Comparative Analysis of Maori and European Folk Tales:  
Illustrated Maori Myths and Legends

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Introduction

This paper introduces six different approaches to folk tales. Two approaches, the folkloristic (Aantti Aarne: Index of Types of Folktales, 1910; Stith Thompson: Motif-Index of Folk Literature, 1921, 1961) and the structuralistic (Vladimir Propp, 1928) were prevalent in the first half of the 20th century. They also increased interest in folktale research in the second half of the 20th century. Max Luthi’s (1947) literary approach, above all with key term named onedimensionality influenced further researches in Europe. In the second half of the 20th century, there was continued interest in psychoanalysis and Sigmund Freud’s Psychoanalytic theory. Bruno Bettelheim (1976) become influential but at the same time was also criticized for connecting folk and fairy tales and sexuality. Different views in psychoanalysis were developed by Carl Gustav Jung (archetypes in fairy tales) and Maria Louise von Franz. The sociological approach developed Jack Zipes became dominant in the 1980s and 1990s and influenced the development of the feministic view on the forms of folk fairy tales and gender studies... Representative of feministic theory are Maria Tatar, Marina Warner and Clarisa Pinkola Estes (Woman who Run with the Wolves: Myths and Stories of the Wild Woman Archetypes, 1992). Estes brought together two different approaches, the feminist approach along with stress on archetypes.

Approaches to Folk Tales

Interest in the European folk tradition strongly increased in the 19th century in the Romantic Movement. Characteristic for models of folk and fairy
tales were developing in oral tradition long before they were recorded in the 16th or 17th century. The first records of folk and fairy tales in Europe were in the Middle Ages in collections by Giovanni Francesca Straparola (1480-1557) and the book La piacevoli notti, by Giambattista Basile (1566 or 1575-1632) Lo cunto de li cunti overo lo trattenimento de peccerille, is better known under the shorter name Pentameron. Folk tales began to be written down in the 17th century, although with no intention that children would read them. Rather, they were for adults in French aristocratic salons to enable them to realize their own fantasies about sexuality. Maria Leprince de Beaumont (1711-1780) published the first version of Beauty and the Beast (1756). The most known collection is that of Charles Perrault (1628-1703) from the year 1697, which he published under the name of his son. The most well known collection of fairy tales is from the years 1812-15 by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm (Kinder- und Hausmarchen), which were modified and reissued several times. In the 19th Century, we can trace the slow passage from the model of the folk tale, to the model of the fairy tale, in the work of Hans Christian Andersen (1805-1875), who published a collection of fairy tales for children in 1835. An unknown collection of fairy tales, which speaks of the extraordinary interest in folk fairy tales in the 19th century, is the collection of Sicilian fairy tales of Laura Gonzenbach (Beautiful Angiola) from 1870. It is found in second-hand bookshop and in 2006 was reissued by American researcher Jack Zipes. A comparative analysis between the collected folk tales of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm and of those of Laura Gonzenbach (1842-1878) shows the difference in research. Gonzenbach offers numerous different interpretations, less ideology and more equal status between genders.

The interest in New Zealand or Maori folktales was aroused at the end of the 20th century; there are some Maori folktale collections such as. Alfred Grace’s Folktales of the Maori first published in 1907 and reprinted in 1998. The picture book Traditional Maori Legends by Nga Tai Korero and illustrated by Worren Pohatu (2000) has fourteen traditional Maori texts in shortened versions. If we compare this entire version we would find that the first published version from 1907 is not aimed at children because of violence, sex, and cruelty. In Traditional Maori Legends and Illustrated Maori Myths and Legends we can find similar motifs in different versions, including a series of texts about Maui, the demigod, Maui and the Sun, Tatanekai and Hinemoa. In
the booklet *Traditional Maori Legends* we find the folktale Paikea and the Whale that is the basis for the popular teenage novel *Whale Rider* (1987) by Witi Ihimaera and the movie “Whale Rider” (2002) by Niki Caro. Based on Maori folktales and the female individuation process, this book presents an eight-year old orphan girl Kahu, a member of the Maori tribe of Whangara, New Zealand. She must prove herself, her female sex in a patriarchal society, and her equality with males.

Nine tales are included in *Illustrated Maori Myths and Legends*. The first, The Creation, is more similar to Greek Myth than to folktales. The second tale is entitled the Mauri, the demi-god. It is the cycle of seven stories about Maui (birth, meeting father, magic weapon, taming the sun, fishing, stealing fire and death of Maui). In The Creation, we can find similarities and differences between Greek myths and Maori myths. The difference between myth and folktales can be seen in the pessimistic and optimistic ends. The story name Maui Tames the Sun is similar to Greek god Helios and his son Phaeton who drove the sun chariot to his own disaster. The story about How Maui Stole Fire from Mahuika is similar to the myth of Prometheus who stole fire from Zeus and gave it to mortals for their use. The Maori story Patupaiareha – the fairy people is also a short cycle with three tales (Te Kanawa encounters the patupaiarehe, Tawhaitu is abducted by Whanawhana, How Kahukura learnt net making from the fairies). The other stories lie between myths (about the gods), legends (demi-gods) and folktales (humans with supernatural power). In this paper I will look at the different approaches to folklore study as they apply to Maori folktales.

1. The Folkloristic approach is historically the first approach to folktales.
   The main representatives were the Finnish academic Aantti Aarneja (1867-1925) and the American Stith Thompson (1885-1976). Thompson is one of the central scholars in the field of folk tradition. He wrote numerous books, of which the best known is *The Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*, which he wrote from 1932 to 1937. He used as his source the index of motives collected by the Finnish folklorist Aantti Aarneja that was first published in 1910. In 1928 Thompson translated, expanded and added new motifs to Aarne’s motifs and sub motifs, which came out in 1961 and is in well known as the Aarne-Thompson’s
index or AaTh or AT for short. A number is added to the initial letters such as AT 303 (motive of houses), AT 327 (Hansel and Gretel), AT 410 (Sleeping Beauty), AT 425 (motive of animal bride / groom), and AT 709 (Snow White). In 2004 the German researcher, Hans Jorg Uther supplemented the index with the Aarne-Thompson-Uther ATU system.

If we analyse the Maori myths and legends using the Stith Thompson Motif-Index of folk tales, we will realize that the first cycle, the creation, is similar to Thompson's classification of mythological motifs of gods and demi-gods (creator, nature, origin, gods, cosmology, creation of animal/human life and death). These are universal motifs of creation but are transformed into characteristics of Maori land, culture (sky, land), belief (ancestors), geography (Aotearoa), and names, such as Maui, Makea-tu-tara etc. The birth of the demi-god Maui is also universal – miraculous birth and exceptional hero. The other parts of the stories are more folktales orientated, e.g. fairy people, ogre, fairies etc.

2. The Structuralistic approach by Russian formalist Vladimir Propp and his book Morphology of the folk tale 1928. The heart of Propp's theory is 31 well-known functions performed by people (constants in folk tales and attitudes of individual functions. In addition, constant elements are seven characters of fairy tales: sender, receiver, subject, object, (magic) helper, antagonist, false hero. Propp found typical representatives of Russian formalism narrative structure and a few changeable elements in models of folk tales. He first named actions or functions that are unchangeable, and of these are 31, only holders or characters change to fairy tales, that they are realizing these 31 functions and them is seven. It is inventive for its time and he found insightfully, that feels like approaches of model of folk fairy tale exceptionally important: 1) WHAT (action, activity) characters in fairy tales perform, 2) WHO (of person, presenter of action) is doing the performing and 3) SOME (manner of action). Vladimir Propp is in today to basic book Morphology of fairy tale, that he is after eighty years round outcome in Russian (1928), he showed schematic of model of folk fairy tale, that he calls him wonderful folk tale and narrative point of view. In most Maori myths and legends we can find Propp's functions in a simplified fashion and
the home-away-home pattern with Maori cultural characteristics, e. g. net making, instrument like the putorino and the koauau (as flute), tribal gatherings, worship of ancestors, polygamy. For example, in a text entitled Hinemoa and Tutanekai, we can find seven characteristics of folk tales (the sender is the hero himself; there are two receivers, Hinemoa and Tutanekai; the subject is Tutanekai; the object is the beautiful Hinemoa; the (magic) helper (Maori folk instrument flute and calabash, servant Tiki); the antagonist (elder brother); and the false hero (Hinemoa in disguise).

3. The literary approach of Swiss scholar Max Lüthi ([European Folk Tales: the forms and structure (1947, published in English 1987)]. Max Lüthi presented five features plus an additional two (one dimensional, deathlessness, abstractness, isolation and general connection, sublimation and all-inclusiveness) adapted in seven known features of models of folk fairy tales [typical beginning [once long ago, long ago, once] and conclusion [and after were living happily to the end of their days], undecided time [once, long ago] and place [somewhere, behind nine mountains, behind nine waters, in forest, in castle], literary characters [king, queen, prince, princess, farmer, herd, girl], moral base [good, evil], two or three plot structures [two brethren, two sisters] or three-plot structures [three brethren, three daughters; three times, three pitchforks, three peas, three wishes, three feathers], wonderful objects [of word, ring] and one dimensional. His definition of the model of the folk/fairy tale, in which he said that the fairy tale is unreal, but not untrue; it is also an object of debate. His category of one-dimension is best known and accepted by scholars, which means that occurring is entire (time, place, people, objects and occurring) -occurs on one level or to magic dimension. A frequent case is the one-dimensional lists from the fairy tales of the Grimm Brothers– as in Little Red Riding Hood, when she comes across a wolf and starts talking. Little Red Riding Hood does not wonder how the wolf comes to talk, which means that the story is occurring at the level of miracles. In traditional fairy tales the story occurs in one dimension, while in contemporary fairy tales there are two dimensions, the real and the fantastic... In models of fairy tales only on the tremendous level [what do you mean? “Tremendous” is not
the right word in English] or level of magic (magic weapon, token of love),
typical Maori instrument and patriarchal value as “Time passed and
Tawhao became troubled that his wife had not presented him with an
heir.” (Turongo and Mahinarangi, p. 90). Some stories have a typical
folktale-opening sentence “There was once man called ... There was
once a handsome young chief called Tawhao. ... ... The stories that are
based on myths do not have a happy ending, e. g. Death of Maui, while
the stories that are based on folktales have a happy ending “ ...the
couple lived happily ever after.” (p. 104) All the stories in the collections
are based on Max Luthi’s typical folktale characteristic of one
dimensionality... In Maori myths and legends we could find ogres such
as Kopuwai, the ogre of the Matau. He had the head and face of a dog,
and a human body, as well as incantations, spells, and fairy people, e. g.
How Kahukura learnt net making from the fairies.

4. The fourth is the psychoanalytic approach, primarily known as the
psychoanalytical approach of Bruno Bettelheima and his book The Uses
of Enchantment (1976). The Swiss scientist Carl Gustav Jung (1875-
1961) also falls in this category. He analysed archetypes in fairy tales
(The Phenomenology of the Spirit and Fairytales and Four Archetypes:
Mother, Rebirth, Spirit, Trickster, Routledge, 2001). The archetype
theory of Jung’s student Maria Louise von Franz (1915-1998) provides a
new examination of analysis, because she warned against archetypes in
fairy tales in numerous studies, to process individuation and
interpretations of models of fairy tales (Introduction to the Psychology of
Fairy Tales, 1970; Feminine and Fairy Tales, 1972; Shadow and Evil
and Fairy Tales, 1974; Psychological Meaning of Redemption Motifs and
Fairy Tales, 1985; The Interpretation of Fairy Tales, 1990; Individuation
and Fairy Tales, 1991; Archetypal Patterns and Fairy Tales, 1997).
Although her psychoanalytic explanation of the life of French writer
Antoine Saint Exupery (1900-1944) and of his book Little prince (1943)
with address Puer aeternus (1970/1988) challenged numerous
approbations and criticisms. [I do not understand this sentence. When
you begin with “although” you need to finish with something that
contradicts the opening statement]. The influence of Sigmund Freud is
present in Bettelheim’s work. The Uses of Enchantment is made up of
two parts. In the first theoretical section, Bettelheim introduces his own psychoanalytic theory on the model of the fairy tale. In the second section, which is more practical, he applied his theory to the fairy tales Hansel and Gretel, The little red riding hood, Jack and the bean stalk, Snow White, Goldilocks and the Three bears, Sleeping Beauty, and Cinderella and on motifs in fairy tales of the animal bridegroom. Already in the first theoretical part, Bettelheim presents his main conclusion that models of fairy tales enable a psychoanalytic examination into a deeper sense of life. The model of fairy tale that he introduces thickened human experiences, shortly, concisely and straight re-created in millennia of occurring through numerous oral and written versions they are allowing, that young readers, they act their internal problems out on symbolic level. Bettelheim means that classical fairy tales and contemporary fairy tales are despondent for they have open-ended conclusions, which do not provide the child with a sense of safety. Fairy tales have both frank and hidden meanings. The child intuitively experiences the tale and relives their hidden meaning. This allows him to experience catharsis of certain internal problems. He is meaning of Cinderella, meaning of secondary separation is deeper in Hansel and Gretel, in Snow White jealousy. In Maori folktales we find that most are based on love in texts: (The creation), marriage married life (The Creation) – polygamy (Turongo and Maginarangi), conception and birth (The creation), firstborn son (Turongo and Mahinarangi), abduction of female (Tawahaitu is abducted by Whanawhana, Kopuwai, and the ogre of the Matau). In the text Kopuwai, the ogre of the Matau we find the motifs of abduction, captivity, rape and slavery of females. In this tale, we also find the motifs of the animal groom and Bluebeard. In Maori texts, the men are more dominant then the females.

5. The fifth approach is sociological. Jack Zipes (1937) published numerous books concerning the history of fairy tales. He deepened interpretation of folk and literary fairy tales. Zipes is a professor of German at the University of Minnesota in the U.S. From the beginning, Jack Zipes showed an explicitly sociological orientation in his analyses of fairy tales. His first scientific book Breaking the Magic Spell: Radical
Approaches of Folk and Fairy Tales (1979). Many do not agree with his sociological theory, but he provided the study of fairy tales with a necessary academic and sociological context regardless of the impact of time and place. Zipe contends that fairytales are international or universal in their openings (undecided time and place, without names), and become national after the second page when they express a specific culture, time and place. He thinks in analysis of rights, that discourse of dominance of males is prevailing over women, that are from fairy tales J. and W. Grimm above all socialization submission of subordinates women and dominance of males. He mentions that in the handwritten version of the Grimms fairy tales from 1810, when Snow White comes to the dwarfs’ house in the forest, they accept her on the condition that she will be their house cleaner. In 1812 there was a handwritten marginal note that the seven dwarfs say to Snow White, that she can stay with them if she does the ironing, the wash, tidies up, and does the cooking (Breaking the Magic Spell: Radical Approaches of Folk and Fairy Tales, in 1979). In comparison with European folktales tradition that has at least five centuries of folktales tradition, the Maori tales have a unique folk tradition, and especially a written tradition. For example, we can find some explicitly cruel elements, e.g. that a man has the right to kill his second wife and this is not treated as crime. In Maori myths and folktales, we find the dominant male, chieftains (chieftains, male heir, polygamy, and tribe master) and submissive female (slave, captive, raped). In European folktales we find more competitiveness between females (stepmother and Snow White) than in Maori tale, which feature dominant motifs of competitive brothers and wives often the younger brother’s wife. The patriarchal society is more dominant in Maori folktales than in European. In European folktales, we also find the dominant female, e.g. mother or stepmother in Hansel in Gretel, mother or stepmother in Snow White with a basis in pagan society. In Maori folktales, the men are dominant, aggressive and polygamist. The discourse of male domination is obvious and not hidden.

1 «Some suspected that the tāipoa had claimed her corpse, others suggested that the dog had dragged the dead body into the bōsh», but no one blamed Hakuai for Puta’s death. Such a killing was no murder, for a man might do what he pleased with his slave-wife.» in Puta and her dog Kuikui in: Folktales of the Maori, Alfred Grace. First published in 1907, reprinted in 1998. Middlesex: Senate.
6. The sixth approach is feministic, represented by the American professor Maria Tatar (1945) (The Hard facts of the Grimm’s’ fairy Tales, Princeton, Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003). British mythologists Marina Warner (1946) interpreted symbols in fairy tales in a contemporary mythological manner (From the Beast to the Blonde: The fairy Tales and their tellers, Vintage, 1994). The most recently challenged book is by the Mexican psychoanalyst Clarisse Pinkola Estes (1945) whose Woman who run with the wolves (1993) also came out in Slovenian in 2003. Estes is against analysis of fairy tales analysed the archetype of the wild woman in fairy tales such as Bluebeard, Vasilisa the Wise, Menave, Ugly Duckling, Mariposa - butterfly, Skeleton woman, red shoes, Sea skin/Soul mate, girl with matches, Bluebeard, Bear of new moon, girl without hands, three gold hear. Clarisse Pinkola Estes’ theory is a synergy of two approaches: Jung’s archetype and the feminist. She researched the archetype of the wild woman and the causes and consequence of failing to achieve a female identity and her subordination to males. Her book evoked both positive and extremely negative responses, because the work is written in a prominently metaphoric style. In addition to her research, Piccolo Estes is also a storyteller, because she tells fairy tales in a metaphoric style. She advocates storytelling and treatment with fairy tales, to raise women’s consciousness concerning their own identity, strengths, and intuitions. An interesting text that shows the female individuation process is that of Kopuwai, the ogre of the Matau. We find the motif of abducted, captive, raped, female slave. Kopuwai, the dog-headed ogre lives with a pack of five dogs in cave. Because the female Kaiamio was young and very pretty, she became his wife in the cave. He ropes her by long flax rope that he attaches to her hair. When she fetched water or collected wood for the fire, he would jerk on the twine and Kaiamio would give an answering tug to let him know where she was. In this motif, we can discern the motif of the French Little Red Riding Hood entitled the False Grandmother. After years of misery and slavery, she conceives a plan to escape. Alongside her duties “to master” she makes a small raft (kokihí) and unties the rope from her hair, which she then carefully ties to the springy roots of a raupo plant so that when Kopuwai tugged, it would
rebound a little. After the long preparation process of escaping from captivity, slavery and rape, she gets into her mokihi (raft). Kopuwai tries to get her back with a trick; he tries to drink the water so that she will be stranded. The dogs, too, tried to find her. Kaiamio travels steadily and reaches her home safely. She washes herself before she makes her way into the pa (home of her family). This story is an illustration of the individuation of the female after years of submission.

Conclusion

European fairy tales were already collected in the 19th and 20th centuries (Giovanni Francesco Straparola, Giambattista Basile, Charles Perrault, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, Laura Gonzenbach, Alexander Afanasiev). This is the hypothetical reason why Maori tales have more elements of explicit violence and sex. In Europe, the written tradition is longer and the process of written transmission from one generation to another turned the explicit elements of violence and cruelty into metaphorical expression. This is also the reason that Maori texts have a more contained and explicit connection with sources like Greek myths. The difference between European folktales and Maori myths and legends also lies in the process of literary reception, which was aimed more at children. In Grimm’s folktales we find more children than in the Maori tales, where the characters are more or less adults. The element of violence in more implicit in European folktales and more explicit in Maori. Because of this Maori myths and legends are more authentic than the European folktales that have come down to us today.

Literature


2 »That night the Ngati-Toa men held a fearful orgie, of which Puta was an unwilling spectator ...« in: Puta and her dog Kuuikui in: Folktales of the Maori, Middlesex: Senate, 1998. by Alfred Grace.