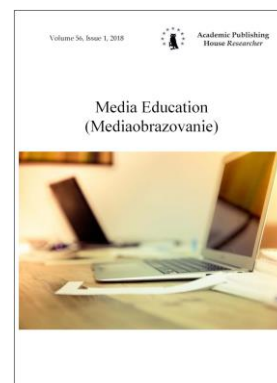




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## Ambivalence of Antiheroes in Modern Film Fairy Tales for Children

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### Abstract

This article seeks to contribute to the debate about understandings and interpretations of modern film fairy tales aimed at children and family audiences. The main focus of the research is on the way traditional folklore and fairy tale antagonists are transformed into heroes/protagonists in postmodern entertainment film genres. The qualitative research results are drawn from an adapted V.Propp's methodology. Conclusions and concerns for media effects are considered.

On the example of two modern films in the genre of fairy tales the author analyzed the erosion of the traditional binary oppositions of the tale – those that were considered marked positively (hero, good king), perform negative functions and vice versa. Indeed, both films use a postmodern narrative device – to turn traditional heroes into villains, and villains into heroes. This gives the viewer the opportunity to take a fresh look at the characters – heroes whom we have considered to be good are capable of evil, and antagonists, on the contrary, can do good. The media texts used for analysis are far from unique, the same trend is reflected in *Shrek* (2001), and its subsequent parts (in the second film, the main villain is Fairy Godmother), a Russian animated series *Princesses* (2018) (the magic school principal is Koschei).

**Keywords:** fairy tale, Propp, functions, protagonist, antagonist, antihero, film, good, evil, media effects.

### 1. Introduction

Fairy tales have been organically woven into the process of educating children since ancient times. The mention of women telling children symbolic stories (myths) is present as back in history as in the dialogues of Plato (4-3 centuries BC). Since the 18th century AD, fairy tales have begun to rise scientific interest. After the publication of the collections of fairy tales by Charles Perrault, Brothers Grimm, it became obvious that the same plots in dozens of variants are repeated in French, Russian, German, Italian, etc. fairy tales. Thus a historical scientific interest in the origin and migration of fairy tales arose.

The fairy tale helps to develop the inner world of the child, teaches him/her to distinguish between good and evil, and is used by modern psychologists as a therapeutic tool. The victory of good over evil, faith in positive heroes are integral attributes of a fairy tale narrative. The tale expresses "the fantasy ideas of people about nature and the gods, as well as the person's dreams of an ideal life, good, perfection, etc" (Rybas, 2016: 113). However, in media texts of the 21st century (including feature and animated films), it happens that a character who has traditionally embodied evil, suddenly performs the functions of good, and vice versa.

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## 2. Materials and methods

The purpose of the study is to research how traditional antagonists or antiheroes are portrayed in modern film fairy tales; analyze possible interpretations of such representations. What way and for what purpose has the narrative of fairy tales in general and fairy tale characters in particular undergone radical metamorphoses in the 21st century? Methodology is the adapted method of analysis by V. Propp, including such informative elements of the narrative as characters and their functions. As a material for a qualitative study, two feature films produced by Disney company were taken: *Maleficent* (Disney, USA, 2014) and *The Last Warrior* (Disney, Yellow, Black & White, Russia/USA, 2017).

## 3. Discussion

Traditionally, there are five main semantic oppositions in fairy tales: life – death, good – evil, truth – falsehood, beauty – ugliness, sense – foolishness. "The meaning of good follows from the values of life and truth, therefore, good is understood as that which contributes to life, affirming its truth, and therefore, as something useful to a man ... Accordingly, evil is associated with death and falsehood" (Rybas, 2016: 126). A "good" hero (or a protagonist) represents good, and a "villain" – evil.

Let's start with the definitions of the terms "protagonist", "antagonist", "hero" and "antihero". The hero is a protagonist of a literary / cinema work, he/she is the bearer of the author's ideals, thoughts and feelings. The antagonist is an important character who is actively opposing the main character in achieving his goal (Electronic..., 2017). The protagonist is opposed by an antihero (a character who is absolutely opposite in beliefs, moral orientations, everyday behavior, etc.), i.e. the antagonist is entering into a fight against the protagonist" (Knigin, 2006).

However, some glossaries distinguish an antihero from an antagonist. An antihero is a type of a literary hero that occupies a central place in a work of art, but does not enjoy authors' sympathies, an antipode of a hero (Nikololyukin, 2001: 35). Usually an antihero incorporates not all the negative qualities but some of them (...) The concept of an antihero should not be confused with an antagonist" (Who..., 2016). "Antihero is a special type of literary hero, deliberately devoid of heroic signs, but occupying a dominant place in the work and to some extent acting as the author's agent (Knigin, 2006).

Accordingly, while a protagonist is a character who is represented as a role model, a model of human behavior, a bearer of aesthetic ideals, approved by the creator (Rusova, 2004), an antagonist is his enemy, adversary, who poses a threat to the hero's life, and his/her world. According to the classification of V. Propp, this is a villain. "His role is to disturb the peace of a happy family. To do harm, damage. A villain can be a snake, the devil, robbers, a witch, and a stepmother, etc." (Propp, 1928: 37).

The work of V.Y. Propp's *Morphology of the Fairy Tale* entered the world history of culture studies of the XX century as a classic example of structural analysis of not only fairy tales, but, ultimately, narrative texts in general (Propp, 1928). The ideas formulated in this book influenced the research of such prominent scientists as R. Bart, T. Todorov, R. Jakobson, C. Levi-Strauss and many others. It is worth noting that some scholars, of course, see certain exaggerations and limitations in the expanded interpretation of V. Propp's concept. However, it seems to us a valuable opportunity to use a theoretically sound structural diagram of the functions of the text of a fairy tale to analyze the narrative of modern film tales. Many scholars have applied narrative analysis patterns, described by Propp, to films and television programs so far. For instance, A.A. Berger (Berger, 1981) studied a series *Prisoner* (In: Adler, 1981), P. Wollen analysed the movie *North by Northwest* (Wollen, 1976), A.F. Parsa – *Titanic* (Parsa, 2004), et al.

## 4. Results

*Maleficent* is a rethought version of two texts simultaneously: the traditional European fairy tale *Sleeping Beauty* (the fairy tale published in 1697 by Charles Perrault, also later published by the Grimm brothers) and the 1959 animated Disney movie.

The "initial situation" of the film *Maleficent* by Propp is a confrontation between two countries – the kingdom of people and the wonderful country of Moors, which, contrary to its name, is endowed by nature with extraordinary beauty and magical creatures. At the beginning of the film, *Maleficent* appears as a young, mischievous, kind and beautiful fairy. However, visually she is drastically different from other Disney fairies, such as Ding-Ding (*Peter Pan*), Godmother

(*Cinderella*) or numerous Fairies of the cognominal animated series. Maleficent has wings and horns - which inevitably causes association with the demonic forces of darkness. Despite the fact that in pre-Christian religions, horns meant fertility, a connection with nature, the dignity of a deity (as an echo of prehistoric animal worship), in Christian iconography since the 12th to 13th centuries horns have become an integral part of the image of the devil, with bat's wings, horns, a tail or claws (Averintsev, Buseva-Davydova, 2017). In addition, the word's (*Maleficent*) definition is "working or productive of harm or evil: baleful" (Maleficent, 1828). The film scriptwriter Linda Woolverton admits in her interview that "the challenge was keeping her both things: both the hero and the villain. Really remembering that she's still a villain, even though we have to empathize with her and understand her plight. To walk that line was the biggest challenge" (Brown, 2014).

The viewer first encounters Stefan when he is caught as a thief, a boy sneaks into an enchanted forest to steal several precious crystals. The second impression is that he is very ambitious for the commoner – pointing to the castle, he tells Maleficent that he will someday live in this palace. Both details are harbingers of how Stefan's identity will unfold in the future. Gradually, Maleficent and Stefan become friends, the tender feeling is born, and on her 16th birthday the boy kisses the fairy. Then, without coherent explanation, a rather long separation follows. Maleficent is already an adult defender of her land, leads the battle against the attack of the king's troops and wounds him. The king, being at death, announces that he who will kill Maleficent will be his successor. Pretending to want to warn her of impending danger, Stefan comes to Maleficent, drugs her and cuts off her wings. Maleficent wakes up with pain, in the first fractions of a second – physical pain, and immediately – soul, because of Stefan's betrayal. As a reflection of her condition, the grass and trees turn gray, the colorful landscape turns into lifeless and gloomy. However, the next act of Maleficent is the merciful rescue of a raven trapped. A raven named Diaval, whom she can turn into any creature, becomes her assistant, her wings. The choice of an assistant and his name, of course, have a symbolic meaning: the raven, as a rule, is associated with death, in Russian folk tales, for example, he eats carrion, pecks the eyes of dead soldiers, etc.).

Meanwhile, Stefan becomes the king and, finally, the day of the christening of his daughter, Princess Aurora, comes. In a familiar tale, the witch's villainous act is that she curses the newborn, however, the death curse is mitigated by the gift of the last good fairy, who announces that the girl will not die, but will fall asleep with a magic dream, from which she will be awakened by a kiss of true love. In the film, Maleficent does not doom Aurora to death, only to a magical dream, she is also the one who leaves hope for awakening with a kiss.

Fairies, who are asked by the king to look after his daughter, are not the best nannies: they do not know how to feed the baby, they sleep soundly, instead of rocking the cradle. None other than Maleficent protects Aurora from the dangers of oversight of the incompetent and awkward "good" fairies who were supposed to guard the girl from her. She calls Aurora "beasty", but day after day warms to the girl. Perhaps, somewhat unexpectedly for the viewer, the growing Aurora mistakes Maleficent (a rather severe-looking lady) for her Fairy Godmother. On the day of her 16th birthday, Aurora announces to Maleficent that she would like to live with her. Naturally, the fairy nannies at the most inopportune moment tell the girl about the spell, upset Aurora escapes to the castle to meet her father, but for Stefan, this battle is not about his daughter. He briefly takes a glance at her, and returns to the thought that has been obsessed with for years: revenge. Aurora inevitably pricks her finger with a spindle and falls asleep. After failed attempts to cancel her own spell, Maleficent tries to save Aurora by organizing a "true love kiss"– she personally delivers Prince Phillip to the sleeping princess. And after his kiss proves to be ineffective, the kiss on the forehead by Maleficent, her motherly love wakes up the princess. Stefan again shows his cunning – he uses iron weapons, against which Maleficent is powerless. And only when Aurora comes to the rescue, freeing her wings, does Maleficent get a chance for salvation and victory in this battle. Aurora is crowned queen to unify the two kingdoms, peace reigns.

Adapting the morphology of the tale by V.Y. Propp, we can present the narrative of *Maleficent* as follows (Table 1).

**Table 1.** The narrative of *Maleficent* (2014).

Initial situation	The neighborhood of two countries – the kingdom of people and the wonderful country of Marshy swamps, which contrary to the name, nature endowed with extraordinary beauty and treasures.
The villain makes an attempt at reconnaissance.	As a teenager, Stefan secretly penetrates into the land of the swamps forbidden for people to steal something.
The villain learns something about his victim.	By chance, Stefan finds out about Maleficent's vulnerability: a touch of iron.
The villain tries to deceive the victim to get possession of him and his belongings.	Adult Stefan returns to the forest, making Maleficent believe that he is here to warn her of the danger, but he deceives her.
The victim unknowingly helps the villain by being deceived or influenced by the villain.	Maleficent trustingly drinks a potion and falls asleep on his shoulder.
The villain harms.	Stefan mutilates her: cuts off Maleficent's wings. He brings them to the old king as a sign of victory over Maleficent and becomes the heir to the throne.
This lack or misfortune is made known.	Maleficent wakes up with both physical and soul pain, her trust is betrayed.
The hero plans action against the villain.	Maleficent decides to permanently protect her land from people, erects a magic wall of impenetrable thorns.
The hero uses the magical agent.	Maleficent saves the raven, who becomes her "wings", her faithful servant.
The hero is transferred to the general location of the object of his mission/ quest.	Upon learning that her enemy hosts a celebration, Maleficent hurries to the king's castle.
The hero and villain join in direct combat	Maleficent does not doom Aurora to death, instead she curses her and disillusioned in love, bitterly adds that only a true love kiss can wake her up.
The villain is defeated.	The king was not physically harmed, but he is publicly humiliated. Stefan gives his daughter to be raised by three good fairies.
The initial misfortune or lack is set right.	Maleficent (at least temporarily) feels avenged.
The hero returns.	Maleficent returns to her country.
The hero is pursued.	She is being haunted by the king's troops.
The hero is rescued from pursuit.	She escapes persecution in the Moors.
The hero arrives home or elsewhere and is not recognized.	None other than Maleficent secretly watches over and saves Aurora from the dangers of oversight of the incompetent and awkward good fairies. Maleficent becomes her friend, Aurora calls her "Godmother".
A false hero makes false claims.	Prince Philipp, lost in the woods, is not an imposter, but he performs the function of a false hero, because both fairies, and at some point, Maleficent herself believes that he is the hero who will break the spell.
A difficult task is set for the hero.	On the day of her 16th birthday, Aurora inevitably pricks her finger and falls asleep. After failed attempts to cancel her own spell, Maleficent tries to save Aurora by organizing a "true love kiss", bringing Prince Philip to the sleeping princess.

The task is accomplished. The hero is recognized.	The kiss of the prince turns out to be ineffective. However it is Maleficent's motherly true love kiss that wakes the princess up.
The false hero/villain is exposed.	Maleficent is surrounded by soldiers. Stefan uses iron weapons, against which she is powerless. Aurora sees the true nature of her father – cruelty and an obsession with revenge.
The villain is punished.	Aurora comes to the rescue of Maleficent, freeing her wings, she can fly again, thus gaining a victory in this battle. Maleficent defeats Stephen.
The hero is married and crowned.	Aurora is crowned, peace between two lands.

Thus, Maleficent is in fact not the villain of the story, but the protagonist, she performs the *hero's* functions.

It should be recognized that such a distribution of functions is not monosemous. The correlation of other functions with the course of action is possible, too. However, from the point of view of their significance for the narrative, the chain built above seems to be the most integral. It should be remembered that V. Propp developed the original 31 functions on the basis of folk tales. "As for the grouping, it should first be said that not all fairy tales give all the functions. But this does not change the order of sequence in any way. The absence of some functions does not change the order of the others," said V. Propp (Propp, 1998: 21). It must be emphasized that V. Ya. Propp anticipated possible criticism of his methodology from those who would try to extrapolate it to any other texts: "it should be stipulated that this pattern applies only to folklore. It is not a feature of the fairy tale genre as such. Artificially created fairy tales are not subordinate to it" (Propp, 1998: 21). Nevertheless, we see that the narrative of *Maleficent* to a greater extent correlates with the Proppian functions than deviates from them.

The film critic A. Dolin describes *Maleficent* as an "ambiguous and unlike anything else" media product. Criticizing the slurred script, the psychological unmotivated behavior of almost all characters, the outrageously flat characters, he notes the important allusion used by the filmmakers – the choice of actress Angelina Jolie for the leading role. A superstar known for her large family and charity, Jolie is a "universal mother, an archetypal image who, as a result, conquers the grim appearance that is historically assigned to Maleficent. Yes, this is a fairy tale about a woman-devil – not without reason winged, black and horned, – but, like John Milton's, the devil is given a chance to prove by deed the advantage of honest darkness over a hypocritical light". The author aptly calls the achieved effect a "heretical dualism" (Dolin, 2014).

The challenge could not go unnoticed by the church. A media critic holding degrees in both in media and religious studies S.D. Greydanus argues that *Maleficent* subverts the Christian symbolism of *Sleeping Beauty* (Greydanus, 2014). His criticism is not aimed at fairy tale creative revisionism in general, but at the inversion of the original idea. The author calls this "central to Maleficent's ham-fisted subversion of the Christian symbolic world of *Sleeping Beauty*."

The author compares the battle scene in Disney's 1959 *Sleeping Beauty* with Disney's 2014 *Maleficent*. In 1959 version, Maleficent as "an explicitly satanic figure": with "all the powers of Hell" she transforms into a dragon to battle Prince Philip, who is armed by the good fairies with a "sword of truth" and a "shield of virtue" featuring a cross, which becomes "a pure allegory of good versus evil" (Greydanus, 2014). In the new interpretation, evil is personified not by Maleficent, but by King Stefan (an unquestionably good character in the original). In the film, he is transformed into a repulsive, cruel, ambitious monster. He abuses Maleficent because of the longing for power in the patriarchal system of the kingdom. It is important to note that the filmmakers focus on the situation: the old king does not have a son, therefore, his daughter will not be his heir, but the man to whom he will give her as a wife – in the patriarchal society, princesses serve only as a trophy, a step to the throne. Prince Philip, the true hero of the 1959 Disney movie, in *Maleficent* gets the role of an almost comic, useless character. The three "good" fairies, for some reason supporting King Stefan, are so ignorant and foolish that without the secret custody of Maleficent Aurora would have died in infancy. The critic is concerned that the cumulative effect of all these transformations is that the moral of the original fairy tale is turned inside out: the devilish villain is turned into a heroine victim.

Next, the second narrative, *The Last Warrior /Posledniy Bogatyr* will be rendered in terms of Propp's functions (Table, 2).

**Table 2.** The narrative of *The Last Warrior* (2017)

Initial situation	In the fairy-tale world, the hero Alesha Popovich is attacked by a witch who is able to take the guise of a white owl.
A member of the family leaves home.	(The viewer finds it out later, from Svetozar) The good wizard Svetozar "hides" a little son of Ilya Muromets, in the human world, leaving him in an orphanage.
A prohibition or rule is imposed on the hero.	Ivan is a cynical participant in a TV show about magicians and psychics, a trickster who earns money pretending to be a mentalist; he is warned by a mysterious old woman that he will find himself in another world and there he will stay.
This prohibition is broken.	Ivan, unwittingly, finds himself in the fairytale world of Belogorye.
The villain makes an attempt at reconnaissance.	Ivan's housekeeper (as the viewer finds out at the very end of the film) is not a simple woman – but the mother of the witch Varvara. Thus, it was through her that Varvara spied on him.
The villain learns something about his victim.	Varvara received information about Ivan from her mother.
The villain tries to deceive the victim to get possession of him and his belongings.	In Belogorye, Ivan is brought to the chambers of Dobrynia, he accepts him kindly, orders Varvara to treat his nephew as a dear guest.
The victim unknowingly helps the villain by being deceived or influenced by the villain.	Ivan believes Dobrynia.
The villain harms.	Varvara imprisons Ivan.
This lack or misfortune is made known.	In prison, Ivan meets the captive Koschei the Immortal, Baba Yaga and Vasilisa (the frog), learns about the hidden magical Sword-Kladenets.
The hero plans action against the villain.	Ivan escapes along with Koschei, Baba Yaga and Vasilisa to search for the Sword.
The hero takes the road.	Ivan sets off in search of the Sword, because it must help bring him home to the real world.
The hero is tested, interrogated, and as a result receives either a magical agent or a helper.	Koschei, Yaga, and Vasilisa are his magical helpers.
The hero uses the magical agent.	Three magic assistants are joined by Vodyanoy.
The hero is transferred to the general location of the object of his mission/quest.	The "team", overcoming various obstacles, approaches the place where the Sword is hidden.
The hero and villain join in direct combat.	Varvara and her warriors hunt them and finally take prisoners.
A difficult task is set for the hero.	Varvara forces Ivan to search for the Sword among hundreds of other swords on the field.
The task is accomplished.	Ivan finds the Sword.
The hero is recognized.	All the characters, including Ivan himself, now have no doubt that he is the last warrior – Ilya Muromets' son.
The false hero/villain is exposed.	Dobrynya is exposed. The collusion of Dobrynya and Koschei is exposed, however, his accomplices (Dobrynya and Varvara) deceive Koschei. Ivan,

	using his sword, opens a "portal" to his world and flees from the battlefield, however, he returns to save his new friends.
The villain is punished.	In the final battle, Koschei breaks the crystal, destroying thereby both immortals: Dobrynya and himself. All enchanted warriors come to life.
The hero is married and crowned.	Ivan and Vasilisa go to meet her parents.

It can be safely asserted that female characters of *The Last Warrior* manifest superiority over male ones. There is a clear parallel between two media texts in female character representation. Some scholars perceive *Maleficent* as a reflection of the philosophy of ecofeminism, in contrast to the animated Disney films of the 20th century, which reinforced the patriarchal way. Ecofeminism draws an analogy between the exploitation of nature and women in a patriarchal Western society, emphasizing their philosophical unity. The main goal of the movement is to bring the world to its original harmony by putting an end to discrimination against women (Feminism and Ecofeminism in *Maleficent*).

Reflection of feminism is a cross-cutting theme in *The Last Warrior*, too. In both films, the main female characters are endowed with power and intelligence, which is why they are superior to men in everything. *Maleficent* bravely leads the army to protect her country from the attack of the greedy and aggressive king's army; after the betrayal of a loved one, after the allegorical "rape" (circumcision of her wings), she finds the strength to recover, moreover, she is so strong in spirit that she admits her guilt (the curse of Aurora) and tries to fix it. The antagonist Varvara in *The Last Warrior* is both a strategist and a warrior at the same time. She personally conquers all the heroes, directs the intentions and actions of Dobrynya. Vasilisa is also a warrior girl; at first she treats Ivan with contempt and scorn because of his apparent ineptitude. Baba Yaga, who often plays the role of a magical assistant in Russian folk tales, is indispensable for the implementation of the "heroic" plan – only she was able to attract Vodyanoy to help. The final duel of Varvara and Vasilisa is shown much more spectacular than the fight between male characters: Ivan and Dobrynya. Thus, the patriarchal dichotomy between the lifeless, dependent, passive woman and the active man, destroying all obstacles in his path, is violated.

Another parallel that lays between the narratives of the two films is the motive of atonement and sacrifice. *Maleficent* goes to Stefan's castle to save Aurora, although she realizes that it might be deadly dangerous for her. In *The Last Warrior*, at first Vodyanoy covers for his friends to retreat, and in the end Koschei sacrifices himself, thereby helping Ivan to win. That is, the Christian postulate that "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends" (John 15:13-15), is realized in the film by a character whose name, appearance, "background", known to both the hero and the audience, is directly connected with evil. Representatives of the church in Russia and the United States are unanimous regarding "inverted tales". "You do not need to have special expertise to see how the concepts of good are blurred in this film and evil and painfully known to us (but not to our children!) heroes acquire a new look: ... Dobrynya, it seemed, was completely unaware that his wife is an evil witch. But all of a sudden, he became an evil creature himself. Good turned out to be evil. Moreover, it turns out that all the inhabitants of a fairy country are on the side of evil. Everyone, except for evil forces – or rather, in the film – "good", in evil guise" (Lukyanenko, 2017). Moreover, Koschei's act of sacrifice is not just a twisted fairy tale – it might be seen as a mockery of the Christian understanding of good and evil, – argues the author and comes to the categorical conclusion that the film "purposefully contains everything that can contribute to the decay of the soul and the distortion of the Russian mentality. It includes propaganda of stupidity, the presentation of evil as good, and representation of making a deal with evil as something completely harmless, creation of false role models" (Lukyanenko, 2017).

Marina Zhigalova-Ozkan, the head the Walt Disney Company CIS, in her interview said that *The Last Warrior* is not just another premiere for Disney: "For us, this project is strategic: we want to continue the tradition of adaptation of Russian fairy tales, begun by the great directors Alexander Rowe and Alexander Ptushko" (Afanasjeva, 2016: 1). This statement, however, did not justify itself. As Rowe's work researcher N.Y. Sputnitskaya rightly notes, "the therapeutic role of the Soviet fairy tale is based primarily on creating a model of the world order, educating the person about the world. There are no mimicking characters in Rowe's films. All the characters are colorful

.. .. But the main character is a subject of sympathy, the center of the narrative" ([Sputnitskaya, 2010: 187](#)).

## 5. Conclusion

In both media text, we observe the erosion of the traditional binary oppositions of the tale – those that were considered marked positively (hero, Varvara-krasa, good king), perform negative functions and vice versa.

Indeed, both films use a postmodern narrative device – to turn traditional heroes into villains, and villains into heroes. This gives the viewer the opportunity to take a fresh look at the characters – heroes whom we have considered to be good are capable of evil, and antagonists, on the contrary, can do good. "Postmodernism turns to cultural heritage of the past as an object of the game acquisition, ironic allusions, and situational rethinking (while using it in various contexts), the source of stylization and the eclectic combination of its forms ([Popov et al, 2016](#)). The media texts used for analysis are far from unique, the same trend is reflected in *Shrek*, 2001, and its subsequent parts (in the second film, the main villain is Fairy Godmother), a Russian animated series "Princesses", 2018 (the magic school principal is Koschei).

Of the five key questions of the well-known mass communication model (Who says What, in Which channel, to Whom, with What effect?), the most challenging is the latter. Cases when researchers could give an answer to it are extremely rare. As a rule, this is possible for those whose research tasks include studying the reaction of the audience (for example, using the focus group method after watching a commercial / a pilot of a new TV series, etc.). How to evaluate the impact of a specific media text on the development of the most complex tissue of a child's value orientations? The direct and delayed effect of such an effect?

Using the method of forecasting the impact of media products on the development of a child, psychologists and educators argue that "turning upside down the requirements in affirming goodness or mixing ideas about mercy and compassion that modern "educational tools" – even new fairy tales provide (...) are detrimental for the formation of not only ideas of good and evil in the children's mind, but also for the personal and moral-spiritual development of the child" ([Abramenkova, 2007: 152](#)).

We can not but agree with the opinion of professionals in the field of cinema that the first function of children's cinema is the development of the worldview of children. "The coordinate system, based on the issues of good and evil, admiration and contempt, sympathy and disgust, should be embedded in young minds and souls, just as a child learns to walk, speak and understand the world around. It's not without reason that folk tales were always based on such a coordinate system, and at an older age - adventure and fantasy. The second function of children's cinematography is the construction of ideals. From the screens, children perceive the image of the hero, a model of behavior" ([Sidorenko, Matrosova, 2016: 96](#)).

If a fairy tale is "a system of possibilities for realizing meanings and affirming values" ([Rybas, 2016: 115](#)), the key question remains: why out of all the possibilities for realizing meanings does modern cinema choose those in which positive values are embodied by characters traditionally considered to be the personification of evil?

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