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# 1

# The Eight Elements of Intertextual Use of Fairytales

The fairytale has always been a popular form of literature, and it is possible to find examples of works throughout the canon that utilise fairytale intertexts. If we were to make a list of every text that contained a reference to fairytale plots we would end up with a list of thousands containing samples from every genre and every period. However, it is my thesis that the fairytale has been used as an intertext in interesting ways for various purposes by a certain group of writers whose work is typically called 'postmodern'. In order for me to make this claim, I must be able to differentiate between texts in which the fairytale intertext is important and contributes a significant amount to our understanding of the story, and those texts in which the fairytale is simply one intertext among many, and does not affect our reading of the text to a great extent.

In defining the ways in which these intertexts operate, I will draw upon various theories of intertextuality. My exploration of intertextuality will be mostly informed by the theories of Gerard Genette, due to his attempts to differentiate between different types of intertextuality or, as he calls it, 'transtextuality'.

Genette differentiates between five sub-categories of transtextuality: 'Kristevan' intertextuality, which covers allusion as well as quotation and plagiarism; paratextuality, which covers the relations between the 'text itself' and its titles, epigraphs, illustrations, and even factors which we usually judge as separate to the text itself, for example reviews and author interviews; metatextuality, which concerns the relationship between commentary and its object; architextuality, the relationship between a text and its nominal genre, a tacit, perhaps even unconscious gesture to genre demarcations; and hypertextuality, which is the relationship between a late-coming text and its pre-text (Still and Worton 1990: 23)

These different categories rarely exist in isolation, but the focus of this inquiry will concentrate on hypertextuality, 'a field of literary works the generic essence of which lies in their relation to previous works' (Allen 2000: 108). Drawing upon Genette's categories, I suggest that there are eight identifiable ways in which the fairytale can operate as an intertext within mass-produced fictions.

1. **Authorised:** Explicit reference to a fairytale in the title
2. **Writerly:** Implicit reference to a fairytale in title
3. **Incorporation**: Explicit reference to a fairytale within the text
4. **Allusion**: Implicit reference to a fairytale within the text
5. **Re-vision**: putting a new spin on an old tale
6. **Fabulation**: crafting an original fairytale
7. **Metafictional**: discussion of fairytales
8. **Architextual/Chronotopic:** 'Fairytale' setting/environment.

I will call these eight categories 'elements', in order to reflect the complexity of intertextuality and to reflect that they can be found in numerous different combinations. The *OED* defines an element as 'a component part of a complex whole', which I find a satisfactory label for these eight types of intertextuality.

In order to demonstrate the eight ways a fairytale intertext can be used, I will concentrate on one of the most popular fairytale intertexts in contemporary fiction, 'Bluebeard'. The fairytale 'Bluebeard' has been used as an intertext in many fictions in recent years and has proved a fertile field of criticism for feminist critics due to its explicit patriarchal message. The fact that 'Bluebeard' criticism is a well-ploughed furrow is here an advantage rather than a disadvantage. By using a single fairytale, the exposition of the different ways that fairytales can be used as an intertext does not rely on the reader's knowledge of dozens of significant fairytales, and the criticism can, to some extent, excuse me from repeating arguments about 'Bluebeard' again here, which are covered in depth in studies such as Casie Hermansson's *Reading Feminist Intertextuality through Bluebeard Stories* (2001). Before I go on to discuss in further detail the eight ways in which fairytales can be used as intertexts, it is necessary to provide a little historical information about 'Bluebeard'.

'Bluebeard' made its literary debut in Charles Perrault's *Histoires ou contes du temp passé* (1697). Perrault was not a 'collector' of fairytales, like the Grimm Brothers, and he freely adapted and changed oral tales for his own purposes. His collection was also one of the first to address a double audience of adults and children. Before Perrault, most literary fairytales were written by and for adults, ranging from the medieval bawdy of Boccaccio and the risqué tales of Basile and Straparola to the works of the erudite and aristocratic *Saloniers* Madame D'Aulnoy and Madame L'Héritier; the concept of the fairytale as educational children's literature did not arise until the nineteenth century, although we can certainly recognise Perrault as a precursor of this trend. While supposedly written for children, the writer takes up a faux naïf style of narration that winks knowingly at adult readers. Although Perrault's precise sources are unknown, it is generally agreed that the tale(s) that Bluebeard was based on was/were well known, and existed for some time before Perrault's adaptation.

Various historical sources have been suggested as the basis of the tale, from the murderous Baron Gilles De Rais, who confessed to murdering 140 young boys and burying their remains about his castle, to Cunmar (or Comorre, the spelling seems to vary) the accursed, who decapitated a succession of wives as soon as they became pregnant (see Warner 1994a: 261, Windling 2002: 14–15). It is possible that Perrault knew of the legends surrounding these historical figures and incorporated details from the legends to add to his own tale, or it is just as possible that he knew similar stories that we now have no record of. Whatever his sources it is generally agreed that the remarkable facial hair of the murderous husband was Perrault's invention. A version of Perrault's tale, including the titular blue beard, was also reprinted in the 1812 first edition of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm's *Kinder und Hausmärchen* (*KHM*), but was removed from later editions, according to Maria Tatar, because its obvious French heritage clashed with the illusion of a uniquely German folklore that the Grimms were attempting to portray (Tatar 1987: 157). It is ironic, then, that in her article on Bluebeard in the *Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales*, Maria Tatar identifies two tales in the Grimm collection as representative of the pre-Perrault French Bluebeard stories:

> The French versions of 'Bluebeard' that pre-date Perrault's story reveal a close relationship to two tales recorded by the Brothers Grimm. The first of these, 'Fitcher's Bird', shows the youngest of three sisters using her 'cunning' to escape the snares set by a clever sorcerer [. . .] The heroine of 'The Robber Bridegroom also engineers a rescue, mobilizing her mental resources to thwart the thieves with whom her betrothed consorts.
>
> (Tatar 2000: 56)

The Grimms' 'Fitcher's Bird' (*KHM* 46: AT 311), and 'The Robber Bridegroom' (*KHM* 40: AT 955) have been linked with Bluebeard for many years. In the introduction to the 1888 edition of *Perrault's Popular Tales*, Andrew Lang highlighted the similarities between Perrault's tale about a murderous husband and those collected in the *Kinder und Hausmärchen*. We will return to the question of how we identify the relationship between fairytales later, but the fact that Lang in 1888 felt it necessary to spell out an intertextual kinship between these tales is important.

## 1. Authorised

Element one, the fairytale as an authorised intertext is the most obvious use of fairytale as an intertext. The use of a proper name of a fairytale in the title acts as an authorial sanction that the text is to be understood in its relevance to a prior, pre-existing fairytale. No one's knowledge would be greatly enhanced by an article 'revealing' the importance of 'Bluebeard' to Margaret Atwood's Bluebeard's Egg, for example. There are numerous examples of this relationship that one may cite: Kurt Vonnegut's *Bluebeard*, Max Frisch's *Bluebeard*, Donald Barthelme's *Snow White*, Margaret Atwood's *The Robber Bride* and Robert Coover's *Briar Rose*. However, although there are thousands upon thousands of collected folk tales that can be categorised as fairytales there are relatively few fairytales that are known by a proper name,[1] and there is therefore a sliding scale of recognition with the Disney popularised titles such as *Sleeping Beauty, Cinderella*, and *Beauty and the Beast* operating as extremely explicit references, and with lesser-known tales such as *Briar Rose* and *The Girl Who Trod on a Loaf* operating at the more ambiguous end of the scale. This difference can be seen in Atwood's *The Robber Bride*, where one of the narrators of the text describes the story of the Grimm fairytale 'The Robber Bridegroom'. Because this fairytale intertext is not as obvious or well known as the most popular fairytales that have been adapted by Disney, it is necessary for the author to explain or make the intertextual title explicit within the text itself by explaining it. Furthermore, it is entirely possible that an author may mislead the reader: a text may, in theory, be called *Snow White* and yet have absolutely nothing to do with the fairytale.[2] This suggests that the difference between elements one and two is arguably one of degree and not of type.

Due to the importance of the title of a work to the way in which we understand it, the examples above act as an exaggerated form of what happens any time a recognisable fairytale name appears within a text. A critic might argue that Frederick Clegg in John Fowles's *The Collector* is a Bluebeard figure, but without a direct reference to the fairytale such an assertion lacks explicit authorial sanction.[3] The critic would have no such problems in trying to link the protagonist of Max Frisch's *Bluebeard* with the eponymous fairytale ogre. The case of Kurt Vonnegut's *Bluebeard* is also illuminating. In this text there are several characters that may be likened to Bluebeard. As Casie Hermansson points out, the hyper-realistic advertising artist and Mussolini-admirer, Dan Gregory, to whom the narrator is apprenticed, even has his own forbidden chamber (Hermansson 2001: 179), 'Your loving Papa asked just one thing of you as an expression of your loyalty: "Never go into the Museum of Modern Art" ' (Vonnegut 1988: 166). This odious character whose violence, conservatism, misogyny and fascism seem to be in character with the monstrous nature of the fairytale villain is a complete contrast to the curmudgeonly, but likeable narrator, Rabo Karabekian, whose identification with Bluebeard is assured when he utters the words 'I am Bluebeard, and my studio is my *forbidden chamber* as far as *you're* concerned' (47).

The explicit use of a fairytale name in the title of Vonnegut's *Bluebeard* allows the reader to see the narrator as Bluebeard despite the fact that neither he nor Dan Gregory is a serial killing maniac who preys on young women. The use of the fairytale title as the title of the novel, allows the reader to generate a reading of the text that appears uncontentious and even common sense. It also allows a degree of ambivalence, for despite his identification with the fairytale ogre, the narrator appears as a wholly sympathetic character and we may object that it is perhaps Gregory, or even Gregory's abusive mentor Beskudnikov, who is the real ogre in the tale. This readerly ambivalence over role allocation, to make the new version (hypertext) fit with its predecessor (hypotext), is neatly highlighted in Barthelme's *Snow White* when the narrator forces the reader to acknowledge one character as a version of the Prince:

> QUESTIONS:
>
> 1. Do you like the story so far? Yes ( ) No ( )
> 2. Does Snow White resemble the Snow White you remember? Yes ( ) No ( )
> 3. Have you understood, in reading to this point that Paul is the prince-figure? Yes ( ) No ( )
> 4. That Jane is the wicked stepmother-figure? Yes ( ) No ( )
>
> (Barthelme 1996 [1965]: 88)

The title of Barthelme's *Snow White* refers the reader instantly to one of the most popular and recognisable (and Disneyfied) fairytales, and the novella features a character called Snow White,[4] whose resemblance to the Snow White we remember is in question. In the extract above, Barthelme makes the reader consider characters in the light of the fairytale, placing Paul up against the prince (a comparison that doesn't much help Paul) and Jane against the wicked stepmother. If we had not the above clarification, we could argue about which characters fulfil those roles, but the author's playful intervention helps relate the novella to the fairytale and allocate characters to familiar roles.

An explicit intertextual reference within the title, then, sets up a whole set of mechanisms whereby the reader automatically assumes that this intertextual reference is somehow relevant to the following text, the default setting may indeed be to assume that the new text is a version of the earlier, identically titled text. This is the most obvious sign of an author explicitly indicating the intertextual relation between his or her text and a predecessor. It is also a fairly rare phenomenon, due to the problems of copyright law, marketing, and the concept of originality. Though we may not see any problem with an author titling his or her text *Bluebeard, Sleeping Beauty* or *Briar Rose*, or even *Ulysses*, it is likely that we, and the courts, would find a new novel taking the name *The Great Gatsby* or *Midnight's Children* a more problematic situation.[5] In the cases where a new novel does take on the plot of a previous tale, if the new text does wish to refer itself to its predecessor it is more likely to signal this intent through the use of element two.

## 2. Writerly

Element two, an implicit or writerly reference within the title, may seem a contradiction in terms but the difference is one of reference. A direct reference to a well-known fairytale in the title, as we have seen above, instantly generates an interpretation of the text that carries a certain authority (because it obviously has the author's overt sanction), but the use of a more implicit reference allows for some interpretation. For example, John Fowles' *The Collector* has been read as a version of 'Bluebeard' (see Grace 1984 and Hermansson 2001), and in this argument its title can be used to substantiate this claim. Bluebeard is a collector of wives, and by this interpretation the unhinged protagonist of Fowles' text can be viewed as a latter-day Bluebeard. However, by being at one remove from an explicit reference, the title allows more ambiguity: though we might argue, as Sherrill Grace does, that *The*

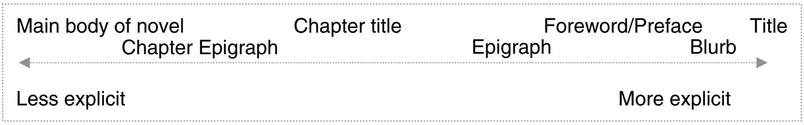
*Collector*'s Clegg is a Bluebeard figure because he 'collects women' (1984: 254), it is entirely possible to say that the title is derived from his other hobbies, namely his habit of butterfly collection.

Other examples of a writerly reference in the title of a text could be Angela Carter's *Nights at the Circus* and Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*. The titular 'Nights' of both these texts can be seen as cryptic intertextual references towards the *Arabian Nights*, an argument backed up by the references to Scheherezade and *Nights*-like storytelling in both texts. Again, the overlap between elements can be demonstrated by the fact that Angela Carter's short story collection is called *The Bloody Chamber*, an implicit reference to the secret room of Bluebeard's castle. Although the tale 'The Bloody Chamber' is obviously a Re-vision (element five) of 'Bluebeard', the nexus between Perrault's story and Carter's is not explicit in the title of the short story.

Both element one, the explicit (Authorised) reference, and element two, the implicit (Writerly) reference, would be considered, according to Genette's categories, examples of Peritextual transtextuality. 'Peri' is, like Genette's other terms, derived from Greek and roughly translated means 'around' or 'round about' (*OED*). He uses it to discuss elements that we might not normally consider part of the text itself: for example, the title, front and back cover, chapter titles, epigraphs, forewords, after-words, 'about the author' prefaces, footnotes, endnotes, type-faces and illustrations. This term makes up one half of the two subclasses of Genette's Paratextuality, with its opposite, Epitextual transtextuality, referring to the halo of texts that surround a text and orient the reader towards it in meaningful ways, texts such as author interviews, reviews and criticism.

The difference between the authorised and the writerly types of intertext in the title is an accentuated version of what happens in the text proper. Peritextual features that explicitly refer to the title (or other major, recognisable features) of a well-known fairytale are more prominent than similar references that occur within the main text itself. There may be hundreds of thousands of words in a novel, but only one title. There can be hundreds of allusions, but if the allusion is in the title, foreword or epigraph, it stands out from the rest of the text and assumes a certain importance.

We can therefore attribute a level of importance to the different types of peritextual intertextuality according to how prominent they are, assuming that the most prominent and explicit intertextual references affect the reader's expectations of the text the most. The most obvious form of this is re-using a well-known fairytale name in a prominent position (like the title or subtitle), which either suggests the affinity of this text with a fairytale intertext or signals that this is a re-vision of the previous text, a supplementary version. A (named) fairytale epigraph, a foreword by the author that mentions a fairytale, or a chapter title that refers to a fairytale act in the same way as the next level down of explicitness. Implicit peritextual features that point towards a fairytale intertext come further down the scale, and are less evident to the reader, and therefore may require more argument if a critic wishes to highlight the importance of an intertext pointed to by peritextual references. A graphical representation of the scale of explicitness would look something like the following:



This diagram, however, only concerns peritextual features. It is doubtless true that epitextual features also affect the reader's approach to a text. In the example of *The Collector*, critics have had access to an interview that Fowles gave in which he mentioned Béla Bartók's *Duke Bluebeard's Castle* as one of the primary sources that he drew on when writing the novel (Newquist 1964). In cases like this, texts that are typically viewed as extraneous can fundamentally alter one's perception of a novel.

## 3. Incorporation

The most obvious way in which a fairytale can be explicitly referred to is incorporation of the fairytale into the novel. The following example from Kurt Vonnegut's *Bluebeard* is a case in point:

> I have now returned to this typewriter from the vicinity of the swimming pool, where I asked Celeste and her friends in and around that public teenage athletic facility, if they knew who Bluebeard was. I meant to mention Bluebeard in this book. I wanted to know if I had to explain, for the sake of young readers, who Bluebeard was.
>
> Nobody knew. While I was at it, I asked them if they recognized the names of Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko, or Terry Kitchen, or Truman Capote, or Nelson Algren, or Irwin Shaw, or James Jones, all of whom had figured not only in the history of arts and letters but in

> the history of the Hamptons. They did not. So much for achieving immortality via the arts and letters.
>
> So: Bluebeard is a fictitious character in a very old children's tale, possibly based loosely on a murderous nobleman of long ago. In the story he has married many times. He marries for the umpteenth time, and brings his latest child bride back to his castle. He tells her that she can go into any room but one, whose door he shows her.
>
> Bluebeard is either a poor psychologist or a great one, since all his new wife can think about is what might be behind the door. So she takes a look when she thinks he isn't home, but he really *is* home.
>
> He catches her just at the point she is gazing aghast at the bodies of all his former wives in there, all of whom he has murdered, save for the first one, for looking behind the door. The first one got murdered for something else.
>
> (Vonnegut 1988: 46)

Here, not only is Bluebeard explicitly mentioned, but a full synopsis of the tale is included to drive home the importance of the intertext. If the reader, like Celeste and her friends, did not know the title of the book, *Bluebeard*, was an intertextual reference to a fairytale, they will certainly appreciate that fact after the above synopsis. The narrator and fictional autobiographer Rabo Karabekian feels that the fairytale is important to his own story as we can see in his later remark to his visitor who is curious about his locked studio: 'Look: think about something else, anything else. I am Bluebeard, and my studio is my *forbidden chamber* as far as *you're* concerned' (47).

The technique of embedding a synopsis of a fairytale is also used in Margaret Atwood's *The Robber Bride*, which contains a synopsised account of 'The Robber Bridegroom' (*KHM* 40), and her short story 'Bluebeard's Egg', which contains a short version of 'Fitcher's Bird' (*KHM* 46). In each case, the reader is explicitly alerted to the existence and importance of a particular intertext.

The fairytale in both these cases acts as a supplement to the story and fulfils the paradoxical nature of the supplement highlighted by Derrida; although it may appear supplementary (or dispensable), the fairytale plot takes on greater importance, becoming a model by which the reader can understand the text. As W. J. Keith suggests, Atwood's Bluebeard's Egg shows how the 'Bluebeard' story affects its protagonist's world view (Keith 1994: 252), and indeed, the assignment given the protagonist in her creative writing class, 'a version of Bluebeard, set in the present day and not using the universal narrator', is an apt description of the short story. In those cases where a fairytale is incorporated into a novel, it often fulfils the function of the *mise en abyme*.[6]

Other uses of incorporating a fairytale, or a story, into a novel is to give an insight into the narrator's psychological state and the stories that influenced their expectations. The following quotation from Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* is a good example of this technique, where the reader is introduced to the legend of the Gytrash and the mysterious Mr Rochester at the same time:

> In those days I was young, and all sorts of fancies bright and dark tenanted my mind: the memories of nursery stories were there amongst other rubbish; and when they recurred, maturing youth added to them a vigour and vividness beyond what childhood could give. As this horse approached, and as I watched for it to appear through the dusk, I remembered certain of Bessie's tales wherein figured a North-of-England spirit, called a 'Gytrash'; which, in the form of a horse, mule, or large dog, haunted solitary ways, and sometimes came upon belated travellers, as this horse was now coming upon me.
>
> It was very near, but not now in sight; when, in addition to the tramp, tramp, I heard a rush under the hedge, and close down by the hazel stems glided a great dog, whose black and white colour made him a distinct object against the trees. It was exactly one mask of Bessie's Gytrash, – a lion-like creature with long hair and a huge head: it passed me, however, quietly enough; not staying to look up, with strange pretercanine eyes, in my face, as I half expected it would. The horse followed, –a tall steed, and on its back a rider. The man, the human being, broke the spell at once. Nothing ever rode the Gytrash: it was always alone; and goblins, to my notions, though they might tenant the dumb carcasses of beasts, could scarce covet shelter in the common-place human form. No Gytrash was this, – only a traveller taking the short cut to Millcote.
>
> (Brontë C. 1996: 128, Volume 1, Chapter 12)

## 4. Allusion

Element four is titled 'Allusion' due to the problematic nature of that term. Allusion is part of the standard toolkit of literary criticism and such a long-standing feature of literary criticism that it is very infrequently defined; no mention of it graces the pages of *The Oxford Companion to English Literature* or even Katie Wales's *Dictionary of Stylistics*. The *OED* contains four meanings for the word, three of them obsolete:

> **†1.** Illusion. *Obs.*
> **†2.** A play upon words, a word-play, a pun. *Obs.*
> **†3.** A symbolical reference or likening; a metaphor, parable, allegory. *Obs.*
> **4.** A covert, implied, or indirect reference; a passing or incidental reference (cf. Allude *v.* 5). Also attrib. In *allusion book*, a collection of references to a writer or his works.
>
> (*OED*)

As the only non-archaic sense of the word makes clear, an allusion is typically covert or indirect. Where the dictionary uses the terms 'overt' and 'covert', I substitute my preferred terms 'explicit' and 'implicit'. Clearly, the incorporation of a fairytale (element three) cannot be described as covert, implied, indirect, passing or incidental. This type of intertextuality is of the kind that is usually termed 'intertextuality' because of its obvious links with other texts, and it is for this reason that I term it 'explicit'. Intertextuality that is closer towards the implicit end of the scale is considered allusion. Intertextuality that cannot be missed or ignored is more likely to be given its proper name.

### 4.1 Quotation

Quotation is one of the classical types of allusion, and falls under Genette's category of 'Kristevan' intertextuality. Quotations are most obvious to the reader when they occur marked with quotation marks with references attributing them to their source (attributions to an author are common; telling the reader the book, edition and page number less so). When quotations are presented in this way, they accentuate their intertextuality (as they are, after all, references to another text) and can be considered an example of explicit intertextuality. However, except in academic volumes very few quotations are presented in this manner, and when they are, the reader assumes that the quotation has a special significance. Due to the recognisable tone of fairytales, quotations tend to be easily recognisable. When the line 'All the better to see you with' occurs in 'The Bloody Chamber' few readers need to be told that this is the refrain from the fairytale generally known as Little Red Riding Hood (Carter 1992: 17).

## 4.2 Character names, the proliferation of signifiers

This implicit intertext can be as small as a single word: When Philip Pullman in his novel *The Amber Spyglass* names one character Baruch and another Metatron, these character names act as allusions, linking the text with Old Testament myth and the Apocrypha, just as the character Jibreel Farishta in Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* links that text with the Koran. Calling a character Satan, or even mentioning the name brings up a whole slew of intertextual references, from folklore to the King James' Bible and Milton's *Paradise Lost*.[7]

An allusory character name is an example of an intertextual reference that can be located on the surface of the text. The signifier used to refer to a character in one text is recognisably the same as the signifier used to refer to a character in another text. As allusions go, this type of allusion is fairly explicit, assuming that the reader recognises the name is also used in another text. Once again, we can see a sliding scale of recognition, where using the name of particularly famous characters like Emma Bovary, Hamlet or Cinderella occupies the explicit end, and obscure characters like Trabb's boy, or any number of minor characters from the panoply of the novel genre, the implicit end.

It is helpful, at this point to recall the distinction made by the Russian formalists between *sjuzet* and *fabula*. The *sjuzet* is the surface text, the way in which the events of the narrative are narrated, and the *fabula* refers to the events depicted, the underlying events that are narrated.

If all readers were omniscient we could assume that any character name that had been used in a previous book would be an explicit intertext, but unfortunately for us this is not the case. The term 'allusion' is useful here precisely because it deals with a liminal area between two texts; a text might contain a reference to Bluebeard directly by name, but we cannot assume that the reader knows who Bluebeard is.[8] In cases like this, the intertext is a cryptogram. It is only activated when the reader has the knowledge to decode it.

Allusions that exist on the level of the *sjuzet* may be cryptograms, but they are hidden in plain sight. A handy metaphor for this form of intertextuality is the practice of steganography. As Singh defines it, 'Secret communication achieved *by hiding the existence of a message* is known as steganography, derived from the Greek words *stegano*, meaning "covered", and *Graphein*, meaning "to write"' (Singh 1999: 5 my emphasis). Steganography, although a term originally used interchangeably with cryptography, has taken on specialised meaning in recent years. The term refers to the practice of hiding information within other information that may appear innocuous at first sight. The only way to decode a steganogram is to have foreknowledge of the secret code. One everyday example of this is the practice of watermarking, where a picture when treated in a special way (held up to the light) reveals a hidden message, in the case of money the message that this piece of currency is genuine. More historical examples of steganography can be seen in the communications between the British government and the French Resistance in the Second World War. The BBC (British Broadcasting Company) would include secret messages like 'the chair is against the wall' in their broadcasts. This innocuous seeming phrase would not raise anyone's attention unless the listener knew this to be a secret code, which signalled the target for that night's Allied bombing (Lau 2003: 4). In this way, operatives could receive messages without it ever becoming clear to those who heard the broadcast but were not aware of the key that a secret transmission had occurred. An allusion on the surface level of the text, be it a character name, place name or even an unreferenced quotation, is very much like a steganogram: it is hidden in plain sight, and obvious to everyone who has the foreknowledge necessary to decode it. To those who lack this knowledge the communication makes sense only in its relation to other events on the *sjuzet*, rather than being an active link to extended meaning.

It is no great insight to say that fictional characters, whether from folklore like Little Red Riding Hood or from literature, like Tom Jones, exist only as words. Things become more complicated when we begin to see characters with the same names as real people. The phenomenon of characters in a work of fiction being 'borrowed' from the books of others (like Emma Bovary in Woody Allen's *The Kugelmass Experiment*) or recognisably real personages being depicted in works of fiction highlights the philosophical problems of intertextuality. When in A. S. Byatt's *The Djinn in the Nightingale's Eye* the narrator meets Gerard Genette and Tzvetan Todorov, we see a kind of ontological clash. How much of this is historically true? What part of it is real? Cases like these foreground ontological questions about the novel, and history itself. For the vast majority of readers, famous people, like literary characters, exist only as words or images. This overlap between the fictional and the historical is one of the major sources of what Hutcheon calls 'historiographic metafiction', or postmodernism. Sometimes, as in Pat Barker's *Regeneration*, the representation of literary characters who share the same name as historical personages is based upon real events and sometimes, as in D. M. Thomas's *The White Hotel*, it is a total fabrication. How can the reader know the truth of events without referring outside the text? How can the reader trust the texts they consult to check the veracity of the representation in these novels which are also made up of words?

Brian McHale, for whom the key distinction between Modernism and Postmodernism is the former's emphasis on questions of epistemology and the latter's emphasis on ontology calls this phenomenon of 'borrowed' characters 'transworld' characters because they make the reader question the boundaries between one world (reality) and another (history or fiction). Postmodernism has been especially identified with the use of intertextuality, as in Hassan's famous list of the key terms of modernism and postmodernism (Hassan 1993: 152), despite the fact that the novel as a genre has been shot through with intertextuality, from *Don Quixote* onwards and that Modernism too was essentially intertextual, especially if we look at the examples of *The Wasteland* or *Ulysses*. It is perhaps because of the phenomenon of transworld characters, names that the reader recognises from one discourse (history), that postmodernism has been so heavily linked with intertextuality. The names operate as an intertext which forces the reader to question the nature of reality (did this event really happen?) and the nature of representation (which discourses are considered 'authoritative' and why?).

### 4.3 Character description

If a character name allusion is highly explicit, slightly less explicit is character description. Margaret Atwood, when discussing *The Handmaid's Tale*,[9] once asked, 'What do you think of when you see someone in red carrying a basket?' (Wilson 1993: 271). The answer, to most people, is the heroine of that perennially popular fairytale, Little Red Riding Hood. Recognising an intertextual link between one character and another is an operation that takes place on the threshold between *fabula* and *sjuzet*; although any description necessarily takes place on the surface of the text, recognition usually takes place by comparing the *fabula* description of one character with another. If a character has two ugly sisters who mistreat her, we will be put in mind of Cinderella. If a character is portrayed as an old miser who is cynical even at Christmas (like the character Mr Potter in Frank Capra's *It's A Wonderful Life*) we might be put in mind of Ebenezer Scrooge.

One of the interesting things about allusions to fairytales that operate via character names is that they have the capacity to be extremely explicit. The vast majority of Western readers will instantly recognise references to Cinderella and Rapunzel, for example. But these names, like the vast majority of fairytale character names, are metonyms, a way of recalling a major facet of that tale in a 'part for whole' keyword. Cinderella is named after the cinders by which she is covered (hence the name of the Grimm version, *Aschenputtel*), Rapunzel is named after the herb that her mother craved during her pregnancy, the theft of which leads to her real parents being forced to give their child to the witch. Sleeping Beauty is almost a summary of the story rather than a description of the protagonist's personal qualities. The difference between character names and character definitions is very slight in the fairytale due to the oral origins of the tales. A character may be given a different name by every narrator who tells their story, but what really identifies them are the actions they take. For this reason, we have come to know characters by names that derive from either their actions or by particular features that stand out as important in a tale: for example, Little Red Riding Hood is metonymically named by her attire due to the intense symbolic nature of that garment.[10]

On the other hand, identifying a character as fairytale-like can also be problematic. The example of Bluebeard is one where the character's murderous activities are typically the basis of comparison, especially when the murderer preys on women. However, the trope of the male serial killer is so common in contemporary fiction, from cinematic horror to pulp novels, that almost any murderer could be linked to Bluebeard.

This leads to a need for expanded linkage. The character of Bluebeard is not only defined by his distinctive mane/name but has various other characteristics, such as his wealth and his isolated castle.[11] In some stories using 'Bluebeard' as an intertext, it could be argued that a character is Bluebeard-like due to these features. For example, in A. S. Byatt's *Babel Tower* the character Nigel is aristocratic, rich, violent, misogynistic and owns a house that is (like a castle) surrounded by a moat, a list of qualities highly reminiscent of the fairytale ogre.

These 'Bluebeard'-like qualities correspond with resemblances between the plot of 'Bluebeard' and *Babel Tower*, in which the protagonist, Frederica, uses a 'sharp toothed' little key to open a suitcase in one of her husband Nigel's 'secret places'. She discovers not human remains, as in the fairytale, but a stash of sadomasochistic pornography which is presented in the same way: 'It is like finding trunks of butchered limbs, she tells herself wildly, hands and feet under the floorboards' (Byatt 1997a: 101). Of course, it helps the reader to recognise 'Bluebeard' as an intertext when the narrator describes Nigel as having blue stubble, and when later on the fairytale villain's name is used as an analogy, first by Frederica and then by her husband's divorce lawyer. In the case of *Babel*

*Tower* then, the reader is aided in recognising 'Bluebeard' as an intertext through the description of Nigel and through similarities between the two texts on the structural level.

### 4.4 Pattern recognition (structure)

Fairytales are usually short in length and typically quite simple in terms of structure and character. They are perhaps the best example of formulaic narratives, which explains why formalist and structuralist critics have analysed them in such depth. The best-known example of structuralist criticism of the fairytale is Vladimir Propp's *Morphology of the Folk Tale* in which Propp, after analysing 600 Russian folk tales, identifies 31 functions which are found in all the tales. After observing that names and *dramatis personae* alter from tale to tale but that neither their actions nor their functions change, he rules that it is therefore possible to study the tale according to the functions of its *dramatis personae*, where function is understood as 'an act of character, defined from the point of view of its significance for the course of the action' (Propp 1973: 21). To adapt this point for my own focus on Bluebeard, it is evident that whether the ogre is called 'Bluebeard', Fitcher or Silver-nose, his function within the tale is identical: He is a murderous ogre who gives an interdiction to the protagonist that she will disobey. Likewise, the item given to the heroine that betrays her actions can be anything from an egg to key items with vastly different symbolic connotations, but which fulfil precisely the same role within the tale as markers of disobedience.

Propp goes on to make four key claims about the fairytale:

> 1. Functions of characters serve as stable, constant elements in a tale, independent of how and by whom they are fulfilled. They constitute the fundamental components of a tale.
> 2. The number of functions known to the fairy tale is limited [...]
> 3. The sequence of functions is always identical [...]
> 4. All fairy tales are of one type in regard to their structure.
>
> (Propp 1973: 21–4)

Point 4 deserves special consideration due to the enormity of the claim that Propp makes: All fairytales are fundamentally constructed by a limited number of functions that occur in an identical sequence and there is no exception. Propp's work is an act of pattern recognition on the level of the text's structure. Details on the text's surface about where the hero is from, the hero's name or motivations are irrelevant compared to the similarities on the structural level of the text.

As an example, we might think of the difference between the interdictions given by Bluebeard to his wives and that given to Sleeping Beauty. At first sight they appear fundamentally different in nature; where one is the command of a murderous husband, the other is the order of an overprotective parent. Propp recognises that even though these interdictions seem to be fundamentally different, structurally they play an identical role: It is in the nature of the interdiction in the fairytale (indeed, in almost any type of story) to be violated, and therefore both of these interdictions would fall under the function he designates as 'y', 'An interdiction is addressed to the hero.'

Recognising patterns on the level of structure is an innate critical reaction that is shared by almost all audiences. On the most simplistic level we recognise a play where the lead characters get married at the end as a form of comedy. A play in which the lead character dies in the final act we recognise as tragedy. We compare books that contain flying saucers to other books with flying saucers, books set in the drawing room milieu of the early nineteenth century with other books set in the same environment. Pattern recognition is one of the key ways we identify genre; it is what Genette identifies as a book's Architext.

## 4.5 Patterns or motifs? The Aarne–Thompson index

Folklorists regularly use a system that is based upon pattern recognition. The Aarne–Thompson (AT) index is a system used to classify folklore according to content, by assigning numbers to tale types that are recognisably derived from oral culture. Tales are grouped thematically, with animal tales occupying type numbers 1–299, ordinary folk tales (including fairytales) numbers 300–1199, jokes and anecdotes 1200–1999. The AT index covers a larger range of texts than Propp's study, covering all folklore, not just the fairytale. It is also much larger in scope than Propp's *Morphology*. Where Propp reduces all fairytales to 31 functions, Aarne and Thompson catalogue thousands of different tale types. One reason for this major difference is that folklorists in the eighteenth, nineteenth and even early twentieth centuries, tended to be concerned with the genealogy of a tale. Where Propp is concerned with the inner workings, the grammar of storytelling in general, folklore has traditionally been concerned with the origin and evolution of a certain tale type. We may recognise this as a major fault line between two techniques that attempt to utilise a scientific model: where, according to Saussure's terminology, Propp's model is 'synchronic'; the conventional model for folklorists is 'diachronic'. The model governing

Propp's study is grammar; the model for Aarne and Thompson is ethno-botany.[12]

In the AT index there is one unit smaller than the tale, and this is the motif. An extended quotation from Thompson himself explains the difference between the type and the motif:

> A type is a traditional tale that has an independent existence, that can be told as a complete narrative and does not depend for its meaning on any other tale [. . . ]
>
> A motif is the smallest element in a tale having a power to persist in tradition. In order to have this power it must have something unusual and striking about it. Most motifs fall into three classes. First are the actors in a tale—gods, or unusual animals, or marvelous creatures like witches, ogres or fairies, or even the conventionalised human characters like the favorite youngest child or the cruel stepmother. Second come certain items in the background of the action—magic objects, unusual customs, strange beliefs and the like. In the third place there are single incidents—and these comprise the great majority of motifs. It is this last class that can have an independent existence and that may therefore serve as true tale types. By far the largest number of traditional types consist of these single motifs. For the purpose of furnishing a basis for the survey of traditional narrative in an area having a large common store of tales a type index is necessary; the principal use of a motif-index is to display identity or similarity in the tale elements in all parts of the world so that they can be conveniently studied. A type-index implies that all versions of a type have a genetic relationship; a motif index makes no such assumption.
>
> (Thompson 1977: 415–16)

Motifs, then, are highly important elements. A tale type can consist simply of one motif, or a chain of motifs linked together. The removal or addition of a certain motif may be the difference between one tale type and another. But for all the proposed scientific exactness that an index of motifs proposes, it cannot get round the fact that recognising a motif is an act of pattern recognition. It depends on the folklorist or critic recognising a 'striking' feature and then comparing tales that utilise this striking event *or something like it*. The actual motif does not need to be exactly the same thing. The AT index is therefore an ideal model of the way that audiences and critics recognise patterns on the level of a story's structure.

In this index, the tale named 'Bluebeard' is given the number 312, placing it within the realm of tales that feature a 'supernatural adversary'. The motifs identified in the AT index are as follows:

> I. G400. Person falls into ogre's power. R11.1. Princess (maiden) abducted by monster (ogre). G81. Unwitting marriage to cannibal. T721.5. Subterranean castle. C611. Forbidden chamber. Person allowed to enter all chambers except one. C311.1.1. Tabu: looking at ghosts. C227. Tabu: eating human flesh. C913. Bloody key as sign of disobedience.
>
> II. C920. Death for breaking tabu.
>
> (Aarne and Thompson 1964: 102)

In identifying the introductory motifs of Bluebeard (AT 312), Aarne and Thompson refer to a tale type that has long since been associated with Bluebeard, and which is best known as the Grimms' 'Fitcher's Bird' (AT 311), the index working to further accentuate the similarities between the two tales by presenting them in close proximity and interlinking 312 with 311 with the phrase 'For introductory motifs, see type 311' (103). The following motifs are given as being specific to type 312:

> S62.1. Bluebeard. K551. Respite from death granted until prayer is finished. G551.1. Rescue of sister from ogre by brother. G652. Rescue from ogre by helpful animals.
>
> (103)

As a cursory inspection of the motifs that are included in 'Bluebeard', we can first see that many motifs are not found in the best-known example of the tale.

Statistically, Perrault's 'Bluebeard' only contains 50 per cent of the motifs that supposedly characterise the tale.[13] This paltry score may be increased if we consider the secret room as being an example of C311.1.1, although if that *is* the case 'looking at ghosts' is a strange summary to give of the motif, and 'looking at corpses' would be more apt. This confusion over what to count as a motif is increased when stories are read symbolically. Marina Warner suggests that cannibalism in 'Bluebeard' is a metaphor for promiscuity, pointing to cases where, despite being labelled a 'cannibal', the protagonist finds the intact remains of the ogre's previous wives, raising the question of what exactly the cannibal has eaten (Warner 1994a: 259). To explain this consumption, Warner reads the cannibalistic urge as a form of

| Motif | In 'Bluebeard' | In 'Hare's Bride' |
|---|---|---|
| G400 | Yes | Yes |
| R11.1 | No | Yes |
| G81 | No | No |
| T721.5 | No | No |
| C611 | Yes | No |
| C311.1.1 | No | No |
| C227 | No | No |
| C913 | Yes | No |
| C920 | Yes | No |
| S62.1 | Yes | No |
| C551.1 | Yes | No |
| C652 | No | No |

male promiscuity where the woman is 'consumed' in the symbolic sense, although, as she later explains, this symbolic cannibalism is almost as dangerous to the woman as the real thing, given the likelihood of death during childbirth before the early twentieth century. But cannibal is also used in everyday language to refer to the uncultured, a synonym for 'savages'. In *The Collector* Miranda even mockingly refers to her captor as Caliban, poking fun at his lack of urbanity, a fact that can be used to connect that novel with Bluebeard, if we read symbolically rather than literarily.[14] We may question the classification of tale types even further when analysing the second example of type 312 given in the AT index, the Grimms' 'The Hare's Bride' (*KHM* 66).

This story tells of a girl who sits on the tail of a hare and is carried away to its little hut. Then the hare forces her to cook for the wedding guests. After the hare enters the kitchen twice telling her to hurry; the girl dresses up a straw doll to take her place and escapes. The next time the hare tells the girl to hurry up, he furiously strikes the head off the straw doll, at which point the cap falls off the doll and the hare realises he has been duped.

The connection between this story and Bluebeard seems tenuous in the extreme. Instead of a mass murderer we have an unpleasant hare; there is no secret chamber, no dead brides and no sentencing to death. In fact, if 'Bluebeard' matches the motif list only by 50 per cent, this tale scores a paltry 17 per cent , featuring only motif G400 and R11.1 (and those only if it is accepted that the hare can be said to represent an ogre,[15] which is quite an imaginative leap). The latter part of the tale even resembles tale type 311 more than 312, particularly motifs G501

'Stupid ogre' and K525 'Escape by use of substituted object'. The only unifying theme between the two tales seems to be 'bad husband', and even this is an over-generalisation, given that the husband in the second tale is a hare and the protagonist and her nemesis aren't even married. Saying that the two tales are of the same type seems counterintuitive.

The AT index was designed to organise folk tales, so that tales of the same family or with the same subject could be organised in a logical manner, as Aarne himself implies:

> How much would it facilitate the work of the collector of tales if all the collections of folk-tales thus far printed should be arranged according to the same system. The scholar would be in a position to discover in a moment the material for which he has the need in any collection, whereas at present he is compelled to look through the entire work if he wishes to acquaint himself with the contents. [...] If now the classification of types issued by the Folk-Lore Fellows, in their collections and catalogues to appear in the future, should come into general use, the collecting of material would thereby be made very much easier.
>
> (Aarne quoted in Thompson 1977: 415)

As we have seen, however, the classification of types can sometimes seem a haphazard and arbitrary arrangement. In a collection ordered according to the AT type index, a story about a particularly unpleasant rabbit would be right next to one of the darkest tales of serial murders in popular fairytales. Furthermore, the reader would have to skip several hundred pages to find another tale type that has been linked with 'Bluebeard' for centuries. 'The Robber Bridegroom', or a tale resembling it, has been suggested by some critics as a possible source that Perrault drew on when writing his tale (see Windling 2002: 15–21, Tatar 2000: 56), and the English version of the tale, 'Mr. Fox', is alluded to in *Much Ado About Nothing*, proving that this story predates Perrault's late-seventeenth-century collection (Carter 2001a: 230).

Because the protagonist's fiancé in this tale is a robber, a natural rather than supernatural adversary, we find the tale amongst the other tales of robbers allocated the number 955. Here a relationship between tales (possibly in the traditional sense of source criticism) is obscured due to the non-magical nature of the villain, even though it is hard to see exactly what is magical about Perrault's Bluebeard, where only the key (and perhaps the blue beard) appears supernatural. Whether tales are related to each other seems always to be decided by the individual critic.

If Aarne and Thompson judged the marital relationship between protagonist and villain more important than whether the villain was realistic (a robber) or unrealistic (a wizard or ogre) we can easily imagine the tales would be closer together in classification. Similarly, we can imagine that different critics might find different motifs the most important aspect of a tale; as Maria Tatar writes, critics have constantly focused on the 'bloody key as a sign of disobedience' as the major motif in the 'Bluebeard' fairytales (Tatar 1987: 166, 2000: 56). It is clear that Aarne and Thompson did not share this view, due to the allocation of 'The Hare's Bride' to type 312, and the fact that this motif does not occur therein.

If anything, the AT index's greatest utility and its greatest flaws come because it is modelled upon the operations that take place in the human mind. When watching Disney's *Pinocchio*[16] anyone who has heard the story of Jonah and the Whale automatically recognises the similarity between the two stories, just as the reader of fairytales recognises similarities between Odysseus' theft from Polyphemus and Jack's theft from the giant. The AT index assigns these events a motif number to formally link the tales, where the human mind makes the link in a more ineffable manner, recognising the similarity between the two tales without having to bridge them with the thought 'ah motif number G610'. The mind is able to recognise the patterns in one story and another, just as we are able to recognise film remakes, or dramatic versions of novels. Pattern recognition is increasingly stressed in modern psychology of the type practised by MIT professor Stephen Pinker, and which suggests that the human brain is uniquely engineered by natural selection to recognise patterns, an ability that facilitates what Noam Chomsky called the Language Acquisition Device (Pinker 1994: 15–24). But it is the mind's superior ability to recognise patterns that shows the faults with the AT index. Andrew Lang recognised the similarities between 'The Robber Bridegroom' and 'Bluebeard', but as we have already noticed, the AT index is obliged to place them at opposite ends of the book as one tale features a robber and the other an 'ogre'. Likewise, Marina Warner recognises *KHM* 3, 'Mary's Child', as related to 'Bluebeard', despite it featuring the Virgin Mary in the role of 'Bluebeard' and therefore appearing as type 710 (Warner 1994a: 244).

It is not only folklorists who attempt to chart relationships between texts by identifying patterns. A common strategy in literary criticism is 'revealing' the influence of text a upon text b, or recognising text a as an update of text b. So it is not surprising when we see, for example, Sherrill Grace referring to John Fowles' *The Collector* as an update of 'Bluebeard'. It shares certain themes (the murderous and rich man, the secret room, the isolated location) but in other ways it lacks some features that have been seen as the definitive (such as the prohibition to enter the secret room, the previously murdered wives, the bloody key as sign of disobedience). Casie Hermansson gets around this problem by reducing Bluebeard to two key elements, the murderous male and the secret chamber, much like a folklorist identifying the motifs that they consider to be most important to a tale (Hermansson 2003).

Despite problems with the AT index, it is possible to use it in order to show the similarities (or differences) in structure between one fairytale and another. It is also useful for highlighting structural similarities

| **Motif** | **'Bluebeard'** | ***Babel Tower*** |
|---|---|---|
| G.81 Unwitting marriage to cannibal G400. Person falls into ogre's power | After being courted, the protagonist marries Bluebeard. | Frederica marries Nigel. |
| S621.1 Bluebeard | The husband's unusual blue beard. | Nigel's blue stubble. |
| C611 Forbidden chamber | 'Open them all; go into all and every one of them, except that little closet, which I forbid you, and forbid it in such a manner that, if you happen to open it, there's nothing but what you may expect from my just anger and resentment.' | Frederica invades Nigel's 'secret places'. |
| C311.1.1 Tabu: looking at ghosts (!) | The slaughtered wives: 'Coming to the closet-door, she made a stop for some time, thinking upon her husband's orders, and considering what unhappiness might attend her if she was disobedient; but the temptation was so strong she could not overcome it. She then took the little key, and opened it, trembling, but could not at first see anything plainly, because the windows were shut. After some moments she began to perceive that the floor was all covered over with clotted blood, on which lay the bodies of several dead women, ranged against the walls. (These were all the wives whom Bluebeard had married and murdered, one after another.) She thought she should have died for fear, and the key, which she pulled out of the lock, fell out of her hand.' | Frederica finds Nigel's stash of Sadomasochistic pornography in a suitcase inside his wardrobe; 'It is like finding trunks of butchered limbs, she tells herself wildly, hands and feet under the floorboards' (101). |

| **Motif** | **'Bluebeard'** | ***Babel Tower*** |
|---|---|---|
| C913 Bloody key as sign of disobedience | After several goings backward and forward she was forced to bring him the key. Bluebeard, having very attentively considered it, said to his wife, 'How comes this blood upon the key?' 'I do not know, ' cried the poor woman, paler than death. 'You do not know!' replied Bluebeard 'I very well know. You were resolved to go into the closet, were you not? Mighty well, madam; you shall go in, and take your place among the ladies you saw there.' | N/A |
| C920 Death for breaking Tabu | Bluebeard sentences his wife to death. | Nigel rapes Frederica and when she runs away threatens her with an axe which he hurls at her. The flat of the axe hits her ribs, but gashes her leg as she and it fall to the ground (121). |
| K551 Respite from death granted until prayer is finished | Wife delays death by asking to pray. Calls her brothers. | Frederica telephones her friends for assistance, though she claims she is going to the chemists (124). |
| G551.1 Rescue of sister from ogre by brother | 'At this very instant there was such a loud knocking at the gate that Bluebeard made a sudden stop. The gate was opened, and presently entered two horsemen, who, drawing their swords, ran directly to Bluebeard. He knew them to be his wife's brothers, one a dragoon, the other a musketeer, so that he ran away immediately to save himself; but the two brothers pursued so close that they overtook him before he could get to the steps of the porch, when they ran their swords through his body and left him dead.' | Frederica, with son Leo, is rescued by her 'brothers' from Cambridge (129). |

between a novel and fairytale, as the following table comparing 'Bluebeard' and *Babel Tower* shows.

The above table shows both the strengths and the weaknesses of the AT index. For example, although I believe it helps to show similarities between the two stories on the structural level, several of the comparisons are clearly problematic. A collection of pornography is not objectively the same thing as a chamber of dead women, even if symbolically it may serve as a metaphor for Nigel's 'Bluebeard-like' misogyny. Furthermore, as the page references demonstrate, the AT index has here acted like a filter, focusing on certain events that occur in the first 130 pages of a 600-page novel. However, it does provide a way to externalise the process of recognition that a reader undergoes when reading and works better to show the similarities in structure between two texts than close reading, or by synopses of both texts written by a (hardly impartial) critic. The above table, I think, helps highlight the structural similarities between 'Bluebeard' and *Babel Tower* in an effective way, providing a point-by-point comparison between the two texts. In cases like these, Genette's metaphor of the palimpsest is particularly apposite.[17]

## 4.6 The unconscious of the text

If we accept the possibility of the palimpsestic text, a story that borrows its structure from a previously existing intertext, then we have to accept the possibility that texts can have a 'hidden meaning'. This viewpoint is so ingrained that it has entered the critical lexicon; we speak of texts' 'deeper' meaning, or having a 'deeper' understanding of a work, as though reading was a form of archaeology where the skilled reader is the equivalent of the diligent and knowledgeable archaeologist reconstructing the past from pottery fragments.

Indeed, the idea of the intertext owes a great deal to the absorption of Freudian theory into everyday thought. Just as the latent meaning of dreams may be 'unearthed' through careful analysis of condensation and displacement, so critics argue that a text's 'real' meaning can be discovered through the same techniques:

> Freud, in his analysis of dreams, argued that they tend to focus through *condensation* and *displacement*. In condensation one sign collects into itself a host of meanings or signifiers; in displacement a sign from another area of signification stands in for the real content of the dream. A ring in a dream might symbolically condense ideas and desires concerning a host of aspects of life: marriage, religious faith,

> sexual desire, economic stability or instability. A surreal dream centring on a cake might be a symbolically displaced working-through of the dreamer's desires for a person associated in the unconscious with cakes. Condensation and displacement can, then, be seen as two operations in the semiotic process.
>
> (Allen 2000: 52–3)

In constructing a reading of *The Collector* as a work that is structured upon Bluebeard we may draw parallels that help illustrate how these Freudian concepts work when 'revealing' the unconscious intertext. We may suggest that *The Collector's* epigraph '*que fors aus ne le sot riens nee*' ('no one but them knew about it') which is from a thirteenth-century French Romance, *La Chastelaine De Vergi*, is exceptionally important in reading the text because it is from a tale of the type of *La princesse lointaine*, 'the princess in a tower', a classic fairytale motif found in the popular fairytale 'Rapunzel' (Foster 1994: 24, Loveday 1985: 13). In doing this, we are suggesting that, like in a dream, condensation has taken place. We privilege one part of the work above the rest of it due to it being perceived as the 'key' to the meaning of the text as a whole. There is a fairytale incorporated within *The Collector* (a version of Beauty and the Beast told by Miranda) and it uses Shakespeare's *The Tempest* as an overt intertext, and yet, Sherrill Grace, Casie Hermansson and Marina Warner talk of its relation to a fairytale that is not explicitly mentioned anywhere in the text. Again, we could argue that this is an example of *displacement*: both narrator-protagonists are choosing to mention the fairytale of the princess in the tower because the alternative (that Clegg may see himself for what he is, a Bluebeard, or that Miranda may recognise the menace in her captor) is too distressing.

## 5. Re-vision

Element five covers texts where the hypertext is mainly concerned with revising the hypotext with all that this implies in terms of structural similarities between the two tales. Any 'new' version of a fairytale counts as a re-vision, whether it is the Disney version of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* or whether it is Donald Barthelme's *Snow White*. Fairytales have been revised over the centuries for any number of reasons; Zipes (1988), Tatar (1987) and Bottigheimer (1987) all document the way that the Brothers Grimm revised the tales they published to make them more suitable for the nineteenth-century bourgeoisie. Zipes also highlights the way that Walt Disney's *Snow White* revises its fairytale 'hypotext'* (*KHM* 53) '*Sneewittchen*' (usually translated as 'Little Snow White') in order to make a version of the tale that reflects American values (Zipes 2001: 84–5).

In *Fairy Tale as Myth: Myth as Fairy Tale*, Zipes suggests a definition of re-vision that is helpful here:

> According to the *Oxford Universal Dictionary*, revise means 'To look or read carefully over, with a view to improving or correcting 1611,' 'To go over again, re-examine, in order to improve or amend.' The purpose of producing a revised fairy tale is to create something new that incorporates the critical and creative thinking of the producer and corresponds to changed demands and tastes of audiences. As a result of transformed values, the revised classical fairy tale seeks to alter the reader's views of traditional patterns, images, and codes. This does not mean that all revised classical fairy tales are improvements and progressive. Revision for the sake of revision is not necessarily a change for the better of stimulating. However, the premise of a revision is that there is something wrong with an original work and that it needs to be changed for the better.
>
> (Zipes 1994: 9–10)

The term 're-vision', then, can be applied to Hollywood remakes or to subversive short stories alike, although as we will see, just because a text is a re-vision, this does not necessarily make the link between the two texts an explicit one. Particularly important to this study are the re-visions of fairytales that started appearing in the 1970s and which coincided with the increasing importance of the second wave feminist movement.[18]

Element five, the re-visioning of 'old' fairytales, is best represented by Angela Carter's short story collection, *The Bloody Chamber*, perhaps the best-known book of contemporary fairytale re-visions. The story which begins the collection, 'The Bloody Chamber', is a good example of re-vision, as it retells the story of 'Bluebeard' with few deviations. Although told in the first person and in Carter's characteristically opulent prose, it is possible to recognise the tale as a version of 'Bluebeard' because the events in the two tales are almost identical.

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* The title credits refer to it as 'The Brothers Grimm's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*'.

In the case of re-visions the question is always, *why?* Why re-write 'Bluebeard' with a layer of psychological complexity and in a greatly lengthened form? In this case, we already have a gamut of explanation, given the reams of critical material on Angela Carter. Although Carter's relationship with feminism was always uneasy, as evidenced in her still controversial *The Sadeian Woman*, the book has been ascribed an intent in line with that of second wave feminism: to reclaim fairytales for women by highlighting the underlying misogyny of certain stories, or the way in which these stories have been used against women.

There was a great spate of feminist re-vision of fairytales by women during the 1970s, a sample of which is represented in Jack Zipes's collection *Don't Bet on The Prince* (1986) and also *The Trials and Tribulations of Little Red Riding Hood* (1993). Some of these re-workings were meant to displace the patriarchal originals, others to criticise and subvert those originals by putting women in a more active role, although despite the merits of the Merseyside Fairy Story Collective version of 'Little Red Riding Hood' it has not supplanted the Grimms' version as 'the' fairytale. In fact, the re-vision most often takes the stance of a supplement, as Still and Worton observe, '[e]very literary imitation is a *supplement* which seeks to complete and supplant the original and which functions for later readers as the pre-text of the "original"' (Still and Worton 1990: 7). Therefore even re-visions which have successfully supplanted their hypotexts, like the Disney fairytale movies that function as 'the original' for most modern children' are supplementary in nature.

Carter's version of 'Bluebeard' is not intended to displace the original in every sense. It is novelistic, with dense description and significant attention paid to making the characters psychologically realistic, and is obviously not supposed to replace Perrault's version in modern fairytale collections. But it is a supplement because it relies to a large part for effect upon the reader's knowledge of a pre-text.

One of the most interesting things about Carter's re-vision of 'Bluebeard' is the tenuous way in which it is explicitly connected to the original. Its title is of the writerly type (element two), able to be decoded by those who *already know* the tale that is famous for its 'bloody chamber' but liable to remain cryptic to those who do not*. This is an important point, because re-visions that intend to replace or supplement an original usually signal this intention in the title. The Merseyside Fairy Story Collective and Roald Dahl used the title of their re-visions of 'Little Red Riding Hood' ('Red Riding Hood' and 'Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf' respectively) to signal to the reader that this is intended to replace, or conflict with, the version they already know (Levorato 2003: 151). Jane Yolen's *Sleeping Ugly* signals its relationship with 'Sleeping Beauty' in its title by the clever use of antonym. As in all cases, the title is the best place to identify an intertextual relationship between one text and another, whether the example is *Ulysses* or *Faust among Equals*. Margaret Atwood's 'Bluebeard's Egg', where the intertextual relationship between the two texts (hypo/hyper) is authorised by its title and which incorporates a synopsis of 'Fitcher's Bird', is an example of a short story that signals clearly its status as a re-vision of the fairytale.

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*In fact, the only title that acts as an 'authorised' intertextual element is the story 'Puss in Boots'.

The plot of 'The Bloody Chamber' is almost identical to Perrault's 'Bluebeard', although transplanted to the early twentieth century, and without siblings. Sister Anne, that strangely redundant figure in Perrault's version, is absent although an ineffectual piano tuner (to whom the narrator is later affianced) provides companionship for Bluebeard's bride. Likewise it is the mother, not the brother, who rides in to the rescue and slaughters the monstrous husband. These alterations do not significantly alter the underlying structure of the tale, although we can already see the obvious difference in meaning. In other words, this re-vision is implicit, rather than explicit. Contemporary readers may have been less aware of the hypertextual nature of this version, a fact arising from the implicit nature of the title and the increasing rarity of 'Bluebeard' in modern fairytale collections. To be fair, this is not the only tale in the collection that has a writerly, rather than an authorised title, but the average (intended) reader would have no trouble in figuring out the hypotext of 'The Courtship of Mr Lyon' when the protagonist is called 'Beauty' and Mr Lyon is called 'Beast'.[19] It is safe to say that those who are unaware of the existence of the fairytale 'Bluebeard' will not have their attention called to its pre-existence.

One explicit reference to 'Bluebeard' occurs in 'The Bloody Chamber' and this is almost a passing aside that occurs at the dénouement of the tale and does not leap out at the reader.[20] When the protagonist's mother rides in to rescue the daughter,

> You never saw such a wild thing as my mother, her hat seized by the winds and blown out to sea so that her hair was her white mane, her black lisle legs exposed to the thigh, her skirts tucked round her waist, one hand on the reins of the rearing horse while the other clasped my father's service revolver and, behind her, the breakers

> of the savage, indifferent sea, like the witnesses of a furious justice. And my husband stood stock-still, as if she had been Medusa, the sword still raised over his head as in those clockwork tableaux of Bluebeard that you see in glass cases at fairs.
>
> (Carter 1992: 40)

The one, solitary allusion to the model of the tale occurs at its climax, and is overshadowed by the description of the mother. It's Medusa versus Bluebeard and Bluebeard doesn't stand a chance. But this throwaway line (one among dozens of intertextual allusions in the story) is the 'key' to the text, the one moment where an uninformed reader is informed of the hypotext, and the fact that this key is so diminished is of the utmost significance to how Carter uses Bluebeard. For if the protagonist knows the tale of Bluebeard, we may wonder, why does she still open the forbidden chamber?

The traditional reading of 'Bluebeard' propagated in the nineteenth-century editions was that it was a tale of the ill-effects of female curiosity, indeed it was often subtitled 'The Fatal Effects of Curiosity' or 'The Effect of Female Curiosity' (Warner 1994a: 244). This tradition presented it as a variant of the story of Pandora or Eve, where female curiosity causes all the evil in the world, and Carter playfully invokes this reading in her tale through allusions and foreshadowing. Carter's heroine, while looking through her husband's library, finds books with titles like '*The Initiation, The Key of Mysteries, The Secret of Pandora's Box*', and a pornographic tome featuring a naked prostrated woman and an oriental man with an erect penis and a scimitar that bears the caption 'Reproof of Curiosity' (16–17). When she is in the bloody chamber she feels 'the eye of God—his eye' upon her (29). Considering her fate she compares her discovery to 'the secret of Pandora's box' (34) and on the eve of execution when she discusses her fate with the blind piano tuner, and objects that she was being punished for only doing what her husband knew she would, he responds, 'Like Eve' (38).

So why, if she is aware of all these precedents, if she knows the story of Bluebeard, does she enter the bloody chamber? It is not a question you can ask, as Maria Tatar explains:

> Prohibition/violation: these paired functions stand as one of the fairy tale's most fundamental plot sequences. As soon as we learn about the dire consequences that will attend the mere touching of a spindle, we know that Briar Rose will somehow search out and find the only spindle left in her father's kingdom. When the dying monarch in

> 'Faithful Johannes' tells his servant to show his son every room save 'the last room on a long corridor, where the portrait of the Princess of the Golden Roof is hidden,' it is almost certain that that particular room will be the only one to pique the curiosity of the young prince. The mother of the Goose Girl has only one word of advice to give her daughter on her journey to a foreign kingdom: to guard with care a snippet of white cloth stained with three drops of her mother's blood. Needless to say, the first event of consequence on the girl's journey is the loss of the cloth. In fairy tales, violations of prohibitions are the order of the day.
>
> (Tatar 1987: 165)

And, if we take a closer look at Perrault's 'Bluebeard' we begin to see that the heroine is not punished for her curiosity. The scimitar does not fall, the protagonist escapes the fate of her predecessors and inherits a castle through her husband's death, as Marina Warner puts it, ' "Bluebeard" is a version of the fall where Eve gets away with it' (1994a: 244). Carter's version accentuates the complicity that Warner detects between Perrault and his heroine, and reclaims the feminist nature of the tale. It is, after all, a tale in which the male plot of subjugation is defeated. Those who suggested the tale was a warning to women got it wrong, oversimplifying the prohibition/violation pairing into a tale that hinges upon the woman's act of disobedience rather than the man's rather more serious habit of immolating his wives. We feel little sympathy for the violation of the ogre's right to privacy, and it can hardly be suggested that it would be better to ignore the fact that one's husband is a serial killer. It is for this reason, then, that Carter throws the line in a position where it is overshadowed. The heroine is aware of precedent, but leaving the door unopened is not a real choice, and ignoring the secret door would not lead to 'happily ever after' as some readers of the tale have implied. Vladimir Propp, in fact, suggested that the interdiction fulfils *exactly the same function* in the folk tale as the 'order', a fact highlighted by Carter, as her Bluebeard almost draws his wife a map to the chamber:

> All is yours, everywhere is open to you – except the lock that this single key fits. Yet all it is is the key to a little room at the foot of the west tower, behind the still-room, at the end of a dark little corridor full of horrid cobwebs that would get into your hair and frighten you if you venture there. Oh, and you'd find it such a dull little room! But you must promise me, if you love me, to leave it well alone. It is only a private study, a hideaway, a 'den', as the English say, where I can

> go, sometimes, on those infrequent yet inevitable occasions when the yoke of marriage seems to weigh too heavily on my shoulders. There I can go, you understand, to savour the rare pleasure of imagining myself wifeless.
>
> (Carter 1992: 21)

The heroine of this tale is strangely passive and acquiescent and not, we might think, a suitable candidate for a feminist story at all, and the numerous references to Pandora show how she is locked into a patriarchal way of seeing herself. She does not resist her husband, and literally puts her own head on the block when he commands. She also internalises Bluebeard's faults, speculating that 'he might have chosen me because, in my innocence, he sensed a rare talent for corruption' (20), an acknowledgement of the husband's perversity, but also a phrase suggesting that it is the heroine's *own fault*, her hitherto unknown 'talent for corruption' that singled her out. The passive heroine is reminiscent of those women who blame themselves for their husbands beating them, and comparing this protagonist with those in Carter's novels or in the other stories in this collection leads us to the conclusion that Carter's re-vision, rather than being a feminist re-vision that empowers the heroine as a modern woman, draws out the feminist implications of the original tale. No one reading the tale correctly can believe that it is the woman's fault, and drawing parallels between Bluebeard, Pandora and the story of the Fall allows Carter (an avowed atheist) to return to a theme she has written about previously, the unfairness of God's role in the fall, and the way women are blamed for something entirely God's own fault. The only major change in Carter's re-vision is that her *deus ex machina* is not the brothers but the tiger-slaying mother on a white charger who represents the 'new woman' found in Carter's other works.[21] So, although this re-vision seems to change very little, it in fact accentuates and re-presents the feminist nature of Perrault's original. Though the new woman is the usual protagonist of Carter's later works (*Nights at the Circus, Wise Children*), whether this would have worked in a re-vision of this particular tale is doubtful (supposing she had the bad sense to marry a murderer, such a heroine would doubtless kill him as soon as she had opened the chamber, leaving the story bereft of its memorable tension). Here, by highlighting the heroine's absurd passivity and stressing the analogy between Bluebeard and God, Carter reinstates the tale of Bluebeard as one that has meaning for feminists.[22]

As the above discussion of re-vision shows, re-vision is not different in technique from any other type of intertextuality. 'The Bloody Chamber' utilises a writerly title, allusive character description, and borrows its plot directly from its hypotext, with a few minor differences. The main difference between a re-vision and any other intertextual usage of fairytales is to do with the extent to which a re-vision draws upon the structure of a pre-existing tale, whether this is explicit or implicit. For example, I would not call *Babel Tower* a re-vision of 'Bluebeard', even though it has significant structural similarities with the fairytale and, later in the text, explicitly signals the intertextual relationship between itself and the fairytale because, despite these structural parallels, the 'Bluebeard' intertext takes up only part of the first 130 pages of a 600-page book. For this reason, the importance of structure, most re-visions of fairytales tend to be short, approximating the fairytale in comparative length.[23] This is another reason why Carter's *The Bloody Chamber* is an excellent example of how re-vision operates with regard to the fairytale. Nevertheless, I believe re-vision deserves separate study from elements one to four, because I see a re-vision of a story that draws intensively from one pre-existing story as a phenomenon quite different from intertextuality that draws from innumerable sources. Fairytale re-vision is the creation of new fairytales that are based upon old ones and, as such, deserves a category of its own, just as the creation of entirely new fairytales (fabulation) does.

Re-vision is an interesting testing ground for one aspect of the use of fairytales. Genette noted that plagiarism is a kind of intertextuality, and he covers it under the category of 'Kristevan', along with Quotation and Allusion. But what is plagiarism other than when the new version (hypertext) is identical to the old (hypotext)? The controversy over Graham Swift's *Last Orders* focused around the fact that its subject matter and structure was 'stolen' from Faulkner's *As I Lay Dying.* Yann Martel's *Life of Pi* (2002) was criticised when the author admitted that the idea for the book's story was pilfered from a review he had read of a book by a Brazilian author (which he had not read). The controversy over these two texts shows that it is not only the surface of the text that matters, but even structure and subject matter (for the texts concerned are not word-for-word facsimiles of the earlier texts but share only structure or subject matter).

Yet the same critical reaction is *not* found when the 'theft' is from fairytale. In the vast amount of negative criticism of *The Bloody Chamber*, none of it brought up the fact that Carter had 'stolen' material. This reaction did not arise, even though one of the tales ('The Snow Child') – though not the *Snow White* familiar from Disney – had hardly been changed from the source.[24] The idea of plagiarism does not seem to extend to fairytales, a fact that made the fairytale popular amongst nineteenth-century publishers as a hack writer could be employed and costly authors' royalties avoided (see Zipes 1997a). The fact that obvious fairytale intertexts do not generally lead to the author being castigated as a plagiarist shows that fairytale intertexts are still regarded as fair game for re-telling.

## 6. Fabulation

Up to this point we have seen intertextuality primarily as a relationship between two identifiable texts, what Genette termed the 'hypertext' and the 'hypotext'. Elements one to five talk of the intertextual relationship between two works, whether that relationship is made clear explicitly through an authorised element or incorporation, or whether the relationship between two texts is more implicit, writerly or allusive.

Element six, the fabulation of a 'new' fairytale, is where we see what Genette called 'architextuality' arise. Genette defines architextuality as the relationship between the individual text and its genre. We recognise a 'new' fairytale precisely by these generic markers. The following exercise helps one to understand what Genette means by the 'Unconscious' or 'Tacit' nature of architextuality.

Imagine being asked, like the protagonist of Bluebeard's Egg, to write a fairytale. The temptation would be to start the first line with the customary distancing devices used in fairytales, 'Once upon a time'. Not using this introduction would to be to *consciously* avoid it, in an effort to elide cliché (a massive difference between the *writer* of the fairytale and the oral storyteller, for whom clichés are a useful mnemonic device, as Ong's study of Homer demonstrates [Ong 1999]). This newly crafted fairytale is also likely to be short in length, to take place in an unspecified archaic world rather than the modern day, and feature motifs that occur in traditional fairytales, such as having three sisters, magical helpers and a happy ending connected with great wealth or marriage.

These are the architextual features that we use to recognise the fairytale, and we can say that a tale is 'new' if it does not closely follow the plot of a previous fairytale. The practice of the 'literary fairy tale', an original artistic work which is *written* by a historically recognisable individual, falls under this category, and Oscar Wilde's *The Happy Prince* belongs here as much as Margaret Atwood's *Princess Prunella and the Purple Peanut*. For the purposes of this study, architextual intertextuality in the form of 'new' fairytales is only of interest if they fulfil the criterion of being postmodern in some sense. A good example of this can be seen in Jeanette Winterson's *Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit*. At key stages, the narrative shifts from the realistic portrayal of the narrator's evangelical, Lancastrian upbringing to fantastic stories which bear all the hallmarks of the fairytale that at first seem not to have anything to do with Jeanette's story, a perception that becomes more difficult to maintain as we later begin to see links between these fabulated fairytales and Jeanette's own life.

The first of these 'new' fairytales occurs early in the novel, and can be easily recognised by its opening paragraph, 'Once upon a time there was a brilliant and sensitive princess so sensitive that the death of a moth could distress her for weeks on end' (Winterson 2001 [1985]: 9). We know that we are entering the world of the fairytale by the customary opening 'Once upon a time' and its *dramatis personae*, a troubled princess and an old hunchback. The tale relates how the princess loses her sensitivity after she takes over the role of the hunchback as advisor and friend to a nearby village, goat-milker and song-composer. With this work, and the perks of a stool, the hunchback's books and her harmonium, the princess soon forgets her previous hypersensitivity.

This brief fairytale occurs shortly after Jeanette gives the story of her mother's conversion to evangelical Christianity. More importantly, it occurs sandwiched between her mother as a child wondering what to do with her life, and a paragraph in which she decides to 'get a child, train it, build it, dedicate it to the Lord' (10). The tale therefore seems to serve as an allegory, accounting for Jeanette's mother's conversion from her frivolous, piano-playing, French-speaking (sensitive) youth to the missionary zeal she displays as an adult. This is the first of three fairytales within the novel, and the shortest in the sequence, each of which is longer than the last. The second tale is about a prince who searches for the perfect woman, and becomes so bound up in the philosophy of perfection that he forgets what the search was about in the first place (58–65), and the third is a story about a young girl who is tricked by a sorcerer (137–44, 148–9, 154–5).

In *Oranges* these invented fairytales occur at key points thematically linked to events in the first-person, realistic narrative and serve to break up the realistic text and place it in an polyphonous intertextual environment. These invented fairytales occur in a book that has chapter names derived from Old Testament book names (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Joshua, Judges, Ruth) and which quotes liberally from the religious sources. The ever-escalating complexity of the fairytales that occur in the narrative reflect Jeanette's ability to question the grand narratives that most children are subjected to in childhood (the Bible and fairytales). The tales begin to tease out and explore contradictions in the absolute binaries and the 'moral absolutes' that didactic literature is built on. In his early work, Jack Zipes suggested that the fairytale has been used to 'civilize' children, punishing the indolent and rewarding the good characters, who by broad coincidence tend to have the values that make children easier to look after (see Zipes 1979, 1991). The above mentioned tales also show the young Jeanette's awareness of some of the latent issues of sexuality embedded in the fairytale which have been edited out over the centuries in order to make fairytales suitable for children, and which will become increasingly important to the main narrative as Jeanette falls in love with her best friend, Melanie. It is highly significant that none of the protagonists in the three fairytales ends up married or living 'happily ever after'.

This use of invented fairytales as an allegoric mirror of the main diegetic layer of the story is a technique also found in A. S. Byatt's *Possession*, where the love story between Roland and Maud is punctuated by four invented fairytales supposedly written by the fictional character Christabel Lamotte. The effect is in one sense metafictional, used to highlight the way in which we use stories to interpret experience, or to make particular experiences transmissible to other people. The other effect is to highlight the way in which we read: what Barthes would call the 'hermeneutic code' (Barthes 1974). If we encounter textual fragments that are not part of the main story, whether these are embedded tales or snippets of poetry written by fictional characters, then, the reader puzzles over their significance. We do not like to think of such 'extras' as mere padding, or pointless pages, but try to attribute a meaning to them. Why, the reader must ask, is this fairytale appearing in a narrative that has been otherwise realistic? Why does the narrator not say 'I wrote a poem', in for example, John Fowles' *The Magus*, rather than writing out the poem in full? If it is there, we reason, it must be there for a reason.

There is another type of 'invented' fairytale, as we shall see in Chapter 3 – the fairytale of someone's life. The fairytale told by Crick's mother in *Waterland* is one that has been invented, real experience converted into fairytale. This sort of 'new' fairytale draws attention to the way in which humans understand the world through stories, and the need to make experience transmissible. The battle between language and experience is here played out, as the storyteller uses the well-worn words of the fairytale, an architext used for hundreds of years in mainland Europe in order to make their own story understandable.

One final point must be made about fabulation with regard to its relationship to re-vision. There are areas where the line between the two is hard to distinguish, simply because of the nature of the fairytale. The fairytale is, as we have seen, a highly formulaic genre, and therefore the structure of any new fairytale will most likely be very similar to that of its precursors (which is exactly what architextuality demands). Furthermore, the typical characters and typical elements are all already documented, so having a prince, princess or tailor protagonist comes with its own motif number, making it very hard to imagine a truly 'new' fairytale. We can see this in John Fowles' *The Collector*, when Miranda attempts to enlist the sympathy of her captor by telling him a fairytale, beginning 'Once upon a time' (187). On the one hand, this is a fairytale that the character has made up in order to reflect her current dire predicament, but on the other hand it is also recognisably a version of 'Beauty and the Beast', where the ugly monster turns into a handsome prince. Therefore, I would suggest that this particular example is actually a re-vision which shows Miranda's attempts to change her own situation with the power of words by offering up a corrective story.

Similarly, the fairytales that punctuate Byatt's *Possession*, and which are reprinted in *The Djinn in the Nightingale's Eye* also toe a thin line. 'The Glass Coffin' has a tailor protagonist, contains recognisable motifs of testing, where the protagonist must impress a donor character into providing aid, and the glass coffin of the title. All of these are traditional and recognisable fairytale motifs, but they are brought together in a sequence that is a 'new' combination of the formula. That is, they do not replicate a pre-existing fairytale in its entirety, and therefore this can be seen as an example of fabulation.

## 7. Metafictional

Metafictional intertextuality occurs when a fairytale is commented upon, or when the fairytale is analysed in a critical way. This 'criticism in the text' is what Genette would categorise as metatextual, the type of intertextuality we usually find between commentary or criticism and the text it comments upon. This type of intertextuality can be related to a specific tale, therefore approximating the link between hypertext and hypotext above, like the narrator's thoughts on 'Little Red Riding Hood', or, about fairytales in general, approximating the link between text and architext. As Genette suggests when he defines it, '[Metatextuality] unites a given text to another, of which it speaks without necessarily citing it (without summoning it), in fact sometimes even without naming it' (Genette 1997a: 4).

An example of the metafictional use of a fairytale intertext can be seen in *Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit*, where the narrator considers fairytales about marrying beasts:

> In this story, a beautiful young woman finds herself the forfeit of a bad bargain made by her father. As a result, she has to marry an ugly beast, or dishonour her family forever. Because she is good, she obeys. On her wedding night, she gets into bed with the beast, and feeling pity that everything should be so ugly, gives it a little kiss. Immediately, the beast is transformed into a handsome young prince, and they both live happily ever after.
>
> I wonder if the woman married to a pig had read this story. She must have been awfully disappointed if she had. And what about my Uncle Bill, he was horrible, and hairy, and looking at the picture, transformed princes aren't meant to be hairy at all.
>
> Slowly I closed the book. It was clear that I had stumbled on a terrible conspiracy.
>
> There are women in the world.
> There are men in the world.
> And there are beasts.
> What do you do if you marry a beast?
> Kissing them didn't always help.
> And beasts are crafty. They disguise themselves like you and I.
> Like the wolf in 'Little Red Riding Hood'.
> Why had no one told me? Did that mean no one else knew?
> Did that mean that all over the globe, in all innocence, women were marrying beasts?
> [...] If only there was some way of telling, then we could operate a ration system. It wasn't fair that a whole street should be full of beasts.
>
> (Winterson 2001: 70–1)

This quotation, comparing 'happily ever after' fairytale marriage to the rather more depressing and realistic institution Jeanette is familiar with, occurs straight after the ironic fairytale of the prince who is in search of the perfect woman (and who has her executed after he finds her). In the same section of the book we discover that Jeanette's experience of *Jane Eyre* – a novel whose plot has been compared with 'Bluebeard', 'Beauty and the Beast' and 'Cinderella' – has been very different to most readers because Jeanette's mother has removed the final section of the book, and left the text at the point where it looks like Jane will marry St John Rivers, to go to glory (and death) in India as a missionary. This metafictional discussion of a particular fairytale, then, is tied thematically with the events that surround it within the text and helps highlight that the fabulated fairytale which precedes it enacts the concerns of the realistic primary narrative on an allegoric plane that serves to heighten the metafictive and philosophical tone of the novel. The metafictional relationship between a text and a fairytale it comments upon or criticises can be as short as a sentence or can be a running concern throughout the text. Margaret Atwood's Bluebeard's Egg contains a good example of metafictional commentary upon the fairytale when Sally is considering how to write the assignment she has been given, to transpose 'Bluebeard' into modern setting:

> At first she thought the most important thing in the story was the forbidden room. What would she put in the forbidden room, in her present-day realistic version? Certainly not chopped-up women. It wasn't that they were too unrealistic, but they were certainly too sick as well as being too obvious. She wanted to do something more clever. [...] [I]t comes to Sally that the intriguing thing about the story, the thing she should fasten on, is the egg. Why the egg? From the night course in Comparative Folklore she took four years ago, she remembers that the egg can be a fertility symbol, or a necessary object in African spells, or something that the world hatched out of. Maybe in this story it's a symbol of virginity, and that is why the wizard requires it unbloodied. Women with dirty eggs get murdered, those with clean ones get married.
>
> (Atwood 1996a: 156–7)

These examples make clear exactly which fairytales they are commenting upon, and could be seen as specific to those texts. Other examples of the metafictional/metatextual use of fairytale intertexts are less concerned with individual stories and more with the practice of storytelling that is typified by the fantastic, formulaic fairytale. 'What is the use of stories that aren't even true?' asks one character in Salman Rushdie's *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*. *Haroun* is an engaging example of the metafictional link between text and fairytale. Though it also has several explicit fairytale intertexts including a parody of 'Rapunzel' (73), the novel sets about answering the question posed above, and the final answer seems to stress the subversiveness of tale-telling. When Haroun finds himself in a fantastic world, and in confrontation with Khattam-Shud, who is attempting to destroy all stories, the key lines are spoken:

> 'But why do you hate stories so much?' Haroun blurted, feeling stunned. 'Stories are fun...'
>
> 'The world, however, is not for Fun,' Khattam-Shud replied. 'The world is for Controlling.'
>
> 'Which World?' Haroun made himself ask.
>
> 'Your world, my world, all worlds,' came the reply. 'They are all there to be Ruled. And inside every single story, inside every Stream in the Ocean, there lies a world, a story-world, that I cannot Rule at all. And that is the reason why.'
>
> (Rushdie 1991: 161, capitalisation replicated)

As *Haroun* demonstrates, it is possible for there to be a metatextual relationship between a fiction and the fairytale without this being portrayed as a long critical aside about a specified text. A metafictional examination of a certain fairytale can take place on the diegetic or narrative level; it can be integral to the story or it can be an aside by the narrator that does not directly further the plot.

## 8. Architextual/Chronotopic

In elements one to five we saw intertextuality as a relationship between two identifiable texts. We have noted events in various fictions that remind us of a particular fairytale, 'Bluebeard'. This is not possible for the more nebulous nature of intertextuality that I have termed here 'chronotopic'. This element occurs when we recognise 'fairytale-like' qualities in a fiction, without knowing a *specific fairytale to which this text relates*. This is a type of intertextuality that leads the reader to recall a genre, rather than specific examples of that genre.

Element eight is evoked every time a critic remarks upon the 'fairytale' qualities of a work, whether they refer to its tone or to the type of world presented in a text. We noticed when discussing the fabulation of 'new' fairytales that there are certain architextual features that we associate with the fairytale, such as the traditional opening, the indeterminate time and place of its setting, the dramatic personae and the presence of magical items or events. Another term, similar in essence to 'architextuality' in its necessarily fuzzy definition, but this time from the work of Mikhail Bakhtin, helps describe this kind of intertextuality.

The 'chronotope' is a term coined by Mikhail Bakhtin in the essay 'Forms of Time and the Chronotope in the Novel' and is used by Bakhtin to investigate the representation of time in literary writing. The term means, when translated from the Greek, 'space time' and is derived partially from Einsteinian mathematics (Bakhtin 1994: 84). It is used by Bakhtin, as by Einstein, to stress the fundamental interconnectedness of time and space.

It is for this reason that the concept of the chronotope can be difficult to understand. As Sue Vice explains, '[t]he concept of the chronotope may be puzzling or hard to grasp because it seems omnipresent to the point either of invisibility or of extreme obviousness' (Vice 1997: 201). Vice suggests the easiest example to grasp of the chronotope is the road movie, where movement along the road is also movement in time. In chronotopic situations like this, 'Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history' (Bakhtin 1994: 84).

The chronotope is not, however, solely a device of analysing temporal representation within fiction. Bakhtin also claims, 'it is precisely the chronotope that defines genre and generic distinctions, for in literature the primary category in the chronotope is time' (85). He goes on to argue, 'any and every literary image is chronotopic. Language, as a treasure-house of images, is fundamentally chronotopic' (251). In this immense essay, he sketches out the evolution of different chronotopes, from the 'road' chronotope that characterises folklore to the chronotope of the sitting room that began to dominate in the early nineteenth century.

## 8.1 Chronotopic objects (castles)

An example of a chronotopic image is *the castle*. Lucie Armitt suggests, in *Contemporary Women's Fiction and the Fantastic*, that

> The chronotope is, in its simplest terms, a fictive spatio-temporal framework. At its most formulaic it might, say in the context of the gothic, crime fiction, the classical quest narrative, be summed up as a nineteenth century haunted castle, a contemporary metropolis and an ancient Greek citadel respectively.
>
> (Armitt 2000: 35)

When we think of genres in which castles play a major role our mind inevitably goes to the medieval romance, the fairytale and the gothic. It does not, generally speaking, remind us of realistic narratives of domestic violence set in the mid-1960s, which is why the presence of a castle in Byatt's *Babel Tower* suggests that we are not dealing with traditional literary realism. Richard Todd, in his study of Byatt, mistakenly calls 'Bluebeard' 'Bluebeard's Castle', emphasising how important the castle is in the fairytale (1997: 41). The title of Bartók's opera, *Duke Bluebeard's Castle*, and George Steiner's polemic *In Bluebeard's Castle* both attest to the importance that suitably gothic real-estate plays within the fairytale.[25] The castle is an image that attests to the power of the chronotope, a solid object which usually signifies a particular genre.

Nigel Reivers lives in a country house with a moated grange named 'Bran House' that has been in his family for several generations. It is not, in any literal sense, a castle, and yet it is described as such: 'Bran House, the sinister Bluebeard's castle', writes Richard Todd, connecting the house with the fairytale (66). The power of the castle chronotope is such that, like literal murder, including it in the narrative of *Babel Tower* would lead readers to have a significantly changed perception of the novel's genre. Rather, a castle is suggested through the imagery. Bran House is, like a feudal lord's home, hereditary. It is encircled by a moat, isolating those within from the outside world.

The use of imagery that links a home with the castle chronotope is not a new technique. In *Jane Eyre*, the narrator is anxious to point out the gothic architecture of Mr Rochester's ancestral home, Thornfield, its 'battlements' and 'grey front' and 'seclusion' (Volume I, Chapter XI). If we had not fathomed the connection between Thornfield and Bluebeard's castle, Brontë soon clarifies this link:

> Mrs Fairfax stayed behind a moment to fasten the trap door; I, by dint of groping, found the outlet from the attic, and proceeded to descend the narrow garret staircase. I lingered in the long passage to which this led, separating the front and back rooms of the third storey: narrow, low, and dim, with only one little window at the far end, and looking, with its two rows of small black doors all shut, like a corridor in some Bluebeard's castle.
>
> (Brontë C. 1996 [1847]: 122, Volume 1, Chapter 11)

In *Jane Eyre*'s case, the allusion to Bluebeard foreshadows the later revelation that Mr Rochester's home contains a bloody chamber; only in this case the previous wife is still alive and kicking. The description both heightens the sense of menace that lies beneath the surface at Thornfield and gives the reader an indication of Jane's character. The castle as a chronotope, however, is particularly important to reading Rochester, as it is to Nigel. The 'castle' marks its owner out as respectable, or at least as having a high level in society. It suggests the isolation of the 'squirearchy' from the peasantry, 'old' country money and inheritance against 'new' city wealth. It links the modern-day aristocrat with his feudal forebears, linking current social formations with patriarchy and primogeniture in its purest, most brutal form.

The castle is an example of a physical object that carries symbolic baggage (to the extent that our reaction to the physical object is determined by its fictional representations). There are also chronotopic events, or actions, that remind us of the fairytale. It is these *events* that Tzvetan Todorov concentrates on in his attempt to define the fantastic in his seminal study *The Fantastic* (1973).

### 8.2 Chronotopic events (magic)

Todorov proposes a threefold division between types of fantasy, which can briefly be summarised as follows:

- The uncanny, where an unusual event is a one-off supernatural happening in an otherwise realistic world.
- The marvellous, a world that is not our own, where the supernatural is the norm.
- The fantastic, in which the reader cannot decide whether the events described fall under the category of the uncanny or the marvellous.

Under Todorov's groupings, the fairytale would appear in the category of the marvellous. It is a world that appears to have different rules from the everyday rational world. This is not a one-off unusual event, like the transformation of Gregor Samsa in Kafka's 'Metamorphosis', but an entirely different world that defies quotidian expectations of realism.

Todorov's categories are predicated upon an entirely Western and rationalist expectation of what reality is:

> In a world which is indeed our world [...] a world without devils, sylphides, or vampires, there occurs an event which cannot be explained by the laws of this same familiar world. The person who experiences the event must opt for one of two possible solutions [...] Either the devil [or vampire] is an illusion, or an imaginary being; or

> else [s/] he really exists [...] The fantastic occupies the duration of this uncertainty.
>
> (Todorov 1973: 25)

This framework assumes that magic is an outmoded concept that has been entirely suppressed by the rise of empiricism and science. But not everyone believes in this strictly rational world. To take the obvious example, Todorov precludes the existence of the devil in 'our' world, something that I might agree with him on, but we might speculate that some Christians would not.

Wendy B. Faris suggests a similar objection to the Todorovian binary when she discusses Todorov's idea of the pure fantastic occurring when a reader hesitates between the uncanny and the marvellous: 'some readers in some cultures will hesitate less than others' (Faris 1995: 171). She later reinforces this opinion when in her ten-point scheme of 'accessory specifications' of magic realism she makes point seven, 'In magical realist narrative, ancient systems of belief and local lore often underlie the text' (182). We hardly need reminding that the fairytale represents both ancient systems of belief and local lore.

Many of the texts that I will discuss in later chapters have been classified as magic realist narratives. Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, Graham Swift's *Waterland* and Angela Carter's *Nights at the Circus* all feature as examples in the essays of *Magical Realism: Theory, History, Community* (1995). As Fredric Jameson remarked, the term 'magic realism', despite its theoretical vagueness and shortcomings still 'retains a strange seductiveness' (1986: 302) a statement that becomes increasingly apt as 'magic realism' becomes a buzzword used to describe fictions that fit unproblematically into Todorov's influential categories of the uncanny, fantastic or marvellous. Anyone reading the newspapers will have seen the increasingly imprecise usage of the term, with *Harry Potter*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and even the *Lord of the Rings* being labelled magic realist.

However, many of those texts that are not accounted for in Todorov's system, that question the margins between what is 'real' and what is 'magic', also tend to utilise the fairytale as an intertext. I believe that it is no coincidence that the books by Rushdie, Swift and Carter which have been claimed as magic realist also feature fairytale intertextuality. The fantastic events described in these texts, whether a Will o' the Wisp, educated chimps or Saleem's remarkable sense of smell, are portrayed in a matter-of-fact manner, which has been suggested is the characteristic style of the folk tale. De Vos and Altmann condense this neatly when paraphrasing Max Lüthi:

> Lüthi suggests that in the folktale, though not in other genres of oral tales, the supernatural is naturalized into the secondary world of the story by detachment. Although it is entirely mysterious, it evokes no shudder of dread, often not even surprise. [...] Within the folktale, the numinous and magical become a matter of course, and for this reason Lüthi calls the folktale one-dimensional. There is no gap between the sphere of the otherworldly and the sphere of the human; they exist in the same spiritual dimension.
>
> (De Vos and Altmann 2002: 14)

This 'one dimensionality' explains the feeling of recognition we sometimes encounter in texts as seemingly fantastic events occur in realistic narratives. It is a matter of fact that, unlike Lewis Carroll's Alice, fairytale protagonists rarely express wonder at what is happening. Talking Wolves, Fairies, Witches and Gingerbread Cottages are all greeted as though they were everyday occurrences (in the same way that children aren't *really* sure that their toys don't have their own lives in the toy box at night) and this entirely relaxed and accepting attitude to the numinous, when it is encountered in otherwise realistic text, is reminiscent of the fairytale.

## Conclusion

Having defined eight types of intertextuality it is now time to admit to a certain sleight of hand. All of these types are based upon the division between explicit and implicit intertextuality. Furthermore, this division itself is arbitrary and we can question where the margins between explicit and implicit lie.

I therefore make no great claims for the eight categories of intertextuality that I have sketched out, except they help me make out some kind of order from the chaotic nature of intertextuality and help me define which types of intertextuality are particularly important for this study. Though I began by categorising the ways fairytales could be used as intertexts with the title, the most prominent position a text's relation to a previous hypotext can be explicitly signalled, this is not a hugely important factor to my study. Granted, those fictions that contain an intertextual reference in the title such as Bluebeard's Egg, *Bluebeard, Briar Rose* and *Sleeping Beauty* are a great help for anyone scouring a library archive for books that contain intertextual references to fairytales. Until the entire contents of books are contained in searchable library catalogues, a computer search of the library archive with popular fairytale names in the title will be the most reliable way to detect fairytale intertexts,[26] especially given the title's prominence.

For this study, the emphasis is also on those texts wherein the fairytale intertext is explicit, rather than implicit. The problem of ever proving the importance of an implicit intertext makes concentrating on 'revealing' hidden intertexts seem pointless. Similarly, I will not devote significant further space to examining the practices of re-vision or fabulation: the re-vision of fairytales has already been the subject of much academic criticism, from Zipes' *Don't Bet on the Prince* and *The Trials and Tribulations of Little Red Riding Hood* to the more recent studies such as Hermansson's *Reading Feminist Intertextuality through Bluebeard Stories* and Levorato's Red Riding Hood-centred *Language and Gender in the Fairy Tale Tradition*.

As my idea of postmodernism owes much to Linda Hutcheon's idea of historiographic metafiction as defined in *A Poetics of Postmodernism*, the use of a fairytale intertext that leads to features linked with postmodernism such as magic realism, or metafictional discussion about the possibility of representation, is most relevant to my study. The most important elements for my study, therefore, are elements seven and eight. Element seven, the metafictional approach to the fairytale, is important because of how metafiction has been linked with postmodernism. In all of the texts that I analyse, I endeavour to point out a metafictional aspect, even if this layer of self-consciousness isn't immediately evident. In the example of *Babel Tower*, the 'Bluebeard' intertext demonstrates the way in which Frederica (and, by implication, the reader) organises experience according to predetermined intertexts. At the end of the novel we even begin to feel that, despite his flaws, Nigel is perhaps not *quite* the ogre this intertext makes him, his jealousy and rage being caused by his love for his son as much as anything else. He may be an unpleasant and fundamentally unsympathetic character, but he remains a metaphorical, not a literal Bluebeard.

This is similar to the way in which Sharon Rose Wilson describes Margaret Atwood's use of fairytale intertexts. Wilson attempts to call attention to the metafictional aspect of fairytale intertextuality in the work of Margaret Atwood, and her thesis is summarised in the following quotation:

> Atwood's intertexts serve at least five connected purposes in her work: 1) to indicate the quality and nature of her characters'

> cultural contexts [...] 2) to signify her characters'—and readers'—entrapment in pre-existing patterns; 3) to comment self consciously on these patterns—including the embedded fairy tales, myths, and related popular tradition stories—often by deconstructing constricting literary, folkloric, and cultural plots with 'transgressive' language [...] and filling in the gaps of female narrative; 4) to comment self-consciously on the frame story and other intertexts; and 5) to structure the characters' imaginative or 'magical' release from externally imposed patterns, offering the possibility of transformation for the novel's characters, for the country they partly represent and for all human beings.
>
> (Wilson 1993: 34)

Note the importance of the 'self consciousness' of the usages of these intertexts in this passage. Wilson's thesis depends upon the idea that these intertexts are used in a self-conscious manner to reflect metafictively on the text *even if this metafictive level is not immediately evident.* So, she argues, '[s]ome of the psychic pain that Atwood characters, notably Marian MacAlpin [...], Joan Foster (LO), Circe (YAH) and Offred (HT), experience seems to derive from their unquestioning ingestion of old stories or an already written plot line [...] that threatens to limit their life choices' (Wilson 1993: 11). The treatment of the fairytale is metafictional not only in those books where fairytales and storytelling are explicitly discussed, like *The Handmaid's Tale, Lady Oracle, The Robber Bride* and Alias' *Grace*, 'a novel about the ideological power of storytelling' according to Armitt (2000: 91), but also in those where the metafictional aspect is not foregrounded, like *Life Before Man* and *Surfacing*, because the texts show how the already-written patterns of the fairytale affect the protagonists. Wilson finds the metafictional aspect of these fairytales where sometimes they are not immediately apparent. The metafictional treatment of the fairytale is most prominent in those texts that foreground the process of storytelling, and therefore Chapter 3 will examine this type of narrative in close detail.

Element eight, the intertextual use of the fairytale chronotope or architext, is an area that has been little developed before, and to my knowledge no critic has carried out an in-depth analysis of the ways in which texts considered magic realist use the fairytale as an architextual model. Todorov's categories suggest that the fairytale is always in an entirely different world to our own world, a fact that clashes with Bakhtin's view that

> [T]he fantastic in folklore is a *realistic* fantastic [...] Such a fantastic relies on the real-life possibilities of human development [...] in the sense of the needs and possibilities of men [*sic*], those eternal demands of human nature that will not be denied. These demands will remain forever, as long as there are men [*sic*]; they will not be suppressed, they are real, as real as human nature itself, and therefore sooner or later they will force their way to a full realization.
>
> Thus folkloric realism proves to be an inexhaustible source of realism for all written literature, including the novel.
>
> (Bakhtin 2000: 150–1)

Where events of the fairytale chronotope mean that a text belongs to a marvellous unreal world to Todorov, to Bakhtin this chronotope is realistic because it reveals the demands and aspirations of those who imagined it. Chapter 2 will concentrate on the use of element eight in Kate Atkinson's *Human Croquet* (1998), which I will argue is a magic realist novel precisely because of its use of fairytale intertexts.

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