

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF A SELECTION OF
HUNGARIAN FOLKTALES IN ENGLISH

by

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B.A., The University of Alberta, 2003

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in

THE FACULTY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

(Children's Literature)

October 2007

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Abstract

A significant body of Hungarian folktales in English exists, but these tales are difficult to locate, out of print, and/or excluded from international folktale anthologies. Critics have attributed this lack of prominence to linguistic isolation or to issues surrounding translation and economic challenges in today's publishing world.

This thesis examines a selected body of Hungarian folktales in English. Specifically, it presents the findings of my extensive search for tales in translation and for scholarship on these tales; it offers a system of classifying and describing the selected tales and provides a comparative analysis of variants and types; and it offers an argument for anthologizing tales for a Canadian and/or Hungarian Canadian reading audience.

Twenty tales (four variants within each tale category), chosen according to the selection criteria, comprise the body of primary material and are grouped according to tale categories – fairy tales, humorous tales, animal tales, anecdotes, and historical legends. In considering the variants of a selection of tale types and their particular references to Hungarian culture, this study illuminates the persistence of certain Hungarian folktales while highlighting their cultural distinctiveness.

Ultimately, by creating awareness of this unique body of tales, my hope is for Canadian readers to be made aware of Hungary's culture and its folk literature, and for the tales to find their way into collections of multicultural folktales, to be released from their isolation, and to join other well-known international folktales on bookshelves around the world.

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Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to several people who have supported me during the process of completing this thesis.

Specifically, I would like to thank my thesis advisor, Judy Brown, for her consistent support, patience, and invaluable editorial input. Special thanks go to Judith Saltman, MACL Chair during my time in the Program, Margot Filipenko, my directed studies supervisor and thesis committee member, and Theresa Rogers, current MACL Chair.

In addition, I would like to thank the Hungarian community in Edmonton and Vancouver – the people within these communities contributed to the rich memories I hold of growing up as a first generation Hungarian-Canadian. Deep appreciation goes to my Koma, Susanna Bíró, who has fostered, influenced, and shared my love of Hungarian folklore.

To my parents, Ildikó and Paul, thank you for choosing to teach us about our cultural heritage, for passing down your traditions, for involving us in the Hungarian community, and for your love and support.

Thank you, Geneviève Brisson, my friend and colleague, for your good conversation, friendship, and thoughtfulness from day one of the MACL program.

Finally, I would like to thank Jordon Starling, for his interest in Hungarian culture, for his support of my endeavours, and for his love, which has been a source of inspiration from the beginning.

“The folklore of Hungary is richly based in the national character. It mirrors the many-sided texture of the Hungarian peasant imagination: its simple belief in the supernatural, its faith in the power of good and evil and its ability to use the splendid release of humour to make the business of ordinary daily life bearable.

*It is, above all, the humour in these tales that appeals to me most. The villains are certainly villainous, yet their badness is human and recognizable so that one can retain some small shred of sympathy for them; the heroes are heroic without bombast, because their basic goodness is not of the shining-armour type: they, too, are a little too human for that.” -Val Biro, *The Honest Thief**

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

As a first generation Canadian, I have felt a strong connection to my Hungarian heritage from a young age. As I was growing up in Edmonton, my parents chose to enroll my siblings and me in various cultural activities, including Saturday Hungarian school, scouts, and folk dancing. All three of these activities introduced me to Hungarian language, culture, and folklore. At Hungarian school, geography, history, and language were all components of our education and provided background information about Hungary and its culture. This is information I am grateful for and use to this day. In Hungarian scouts, we would put on skits for the campfire each night, and often act out folktales – usually humorous tales, jokes, or historical legends. Specifically, I remember learning the tale of the White Stag, a historical legend describing the migration and formation of the Hungarian people centuries ago. The antiquity of the characters and story elements struck me, and it was fascinating to learn about Hungary's rich history by way of an engaging tale.

Where scouts taught history and outdoor skills, folk dancing fostered understanding of village life. Today, Hungarian folk dancers in Hungary and Canada work at preserving the dances from specific villages, as they were performed many years ago. As a result of folklorists researching a village, its people, and its traditions, these dances are still performed today in dance camps and *táncházak* or dance houses, both in Hungary and in Canada. Such research has also shown that a rural life has been a reality for many Hungarians in Hungary throughout Hungary's history. Even today, Hungary's folklore (pottery, crafts, music, song, and dance) is rich and very much alive. The

landscape—the pastoral setting, where people work hard on their land and relax by visiting with friends and family, enjoying each other’s company over good food, drink, and revelry—is equally important. The strong presence of Hungarian heritage still exists today, particularly in villages in former Hungary, or Transylvania, where the traditions of the Hungarian people are still celebrated.

Despite being familiar with the culture, I had never traveled to Hungary until 2001, when I decided it was time to explore my roots first-hand and meet relatives I had only ever heard about. I grew up listening to my parents and their friends speak Hungarian, though it was common practice for us to respond in English; after all, we were growing up in a primarily English-speaking part of Canada. As children, we had a few storybooks in Hungarian, but looking back, I think it would have been enjoyable and educational to read Hungarian stories in English. As a teenager, I began to consider ideas of cultural identity and what it means to call myself Hungarian. Is it just that my parents were born in Hungary? Or is it my dedication to preserving the traditions of their former home? Or is it simply that I identify myself as a Hungarian-Canadian?

As an active member of the Hungarian-Canadian community, even today, I am committed to preserving the culture and educating others about the traditions of Hungary as much as possible. Through folk dance research, practice, and performance, our dance group’s aim is to create awareness among Hungarian and non-Hungarian communities. This is also a major aim of many Hungarian organizations in Canada.

The New Hungarian Voice (NHV), a publication devoted to the promotion of Hungarian culture, includes, among a wide range of articles, a folktale in each issue, which I either translate and/or adapt. I have been a member of the *NHV* since 2004. The

NHV team is not limited in its scope; members of the committee organize community events, cultural performances, historical exhibits (such as the month-long 50th anniversary commemoration of the 1956 Revolution, held at the Vancouver Public Library, Central Branch in October 2006), and other major projects such as translating important and lengthy documents to make them available for English speakers. The *NHV* team believes in the importance of making information available in English to those interested in Hungarian culture. Children should be no exception, and one way to create awareness in them is by exposing them to a wide range of stories.

When I became interested in studying literature during my undergraduate years, and more recently, during my current graduate work in children's literature, my interest in Hungarian folktales has also grown. The project of discovering the range of Hungarian folktales available in English began, and acquiring illustrated versions, collections, as well as critical works about the tales became a slow and ongoing endeavour, especially since many of these books are out of print and not readily available in libraries or bookstores.

This project emerges from my desire to study a selected body of Hungarian folktales in more detail. Specifically, the goals of this study are three-fold: to present the finding of my extensive search for tales in translation and for scholarship on these tales; to offer a system of classifying and describing the selected tales and to provide a comparative analysis of variants and types; and to offer an argument for anthologizing tales for a Canadian and/or Hungarian Canadian reading audience.

Upon examining the collections and illustrated tales, I realized that a very large number of tales exists, and variants of the same tale appear in different collections. The

number of tales was too large to contend with in this study's scope, and it became apparent that some narrowing of the data was necessary. I divided the body of tales into two categories: single, illustrated folktales, and folktale collections (illustrations not present or minimal). Approximately eighteen illustrated folktales exist in English, and most were published between 1960 and 2000. Interestingly, within these illustrated tales, certain cultural elements (folk art designs, traditional costumes, and peasant/village scenes) seem to recur despite differing illustration styles. These elements are what provide readers of all ages with a glimpse of what life used to be, and is still, in many cases, like for Hungarians. The illustrated tales chosen for this study are important as they are distinctively Hungarian, providing a richer experience of the tales and of the culture.

Culture, as defined by Perry Nodelman, is "the entire range of texts, actions, and artifacts through which a social group – a particular class or a national or local group – expresses and confirms its meanings and values to itself and others" (243). The selection of folktales demonstrates, through text and illustration, the traditional actions and artifacts of this national group. In addition, the selected tales, both with and without illustrations, have the aspect of translation in common. That is, they have been translated from Hungarian at some point. This is not to say that the tales do not have other cultural variants – this is entirely possible, as folklore is not confined to national or political borders. However, I argue in this study that there is something uniquely Hungarian about these tales that is only communicated through signs in the text and illustration.

This study ultimately makes a case for the creation of an anthology of illustrated Hungarian folktales in translation for young Canadian readers. Twenty tales, chosen

according to the selection criteria, comprise the body of primary material and are grouped according to tale categories. A review of critical works on Hungarian folktales helps provide context for the study; in addition, critical works pertaining to specific aspects of folklore studies serve to ground the comparative parts of this thesis in critical theory. For example, the discussion around illustration and culture considers theories that examine both illustration in children's books (such as those of Penni Cotton, Perry Nodelman, Maria Nikolajeva, Patricia Cianciolo, Ken and Sylvia Marantz, John Stewig, and others) and cultural theory (Nodelman, Stuart Hall, and Anthony Smith). In considering the variants of a selection of tale types and their particular references to Hungarian culture, my hope is to illuminate the persistence of certain Hungarian folktales while highlighting their distinctiveness.

Following this introductory chapter, which provides an overview of this study's content, purpose, and structure as well as some personal background and connection to Hungarian culture, Chapter Two discusses the primary materials and defines the criteria applied to the selection of tales in this study. Also in the second chapter, I evaluate, analyze, and synthesize secondary sources related to Hungarian folktales. These critical works in Hungarian folktale research are organized chronologically and provide a context for this study.

Chapter Three defines the folktale categories—fairy tales, humorous tales, animal tales, anecdotes, and historical legends—underpinning my thesis. In this chapter, I also define the elements of comparison used for each tale category, or grouping—beginnings, endings, motifs, and illustrations. Another important aspect of this chapter is the examination of critical issues surrounding folktales as literary objects. The classification

systems and critical issues discussed in chapter three serve as the theoretical paradigm for chapters four to eight.

Chapters four to eight are primarily close readings and detailed comparisons of variants within each tale grouping. Definitions of each tale category draw upon Gyula Ortutay and Linda Dégh's established definitions from Chapter Three. Chapters four to eight are structured similarly, and given that text and illustration can hardly be separated in picturebook analysis, illustration is given some consideration within each of these sections. As mentioned earlier, the focus of these chapters is to look at differences and similarities among tales variants within a particular category as well as the role illustration plays in depictions of Hungarian culture.

Chapter Nine, the conclusion, includes observations from the comparative chapters, four to eight, and opportunities for further research related to this study. I also argue for the creation of an anthology of Hungarian folktales in English, anticipated challenges of such a project (funding, permissions, time, translation), the shape of the anthology (for example, introductory essay for each section), the consequences of, or expected response(s) to, having such an anthology, and finally, a working title for the anthology.

This study, I believe, shows the evolution of these folktales: their roots in oral tradition, their collection and transcription, their translation, their adaptation (through words and pictures), their migration to other parts of the world, and their accessibility to a wider body of young readers. This change in readership results not only in the development of creativity and literacy through reading, but also in cultural awareness and the development of empathy in child readers. Today, many of these tales are difficult to

locate, and the act of pulling them all together in an illustrated anthology would be invaluable. Such an anthology would help promote multiculturalism in Canada and create awareness of a body of literature, Hungarian folktales, that is so often ignored in world folktale collections. In her book, *Folktales of Hungary*, Linda Dégh describes Hungary as a “racial and linguistic island between the Balkan and the Baltic states” (v) – a possible explanation for the lack of Hungarian folktales translated into English. It is my hope that this study sparks interest and further research in Hungarian folklore, so that Canadian children may have access to stories from that part of the world and, by extension, gain an understanding of another culture and its richness.

Ultimately, by creating awareness of this unique body of tales, my hope is for readers of Hungarian folktales, and especially child readers, to be made aware of the culture and its folk literature, and for the tales to find their way into collections of multicultural anthologies of folktales. At present, they are noticeably absent, and this neglect does a disservice to a group of stories that are, as Val Biro writes in *The Honest Thief*, “richly based in the national character..., [that mirror] the many-sided texture of the Hungarian peasant imagination: its simple belief in the supernatural, its faith in the power of good over evil, and its ability to use the splendid release of humour to make the business of ordinary life bearable” (n.pag.).

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Primary Sources

Hungarian folktales are rarely included in world folktale collections for children. One possible explanation is that they are not readily available. In fact, relatively few Hungarian folktales exist in translation. A preliminary search through the University of British Columbia and Vancouver Public Library systems returned fewer than eight of the single, illustrated folktales and folktale collections ever published. Most, however, are out of print and/or rare and only available for purchase through the Advanced Book Exchange online.

The folktale chronologies provided in the appendices of this paper are as complete as possible, though I acknowledge that other tales and/or collections may exist that are out of print or simply unavailable online or through the UBC or VPL catalogues. I will provide an overview of available primary material, Hungarian folktales in English, to demonstrate my point: that there is a lack of translated Hungarian folktales, and that those translated are largely inaccessible.

In total, there are seventeen collections of Hungarian folktales published in English, with publication dates ranging from 1886 to 2001. Nine of these collections appeared between 1960 and 1990, with only five published in the last fifteen years. The number of single, illustrated Hungarian folktales is comparable at eighteen. The earliest English language picturebook, *The Three Poor Tailors*, by author/illustrator Victor Ambrus, was published in 1965, much later than the first unillustrated collection of tales published in the late nineteenth century. Again, as with the collections in translation, the

majority of these illustrated tales were published between 1965 and 1981, with only four appearing after 1990, the most recent being Celia Barker Lottridge's *The Little Rooster and the Diamond Button* in 2001. Nine of these books were published in the United States, with four coming out of Britain, and three from Canada. Full bibliographic information appears in Appendix B.

In this study, one of my goals has been to determine a core sample of Hungarian folktales, which proved a challenging task, as many of the collections contain up to forty tales. I tried to choose tales from a range of categories and ultimately decided on the following: fairy tales, humorous tales, animal tales, anecdotes, and historical legends. Definitions for these categories are given in Chapter Three, along with an explanation of the process by which I arrived at these categories and their definitions. To establish and maintain the comparative framework of this study, it was important to choose tales with several variants. And to provide a more uniform study of each, I chose five tales—one for each category—each tale within the category to have three other variants. I also included at least one illustrated version in each tale grouping, though the animal tale grouping is composed entirely of illustrated folktales.

Five criteria determined the selection of tales for the folktale sample. These items are as follows and also appear (for easier reference) in Appendix C:

- 1) The tales must be Hungarian, with distinct textual or visual representations of the country and/or its culture. Those without distinctive Hungarian representations give source notes rooting the tale in Hungarian culture.
- 2) A given tale should be chosen from one of the main categories: fairy tale, humorous tale, animal tale, anecdote, and historical legend.

- 3) The chosen tale for each category needs at least three other variants to adequately facilitate a comparative framework.
- 4) Each grouping needs to include at least one single, illustrated version, or folktale in picturebook format.
- 5) Each grouping also needs to include at least one variant that has a child audience in mind.

Since this study focuses on Hungarian folktales, it has been important to include authors of Hungarian origin¹. However, I have chosen to include tales by non-Hungarian authors as well, provided the source explicitly identifies the tale as Hungarian. This is the case with Celia Barker Lottridge's *The Little Rooster and the Diamond Button*, a "lively retelling of [a] traditional Hungarian folktale," according to the front matter. I have included this tale in the core sample because, as an adaptation by a non-Hungarian author, it contributes to a richer comparative discussion. Similarly, *The Little Rooster's Diamond Penny* by Marina McDougall (1945) is a bilingual book, its text in both English and Hungarian, of a well-known folktale in which the protagonist is an animal. Though visual and textual cultural distinctiveness are absent in this book, it is connected to Hungarian culture through language.

The following charts organize the primary materials selected for this study according to title, author, source, and presence of illustration:

¹ In most cases, biographical information is included with each illustrated tale. Where this information has been omitted, a biographical search on the Internet has determined whether the author is Hungarian or not, and what connection he or she has to the culture.

Table 1.1
Fairy Tales – Selected Variants

Title	Author(s)	Source	Illustrations
“The Student Who Was Forcibly Made King”	Rev. W. Henry Jones & Lewis L. Kropf	collection - <i>Folk-Tales of the Magyars</i> (1886)	no
“The Student Who Was Forced To Be King”	Gyula Illyés	collection - <i>Once Upon a Time: Forty Hungarian Folk-tales</i> (1964)	no
<i>The Student Who Became King in spite of Himself</i>	François Colos	picturebook - <i>The Student Who Became King in spite of Himself</i> (1974)	yes
“How a Student Became a King”	Irma Molnár	collection - <i>One-Time Dog Market in Buda</i> (2001)	no

Table 1.2
Humorous Tales – Selected Variants

Title	Author(s)	Source	Illustrations
“The Wishes”	Rev. W. Henry Jones & Lewis L. Kropf	collection - <i>Folk-Tales of the Magyars</i> (1886)	no
“Three Wishes”	Gyula Illyés	collection - <i>Once Upon a Time: Forty Hungarian Folk-tales</i> (1964)	no
<i>Janko’s Wish</i>	Judy Varga	picturebook - <i>Janko’s Wish</i> (1969)	yes
“Three Wishes”	Elek Benedek	collection - <i>The Tree that Reached the Sky</i> (1988)	yes- one

Table 1.3
Animal Tales – Selected Variants

Title	Author(s)	Source	Illustrations
<i>The Little Cockerel</i>	Victor Ambrus	picturebook - <i>The Little Cockerel</i> (1968)	yes
<i>The Little Cock</i>	Joseph Domjan & Jeanne B. Hardendorff	Picturebook - <i>The Little Cock</i> (1969)	yes
<i>The Little Rooster's Diamond Penny</i>	Marina McDougall	bilingual picturebook - <i>The Little Rooster's Diamond Penny</i> (1978)	yes
<i>The Little Rooster and the Diamond Button</i>	Celia Barker Lottridge	picturebook - <i>The Little Rooster and the Diamond Button</i> (2001)	yes

Table 1.4
Anecdotes – Selected Variants

Title	Author(s)	Source	Illustrations
"The Dog Market in Buda"	Rozsika Schwimmer	collection - <i>Tisza Tales</i> (1928)	yes - two
"A Deal that Went to the Dogs"	Linda Dégh	collection - <i>Folktales of Hungary</i> (1965)	no
"Only One Dog Market in Buda"	Peggy Hoffmann & Gyuri Biro	collection - <i>The Money Hat and other Hungarian Folk Tales</i> (1969)	yes - one
"One-Time Dog Market at Buda"	Irma Molnár	collection - <i>One-Time Dog Market at Buda</i> (2001)	yes - one

Table 1.5
Historical Legends – Selected Variants

Title	Author	Source	Illustrations
<i>The White Stag</i>	Kate Seredy	illustrated chapter book - <i>The White Stag</i> (1970)	yes
“The Enchanted Stag”	Albert Wass	collection - <i>Selected Hungarian Legends</i> (1971)	yes - one
<i>The Miraculous Hind</i>	Elizabeth Cleaver	picturebook - <i>The Miraculous Hind</i> (1973)	yes
“The Legend of the White Stag”	Irma Molnár	collection - <i>One-Time Dog Market at Buda</i> (2001)	no

Secondary Sources: Hungarian Folklore

An extensive search in the University of British Columbia databases, as well as a lengthy consultation with Joanne Naslund, a research specialist in children’s literature at the UBC Education Library, yielded a small body of secondary sources related to Hungarian folktales. Though just a few scholarly articles have been published on the subject, a larger number of books have been produced. To place my study in the context of previous research dealing with topics in Hungarian folklore, the existing literature is reviewed chronologically in this section of the chapter.

The earliest scholarly work in English on Hungarian folktales is Rev. W. Henry Jones’ and Lewis L. Kropf’s *The Folk-tales of the Magyars*, published in 1889. This source is a collection of folktales, translated and edited, with detailed notes accompanying each tale. These notes compare the anthologized tales to the folktales of other nations. However, in the introduction, Jones and Kropf also give a history of Hungary and its people as well as a list of Hungarian folktale collections to the date of

publication, which amounted to 240 tales. In his extended introduction, Jones makes an important argument about the lack of critical attention paid to this body of literature:

The great difficulty in considering these tales—in common with the Finn, Esthonian, and Lapp—is the language; and the aim of the present translation is but to be as literal as possible in its rendering of the stories; there being no attempt whatever made to polish or beautify the tales, but simply an endeavour to reproduce as near as may be the stories as told by the people; in many cases, especially with regard to the Székely stories, this has been a work of very great difficulty, on account of the dialect, and must plead for the many shortcomings in the translations. (Jones xxiv)

A lengthy section explaining the significance of certain characters, such as giants, fairies, and witches, as well as of beliefs, superstitions, and special days, grounds this source in the tales, while drawing at the same time upon the traditions of Hungarian culture. Jones credits the paper “Mythological Elements in Székely Folk-lore and Folk-life” as his source. By combining a selection of primary sources with comparative notes, Jones and Kropf help place the tales in an international context and illuminate them for the purposes of critical study.

Jeremiah Curtin’s *Myths and Folk-tales of the Russians, Western Slavs, and Magyars*, published by Little, Brown, and Company in 1890, is less rigorous in its critical material, and looks briefly at Hungary’s political history, while selecting only six tales² in total as a sample of the country’s folk literature. Curtin’s bibliography cites many of the

² “The Poor Man, and the King of the Crows,” “The Useless Wagoner,” “Mirko, the King’s Son,” “The Reed Maiden,” “Kiss Miklos, and the Green Daughter of the Green King,” and “The Hedgehog, the Merchant, the King, and the Poor Man.”

same sources as Jones' does; however, by including even a small number of Hungarian folktales, he allows for awareness of their existence in an English language audience.

It seems there was a lull in publication of critical works in English until 1955, when Gyula Ortutay's article, "The Science of Folklore in Hungary between World War One and Two and during the Period Subsequent to the Liberation," appeared in the journal *Acta Ethnographica*. This dense, academic, and lengthy (83-page) essay has no headings and lacks an accessible organizational scheme. Ortutay's ideas are significant to folklore research and grand in scale, but go beyond what this study intends to explore. I, therefore, will not engage these ideas in this study but note them here for their contribution to the study of Hungarian folklore. Ortutay also surveys the major scholars of this field and their contributions to the development of folklore research. In addition, he examines the mistakes in interpretation made by Hungarian researchers as well as the "various erroneous western doctrines, e.g. the psychoanalysis" applied to the interpretation of texts (26). The objectives of Ortutay's essay are summarized in the final lines: "We hope to have given above a concise survey of the history of the science of folklore in Hungary during the last decades including the post-liberation era, and we trust we have conveyed to the reader a comprehensive picture of the problems, debates, controversies and results of those years" (81). Though my project is a literary study rather than a survey, Ortutay's research provides pertinent cultural information that gives a context for a study of this nature. His work is influential in the history of Hungarian folk research and marks the beginning of a fruitful period of publication in the field of Hungarian folklore.

Agnes Kovacs' authoritative article, "The Hungarian Folktale-Catalogue in Preparation," published in 1955 in *Acta Ethnographica*, describes the various attempts of folklorists at cataloguing Hungarian folktales over the years, outlining the works, the authors, details of their projects, their successes and shortcomings. Kovacs contends that, in the mid-twentieth century, 6000 tales comprised the body of Hungarian folktales. She explains the purpose of her article as follows:

The tale-catalogue...wants to present to scholars of folklore within and without Hungary the complete material of the Hungarian folktale, viz. the texts of folktales (a) published in anthologies of folk-poetry, (b) issued as publications of philological texts, (c) printed in ethnographical, linguistic, literary and sociographical etc. works, reviews and periodicals, (d) registered in the manuscript-collections of the Ethnographical Museum, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, etc., or (f) hidden as manuscripts in the possession of private collectors. The texts are to be arranged in accordance with Aarne-Thompson's internationally accepted system, indicating, within that framework, the characteristic features of the Hungarian folktales in respect of construction, episodes, and motifs. (443)

This document would be a key source, as it specifically relates to folktale analysis and looks at the characteristics of Hungarian folktales. However, despite searching databases such as Academic Search Premier and others where literature and/or folkloric topics appear, I was only able to locate an incomplete version of the document. Then, in an e-mail correspondence, Linda Dégh, an author, folklorist, and professor at the University of

Indiana, wrote the following in answer to my question concerning a completed version of Kovacs' "The Hungarian Folktale-Catalogue in Preparation":

The Hungarian Folktale Catalogue (vols. 1-12) was published several years ago, only the last concluding volume hasn't been finished yet. Nevertheless the volumes are available on order, from the Folklore Research Institute in Budapest. The materials, by the way, were incorporated into the new *The Types of International Folktales* in 3 vols. by Hans-Jorg Uther ... Agnes Kovacs (who died 10 years ago) was related to the great story collector-teller Elek Benedek. (n.pag.)

My search for this document involved several e-mail enquires to the Folklore Institute as well as an Interlibrary Loan request at UBC. What I learned is that this document was published in 12 separate volumes, available by individual request. Due to time restraints, I was not able to collect all 12 volumes for use in this study. I did, however, obtain Hans-Jorg Uther's *The Types of International Folktales*. As Linda Dégh mentions in her e-mail correspondence, the materials are incorporated, meaning the book combines thousands of international folktales. Again, the time constraints did not allow me to search these dense and lengthy volumes for the five tale types selected for this study. It would, however, be useful for subsequent studies similar to this one to obtain and refer to Kovacs' "Hungarian Folk-Tale Catalogue."

In the following year, 1956, Tekla Dömötör published "Principal Problems of the Investigation on the Ethnography of the Industrial Working Class in Hungary." This article is very much ideologically driven and written in an ethnographic vein. It deals with ideas of the working class in relation to Hungarian folklore and focuses primarily on

folk songs; furthermore, it sheds light on peasant life, and since many Hungarian folktales are also about peasant life, the information is useful to the researcher of such tales.

Unlike Dömötör, Linda Dégh is primarily concerned with folktales and their oral transmission. Dégh's essay, "Some Questions of the Social Function of Storytelling," published in 1958 in *Acta Ethnographica*, argues that "the social background is of cardinal importance in the research into folktales, for their sense, development, gain and loss of glamour can best be explained when their performance is placed in their proper social setting" (91). The historical discussion focuses on storytelling and storytellers among both peasantry and nobility, but also discusses the folktale itself. Dégh is concerned primarily with the telling of stories, and not necessarily stories (told) for children. The same is true of Ortutay. Both are folklorists, not children's literature specialists, and their works reflect this. Dégh does, however, discuss the role of women and children in relation to storytelling:

The narration of tales for the benefit of children is, however, no genuine storytelling. Children's stories as told by women are not taken seriously anywhere, nor are they taken so in Hungary, whereas real storytelling is accepted in all communities as a serious form of entertainment. (139-140)

Given that this study is ultimately interested in the child audience of the folktale, any reference to children and folktales is significant. However, now—fifty years later—such sweeping statements about gender roles and societal or cultural beliefs should be regarded critically, as beliefs belonging to a particular past period.

Gyula Ortutay, in his 1959 *Acta Ethnographica* article, "Principles of Oral Transmission in Folk Culture," writes: "a variant is the result of a given creative moment but is, at the same time, the echo of a historical form: it is only in comparison with that pre-existing model that it conveys something new and different, so that the term *variant* is quite justified" (181-182). Though his comment pertains to the oral transmission of folk poetry, it may also be applied to this study. The importance of comparison is clearly justified here by Ortutay. He continues to argue for motif and type comparisons: "A comparison of the type, motif, etc. with their variants enables us to follow historical processes, perceive ethnically conditioned deviations, observe the creative role of the individual in reproduction, measure the force of communal tradition and discover characteristic features of oral transmission" (190). What is particularly compelling for this study are the "ethnically conditioned deviations," which do influence the adaptation or alteration of pre-existing folktales. One drawback of Ortutay's article is that it focuses very little on folktales and more on folk songs, poetry, and ballads. Therefore, some of it is not directly pertinent; still, some of the theory concerning the oral transmission of folklore can be applied to the literary genre of folktales as well.

Vilmos Voight's "Selected Studies of János Honti," published in *Acta Ethnographica*, followed Ortutay in 1963, and claims significance because of Honti's major contributions as a folktale researcher. This article is an overview of Honti's works and an introduction to his life and to those who influenced him. Voight's mention of Honti's works is useful to the further study of Hungarian folktales, though Voight does not specify whether Honti's works have been translated into English or not.

Linda Dégh is arguably the most prolific and influential Hungarian folklorist whose work has been translated into, or originally published in, English. In the foreword of her book, *Folktales of Hungary*, published in 1965, Dégh gives a comprehensive overview of past and then-current (to 1965) research on Hungarian folktales. This book is part of the *World Folktale* series, edited by Richard Dorson: its "principal motive ... is ... to suggest the contribution of Hungarian oral literature to the universal stock of folk narrative" (Dégh xlii). As a rich resource for identifying other seminal works related to this subject, it provides a detailed look at major issues as well as at collections available in English.

The 72 tales that comprise the collection of primary sources are divided into seven categories: "Marchen," "Jokes and Anecdotes," "Religious Tales," "Animal Tales," "Tales of Lying," "Historic Legends," and "Local Legends." This final category is further subdivided to specify the following types: "The Herdsman Legend Cycle," "The Coachman Legend Cycle," "Witches," "Other Persons Endowed with Extraordinary Knowledge," "The Garabonciás Legend Cycle," "Supernatural Beings," and "Legends That Have Assumed the Form of Tales." Each tale is annotated, some more thoroughly than others, and the author includes a glossary, extensive bibliography, index of motifs, and index of tale types. *Folktales of Hungary* has a distinctively sociological slant, as the author's research is primarily concerned with storytelling and primary materials collected from villages. Nevertheless, it contains much information pertaining to the tales themselves and the traditions of the culture from which the tales arise.

Should this study become a steppingstone for a larger scale project, Dégh's *Folktales of Hungary* would likely be the best bibliographical resource. To give an

example of one valuable item included in *Folktales of Hungary*, Dégh suggests that in 1846-1848, János Erdélyi's three volumes of *Folksongs and Legends*, "displayed insights into social theory and recognized that the rudest peasant possessed the finest specimens of folk prose and folk poetry" (Dégh vii). I have found Dégh's bibliography a most useful tool in learning about the range of material available (both in English and in Hungarian) on Hungarian folktale research.

Another of Linda Dégh's works, *Folktales & Society: Storytelling in a Hungarian Peasant Community*, originally published in 1969, is again concerned with, as the subtitle suggests, storytelling in a peasant community. She focuses on a "transplanted Bucovina Szekler community" residing in the village of Kakasd, which belongs to the County of Tolna, Hungary (vii). Dégh also provides a "survey of the results in folktale research to the present" (v). Interestingly, her afterword was added in 1989, once she revisited this community. The appendix is a survey of the tales from Kakasd, including comparisons of variants, thorough annotations, notes to the tales, and a bibliography, which are all extensive and most useful in understanding these tales and their origins, as well as in determining the range of tales originating from this geographical area. The index of motifs and tale types provides a sense of the range of Hungarian folktales available, and the translated versions appearing in this book contribute significantly to the body of Hungarian folktales available in English.

Gyula Ortutay, a contemporary of Dégh's, wrote *Hungarian Folklore: Essays*, published in 1972, which is typical of Ortutay's style—erudite, critical, and insightful—and is a seminal work to consider in a study of this nature. The most pertinent section of the book is titled, "The Hungarian Folktale," in which the author delves systematically

into the tales and analyzes their elements, motifs, types, and contexts. In addition, the third part of the book provides detailed portraits of all the major Hungarian folklore scholars and their contributions to research and development in this particular field. Ortutay's writing is stylistically different from Dégh's, whose work is more direct and accessible.

Linda Dégh's essay, "Folk Narrative," was published in *Folklore and Folklife: An Introduction* in 1972; it provides a detailed description of the evolution of Hungarian folktale scholarship but also delves into the various types of folk narrative, which include "the magic tale," "the romantic tale," and "migratory legends." As an overview of folktale scholarship, as well as an introduction to these types of folk narrative, Dégh's essay is lucidly written and provides clear examples for each type.

Ivan Balassa and Gyula Ortutay's *Hungarian Ethnography and Folklore*, published in 1974, is a goldmine of over 800 pages of information about Hungarian folk life. It is essentially an anthology divided into sections dealing with the various anthropologies of Hungary: social, material, and cultural. The section on folktales and legends is extensive and deals specifically with the following types: "Fairy Tales," "Humorous Tales," "Village Mocking Tales," "Religious Legends," "Animal Fables," "The Form and Content of Folktales," "The Legend," and "Other Types of Folk Narrative." These pages are invaluable to subsequent chapters of my study, as they provide definitions for the tale categories I have selected. Important information they provide on motifs and their significance in Hungarian folktales is also integrated into my comparison.

Studies in East European Folk Narrative, published in 1978, and edited by Linda Dégh, includes at least six scholarly articles (in translation) pertaining directly to the study of Hungarian folk narrative. Since each article deals with folk narrative in relation to a specific geographic area of Hungary or is a detailed study of motifs, characters, or other narrative elements specific to a group of tales, none of the articles is directly useful for this study, though they are useful additions to the body of literature on Hungarian folktales in general.

Linda Dégh's work, *Hungarian Folktales: The Art of Zsuzsanna Palko*, published in 1995, is a tribute to well-known and acclaimed storyteller Zsuzsanna Palko (1880-1964). Dégh writes, "There has been no more important relationship between folk artist and folklorist than that between Zsuzsanna Palko and Linda Dégh," demonstrating her close relationship with Mrs. Palko (vii). The result is a collection of 35 tales, as told by Mrs. Palko, including sections by Dégh devoted to terms, special meanings, concepts, and references. This anthology is not a collection intended for children; instead, it adds to the body of Hungarian folktales available in English, widening the range of tales, and providing another perspective on this subject.

As this literature review shows, given the time span, there is only a handful of scholars whose research on Hungarian folklore is available in English. In the process of researching secondary material and considering one of the aims of this study—to review current literature—I have determined that no substantial body of current literature exists in the area of Hungarian folktale research, making it a rather obscure area of interest where many avenues are waiting to be pursued. According to Dégh, the launching in 1953 of *Acta Ethnographica*—a significant journal both for my study and for the

preservation of Hungarian folktales—marked the beginning of research on Hungarian folklore in English. This brief movement, which began in the 1950s, and the works produced in English during this period (until approximately the late 1980s), appears to have been created by a select group, led by Ortutay and Dégh.

Having reviewed the scholarly works in English, relating to Hungarian folklore and folktales, I turn in the next chapter to defining the folktales categories—fairy tales, humorous tales, animal tales, anecdotes, and historical legends—underpinning my thesis. Chapter Three also defines the comparative elements employed for each tale grouping, examines critical issues surrounding folktales as literary objects, and situates these tales within the context of existing literature as literary objects. I have chosen to examine these classification schemes and critical issues in a separate chapter because they serve as the theoretical paradigm for the subsequent five chapters which look in depth at the primary texts I have selected for this study.

CHAPTER THREE: DEFINITIONS AND CRITICAL ISSUES

This study considers folktales as literary objects and creates a comparative framework for the purpose of examining patterns among tale variants of a selection of Hungarian folktales for children. This chapter first looks at some commonly debated terms and at questions that arise in folktale scholarship. It then provides definitions of tale categories and selected comparative elements. My overall purpose in this chapter is to situate my analyses of selected folktales as literary objects within the context of a literary approach to folktales, to acknowledge some frequently debated terms and issues in folklore scholarship, and to establish the framework for comparison of these texts.

In *Beauty and the Beast: Visions and Revisions of an Old Tale*, Betsy Hearne considers the complex nature of fairy tales:

The study of fairy tales is by nature interdisciplinary, requiring some familiarity with folklore, literature, art, history, psychology, and education. Although researchers must guard against thin scholarship in dealing with so many diverse canons of knowledge, they otherwise risk limitations of vision within a narrow specialty. (xiii)

Certainly one must acknowledge the wide-ranging areas of knowledge involved in the study of folktales. Maria Tatar also acknowledges this multidisciplinaryity: “When it comes to fairy tales, nearly everyone has something to say, and they all have something different to say. Folklorists, cultural anthropologists, historians, sociologists, educators, literary critics, psychologists—even criminologists—have all laid claim to occupying privileged positions as judges and interpreters of those tales” (39). The folktales this

study is concerned with are no exception to the prevailing idea that folktale scholarship must consider a number of disciplines. Given the many possible approaches to examining a set of folktales, it has been necessary for me to define research goals workable for a thesis project of limited length. The aims of this study, therefore, are to

- 1) survey a wide selection of Hungarian folktales in English and select a sample of Hungarian folktale categories
- 2) select folktales representative of the chosen categories
- 3) find at least three variants for each folktale and identify patterns of variation from tale to tale
- 4) examine, through close reading and a comparative framework, the similarities and differences among variants of the same tale
- 5) draw conclusions and make generalizations about the presence of Hungarian folktales in current children's literature.

Once my key research objectives were articulated, it became apparent to me that a literary approach to this study was possible. In *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales*, the literary approach to studying folktales is defined using Max Luthi as an example, and Robyn McCallum makes the following observation about his work:

[He] focuses on those formal stylistic features which characterize the genre and which ... function thematically ... supported by close textual analysis of particular tales and their variants [and he] largely ignore[s] the social and cultural contexts of particular retellings, focusing instead on those story elements and motifs which remain stable despite progressive

retellings ... [he] avoids imposing specific meanings on individual tales.

(18)

Key to this definition is the analysis of the texts of particular tales and their variants to draw conclusions about the tales' timelessness. Though other approaches—sociological, historical, cultural, and so on—are equally valid, I have chosen to investigate the selected tales within a literary context as this is the perspective that most intrigues me.

Debated Terms

In children's literature criticism, authoritative definitions of the terms *folktale* and *fairy tale* are elusive. *The Oxford Companion to Fairy Tales* makes a distinction between the two:

The terms have distinct etymologies and meanings. The words fairy tale can refer to both a category of oral folk tale and a genre of prose literature.

The term folk tale is reserved for any tale deriving from or existing in oral tradition and is generally preferred by folklorists and anthropologists.

Literary scholars tend to use the word [sic] fairy tale to refer to a genre of prose literature, which may or may not be based on oral tradition. (Stein

167)

According to Martin Hallett and Barbara Karasek, in *Folk and Fairy Tales* (2nd edition), a “folk tale means exactly what it says: it's a tale of the folk ... the common people of a nation – and the important point to realize here is that the ‘common people’ were, in the past, generally illiterate. Consequently, their tales were orally transmitted” (12). Perry

Nodelman and Mavis Reimer define folktales simply as “stories that circulated orally” (303). Maria Tatar discusses a continuum between supernatural and natural settings:

The term *folktale* traditionally has been used in two senses. On the one hand, *folktale* refers to oral narratives that circulate among the folk; on the other it designates a specific set of tales, namely oral narratives that take place among the folk, that is, in a realistic setting with naturalistic details.... The term *fairy tale*, by contrast, has been associated with both oral and literary traditions but is above all reserved for narratives set in a fictional world where preternatural events and supernatural intervention are taken wholly for granted. A fairy tale can thus belong to the category of folktales, but it stands in contrast to the folk tale, which is sharply biased in favor of earthy realism. (Tatar 33)

For the purposes of this study, I combine several of the outlined definitions of *folktale* and use the term loosely to refer to tales transmitted orally, originally told by the Hungarian “folk,” or peasantry. I use *folktale* as a general/inclusive term, accounting for all the different categories within the broad genre of folktales. To avoid confusion, I use *fairy tale* to refer to a “category of oral folk tale” (Stein 167). The definition of this term is expanded in a later section of this chapter.

Broadly speaking, *folklore* is a contextual term—a source from which folktales arise. According to Bette Bosma, *folklore* is a term coined by William Thoms in 1846 as a study of “manners, customs, observances, superstitions, ballads, proverbs, etc. of the olden time” (28). Since this study is primarily concerned with folktales as literary objects, it does not thoroughly explore all definitions of folklore as Bosma and Thoms have done.

I do, however, acknowledge scholar Donald Haase, who explores a nationalistic view of folklore. He writes, “to some, the folk are an ethnic or national group sharing common traditions, lore, and social or cultural traits” (65). For the purposes of this study, I concur with Haase’s definition of *folklore*, which links the term to an ethnic group—in this study, Hungarians.

Because my study focuses in part on illustrated folktales, it has also been necessary to explore different perspectives on terms associated with this genre of children’s literature. Scholars often differentiate between an illustrated book and a picturebook based on the number or size of illustrations or even based on the level of interaction between picture and text. For example, John Stewig defines illustrated books as having “fewer illustrations than picture storybooks and what they do have are [sic] often printed in limited color or just black and white” (7). Patricia Cianciolo, however, defines the illustrated book as “any book in which the text is accompanied by illustrations that are pertinent to the text,” and the picture book as having a “thorough fusion of pictures and words” (*Illustrations* 24). Joseph Schwarcz uses the term *illustrated book* to describe more generally a book for children in which “word and picture come together to produce a common work”; he defines *picture book* as a “kind of book, where text and pictorial narratives accompany each other, alternate, and intertwine ... [and] it strives to overcome cultural boundaries and to offer entertainment and enlightenment in a metanational framework” (*Picturebook* 4). For the purposes of this study, the term *picturebook* will be used synonymously with illustrated story/tale/book and will be applied to the primary materials which include more than two illustrations.

Some of the texts I have chosen include a single illustration; these tales will not be considered picturebooks. I refer to them simply as folktales, not as picturebooks.

Critical Issues

By including picturebooks in the selection of tales, one must consider, perhaps obviously, the element of illustration. Illustrated folktales have value that reaches into multiple disciplines as well: art history/criticism, education, psychology, and cultural anthropology, to name a few. Illustrations, according to Gail de Vos, have intrinsic value:

Any picture-book version of a folktale cannot help but fill some of those gaps because graphic images are directly referential and necessarily explicit about all sorts of details that the writer of the text may choose not to mention. Pictures tell us the ages of the characters, their physical appearance from hair color to height, and their personalities and relationships to other characters as shown by facial expressions and posture.... To a greater or lesser extent, the buildings, furniture, and clothing in the pictures will suggest a time and place in which the story is set. (*New Tales* 25)

My views are aligned with Patricia Cianciolo's, in that folktale variants can have the same text, but as soon as illustrations are added, the tale becomes a new story: "Folktales have been told without illustrations as long as humans have used language to communicate their ideas, values, and creative imaginings. But once illustrations exist, they inevitably change the story" ("Variants" Cianciolo 98). Illustrations extend the text,

provide additional information, and make certain demands on readers that text alone does not.

In addition to extending the text, illustration “provides context [and] additional information that doesn’t appear in the text” (Nodelman 294). This is the case with the Hungarian folktales this study is concerned with. These tales, through icons in the illustration, provide details about another place and about another culture. Maria Nikolajeva’s definition of icons is apt here:

Iconic, or representational signs are those in which the signifier and the signified are related by common qualities; that is, where the sign is a direct representation of what is signified.... A picture of a horse-drawn cart, then, is a direct representation of the horse-drawn cart ... in most cases, we do not need special knowledge to understand a simple icon. (1)

These glimpses of elements of Hungarian culture are one reason these books are distinctly Hungarian.

The illustrations, as Patricia Cianciolo observes, help teach young readers about another culture by representing folkloric items found in the culture: “Information about and appreciation of people of various cultural groups may be obtained from picture books, be they factual or fictional books” (“Variants” 106). For my part, I am more interested in what the pictures actually show, rather than in “how pictures are able to express and metaphorically display what cannot be pictured directly—ideas, moods, abstract notions and qualities” (Doonan 8). Without venturing deeply into cultural representations in illustration, I argue that the visual elements of Hungarian culture are

what the pictures show, and that these elements contribute to the *Hungarian-ness* of the tales.

Ultimately, the illustrations in the primary sources of this study create a sense of place: the people, the objects, and the setting mirror elements of Hungarian folk life. On one hand, “when children get acquainted with these old stories, they can take pride in their own backgrounds” (“Variants” Cianciolo 92). Meanwhile, they also “learn to appreciate differences among cultures” (“Variants” Cianciolo 92). Illustrated folktales can thus function as affirmation of one’s own cultural roots as well as offering a sampling of another culture.

Some may argue that these tales and their culturally specific illustrations exclude the non-Hungarian reader. I believe, apart from their intrinsic artistic value, that they inform, and that most school-aged children are interested in settings and cultures different from their own. Ultimately, the themes and form of these tales are familiar, and they leave readers, whatever their ethnicity, with a sense of satisfaction. Perry Nodelman’s observation on this issue is apt: he writes of Jane Yolen’s *Favorite Folktales from around the World*³: “This collection of tales bubbling up from the thoughts and imaginations of ordinary people everywhere in all cultures shows amply the common reservoirs of hopes, fears, love, and rascality that we all share” (309). Folktales inherently touch on common elements that resonate with readers of all ages.

In addition to issues of illustration, matters of translation inevitably come into play when one is looking at a body of literature originating in a language other than English. In many of the tales selected for this thesis, multiple authors are credited for a

³ *Favorite Folktales from around the World* by Jane Yolen is not illustrated.

single retelling. Often the author is not the translator, but many of the stories have indeed been translated, and are noted accordingly. Due to these complexities, an in-depth analysis of the factors involved in translation could comprise another study altogether; however, considering some issues involved with translation may lead to awareness of Hungarian folktales among others and, ultimately, to the translation of more Hungarian literature for English-speaking children.

The scarcity of translated children's literature is perhaps due to Hungary's "linguistic isolation," as Katalin Nun calls it, or to economic considerations of cost, marketing, distribution, as well as to a lack of communication between publishers and, thus, a lack of awareness of children's literature in Hungary. Katalin Nun's essay, "Hungary," in the *International Companion Encyclopedia of Children's Literature* (2004 edition), traces the history of Hungarian children's literature. Even in its introductory approach, this piece is a valuable contribution to Hungarian folktale scholarship. Rarely has discussion of Hungarian literature been included in such international and scholarly anthologies; Hungarian folktales are more often than not omitted from world folktale anthologies for children as well. Though Nun mentions some works of Hungarian children's literature that have been translated into English, her list is far from comprehensive, and she writes of children's literature in general, mentioning folktales only in passing. That aside, Nun's essay draws attention to Hungarian children's literature and provides a solid introduction to political influences on its development, trends in publishing, and translated works.

Ron Jobe summarizes the task of translating for children well: "In the purest form, then, translating literature for children presents a complex challenge wherein the

translator tries to retain the original sense and meaning of the story in another language” (“Translation” 913). Translation is truly an art form, and retaining the original essence of a story, without losing the nuances of the language and culture, is arguably an impossible feat. In her essay, “Weaving World Understanding: The Importance of Translations in International Children’s Literature,” Rosie Webb Joels argues, “the magnitude of the translator’s skill, technique, and art in a successfully translated book cannot be overemphasized; successes result only when cultural codes are discerned, understood, and rebuilt” (69).

Sandra Bermann would argue that culture and national identity are not mutually exclusive. In her introduction to *Nation, Language, and the Ethics of Translation*, a collection of essays on translation, says, in reference to translation and national identity, that language is not neutral. Restating a text in a new language subjects that text to cultural and linguistic changes. Bermann writes, “consciously or unconsciously, [language] performs deft feats of appropriation and exclusion, supported by a dialectic of otherness” (3). Bermann’s work leads to a fundamental question: if the tales selected for this study did not include source notes, or had no mention of Hungary, or no illustrations representing elements unique to the culture, then how would one credibly define them as Hungarian? They would simply be tales, and one might or might not stop to make assumptions about, or give due credit to, their origins.

Though cultures may have similarities, they are also, by definition, different from one another. Perry Nodelman writes, “There are many cultures exactly because these cultures are not like one another—and because the stories they tell are not like the stories other cultures tell” (309). To retain these differences, there must be either something

distinctive about the tales that can be attributed to a certain culture or source notes rooting the tale in a particular culture. Authors and illustrators must be familiar with that culture if they are to accurately represent it in text or illustration.

Children's literature in translation, then, both educates young readers about another place and "provides students with a sensitive glimpse into the minds and actions of young people in other parts of the world" ("Reflections" Jobe 22). In different words, Rosie Webb Joels agrees that translating children's literature is a "means to advancing mutual respect among all peoples of the world" (66). Despite the many obstacles to translating literature for children, then, the benefits of sharing literature among nations are obviously numerous.

Translation often gives rise to another commonly debated topic in discussions about folktales: authorship, and more specifically, cultural appropriation. One side of the debate argues that a person who has no direct experience or ethnic connection with a culture cannot possibly offer a credible retelling of a particular culture's folktales. Maria Nikolajeva, in *Aesthetic Approaches to Children's Literature: An Introduction*, explores the complexities of writing from a cultural standpoint other than one's own:

'Lending a voice' to an oppressed minority is undesirable, because the author is writing from a superior power position and cannot adopt the minority's subjectivity. On the other hand, it can be positive, as the author is lending a voice to a silenced group. Yet, it is still undesirable, because lending a voice is always usurping a voice. Further, the activity can be viewed as self-indulgent and motivated by self-justification. Not least, it is impossible, because the authors cannot use their own experience in their

writing. The counter argument to this last stance is that it is possible for a talented author to adopt an Other subjectivity. (15)

Though I do not consider today's Hungarians, either living in Hungary or abroad, an "oppressed minority," Nikolajeva's exploration of cultural appropriation clearly demonstrates the complexities involved. Cultural distinctiveness is important for many reasons: to preserve a culture, to introduce a child reader to a world wider than he or she can see, to facilitate discussions about different people and places, and ultimately, to encourage empathy, respect and appreciation for other groups of people in the world. To a certain degree, cultural distinctiveness and nuances may not be present in tales adapted by non-ethnic authors. However, adaptations by authors outside the cultural group provide an opportunity for a rich comparison of folktale variants. Tales often persist through time and language and culture because non-ethnic authors have adapted them from other cultures. This, I believe, attests to a tale's staying power and universal appeal.

Having a non-Hungarian author for a tale originating in Hungary contributes to a richer comparative discussion and supports the idea that Hungarian tales are appealing to an English-language as well as a Hungarian audience. It is impossible to trace the original author in many cases, as these tales are rooted in an oral tradition. From there, the tales have been collected, transcribed, translated, retold and/or adapted, making original authorship difficult to claim.

Another element of folktale evolution to consider is audience. In their book, *New Tales for Old*, Gail De Vos and Anna Altmann write, "folktales are not children's stories" (21). What they mean is that folktales did not originate as children's stories:

For 200 years and more, adults who write, publish, and choose stories for children have worked hard to make sure that those stories are psychologically appropriate for young readers, free of sex and bad language, packed with edifying themes or good clean fun. Folktales, before they became children's stories read in books, showed no such concern for innocent ears. (21)

Indeed, the first collections of Hungarian folktales appeared to be targeted at an academic, not child, audience. In fact, only the picturebook versions of Hungarian folktales seem to be specifically aimed at children. Unlike the picturebooks, many of the collections are accompanied by annotations and other critical commentary and appendices.

Because each of the tales in this study has at least one picturebook version, which I assume to have a child audience in mind, I consider the variants also to be intended for children. Though I believe that folktales are appealing to audiences of all ages, ultimately, in this study, my views are aligned with de Vos's comment that "folktales do make marvelous children's stories":

They are short, with a straightforward narrative line, and all the force of the story is in the eventful plot. They have patterned repetition, strong contrasts, very little description, and unambiguous characters. They are also a superb playground for the imagination, full of wonders and the bizarre, free from the limitations of everyday reality, with layers of meaning that the conscious or unconscious mind may discover according to its readiness or need. And their porousness and resilience lets them

survive a great deal of pasteurization, homogenization, and the addition of whatever the currently approved moral equivalents of supplementary vitamins and minerals for children might be. (*New Tales* 23)

Indeed, folktales are resilient and persistent as a result. Hearne's views are similar to de Vos': "Although not originally intended for an exclusively young audience, fairy tales have become, primarily and perhaps irrevocably, provender for children" (141).

Maria Tatar, on the other hand, claims an agelessness in the appeal of fairy tales:

Compelling in their simplicity and poignant in their emotional appeal, fairy tales have the power to stir long-dormant childhood feelings and to quicken our sympathies for the downtrodden. They also offer wit and wisdom in the trenchant formulations of the folk. There is something in them for every age and generation. (Tatar xiii)

Children's literature scholars evidently agree upon the critical issues of intended audience and folktale appeal: folktales were not initially intended for a child audience, but it is "difficult to conceive of a childhood without them" (Tatar xiv). And folktales are appealing to readers of all ages, contributing to their persistence over time and culture.

Folktale Variants

Jerry Griswold, in his book on *Beauty and the Beast*, writes the following:

The pleasure in reading these various versions is twofold. If enough of them are consulted, similarities are recognized and what emerges is a sense of the shared story...that lies behind them. (116)

Though Griswold's chosen tales are very different from my own, we share the idea that familiarity creates awareness through variation. Griswold also views adaptations and retellings in a positive manner. I agree that the creation of variants speaks to the success of a tale. If a tale did not have staying power, it would not likely be selected for multiple retellings by different authors.

Again, regarding *Beauty and the Beast*, Betsy Hearne writes, "The core of motifs, images, characters, and conflicts remains constant. Yet the changes in form, detail, and tone show the tale's elasticity. Its endurance of transition proves it to be one of the great metaphors of oral and written tradition" (1). As I show in subsequent chapters which focus on a close reading of the tales, most tales retain core elements in their variants; however, illustration and other details may be modified while preserving the essence of the tale. Hearne states, "the core elements remain because they are magnetic to each other, structurally, and to people, variably but almost universally" (6). Hearne writes, "remarkably—the most effective *literary* versions prove to share the same motifs that have been retained in *oral* variants, a pattern that suggests significant continuity of creative process between the two traditions" (123). From this statement, I conclude that there are certain core elements inherent to the folktale that secure it regardless of evolution of form from oral to written. However, as Cianciolo writes, "when the same elements are repeated in one tale after another, small differences between them become all the more prominent, all the more obvious as features of a specific culture" ("Variants" Cianciolo 82). I look for both similarities and differences in subsequent chapters, which centre on comparing variants of tales.

Defining Tale Categories

As one might assume, similar to the differences in folktale terminology, multiple and conflicting definitions for folktale categories also exist. In surveying the literature on Hungarian folktale scholarship, I came across definitions for folktale categories advanced by two major contributors—Gyula Ortutay and Linda Dégh. I have chosen to adopt their definitions of folktale categories for this study:

- 1) Fairy tales: A tale containing “a wondrous miracle, mysterious assistance, magical transformation, a signal of danger, giants (or dragons), witches, and which has epic authenticity and the confident faith of the narrator” (*Ethnography* Ortutay 556).
- 2) Humorous tales: “Although they frequently slip into the world of fairy tales, with which they are interwoven by the presence of the miraculous, they are more robust and more realistic, and at times lash out with rather unsparing humour at the stumblings of the weak ... these jokes were born or became rooted in the tradition of people having a hard, often barely tolerable fate. Thus, in these humorous tales the reigning element is not the miraculous, but the grotesque” (*Ethnography* Ortutay 564).
- 3) Animal tales: according to Dégh, “animal tales are meant exclusively for audiences of children” (*Folktales* xxxvii). I have expanded this definition to include any folktale in which the main character is an animal.
- 4) Anecdotes “[h]ave a highly censorious sense of social criticism...[and are] excellent satires, directed against the village boss, the overbearing official, or the

bullying squire held up to ridicule by a released soldier, or their own coachman, or a gypsy lad play-acting the simpleton” (*Folktales* Dégh xxxvi).

- 5) Historical legends: “The kern of the historical legend is actually always realistic and has some foundation in truth. However, this kern of reality is coloured generally, often by tale-like elements” (*Ethnography* Ortutay 583).

Identifying Comparative Elements

After carefully reading each tale and its versions, and scanning for patterns in variance, I concluded that most tales differ in similar ways. In other words, these differences can be broken down into the following elements: beginnings, endings, illustrations, and motifs. These serve as the primary elements for my comparison and contrast within each tale grouping. Other scholars have also chosen elements within a particular vein; for example Betsy Hearne bases her comparison of the 22 versions of *Beauty and the Beast* on the following structural functions: “character (and characterization); narrative structure (action, event, plot); narrative voice (style, description, tone, point of view, theme); and symbols, objects, and images” (7). Hearne limits her comparison to structural function.

I now turn to defining the comparative elements—beginnings, endings, illustrations, and motifs. The *beginning* refers to the opening and initial action; the *ending* refers to the closing action and final lines, and *illustration* indicates whether the narrative is illuminated visually in addition to textually, and to what degree (ranging from a single illustration to a single, illustrated tale, or picturebook). This element also describes

briefly the kinds of illustrations present in the tales but does not focus on the artistic medium and other aspects associated with art appreciation.

For the purposes of this study, I have accepted Stith Thompson's definition of a motif: "the smallest element in a tale having a power to persist in tradition" (415).

Thompson makes the following observations about motifs:

Most motifs fall into three classes. First are the actors in a tale—gods, or unusual animals, or marvelous creatures like witches, ogres, or fairies, or even conventionalized human characters like the favorite youngest child or the cruel stepmother. Second come certain items in the background of the action—magic objects, unusual customs, strange beliefs, and the like. In the third place there are single incidents—and these comprise the great majority of motifs. It is this last class that can have an independent existence and that may therefore serve as true tale-types. By far the largest number of traditional types consists of single motifs. (415-416)

The descriptive analyses of the motifs in tale variants in this study keep Thompson's parameters in mind.

My next chapter begins by organizing the results of my comparison of the five tale variants within the *fairy tales* category into a chart. Following the organization of comparative elements is a discussion comprised of detailed close reading of the texts. The theoretical and comparative frameworks offered in chapters two and three drive the discussion of the subsequent five chapters.

CHAPTER FOUR: FAIRY TALES

“The Student Who Was Forcibly Made King” and its three variants are surprisingly similar, given their range in dates of publication from 1886 to 2001. Their basic plot structure is the same: a student embarks on a journey, comes across some peas, and pockets them for later (remembering his father’s advice). Once he arrives at the king’s home, the student requests shelter, and the king and queen put the student to a test to see if he is a prince disguised as a student and thus a possible suitor for their marriageable daughter. The student passes the test, marries the princess, and after one year, they are told to go back to the prince’s land. The student frets that his real identity will be revealed and decides he will abandon his wife and servants and return to school. Once they reach a forest, the student meets a false helper (a seven-headed dragon), who offers help (an abandoned castle to live in until the castle begins to spin). The couple lives happily in their new dwelling for a while. Then, the false helper comes to “collect;” the student frets again but meets an actual helper (an old woman). He follows her instructions to bake a loaf of bread seven times over. When the false helper (dragon) arrives a second time, it cannot pass the test required to enter the castle (to endure what the loaf has endured), so he perishes, and the student becomes an actual king, eventually of two countries.

The following tables outline the differences between these folktale variants in the comparative elements described in Chapter Three:

Table 2.1
Identification of Fairy Tale Variant Elements – “The Student Who Was Forcibly made King”

Title	Beginning	Motifs	Illustrations	Ending
“The Student Who was Forcibly Made King” (Henry Jones and Lewis Kropf)	Opening lines and initial action: “A student started on a journey, and as he went over a field he found some peas which were cracked.”	-student on journey -royal borough -the adjoining house -servant watch -peas under bed -peas in corner of handkerchief -student’s gown -copper fortress swiveling on a goose’s leg -old woman/queen of magic -expanded loaf-baking instructions	no illustrations present	Closing action: Student becomes lord of the fortress and king of two lands. If not dead, still reigns Final line: “If I knew that I should fare as well as that student I would become a student to this very blessed day!”

Table 2.2
Identification of Fairy Tale Variant Elements – “The Student Who Was Forced to Be King”

Title	Beginning	Motifs	Illustrations	Ending
“The Student Who was Forced To Be King” (Gyula Illyés)	Opening lines and initial action: “A student who was out walking one day found some cracked peas in a meadow.”	-student out walking -kingdom -wing of palace -trustworthy man on watch -peas onto bed -peas in pants’ pocket -student clothes -copper castle turning on webbed feet -old witch/queen -short loaf-baking instructions -king of the castle	no illustrations present	Closing action: Student becomes king of castle and king of two lands. If not dead, still ruling there. Final line: “If I knew that I would be as lucky as that student, I would become a student this very day.”

Table 2.3
Identification of Fairy Tale Variant Elements – *The Student Who Became King in spite of Himself*

Title	Beginning	Motifs	Illustrations	Ending
<i>The Student Who Became King in spite of Himself</i> (François Colos)	Opening lines and initial action: “Once upon a time, beyond the Glass Mountain, there was a great sea. In this great sea lived a little fish. On the biggest tooth of this little fish was written this story: One day a student left home to see the world.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -student leaves home to see the world -tiny green balls in field -city of the King -asks for sausages and shelter -distant wing of palace -trustworthy man watch -peas onto bed -peas into handkerchief -no student clothes -large castle on a duck’s foot -lived in castle 7 years -old witch/Batu, Queen of the Tartars -loaf instructions short 	<p>picturebook format: student has shoulder-length, wavy brown hair; dressed in folk garments; national items depicted—</p> <p>currency, postage, flag colours, folk costume.</p> <p>Intertextual: British, royalty, other folktale characters.</p> <p>Eclectic style, almost collage</p>	<p>Closing action: Young man is Lord of the castle and all countryside, later rules two countries. Still does, if he hasn’t died yet.</p> <p>Final line: “If I could know before it happened that I could have such good luck I would become a student at once.”</p>

Table 2.4
Identification of Fairy Tale Variant Elements – “How a Student Became a King”

Title	Beginning	Motifs	Illustrations	Ending
“How a Student Became a King” (Irma Molnár)	Opening lines and initial action: “In another time and place a student set out on the journey to the university. On the way he found some dried peas in a field, picked them up, and put them in one of his pockets.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Student on journey to university -dried peas in a field -capital city, royal palace. -information on custom -small back room -royal guard watch -peas onto bed -peas in handkerchief -student’s uniform -copper castle -old woman/queen of the witches -loaf instructions short 	no illustrations present	Closing action: Student becomes king and later king of two countries. Final line: “He is still ruling, if he has not died in the meantime.” History and source notes.

Motifs vary just slightly within this grouping of tales. In *Folk-Tales of the Magyars*, Jones writes, “Heroes of folk-tales often attain wealth ... by picking up some apparently useless thing on the road” (354). This motif, picking up the peas, remains the same in each tale. What varies at times is the request the student makes. For example, in Illyés’ and Jones’ versions, the student asks for travel expenses, whereas in Molnár’s, he requests lodging and provisions. Colos has the student asking for sausage and shelter.

The name of the king’s castle upon which the student stumbles changes from author to author: Jones refers to a royal borough, Illyés to a kingdom, Molnar to the

capital city and royal palace, and Colos to the city of the king and his palace. Other minor name changes occur in this section of the tale as well. Where Jones has the student placed in an adjoining house during his stay, Illyés has him in the wing of the palace. Molnár places the student in a small back room, and Colos in a distant wing of the palace.

While in this room, on the first night of his stay, the student either drops the peas accidentally under the bed (Jones) or onto the bed (Illyés, Molnár, and Colos). Once he picks them up, he either wraps them safely in a handkerchief (Jones, Molnár, and Colos) or places them back in his pants' pocket (Illyés).

Another motif, the seven-headed dragon, appears in all four tales unchanged and plays the role of the false helper in each tale. The spinning castle, however, changes slightly from version to version. In fact, both the description of the castle and the length of the student's stay vary slightly. Jones refers to a copper fortress that swivels on a goose leg, and the student stays there for two years. Illyés also employs a copper castle, which turns on webbed feet, where the student also stays for two years. Colos now describes a castle (with no mention of copper) that spins on a duck's foot, and the student stays seven years rather than two. Molnar removes the foot and simply has a copper castle that houses the student for two years.

Another variation in motif is the identity of the actual helper. In Jones' version, she is an old woman who calls herself the queen of magic; in the other three versions, she is called a witch (Illyes and Colos) and queen of the witches (Molnar), and in all four cases she is a fierce enemy of the false helper, the seven-headed dragon. Colos gives the witch a name – Batu, Queen of the Tartars. By doing this, Colos adds his signature to the

folktale, making it a literary artefact. His illustrations, which I discuss later in this chapter, also serve to make this tale markedly Colos'.

The advice that the true helper gives to save the student and his wife is another important motif: she tells him to bake a loaf of bread seven times over in the oven and to place it at the threshold of the castle. The loaf of bread is a magical object that challenges the dragon to endure what the loaf has endured (from being seeded to harvested to baked) and ultimately extinguishes the false helper/enemy. All four tales retain this motif exactly, with Jones inserting lengthier instructions to have the particular loaf put in the oven first and taken out last each time it is baked. The others' tales simply mention the loaf should be baked seven times over.

Beginnings and endings serve as the next category for comparison within the fairy tale grouping. Jones has the student simply starting on a journey; Molnar, similarly, has the student on a journey to university; Illyes' student is not setting out on a journey at all but is just out walking; finally, Colos has an entirely different take, inserting a short, opening vignette of a fish with the story written on its tooth. Only after this odd opening does he send the student on a journey to see the world.

In the endings, the same closing action is retained for each variant: the dragon dies from rage, the student becomes king, and when his parents-in-law die, he becomes king of two countries. The tale closes with the narrator reflecting on the wish to become a student, if being a student means having such luck. Only Molnar omits this wistful reflection and instead writes a brief annotation to the tale: "traveling students were often offered hospitality in palaces, and a handsome, well-mannered one could be mistaken for

a prince traveling incognito” (59). In addition, she provides source notes on the tale and compares it to Hans Christian Andersen’s “The Princess and the Pea.”

Finally, as almost every children’s literature scholar would agree, illustrations play a key role in altering and enhancing a story, and in the case of Colos’ picturebook, a single tale is told through words and pictures within the covers of the book, thereby giving the story a new level of importance. The illustrations serve as a vehicle of expression for the illustrator, whose work has appeared in *The New York Times*, *Life*, *Harper’s*, and *Time* publications. Colos was a collector of stamps, engravings, decals, sticks, drawings, and prints, all of which he incorporates in his collage-style illustrations. He has an eclectic and intertextual style—the forest scene, which is an illustration that spans two pages, includes Sir John Tenniel’s Alice, a cherub, Red Riding Hood and the wolf, and other, seemingly unrelated characters. The inclusion of certain national and cultural elements—the colours of the Hungarian flag, traditional costumes, and old Hungarian postage stamps—pays tribute to the origins of the tale, while mingling with the artist’s modern and unique take on an old story.

It is perhaps surprising that the selected variants in the fairy tale category are so similar. They each follow the same basic story structure, with only slight variations in motif, beginning, and ending. One other noteworthy distinction among the tales is the style (tone and diction) in which they are written. Jones’ version is told in an elevated discourse, which is likely a reflection of the period. Illyés’ and Molnár’s styles are quite similar, perhaps because these two variants come from collections that rely on the textual narrative, having no illustrations. Colos’ version of this tale, being a picturebook, has the added virtue of marrying the text with illustration to create an entirely different feel to the

story. As a result, this tale stands, in my mind, as the most memorable variant among the group.

In this chapter, I have discussed the major differences, as I see them, of these tales. The next chapter compares tale variants within the category of Humorous Tales.

CHAPTER FIVE: HUMOROUS TALES

Humorous tales, according to Gyula Ortutay, may contain elements of magic but are “more robust and ... realistic” than fairy tales (564). In addition, Ortutay gives humorous tales the characteristic of “lashing out with rather unsparing humour at the stumblings of the weak ... these jokes were born or became rooted in the tradition of people having a hard, often barely tolerable fate. Thus, in ... humorous tales the reigning element is not the miraculous, but the grotesque” (*Ethnography* 564). Parallel to Ortutay’s definition, the next set of tales, “Three Wishes,” features a poverty-stricken couple and a grotesque scenario; the latter adds humour and makes the former tolerable.

The four versions I have selected range in publication dates from 1886 to 1988 and differ more significantly from one another than the tales discussed in chapter four. The tales titled “Three Wishes” and “The Wishes” will be discussed as a group, and the fourth, Judy Varga’s *Janko’s Wish*, will be contrasted, as it is most loosely based on the story structure of the previous three. The basic story structure for Henry Jones, Gyula Illyés, and Elek Benedek’s versions involves a childless and poor peasant couple and the presence of a special helper who grants three wishes, the second of which is squandered by the couple and the third is required to fix the mistake. Varga’s tale, *Janko’s Wish*, involves a single, male farmer who is lazy and keeps his farm in disarray. He meets a special helper who grants a single wish in exchange for help. Janko eventually achieves everything he could wish for, but only after learning important lessons on helping himself.

The following tables outline the differences between these folktale variants in the comparative elements described in chapter three:

Table 3.1
Identification of Humorous Tale Variant Elements – “The Wishes”

Title	Beginning	Motifs	Illustrations	Ending
<p>“The Wishes” (Henry Jones and Lewis Kropf)</p>	<p>Opening lines and initial action: “There were 10,000 wagons rolling along the turnpike road, in each wagon there were 10,000 casks, in each cask 10,000 bags, in each bag 10,000 poppy seeds, in each poppy seed 10,000 lightnings [sic]. May all these thunderous lightnings strike him who won’t listen to my tale, which I have brought from beyond the Operencian Sea!” Initial action: the woman comes home early and has nothing to cook.</p>	<p>-poor farmers, married, no children -wife home early, about to cook soup -husband has news -squire’s maize- field -golden carriage, pretty little woman (fairy) inside, four fine black dogs -fairy promises reward for help to get out of mud; offers 3 wishes; wife to make wishes - first wish for sausage -couple discusses other wishes - heifers, two horses, and sucking [sic] pig -husband upsets frying pan with sausage -wife wishes sausage onto his nose -wife wishes sausage back into pan -couple agrees to live in harmony -couple acquires heifer, horses, and sucking pig</p>	<p>no illustrations present</p>	<p>Closing action: Couple makes a hearty meal of sausage</p> <p>Final line: “They got on much better in the world, and in time they acquired heifers, horses, and a sucking [sic] pig into the bargain, because they were industrious and thrifty.” (Didactic ending)</p>

Table 3.2

Identification of Humorous Tale Variant Elements – “Three Wishes”

Title	Beginning	Motifs	Illustrations	Ending
<p>“Three Wishes” (Gyula Illyés)</p>	<p>Opening lines and initial action: “There was once upon a time – don’t ask me when or where – a poor man and his wife.” Initial action: Woman comes home early from fields, not knowing what to make for supper</p>	<p>-young, poor, married couple, no children -wife home earlier from fields; about to cook soup -swishing sound, fairy appears -fairy offers three wishes -first wish - sausage -man comes home; couple argues about what to wishes -man wants horse, cow, pig -man upsets sausage in pan -wife wishes sausage on his nose -wish sausage back into pan -couple continues to argue</p>	<p>no illustrations present</p>	<p>Closing action: Couple sits down to dinner but does not enjoy it. Final line: “All the time they kept grumbling about which one was to blame for the fact that they would again be just as poor as they were before.”</p>

Table 3.3

Identification of Humorous Tale Variant Elements – *Janko’s Wish*

Title	Beginning	Motifs	Illustrations	Ending
<p><i>Janko’s Wish</i> (Judy Varga)</p>	<p>Opening lines and initial action: “Once upon a time a peasant named Janko owned a farm that was the grubbiest on this side of the Danube, if not in all Hungary.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -poor, lazy peasant; farm in disarray -forest; farmer gathers berries -old Gypsy crone “Queen of the Gypsies”; caravan’s back wheels stuck in mud -gypsy offers a wish for help -farmer considers sack of gold as wish -cleans up farm while searching for hiding place for gold -plaintive tune on flute -vegetables to market -fixes roof -Sunday clothes -new hiding place—under rock -works fields, gold enough there not to wish for gold -wishes instead for wife -big wedding; has everything could have wished for 	<p>picturebook format: Janko is a slim, young lad; dresses in folk garments; national items depicted—colours of the flag, folk art (designs, textiles, wood carving, and pottery), rural architecture (buildings, wells, landscape), market with Hungarian words on signs, folk costumes, folk dance scene with costumes and musicians.</p>	<p>Closing action: Janko receives everything he wished for</p> <p>Final line: “Possibly the old crone really was the queen of the Gypsies, but of magical powers she had none at all.”</p>

Table 3.4

Identification of Humorous Tale Variant Elements – “Three Wishes”

Title	Beginning	Motifs	Illustrations	Ending
<p>“Three Wishes” (Elek Benedek)</p>	<p>Opening lines and initial action: “Once upon a time, and never mind when, there lived a poor man and his wife.” Initial action: Wife comes home earlier from fields, does not know what to make for supper</p>	<p>-Poor married couple; young, no children -woman home early from fields, starts to make soup -fairy appears, shaking wings on table-top -grants three wishes -wishes for sausage -man comes home; wants horse, ox, pig -woman wants chicken, mirror, new apron -couple argues -man reaches for pipe, tips frying pan over -woman wishes sausage onto his nose -couple argues -woman wishes sausage back into pan -end squabbling</p>	<p>one, full-page illustration of two females in folk costumes, one wearing a head scarf. Both females have haloes surrounding their heads.</p>	<p>Closing action: Couple sits down to eat but does not enjoy meal. Final line: “Now they could sit down to eat, but they did not enjoy it much, as they were still squabbling about whose fault it was, and how they would now stay as poor as they had always been.”</p>

Motifs are fairly consistent in Jones’, Illyés’ and Benedek’s versions. Differences arise in the type of helper and the situation in which the helper appears. In Jones’

version, a fairy's carriage is stuck in the mud, and she offers three wishes in exchange for help getting out. Illyés has a peasant woman in a kitchen wishing for a more substantial meal than clear soup, when a fairy appears to her and offers her three wishes to “see whether [she has her] wits about [her]” (Illyés 173). Benedek also places the woman in the kitchen, stewing over their poverty and meager dinner. A fairy appears and gives the woman a fright, and then offers three wishes. In the first case, the wish is a reward for help, in the second, a test to see if the woman will squander it, and in the third, compensation for frightening the poor woman as well as a test.

Other motifs are surprisingly consistent among these three tale variants, considering the range in publication dates. All three tales feature a poor, young peasant couple with a tendency to quarrel, though they love each other very much. Illyés and Benedek describe the couple without children, and Jones makes no mention of children. The major motifs—presence of a fairy, granting three wishes, the wife wishing for sausage, a squabble over what to wish for, the husband upsetting the sausage from the pan as a result of reaching to fill the pipe, the wife wishing the sausage onto the husband's nose in anger, and then having to wish it back into the pan—are consistent among these three variants.

Slight variation occurs in what the couple desires as wishes. Jones' characters mention two heifers, two horses, and a sucking [sic] pig; Illyés' characters want a horse, a cow, and a pig; and Benedek's characters each have their own desires—the husband a horse, an ox, and a pig, and the woman a chicken, a mirror and a new apron.

Beginnings serve as the next category for comparison within the humorous tale grouping. Jones begins his version of the tale uniquely: “There were 10,000 wagons

rolling along the turnpike road, in each wagon there were 10,000 casks, in each cask 10,000 bags, in each bag 10,000 poppy seeds, in each poppy seed, 10,000 lightnings. May all these thunderous lightnings strike him who won't listen to my tale, which I have brought from beyond the Operencian Sea!" (217). He then introduces the poor, but very-much-in-love couple, and the story ensues. Illyés begins, "There was once upon a time—don't ask me when or where—a poor man and his wife," and then jumps right into introducing the young peasant couple and opening action (173). Benedek begins in a similar fashion to Illyés: "Once upon a time, and never mind where, there lived a poor man and his wife" (56). In fact, Benedek and Illyés' version are the most similar, in all aspects of comparison, of the humorous tale grouping.

In terms of endings, both Illyés and Benedek give their versions an unhappy ending treatment, where the couple continues to squabble, not able to enjoy their dinner and each blaming their perpetual poverty on the other. Even though the tales contain situational humour (the sausage growing on the end of the man's nose), the endings these authors choose is still unhappy. One reason for this may simply be personal—artistic—choice; alternately, an unhappy ending may reflect a return to reality for a historical Hungarian peasant audience listening to the story. The story provides a brief escape, via humour, but an unhappy ending reminds them of their fate—poverty. Not all the authors choose an unhappy ending. Jones has the couple learn from their mistake, live in harmony, and eventually "acquir[e] heifers, horses, and a sucking pig...because they were industrious and thrifty" (Jones 219). This didactic ending also serves as a happy one.

Varga's *Janko's Wish* deserves separate consideration for two main reasons: it is loosely based on the story of the three wishes, and it is in picturebook format. Varga's tale begins with an introduction to the main character and setting: "Once upon a time a peasant named Janko owned a farm that was the grubbiest on this side of the Danube, if not in all Hungary"(n. pag.). The basic story structure involves a poor farmer who does not like to work and whose farm is in a state of terrible disarray. While in the forest collecting berries, he encounters a gypsy woman—"Queen of the Gypsies"—whose caravan is stuck in the mud. She offers to grant him a wish in exchange for help to extract the caravan. Incidentally, this motif is shared with Jones' version of tale. At this point, however, Varga's story begins to deviate from the others: the farmer's wish is for gold, and in the process of trying to find a place to hide it, he begins to clean up his farm and work hard to put it in order. As a result, his luck changes, and he begins to increase his wealth. He decides to wish for a wife, and marries shortly thereafter. He now has everything he could ever wish for, and the tale implies that the gypsy woman did not have any magical power to begin with and simply swindled him.

The illustrations add an enormous amount of cultural information, and include the following depictions of Hungary folk culture: colours of the flag prevalent throughout, folk art designs on textiles, wood carving, and pottery, rural architecture (characteristic buildings, wells, and landscape), farmers' market with Hungarian words on signs, folk garments throughout, folk dance scene with folk garments and musicians. The combination of textual references and visual elements makes this tale distinctly Hungarian and offers a didactic tale along with detailed information about a rural setting within Hungary.

In this chapter, I have discussed the major differences, as I see them, of the humorous tale category. Chapter six compares tale variants within the category of Animal Tales.

CHAPTER SIX: ANIMAL TALES

According to Linda Dégh, “animal tales are meant exclusively for audiences of children” (*Folktales* xxxvii). I have expanded this definition to include any folktale in which the main character is an animal. The next set of tales, the first of which is *The Little Cockerel* by Victor Ambrus, differs from all other tale groupings of this study in that all four variants are single illustrated folktales. Incidentally, I did not find a single unillustrated version in any of the collections.

Among all four picturebooks, the basic story structure is shared: a poor old woman has a rooster who finds a shiny item of value while scratching for food. A sultan passes by the house, demands the coin, and takes it from the rooster by force. The rooster then follows the sultan to his palace and crows until the sultan becomes annoyed. Three times the sultan tries to get rid of the rooster: by throwing him first in a well, then in a red-hot oven, and finally, in a beehive. Each time, the rooster, who has a special power and sharp wits, escapes the attempts, and eventually returns to the woman, bringing riches.

The following tables outline the differences among these folktale variants in the comparative elements described in Chapter Three:

Table 4.1
Identification of Animal Tale Variant Elements – *The Little Cockerel*

Title	Beginning	Motifs	Illustrations	Ending
<i>The Little Cockerel</i> (Victor Ambrus)	Opening lines and initial action: "Once upon a time there was a poor old woman, and all she had in the world were a tumbledown house, a little cockerel and a rubbish heap." Cockerel scratches and finds a golden sovereign	-Poor old woman; tumbledown house -little cockerel scratching over rubbish heap -golden sovereign, -Turkish sultan & his men, take coin by force -men throw cockerel in well, sucks up water -men throw cockerel in red-hot fire, spits out water -men throw cockerel into beehive, swallows them -blows them on Sultan, takes coin back to woman	picturebook format: no explicit depictions of Hungarian culture, except for last page – folk art designs on furniture in woman's kitchen, plates displayed on wall.	Closing action: Cockerel flies home and gives woman the coin. Final line: "The old woman was so pleased she allowed the brave little cockerel to sit wherever he wanted, and gave him corn to eat in a bowl, and he never again had to scratch in the rubbish heap for his dinner."

Table 4.2
Identification of Animal Tale Variant Elements – *The Little Cock*

Title	Beginning	Motifs	Illustrations	Ending
<i>The Little Cock</i> (Joseph Domjan & Jeanne. B. Hardendorff)	<p>Opening lines and initial action: “There was once, in Hungary, a poor old woman who lived in a very small house at the end of the village.”</p> <p>Kis Kakas scratches and finds a diamond halfpenny</p>	<p>-Poor old woman in Hungary, small house at end of village</p> <p>-pet cock Kis Kakas, scratching in yard for worms to eat</p> <p>-diamond halfpenny</p> <p>-Turkish Sultan with soldiers, takes halfpenny from cock, puts penny in Treasure Room</p> <p>-Sultan has three wives</p> <p>-first wife throws cock in well, drinks water</p> <p>-second wife throws cock into hot fire in stove, spits water out</p> <p>-third wife throws cock into beehive, swallows bees</p> <p>-Sultan sits on cock, spits out bees, bees sting Sultan</p> <p>-Treasure room, swallows treasure, takes back to woman</p>	<p>picturebook format: color woodcuts, no recognizably distinctive elements of Hungarian culture, suggestion of folkart designs in some images</p>	<p>Closing action: Little cock goes back to house with gold and silver, diamonds and rubies, and diamond halfpenny</p> <p>Final line: “Kis Kakas and the old woman lived happily and in comfort for the rest of their lives.”</p>

Table 4.3
Identification of Animal Tale Variant Elements – *The Little Rooster’s Diamond Penny*

Title	Beginning	Motifs	Illustrations	Ending
<i>The Little Rooster’s Diamond Penny</i> (Marina McDougall)	<p>Opening lines and initial action: “A long time ago, at the time the Turks invaded Hungary, there lived a poor woman who had a little rooster.”</p> <p>Rooster pecks at garbage pile for food and finds a diamond penny</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Poor woman and tumbledown cottage -little rooster, pecking at garbage pile -diamond penny -Turkish Sultan with army, guards take penny, rooster flies into guard’s cloak -guard throws rooster into well, drinks all water -guard throws into oven, spits out all water -guard throws rooster in beehive, rooster eats bees -Sultan sits on rooster, who spits out bees -treasure house, throws ruby out to distract guards, swallows all treasure, takes it back to mistress 	<p>bilingual picturebook format: folkart designs suggested in rooster’s feather and in depiction of old woman in front matter (folk garment with peasant house in background; folk art designs in border)</p>	<p>Closing action: Little rooster brings back mound of riches in his magic gizzard.</p> <p>Final line: “The little rooster and his mistress danced with joy around the treasure heap, for they knew they would never again go hungry.”</p>

Table 4.4
Identification of Animal Tale Variant Elements – *The Little Rooster and the Diamond Button*

Title	Beginning	Motifs	Illustrations	Ending
<i>The Little Rooster and the Diamond Button</i> (Celia Barker Lottridge)	<p>Opening lines and initial action: “Once long ago, a little rooster lived with a poor old woman.”</p> <p>Rooster has to scratch for worms and bugs to eat, finds a diamond button</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -poor old woman -rooster scratches for worms and bugs -diamond button -imperial sultan/three servants take button -throw rooster in well, drinks water -throw rooster in fire, spits out water -throw rooster in beehive, eats bees -Sultan sits on rooster, rooster spits out bees, which sting Sultan -room with diamond buttons, rooster eats up buttons, takes them back to woman, tells friends the tale 	<p>picturebook format: no distinctive elements of Hungarian culture featured</p>	<p>Closing action: Rooster gives diamond buttons to woman</p> <p>Final line: “Then he went outside to tell his friends the worms and the bugs all about the sultan and his three servants and the diamond button.”</p>

Each tale remains true to its type in that the narrative action, or story structure, among the tales is the same. The same motifs occur as well, though they differ from tale to tale in name only. In Ambrus' version, for example, the "little cockerel" finds a golden sovereign; Domjan's Kis Kakas, or "little cock," discovers a halfpenny; McDougall's "little rooster" has a diamond penny; and Lottridge decides to give her "little rooster" a diamond button.

The rooster in each tale also repeats a phrase as it is performing its magical ability: this saying, also a motif, differs in each retelling. Ambrus' cockerel says, for example, "stomach drink up all the water"; Domjan's Kis Kakas, repeats, "drink, my craw, drink up"; McDougall's rooster says, "gizzard, gizzard, magic gizzard, suck in all this water"; and Lottridge's rooster says, "Come, my empty stomach. Come, my empty stomach. Drink up all the water in the well." Along these lines, Ambrus, McDougall, and Lottridge have their rooster's crow "Cock-a-doodle-doo!" while Domjan's cries "Kukuricku!" (the Hungarian word for the sound of a rooster). The repeated element within each tale of the rooster addressing its stomach is enduring and significant within the comparative framework of this study; more interesting is the authors' choice to alter the diction. This alteration may be a result of choosing context-appropriate words.

Another motif altered among these variants is the treasure room. Three of the four versions include a visit, with or without permission, to the treasure room, where the rooster fills up its stomach with treasure to take back to his mistress. Only Ambrus' version omits this motif and has the rooster returning with the single coin. Domjan fills the treasure room with gold, silver, diamonds, and rubies; McDougall calls it a treasure

house that holds seven chests of precious stones, and Lottridge fills a room with diamond buttons, which the rooster ingests.

One other element that differs among these variants is the character who carries out the Sultan's orders to try to extinguish the rooster. Where Ambrus puts the Sultan's guards to the task, Domjan employs a single servant, and Lottridge three servants. Domjan deviates the most, by putting each of his three wives to the task, one by one, offering to reward them with the diamond halfpenny should they succeed in killing the rooster. As most differences among this tale grouping are in the naming of motifs, a change in the character who attempts to kill the rooster is one of the significant differences among these tale variants.

All four authors begin their variants of the cockerel tale differently, with two mentioning Hungary, and two including no such mention. Where Ambrus begins in a traditional way with "once upon a time," Domjan immediately sets the story in Hungary. McDougall refers to an historical event in Hungary: "long ago when the Turks invaded Hungary," and Lottridge omits any mention of Hungary, like Ambrus. The mention of Hungary and the use of Hungarian words or phrases may or may not be linked to authorship. For example, neither Ambrus nor Lottridge mentions Hungary or includes visual or textual cues (though the source notes indicate they are Hungarian folktales) to indicate the tale indeed comes from Hungary, and yet, Ambrus is of Hungarian descent, whereas Lottridge is not. Domjan deliberately uses Hungarian names, "Kis Kakas," and phrases, "kukuricku." As mentioned, McDougall's version, which is bilingual, also makes references to a specific historical event of Hungary: when "the Turks invaded Hungary." Though no clear connection may be made between the authors' backgrounds

and the mention of Hungary or the use of Hungarian words, the presence of these elements nonetheless adds to the cultural distinctiveness of the tales.

In terms of endings, Ambrus ends quite suddenly and simply with the little cockerel flying home and giving the old woman the coin. The woman is pleased and rewards the cockerel's bravery by allowing him to sit anywhere he likes and giving him corn to eat in a bowl, not having to scratch in the rubbish heap again. Domjan's Kis Kakas goes back to the house and empties his stomach of gold and silver, diamonds and rubies, and a diamond halfpenny. Together they live happily in comfort. McDougall's little rooster half-flies, half-walks home, lets out treasures from his gizzard and together, the mistress and rooster dance around the heap, glad they will never go hungry again. Lottridge's little rooster walks home because he is too heavy with diamonds. When home, the rooster gives all the diamond buttons to the old woman. She is surprised, and he goes outside to tell his friends (the worms and bugs) about his adventures.

Though each tale in this grouping is Hungarian, according to a source note (Ambrus, Lottridge) or reference within the tale text (Domjan, McDougall), none has a distinctly Hungarian presence about the illustration. Folk art designs are suggested within the illustrations of Domjan's, Ambrus', and McDougall's versions, but do not depict Hungarian culture through obvious icons, such as tales in previous groupings do. As mentioned earlier, neither Lottridge nor Joanne Fitzgerald, the illustrator of *The Little Rooster and the Diamon Button*, is Hungarian. This may explain why the tale has no distinctive Hungarian visual elements.

I consider these tales animal tales because, as Dégh writes, "they are for children," and because they feature an animal protagonist. This chapter discusses the

differences, however minor, in the animal tale category. The next chapter, seven, compares tale variants within the category of Anecdotes.

CHAPTER SEVEN: ANECDOTES

Anecdotes differ from legends and humorous stories in that they function primarily as social criticism. According to Linda Dégh, anecdotes are “excellent satires, directed against the village boss, the overbearing official, or the bullying squire held up to ridicule by a released soldier, or their own coachman, or a gypsy lad play-acting the simpleton” (*Folktales* Dégh xxxvi). To this definition, I will add that anecdotes can have humour but do not contain wondrous elements or magic.

The next tale, “The Dog Market in Buda,” can be considered part of the unique group of anecdotes referring to King Mátyás, who reigned in Hungary during the period 1458-1490. This story’s premise is that a rich farmer is punished for his greed, and justice prevails when a poor farmer gains riches. The tale depends on the wise and generous king with a strong sense of social justice. According to Linda Dégh in *Folktales of Hungary*, “this is a popular anecdote attached to the figure of King Mátyás; an old Hungarian proverb, still very much in use, alludes to this incident: ‘Only once did dogs go into the bargain at Buda,’ [a proverb] said if luck has left a person” (322).

The following tables outline the differences between and among these folktale variants in the comparative elements described in Chapter Three:

Table 5.1**Identification of Anecdote Variant Elements – “The Dog Market in Buda”**

Title	Beginning	Motifs	Illustrations	Ending
“The Dog Market in Buda” (Rozsika Schwimmer)	Opening lines and initial action: “One day Mathias felt, as he often did, tired of the King business, and dressed up as a wandering student, in quest of adventure.”	-King Mathias, dressed as student, leaves palace -poor peasant crying - cheated and no money -king gives advice: will pay great price for dog -peasant goes to palace, offers dog - king promises to look into injustice, - silk purse and 100 gold pieces -villagers learn of peasant’s luck -yellow cur dogs -march to Buda -king orders everyone leave	One illustration present: black and white sketch of a palace entranceway, with two men, a farmer and a guard, standing with a dog. Illustration by Willy Pogány, folk art designs in wood work and border. Caption reads: “I want to offer my dog to his majesty.”	Closing action: People leave the storytelling session; snow ceases falling. Final line: “Snow covered the village, and stillness spread out over snow and roofs.”

Table 5.2**Identification of Anecdote Variant Elements – “A Deal that Went to the Dogs”**

Title	Beginning	Motifs	Illustrations	Ending
“A Deal that Went to the Dogs” (Linda Dégh)	Opening lines and initial action: “Maybe you have already heard the story of the dogs that were sold in Buda.” Man returns from Buda and tells everyone of the wonderful price for dogs in Buda	-King Mátyás “the Righteous,” -wealthy farmer -good bargain for dogs -poor man sells only possession, cow, for pack of dogs, takes them to castle -servants send him and dogs to pound -king invites him in -100 thalers -king asks for rich man’s name -rich man takes dogs to king -king sends him off with nothing	no illustrations present	Closing action: The king outwits the bamboozling man Final line: “The wicked man was sent off with nothing more than he had when he left home.”

Table 5.3
Identification of Anecdote Variant Elements – “Only One Dog Market in Buda”

Title	Beginning	Motifs	Illustrations	Ending
<p>“Only One Dog Market in Buda” (Peggy Hoffmann & Gyuri Biro)</p>	<p>Opening lines and initial action: “There was only one dog market in Buda!” This is a familiar saying in Hungary. It means somewhat the same as the phrase that is common in America: ‘Lightning never strikes twice.’” King Matthias the Just walks through the countryside in the spring, watching people work on their farms</p>	<p>-“King Matthias the Just,” -man plowing with two oxen -man with six oxen -king suggests lending two oxen to other -rich neighbour refuses -king tells poor man to sell two oxen, to buy dogs and to bring them to capital city -king buys dogs for a fortune -rich man sells six oxen for dogs, goes to palace -king orders man to get rid of dogs</p>	<p>one illustration: black and white sketch of a man standing at an opening in a brick wall, wearing folk-like garments and boots, holding several dogs by a leash. In the background, church steeples and houses. Small head shot of a dog at the end.</p>	<p>Closing action: King shouts at the farmer to take the dogs away</p> <p>Final line: “But I thought—the farmer said again. “<i>Out!</i>” ordered the King. “<i>There was only one dog market in Buda.</i>”</p>

Table 5.4
Identification of Anecdote Variant Elements – “One-Time Dog Market in Buda”

Title	Beginning	Motifs	Illustrations	Ending
<p>“One-Time Dog Market in Buda” (Irma Molnár)</p>	<p>“Although it happened more than five hundred years ago, many people still remember the dog market at Buda. Whenever they think of it, they laugh, and for good reason.” -Wealthy man brags of money made by selling dogs.</p>	<p>-“Matthias the Just,” -wealthy man brags about good deal in Buda -poor man sells only possession, cow, buys pack of dogs, and goes to castle -100 gold pieces -rich man buys dogs, takes to king -king tells him too late, market only once.</p>	<p>One illustration: a comical black and white sketch with a castle in the distance, dogs running around in front of it, storm clouds and rain. A man’s smiling profile in the foreground, holding a sack.</p>	<p>Closing action: King punishes greedy man. Final line: “My good sir,” the king addressed him. “I am sorry that you let such a fine opportunity slip through your fingers. You are simply too late. The dog market at Buda happened only once.”</p>

Rosika Schwimmer's 1928 version of this tale differs most, both in length (it is substantially longer) and in altered motifs. She injects considerable social commentary in the narrative: "He was often bored with the royal game, its stiff formality, its lack of sincerity. He hated the unreasonable adulation showered on him because he was a king, and yearned for simple friends and manners" (Schwimmer 166). While wandering, the king comes across a poor peasant, lamenting his losses from being cheated and left with only a dog. Upon King Matthias' advice, the peasant travels to the castle to sell his dog for a large sum. He is rewarded, and when the rest of the villagers discover the source of his good fortune, they proceed to the castle as well, wherein the king's message is swiftly delivered: "there was only once a dog market in Buda and there never will be one again." For the ending, Schwimmer includes an epilogue or vignette that portrays a typical storytelling scenario, with peasants gathered around, the snow falling outdoors, laughing over the narrative and life and their similarities and differences. There is less magic and more of a realistically portrayed human element to the tale, along with a reflection of the culture. For example, the author interjects with Hungarian words such as "éjnye," "Bodri," "Bimbo," and "éljen." The one illustration in this version—a simple line rendering of the peasant at the palace gates, dog at his side—is by Willy Pogány.

Dégh's version, which is narrated by "László Márton, a farmhand resettled from Bukovina" (*Folktales* 322), has not a single illustration, and this version is considerably shorter than Schwimmer's, with certain motifs altered. The narrator places this tale in history, "in 1460-70, 470 years ago" (168), and refers to the King as Mátyás the Righteous. Unlike Schwimmer's version, here, a wealthy farmer takes pleasure in outwitting others, and tells every "Tom, Dick, and Harry" that selling dogs to the king is

a lucrative business. A poor man sells off his possessions, buys a pack of dogs, and heads to the palace. The king takes pity, gives him “one hundred thalers,” and lets the dogs go free. When the rich farmer finds out about the money, he too sells everything, only to discover upon arriving at the palace that “only once did it happen in Buda that a deal was made over dogs.” This version, appearing 37 years after Schwimmer’s, is noticeably different in narrative style, though the tale remains true to its type.

Hoffmann and Biro’s version opens immediately with “there was only one dog market in Buda!” followed by an explanation of this proverb: “it’s something like ‘lightning never strikes twice’” (108). This variant is similar to Schwimmer’s in that King Matthias is walking through the countryside, but then the tale deviates slightly. The King notices a rich farmer with six oxen, and a poor farmer with two. When he suggests the rich farmer give the poor two so they each have four, the rich man refuses. In line with the role of the just king, he tells the poor farmer to sell his oxen and buy a pack of dogs, bring it to him, and he will not regret selling his possessions. The farmer does as he is told and is rewarded with “an unbelievably large sum of money” (110). The rich farmer hears of this, and sells his six oxen for a pack of dogs, only to be denied at the palace gates. This version is more dialogue driven than the other two, and is approximately the same length as Dégh’s narrator’s version. The single illustration of, presumably, the rich farmer, is a comical pencil sketch that depicts Hungarian village-style buildings and church steeples in the background.

Finally, Molnár opens similarly to Dégh, placing the story over 500 years ago, during the reign of Matthias the Just. Also in line with Dégh’s version, a wealthy man living near Buda takes pleasure in ridiculing people. After making a good deal “West of

the Danube,” he tells a poor man to sell dogs to the king if he wishes to acquire riches. At the castle gates, the poor man is rejected and is consequently angry. The king then invites him to return, hears of the story, and compensates the poor man with 100 gold pieces. When the rich man finds out, he buys a pack of dogs and goes to the king, but “the greedy fellow [falls] into his own pit” (20). The king says, “I am sorry that you let such a fine opportunity slip through your fingers. You are simply too late. The dog market at Buda happened only once” (20). Of the four variants, I find this one has the least compelling narrative style due to its elevated language and comparative lack of linguistic thrust. However, its single, pencil drawing of a cartoon man holding a sack, with dogs dancing about before the castle in the distance, is amusing, and the final note provides some geographical notes and an explanation that this proverb refers to “a unique opportunity” (Hoffmann 20).

This chapter examines, the similarities and differences among tale variants within the category of Anecdotes. Chapter eight explores a selected group of Historical Legends and provides descriptive analyses of this category of tale variants.

CHAPTER EIGHT: HISTORICAL LEGENDS

Historical legends, according to Gyula Ortutay, have a “kern of reality [that] is coloured ... by tale-like elements” (*Ethnography* Ortutay 583). The legend of the White Stag is significant because it serves to explain the Hungarians’ migration from Asia to Europe and suggests the genesis of the Hungarian people. Irma Molnár gives her account of this migratory tale:

The origin and kinship of Hungarians are hotly debated issues. According to Kézai Simon’s chronicle, *Gesta Hungarorum*, written in 1283, Hunor and Magor followed the trail of the white stag into the Maeotian marshes near ancient Persia. Apart from a narrow wading place this region is enclosed by the Sea of Azov ... Hunor and Magor did not move for five years. In the sixth year they ventured out to the land of the Alans, situated in North Caucasus ... here they seized the two daughters of Dula, the prince of the Alans, for their brides. All the Huns descended from these women...their descendants settled along the River Volga in an area known as Magna Hungaria...In a protracted scramble for living space, the Hungarians were pushed westward by their powerful enemies...Their migration lasted more than four centuries and ended in what is now Hungary. (125-126)

According to Elizabeth Cleaver, “The Legend of the Miraculous Hind is based upon actual historical events that took place on the borders of Europe and Asia some fifteen hundred years ago. It is in many ways an accurate reflection of the movements of the

Hungarians through the eastern European steppes between the fifth and eighth centuries A.D.” (60). This legend is indeed the subject of much attention and debate, and as a result appears in various forms and permutations of the basic story.

The following tables outline the differences between these folktale variants in the comparative elements described in Chapter Three:

Table 6.1
Identification of Historical Legend Variant Elements – *The White Stag*

Title	Beginning	Motifs	Illustrations	Ending
<i>The White Stag</i> (Kate Seredy)	Opening lines and initial action: “Old Nimrod, Mighty Hunter before the Lord, leaned wearily against the stones of the sacrificial altar.”	-Old Nimrod, sons Hunor and Magyar (Twin Eagles of Hadur) -Hadur – pagan god -white stag -sons give chase, seven days and nights -sons find bountiful and beautiful land and are appointed leaders of tribe -stag leads them to their new homeland -Old Nimrod dies -journey -dancing Moonmaidens	Several illustrations: by Kate Seredy, black and white pencil/charcoal drawings with heavy shading, Dramatic illustrations of the characters, eagles, the white stag, each a small depiction of an action in the narrative. No explicit Hungarian distinctiveness	Closing action: Final line: “He stood, King of the Promised Land, Attila the Conquerer.”

Table 6.2
Identification of Historical Legend Variant Elements – “The Enchanted Stag”

Title	Beginning	Motifs	Illustrations	Ending
<p>“The Enchanted Stag” (Albert Wass)</p>	<p>Opening lines and initial action: “Long, long ago, in the faraway land of the East, there was a beautiful site [sic].”</p> <p>Description of the land, introduction to Hunor and Magor</p>	<p>-“faraway land of the East,” - beautiful site—tall mountains to North, sparkling seas to South, forest, game, herds -King Nimrod mighty Ruler, sons Hunor and Magor, -each lead one hundred young braves -white stag -men chase for seven days & nights -reach beautiful land -brothers and men camp there -heavenly music -beautiful daughters of King Dul -men fall in love, marry them -descendants Huns and Magyars</p>	<p>one illustration: by Joseph Mor, dark black and white forest scene, with three women in clothes dancing in a circle, warriors and horses watching from behind trees, and the white stag standing between trees</p>	<p>Closing action: Brothers marry princesses and settle in new land</p> <p>Final line: “Thus the descendants of Hunor and his men became known as the Huns in years to come, while the descendants of Magor and his men were destined to be called the Magyars.”</p>

Table 6.3
Identification of Historical Legend Variant Elements – *The Miraculous Hind*

Title	Beginning	Motifs	Illustrations	Ending
<p><i>The Miraculous Hind</i> (Elizabeth Cleaver)</p>	<p>Opening lines and initial action: “Let me tell you of an adventurous hunt for a Miraculous Hind by my people, the Hungarians.”</p> <p>Introduction to Ménrót, wife, and sons</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Ural Mountains -king Ménrót and wife Enéh -sons Hunor and Magyar, mighty hunters -great hunt, chose 100 men -stag appears -Magyar pierces stag’s heart with arrow -bluebird flies to sky -hind escapes -Kur river, hind disappears -camp for night, hind appears, give chase -Sea of Azov -settle there -hear music -fairy maidens, daughters of Dúl and Belár -each man chooses wife -children’s children are Hungarians 	<p>picturebook format: Illustrations by Elizabeth Cleaver.</p> <p>Large, full-page, pictures, brightly coloured and more salient than text in many cases.</p> <p>Distinctive Hungarian elements: traditional garments specific to the tale’s period</p>	<p>Closing action: Hunor and Magor settle in new land</p> <p>Final line: “Here is where Hunor and Magyar and their one hundred horsemen and their wives made their home. Their children and their children’s children formed the Hungarians.”</p>

Table 6.4
Identification of Historical Legend Variant Elements – “The Legend of the White Stag”

Title	Beginning	Motifs	Illustrations	Ending
“The Legend of the White Stag” (Irma Molnár)	Opening lines and initial action: “Two generations after the Flood, recorded in Jewish sacred literature, lived the mighty prince, Ménrót, grandson of Noah.” Sons of Ménrót known as fathers of Hungarians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Grandson of Noah -Menrót, marries Persian woman Enéh -two sons Hunor and Magor, mighty warriors and hunters (bird as game) -boys grow up, father offers land, forests, servants, horses, and livestock -hunting trip -white stag, give chase -stag disappears -beautiful land, seven days and nights away -go home -father gives blessing -brothers go back and thank God for new homeland 	no illustrations present	Closing action: Hunor and Magor return the beautiful land they found Final line: “When they arrived, they knelt down, thanked God for their new homeland, and praised the white stag that had lured them there.”

Kate Seredy’s 1970 version, *The White Stag*, is an illustrated novel about the coming of Attila the Hun, divided into four parts: Nimrod, the Mighty Hunter, Twin Eagles of Hadur, White Eagle of the Moon, and Attila. Seredy expands the basic migratory tale of the Huns and Magyars moving “relentlessly westward, obeying the voices of their pagan gods, which compelled them to follow the elusive white stag to their

promised homeland,” and contends with a broader range of elements (book cover). The basic story structure involves Old Nimrod and his sons, Hunor and Magyar, both excellent warriors. Hunor and Magyar “lead the tribe toward the promised land, for they, too, understood the voice of Hadur when it spoke in the wind and in thunder” (13). Similar motifs to the other variants include the presence of the white stag and its role in leading the men and ultimately their tribe to their new homeland; the dancing maidens and their eventual role as wife and mothers to the Huns and the Magyars.

One difference between Serey’s version and the others is that the characters are listening to the voice of a pagan god for direction; whereas, in the other versions, Hunor and Magor/Magyar embark on a hunting journey, more because of their own desire for adventure. Coming upon the beautiful land for the warriors in the versions by Wass, Cleaver, and Molnár is more a matter of chance than predetermination.

As mentioned, this narrative is expanded into a short novel (94 pages), but adapts to some conventions of the novel such as the use of chapters and descriptive passages to elaborate upon the basic story elements. The other variants within this category, in keeping with the folktale tradition, use a brief narrative, offering no more details than necessary.

Wass’ drastically shorter, nine-paragraph retelling of this legend is called “The Enchanted Stag,” and keeps the story structure tightly focused on the following elements: King Nimrod’s two sons, Hunor and Magyar, both hunters and might warriors, set out with one hundred chosen men each on a hunting journey. A white stag appears, and they give chase, eventually discovering a beautiful land, which they do not want to leave. There also they find the two daughters of King Dul, along with two hundred dancing

maidens. According to this version, “the two hundred warriors married the two hundred maidens, and they all settled on the new land” (Wass 14). Despite the direct delivery of this legend, an illustration provides a glimpse of a forest scene, in which the maidens dance, the warriors peer at them from behind trees, and the stag appears in mid-leap in the background. Interestingly, Wass devotes more space to the explanatory notes than to the tale itself.

It seems that authors who choose to adapt or retell this legend feel compelled to include extensive notes regarding the legend, and for good reason. Elizabeth Cleaver, in her elaborate 1973 picturebook version, *The Miraculous Hind*, includes over four pages of notes, which are divided up into the following sections: “The Early History of the Hungarians,” a map, “The Legend of the Miraculous Hind,” “Figures of the Legend,” and “Costumes.” The legend itself is illustrated in bright colours and authentic representations of Hungarian culture, particularly in folk garments (e.g. *szür*—mantles with large back-collars and *gatya*—wide white trousers), as researched by the author/illustrator.

According to Cleaver’s notes, “The major figures of the story—Enéh, Menrót, Hunor and Magyar, and the daughters of Dúl—wear the dress characteristic of the Hungarian nobility between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries which survived as Hungarian gala costume until the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries” (63). The other characters, according to Cleaver, are dressed in “regional costumes of the nineteenth century” (63). In the tale’s endnotes, Cleaver devotes considerable detail to describing not only costumes, but also “The Early History of the Hungarians,” “The Legend of the Miraculous Hind,” and “Figures of the Legend.”

Compared to Wass' straightforward narrative style, Cleaver's is much more poetic and whimsical, with fairy maidens and tents woven from strands of mist, and her words are very much married to her renderings on each page. In terms of story structure, Cleaver has Hunor and Magyar as the two sons of King Ménrót and his wife Enéh. The two plan a large-scale hunt, choosing fifty men each to accompany them. There are direct references to the traditional costume/dress of the time and brief explanations that are, as mentioned, furthered in the endnotes. In this adaptation, the men embark on their hunt when a stag and a hind appear. Magyar's arrow pieces the stag's heart, and bluebird flies up as the hind escapes. The group then pursues the hind until they come upon a beautiful land where the "grass is like silk, the water is sweet, sweet sap drips like syrup from the trees. The blue rivers have shining fish and wild game is plentiful" (Cleaver n.pag.). In line with Wass' version, the two warriors decided to settle on this land after meeting the daughters of King Dul and Belar: "Here is where Hunor and Magyar and their one hundred horsemen and their wives made their home. Their children and their children's children formed the Hungarians" (Cleaver n.pag.).

The fourth variant chosen for this study is also the most recent. Irma Molnár's 2001 version, "The Legend of the White Stag," is taken from her collection of Hungarian folktales and remains true to the tale type in the sense that though some variation exists, all necessary motifs are in place. This tale differs from both Wass' and Cleaver's in its opening: "Two generations after the Flood, recorded in Jewish sacred literature, lived the mighty prince, Ménrót, grandson of Noah. From the mountains of Ararat in the area of Urartu, Ménrót's father, Japheth, migrated toward Persia. Because of his passion for hunting, Ménrót settled there amidst such an abundance of game" (Molnár 121). Only

after this rather dense introduction does the author mention the main characters, Hunor and Magor and their hunt.

Molnár, like Cleaver, gives each young son fifty men for his journey. Unlike Cleaver, however, it is an amazing stag that jumps out and leads them to the beautiful land on which they desire to settle. In this version, Hunor and Magor's father is ill, and they feel they must have his blessing to relocate. Their journey home lasts seven days and seven nights, and only after Ménrót gives his blessing, passes, and is given a dignified burial do his sons take their hundred men, servants, livestock, and move to their new homeland. Molnár's variant is not as poetic in style as Cleaver's and differs in that it has not a single illustration.

Historical legends are distinctive both for Hungarians and for an English language audience. For Hungarians, historical legends represent kernels of a people's history and the evolution of their nation and culture. An English language audience, through historical legends, may read glimpses of another country's history, presented in the persistent and effective form of the folk tale.

This chapter explores the similarities and differences among tale variants within the category of Historical Legends. Chapter Nine offers concluding remarks with regard to the comparative chapters of this thesis—Chapters Four to Eight. It also makes suggestions for further study. As well, based on a brief survey of tales included in a selection of world folktale anthologies, I argue that Hungarian folktales should be included in such anthologies.

CHAPTER NINE: CONCLUSION

This thesis has presented the findings of my extensive search for Hungarian folktales in translation and for scholarship on these tales. It has also offered a system of classifying and describing the selected tales and has provided a comparative analysis of variants and types.

In the process of comparing and contrasting tales, I have shown that although these tale variants come from different authors and/or collections, they are still similar in notable ways. It appears that, for the most part, the main differences between the tale variants are in presentation, style, illustration, and/or beginnings and endings. Significantly, the key elements of the tales have been retained over time and across variants. Motifs have generally been altered in function, not in name. The most substantial differences occur in the single, illustrated versions of the tales, where, it seems, the tales take on a new life as a result of the of the illustrator's pictorial interpretation of the text. Therefore, what has emerged from the comparative chapters of this thesis, chapters four to eight, is the observation that the essence of the folktale variants in each category remains largely consistent.

As this study provides a multi-faceted examination of a selection of tales, it serves as a stepping-stone for different avenues of study related to Hungary folktales. In her book *The Hard Facts of the Grimms' Fairy Tales*, Maria Tatar makes direct reference to Linda Dégh and Alan Dundes and suggests that wider approaches to the study of interpreting folktales are recommended:

Like any literary critic who ventures into the realm of folkloric studies, I have discovered that close textual analysis is a skill that does not always pay off in interpreting folktales. The tools of literary study in general cannot be directly applied to folklore but must first be adapted for use in examining oral narration, a form of literature paradoxically without letters. That literature and folklore are, despite their mutual contamination, separate in their genesis, intentions, and structure is an insight—obvious as it may seem—that I owe to scholars in the area of folkloric analysis, who never tire of reminding their literary colleagues to observe carefully the line dividing the two. Linda Dégh and Alan Dundes deserve special mention in this context. But folklore, I have also learned from these scholars, is a discipline without real boundaries. It requires the paleontologist's love of the archaic, the historian's appetite for facts, the psychologist's curiosity about causes, and the anthropologist's passion for understanding cultural differences. (xix-xx)

This thesis is a literary study; however, I agree with Tatar's observation that folklore has no real boundaries and should use multiple disciplines when interpreting folktales. With that in mind, some multidisciplinary studies might include an in-depth study of the historical significance of each tale or of a group of tales. Another avenue of study might be dedicated to an analysis of the visual elements of the tales in picturebook format. Examining each instance of a distinctive representation of Hungarian culture, by providing a historical context and identification of historical period and regions from

which the illustrations are taken, would likely involve a multi-disciplinary approach: literary, visual arts, socio-historical perspectives, and possibly others.

In addition to observing the complexities surrounding illustration in some of the selected tales of this study, I noticed upon sifting through a large number of tales, and in looking in-depth at the core sample of tales chosen for this study, that none of the tales feature child protagonists. Moreover, the heroes of these folktales, if not an animal, are all human males. Looking at reasons for a predominantly male-gendered body of tales would be an interesting study unto itself. Perhaps it points to patriarchal roots of the Hungarian culture. Similarly, child protagonists do not exist in this study's selection of tales, even though several folktale collections, and especially the single, illustrated tales seem explicitly intended for a child audience. I would be curious to find out the reasons behind these choices and pursue questions surrounding audience, including culture, gender, and socio-economic status, both historically and in the present day.

Another possible avenue for further study would involve detailed research of the specific contributions made by the major figures in Hungarian folktale research, such as Lajos Katona, János Kriza, János Erdélyi, János Honti, Tekla Dömötör, Sándor Erdész, Iván Balassa, Gyula Ortutay, Agnes Kovács, and Linda Dégh,. Perhaps one day a comprehensive anthology—a series of portraits—complete with biographical, bibliographical, theoretical, and contextual information may find its way into print.

I believe the creation of a comprehensive anthology devoted to Hungarian folktales in English would bring together and promote awareness of the rich body of tales. Such an anthology might include newly translated tales and be organized according to categories, including but building upon the categories created in this study. Each

chapter might include a critical introduction and annotations for both text and illustration. I acknowledge that this is a large-scale project requiring considerable time and funding commitments. Other challenges involved in such an endeavour include obtaining the appropriate permissions and issues around translation. Nonetheless, the outcomes of creating an anthology of Hungarian folktales in English are limitless. First, English speaking audiences around the world would have access to a large body of tales that are otherwise unavailable. Second, readers would be given the opportunity to learn about the Hungarian people, the culture, and their folklore. Third, opportunities for fresh comparative work would likely arise.

Ultimately, by creating awareness of this unique body of tales, my hope is for Canadian readers to be made aware of Hungary's culture and its folk literature, and for the tales to find their way into collections of multicultural folktales, to be released from their isolation, and to join other well-known international folktales on bookshelves around the world.

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Appendix A: Chronology of Hungarian Folktale Collections in English

- 1886- The Folk-tales of the Magyars (Collected by Kriza, Erdélyi, Pap, and others) by Henry W. Jones and Lewis L. Kropf
- 1890 – Myths and Folk-tales of the Russians, Western Slavs, and Magyars by Jeremiah Curtin
- 1928 - Tisza Tales by Rozsika Schwimmer
- 1963 – Hungarian Heroes and Legends by Joseph Domjan
- 1964 – Once Upon A Time: Forty Hungarian Folk-tales by Gyula Illyés
- 1965 – Folktales of Hungary by Linda Dégh
- 1968 – The Glass Man and the Golden Bird by Ruth Manning-Sanders
- 1969 – The Money Hat and Other Hungarian Folk Tales by Peggy Hoffmann and Gyuri Biro, illustrations by Gyuri Biro
- 1971 – Selected Hungarian Legends (compiled from the collection of Freda B. Kovacs) by Albert Wass.
- 1980 – Hungarian Folk-tales (Oxford Myths and Legends) retold and illustrated by Val Biro
- 1987 – The Prince and His Magic Horse by Elek Benedek and Gyula Illyes
- 1988 – The Tree that Reached the Sky by Elek Benedek and Gyula Illyes
- 1995 – Hungarian Folktales: The Art of Zsuzsanna Palkó collected, transcribed, annotated, and introduced by Linda Dégh.
- 1997 – Hungarian and Transylvanian Folktales by Emőke de Papp Severo
- 1999 – Palko the Piper: Hungarian Folktales by Elek Benedek

- 2001 – One-Time Dog Market at Buda and Other Hungarian Folktales translated and retold by Irma Molnar, illustrations by Georgeta-Elena Enesel.

Appendix B: Chronology of Illustrated Hungarian Folktales in English

- 1965 – The Three Poor Tailors by Victor G. Ambrus
- 1967 – Brave Soldier Janosh by Victor G. Ambrus
- 1968 – The Little Cockerel by Victor G. Ambrus
- 1969 – The Little Cock by Joseph Domjan
- 1969 – Janko's Wish by Judy Varga
- 1970 – The White Stag by Kate Seredy
- 1972 – The Honest Thief by Val Biro
- 1973 – The Miraculous Hind by Elizabeth Cleaver
- 1974 – The Student Who Became King in Spite of Himself by François Colos
- 1975 – Mishka by Victor G. Ambrus
- 1976 – Two Greedy Bears by Mirra Ginsburg
- 1978 – The Little Rooster's Diamond Penny by Marina Mezey McDougall
- 1981 – The Amazing Pig by Paul Galdone
- 1981 – The Good-Hearted Youngest Brother by Eموke de Papp Severo
- 1990 – The Son of the White Horse: An Hungarian Fairy Tale by Laszlo Arany
- 1996 – A Wagonload of Fish by Judit Z. Bodnar
- 2000 – The Little Golden Lamb by Ellin Greene
- 2001 – The Little Rooster and the Diamond Button by Celia Barker Lottridge

Appendix C: Criteria for Folktale Selection

- 1) The tales must be Hungarian, with distinct textual or visual representations of the country and/or its culture. Those without distinctive Hungarian representations give source notes rooting the tale in Hungarian culture.
- 2) A given tale should be chosen from one of the main categories: fairy tale, humorous tale, animal tale, anecdote, and historical legend.
- 3) The chosen tale for each category needs at least three other variants to adequately facilitate a comparative framework.
- 4) Each grouping needs to include at least one single, illustrated version, or folktale in picturebook format.
- 5) Each grouping also needs to include at least one variant that has a child audience in mind.

Appendix D: Tale Texts

Text removed for copyright reasons; original sources:

1. "The Student Who Was Forced To Be King (Gyula Illyés)
2. "The Wishes" (Rev. W. Henry Jones & Lewis L. Kropf)
3. *The Little Cock* (Joseph Domjan & Jeanne B. Hardendorff)
4. "A Deal that went to the Dogs" (Linda Dégh)
5. "The Legend of the White Stag" (Irma Molnár)

Appendix E: Selected Illustrations

Illustrations removed for copyright reasons.