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## David Lindsay Abair and Jeanine Tesori's Shrek the Musical: A postmodernist study

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**Abstract**--Postmodernism is an intellectual movement that characterizes by scepticism and fragmentation. Postmodernist writers return to traditional fairytales to question and challenge their norms and meanings. Shrek the Musical is a play based on classic fairytales of Rapunzel and Beauty and the Beast. Shrek the Musical will be studied according to postmodern techniques and strategies. They are many such as deconstruction and intertextuality. This play will be analyzed according to Kevin Paul Smith's method of intertextuality. This method traces the elements of fairytales in postmodernist literature and their unique alterations by using deconstruction theory that shows the false hierarchies and the false values upon which these classic tales are built.

**Keywords**---Shrek, the Musical, Musical Theatre, Fairy tales, Postmodernism, Beauty and the Beast.

**Introduction**

Postmodernism is a very controversial and complicated term with no unified definition. The explanation of this term is a problem which not only faced the ordinary reader but also students and academics in different spheres of literature, culture and social science. Postmodernism means different interpretations for different people. Many critics and theorists differ in their definitions of postmodernism. In his work, *Postmodernism Condition*, the French philosopher Jean-François Lyotard defined postmodernism as "an incredulity towards metanarrative"(74).

## Method

Postmodernism can be considered a philosophical movement by its scepticism of all the assumptions of western philosophy about ultimate reality and objective reality. In 1960 many theorists and philosophers such as the French philosopher Jacques Derrida (1930-2004 ), the aesthetician Jean François Lyotard (1924\_1998 ), and the American pragmatist Richard Rorty (1931-2007 )and the French cultural historian Michel Foucault (1926\_1984) declare the collapse of objective truth. Those pioneers of postmodernism confirm that modernity has failed because it always seeks to find a core or external point of reference such as God, science, self, essence and reason to build its philosophy. "For these postmodern thinkers, there is no such point of reference because there is no ultimate truth or inherently unifying element in the universe and, thus, no ultimate reality" (Bressler, 89).

In literature, postmodernism is articulated by its relationship with Modernism. Some writers consider postmodernism as a radical break from Modernism. For example, Fredric Jameson, in his seminal article postmodernism or the cultural logic of late Capitalism(1984), suggested that:" The difference between the two is that the creation of an individual style can characterize modernist writing, while postmodernism is best understood in terms of exhausting style (the death of originality) and the pervasiveness of pastiche and imitation(as cited in Mason, 10).that means the modernist writer is concerned with the creation of the new type of text "original text" while postmodernist writers are avoided the 'original' text, and they are concerned with question and scepticism, so they return to the imitate the past to question its central assumption and meaning.

Postmodernist writers seek to avoid the former values such as the new, original or unique text and return to imitate the past to question its meaning and values. Fairytales in postmodern literature become the fertile ground for postmodern writers. They can escape from what is called "newness" and "originality" and, at the same time, they can imitate the past, such as "putting new wines in old bottles"(Carter,37).

Postmodernist critics utilize a particular interpretive strategy called deconstruction, which seeks to prove the text's instability and to demonstrate that the text has multiple meanings (Powell, 69). Postmodern literature is a literary movement. It avoids absolute meaning and emphasizes play, metafiction, intertextuality, and fragmentation. postmodern literature emerged in the late 1950s and early 1960s as a reaction against modernist literature, which seeks to find meanings for the violation of human rights in world war11  
www. postmodern literature Guide: Notable postmodern Authors.  
The main strategies and techniques of postmodernist literature

### 1-Deconstruction

The term deconstruction first appeared in American literary criticism in 1966 when the French philosopher and teacher Jacques Derrida gave his paper on structure sign and played in the Discourse Human science at the John Hopkins symposium. Derrida, with his strategy of deconstruction, challenges and

questions all the metaphysical assumptions held to be accurate by western philosophy (Bressler,107).

At first, Derrida utilizes his deconstruction approach in language. Derrida argues that language is unstable and unreliable in conveying meaning. He depends on structuralism in formulating his deconstruction strategy. Derrida depends on De Saussure's proclamation that language is a system founded on the difference. De Saussure proclaims that language is a linguistic sign that consists of the signifier(the image and the word's sound)and the signified(the word's concept). The meaning in language can get from the unifying of the signifier and the signified. Derrida agrees with Saussure that one can know the meaning of the signifier because of their interaction and differences among themselves. However, unlike Saussure, he applies this logic to the signified. The signified as the signifier can only be understood through its relationship and its differences (Bressler,106). The goal of deconstruction is to destroy what Derrida labelled logocentrism of western philosophy. Logocentrism is a term which refers to the preoccupation with truth, rationality, logic and the world, which became the hallmarks of western philosophy. Deconstruction examines what it has concealed, what it has failed to express, and what it has contradicted. It not only corrects errors but also rewrites the text by reversing and undoing opposites( Jordan, 58).

Deconstructionists aim to overcome their logocentrism and inherited approach to reading. They search to identify the binary oppositions at work in the text itself. They argue that these binary oppositions depict establishing and accepted ideologies that commonly assert the existence of transcendental signified(the external point of reference upon which one can build his philosophy). By reversing binary oppositions in the text, Deconstructionists hope to challenge the fixed views implied by these hierarchies and the values connected with such rigid beliefs (Bressler,116).

### **Deconstruction and the Binary oppositions**

Derrida argues that Western metaphysics depends on a system of conceptual oppositions or binary operations called binary oppositions," For each centre, an opposing centre".For example, man/women, God/Humankind, good/evil, day/night, Etc. Western philosophy suggests that each concept in this hierarchy of binary oppositions can define itself by its opposite concept, which means one concept is superior. Its opposite is inferior, or one concept is a privilege, and the opposite concept is unprivileged. Derrida objects to these hierarchies that are the basis for Western thought and actions. Derrida argues that by reversing these binaries, there will be no absolute standard or "transcendental signified". (Bressler,110-111).

### **Deconstruction and Difference**

The difference is a term invented by Derrida and derived from the French word difference, which means both 'deferral' and 'difference. Derrida coins this term to demonstrate the instability of meaning and suggests that it can be operated in all places and at all times within discourses.

For Derrida, the difference is "the alternative to and to escape from the logic of transcendental signified" (Hendricks, 5). The term difference is Derrida's question of 'what if'. What if there is no transcendental signified, what if there is no ultimate reality, what if there is no being, essence or inherently unifying factor in the universal. Such transcendental signified would establish the binary operation presence /absence almost instantly. Because presence is supreme or privileged in Western metaphysics, while absence is unprivileged, Derrida proposes this hierarchy by momentary reversal, making absence/ presence. One cannot posit a transcendental signified after such a reversal. There is no longer an absolute norm or a unified unity from which knowledge develops and proceeds. Now, all human knowledge and all self-identity must arise from difference rather than similarity, absence rather than presence.

Derrida suggests that the use of differences in textual analysis shows that the text is a play of signs and its meanings are constantly in the process of difference "texts can no longer have a presence. In isolation, texts cannot possess meaning. Because all meaning and knowledge are now based on difference, no text can simply mean one thing. Texts become intertextual"(Bressler,115). That means human knowledge and all self-identity must arise from difference, not sameness. The meaning of the text also springs from difference, not sameness, because no text exists in isolation, and all the "texts become intertextual".

## **2-Intertextuality**

Intertextuality is a term that was first coined by the Bulgarian theorist Julia Kristeva. She defines it as "Any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotation; Any text is the absorption and transformation of another"(Kristeva, 66).that means no text is unique, original, or individual. Intertextuality shows the complex interrelationship between texts.

Ronald Barthes asserted that texts are "a multidimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash"(144). He thinks the reader should be given more consideration because he thinks the reader is born due to the author's death.

The intertextuality of fairytales in postmodern literature depends heavily on Kevin Paul Smith's method of intertextuality. Smith suggested eight elements of intertextuality in his work *The Postmodern Fairytales Folkloric Intertexts In Contemporary Fiction* (2007). Authorized, Writerly Incorporation, Allusion, Revision, Fubalation, Metafictional, and Achitextual /Chronotopic( 9)

2-1-Authorized: "Explicit reference to a fairytale in the title". This tool explicitly references the old and present versions in the fairytale's title. Many fairytales are famous for their titles, so any recurring of these titles in the present text creates a transparent connection with the old text, and the audience can unfold this connection between texts immediately(Khan, 618)

2-2- Writerly:" Implicit reference to fairytale in the title". This intertextual element displays indirect links to the previous version by utilizing a minor character and an object that exists in the tale to be the title(Smith, 16)

2-3-Incorporation: "Explicit reference to a fairytale within the text". This element clearly references a previous text in the new text. It blends the previous narrative into the present one. The postmodern writers use this incorporation device to unfold new perspectives of the characters and show new meanings that are neglected in the previous version. (Khan,620)

2-4-Allusion: "Implicit reference to fairytale within the text". This tool shows the implicit references such as quotations, character descriptions, character names, patterns, motifs and structures from the previous text in the current text. This element also contains the hidden symbols of the text. This tool of allusion is like the unconscious of texts. Ibid

2.5-Revision: "putting a new spin on the old tale". This component of intertextuality is a favourite among postmodernists. It allows them to include fresh viewpoints into the current text. Postmodernists use re-revision to look at the text of fairytales from different lenses and angles. The postmodernist writers want to look at the text from the lens of the world of globalization and not from the world of the Perrault and Grimm brothers, who explore their social condition and culture in their texts(Khan et al.,1393).

2.6-Fubalation: "crafting an original fairytale". Postmodernists sparsely use this element. This tool is used to create a new story of fairytales which differ entirely from the order tales. That means the elements of the fairytales genre are present, but the structure and the plot are entirely different(Khan, 2017).

2.7-Metafiction: "The discussion of the fairytale". This device is used when fairytales are analyzed critically or commented upon. Ibid

2.8-Architectural/Chronotopic:" Fairy tale setting/environment". This element of intertextuality does not refer immediately to the fairytale genre but the use of specific elements and objects such as magical elements, kingdoms and indefinite times and places that refer to old tales of a fairytale (Khan et al.,1395)

### **3-Fragmentation**

Fragmentation is a common technique in both Modernism and postmodernism. Many elements concerned with the plot, characters, themes, factual references and imagination are fragmented throughout the text. The fragmentation technique can be used in language, sentence structure and even grammar in addition to the structure of a work (Goisova, 62).

The postmodernist writers use fragmentation in the revision of fairy tales to alter or break down the conventions of classical fairy tales. They utilize fragments of a fairytale in each text in order to expose the artifice of the fairytale and to demonstrate that there are different ways to shape the tales "the end goal of the postmodernist fairytale is not to closure but openness, not recuperation but differentiation, not the establishment of new norms but questioning of all norms"(Zipes,1994).

Postmodernists do not portray events and characters in their work realistically. This method is utilized to show multiple endings. They employed two or more conclusions, allowing the reader to choose the most likely (Abootalebi, 72).

This strategy and techniques of the postmodern theory are used in the play *Shrek the Musical* to show what alternative meaning has emerged and what ideas are rejected. This study highlights the two tales of Rapunzel and Beauty and the Beast that have become intertextual in *Shrek the Musical*. This study aims to show how these tales' norms and meanings are questioned in the play *Shrek the Musical*.

### **Discussion**

*Shrek the Musical* is a musical play based on the *Shrek* movie (Dreams work 2001) and features music by Jeanine Tesori and the book and lyrics of David Lindsay Abair. In 2008 this play debuted on Broadway. Although most people who first hear about it think it is a ridiculous idea. It is a robust and faithful adaptation that retains most of the dialogue from the movie and has some genuinely excellent music.

[www.Theartical / Shrek: The musical .TV .Tropes.](http://www.Theartical.com/Shrek-The-musical-TV-Tropes)

*Shrek the musical* tells the tale of the substantial green ogre who spends his whole life frightened by everything that crosses his path. So, he escapes to the hideous swamp to live a peaceful life in seclusion after claiming. Suddenly, a group of homeless figures from fairytales break into his shelter and claim to have been kicked out by the vertically challenged Lord Farquaad. *Shrek*: therefore, makes a deal as a result. If *Shrek* rescues Princess Fiona, Lord Farquaad will return the fictional character's homes. *Shrek* agrees but notices something intriguing-something unusual and different about this lovely princess.

[www.' Shrek the musical. New life Academy.](http://www.NewLifeAcademy.com/Shrek-the-musical)

*Shrek the musical* can be viewed as a postmodern play in many aspects. It makes excellent use of intertextuality by combining a variety of texts into its style, including a mash-up of several fairytales. This play explicitly references the traditional tales of Beauty and the Beast and Rapunzel. Gabrielle Suzanna de Villeneuve wrote the tale of Beauty and the Beast in 1740, but Madame de Beaumont wrote the famous version in 1756. The tale involves a beautiful girl called Beauty who is agreed to stay with a terrifying beast to save her father to discover at the end that the Beast is ultimately a handsome prince. (Haase, 572). While the tale of Rapunzel is about a girl whom an evil witch in a tower imprisons. The first version of Rapunzel was written by the Italian novelist Giambattista Basile named 'Petrosinell'. It was rewritten by the French author Charlotte-Rose de Caumont de la Franco, and finally, the famous version appeared in the Grimm Brothers collection in 1812.

[WWW.The Origins of Rapunzel- Fairy Tales Central.](http://WWW.TheOriginsOfRapunzel-FairyTalesCentral.com)

According to Smith's method of intertextuality, there are explicit references between these traditional tales (Rapunzel and Beauty and the Beast and the play of *Shrek the Musical*. Smith has mentioned eight elements of intertextuality in his work *The Postmodern Fairy Tales, Folkloric Intertexts in Contemporary Fiction*:

which they are: Authorized, Writely, Incorporation, Allusion, Revision, Fabulation, Metafictional, Architectural/ Chronotopic. According to Smith, these elements do not appear alone in the text, but at the same time, all eight do not need to be present because some of these aspects are closely related to one another, and there is just a difference in degree between them(2007, 9-57). Although his methodology of intertextuality examines how the filmmakers and novelists use fairy tales in their works, at the same time, it provides a visual insight to trace the elements of fairytales in drama since the aim of his study is that the traditional fairytales are used for ends called postmodernism. "I will contend that the fairy tale is being intertextuality used for ends which can be called postmodern" (Smith, 1). According to his methodology, Shrek the Musical contains five intertextual aspects (out of the eight he proposed in 2007): Allusion, Metafictional, Incorporation, Re-vision and Architectural / Chronotopic.

### **1-Incorporation**

Smith uses this element of intertextuality to alarm the reader of the existence of a particular intertextual. Smith uses this tool to show an apparent reference to the Prior text in the present. It is a feature that ties the old and new stories together. Postmodernist writers frequently employ this incorporation tool to convey the characters and writers' new perspectives. In Shrek the Musical, there is an explicit reference to the two tales of Rapunzel and Beauty and the Beast.

YONG FIONA: "THERE IS A PRINCESS IN A TOWER."

(OH, MY GOUSH, THAT IS JUST LIKE ME.)

"POOR RAPUNZEL\_NEEDS A HAIRCUT

"BUT THE WHICH WILL NOT SET HERBFREE."

"SHE PASSES TIME BY SINGING,"

(LIKE SOMEONE ELSE L KNOW)

"AS YEARS GO BY, SHE SITS AND WAITS"

(Abaire & Tesori ,34)

The writer in this quotation makes an explicit intertextual with the traditional tale of Rapunzel. Then he incorporates another story with this traditional tale to show another angle of this tale: the postmodernist angel. Fiona:

Once upon a time, a little princess named Fiona lived in a kingdom Far, Far Away. One fateful day, her parents told her it was time for her to be locked away in a desolate tower, Guarded by a fire- birthing dragon –as so many princesses had for hundreds of years before"(Abaire & Tesori, 8).

Shrek the Musical has enough elements of the classic tale Beauty and the Beast to be relevant to this study, such as a curse that can only be broken by true love and the idea of the Beauty and the Beast. The writer integrates the story of Shrek with this classic tale to show another side of the story that remained unknown to the readers and the audience to show that ugly people should have a beautiful appearance to find a place in society.

### **Voice of Shrek**

Once upon a time, a little ogre named Shrek lived with his parents in a bog by a tree.

Shrek

"on his seventh birthday, the little ogre's parents sat him down to talk, just as all ogre parents had for hundreds of years before"(Abaire & Tesori, 1)

Both(Mama ogre and Papa ogre)

It is a big bright, beautiful world

With possibilities everywhere

And just around the bend

There is a friend or two

But not for you (Abaire & Tesori,2)

## **2-Allusion**

This element of intertextuality displays an indirect reference to the previous texts .it includes various themes and descriptions such as quotations, characters' names and descriptions, the patterns of the structure and the patterns of motifs of the old text in the present text.

### **2-1-Quotations**

Questions are the most noticeable intertexts because a particular character's utterances and dialogues are so frequently repeated that they have become iconic. In Shrek the Musical, there is an explicit reference to the tales of Rapunzel and Beauty and the Beast, however, there are no quotations for these tales in the play.

### **2-3 –Character Names**

Character names have an apparent allusive reference to the previous texts. The stories are immediately recognized if they have the same names repeated in the present version. In Shrek, the Musical, the name of Rapunzel and Beauty and the Beast are not mentioned.

### **2-4-character description**

The intertextuality of allusion through the character's description is more important than the allusion of the character's name. The character may be given a new name by each narrator who relates their stories, but their activities are indeed what distinguishes them. The characters of Fairy tales are known mainly by their action and distinctive features that make an essential aspect of the tales. For example, In Shrek, the Musical, the description of Fiona is just like the description of Rapunzel because she is imprisoned in the tower and has forbidden to communicate with other people and has long hair.GINGY "In the highest room in the tallest tower, you will find a fiery red-head named princess Fiona "(24(.

The description of Fiona and Shrek is mainly like the description of Beauty and the Beast because Fiona is a beautiful girl who falls in love with a Beast, and there is a disenchantment from a spell by true love. All these elements show an explicit reference to the Beauty and the Beast tale: Farquaad," oh, this is precious! The ogre has fallen in love with the princess. Oh good Lord( Abaire and Tesori ,107) .

## 2-5-Pattern recognition structure

This component emphasizes the structure of fairytales and looks at the intertextual relationship in terms of structure with the classic fairytales .while names and characters do alter in different stories, their actions and roles do not necessarily change. The postmodernists have significantly altered the framework of fairytales. Shrek the Musical has taken only some fragments from the tales of Rapunzel and Beauty and the Beast, such as a princess imprisoned in a tower and a witch who makes a spell just like the original tale of Rapunzel. Then, the love story between Shrek and Fiona is the same story between the Beauty and the Beast and the spell that is only broken by true love is based on the original tale of Beauty and the Beast. However, there are changes in traditional tales, such as the hero not being the conventional prince found in earlier stereotyped fairytales. The prince in Shrek the musical is an ogre, and Fiona is a princess and ogress in the same and the magical transformation in the play the contrary to the original tale. Both of them, Shrek and Fiona, remain an ogre, and that is not what the audience expected.

## 2-6- Patterns or motifs(The Arne Thompson index)

The Arne- Thompson Index is one of the most popular tools for identifying the recurring motifs in fairytales. This index contains various fairytales organized according to their motifs and patterns. According to this index, the tale of Rapunzel comes under the tale type 310," The maiden in the tower". Numerous versions of Rapunzel have been presented throughout various cultures and eras, including an Italian version written by Giambattista Basile, Parsley and Dove. A famous version of Rapunzel was discovered in Germany by Wilhelm and Jacob Grimm, known as Rapunzel. The Arne- Thompson index is essential to highlight the structural similarity between works and fairytales. The following table shows the structural similarity between the play Shrek the musical and the classic tale of Rapunzel.

Table 1: the Presence of Motifs in Rapunzel and Shrek, the Musical

Motifs	Rapunzel	Shrek the musical
R41.2	Yes	Yes
S144	Yes	Yes
G204	Yes	Yes
T381	Yes	Yes
F848.1	Yes	Yes

W32 No  
 No  
 Yes  
 S222  
 Yes  
 No  
 L162  
 Yes  
 No

Table 1 presents 8 motifs. In Rapunzel, 7 motifs are present, and one is absent. In Shrek, the Musical, 5 motifs are present, and three are absent.

Table2: the explanation of motifs in Rapunzel and Shrek, the musical

Motifs	Rapunzel	Shrek the musical
R41.2 captivity in a tower.		
A witch in a tower imprisons Rapunzel		
Fiona looks away in a tower by her parent		
S144.Abandonment in a desert.		
Rapunzel is punished and abandoned in a desert by the witch.		
Her parents abandon Fiona in the desolate tower.		
G204 Girl in serves of the witch.		
Rapunzel serves the witch in her desolate tower.		
Fiona has remained under the curse of the witch		
T381.Imprisoned virgin to prevent knowledge of men (marriage and impregnation).		
Rapunzel is imprisoned by the witch in order not to get married to any man		
Fiona is imprisoned in her tower and cannot get married until she finds her true love.		
F848.1. Girl's long hair as a ladder into a tower.		
The witch uses Rapunzel's hair to climb the tower		
No		
S222. The man promises (sells) a child to save himself from danger or death.		
Rapunzel's father sells Rapunzel to the witch in order to save his life because he steals her garden.		
No		
L162.Lowly heroine marries the prince		
Rapunzel has married a prince.		
Fiona is a princess and gets married to an ogre.		
W32 .Bravery		
Rapunzel is weak and passive		
Fiona is active and brave.		

Table 2 explains the motifs that are explicitly shown to be present or absent in both stories. Their explanations also illustrate how changes are evident in both stories, highlighting the authors' intention.

The Aarne –Thompson index also shows the recurring motifs of the classical tale of Beauty and the Beast found in Shrek the Musical. The first tale of Beauty and the Beast was written by Madame Gabrielle de Villeneuve and is known as *La Belle et la bête*, published in 1740. The most prevalent version was written by Madame de Beaumont, published in 1756. De Beaumont's story is based on de Villeneuve's tale but is shorter and more intended for girls between 12 and 18. Through the Aarne Thompson index's categories, the tale of Beauty and the Beast comes under the tale type 425C, the tale of "Beauty and the Beast". The motifs present in the various fairytales are highlighted as follows.

The presence of motifs in Beauty and the Beast and Shrek the Musical		
Motifs	Beauty and the Beast	Shrek the musical
D735.1	No	Yes
D766.3	Yes	No
S215.1	Yes	Yes
S288	Yes	No
C761.2	Yes	Yes

Table one shows 5 motifs. Four motifs are present in Beauty and the Beast, and one is absent. In Shrek the Musical, three motifs are present, and two are absent

The explanations of motifs in Beauty and the Beast motifs

Beauty and the Beast  
Shrek the musical

D735 Beauty and the Beast. The Disenchantment of animals by being kissed by a woman(man).

No

Their spell of Fiona can only be broken by true love in order to get her standard shape

D735 Disenchantment by tears.

The tear has broken the spell of the Beast of Beauty.

No

S215.1 Girl promises herself to an animal suitor

Beauty promises herself to be the Beast's fiancé.

Fiona promises to accept Shrek as a Suitor after her spell is broken.

S288.The daughter promised the monster as a bride to secure the flower she asked for.

Beauty accepted to be the monster because her father took a flower from the monster's garden.

no

C761.2 Taboo is staying too long at home.

Beauty is forbidden to stay too long at her father's home because the spell will not break.

Fiona is forbidden to stay too long at her parent's home because of her spell.

## **2-7-The unconscious of the text**

This element indicates that each text depends on its structure. The other text will have hidden meanings. Smith explains that this element of the text's unconscious is based on Freud's theory of condensation and displacement. This theory of Freud shows the repressed ideas that appear in dreams. So, the text's unconscious highlights the hidden meaning repressed in the original text(Smith,33). The hidden meaning is highlighted when Fiona is rescued by an ogre and not by the conventional prince that always appears in the stereotyped fairytales. Then, the magical transformation between Fiona and Shrek is not the same in Beauty, and the Beast since both of them remain an ogre. So, The message of the hidden meaning of the text is that the postmodernists embrace everyone as different rather than condemning it and promoting difference. At the same time, the traditional tales always marginalize everyone differently.

## **3-Mateficcational**

When a fairytale is commented on, or when a fairytale is critically analyzed, Metafiction intertextuality happens. Metafictional is a crucial intertextual element, especially for the postmodernists to employ their point of view, as it gives them the chance to disagree or mock earlier ideas and criticize or remark on them (Smith, P:45). In Shrek the Musical, the story is narrated by the Fiona and Shrek who comment on this traditional tale. In one place, Shrek says, "Ahh, I know it is sad, unfortunate, but ogres are used to that-the hardships, the indignities, the endless stream miser"(Abaire & Tesori, 3).In this quotation, Shrek explains how the ogres and the ugly beasts are treated in the original stories. They are always used to indignities, hardships and an endless stream miser of sadness because of their ugly, and they must live in isolation because of their ugly appearance, not because of their behaviours. Fiona also comments on the classic tale of Rapunzel when she says, "Isn't that the saddest thing you have ever heard? A poor little princess hid away from the world, high in a tower, waiting for her one true I"(Abaire& Tesori, 3)). Fiona criticizes the idea that a girl should be imprisoned in a tower, waiting for a man to rescue her and change her miserable life. Fiona criticizes the previous notion that the Girl should be treated like an object and not like a woman with her own opinions.

Shrek comments on the traditional fairytales and shows that these tales always oppressed the ogres because of their physical appearance, not because of their behaviours: Shrek" I am also an ogre, which means I stay on my swamp and avoid large crowds. Or haven't you read the stories? (Abaire & Tesori, 11).

#### **4-Architextual/ Chronotopic**

Fairy tales setting/Environment

This sort of intertextuality draws the reader's attention to a genre rather than the specific example of that genre. It draws attention to elements of fairytales, such as people with fairytale connections, some magical occurrences, and an ambiguous setting and time that are exclusive to fairytales and present in contemporary stories. There are two types of intertextuality.

##### **4-1- Chronotopic Object**

Several objects are primarily connected to fairytales in Shrek the musical. Although the castle can be considered the best example of a Chronotopic object, many objects are mainly related to fairytales. For example, the tower without any door in Shrek the musical makes an explicit reference to the original tales of Rapunzel. The spell casts on Fiona and cannot be broken only by true love is a chronotopic object that links mainly to the fairytale genre.

##### **4-2- Chronotopic of Events**

Todorov proposed three categories for fantasy, which he called uncanny, marvellous, and Fantastic. He suggests that fairytales fall into the marvellous category( Smith, 51). Smith emphasizes that contemporary fairytales can fluctuate between all three categories. Smith refers to fairytales as being a form of magical realism because they combine magic and reality. Shrek the musical is a play that blends the real world with fantasy where everything is possible. The kingdom of Lord Farquaad portrays the real world. He rejects any fairytale creatures and any magical accidents, while the fantasy is depicted by fairytale characters and the spell cast on Fiona. Then, the magical transformation that happens between Fiona and Shrek in which Fiona remains an ogress and does not turn into a beautiful princess. This magical accident is refused by the people of Duloc, who reject any different person and consider him a freak. This magical transformation shows the postmodern perspective, which celebrates everyone who is different and considers him/her a unique person, contrary to the magical transformation in the classic tale of Beauty and the Beast, in which the Beast is converted into a handsome prince, emphasizing the idea that the different person has no place in the society.

#### **5-Revision**

Revision is a popular tool of the postmodernists since they constantly reject old ideas and embrace new ones. The element of re-vision helps them in putting their ideas into action. They do not adhere to traditional ideas but instead attempt to perceive the world through alternative lenses.

Shrek the Musical does not follow the original plots of the classic tales of Rapunzel and Beauty and the Beast. However, it contains fragments of these tales in order to reshape these stories according to the postmodernist lens. For example, Rapunzel in Shrek the musical is depicted as the character of Fiona since it is a beautiful girl imprisoned in a desolate tower. She is under a spell of a

witch. However, the alteration in the original tale is that Fiona is not rescued by a handsome prince or a white knight as supposed in the stereotypes of fairytales. However, she was saved by an ogre: Fiona" well...yes. Oh no. I'm supposed to be rescued by my true love! Not by some ogre and his...pet.(Abair & Tesori,58). Fiona always thinks that a knight like the storybook will save her that she reads. So, the spin put by the postmodernists on the original tales of Rapunzel to show the other side of the tale that remains unknown to the readers is that this tale always marginalizes who is different and has an ugly shape.

The Rapunzel from the Grimm Brothers is unlike Fiona in the Shrek the Musical. Rapunzel is the classic tale of naïve and meek, and she is like an object that controls by others. She locks away in the tower without any door by the witch and then stays there until the prince discovers her place and makes her pregnant with a twin. Rapunzel, in traditional tales, has no opinion. She is absent entirely and can only see through the eyes of the other characters. Fiona in Shrek the Musical is fearless, bold, curious, and incredibly brave. When Fiona saw the Pied Piper, and he could not get rid of the rats that followed him, Fiona took the pipe and told him, "I think you may need to change your tune, Master" then she taught him the correct tune. Fiona shows the development of the female character that differs entirely from the female protagonist in the original tales: Shrek "Oh, I do not know, princess-germ-infested vermin-not exactly what I expected, Fiona Well maybe you should not judge people before you get to know them"(Abair&Tesori,69). So, this quotation shows that the female characters have changed from the previous version and have become bold and brave.

The tale of Beauty and the Beast has also been revised in Shrek the Musical to show another perspective of this tale that had remained unknown to the reader. The new spin on the tale of Beauty and the Beast is that the heroine is whom an ogre has broken enchantment and not the hero, and the spell cast on Fiona is not by a handsome knight. Then in the original tale, the hero is converted from a beast into a handsome prince after he finds his true love. However, in Shrek, the Musical, the hero and the heroine remain ogres, which shows the postmodernist perspective that celebrates anyone who is unique and different and demonstrates the classic tale of the Beauty and the Beast based on the marginalization of the people who have a different shape.

So, the revision of the tales of Rapunzel and Beauty and the Beast in Shrek the musical prove that these classic tales are based on false idea and wrongs beliefs since the Girl should depend on the man to save her from her miserable circumstance and any person should have a beautiful shape to be accepted in the society. According to deconstruction theory developed by Derrida, which observes the binary oppositions that operated in the text to challenge the fixed view of certain beliefs.

Deconstructionists search for the binary oppositions operating in the text and reverse them. By reversing these hierarchies, deconstructionists wish to challenge the fixed views assumed by such hierarchies and the values associated with such rigid beliefs(Bressler,116). The binary oppositions in the text make one concept privilege and the other unprivileged, one superior and the other inferior. In Shrek, the musical, the binary oppositions that have given in the text are beauty/ugly,

light dark and male/ female. Derrida suggests that by reversing such hierarchies, there will be no transcendental signified ( the external point upon which one can construct his philosophy), and all the human knowledge will spring from difference, not sameness. It will spring from absence, not from presence. In Shrek, the Musical, the hierarchies built in the traditional tales of Rapunzel and Beauty and the Beast are reversed and deconstructed. The tale of Beauty and the Beast is built on the hierarchies of beauty/ugly and light/dark because the prince turns into a handsome princess in the end. "How great was her surprise when she discovered that Beast had disappeared and that young prince more beautiful than the day was bright"(Tatar). So, the concept of Beauty is privileged and superior to the ugly. In contrast, in Shrek, the Musical, the concept of ugliness becomes superior since, in the end, Fiona remains an ogress.

Fiona's voice

"By day and night another –this shall be the norm until you find true love's first kiss and then take love's true form ....true form...."

(A magical transformational explosion fills the cathedral. A whirlwind of sparkling light. Then the magic subsides )

Shrek

Fiona ....are you all right

(she slowly turns around, still, in an ogress, Fiona looks at herself dismayed.)

Fiona

Well, yes...but ...I do not understand . I am supposed to be beautiful.

Shrek: But you are beautiful (Abaire & Tesori, 113).

So, the binary oppositions of the beauty/ugly have reversed in Shrek, the Musical. The concept of ugliness becomes superior to Beauty, confirming that the ugly people are marginalized in the tale of Beauty and the Beast because of their shape, not their behaviours. At the same time, in the postmodern Age, anyone different is considered unique and special. The hierarchies of light /dark also have reversed in Shrek the musical since Fiona a Shrek celebrate their shape and assert that what makes them different is memorable.

The classic tale of Rapunzel is built on the binaries' opposition of the male/female since she is just like a puppet, and she has no voice. She is locked away in her tower and does not attempt to free herself from the authority of the witch. She wastes her time waiting for a male who will come and rescue her. Although Fiona repeats this idea but does not follow Rapunzel's path, on the contrary, she criticizes this idea that makes the female submissive entirely to the norms of society. Fiona is bold and brave, unlike Rapunzel, who is weak and passive. Fiona is not afraid of anything, whether that thing is a human or anything else. When Shrek sees Fiona and her way of treating the Pied piper and then with the animals, he says that "not exactly what I expected" about a princess. So, by developing the character of Fiona into a bold and curious girl, the binary oppositions of male/female have reversed in Shrek the Musical confirming the shaky foundation of this hierarchy and this classic tale is based on false values.

## **6-Fragmentation**

Fragmentation is a technique used in both Modernism and postmodernism. Many elements concerned with the plot, characters, and themes are fragmented

throughout the text. Many postmodernists use fragmentations in the revision of fairytales to show alternative meanings, questioning the old norms and rejecting specific ideas. Although the plot of *Shrek the Musical* is about an adventure of an ogre who tries to save his swamp and its begins with 'once upon a time', it has fragments of the classic tales of Rapunzel and Beauty and the Beast. The plots of these tales are fragmented entirely and do not narrate in a realistic manner or chronotopic order as in their original tales. The events of Rapunzel and Beauty and the Beast do not begin in the play of *Shrek the Musical* but begin in the middle. The tale of Rapunzel begins when Fiona is locked away in the tower, and the story of Beauty and the Beast begins when Shrek and Fiona fall in love with each other, reflecting the idea of Beauty and the Beast. These fragments of tales and their figments events in the play provide multiple endings that question the traditional norms of these tales, such as the protagonist being an ogre. The antagonist is the actual prince, and Shrek and Fiona remain an ogre at the end, contrary to the stereotype of conventional fairytales in which the beautiful princess married the handsome prince.

### **Conclusion**

*Shrek the Musical* is a play based on the traditional tales of Rapunzel and Beauty and the Beast. Smith's method of intertextuality, which traces the elements of fairytales in postmodern literature, shows that the hero and the heroine in postmodernist literature are no longer the handsome prince or a beautiful princess but ogres because the postmodernists embrace plurality. It believes that human knowledge springs from difference, not sameness. The brave and bold heroine is also contrary to the classic tales. The values and the norms of these traditional fairytales have been questioned and challenged in the Postmodern Age. The values of these classic tales of Rapunzel and Beauty and the Beast are based on wrong beliefs and false hierarchies which no longer serve society. Using deconstruction theory that proves that these tales are constructed on hierarchies that make the people who have different shapes or ugly appearance are marginalized and have no place in the society such as the tale of the Beauty and the Beast. In contrast, the tale of Rapunzel in Grimm Brothers is based on a hierarchy that makes the women submissive and weak. So, these traditional tales are no longer suitable for the postmodernist audience (especially children) since it based on false values.

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### **Data availability statement**

It is possible to receive the dataset that was used in this study from the individual who functioned as the corresponding author if a legitimate request is made to do so.

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