THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRANSLATED FAIRY TALES AND ORAL NARRATIVE TRADITION: CHARLES PERRAULT'S CONTES IN GEORGIAN FOLKLORE

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Abstract: What does put Little Red Riding Hood in her basket when she arrived in Georgia? What was the name of that demonic antagonist who met Little Thumb? An overview of archival sources gives an account of characteristics of Georgian folkloric adaptations of Charles Perrault's fairy tales. The paper deals with transmissions between the categories of 'oral' and 'literary' and relations between translated print products and oral narratives. The comparison of literary and folkloric versions of fairy tales shows certain features that are universal and serve as a medium between the literature and oral narrative traditions.

Keywords: Georgia, folktales, fairy tales, Little Red Riding Hood, Little Thumb

1. Introduction

By the end of the nineteenth century, European literary tales had gained great popularity in Georgia. Next to Georgian traditional folktales, they became an important part of children's literature. This article focuses on the folkloric versions of "Little Red Riding Hood" and "Little Thumb" by Charles Perrault. The reception of his fairy tales in different cultures produces differing texts. Georgian archival sources reveal the existence of some interpretations of Charles Perrault's fairy tales in Georgian traditional storytelling. Georgian folk retellings of Charles Perrault's "Little Red Riding Hood" and "Little Thumb" had never been published due to their literary origin. The folklorists concentrated on the national repertoire. This paper deals with transmissions between the categories of 'oral' and 'literary,' and relations between translated print products and oral tradition.

Although there were rich and indigenous folk narrative traditions in Georgia, translated literature from both the East and the West have their significant value in the study of rich indigenous folk narratives in Georgia. The adaptations of translated fairy tales and their oral retellings in Georgian folklore are not frequent but even the rare

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examples can be very important as they outline the specifics of the relationship between literature and folktales.

2. Methodological Background

The interdisciplinary approach among folklorists and literary critics broke the boundaries between the disciplines of folklore and literary studies. Western scholarship concentrated on the systematic study of oral folktales through the lens of literary fairy tales. From the folkloristic point of view, the identification of literary sources of oral narratives is one of the important tips to observe the process of internationalization of folktales.

The literary origins of fairy tales and their print dissemination have been fundamentally studied by German folklorist and literary critic Rudolf Schenda (1930-2000). He studied a vast body of oral narratives and print culture in Italy, France, and Germany. His works *Volk ohne Buch* (Schenda 1970) and *Die Lesestoffe der Kleinen Leute* (Schenda 1976) demonstrated the importance of print culture for studying folkloric repertoire and maintained the primacy of print production for the study of the origins of oral narratives.

In 1988 German fairy tale researcher Manfred Grätz published a study of fairy tales in the epoch of German Enlightenment Das Märchen in der deutschen Aufklärung. Vom Feenmärchen zum Volksmärchen (Grätz 1988). He explored a large number of documents on the transfer of French fairy tales to Germany. A subsequent analysis of relationships between high literature and fairy tales submitted the power of print processes from the Middle Ages to the nineteenth century. Manfred Grätz argued such fairy tales as Grimm's Children and Household Tales were uncommon in eighteenthcentury Germany. Instead of the "genuine, native folk tales" there is a large number of French fairy tales and oriental tales, which were translated, adapted and transformed by German authors. Grätz considers that fairy tales as we know them today are by no means a timeless genre that has always existed due to some human psychological constant. At least in Germany, fairy tales first appear in the second half of the eighteenth century under French influence. Since then, this genre has been subject to constant historical change, precisely because it is closely linked to the psyche and faith, but also narrative styles shaped by culture, and because people's relationship to miracles and reality is constantly changing (Grätz 1988: 272).

Other scholars in Germany have illuminated mutual, complex, and long-term print history of European fairy tales between the 1600s and the late 1800s (Rötzler 1972; Clausen-Stolzenburg 1995; Karlinger 1983). American Germanist Ruth B. Bottigheimer argues that a print-based history of the fairy tale genre does not look to an anonymous folk, singly or in a group, either as a point of origin for fairy tales or as a means of transmission of fairy tales. According to Bottigheimer, the history of fairy tales depends on the evidence provided by educated authors, particularly Giovanni Francesco Straparola who invented the genre of the modern fairy tale in its most familiar form. As his stories achieved success through several printings, they became diffused worldwide (Bottigheimer 2002). This history explores literary texts, follows and analyzes printers, publishers, and translations.

Not all contemporary scholars subscribe to the theory of print tradition's primacy. American folklorist and medievalist Jan M. Ziolkowski argues that ancient and medieval Texts contain earlier literary adaptations of folktales that qualify as fairy tales. Against Ruth B. Bottigheimer's argument that Straparola created fairy tale in its best-known form, Jan M. Ziolkowski pays attention to the second-century Latin author Apuleius, Medieval Latin author Asinarius and the distribution of folktales across space and time worldwide (Ziolkowski 2010: 377-397).

Scholars offer a deep analysis of different aspects of the oral and written narrative traditions. Oral traditions and literary traditions belong to parallel categories of traditions (Ong 2002: 2).

In the nineteenth century, large collections of traditional folk material were amassed in many different countries. At the same time, it will be difficult to find a folk culture in nineteenth-century Western Europe that is devoid of literature. According to Finnish folklorist Satu Apo, toward the end of the nineteenth century, one has to take into account all aspects of the narration: "They were masters of oral narrative and performance. They made use of traditional fairy-tale themes and motifs, but some of them also wanted to create new, individual stories. Many of them enjoyed reading and even writing tales in the same style as those familiar to them from the literature they had read. This seems to suggest that research into European folktales is to a large extent interdisciplinary. Folklorists should deepen their understanding of literary history, while researchers of literary tales should acquaint themselves with folklorists more thoroughly. And both folklorists, as well as literary scholars, require a profound understanding of the social and cultural historical contexts of the material at the focus of their study" (Apo 2007: 30).

The retellings of folk tales surpass the domain literature to enrich other cultural representations, including film, comics, pop art, and advertising. The contemporary study of folktales is to a large extent a product of the cross-disciplinary research conducted by folklorists and literary scholars. As important as these questions of the relationship between literary and oral tales is the socio-historical study of folktales and fairy tales. A phenomenon of storytellers' art and society is closely connected with the study of fairy tales and folktales in print culture. *Märchen und Wirklichkeit* by Lutz Röhrich (1964) and *Erzähler und Erzählgemeinschaft* by Linda Dégh (1962) are key studies of the relationships between the folktale and society.

The comprehensive work by American folklorist Jack Zipes provides an interdisciplinary model of cultural and socio-historical analysis that explains the genre of the fairy tale in the context of history and culture. His edition *The Trials and Tribulations of Little Red Riding Hood* (1993) suggests the comparative methods, categories and interpretive tools to study the history of oral and literary tales. There is no such thing as a pure literary fairy tale or a separate literary tradition: "The fairy tale developed out of an oral cognitive mode of communication and narration; it was continued and expanded through print, which generated another mode of transmitting relevant information. When fairy tales came to be printed as public representations, they were read privately and publicly, remembered and retold orally, and republished, always with changes." (Zipes 2006: 98).

From the perspective of comparative literature, María Rosal Nadales analysed Spanish-language versions of Little Red Riding Hood in social and cultural contexts taking into account the historical nature of tales (Nadales 2019: 244-262).

2.1. Terminology

To avoid terminological confusion, I describe the terms I have used in the paper. According to Ruth Bottigheimer's definition, 'fairy tale' overlaps related genres and subgenres, such as wonder tales, Conte(s) de(s) fees, literary fairy tales, burlesques, tales of origins, and folk tales: "Stories and tales are brief narratives that communicate a sequence of events leading to our narrative conclusion. This simple statement reflects common knowledge and incorporates the ordinary experience of listening and reading" (Bottigheimer 2002: 7).

I have used the terms 'fairy tale,' 'story' and 'tale' as synonyms for a plot that traces a poor hero or heroine who has magical assistance in marrying into royalty and obtaining wealth. This is the most common pattern, found in various cultural contexts distributed broadly across time that exceeds in its specificity the results of searches for the origins of fairy tales as a genre (Propp 1968; Uther 2004). As Jan Ziolkowski puts it, "Genre is often defined as a tool for the taxonomy of literature that has been devised by literary scholars and that is distinct from the native categories, and fairy tale is a case in point." (Ziolkowski 2010: 381). In this paper the terms 'fairy tale' and 'folktale' are used as contrastive terms: 'fairy tale' in the sense of a published text, and 'folktale' as an oral narrative.

3. Charles Perrault's Fairy Tales in Georgian

Very few authors have been accorded the honor of being referred to as "fairy godfathers": Giovanni Francesco Straparola, Giambatista Basile and Charles Perrault. Furthermore, the French fairy-tale writer became one of the most translated authors all over the world. Charles Perrault is considered not only a significant writer but also a translator: "If the problematics of translation stem from the transfer from one culture to another, one must then go back to the preface to Perrault's tales, where he expressed his pride for the French traditional tales that he 'translated' into the language of seventeenth-century salons. His preface emphasized the superiority of his tales above the Greek and Roman fables of antiquity and claimed that, coming as they did from a Christian and Gallic tradition, they did not offend 'la morale,' 'the main thing in all sorts of fables.' Perrault's own translation consisted of transposing tales from French popular culture into the literary culture of his time. The author of the Contes implicitly laid claim to the profoundly national character of his tales' sources." (Malarte-Feldman 1999: 195).

Charles Perrault's fairy tales were well-known in Georgia through French and Russian editions (Perrault 1897; 1908). Georgian translation of Charles Perrault's fairy tales was done from French by Georgian literary critic and translator Geronti Kikodze (1888-1960), and published in 1938 in Tbilisi, with Gustave Doré's illustrations

(Perrault 1938). Kikodze translated fairy tales from the collection Les Contes de ma Mère l'Ove ["Mother Goose's Tales"] such as "La Belle au bois dormant" ["The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood"], "Le Petit Chaperon rouge" ["Little Red Riding Hood"], "Cendrillon" ["Cinderella"], "Le Maître chat ou le Chat botté" ["Puss in Boots"], "Le Barbe bleue" [Blue Beard], "Le petit poucet" ["Little Thumb"], "Riquet à la houppe" ["Riquet with the Tuft"]. Kikodze successfully transposed Perrault's fairy tales from the seventeenth century to another period - the twentieth century, from the aristocratic elite of the Parisian salons to the twentieth-century Georgian reader. His translations have been continuously published in Georgia during the twentieth century. Next to modern Georgian adaptations, Kikodze's translations remain to be best Georgian translations of Charles Perrault. The fairy tales "Griselidis" ["Griselda"], "Les Souhaits Ridicules" ["The Ridiculous Wishes"], "Les Fees" ["The Fairy"], "Peau d'âne" ["Donkey-Skin"] were translated by several translators, such as Mariam Pareshishvili (Perrault 2022), Maia Shvelidze (Perrault 2021), Ana Abashidze (Perrault 2017) and many others. Up to 80 Georgian editions of Perrault's fairy tales were published in Georgia between 1908 and 2022.

These popular prints make up an important medium for the distribution of Charles Perrault's fairy tales in Georgia. Studying them demonstrates diverse paths of transcribing and transforming literary tales into a popular medium.

Some of Perrault's fairy tales were included in the Georgian oral tradition. The same process happened in Eastern European countries. For example, in Greece, popular booklets of translated fairy tales constituted an important part of popular literature. Studying the tales of Charles Perrault has demonstrated a variety of transformations and transcriptions of the tales: on the one hand, free adaptations, and on the other, word-by-word translations of the tales (Kaliambou 2007: 60). The influence of popular prints on the oral tradition has to be understood in relative terms. The storytellers created their versions by retelling literary texts.

4. Georgian Folkloric Adaptations of Perrault's Fairy Tales

4.1. Little Red Riding Hood

The story of "Little Red Riding Hood" (ATU333) has two versions of the ending episode. The first, with a sad ending, was written by Charles Perrault. It finishes with the frightful sentence: "And, saying these words, this wicked Wolf fell upon poor Little Red Riding Hood, and ate her all up" (Perrault 1922: 25). The second version, which ends well, was recorded by the brothers Grimm at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Here the hunter arrives and finds the wolf sleeping after his meal. He takes out his scissors and cuts open the wolf's belly. The granddaughter and the grandmother are released: "Ah, how frightened I have been! How dark it was inside the wolf," says the little girl. After that, the aged grandmother came out alive also, but scarcely able to breathe. "Red-Cap, however, quickly fetched great stones with which they filled the wolf's body, and when he awoke, he wanted to run away, but the stones were so heavy that he fell down at once, and fell dead." (Grimm 2004).

In the Folklore Archive at Shota Rustaveli Institute of Georgian Literature, there are kept three versions of "Little Red Riding Hood" recorded by Georgian Folklorists Ksenia Sikharulidze, Rusudan Cholokashvili and Khatuna Keshelava in 1949, 1961 and 1998 (Database of Georgian Folklore: ID18390, ID7228, ID17092). Two of these texts, recorded in 1948 and 1961, seem to be retellings of Grimm's version as they have a happy ending. The third text, which is recorded in 1998, follows Perrault's fairy tale. The archival text is presented in my translation:

Once upon a time, there was a Tsitelkuda (Georgian word-by-word translation of the name Little Red Riding Cap) who lived in a village with her Parents. Her grandmother lived in the forest.

One day Tsitelkuda's mother packed a nice basket with bread, khatchapuri (cheese-filled bread) and kada (sweet bread), and for Tsitelkuda to take to her grandmother.

The little girl put on her red cap and went to Grandma's house.

She sang:

"I am Tsitelkuda, I have a red cap,

My grandma knitted it for me,

My grandma gave it to me."

Tsitelkuda was enjoying singing. Suddenly, the wolf appeared beside her.

"What are you doing out here, little girl?"

"I'm on my way to see my Grandma."

"Where is your Grandma?"

"She lives through the forest." and she showed the way.

The wolf run into the forest, arrived at Grandma's house, gobbled her up and jumped into bed.

Tsitelkuda knocked on the door.

"Grandma! Grandma!"

"Who is it?"

"It's me, open the door, Grandma."

"Come in, my dear,"

Tsitelkuda entered the house and met the wolf.

"Grandmother! What big and bushy hands you have," said Tsitelkuda.

"The better to hug you," replied the wolf.

"What big mouth you have."

"The better to kiss you with."

"What big eyes you have."

"The better to look you with," said the wolf and swallowed up Tsitelkuda.

As we see, the oral retelling is much shorter than Perrault's fairy tale. The narrator tells the story sketchily. Only the introduction of the tale is described in detail. The most attractive element here seems to be the description of the basket with some food.

In the beginning episodes of both Perrault's and Grimm's editions the mother gives her daughter some cakes to bring to the grandmother:

One day her mother, having made some girdle cakes, said to her, "Go, my dear, and see how the grand-mama does, for I hear she has been very ill. Take her a girdle cake, and this little pot of butter." (Perrault 1922: 21).

"One day her mother said to her, "Come Little Red Cap. Here is a piece of cake and a bottle of wine. Take them to your grandmother. She is sick and weak, and they will do her well." (Grimm 1922: 72).

In Georgian folk narratives, there are some regional foods in the basket of Little Red Riding Hood: Kada, sweet bread with the filling of flour, sugar and butter, and Khachapuri, cheese-filled bread.

In various versions of oral retellings in French folklore, Little Red Riding Hood has an assorted menu, not only appetizing cakes. As Yvonne Verdier found out, in oral traditions of several French provinces - in the Loire basin, the Nivernais, the Forez, the Velay, in the northern Alps, there are products perfectly compatible: "pain amélioré, the local form of galette, confected by adding sugar, butter, and eggs to the bread dough and cooked at the edge of the oven the day bread is made, called pompe in the Velay, époigne in the Nivernais, and fouace in the Alps. Associated with this cake is usually a dairy product: a pot of cream in the Nivernais, or the local cheese - tomme in the Alps, fromazeau in the Velay. More rare is the mention of a third product: a small pot of honey in the Alps, or, also in the Alps, eggs associated with the butter and cheese. Set forth in a formula are moré numerous gifts in the Indre." (Verdier 1997: 114).

The content of Little Red Riding Hood in the Georgian oral version is the same as Perrault's and Grimm's, but some details are changed to fit the culturally preferred things in a given locale. The basket of Little Red Riding Hood is a perfect example of this.

4.2. Little Thumb

From Charles Perrault's fairy tales, in Georgian folk narratives, there is found a version of "Little Thumb" (ATU327B), recorded in 1961 by Lali Tevzadze (Database of Georgian Folklore, ID5582). In comparison with Perrault's style, Georgian oral retelling in a regional dialect is much shorter. The text is presented in my translation:

Once upon a time, there was a poor man and his wife, who had twenty children, all boys. These poor people resolved to rid themselves of their children. One evening the man said to his wife, "I am resolved to lose them in the wood tomorrow."

The youngest brother heard all his father had said. He got up and filled his pockets full of small pebbles. The parents took their children into a forest and got away from them. When the children found they were alone, they began to cry. Then the youngest brother said to them, "do not be afraid, I had dropped the little pebbles all along the way. I will lead you home." The brothers followed and came home. The next day the parents resolved to lose their children again. They went early morning and the youngest brother could not collect the little pebbles. So the children got lost.

After two weeks they arrived at the house of a giant – Devi. The wife of the giant opened the door and asked them what they wanted. The youngest brother asked her to hide them from her husband till morning. Giant's wife hid them under the bed. When the giant came, he sniffed and said "I smell fresh meat." His wife answered "my nephews are here, do not eat them." The giant decided to eat them the next day and gave them food that they may not grow thin.

The giant had twenty daughters. They all had gold hoods on their heads. The youngest brother got up about midnight, and, taking his brothers' hoods and his own, went very softly and put them upon the heads of the twenty girls, after having taken off their gold hoods and put them upon his head and his brothers. The giant murdered all his twenty children. Little thumb and his brothers ran away. The giant followed them but he was tired, set down and fell asleep. Little Thumb pulled off his boots and blinded him. The twenty brothers returned home. Then the giant killed himself. Little thumb, his brothers and his parents lived happily.

There are many differences between the literary fairy tale and the Georgian retelling:

- 1) Georgian narrator does not tell the name of the protagonist in the beginning. She says "the youngest boy." Only at the end of the story, the protagonist appears with his nickname "Little Thumb" (in Georgian: "Tserodena").
- 2) The number of siblings. In the French fairy tale, the Little Thumb has six brothers and a giant has seven daughters. In the Georgian folktale, there are twenty brothers and twenty daughters.
- 3) Instead of the giant, in the Georgian version appears Devi, an anthropomorphic demon and typical character in Caucasian and Near Eastern folklore.
- 4) In the final episode of the Georgian folk narrative there is included a motif of blending (Mot.K1011) which evokes an association with the tale types ATU1135 "Eye-Remedy" and ATU1137 "The Blinded Ogre" (Thompson 1975; Uther 2004).
- 5) The narrative style of the Georgian version accords with typical characteristics of traditional storytelling: it is brief and reserved when describing emotions. This is especially noticeable in the episodes when the parents talk about their children.

In contrast to other Georgian folktales which belong to the tale type ATU327B "The Brothers and the Ogre," the text discussed above derives directly from the literary source. Geronti Kikodze translated French "Le petit poucet" into Georgian word by word as "Tserodena" – no bigger as the thumb. In Georgian everyday speech, the word "Tserodena" is a common adjective which means not a fairy-tale character but a small-sized thing. ATU327B "The Brothers and the Ogre" is one of the often occurring tales of Georgian folklore but their protagonists have different nicknames: "Khutkunchula," "Kokrochina" and "Chinchraka." The appearance of the name "Tserodena" in the Georgian version of the tale type ATU327B "The Brothers and the Ogre" confirms its literary origins.

Although Little Thumb and Little Red Riding Hood are not national fairy-tale characters, they became very popular among Georgians. "Little Red Riding Hood" is one of the favourite plays in children's and puppet theatres in various towns of Georgia.

5. Conclusion

During the research of the influence of the print fairy tales on oral narrative traditions in their various forms, it is important to remember that although there was a rich and long-standing indigenous literary tradition in Georgia, the translated literature was also instrumental in the formation of Georgian literary culture. Popular literature intended to be read by a mass audience arrived in Georgia about the late nineteenth century in

broadsheet form. The oral narrative tradition was much richer and remained an important part of Georgian folklore well into the twentieth century. I am far from the radical opinion that print culture was the single most important instrument for the dissemination of the genre of fairy tales but the comparison of literary and folkloric versions of fairy tales shows certain features that serve as a medium for establishing close links between the literature and oral narrative traditions.

The reason for the spreading of "Little Riding Hood" and "Little Thumb" in the national repertoire of Georgian folklore can be explained on the one hand by the impact of published fairy tales on oral narratives. On the other hand, Perrault's fairy tales owed some of their success to being close to the traditional oral folktales. Georgian oral retellings of Perrault's fairy tales transformed into folk narratives shaped by the genre peculiarities of folklore.

It will be difficult to find a narrator of twentieth-century Georgia who was not influenced by print culture. They made use of traditional fairy-tale themes and motifs, and some of them also wanted to retell or create new stories from the literature they had read, for example, "Little Red Riding Hood" and "Little Thumb." This seems to suggest that the study of Georgian folktales, strongly influenced by translated fairy tales, is to a large extent interdisciplinary and should be examined in social and cultural-historical contexts.

The study of transitions and intermediate forms between oral and written communications gives folklorists a chance to explore various interesting processes of cultural transfer in traditional folklore. Georgian translations of European fairy tales in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries have their cultural-historical value in terms of cross-cultural contamination and cross-fertilization of one tradition by another.

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