation of Fairy Tales" (Brewer 2003: 21), Derek Brewer quotes Alessandro Falassi's *Folklore by the Fireside - Tuscan Veglia* on his example of a fairy tale that reads like a variation on Grimm's *One Eye, Two Eyes, Three Eyes*: Falassi reports the fluidity of the storytelling occasion, the recognition of variants, and at the same time the sense that one story is not another, even when elements of one get mixed with another. The deep structural pattern holds, then, while the surface renderings are pleasantly (if conventionally) diverse.

The explanation for topological invariance is rooted in the cognitive models (template, prototype, feature) which help us to reduce the multitude of fairy tales to prototypical cases grouped together according to theme, characters, motifs, as well to see the underlying structure they possess.

### **Pattern and Structure. The Forerunners of Cognitivism**

This chapter invites an appreciation of the recent cognitive approach in comparison to

the main theoretized approaches to the literary fairytale in the 20th century which were in the order of their emergence: folkloricist, semiotic, psychoanalytic, historicist, culturalist, feminist.

Our test case is the way Angela Carter has refurbished "Bluebeard", a fairy tale that has many variants, but it is the "original" story (that is, Perrault's story) against which readers will assess variants.

*Bluebeard* is a widespread European folktale with many variants German, French, Basque, and Estonian, to name but a few. In Norway the husband is a troll, in Italy, a devil, and in ancient Greek version, death itself. According to Funk and Wagnall's *Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology and Legend* (1949), "the central motif of the story is the broken taboo, the forbidden chamber"(Leach & Fried, 1949). Charles Perrault's first moral to the story reads as a warning to young wives: "Curiosity is a charming passion, but may only be satisfied at a price of a thousand regrets; one sees around one a thousand examples of this sad truth every day. Curiosity is the most fleeting of pleasures; the moment it is satisfied, it ceases to exist and it always proves very, very expensive."(Perrault, 1979:41)

The second perspective of pattern recognition regards the fact that fairy tales have a simple structure and therefore a new inscriptor can operate changes (of perspective, relations, of the Bakhtian spacetime chronotope, etc.) on it, and yet it will still be understood as a fairy tale. In Carter's revision, *The Bloody Chamber*, we are told the story from the heroine's perspective, in a different time and space from the Bluebeard story.

The third perspective of using pattern recognition is that one can even open or rewrite wrong on old fairy tales and make a new modern or postmodernist version out of it, inserting into it some personal agenda (such as Angela Carter's feminist perspective in *The Bloody Chamber*), without rendering unreadable the traditional fairy tale which can still be identified as the original matrix on which the later bricoleurs have worked. As Carter herself said „I am putting new wine in old bottles, especially if the pressure of the new wine makes the old bottles explode." She makes use of the old wellknown fairy tales, or the well-established pattern in the readers' long-term memory and subverts the original message. It is this familiarity of the reader with the fairy tale that makes it possible for Carter to deliver her message, for "Carter, a feminist, to speak through Perrault's tales"( M. Roemer and Bacchilega: 12) and for readers to get involved into a text they have previously known and stored in their memory but rediscover it with new feminist implications. Carter uses the basic elements from Perrault's tale, namely the rich and powerful man who marries a series of young wives, lets them the key to a forbidden room in which they are told not to enter, this



being a test of obedience to him. Each woman will not resist her curiosity which is afterwards revealed by the blood stained key. Bluebeard killed his previous wives but the cycle is broken when his current wife is rescued just in time and he is then killed. The differences are noticed in the end, in the bloody chamber the mother of the wife comes to save her and kills the marquis, while in "Bluebeard" tale it is the brothers who come to save the "damsel in distress". This is clearly an example of Carter wishing to portray a stronger female character or the female ability to fend for herself and equal the power of a man. Another difference is that in Bluebeard the wife quickly remarries the perfect nobleman inheriting all Bluebeard's riches and lives happily ever after. In *The Bloody Chamber*, Carter breaks the stereotypical ending by making the protagonist invest the majority of the Marquis's money in a school for the blind, living on a modest life. She does this to show that a female can live independently of a man and still live "happily ever after". Perrault's "dragon and musqueteer", figures of the Ancient Regime militaristic order, are displaced by the non-European mother, the racial other, the "Indo-China daughter of a rich tea planter", whose heroic feats do not exalt service to the king and state but serve justice and humanistic values: in her girlhood, the mother had "outfaced a junkful of Chinese pirates, nursed a village through a visitation of the plague, shot a man-eating tiger with her own hand" (Carter, 1993). Unlike Perrault, who sides with the male partner, blaming his female victim's curiosity, Carter's master opening shows the heroine's first voyage to a marital relationship into which she had been drawn by fascination with antiquated French aristocracy and their paraphernalia (castel, jewells, deadly mysteries of the Catherine de Medicis sort) as imprisonment into machinery.

Far from limiting a writer's love of invention, rewriting can be pretty imaginative and challenging. By writing from experience, a writer will feel bound to the principle of truthfulness or held in check by norms of credibility, as he makes a statement about reality. Rewriting is dialogue with some other text(s) whose effect is a layering of meaning structures, semantic overdetermination.

Cognitivist Theory is put to the test in section 4 of the third chapter, **Experiments in Pattern Recognition**, where a famous story, *The Nutcracker*, is the object of a **case study**.

The nutcracker figure is at the centre of a cultural narrative of migration: from E.T.A. Hoffmann's original story (1816) to Alexandre Dumas the Elder's adaptation (1844) and from here to the libretto that served Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky's score of the homonymous ballet, first performed in St. Petersburg, at the Mariinsky Theatre, in 1892 and based on a libretto written by Marius Petipa and Lev Ivanov. The differences in form and content reveal

the importance of cultural phases (from romanticism to the positivist mid-nineteenth-century, for instance) in the modulations of the narrative voice, character construction or poetics of representation. Far from being archetypal scripts immune to the change of time, fairy tales share in the generic shifts that affect all art works along time.

**Chapter IV on Integrated Teaching** establishes a correlation between an interdisciplinary approach to fairy tales and the latest model in teaching based on the integrated curriculum.

An integrated curriculum will gather together instructors in various disciplines who will devise subjects and also consider possibilities of identifying connections across disciplinary borders.

Our choice of a curriculum map like the one above is grounded in the results of studies in cognitive psychology according to which the connection in our brain between similar abstract terms (concepts, categories used in traditional taxonomies) are weaker than those between similar concrete terms. Supportive of our view is a paper published by a group of researches in the Department of Psychology of Northern Illinois University entitled "Structural Differences in Abstract and Concrete Item Categories":

Our minds seem to focus more readily on the thematic relation of items, for instance, establishing a relation of similarity between knife and meet (knife cutting meet) than between members of cutlery sets on the one hand and foods on the other. Thematic relations were more apparent in similarity judgments to participants in the experiment than those producing abstract item pairs. The conclusion is important, not only for the way we design our curriculum maps, but also in the teaching of fairy tales themselves. A taxonomy of abstract terms, such as generic categories, will distinguish, as in the "ATU Catalogue" edited by Hans-Jörg Uther (2004), among tales on an ontological basis (the level of reality on which the action takes place, whether close to reality, the other world, human, sub-human or semiological):

#### **ANIMAL TALES**

Wild Animals 1-99

The Clever Fox (Other Animal) 1-69

Other Wild Animals 70-99

Wild Animals and Domestic Animals 100-149

Wild Animals and Humans 150-199

Domestic Animals 200-219

Other Animals and Objects 220-299

### **TALES OF MAGIC**

Supernatural Adversaries 300-399

Supernatural or Enchanted Wife (Husband) or Other Relative 400-459

Wife 400-424

Husband 425-449

Brother or Sister 450-459

Supernatural Tasks 460-499

Supernatural Helpers 500-559

Magic Objects 560-649

Supernatural Power or Knowledge 650-699

Other Tales of the Supernatural 700-749

### **RELIGIOUS TALES**

God Rewards and Punishes 750-779

The Truth Comes to Light 780-799

Heaven 800-809

The Devil 810-826

Other Religious Tales 827-849

### **REALISTIC TALES (NOVELLE)**

The Man Marries the Princess 850-869

The Woman Marries the Prince 870-879

Proofs of Fidelity and Innocence 880-899

The Obstinate Wife Learns to Obey 900-909

Good Precepts 910-919

Clever Acts and Words 920-929

Tales of Fate 930-949

Robbers and Murderers 950-969

Other Realistic Tales 970-999

## **TALES OF THE STUPID OGRE (GIANT, DEVIL)**

Labor Contract 1000-1029  
Partnership between Man and Ogre 1030-1059  
Contest between Man and Ogre 1060-1114  
Man Kills (Injures) Ogre 1115-1144  
Ogre Frightened by Man 1145-1154  
Man Outwits the Devil 1155-1169  
Souls Saved from the Devil 1170-1199

## **ANECDOTES AND JOKES**

Stories about a Fool 1200-1349  
Stories about Married Couples 1350-1439  
    The Foolish Wife and Her Husband 1380-1404  
    The Foolish Husband and His Wife 1405-1429  
    The Foolish Couple 1430-1439  
Stories about a Woman 1440-1524  
    Looking for a Wife 1450-1474  
    Jokes about Old Maids 1475-1499  
    Other Stories about Women 1500-1524  
Stories about a Man 1525-1724  
    The Clever Man 1525-1639  
    Lucky Accidents 1640-1674  
    The Stupid Man 1675-1724  
Jokes about Clergymen and Religious Figures 1725-1849  
    The Clergyman is Tricked 1725-1774  
    Clergyman and Sexton 1775-1799  
    Other Jokes about Religious Figures 1800-1849  
Anecdotes about Other Groups of People 1850-1874  
Tall Tales 1875-1999

## **FORMULA TALES**

Cumulative Tales 2000-2100  
Chains Based on Numbers, Objects, Animals, or Names 2000-2020  
Chains Involving Death 2021-2024

Chains Involving Eating 2025-2028

Chains Involving Other Events 2029-2075

Catch Tales 2200-2299

Other Formula Tales 2300-2399

Memorising this list and assuming it as a current basis for establishing similarities to other tokens of the same type would prove both difficult and inconsistent (in the case of abstract categories, there is much overlap, for instance, why not include ALL tales about ogres within the “supernatural adversaries” subdivision of magic tales?). On the contrary, the Tzvetan Todorov classification on the basis of function allows of the association of item pairs perceived as having a lower semantic distance between them, that is, as being more similar:

The existence of fairy tales as a special class is assumed as an essential working hypothesis. By “fairy tales” are meant at present those tales classified by Aarne under numbers 300 to 749. This definition is artificial, but the occasion will subsequently arise to give a more precise determination on the basis of resultant conclusions. We are undertaking a comparison of the themes of these tales. For the sake of comparison we shall separate the component parts of fairy tales by special methods; and then, we shall make a comparison of tales according to their components. The result will be a morphology (i.e., a description of the tale according to its component parts and the relationship of these components to each other and to the whole). What methods can achieve an accurate description of the tale? Let us compare the following events:

1. A tsar gives an eagle to a hero. The eagle carries the hero away to another kingdom.
2. An old man gives Súcenko a horse. The horse carries Súcenko away to another kingdom.
3. A sorcerer gives Iván a little boat. The boat takes Iván to another kingdom.
4. A princess gives Iván a ring. Young men appearing from out of the ring carry Iván away into another kingdom, and so forth.

Both constants and variables are present in the preceding instances. The names of the dramatis personae change (as well as the attributes of each), but neither their actions nor functions change. From this we can draw the inference that a tale often

attributes identical actions to various personages. This makes possible the study of the tale according to the functions of its *dramatis personae* [...] *Function is understood as an act of a character, defined from the point of view of its significance for the course of the action.* (Todorov web: 8-9).

As long as the thematic similarity is preserved through sameness of function, *The White Moor* can be mapped onto theme units across disciplinary boundaries, the change in the level of reality (narrative timeline of chronodiegetic plot, Romanian society in the late nineteenth-century, a district court, a semiotic utopia, etc.) being irrelevant.

Let us take a closer look at the integrated method of teaching the Pygmalion motif underwriting a host of works of art (Table 1). The core meaning is given by the original story. As Galatea is an image/ idol descending into the real world, crossing the dividing line between ontological planes, we may say that Ovid's story enacts a sort of incarnation, that it belongs to the mythical epistemic regime (Table 1).

Early modernity is associated with the collapse of authoritarian regimes of power, the time when the burlesque, the mock-heroic, the anti-discourse, the tragicomedy, that is hybrid generic forms were created with a demystifying and deconstructionist effect. For instance, gender superiority (Pygmalion creating Galatea as God created Eve) is reversed: in "Hercules and Omphale", a painting by Rubens, it is Omphale, Queen of Lydia, who enthralls Hercules changing him into a mock-object, holding his club, wearing the fur of the Nemean lion killed by the hero, and twisting Pygmalion's ear. This is a burlesque, a reversal of the patriarchal relationship between the sexes. The heroic is being played down, the hero is his lady's plaything.

Jean Leon Gerome is a very complex artistic personality of the nineteenth century. He collapses ontological planes as well as the media, producing a sculpture within a painting with the latter reproduced by a photograph. In *My Portrait*, he impersonates Pygmalion, a self-portrait of the artist in his studio, with the real-life model sitting side by side with the sculpture. The sculpture in the painting is further distanced from a coherent reality by being the image reproduced by a photograph. The origin has been removed from reality and located within the space of representation (painted Gerome and painted model), the work of art (the sculpture) being the mimetic image of the model: Fig. 12.

According to Jean Baudrillard's classification of signs (*Simulacres et Simulation*, 1981), Ovid's Pygmalion belongs to the first order of images, the sign/ textual figure being a "reflection of a profound reality" levelled with "the sacramental order" of the gods who intervene in the mortals' lives, performing miracles. The Rubens painting belongs to the second stage in the "precession of simulacra", as it "masks and denatures" the reality of the patriarchal order, rewriting wrong the heroic tradition. Gerome's painting pretends to be a mimetic copy but the ontological distance between original and copy has vanished, they exist on the same level of reality. Gerome's painting is self-reflexive, the sign referring to itself (the making of the painting, not the representation of a pre-existing reality out there). In *Pygmalion and Galeta* (Fig.13), Gerome introduces the intertextual element which places a representation at the origin of his refurbishing: the sculpture's body is metamorphosing before the onlooker's eyes, the white legs being still of marble, while the torso is fleshly, a woman's body curving to embrace the painter. Finally, Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion* is centred upon simulacrum, a copy that refers to no reality whatever. Eliza is a copy of the Professor's imagination, his desired phantasma.

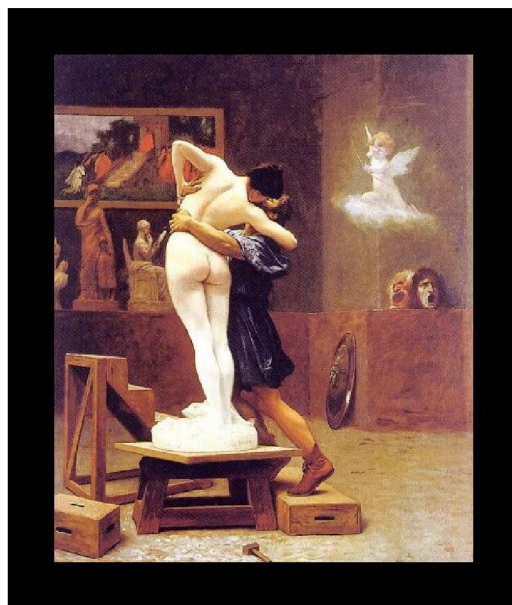


Fig. 12. [Jean-Léon Gérôme, My Portrait](#), \_\_\_\_\_ [Fig. 13. Jean-Léon Gérôme, Pygmalion and Galatea \(1890\)](#).

Here is a correlated picture of the elements shaping several works of art based on the same fable:

TITLE	DOMAIN	TIME	GENDERED IDEOLOGY	EPISTEMIC REGIME
Metamorphoses (Ovid)	Myth (narrative poem)	8 Ch.E.	Pygmalion as originator of art and female body  Galatea as man's creature	Mythical
"Hercules and Omphale" (Rubens)	painting	Cca 1602	Hero Hercules as Queen Omphale's slave, spinning wool.  Queen Omphale  holding Hercules's club and twisting his ear	Burlesque
" <i>My Portrait</i> " " <i>Pygmalion and Galatea</i> " (Jean Leon Gerome)	Photograph of painting. Self-portrait as sculptor and painting, superimposed	1890	The artist collapses the planes of art, reality, and representation	Simulation
"Pygmalion" (Bernard Shaw)	Play	1914	An academic possessed of power over language undertakes to make a flower-girl with "curbstone English" talk like a ducess.	Simulacrum

**TABLE 1.** Deconstruction of Myth into Simulacrum



**The last chapter** examines the **formative dimension of education** which is part of a “**cultural pedagogy**”, whose aim is to refine the students’ perception of media specificity.

As teachers of English we focus on a fifth skill that is culture. In the context of teaching, we will understand through cultural pedagogy the way we need to approach issues of gender, race, class and other social characteristics by appealing to the students’ representations in literature, film, visual art and popular culture media, such as television, advertising, magazines and the internet.

Disney plots emerged out of fairy tales and in time it seems they have “cast a spell”, Jack Zipes says, appreciative of their impact on mixed audiences: “It was not once upon a time, but at a certain time in history, before anyone knew what was happening, that Walt Disney cast a spell on the fairy tale, and he has held it captive ever since” ( Zipes 1999: 332)

We talk of the Disneyfication of the fairy tale and acknowledge it as a referential source nowadays much the same The Grimms' stories served as a model for most fairy tales in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

A specific phenomenon is related to Disney film as cultural pedagogy. Though not intending to be culturally relevant on the market, but rather to make profit from animated films based on fairy tales, Disney cinema cannot be regarded as harmless or innocent as far as culture biased ideas are promoted: “consumerism, corporatism, and technological progress become the central principles for constructing who we are and how we act” (Giroux 1999: 24). and Disney is the new face of corporate power at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Unlike other large corporations (Time Warner, Westinghouse, etc.), Disney is an icon of American culture and middle-class family values. Giroux is probing into the way consumerism pervades our lives:

Democratic identities are replaced by consumerism patterns, and the good life is constructed in terms of what we buy. As corporate power extends its influence and reach over public schools, education is subordinated to the logic of the market and to the interests of creating corporate citizens...The commercial spheres promoting such changes include: television, radio, cinema and newspapers. They and other media are engaged in a cultural pedagogy marked by a struggle over meaning, identity and desire. Increasingly, large corporations work to connect matters of meaning and desire to commercial logic that constricts democratic identity and affirms the growing

political and pedagogical force of culture: “as a crucial site and weapon of power.” (Giroux 1999: 24-25)

Media's mission is to naturalize a cultural approach universally accepted as the true way of looking at the model life of the age. Warner suggests that the fairy tales have been emptied of the complex histories by companies that more or less have won monopoly over the genre, that is, Disney industry and its affiliates. The images and texts “with certain prejudices and values deeply instilled” got sooner to the audience and “naturalized” specific versions of fairy tales (Warner 1994: 416) She mentions that:

[...] the misogyny present in many fairy stories – the wicked stepmothers, bad fairies, ogresses, spoiled princesses, ugly sisters and so forth has lost its connections to the particular web of tensions in which women were enmeshed and come to look dangerously like the way things are. The historical context of the stories has been sheared away and figures like the wicked stepmother have grown into archetypes of the human psyche, hallowed inevitable symbols, while figures like the Beast bridegroom have been granted ever more positive status... The danger of women has become more and more part of the story, and correspondingly, the danger of men has receded “(Ibid, 417).

Contemporary versions are steeped in sexism that teaches them, as Warner says, that this cultural patterning is “the way things are” (Ibid.: 417). The influence of popular culture is paramount for, as Henry Giroux remarks, “the individual and collective identities of children and youth are largely shaped politically and pedagogically in the popular visual culture of video games, television, film, and even in leisure sites such as malls and amusement parks”. (Giroux 1995: web)

Giroux observes and critiques the pedagogical function that Disney movies serve especially for children, underlining that “the significance of animated film operates on many registers, but one of the most persuasive is the role they play as the new “teaching machines”, as producers of culture. The danger lies in the fact that these films receive such importance that they acquire “at least as much cultural authority, as the public schools, religious institutions, and the family” (1999: 91). Under the circumstances, one drawback of media power is that critical thinking is not encouraged, instead everything is served and accepted as such:

The cultural authority of this postmodern media-scape rests on its power to usurp traditional sites of learning and its ability to expand the power of culture through and endless stream of signifying practices, which prioritize the pleasures of the image over the intellectual demands of critical inquiry (Giroux 1995: web).

In order to diminish the undesirable effects of living in a civilization dominated by the media, we need to cross disciplinary borders and appeal to domains as different as genre theory, political philosophy, history, ideology, psychoanalysis, media studies, etc. The integrated model in education allows of connectivity in the students' learning practices, and also gives them the possibility to integrate the texts in contexts which confer upon their studies culturally added value and also help them relate learning to their world and personal experience.

### **Conclusion**

The initial hypothesis of our interdisciplinary paper, that fairy tales resemble a topological space, in the sense that some core pattern remains unchanged despite transformations and rewriting through time, has been discussed in relation to a structuralist approach emphasizing the existence of stylized and unchanging formal aspects (Max Lüth) and with a historicist one focusing on change through time (Vito Carrassi). Fairy tales are topological spaces because:

1. a fairy tale can have many variants, but the "original" fairy tale will nevertheless be recognised by people (See "*Cinderella, Three Hundred and Forty-Five Variants*" by Marian Roalfe Cox., published for the Folk-Lore Society by David Nutt, 1893);
2. given the fact that the fairy tale has a simple structure, a new inscriptor can operate changes (of perspective, relations, in the way of the Bakhtian space-time chronotope, etc.) on it, and yet it will still be understood as a fairy tale;
3. one can even open and rewrite wrong on old fairy tales and make a new modern or postmodernist version out of it, inserting into it some personal agenda (such as Angela Carter's feminist perspective in *Black Venus* and *The Bloody Chamber*), without rendering unreadable the traditional fairy tale which can still be identified as the original matrix on which the later bricoleurs have worked.

Once integrated in the cultural flow, fairy tales began to share the fate of all artifacts, which is a record of formal and ideological mutations in respect to changing aesthetic views, the politics/poetics parallelism, metamorphoses, especially, hybridization of generic forms over time, in respect to trends in art and movements and attitudes in the historical world. The combination of invariant structures and formal and contextual aspects marked for historical change in the world as well as in art lends fairy tales a complexity which creates the necessity for a mix of methods, interpretation grids and theoretical vocabularies, ranging from the cognitivist examination of patterns to the New Historicist contextualization of fairy tales in their progress through time.

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