

Germanic Review 68.1 (1993): 11–23; Zipes, Jack, *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion* (New York: Wildman, 1983).

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Fairy Tale Drama/Märchendrama. This is a theatrical work that employs the motifs, images, characters and genre markers (e.g., avoidance of specific time and place references) of the fairy tale. Like fairy tales, these plays have variously served as entertainment, socializing tools, pedagogical and didactic instruments, and critiques of the social order.

In their early incarnation, fairy tale plays were written and performed for adult audiences. Women like Luise Gottsched were instrumental in their introduction to the German stage in the 18th century with translations of popular French *Lustspiele* and dramatized *contes de fées*. In ensuing German fairy tale plays, females figured prominently not as the playwrights but as the title characters: *Mägera, die fürchterliche Hexe* (1763); *Das Donauweibchen* (1798); and *Hulda, das schöne Wasserfräulein* (1799). Also popular during this period were operatic versions of such plays; the actress and playwright Friederike Sophie Hensel Seyler is known to have produced such a work: *Oberon oder König der Elfen: Ein romantisches Singspiel in drei Aufzügen nach Wieland* (1789). These early works were important for the development of the tradition because they helped cement the popular image of fairy tale figures (just as, today, children are influenced by the fairy tale films of Walt Disney).

Despite contemporary theories that drama was unsuited to the female disposition, many women were involved in their production by the 19th century. Whereas public opinion continued to exclude women from “serious” theater, they were free to produce works for juvenile audiences. Many German women therefore penned fairy tale plays to be performed at home and in school, like Anna Ausfeld’s *Für die Kinderwelt: Geschichten und dramatisierte Märchen zum Deklamieren und Aufführen in Schule und Haus* (1888) or Helene Binder’s *Zeitvertreib: Bilderbuch mit Geschichten, Märchen, Reimen und kleinen Aufführungen für Kinder* (1895). Theatrical versions of well-known tales, often with female title characters, came into print and appeared on stage, such as Ida Blum’s *Goldmarie und Pechmarie: Dramatisierte Märchen* (1889); Elisabeth Ebeling and Berta Filhés’ *Dornröschen: Dramatisches Märchen* (1864); Adelheid Wette’s *Hänsel und Gretel: Märchenspiel* (1894); and Emilie Ringseis’ *Schneewittchen* (1873). Musical theater also continued with works like Johanna Siedler’s *Die Bremer Stadt-Musikanten* (music by A. Kugler, 1898) and Adelheid Wette’s *Die sieben Geislein: Märchenspiel für die Kleinen* (music by E. Humperdinck, 1895).

By the early 20th century, the fairy tale play had become clearly established as a genre for children’s theater. Works such as Lou Andreas-Salomé’s *Die Tarnkappe* (1903) used the fairy tale play as a way to instill in children a better understanding of, and respect for, reality. In the later 20th century, the staging of fairy tale plays for children waxes and wanes according to the prevailing

theoretical debates (like those in the 19th century) about proper reading and viewing material for children and juveniles. Fairy tale plays seem to enjoy popularity when society as a whole appears more fragmented since they provide a defined and familiar structure.

See also: Children’s Literature; Comedy; Fairy Tale; Fairy Tale Novella; Jugendliteratur; Musical Theater.

References: Cincura, Andrew, “Märchendrama: A Paradox in Progress” (Diss., University of California, Riverside, 1973); Ende, Amalie von, “Neunhundert Jahre Frauendrama.” *Bühne und Welt: Zeitschrift für Theaterwesen, Litteratur und Kunst* 1 (1899): 1105–11; Grätz, Manfred, *Das Märchen in der deutschen Aufklärung: Vom Feenmärchen zum Volksmärchen* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1988) 252–57; Jahnke, Manfred, “Die Verdrängung des ‘Sozialen’ auf dem Weg zur ‘Kunst’: Märchentheater zwischen Bettelheim und ‘Poesie.’” *TheaterZeitschrift* 17–18 (1986): 8–18.

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Fairy Tale Novella/Märchennovelle. The terms “Märchennovelle” and “Novellenmärchen” have traditionally assumed a narrow definition, referring to works in the form of the novella that include fantastic elements. Ludwig Tieck is generally regarded as the creator of the *Märchennovelle*, and most studies concentrate on works by well-known male Romantic authors or distinguish carefully between these works and other examples of literary fairy tales. This perspective ignores the 18th-century tales modeled on Italian and Oriental novellas that were written literally by the thousands in France—almost exclusively by women—and widely read and imitated in Germany. William W. Anthony, one of the few critics to assess the precursors of the Romantic fairy tale, investigates Benedikte Naubert’s narrative style and maintains, contrary to common perception, that there is some continuity between her work and the Romantic tradition. Tieck, for instance, uses themes and imagery from Naubert’s “Der Mantel” (*Neue Volksmärchen der Deutschen*, 1789–1792) in his “Der blonde Eckbert” (1797). Naubert’s “Der Mantel” is a Cinderella-story that frames another tale based on the legend of *Frau Holle*. As in the tradition of the novella, the framed narrative and the frame itself eventually prove to be intertwined, and a central symbol—in this case the coat—ties these two worlds together and conveys the essence of the story. Although an affirmation of the protagonist’s virtue, industry, and piety, the story is more complex than a simple valorization of middle-class virtues and the image of the ideal girl that they construct: interesting conflicts between romance and female friendships, and the dangers of revealing secrets are intertwined with magical elements and countless allusions to common fairy tale motifs.

Gisela and Bettina von Arnim’s *Das Leben der Hochgräfin Gritta von Rattenzuhausbeiuns* (1843) similarly adheres to the marriage plot while transcending its limitations. Drawing on the genre of the *Robinsonade* and yet establishing a Utopia in the form of a cloister, it implicitly critiques patriarchal culture on two levels, now commonly understood as being interrelated: the treatment of