

Wang Yizhen's Modern Poetry Education Analysis of Creative Misconceptions in Fairy Tale Poetry of Paper

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Abstract

This research analyses contemporary Chinese fairy tale poetry's challenges – excessive moralism and creativity, or lack thereof, as demonstrated in "Tadpole Grows Legs" and "The Quarrel in Grandpa Dictionary's House." These pedagogical components diminish the beauty and feelings embedded within the works. The investigation calls for a move towards creative storytelling that, with Western critical lenses, teaches morals without being didactic. This strategy would enhance fairy tale poetry from primitive sketches towards more sophisticated designs with clear-cut archetypes that transform complex social realities into simple fantasies while using literature as a medium for education.

Keywords: Fairy tale poetry, Didacticism, Imaginative depth, Dual perspective literature,

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1.0 Introduction

Fairy tale poetry combines elements of child-centred prose and lyric poetry, which proves to be difficult yet fruitful for poets. Traditionally, children's literature in China has used teaching purposes as the main theme at the cost of imagination and artistry, which lead us to the present State's of Chinese fairy tale poetry being overly didactic, unimaginative, and monotonic (Wang Yizhen, 2016).

As pointed out in Wang Yizhen's thesis, fairy tale poetry is expected to incorporate both poetry and fairy tales. This integration is necessary for the poetry to capture the reality and the profound experiences of the inner world (Wang Yizhen, 2016). In contrast to the subjective generalisation of the works of some poets like W. Blake, fairy tale poetry refrains from abstractness and instead calls for simple and straightforward language and elaborate emotional and philosophical thinking (Blake, 1987).

The genre's use of fantasy is important because it allows it to cater to and further develop children's love for imagination. Nevertheless, not all forms of entertainment are mere fanciful diversions. This element stems from a deliberate artistic decision straddles psychological and cultural issues (Shu Wei, 2005). Unlike modern fairy tales that commonly gratify wishes through absurdity, fantasy poetry should contain elements of realism and imagination that appeal to children and adults alike (Xu, 2003).

Even with its prospects, contemporary Chinese poetry in the fairy tale mode is still based on crude stories and clear-cut morals, as demonstrated through the case studies "The Quarrel in Grandpa Dictionary's House" and "The Tadpole Grow Legs." This poetry indicates a lack of some of the possible elements of creative inventiveness, which is the notion that moralistic themes must be treated simplistically, producing pieces that resemble textbook prose instead of poetry (Wang Yizhen, 2016; Harold Bloom, 2016).

The study emphasises the need to reconsider the method of devising fairy tale poetry. An examination of some poetry, like Lan Lan's "The Tadpole Grows Legs", which is overly simplistic and dualistic in its metaphorical thinking, reveals a worrying trend of artistic development stagnation. These works comply with rigid patterns of anthropomorphisation, which ascribe human qualities to non-human beings to meet the minimums of imagination construction requirements. (Tong Qingbing 2015)

One needs to turn to more developed Western models to remedy the shortcomings of modern Chinese fairy tale poetry. These models aim to attract larger audiences and use sophisticated, imaginative storytelling instead of heavy-handed narration (S Barsotti, 2015). These approaches encourage expanding the scope of the intended audience, abandoning the pedagogic focus, and using traditional poetry's intricate structural composition to stimulate imagination (Alexander E., 2019).

This analysis extends the scope of issues related to Chinese fairy tale poetry's cultural and educational aspects by critiquing the genre's entrenched pedagogical legacy and urgently appealing for a creative synthesis of poetry and fairy tales. The study posits that, following Xu Yongquan (2003) and Shu Wei (2005), successful fairy tale poetry caters to the curiosity and imagination of everyone regardless of age and becomes a literary experience beyond demographic boundaries.

This aim seeks to encourage younger generations of poets to transform artworks into instruments for moral education, devoid of texts but rather vivid artworks. By forgiving Chinese fairy tale poets a moral mission, this genre can bridge the pedagogic and artistic demands of modern society by transforming into one that can straddle and synthesise contemporary Chinese poetry with traditional fairy tales.

2.0 Literature Review

The focus of the review of the literature explores the poetry of fairy tales, in which the prose fairy story's features are combined with the musical and figurative inflations of poetry and prose, revealing aspects that are often ignored by scholarly criticism. The poetry of fairy tales has been regarded as the most elementary and is put into the category of children's literature, but in reality, it is bi-functional for both children and adults (Shu Wei, 2010). Andersen's fairy tales are examples of such duality, for they mirror the world, do not preach with heavy-handedness, and offer children complex situations to grapple with (Mu Zhihui, 2014). This review aims to analyse the development, misinterpretation, and artistic expression of fairy tale poetry in the context of this duality.

2.1 Historical Evolution and Misconceptions

All stories integrate culture and history to emphasise their meaning, which is evident in the poetry of fairy tales. For example, in China, there are fairy tale poetries that are almost exclusively didactic, focused on morals and lessons at the expense of creativity and storytelling sophistication which is a rich part of the culture (Wang Yizhen, 2016). A Western viewpoint, however, usually considers fairy tales instruments through which deeper metaphysical aspects of human beings are revealed through imagination and analogies (Brewer, 2003; McGillis, 1982). The very idea of defining fairy tales as primarily those told for children has limited their imaginative scope and oversimplified profoundly intricate factors of human life, twisting them into simple stories (Nishida, 1994).

2.2 Theoretical Perspective Under Dual Nature

Fairy tale poetry is situated between two genres: the story-telling magic of fairy tales and the reflective nature of poetry (Wang Yizhen, 2016). This dual nature requires that these literary works balance external narration and internal emotional articulation. Fairy tales possess a certain poetic nature, and many poems often draw on fairy tales in detail and imagery (Jumanova Shahnoza Ikromjonovna, 2023). Xu Yongquan (2003) and Zhang Jinyi (1985) note that fairy tales fulfil children's fantasies, permitting them to dream within a framework of traditional literature's moral and aesthetic values. The nature of the fantastical in fairy tale poetry goes beyond personification and aims at symbolic representation of internal conditions (Shu Wei, 2005).

2.3 Artistic Needs with Creative Challenges

One of the challenges in creating fairy tale poetry is the requirement to blend fantasy with moral teachings while sustaining the poetic nature. Bloom (2016) maintains that what remains fundamental in poetry is the use of figures of speech and the ability to express meaning in condensed but richly packed imagery. In this case, the excessive didacticism in the so-called poetry "The Quarrel in the Dictionary Grandpa's House" stifles creativity because it opts for straightforward moral messages instead of metaphoric poetry (Wang Yizhen, 2016).

2.4 Comparative Analysis with Western Models

In contrast to the Chinese instructional model, Western traditions prefer explanation over telling a story through emotions and intellect (S Barsotti, 2015; Alexander, 2019). Silverstein's "Skin Stealer" is a perfect example of this, as he provides imaginary stories that evoke personal reflection without overt moral instruction. (Iser, 1991). Uzbekistan's lyrical epic fairy tales also combine the advantages of poetry and fairy tales, conveying profound thoughts and emotions (Ruziyeva M.Y., 2021).

2.5 Bridging the Gap: Towards Richer Fairy Tale Poetry

To resolve these creative inaccuracies, Wang Yizhen proposes widening the borders for the audience of fairy tale poetry. Shifting away from instructional teaching towards storytelling that emphasises the intricacies of life (Wang Yizhen, 2016). Incorporating Western traditions into Chinese fairy tale poetry can enrich its capability for young and adult readers; hence, serving a greater educational and artistic purpose.

This body of work aims to set the groundwork for understanding the complex linear relationships within the dynamics of fairy tale poetry. It will guide further research and creative endeavours to redefine the genre from simplistic moralisation to richer imaginative literature.

3.0 Methodology

In studying fairy tale poetry concerning the modern pedagogy of poetry, the primary components required are a literature review, an analytical framework, a case study selection, data collection and analysis, and finally, the corresponding tools for each activity. Each component strives to answer the research problems and address the critique of creative errors in fairy tale poetry by Wang Yizhen (2016).

3.1 Literature Review

As the first segment of our methodology, we carefully analyse the existing literature written about fairy tale poetry, and this deepest focus looks at the aspect of the two-fold view that is characteristic of fairy tale poetry wherein both the external environment and the internal sentiments are captured within a story and imaginative words (Wang Yizhen, 2016). Cultural factors, chronological development, and theories from both the Chinese and Western sides are synthesised from the works of Shu Wei (2005, 2010), Xu Yongquan (2003), and Roderick McGillis (1982).

3.2 Analytical Framework

This framework integrates literary analysis with psychological critiques, especially those related to audiences' understanding and reception of fairy tale poetry. It analyses how poetry gratifies children's needs and fantasies and tackles wider socio-political and cultural issues (Shu Wei, 2005; Jung, 1959). I employ phenomenology and reader-response concepts based on Iser's (1991) discussions to examine the nature of interaction between fairy tale poetry and children's minds.

3.3 Case Study Selection

This step focuses on selecting case studies that illustrate some of the problems and artistic difficulties of fairy tale poetry. In particular, the poetry "The Quarrel in the Dictionary Grandpa's House" and "The Tadpole Grow Legs" are selected because they tend to be too educational and too unimaginative (Wang Yizhen, 2016). These cases illustrate the inadequacies of existing poetic constructs and offer some directions for solving these problems.

3.4 Data Collection Methods

The data for this research is gathered through poetry and literature reflecting fairy tale poetry and through the analysis and thematics of relevant prose and poetry texts. Analysis and interpretation of the poetry selected are done concerning the diverse levels of discourse, including but not limited to its story grammar, lexicon, and overarching ideas. The data collection process also involves assessing existing literature relevant to the findings to deepen understanding within the context of developed cultural and literary structures (Derek Brewer, 2003; McGillis, 1982).

3.5 Analytical Tools

This research analyses the selected poetry using a blend of qualitative and comparative literary methods. Following the conventions of poetry analysis, the study assesses the use of images, metaphors, and symbols within the context of fairy tale poetry (Bloom, 2016; Tong Qingbing, 2015). This analysis also includes examining the poetry concerning Western fairy tales by some authors, such as Harold Bloom (2016) and Silverstein's "Skin Stealer", to show the variations in originality and interaction with the public.

Using this method, the research intends to find and examine contemporary Chinese fairy tale poetry's creative blunders, hoping to fully explain what such works need to develop as a hybrid genre of literature. The study attempts to change the scope of the audience and move away from didacticism towards storytelling, as advocated by S Barsotti (2015) and Alex E. Alexander (2019), to offer new possibilities for future poetic works that enhance artistic and pedagogical value.

4.0 Findings

In China, the contemporary instructional approach towards poetry emphasises the analysis of fairy tale poetry. This approach, however, reveals one of two critical findings in the genre's development concerning the creative misconceptions that have stymied its advancement. This section presents the empirical findings from analysing selected works, "The Quarrel in the Dictionary Grandpa's House" and "The Tadpole Grow Legs," discussing their educational merit and artistic limitations.

Fig. 1: Diagram of Creative Pitfalls in Fairy Tale Poetry visually encapsulates the primary issues that impede the development of Chinese fairy tale poetry, identified through empirical findings in works like "The Quarrel in the Dictionary Grandpa's House" and "The Tadpole Grow Legs." The diagram highlights three core challenges: the predominance of overly didactic content, a significant lack of imagination, and resultant monotonous structures. For example, in the poem, Grandpa Dictionary explicitly tells other juniors to be humble and united without explaining the reasons, directly stating the results in a rather straightforward manner with a clear didactic tone. Excellent fable poems will interpret the benefits of humility and unity through imaginative stories that inspire readers, just like "The Stolen Skin" and "The Two Trees" (written by Elizabeth Blamey, 1940). These elements collectively restrict the genre's artistic scope

and audience engagement. Explicit moral messages detract from artistic value, while the lack of imaginative depth and predictable narratives stifle creativity and fail to captivate readers. By illustrating these interconnected challenges, the diagram underscores the need for a transformative approach that integrates storytelling richness with nuanced moral undertones, rather than overt instruction, to enhance the literary quality and appeal of fairy tale poetry.

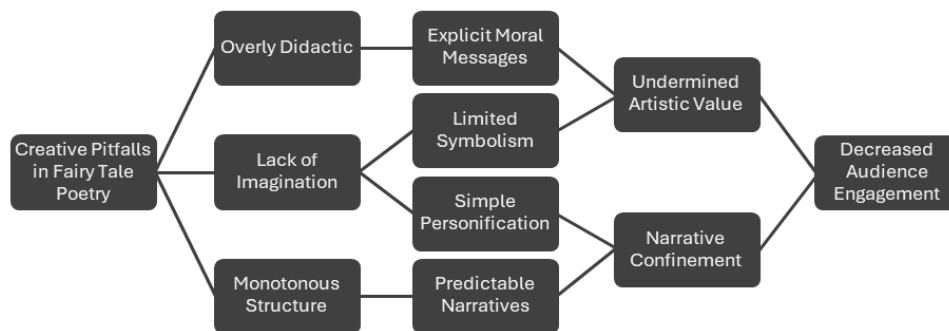


Fig. 1: Diagram of Creative Pitfalls in Fairy Tale Poetry
(Source: Self-created.)

4.1 Overly Didactic Nature

Among the many problems that plague Chinese fairy tale poetry, perhaps the most striking one is the overemphasis on moral instruction, which dominates artistic expression and poetic form. In "The Quarrel in the Dictionary Grandpa's House," the narration goes beyond teaching children cooperation and unity to involve the personification of punctuation marks. However, there is an unduly didactic ending in which Dictionary Grandpa tells the readers they must learn to cooperate and be humble (Wang Yizhen, 2016). This excessive and simplistic moralising forecloses more interesting and sophisticated metaphorical readings and makes the poetry less accessible (Shu Wei, 2005).

4.2 Lack of Imaginative Depth

Tadpole poetry and other fairy tale poetry lack depth as imagined, affecting reader engagement. This is evident in, "The Tadpole Grow Legs," by Wang Yizhen (2016), where the tadpole is personified, cubically, accompanying a journey to adulthood constrained with a linear logic. While the poetry vividly describes a tadpole's life cycle, it concludes with an oversimplified ideological statement about progress and change. Such prose is blunt and suppresses imaginative scope. This simplicity inhibits understanding complex issues, that can appeal to children and adults.

4.3 Monotonous Structure

The poetry under review also reveals sameness at the level of structure, defined by predictable and, therefore, uninspiring plots that do not utilise the scope of fairy tale poetry. "The Quarrel in the Dictionary Grandpa's House" is a typical narrative with no engagement value (Tong Qingbing, 2015). This lack of creativity is similar to Wang Yezhen's (2016) poetry, "The Tadpole Grow Legs," where the hope for surprising innovation in the poetry is unmet as the basic level of monotony is sustained.

4.4 Variations from Western Norms

Chinese fairy tale poetry lacks the features of intricacy and nuance found in Western counterparts, which employ a networked form of storytelling and layered messages (Alexander, 2019). Silverstein's works, like "Skin Stealer", capture readers with outlandish tales that serve profoundly engaging purposes without being overly instructive. The fantasy offered in that tale and its substantial thematic content create an imaginative narrative rarely seen in Chinese poetry (Iser, 1991).

4.5 Involvement of the Audiences

The findings emphasise the need to shift the scope of fairy tale poetry from solely a children's audience to embrace more complex art that offers deeper engagement. Fortunately, some Chinese literary criticism is coming to terms with older poetry intended for children and encompasses adults, which is an appreciated progressive shift of attitude (Wang Yizhen, 2016; Xu Yongquan, 2003). Such a strategy can make the poetry castor more effective in meeting contemporary literature's needs in imaginative fairy tale poetry.

This study's findings, in essence, underline the importance of expanding the boundaries of Chinese fairy tale poetry beyond its overly pedagogical and simplistic scope. Unlike contemporary Western poets, Chinese poets can write complex imaginative narratives with the aid of artificial intelligence that would appeal to countless audiences and increase the educational and artistic value of fairy tale poetry. The artistic merit of the genre can be revived and can attain a place of greater significance in the realm of modern poetry pedagogy.

5.0 Discussion

The study of modern Chinese fairy tale poetry, especially in "The Quarrel in the Dictionary Grandpa's House" and "The Tadpole Grow Legs," reveals a consistent fascination with didacticism, which has been extremely creatively restrictive within the genre. This attempts to explain the sources of these constraints and seeks ways to overcome them to enrich the poetic experience.

5.1 The Didactic Tradition

The most important aspect of this poetry is its strict didacticism, a characteristic of Chinese children's literature because it focuses more on lessons and not the level of art. Shu Wei (2005) is one of the critics who points out that this does not help in imaginative creativity as it requires a story to fit into a moral box. Wang Yizhen's analysis supports these arguments with a focus on "The Quarrel in the Dictionary Grandpa's House" and "The Tadpole Grow Legs" as examples of how these ideological inputs limit the poetry's themes and their artistic explorative potential (Wang Yizhen, 2016).

5.2 Using Imagination and Artistic Skill

As much as imagination is fundamental in children's fairy tale poetry, it relates closely to the reality that a child's fantasies and dreams at a certain developmental stage demand catering to. In the words of Shu Wei (2005), however, the absence of genuine imaginative characteristics in these verses is glaringly obvious in the crude narrative forms and personifications, which do not seem to go beyond a primary figurative meaning. Such shallow imagination gives birth to predictability, for instance, in the poetry "The Tadpole Grow Legs," which is limited to sequential reasoning instead of striving for metaphorical richness or depth (Wang Yizhen, 2016).

5.3 Closing the Gap with Western Affiliation

Analysis of Western literature offers a different approach to fairy tale poetry, for which a blend of fiction with less directly stated ethical lessons, not with blatant moral teachings, is emphasised. As Iser (1991) points out, Shel Silverstein is an author who tries to avoid simplistic moralisation. He does so by expressing ideas in multi-dimensional stories in which different thematic elements are woven together for the readers' engagement. This approach demonstrates that children and adults can enjoy fairy tale poetry without compromising artistic sophistication for moral simplicity.

5.4 The Role of Audience Engagement

Attending to expanding the audience for fairy tale poetry is important for the genre's development. Instead of focusing only on children, these works should embrace the "child" in every person, as discussed in many psychological theories regarding archetypes, including Jung's (1959) work. Through universal themes and appealing to stronger emotional bonds, fairy tale poetry can go beyond age-specific boundaries and foster a more inclusive and resonant literary appeal (Xu Yongquan, 2003).

5.5 Towards Subtle Moral Guidance

Altering fairy tale poetry requires a movement from direct teaching to subtler forms of storytelling that seamlessly blend moral teachings. This change is part of the critique provided by J.K. Rowling and Barsotti (2015) that challenges the overly moralistic bias of children's literature. The loosening of control over narrative complexity helps them subtly convey moral messages that could profoundly refresh artistically and socially classic fairy tale poetry (Qu Zhigong et al., 2002).

In conclusion, solving the creative shortcomings in modern Chinese fairy tale poetry calls for respect for its poetic and narrative roots. By developing imaginative depth, captivating stories, and adopting more subtle moral lessons, didactic fairy tale poetry can balance its artistic merits and respect its didactic traditions. This reinterpretation enables the genre to preserve its cultural value and broaden its literary scope, thus enriching and adding diversity to contemporary literature.

6.0 Conclusion

This study focuses on analysing and evaluating the fairy tale poetry works of renowned Chinese poets, most of whom have received literary awards in China. Their works hold a certain level of representativeness and authority. The poetry of fairy tales is entertaining and instructive, but the overwhelming focus on didacticism greatly reduces its artistic value. The examination of the texts "Tadpole Grows Legs" and "The Quarrel in Grandpa Dictionary's House" demonstrates that the authors' imaginative ideas are often stifled by strict ideological propaganda. For fairy tale poetry to prosper, it must move towards having its plot creatively incorporate the intricacies of human wants and friendships and offer subtle lessons. Authors' works can potentially appeal to the public by employing poetry's fundamental characteristics. Such works can blend the fanciful delight and deep meaning that fairy tales can provide and, in turn, enhance both them and the artistic quality of the image and the reader's perception.

Paper Contribution to Related Field of Study

This research is particularly relevant in Chinese contemporary fairy tale poetry writing, such as specifying the boundaries of creativity and proposing a transformational style. By focusing on the mephistophelian pedagogy, which hinders a child's imagination, this study offers something novel to educators and poets alike. It describes three major vices: over-moralization, unimaginativeness, and dull forms, as well as marvels of pedagogical fairy tale poetry which can speak to all ages with mastery of multi-layered narration and emotion. This paper also aims to motivate novel readers to appreciate children's literature as an artistic genre rather than a didactic tool. It also proposes greater emphasis on the richness of storytelling than on explicit morals, which can transform the genre and close the

gap between it and art. Future research should focus on using fairy tales and poetic thinking to transform straightforward preaching into vivid and intricate stories that conceal educational significance. Additionally, it should explore how to interpret current hot topics in the form of stories using fairy-tale poetry. This has significant implications for developing, continuing, and expanding the form and genre of fairy-tale poetry in contemporary times.

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