The magic of a genre: an approach of defining the basic elements of Fairy Tales and a comparative analysis of two versions of Beauty and the Beast

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Introduction

“[Fairy tales] instruct the young about who they are, how they relate to others, and what they should know of the world” (Swann Jones 2002: 18). This is how Swann Jones describes the overall function of fairy tales. When I was a child, I enjoyed reading fairy tales. For me, they were a gate to another worlds full of, magical objects fantastic creatures and other miracles. Moreover, most of the time I could somehow identify with the protagonists, or at least I could share the thrill with them when they experienced their adventure. Even nowadays, I like reading a fairy tale from time to time, because I greatly enjoy the magic they spread. I believe that the fairy tale is a quite popular and one of the most beloved genres in literature- even when it comes to an adult audience. For me, this is mainly because of the stories' complexity. Swann Jones and Bettelheim analyzed several fairy tales according to their value for the audience. Both applied a psychological analysis when looking at the essential elements of fairy stories. Based on their findings, this paper will point out the basic elements that a story has to include in order to belong to the genre fairy tale. The paper is divided into two parts. The first part is devoted to the definition of the genre. First of all, I will distinguish between three main branches of folk narratives. Afterwards, I will point out the five essential qualities of fairy tales and will discuss whether it is possible to have different varieties of one and the same tale. The second part will focus on one specific tale. I will discover how much psychological power and influence the genre inheres by taking a closer look at my favorite fairy tale Beauty and the Beast. At first, I will point out the story's thematic main focus. Afterwards, I will try to reveal the story's origin. Finally, I will compare Beaumont's version of the tale to Andrew Lang's narrative concerning their fairy tale elements in order to tell whether those narratives belong to the fairy tale genre.

Part 1: Defining the genre fairy tale

1 Distinguishing between the three folk narratives: myth, legend, folktale

The tradition of telling and retelling stories is as old as mankind itself. Long time before books were invented, people loved to spread narratives. In a broader classification, one distinguishes three major branches of folk narratives: myths, legends, and folktales. What they have in common is that they are the product of oral tradition, i.e. they were orally spread over centuries without anyone knowing who the author of the narrative is (Swann Jones 2002: 8). In order to identify essential qualities of fairy tales, it is important to differentiate them from the other forms of folk tales:

1. Myths are etiological stories. They explain the operation and purpose of the cosmos by employing divine and immortal figures (gods) as protagonists who are always
superior to mortals. Furthermore, that genre presents its theme majestically and carries
spiritual force (Bettelheim 1989: 26; Swann Jones 2002: 8).

2. **Legends** are defined as being quasi-historical narratives that involve exceptional and
extraordinary protagonists. In legends, cultural ideas, values, and norms are depicted
by remarkable phenomena (Swann Jones 2002: 8).

3. **Folktales**, in contrast, are entertaining narratives that do not only discover the nature
of human desires and foibles, but also deal with the issues of everyday life. The
protagonists in folktales are common and ordinary people. They can be
further divided into fables, jokes, romantic tales and fairy tales (Swann Jones 2002: 8).

When it comes to the qualities of the protagonist, there are essential differences in the way of how the
listener identifies with them. This is, as well, an important point for distinguishing the three branches
of folk narratives, but it is too extensive to be included in this paper. For a more detailed discussion on
that issue look at Bettelheim's *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales*.

**2 Essential qualities of a fairy tale**

So far, we discovered that fairy tales belong to the category of folktales which are an oral
heritage of folk cultures and traditions. In contrast to the other folk narratives- namely the fables,
jokes, and romantic tales- fairy tales depict fantastic and marvelous events, phenomena, and/ or
characters of the magical world (Swann Jones 2002: 9). In order to identify the genre in more detail, it
is necessary to have a look at the essential qualities of fairy tales.

**2.1 Fantastic elements**

Fairies and other fantastic creatures, enchanted people, talking animals, ensorcelled objects,
and magical events are often to be found in fairy tales. However, even if a story does not explicitly
mention fairies, it belongs to the genre *fairy tale* when it depicts the world of wondrous magic and
fantasy. Somehow the protagonist must come into contact with the marvelous and the magical. In most
cases, the main character interacts with a magical object or encounters either a bewitched creature or a
creature that has magical powers itself. An important explanation for the incorporation of fantasy
elements and creatures is that fairy tales illustrate how the cosmos operates. Fantastic elements serve
the function of making the audience believe in the existence of magical phenomena in the real world,
which is achieved by presenting the magical dimension in an earnest way (Swann Jones 2002: 9f).
Thus, the events happening in fairy narratives always appear as ordinary events; even though they
might be unlikely to happen in reality (Bettelheim 1989: 37). Accordingly, the audience is expected to
acknowledge the story's magical elements as being true and face value. In other words, the reader/
listener must accept the existence of supernatural powers that are greater than the human ones. Therefore, the manifestation of fantastic elements and creatures is an ubiquitous characteristic of fairy tales (Swann Jones 2002: 9f).

2.2 Thematic focus

Considered that a huge number of fairy narratives exist, the problems dealt with in them are of various kinds. It would take more than this paper to name them exclusively, but some frequently common topics are for example oedipal love, sibling rivalry, feelings of rejection, sexual anxiety, and sexual maturation (Swann Jones 2002: 20; Bettelheim 1989: 11 ff, 280). In the broadest interpretation, however, fairy tales deal with the operation of the cosmos. They make the audience aware that greater powers exist, which is illustrated by the incorporation of fantastic and magical elements/phenomena derived from the fairy realm. Fairy tales, so to say, document and affirm cosmic morality. At the end of a story, most often inherently good and friendly characters will be rewarded for their kindness, no matter how many obstacles they had to face before. In contrast, evil characters will be punished for their malice. In Cinderella, for instance, the female protagonist receives good fortune from a fairy godmother who magically gives her everything she needs to attend the prince's ball. Cinderella's evil and jealous stepsisters, however, are attacked by birds that pick the girls' eyes out. The cosmic morality is affirmed and the magical and fantastic elements serve to confirm that the world is a moral one. As a consequence, the characters in the stories had better encounter the fairy realm's magic with respect and awe (Swann Jones 2002: 10). Moreover, fairy tales do not only illustrate how the cosmos works and affirm universal morality, but also represent the world of society, and focus on human inner psychological phenomena. Swann Jones, Bettelheim, and others who investigated the fairy tale's psychological effects, claim that fairy stories are a mirror of the unconscious mind of human beings: they “represent the deep-seated feelings of ordinary individuals in facing the typical challenges of life,” as Swann Jones points out (Swann Jones 2002: 11). Thus, the themes and issues reported in fairy tales are such of everyday life: ordinary wishes, desires, human foibles, as well as fears and existential anxieties. Bettelheim clarifies that fairy tales “take these existential anxieties and dilemmas very seriously and address [them] directly [to the audience]: the need to be loved and the fear that one is thought worthless; the love of life, and the fear of death” (Bettelheim 1989: 10). Accordingly, fairy tales inhere a huge source of emotional energy and they can be regarded as a gate to the unconscious dimension of the individual psyche. In other words, the magical elements and fantasy creations are symbols, metaphors and similes that represent the audience's unconscious inner feelings and concerns (Swann Jones 2002: 11f).

2.3 The protagonist

The majority of fairy tales does not include names at all. The acting characters are rather
referred to by general or descriptive characteristics or their occupation. For instance, malevolent stepsisters are referred to as “evil stepsisters”, a prince is called “the prince”, a father is introduced as “the father” and so on. Even the narrative's main character is most often just referred to by a nickname that indicates his/ her most striking quality. However, in some fairy tales the protagonist is simply called “the boy”/ “the girl” in order to emphasize that it is an ordinary person (Bettelheim 1989: 40; Swann Jones 2002: 17). Concerning the characterization, it is to say that the acting people are rather typical characters. They are either inherently good or inherently bad, but they do not inhere simultaneously good and bad traits of character (Bettelheim 1989: 9). The central character is always one with a good and friendly character who does not want to cause trouble to anyone. Despite he/she is presented as deserving good treatment, the protagonist is not an extraordinary person. In fact, it is a modest and quite ordinary character who is mostly being treated unfair and has to solve a problem as the story goes on. The driving idea behind the rather poor characterization of the protagonist is that the audience is encouraged to identify with him/ her. As a consequence, the description of the character is a short, but, nonetheless, an unambiguous one. It is also important to mention that, frequently often, the protagonist turns out to be descend from aristocracy (namely a prince/ princess) or, at least, worthy of marrying a nobleman/-woman (Swann Jones 2002: 17f).

2.4 The plot consists of a quest

So far, we know that fairy narratives give some insights into cosmic principles. However, most often, the protagonist is confronted with a quest or a problem that deals with the cultural and social dimension of the (real) world. As already explained in 2.2 Thematic focus, the protagonist will start to get aware of his/ her own anxieties and desires pretty soon. As the story goes on, most often, the main character will go on an adventurous quest in order to solve a serious problem. The quest can also be seen as a self-discovery trip that eventually helps the hero/ heroine to recognize his/ her true identity and to overcome their fears (Swann Jones 2002: 17). At the end of the narrative, the protagonist has a strong inner security about the own strengths and perceives personal happiness.

2.5 The happy ending

The fifth important quality of the genre is the happy end which serves the function of affirming the moral justice of the universe. The good and deserving will be rewarded and gain personal happiness, whereas the evil characters will be punished. The punishment is either fulfilled by social justice (e.g. by the verdict of a court) or as a penalty derived from nature or the supernatural realm. The latter case is a result of cosmic justice. Either way, the cosmic morality is affirmed (Swann Jones 2002: 16 f). Bettelheim, who analyses fairy tales according to their effect on children's psychological
growth, believes that a happy end is important for a child in order to teach him to act correctly. This is done by illustrating that one always gets what one deserves- may it be in a rewarding or in a punishing way. In the end, justice will prevail (Bettelheim 1989: 144).

In short, a typical fairy tale includes the following five criteria: an ordinary protagonist who faces ordinary issues, fantastic elements, an adventurous quest, and a happy and satisfying ending. Thematically, they focus on affirming the cosmic morality and justice.

3 Varieties of a tale

Authors like Andrew Lang and the brothers Grimm are well known when it comes to the genre of fairy tales. But in fact, these authors didn't invent the stories themselves, but simply published collections of popular tales in folk culture. Since the tradition of folk narratives dates back to a time long before people started to record stories or even historical events, it is impossible to identify the creator of a story. Before tales were recorded, the folk narratives were spread orally, not only from generation to generation, but also from one region to another by the expansion and resettlement of people. The result of the oral circulation is that one tale exists in different versions: the same story can be found in different societies and different cultures. However, the basic plot structure always remained the same, which means that no officially correct version exists, but several equally legitimate ones (Swann Jones 2002: 1 ff). Swann Jones, therefore, defines the fairy tale as “the sum of its versions” (Swann Jones 2002: 4). According to him, the plot outline, meaning the specified sequence of plot actions, is a useful device to categorize folktales into recognizable tale types. While motifs and stylistic features, such as settings, objects, or rhetorical formulations included in several versions of a specific tale may differ, the basic sequence of actions is always the same. Therefore, the division of tale types by a story's plot outline is possible. Accordingly, “other collected texts that follow the same specified sequence of episodes typical of that tale type are considered versions of it” (Swann Jones 2002: 4). Moreover, Aarne and Thompson developed a classification of folktales depending on the essential plot actions- which they call actions traits. Among other tale types, such as animal tales, romantic tales, jokes and anecdotes, Aarne and Thompson cataloged fairy tales in their book The Types of the Folktale. Fairy tales are described as “Tales of Magic;” numerated as tale types 300-749 (Swann Jones 2002: 7).

4 Propp's suggestion to study the function of the dramatis personae

The fact that there are a huge amount of different tale versions leads to the phenomena that the names (and even some attributes) of the protagonist may change. However, the function of the dramatis personae, as Propp calls them, does not change at all. As a consequence, it is possible to analyze a tale according to the functions of the dramatis personae by examining the events of a tale and
their sequence. The leading question here is *what* does the characters do? The questions of how or by whom one function is fulfilled is variable, since this an accessory element of a tale (Propp 1994: 20). He defines *function* as “an act of a character, defined from the point of view of its significance for the course of the action” (Propp 1994: 21). In his book *Morphology of Folktale*, Propp distinguishes between 31 strictly ordered functions. He explains that a function labeled with the letter A always appears in the first place of a story, followed by the function designated with the letter B and so on (Propp 1994: 22ff). In short, the structure of fairy tales is always the same, according to Propp. In theory, Propp's approach may sound useful, but he himself admits that not all functions may occur in one tale. He, therefore, tries to analyze the morphological structure of fairy tales by the presence or absence of one function (Propp 1994: 22). One criticism of this approach is that it is quite difficult to analyze a tale by saying whether or not one function or even a series of functions appears in one story. Especially, if one tries to examine a narrative with several intervening plot stands, it may get quite complicated to apply Propp's approach.

5 Moral tales

A more distinctive branch of the fairy tale is the moral tale. It is a sub-genre of fairy tales and is characterized by including moral or didactic features. These tales intent to instruct the reader or to educate him. Most often, the audience can learn exact moral lessons (Hannon and Duggan 2008: 383).

**Part 2: The tale Beauty and the Beast**

In short, the tale tells the story of the meeting, separation, and reunion of Beauty and the Beast (who actually is an enchanted prince). Beauty's love towards Beast eventually leads to his disenchantment. The story ends with the marriage of Beauty and the redeemed prince (Beast). That theme is known as the animal groom story. In the following part of the paper, I will have a closer look at two versions of the story: Madame J.-M. Leprince de Beaumont's (1756) and Andrew Lang's version (1889). Both narratives can be found in the appendix. Nonetheless, I want to give a short summary of the basic elements that are included in both narratives.

1 Brief summary of the plot

A wealthy merchant has some sons and some daughters (the amount of children he has varies from story to story). The prettiest and youngest daughter, however, is called “Beauty” because of her wonderful outer appearance. Beauty is a friendly, modest and charming person, whereas her sisters are shelfish, spoiled and jealous of Beauty's wonderful look. Their brothers hardly play a role. Out of the sudden, the merchant looses his money what forces the family to leave the town. In contrast to her
sisters, Beauty's personality blossoms while living in the countryside. One day, the merchant has to go on a trip that may bring some wealth to the family again. After being asked, the two shelfish girls want their father to bring them expensive gifts, but Beauty just wants him to bring her a rose. On the journey, the merchant looses his way and gets to a castle. He enjoys a nice meal, a warm shelter and stays overnight without seeing the castle's ruler, a beastly creature. Before leaving, the merchant cuts a rose for Beauty, but gets coughed by the Beast who wants to punish him for this affront. However, the Beast suggests that one of the merchant's daughters can come to the castle in order to live there forever. Eventually, Beauty chooses to do so and gets to the castle willingly. There, every evening Beast asks her for marriage, but she refuses. One day, Beauty asks to visit her family for some time. Predicting that he will die if Beauty stays away for too long, Beast allows her to go. At home, Beauty discovers her feelings for Beast. However, Beauty somehow stays too long, but she dreams about the dying Beast. In fear of his death, she decides to go back to him and arrives just in time. Beauty admits that she loves Beast. Eventually, Beast turns out to be an enchanted prince who was just saved by Beauty's loving feelings towards him.

2 Literal heritage of Beauty and the Beast

In the first part of this paper, paragraph 3Varieties of a tale already pointed out that a fairy tale can have different story variations. Before analyzing the tale genre-wise, I want to examine the literal heritage of the story. Like every folk tale, Beauty and the Beast probably also goes back to oral traditions. Animal groom stories are to be found in folklore all over the world: Europe, America, China, India, and other regions. Some of these tales are ancient ones, others were created over centuries by telling and retelling. It is possible that the story's inspiration was taken from the ancient and “primitive ritual of sacrificing a virgin to appease a menacing supernatural being or serpent” (Swain 2008: 104). Even though it is not possible to pinpoint the story's true origin, Madame G.-S. B de Villeneuve is considered to be the original author of Beauty and the Beast. Her French novel La Belle et la Bête was published in 1740. However, it is suggested that she was inspired by two other stories that have a similar general outline: an animal or an unattractive man will suddenly be loved by a beautiful maiden. This is true for M.-C. d’Aulnoy’s Le Mouton (1698) and C. Perrault’s Riquet a la houppe (1697). However, according to Swain, Villeneuve managed to reflect the milieu she was writing in and involved her own fantasy by creating the story's details and plot structure (Swain 2008: 104). Soon Villeneuve's tale was the basis for other versions. In 1756 Madame J.-M. Leprince de Beaumont published an abridged version. She cut out most of the novel's subplots and turned the story into a didactic tale for children (Swain 2008: 105). Beaumont's version was soon translated into other languages which was the reason for the great diffusion of the tale. Her creation “became the standard referent for most subsequent retellings, in both folk and literary traditions” (Swain 2008: 105).
However, the 19th century's retellings tend to dissociate from Beaumont. Andrew Lang's version of *Beauty and the Beast* appeared in the *Blue Fairy Book* in 1889. He published a radical abridgment of Villeneuve's tale which became one of the “best known and most influential” retelling that was reprinted until the mid-twentieth century (Swain 2008: 105). In addition to several literal versions of the story, *Beauty and the Beast* also established itself in several artistic ways. The general plot of the tale became a much-loved basis for modern opera, movies and even offers subject matters for television series. In short, the tale has been changed over and over again, but the basic plot structure always remained the same. That is the reason why we can speak of having different versions of one and the same tale.

3 Plot action examined by Aarne and Thompson

As already said, a tale can vary concerning the details, but the basic plot structure is a clearly distinguishable one. Aarne and Thompson examine several fairy tales and catalogue them according to their basic plot structure. They list the story *Beauty and the Beast* as tale type 425C (within the section “supernatural or enchanted husband or other relatives”). In comparison to type 425A/ B, tale type 425C concentrates on the beast and its transformation. The following overview is taken from Hearne's *Beauty and the Beast: Visions and Revisions of an old Tale* (Hearne 1989: 9):

Tale type 425C reveals the following plot actions specified for *Beauty and the Beast*:

425. The search for the lost husband

I. The Monster as Husband
   (b) He is a man at night.
   (c) A Girl promises herself as bride to the monster
   (d) or her father promises her

II. Disenchantment of the Monster

III. Loss of the Husband
   (c³) Staying too long at home

IV. Recovery of Husband
   (b) Disenchants him by affectionate treatment

4 Comparative analysis of Beaumont's and Lang's *Beauty and the Beast*

The last paragraph is devoted to the analysis and comparison of two versions of *Beauty and the Beast*. The focus will be put on the question whether these narratives belong to the genre of fairy tale, so I will point out the typical fairy tale qualities that are included in the texts. Of course, both versions employ the theme of the animal groom, since both narratives belong to tale type 425C.
4.1 The initial situation

The acting characters in Lang's and Beaumont's version are the merchant, his youngest and most beautiful daughter “Beauty” and a creature called “Beast”. The merchant has some children (the total amount of descendants differs between both versions). However, he exact amount of existing family members is not important for the plot and is therefore changeable. In both versions, the merchant looses his wealth and the family has to move into a small house off town.

4.2 The characters: Beauty, her father, the Beast and other characters

To recall, characters in fairy tales are presented as ordinary people. Most of the time, they do not possess special powers and they are called by a nickname that represents the most striking trait of their character or a general description. The female protagonist in the story in question is Beauty. In both versions, she is the prettiest of the merchant's daughters and deserves this name not only because of her outer appearance, but also because of her sweet and kind character. Beaumont explains her nickname as follows

(a) Beaumont: “When she was little, every body admired her, and called her The little Beauty; so that, as she grew up, she still went by the name of Beauty […] such a charming, sweet-tempered creature, spoke so kindly to poor people, and was of such an affable, obliging disposition” (Beaumont 1756: 1)

Lang also justifies her nickname by referring to her appearance as well as her character:

(b) Lang: “But she was really far prettier and cleverer than [her sisters]were; indeed, she was so lovely that she was always called Beauty.” (Lang 1889: 1)

To conclude, even though she is of natural beauty, the protagonist is definitely described as an ordinary person. Moreover, her inner goodness is manifested in her outer appearance.

The name of Beauty's father is never mentioned in the two narratives. He is either referred to as “the father” or “the merchant,” because that is his occupation. The audience hardly gets to know anything about his character. Just a few means of indirect characterization can give a clue as to how the merchant's character may be like. I don't want to go into great detail, because the focus shall not be put on a characterization, but let's compare the merchant's reaction to the Beast's proposal of sending one of his daughters to the Beast's castle.

(a) Lang: “Ah!” cried the merchant, “if I were cruel enough to buy my own life at the expense of one of my children’s, what excuse could I invent to bring her here?” (Lang 1889: 3)

In this version, the merchant seems to be willing to send one of his daughters to the castle, because he does not clearly express his displeasure. Instead, he speaks of having no excuse to make her come to the castle. In contrast to that, Beaumont describes his reaction the following way:

(b) Beaumont: “The merchant had no mind to sacrifice his daughters to the ugly monster […] so he
promised upon oath, he would return […]” (Beaumont 1756: 2)

In Beaumont's narrative the audience gets to know in a direct way that the merchant does not want to give up on one of his daughters. However, how the merchant reacts does not make any difference to the following plot actions, because in both versions Beauty will go to the Beast's castle willingly. Nonetheless, the merchant's reaction may have an influence on the didactically perception of the story, which is interesting to analyze but does not contribute to the topic of this paper.

The third important character is the Beast. In this case too, the audience never gets to know his real name. In both narratives, he received this nickname just because of his beastly appearance. Beast's character, however, is a friendly and lovable one. In both narratives, Beast supplies the merchant and Beauty with food and shelter when they arrive in the castle. Beast also supplies the merchant with some goods as a compensation for him loosing Beauty to the Beast. Moreover, he is always polite and courteous towards Beauty and is concerned about her feeling comfortable in the castle. This is true for both, Lang's and Beaumont's version.

Considering the other characters in the story, it is to say that the merchant's sons hardly play any role. As a consequence, the audience does not get to know any detailed information about them. Beauty's sisters, however, are described as being malevolent, greedy, but also jealous of Beauty. A more detailed characterization of them is neither provided by Beaumont nor by Lang.

In short, the presentation of Beauty, Beast and the other characters in Lang's and Beaumont's version completely corresponds to how fairy tales deal with their acting characters: they are ordinary people and they are named for their abstract qualities (Beauty) or their general description (Beast, the merchant). Moreover, a person is either good or bad, but none of the characters in Beauty and the Beast combine good and bad traits at once. Consequently, they rather represent types of characters instead of unique personalities. Because of the plainness of the character descriptions it is easy, at least for children, to identify with the characters.

4.3 Beauty's quest: sexual maturation and finding a mate

As explained in 2.4 The plot consists of a quest (Part 1 of the paper), the protagonist is confronted with problems of everyday life and has to go on an adventurous quest in order to gain personal happiness and certainty about his/ her true character. The thematic core of Beauty and the Beast is the theme of leaving the parent's home and finding a mate. This is a topic often depicted in fairy tales (Swann Jones 2002: 22). Beauty's request for a rose can be interpreted as her (subconscious) wish to go adrift from her father in order to establish an adult relationship with a
mating partner. Beauty has to learn to transfer her love for the father to another man, which is presented as Beast in this story (Bettelheim 1989: 308). The act of picking the rose leads to the meeting of Beauty and Beast, initiated and accepted by her father. The rose itself can be seen “either as a figure for male power, which is in play between the father and his daughter’s suitor, or as a sign of the young woman’s sexual innocence, which will soon be lost” (Swain 2008: 108). Bettelheim too, interprets the broken rose as a symbol for the lost virginity (Bettelheim 1989: 306). Beauty's quest is to leave home in order to live in the Beast's castle. At first, Beauty finds her life in the castle exciting and enjoys exploring it. But soon she finds it more interesting to talk to Beast and looks forward to the daily talks in the evening. Every night, Beast confronts her with the topic of establishing an own family, since Beast asks her to marry him. For as long as Beauty stays in the castle, she refuses marriage, but she notices that she feels something for Beast though. This is true for Lang's and Beaumont's narrative. Beauty's growing interest in the Beast can be seen as her sexual maturation: she develops awareness of her own sexual identity (Swann Jones 2002: 22). However, the time when Beauty is actually aware of the fact that she loves Beast differs in Beaumont's and Lang's version. In Beaumont's narrative, Beauty admits her love when she asks for permission to visit her family. Even though she assures just feeling friendship for Beast, she also uses the word love when she promises to came back:

(a) Beaumont: "Beast, you make me very uneasy, I wish I could consent to marry you, but I am too sincere to make you believe that will ever happen: I shall always esteem you as a friend; endeavour to be satisfied with this." […] "No, (said Beauty, weeping,) I love you too well to be the cause of your death: I give you my promise to return in a week […]" (Beaumont 1756: 5)

At home, Beauty gets to know her sister's husbands. The one is handsome, but selfish and neglects his wife, and the other one is witty, but enjoys tormenting others. This detail is just to be found in Beaumont's version. It serves the purpose to make Beauty witness on her own that marrying a beautiful man or a character of wit may have negative side effects too. Moreover, one night, Beauty dreams about the dying Beast. Soon she asks herself:

(a) Beaumont: “Why did I refuse to marry him? I should be happier with the monster than my sisters are with their husbands […]” (Beaumont 1756: 6)

This is the moment when Beauty decides to go back to Beast and admits her love towards him. She finally adrifted herself from her family life. The fact that Beauty expresses the lesson she learned in words underlines Beaumont's didactic intention of storytelling. Beaumont formulates a moral and addresses it directly to the audience in form of Beauty's thoughts.

In Lang's narrative, Beauty dreams every night about a handsome prince when she is in the Beast's castle. She falls in love with the prince and believes that he is the Beast's prisoner. Even though the prince in her dreams constantly tells Beauty to distrust appearances and to listen to her heart, she does
not consider that Beast might be the prince in disguise. In contrast to Beaumont's version, Beauty does not express any feelings of love when she asks for permission to leave. It rather seems like Beauty just feels pity for Beast.

(b) Lang: “No, dear Beast,” answered Beauty softly, “I do not hate you, and I should be very sorry never to see you any more, but I long to see my father again. Only let me go for two months, and I promise to come back to you and stay for the rest of my life.” (Lang 1889: 9)

However, the time when she figured out that she loves Beast is after she dreamed about his death. A lady that she already saw in earlier dreams, showed Beauty the dying Beast. The next day, Beauty decided to go back to him to make his suffering for love come to an end. In Lang's version, the audience just learns that Beauty considered marriage with Beast when she tells him for making his suffer stop. Nonetheless, Beauty never puts in words why she feels love for Beast out of the sudden. The message is clear: she wants to marry him out of love, but why she prefers Beast to the prince of her dreams stays unclear.

4. 4. other topics depicted in Beauty and the Beast

To recall, fairy tales deal with ordinary problems of everyday life. Apart from the topic of Beauty's sexual maturation, the story also depicts the topics of sibling rivalry, the anxiety of suffering from sudden poverty and even what Bettelheim defines as existential fears. Those topics are included in both tale versions. It would be too much to discuss all these themes in great detail here, but I want to give a short overview of them. In both narratives, Beauty and her ordinary, but wealthy family live a good life at first, but soon they have to suffer from poverty. As a consequence, they move to a small cottage off town and start doing hard, physical work. Living at the edge of existence is a problem that most people fear. It is therefore an anxiety of ordinary people. Beauty also comes into contact with spiteful and jealous people, namely her sisters. Sibling rivalry is one theme often reflected in fairy tales (Swann Jones 2002: 22). The rivalry between Beauty and her sisters is expressed directly in saying that the sisters do not wish any good fortune for Beauty. Moreover, they are jealous on her appearance and are even happy when she leaves to go to the Beast. This is also true for Lang's and Beaumont's story.

As already mentioned in Part 1.2 Thematic focus, Bettelheim distinguishes some existential anxieties that are typically included in fairy tales: “the need to be loved and the fear that one is thought worthless; the love of life, and the fear of death” (Bettelheim 1989: 10). In Beauty and the Beast, all of these fears are somehow represented by Beast, who is totally aware of his ugly and frightful appearance. Despite his look, Beast is a friendly, benevolent and frank character. He desperately wants to be loved and is happy to hear that Beauty came to him on her own will. When she leaves the castle in order to visit her family, Beast feels left alone and worthless. He does not fear death, but he wishes for salvation of his suffering. Therefore, he develops a death wish. The only one who does not want
him to die is Beauty. She fears that she might not arrive in time to rescue him from death. In short, *Beauty and the Beast* depicts a lot of topics that are typically to be found in fairy tales. All of these issues are presented in a serious and persuading way in both, Beaumont's and Lang's version of the tale.

### 4.5 Fantastic elements

One of the most important qualities of a fairy tale is the employment of fantastic elements. In both analyzed narratives, some magical elements can be found. First of all, the Beast's castle has some magical features: even though the castle is in the midst of a snowy forest, there is no snow to be found in the castle grounds at all. Instead, there are even roses blooming in the Beast's garden. Moreover, Beast allows the merchant to take some of his goods as a compensation for having to leave Beauty in the castle. The merchant is provided with special boxes that move themselves magically to the merchant's house.

(a) Beaumont: “[the merchant] had quite forgot the chest full of gold; but […] to his great astonishment, he found it by his bedside” (Beaumont 1756: 3)

(b) Lang: “[After Beauty returned home] “then saw that the boxes she had packed the night before were all in the room. While she was wondering by what magic the Beast had transported them and herself to this strange place […]” (Lang 1889: 10)

A third fantastic element that is included in both narratives is a magical ring that transports Beauty to her family and back to the castle while she sleeps.

(a) Beaumont: “Beauty having said this, rose, put her ring on the table, and then laid down again; scarce was she in bed before she fell asleep; and when she waked the next morning, she was overjoyed to find herself in the Beast's palace.” (Beaumont 1756: 6)

(b) Lang: “She turned her ring round upon her finger, and said firmly, “I wish to go back to my palace and see my Beast again,” as she had been told to do. Then she fell asleep instantly, and only woke up to hear the clock […] which told her at once that she was really in the palace once more.” (Lang 1889: 10)

Both narratives also include mysterious and forecasting dreams. Even though in Lang's version Beauty dreams about a handsome prince every night that she spends in the Beast's castle. However, she does not dream very often in Beaumont's version. Rather, there is just one specific dream sequence; it is the one that helps Beauty to discover her true feelings for Beast. In both stories, Beauty stays too for long at her father's house. One night, she eventually dreams of the Beast. She sees him suffering and recognizes that he is close to death. That dream makes Beauty feel sorry for breaking her promise to visit the family for a short amount of time. She magically returns to the castle, because of the ring Beast gave her, and finds Beast indeed dying. Beauty's dream therefore can be seen as a mysterious
event that makes her magically aware of the delicate situation Beast is in.

Last, but not least both tale versions directly lead the audience to think about whether or not fairies could exist. Eventually, both plots even reveal that a good fairy establishes cosmic morality and fairness.

(a) Beaumont: “[the merchant expresses his excitement about the castle and it's owner] "Certainly, (said he,) this palace belongs to some kind fairy, who has seen and pitied my distress." [...] As to you, ladies, (said the Fairy to Beauty's two sisters,)[…]” (Beaumont 1756: 2)

(b) Lang: “Beauty recognized [her] as the stately lady she had seen in her dreams […] “Now,” said the Fairy to Beauty, […] “(Lang 1889: 11)

In short, both versions of Beauty and the Beast include magical elements that make the audience believe that another realm may exist. They also directly point the reader towards the thought that the magical events may be caused by fairies who come from the fairy world and cause an interaction between the real world and the fairy realm. This element is an essential characteristic of the fairy tale genre.

4.6 Happy ending: marriage

A final essential quality of fairy tales is the happy end. The cosmic morality will be affirmed in the end, because every character gets what he deserves. In Beauty and the Beast, Beauty gains her personal happiness when she figured out that she loves Beast. She perceives Beast “before any transformation, as irresistible.” (Hearne 1989: 27). As a consequence, Beauty gets aware of her love for him and eventually agrees to marry him. In other words, Beauty learned to look beyond appearance and learned to appreciate Beast how he is. Accordingly, even Beast gains happiness in his enchanted form. He witnesses that he is been truly loved by Beauty. On top of it, the spell upon him is broken and he turns into his real form: a human prince. Consequently, both, Beauty and Beast find their true love and gain personal happiness in the end. However, Beauty's evil sisters are punished in Beaumont's story, whereas they are not in Lang's version. This can be explained by the fact that the sisters are more cruel towards Beauty in Beaumont's narrative. Lang just mentions that Beauty's sisters got used to living without Beauty. They consider her a nuisance when she visits, but they do not cause a malevolent action that prevents Beauty from leaving. As a consequence, Beauty's sisters do not have to fear punishment in Lang's version.

(a) Lang: “Then her sisters seemed to have got quite used to being without her, and even found her rather in the way, so she would not have been sorry when the two months were over […]“ (Lang 1889: 10)

Beaumont presents Beauty's sisters in a completely different way. In the spirit of mischief, the sisters caused Beauty to stay longer than intended when she is at home for a last visit:
In what is this little creature better than us, that she should be so much happier?"
"Sister, said the eldest, a thought just strikes my mind; let us endeavour to detain her above a week, and perhaps
the silly monster will be so enraged at her for breaking her word, that he will devour her." "

(Beaumont 1756: 5)

In the end, the good fairy condemns the sisters to witness Beauty's happiness by turning them into
statues that are placed in front of the castle. Chances are high that they stay transformed until the end
of time. This prospect is even formulated by the fairy in Beaumont's narrative:

(B) Beaumont: “You shall stand before your sister's palace gate, and be it your punishment to behold her
happiness; and it will not be in your power to return to your former state till you own your faults”

(Beaumont 1756: 6)

4.7 Conclusion of the comparison

Lang's version of Beauty and the Beast as well as Beaumont's narrative include a lot of
elements that are typically to be found in fairy tales, e.g. ordinary characters referred to by nicknames,
several magical elements, the affirmation of cosmic morality, and many more. So both versions belong
to the fairy tale genre. However, Beaumont's narrative also serves a didactic purpose. At several points,
she formulates morals and provides the reader with them, for example when Beauty realizes that she
loves Beast. At this point she explicitly analyses why marring Beast is much better than marrying a
handsome man. Moreover, Beaumont intendedly describes that Beauty gets up early and does her
chores conscientiously. Beaumont wants to express that the moral of merit comes through hard work
and education. Her narrative, therefore, belongs to the fairy tale sub-genre of moral tales (Hannon and
Duggan 2008: 383).

Overall conclusion

This paper analyzed the genre fairy tales and examined the five essential qualities of the genre.
The focus was put on the psychological elements that define a fairy narrative as they are studied in
more detail by Swann Jones and Bettelheim. Moreover, two versions of one tale are compared to each
other concerning their fairy tale elements. The analysis pointed out that Andrew Lang's version of
Beauty and the Beast belongs to the fairy tale genre, whereas Madame J.-M. Leprince de Beaumont's
narrative even belongs to the fairy tale sub-genre moral tales. The more detailed occupation with the
topic manifested my initial believe that fairy tales offer a great amount of enchantment. Even by
comparing two versions of one and the same story, I noticed that fairy narratives are highly diverse,
not only concerning their inner structure, but also concerning the topics they depict and the values they
offer to the audience. For me, fairy tales stay pieces of literature that I enjoy reading from time to time.
Bibliography


The fairy tale genre provides ways for children to receive important messages. Although there are some themes in fairy tales that are unrealistic, the overall effect is positive and offers fundamental elements for children’s development. Fairy tales not only aid in child development, but they also offer a rich source of material to draw from in a therapeutic manner. This provides a great way of accessing children’s imagination by exploring memories of fairy tales and using them to address painful or unsettling issues in a nontargeting, playful manner. This can be better appreciated through the analysis of a project titled “Fairy Tale Workshop in a Pediatric Oncology Ward.”

Learning About the Genre of Fairy Tales

The Elements of a Fairy Tale

What is it that makes a story a fairy tale? As with folktales, fairy tales have an oral tradition, and they usually take place “long ago.” There are several elements present in most of these stories, however, that identify them as part of the genre of fairy tales: The Elements of a Fairy Tale Chart

- Special beginning and/or ending words - Once upon a time...and they lived happily ever after.
- Good character
- Evil character
- Royalty and/or a castle usually present
- Magic happens
- Problem and a Solution

Things often present in fairy tales: The Elements of a Fairy Tale Chart

- Once upon a time...
- Happily ever after

What Are Fairy Tales? Defining the term “fairy tale” accurately and concisely proves difficult. In many ways, this relates to the issue of distinguishing fairy tales from folk tales, as fairy tales generally have origins in folk tales, but not all folk tales are fairy tales. Elizabeth Harries suggests that occurs because people tend to classify a story as a “fairy tale” when it follows the basic plot sequence of “stability, disruption, intervention, and stability regained, ‘once upon a time’ to ‘happily ever after.’” Another complication in the study of fairy tales, which may also result from their folkloric background, concerns the difficulty of composing any kind of firm chronology or origin for any given tale. Sagas about princes and princesses, beauty, magic, and love, fairy tales like Snow White and Cinderella among others have become children’s favorite bedtime stories. However, as parents tuck their sons and daughters in, they fail to realize that there is a much more daunting purpose to these stories. American writer and poet, Jane Yolen suggests that fairy tales indicate life values. First of all, a rather sexist view of women has emerged from the evolution of a variety fairy tales. In older versions of many fairy tales, on can see the female dominant, matriarchal societies through the strong female protagonists. For example, as Yolen reminds, Cinderella until lately has never been a passive dreamer. The forerunners of the Ash-girl have been hardy, active heroines.