

**ALMA KARLIN, THE YOUNGEST  
GRANDDAUGHTER OF THE HONORABLE I  
CHAO (I TSCHAOS JÜNGSTES ENKELKIND),  
1948, 2016**



**Comparative Literature**

**Keywords:** Alma Karlin, fairy tales, ATU 514, ATU 884, M. Lüthi, H. J. Uther, Slavoj Žižek.

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**Abstract**

This article was created on the basis of the study of the life and work of the Slovene writer Alma Karlin (1889–1950), who spent a large part of her life abroad, during her trips around the world. She mainly published in German, during the period between World War I and World War II. Some of her works are open in the manner of crosswriting, including the analyzed fairy tale *The Youngest Granddaughter of the Honorable I Chao* which was originally published in 1948 in German and in 2016 in Slovene. With this fairy tale, the writer intertextually related to the model of the folk fairy tale, the European fairy tale, and the ATU514 and ATU884 international fairytale type. The detailed analysis and application of the theory of Slavoj Žižek, entitled *From Antigone to Joan of Arc*, confirms the hypothesis that Alma's fairytale belongs to the literary tradition from Antigone to the present, that the fairy tale contains the features of subjectivization of a literary heroine, which is a universal element (fairytale type or motif), and Alma also added to the text the typical characteristics of Chinese culture.

## INTRODUCTION

Alma Maximiliana Karlin (1889–1950) was a Slovenian writer of world importance who, like many writers or storytellers, e.g. H. C. Andersen, realized the life guideline “to travel is to live”.<sup>1</sup> A fairy tale is also a journey according to M. Lüthi's theory: “A *fairy tale hero is essentially a traveler.*” (Lüthi 2011:31).

In 1919 she traveled to China on one of her many trips, also in 1923 and 1924. Her fairy tale *The Youngest Granddaughter of the Honorable I Chao* was first published in 1948 in German (*ITschaosjüngstesEnkelkind*) and in Slovenian in 2016 (*NajmlajšavnukinjačastitljivegaIČaa*), translated by Jerneja Jezernik. Some elements of this authorial tale are based on autobiographical data, e.g. A.M. Karlin taught a Chinese girl English in Beijing. The girl's parents studied in the West, i.e. in Germany, so these “Western values” are also evident in the text (Jezernik 2016: 71). Alma M. Karlin wrote for adult addressees, but some of her texts, as well as the present one, can be defined as crosswriting.

From the point of view of literary studies on literature for youth, dual audiences or crosswriting is a feature or almost a condition for the canonization of authors and/or texts which is, for example, argued in the article by Bettina Kummerling Meibauer, *Cross Writing as a Criterion for Canonicity: The Case of Erich Kastner* (1999).

<sup>1</sup> [http://andersen.sdu.dk/forskning/konference/tekst\\_e.html?id=10919](http://andersen.sdu.dk/forskning/konference/tekst_e.html?id=10919) (Accessed 25. 8.2018)

The analyzed text by Alma Karlin is multifaceted also because it is connected in motif and topic with the fairy tale types ATU514 and ATU884 (Uther 2011:301–2, 508–9), with the model of (European) folktale (Lüthi 2011), and it is related also to the literary tradition of Antigone, in which the subjectivization of female literary characters is shown. In some elements, it is also intertextually connected with Žižek’s play *Antigone* (2015).

Žižek’s *Antigone* in the end says: “I am in the world not to hate but to love!” (Žižek 2015: 43), and, similarly, the youngest granddaughter in Karlin’s text becomes “...the sun of this old heart” (Karlin 2016: 66). Both heroines, Žižek’s *Antigone* (“I am good and incorruptible!” [Žižek 2015: 68]) and Karlin’s youngest granddaughter (“It is better to be a brave dog than a cowardly tiger. Appearance is not valuable, but flourishing inner strength is everything.” [Karlin 2016: 17]), are brave.

## METHODS

The article uses quantitative analysis (comparative analysis of twelve similar texts in the motif and topic) and a qualitative method of pedagogical research, namely comparative literary analysis, similarities and differences (fairy tale heroes, time, and place). The introduction presents the similarities and differences of comparative literary analysis with the fairy-tale types ATU514 and ATU884 (H.J. Uther). The intertextuality of the folktale (M. Lüthi) with the authorial tale by A. Karlin is presented below. In conclusion, intertextuality with the contemporary literary tradition and Žižek’s play *Antigone* (2015) are presented.

### **Alma M. Karlin, *The Youngest Granddaughter of the Honorable I Chao*, 1948, 2016**

The title literary character is the youngest granddaughter of the honorable I Chao, with the real name Ko Cai, which is explicitly associated with the model of a folk tale, where the youngest character is the bearer of progress. At the same time, the title already indicates affiliation – the youngest granddaughter, whose name does not appear in the title, but only in the content. The second part of the title presents a strong literary figure of the ‘millennial’ tradition and the Chinese emperor – Fu Chao Tzu, who is without a male descendant. This initial state is inline with the theory of fairy-tale types ATU514 and ATU884, where a female literary character ‘sacrifices’ herself for men (brother, emperor, king, husband, father). Female literary characters are daughters, sisters, granddaughters, wives, etc. In the text presented, the starting point is typical for fairy tales – empire, kingdom, family, etc. wants to have a (male) child/heir to the throne. “Better three ugly boys than four beautiful daughters. After your death, only male descendants can donate to you, and their ugly faces would not bother you so badly anymore, the old man replied and smiled wickedly.” (Karlin, 2016: 5)

## RESULTS

### Comparative analysis of the fairy tale type ATU514<sup>2</sup> and ATU884

In the international type index, the motif of disguised women is included in the group of motifs ATU514, the shift of sex or motifs about disguised women. The basic motif has several variants, wherein at the beginning of each variant there is an emperor/king/father/priest who has a daughter (daughters/minor sons), but needs a male descendant to inherit the empire/kingdom, to go to war/army, etc. The father sends (must send) his daughter to war (e.g., Mulan). The daughter changes dresses as a man and goes to the army/war. In some variants, the queen pretends that the (youngest) daughter is a boy. A woman can dress as a man for other reasons as well. For example, a disguised woman performs her heroic deeds in the service of a king (e.g., Joan of Arc). The king's daughter (sister) falls in love with a disguised woman and wants to marry her (Kamar al Zaman and the Chinese Princess Badur). A disguised woman refuses to marry (Vasilisa Popova) in order to do her job. She performs the task with the help of other people or objects (magic helpers, horses, etc.). In some variants, there is also a test of whether a person is male or female, e.g. by food, garden or bathing in water. At the end of some variants, a disguised woman with magical help or by chance really turns into a man, and in some variants, parents are happy to have a son, regardless of the fact that she is a girl raised as a boy. Fairy tale type no. 884<sup>3</sup> is a combination of different fairy tale types/motifs and different episodes/motif fragments, e.g.:

- 1) the motif of disguised women (Alenčica, Gregčeva sestrica, Joan of Arc, Mulan, Vasilisa Popova);
- 2) test of masculinity or femininity (Alenčica, Gregčeva sestrica, Mulan, Vasilisa Popova);
- 3) separation of lovers (Rožmanova Lenčica);
- 4) the wife finds the lost husband (Makalonca) before he marries another woman (Turkiodpeljejo Srebrno<sup>4</sup>);
- 5) a girl in a modest disguise at court.

The abbreviation ATU is an international designation or an acronym based on the surnames of the three folklorists (A.Aarne, S.Thompson, H.J.Uther) who published an internationally classified index of fairy tale types (Uther 2004, reprint 2011).

Radešček, Rado (1983). Slovenske legende. Ljubljana: Cankarjeva založba.

(Joan of Arc);

6) the forgotten fiancée (Turkiodpeljejo Srebrno);

7) recognizing lovers by image (Belainčna nevesta<sup>5</sup>);

8) the prince marries his first fiancée (Twelve Hunters: *“But he sent the other bride a messenger and asked her to return to her kingdom, for he already has a wife, and he who has found his old key does not need a new one.”*) (Grimm 1993: 363).

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<sup>2</sup> Ibidem

<sup>3</sup> Ibidem

<sup>4</sup> Radešček, Rado (1983). Slovenske legende. Ljubljana: Cankarjeva založba.

<sup>5</sup> Grimm, J. and W. (1993). Grimmove pravljice. Druga knjiga zbranih pravljic.

### *Alenčica, Joan of Arc, Mulan, Vasilisa*

There is an extensive cycle of Russian fairy tales about Vasilisa, which appears under different titles: Vasilisa–Splendid, Beautiful, Wise, also Vasilisa Vasilyevna. A.N. Afanasev (1826–71) mentioned in his notes to Vasilisa Vasilyevna (No.316) that it was an apocryphal motif of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba (Visit of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon). The basic motif of disguised women or warriors is the fight for men (brother, king, father). The fairy-tale motif is already known in antiquity (The Amazons), the Bible, in fairy tales (F. Straparola, Costanza/Costanzo (1550); G. Basile, The Three Crowns (1634); M.C.d’Aulnoy Belle Belleoule Chavarlier Fortune (1698); H.J.deMurat, The Savage (1699). The Russian fairy tale Vasilisa Vasilyevna or Vasily Vasilyevich or Vasilisa Popov(n)a from the 19<sup>th</sup> century is the most modern because it advocates the subjectivization of women. Slavic–Russian (Vasilisa Vasilyevna) and Slovenian (Alenčica, Gregčeva sestrica) – variants are similar in the modern conception of women.

In the Chinese fairy tale by Song Nan Zhang, The Ballad of Mulan (1998), a girl Mulan disguises herself as a man and goes to war instead of her father. In J. Poole’s contemporary French fairy tale in pictorial form, Joan of Arc (1998), Joan, disguised as a man, heroically fights for the king, who later betrays and demonizes her, and is eventually burned at the stake. The Chinese and French variants are traditional, the first with the message that it is natural for women to sacrifice themselves for home, family, homeland, father and war. The French variant of the motif is a literary biography of Joan of Arc (1412–1431) with a tragic ending.

The fairy tale type/motif of heroic/disguised/military girls/women or warriors is archetypal, it can be understood literally, i.e., that women are physically strong (Amazons, Brunhild in the Nibelungs), or figuratively, that they are intellectually equal to men (Alenčica, Queen of Sheba, Vasilisa). The Russian tale of Vasilisa has been the subject of much discussion (e.g., C. P. Estés, The Girl in the Pocket: The Blue Vasilisa Beautiful, in: Women Running with Wolves, 2003). A salitary motif, the fairy-tale type also undergoes inter-media adaptations and is depicted in films, e.g., Luc Besson, The Messenger: The Story of Joan of Arc (1999); Russian cartoon by Grimm, J. and W. (1993). Grimmmove pravljice. Druga knjiga zbranih pravljic.

D. Shmidt, Little Vasilisa, 2007; and in pop culture, e.g., W. Disney, Hua Mulan, (1998); Madonna’s song Joan of Arc (2015), etc.

#### **Comparative analysis with the European fairy tale model (Max Lüthi)**

The tale by A. Karlin, The Youngest Granddaughter of the Honorable I Chao, has certain similarities and differences, if we compare it with the model of European folktales. One-dimensionality – numinousness (other worldliness), there is no separation between the real and the fairy-tale world, Karlin emphasizes circularity. He did not manage to free himself yet, neither from ancient Chinese customs nor from ancient superstition. Nevertheless, he asked sternly, “Have you been so little virtuous in a previous life that you were born again as a woman?” (Karlin 2016:

9-10). But what does my son know about that descendant of our house who hung on the tail of the Big Dipper in a male image before his descent into material attachment?" (Karlin 2016: 50).

The youngest granddaughter, when she encounters miracles (hanging on the tail of the Big Dipper), shows neither astonishment nor fear, these elements are part of the real or fairy-tale environment known to her – in A.Karlin's work it is spiritual environment. The heroine is not surprised, she is not afraid, nothing seems unusual to her. Everything falls into the same dimension (e.g., hanging on the tail of a Ursa Major). The heroine calmly accepts the advice, help or 'insults' of the Venerable I Chao. The geographical distance when the youngest granddaughter goes "*to the whites*" to the "West" for a few years is geographically distant, but expresses "*spiritual difference*" (Luthi 2011:5). Flatness–insensitivity to the distance between this world and the hereafter (almighty sky, "*Heaven is in favor of this fool,*" the sky is infinite and therefore eternal)

"*When heaven calls, we must obey,*" I Chao replied sternly (Karlin 2016: 55).

"*Why is the sky round and the earth quadrangular?*"

"*The sky is round because it is a circle. Something that has neither a beginning nor an end, which is infinite. Yes, the sky is infinite and therefore eternal.*"

"*What about the earth? The earth should also be spherical, but it is quadrangular.*"

"*By this we do not mean the sphere on which we live, but everything on Earth and this has its limits. Space and time form walls, and the four dragons—east, west, south and north – are the guardians and supporting pillars.*" (Karlin 2016: 11).

The fairy-tale heroine fulfills her commitment "*that she betaught a Western language by a white teacher*" (Karlin 2016:21).

Abstract style: lack of realism, unity of adjectives (honorable, youngest); metallization and mineralization (pearls, cup [of tea], glass) of objects and living beings, traveler (fairy-tale hero), permanent forms; numbers (1,2,3); introductory and closing forms; single-strand and multi-layered story (the storyline consists of nine chapters or episodes); extremes (beautiful, good, ugly, evil...); miracle; hero/-ine = traveler. The heroine wants to learn a lot. The other characters, her three older sisters, her mother, the emperor's wives and concubines, are merely contrasting characters (Luthi 2011: 16). In contrast to the European fairy tale, in which there is more metallization (sand, silver, gold, iron...), in Chinese fairy tale there is more mineralization (pearls, glass).

### **Isolation and universal connectivity**

In Karlin's fairy tale, the so-called blind motifs appear, e.g., the Cinderella motif (wrapping the feet): "*I am the youngest son of the Chao family – and no one shortens boys' legs. 'Your future husband will drive you away from home, and your mother-in-law will call you a duck,' he often replied, but allowed her to have her own will*" (Karlin 2016:25–6).

This Man, whose legs were tied at the express request of her grandfather according to an old Chinese custom, limped awkwardly across the yard on her crippled lower limbs, even though her hellish torments had ended years ago and she now wore cute, properly cut slippers. Ko Cai avoided this nonsense because Ta Men's crying drove too much fear into her bones and she wildly defended herself against similar attempts. When her grandfather teased her with the nickname MyRolled-under Leg, she always replied: *"I am the youngest son of the Chao family—and no one shortens boys' legs"* (Karlin 2016:25).

Sublimation and inclusion; effort (miracle requires effort); mythical motifs; numinous (after life) or a special kind of spirituality. Old rites, habits, and customs: *"Nevertheless, he sternly asked, 'Have you been so little virtuous in a previous life that you were born again as a woman?'"*(Karlin 2016: 10). Weakened sexual and erotic topics: *"I Chao, on the other hand, shuddered at the memory of one of her concubines who drank toxic tobacco juice many years ago because her life had become too difficult"* (Karlin 2016:10).

*Inclusion.* Restlessness within a millennial tradition and expanse (West). Movement and freedom: *"No, no, I just wanted to say that all my life I would like to be nothing else but my grandfather's youngest grandson. A son, not a daughter, a human being from the Chao clan, who will apply for exams and find his place in a free life, not in the limitations of inner rooms"* (Karlin 2016:44–5).

In the fairy tale *The Youngest Granddaughter of the Honorable I Chao*, the miracle is self-evident, but it is not an every day event. The fairy tale shows, and does not substantiate nor explain. This fairy tale does not differ from other variants of ATU514 and ATU884 because of the version of the type of motifs (the youngest granddaughter and not the daughter), but because of the special way in which A. Karlin formulates the story – with a special literary style.

### **Similarities and differences with Žižek's *Antigone***

In the article *From Antigone to Joan of Arc* (2004), Žižek states that women in the Greek tragedy have two options for escaping from the domestic into the public sphere. The first type of subjectivization is unconditional self-sacrifice for a husband or father (e.g., Iphigenia, Polyxena), and the second type is destructive (e.g., Hekaba, Medea, Phaedra). Žižek says that the first type is a formal act of subjectivization in the name of the Other for posthumous fame. The second type is the type of inhumane woman who takes paternal law as a foundation and becomes inhumane with monstrous revenge. According to Žižek, Antigone belongs to the first type, as she adopts a sublime gesture of self-sacrifice in accordance with the law, as opposed to destructive furies, e.g. Medea. The characteristic of the first type or Antigone is its inner calmness and serenity, and the characteristic of Elektra is *"hysterical theater"*, self-pity and satisfaction which is a confirmation of libidinal satisfaction. According to Žižek, Elektra falls under the second type—destructive fury, because she expresses inner pain with neurotic emotions that have the function of a public spectacle, hysterical lust for revenge and enjoyment of the symptom. Among the ancient heroines

Antigone, Iphigenia, and Medea, Antigone has the sublime status of an ethical heroine. She does not oppose the law because of gesture or offense, but in the name of some other law.

By her actions, Antigone institutionalizes the internal law of the symbolic order with socio-symbolic coordinates. Žižek cites Hegel, who also locates the conflict in a socio-symbolic order. Žižek conceives of Antigone in accordance with Kant. In his words, Antigone would be described as pure desire, free of pathological motivations, and a moral subject. This is how we could also define Rožman's Lenčica, who is a pure wish, written during the Romanticism and under the conventions of the 19th century.

Žižek says of Joan of Arc, a medieval heroine, that she is a new figure of women's intervention in politics. He emphasizes that Joan of Arc is a political figure in the purest sense of the word she is all for the community and against particular interests. Even the youngest granddaughter of the honorable I Chao disguised as a man is not a symbol of unstable sexual identity. The essential factor here is that she committed her actions as a woman (Žižek 2004:57). The youngest granddaughter of the honorable I Chao, for political and personal reasons, consciously entered politics as a woman, the youngest granddaughter, disguised as a man – a son or grandson. Unlike Antigone, the youngest granddaughter was not betrayed, although treason is also a condition for the later canonization of Joan of Arc in the national interest and in a determined social order. There is no betrayal in Karlin's fairy tale; there is only a millennial doubt in the youngest granddaughter who intervenes politically and personally with female attributes.

*"You don't need to know that, you're nothing more than a girl,"* he replied, as he was an old school man and of the opinion that women should not have talents and too much brain in their heads (Karlin 2016:8).

*"Remember that you are nothing but a woman, and not even that yet!"* he explained energetically to her (Karlin 2016: 9).

*"Like women from the West, I will learn a lot and walk through my life as a man, as your true grandson"* (Karlin 2016: 23–4).

The youngest granddaughter remains respectful and loyal to honorable I Chao, but at the same time she is modern. If we apply Žižek's theory, we could conclude that the youngest granddaughter is consistent because she shares what she knows, but she does not want to share what she does not know. This is exactly the element that is also articulated in the fairy tale of the youngest granddaughter – her subjectivization.

*"Granddaughter,"* I Chao emphasized her gender this time, *"as far as I can remember, I wanted to talk about choosing a husband for you, not about avian studies."* If you are looking for a suitable symbol...

*"No thanks!"*

*"...I would recommend you a dove, which is supposed to be a symbol of humility and kind obedience to the white people. I also definitely recommend you a goose..."*

*“I am neither a goose obediently ducking for anyone else, nor a mandarin duck famous for its loyalty...”*

*“So? What are you then?”*

*“The youngest grandson<sup>6</sup> of my esteemed grandfather.”* (Karlin 2016: 43).

At the end of the article, Žižek classifies six types of women/mothers, namely: 1) Oedipal mother, 2) revolutionary mother (Brecht), 3) passive-aggressive mother who silently sacrifices herself for family and children, 4) conservative mother for whom stability of home is characteristic, 5) postmodern feminist mother who raises children in a spirit of tolerance and a career, and 6) ecological “Mother Earth”.

Based on Žižek’s classification, Rožmanova Lenčica (Rožman’s Lenčica) could be defined as a transition between the revolutionary (going to war) and the conservative (marriage) in the end, which is in line with the Romantic convention and the time in which Josipina Turnograjska published it (1853). Mulan would also fall into this category, even if she doesn’t get married in the end, as she doesn’t ask for anything in return for the ‘ten-year war’. The revolutionary type of woman would be Joan of Arc, who physically fails while morally triumphs, and Vasilisa Popova, who remains consistent and at the same time modern until the end of the text. This type would also include Alenčica, Gregčeva sestrica (Alenčica, Gregec’s sister), in a milder form than Vasilisa.

The Youngest Granddaughter of the Honorable I Chao could be defined as a postmodern heroine who crosses the path from a Brecht-type revolutionary act to a feminist woman who is persistent and has a career, as Žižek would say, but achieved this (male) career with female modern attributes: assertiveness, wisdom, art, perseverance, and knowledge.

### **Slavoj Žižek: Antigone, 2015**

A lesser known fact is that Slavoj Žižek also published a drama entitled Antigone,<sup>7</sup> in which there is no motif of disguised girls in the literal sense (ATU 541 and ATU 884), however, there is a strong motif of subjectivizing women in a masculine way, but with female attributes. The motif of disguise appears in the sense of the order of an unjust ruler who drives the city into chaos, which is “an obscene disguise of the worst anarchy” (Žižek 2015: 66). Žižek thematizes the internal laws that govern all five treated heroines, disguised girls or warriors who act as women (Alenčica, Joan of Arc, Lenčica, Mulan, Srebrna, Vasilisa), and asks: “*Was she right when she insisted unwaveringly in obedience to divine unwritten laws?*” (Žižek 2015: 73).

The youngest granddaughter is also a blind motif (Lüthi 2011: 70) of Orpheus and Eurydice, because the “*young artist*” also proves himself in the field of art (“*Andon stage, a gentle*

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<sup>6</sup> Underlined by M. M. Blažič

<sup>7</sup> Žižek, Slavoj (2015). *Antigona*. Ljubljana: Društvo za teoretsko psihoanalizo.

boy<sup>8</sup> had just performed a lion dance<sup>9</sup>, as they used to perform during the Ming Dynasty” [Karlin2016: 61]). Here we could confirm the hypothesis of M. Lüthi that a miracle in a fairy tale requires effort, as we see that Ko Cai or the youngest granddaughter was educated in dance, theater, music... and that her metamorphosis also based on many years of effort and not just destiny.

When the dance was over, the young man spoke of old Chinese theatrical art, forgotten parables, and ancient music. His voice was high, almost feminine, but this was natural, as all female roles in China have always been played only by young men (Karlin 2016: 61–2). Even the fairy tale heroine Ko Cai or the Youngest Granddaughter unwaveringly insists on respecting the divine (“*When I hung on the tail of the Big Dipper before I came to Earth, I was a man.*” [Karlin 2016: 9]), unwritten laws (“*No, I’ve descended from heaven because I saw that this house needed a son.*” [Karlin 2016: 10]), as Žižek says. The girl is meant for “*something big*”, even though she belongs to the weaker sex (Karlin 2016:7).

### Disquisition

Based on a comparative literary analysis, the tale of Alma M. Karlin, *The Youngest Granddaughter of the Honorable I Chao*, is associated with the fairytale types ATU 514 and ATU 884. It has some similarities (disguised women) and differences (a postmodernist literary character who intervenes in politics and makes a career [Žižek]).

Comparative literary analysis shows that the tale of Alma M. Karlin, *The Youngest Granddaughter of the Honorable I Chao*, intertextually relates to the model of the folktale (M. Lüthi), that there are similarities (all characteristics) and differences, as the tale of A. M. Karlin is a model of authorial tale, similar to the model of Andersen’s and Wild’s fairy tales, because it build son the original model of the folktale with authorial elements.

With the help of comparative literary analysis, it became obvious that the fairy tale of Alma M. Karlin, *The Youngest Granddaughter of the Honorable I Chao*, intertextually connects with the literary tradition of ancient Antigone, and that there are similarities (subjectivization, female attributes, intervention in politics) and differences (no tragic conclusion) between the two. We can conclude that the tale of Alma M. Karlin has similarities (respect for divine unwritten laws) and differences (no tragic conclusion) with Žižek’s *Antigone* (2015).<sup>10</sup>

### SUMMARY

Like Sophocles’ *Antigone* (5<sup>th</sup> century BC), Žižek’s *Antigone* (2015) and Joan of Arc also have a tragic end because they are based in a mythical and not fairy tale tradition – as opposed to,

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<sup>8</sup> Underlined by M. M. Blažić.

<sup>9</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

for example, Alenka, Gregec's sister and Vasilisa Popova, who are subjective literary figures. Although a figure from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Vasilisa Popova has all the attributes of the subject which may also be based on Orthodoxy as she is a daughter of an Orthodox priest<sup>11</sup> who can marry and is not bound to celibacy. Mulan in the Ballad of Mulan remains a traditional figure, but for a limited period of time, for a period of ten years, as she was allowed to be brave when she fought for her father or the homeland or the Han dynasty, or for patriarchal values that are explicitly expressed, because she “*did not demand/expect anything in return.*”<sup>12</sup> (Zang 1998: 36) With A.Karlin, the youngest granddaughter resisted tradition, but her two sisters did not. He insisted that both elderly daughters should get married without asking them about their own wishes, although the first one was only sixteen and the other barely eighteen years old. (Karlin 2016: 19) Literary texts, in this case the authorial fairytale *The Youngest Granddaughter of the honourable I Cha*, refers to the fairytale types ATU514 and ATU884, which means that it is embedded in the international space. The text has all the features of a folk fairy tale, which are upgraded with the author's elements, descriptions (“*There was a bright early morning and dew was still gathering on the ripening shrubby dates*” [Karlin 2016: 25]), explanations, complementarily combining both models into a higher form – author's fairy tale. The fairy tale is composed of already known motifs, motif fragments and blind motifs in the form of a mosaic, but on a higher level, in such a way that it forms an original whole. It is placed in the Chinese context (the Ming dynasty, the Chinese people, the Chinese opera, the Chinese language, the Chinese classical characters, the mandarin, the rice brandy, the foot binding, the tiger, etc.). The beginning of Alma's fairy tale is characteristic of the model of folk fairy tales, also in the fairy tale *Kamar al Zaman* and the Chinese Princess *Badur* (Thousand and One Nights),<sup>13</sup> S. Finžgar: *Makalonca...*, etc. Fairy tales in which the starting situation presents a couple without a son or an heir to the throne, while in some fairy tales this is a couple without children (regardless of gender), for example, *Ježek Janček*, *Palček*, *Snow White...*, *Hedgehog Son*, *Hedgehog is Getting Married...*

Žižek's *Antigone* and Alma's *Ko Caior The Youngest Granddaughter* are brave, committed to the internal unwritten laws, with the exception that Žižek's *Antigone* ends tragically, while Alma's *Youngest Granddaughter*, eventhough “*apricot can not grow from an apple flower.*” (Karlin 2016: 17), becomes an artist, regardless of gender, and has the necessary knowledge, as in addition to her natural abilities she also studied language in the West with the “*white devils*” or teachers. She proved herself by mastering “*impeccable Chinese with classical letters*” and introduced the “*habits of the whites*” with a lot of humor, thus creating a new world in which both men and women are equal, regardless of gender, but on ability, knowledge: “*If something truly belongs to somenone, then it cannot be lost.*” (Karlin 2016:58).

<sup>11</sup> <https://fran.si/133/sskj2-slovar-slovenskega-knjiznega-jezika-2/3682087/pop?View=1&Query=pop> (Accessed 25. 8.2018)

<sup>12</sup> “And to this day, we sing of this brave woman who loved her family and served her county, asking for nothing in return.” (Zang 1998:36).

<sup>13</sup> Blažič, Milena (2015). Tisočletje Tisoč in ene noči. Gledališki list Mestnega gledališča ljubljanskega, year 66, vol. 9, pp.15–19.

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- ATU - The abbreviation ATU is an international designation or an acronym based on the surnames of the three folklorists (A. Aarne, S. Thompson, H. J. Uther) who published an internationally classified index of fairy tale types (Uther 2004, reprint 2011). <https://fran.si/133/sskj2-slovar-slovenskega-knjiznega-jezika-2/3682087/pop?View=1&Query=pop> (Accessed 25. 8.2018)
- "And to this day, we sing of this brave woman who loved her family and served her county, asking for nothing in return." (Zang 1998:36).
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