

## **‘Kill Her, and Bring Me Back Her Heart as A Token!’ Identity, Power and Violence in the Grimms’ Fairy Tales Collection**

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**Abstract:** *We obtain some of our first organized accounts of human action through folk and fairy tales, through their participants. It is by means of these stories that we make ourselves acquainted with the social world that surround us. This paper analyses the role of the main participants and the processes they carry out in a selected corpus of 22 tales of the Grimm’s tales collection. The intention is twofold: firstly, to show how violent actions, power and social status are intrinsically related in them and that this narrative might be embedded within a visible social construction of the self. In addition, I intend to prove that the degree of violence in the tales does not suit publishers’ readings criteria in terms of age which are being applied nowadays to readers for children. The analytical framework used for the analysis draws on the principles of CDA, CL, SFL and the social identity theory. The results confirm that the verbal processes performed by some of the characters who use the power that their status provides them could influence the potential receptors of these narratives: children.*

**Keywords:** *Literature for children, identity, social construction of childhood, power, violence*

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### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The Grimm brothers’ fairy tales collection (GBFT) was the result of a philological research project intended to preserve German tradition. Although the tales were originally addressed to adults, the collection was transformed into literature for children due, mainly, to marketing reasons (Alcantud-Díaz 2010). The change in the intended audience, however, did not seem to consider removing (some) highly violent scenes (cf. Tatar 1987) in order to fit the standards recommended, at least nowadays, for children’s literature. The underlying intention of the present study is twofold: firstly, to show how violent actions, power and social status are intrinsically related in them and that this narrative might be embedded within the children’s visible social construction of the self. This is so because given that other previous studies have confirmed empirically the influence of fictional characters or cartoons in children (see Coates et al. 1976), off spring could reflect some violent social behaviours directly related to that of the Grimm’s characters. Moreover, the relationship between violence and power is prevalent in the tales thus allowing those who occupy higher social positions to exert violence on the less fortunate.

My second intention is to prove that the degree of violence in the tales does not suit publishers’ readings criteria in terms of age which are being applied nowadays to readers for children. We have to take into account how narratives aimed at children entertain and influence them and what language and content should be used; all this, in the “context of pressure from publishers, parents, the educational establishment and would-be censors” Hunt (1996:555).

This paper provides a systematic account of the presence of violence in a selected corpus of 22 tales of the GBFT. The premise for being selected to become part of the Grimm Corpus was my intuition regarding the presence of violent or cruel acts within them since the main objective was to show violent behaviours. An electronic version of the 1857 edition, collated to the above mentioned printed version, was used to make corpora research by computer easier to use. This version used for the computerized analysis is a proven translation (mentioned in some manuals like Thompson (1977:368) by Margaret Hunt (1831–1912), a British novelist and translator. The

reason for the choice of this translation is because as Margaret Hunt pointed out<sup>1</sup> in the preface to the *Household Tales* by the Grimms, that in her work she attempted to respect the “principle which was paramount with the brothers Grimm themselves”.(Grimm (1884,1892) *Household Tales*. Margaret Hunt, translator).

Although the fairy tales collection compiled by the brothers Grimm was originally written in German, my decision to use the English version was so because the intention of this article is not to compare the German and the English translations.

This research has been done by studying the process structures- the process itself, the participants involved, and the circumstances associated with the process- that appear in the tales. The present study is located within the analytical frameworks of Critical Discourse Analysis (Van Dijk 1997-2004, Wodak 1996-2002, Wodak& Meyer2002-2009, and Fairclough 1992) the social identity theory (Tajfel 1974, Sacks 1974, Antaki and Widdicombe 1998a/b), Corpus Linguistics (Biber et al 1998) and Systemic Functional Linguistics (Berry 1977, 1989, Downing and Locke 2006 and Halliday 1994). The combination of these four approaches is adequate to account for the presence of violence in different types of discourse, since they complement each other and facilitate both a quantitative and a qualitative interpretation of the data. This point will be discussed further in section 3.

In the first section present research the GBFT’s collection is contextualized. Section two presents a brief review of the features analysed in the corpus as well as a justification of the usefulness of combining Corpus Linguistics (CL), Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) in order to clarify the relationship between the types of actions, social power and social identity. Section three provides a concise explanation about The Grimm Corpus (the core corpus of the present study), the data selected and the method of analysis. In the final sections, I identify and label the participant categories in terms of social and familial status. Then, I proceed to establish the relationship between these categories and the types of processes carried out by each one of them gives results and conclusions, based on a detailed analysis of the processes that participants are involved in, how they affect others and whether the infliction of violence is linked to social power. If this were the case, one of the possible interpretations – especially by children- is that one is granted the right to inflict violence if s/he holds a powerful social position. Moreover, his/her act will sometimes not only be unpunished but instead be socially celebrated.

## 2. THE GRIMM BROTHER’S FAIRY TALES COLLECTION

Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, two of the benchmark of worldwide literature which concerns not only fairy tales but German grammar too, started to collect folk, songs, tales, proverbs, legends, and documents as part of a philological research project. This project was intended to preserve German tradition by writing a “history of old German *Poesie*” (Zipes2002a:10, Lang 1884:3, Bottigheimer1996: 154) that, as Tatar (1987:11) explains, would preserve storytelling traditions threatened by industrialization and urbanization. This would, additionally, keep their national identity. “What they wanted was to capture the “pure” voice of the German people and to conserve their oracular *Naturpoesie* before it died away” (Tatar 1987:10 and 2004: xxxii). However, this nationalistic motivation led the two scholars to a great contradiction, since, on one hand they defended that God spoke through folk culture and on the other hand, that culture should be that of German peasants of their time. However, the truth was that, apart from two French tales, the rest of the tales of their collection already existed in other cultures or countries, but had never been taken to print before. The love for the folk culture which the brothers Grimm proclaimed, clashed with their social background, which considered them not very convenient and rude (Tatar 1993:17).

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<sup>1</sup>Grimm (1884, 1892) *Household Tales*. Margaret Hunt, translator. London: George Bell. Retrieved from <http://www.surlalunefairytales.com/authors/grimms/preface.html>

In 1857, the brothers Grimm published their last version, a book composed of 211 tales and legends. The moment the Grimm brothers became conscious that there was a public for their collection; they rewrote softened versions of some of the tales (Zipes 2002a). However, this does not seem to include a removal of violent scenes since, as reported by several authors, the version available nowadays still contains a large amount of scenes of violence (Byatt 2004, Tatar 1987, Zipes 1993-2006).

Since the original version of the GBFT is still read nowadays by children, the constructive effects this discourse may have upon social identities (cf. Fairclough 1992:12) should be studied from a critical perspective. The power-violence relationship that the tales seem to portray can contribute to perpetuate certain models and morally problematic assumptions which might result in harm to others ("if I am powerful I have the right to exert violence upon others") of socially acceptable identities in children.

### **2.1. Violence in the Folk/Fairy Tale Genre**

The GBFT collection has a high content of violent processes and situations. This fact has widely been argued by scholars like Tatar (1987, 1992, and 2004). The brothers Grimm changed some details in their tales from edition to edition in order to "attempt to meet the moral needs of children; and in 1825, they published a shorter edition of the tales clearly directed at a popular audience, particularly children" as Nodelman and Reimer explain (2003:307). They continued to reshape the tales up to the final edition of 1857. However, according to Zipes (1991), it was impossible to remove the violent content from some of the tales without changing their whole plots. The Grimm's "only occasionally took advantage of opportunities to tone down descriptions of brutal punishments visited on villains or to eliminate pain and suffering from the tales" as Tatar (1987:5) explains.

References to sexuality, such as the premarital couplings of Rapunzel and the prince, embarrassed particularly the brothers Grimm, so they got rid of any issue related to sexual activity. These sexual references "might be offensive to middle-class morality" as Hunt (1994:51) argues. Nonetheless, occasionally, some of the references to sexuality were unknown by the brothers Grimm, as Bottigheimer (2009:45) explains, since she considered them "unworldly, inexperienced and [...] general innocent of sexual knowledge".

Despite the Grimms' "creative contamination" (Zipes 2002a:31) of the original folk material, the cores of the stories were left untouched including the violence and cruelty which most tales showed. A case in point is the tale *Hansel and Gretel*. In this tale, the witch tries to cheat Gretel and made her get into the oven in order to check the heat, but her true intention is to bake her and to eat her first, that is, a premeditated act of cannibalism, which includes insults and ill treatment to Gretel. The tale finishes with a very cruel murder scene, that of the witch being burnt alive in an oven. This scene, according to Tatar (2004:84), "has been read as a portent of the horrors of the Third Reich" mainly for two reasons, the first is that the witch is always featured with "stereotypical Jewish traits" and the second is that she is burnt in an oven (Alcantud 2011).

The tales also included many role models for male and female participants consistent with the dominant patriarchal code of that time (Hunt 1989:50 quoting Zipes (1988:12-14)). The idea of 'moral needs' are widely argued by Zipes (1991:47), who, from a socializing point of view, reports that their stories contribute to "the creation of a false consciousness and reinforce an authoritarian socialization process", since they indoctrinate children to learn fixed roles which may have many points in common with psychological or physical ill treatment to women, for example, by means of sexist and racist attitudes.

What is true is that, for some scholars of that time, *The Nursery and Household Tales* fell wide of the mark and missed its potential market, because the brothers had let their scholarly ambitions undermine the production of a book for children" (Tatar 1987:16).

### **3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE ANALYSIS**

As van Dijk (2001a: 355) argues, social power is understood in terms of control, that is, "a power base of privileged access to scarce social resources, such as force, money, status, fame, knowledge, information, culture". According to Horno (2005:23), "power is a universal

dimension of human relationships which underpins both authority and violence". Horno (2005: 24) describes authority as the "positive use of power", while violence "involves using power negatively, imposed without being accepted by the person and involving a violation of their rights. Furthermore, "when the words of violence are spoken by others and by ourselves, we may well be advancing acts of violence" (cf. García-Gómez, 2008). Violence and power are intrinsically linked by means of this relationship between perpetrator and victim, since whenever there is a violent conflict, one of the elements involved is more powerful than the other (Bagshaw 2003:1).

In the tales under analysis, characters are portrayed as powerful vs. non-powerful through social status and their actions (verbal and non-verbal). By adopting a critical perspective on how power is distributed among the characters and what power allows the characters to do (what actions are performed by whom and whom they affect), a clear picture of the kind of society described in the tales will certainly emerge. The analytical framework proposed here involves drawing upon the principles, as mentioned in the introduction, CDA, CL, SFL and some insights of the social identity theory.

CL has become, in the last few decades, a remarkable assistant at the time of studying texts (cf. McCarthy 1999:1, Baker *et al.* 2008: 346). According to O'Keeffe and McCarthy (2010:9) and "existing models for above-sentence analysis such as [...] CDA are all benefiting from the use of Corpus Linguistics" because CL can computerize many processes of CDA by providing wordlists, concordances and keyword searches. Both approaches, as Koteyko (2006:146) explains: view language as a social construction and pay attention to historical and cultural aspects of meaning production in discourse.

CL is empirical (Biber *et al.* 1998:4) and its methods "enable the researcher to approach the texts (or text surface) (relatively) free from any preconceived or existing notions regarding their linguistic or semantic/pragmatic content" (Baker *et al.*, 2008:277). Furthermore, as Koteyko (2006: 149-150) suggests, "the choice of words in a text reflects social choices, and it is in this way that the selection at the textual level is seen as reflecting the contextual level dealing with social and cultural aspects" (cf. also Dolón and Fuster 2011). Additionally, in the words of Khosravi Nik (2010:5) Critical Discourse Analysis permits a diachronic (contextual) and synchronic (co-textual) investigation of a limited number of texts while CL carries out a descriptive investigation of qualities of texts in a size which is unimaginable and not feasible for a CDA".

In turn, CDA focuses on the description of discursive practices, on "how discourse is shaped by relations of power and ideologies" and on "the constructive effects discourse has upon social identities" (Fairclough 1992:12). As for the relationship between social practice and language, Fairclough (2003:2) stresses that an analysis of texts carried out following a CDA approach starts from the premise that language is a part of social life "dialectically interconnected with other elements of social life, so that social analysis and research always has to take account of language". This certainly links with the analysis of transitivity proposed by Systemic Linguistics, where the study of processes may help confirm the relationship between power and violence in the GBFT's collection.

On the other hand, the data driven research promoted by CL is crucial when studying the relationship between the linguistic and the social (Hasan 2004 and Koteyko 2006): CL does so by studying patterns in real language. For this reason, as Baker *et al.* (2008:273) point out, some "methods associated with corpus linguistics can be effectively used by Critical Discourse Analysis".

For systemic functionalists, the clause entails a model of representing the experience and "embodies a general principle" (Halliday 1994:106) based on the premise that reality is composed of processes. Thus, "the transitivity system construes the world of experience into a manageable set of process types" (Halliday 1994: 106-107), the participants and circumstances involved in them. In the present article, the study of processes is essential to show the relationship between power, violence and the characters in the tales.

In turn, Tajfel (1974:69) defines social identity as "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the emotional significance attached to that membership". Moreover, Antaki and Widdicombe

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(1998b:2) argue that identity is “a person’s display of, or ascription to, membership of some feature-rich category”. Participants, however, may adopt different multiple identities, sometimes concurrently, during the same or different social activities which may, in some case be provoked by a change in social status (cf. Gregori-Signes 2000). Thus the claim here that when a character changes status s/he also changes the types of processes s/he is allowed to. Or in other words, violent actions are particularly linked to characters that hold power over others.

The present study focuses on how social identity, social status and power relations may affect the influence on the type of violent actions performed by the characters in the tales, that is why the combination of the approaches outlined above may fit our purpose.

### 4. METHOD OF ANALYSIS

The texts selected for the analysis, which comprised the corpus were- maintaining the order in which they appear in the 1857 original version shown by the number before each title: 6 *Faithful John*, 9 *The Twelve Brothers*, 11 *Little Brother and Little Sister*, 12 *Rapunzel*, 13 *The Three Little Men in the Wood*, 15 *Hansel and Grethel*, 16 *The Three Snake-Leaves*, 21 *Cinderella*, 24 *Mother Holle*, 25 *The Seven Ravens*, 26 *Little Riding Hood*, 27 *The Bremen Town Musicians*, 28 *The Singing Bone*, 31 *The Girl Without Hands*, 40 *The Robber Bridegroom*, 46 *Fitcher’s Bird*, 47 *The Juniper Tree*, 53 *Little Snow-White*, 65 *Allerleirauh*, 76 *The Pink*, Legend 5 *God’s Food and Legend 8 The Aged Mother*.

As mentioned previously, I chose these tales to become part of the Grimm Corpus due to their violent content according to my own perception. In my opinion, selecting some of the stories I do not think I bias the results since one of the main aims here is to analyze violent participants.

The method of analysis involved several steps (as seen in figure 1 below).

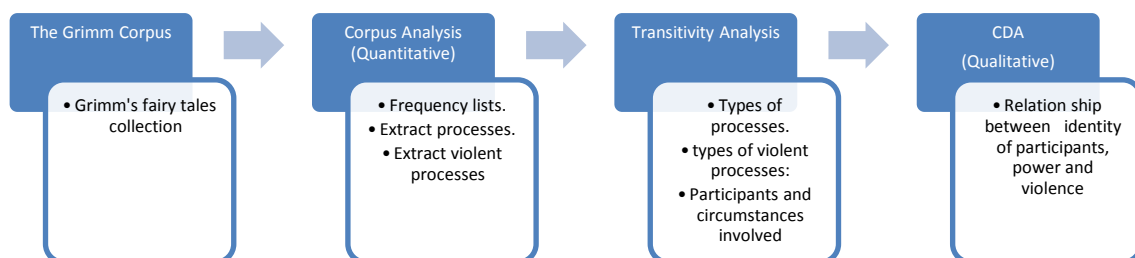


Figure 1. Method process

Firstly, a wordlist of frequency and concordances of words related to cruelty and violence obtained was extracted using Wordsmith Tools 5 (Scott 2010). These lists facilitated the study of each of the individual words and the context in which they appear. By doing this, it was possible to observe the lexical units which were used in a higher percentage in the tales. Analyzing this kind of information provided a study of the most frequently used content words (excluding function/grammatical words). I made the decision of excluding non-content words from my list mainly because they do not influence the final results of my research. However, I necessarily included words like *she*, *he*, *am*, *are* since they are crucial elements for the analysis of participants.

By doing this, I was able to check those words, which were directly or indirectly related to violent and cruel situations. In addition, only those words which had a frequency rate of 9 and higher were considered as indicative of the presence of violence, which conform a list of 394 different words. Among the lexical words in the frequency list, some of them stood out as particularly interesting regarding violence. At first sight, the words *cried* (64), *cut + cutting* (45), *blood* (37), *dead* (30), *wicked* (25), *wept* (24), *killed* (22), *die* (21), *death* (19), *forced* (15), *dark* (12), *tied* (12), *devil* (11), *grave* (11), *kill* (11), *frightened* (11), *evil* (10), *weep* (10) and *afraid* (9), which are directly related to violence, had a very high frequency rate. Additionally, in order to study more in

depth to what extent violence was present in The Grimm Corpus, I made the decision of looking for those words which apparently did not have any relation to the semantic field of violence or cruelty, but that might support its presence. Thus, I selected those words which, having a high frequency rate in The Grimm Corpus, seemingly might have been used in a context of violence. This was the case of words like *heart* (54), *cut* (40), *ate* (36), *hand* (34), *eyes* (31), *head* (31), *eat* (30), *fire* (29), *piece/pieces* (23 each), *hands* (22), *finger* (14), *foot* (13) and *eaten* (11).

I would like to show some empirical results concerning one of the words mentioned previously, its metaphors connected to violence and the actors involved in order to give a more solid foundation on which to sit the CDA work. A case in point is the word *heart*:

I found 64 occurrences which contain the Word *heart* as displayed in table 1 below. Three of them (19, 29, 32) have to be disregarded because they contain the word *hearth*(fireplace), which was included in the list when typing heart\* in the program (Concord (which means that it looks for all the occurrences of this word and derivatives). Thus solely 61 concordance lists have to be taken into account.

Three out of the 61 left (n° 13, 15, 16) are examples of the compound adjective *light-hearted* and which it is not my intention to take into consideration because I do not think they are relevant for the present analysis: (i) Line 13: [...] the house. "Ah," said she, "I was so sad when I went out and now I am so light-hearted; that is a splendid bird, he has given me a pair of red shoes!" "Well," [...], (ii) Line 15: [...] Marlinchen at dinner, and the father said, "How light-hearted I feel, how happy I am!" "Nay," said the mother [...], (iii) Line 16: [...] Juniper-tree, Kywitt, kywitt, what a beautiful bird am I!" Then she was light-hearted and joyous, and she put on the new red shoes, and danced and leaped into [...].

Concerning the rest of the occurrences, one of them is an example of the adverb *heartily*: Line 39: when he came home and heard that he had a son he was heartily glad, and was going to the bed of his dear[...].

Moreover, there are three examples of the old form of the word *earth*, (*hearth*) and which, for obvious reasons, are not going to be taken into account (lines 29, 32 and 51).

However, 29 occurrences out of the 61 which I analysed show situations immersed in a context of violence, some of them, in my view, could be considered what Tatar<sup>2</sup> (2003) calls *Hard Facts of the Brothers Grimm's Fairy Tales*. When the parts of the body are involved in the lines regarding the word *heart*, most of the times the context entails mutilations and cannibalism and thus, murder. This is the case of lines 1, 2, 5, 8 and 27 in which Snow-White's murder attempt is described, and lines 17, 18, 20, 23 in which the baby prince's murder in *The Pink* is described. Some examples are: (i) Line 1: [...] have her in my sight. Kill her, and bring me back her heart as a token." The huntsman obeyed, and took her [...], (ii) Line 17: [...] and plunge this knife into his heart, and bring me his heart and tongue, and if thou dost not do it, thou and [...].

It has also been found how a poor girl was savagely killed in the *The Robber Bridegroom*: Line 11: They gave three kinds of wine to drink, white, red, and yellow, with which her heart broke in twain. My darling, I only dreamt this. Thereupon they pulled off [...].

Furthermore, it has been found that *heart* has also the connotation of being related to envy and hate to the darkest participants in The Grimm Corpus and thus, it is a characteristic which most of them share: having a dark heart. This is the case of the envious step-sister in in the *Three Men in The Woods* in line 38: "What shall we give her as she is so naughty, and has a wicked envious heart, that will never let her do a good turn to any one?". Another example is the mean brother in *The Singing Bone* in line 55: "Is young brother coming out of the wood laden with his booty, his envious, evil heart gave him no peace. He called out to him, "Come in, dear brother, rest and [...]"

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<sup>2</sup> Tatar's book published in 2003. See references

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Table 1. Concordance lines of HEART

N	Concordance
1	no longer have her in my sight. Kill her, and bring me back her heart as a token." The huntsman obeyed, and took her away;
2	his knife, and was about to pierce Snow-white's innocent heart, she began to weep, and said, "Ah dear huntsman, leave
3	envy. From that hour, whenever she looked at Snow-white, her heart heaved in her breast, she hated the girl so much. And
4	girl so much. And envy and pride grew higher and higher in her heart like a weed, so that she had no peace day or night. She
5	and the wicked Queen ate it, and thought she had eaten the heart of Snow-white. But now the poor child was all alone in the
6	shall want for nothing." "Yes," said Snow-white, "with all my heart," and she stayed with them. She kept the house in order
7	he, and yet it seemed as if a stone had been rolled from his heart since it was no longer needful for him to kill her. And as a
8	boar just then came running by he stabbed it, and cut out its heart and took it to the Queen as proof that the child was dead.
9	stood under the Juniper-tree, which smelt so sweetly that her heart leapt, and she fell on her knees and was beside herself
10	she looked at the little boy and it seemed to cut her to the heart, for the thought came into her mind that he would always
11	kinds of wine to drink, white, red, and yellow, with which her heart broke in twain. My darling, I only dreamt this. Thereupon
12	wilt certainly be happy with me, for thou hast everything thy heart can wish for." This lasted a few days, and then he said, "I
13	said she, "I was so sad when I went out and now I am so light-hearted; that is a splendid bird, he has given me a pair of red
14	world were coming to an end! I, too, will go out and see if my heart feels lighter." And as she went out at the door, crash! the
15	and Marlinchen at dinner, and the father said, "How light-hearted I feel, how happy I am!" "Nay," said the mother, "I feel
16	Kywitt, kywitt, what a beautiful bird art thou!" Then she was light-hearted and joyous, and she put on the new red shoes, and
17	to his bed and plunge this knife into his heart, and bring me his heart and tongue, and if thou dost not do it, thou shalt lose thy
18	hind brought to her, and ordered her to be killed, and took her heart and tongue, and laid them on a plate, and when she saw
19	The two played together, and loved each other with all their hearts, and the old cook went out hunting like a nobleman. The
20	the boy is asleep, go to his bed and plunge this knife into his heart, and bring me his heart and tongue, and if thou dost not do
21	than the two little ones drew their last breath, whereupon her heart broke, and she sank down dead. Legend 8: The Aged
22	now she was quite alone and desolate. She was very sad at heart, and heaviest of all her losses to her was that of her sons;
23	the wicked wretch came in and said, "Where are the boy's heart and tongue?" The girl reached the plate to him, but she
24	to be torn in four pieces, but grief consumed the King's own heart, and he soon died. His son married the beautiful maiden
25	Queen, in this land thou art fairest of all." Then her envious heart had rest, so far as an envious heart can have rest. The
26	of all." Then her envious heart had rest, so far as an envious heart can have rest. The dwarfs, when they came home in the
27	in." But the Queen, believing that she had eaten Snow-white's heart, could not but think that she was again the first and most
28	fair as she." When she heard that, all her blood rushed to her heart with fear, for she saw plainly that little Snow-white was
29	go, but you must be back here in half-an-hour to sweep the hearth." Then she took her oil-lamp, went into her den, put off
30	gave his hand to her, and danced with her, and thought in his heart, "My eyes have never yet seen any one so beautiful!"
31	saw that there was no longer any hope of turning her father's heart, she resolved to run away from him. In the night whilst
32	the kitchen, and there she carried wood and water, swept the hearth, plucked the fowls, picked the vegetables, raked the
33	not do otherwise, but opened the door for him with a heavy heart, and the roebuck, full of health and joy, bounded into the
34	were so happy, and so well off, envy and hatred rose in her heart and left her no peace, and she thought of nothing but how
35	will be killed by the one word." Then said the maiden in her heart, "I know with certainty that I shall set my brothers free,"
36	and when it rained the little sister said, "Heaven and our hearts are weeping together." In the evening they came to a
37	son began to talk to her quite like a friend, and told her that his heart had been so stired that it had let him have no rest, and he
38	we give her as she is so naughty, and has a wicked envious heart, that will never let her do a good turn to any one!" The first
39	when he came home and heard that he had a son he was heartily glad, and was going to the bed of his dear wife to see
40	He rode home, but the singing had so deeply touched his heart, that every day he went out into the forest and listened to
41	of the Golden Dwelling heard that, she was comforted, and her heart was inclined unto him, so that she willingly consented to
42	it to him, half his body will become stone from the knee to the heart." Then said the third, "I know still more; even if the bridal
43	John saw that there was no help for it now, and with a heavy heart and many sighs, sought out the key from the great bunch.
44	had represented it to be, and thought no other than that his heart would burst in twain. Then she got into the ship, and the
45	too small for father?" Then the Queen answered with a heavy heart, "Dear child, these belong to thy twelve brothers." Said the
46	and fell on her neck, and kissed and loved her with all their hearts. Now she stayed at home with Benjamin and helped him
47	whom we must sacrifice." The Queen turned pale, and her heart was full of terror, but she said, "We owe it to him, for his
48	Queen had given birth to, was now grown up; she was good of heart, and fair of face, and had a golden star on her forehead.
49	a black spear and said, "I give you this spear because your heart is pure and good; with this you can boldly attack the wild
50	it, and in its blind fury it ran so swiftly against it that its heart was cloven in twain. Then he took the monster on his back
51	straw in the yard, the hound behind the door, the cat upon the hearth near the warm ashes, and the cock perched himself upon
52	pride; the younger, who was innocent and simple, from a kind heart. The King said, "In order that you may be the more sure of
53	was glad, and said, "A heavy stone has fallen from off mine heart." Then the angel of God gave them one meal with her, and
54	wine, one glass of red, and a glass of yellow, and with this her heart burst in twain. Thereupon they tore off her delicate
55	coming out of the wood laden with his booty, his envious, evil heart gave him no peace. He called out to him, "Come in, dear
56	and as she was so beautiful and good, he loved her with all his heart, had silver hands made for her, and took her to wife. After
57	again; there is no other means of saving ourselves!" The man's heart was heavy, and he thought "It would be better for thee to
58	buried alive with her if she died first. "If he loves me with all his heart," said she, "of what use will life be to him afterwards?" On
59	said to her, "Wilt thou go away with me?" "Ah, yes, with all my heart," she answered, for she was glad to get away from the
60	at all!" The father, however, rejoiced, for it had cut him to the heart to leave them behind alone. Not long afterwards, there was
61	the well, and did not know what to do; and in the sorrow of her heart she jumped into the well to get the shuttle. She lost her
62	had only been the innocent cause. But the maiden took it to heart daily, and thought she must deliver her brothers. She had
63	life, it seemed as if all love for her husband had gone out of her heart. After some time, when he wanted to make a voyage over
64	her, who were beautiful and fair of face, but vile and black of heart. Now began a bad time for the poor step-child. "Is the

To summarize, the word *heart* appears in two well differentiated circumstances: firstly, the heart is at the core of murders or murder attempts which take place against some of the participants in the tales; it is the main part of the body and thus, the most sensible and more representative organ. Secondly, *heart* refers to a human quality, in this case that of being a bad person, a quality that all the perpetrators of violence seem to share. One more thing to mention is the fact that all the participants but one (the mean brother in the *Singing Bone*) having 'dark heart' within The Grimm



Corpus are women. This observation supports once more the idea of a further research in terms of gender inequalities.

The second step in this research process was to identify each violent act together with the participants who took part and the circumstances surrounding them.

The analysis matched violent actions to the different social identities that carried them out. The focus was on human (including magic creatures) and animal participants where the volitional factor was present. Figure 2 below illustrates the types of categories identified in The Grimm Corpus.

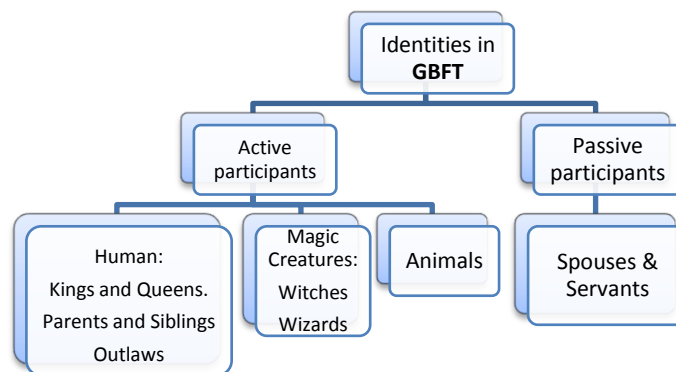


Figure 2. Participants categories

## 5. PROCESSES, SOCIAL IDENTITY AND POWER

Once all the concordances of all the processes were gathered, these were classified according to the following processes: material (MA), mental (ME) (which include perception, cognitive and affectivity processes), relational (R) (which include attributive, circumstantial and possessive processes), behavioural (BE), verbal (V) and existential (E).

Table 2. Example of verbal processes labelling

N	Concordance	Process	
1.	To whom do these twelve shirts belong, for they are far too	BELONG*	R
2.	saw the blood on her apron, he believed this, fell into such	BELIEV*	ME
3.	eavy heart, "Dear child, these belong to thy twelve brothers	BELONG*	R
4.	ave killed him," and every one believed it. But as nothing r	BELIEV*	ME
5.	- why do you not look round? I believe, too, that you do not	BELIEV*	ME
6.	ived the letter, and could not believe it. She wrote back ag	BELIEV*	ME
7.	will come and carry away what belongs to me," and then he w	BELONG*	R
8.	p, I will go there myself, and behold the treasures of thine	BEHOLD	BE
9.	then, as before, Allerleirauh begged the cook for leave to	BEG*	V
10.	"I cannot believe that she has behaved so ill, but the truth	BEHAV*	R
11.	that which I cook," but as she begged so hard, he let her go	BEG*	V
12.	Consented to be his wife. It so happened, however, while they	HAPPEN*	E
13.	Opened the door. When they had made a bargain the old woman	MADE	M

391 processes which mirrored violent or cruel situations were isolated, with a clear predominance of material processes (58.51%). Thus, most relevant participant roles researched were Agents, that is, those entities which have energy, volition and intention, and are capable of initiating and controlling the action; usually with the intention to bring about some change of location or properties in themselves or others, as Downing and Locke (2006:128) explain. Agents are represented in the clause by the Subject. In order to look for voluntary participants in material processes, I followed the formula "What did X do?"

This is the case of the example from *The Juniper Tree*, when the step-mother, after killing her step-son, cuts him into pieces and cooks a pudding with him: "she [the step-mother] killed it, cooked and ate it [her step-son]".

Apart from the Agent, most of the processes involved a second participant too, the so-called Affected, the victim in this case. The Affected participant in a voluntary process of 'doing' is



**‘Kill Her, and Bring Me Back Her Heart as A Token!’ Identity, Power and Violence in the Grimms’ Fairy Tales Collection**

“someone or something affected by the action denoted by the verb in an active clause, as a result of the energy flow” (Downing and Locke, 2006:129).

I will now show the representations of voluntary material processes and their participants found to be related to cruel and violent acts. I carried out the study of the list of participants ordered in alphabetical order regarding the processes, that is, starting with accuse. Some of the examples of the material voluntary processes found in The Grimm Corpus can be seen in table 3 below. In this table, I have displayed the material voluntary processes in the first column. These processes are committed by the perpetrators sometimes, but I include also the consequences (circumstances) of violent acts like the hard tasks of the house that Cinderella or Gretel have to carry out. In the second column, the verbal process can be observed, in the third column, the Affected, that is, the person who suffers the action and finally, in the final column, the tale that the scene belongs to. All the words appearing between parentheses are either explanations of the participants the personal pronouns refer to or of the elided participants.

**Table 3.** *Participants in material voluntary processes*

<b>Agent</b>	<b>Material voluntary process</b>	<b>Affected</b>	<b>Tale</b>
<b>He (father)</b>	ate and ate and threw	all his son’s bones	<i>The Juniper tree</i>
<b>She (wicked witch)</b>	killed , cooked and ate	a child	<i>Hansel and Grethel</i>
<b>He (The old man, cook)</b>	ate,	these (some live coals), until the flames broke forth from his throat	<i>Allerleirauh</i>
<b>The father</b>	ate	Me (the son)	<i>The Juniper tree</i>
<b>The wicked Queen</b>	ate	It (Snow-white’s heart supposedly)	<i>Snow- White</i>
<b>He (the prince) (Buried alive)</b>	Ate	every day only a little piece of bread	<i>The three snake-leaves</i>
<b>We (The wicked witch and Grethel)</b>	will bake	(Hansel)	<i>Hansel and Grethel</i>
<b>our step-mother</b>	Beats	Us	<i>Little brother and little sister</i>
<b>I</b>	Bound	the child (to her mother’s back)	<i>The girl with no hands</i>
<b>The other (child)</b>	bound	to the wheel	<i>God’s food</i>
<b>She</b>	Was bound (to the stake)		<i>The twelve brothers</i>
<b>(King)</b>	Bring	Her(the queen)	<i>The Pink</i>
<b>(Witch)</b>	Bring	Some water	<i>Hansel and Grethel</i>
<b>(Queen)</b>	bring me back	her heart as a token	<i>Snow-White</i>
<b>(Cook )</b>	Bring	Me (his heart and tongue)	<i>The Pink</i>
<b>He</b>	Went and brought (kidnapped)	The third sister	<i>The Robber Bridegroom</i>
<b>He (brother)</b>	buried	him (beneath the bridge)	<i>The Singing Bone</i>
<b>It(Woven with sulphur and pitch)</b>	Will burn	Him (to the very bone)	<i>Faithful John</i>
<b>(People)</b>	Had to burn	The wizard and all his crew	<i>Fitcher’s bird</i>
<b>(Cinderella Ordered by stepmother)</b>	get up before daybreak, carry water, light fires, cook and wash		<i>Cinderella</i>
<b>They (old witch and her daughter))</b>	carried	the weakly queen (into the bathroom)	<i>Little Brother and Little Sister</i>

<b>He</b>	carried away	the child	<i>The Pink</i>
<b>He (The prince)</b>	is carrying home	the princess of the Golden Dwelling	<i>Faithful John</i>
<b>He (The wizard)</b>	Caught	pretty girls	<i>Fitcher's Bird</i>
<b>The mother</b>	Chopped( him) in pieces	(The little boy) him	<i>The Juniper Tree</i>
<b>She (the witch)</b>	clutched	Rapunzel's beautiful tresses	<i>Rapunzel</i>
<b>(Step-sister ordered Cinderella)</b>	Comb	our hair for us	<i>Cinderella</i>

The representation of material processes was found in two forms, either active or passive. In the former, the positions of the Agent and the Affected were changed thus changing the Affected into the Subject and the Agent into the Direct Object. In table 4 displayed below some of those examples of passive material voluntary processes can be observed:

**Table 4.** Participants in passive material voluntary processes

Affected (S)	Passive Material voluntary processes	Agent (Od)	Tale
<b>I</b>	Must be buried		<i>The Three Snake Leaves</i>
<b>Thou (Allerleirauh the cook advised)</b>	shalt be beaten		<i>Allerleirauh</i>
<b>The corpse</b>	was to be buried		<i>The Three Snake Leaves</i>
<b>You</b>	are all to be killed and buried (murder attempt)		<i>The Twelve Brothers</i>
<b>(The prince)</b>	to let himself be buried alive with her if she		<i>The Three Snake Leaves</i>
<b>She</b>	was to be burnt		<i>The Twelve brothers</i>
<b>The godless witch</b>	was miserably burnt to death	(by Grethel)	<i>Hansel and Grethel</i>
<b>The witch</b>	cast into the fire and miserably burnt	(by the king)	<i>Little Brother and Little Sister</i>
<b>(The maidens)</b>	(had been) cut in pieces.		<i>The robber bridegroom</i>
<b>They (lovely braid)</b>	were cut off,		<i>Rapunzel</i>
<b>Her hands</b>	had been cut of		<i>The Girl with no Hands</i>
<b>He and his whole troop</b>	were executed		<i>He Robber Bridegroom</i>
<b>(The wicked queen)</b>	to put on the red-hot shoes		<i>Snow-white</i>

The results of the analysis are discussed below.

## 5.1. Active Participants

### 5.1.1. Human active Participants.

#### 5.1.1.1. Kings and Queens

An example of violence by human active participants appears in *Faithful John*. The king takes advantage of his position in order to both inflict violence and order his servant to do so as well. They both kidnap the princess of the Golden Dwelling because the king is in love with her. After that, Faithful John shoots a horse as a loyal act to his master, even though it was imposed on him

by magical ravens and the king cuts his own son’s head off because of the great debt he feels for his servant.

This same situation occurs in the *Twelve Brothers*. The king, taking advantage of his social status, orders his twelve sons to be killed if the thirteenth child who is about to be born is a girl because he does not want his entire kingdom to be divided in thirteen parts. In that same tale, the second king’s wicked mother convinces him, by using the power she exerts over him, to sentence his wife to death because of the envy she feels.

In *Allerleirauh*, Allerleirauh’s father, the king, commits incest by marrying his daughter. She is forced to run away and take a job which makes her live in “great wretchedness”. In addition, in *The Three Little Men in the Wood* the step-mother “became bitterly unkind to her step-daughter and day by day did her best to treat her still worse”. She tries to kill her several times, even when the girl has become a queen. All the murder attempts are inspired by and carried out from a position of greater strength based on meanness. The queen in the *Three Snake-Leaves* takes advantage of being the successor to the throne (thus, a better social status) and causes her husband to be buried alive with her as soon as she dies. Later on, she is brought back to life but she tries to kill her husband by throwing him into the sea.

Additionally, the prince in *Rapunzel* has sexual relations with her in the tower when she is fourteen years old (and she has twins, fact that was removed in later versions due to the embarrassment that sexual issues produced in the Grimm brothers). In this case, he takes advantage of the power that his highersocial status provides him.

#### *5.1.1.2. Parents, Siblings, Step-mothers and Step-siblings*

The step-mothers and step-sisters in *Cinderella* “did her every imaginable injury”. Moreover, the same step-mother forces her own children to cut their toes off in order to fit into the shoe the prince is trying on them, only because she wants them to become queens. Her power is based on a more dominant status position within the family.

For the same reason, mother Holle obliges her step-daughter to do all the hard work in the house and seriously mistreats her. This is also the same reason why the step-mother in the *Juniper Tree* cuts her step-son’s head off and “chopped him in pieces, put him into the pan and made him into black puddings” and gave them to her husband, who ate his own son without knowing it. Equally, in *Singing Bone*, one man kills his own brother and buries him under a bridge: his power is based on the strength that his character provided him

In Legend 5, *God’s Food*, a woman refuses to help her sister and her children who are starving. When her husband goes to her sister’s house and sees all of them dead, “her heart broke and she sank down dead”. This time, the power of providing help or not (a help that can save an entire family from death) is based on wealth.

#### *5.1.1.3. Outlaws*

Outlaws, that is, robbers and murderers, take advantage of their position of greater strength to perpetrate crimes. In the *Robber Bridegroom*, the criminal and his friends are flesh-eating robbers and murderers. They commit one of the most violent crimes when they kill and eat a young girl who is revenged later on.

The cook in *The Pink* steals the young baby prince from her mother’s arms and tells the king that the queen had allowed her child to be taken away from her. The king believes him and shuts his wife in a tower without any food or drink. The cook tries to kill the baby prince as well.

To summarize, most of the violent acts committed by human beings are based on power that comes from their higher social status (kings and queens or mothers or brothers). This higher position is even observed in the relationship between owner and animal.

#### *5.1.2. Active Magic creatures*

Most of the magic and/or enchanted characters in the Grimm corpus have a particularly violent identity in GBFT. Their power is mostly based on the greater strength that their magic powers provide. In *Little Brother and Little Sister*, the wicked step-mother “beats her children every day

and kicks them away with her foot” and bewitches all the ponds so that they cannot drink. When the step-daughter becomes a queen, the wicked step-mother, together with her natural daughter “made a fire of such deadly heat that the beautiful young queen was soon suffocated” in order to supplant her.

In *Rapunzel*, the wicked witch shuts twelve-year-old-Rapunzel into a tower in the forest and mistreats her (even cutting her beautiful tresses). In addition, she threatens bewitches the king’s son in such a way that when he escapes from the tower, the thorns pierce his eyes. In turn, the wicked witch in *Hansel and Gretel*, who is a cannibal, tries to kill and eat the children and cruelly mistreats them. In the *Seven Ravens*, a magic spell cast by their father turns the seven boys into ravens, banishing them to a painful existence due to their status.

The wolf in *Little Red-Cap* devours her and her grandmother. The devil in *The Girl without Hands* makes her father cut her hands off and tries to kill her and her son when she becomes a queen. Besides, in *Fitcher’s Bird*, the wizard who had taken pretty young girls with him kills them by cutting them up into pieces.

### 5.1.3. Animals

There are some examples of animal active participants, like the four animals in *The Bremen Town Musicians* who attack the robbers or the birds that picked the eyes of both step-sisters in *Cinderella*.

To summarize, most magic creatures are particularly violent in the Grimm Corpus. Their power is based on the great strength that their magic provides them and which renders the victims defenceless.

## 5.2. Passive Participants: Spouses and Servants

The identities of husbands and wives in the GBFT can be described as being weak and passive agents of violent acts. That is, many of these characters do not commit active violent acts but act as accomplices by allowing their relatives to carry them out. An example is the queen in *The Twelve Brothers*. She sits and laments all day long, while her husband the king tries to kill their sons, but does not do anything to impede the act. In *Hansel and Gretel*, their father consents to abandoning his children when his wife (their step-mother) convinces him. This time, power is exercised on the basis of strength and weakness. Cinderella’s father lets his wife and step-daughters mistreat his own natural daughter. To summarize, the spouses are passive perpetrators who consent to the violent acts against their relatives. This makes them accomplices of the violent act.

The analysis of the tales has shown a clear relationship between power and social status, since it is often the case that violent acts are performed by those who had been victims of abuse and have been promoted to a higher position. That is, the power which tyrants use in order to inflict violence on their victims works to their own detriment when their victims become tyrants or allow their spouses to do so. In these cases, the mechanisms used for revenge are even crueller than those inflicted upon them. For instance, in *The Twelve Brothers*, the wicked king’s mother (the princess’ husband), who had previously intended to make her son execute his wife, is condemned to be put into a barrel filled with boiling oil and venomous snakes, and dies an evil death.

In *Little Brother and Little Sister*, after trying to supplant the queen by using her supernatural powers, the wicked step-sister is condemned to be taken into the forest where she is torn to pieces by wild beasts. Besides, her mother, the witch, is cast into the fire and miserably burnt. In the *Three Little Men in the Forest*, the step-mother and step-sister, after trying to kill the queen, are sentenced to be put in a barrel full of nails with its top hammered on, and is rolled downhill into the river.

The wicked witch in *Hansel and Gretel*, who is a cannibal, tries to kill and eat the children; however, Gretel manages to put her in an oven and “miserably burn her to death” while the witch “howls quite horribly”. The queen in the *Three Snake-Leaves* is punished by her own father, the king, because she tries to kill her husband. He is “placed with her accomplice in a ship which had

been pierced with holes, and sent out to sea, where they soon sank amid the waves”. Cinderella’s step-sisters have their eyes pecked out by pigeons.

The murderous brother in *The Singing Boneis* sewn up in a sack and drowned, upon orders of the king. In *The Robber Bridegroom*, the murderer and his crew are sentenced to death. Snow-White’s step-mother, the queen, tries to kill her three times but when she is invited to Snow-White’s wedding, she is forced to put on red-hot shoes and dance until she drops down dead.

To conclude, as Santaemilia (2000:13) argues, power can be measured in many different ways: according to social prestige, to reputation, to psychological control, intelligence or sexual seduction. In GBFT, power is measured in terms of social status, either political or familiar, or in terms of greater strength due to magic or to gender inequalities. Most of the time, the victim is a woman or a child and the perpetrator, predominantly, a man with a high social status; or if it is a woman, she is usually a wicked envious greedy step-mother.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

This article has tried to provide evidence of the high content of violence present in a selected corpus of 22 tales from the GBTF by studying the process structures (the process itself, the participants in the process, and the circumstances associated with the process) in each one of the tales.

The analysis involved, first a classification according to two basic categories based on their relationship to verbal processes and their role as active participants (inflicted violence upon others) or passive participants (victims and or “accomplices”). Active participants were identified as human beings (kings and Queens, parents and Siblings and outlaws), animals and magic creatures (wizards and witches).

On the other hand, passive participants were identified, namely, as human beings belonging to the social group spouses and servants. These were not the executor of the violent processes but consented to them, thus becoming accomplices of violent perpetrators.

The results indicate that the person holding the power is the one inflicting violence, regardless of his or her previous condition, since all the violent acts committed by human beings are carried out by those who hold a higher social status in terms of political structure (kings and queens) or a family structure (mothers or brothers with regard to their offspring or weaker siblings respectively). This indicates that the relationship between violence and power is prevalent in the tales thus allowing those who occupy higher social positions to exert violence on the less fortunate. This was ratified by the fact that when previous victims became perpetrators- after moving one step up the social scale- they inflict violence upon others as a revenge for what was done to them, thus becoming perpetrators.

The implications of the present study are that power and violence are related and that holding a higher social status gives perpetrators the right to inflict violence upon those less fortunate. In other words, the relationship between perpetrators and victims in the GBFT collection is based on the presence –or lack- of social power and how the perpetrators utilize it in order to use violence against their victims. If this were so, then, one of the messages sent to children is that one might take advantage of a predominant power position –either related to social status or solely to a better position caused by magic or strength- to make use of violence. Such a pattern of behaviour can be found in tales such as *Snow White*, *Rapunzel*, *The Juniper Tree*, *Fitcher’s Bird*, *The Robber Bridegroom* and many others.

The previously mentioned implications can be, in our view, very negative for children, since as Nodel man and Reimer (2003:87) state, children are “pliable and, therefore, highly suggestible, and they are prone to dangerous experimentation. They respond to depictions of violence by becoming violent themselves. [...]. Children will become whatever they read about”. Additionally, stories aimed at children should not “describe unacceptable behaviour, such as violence or rudeness or immorality that readers might choose to imitate (Nodel man and Reimer 2003:86).

I must say that the present study takes into account the socio-historical and literary contexts of the Grimm’s tales. Even though these are folk tales that concern magic and exaggerated expression of

the essential elements (including violence) which are there to drive the narrative forward, some concepts related to inequalities, mutilations, cannibalism, sexual attacks and many others should be taken into account regarding the social construction of childhood.

Finally, further quantitatively and qualitatively research on gender inequalities demonstrated empirically by our data should be pursued, although possible gender implications are beyond the object of analysis of the present article.

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