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Summary

The Horror in the Fairy Tale and in its Postmodern Transformations

The dissertation, entitled *The Horror in the Fairy Tale and in its Postmodern Transformations* discusses two issues. The first examines the horror aspect of the classic fairy tale understood as a story with many variations (often divergent in the plot), firmly rooted in Western culture and therefore familiar to audiences for centuries. To delineate the fairy tale scare mechanisms, especially the awe-inspiring antagonists, Charles Perrault's *Histoires ou Contes du Temps Passé* and Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm's collection of fairy tales *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (last edition, 1857) were analyzed. The study also refers to selected works by Hans Christian Andersen. The analysis of his chosen writings is a vital addition to this research. In order to discern how horror manifests itself in selected texts (including those less familiar to the general public) by the mentioned authors, a detailed analysis of the scary characters typical of fairy tales was carried out. The subjects of consideration were mainly images of the witch, the wolf, the devil, and child-devouring creatures. These characters were used as case studies. The case study method made it possible to show how these antagonists were presented in terms of their aesthetic and axiological qualities. It also highlighted their similarities and differences both in their (often awe-inspiring) appearance and in their actions and motivation, which were discussed together with the motif of punishment. The analyses referred, among others, to psychoanalysis (especially the findings of Bruno Bettelheim), the structuralist research of Vladimir Propp, Max Lüthi's reflections on the representation of fairy-tale characters, as well as the interpretations of contemporary literary scholars (Maria Tatar, Katarzyna Slany). Each case study is preceded by an outline of historical and cultural studies also referring to folklore.

The second research problem concerns how horror is presented in contemporary renarrations of fairy tales and how familiar traditional fairy tale characters, motifs, plot patterns (especially regarding punishment and antagonist story endings), and scare props have been used and

reworked. It shows how the paradigm of the witch - a threatening and emblematic figure in fairy tales - has changed and evolved in fairy tale renarrations in children's and adult literature and crossover literature. The research realized by the case study method included not only literary works but also movies, series, posters, and a music video, all of which are traditional fairy tale adaptations to a greater or lesser extent.

The thesis comprises four chapters. The first is theoretical and literary. It attempts to systematize the terminology associated with fairy tales (folk tale, magical tale, literary tale) and postmodern fairy tales (discussion of terms such as hypotext and hypertext, retelling, rewriting, duplication and revision, anti-tale, anti-fable, rewritten literature, renarrations, the notion of fairy tale as a meme, and fairy-tale sphere theory).

 The second chapter addresses the anthropological and psychoanalytical origins of horror. It outlines the subject of the cruelty of myths and biblical stories, as well as reflects on the 18th and 19th-century Gothic novel and its later realizations (horror) and relevance to postmodern transformations. It presents how horror is pursued within the intellectual current of postmodernism, including the concept of the death of the author (Barthes), intertextuality (Glowinski), and liquid modernity (Bauman).

The third chapter deals with the characteristics of horror in the fairy tales of Perrault, the Brothers Grimm, and Andersen. The issues raised included the addressee of the works and the frightening motifs in the selected titles. The essential part of the chapter, however, is a typology of threatening characters in fairy tales. Images of antagonists such as the witch, the wolf, the devil, murderers, and cannibals were analyzed. The discussion begins with a historical and anthropological section.

The fourth chapter explores the depiction of horror in the postmodern fairy tale. The literary and cinematic material was chosen to show haunting motifs in fairy tale renarrations addressed to children and mature audiences alike. Works from the 20th and 21st centuries are the main focus of examination. To demonstrate how the paradigm of the frightening figure of the witch was reshaped (the analysis of the witch imagery is central to this chapter), important 19th-century children's literature works (William Makepeace Thackeray's *The Ring and the Rose*, *The Light Princess*, and George MacDonald's *The Princess and the Goblin*) were selected. Otfried Preussler's *Little Witch* was an important point of reference. A part of the chapter is devoted to the antagonists who inspired awe in the traditional fairy tale and who no longer comply with the set schemes in renarrations. Often these characters are distinguished

by their meta-consciousness, who shatter the framework of their fairy tales, wander through other fairy-tale plots, or are placed in a contemporary world. The chapter also investigates titles that use and even emphasize fairy-tale horror. They are primarily works for a mature audience, rarely for children.