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### **THE ROLE OF HUMOR IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE**

By Tiziana Mascia, University of Urbino and Juli-Anna Aerila, University of Turku (Finland)

This article examines the role of humor in children's literature, with a particular focus on its impact on story structures and the emotional and cognitive responses of young readers. Through a review of international scientific literature, the study explores key theories of humor and its varied expressions in children's books, ranging from narrative styles and character development to the integration of complex themes. Particular attention is paid to the strategic use of humorous elements by writers willing to enrich the narration and to involve the reader, as well as to address delicate or taboo topics in an accessible and sensitive way. We also discuss the vital role of humor as a tool that promotes understanding and acceptance of differences, facilitating learning through fun and reflection. Overall, this analysis reveals the influence of humor in inspiring readers, emphasizing its significant role in children's literature.

**Keywords:** humor in literature; children's literature; emotional response; young readers; reading motivation.

### **LITERATURE "OF CHILDHOOD": ABOUT YOUTH STORYTELLING AND BABY WRITERS**

By Rebecca Rossi, journalist

"Children's" literature is a flourishing editorial and critical sector, but it does not coincide with "children's" literature (assuming that we can speak of it as a literary status), nor does it necessarily include it. Yet children write and it is not uncommon for books by very young authors to be published. The article intends to propose an open reflection on the literature of childhood and adolescence, i.e. produced by authors who are still children and adolescents, and to show the variety of spontaneous expressions, sometimes predictive of future literary successes, whether unpublished or editorial cases. To this end, it presents a broad historical and current overview of these "immature" works, questioning their artistic value and the motivations behind them. It then notes how the creative activity of these "baby writers" represents an increasingly less unusual phenomenon and is a natural consequence of progress in literacy, calling for further insights.

**Keywords:** youth literature, children's literature, baby writers, childhood, adolescence.

### **THE RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS OF FAIRY TALE BETWEEN 'GENRES' AND NEW NARRATIVE CONSTELLATIONS**

By Valentina Baeli, Phd University of Catania

Fairy tales are versatile, multifaceted literary products that lend themselves well to the possibility of reversing predetermined gender roles. Blue traditionally associated with them. In the wake of these suggestions, some authors have committed themselves to overturn the point of view of the traditional fairy tale canon, in a gender perspective. The aim of the survey is to trace, among some specific publishing realities, the recent and new attitudes towards the fairy tale genre, with particular attention to the approaches that favor an equal storytelling, removed from prejudices and projected towards a more critical representation of gender identities.

**Keywords:** fairy tales, stereotypes, symbolism, gender studies.

### **GENDER IDENTITY IN CLASSIC FAIRY TALES AND DISNEY ADAPTATIONS**

By Gabriella Armenise, University of Salento

The male and female models proposed through some Disney transpositions, chosen on a sample basis, allow us to open a reflection on the perception of certain literary genres (such as the classic fairy tale) or themes of essential value from a historical-pedagogical profile particularly suited to "movie rereading", because they are constructed with captivating words, meticulous descriptions and effective drawings. Starting from the concept of a sexual body with equal dignity, present in film transpositions – faithful or revisited, but still inspired by complete texts –, we can focus on the experience in the world through corporeality and reflect on the difference to redescribe the terms of the male/female relationship, taking into account that the previous stereotype of a dependent/fragile female character and an aggressive/dominant man has gradually been replaced by a "new" model. In noting the educational value of Disney cinema, which is increasingly attentive to proposing and promoting a "movie rereading" of the fairy tale, the intention is also to encourage the reconsideration of the concept of gender stereotype, together with the respective affective meanings and value and/or behavioral categories trying to "orientate" people with a view to gender equality.

**Keywords:** Disney transpositions, gender identity, classic fairy tales, educational value of cinema.

## **WORK AND WOMEN IN THE FAIRY TALES**

By Alessandra Mazzini, University of Bergamo

Fairy tales have always talked about work, disseminating roles, tools, techniques and skills of exquisite and sometimes truculent wisdom, at first in the oral word and then in the written page. From *One Thousand and One Nights* to *Lo cunto de li cunti*, passing through the fairy tales of Perrault, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, all the way up to Italo Calvino's collection, a map of professions is outlined made up of street vendors, fishermen, millers, farmers and sharecroppers and other occupations in which experience and expertise are celebrated, in an exaltation of work ethics and morals. Apparently, female figures are excluded from this poetic and at the same time painful image of activities. Inertia, passivity, immobility and waiting mark, in fact, the imagery of the complex and fascinating world of the woman in the fairy tale. Yet, whether it be a girl, mother or stepmother, witch or fairy, the regenerating effort of the female figure is relived in numerous fairy tales. Just think of *Cinderella* or *Snow White*, *The Goosekeeper* or *The Three Spinners*, where the protagonists are involved in jobs through which they construct the plots and threads of their own destiny. The essay intends to retrace the paths taken by some of these female characters, to demonstrate, finally, that it is not necessary to look only at the modern heroines of rewritten, readapted and revisited fairy tales, to find the images of women playing an active role and interpreting "doing" as virtuous self-entrepreneurship and, therefore, also as an educational and training opportunity.

**Keywords:** fairy tales, work, women, stereotypes.