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Bakalářská práce

Key Motifs in Oscar Wilde's and H. C. Andersen's Fairy Tales

Klíčové motivy v pohádkách Oscara Wilda a Hanse Christiana Andersena

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Anotace

Předmětem zkoumání bakalářské práce je analýza klíčových motivů, které se objevují v pohádkách Oscara Wilda a Hanse Christiana Andersena. Teoretická část práce se zaměří na charakteristiku pohádky a pohádkové motivy, kterými lze tvorbu obou autorů v oblasti dětské literatury vymezit. Práce dále představí oba autory a jejich dílo, přičemž se pokusí charakterizovat vliv H. Ch. Andersena na dětskou viktoriánskou literaturu a zařadí dílo Oscara Wilda do kontextu viktoriánské prózy. Jádrem práce bude analýza vybraných motivů Andersenových a Wildeových pohádek s ohledem na dobovou náboženskou zkušenost (motiv dobra a zla, pokání, lásky a sebeobětování). Práce se v závěru pokusí stanovit společné znaky a motivy v pohádkách obou autorů a zmíní Andersenův vliv na pohádky Oscara Wilda.

Klíčová slova: H. Ch. Andersen, Oscar Wilde, pohádka, pokání, sebeobětování, láska, dobro a zlo

Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to analyse the key motifs appearing in the fairy tales of Oscar Wilde and Hans Christian Andersen. The theoretical part focuses on the characterization of fairy tale and the motifs that define works of both authors in the field of children's literature. Further, the work introduces both authors and their work and tries to define H. Ch. Andersen's impact on children's Victorian literature and integrate works of Oscar Wilde into the context of Victorian prose. The core of the work constitutes the analysis of the selected motifs in Andersen's and Wilde's fairy tales with regard to religion (motif of good and evil, motif of repentance, motif of love and motif of sacrifice). In the end the thesis tries to define common features and motifs in the fairy tales of both authors, and it mentions Andersen's impact on the fairy tales of Oscar Wilde.

Key words: H. C. Andersen, Oscar Wilde, fairy tale, repentance, sacrifice, love, good and evil

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Introduction

This thesis concentrates on analysis of the key motifs appearing in the fairy tales of two authors, namely Irish author Oscar Wilde and Danish writer Hans Christian Andersen. Connecting the works of these authors may appear surprising, because they seem to be very different in many factors, for example they came from different places, spoke different languages and moreover, they had different family background. Despite, there can be found similarities in their works, because of Wilde whose work seems to be influenced by Hans Christian Andersen. There are many analyses dealing with the fact to which extent Wilde found inspiration in Andersen's work and his influence has been long recognized. It is believed that Oscar Wilde wrote his fairy tales as a response to those of Hans Christian Andersen.

The aim of this thesis is to analyse the selected motifs in Andersen's and Wilde's fairy tales regarding religion. The thesis deals with the analysis of motifs of sacrifice, repentance, love, good and evil. The comparison is done through the analysis of motifs in "The Happy Prince", "The Nightingale and the Rose", "The Devoted Friend", "The Fisherman and His Soul", "The Selfish Giant" and "The Birthday of the Infanta" by Oscar Wilde and "The Little Mermaid", "The Story of a Mother", "The Girl Who Trod on the Loaf", "The Red Shoes" and "The Snow Queen" by Hans Christian Andersen.

The theoretical part focuses on the characterization of fairy tale and on the motifs, which are characteristic for works of both authors. It also introduces the term modern fairy tale, which is typical for both authors, especially for Andersen who can be considered as founder.

In the next chapters, the thesis outlines information about both authors and their works and tries to define Andersen's impact on children's Victorian literature and integrate Oscar Wilde's work into context of the Victorian prose.

Next part of the thesis deals with the above-mentioned religious motifs in the selected fairy tales of Oscar Wilde and Hans Christian Andersen. Moreover, there are defined meanings of the motifs.

Finally, the thesis gradually summarizes and defines common features and motifs in the fairy tales of both authors and mentions Andersen's impact on the fairy tales of Oscar Wilde.

1 The Theory of Fairy Tale

The oldest theory of fairy tales was given by Plato who defined them as “the tales told by nurses.” (Čapek 1971: 76)¹

The origin of the word “fairy” comes from the Latin *fatum*, which means “to enchant”. This term “was derived directly from the French form of the root, *fee*, *feerie* that means “illusion”.”²

A fairy tale is a special literary genre which is adapted to children. It is a fictitious story having an implausible setting and is full of supernatural beings like fairies, giants, talking animals and evil witches. The main motif very often is the struggle between good and evil. Figures representing evil are, for example dragons, water goblins, witches or devils. In fairy tales, there are also used special phrases in the beginning and the end, such as: Once upon a time ..., In a faraway land ..., Long, long ago ..., There was once a ..., And they all lived happily ever ... Moreover, fairy tales often deal with magic numbers, like three, seven, nine or twelve. In the world of fairy tales, there can be found many magic objects as water of life, magic ring, seven-mile boots or magic mirror.

Fairy tales are very often divided into three groups including stories with supernatural content, real-life stories and stories about animals.

1.1 The History of Fairy Tale

The fairy-tale genre came into existence “within an oral storytelling tradition and was created and cultivated by adults, and as the fairy tale become an acceptable literary genre first among adults, it was then disseminated in print in the eighteenth century to children.”³ It is important

¹ My translation

² KREADY, Laura F. *A Study of Fairy Tales*. Boston, New York, Chicago: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1916. p. 159

³ ZIPES, Jack. *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion: The Classical Genre for Children and the Process of Civilization*. 2. edition New York: Routledge 2006. ISBN: 0-415-97670-7, p. 3

to mention that “the fairy tale for children originated in a period of absolutism when French culture was setting standards of civilité for the rest of Europe.”⁴

According to Theodor Benfey, “all the fairy tales came from India and were spread by the merchants, captives, travellers, soldiers and voyagers.” (Čapek 1971: 77)⁵

The first records about fairy tales were found in Egyptian papyrus from the 13th century BC, including the Tale of Two Brothers, who were known as Anubis and Bata. The scientific research of fairy tales began in the 18th century and the first theorist was a German aesthete Johann Joachim Winckelmann. Shortly, brothers Grimm started to draw up fables and their works spread all over the world. Their edition of Children’s and Household’s Tales which they published between 1812 and 1815, became the most significant publication at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

1.2 The Function of Fairy Tales

The main function of fairy tales is to “awaken our regard for the miraculous condition of life and to evoke profound feelings of awe and respect for life as a miraculous process, which can be altered and changed to compensate for the lack of power, wealth and pleasure that most people experience.”⁶

⁴ ZIPES, Jack. *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion: The Classical Genre for Children and the Process of Civilization*. 2. edition New York: Routledge 2006. ISBN: 0-415-97670-7, p. 9

⁵ My translation

⁶ Folklore Connections: *Mary Magoulic: Fairy Tales* [online] [cit. 2018-10-22] https://faculty.gcsu.edu/custom-website/mary-magoulick/fairy_tales.htm

2 The Modern Fairy Tales

The beginning of the modern fairy tale relates to the arrival of the Romantic period. In modern fairy tales, there are many Romantic features, for instance exotic scenery of stories, illusory folklore and sometimes tragic end of the main character. The modern fairy tale is “more definitely intentional and it often sets boundaries to its suggestion. Frequently it emphasizes the satiric and critical element, and its humour often is heavy and clumsy. To be literature, beside characters, plot, setting, and dialogue, it must have emotion and imagination moulded with beauty into the form of language; and it must have the power of a classic to bestow upon the mind a permanent enrichment.”⁷

This kind of fairy tale is more subjective than traditional. The author can talk to the reader and express his or her personality and opinions. But sometimes it can be hard for children to understand the stories, because the authors use a lot of symbols and allegory. They also use magic motifs and fanciful elements.

The modern fairy tale of the 20th century placed emphasis on distinguishing of good and evil. There was a combination between the real and fantastical world. Some of these stories are full of magic and poetry, other are humorous or nonsense. In this type of fairy tales, there are also very often atypical characters, for example talking furniture or dancing flowers.

On the one hand this genre of fairy tale was meant for adults to show them how the society looks like and which problems human being in this society might have. This is typical for fairy tales of Jonathan Swift and Oscar Wilde. On the other hand, there were fairy tales which were written primarily for children and they were adapted to the children’s perception. That was included in fairy tales of Lewis Carroll and Hans Christian Andersen.

⁷ KREADY, Laura F. *A Study of Fairy Tales*. Boston, New York, Chicago: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1916. p. 235

2.1 The Authors of Modern Fairy Tales

The first innovator of the modern fairy tale was Wilhelm Hauff, whose work was influenced by Romanticism. In his stories, there are romantic features as an inspiration by folklore, love to homeland and an exotic setting.

But eventually, Hans Christian Andersen is considered as founder of the modern fairy tale. “He added irony and humor and vastly expanded the repertoire of characters. There are plenty of princes and princesses, witches, enchanted animals, and poor innocents in his tales, yet he was the first to give inanimate objects personalities of their own.”⁸

His work inspired the late Victorian author Oscar Wilde. On the contrary, there was a difference in their works. Andersen drew inspiration from folk stories whereas Wilde did not use folklore. On the other hand, they have a lot in common – both deal with social problems, lay stress on religious values and not all their fairy tales have happy end.

Other authors representing the era of modern fairy tales are for example: Alan Alexander Milne, Lewis Carroll, Carlo Colodi, Pamela Travers, Astrid Lindgren, John Roald Reul Tolkien, Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, Roald Dahl and Joanne Kathleen Rowling.

⁸ LEWIS, Tess. *Review: A Drop of Bitterness: Andersen's Fairy Tales*. The Hudson Review 54, no. 4. pp 679-686

3 The Fairy Tale and Its Motifs

A motif can be defined as “the indivisible (the simplest) unit of the story.” (Propp 1999: 21)⁹

In stories, there are main and subordinate motifs. The subordinate motifs refill the main motifs.

Fairy tales very often contain religious motifs, because most of them originated in times, when religion was a very important part of life.

According to Karel Čapek, the most frequent motifs of fairy tales are: “fulfilled wish, present, change, find, magic wand, help, obstacle, success and good deed.” (Čapek 1971: 77)¹⁰

3.1 The Motifs in Wilde’s and Andersen’s Fairy Tales

In the fairy tales of Oscar Wilde and Hans Christian Andersen, there we can find motifs like love, friendship, vision vs. reality, dream, devotion, selfishness, death and afterlife, pride and religious motifs. This work is going to deal with the religious motifs (sacrifice, repentance, love, good and evil) in the next chapter.

⁹ My translation

¹⁰ My translation

4 Oscar Wilde

Oscar Wilde was born on the 16th October 1854 in Dublin. His mother named him Oscar Fingal O'Flahertie Wills Wilde to reveal her Nationalist sympathies and pride. But Oscar appeared to suffer because of this name in his youth. He did not like his long name and said that he wants to be known only as "The Wilde" or "The Oscar" to the public.

His father William Wilde graduated as a doctor and few years later he worked in Dublin and specialized in ear and eye diseases. In 1844 he founded St. Mark's Ophthalmic Hospital. He was one of the editors of the Irish medical journal "The Irish Journal of Medical Science". He also worked as a doctor of Queen Victoria. He was not very popular in the public because he was accused of raping his patient.

Oscar's mother Jane Francesca Elgee became famous in 1846 after publishing revolutionary poems in the weekly Irish newspaper "The Nation". She was known under a pen name "Speranza" and was regarded as a Muse by the Irish people. She was also very great linguist and was interested in European languages.

The Wildes had three children. The first son William was delivered a year after the marriage in 1852. Two years later Jane was pregnant again. She desired to have a daughter. After Oscar was born, she was very disappointed. "She refused to admit that her new child is a boy and used to treat him, to speak of him as a girl, and as long as it was possible to do so, she dressed him like one."¹¹ In 1857 their sister Isola Francesca was born. Unfortunately, she died ten years later because of a sudden fever. Oscar was very sad because of her death and "for his lifetime he carried a lock of her hair sealed in a decorated envelope."¹²

At the age of ten Oscar Wilde started to attend Portora Royal School at Enniskillen with his brother. In October 1871 he entered Trinity College in Dublin, where he won entrance scholarship. In 1874 he continued in studying at Magdalen College in Oxford. There he awarded a prize for his poem "Ravenna". From 1887 to 1889 Oscar Wilde worked as an editor

¹¹ SHERARD, Robert Harborough. *The Life of Oscar Wilde*. 1. Edition New York: Mitchell Kennerley 1906. p. 6

¹² The official website for Oscar Wilde [online] [cit. 2018-09-10] <https://www.cmgww.com/historic/wilde/>

of the Woman's World magazine.

On May 29, 1884 Oscar Wilde married four years younger Constance Lloyd – a daughter of an Irish lawyer. They had two sons – Cyril (*1885) and Vyvyan (*1886).

In the autumn of 1891 Oscar Wilde met the son of the Marquis of Queensberry, Lord Alfred Douglas, whom he called "Bosie". They became lovers and were together until Oscar's arrest. Oscar Wilde was arrested because Alfred's father accused him of homosexuality. The trial took place on 3rd April 1895 and Wilde was sentenced to two years hard labour in Reading. His wife Constance divorced him and went with their two sons to Switzerland and changed her surname on "Holland".

After his release, Oscar Wilde went with his lover Lord Alfred Douglas to France. But they split up in a short time. Oscar Wilde has lived in poverty since this time. On 30th November 1900 he died in a hotel and was buried in cemetery Père Lachaise.

4.1 Wilde and religion

Oscar Wilde was a devoted Christian as can be seen from the text, in which he wrote: *"Christianity allows mankind to grasp at the skirts of the Infinite. Since Christ the dead world has woke up from sleep. Since him we have lived."*¹³

There is also an apparent paradox resolved through Oscar Wilde's interpretation of the figure of Christ. For example, in his work "The Soul of Man under Socialism" he described Christ as a beggar having marvellous soul and he added that he is a leper with divine soul. Moreover, he once wrote about Christ: "One always thinks of him ... as a lover for whose love the whole

¹³ The Hollowverse [online] [cit. 2019-03-19] <https://hollowverse.com/oscar-wilde/>

world was too small”¹⁴ and “he does not really teach one anything, but by being brought into his presence one becomes something.”¹⁵

4.2 Wilde’s work

As mentioned above, during his study in 1878 Oscar Wilde wrote a poem called *Ravenna* for which he awarded a prize. His first work from 1881 is called *Poems* and this collection of poems reached a great acclaim.

He also wrote satirical short stories including *The Canterville Ghost*, *Lord Arthur Seville’s Crime*, *The Sphinx Without a Secret* and *The Model Millionaire*. His major and famous novel is called *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

He was also the author of modern fairy tales and he wrote two collections. In 1888 it was published a collection called “*The Happy Prince and other Tales*” including five fairy tales: “*The Happy Prince*”, “*The Nightingale and the Rose*”, “*The Selfish Giant*”, “*The Devoted Friend*” and “*The Remarkable Rocket*”. In 1892 he published his second collection known as “*The House of Pomegranates*” which included four fairy tales: “*The Young King*”, “*The Birthday of Infanta*”, “*The Fisherman and His Soul*” and “*The Star-Child*”.

Since 1892 Wilde has worked in theatre. His first play was the comedy *Lady Windermere’s Fan*. His other famous stage plays are *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *Salome* and *An Ideal Husband*.

His works *De Profundis* and *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* which he wrote during his imprisonment in Reading cannot be also omitted.

For Oscar Wilde it is typical that in his writings he used irony, symbolism and satire.

¹⁴ GOODENOUGH, Elizabeth. *Oscar Wilde, Victorian Fairy Tales and the Meanings of Atonement*. *The Lion and the Unicorn* 23 (3): pp 336 – 354.

¹⁵ WILLOUGHBY, Guy. *ART AND CHRISTHOOD: The Aesthetics of Oscar Wilde*. Rutherford, N. J., London and Cranbury: NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press /Associated University Presses 1993. ISBN: 9780838634776, p.

4.3 Wilde and Victorian literature

Oscar Wilde belongs to the late Victorian authors. This period, which was preceded by Romanticism and in which Queen Victoria ruled the British empire, lasted from 1837 to 1901.

In the late Victorian period “Christianity is described as a deception, moral as hypocrisy and the taste of art as degraded, materialist and mechanical.” (Barnard 1997: 145)¹⁶ There are also changes in sexual field. Early Victorian novel seems to be “something orderly, monogamous as some kind of secondary product of love.” (Barnard 1997: 145 – 146)¹⁷

Primarily, this era is known as the period of folk tales and fairy tales, because the Victorians initiated “inventing childhood”. That means, they stopped child labour and introduced compulsory education. It is popularly known that the Victorians were fascinated by childhood. They regarded childhood as the best time and everything what was beyond as its loss. Moreover, this fascination with childhood related to the interest in an old age which was considered as an inferior state. There was used a term “second childhood” which referred to an extreme old age.

In this period, literature for children “almost always had a moral or religious basis, but it was often just this conflict between morality and invention that created some of the era’s greatest works.”¹⁸ But despite there was a strict morality, children’s literature was also seen as an entertainment than moral and spiritual education.

The Victorian public also grew fond of fantasy and “the growing interest in modern fantasy can also be related to a number of other developments from the beginning of the nineteenth century, as the popularity of Gothic novels”¹⁹ including for example Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* which was published in 1818.

¹⁶ My translation

¹⁷ My translation

¹⁸ ZIPES, Jack. *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion: The Classical Genre for Children and the Process of Civilization*. 2. edition New York: Routledge 2006. ISBN: 0-415-97670-7, p. 106

¹⁹ BUTTS, Denis. *The Beginnings of Victorianism (c. 1820-1850)*. IN HUNT, Peter. *Children’s Literature: An Illustrated History*. 1. publication Oxford: Oxford University Press 1995. ISBN: 0-19-212320-3, p. 91

George McDonald, Oscar Wilde and L. Frank Baum are regarded as the innovators of the fairy-tale genre and have become known as the classical fairy-tale writers. They used fairy tale “as radical mirror to reflect what was wrong with the general discourse on manners, mores, and norms in society, and they commented on this by alluring the specific discourse on civilization in the fairy-tale genre.”²⁰ For example, Oscar Wilde used fairy tales in his work “The Happy Prince and Other Tales” “as an attempt to mirror modern life in a form remote from reality – to deal with modern problems in a mode that is ideal and not imitative. These fables strongly influenced by Andersen, include not only selfish giants and dedicate mermaids but also the brutal contrasts that make up life in the modern city; the rich making merry in their beautiful houses, while the beggars were sitting at the gates ... the white faces of starving children ... two little boys ... lying in one another’s arms to try and keep themselves warm.”²¹

In the late Victorian period, Oscar Wilde followed W. S. Gilbert as the leading poet and dramatist. He was one of the main leaders of Aestheticism. His work “The Decay of Lying” (1889) became the manifesto of the aesthetic movement.

²⁰ ZIPES, Jack. *Fairy Tales and the Art of Subversion: The Classical Genre for Children and the Process of Civilization*. 2. edition New York: Routledge 2006. ISBN: 0-415-97670-7, p. 10

²¹ BRIGGS, Julia and Denis BUTTS. *The Emergence of Form (1850-1890)*. IN HUNT, Peter. *Children’s Literature: An Illustrated History*. 1. publication Oxford: Oxford University Press 1995. ISBN: 0-19-212320-3, p. 140

5 Hans Christian Andersen

Hans Christian Andersen was born on the 2nd April 1805 in Odense in Denmark in a poor family which did not have a permanent address and lived a hand-to-mouth existence.

His father Hans Andersen, also called Hans Hansen Piper, worked as a shoemaker and his mother Anne Marie Andersclatter was a washerwoman. Andersen described his parents in his work *The True Story of My Life*: “He was a shoemaker, scarcely twenty-two years old, a man of a richly gifted and truly poetical mind. His wife, a few years older than himself was ignorant of life and of the world but possessed a heart full of love.”²²

Unfortunately, Hans Andersen died when his son was only eleven years old and little Hans became known in Odense “as a lonely, gawky, ridiculous boy who dressed his dolls, wrote plays and sang in a beautiful tenor voice.”²³ Two years later his mother re-married. Andersen described his step-father as “a young, grave man, who would have nothing to do with his education.”²⁴

“The best head in the family appears to have been the Andersen’s grandmother, the prototype of all the ideal old grandmothers whom we met with in the fairy tales. She is described by Andersen as a cheerful, quiet and very amiable old woman with gentle blue eyes, and a fragile figure.”²⁵

Since childhood Hans Christian Andersen had loved literature, theatre and travelling. When he was fourteen years old, he went to Copenhagen, where he received a private tuition in

²² Project Gutenberg: *Hans Christian Andersen The True Story of My Life*: Chapter I [online] [cit. 2018- 09-16] <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/7007/7007-h/7007-h.htm>

²³ WULLSCHLÄGER, Jackie. *Hans Christian Andersen*. [online] [cit. 2018-10-6] <https://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/features/andersen/pdf/essay.pdf>

²⁴ Project Gutenberg: *Hans Christian Andersen The True Story of My Life*: Chapter I [online] [cit. 2018- 09-16] <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/7007/7007-h/7007-h.htm>

²⁵ BAIN, Nisbet R. *Hans Christian Andersen; a Biography*. London, Lawrence and Bullen: New York, Dodd, Mead and Co. 1895. p. 9

Danish, German and Latin. In 1828 Andersen passed an examination at Copenhagen University and the following year he passed philosophical examination.

In 1873 his health failed, and he seemed going to die, but fortunately, he partially recovered. Hans Christian Andersen died on 4th August 1875.

5.1 Andersen and religion

Even though “since Hans Christian Andersen has been admitted to the last official hymn book in Denmark (2003) with two hymns, one might on this basis argue that he is no doubt a true Christian author,”²⁶ it is not so simple to answer what were his religious beliefs.

Moreover, doctrine held little interest for him. “Instead, the only religious tenets which mattered to him were providence, grace and immortality, which he increasingly saw as a compensation for the pain and injustices of mortal life.”²⁷

5.2 Andersen’s work

Andersen’s first book was published in 1822. Primarily, he wrote stage plays, for example *Love on St. Nicholas Tower* and *The Mulatto*. His first book was published under his pen name William Christian Walter. He also wrote poetry all his life and his poems belong to the important part of Danish poetry.

His first novel written in 1835 is called *The Improvisatore* and includes many autobiographical features because it is inspired by Andersen’s travel to southern Europe. This autobiography can be also seen in his story *The True Story of My Life*. His other well-known novels are called *Only a Fiddler* and *OT*.

²⁶ de MYLIUS, Johan. *Religious Views in Hans Christian Andersen’s Works – and Their Literary Implications*. *ORBIS Litterarum* 62, no. 1. pp 23 – 38 [online] <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/j.1600-0730.2007.00880.x>

²⁷ LEWIS, Tess. *Review: A Drop of Bitterness: Andersen’s Fairy Tales*. *The Hudson Review* 54, no. 4. pp 679-686

Hans Christian Andersen loved travelling and wrote many travelogues, “which are often celebrated for their journalistic flair, but which are in fact poetical books, picturesque and lyrical in their style and way of describing reality.”²⁸

But he is better known for his fairy tales. To him “the fairy tale was an open playground, not limited by rules of the already fixed laws of genre. He allowed himself to mix narrative positions and voices and to make subtle composites of irony and the naïve, of adult horizons and experiences, and apparently childish or childlike reductions of angles and points of view.”²⁹ He wrote two collections of fairy tales known as “Fairy Tales” and “New Fairy Tales”.

The collection Fairy Tales includes these tales: “The Tinder Box”, “Little Claus and Big Claus”, “The Princess and the Pea”, “Little Ida’s Flowers”, “Thumbelina”, “The Naughty Boy”, “The Travelling Companion”, “The Little Mermaid”, “The Emperor’s New Clothes”, “The Galoshes of Fortune”, “The Daisy”, “The Steadfast Tin Soldier”, “The Wild Swans”, “The Garden of Eden”, “The Flying Trunk” and “The Storks”.

In the collection New Fairy Tales, we can find these tales: “The Angel”, “The Nightingale”, “The Sweethearts”, “The Ugly Duckling”, “The Snow Queen”, “The Fir Tree”, “The Elfin Mound”, “The Red Shoes”, “The Old Street Lamp”, “The Neighbours”, “The Darning Needle”, “The Shadow”, “The Old House”, “The Water-drop”, “The Little Match-girl”, “The Happy Family”, “The Story of a Mother” and “The Collars”.

Although his fairy tales seem to be written for children, he was “more of an author for adults, ironically hiding himself behind the mask of children’s author.”³⁰

²⁸ The Hans Christian Andersen Centre [online] [cit. 2018-09-15] http://andersen.sdu.dk/liv/index_e.html

²⁹ de MYLIUS, Johan. “*Our time is the time of the fairy tale*”: Hans Christian Andersen between Traditional Craft and Literary Modernism. *Marvels & Tales* 20, no. 2. pp 166 - 178

³⁰ de MYLIUS, pp 166 - 178

5.3 Andersen's Impact on Victorian literature

The stories of Hans Christian Andersen appeared in 1830s and few years later, in 1846, were translated into English. Andersen's work inspired many Victorians, and he "as well as the Grimms had a pervasive and profound effect on Victorian fiction throughout the period."³¹

Andersen influenced works of William Thackeray, who adopted similar narrative persona. For example, in his work *Vanity Fair*, the main character Becky Sharpe is described as a siren with a fishy tail and his inspiration can be found in Andersen's fairy tale "The Little Mermaid".

Charles Dickens read Andersen's stories as an adult and was affected by his tale "The Old House". This story influenced first chapters of one of his well-known works *David Copperfield*.

Lewis Carroll was swayed by Andersen when he wrote his Alice books which are full of speaking creatures and fantastic situations.

The author who most admired Andersen was the late Victorian Oscar Wilde. Like Andersen, Wilde uses in his fairy tales' animals, plants and inanimate objects "to express the affectation of officialdom, the limited world-view of the literati, and the bitter-sweet and often unrecognized sacrifices of the truly sensitive soul."³²

³¹ The Victorian Web: *J. Banerjee: The Impact of Hans Christian Andersen on Victorian Fiction* [online] [cit. 2018-09-20] <http://www.victorianweb.org/genre/childlit/fairytales4.html>

³² The Victorian Web: *J. Banerjee: The Impact of Hans Christian Andersen on Victorian Fiction* [online] [cit. 2018-09-20] <http://www.victorianweb.org/genre/childlit/fairytales4.html>

6 The Religious Motifs

The main function of the religious motifs is to “describe or name religious phenomena, in other words, it is characteristic that something of a religious nature takes place in the story or is mentioned in the text.”³³

The religious motifs appearing in the works of Oscar Wilde and Hans Christian Andersen sometimes seem to be a little bit diverse and contradictory. Nevertheless, both authors deal with the motif of God. For example, in Wilde’s fairy tales the motif of God is the most apparent in his tale “The Fisherman and His Soul”. In Andersen’s fairy tales God does not appear so explicitly. In his fairy tale “The Little Mermaid” he describes God and refers to Him, only when he mentions the kingdom of God and God’s Sun.

Oscar Wilde describes the religious motifs via characters, their traits and setting. In his fairy tales God usually appears in the end of the story thereby he wanted to show that man cannot sway his life.

This chapter deals with the analysis of these religious motifs: sacrifice and repentance. The next analysed motifs are love, good and evil.

6.1 The Motif of Sacrifice

The term sacrifice describes a ritual in the course something is “consumed”. That means that it is killed, destroyed, eaten or given away. The sacrifice refers to the giver’s person or characteristics or it refers to a union of the giver and receiver.

The sacrifice is a universal phenomenon which appears in all religions through the history. In Christianity, there is known only one sacrifice: “the sacrifice which was once offered by Christ in a bloody manner on the tree of the Cross.”³⁴

³³ The Hans Christian Andersen Centre *On Religious Motifs in Hans Christian Andersen’s Tales* [online] [cit. 2019-04-06] http://andersen.sdu.dk/forskning/motiver/religion_e.html

³⁴ New Advent: Catholic Encyclopedia: *Sacrifice* [online] [cit. 2019-04-06] <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13309a.htm>

The characters in Wilde's and Andersen's fairy tales sacrifice their lives for love, friendship, their children or parents, but they are not aware of their sacrifice. Although, it is very often discussed if sacrifice in their fairy tales can be considered as sacrifice in the religious sense of the word and many analyses of their tales operate freely with this term and it is frequently used when the stories are analysed.

6.1.1 The Motif of Sacrifice in the Selected Fairy Tales of Oscar Wilde

The Happy Prince

In the fairy tale "The Happy Prince" the Prince sacrifices his beauty in good faith to save his town from poverty. He believes that he could make life of the townspeople easier, if they had some valuables they could sell and buy what they need.

According to Rodney Shewan "the Prince's sacrifice has been for nothing as the beauty of the acts of self-sacrifice seems marred by the obtuseness of their objects."³⁵ It could be true, because it changed nothing in political or economic establishment. Judging from this sentence, his sacrifice was in a sort of way beneficial, because it helped people for some time: *"Leaf after leaf of the fine gold he brought to the poor, and the children's faces grew rosier, and they laughed and played games in the street. "We have bread now!" they cried."*³⁶

As Guy Willoughby insists "charitable gestures may be (socially) useless, but in individual terms ... such sacrifices are vital."³⁷

However, the Prince's deed cannot be understood as sacrifice because "the tale deliberately advocates mercy as an alternative to sacrifice."³⁸ The theme of "mercy" not "sacrifice" can be

³⁵ KILLEEN, Jarlath. *The Fairy Tales of Oscar Wilde*. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited 2007. ISBN: 978-0-7546-5813-9. p. 22

³⁶ WILDE, Oscar. *A House of Pomegranates, The Happy Prince and Other Tales*. London: Methuen and CO 1908. p. 180

³⁷ KILLEEN, p. 22

³⁸ GRISWOLD, Jerome. *Sacrifice and Mercy in Wilde's "The Happy Prince"*. John Hopkins University Press 3, pp. 103 - 106

seen in the story at several level and it can be seen better if the characters are divided into three groups. "The townspeople from the opening of the tale to its conclusion remain unchanged and reveal the shortcomings of the idea of sacrifice. The Swallow occupies the centre of attention of the story and his metamorphosis seems to represent most clearly the transition from sacrifice to mercy that Wilde advocates. The Happy Prince himself, though has undergone a change of heart before the story opens, remains throughout the tale an unchanged exemplar of the lesson and value of mercy."³⁹

In the story, there is a similarity between the figure of Christ and the Happy Prince in the way of their sacrifice. The Happy Prince has sacrificed everything, and he did not wait for a reward from others. Like Christ he remained anonymous, so that people did not know it was him who helped them, and the Happy Prince has never asked about the reactions of the townspeople.

As mentioned above, the Swallow sacrifices too, when he decides to stay with the Prince and surrenders his life to help him by giving ruby and sapphires to the poor. Even though it is winter, and he should be in Egypt, he keeps him company. But unfortunately, he dies.

In the end of this tale the Prince and the Swallow are rewarded for their sacrifice with a place in heaven. An Angel brings God the Prince's leaden heart and the dead bird and their suffering is sanctified, and they are regarded for the two most precious things in the city.

*"You have rightly chosen," said God, "for in my garden of Paradise this little bird shall sing for evermore, and in my city of gold the Happy Prince shall praise me."*⁴⁰

The Nightingale and the Rose

"The Nightingale and the Rose" is a story about a Nightingale who sacrifices her life for a Student's love because she believes that it is true love. The Nightingale wants to help the Student to fulfil his love and she is determined enough to find a red rose for him. She flies

³⁹ GRISWOLD, Jerome. *Sacrifice and Mercy in Wilde's "The Happy Prince"*. John Hopkins University Press 3, pp. 103 - 106

⁴⁰ WILDE, Oscar. *A House of Pomegranates, The Happy Prince and Other Tales*. London: Methuen and CO 1908. p. 188

from one rose tree to another and after some time she finds the red one. The only way how to fulfil Student's wish is to sing and sacrifice her life in order to help the true love.

*"If you want a red rose," said the Tree, "you must build it out of music by moonlight and stain it with your own heart's blood. You must sing to me with your breast against a thorn. All night long you must sing to me, and the thorn must pierce your heart, and your life-blood must flow into my veins and become mine."*⁴¹

Thus, the Nightingale kills herself crushing her breast against the thorn, so that the rose will grow, and the young Student will have the flower to give to the girl he is madly in love with. But even though the Nightingale gives her life's blood to create the red rose for the Student, her sacrifice is seen as useless because at the end of the tale the Student throws the rose away into the gutter.

According to Rodney Shewan there are two alternative inferences: "that self-sacrifice for altruistic motives is futile and wasteful, or that self-sacrifice in pursuit of a personal vision ... is as egoistical as any other form of self-realisation."⁴²

Guy Willoughby pointed out that "the self-immolation of the Nightingale on the rose-tree's thorn should clearly be read as a version of the crucifixion of Christ."⁴³ It is believed that Wilde concentrated on the suffering body of Christ and his physical suffering was depicted by the Nightingale's long night of crucifixion.

"All night long she sang with her breast against the thorn, and the cold crystal Moon leaned down and listened. All night long she sang, and the thorn went deeper and deeper into her breast, and her life-blood ebbed away from her. (...) So, the Nightingale pressed closer against the thorn, and the thorn touched her heart, and a fierce pang of pain shot through her. Bitter,

⁴¹ WILDE, Oscar. *A House of Pomegranates, The Happy Prince and Other Tales*. London: Methuen and CO 1908. p. 191

⁴² KILLEEN, Jarlath. *The Fairy Tales of Oscar Wilde*. Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited 2007. ISBN: 978-0-7546-5813-9. p. 41

⁴³ KILLEEN, p. 42

bitter was the pain, and wilder and wilder grew her song, for she sang of the Love that is perfected by Death of the Love that dies not in the tomb."⁴⁴

The Devoted Friend

In this fairy tale a little fellow named Hans sacrifices his own life when he is in a hurry at night in a storm, to find the doctor who should save the son of the Miller.

"Dear little Hans," cried the Miller. "I am in great trouble. My little boy has fallen of a ladder and hurt himself, and I am going for the Doctor. But he lives so far away, and it is such a bad night, that it has just occurred to me that it would be much better of you went instead of me." (...) "Certainly," cried little Hans, "I take it quite as a compliment your coming to me, and I will start off at once."⁴⁵

But unfortunately, he drowned at the time when he returned. He did everything due to their friendship. His action can be perceived as foolishness in a sort of way. The death of Hans represents climax of conflict between selfishness and real friendship.

The Fisherman and His Soul

In the fairy tale "The Fisherman and His Soul" a young Fisherman sacrifices his soul to win Mermaid's love.

*"And the young Fisherman said to himself, "Of what use is my soul to me? I cannot see it. I may not touch it. I do not know it. Surely, I will send it away from me, and much gladness shall be mine."*⁴⁶

But he does not realize, that the moment he loses his soul, he also sacrifices his heart. Apart from the fact that he sacrificed his soul and heart, he also sacrificed his earthly life and changed it for life underwater. Although his sacrifice is not so useless. He gains his love and he really enjoy it.

⁴⁴ WILDE, Oscar. *A House of Pomegranates, The Happy Prince and Other Tales*. London: Methuen and CO 1908. p. 227-228

⁴⁵ WILDE p. 194-195

⁴⁶ WILDE, p. 72

6.1.2 The Motif of Sacrifice in the Selected Fairy Tales of Hans Christian

Andersen

The Little Mermaid

The fairy tale “The Little Mermaid” is about a little Mermaid who falls in love with a Prince. She is determined to sacrifice anything to gain her love, immortal soul and primarily human legs, which cause her later excruciating pain. She sacrifices not only her life underwater but also the most valuable thing she has – her voice, by sacrificing her tongue which the evil Sea Witch wants in exchange for a draught, so that the Mermaid could get rid of her fish’s tail and become human. Unfortunately, if the Prince will not love her and marries someone else, she will die.

“The first morning after he marries another your heart will break and you will become foam on the crest of the waves.”⁴⁷

Unfortunately, in the human world the Mermaid is not accepted. “Moving elegantly around the castle, the prince, being perhaps ahead of his time, nevertheless failed to think of a silent woman as proper marriage material”⁴⁸ and he condemned her to death.

Her sisters want to save her life. They went to the Witch and exchanged their hair for a knife.

“We have given our hair to the Witch,” said they, “to obtain help for you, that you may not die tonight. She has given us a knife: here it is, see it is very sharp. Before the sun rises you must plunge it into the heart of the Prince; when the warm blood falls upon your feet they will grow together again, and form into a fish’s tail, and you will be once more a mermaid, and return to us to live out your three hundred years before you die and change into the salt sea foam.”⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Hans Christian Andersen Fairy Tales and Stories. *Hans Christian Andersen: The Little Mermaid* [online] [cit. 2019-04-08] http://hca.gilead.org.il/li_merma.html

⁴⁸ HANSEN, Lene. *The Little Mermaid’s Silent Security Dilemma and the Absence of Gender in the Copenhagen School*. Millennium: Journal of International Studies 29 (2), pp. 285 - 306

⁴⁹ Hans Christian Andersen Fairy Tales and Stories. *Hans Christian Andersen: The Little Mermaid* [online] [cit. 2019-04-08] http://hca.gilead.org.il/li_merma.html

But the Mermaid is not able to kill the Prince and throws the knife away into the waves and flings of boat into the sea where she becomes a foam and lives amongst the Air Spirits.

Despite all her sacrifice, her death cannot be considered as sacrifice in the religious sense, because she did not die to venerate deity or to communicate with it and moreover, she did not commit any sin.

The Story of a Mother

In this fairy tale, there is a mother who is willing to sacrifice everything for life of her child. The Mother is very sad and fears that her child would die. Suddenly, someone knocks on the door. It is a poor old man. The Mother tells him everything and believes that her child will not die. But she does not know that the old man is in fact Death and he waits till the Mother falls asleep to take her child and disappear as quick as possible.

The desperate woman rushes out from the house calling her child and during her search she makes sacrifices so that she can find her child. She sacrifices her eyes when she wants to cross the Lake.

“Let us make an agreement together which will be better. I love to collect pearls and your eyes are the purest I have ever seen. If you will weep those eyes away in tears into my waters, then I will take you to the large hothouse where Death dwells and rears flowers and trees, every one of which is a human life.”⁵⁰

Then the blind Mother comes to the greenhouse where Death cares for the flowers and trees and there she sacrifices her hair in order that an old woman tells her when Death comes.

“I can give you nothing to do for me there,” said the old woman; “but you can give me your long black hair. You know yourself that it is beautiful, and it pleases me. You can take my white hair in exchange, which will be something in return.”⁵¹

⁵⁰ Hans Christian Andersen Fairy Tales and Stories. *Hans Christian Andersen: The Story of a Mother* [online] [cit. 2019-04-08] <http://hca.gilead.org.il/sandhill.html>

⁵¹ Hans Christian Andersen Fairy Tales and Stories. *Hans Christian Andersen: The Story of a Mother* [online] [cit. 2019-04-08] <http://hca.gilead.org.il/sandhill.html>

6.2 The Motif of Repentance

The term repentance means in Christianity “a sincere turning away, in both the mind and heart, from self to God. It involves a change of mind that leads to action – the turning away from a sinful course to God.”⁵²

In the same manner as Hans Christian Andersen, also Oscar Wilde placed emphasis on repentance which is related to suffering.

6.2.1 The Motif of Repentance in the Selected Fairy Tales of Oscar Wilde

The Nightingale and the Rose

On the one hand, Nightingale’s suffering and death represent death of Christ, but on the other hand, there is no dimension of a satisfaction for sins, which is very important for repentance. The Nightingale did not die to give a satisfaction for her sins but only because of her blind faith in love.

The Selfish Giant

The Giant redeemed himself owing to his love and self-sacrifice. It can be seen in the last scene of the tale:

*“And when the children ran in that afternoon, they found the Giant lying dead under the tree, all covered with white blossoms.”*⁵³

The white blossoms symbolize God’s redemption for his sin and his purification.

The Fisherman and His Soul

In the fairy tale “The Fisherman and His Soul” however, the young Fisherman makes confession to his dead lover, this act cannot be understood as repentance as a religious motif.

⁵² ThoughtCo. *Meaning of Repentance in Christianity* [online] [cit. 2019-04-08] <https://www.thoughtco.com/what-is-repentance-700694>

⁵³ WILDE, Oscar. *A House of Pomegranates, The Happy Prince and Other Tales*. London: Methuen and CO 1908. p. 208

If it is to be seen through the religious prism, it is more a manifestation of contrition. Given his repentance combined with his sincere love, he can be reunited with his soul again.

6.2.2 The Motif of Repentance in the Selected Fairy Tales of Hans Christian Andersen

The Girl Who Trod on The Loaf

The main character of the fairy tale “The Girl Who Trod on the Loaf” is a proud girl Inge who had been since her childhood evil and cruel to animals and unfortunately, when she became older, she was so pretty that everybody excused her behaviour instead of reproving her.

She is adopted by the rich patroness who treated her as their own child. One day, they told her to go and see her parents and gave her a large wheaten loaf of bread for them. She embarked on journey but suddenly she saw the footpath which led across the moor and “she found small pools of water, and a great deal of mud, so she threw the loaf into the mud”⁵⁴ and trod on it to avoid soiling her shoes. As she stood on the loaf, it began to sink under her, and she disappeared. She sank into a muddy underworld where she must stand as a statue and her foot was fastened to the loaf. Even though, her mother wept for her, Inge was full of bitterness.

The story about a child’s sin who wastes bread was told to the little children who called her “wicked Inge”. The girl who listens to the story does not want Inge to be punished.

“But if she were to say she was sorry, and ask pardon, and promise never to do so again?” asked the little one. “Yes, then she might come; but she will not beg pardon,” was the answer.”⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Hans Christian Andersen Fairy Tales and Stories. *Hans Christian Andersen: The Girl Who Trod on the Loaf* [online] [cit. 2019-04-10] http://hca.gilead.org.il/girl_who.html

⁵⁵ Hans Christian Andersen Fairy Tales and Stories. *Hans Christian Andersen: The Girl Who Trod on the Loaf* [online] [cit. 2019-04-10] http://hca.gilead.org.il/girl_who.html

And as the girl said, "Poor Inge" and prayed for mercy for her, Inge wanted to have wept herself, but she could not to do so.

Many years had passed since the girl wept about Inge. The child became an old woman. She dies and prays for her. An Angel of God weeps for her, too.

"As in thought Inge seemed to act over again every sin she had committed on earth, she trembled and tears she had never yet been able to weep rushed to her eyes. It seemed impossible that the gates of mercy could ever be opened to her; but while she acknowledged this in deep penitence, a beam of radiant light shot suddenly into the depths upon her."⁵⁶

A tear of repentance turned her into a bird. Moreover, after the winter she as the bird only eating a single crumb and calling around her other birds to have also a grain of corn, she was redeemed. The bird's feather became white as a symbol of purification.

The Red Shoes

"The Red Shoes" is a moral story about a little poor girl named Karen who goes barefoot in the summer and in the winter, she wears only wooden clogs without stockings. The old woman of shoemaker stitches together some red cloth and gives her a pair of red shoes. Karen wore them for the first time on the day of her mother's funeral. After that Karen became orphan, she was saved from poverty by an old Lady who decided to take care of her, and Karen was not allowed to wear the red shoes any more.

When Karen is old enough to be confirmed, the old woman takes her to the rich shoemaker and there stands a pair of red shoes. Karen desires to take them and she is allowed to have them, because the old woman is nearly blind, so that she does not notice that Karen has picked out red shoes.

Then the old Lady goes with Karen to the church and there everyone stares at Karen's red shoes and she likes it. Instead of God she only thinks of the red shoes while taking communion, so much she is obsessed with them. But ere long she will be punished for her vanity.

⁵⁶ Hans Christian Andersen Fairy Tales and Stories. *Hans Christian Andersen: The Girl Who Trod on the Loaf* [online] [cit. 2019-04-10] http://hca.gilead.org.il/girl_who.html

When an old soldier sees her shoes, he admires them and taps the soles of her shoes and tells them to never come off dance and the shoes become enchanted and force her to dance.

But despite everything she cannot resist the temptation to wear them. She puts them on and after that she tries few dance steps. But then she cannot stop dancing and she is also unable to take them off. When she dances past the open church door, she sees an Angel, holding a broad shining sword in his hand, who does not want to let her go inside and he damns her.

“Dance you shall,” said he, “dance in your red shoes till you are pale and cold, till your skin shrivels up and you are a skeleton! Dance you shall, from door to door, and where proud and wicked children live you shall knock, so that they may hear you and fear you! Dance you shall, dance -!”⁵⁷

She is saved from the cruel fate only after she truly repents her sin and begs the executioner to chop off her feet. “Yet physical suffering alone does not bring redemption. Karen tries again and again to hobble to mass on crutches, but the shoes keep barring the church door until the Angel of God is satisfied that her repentance is genuine.”⁵⁸

Finally, Karen finds redemption and her heart is so filled with sunshine and with peace and joy, that it bursts and her soul flies to heaven.

6.3 The Motif of Love

Love is the most used motif in literature. There appear many kinds of love such as: parental love, maternal love, sibling love, heartfelt love, happy and unhappy love, platonic love, but there is also self-love which can develop into selfishness, narcissism or self-concern and so on.

⁵⁷ Hans Christian Andersen Fairy Tales and Stories. *Hans Christian Andersen: The Red Shoes* [online] [cit. 2019-04-11] http://hca.gilead.org.il/red_shoe.html

⁵⁸ LEWIS, Tess. *Review: A Drop of Bitterness: Andersen’s Fairy Tales*. The Hudson Review 54, no. 4. pp 679-686

From the religious point of view “love can release, save, redeem and free the soul – give it eternal life, immortality.”⁵⁹

Just as in Oscar Wilde’s fairy tales so in Andersen’s, there are situations connected with the motif of love, for instance bursting of heart, sorrow or death.

6.3.1 The Motif of Love in the Selected Fairy Tales of Oscar Wilde

The Happy Prince

In the fairy tale “The Happy Prince” there is the motif of love very clear. The Swallow is the main character representing love. In the beginning he is selfish, being capable of leaving his beloved Reed, because she is not like him. Later, owing to his friendship with the Prince he realizes what love means and this love climaxes with sacrifice. Unfortunately, their friendship ends at the point the Swallow dies and the steal heart of the Prince bursts.

The Swallow loves the Happy Prince so much, that he wants to stay with him regardless of the forthcoming winter.

“The poor little Swallow grew colder and colder, but he would not leave the Prince, he loved him too well. He picked up crumbs outside the baker’s door when the baker was not looking and tried to keep himself warm by flapping his wings. But at last he knew that he was going to die.”⁶⁰

The Nightingale and the Rose

This fairy tale begins with a monologue of the Student being in despair, because he does not have a red rose for the girl he is madly in love with. The Nightingale hears everything, and she is very happy. Finally, she found the “true lover” of whom she sings.

⁵⁹ The Hans Christian Andersen Centre: *The Motif of Love and tears release the soul in Hans Christian Andersen’s fairy tales and stories* [online] [cit. 2019-04-06] http://andersen.sdu.dk/forskning/motiver/vismotiv_e.html?id=3

⁶⁰ WILDE, Oscar. *A House of Pomegranates, The Happy Prince and Other Tales*. London: Methuen and CO 1908. p. 181

*“Here indeed is the true lover,” said the Nightingale. “What I sing of, he suffers, what is joy to me, to him is pain. Surely Love is a wonderful thing. It is more precious than emeralds, and dearer than fine opals. Pearls and pomegranates cannot buy it, not it is forth in the market-place. It may not be purchased on the merchants, nor can it be weighted out in the balance for gold.”*⁶¹

John-Charles Duffy describes in his essay three kinds of love about which the Nightingale sings: “First, the Nightingale sings “of the birth of love in the heart of a boy and a girl”. Second, she sings “of the birth of passion in the soul of a man and a maid”. Finally, in her dying breath, she sings of “Love that is perfected by Death”.”⁶²

The Nightingale is determined to find the rose for the Student, because he only weeps and complains doing nothing to gain the red rose. “Her desire to support the Student leads her to do a “terrible deed,” as the Rose-tree puts it: she pierces her heart with a thorn on the Rose-tree to make a rose red with her own heart’s blood.”⁶³

The Nightingale knows that she is going to die, saying:

*“Death is a great price to pay for a red rose, and Life is very dear to all.” (...) “Yet Love is better than Life, and what is the heart of a bird compared to the heart of a man?”*⁶⁴

She wants to put herself through sacrifice in Student’s favour.

*“Be happy,” cried the Nightingale, “be happy; you shall have your red rose. I will build it out of music by moonlight and stain it with my own heart’s blood. All that I ask of you in return is that you will be a true lover, for Love is wiser than Philosophy, though she is wise, and mightier than Power, though he is mighty.”*⁶⁵

⁶¹ WILDE, Oscar. *A House of Pomegranates, The Happy Prince and Other Tales*. London: Methuen and CO 1908. p. 188

⁶² DUFFY, John-Charles. *Gay-related Themes in the Fairy Tales of Oscar Wilde*. *Victorian Literature and Culture* 29 (2), pp. 327 - 349

⁶³ LANGE, Stefan. 2002. ‘Wilde’s Concept of Love’. In Böker, Corballis and Hibbard 2002, pp. 147–158

⁶⁴ WILDE, p. 191-192

⁶⁵ WILDE, p. 192

Unfortunately, the Student's love ends unhappy. For the daughter of the Professor the rose is not good enough and she says that Chamberlain's nephew has sent her some real jewels and they are better than flowers. The Student is not interested in love anymore and he is disgusted by it.

*"What a silly thing Love is," said the Student as he walked away. "It is not half as useful as Logic, for it does not prove anything, and it is always telling on of things that are not going to happen, and making one believe things are not true. In fact, it is quite unpractical, and, as in this age to be practical is everything. I shall go back to Philosophy and study Metaphysics."*⁶⁶

In this story "the Nightingale is the true lover, if there is one. She, at least, is Romance, and the Student and the girl are, like most of us, unworthy of Romance."⁶⁷

The Birthday of the Infanta

The fairy tale "The Birthday of the Infanta" contains three kinds of love – the Dwarf's love to Infanta, Infanta's narcissism and the King's love to his dead wife.

The most distinct is the Dwarf's love. He thinks that Infanta loves him because she was so amused by his performance and because of giving him a white rose. And the Dwarf was enchanted by Infanta so much that he wanted to live with her in the forest.

*"Yes, she must certainly come to the forest and play with him. He would give her his own little bed, and would watch outside the window till dawn, to see that the wild horned cattle did not harm her, nor the gaunt wolves creep too near the hut. And at dawn he would tap at the shutters and wake her, and they would go out and dance together all day long."*⁶⁸

The Dwarf thinks that the Infanta is as good as he is. It takes only a short time and his love culminates when he is madly in love with her. But his next meeting with her is severe. He sees his appearance in the mirror and now he knows that Infanta does not love him and she only

⁶⁶ WILDE, *A House of Pomegranates, The Happy Prince and Other Tales*. London: Methuen and CO 1908. p. 197-198

⁶⁷ MALMKJAER, Kirsten. "Wilde Versions of Hans Christian Andersen's Stories". *Wilde Versions of Andersen's Lexis and Themes*. Working Papers in English and Applied Linguistics (II). <https://lra.le.ac.uk/handle/2381/10962>.

⁶⁸ WILDE, p. 53

made a mock of his ugliness. The Dwarf is very unhappy, he lies on the floor and his heart is broken. When Infanta comes, she wants him to dance for her and as she finds out that he is dead because of his broken heart she says: *“For the future let those who come to play with me have no hearts.”*⁶⁹

The Fisherman and His Soul

In the story “The Fisherman and His Soul” love is one of the central motifs and there is shown “how much higher “Love is better than Life.”⁷⁰ In this tale love appearing between two lovers ends unfortunately. A young Fisherman falls in love with the Mermaid.

*“So beautiful was she that when the young Fisherman saw her, he was filled with wonder, and he put out his hand and drew the net close to him and leaning over the side he clasped her in his arms.”*⁷¹

In the beginning he is drawn to her only because of her beauty and then because of her singing which makes his fishing easier. But then her songs awake new desires and feelings in his heart.

It is not so easy for him to be with his beloved. If he wants to live with her, he must give up his soul. He is not certain if a man needs his soul. He is not giving up his soul only because of love but he also expects to feel joy, pleasure and happiness.

His action is successful, but it was very difficult because he had to outwit the Witch and then resist the appeal of his soul to stay with him. Moreover, he is shocked when the Priest condemns him, his love and his intention to get rid of his soul.

Once a year his Soul finds him and tells him what it experienced. But the Fisherman does not want to gain his soul back. He only laughs and says: *“Love is better than Riches, and the little Mermaid loves me.”*⁷²

⁶⁹ WILDE, Oscar. *A House of Pomegranates, The Happy Prince and Other Tales*. London: Methuen and CO 1908. p. 64

⁷⁰ LANGE, Stefan. 2002. ‘Wilde’s Concept of Love’. In Böker, Corballis and Hibbard 2002, pp. 151

⁷¹ WILDE, p. 68

⁷² WILDE, p. 110

It is important to mention that the Fisherman retained his heart and his Soul roamed the world alone. The third year his Soul comes again and tells him about a girl who dances in the town and the Fisherman desires to see her because he knew that the little Mermaid does not have feet and she cannot dance. But the Soul has a plan and forces him to be cruel and to do evil things. *“And when the young Fisherman knew that it was an evil Soul and would abide with him always, he fell upon the ground weeping bitterly.”*⁷³ There can be seen that Fisherman’s love was great and deep, nevertheless it was not pure enough to protect him from desire.

After that he leaves his faithless soul and wants to return to his beloved. Every day he calls his little Mermaid, but she does not appear. He waits for her patiently for two years. The Soul is unyielding and wants to enter his heart. However, as the Fisherman can differentiate between good and evil and his Soul concedes defeat and the Fisherman lets it to enter his heart again, the Soul is unable to do so because of the greatness of his love in his heart. It is possible for the Soul to do so only when the Fisherman learns of the Mermaid’s death and his heart breaks. *“Furthermore, the love relationship of the Mermaid and the Fisherman is made more perfect through the mode of their death: both die of a broken heart.”*⁷⁴

*“And as he spake there came a great cry of mourning from the sea, even the cry that men hear when one of the Sea-folk is dead. And the young Fisherman leapt and left his wattled house and ran down to the shore. And the black waves came hurrying to the shore, bearing with them a burden that was whiter than silver. White as the surf it was and like a blower it tossed on the waves. And the surf took it from the waves, and the foam took it from the surf, and the shore received it, and lying at his feet, the young Fisherman saw the body of the little Mermaid. Dead at his feet it was lying.”*⁷⁵

The Fisherman weeps and wants to die, too. His Soul appears again. But the Fisherman listens not to his Soul and all he wants is to die as his beloved.

⁷³ WILDE Oscar. *A House of Pomegranates, The Happy Prince and Other Tales*. London: Methuen and CO 1908. p. 118

⁷⁴ LANGE, Stefan. 2002. ‘Wilde’s Concept of Love’. In Böker, Corballis and Hibbard 2002, pp. 152

⁷⁵ WILDE, p. 123-124

“Love is better than wisdom, and more precious than riches, and fairer than the feet of the daughters of men. The fire cannot destroy it, nor can the water quench it. I called on thee at dawn, and thou didst not come to my call. For evilly had I left thee, and to my own heart had I wandered away. Yet ever did thy love abide with me, and ever was it strong, nor did aught prevail against it, though I have looked upon evil and looked upon good. And now that thou art dead, surely, I will die with thee also.”⁷⁶

And the fisherman really dies, embracing the body of his beloved. The Priest condemns and buries them in the corner of the Field of the Fullers. In the third year, in the area around their unmarked grave suddenly appear beautiful strange flowers of a sweet scent that only grow that particular year. The flowers symbolize the innocence of their love and they also demonstrate God’s satisfaction. “The beauty and rareness of their relationship is reflected in the beauty and uniqueness of the flowers as well as in the words of the Bishop, instead of talking about “the wrath of God,” suddenly speaks “of the God whose name is Love”.”⁷⁷

6.3.2 The Motif of Love in the Selected Fairy Tales of Hans Christian Andersen

The Little Mermaid

In the fairy tale “The Little Mermaid” there are several main themes and one of them is the tragic love of the Mermaid to terrestrial – the Prince, whom she saved and from the very first moment she fell in love with him and because of this love she is willing to sacrifice the most valuable things she has – her voice and life. Moreover, she admires him because he reminds her of the marble statue of a boy which stands in her garden.

But her love does not appear to be reciprocated. On the one hand, the Prince does not know that she saved him: *“Yes, you are dear to me,” said the Prince, “for you have the lust heart, and you are the most devoted to me; you are like a young maiden whom I once saw, but whom*

⁷⁶ WILDE, Oscar. *A House of Pomegranates, The Happy Prince and Other Tales*. London: Methuen and CO 1908. p. 125 - 126

⁷⁷ LANGE, Stefan. 2002. ‘Wilde’s Concept of Love’. In Böker, Corballis and Hibbard 2002, pp. 152

*I shall never meet again.*⁷⁸ And on the other hand, from the very beginning she knows that the Prince had fallen in love with another “girl”. Moreover, she is aware of destiny which awaits her, if the Prince does not fall in love with her. It is also exacerbated by her constantly renewed suffering, when she has a problem with walking due to the pain and is not able to speak because of her muteness.

Even though, she knows that the Prince will never love her, and she is going to die, she decides to spend her last days in his proximity.

*“She knew that was the last evening she should ever see the Prince, for whom she had forsaken her kindred and her home; she had given up her beautiful voice, and suffered unheard-of pain daily for him, while he knew nothing of it.”*⁷⁹

“Furthermore, even though the mermaid falls in love with a human and desires feet so that she can join him, her love for him has, at the time of sacrifice, already led her to love humanity in general, and her ultimate aim is to gain an immortal soul.”⁸⁰

Through this fairy tale Hans Christian Andersen wanted to show how love is on the one hand pure and heartfelt, but on the other hand it can be also fickle and unstable.

In the story, as Nassaar has noted, “it is the Fisherman’s heart, not his soul, that occupies the position of highest importance ... for love is seen as the supreme value and the road to redemption.”⁸¹

The Story of a Mother

⁷⁸ Hans Christian Andersen Fairy Tales and Stories. *Hans Christian Andersen: The Little Mermaid* [online] [cit. 2019-04-08] http://hca.gilead.org.il/li_merma.html

⁷⁹ Hans Christian Andersen Fairy Tales and Stories. *Hans Christian Andersen: The Little Mermaid* [online] [cit. 2019-04-08] http://hca.gilead.org.il/li_merma.html

⁸⁰ MALMKJAER, Kirsten. “*Wilde Versions of Hans Christian Andersen’s Stories*”. *Wilde Versions of Andersen’s Lexis and Themes*. Working Papers in English and Applied Linguistics (II). <https://lra.le.ac.uk/handle/2381/10962>.

⁸¹ book2look: *The Fairy Tales of Oscar Wilde: Jarlath Killeen* [online] [cit. 2019-04-06] <https://www.book2look.com/book/hGcpp9EE5s&euid=107715037&ruid=107715007&refererpath=www.google.com&clickedby=H5D&bibletype=epub>

The fairy tale “The Story of the Mother” shows maternal love. It is about a mother who is decided to sacrifice anything to save her child and get it back from Death.

“Oh, what would I not give to reach my child!” said the weeping mother; and as she still continued to weep, her eyes fell into depths of the lake and became two costly pearls.”⁸²

She is also determined enough to go to Death and beg for getting her child back. But when Death shows her fortune of her child and she finds out how the life of her child might be, she loves her little child so much, that she agrees that Death carries him away to the place that she does not know.

The Girl Who Trod on the Loaf

In the fairy tale “The Girl Who Trod on the Loaf” there can be seen maternal love as Inge’s mother is weeping because of her daughter’s punishment.

“A tear, followed by many scalding tears, fell upon her head, and rolled over her face and neck, down to the loaf on which she stood. Who could be weeping for Inge? She had a mother in the world still, and the tears of sorrow which a mother sheds for her child will always find their way to the child’s heart, but they often increase the torment instead of being a relief.”⁸³

There is also Angel’s love for Inge as he weeps for her.

The Snow Queen

In this fairy tale, there is love in the form of friendship. This story shows if there is a pure love, it is possible to defeat any evil.

The main characters of this tale are little girl Gerda and her friend Kay. *“They were not brother and sister, but they loved each other almost as much as they had been.”⁸⁴* One day small

⁸² Hans Christian Andersen Fairy Tales and Stories. *Hans Christian Andersen: The Story of a Mother* [online] [cit. 2019-04-08] <http://hca.gilead.org.il/sandhill.html>

⁸³ Hans Christian Andersen Fairy Tales and Stories. *Hans Christian Andersen: The Girl Who Trod on the Loaf* [online] [cit. 2019-04-10] http://hca.gilead.org.il/girl_who.html

⁸⁴ Hans Christian Andersen Fairy Tales and Stories. *Hans Christian Andersen: The Snow Queen* [online] [cit. 2019-04-10] http://hca.gilead.org.il/snow_que.html

fragments of glass from the magic mirror that is known for changing human character penetrated Kay's eyes and heart. Kay becomes evil, everything seems ugly to him and his heart turns into a lump of ice. Even though he behaves badly towards Gerda, she still loves him.

Oncoming winter Kay gets in sledge of the Snow Queen and she abducts him. She kisses him on forehead, and he forgets about his beloved Gerda. Then the Snow Queen incarcerates him in her world where is no place for love.

Gerda makes an adventurous journey and goes in quest of her dear Kay. The moment she comes to the Snow Queen, she finds Kay who is almost chilled to the bone. The girl runs to him and *"then little Gerda wept hot tears, which fell on his breast, and penetrated into his heart, and thawed the lump of ice, and washed away the little piece of glass which had stuck there. (...) Then Gerda kissed his cheeks, and they became blooming; and she kissed his eyes, and they shone like her own; she kissed his hands and his feet, and then he became quite healthy and cheerful."*⁸⁵ Kay is saved owing to Gerda's love.

6.4 The Motif of Good and Evil

Generally speaking, good means different things to people and everybody interprets this term differently. Primarily, this word is used for things and acts that are not considered to be evil.

In simple terms, good is something that people desire, and evil is something they do not desire.

There are two types of evil. Moral evil includes acts which are morally wrong, and this kind of evil is traditionally called sin. Natural evil contains natural disasters.

6.4.1 The Motif of Good and Evil in the Fairy Tales of Oscar Wilde and Hans Christian Andersen

In Oscar Wilde's fairy tales, there wins neither good nor evil. This can be seen for example in his fairy tale "The Nightingale and the Rose" in which good is not rewarded nor evil is

⁸⁵ Hans Christian Andersen Fairy Tales and Stories. *Hans Christian Andersen: The Snow Queen* [online] [cit. 2019-04-10] http://hca.gilead.org.il/snow_que.html

punished. In his fairy tales, the author only derides evil and uses irony and satire. Moreover, his fairy tales never have a truly happy ending because they end very sadly culminating in death of the main characters.

In the fairy tale "The Selfish Giant", there the Giant symbolizes evil, and a little boy (Christ) contrarily symbolizes good. Nevertheless, in this fairy tale good wins when the Giant transforms into a kind creature.

In Wilde's heart-breaking fairy tale "The Fisherman and His Soul" there is the struggle between good and evil obvious. The Fisherman is a very good man, but he is not able to defy his soul as it entices him to steal, to strike a child and to murder a Merchant. After that the Fisherman is bound to his soul by the evil deeds.

For the fairy tales of Hans Christian Andersen, it is typical that not all of them end happily. Although it is possible to find exceptions and compared with Wilde, his fairy tales have much more happy ending. Fairy tales where good wins are for instance "The Snow Queen", "The Ugly Duckling", "Thumbelina" and "The Wild Swans".

The fairy tale where the struggle between good and evil can be found is "The Snow Queen". In this tale the author tried to clarify the genesis of evil. In this story evil is represented by the small fragments of the mirror and the evil Snow Queen.

It follows that, for Andersen's fairy tales it is typical that sometimes evil wins over good and the other way around, whereas in Wilde's fairy tales even though some of them does not end happily, always wins Christian love.

Conclusion

The main aim of this thesis was to analyse the key motifs with regard to religion (good, evil, sacrifice, repentance and love) appearing in the fairy tales of Oscar Wilde and Hans Christian Andersen and define the common features and motifs in their fairy tales and also introduce Andersen's impact on the fairy tales of Oscar Wilde.

The links between the writings of Oscar Wilde and Hans Christian Andersen are very clear and they have a lot in common. As Jacqueline Banerjee remarked it may seem extraordinary that educated Wilde found a soul-mate in poorly educated Andersen, but it is the fact. Their style of writing is sometimes indistinguishable. It can be seen in Oscar Wilde's fairy tales in which he, as well as Andersen, uses animals, plants and inanimate objects. Moreover, Oscar Wilde adopted Andersen's characters and motifs which he added to his fairy tales, and even in his short stories and in novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

They both lived in the periods of Romanticism (Andersen) and Victorianism (Wilde) which are closely connected, and it is well-known that these eras put emphasis on morality. It follows that their fairy tales are strongly moralistic. That means that sins are punished, and repentance is rewarded.

Both authors deal with social problems, lay stress on religious values and not all their fairy tales have happy end. They also use humour and very often make fun of the high society and criticize their behaviour and character, especially their vanity, pride, hypocrisy and snobbery. The authors let their characters speak themselves and they expose themselves via their actions. They also put emphasis on God's love for human beings. Moreover, they seem to advocate a kind of Christianity in which love has the highest value, instead of conventions of orthodox Christianity. The next common element is descriptiveness. Both authors attend to particularized description of the surrounding in their works.

Oscar Wilde as Hans Christian Andersen uses in his fairy tales' identical motifs, for example the motif of mirror, the motif of flowers and the motif of the Mermaid.

The motif of mirror has two meanings. On the one hand, it is a symbol of vanity and on the other hand of self-knowledge, cleverness and veracity. Andersen and Wilde used this motif in

several of their fairy tales. In Andersen's "The Red Shoes" the mirror functions as a symbol of self-love. The motif of mirror also appears in Wilde's "The Birthday of the Infanta" where the Dwarf looking in the mirror finds out how ugly he is and facing the truth his heart breaks and he dies. In Andersen's "The Snow Queen" there is the mirror which causes only bad things.

Both authors deal with the motif of flowers. The rose in "The Story of a Mother" and "The Nightingale and the Rose" functions as a symbol of sacrifice and love. Flowers can also be a symbol of forgiveness. In Andersen's fairy tale "The Red Shoes" red roses blooming for Karen function according to her purification as a symbol of forgiveness and love. In "The Fisherman and His Soul" in the grave of the Fisherman and the Mermaid appear beautiful flowers and this phenomenon is perceived as a symbol of God's forgiveness and love. The Giant's body from "The Selfish Giant" is buried in white blossoms, after the boy (Christ) took him to heaven. In this fairy tale the flowers also symbolize forgiveness and love.

The motif of Wilde's Mermaid from the fairy tale "The Fisherman and His Soul" is based on Andersen's fairy tales "The Little Mermaid" and "The Shadow". As well as Andersen's Mermaid, Wilde's has a unique voice. Andersen's Mermaid must give up this voice so that she can become human and win Prince's heart. In Wilde's fairy tale it is Mermaid's voice which helps to Fisherman gain net filled with fish and gives rise to his love to Mermaid. As Christopher Nassaar states in his essay "Andersen's "The Shadow" and Wilde's "The Fisherman and His Soul": A Case of Influence" Wilde's fairy tale deliberately responds to Andersen's "The Shadow" and there can be seen deeper influence in "The Little Mermaid".

The most obvious in their fairy tales are religious and Christian motifs with which this thesis deals, and similarities are recognizable. There are motifs as sacrifice, guilt and repentance or craving for immortal soul.

Sacrifice is the central theme of the fairy tale "The Story of a Mother" from Hans Christian Andersen. This fairy tale where the mother sacrifices everything in a bid to get her child back inspired Oscar Wilde's tale "The Nightingale and the Rose" where the Nightingale sacrifices her life for true love. The way of their sacrifice is almost identical. For example, they must sing – the Mother sings all the songs she knows to Night and the Nightingale sings songs about love during piercing her heart. They also sacrifice their heart's blood – the Mother must warm a

thorn bush until it bursts into flower and the Nightingale gives its heart's blood to create a red rose. Moreover, their act reminds the death of Christ. They have one more thing in common: their sacrifice was utterly useless. They sacrificed everything they had and did not get what they desired to have. The Mother must be without her child and the rose as a symbol of Nightingale's love remains refused.

It is also possible to find similarities in the fairy tales "The Story of a Mother" and "The Happy Prince". The Happy Prince sacrifices as the Mother his beauty and his eyes. Compared with the Mother, Prince's sacrifice is not so useless, and he is rewarded with a place in heaven.

In Wilde's and Andersen's fairy tales the characters plead guilty of their acts. They sin against testaments having bad attributes like superciliousness, parsimony, rapacity, rage, selfishness, envy, enviousness and indolence. Then the characters are afflicted by deserved punishment which can even lead them to death. In some cases, the characters have to do penance and counterbalance their sins to free their souls.

In Wilde's and Andersen's fairy tales according to the motif of love, the characters are often disappointed, and their love is unrequited. Although there can be found unconditional love. In Andersen's fairy tale "The Snow Queen" little Gerda saves Kay overcoming all obstacles because of her unconditional and unselfish love. This is exactly the kind of love about which the Nightingale in Wilde's "The Nightingale and the Rose" sings. Whereas in Wilde's "The Nightingale and the Rose" the ideal love ends with Nightingale's death in Andersen's "The Snow Queen" love overcomes everything.

In conclusion, fairy tales of both authors seem to be similar on several counts and Oscar Wilde's inspiration in Andersen's fairy tales is more than obvious. According to the modern fairy tale Oscar Wilde follows Hans Christian Andersen.

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