YouTube: The Fairytale of the Future?

We know the stories well: tales of little girls and wolves, of witches and apples, of fairy godmothers and greedy stepsisters. These are the stories we knew as children, the ones we learned growing up, and the ones we still read to our children today. While the precise origin of the fairy tale is difficult to determine, common knowledge suggests that the first fairy tales, along with other types of folk narratives, were likely oral tales. Although the telling of such oral tales precedes written history, the fairy tale as its own respected genre emerged in the late 17th century as talented French female writers began to publish the stories told in their literary salons, stories which only vaguely resemble those considered fairy tales today; they were dry, mocking, or ironic stories often about politics and life at court and not really intended for children (Zipes xxii). The recent popularity of the Internet sensation, YouTube, has made it a household name, reaching populations around the globe while sharing entertaining and universal appeals of the fairy tale and YouTube, one could argue that YouTube is successfully replacing the fairy tale.

Both YouTube and the fairy tale share some of the same purposes. Fairy tales, according to Jones, use ordinary protagonists to reveal human nature. YouTube videos, appearing in lines, often feature ordinary people doing extraordinary, humorous, or dangerous acts, which could provide insight into their social or psychological nature. Fairy tales also have a didactic, or educational, purpose, such as giving situation-based advice on...
such as manners or morals (Zipes xxiii). Similarly, YouTube’s self-expressed purpose is “to
connect, inform, and inspire” its viewers and content can include anything from common safety lessons to cultural rituals (About YouTube). Another interesting observation is that fairy tales and YouTube often suffer from author ambiguity. For most fairy tales there is usually no single, identifiable author (Carpenter and Prichard 177). Similarly for many YouTube videos, author anonymity is an option. While it is easy for authors to identify themselves within the video or the surrounding text areas, YouTube users can observe that many choose not to, or to upload videos with false author information.

Comparisons of the geographical limitations of the fairy tale and YouTube also highlight interesting similarities. While fairy tales and folktales initially may have been limited to specific geographic regions such as Germany and France, they eventually made the journey to distant lands, pushing geographic boundaries as travelers and written documents spread (Zipes xxiii). YouTube is also pushing past the geographic boundaries, with over 50 countries identified as having region-specific content (About YouTube). This collection of regional content is impressive, and indicates that YouTube is quickly catching up to the global popularity of the fairy tale.

In addition to the shared purposes and portability of the fairy tale and YouTube, there is another similarity that can be explored: their universal quality to their contents – the types of characters and stories that are universal to humans – to which audiences both around the globe and across centuries can relate (Folktale). YouTube, on a similar note, recently estimated that over 3 billion of its videos are watched each day (About YouTube); these numbers indicate a universal nature all their own. So many people are watching this same collection of videos because of the general appeal or popularity of its content.

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Anytime I use statistics and numbers in my paper, I need to identify where I got those from. I did using a parenthetical (using parenthesis) reference.
Works Cited


Before I submit it, I also want to be sure my Works Cited page is the last page of my paper. Here it is. Yay! I'm done!