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**Elene Gogiashvili**

**Nino Jvania**

### **The Silence of Singing Birds: Music as a Sign of Human and Animal Feelings in Folktales**

In the study of folktales, a methodological pluralism has developed in the field of interpretation, making folktales themselves an exciting field of research. Ethnological approaches to interpretation have emerged in structuralist methods. Anthropological influences can be found in polygenetic theories. The connection between the Bible and traditional folktales is a recurring theme. In their own way, folktales speak of redemption, of completion, of making up for what has been missed. In folktales, the treasure, i.e. the water of life, a beautiful maiden, a magic bird, a supernatural horse - can only be won by the humble person who does not think he is too good to answer a dwarf or an old man, and who does not miss the right moment. The objects of human experience are transcended by the folktales in a symbolic context of meaning with the participation of supernatural forces.

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The paper deals with the folktales from the Black Sea region and the Middle East, concentrating on the motifs of magic birds. The focus is on an analysis of the adventures and behaviour of the tale's characters and the fantastic birds that sing only when the true hero is freed and returns home. The paper presents some thoughts on the interpretation of (1) the relationship between humans and animals, (2) the role of music, and (3) representation of emotions in folktales. Methodologically, this research is based on the methods of symbolic interpretation of the folktales. According to Bengt Holbek, the marvelous elements in fairy tales are symbolic, which means that they “convey feelings rather than thoughts.” Such emotional impressions are deemed to refer to beings, events and phenomena of the real world. Since fairy tales are supposed to express emotional impressions, interpretation consists in tracing all fantastic elements back to the real-world referents of such impressions. Symbolic elements in fairy tales convey emotional expressions of beings, phenomena and events in everyday life, which are organised in the form of fictional sequences. The symbols

in the folktales refer to the real world, that is known to the storytellers and their audience and that is to be shaped by the folktale.