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**Constructions of Female Empowerment in Contemporary (Recycled)
Fairy Tales
Summary**

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Summary

The thesis, titled *Constructions of Female Empowerment in Contemporary (Recycled) Fairy Tales*, has been concerned with the metamorphosis of the female characters in the contemporary version of the traditional fairy tales. The present study has been grounded on my MA dissertation, titled “Social and Pastoral Symbols in Irish Fairy Tales”, a topic that I intended to develop in the present research, in which the focus has been particularly on the construction of the identity of the female protagonists in European fairy tales and in their re-written versions in the recent decades. The purpose of the current thesis has been to investigate the social, spiritual and psychological journey of the female protagonist from the Middle Ages to the contemporary postmodern recycled narratives, by analysing her trajectory from the victim to the heroine. Concerning the theoretical background, I have focused on Vladimir Propp’s *Morphology of the Folktale* (1928) and *Folklore Legend and Myth* (1993), Romulus Vulcănescu’s *The Romanian Mythology* (1970), Jack Zipes’s *Fairy Tale as Myth, Myth as Fairy Tale* (1994), Maggie Humm’s edited volume, *Feminisms: A Reader* (1992), Nicola Rivers’s *Postfeminism(s) and the Arrival of the Fourth Wave Turning* (2017), among others. As far as the structure of the thesis is concerned, the study is divided into five chapters, which have chronologically analysed the metamorphosis of the female character, from the medieval protagonist, to postmodern rewritings and adaptations of the character in print, cinema, animation and video games.

The first chapter of the thesis, “The Mythological Origins of European Fairy Tales,” has explored the origins of the fairy tale by emphasizing the relationship between oral and written fairy tales and social beliefs. The concepts of myth and fairy tale have been investigated starting with the Middle Ages because the first part of the study has highlighted the distinction and similarities between the two terms. The chapter also explores possible definitions of myth, by underlining its multidisciplinary connections with science, religion, psychology and literature. Each relationship has been analysed individually to pinpoint how they may influence the development of the fairy tale. For instance, in *The Celtic Twilight* (1902), W.B. Yeats presents myth as an imaginative force which is essential for survival and creativity. On the one hand, Peter O’Connor’s *Beyond the Mist: What Irish Mythology Can Teach about Ourselves* (2000) criticizes abstract definitions of myth, arguing that it should be considered only attached to the fairy tale, as a narrative that transcends physical reality through spiritual and natural motifs. On the other hand, in *Myth: A Very Short Introduction* (2004), Robert A. Segal considers myth a primitive science underlining its symbolical truth. Furthermore, Sigmund Freud explores psychological traumas by analysing the spiritual and symbolical facets of myth through Oedipus. Moving towards the integration of myth into fairy tale, the chapter also underlines Claude Lévi-Strauss’s argument in *Myth and Meaning* (1978) which reinforces myth as an explanatory and religious nexus, while the fairy tale surrounds it with moral and social context.

Further discussion concerns ways in which myths are provided social and moral context in order to be converted into fairy tales. This section of the thesis analyses concepts, such as the archaic myth, myth as charter, myth as model and the anti-model myth as explained by Vladimir Propp in *Morphology of the Folktale* (1928). In order to clarify the archaic myth, repeated narrative patterns in different fairy tales have been identified. Patterns such as the departure of a character, prohibition, and the violation of interdiction that result in imbalance and require a heroic trial to restore the initial order have been

underlined and examined. Regarding the opposition between myth as charter and myth as model, I have used Bronislaw Malinowski's theory in *Magic, Science and Religion and Other Essays* (1948), according to which the former myth justifies existing social structures whereas the latter offers ideal behavioural prototypes. If applied to *Rumpelstiltskin* and *Snow White*, for example, the former reflects class structures, while in the latter the heroine serves as a moral and spiritual model. The anti-model myth, however, warns against social dangers. In *Red Riding Hood*, the wolf represents a transgression against imposed behavioural norms, resulting in the endangerment of both female characters, namely both the girl and her grandmother.

The chapter also offers a detailed analysis of the main narrative functions in fairy tales and the development of the functions in a fairy tale based on Vladimir Propp's structuralist theory regarding fairy tale linear sequencing: departure or absence and interdiction. The departure initiates the plot and disrupts the initial balance. It is followed by the hero's disobedience as a necessary step toward growth and transformation. I have compared this function with the biblical fall in the Genesis, which also features transgression, but, in this case, though transgression leads to punishment, it is also meant to enhance wisdom.

Drawing on theorists, such as Peter Bürger and Jack Zipes, the thesis examines the transition of the fairy tale from oral tradition to literary recognition, arguing that fairy tales require formal structures to gain mass acknowledgment. However, along with the process of the fairy tale institutionalization, oral elements got either lost or distorted, which resulted in the creation of stories that have been simplified and sanitized. As Jack Zipes argues in *Fairy Tale and the Art of Subversion* (1983), the institutionalization of the fairy tale can be interpreted as an unavoidable compromise. Although it is necessary for preservation, tying the fairy tale to an authorship betrays the communal and improvisational nature of storytelling.

The last part of the first chapter has focused on Walt Disney's cosmeticization and commercialization of the fairy tale for mass consumption, which resulted in the publication of various illustrated narratives for children. The examples provided are *Cinderella* and *Little Red Riding Hood*, which reinforce Jack Zipes's critical attitude towards the consumerist shift because it has reduced the imaginative interpretation and the narrative complexity.

The second chapter, titled "The Pastoral Heritage of Fairy Tales," investigates the purpose of the fairy tale in the Middle Ages. The chapter has aimed to highlight the importance of fairy tales, not only as a source of entertainment, but also as a source of unfiltered history meant to help people understand it in an enjoyable manner. Thus, Yeats's theory developed in *Mythologies* (1959) regarding the role of the tales and legends in conveying moral principles has been emphasized. The chapter also discusses the important role of fairy tales in preserving the history among the ordinary people who had no access to education. Additionally, it stresses the significance of fairy tales in the life of children as a source of moral guidance. Drawing on John M. Ellis's *The Theory of Literary Criticism* (1974), it has been underlined that the audience is the entity which grants the fairy tale literary value, accentuating that the community turns texts into literature. Moreover, fairy tales are the texts prone to social reinforcement as they are created through binary opposition: good versus evil, light versus dark. Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale* (1928) has been an important source used to illustrate the structural foundation of the fairy tale with a view to analysing how it metaphorically reflects political and social critique. The examples provided here are "*Puss in Boots*," "*Rumpelstiltskin*," and "*The Emperor's New Clothes*," specifically chosen to reinforce the idea that these tales, and other similar ones, might be read as a critical response in disguise to the oppressive patriarchy.

For instance, Lady Wilde's *Ethna the Bride* and T. Crofton's *The Soul Cages* illustrate how spiritual and social symbolisms, such as envy or fate, remain central to the impact upon the reader. Such aspects are presented under the shape of magical creatures possessing positive and negative traits. The chapter also discusses Ruth Bottigheimer's views in *Fairy Tale: A New History* (2009), in which he underlines the religious allegory and morality in fairy tales. At the same time, in *The Irish Fairy Tale* (2012), Vito Carassi emphasizes the term pseudo-fairy tales, considering them moral satires. In terms of gender roles, the male-female relationship in fairy tales and the then-existing moral codes have been underlined by Patrick Kennedy in *The Haughty Princess*, in which the female protagonist is punished for not wanting to get married. Instead, she is forced to marry a poor man who turns out to be a prince. Susan Sellers also analysis this peculiarity in *Myth and Fairy Tale in Contemporary Women's Fiction* (2001), in which she criticises this illusion of truth and suggests that its meaning is socially constructed. Therefore, female characters are encouraged to get married as a refusal might lead to oppression disguised as a moral lesson.

The last part of the chapter examines how fairy tales function as a moral and psychological guide, embedding religious, patriarchal and cultural values, while mirroring the biblical motifs of sin, punishment and, ultimately, redemption. This chapter part aims to discuss whether fairy tales promote rigid binaries, such as good versus evil, obedience versus punishment, reflecting gendered norms and moral absolutism, as argued by Leslee Farish Kuykendal and Brian W. Sturm in "We Said Feminist Fairy Tales, Not Fractured Fairy Tales! The Construction of the Feminist Fairy Tale: Female Agency over Role Reversal" (2007) or whether they depict a safe developmental space for the young learners, as suggested by Bruno Bettelheim in *The Uses of Enchantment* (1976).

The third chapter, titled "Construction of the Female Characters Identity in European Fairy Tales," has focused on female characters in Irish, German and Romanian tales. I have chosen fairy tales of different origins because, despite their differences, the female protagonists are representative for this study in the sense that they gradually turn from victims to heroines while still preserving the moral values of their community.

Fairy tales, such as: *Fair, Brown and Trembling*, the Irish version of *Cinderella*, Ion Creangă's *Harap Alb* and Petre Ispirescu's *Sarea în Bucate* have been discussed. This chapter has aimed to draw a psychoanalytical comparison between similar female characters, be they protagonists or antagonists, in different cultural environments. As fairy tales have a fluid nature, which, according to Jack Zipes makes them resist any type of rigid taxonomy, the chapter provides a structural categorization of the tale by applying Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson's paradigm described in *Types of the Folktale: A Classification and Bibliography* (1961). Thus they fall into the following categories: animal tale, ordinary tales, anecdote or jests. In opposition to Aarne and Thompson, Hans-Jörg Uther's *The Types of International Folktales A Classification and Bibliography* (1999) considers that any type of systematization is too simplistic and male-centred.

A central argument in the chapter is that female characters in fairy tales are constructed based on stereotypical physical and psychological traits. Their positive traits come from idealized beauty, obedience, passivity and innocence. Simultaneously, the female antagonists are constructed in direct opposition, being vilified for ambition, manipulation and open sexuality. Among the examples provided, mention should be made of characters like Cinderella, who waits for salvation from a supernatural force, Snow White who is depicted as running instead of protesting to prevent her femininity being altered, and Sleeping Beauty whose implication is reduced to lying asleep. In the end, such characters are rewarded for their mere existence in the male gaze. In contrast, the stepmother, the Evil Queen and the wicked fairy

are confined upon the reader to a universal set of negative traits, being obstructed from an unbiased analysis.

A significant part of this chapter has been dedicated to psychoanalytical interpretations, with reference to Freud, Jung, and Marie-Louise von Franz. Female protagonists and antagonists have been analysed as embodiments of *id* and *superego*, or as representations of light and shadow. One of the examples offered is *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, in which the Evil Queen can be interpreted as the protagonist's shadow self, embodying suppressed desires and societal anxieties drawn upon women, because she is afraid of becoming old and socially irrelevant. According to Bruno Bettelheim (in *The Uses of Enchantment: The Meaning and the Importance of Fairy Tales*, 1976), villains embody the seven deadly sins to make the contrast with the heroines even more abrupt.

The chapter also draws upon the differences in creating male versus female characters in fairy tales. Harap Alb has been taken as an example of male character who has the chance to choose whether he wants to be part of the trials or not, while also receiving proper guidance from the old lady who acts as helper. Snow White is ejected from her house and must endure trials without adequate guidance. Moreover, it has been emphasized that psychological trauma is enforced upon female heroines, while knowledge is intentionally withheld to protect their innocence. For instance, Sleeping Beauty is unaware of her surroundings because her father would keep her within a limited space, instead of revealing that she was cursed at baptism. Such aspects make female protagonists rely solely on male intervention, which is ultimately what the fairy tale needs reinforcing. Therefore, traditional fairy tales seem to be male-biased, positioning the female characters in diametrical opposition, either as passive ideals or as dangerous agents. Ultimately, the chapter calls for a re-examination of the traditional tales in comparison to their recycled versions to further analyse the dynamic of the complexity and agency of female identity.

The fourth chapter of the thesis, "Female Characters in Metamorphosis," has narrowed the investigation and focused on the female characters in fairy tales and on their evolution from archetypal figures to autonomous agents. The chapter has aimed to stress the repositioning of the traditional heroine in contemporary literature to embody autonomy, agency and social critique. Throughout the chapter, a comparison between the traditional fairy tales and their recycled counterparts has been drawn. The chapter proposes traditional-recycled parallels between: *Cinderella* (1812) and *Cinder* (2011), *Sleeping Beauty* (1812) and *Malice* (2021), *Rumpelstiltskin* (1812) and *Spinning Silver* (2018), *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1812) and *Song of Ebony* (2022).

One of the main arguments highlighted in the fourth chapter is that traditional fairy tales idealize the female characters as silent, beautiful, passive and morally pure. Such attributes are rewarded with marriage, social integration and male protection. The chapter emphasizes studies by scholars, such as Maria Tatar (*The Hard Facts of the Grimm's' Fairy Tales*- 1987) and Maria Warner (*From the Beast to the Blonde*- 1995) who discuss the rigid dichotomy between the virtuous heroines and the malevolent female antagonist. The chapter discusses the difference in perspective of the binary opposition between the protagonist-antagonist pair and the kaleidoscopic facets of the antagonist, while analysing the female villain through the post-postmodern lens of emotional authenticity. The chapter explores the vulnerability of the antagonist by switching perspectives and debating its actions with a view to deviating from the traditional narrative roles. Therefore, according to the analysis, the female villain possesses ambition, independence and is able to use her sexuality to manipulate men. An example in this respect is the Evil Queen in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1812), whose ability to manipulate is not praised, yet it represents an instrument for the conservation of female power in a patriarchal society.

The chapter further discusses how post-postmodern reinterpretations dismantle the ideological binaries imposed by traditional fairy tales. The protagonists in recycled tales (ex. Cinder, Bianca, Alyce, and Miryem) are not confined to the domestic sphere like their traditional counterparts, but they are constructed as active subjects who unveil their agency, independence and individualism. Therefore, their fulfilment is their freedom, their physical and mental autonomy. In opposition to their traditional counterparts, the recycled characters are flawed, because they willingly endanger their femininity to overcome the obstacles. Contrary to Cinderella, Cinder works as a mechanic, giving up femininity to handle hard work. Bianca uses her voice to destroy the enemies, unlike Snow White whose voice is meagre and shy. Alyce kisses different men to save herself from the curse, unlike Sleeping Beauty who represents the damsel in distress, Miryem adopts masculine psychological traits and becomes a moneylender to replace her father who is sick, while the miller daughter in *Rumpelstiltskin* (1812) waits for salvation and is rewarded by getting married to her initial oppressor, the king. These contemporary characters transcend traditional expectations, embodying traits that are culturally aligned with masculinity. In order to support this argument, Donna Haraway's "cyborg" theory in *A Cyborg Manifesto* (1985) in which she proposes hybridity as a mode of resistance to patriarchal essentialism has been introduced.

Equally significant in this chapter is the use of Carl Jung's theory of the human psyche, namely the concepts of persona, shadow, anima or animus and the self. With a view to discussing the psychological construction of fairy tale characters, traditional and recycled characters have been analysed from the Jungian perspective. Therefore, while in traditional tales, the heroine's persona represents the aspired social acceptance, the shadow embodies female rage, autonomy and non-conformity. The shadow thus becomes the pariah in the society, outcast and isolated, while the persona is praised. The antagonist is depicted as either an old, ugly woman like the wicked fairy in *Sleeping Beauty* (1812) or as a beautiful, but malicious character like the Queen in *Snow White* (1812). The post-postmodern transition from traditional to recycled versions is marked by the blending of these dualities into single, complex identities. For instance, Heather Walter's antagonist, Alyce, is granted psychological depth and justification, blurring the moral lines between good and evil. Similarly, Marissa Meyer's protagonist Cinder is flawed as she is allowed to feel envy or hate, which turns her into a blended character, based on human characteristics, a more realistic character than its traditional counterpart, based on female idealism.

Additionally, the chapter focuses on the symbolic and socio-economic dimension the female labor and voice. The parallel drawn between Grimm's *Rumpelstiltskin* (1812) and Naomi Novik's recycled *Spinning Silver* (2018) focuses on the transformation of spinning from a domestic act into a symbol of economic agency. Novik's protagonist empowers the protagonist's financial literacy and negotiation skills, reversing the trope of female dependence. Unlike the traditional female character, whose fate depends entirely on male characters, like the miller, the king and ultimately Rumpelstiltskin, the recycled protagonist is manipulative and dominates a male-dominated field to survive. To strengthen the analysis, the two fairy tales have been analysed through the lens of Silvia Federici's *Caliban and the Witch* (2004) which criticizes the historic obliteration of women's autonomy under capitalism.

Another aspect discussed in the chapter is the duality of marriage. It is explored as a dual construct, reflecting both traditional constraints and modern reinterpretations. In traditional fairy tale marriage represents the supreme reward, an opportunity for the female characters for social recognition, while in recycled fairy tales, relationships are de-emphasized to centre on emotional authenticity and mutuality rather than hierarchical dependence. Recycled female characters emphasized in the chapter get married willingly and without any particular social reward. For instance, Heather Walter's *Malice* (2021)

seeks purpose beyond romance. The main characters Aurora, the princess, and Alice, the witch, save each other, therefore, they subvert the traditional man-saves-woman concept and introduce woman-saves-woman scenario.

The chapter also discusses the perpetuation of female rivalry and the absence of maternal figures in traditional tales. Scholars, like Marcia Lieberman, Michelle Ann Abate, and Nancy Veglahn, emphasize how female characters are pitted against one another in competition for beauty, power, and male approval. The competition discussed in the chapter might be a reason for the creation of antagonists who embody societal rejection. For instance, the Evil Queen is continuously reminded how beautiful and young Snow White is, thus feeding the implied opposition between the two characters. Consequently, the villain could also act under the social pressure to stay young, so as not to be replaced.

Ultimately, the chapter asserts that fairy tales are not fixed relics, but dynamic cultural texts capable of reflecting and reshaping gender ideologies. The recycled female character is not merely a revision of an outdated archetype, but a symbol of evolving narratives in which women are complex, conflicted, and self-defining. Through the works of modern authors and supported by interdisciplinary scholarship, this chapter confirms that the recycled fairy tale is a potent site for feminist intervention, critical thinking, and literary innovation.

The fifth chapter titled “Reinvention of Female Identity in Contemporary Adaptations” explores the reinvention of the female identity in recycled fairy tales under different forms. It discusses the transition from traditional fairy tales to postmodern and post-postmodern reinterpretations, by analysing the integration of the fairy tale in the film and digital narratives spheres. The final chapter of the thesis has underlined the division between the postmodern and post-postmodern reinterpretation of the fairy tales highlighting that the former deconstructs the original literal creation to underline its flaws in terms of gender roles and unrealistic social expectations regarding female counterparts. In opposition, post-postmodernism recycles the traditional fairy tales to cater for a continuous adaptation to current ideological frameworks, such as diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The chapter points out Linda Hutcheon’s argument in *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction* (1988) according to which postmodern retellings engage heavily in intertextuality, pastiche, and metafiction deconstructing the canonical structures while preserving their foundations. Such techniques presented in the chapter allow the fairy tale to undergo narrative transformation in order to be updated to society’s ideological evolution while remaining easily recognisable. The chapter reinforces Mikhail Bakhtin’s theory of “internal hybridization,” as proposed in *The Dialogic Imagination* (1981), to clarify the ability of the fairy tale to preserve the dialogue between old archetypes and contemporary social values, ensuring its constant metamorphosis without the loss of its structure.

Through a detailed comparison between postmodernism and post-postmodernism, the final chapter draws on Robert McLaughlin’s *The Cambridge History of Postmodern Literature* (2016) to distinguish the ironic detachment and deconstruction of the former from the ethical commitment and affective sincerity of the latter. In the same manner, Stephen Turner in *Post-Postmodernism and the Rebuilding of Meaning* (2015) outlines the idea that contemporary adaptations no longer focus exclusively on exposing societal flaws, but rather on proposing narratives of healing, resilience, and ethical reconstruction. Similarly, Christina Bacchilega’s *Postmodern Fairy Tales: Gender and Narrative Strategies* (1997) offers a critical framework for understanding how these adaptations fracture the traditional fairy-tale paradigm to propose alternative visions aligned with contemporary concerns.

The final chapter incorporates contemporary literary examples such as Jo Franklin’s *Little Rude Riding Hood* (2020), Stewart Ross’s *Snow White and the Seven Robots* (2020), and Trisha Speed

Shaskan's *Seriously, Cinderella is So Annoying!* (2011) to illustrate how fairy tales have been recycled to reflect contemporary ideologies. For example, in *Little Rude Riding Hood* (2020) the wolf attends group therapy to manage his anger issues, whereas the Little Rude Riding Hood is the antagonist because she mistreats the other characters. It has been emphasized that the contemporary recycled versions mentioned in the chapter do not retain the traditional protagonist-antagonist binary opposition because the characters depict and exhibit human traits and emotions. The wolf eats Little Rude, but the other characters provide understanding because the girl becomes intolerable. Therefore, I have argued that in contemporary fairy tales the characters possess both positive and negative attributes becoming prone to reliability.

The chapter reinforces how recycled fairy tales transition from tradition to innovation resulting in a complex narrative with kaleidoscopic portrayals of heroines and antagonists. Marie Louise von Franz's *The Problem of the Feminine in Fairytales* (1972) outlines a distinction between archetypes with psychological depth and the ones influenced by patriarchal projections.

The chapter has also investigated the representation of fairy tales in cinematographic adaptations, beginning with Georges Méliès's "Cinderella" (1899) and proceeding chronologically to contemporary adaptations such as *Shrek* (2001), *Maleficent* (2014), *Frozen* (2013), *Brave* (2012), and *The Princess and the Frog* (2009). Significant interventions into the traditional model of storytelling are emphasized in Adina Ciugureanu's analysis of *Shrek* in *The Boomerang Effect* (2002) which situates him as a parody of medieval heroic values displayed in "Sir Gawain and the Green Knight." The chapter also discusses Karen A. Winstead's *Virgin Martyrs* (1997) and Caroline Walker Bynum's *Holy Feast and Holy Fast* (1987) to point out how contemporary films actively dismantle the passivity once glorified in female characters.

The digital transformation of fairy tales in video games is also investigated in the final chapter. The theories used are grounded on the concept of hyperreality as described by Umberto Eco in *Travels in Hyperreality* (1983) and Jean Baudrillard in *Simulacra and Simulation* (1981). The examples offered include the games *The Path* (2009) and *The Witch's House* (2012) by means of which the preference of player agency to traditional reader-receiver has been noted. The chapter also reinforces how digital narratives propose critical engagement based on Marie-Laure Ryan's opinion in *Narrative as Virtual Reality* (2001) and Janet Murray's argument in *Hamlet on the Holodeck* (1997) regarding the evolution of the female protagonist from passive figures into active agents.

Finally, the analysis engages with Jack Zipes's reflections in *The Enchanted Screen* (2011) and *Why Fairy Tales Stick* (2006). It is generally known that fairy tales have historically reinforced the societal dominant norms with an inherent potential for subversion. According to postmodern and post-postmodern adaptations the once clear-cut binaries of good and evil, hero and villain have increasingly been replaced by complex, morally ambiguous characters who reflect a multifaceted human condition. The contemporary adaptation of fairy tales through literature, cinema, and digital media represents a profound cultural re-signification. These recycled tales not only preserve the fairy tale's narrative legacy, but transform it into a space of contestation, reconstruction, and ethical inquiry. By reclaiming female agency and challenging traditional hierarchies, contemporary fairy tales offer new forms of empowerment, inviting readers and audiences to critically reimagine inherited archetypes and create new narratives of resilience, complexity, and hope.

The current thesis brings into dialogue a cross-cultural comparison between Romanian, German, French and Irish fairy tales, comprising regional specificity and novelty expanding the existing Western-centric canon. It diachronically analyses the evolution of the female characters from mythology (with archetypes such as Medusa and Antigone) to post-postmodern literary and digital characters (Cinder and

Lara Croft) focusing on maintaining a historical and structural timeline. A particular angle explored in the thesis is the emphasis on the female antagonist in post-postmodern retellings. The dissertation discusses the humanized “evil” woman with a view to rehabilitating it through multiple perspective techniques. This has involved an analysis of the fairy tale’s expansion into digital and visual popculture forms (ex. Tomb Rider), that become vehicles for gender depiction and inclusion in popular media.

The thesis offers rich opportunities for research extension, such as, but not limited to a comparison between European fairy tales and Japanese animés. Following the exploration of female empowerment in contemporary fairy tales, the research could engage in animé studies, by focusing on similarities between the literary and the digital narrative with a switch in the geographical space. Future research can analyse the similarities between fairy tales and the Japanese animé in terms of mythology, archetypes and motifs. For instance, the anime *Tokyo Ghoul* (2014) inspired by the *manga* with the same name proposes the theme of the “other” similar to the monstrous, yet misunderstood, witch or supernatural creature of fairy tales. It can be argued that it has the format of a fractured tale because neither the protagonist, nor the villain follows the patterns of the traditional tale.

Constructions of Female Empowerment in Contemporary (Recycled) Fairy Tales has explored the metamorphosis of female identity in fairy tales across historical and cultural boundaries. It has drawn a chronological map beginning with mythological archetypes and moved towards post and post-postmodern reinterpretations. It has emphasized the evolution of the female characters in relation to their male counterpart as well as the female-female relationship and the connection between the traditional protagonist and the recycled one. Concerned with feminist theory and psychoanalysis, this research has demonstrated how old and recycled fairy tales function as social mirrors, serving both as educational tools for the new generations and for entertaining purposes for old and young alike.

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