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Diploma Thesis

Eating Their Own: Maternal Cannibalism in Hansel and Gretel

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Anotace

Tato magisterská práce se zabývá analýzou kanibalismu vyskytujícího se v pohádkách. Za pomoci pohádky *Jeníček a Mařenka* (od bratří Grimmů) zkoumá sociologicko-historický vývoj a funkce kanibalismu v dětské literatuře. Čtyři kapitoly práce mohou být obsahově rozděleny do dvou hlavních částí. První z nich představuje definici pohádky spolu s vývojem tohoto žánru a jeho funkcí. Další z kapitol se zaměřuje na typy kanibalismu a jeho role odrážející přístupy a morálku evropské společnosti. Prostřednictvím vybraných pohádek jsou představeny významy a funkce kanibalismu v literatuře pro děti, pomáhající tvarovat evropskou společnost skrz naplňování určitých edukačních záměrů. Druhá, praktická část práce, se soustřeďuje na analýzu prvního a posledního vydání *Jeníčka a Mařenky* od bratří Grimmů a jejich rozdílů. Blíže tak osvětluje problematiku pocitů duality, vyskytujících se ve vztahu mezi dětmi a jejich matkou, které jsou zosobňovány zlými postavami a sklony ke kanibalismu, vyskytujícími se v příběhu. Sociální role, jejich funkce a vnitřní konflikty dětí i rodičů v procesu dospívání se odrážejí v pohádkách a jsou ovlivněny a morálními kódy evropské civilizace. Skrze postoje společnosti vůči kanibalismu dochází k jejich rozlišení, upevnění a vyjasnění případných konfliktů prožívaných jak na vnější, tak i na vnitřní úrovni lidského vědomí.

Abstract

This Master's thesis concentrates on analysis of cannibalism in the fairy tale genre. It examines the socio-historical development and cultural functions of cannibalism in children's literature through its analysis of *Hansel and Gretel* (by Brothers Grimm). The four chapters of the thesis are divided into two main sections. The first part introduces the various definitions of the fairy tale and the development of the genre and its functions. In the second chapter, there are discussed types of cannibalism and its roles reflecting the attitudes and morals of the European society. Through several fairy tales, the thesis introduces the function and importance of cannibalism in literature for children that fulfils certain educational aims. Second, the practical part of the thesis analyses the first and the latest editions of *Hansel and Gretel* by Brothers Grimm and the differences between them. It closely deals with the issue of duality feelings in the relationship between the children and their mother represented by evil characters and cannibalistic tendencies in the story. The social roles and inner conflicts of both children and parents in the process of maturation are reflected in the fairy tales and influenced by the moral codes of the European civilization. It can be argued that through the attitudes of society towards cannibalism is achieved the distinction, consolidation and clarification of possible inner conflicts. These can be perceived on the outer as well as the inner and often subconscious level of the human consciousness.

Klíčová slova

Dětská literatura, Pohádka, Kanibalismus, Jeníček a Mařenka, Mateřský kanibalismus, Opuštění, Rodičovské Role, Bratři Grimové, Strach z dospívání, Šípková Růženka, Červená Karkulka, Sněhurka

Key words

Children's Literature, Folktale, Fairy tale, Cannibalism, Hansel and Gretel, Maternal cannibalism, Abandonment, Parental Roles, Brothers Grimm, Fear of Maturity, Sleeping Beauty, Little Red Riding Hood, Snow White

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Declaration:

I declare that I have worked on this thesis independently,
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I agree with storing this work in the library of the Faculty of Education at Masaryk University, and making it accessible for study purposes.

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Brno 18.4. 2014   Kateřina Platzerová

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Introduction

For centuries, the tales were conveyed to entertain people as well as share some experience, beliefs and fears around the whole world. Roots of the tales go far back to primeval history. They were orally preserved, retold by one generation after another, until recorded and again orally transmitted before they gained some sort of static printed form. They underwent many changes when shifted onto a different media and regained new reconstructive goals influenced by film industry, but in their basic form they can often be tracked back into the Middle Ages.

Printed books of stories transformed into several genres until the folktales were reconstructed into the fairy tales genre as we know it today. Its moral meaning along with the power to influence social development of the society is strongly dependant on the way we either consciously or subconsciously interpret the fairy tales with means of our cultural background and experience. It gives the fairy tales some sort of status of the life entity that we carry throughout the history of our civilization. Sheldon Cashdan in his book *The Witch Must Die* sums up the function of the fairy tale genre and its influence on children. Through their unconscious projections into the fairy tale characters they resolve the issues that need to be dealt with in real life.

> Children, in listening to a fairy tale, unconsciously project parts of themselves into various characters in the story, using them as psychological repositories for competing elements in the self…fairy tales give children a way of resolving tensions that affect the way they feel about themselves. (15)

The first tales read and told to children were not anything like Walt Disney soothing stories presented mainly by cinematography in the late twentieth century. Their function was not just to have something to read to children when before their bedtime or to make them quiet by letting them watch filmed fairy tale remakes during the day. As purpose of the tales started shifting, some tales diverted and focused primarily on children audience creating a new genre of fairy tales. Jack Zipes notices that, "fairy tales can be both provocatively subversive and trivially traditional" (xi). It is dependent on the cultural influence and educational suggestions of the stories.

Many tales carry out their message through the sadistic elements of human behaviour. One of the cruellest ones is cannibalism. The main goal of this Master's thesis is to find the cultural meaning and moral reasoning of cannibalism contained within the development of so many fairy tales. Process of discovering the purpose of the cruel elements in the fairy tale plot

could also clarify why some older versions of the stories are so often rewritten and forgotten and other remain popular throughout the centuries. The next question raised is whether the original goal of the fairy tales is preserved in their modern versions or if it is hidden so deeply that the stories fulfil mainly their entertaining functions.

This thesis analyses two different editions of Brother Grimm's *Hansel and Gretel* showing its development in attempts to communicate the values, manners and norms of the European society. Analysing the different versions of the same story should, among other things, reveal the true nature of cannibalism in fairy tales considering its history and meaning. Among some common features of the cannibalistic fairy tales belong inclusion of parental roles; children's psychological development; characteristic of environment and symbolics; the means and circumstances enabling the events. The thesis will concentrate primarily at the maternal roles in the fairy tale slightly covering also other mentioned areas. The mother in the fairy tales is often perceived as dual character causing the situation which leads children towards the beginning of the maturation process. It most commonly takes place in nature as it is for example in case of *Hansel and Gretel* where they wander through the woods. Fort their connection with hunger, cannibalistic tales often put in the time of famine.

Fairy tale might be defined as an entertaining story with some outlined moralistic, sociological and gender statuses. As such, it attempts to shape society that already was marked by its influence one generation after another. Though people often do not perceive the cruelty in familiar stories as something extraordinary it is perhaps because they are used to them since their childhood. When the stories are introduced as new to some older or adult readers or when thinking about it further the repetitive cruelty obtained within them is often surprising. In general, the older the versions of the tales are the more striking is the impact of sadistic elements they contain. Some of these elements were later softened by adding an unnatural environment in the battle of good versus evil, or even skipped if they were considered to be redundant.

Actions of the main characters or even heroes of the stories include abandonment, rape, cannibalism and other violent behavioural patterns. Fairy tales derive from folktales that used to function as a display of lives and the problems people needed to deal with. The tales used to contain the facts about life often in the naked unpleasant form, yet often metaphorically covered by the mythological occurrences and unreal but not unrealistic characters. The issues they dealt with served as comparison to ordinary lives in conflicts with the world and the tale sometimes offered desired resolution to those ones, other times just displayed possible risks of following some kind of behaviour. The need for resolution of

issues concerning daily struggling in mediaeval tales was transformed into the internal messages in fairy tales that kept part of old truths gained by life experiences in sort of mutilated form absorbed by our subconscious mind. As a consequence, these truths can be easily processed without people actually admitting they are an actual part of their lives.

> They conceive worlds of contestation in which the art of subversion ultimately reveals stunning truth that we try to avoid. But fairy tales are insistent and persistent…pervade and invade our lives by telling us truths without telling us how to live those truth. (Zipes xiii)

Resolving the fairy tale struggle into some acceptable ending gives people hope that they also can find their place in life. It helps people to find rationality through irrational occurrences. Ingrida Povidisa and Anna Kérchy in their analysis of *Corpse Bride*[1] in *Postmodern Reinterpretation of Fairy Tales* share their opinion that Brothers Grimm or Hans Christian Andersen:

> …play on childish fears, our very own, very human cultural traumas which take their course when the light goes out and we are left alone. The most prominent of these fears is that of death, that is compensated for and sublimated here by means of turning the fear into something that can be articulated, transformed into something …(Kérchy 108)

Often unspoken human fears are transformed with the unnatural means of fairy tale into the rigid evil characters and in that form they are easier to resolve. Jack Zipes points out that studying fairy tales in "in socio-political context… might ruin their magic power" (2). This thesis actually intends to uncloak this "magic power" and discover its source. There are many possible interpretations and definitions trying to summarise the mission of fairy tales and Zipes provides one of them. They have the power over our lives and the more we mystify them the bigger the power is. The society use it to influence the next generations but at the same time it is already marked by the influence storytelling had on their generation and generations before them.

> The fairy tales we have come to revere as classical are not ageless, universal, and beautiful in and of themselves, and they are not the best therapy in the world for children. They are historical prescription, internalized, potent, explosive, and we acknowledge the power they hold over our lives by mystifying them. (Zipes 11)

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[1] The story of Corpse Bride is nowadays known as a movie directed by Tim Burton. It is based on Jewish folklore. According to Naomi Pfefferman the original "source was the 17th-century volume, 'Shivhei ha-Ari,' which collected earlier stories about the alleged feats of the real Rabbi Luria." The story roots on real events that occurred in anti-Semitic hatred. Young brides were usually killed and buried in their wedding gown.

The importance of the characters does not lie in their profoundly rendered personality, but in their generally stated characteristic through social roles or habits that are easy to process. Philip Pullman suggests that characters of the fairy tales do not contain any deeper psychological proportion: "The characters have little interior life; their motives are clear and obvious." Among his arguments belongs the fact that the characters are often referred to in accordance with their social status, job or outer characteristic. Nevertheless, it does not mean that the story itself does not display some sociological and psychological development. As Adam Zolkover notices "Fairy tales are specific in their non-specificity, occurring 'once upon a time' or 'far far away.' Their settings are rarely named, but they are clearly located Elsewhere" (Zolkover qtd. in Kérchy 67). The same rule of non-specificity could be easily applied to the depth of the characters. The exact location or the deeper psychoanalyses of the characters in the stories could side-track the importance of "here and now".

As for the analyses and reinterpretations of the fairy tales, most scholars agree that the meanings and morals truths of the fairy tale are specified by the life, experience and moral priorities of their translators. However objective they try to be, there can never be reached any point of certainty that through the fairy tale interpretations they are not just mirroring themselves. This leads Jan M. Ziolkowski to the suggestion that it is possible for the fairy tales to have no original meaning and all the meanings were just assigned to them later.

> One of the main qualities of the narratives we call fairy tales is their interpretability or elasticity. They appear to be fraught with meaning, but (or and) they seem to lend themselves almost equally well to mythological, Indianist, anthropological, ritualist, Freudian, Jungian, Marxist, structuralist, deconstructionist, feminist, postmodernist, and assorted other readings. The proliferation of interpretations could point to a flaw in the tales themselves. It could indicate that they have no essential meaning— that they are a clay, easily molded into infinite forms but having no abiding definition. (9)

Nevertheless, people do not really need to deeply analyse the messages in the tales to be aware of the influence they carry through the centuries. Although constantly recreated they still have an influence on their narrators and that means they also support their own development. The tales spread either orally or in the written form and in any case have significant influence on assigning the roles and identities in the society. Children have the ability to subconsciously receive sociological, gender and moral message contained within the fairy-tales. Essay by Pierre Canisius Ruterana contains Bruno Bettelheim's argument that while in the fairy tale the heroes fight against evil the fairy tale itself fights to restrain its readers and listeners via social and moral codes.

…genres encountered in children's literature are both therapeutic and informative. Furthermore, they convey a socializing content meant to make children behave in the ways that fit them into the society. Heroes or heroines are engaged in a struggle to uproot the evil grass in the society.

According to Stop the earliest known versions of stories that might fit to concept of fairy tales in literary form come from seventeenth century. "Early collections of tales often bore some semblance to our modern fairy tales but it was not until 1634 that we find our first recorded fairy tales. Giambattista Basile wrote II *Pentamerone* (*The Tale of Tales*), also known as *Lo cunto de le cunti*" (Stop).[2] Tracy Willard among the earliest collected tales focused exclusively on children includes Charles Perrault's *Contes du temps passe* (1697). Until then, the literature for children had mainly religious character and included biblical lessons aimed at adult readers. Also the fairy tales having the influence on our society were designed to follow and underline these lessons and morals. The good example of this is further explored publication *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (*Children's and Household Tales*).[3] "The first editions of the Grimm's *Kinder-und Hausmarchen* (KHM), published in 1812 and 1815, concentrated on sculpting tales to include morality lessons and religious references" (Willard). Politics and power connected with it was partly in hands of religion. This is the reason why fairy tales as a kind of tool forming the society are, without any doubt, seen through Christian morality codes a suggestions.

While the oral transmissions of the tales might differ from region to region based on listener's experience and perception of the story along with imagination of the story-teller, transformation of the stories into the written form has partly stabilized it and made it more universal. Through this form they were transferred into several countries and even over the sea where European, mainly English literature, influenced the later American production. The proof of its impact on the society is, among other things, the fact that the same tales were several times rewritten as a consequence of the clash with the different political views of the

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[2] "Due to its obscure and difficult to translate dialect, the collection was not first published in Italian until 1747, German in 1846, and English in 1848" (Stop).

[3] … first edition was published in 1812, and the collection went through six further editions (Wilhelm, by this stage, doing most of the editorial work) till the seventh and final one of 1857, by which time it was immensely popular. It shares its eminence with *The Arabian Nights*: the two of them are the most important and influential collections of folk tales ever published. Not only did the collection grow bigger, the tales themselves changed as the 19th century went past, becoming in Wilhelm's hands a little longer, in some cases more elaborate, occasionally more prudish, certainly more pious than they were to begin with. (Pullman)

country. Nevertheless, as the stories are often possible to partly adjust just through the subjective analyses of it by some political system, the stories in its bases remained the same.

The first part of the thesis deals with the definitions and characteristics of the fairy tales and their historical and sociological development within the centuries. By studying the history of the fairy tales, it is possible to learn more about European sociological background. The understanding of the main purpose of the stories told to children in the form their parents heard them can lead us to better realization and understanding of some deeply rooted opinions and attitudes our society has developed.

The second chapter describes features of cannibalism and its meaning within the cultures. It helps to clarify the cannibalistic occurrences in fairy tales using the social and historical points of view as well as explaining possible influences on psychological processes of European sub-consciousness. Using the examples of cannibalism within the famous tales such as *Sleeping Beauty*, *Snow White* and *Little Red Riding Hood* displays the use of cannibalism and its function in the tales in general that are further developed in the following part of the thesis concerning detail analysis of *Hansel and Gretel*.

The third part aspires to explain the meaning of cannibalism within the example this specific tale and reveal its true nature. It is concentrated into several parts taking in consideration parental roles, duality of the relationship towards mother and child's development towards the maturation.

The last chapter summarises and discusses the findings clarifying the significance of cannibalism in the literature. Fairy tale can offer some sort of escape from reality not only for children, but for the parents as well. Cannibalism serves as the mean of expressing the fears and desires that sometimes are, by our society, unacceptable to have and therefore they are difficult to deal with. By the identification with fairy tales characters and their solutions for managing these feelings people, children especially, are able to find the resolutions of their inner conflicts and problems. In case of *Hansel and Gretel* these are connected with overcoming their basic desires, conflicts concerning parent-child relationship and duality within this relationship.

2. From Tale to Fairy tale

When following the history of fairy tale development, we discover that defying the difference between folktale and fairy tale is a subject of discussions. Debates regarding the problematic of fairy tale definition graduated throughout several centuries and doubted even alleged origination of the folktales. After several theories and disputes influenced not just by the discoveries in different scientific fields but also by the political situation in involved countries scholars might reach the point of conclusion that might be final.

So far the resulting assumption is that anonymous oral literature could be just an updated version of the tale writers' stories. Twenties and early thirties years of the twentieth century gave birth to an idea upheld by Austrian-born Czech named Albert Wesselski. He "replaced the idea of folk oral creation and transmission with a concept of literate creation and textual transmission" (Bottigheimer 113).[4] It means that many of the folk narratives are, in fact, based on some form of written literature that was later orally passed and recreated while falling into the oblivion of its antecedents. Although so distant root of examined literature is not part of this study, it is important to acknowledge its history and the possibilities that brought up the conditions for fairy tale creation. This theory offers a reasonable explanation of similarities noted in the different stories all over the Europe.

True origin of the folktales predating the written word remains undiscovered. All the presumptions of its development are largely based on general beliefs and guesses. Therefore, in a broader sense, the real origin of the fairy tales that later erected from this genre remains to be a mystery. To follow the later rise of literary fairy tale for children is more fruitful than would be tracing the historical origins of folktale.

Fairy tales as we know them today are presumed to derive from narrative folktales. In the nineteenth century the European civilizing process lead to securing and further developing

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[4] Ruth B. Bottigheimer presents the argument of "Blind Strömberg's" example possibly proving the misleading concept of fairy tale history development. Strömberg's blindness made some scholars jump to the conclusion that he must have known the stories through oral transmitting. Yet, learning about his previous life disproves the theory.

> Young Strömberg had been a sighted child and an avid reader who became blind at the age of ten. The shocking part of the history of Blind Strömberg is that those who first chronicled his storytelling knew of his earlier reading and of his later blindness and conscientiously included those facts in their accounts. But researchers eager to demonstrate the existence of oral transmission erased all mention of Blind Strömberg's childhood reading. This remarkable history was laid out by the Finnish researcher Gun Herranen in a cautionary 1989 article, "A Big Ugly Man with a Quest for Narratives," which deserves close reading. (Bottigheimer 110)

post-medieval norms. These include behavioural and moral rules regarding the matters of etiquette as well as the approach towards violence. Their difficult categorization and definition by the different scholars lead to the confusion in usage of the terms "folktale" and "fairy tale" especially when studying the tales from the secondary literature sources. For having the same roots and being the subgenre of the tales in general, fairy tales share many features with folktales. That is perhaps the reason why distinguishing an end of the folktale and beginning of the fairy tales is so difficult. It makes impossible putting out a clear definition of the fairy tale genre. Nevertheless, many attempts have been made to defy folk and fairy tales.

By the Elliot Oring's definition "A folktale is a narrative which is related and received as a fiction or fantasy" (126). However, this definition could comprise different kind of literature and therefore does not enable to find any distinction between folktale and fairy tale. Elliot P. Schuman tries to avoid this problem by defying the fairy tale also not by its superficial form but he goes deeper into the psychological perception of the fairy tales. Through identifying with fairy tale personages as manifestations of different clearly stated characters, people can find some kind of resolution for some problematic aspects present in their life.

> A fairy tale permits the simultaneous accomplishment of a number of tasks. For the young reader, it furnishes a vehicle for: a more direct expression of wishes, fears, and ambivalent feelings; the fulfilment in fantasy of desires which are not fully realizable in real life and for which renunciations, partial satisfactions, or substitute satisfactions do not suffice or are not yet available; and a more complete resolution of psychic problems via the process of 'working through.' The three (more direct expression, wish-fulfilment in fantasy, and more complete resolution) are accomplishable by: attributing own feelings to others; substituting permissible vicarious for impermissible direct experience; reacting emotionally to the fantasied situations and characters; having separate personages, each typically with a unitary characteristic, perform distinctive roles; employing symbolic representation of the frustrating and contradictory aspects of life; and enabling enjoyment of the oversimplified but satisfying solutions.

However, even this kind of definition dos not enable to distinguish subtle nuances among the tale genres. When following the psychological aspects in tale, it becomes difficult to be objective and therefore reach the agreement among the scholars exploring tales from many perspectives. As it is not goal of this thesis to define the grounds of the fairy tale it is only mentioned to avoid a possible confusion that might follow when considering different usage of terminology while discussion the folktales and fairy tales by the different scholars.

1.1. Features and Functions of the Tales

Narrative has a function of transforming the experience into a verbalized form while maintaining the order of events engaging both emotion and mind. "A good narrator may engage his audience totally, directing or redirecting their thoughts, emotions, and perhaps their future behaviour as well" (Oring 122). One of the main streams of narrative being formed through the community's attitudes towards these narratives and dependant on them became tales. Some functions of oral literature transmitted into the written form in which narrative folktales in some sort of an amended form continue to influence its audience in the twenty-first century.

Though there are several different kinds of fairy tales that can be studied either separately or as an entity this thesis chooses to follow fairy tales as the whole genre derived from folktales for the reasons of acquiring some features of this genre. The literary fairy tales emanated from folktales and simultaneously continued in rising. It led to a creation of fantasy literature and contemporary fairy tales aimed at children, young adults and adult readers. Due to their oral transmission, folk narratives tend to change with each retelling being shaped by the narrator as well as the audience. It is the "process of re-creation" through which "the folk narrative reflects both the past as well as the present" (Oring 123). Original oral form of the tales has been transferred onto the different media. First it was books and later it spread onto tape-recording and audio-visual means of communication. Nowadays, the tales "… are encountered only rarely in the oral traditions of our own society, although many have been adapted for children's entertainment in hundreds of illustrated books and scores of films" (Oring 126).

Due to the foundation on the oral tradition we can recognize some specific folktale literature features even in many modern fairy tales. One of the most obvious is repetitiveness. Simple repetitive structures are inheritance of oral narrators helping them remember the tales as well as fulfilling their magic functions. "European and American tales tend to rely on the threefold repetition of action, but fourfold, fivefold, and even sevenfold repetition may be utilized in the folk literatures of other cultures" (Oring 130). Repetitiveness in general also creates some sort of familiarity with the audience and it has better impact on our consciousness. Second major feature is that both folk and fairy tale "place little emphasis upon character development" and as for the third they are "depicted in terms of extreme contrast" (Oring 128). The simple story line following logical stereotypical patterns can be considered to be the fourth most obvious feature.

Elliot Oring states that there are four major contexts used for understanding of folk narrative. At least one of these contexts has to be taken into a consideration in order to interpret it. The cultural context includes ideas, symbols, behavioural patterns of the group in which particular folk narratives are found; the social context is based on specific group of people and principles governing their interrelationship, sets of behaviours and conversations by specific physical and symbolic environment present at the time of narration; the individual context and the comparative context are also part of many analyses. As folktale is a part of folk narrative and for the reason of finding many common features in folktale and fairy tale, this thesis is to follow the theory about context of reinterpretation. Its efforts point its concentration towards the socio-cultural contextual knowledge and attitudes.

Along the way through its development, fairy tales have taken in some key elements some of which they kept until the present days. Rough outline of their characters and plots started to form mainly from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century. At that time, religion and politics were crucial issues in shaping the society and as those they are responsible for covering the tales into Christian cloak of rules, moral obligations and prejudices.

Fairy tales have been used as a convenient tool not to just entertain but also guide people in their social development and towards the acceptance of certain norms of correct behaviour. The tale as such was aimed at adults as well as children who, at that time, were treated mainly as their miniatures. It was a mean for moulding the society and it did not except any deviations that could undermine its authority. Those deviations were turned into characters that could be clearly judged for their actions and, as a consequence, punished accordingly.

> Catholic Church and the reform movement of Protestantism combined efforts with the support of the rising mercantile and industrial classes to rationalize society and literally to exterminate social deviates who were associated with the devil, such as female witches, male werewolves, Jews, and gypsies…deviation had to be punished brutally in the name of civility and Christianity. (Zipes 38)

The socio-political character of the first recorded tales should not be underestimated. It was present even before its transformation leading towards aiming at children audience. It came from European upper classes and it strongly followed required changes in gender statuses lead by patriarchal society. European attitudes towards sexuality shifted, defying gender statuses into rigid characteristics. Jack Zipes touches this problematic showing on what level the changes were done. They were breaking even basic roles of the heroes and heroines.

…by the time the oral folktales, originally stamped somewhat by matriarchal mythology, circulated in the Middle Ages, they had been transformed in different ways: the goddess became a witch, an evil fairy, or a stepmother; the active young princess was changed into an active hero; matrilineal marriage and family ties became patrilineal; the essence of the symbols , based on matriarchal rites, was depleted and made benign; and the pattern of action that concerned maturation and integration was gradually recast to stress domination and wealth. (7)

Christianity had a powerful impact not only on ethics and morality, but also influenced character of some figures that are nowadays considered to be supernatural. For example the witch hunts which were initiated by the church and belong to European history had an impact on creation of the bad characters in the fairy tales. The witch happens to be one of the most popular and beloved figures of the fairy tale culture. An era of Christianity transmitted the guilt of Eva onto the female characters in general. "Figures of female evil stride through the best-loved, classic fairy tales: on this earth, wicked stepmothers, ugly sisters: from fairyland, bad fairies, witches, ogresses" (Warner[5] qtd. in Willard).

Since the folklore is influenced by the society and history of mankind is not really filled with good deeds and people acting nicely towards each other, tales are the reflection of what humanity has to offer. It summarises its best and the worst tendencies for actions people have. It provides us with some sort of basic explanation of cruelty noted within the folk and fairy tales. Violent and obscene themes display the dark side of humanity while fairy tale happy endings give people some sort of resolution with this side of human potential.

As well as other genres, fairy tales are concerned with the power, gender statuses and socio-political situation. Initial tale writers watched and recorded civilizing process and writing this genre was the way they chose for expressing the findings of their observations. They used it as a mean of expression of their "concerns about the deformation of the civilizing process and the transmission of norms of behaviour that involved the management of violence and self-restraint" (Zipes 21) Ironically, the same form of literary form that once gave them the freedom in writing later ensured to follow socio-political expectations and it was misused to mould the form of the society.

In the seventeenth century, the social, moralistic and politic manipulations through the tales were already skilfully mastered. The tale changed its form and differentiated within own genre based on the popularity of its message and form of its expressing. Zipes chooses to quote Denise Escarpit to present a clearer picture of power the tale held when forming the society:

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[5] *From the Beast to the Blond*

…there was a threefold manipulation by the author-a manipulation that served a cultural and personal politics, a manipulation of a social kind that presented a certain image of society, and a moralistic manipulation that adhered to the code of bourgeois moralism at the end of the seventeenth century. It was this possibility of multiple manipulations that constituted the power of the tale. According to how the tale was cloaked, it could assume very diverse forms that were functions of social and cultural imperatives at the time. And, in the same way, according to social and cultural imperatives, the tale experienced periods of favour and disfavour. This is the reason why it was transformed into an erotic tale, a philosophical one, or a pedagogical moral tale. It was the latter that directed itself to children. (Escarpit qtd. in Zipes 9-10)

We can analyse specific goals and purposes for which the tales were shaped while taking in consideration all historical, political and social events of that time. Nevertheless, objectivity of current re-readings of the tales remains questionable. People are able to keep just the theoretical subjective knowledge of history. Therefore we can never be sure of what exactly was the reality of living in the conditions that gave birth to the fairy tale. In any case, there is no other option but attempting to analyse the tales in hope that resulted findings will be as close to the truth as possible and enable to reconstruct the messages carried out by this kind of literature.

1.2. Historical Development of the Fairy Tale genre and Brothers Grimm

The end of the seventeenth century gave rise to the state of childhood and the literature for children was finally ready to evolve separately from the tales focused at more general range of readers. Through the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries the genre was dominated by Italian and French writers such as Charles Perrault and Madame d'Aulnoy.

Many creators of the fairy tale "were the elite frequenters of courts and salons, and these authors lost no opportunity to use the tales to air their views on prevailing social and political conditions, sexuality, and mores" (Canepa 17).

According to Zipes fairy tale originated in absolutism during the time French were responsible for setting the cultural standards in the rest of the Europe. Prevailing number of writers in newly institutionalized genre of the fairy tale in France were women. However, the sad fact is even though women contributions were significant[6] to the fairy tale genre the most famous writers of this age during and after this period are males.

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[6] „French women writers or, to be even more specific, Madame d'Aulnoy, because she and they almost single-handedly transformed the Italian and Oriental tales as well as oral tales into marvellous fairy tales that were serious commentaries on court life and cultural struggles at the end of the eighteenth century in Versailles and Paris" (Zipes 18).

Fairy tales were concerned with pursuing the values for children and in patriarchal society it was more acceptable to follow male writers and their standards. As the most known European male writer of that time can be perceived Charles Perrault (1628 – 1703) who is considered to play significant part in the fairy tale discourse. The fact that he was a respectable member of the Acaémie Francaise underlined his power in this area. Although he, according to Zipes, did not belong to the most innovative writers of his time, his work *Tales and Stories of the Past with Morals* (*Histoires ou Contes du Temps passé*) also known as *Tales of Mother Goose* managed to gain the influence on the further development of the fairy tale genre. His female co-writer regaining the most influence in compare to other writer of her gender was Marie-Catherine Baronne d'Aulnoy (1650-1705) also known as Madame d'Aulnoy's for her *Les contes des fées* (*The Tales of the Fairies*).

The beginning of the nineteenth century brought the most significant changes marking the children's literature. Romanticism and its ideas along with illusive perception of the world significantly influenced fairy tale genre and helped to reshape it into the form that we nowadays know.

This period could be characterized by the fascination of childhood in the connection with innocence and by the preservation of the qualities connected with it. Until then, the most of the literature was written for adult or both adult and child readers. Deborah Cogan Thacker states that "literature produced for children has always been influenced by debates originating in the eighteenth century" (14) Discussions about childhood, child education and moral values provoked many writers into redirecting their attention towards younger generations. Also economic situation signalized by the growing number of middle class helped children's literature by its provision of the wider target market.

It was believed that childhood is a state of heightened sensitivity and openness. Although some adults at that time, according to Thacker, wished to get back child's sensitivity and spirituality and fantasy and fairy tale literature was more inclined towards keeping or obtaining the freedom of childhood. Anyhow, was still written by adults with the undertone of desire to shape, control and influence the readers.

> The struggle between the educative function of the books written for a child audience, and the need to nurture the imagination is continually played out in this history, influenced by the play between 'masculine' and 'feminine' influences in society as a whole. (Thacker 22)

Thacker shares her opinion that "This opposition between imposed knowledge and the possibility of discovery through an open apprehension of the world, lies at the heart of the

development of a literature specifically for children" (24). It created what is nowadays considered to be the classical fairy tales famous mainly for their transcription and adaptation by the Brothers Grimm, and Hans Christian Andersen.

At first it was believed that Jacob (1785–1863) and Wilhelm Grimm (1786–1859) were tale collectors with the aim of preserving the existing tales and their folktale predecessor versions. They themselves spread the belief that the tales they retold had their origin in oral transmitting, but never really tried to verify and justify this belief. The biggest influence on German fairy tales came with the outbreak of the French Revolution when, as Zipes notices, the sociocultural perspective shifted. Nevertheless, French tales did not keep their influence for long and soon Brothers Grimm dominated the field.

They had spent fifty years by reshaping fairy tales in such a manner they gradually prolonged the fairy tales, added their own motives, dialogues and messages to the stories. Though still recognizable, after this reformation they were not the same stories any more. Bottigheimer accuses them of "having turned widely available tales from literary sources into carefully crafted reflections of contemporary folk grammatical usage and contemporary bourgeois beliefs about folk social values" (7).

The second half of the nineteenth century finalized the process of making children literature distinctive in its features. Though it kept some idealization about childhood, the awareness of mistreatment towards the children in the society grew and marked the literature for children by the sense of loss that comes with adulthood and which cannot be renewed. "The tension between images of Romantic innocence and its inevitable loss, and the conscious need to provide a voice of authority, led to a more self-conscious approach to writing expressly for children" (Webb 53).

Development of child psychology and Freudian theory shakes with the romantic images of the childhood. "Notions of the innate sexuality and desire in the relationship between parent and child at the heart of Freudian theory, threaten to disrupt Romantic images of innocence and purity. Deep knowledge, once spiritual, once innocent, is imbued with a more threatening knowledge" (Thacker 75). Contemporary scholar's analyses are often in agreement with Freud and are included in the following chapters of this thesis.

2. Cannibalism

As it was already mentioned, this Master's thesis attempts to answer some questions concerning cannibalism and its cultural and moral purposes in fairy tales. Fairy tales inherited many of their significant features from the folktales which have their roots in mythological stories. Cannibalism was a part of mythological stories that people have created, and managed to keep its position in our current cultural legacy in the form of fairy tales.

Cannibalism can be characterised by consumption of human flesh, but its purpose is distinctive.[7] On the most basic level cannibalism is connected with food and hunger. This hunger can be either physiological or psychological. This is one of the reasons why it has been re-appearing in so many fairy tales. Cashdan states that heroes and heroines of the fairy tales are either trying to get some meal or trying not to become one.

2.1. Cannibalism and Its Motives

Cannibalism can serve several purposes according to the reasons for its committing. One reason for its presence in children's literature is dealing with abandonment which is also a very common topic in the fairy tale production. Aggression or frustration of some cannibals, having cause in their feeling of being left on their own by the deceased, can take a form of literal oral aggression. Second, and perhaps more generally known reason for cannibalism is to gain some power. Some cannibal tribes believe that just the very existence of the strong enemy can compromise their strength, and thus devouring their enemies will magnify it. Similarly to abandonment, also dealing with power is part of fairy tales themes. Power and abandonment are, in fact, closely connected in fairy tales as well as in real life. Cannibalism serves as a tool for having the connection to life situations that people otherwise cannot control. Fairy tale characters often are forced to deal with their lack of control after being abandoned. Cannibals either keep the ties with their loved ones, or take a part of someone else's vital force.

Tim D. White in his work *Prehistoric Cannibalism at Mancos* presents the data that are to prove the theory considering cannibalism to be a part of human history since Prehistoric

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[7] Survival cannibalism is defined as the consumption of human flesh in the need for food. Endocannibalism deals with the consumption of human flesh from a deceased member of one's own social group providing his soul some kind of afterlife or ingesting some of his characteristics. "Endocannibalism recycles and regenerates social forces that are believed to be physically constituted in bodily substances or bones at the same time that it binds the living to the dead in perpetuity." (7 Sanday) Exocannibalism concerns the consumption of flesh outside one's close social group—for example, eating one's enemy.

period. He bases his research on archaeological discoveries and "White's data imply that humans evolved as predators, and predators will eat their own if they're disadvantaged and not part of the breeding group" (Binford qtd. in Bower). Although some anthropologists try to disprove the results of his work, it has been accepted as valid by many specialists in this field. Yet, there are many theories that could explain the reasons for this cannibalism and none of them has been scientifically proven. Eric Ecklholm explains the reason for interest in studies of cannibalism held by anthropologists: "Anthropologists think the study of something that resonates so powerfully in the psyche can illuminate human nature". However repugnant the concept of cannibalism may be it has been fascinating our society for centuries and it has, without any doubt, influenced the development of European cultural and literary heritage.

Among other classifications, cannibalism can be judged by various cultural forms as it is described by Peggy Reeves Sanday. Her conclusions are based on the study of 156 societies from which one third showed some indication of cannibalism. Although there were no European countries included in the study, the following classification are applicable to literary European heritage.

> (1) ritual cannibalism is practiced, that is, human flesh is regularly consumed in ritual settings; (2) ritual cannibalism is not reported but institutionalized cannibalism is mentioned in other contexts (i.e. reports of famine, reports of past practice, legends, or hearsay); (3) ritual cannibalism is not reported, but fantasized incidents of cannibalism are feared and take the form of belief in cannibal sorcerers or witches. (4)

Her observations of cannibalism and its studies in *Divine Hunger* lead her to suggesting that rituals concerning human corpses also served as a tool used to gain control over nature or even politics (26). Sanday examines "the interrelationship between material forces and psychological states predicated by rituals of cannibalism" (26).

If we look into our cultural history, we can see that cannibalism occurs even within our cultural system. Judging by the third classification, though it is not a part of our culture, some psychopathic personalities can manifest or satisfy their needs through the acts of cannibalism.[8] Also some cases of survival cannibalism have been noted due to extreme circumstances.[9]

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[8] Most cannibals are extreme loners. They do not have friends, and they are bitter about it. Killing and eating a victim ensures that the offender is never alone. He 'has' the victims with him at all times. They can never leave. This helps the cannibal retain a sense of control over his life. To himself, he has demonstrated mastery over another human being. The victim is now part of him as a trophy. (Schurman-Kauflin)
[9] The good examples prove the victims of plane crash of 1972 in Andes ate their dead friends to avoid the death from starvation.

By the forth classification, cannibalism occurs as part of our folk and fairy tale history and continues to appear in our literature and cinematography production. Fascination with cannibalism comes from the fact that we, who perceive ourselves as human and share the same potential and tendencies, might, in fact, due to some circumstances be able physically consume others of our kind or being consumed by the others. This fascination can became a source of fear for many people and explain why cannibalism appears in so many horror stories.

2.2. Cannibalism from the Nineteenth to the Twenty-first Century Europe

The concerns with cannibalism found their major development during Victorian era. Guest reminds us that it was the time of creation of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*[10]. At that time, different fields of scientists tried to find physical features that would categorize and distinguish people with specific social statuses or behaviours as physically different from the main stream. The explanation of these researches laid in the fear of finding the same dispositions for cannibalistic behaviour within so called civilized and educated society as within the savage tribes around the world. These were attempts of finding physical and psychological distinctiveness of what might define human race.

"Images of cannibals…help societies define themselves as being different from animals or from other cultures"(Ecklholm qtd. in Arens). Cannibalism is used as an argument of non-cannibals for claiming that they are civilized, but in fact, this argument did not find any scientific support.

Ecklholm points out that "the vital essences of life and social renewal are symbolized by bodily fluids, food and eating." Fear of this shared potential with someone who is by European society perceived to be savage led to many attempts to strip those other cultures out of their humanity. "The fear that the other might be a reflection of our self is active in representations of socially marginal groups as cannibals…dominant population consolidates its power" (Guest 109).

These fears led to a circle of vain attempts of providing the definitions. It is necessary to admit humanity to cannibals in order to try to exclude them from the rest of the human society. Price points out the absurdity of these researches as they contradict in their bases. They are contradictory because the term "cannibal" is used for humans consuming other humans. If they were different from the society that tries to distance itself from them, than the

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[10] A frame narrative based on author's experience deals with issue of cannibalistic tribe being exposed to cruel treatment by the members of European society.

act of eating is flesh would not be considered as cannibalistic. Therefore, there is a need to admit that cannibals belong to the same species as members of European society do and with stripping them of humanity they would not be cannibals any more unless when consuming the members of their own differentiated society.

> At the same time as the allegation of cannibalism functions to divest the accused of their humanity, however, it invariably and ironically also functions to reaffirm it, since membership in the human species is a prerequisite for the eater of human flesh to be considered a cannibal. (Price qtd. in Eston)

It is not just a lack of evidence we have for excluding cannibals from our species that possibly shows our shared potential for cannibalistic behaviour, but there is some historical evidence of those tendencies. When we apply the theory of power expansion, we detect the similarities concerning the wars people fought even in the age of the European civilized culture of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Under the cloak of some higher purpose people plundered their neighbouring countries and ruthlessly killed their own citizens. Although the European civilized society does not literally eat its enemies, it has already been proven by the history of the Second World War that some society can globally massacre others, proving its strength and it can even go as far as making goods out of human skin as Nazis did. It is the nature of cannibalism that can be found in what we call humanity and that makes people possible candidates for performing cannibalistic tendencies.

Guest agrees with Obeyeseker's statement that the "common humanity" is more problematic and apparent in the context of cannibalism and attempts of differentiation civilized and barbarian people.

> By calling our attention to the idea of a "common humanity" that unites "civilized" self and "savage" other, cannibalism would seem to represent a movement back to an older humanistic mode of understanding founded on the notion of shared essence. (Guest 3-4)

All the outer display of cruelty hidden beneath the surface of civilized mankind rose with the intention, to gain or maintain the power which usually comes at the expense of others. As well as cannibals devour each other literally, so called civilized society often do metaphorically. Just the threat of the very existence of a stronger enemy can influence socioeconomic system of the whole country as it was for example during American Cold

War[11]. The fears of possible armed conflict lead both sides to mutual demonstrations of power. It eventually motivated the Vietnam War; was a source of international tension; provided jobs in military industry; cause both countries to spend a lot of money on nuclear power and propagandas and was source of many political arrangements around the world.

The metaphoric translation of cannibalism which continues to develop until today was spread even back in Victorian Era when the dominant's middle classes fear of being symbolically eaten even transformed into fear of being eaten literally.

> …given the fact that for lower-class Victorians, the problem of acquiring sufficient food was a constant source of anxiety throughout the "Hungry Forties," the fear of *being* consumed most often devolved on mainstream consumers. For the well-fed middle classes, there was the fear of being metaphorically swallowed into the toiling masses-losing status through social ruin or economic disaster-or of being literally overpowered by the voracious Luddite or Chartist masses that broke machines and burned crops. (Guest 112)

There is no unanimous agreement among anthropologists concerning either history or the cultural meaning of cannibalism. Ecklholm points out Dr. Arens's[12] idea that the reason of this uneasy grasp of cannibalism remains in judging the problematic in relations to already known cultures. They use existing knowledge of the cultures and try to apply it in clarification of new culture which can be based on completely different bases then the ones they already assume to know. It can easily lead the researches towards mystifications and misunderstandings. Although we do not have a chance to be absolutely sure about the cultural meaning of cannibalism in the previous centuries, it does not make current theories any less valid. Among other things, they show our current view of cannibalism, and therefore have informative values of our culture.

2.3. Cannibalism as a Metaphor

Cannibalism is not just about the hunger or fear, but about control. Endocannibals eat their deceased relatives to prevent them from disappearing from the world; to be able to control the life after death in to form of recycling. In some tribes warriors, exocannibals, used to eat the heart of their enemies or carry different parts of their body in order to increase their

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[11] The war that was fought by all means with weapon exclusion and it was according to John Kent concerned with soft power and ideology. The Cold War became more offensive and the need "to prevent hot war given the destructive power revealed with the explosion of hydrogen bombs in 1953" (Kent).

[12] Dr. Arens is the author of the book *The Man-Eating Myth: Anthropology and Anthropophagy* (1979). He examines the tales of cannibalism to find out some first-hand evidence about it being socially acceptable practice. Although his research is nowadays considered outdated his book still contains some valid points.

power. In any case, by obtaining the power, cannibalism fulfils a cultural function of preventing people from losing control.

To modern society, cannibalism offers many metaphoric associations that literature transforms to interact with the sub-consciousness. It might not be connected with real hunger but with the emotions and needs which are caused by emotional hunger. These mainly arise from fears, feelings of uncertainty and lack of control. Conventional language provides us with many metaphorical meanings and belongs to our everyday thoughts and ways that we perceive and process the world around us. These metaphors are created by our personal and cultural experience. "…metaphorical meanings are given by conceptual metaphorical mappings that ultimately arise form correlations in our embodied experience"(Lakoff and Johnson qtd. in Zipes xiii).

The manifestations of cannibalism belong to the part of cultural display of preserving or regaining some kind of power. Either it could be the power to control life and death events as such, or the power to transmit someone else's skills onto a body of a warrior. Arguably, these manifestations were eventually transformed into metaphorical tendencies of current consumer society. They reinvented itself from the physical display of power through the strength towards the power of the wealthy proved by the worldly possessions. On the most basic level, it makes possible to translate cannibalism as a tendency to consume in a sense of accumulating wealth even at the expense of others. As it was already mentioned, some cannibalistic tribes used to fight with their enemies devouring each other with the purpose of gaining more strength. Perhaps it can be argued that this state is comparable to our contemporary consumer society: European capitalistic society competes at the market with the same motivation.

Another metaphoric translation of cannibalism goes even further. Cannibalistic tendencies are considered to be the borderline between civilization and savages; therefore they can be used as a metaphor for expressing any other borderlines in social and cultural statuses. This does not cover geographical borderlines of European nations but can be applied on social structures within one nation.

Cannibalism in literature represents hunger going beyond the physical level. This hunger can only be satisfied by regaining the power concerning different aspects of our lives. It concerns freedom, independency and self-control as well as the control of others. To put it in other words: by regaining the control over our lives. As Kristen Guest explains, this purpose can be found even in early representations of cannibalism in mythology: "shifts in the balance of divine power as the gods consume each other in the struggle for authority" (5).

Civilized society usually devours its enemies on more metaphorical level, cannibals do it literally. In fairy tale it is the combination of both. The desire to consume human flesh is there to connect with the audience on the metaphorical level and more importantly, work through the consciousness.

As well as were the ancient tales, fairy tales are tools used for forming society and taking control. Although the form of some stories became less brutal the purpose stays. Through the fairy tale can be offered many metaphors that can but does not have to be accepted and transmitted into our conscious lives. Their happy endings give us the satisfaction which, in reality, we aim for. Their mystical form helps people deal with presented realities concerning their own life. They are about power and control while at the same time they have the power to influence the next generation. "Fairy tales test correlation between real social practices and imaginative possibilities that can be realized but are thwarted in our everyday interactions" (Zipes xiii). Consumer society brought a wider spectrum of the possibilities for influencing the children through the threat of death and in case of cannibalism even being consumed. In children's literature, it serves as a form of punishment for all kinds of behaviour that could be considered as sinful.

When being specific and taking in account the problematic of cannibalism it is important not to overlook Peggy Reeves Sanday's conclusion placed in the book *Divine Hunger* following cannibalism in six patterns. She bases their division on the studies of cannibalism as one of the most aggressive and static forms having their place in fairy tale worlds and their analyses.

First, she mentions famine cannibalism. When looking into the tales we can find many examples of them based in the time of famine or placed in the family with the shortage of food. It makes the problematic of cannibalism more realistic. Second, there is the motivation of cannibalism in the form of death avenge which is not really applicable on this fairy tale study. Third, mortuary cannibalism does not really play important part in *Hansel and Gretel* but perhaps it could be applied to some other tales as it is to preserve the circle of life and functions as a symbol of fertility. Forth cannibalism "is a behavioural referent of a mythical charter for society and, with other social and cosmological categories, is a condition for the maintenance and reproduction of the social order" (25). It is to reconfirm or reconstruct the hierarchy. Fifth is more interesting for this fairy tale analysis and refers the cannibalism as a symbol "symbol of evil in the socialization of persons" (26). This symbol has to be dominated so everything remains balanced. The last, sixth purpose of cannibalism plays a part in

"cultural construction of personhood" (26). Also in the fairy tales overcoming the danger of being devoured helps the personhood to be shaped and be recognized.

The most valid patterns in the study of *Hansel and Gretel* are: the famine cannibalism as it determines the settings of the tale; symbol of evil within the people and is later use for personhood construction and maturation.

2.4. Cannibalism in Fairy Tales

Cannibalism and violence are part of the fairy tale history and they managed to keep its role in it until today. They often are described in detail with the intent to affect the child's psychological development. The act of cannibalism is usually initiated or done by witch, ogress, ogre, stepmother or other similar representative of evil.

Cashdan explains that the basic meaning of cannibalism comes from the fact that our culture perceives its act to be enough horrific to justify the death of the villain.

> Flesh eating is an altogether reprehensible act that identifies its practitioner as a thoroughly repugnant human being. If the witch is to perish, as she must, the reader must be convinced that she deserves to die. Whereas killing another person can be understood, even condoned if there are mitigating circumstances, cutting them up into little pieces and consuming them extends beyond the pale. (47)

Looking at the imaginary list of fairy tales with cannibalistic behaviour shows that in some of them cannibalism was in later versions omitted or reduced as not necessary for maintaining their educative purposes while in other tales it did not really change. Beside its use as an excuse to kill the evil, there are many conflicts transformed onto the cannibalistic figures. They have to keep their form as cannibalistic figures in order to be functional and so can be found even in the current forms of the fairy tales.

Among the fairy tales that in some way share cannibalistic tendencies are apart from later analysed *Hansel and Gretel* also, *Little Red Riding Hood, Sleeping Beauty, Snow White* and many others more or less known fairy tales. Some of the tales are in their basics so similar to each other that they can be considered to be just more retellings coming from one tale.

According to Cashdan the value of the fairy tale lies within its ability of helping children to deal with their "internal conflicts". He puts aside the sexual matters that are in the centre of interest among many scholars and psychologists and focuses at the "child's burgeoning sense of self" (12). In his analysis he concentrates on the most significant features of specific tales such as greed, gluttony, lust, envy, vanity and many others.

Through fairy tales and the projection of "self" into the fairy tale characters they learn to understand their feelings and deal with them.

Hansel and Gretel is, by Cashdan's measures, concentrated on gluttony. It is also one of the tales that is considered to belong among the least revised fairy tales by Grimms. Reason for this is perhaps the main educational motif of the tale. Though the tale is concerned mainly with the issue of cannibalism, it does not mean that all the tales with this thematic deal with the same conflict.

> The child's encounter with the witch brings to the fore the negative trait the witch personifies. Though all witches are bad, the precise shape of their badness varies from story to story. The evil stepmother in Snow White is conspicuously vain; she devoted a significant portion of the day contemplating her image in a mirror. The witch in Hansel and Gretel spends her day setting traps for little children in order to satisfy her ravenous appetite. And the evil wife in Talia, Sun, and Moon is consumed by envy.

> The encounter with the evil presence in the story forces children to come face to face with unwholesome tendencies in themselves by casting these tendencies as concrete characteristics of the witch. (Cashdan 35)

Nevertheless, as the fairy tale went through the rewriting process focusing at children's audience and pleasing the adults in effort to educate children towards the socially acceptable model of behaviour, many fairy tales had mitigated or eliminated signs of cannibalism.

2.4.1 Sleeping Beauty

Looking at some of the oldest versions of *Sleeping Beauty*[13] we realize that the story as we know it today is not only modified, but half of it is missing. When the princess is born, she is either predicted or cursed to "run a splinter of flax under her nail" (Basile). When the princess touches the spear she will, according to Basil's version, "be in great danger". In the rest of the tales by different authors she is supposed to fall into a hundred years old sleep. Although the king and queen do everything they can to prevent it, young princess wandering around castle "pierce herself with a spindle"(Perrault) which puts her into sleep[14]. While sleeping, she has to wait to be saved by the prince.

One of the oldest versions of this fairy tale is called *Sun, Moon and Talia* and comes from the seventeenth's century *Pentamerone* written by Basile. Not only it contains

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[13] *Sun, Moon, and Talia* (Giambattista Basile); *The Sleeping Beauty in the Wood* (Charles Perrault); *Little Brier-Rose*, version of 1812 (Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm)

[14] In some versions on the tales she gets hurt while holding a rose with thorns. This probably derived from Grimms' version with the "thorn hedge" which only opened for the prince: "He went forth, but when he came to the thorn hedge, it turned into flowers. They separated, and he walked through, but after he passed, they turned back into thorns."

cannibalism but also rape is one of the main turning points in the story causing the set of events eventually leading to princess's awakening and marriage.

In all known versions of this story Talia (in later versions known as Sleeping Beauty) is punished for her curiosity by a hundred years long sleep and waiting for her rescuer. However, the circumstances of her resuscitation change. While in the modern versions of this fairy tale the awakening kiss included in Grimm's story is enough to the break the course of the evil fairy, in the Basile's versions the princess gets raped. "The prince lifted her in his arms and carried her to a bed, whereon he gathered the first fruits of love while she slept on". After this incident princess gives birth to her two children. One of them loosened the splinter while trying to feed and the spell was broken. The story continues with the prince returning to the scene of their sexual intercourse and finding out she has awakened and bore him two children. The situation is complicated by the fact that he is already married. In Basile's version his wife wants to punish her husband by having the children served to him as a meal.

> Then the queen, with a heart of Medea, told the cook to kill them, and to make them into several tasteful dishes for her wretched husband. But the cook was tender hearted and, seeing these two beautiful golden apples, felt pity and compassion for them, and he carried them home to his wife, and had her hide them. In their place he prepared two lambs into a hundred different dishes. When the king came, the queen, with great pleasure, had the food served.

> The king ate with delight, saying, "By the life of Lanfusa, how tasteful this is"; or, "By the soul of my ancestors, this is good."

> Each time she replied, "Eat, eat, you are eating of your own."

In the Perrault's version Prince is not married, but his mother is an ogress who wants to eat the children and Talia is supposed to be thrown into the fire.

According to Bettelheim, the story is about parent's wish to delay child's sexual awakening until she is ready to become a woman. "The harmonious meeting of prince and princess, their awakening to each other, is a symbol of what maturity implies: not just harmony with oneself, but also with each other" (234).

Honored by the fairies' gifts (in Perrault's and Grimm's version) Talia has got all physical attributes and talents making her the perfect woman and potential wife. As Zipes notices, "In other words, she is bred to become the ideal aristocratic lady" (39). The lesson the story teaches about one more quality she has to gain and that is patience. Perrault even added one more verse to the story as praise to patience:

> Those whom fortune favors
> Find good luck even in their sleep.

She proves curiosity when she is not careful enough entering the strange tower (in Perrault's and Grimm's version); she does something new and possible endangering without consulting her parents first. The lack of obedience or perhaps patience and need for parent's knowledge or advice is punished when she enters forbidden chamber (the place and the tool of fulfillment of the curse in different editions may differ). Her punishment is to wait patiently to be rescued. In the second part of the story, she has to believe her prince will come and rescue her along with their children from the faith that his wife or mother prepared for them.

> …the moral explains that it is a sin for a woman to be curious and imaginative and that woman must exercise self-control. This message is softened by the second moral, which ironically implies that the relationship between men and women has changed: men are no longer the monsters they used to be, and women have more power. (Zipes 39-40)

One of the latest Grimm's editions together with Perrault's name has formed *Sleeping Beauty* that is nowadays so widely known and loved by children. The proved patience in the story is rewarded when the prince marries the princess. It is the inner quality which does not indicate the need to be displayed through cannibalism as it is actually Sleeping Beauty who has to encounter the clash with the cannibal. For these reasons the rest of the story is not necessary for its purpose, therefore it was later completely omitted.

2.4.2. Snow White

The story of Snow White belongs to one of the most famous children fairy tales. As well as in *Sleeping Beauty*, the princess is young and fair beyond imagination. Her mother (Grimm's 1912) in 1957 Grimm's version turns into a wicked stepmother. The most beautiful woman in whole kingdom cannot bear the fact that Snow White has grown more beautiful than she is and decides to have her killed. On the top of it, she intends to eat her lungs and liver. Intriguingly, there is no apparent reason for the queen's desire to eat the Snow White's insides. It seems that after finishing the cannibalistic act, she is just assured that once again she really was "the fairest of them all".

Although the tale has undergone many changes, still the queen devours the proof of Snow White's death the huntsman brought to her. Cannibalism in this fairy tale serves as an analogy to the strong warriors wanting to gain the attributes of their fearless enemy, but this time it is the beauty that is the source of power. Only by her beauty the queen married the

king and gained her position as the queen and the most powerful woman in the kingdom (1957 version).

Snow White unknowingly becomes queen's rival in the imaginary beauty contest and with this cannibalistic act her stepmother hopes to possess desirable physical attributes to remain the most beautiful and powerful woman in the kingdom. As she is getting older the threat of losing it gets bigger and she struggles to keep her fairness.

Mirror, mirror, on the wall,
Who in this land is fairest of all?

It answered:

You, my queen, are fair; it is true.
But Snow-White is a thousand times fairer than you.

The queen took fright and turned yellow and green with envy.

The young princess threatened her on two levels. She is the only the heiress of the throne and she is more beautiful than her stepmother.

It is her beauty and not the position in the kingdom that saves her life for both the first and the second time. The huntsman does not spare her life out of the goodness of his heart but he looks upon her beauty: "'…and as she was so lovely, the huntsman had pity on her.' The queen would destroy Snow White for her looks; the huntsman spares her because of them" (Cashdan 47).

Cashdan claims that this fairy tale teaches children about vanity. Queen's appearance serves her for obtaining and maintaining the power and she becomes obsessed with it checking herself in a magic mirror. She is the most obvious victim of vanity, but in fact the Snow White proved to have this quality as well.

The sign of her vanity ensues from the fact Snow White is not able to learn from her mistakes and three times she is outwitted by the stepmother. While the queen's vanity is partly derived from the fact that she is getting older and she is supposed to retreat before youth, the Snow White's vanity has its source in immaturity. She simply cannot resist the temptation of the offerings the queen arranged for her with continued use "the art of witchcraft" until the dwarfs are not able to save the princess anymore. As well as Sleeping Beauty she has to wait for the prince to be saved.

Twice the Snow White was saved thanks to her beauty. For the first time it was when huntsman spared her life and for the second time when prince fell in love with her and urged

the dwarfs to let him take her coffin for he could not be without her. If there was not for her looks, prince would not have fallen in love with her and he would not want to bring her home despite the fact that his love was dead. Morbidity of this arrangement aside, the tales teaches children that one of the most valuable characteristic of people is their physical beauty.

The queen is punished for her crimes when she does not resist going to the wedding and she is recognized as the source of potential evil. "Then they put a pair of iron shoes into burning coals. They were brought forth with tongs and placed before her. She was forced to step into the red-hot shoes and dance until she fell down dead."

The story suggests that it is the beauty that brought happy ending to Snow White. It also shows that lack of control over the emotions can have terrible consequences. It is proven by the consequences of Snow White's desire for subjects offered to her by the queen and queen's inability to overcome her jealousy causing her to go to the wedding ceremony.

As it was already mentioned, cannibalism is used for expressing our hunger; hunger to have control over our lives. Vanity, in the story where physical beauty clearly is the mean of power grasp, comes from desire to own the power. The term "vanity" could in this case be substituted by the word "greediness" which is a main topic of *Hansel and Gretel*, the cannibalistic fairy tale that is the centre of this thesis. Although cannibalism in this fairy tale does not attract so much attention, it is still valid for making its point in expressing the metaphorical hunger.

2.4.3. Little Red Riding Hood

In the story *Little Red Riding Hood*[15] girl passes through the forest to visit her grandmother meets a hungry wolf. Although some people could object that cannibalism does not take any place in this fairy tale, because it is the wolf who threatens to eat the girl, history of the fairy tale suggests otherwise.

The Story of Grandmother, the predecessor of *Little Red Riding Hood*, clearly indicates that the wolf should be associated with a man. He is referred to as a werewolf and he asks the girl to get undressed and lie in bed with him before he eats her up. The wolf represents the dangerous side of the man inexperience girls should be aware of. In this version, he does not eat the grandmother. He kills her and offers Little Red Riding Hood to eat her meat and drink her blood as a wine. The wolf "put some of her meat in the cupboard and a bottle of her blood on the shelf." The story ends with the girl outwitting the wolf and escaping from the cottage,

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[15] The story is also known as *The Little Red Cap.*

but the grandmother is not resurrected. It passes on the message that girls should not talk to strangers.

Perrault's story does not have the girl eating her grandmother and so she is not punished by the act of eating a flesh of her own grandmother she does not manage to escape to wolf's intentions and he eats her up. He clearly explains the actions that could lead to such consequence. "Children, especially attractive, well-bred young ladies, should never talk to strangers, for if they should do so, they may well provide dinner for a wolf. I say 'wolf,' but there are various kinds of wolves."

This message is expanded in Grimm's version where the girl is directly advised not to leave the path. Yet, she is seduced by a temptation offered by the wolf and explodes the flowers in the woods. It gives the wolf enough time to get to the grandmother's house and eat her with goal of eating the Little Red Riding Hood as well. This time, it is not the girl but a hunter saving both The Little Red Riding Hood and the grandmother. He cuts them out of his belly and fills it with stones instead, letting him die. If The Little Red Riding Hood listened to her mother and did not step out of the path none of it would have happened. The moral is clearly stated in the last sentence of the story spoken by The Little Red Riding Hood: "As long as I live, I will never leave the path and run off into the woods by myself if mother tells me not to." It means that not only talking to strangers, but also other kinds of disobedience could mean a threat.

In both Perrault's and Grimms' version the girl is not able to protect herself on her own which only signifies the importance of their message. The need to avoid the potential dangers by obedience through following the expected behavioural patterns for females set by that time is crucial. Eating the grandmother's flesh is not really necessary for proving the main point of the story so later it presents just the wolf eating the girl and her grandmother. Nevertheless, some sort of cannibalism continues to appear in all those stories, though its form is not as clearly states as it is in *The Story of Grandmother*. The wolf still represents the dangers that are present in men.

2.4.4. Preserving the Cannibalism in Fairy Tales

The presence of cannibalism changes according to its importance in displaying the main purpose of the stories or underlining its morals. While completely omitted in *Sleeping Beauty*, it kept its presence in the rest of the previously mentioned fairy tales.

The main difference between these stories is that while in the rest of them it serves to deal with some inner conflict in *Sleeping Beauty* it just redundantly complements the plot and

it is not necessary for preserving the morals. Cannibalism in *Snow White* and *Little Red Riding Hood* is used to display vanity or consequences disobedience; it serves children to find resolution to inner conflicts such as desire to please the parents and follow their own desires. In *Sleeping Beauty* the cannibal character is present just to enhance the wicked act in the outer world of the story.

The projection of child's conflicts onto the fairy tale characters and resolving them with the help of cannibalistic problematic is nicely shown in *Hansel and Gretel*. In contrast to these other tales it underwent the least changes and therefore cannibalistic issues remained well preserved.

3. Hansel and Gretel

Hansel and Gretel, as well as many other tales, became a part of our culture by marking it as well as having been marked by it. "Our cultural stories are the products of unceasing negotiations between the creative consciousness of individuals and the collective sociocultural constructs available to them" (Tatar 230). Cannibalism within the folktale and fairy tale production is the resulting product of our social and cultural consciousness and their historical development. Therefore remaining presence of the cannibalism in fairy tales is explained more when its historical and social origins are taken into account. Although European society does not live in the age of famine, the issue of food deficiency keeps appearing in children's literature. Sanday introduces hypothetico-deductive and hermetical hypotheses as the main focuses of scholars' interest in relation to dealing with the cannibalistic topics.

> Psychogenic hypotheses explain cannibalism in terms of the satisfaction of certain psychosexual needs. The materialist hypothesis presents a utilitarian, adaptive model – people adapt to hunger or protein deficiency by eating one another. The thirds approach follows a hermeneutical path rather than a hypothetico-deductive model in conceptualizing cannibal practice as part of the broader cultural logic of life, death, and reproduction. (3)

The hypothetico-deductive model fits for defying different approaches concerning analyses of cannibalism in children literature as well as in literature in general.

3.1. Materialist Hypothesis

Fairy tales are closely associated with materialist hypothesis as they occur in time of hunger. *Hansel and Gretel* placed into those circumstances presents the theme of "oral greed" as a consequence of food deficiency.

Under the pressure of upcoming starvation the parents decide to abandon their children in the woods where they are eventually forced not only to deal with their own hunger, but also with the cannibalistic witch. Classified by Aarne-Thompson's scale[16] of folktale subtypes, *Hansel and Gretel* fits for type 327A characteristics. A female protagonist conquers the wicked stepmother or witch. The name of the story **-** *Hansel and Gretel*, especially with Hansel's name coming first, might be misleading for the readers. Although Hansel tries to protect his sister, he fails. It is Gretel who becomes a heroine while taking the initiative and saving her brother, herself and, in fact, the whole family. After killing the witch, they grab

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[16] The Aarne-Thompson tale type index organizes international folktales into subtypes according to the criteria connected with the story line. It was later updated by Hans-Jörg Uther and it is nowadays known as the ATU system.

some of her precious possessions from the house and thus avoid the future possible threat of starvation. This plot can be analysed by materialistic approach analysis of the story; but although it explains how some of the motives got into the fairy tale, it does not provide any explanation of why those motives not only stayed there but developed even further. The further possible way is exploring the story is from the point of psychological analyses of the characters as representatives of certain social roles in European culture.

Hansel and Gretel as a story went through many reconstructions, yet at least in its bases proved to be stable. Although the image of parents following practical solution when making a life decision leading them toward abandoning their children in the woods is hardly imaginable for most people in our society, the story has remained to be popular until nowadays. Its topic is, at least by our age, interpreted in different manners.

Cannibalism can be viewed as a form of aggression and along with other themes of brutality belongs among the most popular topics in the fairy tale world. The more brutal the plot gets, the more the tale becomes to be the source of children's fear, pleasure and demand.

According to Maria Tatar, these tales "…rank among the most popular fairy tales, in part perhaps because no one has ever been able to turn them into stories that preach and teach" (191). She in her work suggests that one reason for their popularity among children is that they can never be really turned to just educative tales. However, abandonment and cannibalism belong to the most various topics included in the folk and fairy tale literature not only because children like them, but also because adults find their internal message important enough to pass them to the next generations.

There are tales following so similar storylines that they are sometimes even mistaken one for another, mixed up together by their content or just exchanging their names. *Hansel and Gretel* shares many similarities with the tales known as *Little Brother and Little Sister* or *Little Thumb*. Nevertheless, although it is far from being the only one dealing with the issues concerning cruelty within one's own family as well as in the outer world, *Hansel and Gretel* still belongs among the most popular fairy tales. It is a subject of many adaptations and various interpretations by different medias.

The earliest known European predecessor of *Hansel and Gretel* as a tale displaying abandonment of children in the time of hunger is an Italian tale *Nennillo and Nennella* (published 1634) written by Giambattista Bassile. The next well known tale dealing with this theme is Perrault's *Little Thumb* (*Le petit Poucet* 1697). Within following fifty years, this story perhaps became an inspiration to many other stories and shares many similarities with *Hansel and Gretel*. The children in *Little Thumb* are not only abandoned by their parents, but

they also encounter with child-eating ogre and run away just in time before being eaten. Similarly to Hansel and Gretel, they somehow thanks to Little Thumb, manage to gain some wealth in the process; they find the resolution to the poverty. *Little Thumb* could also be considered to be the root of many other tales presenting the problems of ogres that are usually also dealing with abandonment and child abuse along with the projections of cannibalistic desires.

Some of these topics are at least for average nowadays European citizens, dealing with unrealistic problems. It is important to realize that the problems of Middle -Ages were first articulated through the folktales. Only later, within the process of folktales growing into fairy tales, were these problems transmitted into our age that deals with different daily situations. Although different in form, these daily situations still suggest the same internal struggle people need to find a resolution for. What we today perceive as display of harshness and cruelty was once part of everyday European reality and it is important to remember that. At the same time, we should be able to recognize historical perspective of the situations in order find a better translation for the part these stories play in psychological development of our society.

3.2. Psychogenic Hypotheses

Psychogenic hypotheses are for most scholars dealing with the topic of fairy tale cannibalism closely associated with Freud and his theories. For him, an infant's nourishment is responsible for his later developing symptoms of oral an aggression. Parents, especially mothers, as providers and nearly invincible figures in their lives are the source of love and hatred at same time. This causes dual feelings towards parental figures, confusion and appreciative themes of fairy tales battles presented by good and evil figures.

> For Klein, the mother's breast begins as a source of pleasure and gratification, then becomes the target of destructive fantasies that are "of a definitely cannibalistic nature": "In his imagination the child attacks, robbing it of everything it contains and eating It up." These fantasise are then projected onto the mother to produce the dread of being eaten. …Susan Suleiman has pointed out….the traffic of love and hate between child and mother might move along a two-was street. …Masson pointed out, with some polemical exaggeration, "…the impulses of parents against their children were forgotten, never to surface again in his writing." (Tatar 204)

One of Freud's supporters is Bruno Bettelheim who concentrates his fairy tale analyses mainly around the children's guilt. Though his later further exploited analyses have many

valid points, it is important to remember that dual feelings in relationship between children and parents can be mutual.

3.3. Introduction to Grimm's Hansel and Gretel

According to Joseph L Zornado, and in accordance with other scholars, the manuscript version of Brothers Grimm's *Hansel and Gretel* (1810) was in the transcription for the first edition of *Kinder-und Hausmarchen* (KHM) prolonged nearly twice as much as was its original length. While the oldest version of the tale is meant to be just a transcription of oral tale heritage, the later adapted versions transform the story into the literary fairy tale.

As it was already mentioned, some of the Grimm's tales in their early editions are on the borderline of folk and fairy tales. Although Grimm's were for a long time supposed to be just the collectors of the stories, passing the message of these stories through different media onto the next generation they, in fact, revised at least some of the tales so much, that they actually changed folktales into the literary fairy tales. Though the core of the story remained intact by often major changes in phrasing, in the story they transformed the message based on daily life into the morally more suitable pedagogic lessons aimed at children audience.

Scholars agree that *Hansel and Gretel* belongs among some of the least changed fairy tales edited by Brothers Grimm. Cannibalistic theme of the story makes it more difficult to change the tale without rewriting it into a completely different story. Cannibalism in this fairy tale does not only represent practical survival solution people could decide for in the time of crisis. It also represents a path to resolution of internal conflict children deal with in their relationship towards the parents. The manuscript version followed preceding oral tales which dealt with more or less common worldly problems and dilemmas. In the latest edition of the fairy tale are observed higher principles of life and simple moral dilemmas or messages are uplifted into whole different level. To highlight other possible meanings, the story transformed some characters into the clearer representatives of good and evil without having touched the cannibalistic references.

3.4. Parental Figures and Guilt

The first printed edition of the Grimms' *Hansel and Gretel* comes from year 1912. It introduces the woodcutter as the head and provider of the family, virtually giving him the responsibility for its members' food supply. He is "a poor woodcutter who had come upon such hard times…". There is no further explanation of the term "hard times" and the reader could assume that the woodcutter just is not able to earn enough to provide for his family,

which would make him possibly responsible for the situation of his family. Though in the latest edition from 1957 he is also depicted as the provider, the authors introduce the characters more as the whole unit than as individuals: "poor woodcutter with his wife and his two children." Those few lines set the environment for the readers' perception of the characters suggesting that he as an individual parent is not the one to blame for the situation of food shortage.

In the introductory paragraph, there can be noted also another change that clearly makes the problem wider in the sense of general living condition of the people at that time: "a great famine came to the land". In this scenario, the woodcutter cannot change their situation for the famine came upon the land they lived in.

Though these changes may seem quite minor in comparison to changes Grimms had done to some other tales, they have an impact on the future analyses of the characters and readers' ability to relate to these characters. They also had an influence on scholars' analyses of the story as they supports Bettleheim's theory based on Freud. He makes the children responsible for their situation and takes away the blame from the parents at the same time.

> … the Grimms have mystified the inherent murderous conflict between the adults and the children, and transformed it into a supernatural battle of good versus evil. No longer is the tale a question of the adult's responsibility to the child, nor is it a tale of the material conditions of the poor. Rather, the Grimms revise it so that the "original spirit" might be made more apparent, and for the Grimms this "original spirit" fashions a world in which human beings become symbols for the larger story of good versus evil, light versus dark. (Zornado)

Although the story is focused on the children, parental figures play an important role in the fairy tale plot. The parents themselves are not important as the characters, but they are representatives of parental figures. As those, they play a significant role in perception of the story by the readers. Among other things, it is proven by the fact that these parental representations change not only in various editions of different, or even the same, authors. Grimms go even further and, for example, the mother is referred to by different names. Within one version of the fairy tale, her position shifts from representative of "good mother" into the hated mother figure and so does the reference to her.

In the Perrault's tale, the parents experience sorrow while struggling with their decision to abandon their children. The father's suggestion to leave the children comes out from the fact that he does not want to watch his children to die from starvation. "In this telling, every effort is made to protect the parents, whose 'tenderness' and 'sensitivity', however misguided, move them to abandon their children" (Tatar 195).

In the earliest Grimm's version, it is the mother who initiates the act of abandonment but the father does not really try to resist it. Zornado points out that taking away the responsibility from both parents and placing it onto a mother figure has an "effect on reducing the emphasis on the conflict between parents and children and replacing conflict with an idealized moral frame that justifies, while at the same time dismisses, the latent violence as obvious and necessary" (Zornado). Suddenly there are no ordinary parents but the mother changes into the representative of evil. As for the father, with further editing he becomes a victim of his dominant wife. Placing the guilt onto one of the parents makes the transfer of guilt from parents on children more possible. It also helps to transform the struggle from dealing with outer condition into a matter of subconscious battles.

While in the Perrault's story readers can relate to the parents who do not wish to see their children suffer for longer than necessary and can actually believe they perceived their decision as the right one, Grimm's versions does not leave much space for the compassion towards the parents. The more edited the tale is, the more assertive the father becomes. Grimms made later updated editions of the story display the father figure in different manner; he acts more like a victim of his wife's power. It leaves the mother alone in the role of a villain. It was Grimm's conscious decision to make the mother figure seem to look more heartless than the father. This heartlessness is multiplied within the newer editions of the story.

One of the most well-known analyses of the story comes from Bettelheim. His observations turn the victimization of the children into making them guilty from their fate. Through the story children reach maturity, but not before they display their oral greed, and lack of control over their own lives along with the dependence on their parents. Their encounter with different forms of evil is presented by female figures in the story, but in reality it is just a projection of their own destructive desires. They have to overcome these desires in order to be able to get back to their father and to be able to provide for him as well as for them.[17] Maria Tatar considers this form of analyses to be too unilateral. She blames Bettleheim for ignoring certain facts about the decision the parents made and attributes this ignorance to the fact it is too unpleasant even for Bettleheim to accept it as a valid part for his analyses.

> In the text preserved by the Grimms, Bettelheim divines "an important, although unpleasant, truth, namely that " poverty and deprivation do not improve man's

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[17] Considering the origin of the tale it is only logical that children should be able to take care of their father as there is no social system taking care of elderly.

character, but rather make him more selfish, less sensitive to the suffering of others, and thus prone to embark on evil deeds." This truth really is too unpleasant for Bettelheim to contemplate, for though the position its enunciation in the very first paragraph of a lengthy commentary, he quickly erases the "evil deeds" of the impoverished parents to focus on the "frustrations," "destructive desires," "uncontrolled craving", "ambivalent feelings," and "anxieties" of the children in the tale. (Tatar xvii-xviii)

Tatar points out that there are also another readings of the story and chooses to present approach of James B. Hoyme which does not take the blame away from the parents and surprisingly admits some kind of sympathy towards the father's situation:

> … if I had to chop wood for a meagre living and had nothing more to look forward to at the end of each back-breaking day than two gaunt, demoralized children and a nagging, selfish woman, I can imagine that I might wish that they'd all go away, leave me in peace, and without their hungry rage elsewhere amongst themselves. I might even wish that my children would someday return…fat and rich and smiling, to report their final solution of the greedy witch problem and give me, ungrudgingly, so much money that I'd never have to chop another tree. (Tatar xviii)

When we choose this kind of translating of the father figure, the story loses its black and white colouring of the fairy tale and becomes interesting from more angles. Dividing the blame of the situation among practically all of the figures presented in the story can conclude in the recognition of something much more than just a fairy tale for children. It can also reveal a cloaked story for adults looking for reconciliation for their action and providing some sort of an escape from their problems through the fairy tale's happy ending.

During the time the first versions of tales dealing with abandonment of children by parents started to appear, it was quite common that children died very young, or their parents did not have enough income to provide for them. As the society in Europe began to grow economically more stable and the number of middle class families grew, this problem was not as pressing as it used to be. The story slowly shifted from the folktale towards the fairy tale, yet some decisions parents needed to make and certain dilemmas they faced did not disappear but only transformed.

Moral dilemmas of our consumerist society can be easily transferred into the situation of the parents not being able, or furthermore, not willing to provide for their family if it means they would have to sacrifice their own needs. Even when they are able to fulfil the most basic needs of their children, the expectations of the society are set so high that some parents just are not able to follow the trend of pretending they are perfect. It may lead towards the feeling of guilt for not being able to give their children everything they would like them to have. These topics are included in the adult world of the fairy tales: "…exaggerated self-interest and

the inability to provide are distorted in the mirror of the fairy-tale world and transformed into cannibalistic hatred" (Tatar 196).

Nevertheless, Tatar states that it is easier for most of the adults to adhere towards Bettelheim's theories and "see the children as egocentric villains then victims" (XXI). She considers the denial of adult evil in any form as a typical feature of our culture which, according to her, gives us no choice but to place the blame on someone else. It also makes the children objects of our never-ending effort to educate and manipulate them towards living their lives according to prevailing social expectations. She uses the numbers rising from researches about child's abandonment in her own country to make the quilt of the parents taken more into an account and to prove that problem of abandonment is not just a matter of past.

> …rates of child abandonment in urban areas probably ranged from 15 to 20 percent of registered births …Though the rate of child abandonment is dramatically lower in this country than it was in eighteenth….."abandoning impulse" is very much with us today, as Hoyme's account of patients in his psychoanalytic practice attests. (XXI)

It gets us back to the point where it is not easy for people in our society to accept that what is considered to be evil or immoral is part of human nature. It means it is also part of this nature is disapproved by our society. Fairy tales make this situation easier, because they offer people the solution without forcing them to consciously admit their dilemmas. Therefore fairy tales are the literature not only written by adults for children, but they keep similar and perhaps even more profound function than they had in a form of folktales. They are solution searching stories.

When the parents lie in bed discussing the future of the family the mother pushes the father towards the decision of leaving their children in the woods. Bettleheim in *Uses of Enchantment* argues that up till this point the tale is realistic and at this moment it transforms into the personification of children's sub-consciousness. The children hear the conversation off their parents through their worst fears and the rest of the tale becomes just a projection of their own minds.

3.5. Good Mother vs. Evil Mother

Children knew their situation was not good and they started to fear they parents will prioritize themselves over them. It is the fear of abandonment they have since they were denied mothers milk; the fear of having to grow up and fight for themselves.

Nevertheless, the solution the parents came up with is not as unrealistic as it might seem nowadays, and the parents should not be stripped of the blame. The story is about gluttony of the children, but it can be also translated with inclusion of the secret desire of parents wanting to be free of the responsibility they have towards their offspring and with their guilt for feeling this way.

The most striking changes in the fairy tale text itself come when the mother wakes the children up to lead them into the forest. Besides the change in the referencing the mother who in 1857 version becomes "the woman", she wakes them up with the phrase, „Get up, you lazybones." In 1812 version the mother wakes up the children with the words that do not indicate any relationship difficulties they could possibly have: „Get up, you children. We are going into the woods."

Grimm's different wording in the latest versions helps to change the character of woodcutter's wife and mother of the children into the evil stepmother so the story would gain more black and white perspective of the fairy tales. As the mother figure's position shifts into becoming the source of evil, the father leaves the impression that he as well as the children lives under some sort of suppression by his authoritarian selfish wife, the representative of children's fears.

> One explanation for the mother's absence in fairy tales is rooted in historical reality. Before the nineteenth century, childbirth was one of the major causes of death, and repeated pregnancies constantly placed a woman's life in jeopardy. Common infections and disease also took their toll…The replacement of the birth mother by a stepmother, a common occurrence in fairy tales, also has a basis in historical fact. The demands of agricultural life forced men to replace their deceased wives quickly with women who could care for the children and tend to the hearth. (Cashdan 42)

The figure of the stepmother in the fairy tales is a target of many psychological analyses. Terri Apter[18] in her article *Re-thinking Hansel and Gretel* mentions the theory of evolutionary psychology according to which the behaviour of the stepmother toward non-biological offspring rises from the fact that she wants to provide as much as possible for her own biological children.

Another theory works more with the sub-consciousness and human relationship towards the parents and is analysed in detail by Bettelheim. He, as well as many others, believed stepmother was physical expression for unconscious negative feelings that were so

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contrastive with the ideal children made of their mother that she just split into more characters in the story.

> …the internalized good mother comes to be experienced less as an inner figure and more as a part of the self (the "good be"), while the bad mother is experienced as a negative part of the self (the "bad me"). We are not speaking here about bad mothers per se, although there are …..about naturally occurring splits in the self that evolve from attempts on the part of young children to reconcile conflicting maternal experiences early in life.(Cashdan 28)

Infants' confusion rises from the fact that the mother is a source of all good but at the same time is not always around to satisfy their immediate needs. According to Cashdan, the child perception of the mother is dependent on the current state of the need fulfilment. To avoid confusion from the fact that mother is the cause of both: the pleasant and unpleasant feelings, children react to her as to two separate "psychic entities a gratifying 'good mother' and a frustrating 'bad mother'" (Cashdan 27). These representations of mother displaying the child's dual relationship with her are later "psychologically 'metabolized' and become transformed into good and bad parts of the child's developing sense of self" (Cashdan 27).

This would mean that the character of stepmother in the story is just an emanation of the immature step-children dealing with their contradictory feelings toward their parents as the care-givers which make them feel protected and dependent at the same time.

Willard comments on the situation of possible split of the mother figure, "The two bad mothers, stepmother and witch, reflect the twin anxieties of the infant who is denied nourishment and whose basic needs are not met. The step-mother denies, and the witch threatens to retaliate by eating the children."

The character of the mother is not only represented by the names "the woman" or "step-mother". In the 1912 edition she gets angry when the children return home although she pretends to be glad. In the 1957 version her pretence goes even farther when she welcomes the children with the words that put the blame of being gone entirely on them. "You wicked children, why did you sleep so long in the woods? We thought that you did not want to come back."

When the situation with food in the house goes bad again, the father in the first edition shows much less resistance than in the last edition which puts stress on the evilness of the mother. Grimms clearly present her dominant position over the father who is not able to uphold his position: "…he thought, 'It would be better to share the last bit with the children.' But the woman would not listen to him, scolded him, and criticized him." Although it is written that he "thought" they should share with their children rest of the food they had, he

must have had say it out loud, and otherwise the sentence "the woman would not listen to him" would not make any sense. In the older version it is written: "but because he had done it once, he could not say no." There is no suggestion he said his opinion out loud and that makes the father figure less assertive.

3.6. The Dangers of Immaturity

When the children overhear the conversation of their parents for the first time, Hansel is able to find the solution by slipping out of his bed and collecting shiny stones that would help them to find their way out of the woods. The only problem is that they got back home into the same situation that forced their parents to leave them in the forest in the first place so returning home does not solve anything.

Children taken into the forest had two options: either to die, or find their way out of the situation. Forest is a common environment of many fairy tales usually symbolizing danger children can encounter with on their way to maturation. Heidy Anne Heiner explains why this location is so important.

> The forest is a recurrent image in German fairy tales, in part because over a quarter of the country is comprised of forest land. In the Grimms' tales, the forest is a supernatural world, a place where anything can happen and often does.
>
> According to Jungian psychology, the forest is a representation of the feminine principle and is identified with the unconscious. The foliage blocks the sun's rays, the sun being associated with the male principle. The forest symbolizes the dangerous side of the unconscious, its ability to destroy reason.[19]

In this case Hansel and Gretel were supposed to find their own way in the world and learn to be independent, since their parents were not able to provide for them and not willing to prioritize them over themselves. Although children were able to find the way back from the forest they simple returned home and did not try to seek a refuge anywhere else. The children's incompetence of taking care of themselves is shown by their decision of returning home to the parents who left them out in the woods to die. Their financial situation did not change in that one night they were wandering through the forest. Yet, they stayed at home with their parents for some time after the incident.

This situation of returning back home indicates that on some level Hansel and Gretel knew that this abandonment is a quest leading towards their maturity. They tried to avoid it,

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[19] Heiner uses two other sources: Cirlot (1962) and Matthews (1986).

hoping their parents will change their minds. Nevertheless, children did not escape their fate for long and soon the mother led them into the woods again. This time it was even farther from home. Hansel was not able to get pebbles to mark the way back for the mother locked them in their bedroom before the morning came. When analysing the story on its manifest level, there raises a question of why the mother locked the children if she wanted to "get rid of them". Unless she knew how they did find the way back home and wanted to prevent the situation from repeating there was no reason for locking them up. It supports the theory that the mother is actually just the projection of fear the children have from being separated from their parents.

When lost in the woods, children encounter the second evil female figure. She is at first referred to as "an old woman" and later revealed as "the witch" with clearly cannibalistic desires: "She had built her house of bread only in order to lure them to her, and if she captured one, she would kill him, cook him, and eat him; and for her that was a day to celebrate." The house functioned as a trap for "greedy" children and the witch knew that children by their nature have a potential of being seduced by their prime impulses. Their lack of restraint did not stay unpunished.

The way Bettelheim perceives the fairy tale characters, the evil figures in the story are just personifications of children's fear which arises as the consequence of their dependence on their parents and therefore incapability to provide what they need. The main theme of the story is "oral greed" at first carefully displayed in settings of food shortage and then reset into the environment of plenty: the children are exposed to such temptation of food they cannot resist their urges and let their way out to the greediness or as Cashdan calls it - gluttony.

Hansel and Gretel saw the opportunity for potential feast and they used it without a second thought. "What started off as 'nibbling' has turned into a feeding frenzy. Ordinary hunger has given way to gluttony" (Cashdan 69). Cashdan concludes that the witch's good knowledge of children's behaviour comes from the fact she is "sinful or bad part of Hansel and Gretel, the part driven by gluttony" (70). Like the mother, the witch is part of their sub-consciousness as well as is their urge to "succumb to temptation".

According to Max Luthi, "the witch in Hansel and Gretel is not a person, but a mere figure, a personification of evil" (Luthi qtd. in Willard). By evil in this case is meant not some threat coming from the outside, but the fears and duality feelings that occupy children minds and have impact on their projection of the world they live in. It influences their reactions and decisions throughout the story. As he mother's behaviour is just a projection of children's fear so, the situation with the house is just a projection of their mind onto a fairy

tale reality. Though on some level they know they should not succumb to gluttony, they are not mature and experienced enough to resist the temptations of gingerbread sweetness and easiness it is offering them. The house is just a symbol of their desire not to be forced to become independent and just be served with what is needed for life as they had it served by their parents at home. The house as subconscious projection shows their current lack of independence they have to deal with. It symbolises their desire to go back to being nourished by their mother who rejected them.

In the latest version of the story is added a part where the children do not fear the owner of the house right away. They just come up with an excuse to continue eating refusing to pay any real attention to the problem they created by eating someone's house. Children did not try to find out who the owner of the house was and did not listen to their conscience that was according to some theories speaking to them in the form of the witch. They knew they should not be greedy and eat what is not theirs, but it was too irresistible and they did not learn to control their basic desires and the behaviour based on them.

The children answered:

The wind, the wind,
The heavenly child.

Their greed lets them fall into the witch's trap and nearly got them both to be killed and eaten. "They continued to eat, without being distracted. Hansel, who very much liked the taste of the roof, tore down another large piece, and Gretel poked out an entire round windowpane." Through greediness they display the danger of not being independent. Their immaturity is the cause of their problems and threatens to devour them in the form of the witch.

3.7. Functions of Cannibalism in the Battle of Good and Evil

At first, the witch invites Hansel and Gretel in her house and lets them feast. She waits until the following morning to reveal her true nature. This malicious behaviour of the female character is, among other things, associated with the history of the tales. "In the folklore of the past, classical and medieval, the female beast … has sometimes cunningly—and purposely concealed her true nature", "male beasts...or male devils...don't possess the same degree of duplicity" (Warner[20] qtd. in Willard).

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[20] *Six Myths of Our Time: Little Angels, Little Monsters, Beautiful Beasts and More*

As Willard notices, the latest Grimm's edition points readers of the fairy tale toward the conclusion that mother and the witch serve as the same personification of evil side of the mother figure and perhaps symbolically of the female character in general.

The wicked witch wakes the children with the same expression used by the wife of the woodcutter. "Then she shook Gretel and cried, "Get up, lazybones!" In addition to Willard's recognition of the mother impersonating the witch in the woods, the expression is used the same way as when the wife takes the children into the woods to get "rid of them", and as the father points out, to be eaten by the wild animals. Here, the expression is used on the day the witch reveals her cannibalistic intentions toward the children.

Another indirect suggestion of the stepmother and the witch impersonating the same representation is put out in the latest edition. "When Hansel and Gretel came near to her, she laughed wickedly and spoke scornfully, 'Now I have them. They will not get away from me again.' The word "again" does not make any sense in the context of the story. The children did not even get a chance to try to run away from the witch. It implies not only that the witch knows they escaped the death their stepmother planned for them by leaving them on their own in the woods but also that she takes it personally. The phrasing of the tale is in agreement with this theory and so is the behaviour of female characters.

> Much as the wife pretends the children are at fault and pretends that she is happy for their return, so does the witch "pretend to be so kind" in order to fool the children into entering her home... This double nature of the female character corresponds to the split of the child's perception of its mother into good and bad elements. (Willard)

As it was already said, the witch is a personification of bad mother; the result of the child's perception of the parents. Nevertheless, the witch does not just want to gain the satisfaction from enslaving Gretel or murdering her and her brother. For some reason, she chooses to eat them. There can be several motives for transforming the mother into the witch with cannibalistic tendencies.

> The witch is a cannibal. Cannibalism is one of the most reviled crimes in the world. It is considered the quintessential expression of savagery and evil. Charges of cannibalism have long been used as justifiable reasons for enslaving or destroying a population or person. (Heiner)

Cannibalism represents the bad side that can be found within humanity as well as the witch represents the evil that can be found or seen within mother figures. The fact that the witch not only wanted to kill the children, but devour them, does not just show the fear of the children. It has its foundation on basic human fear of being capable of evil deeds of such

characteristic as cannibalism. People fear that they share the same potential as cultures they perceive as savage; children fear their mother being capable of abandoning them. According to some psychologists, they were already betrayed by her once when denied breast-feeding.

> … this tale also identifies and attempts to allay the fear of the child about the denial by the mother of its needs, or her retaliatory actions in conjunction with the child's own feeding habits. (Willard)

Hansel and Gretel do not only reassure the children who deal with their dual feelings towards the parents by projecting themselves into the story that they will overcome all their obstacles to reach the maturation and still have loving family. It also helps parents to find their happy-ending in their inner struggle they sometimes may experience as parents.

Cashdan notices that it is reassuring for children to go through these issues in the presence of their parents while being read the story. We could make the same conclusion about parents reading the stories to the subject of their love as well as their burden they have to carry as they are constantly worrying about children and may feel the desire to find some sort of relieve after they reach maturity. The witch is not just a personification of evil, but she also impersonates the children's fear.

Willard states that although the tales were altered, it was not only result of someone's efforts as a human representative with certain life experience but that this experience originated from their cultural consciousness shaped by the society they lived in. It supports the role God plays in the story. Hansel believes he will not forsake them when endangered by dying in the woods and His role erects in the parts with the witch where He is supposed to help them. His role gains on significance in the latest edition of the story.

If we compare the manuscript version with the 1957 version, we can notice that in original version Gretel did not directly ask God for help when facing the threat of being burned by the evil witch. "Dear God, please help us," she cried in the latest edition. "If only the wild animals had devoured us in the woods, then we would have died together." The God is given more meaning in the latest versions of Grimm edition as the fairy tales were shaped into Christian morals aimed directly at children. Also when it comes to the punishment of the witch burnined in her own oven, the God's name is used to underline she deserves to be punished. "The old woman began to howl frightfully. But Gretel ran away, and the godless witch burned up miserably" (1957).

Among other things, using God lessens the responsibility for the events in the fairy tale. It could be also said that recalling God and then finding a solution to their problems takes part of the credit from the children. Suddenly the threat of being eaten is not just a

consequence of parents' actions and children's behaviour, but there is some higher principle involved, partly stripping them of responsibility and having them believe in God's purposes. Nevertheless, sticking up bone instead of the finger so nearly blind witch cannot know when Hansel is fattened shows Gretel's ability to independently deal with problematic life situation as well as her initiative in pushing the witch into an oven.

The duality is not only displayed in representation of the mother but also in the way the witch treats the children. While Hansel is being overfed, Gretel must work. Thought she does not suffer from hunger she only gets food necessary for her survival. Since the witch is plotting to eat them both, it just does not make any sense to feed up just one of them. Now it is only Gretel who suffers from nutrition denial, while Hansel is in danger of getting too much even though on certain level he is taken care of. Eating more than is necessary presents a threat of dying as well as it was when children could not stop eating the house. Being provided with all the food does not give him a chance to fight for himself. On the other hand, Gretel was not treated the same way and it gives her an ability to develop independent thinking which in the end saves them both.

> Once they enter the wood, which can be seen as symbolic of an unconscious or mental construct, they force a splitting off of the mother who becomes bad and good. The children find the magical house made of food, and are first treated to a feast by the woman of the house. They consume her offerings only to be duped into (a) a refusal of food for Gretel and (b) the threat of consumption for both. The dual infantile anxieties are played out in terms of the two children. (Willard)

The punishment for the mistreatment of the children is death. In case of the witch the death is clearly defined by burning the witch in her oven. The origin of this punishment can be easily associated with the mediaeval punishment of witches by burning at the stake. Fire is perceived as a tool of purification of evil. "Gerhard Mueller, who has studied the criminological aspects of several tales, considers the death by fire to be suitable for the witch. In the Middle Ages, the charge of witchcraft was punished by fire. "In other words, the witch's demise supports the due process of law in real life during the time of the tale" (Mueller qtd. in Heiner).

The punishment for cannibalism supposedly performed by the witch is suitable for the crime was about to commit. The fire kills the witch and on top of that purifies Hansel and Gretel's relationship with their mother. They reach some sort of reconciliation by keeping just what they perceive as good mother represented by the treasure. They defeat the witch by maturing and gaining independence.

3.8. Maturity

Children's path through the forest and fight with the witch represent their struggling while transforming their helplessness and dependence on their parents into the self-sufficient adults. In the beginning, even though the children overheard the conversation of their parents plotting their abandonment, they were eager to come back home and did not even consider to seek refuge anywhere else. In the end, they are able to provide for themselves and they still come home. Although they were abandoned by the stepmother they killed the witch and that means there should be only good mother waiting for them. The treasure they found is according to Willard symbol of the "good" mother they find after winning the fight with their fear of being on their own. He claims that,

> …the child's "natural" home (or mother's body) is hostile to them and expels them into the forest, denying nourishment and support … The children must show independence and deal effectively with the bad mother image before they can return to their house, a house that no longer stands in for the maternal body, which is dead. They must find a way to remedy the split mother, to somehow deal with the anxiety of being eaten and to emerge with a fully integrated image of the mother. … After the bad mother is killed the children are free to emerge from the forest and return to the father resuming a natural life, a life without the fears and anxieties presented by the split of the mother, whose "best parts" are represented by the jewels taken from the witch. (Willard)

The witch is dead and the children are left in her house made of food, being able to take care of themselves as Gretel proved by serving the witch and using her wits to kill her. It would seem like after the witch's death they have nowhere to go. It would seem logical to stay in the house that contains plenty of food and where they are able to live on their own, but they do not even consider staying there and look for their home. One more time they enter the woods, knowing where they are but this time, their act is not rendered as being lost. They carry the load of "precious stones and pearls" and there is no mentioning of them having also packed some meal. It means that they are not threatened by lack of food or stay lost and starving in the forest. Suddenly they know where to go and they do not fear of being lost and hungry again because they defeated the witch and are fully self-sufficient.

In the first edition "They filled their pockets, then ran away and found their way back home." It seems like they could have found the way all along but they were blinded by hunger and stopped by their greed. Their return towards home gets more complicated in the version from 1957 as they have to overcome the last obstacle. They have to cross the lake and ask the white duck to help them.

The duckling came up to them, and Hansel climbed onto it, then asked his little sister to sit down next to him.

"No," answered Gretel. "That would be too heavy for the duckling. It should take us across one at a time."

The rush in making their decisions without considering all the possible consequences is replaced by weighing their options and consideration towards the others. It is just the next prove their maturity process completed. Also the ending of the story is much revised. When they return to their father he, with their return, also was finally able to find some peace. "The father rejoiced when he saw them once more, for he had not had a happy day since they had been gone, and now he was a rich man." (1812) This story does not seem to put all the blame for being lost in the woods on the children, but the father feels bad and his richness does not lie in the treasure brought to him by the children, but it lies on the fact that children were able to forgive him for his actions and came back to him. This story only states that the mother died. We know nothing of the life Hansel and Gretel are about to have.

However, the last edition underlines the significance of the treasure they had and only after "Gretel shook out her apron, scattering pearls and precious stones around the room, and Hansel added to them by throwing one handful after the other from his pockets." There was a mention of them finding peace. There is also present today most required sentence of the fairy tale like stories: "Now all their cares were at an end, and they lived happily together."

4. **Cannibalism in translation: Hunger, Fear and Control**

The answer to the pervious question, what the reason is for fairy tales being so cruel, seems quite simple. The raw brutality in the fairy tale has its roots in folktales, and therefore in real life situations. It is doubled by the efforts to make it look less realistic by transforming the characters into the pure representatives of evil. The process of developing the new genre of fairy tale shifted realistic and often disputable characters into the area which clearly states what is good and what is bad.

Black and white perspective of the fairy tale world is much less scary than certain unpleasant facts of life. People can either find someone to blame, or relate to heroes and heroines of the stories placing their feelings onto the characters without considering the wider context of their actions and possible consequences of the brutal punishments on both good and evil characters. One of the main impacts of fairy tales is that unlike folktales, they reassure the audience that everything is going to be all right. This would not work if the depiction of the characters was more realistic and let audience wander whereas the bad character really deserved to be punished without mercy.

It is stated in many sources that fairy tales are supposed to work on a subconscious level. Transformation of children's sub-consciousness into the horror like characters and situations is the subject of the modern analyses of the fairy tales. Yet, we must not forget the background of the original stories. It suggests that as tales developed through the centuries, the society and its aims changed. Consequently, fairy tales were eventually designed to work more like psychological projections. These projections has always been safer to deal with than the harsh facts of everyday reality people want to escape; and which parents want their children to be protected from. Using the situations offered by tales and adding some educational substance into them provide solutions of re-assurance about possibility of finding these solutions.

The reason of cannibalism being present in the stories is perhaps more sub-consciousness than the whole projection of duality in *Hansel and Gretel*. Cannibalism is something that European culture, as well as almost all predominant cultures, tries to suppress along with other types of behaviour that this culture understands as bad or undesirable. Metaphorically speaking, cannibalism in the sense of selfishness, fear resolution, or power grasp is part of human nature. Fairy tales help people to recognise the tendencies to this kind of behaviour and deal with them through the stories they are able to relate to. Everyone would

perhaps, at some level, loved to sink their teeth into the house made of delicious substances and continue without stopping by satiety or exhaustion.

Origins of cannibalism are connected with the basic human wishes, unsuitable desires, appetite, needs and fears. Food is the representation of all common necessities for life preservation. People can gain some kind of control over their lives by being able to independently provide for themselves. When they are able to do it, or make it seem like they are providing for others, it gives them power and helps them either overcome or suppress the fears of losing this ability to be independent.

There are many privately made or publicly recommended rituals offered by different more or less scientific informational sources. Their goal is to help us overcome fears of helplessness and ignorance people may experience. Some of these rituals are included in daily routines as for example getting from the bed with the right foot to avoid a bad luck. Cannibalism belongs to the oldest known rituals used as coping strategy to face the most basic fears: for example, the fear of losing someone can be coped with by eating them. It helps them deal with the feeling of abandonment by the deceased they loved. Some cannibals may reach the feeling of complete merging with their victim and as they become one with the person they are not alone. Similarly, people can experience the feelings of not being alone with their inner unresolved issues. At the same time, act of cannibalism can be perceived as preserving the circle of life; it deals with the fear of mortality.

Tendencies to cannibalistic behaviour offer some kind of solution. The more some people lose in our favour the more we gain. Through cannibalism people gain source of food; they prove some sort of control upon the circle of life and that equals power, however illusory. Without feelings of uncertainty, vulnerability and fears produced by ignorance there would be much less need to perform cannibalistic tendencies we, as human race, are often ashamed of, but cannot get rid of them.

As it was already mentioned, cannibalism has its roots in fears. These fears are transformed into emotions that on the outer level may appear as a sort of greediness which does not apply only to an actual ingestion of the human flesh. By its happy ending fairy tales give reassurance that it is possible to overcome the worst tendencies humanity has to offer. Hansel and Gretel fear of being on their own and being responsible for their own lives, not to mention for possible future taking care of their parents. They fear the process of maturation and uncertainty that goes along with it. The worst nightmares of the children become their reality as they see the world through their minds and fairy tale transforms these fears into their characters and environment.

In the forest symbolizing their blind incompetence they lose themselves and are forced to use all the abilities they have in order to reach maturation and some sort of reassurance that they can come out from the witches cottage back to the woods of their mind and not to get lost again. Of course in the process of maturation they deal with one of the most human tendencies: gluttony.

For some scholars as is for example Bettleheim, this is the happy ending. Children reach maturation, provide for their father and do not project their fears onto the reality. Consequently, they are able to live happily ever after. Nonetheless, this theory only judges the children and has its foundations on the fact that they are responsible for their situation, and as soon as they overcome the obstacles of their basic human tendencies, they are ready for life. The question is if they have really seen all the qualities their parents could show them and if they did, how would it influence their future perception of the world and the situations they got into.

They were clearly not prepared for life by their parents as well as they could. Hansel should have known the birds will eat the bread crumbs or they could show more initiative when endangered by being left in the woods to starve. They have only eaten some berries they picked up on their way in the woods. When we consider how close the children lived to the forest it comes as a surprise they did not know anything else they could make use of. They only knew what their parents taught them, and it clearly was not enough.

 Removing the guilt of parents does not give the readers the whole perspective of what the fairy tale has to offer. Although the children found their way through the woods and reached the maturation it does not mean that they will not encounter other problems people are not ready for even in their adult lives. As a matter of fact, the parents of the children got into the situation they were not able to deal with. It led them towards the decision to expose their children to the dangers of woods without proper preparation. It is something it is difficult to consciously identify with and therefore it is easier to put the blame for the situation entirely on someone else, in this case the children.

As well as the children wanted to stay protected because it was the easiest life solution for them, parents also went for the easier and probably the most selfish answer to their problems and did not try harder to protect the children. Nevertheless, the fairy tale offers to resolution to both children and the parents. For children it is overcoming their fears of not being protected and loved enough by their parents as they return to their father and the good mother appears in the form of the treasure. The fears from being forced to be independent are easier to dissolve when their experience makes them stronger and they can take care also

about their loved ones. The resolution for the parents is the fact that although the father and mother followed the type of behaviour that might be considered to be act of selfishness children successfully dealt with it and matured.

Using certain means of the folktales, including cannibalism in fairy tales, provides something that more realistic folktales cannot. Not only they give warning to children, they also provide hope for both children and parents. Cannibalism has its roots in cultural behaviour, myths or beliefs and therefore successfully serves as a mean of symbolizing patterns of by European society unacceptable human behaviour, impersonates fears and signifies the desires for power and control. Through its being considered as a tool of evil, it justifies the death as a punishment of bad characters. It symbolizes the death of undesirable human tendencies.

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