RUDIMENTS OF CONTEMPORARY FANTASY IN MADAME D'AULNOY'S FAIRY TALES

FILHO, Paulo César Ribeiro[1]

ABSTRACT: It is known that contemporary fantasy literature carries narrative strands from the ancient and long-lived thematic framework of traditional fairy tales and other wonderful tales. Characters and mottos arising from this fruitful literary tradition have been commonly refigured and reused today. This article aims to launch theoretical and analytical reflections on a new interpretative hypothesis: that a series of structural rudiments of contemporary fantasy would be present in literary fairy tales by Marie-Catherine Le Jumel de Barneville, Madame d'Aulnoy (1650? – 1705), coiner of the term "fairy tale" and author of the first known literary fairy tale. To entertain this possibility, the theoretical contributions of Bottigheimer (2019), Mendlesohn (2008), and Matangrano (2021) are combined in counterpoint to Todorov's (1973) postulates about the narrative structure of the fairy tale. As well as demonstrating the relevance of the mentioned hypothesis, this work intends to shed light on the still little-known work of Madame d'Aulnoy (especially to Portuguese language readers), as well as on the fairy tales of female authorship from the 17th century in France.

KEYWORDS: Fantasy Literature, Fairy Tales, Madame d'Aulnoy.

RUDIMENTOS DA FANTASIA CONTEMPORÂNEA NOS CONTOS DE FADAS DE MADAME D'AULNOY

RESUMO: Sabe-se que a literatura de fantasia contemporânea carrega consigo filamentos narrativos provenientes do antigo e longevo arcabouço temático dos contos de fadas tradicionais e demais contos maravilhosos; personagens e motes advindos dessa profícua tradição literária têm sido comumente refigurados e reaproveitados na atualidade. O objetivo do presente artigo é lançar reflexões teóricas e analíticas acerca de uma nova hipótese interpretativa: a de que uma série de rudimentos estruturais da fantasia contemporânea estariam presentes nos contos de fadas literários de Marie-Catherine Le Jumel

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[1] Doctoral student in Comparative Studies of Portuguese Language Literature (Children and Youth Literature area) and Master in Portuguese Literature by the Faculty of Philosophy, Languages and Literature, and Human Sciences of the University of São Paulo (São Paulo – Brazil). Scholarship holder from the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education (CAPES). E-mail: paulo.cesar.filho@usp.br.

de Barneville, a Madame d'Aulnoy (1650?-1705), cunhadora do termo "conto de fadas" e autora do primeiro conto de fadas literário de que se tem notícia. Para cotejar tal possibilidade, conjuga-se as contribuições teóricas de Bottigheimer (2019), Mendlesohn (2008) e Matangrano (2021) em contraponto com os postulados de Todorov (1973) sobre a estrutura narratológica do conto de fadas. Pretende-se, além de demonstrar a pertinência da referida hipótese, lançar luzes sobre a obra ainda pouco conhecida de Madame d'Aulnoy (sobretudo para os leitores de língua portuguesa), bem como sobre a contística feérica de autoria feminina do século XVII francês.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Literatura de Fantasia, Contos de Fadas, Madame d'Aulnoy.

Madame d'Aulnoy and the critics

The fairy tale, as we know it today in terms of structure and narratological elements, acquired definitive literary form on French territory between the 17th and 18th centuries. The specialized literary criticism (BACKSCHEIDER, 2013; HAASE, 2008; MENDLESOHN, 2016; SCHACKER, 2015; SERMAIN, 2005; ZIPES, 2012) attributes to Marie-Catherine Le Jumel de Barneville, Madame d'Aulnoy (1650? – 1705) both the creation of the term "fairy tale" (*conte de fées*) and the authorship of the first literary fairy tale known, "The Isle of Happiness" (*L'Île de la Félicité*), in 1690. Marie-Catherine married noticeably young to an earl much older than herself. This marriage resulted in a great scandal involving the false accusation of a crime of lese-majesty – whose sentence could result in the death penalty – perpetrated, apparently, by her own mother, all to try to free her daughter from this unhappy marriage.

Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy inaugurated the fashion for fairy tales in French literary salons at the dawn of the last decade of the 17th century. Farah Mendlesohn and Michael Levy (2016, p. 15) postulate that her tales were "both her own creations and very clearly intended for adults". Such notions are critically and theoretically important since the works of Madame d'Aulnoy (and also her contemporaries such as Henriette-Julie de Castelnau de Murat, Madame de Murat [1670-1716]) have been the target of chronologically impossible and literarily unfounded invectives by two of the most notable folklorists. Starting with the statement by Jacob (1785-1863) and Wilhelm Grimm (1786-1859) in the preface to the first edition of their children's and home tales (*Kinder- und Hausmärchen*):

> France has certainly much more now than what Charles Perrault provided. But he treated them still as children's tales (not like his inferior imitators Aulnoy and Murat). He produced only nine. Of course, they belong to the best-known

tales, which are also among the most beautiful. His merit consists in his decision not to add anything to the tales and to leave the tales unchanged, discounting some small details. (GRIMM, 2014 [1812], p. 8)

Their unfair criticism also resonated in the words of Andrew Lang (1844-1912) in the preface to his *Olive Fairy Book*:

> The success of Perrault was based on the pleasure which the Court of Louis XIV. took in fairy tales; we know that they were told among Court ladies, from a letter of Madame de Sevigne. Naturally Perrault had imitators, such as Madame d'Aulnoy, a wandering lady of more wit than reputation. (LANG, 1907, p. vi)

In the wake of folklorist romanticism, the rise of naturist ethnography, and a Germany recently liberated from the vogue of French ways and the Napoleonic threat, it is not surprising that a literature deeply marked by the French aristocratic worldview (as we find it in the tales of two authors mentioned) came to be reproached by the Grimms. The idea that Perrault's tales did not undergo considerable changes is equally flawed, given that his primary intention, as a defender of modernity, was to prove that it was possible to make "high literature" in the French language without necessarily imitating the models of the ancient Greek-Latin authors. For this, Perrault resorted to themes already well known to French audiences in order to compose richly crafted and stylistically distinct works, as occurred with the tale "Griselidis", elaborated in carefully metered and rhymed verses.

Then why are such criticisms unjust, chronologically impossible, and literarily false? Firstly, Madame d'Aulnoy is a predecessor of Charles Perrault when it comes to publishing fairy tales, which makes the suggestion of imitation preposterous, at least chronologically. Both, in fact, share some plots that are similar, but definitely different in terms of execution. As an example, we can mention the fact that there is an extremely ugly but very intelligent prince in Perrault's tale "Riquet of the Tuft" and also in Aulnoy's "The Golden Branch". The narratives, however, are completely different. The same can be said of "Cinderella" and "Finette Cendron". Furthermore, the simple conference (a basic reading) of the works by both authors proves to be enough to invalidate the comments made by Grimm and Lang. Finally, it is necessary to note that variants of female-authored fairy tales are found in the Grimm's own

collection, published as a set of national treasures of the German people. Part of the plot of "Finette Cendron", by Madame d'Aulnoy, written in 1697, is present in "Hansel and Gretel"; another classic example is "Persinette", by Charlotte-Rose Caumont de La Force (1654-1724), written in 1698, an earlier variant of "Rapunzel". Thus, the imitator-imitated relationship seems to lean unfavorably towards the purists when it comes to literary "influence".

Describing the typical features of literary fairy tales, Nelly Novaes Coelho (1985) informs that it was a "mighty, exuberant, fanciful prose that, in every aspect, contrasted with the high discipline that presided over the two 'noble' genres of the time: theater and poetry"[2]; in these written fairy tales, intended for adults, the lovers must go through a series of trials to testify their truth. The author still notes that in these tales – which have an air of novel – fantasy defies the assumptions of traditional logic. Jennifer Schacker (2015, p. 41) adds to these considerations, stating that "her [Madame d'Aulnoy] stories can feel unexpectedly long and refreshingly complex to modern readers, but in their day they helped define what a fairy tale was: fantastical landscapes in which characters face social challenges, written as adult amusement and intellectual provocation." In the conjugation of Coelho and Schacker's contributions, we can glimpse a series of adjectives that, substantively, outline a general profile of the female-authored fairy tale of the 1690s: exuberance, fantasy, indiscipline, and complexity, without losing sight of the sense of provocation and courtly entertainment. A simple contrasting reading between a fairy tale by Perrault, Grimm, or Andersen and a story by Madame d'Aulnoy, for example, is enough to verify the validity of the two authors' propositions: the protagonists and antagonists have personality variations, the countless fairies do not appear and disappear out of nowhere, and all characters seem to have their own parallel plots. Moreover, literary fairy tales are steeped in references to traditions, costumes, cuisine, places, and even games of the time, all wrapped in the atmosphere of a fantasy that verges on the absurd. Some of these aspects will be explored later. But the difference in terms of length is the aspect that most impresses readers: while a story like Perrault's "Cinderella" does not exceed five pages of a book in the traditional format, "The Blue Bird", written by the aforementioned countess, reaches up to thirty pages. A classic example is also Gabrielle de Villeneuve's "Beauty and the Beast" (1740), which has all the credentials to be classified as a novel.

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[2] "[...] prosa narrativa caudalosa, exuberante, fantasista que, em tudo, contrastava com a alta disciplina que presidia aos dois gêneros 'nobres' da época: o teatro e a poesia." (COELHO, 1985, p. 57).

Ruth Bottigheimer (2019) uses the term "complex fairyland fiction" to refer to the tale "The White Cat" by Madame d'Aulnoy, in counterpoint to the notion of "simple fairy tale", like "Puss in Boots" by Charles Perrault (1628-1703). This differentiation occurs because Aulnoy's tale (not just the one mentioned, by the way) is composed of more than one narrative engendering: the author intertwines a restoration fairy tale and a rise fairy tale in the same story[3]. Furthermore, more than one plot usually composes her long narratives, causing several plot twists throughout the tales, which was noted by Paula Backscheider (2013, p. 83), who indicates (about *The Isle of Happiness*): "It is longer than popular-culture fairy tales, more complex, stylistically distinctive, highly intertextual, filled with plot twists".

All these prior considerations support the idea that what Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy was writing was something quite different from what Perrault was publishing. We must by no means assume that this or that form was better or worse, only that they were different; stylistically, structurally, and narratologically different. After this introduction, we will now analyze the features present in Madame d'Aulnoy's tales that differ from what is proposed by Todorov (1973), Lüthi (1986), and Jolles (2017 [1930]), and can be interpreted as rudiments of what we now identify as features of fantasy literature.

Classic fairy tale theories

It is necessary to note that the fairy tale theories proposed by Tzvetan Todorov, Max Lüthi, and André Jolles disregarded the literary production of female authorship, excluding from their propositions even the work of the one who coined the name of the genre in question. It is known that so-called folk tales or popular fairy tales (traditional, simple) are the objects of study of these three researchers. Therefore, it is to be expected that the fairy works by Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy and other female French authors of the 17th and 18th centuries do not fit the forms of the researchers' theories. Consequently, for many, their tales simply do not "look like" fairy tales, as they differ from what has been established to be characteristic of the genre.

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[3] As proposed by Ruth Bottigheimer (2002), a restoration fairy tale is basically a narrative that involves the restitution of status, as in "Sleeping Beauty", "Cinderella", "Snow White", and "Beauty and the Beast" (in its first version, from 1740, by Gabrielle de Villeneuve): a member of the nobility is temporarily stripped of their title or privileges but manages to regain them at the end. A rise fairy tale involves a change in social status, as in Perrault's "Puss in Boots" and Madame de Beaumont's "Beauty and the Beast" of 1754, where a member of a lower class succeeds socially. A simple fairy tale usually works with just one of these two possibilities.

Max Lüthi summarizes his work *The European Folktale* through the following self-explanatory topics: one-dimensionality, depthlessness, abstract style, isolation and universal interconnection, sublimation, and all-inclusiveness. In the author's words, "since Charles Perrault first made the folktale an object of serious literary attention in 1696-97, writers, readers, and scholars have never ceased to feel the attraction of this new form" (LÜTHI, 1986, p. 1). It is very interesting to note the association of Perrault with the folktale, which leads us to see him as a sort of collector, someone who captured popular literary material from the hands of the common people and served as a bridge between these people and the upper classes of literary artists. Fact or not (as it is necessary to criticize the romantic reading of Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries, especially after the French Revolution), these postulates seem to echo the Brothers Grimm's commentary quoted earlier. What were the folkloric motifs (coming from popular tradition) that gave rise to Perrault's "Sleeping Beauty", "Cinderella", and "Puss in Boots", for example? Wouldn't they have been themes already artistically elaborated by Giambattista Basile (1566-1632) and Giovan Francesco Straparola (1480~1557)? After all, it seems to be more prudent to state that oral and written literature maintain (from the past to the present day) a relationship of mutualism, of feedback contacts, so that we do not run the risk of falling into the trap of a purist folklorism.

In his considerations regarding fairy tales, André Jolles (2017 [1930]) uses the term "the Grimm genre" to designate his research corpus. The researcher proposes that the fairy tale, as a simple form, has a mobile language (it is not "the writer's own words") and a certain native poetic naturalness ("natural poetry" versus "art poetry"). The author makes it clear that it is not his intention to analyze the situation of the simple fairy tale that is artistically complexified:

> With this last point we have returned to the literary situation that arose with the appearance of the fairy tale in Western literature, and which we can sketch as follows: a guild of poets and writers that has concerned itself for centuries with literary forms believes itself obliged and able to actualize a simple form in the same way it actualizes its literary forms; a series of novellas undertakes to treat the fairy tale-like a novella, to bring it to closure in the same way, to give it solid, particular and singular shape, to impress it with personal character. It would be of great scholarly importance to study what can happen generally, and what does happen each time, when a specific simple form converges, in literature, with a literary form – in short, to determine what such

crossings yield – but this we cannot do here. (JOLLES, 2017 [1930], p. 201-202)

Finally, a specific excerpt from Todorov's considerations about the fairy tale will help us to make a proper counterpoint between the simple tale and Aulnoy's works:

> In the case of the marvelous, supernatural elements provoke no particular reaction in either the characters or in the implicit reader. It is not an attitude toward the events described which characterizes the marvelous, but the nature of these events. […] We generally link the genre of the marvelous to that of the fairy tale. But as a matter of fact, the fairy tale is only one of the varieties of the marvelous, and the supernatural events in fairy tales provoke no surprise: neither a hundred years' sleep, nor a talking wolf, nor the magical gifts of the fairies (to cite only a few elements in Perrault's tales). (TODOROV, 1973, p. 54)

Keeping the contribution of these three researchers of the simple fairy tale in mind, let us move on to the counterpoints, accompanied by examples, collated with some excerpts of fantasy literature's theories.

Rudiments of fantasy

The choice of the term "rudiments" is explained by the fact that we do not intend to, in any circumstance, suggest that these proto-features of contemporary fantasy are indebted to the works of Marie-Catherine d'Aulnoy, or that fantasy authors were inspired by her tales to reach the final literary form that characterizes the genre. Our objective is to punctuate narratological novelties present in d'Aulnoy's literary fairy tales that clash with those commonly attributed to traditional fairy tales, folk tales (based on a Grimm corpus), and present efabulatory devices sympathetic to what is considered native to the fantasy genre today. The annotations and hypotheses presented here shed light on simple narrative strands, little structuring threads that darn the compositional threads in the "fabric" of future complex literature, cooperating (directly or indirectly) with the development of the mesh of ideas underlying the notion of fantasy literature.

Bruno Matangrano (2021) relates the idea of "utopia" to the existence of "another place", the latter being fictionally recreated in contrast to the real world. Therefore, according to the researcher, "often the utopian narrative will depend on a journey to access this idealized world". For the researcher, "in this sense, utopias approach high fantasy because they presuppose the existence of another place – or another world – whose rules are different"[4]. Now, based on simple fairy/folk tale theories, there was never *space* to mention a complex parallel world in a shallow ("depthlessness") tale, which is based on the notion of one-dimensionality where anything can happen, and the wonder does not cause surprise. The fairy tale world is, in itself, a utopian world that does not presuppose the existence of a real world opposed to it. The existence of another world would imply the need for a series of questions to be developed in order to conduct the story with verisimilitude, and for that, there is no *space* (and no function) in the simple fairy tale.

However, rudiments of different "worlds" and their different language systems, for example, can be found among Madame d'Aulnoy's tales. The ogres that kidnap Princess Aimée, the protagonist of the tale "The Bee and the Orange Tree", have their own communication system, which they teach to the girl. The lack of knowledge of the human language will cause great difficulties in the princess's relationship with the prince, her cousin, with whom she is destined to marry. They communicate through gestures and facial expressions. The ultimate recognition comes from the prince's reading ability: he reads the message engraved on an artifact belonging to that unrecognized princess, raised by a family of ogres, thus discovering that she was the missing princess he had been looking for. In "Babiole", the monkey princess, who shares her name with the tale, has no difficulty learning the human language despite her simian nature, for she can reason perfectly as a metamorphosed human (which happened when she was a newborn). Nonetheless, she needs the help of a translator monkey to understand what the ape king (who lives in the Monkeyland) says to her, as she did not fully master the primate language.

Against the common assumption that fairy-tale space is somewhere outside the confines of historical time (as in fables), references to real-world locations where the characters transit daily can be found in several of Madame d'Aulnoy's tales: Russia ("The Isle of Happiness"), China ("Prince Ariel"), Sion ("Prince Ariel"), Spain ("Gracieuse and Percinet", "The Blue Bird", "The Ram", "Green Serpent", "The Dolphin"), Italy ("Green Serpent", "Babiole"), and,

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[4] "[...] nesse sentido, as utopias se aproximam da alta fantasia por pressupor a existência de outro lugar – ou outro mundo –, cujas regras são diferentes." (MATANGRANO, 2021, p. 233).

of course, Paris ("Gracieuse and Percinet", "Babiole", "Prince Ariel", "Finette Cendron", "Green Serpent").

Farah Mendlesohn (2008) categorizes the ways "by which the fantastic enters the narrated world", electing four different fantasy modalities: the portal-quest, the immersive, the intrusive, and the liminal way. Assuming that "a portal fantasy is simply a fantastic world entered through a portal" (MENDLESOHN, 2008, p. 14), we present the following examples of rudiments.

The tearful Princess Gracieuse, ordered by her evil stepmother to be buried in a hole, finds a little door in the darkness and enters the fairyland she had once visited with her lover, Prince Percinet, son of a Fairy Queen. It is in this fairyland that she marries and lives, cut off from the world of men:

> […] suddenly a little door opened, which, in the darkness, she had not seen before. The light streamed through and let her see a garden full of flowers, and fruits, and fountains, grottoes, statues, shrubberies, and arbours. Without a moment's hesitation she entered, and going along a broad walk, wondering to herself what end this adventure would have, she saw de Fairy Castle. (AULNOY, 1892 [1697], p. 17).

In "The Isle of Happiness", the first literary fairy tale known so far, Madame d'Aulnoy registers two different intrusions into wonderful places separated from the land of men (in this case, Russia, the kingdom where Prince Adolphus resided). First, Adolphus unwittingly arrives at a hidden cave where mythological winds inhabit – the children of the Greek god Eos. There he is received by the old mother of the winds (an anonymous translation was done into English in 1691 and is credited as the first literary fairy tale in the English language):

> *You are the first of Mortal Men* (said she,) *whom Curiosity ever brought to this cold place*. He assur'd her, *That he came not through Curiosity, but by Accident*; and was very earnest to be iform'd into whose hands he was faln. She told him, *That this was the Habitation or Retirement of Aeolus, God of the Winds*. (AULNOY, 1996 [1690], p. 121-122, italics by the editor).

Then, guided by the god of the west wind Zephyrus, Adolphus arrives on the Isle of Happiness, where no mortal could dwell. Princess Felicity, who has never seen a mortal man

before, thinks Adolphus is the Phoenix bird, making a pathetic association between the bird's beauty and the unseen male beauty of Adolphus. The dangers of this trip are narrated by Zephyrus:

> She lives (reply'd *Zephyrus*) the Isle of *Felicity*, an Island for these many Ages forbidden to all Mankind. Many Attempts upon it have been made by Men; sometimes theirs Vessel gets in view of shore, and strait some sudden Gust arises, they are dash'd against some Rock, or driven out to Sea to begin their vain search again. *Alexander* could not conquer it, nor *Cresus* purchase one Foot of Land in it. (AULNOY, 1996 [1691], p. 125-126, italics by the editor).

Adolphus shows his concern about not being able to understand and be understood by the princess, as the language spoken on the island is not the same as the one used in Russia. Zephyrus, however, claims that the princess is so intelligent that she can know every language in the world.

It is worth noting that this passage exposes a spatial fracture in relation to the land of wonders (the Isle of Happiness) and the land of men, which is not expected to happen in the traditional fairy tale. The mention of two historical figures who failed to reach Princess Felicity's island demonstrates the existence of boundaries between these two worlds. Finally, time passes differently in these two places; Adolphus thinks he has spent three months in the princess's company, but, in fact, he was there for three hundred years (a feature relatively common in simple fairy tales).

The tale "The Ram" provides valuable insights that dismantle at least two of the narratological features associated with traditional fairy tales: the normalization of the marvelous and the naturalization of magical events. Here we find the amazement caused by the wonderful and the need for an explanation of magic (which happens with more or less intensity in all of Aulnoy's tales). Running away from her father, who intended to kill her for fearing her precognitive dreams, Princess Merveilleuse ends up in an enchanted forest, where she finds an unusual flock of sheep.

> A hundred sheep gaily decked were standing round, not nibbling the grass, but having coffee, sherbet, ices, lemonade, strawberries, cream, and sweetmeats. Some were playing at basset, others at lansquenet. Several had golden collars enriched with beautiful designs, some had their ears pierced or were decked

out in ribbons and flowers. Merveilleuse was so astonished that she stood almost motionless. She was looking for the shepherd of so extraordinary a flock when the beautiful ram came forward by bounds and leaps. "Come, divine princess," he said, "do not fear animals so gentle, so peaceful as we are." "Here is a wonder! Talking sheep!" "Ah, madam," he answered, "your monkey and your little dog spoke very prettily; was that less astonishing?" "A fairy," answered Merveilleuse, "had given them the gift of speech, therefore the wonder had grown less astonishing to me." (AULNOY, 1892 [1697], p. 179)

The princess had no reason to marvel, as was well noted by the Ram, because she had talking animals herself (who killed themselves in an attempt to protect her from her father). Merveilleuse, however, had normalized this magical ability because she knew its origin and could explain it. In the same way, Princess Fortunée, the protagonist of the homonym tale, gets scared by a talking cabbage, but she doesn't show fear when faced with a hen that reveals to her a long stretch of her own story:

> The first thing she did on entering her room was to throw the cabbage out of the window. But she was much astonished to hear a voice crying: "Ah! You have killed me!" She could not understand what these cries could mean, for cabbages are not in the habit of talking […] Giving it a kick, she said: "What are you doing here? Do you think you do as well in my room as my pinks?" "If I had not been put here," replied the cabbage, "I should never have thought of intruding." Fortunée trembled, for she was very much afraid. (AULNOY, 1892 [1697], p. 206)

The protagonist of "Green Serpent", kidnapped by a fairy, is frightened when she contemplates the disappearance of a rock and the fact that she was saved from a shipwreck by an enormous snake:

> "Oh, ye gods! Ye just gods!" she exclaimed, "what do I see? Where am I? What a remarkable change! What has become of the terrible rock that seemed to threaten the heavens with its cloud-capped points? Was it I who nearly perished yesterday, and was saved by the aid of a serpent?" (AULNOY, 1892 [1697], p. 254)

In the tale "The Benevolent Frog", the queen suffers a very serious accident and ends up kidnapped by a fairy, who takes her to live in her own land:

> The sight of such an extraordinary creature convinced the queen she must be dead, for it never occurred to her after so terrible an accident she could still be living, and speaking, she said: "I am not surprised that it should be so difficult to resolve to die, since what is to be seen in the other world is so frightful." (AULNOY, 1892 [1697], p. 306)

Initially, the mentioned "other world" was the land of the dead, as the queen thinks she died in the accident. Later, a new "other world" is described: the homeland of Fairy Lioness, a fairy capable of morphing into a lioness. It is a country located in the center of the earth, ten thousand steps below the surface, where a pestilential air contaminated the atmosphere and slowly poisoned the queen. There live terrible monsters and a great dragon, guarding a castle erected in the center of a lake of mercury. The author mentions that "the frog took a year and four days to ascend the ten thousand steps that led from the dark plain where the queen lived to the world" (AULNOY, 1892 [1697], p. 311). Later, the queen ends up saving a small frog from being devoured by a raven. Once saved, the frog reveals itself to be a demi-fairy and promises to help its benefactress. However, the fact that it had magical powers and still was not able to defend itself from a simple crow left the queen intrigued. Once again, the magic needs to be explained:

> "But," said the queen, "if you are a fairy or a demi-fairy, how comes it that a raven was going to devour you?" "That I can explain in two words," replied the frog; "my power resides in a little hood of roses. When it is on my head I fear nothing, but unfortunately I left it in the marsh, and so the wretched raven came swooping down upon me; I confess, madam, that failing your aid, I should now be dead. Since I owe my life to you, if I can do anything to lessen your sufferings, command me as you please." (AULNOY, 1892 [1697], p. 308)

Like in the Oz series, the fairy tales of Madame d'Aulnoy are full of lands ruled by tyrannical fairies (not witches), explaining the notions of totalitarianism, or the "monopoly of

magic", as proposed by Matangrano (2021). Unlike the simple fairy tales, where fairies appear and disappear without saying where they come from, who they are, and what they do, in Madame d'Aulnoy's "complex" tales, the fairies have their own intrigues and act driven by their own feelings. They kidnap their enemies' children, spoil the plans of their rivals' godparents, and move freely between these two worlds; whenever this transit happens, the narrative thickens in its already very tortuous plot. By mistake, the characters end up acting sometimes as auxiliaries, sometimes as antagonists, in a plot long enough to support different acting cores and two distinct realities where things can happen simultaneously.

Having reached the end regarding these still very preliminary notes, we have come to a few conclusions.

Conclusion

The examples listed here were intended to demonstrate that classical fairy-tale theories do not encompass a certain type of tale, the very one that was originally named as a "fairy tale" itself. The Grimm's celebrity and the power of romantic ethnography ended up choosing the tales of the German brothers as the narratological model to what is commonly seen as a fairy tale today. The opposition between the theories that consider the literary production of female authorship in their analysis proves that such tales are of a very different nature from the so-called simple fairy tales; a greater expansion allows Madame d'Aulnoy's complex fairy tales to explore aspects that are now understood to be characteristic of fantasy literature (and unusual for the folktale). The existence of rudiments of portals to different worlds, language systems, and specific rules for the functioning of magic, as well as the amazement at the marvelous, seem to show signs of features that would become infinitely more complex around the 20th century.

There still needs to be much more research on the female-authored fairy tales, which combine an immense volume of different plots and unusual characters. Unfortunately, as we have seen, the criticism that falls on these productions, although easily refuted by a simple comparative reading, hinders the reception of these stories, since the words of certain figures usually sound like the law. Rediscovering, re-reading, and revisiting Madame d'Aulnoy's fairy tales, in particular, have the potential to reveal numerous other analytical possibilities that will certainly contribute to studies about the fantastic and fantasy literature. Our main objective in this article was to foster this sense of curiosity.

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