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► **To cite this version:**

Avard Jivanyan. Anthropomorphic Dolls as Otherworldly Helpers in the International Folk Tale. 8th International Toy Research Association World Conference, International Toy Research Association (ITRA), Jul 2018, Paris, France. hal-02114234

**HAL Id: hal-02114234**

**<https://sorbonne-paris-nord.hal.science/hal-02114234>**

Submitted on 29 Apr 2019

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# Anthropomorphic Dolls as Otherworldly Helpers in the International Folk Tale

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## Abstract

Although considerable research has been devoted to the study of doll characters in children's fiction, rather less academic attention has been paid to dolls as supernatural helpers in folk tales. Irrespective of the culture they come from, the doll's role is almost inevitably related to matrimony. The doll character in fairy tales is shaped by the anthropomorphization of the ritual doll. The present essay seeks to explain the unique links between folk tale dolls and those depicted in children's fiction, particularly with respect to themes, semantics and even rhetoric.

Keywords: tale types, ritual doll, doll helpers, dowry, spinning, textualization, tropes, anthropomorphism, metamorphosis, metonymy, children's fiction.

## Dolls in Folk Tales

Folk tales which include doll characters are found in the folklore repertoire of most cultures. The Aarne-Thompson-Uther's *Tale Type Index* refers to the following tale types which involve doll characters I. ATU 510 Cinderella/ATU 480 Kind and Unkind Girls, II. ATU 894 The Ghoulish Schoolmaster and the Stone of Pity, III. ATU 560C Doll Producing Gold Stolen and Recovered, IV. ATU 403 Animal Brides, V. ATU 313E The Sister's Flight. In a number of cases the tale types merge: some texts are relevant to both Kind and Unkind Girls and The Sister's Flight types (Uther 2011). We will briefly consider each of the mentioned tale types:

### **ATU 510 Cinderella, ATU 480 (Kind and Unkind Girls)**

The most popular tale of this type is the Russian *Vasilissa the Beautiful*. It was recorded by Alexander Afanasiev and included into the first volume of his Russian Folk tales (Afanasiev 1984). The place of recording and the teller are unknown. The recorder has supposedly made some minor changes. Clarissa Pinkola-Estés claims

versions of this story were told in Romania, Poland and throughout the Baltic countries. She analyses a version (*Vasalisa*) told to her by a storyteller called Aunt Kathe (Pinkola-Estés 1996: 75). A brief summary of Afanasiev's tale:

When Vasilissa was only eight, her mother died. On her deathbed, she gave Vasilissa a doll telling her: "I am dying, and with my blessing, I leave to thee this little doll. It is very precious for there is no other like it in the whole world. Carry it always about with thee in thy pocket and never show it to anyone. When evil threatens thee or sorrow befalls thee, go into a corner, take it from thy pocket and give it something to eat and drink. It will eat and drink a little, and then thou mayest tell it thy trouble and ask its advice, and it will tell thee how to act in they time of need. So saying, she kissed her little daughter on the forehead, blessed her, and soon after died. After a while the merchant remarried. The new wife and her two daughters treated the girl very badly but with the help of the doll she performed all the errands of her stepmother. One day Vasilissa's stepmother put out all the fires and sent Vasilissa to fetch light from the witch's hut. Yaga the witch told Vasilissa she was to perform certain tasks to earn the fire, and again the doll helped her. Baba Yaga sent her home with a skull-lantern, which burned the wicked stepfamily to ashes. Vasilissa went to live with an old childless woman. Here she span, wove and sewed a dozen shirts of remarkable beauty for the king who fell in love with the girl and married her (Afanasiev 1917: 31).

The popularity of the tale owes much to its numerous translations and brilliant illustrations. At least four English translations are known: *Wassilissa the Beautiful* by George Post Wheeler (*Russian Wonder Tales*, 1911), *Vasilisa the Fair* by Leonard Arthur Magnus (*Russian Folk Tales*, 1916), *Wassilissa the Beautiful* by Jack Haney (2014), *Vasilisa the Fair* by Robert Chandler (*Russian Magic Tales from Pushkin to Platonov*, 2013).

In 1900 the tale was exquisitely illustrated by Ivan Bilibin, the famous Russian illustrator and stage designer who was inspired by Russian folklore and is also known for his contribution to Ballets Russes. Strangely enough Bilibin never portrayed the doll itself.

### **ATU 894 *The Ghoulish Schoolmaster and the Stone of Pity***

A girl sees her schoolmaster eating a corpse and he curses her: she is to be taken to a Sleeping Prince who could be awakened if for a long period of time he were rubbed with a herb by a maiden who will become his wife. Close to the end of this period the princess asks a slave girl to replace her for a short while. The prince awakens, marries the slave and the princess becomes her maidservant. One day she asks from the king's marshall a knife and a stone of patience. She tells her story to the stone which swells. The prince listens and sees the stone burst. She is about to kill herself with the knife. The prince stops her. They marry and the slave girl is punished.

In the above summary, no doll is mentioned, however, the stone of pity/patience points to a relevant motif in Aarne-Thompson's *Motif Index*, to *Forgotten Fiancé*

*Remembered by means of Doll* (D 2006.1.6). The Index refers only to one source, namely, Johannes Bolte's Armeno Cristoforo's *Die Reise der Söhne Giaffers aus dem Italienischen Taschenbuch* translated by Johann Wetzel (Thompson 1964).

At our disposal are six Armenian relevant tales all published by The Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography, Armenian Academy of Sciences. In these versions the stone of patience is either accompanied or replaced by a dancing doll. The protagonist being deceived by the slave /gypsy girl etc., tells her sad story to the doll, asking her: "Shall I burst, or will you?" The doll swells more and more with pity and eventually bursts.

Within the context of these stories 'the stone of patience' and 'the doll of patience' may be seen as cultural synonyms. The semantic commonality of the doll and stone seems to be rather far-fetched though easily traced in the narrative where, at the finale, the doll swells and shatters into a hundred pieces, suggesting it could be made of porcelain, clay, or stone-like material. All six Armenian *Dolls of Patience* versions have similar storylines, however, each with its own distinctive features.

Version 1. *Sabri Tikin* (The Dame/Doll of Patience) (HZH<sup>1</sup> 2016: 333-335). The tale is recorded by G. Stepanian from the words of a 16 year old storyteller, Kaqav Makarian, from the Armenian village of Ddmashen. The unusually young age of the storyteller might explain the brevity of the narrative. School is introduced into the story. On her way to school, a young girl hears a mysterious voice telling her she would be taking care of a corpse for seven years.

Version 2. *Leblebu khrtsik* (The leblebu doll) (HZH 1999: 186-194). This tale is recorded by E. Vardanian in 1916, in Tiflis, from the words of Iskuhi Vardanian, a Van refugee. The doll's name is unique since *Leblebi* is an Armenian dialectal word, of Turkish origin, meaning roasted chickpeas. It could be seen as a hyperbolized name for a miniature doll. Such names are not uncommon in folk tales about diminutive personages. A good example is the Slovakian *Janko Hraško* (Johnny Little Pea). It is possible that chickpeas may have been used as a filling to weight the doll. The Leblebu doll is the only doll of patience, which to the heroine's desperate question 'Shall I burst or will you?' answers: 'You burst'. Fortunately the hidden fiancée interferes and saves the life of the girl.

Version 3. *Sabri khrdsig* (Doll of Patience) (HAB<sup>2</sup> 1999: 59-61) This particular version is interesting in terms of its language: within the same text we find two words

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<sup>1</sup> HZH = Hay zhoghovrdakan hekyatner (Armenian Folk Tales).

<sup>2</sup> HAB = Hay azgagrutyun yev banhyusutyun (Armenian Ethnography and folklore).

designating a doll: the Armenian word *khrdsig*, likely to indicate a doll made of straw and the Russian borrowing *kukla* widely used in Armenian dialects. The latter provides the tale with a rough chronology since Russian influence on Armenian vocabulary may have started in the XIX century, after the 1803-1804 Russo-Persian War.

Version 4 *Sapur-sapur khrdsig* (Sapur-Sapur<sup>3</sup> doll)(HZH 1980, 337-343). The story was recorded by N. Martirosian, in 1915, from the city of Alexandrapol, from the words of M. Nahapetian. In the tale we find a mediated dialogue between a man and a maidservant: the man answers questions which the maidservant poses to the doll. Some students of folklore claim it is possible that the *Doll of Patience* stories bear traces of tabooed speech found in many cultures, Armenian in particular, where there have been long lasting traditions restricting female speech (Hayrapetyan 2016). The maid servant/bride had no right to speak directly to her master/bridegroom and the doll becomes a kind of go between.

### **ATU 403 Animal Brides**

The most popular tale of this type is the Norwegian *The Doll in the Grass* collected by Peter Christen Asbjornsen and Jorgen Mu. It is translated into English and included into *Popular Tales from the Norse* by George Webbe Dasent (Asbjornsen & Mu 1904):

A king sent his twelve sons out to find themselves brides who must each be able to spin, weave, and sew a shirt in a day. The princes, however, refused to have their youngest brother go with them and left him behind. Soon he met a Doll in the Grass who was so beautiful that he asked her to become his wife. She spun and wove and sewed him a shirt in a day, but it was tiny. They set off, he on horseback, she on her silver spoon drawn by two white mice. As they came to a piece of water, the horse shied and upset the spoon. The Doll in the Grass fell into the water and became normal sized. The other princes had found ugly and ill-tempered wives. The king drove them away, and held the wedding of the youngest prince.

### **AT 560 C\* Doll Producing Gold Stolen and Recovered**

Straparola's *Adamantina and the Doll* was included in his collection *Le Piacevoli Notti* (*The Facetious Nights*) and is one of the few doll tales of AT 560 C\* tale type.

An old woman dies leaving her daughters only some wool. The older sister spins it into yarn and tells the younger to take it out into the piazza, sell it and purchase some bread. Adamantina, for this was the younger sister's name, changes the spun yarn for a magic doll, which later brings them a fortune.

"Scarcely had Adamantina fallen into her first sleep when the doll began to cry out:

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<sup>3</sup> The meaning of the word obscure in Armenian.

"The stool, mother, the stool". Whereupon Adamantina, waking from her sleep, said: 'What is the matter with you, my daughter?' and to this the doll replied in the same words as before. Then Adamantina said: 'Wait a little, my daughter;' and she straightway arose and ministered to the doll as if it had been a young child, and to her amazement she found that the doll filled the stool with a great quantity of coins of all sorts" (Straparola n.d. )

### **ATU 313E The Sister's Flight (Girl Flees from Brother, who Wants to Marry her)**

Two relevant versions are found in Alexander Afanasyev's collection: NN 291 and 294. Another version is included into Nikolai Onchukov's *Severnyye Skazki* (Northern Tales) (Onchukov 1908). N 294 *Tsarevna v podzemnom tsarstve* (*The Princess in the Underground Kingdom*) is recorded in Chernigov Governorate by the teacher N. Matrosov. The language of the tale is a transitional dialect between Russian and Belarusian:

The King and the Queen order their son to marry his sister. The girl agrees, then makes three dolls, puts them on the windowsills, stands in the middle of the room and addresses the dolls. The first doll answers to her, the second one says that the brother wants to marry his sister. The third bids the earth to open and take in the girl. This is repeated thrice. Then the ground opens and they all sink underground. There, disguised as an old woman, the girl goes to the king's palace where they let her work. Soon the Prince finds out that she is a beautiful princess and marries her (Afanasyev 1984: 319-320).

### **The Folk Dale Doll versus the Ritual Doll**

The doll characters found in the above-mentioned tales share one significant similarity. Irrespective of their originating culture and tales, these doll characters are all related to the ritual doll. In most cultures there have been and still are protective dolls serving as talismans against all kinds of harm, diseases, evil spirits, cradle thieves etc. In Armenia these dolls were sewn by the female members of the family, who strictly followed a set of doll making rules, the most important being that the doll was to be left with some defect or imperfection: a missing limb or a facial defect. This was done for the doll 'not come to life', a possibility much feared. It was believed, for instance, that the doll could kidnap one of the family members, mostly a child, or reveal secrets it was entrusted to keep (Hakobian 2017: 14)

Comparable beliefs are found in Russia too, where ritual rag dolls were often faceless. The absence of a face denoted that the doll was inanimate and could not be

the twin, the double of any person. Hence no one could harm them through the doll (Zimina 2007).

Things are different when the ritual doll is contextualized within the confines of a fairy tale. The doll features, at the expense of animating, personifying the ritual doll and its humanization, does not scare either the teller or listener. It is the genre setting that brings about this essential change of mindset. In fairy tales creatures of different worlds – dolls and humans – are able to communicate freely. Max Lüthi suggested that “in folk tales the numinous excites neither fear nor curiosity” and “all fear of the numinous is absent” (Lüthi 1986, 7). The relations of the protagonist with the otherworldly figures are unique:

Everyday characters and otherworld characters are thus distinguished in the folktale, as in the legend; but in the folktale these actors stand side by side and freely interact with one another. Everyday folktale characters do not feel that an encounter with an otherworld being is an encounter with alien dimension. It is in this sense that we may speak of the “one-dimensionality” (Eindimensionalität) of the folktale (Lüthi 1986, 8; 10).

Thus, when contextualized and set in a fantasy environment the ritual doll is inevitably anthropomorphized - human qualities are ascribed to it depending on its role in the story.

### **The Doll as a Patron OF Matrimony**

In spite of the multiplicity of roles dolls can have in different tales, they are often closely related to matrimony. In the first place the folk tale doll is a dowry patron: it supports the female hero in any kind of handiwork a future bride should know: spinning, weaving, and sewing. This function is shared by doll characters in all above mentioned tale types.

### **ATU 480 Kind and Unkind Girls**

In *Vasilissa the Beautiful*, the doll is a figure closely related to the métiers of spinning and weaving, skills that were essential in the lives of marriageable women who prepared their dowries with their own hands. *Habetrot*, one of the most popular English spinning tales opens as follows: “...in those days no lassie had any chance of a good husband unless she was an industrious spinster” (Jacobs 1993, 396). Jack Zipes wrote in his analysis of the Grimms’ *Rumpelstiltskin*, ‘...the domain of spinning was considered a female vocation and dominated by women. It was through spinning that

a young woman could prove her mettle and win a husband' (Zipes 1994, 1670). Many spinning tale portrayals suggest that the *métier* of spinning was so essential for a young woman that her beauty could not be depicted detached from it (Jivanyan 2004: 14).

At a certain point in the tale we find Vasilissa's doll functioning as a helper in the occupations of spinning, weaving and sewing. Thus she adroitly makes a weaving frame (a loom) for the young owner to weave the yarn she had spun:

So well did she spin that the thread came out as even and fine as a hair... But so fine was the thread that no frame could be found to weave it upon, nor would any weaver undertake to make one. Then Vasilissa went into her closet, took the little doll from her pocket, set food and drink before it and asked its help. And after it had eaten a little and drunk a little, the doll became alive and said: "Bring me an old frame and an old basket and some hairs from a horse's mane, and I will arrange everything for thee." (Afanasiev 1917: 54).

### **ATU 402 *The Doll in the Grass***

*The Doll in the Grass* is an outstanding spinner and a seamstress too. It is important to point out that in both tale types (ATU 480 and ATU 402) the protagonist is a royal bride, however, the chain of required skills to make a good wife remains unchanged. They must be proficient spinsters.

Once on a time there was a king who had twelve sons. When they were grown big he told them they must go out into the world and win themselves wives, but these wives must each be able to spin, and weave, and sew a shirt in one day (Asbjornsen & Mu 1969: 238).

### **ATU 560 C *Doll Producing Gold Stolen and Recovered***

The connection between spinning and the doll is uniquely presented in this 'rags to riches' tale. The doll does not spin, neither does she help the heroine to spin or weave. But the protagonist in Straparola's story buys the magic doll giving some yarn her sister had spun and the doll helps her to marry the King:

...in the piazza she happened to meet there an old woman who was carrying in her apron the most beautiful and most perfectly made doll that had ever been seen. ... So having gone up to the old woman she spake thus: 'Good mother, if it seem a fair thing to you, I will gladly give you this thread of mine in barter for your doll.' (Straparola n.d.)

### **ATU 313E *The Sister's Flight***

Remarkably, ATU 313E seemed to be the only doll tale type where spinning was not

found. It was traced intertextually however. In a version of the same tale type, recorded by N. Onchukov, *Sestra prosela* (*The Sister Sank*), the dolls are replaced by talking spindles. On the advice of an old woman, the girl places spindles in the four corners of her room. The spindles start talking and help the girl avoid her brother's incestuous courting (Onchukov 1998: 71). It is difficult to guess how spindles could replace the dolls or be seen as substitutes. Historically, in Russia there have been special ritual dolls constructed on spindles made to ritually 'solve' some family problems. Once this was completed the dolls were stripped off the spindle, which could again be used for the intended purpose.

It is interesting that 'dolls' and 'spindles' may be connected through the concept of making a thread beyond the space of stories too. In many Indo-European languages the word for the life stage of holometabolous insects is *pupa* (*kukolka* in Russian), which also means a little doll. Both *pupa* (*kukolka*) and *spindle* are related to thread. A spindle is used to twist and wind thread; a silk thread usually suspends the butterfly pupa. As can be seen synonymy and semantic relatedness in folk tales are distinct from non-folkloric texts and are often heavily masked.

### **Dolls as Speech Centred Characters**

Another property which many fairy tale doll characters share, irrespective of tale type, is that they are mostly discourse centred characters: they are patient listeners, adroit speakers, and often speak instead of the protagonist or act as storytellers. The ability to understand human speech and to speak is a major aspect of doll anthropomorphism. It is essential that in most tales doll speech is 'controlled', restricted or is formulaic. All the dolls in *The Sister's Flight* tales speak in short and rhymed sentences. Even more interesting is the fact that often, when addressing the doll, the protagonist's speech becomes metrical and rhymed too, as contrasted to the rest of the narrative. This is how Vasilissa addresses her doll. Below is the transliterated Russian text: in most translations this peculiarity is either overlooked or made less obvious:

Na, Kukolka, pokushay, moego gorya poslushay! Zhivu ya v dome u batyushki, ne vizhu sebe nikakoy radosti!" (Afanasyev 1984: 128).

"There, my little doll, take it. Eat a little, and drink a little, and listen to my grief (Afanasyev 1917: 32).

Little appears in a folk tale at the teller's whim, the latter being merely the bearer of the tradition. Rhymed, metric speech is often found when the hero addresses a personified object, plant etc. related to the 'Otherworld', in this case very likely to

the world of the Dead. A comparable example is the Grimm Brothers' Cinderella's speech when she addresses the hazel tree on her mother's grave:

Shiver and quiver, little tree,  
Silver and gold throw down over me (Grimm 2016: 70).

A unique relationship between dolls and speech reveals in tales of *Dolls of Patience* type (ATU 894) which feature the doll as an ideal listener who patiently attends to its owner's story. When silent, the doll still remains an important participant of the dialogue and reacts to the girl's speech, either by swelling or dancing. Even in the role of a listener the doll of patience continues to stay a matrimonial figure, a kind of go-between, because it is with her help that the hero exposes the woman as an imposter and finds his true bride.

### ***The Rhetoric of Doll Tales***

On a rhetorical level, the humanized folk tale doll can be seen as a specific fantasy trope, anthropomorphism, which is personification with neutralized figurativeness. The doll can also be seen as a metonymy: the doll in *Vasilissa* tales is both the miniaturized version of the heroine and a symbolic presence of her mother. Of interest, in the past in Russia it was accepted to make 'comforting dolls' from the skirt of the dead mother. In her work *Women who Run with the Wolves*, Clarissa Pinkola Estés interprets the doll helper in *Vasilissa the Beautiful*, as the heroine's intuition, 'a small and glowing facsimile of the original Self'. "Superficially, it is just a doll. But inversely, there is a little piece of soul that carries all the knowledge of the larger soul-self" (Estés 1992, 89). To confirm this suggestion we return to Onchukow's version of *Sister Flights tales*, where the heroine makes dolls with her own hands, as if creating a part of herself (Onchukov 1998: 44)

In a number of examples anthropomorphism is paralleled by another fantasy trope, metamorphosis. It is possible to assume that the deceased mother could have transformed into a doll (in other versions of ATU 510 and ATU 480 tales the mother transforms into a cow, an ox or other animals which are seen as the transformed soul of the dead parent).

### ***Between Folklore and Literature***

Many children's books can be read as texts leaning on folklore motifs, characters and poetics. There are many similarities between folk tales and literary works in which doll characters are found. In the nursery and children's fiction, the doll's close

relation to dowry and clothes is reversed: it is the doll that may be provided with a large dowry.

One of the earliest descriptions of a doll dowry is found in French children's literature, in Countess de Ségur's works. Her *Les petites filles modèles* (1858) probably includes the most scrupulous description of a doll's trousseau. In the drawers of her doll's commode, little Marguerite finds a straw hat with a white feather and black velvet ribbons, a green ivory-handled umbrella, an ermine mantle, shirts, nightgowns, skirts decorated with lace, and a variety of dresses, handkerchiefs, corsets, dressing gowns, coats etc. (Ségur 1918: 94). Undoubtedly such a doll could become an index of the social position of the child. In *Jane Eyre* Charlotte Brontë presents two remarkably contrasted doll portraits, which metonymically reveal the social distinctions of the child owners:

I always took my doll; human beings must love something, and, in the dearth of worthier objects of affection, I contrived to find a pleasure in loving and cherishing a faded graven image, shabby as a miniature scarecrow. It puzzles me now to remember with what absurd sincerity I doted on this little toy, half fancying it alive and capable of sensation (Bronte 1994: 31).

Bessie had now finished dusting and tidying the room, and having washed her hands, she opened a certain little drawer, full of splendid shreds of silk and satin, and began making a new bonnet for Georgiana's doll (ibid, 24).

R.M. Romero creates a remarkable doll, Karolina who, like its folk tale ancestors is a clothing related character. She could sew "satin ballgowns and velvet waistcoats, skirts that fanned out like butterfly wings and handsome jackets with gold buttons, and, best of all, Karolina sewed wishes into each piece of clothing" (Romero 1017: 8).

The doll as a patient listener and a speech-centred character can be found in a number of classic works. As a child, Esther Summerson, the major character and the female narrator in Charles Dickens *The Bleak House*, regarded her doll as a calm listener, someone she could trust with her secrets:

I can remember, when I was a very little girl indeed, I used to say to my doll when we were alone together, 'Now, Dolly, I am not clever, you know very well, and you must be patient with me, like a dear!' And so she used to sit propped up in a great arm-chair, with her beautiful complexion and rosy lips, staring at me—or not so much at me, I think, as at nothing—while I busily stitched away and told her every one of my secrets.

My dear old doll! I was such a shy little thing that I seldom dared to open my lips, and never dared to open my heart, to anybody else. It almost makes me cry to think what a relief it used to be to me when I came home from school of a day to run upstairs to my room and say, "Oh, you dear faithful Dolly, I knew you would be expecting me!"

and then to sit down on the floor, leaning on the elbow of her great chair, and tell her all I had noticed since we parted (Dickens 1852: 10).

Francis Hodgson Burnett was a children's author who uniquely developed the humanized doll characters of folk tales in her works. *A Little Princess* is a novel where dolls (Emily and The Last Doll) are major characters. Sarah, the protagonist, of the novel was in search of a special doll which could listen to her and talk to about her father when he left. In *Dolls of Patience* stories the heroine tells the doll her sorrowful story and asks the fatal question: "Doll, shall I burst or you will and he doll swells and bursts into pieces saving the girl's life. In Burnett's novel Emily the doll truly becomes Sarah's doll of patience. There is no supernatural setting in the novel. Emily does not burst like the folk tale doll. But the idea of 'bursting' is present although it is idiomatized: overwhelmed by pain and self-pity Sarah 'bursts into a passion of sobbing':

"I can't bear this," said the poor child, trembling. "I know I shall die. I'm cold; I'm wet; I'm starving to death. I've walked a thousand miles today, and they have done nothing but scold me from morning until night.

... She looked at the staring glass eyes and complacent face, and suddenly a sort of heartbroken rage seized her. She lifted her little savage hand and knocked Emily off the chair, bursting into a passion of sobbing—Sara who never cried (Burnett 1905: 133)

Carlo Collodi's Pinocchio is probably the most anthropomorphized representative among literary dolls, since not only could he speak but he could also tell lies: a speech ability acquiring certain skills.

In the setting of literary tales and children's fantasy fiction new tropes are created that are hardly characteristic of folktale texts. Here humans transform into dolls. Mademoiselle de Lubert's fairy tale *Princess Camion* is the oldest fairy tale (1743) in which human to doll transformation is described. Camion, the female hero of the tale, was transformed into a tiny doll and given to prince Zirphil to be his wife. The tale is translated into English by Jack Zipes (Zipes 1997: 150-198).

Drosselmeier's nephew in E.T.A. Hoffmann's *Nutcracker and the King of Mice* transforms into a Nutcracker doll and then changes back into a young man after Marie swears she would love him in spite of his looks (Hoffmann 1853).

In R.M. Romero's *The Dollmaker of Krakow* metamorphosis includes both 'doll to human' and 'human to doll' transformations. Karolina, the doll, that had a soul and could speak, helps the dollmaker of Krakow save the Jewish musician's children by turning them into dolls and taking them out of the Nazi ghetto hidden in a doll-house:

As the light finally recede, Karolina saw that the thirteen figures standing in the centre of the room, were not children, but a set of wooden dolls made of pine and yarn and cloth. Yet they looked remarkably like their human selves (Romero 2017: 199)

The connecting of children's fiction to folklore may highlight the use of folklore as the source of the literary works.. This can be observed on different levels: motif, character and even rhetoric.

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