


Cinderella – from reign to hinterland: a comparative approach between fairy tales and cordel narrative /

Cinderela – do reinado ao sertão: uma abordagem comparativa entre contos de fada e narrativa em cordel


Veronica Sobral Almeida Amaral^{1*}

Veronica Sobral Almeida Amaral, Federal University of Campina Grande – UFCG, Master in Postgraduate Studies in Language and Teaching – PPGLE.

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0005-1485-7683>

José Hélder Pinheiro Alves^{2**}

José Hélder Pinheiro Alves, Postdoctoral fellow at the Federal University of Minas Gerais (2004); PhD in Letters (Brazilian Literature) from the University of São Paulo (2000), Professor of Brazilian Literature at the Federal University of Campina Grande - UFCG – PB.

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4304-7178>

Received in: 06 nov. 2024. **Approved in:** 08 nov. 2024.

How to cite this article:

AMARAL, Veronica Sobral Almeida; ALVES, José Hélder Pinheiro. Cinderella – from reign to hinterland: a comparative approach between fairy tales and cordel narrative. *Revista Letras Raras*. Campina Grande, v. 13, n. 4, e-4983, dez. 2024. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14542505>.

ABSTRACT

The dialogue between children's literature and popular literature, especially the adaptations of classic narratives and fairy tales for cordel literature, has been a research subject by several scholars. However, little research has been done on the possibility of comparative approaches to this type of production within the school space. In this paper, we present a comparative analysis among three versions of the short story *Cinderella*, published at different times. Two classics: *Cinderella or Gata Borralheira*, by Charles Perrault, and *Cinderella*, by Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm, and a cordel version titled *Oxente Cinderela*, by Isabelly Moreira. Next, we present a reading proposal with the mentioned texts, in order to provide a comparative approach that can stimulate the perception and reflection on what each work can reveal. To theoretically support this paper, we used Coelho (2008) and França (1991) to deal with the

1*

 veronica.sobral@estudante.ufcg.edu.br

2**

 jose.helder@professor.ufcg.edu.br

fairy tale, Hutcheon (2011) on the theory of adaptation, Carvalho (2003; 2007) and Abreu (2004) on the comparative approach. We also return to Pinheiro and Marinho (2012), Pinheiro (2018), Alves and Rodrigues (2016) to think about the teaching of cordel literature and, finally, Alves (2020), Bajour (2021) and Rouxel (2014) as methodological support.

KEYWORDS: Fairy tale; Cordel literature; Adaptation; Comparative literature; Methodological approach.

RESUMO

O diálogo entre a literatura infantil e a literatura popular, sobretudo as adaptações de narrativas clássicas e contos de fadas para literatura de cordel, tem sido objeto de pesquisas de diversos estudiosos. No entanto, pouco se pesquisou sobre a possibilidade de abordagens comparativas desta modalidade de produção no âmbito do espaço escolar. Neste artigo, apresentamos uma análise comparativa entre três versões do conto Cinderela, publicadas em épocas distintas. Dois clássicos: Cinderela ou Gata Borralheira, de Charles Perrault e Cinderela, de Jacob Grimm e Wilhelm Grimm e uma versão em cordel denominada Oxente Cinderela, de Isabelly Moreira. Em seguida, apresentamos uma proposta de leitura com os textos mencionados, com o objetivo de oportunizar uma abordagem comparativa que possa estimular a percepção e a reflexão sobre o que cada obra pode revelar. Para fundamentar teoricamente este artigo, recorreremos a Coelho (2008) e Trança (1991) para tratar do conto de fadas, Hutcheon (2011) quanto à teoria da adaptação, Carvalho (2003; 2007) e Abreu (2004) sobre a abordagem comparativa. Retomamos ainda Pinheiro e Marinho (2012), Pinheiro (2018), Alves e Rodrigues (2016) para pensar o ensino da literatura de cordel e, finalmente, Alves (2020), Bajour (2021) e Rouxel (2014) como apoio metodológico.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: conto de fadas; literatura de cordel; adaptação; literatura comparada; abordagem metodológica

1 Introduction

Fairy tales, according to Coelho (2008), belong to Children's Literature and enchant people of all ages. Transmitted from generation to generation by oral tradition, some stories were collected by Charles Perrault, who organized, in the seventeenth century, the first collection composed of eight short stories.

After Perrault, the Brothers Grimm, in Germany, carrying out linguistic studies, discovered - among many texts collected - a collection of narratives. This collection resulted in the construction of the collection *Literatura Classica Popular*. Influenced by romanticism and criticism, the Brothers, in the collection second edition, “remove episodes of too much violence or evil, especially those that were practiced against children. The success of these short stories paved the way for the creation of the Children's Literature genre.” (Coelho, 2008, p. 29)

Depending on the culture of each region, fairy tales have diversified versions. The adaptation, for example, “keeps the original story, rewritten according to the needs of specific readers, while the retelling gives it a different outfit, maintaining, however, evident references to the source” (Aguiar, 2012, p. 48). The adaptations and retellings give the story a similar or different tone, a phenomenon that figures in the literature.

Using various means to adapt different genres, the retelling of traditional stories is also present in the constitution of leaflet literature. Among the oldest works, we find leaflets such as *História da Mazela Teodora* by Leandro Gomes de Barros and *Histórias da Imperatriz Porcina* by Francisco das Chagas, two adaptations of narratives from the Iberian Peninsula.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Leandro Gomes de Barros bequeathed us a leaflet called *The Sleeping Beauty in the Woods*, possibly the first adaptation of a fairy tale for cordel literature. It is important to clarify that the attribution of authorship of this cordel to Leandro is recorded only by some scholars, such as Egídio de Oliveira Lima (1978), who references him between “The hundred best pamphlets by Leandro Gomes de Barros”, and Irani Medeiros (2002), who indicates the year 1913 as date of publication. We also highlight, from Leandro de Barros, the *Snow White* booklet. We also remember the *History of the sleeping princess and the Kingdom of the seven fairies*, adapted by Minelvino Francisco Silva.

According to Pinheiro and Marinho (2012, p. 116), “adaptations to verses in leaflets have been gaining strength since the beginning of the twenty-first century.” In the context of contemporary cordel literature, the adaptation of fairy tales and canonical works such as *The Little Prince*, by Stélio Torquato, *Romeo and Juliet*, by Maria Ilza Bezerra, *Little Red Riding Hood*, by Manoel Monteiro and many others is growing.

Research focused on the universe of adapting fairy and folk tales from oral tradition points to an exponential growth of this procedure, especially in these first decades of the twenty-first century. Souza (2018), who researched the different versions of *Little Red Riding Hood*, brings, in the appendices of his dissertation, a broad picture, by publisher, of publications of adaptations for cordel literature of fairy tales and literary works in general. The author's work consolidates the idea that there is a significant number of fairy tales in verse circulating in the literary world.

Regarding the adaptation of scholarly literature to cordel literature, we can say that “success [...] is due to a set of factors among which the strong relationship with orality maintained by these compositions stands out” (Abreu, 2004, p.199). The adaptations offer to readers the possibility of reading classic narratives, with the language of cordel.

Another important issue is that the cordelista, who makes the adaptation, seeks to understand the listener's or reader's reception and adapts works that attract this audience. Also, according to Abreu (2004, p. 205), “the pamphlet is more succinct and direct, simplifying the periods' structure and privileging the direct order in sentences.” Another highlight worth

remembering is that in the adaptation to cordel, the author usually seeks to bring texts closer to the reader's references, converting terms into others better known by him.

Thus, in this paper, we present a comparative analysis among three versions of the short story *Cinderella*. Two classics: *Cinderella or Gata Borralheira*, by Charles Perrault, and *Cinderella*, by Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm, and a cordel version titled *Oxente Cinderela*, by Isabelly Moreira. Next, we point out a reading proposal with two strands that originated in the oral tradition: fairy tale and leaflet literature. The aim is to provide an opportunity to observe similarities and differences in each version and favor a comparative approach that can stimulate perception and reflection on the various nuances that each work may reveal.

2 *Cinderella* by Perrault and Brothers Grimm, and *Oxente Cinderella*, by Isabelly Moreira: contextualization.

In the seventeenth century, in France, what we call today Children's Literature was born, with the publication of the first collection of children's stories, by Charles Perrault, entitled *Tales of Mother Goose* (1697). For Coelho (2008),

Charles Perrault (poet and prestigious court lawyer) gathered eight stories, collected from people's memory. They are: *Sleeping Beauty in the Woods*; *Little Red Riding Hood*; *Bluebeard*; *Puss in Boots*; *The Fairies*; *Cinderella*; *Henry of Tufts and Little Thumb*. (Coelho, 2008, p. 27)

Although Perrault's idea was not writing for children, this publication marks the beginning of Children's Literature, which only gained visibility in the eighteenth century, in Germany, "from the linguistic research carried out by the Brothers Grimm (Jacob and Wilhelm), it would be definitively constituted and would begin its expansion through Europe and the Americas" (Coelho, 2008, p. 29).

The curious fact is that the Brothers Grimm wished to demarcate the German language and decided to research old legends and tales that remained in people's memory and were transmitted by oral tradition, from generation to generation. In this search, "they have discovered the fantastic collection of wonderful narratives that, selected from the hundreds recorded by the

people's memory, ended up forming the collection that is now known as Children's Classical Literature” (Coelho, 2008, p. 29).

Among oral narratives, of popular origin, what most appear in children's literature are fairy tales. In some cases, there is no differentiation by the reader between fairy and wonderful tale. For Coelho (2008), although both are forms of wonderful narrative, fairy tale and wonderful tale do not have the same nature. The author argues that these forms are different, especially when analyzed according to the problem that underlies them.

Therefore, “the fairy tale revolves around a *spiritual/ ethical/existential* problem, linked to the individual's inner realization, basically through Love”, while “the *wonderful tale* has oriental roots and revolves around a *problematic/social/sensorial*” (Coelho, 2008, p. 85). That is, the wonderful tale has as its central axis the search for wealth, power and socioeconomic fulfillment of the individual in space.

Portuguese researcher Maria Emília Traça (1992) draws attention to the context of popular tales' emergence – only later framed in classifications such as “fairy tales” and “wonderful tales”. To her,

In its traditional context, folktale is an essentially oral genre, a way of thinking, of elaborating and transmitting stories through a network of tellers who succeed each other in space and time to periodically renew and revive the imaginary function of their auditoriums. (Moth, 1991, p. 38)

When we think of the narrative in a cordel leaflet, although it already has the status of writing, it still preserves many elements of oral tradition, of speech rhythm. Therefore, it is closer to oral genres, even when adapting works whose writing has erased much of the orality dimension.

In modern times, adaptation has become one of the most recurrent procedures. As Hutcheon (2011, p. 10) states, “adaptation is (and has always been) central to human imagination in all cultures.” She also recalls the theorist of adaptation, that they “are everywhere nowadays: on television and movie screens, on stages of musical and dramatic theater, on the internet, in novels and comics, in arcades and also in theme parks closest to you”. (Hutcheon, 2011, p. 22).

Among us, it is increasingly present in the so-called Cordel Literature. Oftentimes victim of criticism, adaptations are understood by Hutcheon from an evaluative perspective. It defines it as: a) “A declared transposition of one or more recognizable works”; b) “A creative and interpretative act of appropriation/recovery;” c) “An extensive intertextual engagement with the adapted work.”

(Hutcheon, 2011, p. 30). Of course, not every adaptation achieves the status of a creative act. This fact can be observed, within the scope of cordel literature, when we compare a set of adaptations of the same work.

Adaptation of fairy tales to cordel literature demonstrates the readers' interest in these productions. According to Abreu (2004), poets consider the reception of listeners and readers and select the texts to be adapted, following the criterion of similarity with those of stories in cordel leaflets. Therefore,

The most fundamental change is the transposition of prose into verse, adapting the narrative to the leaflets' poetic form. Even when there is a practically literal transcription of the matrix text, cuts are inserted in order to obtain seven-syllable verses and words are introduced – or the order is changed – to create rhymes. (Abreu, 2004, p. 202)

This change is necessary so the story's narrative maintains the chain of ideas and is able to fit into the verse's structure, metric and rhyme. It is not enough just to build stanzas, it is necessary to follow the text's logic, maintaining the coherence, cohesion and continuity of the narrative.

When it comes to themes, love is very present in cordel literature. According to Abreu (2004), the romantic feeling, when affirmed, is not questioned throughout the text. In the adaptation of a love story, the poets' priority focuses on the unfolding of the characters' actions, seeking to maintain the plot's linearity.

This way, adaptations to cordel literature, in addition to being an activity of retelling a narrative in another way, involve the idea of bringing the leaflets closer to their reading audience. The poet interprets the work and selects the parts of the plot that must remain, and can provide the reader with access not only to classical narratives, but also those of oral-popular origin.

We think that the comparative analysis of versions of the same short story can enable the reader to perceive similarities and differences between the texts, as well as dialogues and particular characteristics of each one, in a movement between diverse fields. This idea is defended by Carvalhal (2003), who discards the influence or superiority of one text or author over another.

From this perspective, thinking about Comparative Literature is to conceive that the text has the “possibility of moving between various areas, appropriating different methods” (Carvalhal, 2003, p. 15). It is the idea of intertextuality, in which the reader can perceive dialogues between

texts, ideas that are repeated, intersect or even remember the other reading. In this regard, Carvalho (2007, p. 51) recalls the concept of intertextuality established in 1969 by Julia Kristeva as a “process of productivity of the literary text that is built with the absorption or transformation of other texts”. That is, the text is built maintaining relationships with other readings.

Considering that we will present approximations and differences between the narrative of Isabelly Moreira and the versions of Perrault and Grimm, we quickly present the versions of these pioneers, as well as the pamphlet: *Oxente Cinderella*, by cordelista Isabelly Moreira.

2.1. Cinderella or The Cinderella Cat, by Charles Perrault

The short story *Cinderella or The Cinderella Cat*, tells the story of a girl, whose father became a widower and married a woman who had two daughters. When he passes away, they are full of envy for seeing the sweetness and beauty of the orphan, treat her with contempt, making her a servant.

One day, the prince organizes a ball to find a wife, but the stepmother prevents Cinderella from attending. As she cries, her fairy godmother appears, who turns her into a princess to go to the party, but warns that the spell will be broken at midnight. Cinderella and the prince fall in love and dance a lot, but at midnight Cinderella runs away, losing one of her glass shoes. The prince decides to test the shoe on all the girls' feet and marry the person to whom the shoe fits. And despite the bad attempts of her stepmother and her daughters, the shoe finally fits Cinderella, who marries the prince and lives happily ever after. With her kindness, Cinderella forgives the sisters' wickedness and takes them to the palace to be happy too.

2.1.2 Cinderella, by Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm

Although it maintains the plot, the same conflicts, the outcome of a passion and the marriage between Cinderella and the prince, the Brothers Grimm tale brings some points that differ from Perrault's narrative. Cinderella's mother, sick, says her farewells, asks her to be kind and promises to always protect her. There is no presence of a fairy godmother, but a dove protects her. Cinderella's relationship with her mother, always present from the grave, asking for protection from the beginning to the end of the story, is also an action that differs from Perrault's narrative.

Cinderella's father is present throughout the plot, realizing how much Cinderella is despised, but he does not take a stand. The ball takes place during three days, and only at the last one Cinderella misses her curfew. When the shoe fitting takes place to find out who the prince is looking for, he fits it on the orphan's half-sisters' feet and one of them pretends to be the beautiful girl. During the tour with his suitor, the dove warns the prince that the shoe does not fit the girl's foot. Upon returning, Cinderella's father announces to the young man that he has another daughter, who is responsible for cleaning the house and Cinderella appears. And finally, after Cinderella's marriage to the prince, the region's people found out how bad her father, stepmother and stepdaughters were and forced their escape to another country.

2.1.3 *Oxente Cinderella, by Isabelly Moreira*

The leaflet *Oxente Cinderella* is authored by Isabelly Moreira, who was born and lives in São José do Egito – Pernambuco. As a child, she had contact with cordel literature and musical art, contributing to her training. She is the author of the cordels *Carta a Tião, A Borboleta e a Formiga* and *Brinquedo Guardado*, aimed at Children's Literature.

Oxente Cinderella is written in the form of seven-verse stanzas, called *setilha* and each verse contains seven metric syllables, also known as *redondilha maior*. The leaflet contains 26 stanzas and brings changes related to space, habits, and other elements that favor reader's identification linked to aspects of Northeastern culture. In this production, the cordelista exchanged the European palace for a farm in the northeastern hinterland. Thus, all elements of the text were adapted and started to have a regional representation. The title consists of a typical countryside expression: *oxente*.

3 **Between the reign and backcountry, Cinderella is transformed**

Although the *Oxente Cinderella* narrative does not shy away from the first versions, insertions of regional elements contribute to the text approaching northeastern backcountry traditions. Some typically regional words are present in the narrative, such as: “uproar”, “fuss”, “midday drip” and “rush”. This phenomenon present in adaptations of European stories to

Northeastern, in which both landscapes, characters and languages take regional forms, is called acclimatization by Ayala (1997). The author says that “it is evident that even in cases of adaptation to verses of traditional European stories, popular poets do not mechanically transpose, but acclimatize, regionalize, “northeasternize”, we can say, these themes whose origin is lost in time” (Ayala, 1997, p. 162).

The versions presented also show a stepmother as a figure who destroys harmony, creating difficulties for the protagonists' lives. In this case, it is through the difficulties arising from the loss of the protagonist's mother, followed by the cruelty of stepmothers that the heroine, at the narratives' end, rises.

Another similarity worth highlighting is Cinderella's servant condition established by her stepmother and her daughters. Cinderella's patience does not differ in the versions presented in this paper. However, when we look at it from a psychological point of view, the second story explores Cinderella's feelings and suffering, explicitly. In several passages of the text, she cries at her mother's grave, pleading for a change of life. Although, in the other narratives there are also signs of this suffering and dissatisfaction of having such a hard life.

In the three narratives of the short story under study, the figures of mother and father appear differently. In Perrault 's *Cinderella*, the father appears just a little. His presence is recorded as “nobleman” and “husband”. In the paragraph which narrates the beginning of the evils suffered by her, there is a mention that says that Cinderella “did not dare to complain to her father, who could rebuke her [...]” (Perrault, 2015, p. 01). There are no records of the father's reaction to the situation experienced by his daughter. Still in this story, the mother's death is not explicitly expressed. There are signs in the text that make us understand she was no longer alive, such as, “traits inherited from her mother, who had been the best person in the world”.

In the *Cinderella* version by the Grimm Brothers, there is an explicit reference of both mother and father. In this tale, the mother gets sick, calls her daughter and, in a way, says her goodbye and dies. And throughout the text there is a spiritual communication between them, at each encounter in the tomb. The father is also present throughout the entire narrative. Some of the references such as, “one day, the father was going to the city”, “on the third day, when the father whipped the horse”. Although passive and conniving with the wickedness of Cinderella's stepmother, the father has the attitude of, when he sees the lost shoe that does not fit on the stepdaughters' feet, declaring he has another daughter: The Cinderella Cat. He appears at the end

of the story, when he is despised for the evils he witnessed, so that, together with stepdaughters and wife, he leaves the country.

Unlike the two versions presented, Isabelly Moreira's cordel, "*Oxente Cinderela*", does not refer to the protagonist's mother. The cordel's fourth stanza makes a brief quote from the father:

Lived with stepmother
Her father had died.
The sisters of creation
They made a lot of noise
For Anastacia and Drizella
They envied Cinderella
Because she was so beautiful when she grew up. (Almeida, 2023, p. 02)

And along the entire cordel, the father is no longer mentioned. This summarized way of treating secondary characters is, according to Abreu (2004), a characteristic of cordel literature in which "the leaflet is more succinct and direct, simplifying the structure of the periods and privileging the direct order of the sentences [...] it is not just a matter of "drying" the text, but of bringing it closer to the readers' references [...]" (Abreu, 2004, p. 205).

A curious fact refers to Cinderella's step-sisters' names. The Brothers Grimm narrative does not name them. It treats them as "big sister" and "little sister". Perrault's version, on the other hand, names only one sister, "Javotte", but does not explain who she is. However, when we resumed the story, we found clues that she would be the older sister. In the text's beginning, the narrator says that "the youngest is not as rude as the oldest, called her Cinderella" (Perrault, 2015, p. 01). Next, we find a dialogue between Cinderella and Javotte:

"You mean she was very beautiful? Oh, my God, how lucky you were, could I see her too? Oh, please, Miss Javotte, lend me that yellow dress you wear every day.
- Think carefully whether this makes sense! - Miss Javotte said. - Lending a dress of mine to a despicable Cinderella Cat like you? Only if I were very much crazy. (Perrault, 2015, p. 03)

In this dialogue we can see indications that Javotte may be the older sister. Another aspect that strengthens this hypothesis is the tone of Javotte's response and the contempt with which she treats Cinderella, calling her "despicable Cinderella Cat".

In Isabelly Moreira's version, the sisters are called Anastasia and Drizella. In this adaptation, we can see the dialogue with Disney's film production (2004), in which the sisters of creation receive the names mentioned by Isabelly in her text.

When we dwell on the character's clothing and footwear, each story has different aspects. In the first, Cinderella's dress is made of gold and silver and she has glass slippers; in the second, she wears a golden and silver dress and gold slippers; in the third, Cinderella's robes have regional traits of the backlands: floral dress and leather sandals. As for the scenario/ place in which the scenes unfold, in the first two stories we can highlight Cinderella's house, where she lives most of the time, and the king's palace, where the dances and her meeting with the prince take place. The *Oxente Cinderella* version presents the backcountry as the space in which the whole story develops.

Still observing the author's adaptation, the fairy was replaced by the bonfire godmother. In the fourteenth stanza, when she was crying about not going to the party, Cinderella sees the godmother and says:

- Oh, campfire godmother,
I can only be dreaming!
- Don't be astonished, my child,
It's the magic coming.
Get up and go get
Whatever I tell you
Don't just stand there crying! (Almeida, 2023, p. 5)

Still delimiting the story, the classic dress cited in Perrault's work as "a gold and silver dress all inlaid with precious stones" (Perrault, 2015, p. 02) and by Grimm described as a "beautiful ball gown" (Grimm, 2024, p. 04) is replaced by the flowery dress as it appears in the seventeenth stanza of the pamphlet:

As for our Cinderella,
The lordship was enormous
So flowery was the dress
Such subtlety
But at last it was warned:
At the drop of noon
It ended its beauty! (Almeida, 2023, p. 06)

The golden shoe presented in the classics as "a pair of glass shoes, the most beautiful in the world" (Perrault, 2015, p. 02) and "shoe that looked like pure gold" (Grimm, 2024, p. 04), was replaced by the leather sandal. Let's look at the fragment in this stanza, as follows:

So, as there only was
From the girl this only clue
Brought the leather sandal
And ordered a search

Put it on every woman
And the one that fits
Will own the achievement. (Almeida, 2023, p. 07)

In the adaptation, the author also replaces prince with cowboy; palace with farm; supper with regional foods: *buchada*, *pirão*, *cuscuz*, and roast meat, as can be seen in the two stanzas below:

When she made entrance
In the farmer's house,
Immediately caught attention
Of his son, the cowboy
Who asked her to dance
Getting the people excited
From the kitchen to the yard.

After a lot of chatting
Lunch was *buchada*
Served also *pirão*,
With *cuscuz* and roast meat,
When like that, all of a sudden,
Was reminded, that certainly,
Her time had come. (Almeida, 2023, p. 06)

A very important detail to highlight is the carriage construction by Cinderella's protectors. In the first story, there is the transformation of pumpkin, rats and geckos into a carriage. In the second story, it is inferred that the girl was transported to the Palace on the dove's wings; in the third story, as in the whole cordel, the elements present in caatinga's fauna and flora - biome of northeastern semi-arid region – such as jerimum, mongrel dog, gecko, cavy, sparrow, potato, become elements for the magic of her carriage.

One of the most important moments in the narratives presented is the dance, which occurs in all three short stories. Brothers Grimm story differs from the other narratives in an interesting aspect, because in it there are dances lasting three days, while in the others we have only one day ball dance. In Isabelly Moreira's story, the classical dance is replaced by *forró*, a typical party (dance) from Brazilian's Northeast. Regarding Cinderella's participation in the classic parties, there is a set limit: midnight. If she does not comply, the charm will be undone. Only Moreira's story differs from this specific time. Using backcountry language, in *Oxente Cinderela*, the established time is the "drop of noon".

In turn, the prince appears in two of the three stories. In Perrault's, he is referred to as "son of the king", in Brothers Grimm stories, as "prince". In Isabelly Moreira's there is a difference. She introduces the "cowboy" - a typical figure from the northeastern hinterland - to represent Cinderella's love.

As for the party menu, only the first and third stories talk about it. The first deals with a hearty supper served at the ball. The third story presents a typical regional menu, containing: *buchada*, *pirão*, *cuscuz*, roast meat, like it is the case at countryside parties.

We observe magical characters, who aid the protagonist, in all three tales: the fairy godmother in the first story; the white dove in the second, and the fire godmother in the third story. About this, Coelho (2008) explains that "limited by the materiality of one's body and the world in which one lives, it is natural that the human being has always needed *magical mediators*." (Coelho, 2008, p. 85). In this sense, there is a relationship between these figures and their roles in the narrative, considering that they are the ones who fulfill the protagonist's desire to go to the dance, contributing to a happy outcome.

The stories' outcomes also show some differences, although "married" and "happily ever after" are present in all of them. In Perrault's story, after so much suffering caused by her stepmother and step-sisters, Cinderella, demonstrating her virtues of kindness, forgave the sisters and took them to the palace, offering them a marriage. The outcome of Isabelly Moreira's version dialogues with that of the Brothers Grimm, in which Cinderella marries and her stepmother and daughters are despised as a result of the wickedness practiced and go live in another country.

We think, then, that it is possible to carry out a classroom approach that favors, through dialogue and debate, identifying approximations or differences in form, gender, worldviews, language and other aspects. In this sense, "among the teaching possibilities that can favor the reader's dialogue with the text is the comparative approach" (Alves, 2020, p. 164). Therefore, in this next topic, we present some suggestions that may favor a perception of the texts, their adaptations and literary nuances.

4 From Reign to Backcountry: Cinderella in the classroom

There are several ways of thinking about reading versions of the same story in the classroom, among them, the comparative approach. In this sense, we seek to make a comparison between the texts, considering formal, thematic or ideological aspects. This approach is supported by the most recent discussions in comparative literature (Carvalho, 2003; 2007), according to which there is no text superior to the other, but there are approximations or differences that can be observed during reading.

This strategy can favor a dialogue between reader and text, allowing them to perceive nuances of the same narrative through another bias. According to Pinheiro (2020),

The advantages of this type of approach are numerous – but one among many others is the fact that the reader of literature in training can exercise the ability to observe texts more closely and discover certain specificities, differences in form, genre, worldview. (Pinheiro, 2020, p. 164)

For this idea to be consolidated, it is necessary for the teacher to be a mediator of reading and to favor a space for dialogue, listening and, above all, to contribute to discovering clues to new discoveries about the text. On providing opportunities for listening and dialogue in the reading process, Bajour (2021) argues that

Listening to interpretation with others intersperses with our own. Fragments of meaning that we originate in this encounter, when they come into contact with fragments of others, can generate something new, something that, perhaps, we would not reach in solitary reading. (Bajour, 2021, p. 24)

In this perspective, mediation can enable a connection between reader and the work. About this interaction, Rouxel (2014) recognizes that the aesthetic experience is the reader's response to the requests of the story read, and can also be appreciated through the metamorphosis that the reader prints to the text, making it his own.

In this context, both mediator and reader learn mutually. With this thought, Alves and Rodrigues (2016) emphasize that

Didactic actions undertaken by the teacher, in this interactionist paradigm, must always be based on the dialogue between readers (what Colomer (2007) calls "shared reading"), which results, almost always, in learning from the other, but also in contributing to it. In this sense, the teacher's role is basically that of reading mediator (which often includes interpretative conflicts), instigator (the one who asks, questions, leads the reader back to the text) and also that of apprentice (which discovers nuances in text pointed out by young readers). (Alves; Rodrigues, 2016, p. 173)

Thus, interaction between text and reader, and readers and mediator favors launching questions and different perspectives, as well as different experiences and worldviews offer a significant exchange of experiences.

It is important to highlight that bringing the reader closer to the text is also considering other reading biases, when retold in other ways, through other genres. There are countless literary texts with adaptations, especially for cordel literature. According to Pinheiro (2018, p. 105), “many works have emerged at the beginning of this century. A strong trend of our times is the adaptation to leaflets of literary works considered erudite. This is a very old procedure”. Referring to the adaptation of fairy tales, Pinheiro (2018) highlights

the work of some poets such as Manuel Monteiro, who, among other themes, dedicated himself to the adaptation of several fairy tales to cordel verses, such as *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Puss in Boots*, *The Cinderella Cat*, *Twelve Dancing Princesses*, among others. (Pinheiro, 2018, p. 106)

Faced with a wealth of cordel leaflets that can be read in the classroom, we think that “within the scope of cordel activity proposals at school, our perspective is that it should be studied as literature and, often in dialogue with other literary genres” (Pinheiro, 2018, p. 107). In line with this approach, we resume three versions of the short story *Cinderella*, already presented and discussed in previous topics of this work; they are: the classics *Cinderella* or *The Cinderella Cat*, by Charles Perrault; *Cinderella*, by the Brothers Grimm; and the version adapted for Cordel Literature: *Oxente Cinderela*, by Isabelly Moreira.

We suggest that this proposal can be developed over the course of 6 classes, with readers of the 4th and 5th grades from the Early Years of Elementary School. We propose, at first, that the teacher make a question about students' reading experiences about fairy tales. This moment of listening is very important, considering that it is a way of perceiving what reading repertoire they have, as well as the versions they know. Next, the teacher presents the short story: *Cinderella*, by Perrault. We suggest that the reading be carried out aloud by the mediator or even with the class participation. Depending on the circumstances, more than one reading is advisable to bring readers a little closer to the narrative. Next, we propose that the teacher organize a conversation circle, so that they can talk about what they thought of the short story, what they liked the most (or not), as well as present highlights of the text that mostly caught their attention.

After this discussion, the teacher may ask if the students know another version of this story. This moment requires attentive listening. Then, the teacher can present the Brothers Grimm version of *Cinderella*. We propose another aloud reading, following the same path indicated for the previous short story. Once this is done, the teacher can open a new dialogue circle for students to talk about the version presented. After that, propose they compare the two versions and present approximations and differences between them. At that moment, students' observations might be written on the board, for example characters present in one narrative and absent in another, description of Cinderella, etc. It is suggested that always, when making a statement, students should read the short story's fragment that justifies their point of view, favoring a more effective approximation of the text. During the conversation, if students do not address some aspects, the teacher can broaden some questions about the texts, such as: What is the difference between the two texts? How does Cinderella's father behave in both versions? Why are the stepmother and her daughters so mean to Cinderella? And at that moment, a discussion can arise about feelings and consequences that envy and evil arouse, as well as throwing the question about the fairy's importance in the story. If they know other narratives in which fairies are protectors. If they have someone who represents the fairy in their real life and who is always present when they need it. This approach is a way of making a connection between their life experience and the text. It might be asked if they know other versions of this narrative. If they know, the teacher can open a listening space.

In the second moment of this approach, we suggest a survey to see if students know any version of the short story written in verses. After inquiry and comments, we propose the cordel presentation: *Oxente Cinderela*, by Isabelly Moreira, also read aloud, as previously done. If participants do not have leaflet reading experience, it is good that the facilitator read the first stanzas, then repeat orally with all of them. Only then should it be suggested that they continue the oral reading with the participation of those who feel comfortable doing so. At the reading's end, they can read the stanzas they liked the most or did not understand. Next, it is important that a conversation circle be held so that students can expose their impressions about the cordel text, the stanzas or verses that caught their attention, as well as if they know other texts written in cordel.

After this moment, the teacher must, again, stimulate the comparison between texts and instigate students to present the approximations and differences they perceived between the cordel read and the other versions of *Cinderella*. Students, perhaps, present some differences, such as

space, characterization of the character, regionalization of elements. After this first discussion, highlight regional expressions and adaptations that the author made of the story. And they can be questioned as follows: Why, instead of a fairy, does this narrative have the “bonfire godmother”? What is the meaning of the bonfire godmother in the backcountry and Northeast tradition? Do you have a bonfire godmother? If they are students who live in the backlands, especially in the countryside, they probably recognize this tradition. If not, it is important that the teacher has already researched to talk about the ritual and the importance of this Northeastern June tradition. Other questions can also be raised, such as: What did you think of Cinderella's dress and footwear? What does the flowery dress and leather sandal represent? What is the difference between the prince and the cowboy? The king's palace and the farm? The ball dance and forró? Which version did you like best? Which version looks like the reality of each one of them? With which of the versions does the cordel come closest? Perrault's or Grimm's? Is there any passage in the cordel that resembles any of their experiences? And, based on students' discussions, other questions can be addressed and instigated by the teacher.³

In the third moment, the teacher can propose some activities that must be adapted to the reality of each class or even school. They should not necessarily be held at school. Some can be done at home.

Dramatic reading and cordel staging - “Dramatic reading would be dialogue reading, in which two or more characters give speeches as in theater” (Pinheiro, 2018, p. 108). They can stage only some parts of one of the narratives, such as certain dialogues between Cinderella and her step-sisters. At this time, they may even incorporate speeches from the three versions and others they deem appropriate.

Illustration of text's scenes – The cordel is divided into parts and each group of students would be responsible for illustrating one scene. The teacher can define the material that will be used, such as cardboard, brush and paint, colored pencils, crayons, colored pens, etc. After the illustration of the scenes, suggest that students set up a mural in the schoolyard, with the story's sequence. This activity can also be done individually, as some students do not always feel comfortable with group working and others are more interested in working with peers.

³ The teacher can exhibit the movie Cinderella, produced by Walt Disney in 2004. Then, a debate could be proposed about similarities and differences observed among the movie and the versions read, and which one is closest to the movie.

Construction of story mockup – Propose that students divide into groups and, with the story divided by scenes, ask students to assemble a mockup with scrap material. Each group sets up its own scene, with scrap materials collected at home. This activity is a way to instigate students' creativity. When all groups have set up the scenes, the teacher must mediate the assembly of the story model, contemplating the entire class' work. The work may be exposed in the schoolyard.

Reading diary – Encourage them to record excerpts they liked or disliked the most, as well as the version that they most identified with, commenting on characters, space and plot. This activity can be started as early as the first meeting.

It is important to highlight that we present here suggestions for reading approaches that can be experienced or adapted, according to the reality of the teacher and the class in which he/she works. In fact, the goal is to inspire reading practices that stimulate reader's interaction with the text, in a democratic way. Therefore, there is no linearity to be followed. We seek, with the suggestions, to contribute so that classroom reading is an experience that strengthens the formation of readers.

Final Considerations

Comparative Literature is still sparingly present in the country's Language and Literature courses. In a quick observation, of empirical nature, in about ten Language and Literature courses from State and Federal Universities of Ceará, Pernambuco and Paraíba and the Federal Institute of Paraíba, it is observed that, in two of them the subject does not appear in the PPC; in others it appears sometimes as elective or optional and in only two courses as mandatory.

In the scope of graduate studies, it is present in several programs that offer the discipline or are even called Comparative Literature. However, the approaches that emanate from many researches practically do not turn to teaching issues and when they do it is directed to teaching within the University scope.

In this sense, it is of the utmost importance to use comparative procedures as instruments that can contribute to the training of basic school readers. This paper seeks to make a small contribution by presenting, first, a comparison between fairy tales and their adaptation to cordel verses and, then, proposing an approach to the classroom within the scope of elementary school.

It is not a didactic sequence, but broader guidelines that can be adapted to different realities and expanded or restricted according to the interest and need of the mediators. We sought to combine reflections on literature teaching methodology that are based on the reader's interaction with the text (Rouxel, 2014; Pinheiro, 2020; Bajour, 2021) with comparative procedures between literary texts from Comparative Literature.

We believe that these perspectives present many meeting possibilities since, as Carvalho (2003, p. 48) recalls, comparative literature shows itself as “a procedure, a specific way of interrogating literary texts, not as closed systems in themselves, but in their interaction with other texts” (Carvalho, 2003, p. 48).

To propose, then, the reading of versions of the classic short story *Cinderella* and an adaptation for cordel literature, is to favor the interaction between texts that deal with the same theme, is to open a literary dialogue that contributes to the intersection between texts of different genres, as well as between reader and narrative. We also believe that the paper may contribute by opening paths for the approach of cordel literature in basic education in a perspective that escapes the moralistic and pedagogic bias, which still appears in many narratives.

CRediT

Acknowledgement: Not applicable.

Financing: Not applicable.

Conflicts of interest: The authors certify that they have no commercial or associative interest that represents a conflict of interest in relation to the manuscript.

Ethical Approval: Not applicable.

Contributor Roles:

Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal Analysis, Funding acquisition, Investigation, Methodology, Project administration, Resources, Software, Supervision, Validation, Visualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. AMARAL, Veronica Sobral Almeida.

Conceptualization, Data curation, Formal Analysis, Funding acquisition, Investigation, Methodology, Project administration, Resources, Software, Supervision, Validation, Visualization, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. ALVES, José Hélder Pinheiro.

References

- ABREU, Márcia. *Histórias de Cordéis e Folhetos*. Campinas, SP: Mercado das Letras, 1999.
- ABREU, Márcia. “Então se forma a história bonita” – Relações entre folhetos de cordel e Literatura Erudita. *Horizontes Antropológicos*. Porto Alegre, ano 10, n. 22, p. 199-218, jul/dez. 2004. Available at: <https://www.scielo.br/j/ha/a/QL9WD98KHC5wQFZY7CZ6LMK/>. Accessed on: July 10th, 2024.
- ALMEIDA, Isabelly Moreira de. *Oxente Cinderella*. (Cordel Brochure). Recife: Cactus Cordelaria, 2023.
- ALVES, José Hélder Pinheiro; RODRIGUES, Etienne Mendes. De São Saruê à Casa da madrinha: *literatura de cordel e literatura infantil no espaço escolar*. *Revista Cerrados* (Brasília. Online), v. 25, p. 163-180, 2016
- AYALA, Maria Ignez Novais. Riqueza de pobre. *Literatura e Sociedade*, São Paulo, Brasil, v. 2, n. 2, p. 160–169, 1997. Available at: <https://revistas.usp.br/ls/article/view/15694..> Accessed on: Oct 25th. 2024.
- BAJOUR, Cecília. *Ouvir nas entrelinhas: O valor da escuta nas práticas de leitura*. tradução de Alexandre Morales. São Paulo: Editora Pulo do Gato, 2012.
- COELHO, Nelly Novaes. *O conto de fadas: símbolos, mitos e arquétipos*. São Paulo: Paulinas, 2008.
- CARVALHAL, Tânia Franco. *Literatura Comparada*. São Paulo: Ática, 2007. (Série Princípios)
- CARVALHAL, Tânia Franco. *O próprio e o alheio: ensaios de literatura comparada*. São Leopoldo: Unisinos, 2003.
- DISNEY, Walt. *Cinderella*. In: FREITAS, Teresa. *Contos infantis*, 2004. Available at: http://webpages.fc.ul.pt/~ommartins/cinema/dossier/cinderela/ciderela_texto.htm >. Accessed in: 04th July. 2024.
- GRIMM, Jacob; GRIMM, Wilhelm. *Contos Grimm* (Coleção completa). Available at <https://aedah.pt/biblioteca/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Contos-de-Grimm-Jacob-Grimm-e-Wilhelm-Grimm.pdf> . Accessed on: July 10th, 2024.
- HOTCHEON, Linda. *Uma teoria da adaptação*. Translation André Chechinél. Florianópolis: Ed. da UFSC, 2011.
- LIMA, Egídio de Oliveira. *Os folhetos de cordel*. João Pessoa: Ed. Universitária, UFPB, 1978.
- MARINHO, Ana Cristina; ALVES, José Hélder Pinheiro. *O cordel no cotidiano escolar*. São Paulo: Cortez, 2012.

MEDEIROS, Irani. *Leandro Gomes de Barros: no reino da poesia sertaneja*. João Pessoa: Ideia, 2002.

PERRAULT, Charles. *Contos da mamãe gansa ou histórias do tempo antigo*. Translation by Leonardo Fróes. São Paulo: Cosac Naify, 2015.

PINHEIRO, Hélder. *O preço do jumento: poesia em contexto de ensino*. Campina Grande: EDUFPG, 2020. <https://livros.editora.ufcg.edu.br/index.php/edufcg/catalog/book/260>

PINHEIRO, Hélder. *Poesia na sala de aula*. São Paulo: Parábola, 2018.

ROUXEL, Annie. *Ensino da literatura: experiência estética e formação do leitor (Sobre a importância da experiência estética na formação do leitor)*. Translators: Maria Rennally Soares da Silva, Josilene Pinheiro Mariz. In: *Memórias da Borborema 4: Discutindo a literatura e seu ensino*. José Hélder Pinheiro Alves (Org.). – Campina Grande: Abralic, 2014.

SOUZA, Irani André Lima de. *O folheto no cenário das adaptações literárias: releituras do conto Chapeuzinho Vermelho*. João Pessoa, 2018. (UFPB Dissertation).

TRAÇA, Maria Emília. *O fio da Memória: do conto popular ao conto para crianças*. 2a. ed. Porto: Porto Editora, 1998.