

Stage 2 Research Project B – 2014

External Assessment Cover Sheet

Assessment Type 3: Evaluation

SACE Registration Number:

Research Question: How has the evolution of fairy tales reflected societal changes over the same time period?

word count: 1500

This **evaluation** is assessed using the following specific features:

Synthesis	Evaluation
S3	E1
	E2
	E3

Research Evaluation:

Summary:

My Research Project focused on how the evolution of fairy tales reflects changes to culture and society, specifically discussing why fairy tales conform to societal changes and how these changes have affected specific tales, particularly in the rise of the feminist movement. My outcome was presented in the form of a written essay.

It was found that both Richard Dawkins' theory of memetics and Dan Sperber's epidemiological approach may be applied to the evolution of fairy tales to explain why particular fairy tales are disseminated over others. Furthermore, it was found that changes to society, such as changing views on what is deemed appropriate material for younger readers, heavily influence the relative success of specific tales. Finally, it was found that the rise of the feminist movement has had a significant effect on the evolution of fairy tales, specifically in the use or disuse of traditional gender roles over time.

Evaluation of research processes:

1: News articles written specifically for the web

This research process was valid in that it provided current information on the way in which fairy tales reflect culture, particularly in more modern changes to tales that reflect a growing opposition towards exposing younger audiences to more mature content, as noted by Paton (2009) and Greenspan (2013). However, these sources were mostly superficial in nature and mainly acted to support larger, more in depth sources.

The information provided by this research process was mostly reliable. None of the sources of this type included any outstanding contradictions to the other sources, with the only slight contradiction being Tehrani's (2013) statement that Asian tales may have been influenced by Western tales, rather than the other way around, as stated by Zipes (2006). However, this contradiction may be due to poor wording, and it is likely that the two authors were referring to different periods of time. Furthermore, the majority of these sources were written fairly recently, meaning that the information was current and therefore more likely to

S3 Clear and coherent expression of ideas is evident in the summary of the research project. Concepts explored and key findings are outlined with reference to the key sources used, introducing subsequent discussion.

S3 Clear outline of scope of research project followed by outcome format.

S3 Coherent and fluent overview of the research findings, contributes to understanding of the importance of the sources to the research outcome.

S3 Each research process is structured in such a way that ideas are clearly outlined, eg. a statement on validity and general usefulness of the process is followed by recognition of limitations, leading to a discussion of the sources.

E1 Insightful evaluation of research process through sources evaluation. Potential conflicts in reliability are identified, through such things as superficiality, possible contradictions, currency and qualifications of the author. Justification of overall viability is through cross referencing.

be accurate. However, currency is not a significant factor in the reliability of my outcome, due to the nature of my topic. Moreover, the reliability of this process was limited by the fact that most of the authors were journalists that had no formal qualifications in the field of fairy or folk tales (such as a degree or doctorate), and as a result cannot be considered experts. However, as many of these authors referenced relevant experts to support their article and the information found was supported by other sources, lack of formal qualifications did not significantly affect the reliability of the sources.

2: published journals

This process was reasonably valid, as it provided information that was often more comprehensive than articles and Internet processes. This process was especially useful for finding information on specific topics within the research, such as Kuykendal and Sturm's (2007) And Parsons' (2004) sources, which provided far more in-depth analysis on the reception of feminist tales compared to more general sources such as Zipes' book (2006). However, the specialised nature of this process meant that finding sources that were relevant to the topic was more difficult compared to other processes.

E1 Assessment of validity and usefulness of processes in terms of information gathered.

S3 Appropriate use of in-text references contributes to fluency and coherence.

The information found from this process was highly reliable. All sources of this type were written by people qualified to discuss fairy tales in great depth, and as such can be considered reliable sources of information. As these sources were generally written for educative purposes, it is unlikely that they were subject to any bias, with the exception of Dan Sperber's discussions of both his epidemiological theories and Richard Dawkins' meme theory, as he dismisses Dawkins' theory in order to validate his own (Sperber, 2000). However, such bias was taken into account and the opinions of a highly regarded expert (in this case, Jack Zipes, a retired professor at the University of Minnesota who has written several books and lectured on the topic) was utilised to gain a more balanced viewpoint. A limitation of this process was that most of the sources were not particularly recent. However, as the topic is more opinionative and the information does not change much over time, it is unlikely that this would affect the reliability of the sources.

E1 Insightful evaluation of research processes. Possible limitations to this research process are identified in such things as purpose, bias and expertise. However, use of the information is justified through cross-referencing.

E1 Discussion of possible bias and how this was dealt with in the research process.

3: non-fiction book

This process was highly valid in that it included a large amount of relevant, in-depth information that contributed to many of the key findings of the research, such as Zipes' (2006) comparison of Dawkins' theory of memetics with Sperber's theory of epidemiology. Furthermore, this source provided the basis for much of the research, as many of the more specialised sources were researched as a result of the information discovered in this source. Though this was the only source of this process used in the research, it provided a comprehensive view of not only the history of fairy tales, but also how and why certain tales have been disseminated instead of others over time.

E1 Insightful evaluation. Recognition and acknowledgement of the value of the source to the wider research field, and its subsequent use to the research outcome.

E1 Discussion of the reliability of published sources adds to the insightful evaluation.

This process was highly reliable because, as a published source, it was likely to have undergone extensive editing and fact-checking before being released. Furthermore, the author of this source, Professor Jack Zipes, is a highly regarded expert in the field of fairy tales, having written several books on the subject and lectured on it for many years. As the primary purpose of the book is to inform and educate, it is highly unlikely that the information provided was subject to any bias, especially as there is no apparent reason for Zipes to be biased. The information provided is less recent than many of the sources from other processes, but as it focuses more on the historical aspects of the evolution of fairy tales and information that is unlikely to change over time, it is unlikely that the publication date has any significant bearing on the reliability of the information. A limitation of the source was that it focused primarily on the evolution of western tales and only mentioned tales from different cultures when they intersected with western culture, which was a common occurrence in many of the sources.

E1 Insightful evaluation. Recognition of currency, expertise and purpose of source to assess reliability.

E1 Insightful evaluation. Cultural limitation of sources identified and recognised as a limitation.

Evaluation of decisions made in response to challenges and opportunities:

One challenge that I faced in my research was that much of the information was based on opinions, theories, and otherwise subjective material, meaning that it was not as easy to come to a conclusion on my topic. I endeavoured to overcome this challenge by considering a range of credible sources, which all reached the same or similar conclusions. However, the subjective nature of my topic also

E2 Recognition of the challenge created by the subjective nature of the available material and how this influenced the selection process and widening of the research.

provided me with the opportunity to more fully consider and assess the relative strengths of the arguments presented by a range of sources.

E2 Critical evaluation of decisions made is evident in the recognition of the opportunity created by one main source and how it influenced further decisions and the quality of the research.

Another opportunity that was provided to me in my research project was my procuring of Jack Zipes' *How Fairy Tales Stick* (2006), as it was instrumental in my exploration of many of the key findings of my topic. It led me to explore the work of Dawkins and Sperber in my consideration of why fairy tales evolve, and guided my investigation of many other subtopics, such as the impacts of society on the tales of popular authors such as Perrault and the Grimm brothers. This improved the overall quality of my outcome as it allowed me to broaden my research to previously unconsidered yet highly relevant factors within my topic.

E2 Critical evaluation of the decision to not pursue an interview created a challenge that may have effected the credibility of the outcome. Justification is based on information and nature of the topic.

Furthermore, I was challenged by the fact that I was unable to find a relevant expert to interview as a primary source, aside from Professor Zipes, whose opinions on my key findings were heavily explored in his book. As I was unable to formulate any further questions for Professor Zipes, and could not find anyone else to interview, my research lacks the credibility that would be provided by primary sources, which are more likely to be accurate sources of topic-specific information compared to secondary sources. However, as the nature of my topic relies more on theories and opinions, many of my sources, such as Zipes' book, provide a good indication of the author's personal beliefs regarding the key findings and hence further discussion with the authors was rarely necessary.

Evaluation of the Quality of the Research Outcome:

E3 Insightful evaluation of the quality of the outcome. Any limitation caused by the use solely of secondary sources is justified with reference to such things and credibility and expertise of authors.

My outcome was based on secondary research, as I was unable to find a suitable primary source of information. However, as stated above, this did not necessarily affect the quality of my outcome as the secondary sources I procured were sufficient in conveying the opinions of their authors, particularly in sources that were centred around my key findings. As my topic is largely speculative with few concrete facts, the credibility of the authors was paramount to the accuracy of the outcome, and was satisfied by the inclusion of experts such as Professors Jack Zipes and Maria Tatar. As such, I have mostly been able to answer my question successfully. However, there were areas that were not reported on due

S3 Overall coherence of discussion is seen in links like "as stated above", thereby creating links between ideas.

E3 Insightful evaluation. Identification of some aspects of research findings that could have improved the quality of the outcome.

to the size restrictions placed on the outcome, such as the effect of changes to politics on the evolution of fairy tales. Information found on this topic was limited, though there was evidence of this in the use of tales as propaganda in Nazi Germany, and a greater analysis of tales created or reimagined during significant political events or eras may provide further insight.

E3 Insightful evaluation. Limitations of the wider value of the research findings are outlined due to the nature of the topic and the lack of new insights into the topic.

It is unlikely that my outcome will be of use to the general public due to its foundation in literature and in comprehending the connection between literature and culture. Furthermore, as my outcome reflects heavily on the theories and opinions of the authors of my sources and provides no significant new insights, it is likely to be of limited value and quality to the research community. However, this was unavoidable, seeing as I am not an expert in literature or fairy tales, and therefore cannot provide new judgements with any authority. From my research I can however conclude that there is still a great deal that is unknown about why the brain interacts in particular ways to the information presented through tales. As such, further analysis of theories such as Dawkins' of Sperber's in conjunction with the evolution of fairy tales may provide a clearer idea as to why fairy tales conform so closely to changes to society.

S3 Concluding remarks draw readers attention to research findings, whilst indicating directions for further investigation, thus creating a sense of validity to the research.

E3 Insightful evaluation into how further research may lead to a clearer understanding of the research question.

Word Count: 1500

Additional Comments

- E1** The evaluation is well structured. Headings identify key research processes used. Each paragraph begins with a judgement of the process, supported by reference to evidence, a balanced discussion of positive and negative aspects, followed by a discussion of the usefulness in relation to the research question. Connections and examples are used to formulate a balanced evaluation of each research process.
- E2** Challenges and limitations are clearly identified. Processes used to overcome challenges and opportunities are outlined and related to improvements in the outcome.
- E3** A realistic judgement of the limitations of the outcome and of its value are recognised. The quality is judged through a discussion of the quality of the sources. Confidence is shown in the reliability and accuracy of the reporting because of the variety of views of academics and sources considered. Projections for further research are made.
- S3** The work is coherent and fluent, using formal technical style, with some sophistication of language. The intent is clear even in the discussion of more complex ideas. Paragraphs are well structured to enable thorough discussion of the each topic. Appropriate conventions for report writing are used.

A (28)

References:

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- Parsons, L. T., 2004, "Ella evolving: Cinderella stories and the construction of gender appropriate behaviour", *Children's Literature in Education*, vol. 35, no. 2, pp. 135-154
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- Tehrani, J., 2013, "As they spread, folktales evolve like biological species", *The Conversation*, <<http://theconversation.com/as-they-spread-folktales-evolve-like-biological-species-20271>>, accessed 30 March 2014
- Zipes, J., 2006, "Why fairy tales stick: the evolution and relevance of a genre", Taylor & Francis Group, New York

Performance Standards for Stage 2 Research Project B

	<i>Planning</i>	<i>Development</i>	<i>Synthesis</i>	<i>Evaluation</i>
	Assessment Type 1: Folio		Assessment Type 2: Research Outcome	
				Assessment Type 3: Evaluation
A	<p>P1 Thorough consideration and refinement of a research question.</p> <p>P2 Thorough planning of research processes that are highly appropriate to the research question.</p>	<p>D1 Thorough and highly resourceful development of the research.</p> <p>D2 In-depth analysis of information and exploration of ideas to develop the research.</p> <p>D3 Highly effective development of knowledge and skills specific to the research question.</p> <p>D4 Thorough and informed understanding and development of one or more capabilities.</p>	<p>S1 Insightful synthesis of knowledge, skills, and ideas to produce a resolution to the research question.</p> <p>S2 Insightful and thorough substantiation of key findings relevant to the research outcome.</p> <p>S3 Clear and coherent expression of ideas.</p>	<p>E1 Insightful evaluation of the research processes used, specific to the research question.</p> <p>E2 Critical evaluation of decisions made in response to challenges and/or opportunities specific to the research processes used.</p> <p>E3 Insightful evaluation of the quality of the research outcome</p>
B	<p>P1 Consideration and some refinement of a research question.</p> <p>P2 Considered planning of research processes that are appropriate to the research question.</p>	<p>D1 Considered and mostly resourceful development of the research.</p> <p>D2 Some complexity in analysis of information and exploration of ideas to develop the research.</p> <p>D3 Effective development of knowledge and skills specific to the research question.</p> <p>D4 Informed understanding and development of one or more capabilities.</p>	<p>S1 Considered synthesis of knowledge, skills, and ideas to produce a resolution to the research question.</p> <p>S2 Substantiation of most key findings relevant to the research outcome.</p> <p>S3 Mostly clear and coherent expression of ideas.</p>	<p>E1 Considered evaluation of the research processes used, specific to the research question.</p> <p>E2 Some complexity in evaluation of decisions made in response to challenges and/or opportunities specific to the research processes used.</p> <p>E3 Considered evaluation of the quality of the research outcome</p>
C	<p>P1 Some consideration of a research question, but little evidence of refinement.</p> <p>P2 Satisfactory planning of research processes that are appropriate to the research question.</p>	<p>D1 Satisfactory development of the research.</p> <p>D2 Satisfactory analysis of information and exploration of ideas to develop the research.</p> <p>D3 Satisfactory development of knowledge and skills specific to the research question.</p> <p>D4 Satisfactory understanding and development of one or more capabilities.</p>	<p>S1 Satisfactory synthesis of knowledge, skills, and ideas to produce a resolution to the research question.</p> <p>S2 Substantiation of some key findings relevant to the research outcome.</p> <p>S3 Generally clear expression of ideas.</p>	<p>E1 Recount with some evaluation of the research processes used.</p> <p>E2 Some evaluation, with mostly description of decisions made in response to challenges and/or opportunities specific to the research processes used.</p> <p>E3 Satisfactory evaluation of the quality of the research outcome</p>
D	<p>P1 Basic consideration and identification of a broad research question.</p> <p>P2 Partial planning of research processes that may be appropriate to the research question.</p>	<p>D1 Development of some aspects of the research.</p> <p>D2 Collection rather than analysis of information, with some superficial description of an idea to develop the research.</p> <p>D3 Superficial development of some knowledge and skills specific to the research question.</p> <p>D4 Basic understanding and development of one or more capabilities</p>	<p>S1 Basic use of information and ideas to produce a resolution to the research question.</p> <p>S2 Basic explanation of ideas related to the research outcome.</p> <p>S3 Basic expression of ideas.</p>	<p>E1 Superficial description of the research processes used.</p> <p>E2 Basic description of decisions made in response to challenges and/or opportunities specific to the research processes used.</p> <p>E3 Superficial evaluation of the quality of the research outcome</p>
E	<p>P1 Attempted consideration and identification of an area for research.</p> <p>P2 Attempted planning of an aspect of the research process.</p>	<p>D1 Attempted development of an aspect of the research.</p> <p>D2 Attempted collection of basic information, with some partial description of an idea.</p> <p>D3 Attempted development of one or more skills that may be related to the research question.</p> <p>D4 Attempted understanding and development of one or more capabilities.</p>	<p>S1 Attempted use of an idea to produce a resolution to the research question.</p> <p>S2 Limited explanation of an idea or an aspect of the research outcome.</p> <p>S3 Attempted expression of ideas.</p>	<p>E1 Attempted description of the research process used.</p> <p>E2 Attempted description of decisions made in response to a challenge and/or opportunity specific to the research processes used.</p> <p>E3 Attempted evaluation of the quality of the research outcome</p>