Reconstructing the 'Witch' Image in Fairy Tales: Exploring Katherine Arden's Winternight Trilogy

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Abstract

Fairy tales, a genre that offers an enchanted adventure and depicts the struggle between good and bad forces, has fascinated and entertained adults as well as children since time immemorial. Witches, the antagonist of most of the fairy tales are portrayed as the epitome of evil: wicked and scary old crones who abduct and devour children. Contemporary fairy tales, in contrast to conventional ones, offer an entirely different portrayal of witches as young and courageous women signifying virtue. The witches in fairy tales who were pictured as a threat to the heroine or hero are now presented as central characters around which the entire plot revolves. This paper attempts to examine how such a shift happened by analysing Katherine Arden's Winternight Trilogy, a fairy tale consisting of novels *The Bear and the Nightingale* (2017), *The Girl in the Tower* (2018) and *The Winter of the Witch* (2019) to understand the relevance of contemporary fairy tales in reconstructing the image of witch from a havoc creator to a saviour. It also seeks to study how the depiction of witches in fairy tales has evolved from a marginalized position to a central figure over time and its significance in the present scenario.

Keywords: Fairy Tale, Witch, Virtue, Evil, Reconstruction.