Forms of the Grotesque in *The Juniper Tree* / *Formas do grotesco em* A amoreira

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ABSTRACT
This essay argues for the multifold relevance of the Bakhtinian grotesque to the Brothers Grimm tale *The Juniper Tree*. The woman's pregnancy, described in relation to nature's life-death cycle, represents both the grotesque on the individual body and its larger role in the rebirth that it advances. The mother dies after giving birth. The father remarries an abusive woman who decapitates and cooks his son in a stew, which the father unknowingly eats. The tale highlights the carnivalesque song, "My Mother Slew Me, My Father Ate Me," sung by a bird born from the tree where the son's bones are buried. The tale's interpolations of prose and verse become central to its depictions of Romantic moral development. The song functions as a *cris de Paris* to create a marketplace that advances dialogue. The performance further illuminates the grotesque and guides the narrative until justice is restored.
KEYWORDS: Carnival; Grotesque; Verse; Fairy Tale; Grimm

RESUMO
Este artigo defende a relevância multifacetada da noção bakhtiniana do grotesco para o conto A amoreira*, dos Irmãos Grimm. A gravidez da mulher, descrita em relação ao ciclo natural de vida-e-morte, representa tanto o grotesco no corpo individual quanto no seu papel mais amplo de renascimento que ele antecipa. A mãe morre após dar a luz. O pai casa-se novamente com uma mulher agressiva que decapita e cozinha seu enteado num forno, e o pai o come sem saber. O conto destaca a canção carnavalesca "Minha mãe me matou, Meu pai me comeu", cantada por um pássaro nascido na árvore onde os ossos do filho são enterrados. As interpolações de prosa e verso no conto tornam-se centrais para sua descrição do desenvolvimento moral romântico. A canção funciona como um* pregão de Paris*, para criar um mercado público que faz o diálogo avançar. A performance ainda ilumina o grotesco e conduz a narrativa até que a justiça seja restaurada.*
PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Carnaval; Grotesco: Verso; Conto de fada: Grimm

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My mother, she killed me.
My father, he ate me.
My sister, Marlene, she made sure to see
My bones were all gathered together,
Bound nicely in silk, as neat as can be,
And laid beneath the juniper tree.
Tweet, tweet! What a lovely bird I am!
(GRIMM; GRIMM, 2002, pp.161-162).[1]

Introduction

The stanza above, one of the key elements of the Brothers Grimm's fairy tale *Van den Machandelboom* (*The Juniper Tree*) (KHM 47), serves several purposes in the story's narrative.[2] The song takes up the last two-thirds of the tale, becoming its dominant narrative element. According to Herbert Halpert and J. D. A. Widdowson, research concerning song in fairy tales has been uncommon because of the hybridity of the genre (HALPERT; WIDDOWSON, 2015, p.184). As a result, scholars are likely to treat such intertextual musical elements as possible byproducts of a folkloric tradition, rather than to examine them on their own terms.[3] Hence, my objective in this paper is to demonstrate a way in which the analysis of song in the fairy tale leads to a richer literary interpretation. I first briefly discuss the character of the stanza within the context of fables embedded within literature in the European tradition. I argue through my literary textual analysis that the fairy tale's repeated verse works spatially in tandem with the prose to function as the literary framework of the tale. This is possible through understanding the tale as an

[1] In original: "miin Moder de mi schlacht't / miin Vader de mi att, / miin Swester, de Marleeniken, / söcht alle miin Beeniken / un bindt se in een süden Dook, / legts unner den Machandelboom; / kiwitt, kiwitt, ach watt een schön Vagel bin ick!" (GRIMM; GRIMM, 2007, p.213).

[2] Each fairy tale is given a KHM number that stands for the order in which the fairy tale is listed in the collection, *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (Children and Household Tales). Citations throughout the article are to the critical edition published in 2007 by the Deutscher Klassiker Verlag. The version studied in this essay is from 1827. The Grimms initial version differs from earlier examples of the tale from other collectors, such as Achim von Arnim (1808) and Johann Gustav Büsching (1812). In 1806 Romantic artist Otto Runge had two version of the tale (A and B) and sent A to J. Georg Zimmer, the Heidelberg-based publisher of Arnim and Clemens Brentano's *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* and B to his brother David. In 1840 David sent version B to the Brothers Grimm, which they began to publish in 1843 as the version in this and two subsequent editions. For more information, see the following (BOLTE; POLÍVKA, 1913, pp.412-423; SCHERF, 1995, pp.1316-1321). My article uses English translations from Zipes which are based on the seventh edition from 1857.

[3] The inclusion of song in tales is standard in geographic regions where the oral tradition is common enough for fairy tales not to be considered a hybrid genre (HARING, 2007, p.466). This is especially true in the study of the folktales from areas where the inclusion of music is part of the story telling tradition, such in Africa or the Caribbean.

example of the *cante fable* subgenre, which intersperses lyric and prose, opens doors to perceiving its multiple nodes of relevance to Bakhtinian theory and to explaining its persistence both within the Grimm canon and in world folklore. My conclusions show something new: that as a miniature narrative of the grotesque, the song not only advances the plot, but also goes beyond this function to create a marketplace of free speech that allows justice to be served.

Crossroads of literary phenomena, a version of *The Juniper Tree* has been in the collection of the Brothers Grimm since its first edition in 1812. The tale is in a Pomeranian dialect of low German, which makes it one of only two fairy tales in dialect that remain in the Brothers Grimm collection. According to Jack Zipes (2011, p.221), the tales in dialect retain value for folklorists. The use of dialect adds a sense of familiar locality. I suggest that the inclusion of German dialect can also be seen as shaping the fable into social criticism. Arnold Clayton Henderson (1975, p.161) explains fables have long had the potential for specific criticism that could be reached by the authorial voice willing to break from fables' generality. In the case of *The Juniper Tree* I argue that the retention of dialect not only makes the cante fable socially specific, but also suggests an earlier time before the standardization of High German. The tale further illustrates tradition through its description of a natural cyclical framework that predates the clock's role in organizing societal life, which started during the Renaissance. In the first sentence of the tale the Grimms state that the story is over 2,000 years old (GRIMM; GRIMM, 2007, p.209).

The story begins with the age-old problem of infertility, here experienced by a financially established couple who, after trying to conceive for many years, gives birth to a boy. The wife's pregnancy is described as a concurrent development to the seasonal change from the white of winter to the green of spring, with flowering, germination (conception), and growth. However, the mother dies during childbirth and the subsequent actions of other family members after her death advance the plot. The father remarries a greedy woman. She gives birth to a daughter, murders her husband's son from the first marriage, and decapitates and cooks him in a stew, which the father unknowingly eats. The stepsister collects and buries her brother's bones. The boy is then reborn as a singing bird only to be transformed back into a boy at the end of the tale when he reunites with his family.

Mikhail M. Bakhtin explains that a continuous cycle of rebirth is a trait of the grotesque. He writes in *Rabelais and His World* that the grotesque is a mode bespeaking our need to understand

> […] the very act of becoming and growth, the eternal incomplete unfinished nature of being […] which is receding and dying, and that which is being born; they show two bodies in one. At the summit of the grotesque and folklore realism, […] no body remains (BAKHTIN, 1968 [1965], p.52).

As death, life, and rebirth create a circular interconnected pattern in *The Juniper Tree*, the grotesque guides the fairy tale's narrative in a manner, and to an extent not fully accounted for by past applications of Bakhtinian concepts to fairy tales. Zipes draws on The Problems of Speech Genres (BAKHTIN, 1986) to discuss the evolution of fairy tales from everyday speech utterances (ZIPES, 2013, pp.16-17). In another study regarding film, Zipes discusses the ridiculous in cartoons and other adaptations of fairy tales informed by Bakhtin's ideas regarding the carnival in *Rabelais and His World* (ZIPES, 2011, pp.54-55). Betty Moss uses Bakhtinian ideas of the grotesque in her feminist study of the female body in Angela Carter's fairy tale, *Peter and the Wolf*. She compares Bakhtin's appreciation of the unfinished grotesque body to Hélène Cixous's concept of a textual body's ongoing movement (MOSS, 2001, p.193).

Informed by Bakhtin's ideas, my analysis of the fairy tale *The Juniper Tree* shows that the boy's transformation into a bird is a mirror of what Bakhtin refers to as the "two bodies in one: the one giving birth and dying, the other conceived, generated, and born" (1968 [1965], p.26). A bird is born from the tree under which the boy's bones are buried. The bird sings a carnivalesque song of the crime. Referred to by lyrics from its first two lines – my mother slew me, my father ate me – the song is a miniature narrative of the preceding plot.

My research indicates the value of studying the grotesque in *The Juniper Tree*. Through a close reading of the tale I am able to demonstrate that the bird's performance creates a marketplace – a song for an item – where he raises awareness of the stepmother's murder of the boy, and thus challenges the familial violence, as well as brings resolution to the story. The grotesque is a thematic thread throughout the tale that is emphasized even by the title of the song, "My Mother Slew Me, My Father Ate Me." The tale's

musical component structurally complements its prose and underscores the expression of the grotesque. The song is an outlet for the boy's story after his murder, as it fills a void left by his physical absence after his material body is buried. As a result, the song not only shapes the literary form of *The Juniper Tree*, but also illuminates the tale's deep relevance to Bakhtin.

Analysis

What specifically enables this enriched picture of Bakhtinian relevance is a recognition of *The Juniper Tree* as a *cante fable*, a tale that includes a mixture of song and prose, or a "narrative sequence that contains alternating prose and verse" (Ó HÓGÁIN, 2008, p.158). The cante fable blends several oral genres and causes classification problems for folklorist: "These are themselves conventional forms of folkloric expression in which what are analytically considered as primary genres are brought into dialogue with each other" (BAUMAN, 1992, p.139). The cante fable also marks important passages of development in the plot, as the inclusion of verse is a deliberate way to highlight narrative insight and moments of drama (Ó HÓGÁIN, 2008, p.158). The origin of the cante fable is unknown, but a combination of prose and verse was popular in twelfth-century Europe and may even be traced back to Latin influences (HUNT, 1977, p.3).

The fable, as the more general classification, is an older genre than the fairy tale, with ancient pagan roots and medieval associations. Fables generally can stand alone or be placed within another literary genre: "Collections of fables, as distinct from fables incidentally embedded in other works, have their own decorum based on imitating the form of antique models" (HENDERSON, 1979, p.160). In classical fables from the Romans, the fable reflects the world itself and social conflict. Many medieval forms of the fable also exist and give specificity that focus on social classes (HENDERSON, 1979, p.163). For example, Robert Henryson, a Scot schoolmaster from the late fifteenth century, used fables as explicit social commentary (HENDERSON, 1979, p.168). In other European medieval literature the verse was generally included to advance, continue or support the narrative. It also intensified the dramatic (REINHARD, 1926, pp.161-163). Godfrey of Viterbo (circa 1120-1196), of German origin, composed *Memoria seculorum*,

an opus geminum (HUNT, 1977, p.13). Giovan Francesco Straparola (circa 1480-1565), a collector of Italian fairy tales, used the literary form of prosimetrum, which is similar to the cante fable (REINHARD, 1926, p.168). *Aucassin et Nicolett* is the example of the Cantefable that originated in France from the twelfth or thirteenth century (HUNT, 1977, p.10). The anonymous author of *Aucassin et Nicolett*'s originality was not in combining prose and verse, but in combining sung lyrics with recited narrative (HUNT, 1977, p.1).[4] According to Leonard Roberts, a large percentage of the Grimms' fairy tales are cante fables (ROBERTS, 1956, p.203).

My article also builds on the significance of the inclusion of song in *The Juniper Tree* that has been already recognized in fairy tale scholarship. In the Aarne-Thompson-Uther (ATU) classification system the tale is listed as a type 720.[5] In this case, the song is instrumental in determining the tale type. Like other tales classified as ATU 720, "the plaints of murdered or transformed souls are often versified" (GOLDBERG, 2010, p.562). Although the definitions of a cante fable vary, according to Ó HÓGÁIN, *The Juniper Tree* seems to classify as a cante fable based on the abundance of verse in the tale. Generally, in a cante fable, the prose and verse complement each other in the narrative. This pattern is equally identifiable in *The Juniper Tree*, where one textual form picks up where the other leaves off. Its seven-line stanza is sung eight times. In Stephen Benson's recent study concerning cante fables and their post-modern adaptations, he remarks that inconclusive evidence exists regarding the status of *The Juniper Tree* as a cante fable (BENSON, 2015, p.169). For Benson, a cante fable should have more song, but the Grimms *The Juniper Tree* contains four times more song than a prototypical cante fable. Richard Bauman states that the Grimms' tale *The Singing Bone* (Der singende Knochen) (KHM 28, ATU 780) is "often cited as the prototype of the cante fable" (BAUMAN, 1992, p.139). It contains one six-line stanza sung only twice in which "the secret is brought to light by means of a verse sung by the bone flute (hence cante fable, singing tale)" (BAUMAN, 1992, p.139). In their entry for *The Juniper Tree*, Johannes

[4] The origins of Old-French narrative are in part from the Celts, whose literature likewise shows prose interspersed with verse (REINHARD, 1926, p.158). "Perhaps the most graceful and artistic use of the prosimetrum in modern times has been made by Dante (1265-1321) in the Vita Nuova (ca. 1295). Dante's verse is usually but a repetition of what has already been told in prose, or rather, the prose is only an amplified account of what has been said in rhyme" (REINHARD, 1926, p.167).

[5] Fairy tales are more commonly classified by an episodic sequence or other shared motifs (ABRAHAMS, 1985, p.308). The ATU number-type index includes a short description to identify similar tales.

Bolte and Georg Polívka also mention a Louisiana version of *The Singing Bone*, because of its similarity to the German version of *The Juniper Tree*. In this North American version of *The Singing Bone*, a bird sings the song throughout town to avenge his stepmother's murder of a boy (BOLTE; POLÍVKA, 1913, p.421).

In the Brothers Grimm version of *The Juniper Tree* the bird represents a new order. His song specifically marks the end of a horrific childhood narrative and a potentially kinder world. The bird sings the same carnivalesque song eight times – twice each to the goldsmith, the shoemaker, and the mill workers before singing to his family. After singing once, the townsmen ask the bird to repeat the song, which he agrees to in exchange for a gift. In this way, the song functions as a *cris de Paris,* the form identified by Bakhtin as one element of free speech in the carnivalesque. According to Bakhtin, the *cris de Paris* or street vendors' songs were "composed in verse and were sung in a peremptory tone" to lure in customers in the medieval and Renaissance marketplace (1968 [1965], p.153). As a cris de Paris the song permeates the story as it is repeated to draw attention to wares for sale. In the tale, the bird sings the song as an advertisement of itself and thereby creates a market for its message. This exchange, a song for a gift, also provides a structure for the tale after the boy's death. It advances the plot while building suspense towards the dramatic, happy end in which familial harmony is restored.

The fairy tale's song "My Mother Slew Me, My Father Ate Me" functions as a way for the boy-bird to exercise power in his afterlife. Having previously established the ability to analyze the inclusion of a cante fable as an integral part of the fairy tale, I argue that the song allows justice ultimately to prevail at the end of the tale. As a child victim he was powerless living under his stepmother's rule after his mother's death. Transformed into a bird, he is able to sing a song that documents the crime and shifts the previous power balance through his control of the narrative. Sung to the townsmen, the performance creates an oral record of the murder, thus challenging the story his stepmother concocts about his absence (GRIMM; GRIMM, 2007, pp.211-212). The cante fable functions in the tale to correct the injustice.

Prior to this dark turn, the tale's modes of establishing the initial state of harmony bear out in very specific terms Bakhtin's insights on the cyclic emphasis of the grotesque. Early in the tale, the boy-victim's mother is depicted as exclusively spending time in the garden during her pregnancy. Through her actions her body becomes associated with

nature. She is outside when she cuts her finger from peeling an apple under the juniper tree and wishes for a child after seeing the blood. In fairy tales blood symbolically represents conception, as menstrual bleeding is a precondition for life (BETTELHEIM, 2010 [1976], p.202). The woman becomes disfigured with the child as she carries the baby full term (GRIMM; GRIMM, 2007, p.209). The change in her body further reinforces the cyclical element of the grotesque. The Brothers Grimm adopted Otto Runge's imagery of her nine-month pregnancy, which marks the story as romantic and discerns it from later versions in other fairy tale collections that do not include a parallel description of nature (SCHERF, 1995, p.1319). Here her pregnancy advances with the seasons, which is also characteristic of the grotesque tradition: "at the early stage of the archaic grotesque, time is given as two parallel (actually simultaneous) phases of development, the initial and the terminal, winter and spring, death and birth" (BAKHTIN, 1968 [1965], p.24). While pregnant, she smells the blossoms of the juniper tree's ripening fruit, which she eats, and, through eating, metaphorically becomes a surrogate for Mother Earth. For Bakhtin, "the body discloses its essence as a principle of growth which exceeds its own limits only in […] pregnancy, child birth, the throes of death, eating, drinking, or defecation" (1968 [1965], p.26). She continuously turns to the juniper tree for her needs during pregnancy, which also strengthens her association with nature.[6] Her child's physical characteristics equally reinforces this biological relationship, when she gives birth to the child she had wished, as "white as snow, as red as blood."[7] The baby boy becomes an extension of his mother's connection with nature after her death: "'If I die,' she said, 'bury me under the juniper tree' [...] Then she had a child as white as snow and as red as blood. When she saw the baby, she was so delighted that she died" (GRIMM; GRIMM, 2002, p.159.)[8] This process fits within Bakhtin's concept of the grotesque: "In the endless chain of bodily life it [the double body] retains the parts in which one link joins the other, in which the life of one body is born from the death of the preceding, older

[6] Zipes states that people have thought that the juniper tree's berries have magical properties and medicinal value, as they are used in natural health remedies for many ailments. Its wood further protects homes from demons and fire (ZIPES, 2011, p.222).

[7] This mantra is a well-known description of the child, Snow White. Many sagas portray a bleeding raven in snow. The roots of this imagery can be traced back to Wolfgang von Eschenbach's medieval German romance, *Parzival* (SCHERF, 1995, p.1129).

[8] "'wenn ick starve, so begrave mi ünner den Machandelboom.' Do wurde se gans getrost un freute sick, bet de neegte Maand vörbi was, daar kreeg se een Kind, so witt as Snee un so rood as Blood: un as se dat sach, so freute se sick so, dat se sturv" (GRIMM; GRIMM, 2007, p.209).

one” (1968 [1965], p.318). This continuation of lives is marked by the tree, which memorializes the mother and comforts each member of the family with the exception of the stepmother. Her realm is the kitchen, where she plots against her stepson.

Shortly after the mother’s death and the father’s period of grieving, the boy’s problems begin, as the focus of the family shifts from creation in nature to control of property. The reorientation occurs when the father takes a new wife; they soon have their own child, a girl, who is favored over the boy for the family’s inheritance. The stepmother’s focus on the house instead of nature portrays her character and interests as unnatural in the shadows of the memory of the first wife. The stepmother is eager to control the family’s wealth, which causes familial discord, child abuse, and leads to the murder of her stepson. She demonstrates her motivation through managing the family and its property. For example, she gladly gives her daughter an apple when asked. Later she offers her stepson an apple from the same box, but not with the same honorable intentions. Instead she uses the box with a large iron lock to decapitate him as he reaches in for an apple.

His murder exhibits one of the first examples of sound in the tale. Its lexical description represents sound. A loud *bratsch!* depicts the blow to the boy’s head from the stepmother’s slamming of the box.[9] “Crash” [*Bratsch*] is a dialect term from Mark Brandenburg Pomeranian idiomatically associated with the hitting of a body’s part. Heinz Rölleke in his fairy tale commentary lists that the word Bratsch is an example of onomatopoeia or the creation of words to imitate sound (GRIMM; GRIMM, 2007, p.1218). It functions as a percussive foreshadowing of a reversal of justice as well as the decisive turn to the grotesque in its expression of violence against the boy’s remains. To hide her transgression, the stepmother tricks her own daughter into believing she is to blame for her brother’s death. Following the stepmother’s advice, the daughter knocks

[9] At the end of the tale the sound is repeated as the millstone crushes the head of the stepmother. The word *Bratsch* links the deaths of the boy and the stepmother and establishes the bird’s killing of the stepmother as retribution for her mishandling of the child. Rölleke states that *Bratsch* is a *Motivreim*, or a literary allusion that reverses and contrasts the boy’s earlier death. A definition for the verb *Bratschen* is “to hit with an open hand” [mit der offenen hand schlagen] (DÄHNERT, 1781, p.54). The noun Bratsch is not in Dähnert’s dictionary; however, Bratsch is described as a sound that is used to show that a body is being hit in the *Wörterbuch der altmärkisch-plattdeutschen Mundart:* “Crash, a sound in nature that serves to indicate a hit against the body. Crash he got from the blacksmith’s hit” [“Bratsch, ein Naturlaut, dessen man sich bedient, um den Schlag gegen einen Körper zu bezeichnen. Bratsch! kreg he von de Smäd’n Slag] (DANNEIL, 1859, p.24). In the introduction Danneil states that the dictionary’s manuscript was shared with Jacob Grimm, who found the project to be a worthwhile endeavor (III).

her brother's head and it falls off as it had already been severed from his body. Convinced that she has killed her own brother, the daughter becomes an accomplice to the stepmother's additional crimes, as she watches while the boy's corpse is butchered and cooked into a stew. Thereafter his sister remains horrified by the violence and is alone in grieving (GRIMM; GRIMM, 2007, p.210).

Bakhtin explains that the world does not generally become alienated in the fairy tale, while alienation is a distinguishing feature of grotesque realism, in which: "all that was for us familiar and friendly suddenly becomes hostile. It is our own world that undergoes this change […]" (1968 [1965], p.48). However, the beheading scene in the fairytale *The Juniper Tree* illustrates the degree to which the children are alienated. My departure from Bakhtin's discernment between the two genres follows another line of his thinking demonstrated elsewhere in *Rabelais and His World*, as he also criticizes G. Schneegan's scholarship in *The History of Grotesque Satire* (1894) for ignoring the importance of folklore as a source of the grotesque (1968 [1965], p.304). The relationship of folktales to the grotesque explains the reason that modes of the grotesque are encountered on multiple levels, including the way the tale shows the children's emotional desolation.

The suitability of Bakhtin's ideas to the story's sequence of horrors is evident in the stepmother's cover-up of her transgressions. When the father returns home, the stepmother tells him that his son has gone to visit a relative. The remains of the boy's body do not have to be hidden; instead they are consumed. Eating is a trait of the grotesque, which

> […] swallows, devours, rends the world apart, is enriched and grows at the world's expense. The encounter of man with the world, which takes place inside the open, biting, rending, and chewing mouth, is one of the most ancient, and most important objects of human thought and imagery (BAKHTIN, 1968 [1965], p.281).

In the fairy tale, the father is consoled by the stew, which has been salted by Marlene's tears:

> 'Oh, that makes me sad,' said the man. 'It's not right. He should have said good-bye to me.' Then he began to eat and said 'Marlene, what are you crying for? Your brother will come back soon.' Without pausing he

> said, 'Oh, wife, the food tastes great! Give me some more!'(GRIMM; GRIMM, 2002, p.160).[10]

Bakhtin comments that sadness and food are generally incompatible, as eating imagery is associated with the festivities of banquets (1968 [1965], p.281). In *The Juniper Tree*, however, the father devours the stew: "The more he ate, the more he wanted. 'Give me some more,' he said. 'I'm not going to share this with you. Somehow I feel as if were all mine'" (GRIMM; GRIMM, 2002, p.160).[11] His appetite emphasizes the biological link between the father and his son, instead of the acquisition of power made famous through the horrific scene in *Snow White*, in which the evil queen orders her stepdaughter's organs served for dinner. In fact, then, *The Juniper Tree's* seeming departure from Bakhtin regarding consumption is not absolute, for it links up in a weightier way to his understanding of cyclicality in the grotesque: "Here man tastes the world, introduces it into his body, makes it part of himself" (BAKHTIN, 1968 [1965], p.281). The son's experiences seem to complete the circular motion of life started by gentle mother-baby paradigm, in which his mother eats berries from the garden and dies in childbirth. Consequently, both scenes illustrate the flip sides of the rejuvenating aspect of the grotesque:

> […] the main events in the life of the grotesque body […] pregnancy, dismemberment, swallowing up by another body–all these acts are performed on the confines of the body and the outer world, or on the confines of the old and new body (BAKHTIN, 1968 [1965], p.317).

Here the father's dining experience allows the son to return to the father's body and ultimately home. The father drops his son's bones on the floor, which Marlene recovers to bury. Her actions lead to "the potentiality of a friendlier world, of the golden age, of the carnival truth […] The world is destroyed so that it may be regenerated and renewed" (BAKHTIN, 1968 [1965], p.48). She places the bones under the juniper tree,

[10] "'Ach', sed de Mann, 'mi is so recht trurig, dat is doch nich recht, he had mi doch Adjüs seggen schullt.' Mit des fung he an to eeten, un sed 'Marleenken, wat weenst du? Broder ward woll wedder kamen.' 'Ach, Fru', sed he do, 'wat smeckt mi dat Eten schön! giv mi meer'" (GRIMM; GRIMM, 2007, pp.211-212).

[11] "Un je meer he at, je meer wuld he hebben, un sed 'gevt mi meer, gi söllt niks daaraf hebben, dat is as wenn dat all miin weer'" (GRIMM; GRIMM, 2007, pp.211-212).

the tree sways, the bones disappear, and a bird is born of flames from the tree.[12] Marlene's alienation from her family after her brother's death allows her to realize the false stability of their home life.

In a recent study of this tale, Jeana Jorgensen addresses Marlene's characterization within the context of bodily transgression within the corpus of fairy tales of the Brothers Grimm. Informed by feminist theories of the grotesque, abject and queer bodies, she examines the way in which gender, age, and other characteristics are represented in the fairy tales. Jorgensen concludes that Marlene is constructed in the tale as being helpless (JORGENSEN, 2014, p.136). However, the text illustrates a different side of Marlene, as Marlene takes responsibility for the burial of her brother, a humanist act of memorialization which she performs with decorum and as an act of love. Marlene collects herself as well as the bones to bury them under the juniper tree: "Marlene went to her dresser and took out her best silk neckerchief from the bottom drawer, gathered all the bones from beneath the table, tied them up in her silk kerchief, and carried them outside the door" (GRIMM; GRIMM, 2002, p.160).[13] Marlene's agency completes the rebirth of her brother that their father initiated. She further honors her brother's memory, thereby raising them both from victimhood.

A brief examination of the story's reception acknowledges the way in which Marlene's heroic act of kindness inscribed her name in history. Variations of her name remain in fairy tale collections. Besides the Brothers Grimm, she has a name in at least three different versions of the tale from other areas of Germany and France: Stralsund (Marleneken) and Höxter close to Firmenich (Marleineke), and close to Sébillot in France (Marguerite) (BOLTE; POLÍVKA, 1913, p.418). Additional variants of the daughter's names are also in several other tales, ranging from Lehne in Silesia to Leenechen in Anhalt to Berline in Denmark (BOLTE; POLÍVKA, 1913, pp.415-416).[14] All of these tales memorialize her across editions and translations in an unusual way compared to the other characters. Importantly, no other character has a name in many of the tales,

[12] The Russian folktale, *The Wondrous Wonder, the Marvelous Marvel,* contains a humorous example of the motif. The tsar's daughter collects the bones of the roasted goose, which reassemble the bird to be roasted and eaten again (SINYAVSKY, 2007, p.55).

[13] Marleenken averst ging hen na eere Commode, un namm uut de unnerste Schuuf eeren besten siiden Dook, und halt all de Beenken und Knaben ünner den Disch herut, un bund se in den siiden Dook, un drog se vör de Döör…" (GRIMM; GRIMM, 2007, p.212).

[14] For an extensive comparison of the tale's variants, see Bolte & Polívka (1913, pp.412-423).

including the Grimms' tale. Through her action Marlene demonstrates her own agency and is redeemed, though blemished, because of her complicity with her mother's crime. The red shoes that the bird later gives her represent her loss of innocence. At the tale's inception, she is depicted as a naïve child. She is later remorseful following her mother's butchering and serving of her brother in a stew. Her action of burying him further allows his transformation into a bird, which illustrates, again, Bakhtin's principle of the circular motion of life as an aspect of the grotesque.

Moreover, Marlene's development and her brother's transformation together bring new understanding to Bakhtin's concept of the "Romantic grotesque." Having earlier established both children as embodied in nature and as allied with seasonal change, the tale moves toward an illustration of the Romantic ideal of stronger, fuller selfhood. Within the German Romantic context, the boy's transformation can be seen as characteristic of the literary period in which the Brothers Grimm collected and published the fairy tales. The incompleteness of Romantic literary form allows an imagined infinite with a future that promises balance, harmony, and perfection (RAUBER, 1969, p.214). Bakhtin's term Romantic grotesque reflects the similarity of this trajectory to that of the grotesque. The hybrid concept of romanticism and grotesque realism embodies the act of becoming and points toward renewal: "While dying it gives birth" (BAKHTIN, 1968 [1965], p.48). Destruction serves as a mechanism for renewal, an idea that follows the humanistic tradition: "Actually the grotesque, including the Romantic form, discloses the potentiality of an entirely different world, of another order, another way of life" (BAKHTIN, 1968 [1965], p.48). In this way, death begins a process of change that fairy tales promise. For example, in *The Juniper Tree* this process signifies "man's awakening," a moment that Bakhtin generally associates with the joyful "act of eating" (1968 [1965], p.281). Eating depicts this new consciousness. The boy's death begins the transformation. As a bird he symbolically transcends injustice to work toward harmony, when he flies through town and sings out the cruelty of his family. The bird's ability to remember what the slain boy experienced and formulate the memory into narrative allows the boy to tell his story in his afterlife. His action shifts the story from one of forlornness to hope of justice for the slain boy. His act of singing becomes an oral record of the murder. By the time the bird finishes singing, roughly thirty people from all levels of the economic stratum have heard the story: owners of the small businesses, their families,

employees, and mill workers. The song is widespread enough throughout the general population that the bird's message will not be quickly forgotten. The inclusion of members of the community from various socio-economic backgrounds is additionally a characteristic of the grotesque marketplace atmosphere that Bakhtin describes (1968 [1965], p.160).

The bird travels from one location to the next pleasing people with his song, and as a result, they come out to the street to conduct business with him. The market songs *cris de Paris* were a type of advertising that invited business and created an atmosphere of exchange, according to Bakhtin (1968 [1965], p.153). Different than the songs performed in churches, courts, and palaces, the market became a space imbued with familiar speech of "freedom, frankness, and familiarity" (BAKHTIN, 1968 [1965], p.153). I argue that in the fairy tale the bird's performance of the song to other businessmen and their employees creates a similar atmosphere.

This is seen, for example, when the goldsmith takes a break from his project to follow the beautiful voice of the bird perched on his roof. He concentrates exclusively on the music, losing a slipper en route on the bright day, but keeps walking forward until he locates the source of music. He requests to hear the song a second time, which the bird agrees to in exchange for the gold necklace in his hand. The shoemaker's situation is similar, running to the door when he hears the bird, and covering his eyes from the bright sun.[15] In response to the bird's singing, he calls his entire family and employees to come to listen to the beautiful bird with feathers and eyes that sparkle like stars. The shoemaker exchanges red shoes for a repeat performance. Finally, the bird flies to the mill where he lands on a linden tree. The rhythm of the mill work "*clickety-clack, clickety-clack, clickety-clack*" and the sound of their chiseling "*click-clack, click-clack, click-clack*" initially accompanies the bird's song (GRIMM; GRIMM, 2002, p.163).[16] Here the lexical choice conveys a feeling of music. Though the fairy tale does not include the vocal tone of the bird, the sounds depicted by beating of tools at the mill provide a sense of the song's rhythm to accompany the lyric. Gradually, individual employees halt their work to listen:

[15] "Die klare Sonne bringt's an den Tag" in the collection of the Brothers Grimm uses the sun as imagery in its namesake tale, in which a murder that had been kept a secret becomes known to the community (GRIMM; GRIMM, 2007, pp.489-490). The symbol light is ancient, as seen by the light that conquers darkness in the Book of Genesis (NAB, Gen. 1.3-5).
[16] The Grimms' text reads "klippe klappe, klippe klappe, klippe klappe" and "hick hack, hick hack, hick hack" (GRIMM; GRIMM, 2007, p.214).

at first only one man stops, but then after a line of the verse, two more, continuing in this manner until the last one puts down his tools to listen to the bird's final words. This disintegration of the chorus of mill workers to the solo repeat performance of the bird seems to be an example of the dialogue that Brandist explains in his article concerning Bakhtin's shift from language to historical images, plots, and language that shaped the concept of carnival (BRANDIST, 2016, p.23). Further dialogue ensues and the workers reunite in unison to sing "Heave-ho! Heave-ho! Heave-ho!" as they lift the millstone around the bird's neck in exchange for an encore (GRIMM; GRIMM, 2002, p.164).[17] The combination of the workers' song and action inscribes sound to the millstone that finishes the tale with a crash in this symphony of the marketplace. The bird returns to the linden tree to sing a cappella for the mill workers; the truth of his message needs no accompaniment. As after previous repeat performances, the tale does not illustrate any additional audience response. Though little is known of the melody today, the lyrics indicate an apparent grimness, given that the song tells the story of the preceding crimes of extreme violence against children. In spite of the message, the song captivates the entire township. They are intrigued by the sound as well as the visual image of the bird.[18]

To begin to explain this discrepancy, I turn to Eduard Hanslick's *Von musikalischen Schönen (On the Musically Beautiful)*, in which Hanslick addresses the technical aspect of musical creation in its relationship to beauty. Hanslick states a composer who is responsible for the creation of a score imagines what an audience might find beautiful when people listen.[19] During a performance an audience contemplates the composition and experiences a sensation. Sensation is the typical reaction to music, consisting of an initial response to the perceived quality (HANSLICK, 1966, p.6). Likewise, cante fables also lead to an audience response that is not necessarily related to beauty but instead to the message that the music emphasizes: "They [cante fables] allow the audience to recognize and respond to certain core sections of the story on the other"

[17] The Grimms' text reads "hu uh uhp, hu uh uhp, hu uh uhp" (GRIMM; GRIMM, 2007, p.215).

[18] The tale was included without any illustration in the *Kleine Ausgabe* (1825), a shortened children's edition of the Grimms collection, even though it was the first volume of the Brothers Grimm that included pictures. Moritz von Schwind illustrated the tale in 1845 (SCHERF, 1995, p.1319). Even though Johann W. Goethe was older than the Brothers Grimm, he knew of the fairy tale long before their publication of it from his childhood (BOLTE; POLÍVKA, 1913, p.416). He incorporates it in *Faust I* (1808) as Gretchen sings a version of the song from her prison cell as she awaits execution for infanticide (HART, 2005, 15).

[19] Music does not come from nature despite the commonly held assumption that it does. For example, a bird's song is only an inspiration for music (HANSLICK, 1966**,** p.148).

(HALPERT; WIDDOWSON, 2015, p.xlix). Hanslick stresses that music is an entity unaffected and independent of other aspects: "beauty is and remains beauty even if no feelings are aroused and if it be neither perceived nor thought" (HANSLICK, 1986, p.3).[20] However, the hybridization of the fairy tale genre to include the song is integral to the tale's content. In the fairy tale, the audience's request to hear the song a second time is an affirmation of its initial positive response to the bird's singing. Before the audience can respond to its encore performance, the bird flies to his next venue to sing. The audiences are not given textual space to confirm their initial responses. The absence of second responses would seem to indicate that they are not as important in moving the plot forward as is the bird on his singing tour, but beauty functions as the impetus to listen to the song a second time. The song catches their attention and initiates an exchange of a gift for a repeat performance. The entire performance of the song allows the plot to advance toward a restoration of justice and form, as the song ushers in the happy end.

Final Remarks

The cante fable successfully concludes and returns the tale to prose. Ultimately, the bird's ability to voice the barbarous situation of child abuse in his song restores the literary form as well as societal justice. Returning home the bird sings in the garden to get the family's attention. Each family member steps out of the house and receives a gift from the bird, which reflects each person's earlier treatment of the boy. Halfway through the first refrain, the boy's father comes out to hear the song and is given a gold necklace that the bird had received earlier from the goldsmith. Thereafter, the bird throws Marlene the red shoes from the shoemaker. Finally, the stepmother runs out to cool down from the fear she feels, when the bird drops the millstone on her head: "As she went out the door, *crash!* the bird threw the millstone down on her head, and she was crushed to death" (GRIMM; GRIMM, 2002, p.166).[21] After her death the focus shifts from the family's reaction to the bird to the restoration of harmony that the stepmother had nearly dissolved through her greed. Her death reverses the harm she had caused and the boy is reborn. The

[20] In the original: "Das Schönheit ist und bleibt schön, auch wenn es keine Gefühle erzeugt, ja wenn es weder geschaut noch betrachtet wird" (HANSLICK, 1966, p.5).

[21] "Un as se ut de Döör kamm, bratsch! smeet eer de Vagel den Mählensteen up den Kopp, dat se gans tomatscht" (GRIMM; GRIMM, 2007, p.217).

tale's happy end is dramatic: "smoke, flames, and fire were rising from the spot, and when it was over, the little brother was standing there" (GRIMM; GRIMM, 2002, p.166.)[22] The boy returns to life and to his family. They join hands and enter the house to eat dinner, no longer under the stepmother's control. The family's reunion dinner affirms the grotesque, as Bakhtin explains that generally dining together symbolizes a celebration of victory over one's struggles (1968 [1965] p.282). [23] This ending reinforces the tale's multilayered expression of the grotesque. The celebratory meal hints at the feast that is traditionally part of carnival (BAKHTIN, 1968 [1965], p.5). The celebration of Romantic moral development that was based in nature and realized through the cris de Paris is the fulfillment of the promise over alienation to a new familial harmony.

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[22] In the original: ":[…] daar ging een Damp un Flam un Füür up van de Steed, un as dat vorbei was, da stund de lüttje Broder,[…]" (GRIMM; GRIMM, 2007, p.217).

[23] Rölleke suggests that eating here is an example of *Metrikreim* (GRIMM; GRIMM, 2002, p.1218). In the Slovak and the Romanian versions of the tale, the boy remains a bird (KÖHLER-ZÜLCH, 2008, p.876). The Romanian tale, "Why Does the Cuckoo Call 'Cuckoo'?" contains a song with only one stanza of five lines sung once (GASTER, 1915, pp.284-288).

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