

J.Subhiktcha

PhD Scholar

Department of English

Periyar University

Sweetsubi94@gmail.com

Dr.K.Sindhu

Assistant Professor

Department of English

Periyar University

Salem-11

Unscrolling the Reality of the Hard Facts in Grimm's Children and Household tales

Abstract : Fairy tales often include different cultures and ways of doing things. The aim of this paper is to explore the myriad depths of fairy tales and the unfathomable meanings and implications which arise from subsequent readings. In spite the vicious and gory depictions of certain fairy tales, the ultimate aim was empowering children with the underlying strength for facing and overcoming life's hardships. Though debates and controversies have shrouded certain violent fairy tales, the ultimate aim was to instill awareness within children to alert them to the disasters they were likely to encounter in the real world. In weaving complex and violent themes within stories, the authors tried to encompass the deep rooted evil within society. These tales,

often hyperbolic in nature due to the gory descriptions, can be viewed as the stepping stones for children to confidently enter the 'big bad world'. Keeping children away from all forms of violence makes them vulnerable since they are wrapped in a cocoon of safety and fantasy. This would be detrimental to a child's health, emotional development, and thus the author's use of violence can be a justifiable means to an end.

Keywords: Grimm, fairy tales, children, mutilation, cannibalism.

Most of Grimm's fairy tales are filled with violent and horrible thoughts. Although, the tales had a happy ending, most of their tales pictured the violence as some type of usual cultural doings. Grimm's tales were tales collected from ancient German people by Grimm brothers. However, it was not written as they narrated, Grimm brothers brought out their own thoughts in their writings. Degh stated that, "But the statement of the marker is not altogether true because the stories were more adapted than written, and some were adapted (or written) by the brothers, some by others".(Degh 83).

It can be because they thought the growing children should know everything that was happening around them. In fact, it is the reality that the Grimm portrayed in his fairy tales. Maria Tatar says that most of the children prefer Grimm's fairy tales even though it is packed with horrible incidents. She inquired as to how children could like such violent stories. She also points out that "...murder, mutilation, cannibalism, infanticide, and incest that fill the pages of these bedtime stories for children".(Tatar 3). Tolkien's in his *On Fairy Stories* says "A stable plot still leaves much room for variation. Skillful raconteurs can take the same story line and give it

unique twists and turns. The tone may vary from one tale to the next, and the hero may be presented in different lights". (Tolkein 110).

Though they are meant to be scary, they are examples of danger continuously witnessed in this era as probably predicted by them or maybe existed in those days. As pointed out by Maria Tatar, currently murder for love or lust, mutilation as revenge, cannibalism, infanticide, incest all prevail in our society. In fact most of the people have become accustomed to such incidents. Grimm brothers most likely wanted their future generations to be aware of the coming era and hence desisted to remove the violence from their tales. Most certainly this will alert the children from the darker society they are growing up with.

People of today's world are selfish, and wealth is more important for them than any relationship. They run behind money and luxury, thus they are unable to spend time with their family. However, all parents instinctively want their kids to have better lives than their own. It is as natural as hungry birds feeding their fledglings. However in this decade materialism have distorted those instincts and hence our new generation are unaware of many things that they are supposed to know.

Nowadays a mother is ready to abandon her own child born either out of wedlock or due to any such circumstances. Unfortunately, they are dumped in dust bins than nurtured in homes. The mothers assumed their status in this society as more important to their love towards the child. They selfishly worries about the society, fails to think about the baby's life. With such incidents prevailing in the society, it is not surprising to picture a stepmother to be despicable towards their stepdaughter or to illustrate their violent doings to get rid of them.

Mirror Online news reporter has reported on February, 22nd 2018, a German policeman who murdered, dismembered and ate a man he met on a cannibalism website was jailed for lifetime. This was followed by several similar incidents and still continues through means of websites. This type of cannibalism was mentioned in Grimm's fairy tales and probably this was to alert our generation of these atrocious happenings. In Grimm's 'The Juniper Tree' the step mother kills her stepson and chops him into pieces and prepares dishes from him and serves it to her husband. Reality of today's world was exactly brought by Grimm in his stories. "...we will make him into black-puddings. Then the mother took the little boy and chopped him in pieces, put him into the pan and made him into black-puddings". (Grimm's 157).

Humans of this century were doing many horrible deeds for their illegal relationships. Independent news has recently reported that an Argentine man, aged 56 was accused of keeping his own daughter as sex slave for two decades and fathering eight children with her. These types of incest have become frequent in our society as once illustrated by Grimm brothers in their tales. In 'Allerleirauh' the king after the death of his wife finds it difficult to get a new wife that resembled her. However as he observes resemblance of his wife in his daughter, he decides to marry her. "...I will marry my daughter, for she is the counterpart of my late wife, otherwise I can find no bride who resembles her". (Grimm's 231).

Grimm's tales pictured people to be selfish and self centered. Similarly, it has become hard in finding lovable relationship in this century. They forget about values that are actually more important than our material well-being like the value of community, family, caring for other people, and feeling connected to young children.

This is the century where people could not get affection even from their parents.

According to Maria Tatar,

In “The Robber Bridegroom,” a young woman watches in horror as her betrothed and his accomplices drag a girl into their headquarters, tear off her clothes, place her on the table, hack her body to pieces, and sprinkle them with salt. Her horror deepens when one of the thieves, spotting a golden ring on the murdered girl’s finger, takes an axe, chops off the finger, and sends it flying through the air into her lap. Such behavior may not be wholly out of character for brigands and highwaymen, but even the Virgin Mary appears to be more of an ogre than a saint in the Grimm’s collection (Tatar 5).

These are evidences that reality of today’s humankind was exactly pictured out in Grimm’s Fairy tales. As deer was the victim of Lion’s hunger, women were the victim of brutal men. Women gets tortured, raped and brutally killed by men. Nowadays even children have been raped and killed. As a result, only when the child understands the human beings and the world, he/she could escape from these harms. Grimm’s aim was not only to give stories to the child but also to convey the evil things that would happen to them. Though it was too much for them to hear all these violent stories at their tender age, Grimm particularly wanted them to know about these evil happenings so that they can escape from the evil things.

As child cannot read fairy tales by themselves, parents should read it for them and should tell them in the way that they should be aware of all these bad happenings. Stories should be like, it should teach everything. It should be entertaining, should teach good and bad and also end with morals like Grimm’s Children and Household tales.

Grimm's Children and Household tales teach children that good will always triumphs and, while this may not be true in aspects of the real world, the lesson is simple and important. Be the hero, not the villain. Learn to hope for better. Not all characters can be good role models; even 'the goodies' can be damsels in distress, or reckless (or feckless) princes. What the stories do teach though is that when bad things happen, you have decisions to make.

The truth of life is that not everything that happens in childhood is safe and everything about everyone is dangerous. The Bible says that there is no one who lives correctly, that the world is filled with people who will try to tear you apart and the even more offensive truth is that you and I are part of the problem. They are "fairy tales" for children, but they are also images of an extremely unsafe world filled with terror.

Once Grimm's stories are read or understood keeping aside the expectation, magic or the violence; they were trying to focus on what possibly could happen and happened or will happen in our society and the ways one can overcome them. In short it can be said that the violence incidents are just there as approaches to get to the matter: evil punished, the fun a rascal can have, the mighty brought low, wits triumphing over wealth, pretensions crushed, and other lessons learned.

Works Cited

Cockburn, Harry. "Argentine man accused of keeping daughter as sex slave for 20 years and fathering eight children with her." Independent 26 October.2017. Print.

Davidson, Tom. "Cannibal cop who murdered, dismembered and ate man he met online jailed for life after first sentence was 'too lenient!'" Mirror Online 22 February . 2018. Print.

Tatar, Maria. The Hard Facts of the Grimms' Fairy Tales. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003. Print.