



Multimodal Analysis in *Hansel and Gretel* by the Brothers Grimm

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Children's literature is written work of art, such as stories, books, magazines, and poems, which is intended for children. One of the form of children's literature that we are familiar with, is story book with pictures in it, or known as picture books. The source data of this research is a story of Hansel and Gretel (1812) by The Brothers Grimm that was published on 1982 by Western Publishing in a picture book version. This research focuses on the multimodality found in the book, which are text and illustration. The method used in this research is qualitative method as this research focused on the utilization of multimodality in the book. The result of this research is relations between the narrative text of the story and the illustrations in it.

Keywords: *Multimodality, Picture Book, Hansel and Gretel*

INTRODUCTION

Literature is a word with which we are familiar. However, defining literature is not as simple as it is. A simple definition of literature by Wellek & Warren (1954) is 'everything in print'. They also limit it to 'great books', which, whatever their subject, are 'notable for literary form or expression' (pp. 9-10). The English Oxford Dictionary (EOD) defined literature as 'pieces of writing that are valued as works of art, especially novels, plays, and poems (in contrast to technical books and newspapers, magazines, etc)' (p. 869). Whereas, Miller (2002) considered literature as all those novels, poems, and plays that are designated as literature by libraries, by the media, by commercial and university presses, and by teachers and scholars in school and university. In simple, literature is whatever designated as literature. He also stated that literature is whatever bookstores put in the shelves marked 'literature' or some subset of that: "Classic," "Poetry," "Fiction," "Mysteries," and so on (p. 13). For author, literature is every written work of art, which contains expression and give some effects to the reader.

Literature sounds like a field of study that is intended for adult, however there is also a literature intended for children, and that thing is called children's literature. Nuba et. al (1999) defines children's literature as books designed especially for children (p. 3). Meanwhile, Lesnik-Oberstein (2005) defines children's literature as books which are good for children, and most particularly good in terms of emotional and moral values (p. 15). Author broaden the definition that children's literature is not limited to books only, but it could be another written work of art, such as stories, magazines, and poems, which is intended for children. One of the form of children's literature that we are familiar with, is story book with pictures in it, or we call it picture books. We can find picture books easily in book store shelves. Picture book is a book, usually a story book, with an illustrated picture that present the narration to catch the attention of young reader and help them to understand the content of the book. They present narrations that draw on the linguistic and visual semiotic systems through the use of text and image. There are two languages in picture books, first is the written, which is the narration text, and the second is the visual one, which is the picture or illustration. The story told in these books depends on the interaction between the text and the image (Barceló, 2015, p. 9).

One instance of picture books is a story of *Hansel and Gretel* by The Brothers Grimm that was published by Western Publishing. *Hansel and Gretel* is a famous fairy tale created by Wilhem Grimm and Jacob Grimm, or known as The Brothers Grimm. It was originally published on 1812 in German language. It tells a story about a sibling Hansel and Gretel who was abandoned by their parents in the forest, tricked by a cannibalistic witch, but at the end succeeded to escape. Although the story has been exist for centuries, but it is still popular until now. It has been translated into English language, even adapted into a movie with the title *Hansel and Gretel: Witch Hunters* (2013) and theatre performance. The author, The Brothers Grimm, are famous fairy tales writer and collector. Besides *Hansel and Gretel*, another popular fairy tales that was created by The Brothers Grimm are *Rapunzel*, *Cinderella*, and *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. The story of *Hansel and Gretel* that was published by Western Publishing is accompanied by some pictures in it. The pictures are illustrated by Eloise Wilkin, who has illustrated numerous other Little Golden Books.

Speaking of picture books, which narrates the story using text and pictures, it become interesting to discuss about multimodal. A multimodal ensemble is a "complex entity that occurs in both print and digital environments [and] utilizes a variety of cultural and semiotic resources to articulate, render, represent, and communicate an array of narratives, concepts, or information" (Serafini, 2014, as cited in Serafini, Kachorsky, & Reid, 2018, p. 311). In contemporary children's literature, multimodal ensembles are created across print-based and digital platforms and utilize more than one mode for the purpose of communication and representation (Serafini, Kachorsky, & Reid, 2018, p. 311). Mode is socially shaped and culturally given semiotic resource for meaning making.

Image, writing, layout, music, gesture, speech, moving image, soundtrack and 3D objects are examples of modes used in representation and communication (Kress, 2010, p. 79). In picture books, these modes can be found in the form of font, colour of the images, different elements included in the image, among others (Barceló, 2015, p. 13).

The discussions concerning multimodal analysis have been conducted by some researchers before. For instance, a research conducted by Claire Moran and Christina Lee, which discuss about the multimodal discourse analysis of women genital surgical websites in Australia. They used a multimodal critical discourse analysis to identify and analyse all content on the website homepages and all content related to labiaplasty. This resulted in the identification of three higher order themes, which are argue for a need for cosmetic surgery, normalise the practice of cosmetic surgery and highlight its apparent benefits and finally to present surgery as easy and straightforward, with minimal risks (Moran & Lee, 2013, pp. 375-376). Another discussion concerning multimodal analysis is the one conducted by Jayne Krisjanous on 2016 about multimodal analysis of dark tourism websites. Krisjanous also used multimodal discourse analysis as the approach of the discussion. The findings reveal that dark tourism websites are a deep reservoir of multimodal meaning. Discussion debates the role of the website in creating engagement with the visitor pre-visit, thus increasing their motivation to visit, informing, shaping expectations and signaling behavior appropriate for the site (Krisjanous, 2016, p. 1). Based on the studies above, author is interested to discuss how multimodality helps conveying the content of children's picture book.

METHOD

This research used qualitative method as this research focused on the utilization of multimodality in children's picture book. The book that was used to conduct this research is a story of *Hansel and Gretel* by The Brothers Grimm that was published by Western Publishing in a picture book version on 1982. This research used two modes found in the book, which are the narrative text of the story and illustrations drawn by Eloise Wilkin. The research questions are:

1. What aspects in the story are getting described by the illustration?
2. How the illustrations describe that certain aspect?

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Hansel and Gretel is a popular fairy tales by The Brothers Grimm who had also published some other popular fairy tales such as *Rapunzel*, *Cinderella*, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, and so on. *Hansel and Gretel* tells a story of two siblings who were abandoned by their parents, specifically their step-mother, at the forest. A cannibalistic witch took them in with the intention of eating them. However, in the end they succeeded to escape

and came back to their father. This story was originally published in Germany with no illustration. In 1982, Western Publishing published this story in a picture book version. A book with illustration to attract young reader's attention, as this story is indeed a story intended for children. Author realize that the illustration is not merely to attract attention, but it also help describe some aspect of the story that is not being described by the narrative text.

The Cruelty of the Step-Mother

On the beginning of the story, it is mentioned that the siblings step-mother is very cruel to them.

"The wife was the children's step-mother, and she was very cruel to them."
(The Brothers Grimm, 1982, p. 4)

It might be not enough to imagine how cruel the step-mother is. However, author found some illustration that can show how cruel the step-mother is and her dislikeness to the children.



On the fourth page of the book, there is an illustration that shows a woman who was throwing objects toward two children and a dog. The boy is Hansel and the girl is Gretel. In this story, there are two women characters. First, is the cruel step-mother and the other one is the cannibalistic witch. However, the woman who is throwing object is known to be their step mother as the physical appearance shows someone young, which makes it impossible for the woman to be the witch.

Figure 1 Illustration on page 4 shows the stepmother throwing things on Hansel and Gretel

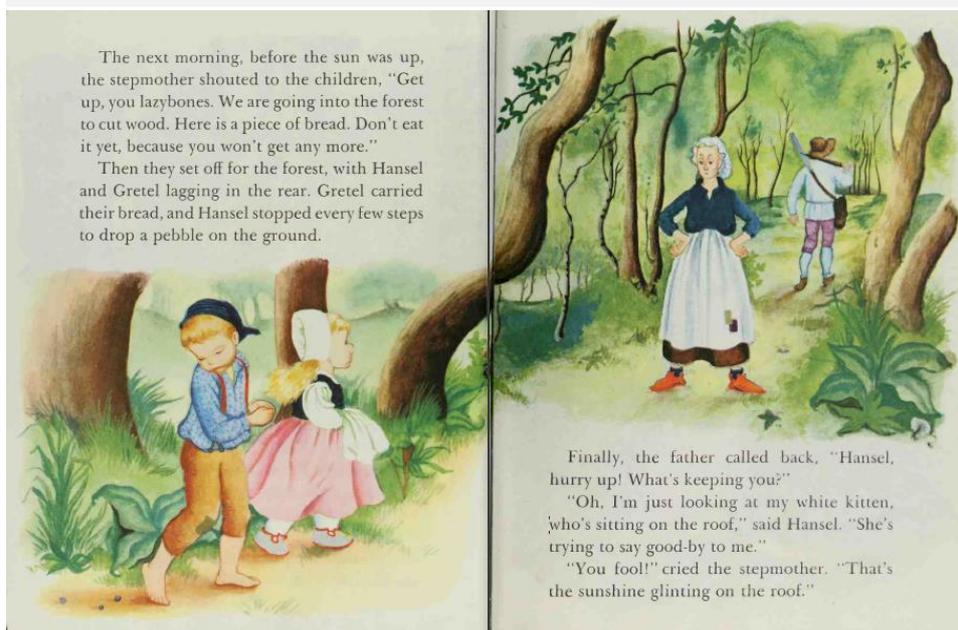


Figure 2 Illustrations on pages 7 and 8 show the stepmother's angry gesture towards Hansel and Gretel

The second sign of the cruelty of the step-mother is shown on the eighth page of the book. It shows a picture of Hansel who is dropping pebbles to the ground, walking behind Gretel, the step-mother, and the father who is just walking without looking to the back. The pose of the step-mother, which has her hands on hips indicates that she is angry or irritated. She might want to abandon the children sooner in the forest and get separated soon.

Page tenth of the book shows a frame of a happy Hansel and Gretel who succeeded on getting back home after abandoned by their parents in the forest. However, the step-mother doesn't seem very pleasant with the arrival of the children. It can be seen from her body gesture, hands on hips, and the fact that she is holding a pan, as if she wanted to hit the children.

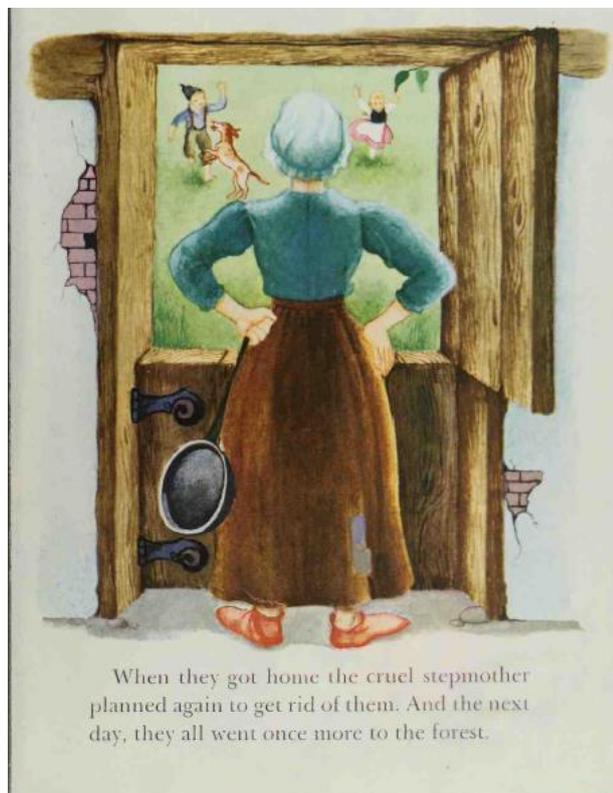


Figure 3 Illustration on page 10 shows the stepmother's angry gesture because Hansel and Gretel are back

How Poor the Family is

On the opening of the story, it is mentioned that the story is about a poor family.

“On the edge of the small clearing, near a great forest, there lived a poor woodcutter and his wife and his two children, Hansel and Gretel” (The Brothers Grimm, 1982, p. 4)

Another sentence to describe the poor family is shown below:

“They had always been very poor, but one time there was a great famine in the country, and the woodcutter couldn’t earn even enough food to buy any food for his family.” (The Brothers Grimm, 1982, p. 5)



Figure 4 Illustration on page 4 shows the poor of the family, shown by the tattered clothes they wore

The story describe the poor family to the point where they weren't able to afford any food. There are also some illustrations that help convey the message of how poor they are.

The illustration from the fourth page shows Hansel, Gretel, their step-mother, and their family dog. The clothes that they wore looks like what a commoner usually wear, with ordinary design and dull colours. However, the tattered clothes of Hansel and the step-mother showed how poor they are that they can't even afford an appropriate clothes. Hansel doesn't even wear any footwear.

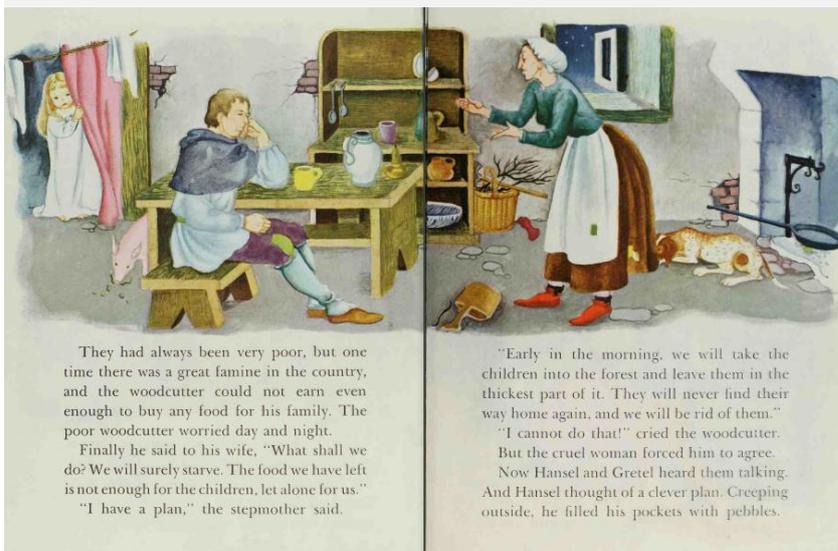


Figure 5 Illustrations on pages 5 and 6 show the poor condition of the family, shown from the broken house

An illustration on the fifth and six pages show the condition of the poor family's house. They don't have a door for they use a sheet of clothes to separate the room. The wall is broken at some points. The house appliances are shattered around the floor, maybe because they can't afford any furniture to put them, and the chimney has no fire at all.

How Affectionate Hansel to Gretel is

It might be not mentioned in the story that Hansel is a great brother who takes care of his sister, Gretel, very well. However, some illustrations show that Hansel is indeed a great brother who is really fond of her sister.

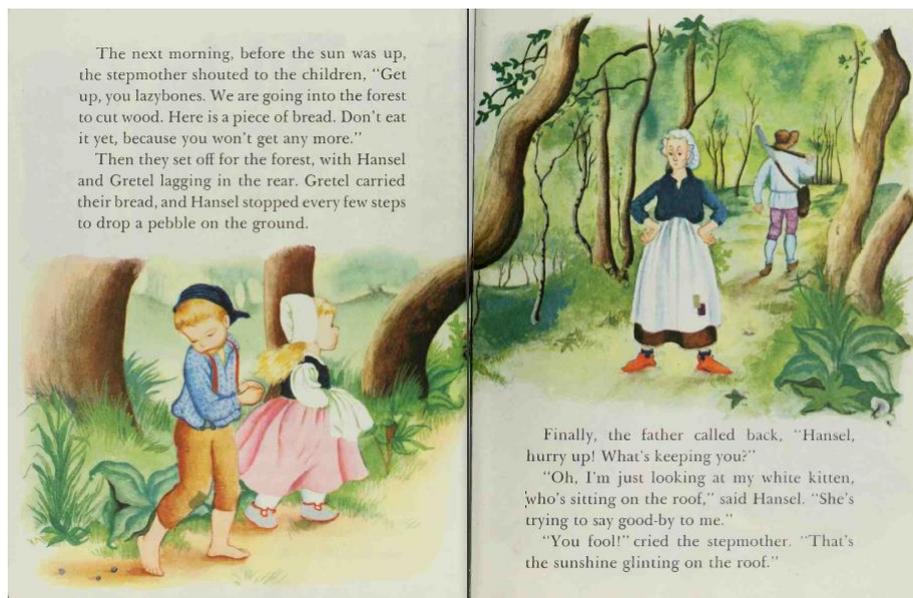
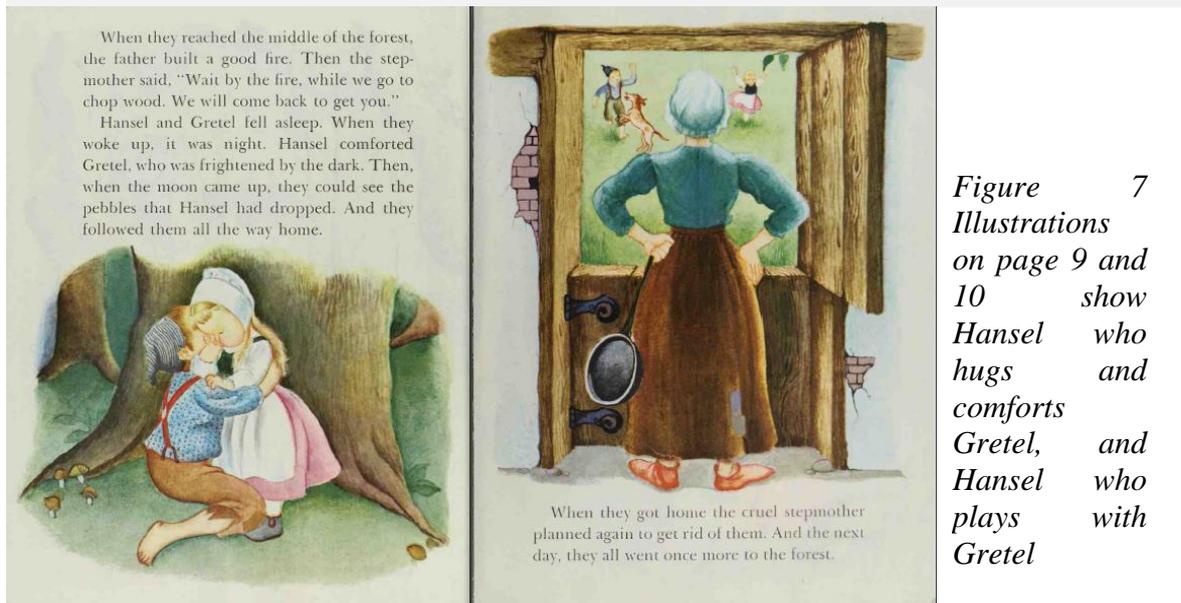


Figure 6 Illustration on page 7 and 8 show Hansel who walks behind Gretel



Page seven and eight show an illustration where the children are brought to the forest to be abandoned by their parents. In the illustration, Hansel lets Gretel walk in front of him as he drops pebbles to the ground. If Hansel is not fond of Gretel, he would just walk ahead not minding his sister and wouldn't bother to drop pebbles they will use to come back home later.

The left illustration shows Hansel who was hugging Gretel and comforting her. It can also be seen from the text:

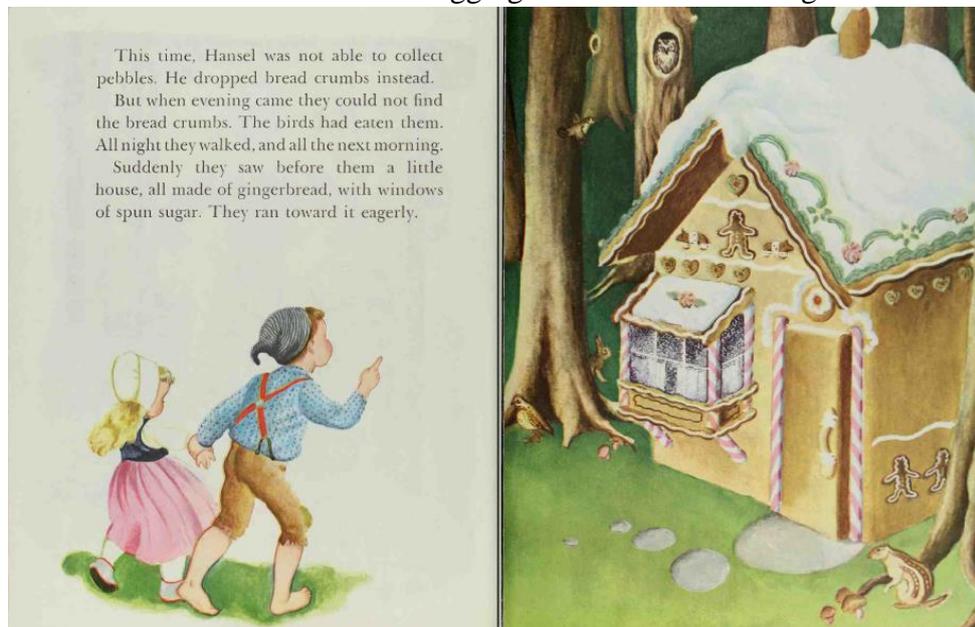


Figure 8 Illustration on page 11 and 12 show Hansel who holds Gretel's hand when they were lost in the forest

"Hansel comforted Gretel, who was frightened by the dark" (The Brothers Grimm, 1982, p. 9)



Figure 9 Illustration on page 22 shows Hansel who is dancing happily with Gretel

The illustration above shows Hansel and Gretel who were dancing happily after succeeded in getting rid of the old witch.

Their Father is actually love them

The character of the father is not very much described in the narrative text. He didn't couldn't even do anything but to agree to the plan of her wife to abandon the children in the forest. As seen on the text below:

"I cannot do that!" cried the woodcutter. But the cruel woman forced him to agree. (The Brothers Grimm, 1982, p. 6)

However, after the children escaped successfully from the old witch, there's a narrative that said their father was looking for them all the time.

Just when they were given up hope, they heard a happy cry. There was their father coming toward them. "Hansel! Gretel!" cried the father hurrying to them. "I have looked and looked for you." (The Brothers Grimm, 1982, p. 24).

It is supported by the illustration below:

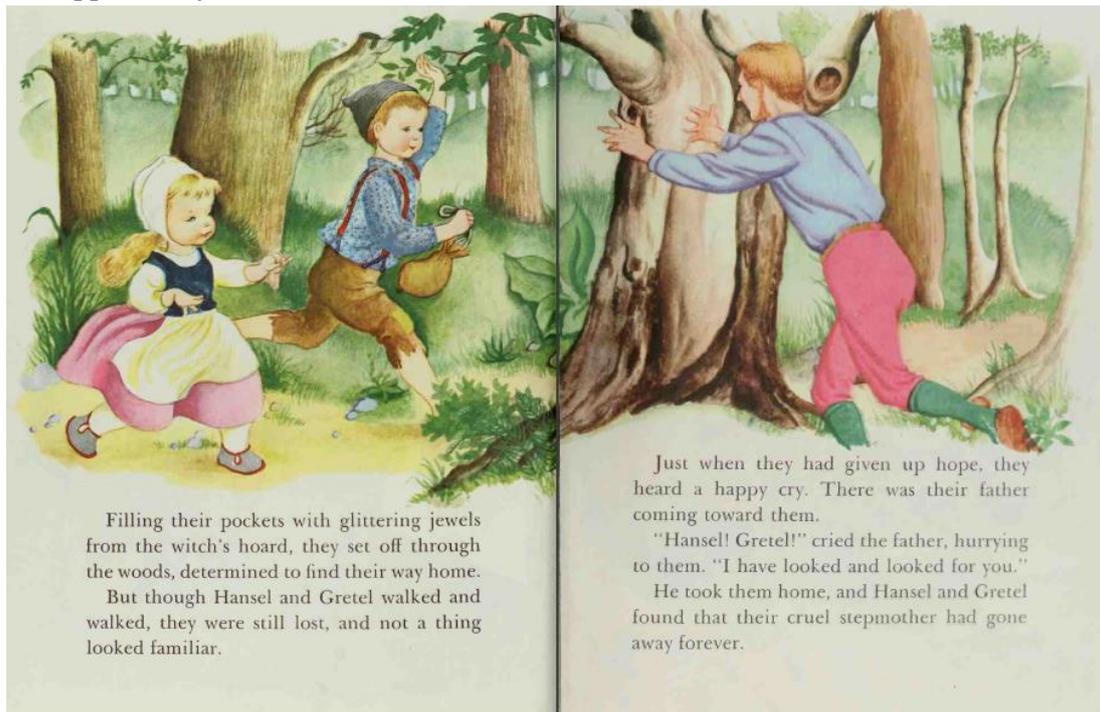


Figure 10 Illustrations on pages 23 and 24 show the children's father who spread his arms as an affectionate gesture

The illustration above shows Hansel and Gretel after escaped the old witch successfully and finally met their father on the forest. The father had the gesture of opening both of his hands as if he wants hug both of his children. The gesture of opening both hands indicates that he is longing for his children.



CONCLUSION

The illustration on the story of *Hansel and Gretel* by The Brothers Grimm that was published by Little Golden Book in picture book version, doesn't only functioned as attention catcher. It also supports some aspects which are not described completely by the narrative text. Those aspects are: 1) the cruelty of the step-mother, which shown by how she treated the children (throwing objects), the body gesture of having both of her hands on her hips; 2) how poor the family is, which shown by the tattered clothes that they wore, Hansel who wore no footwear, the house's condition that are messy with broken walls, no door attached, and no fire on the chimney; 3) how affectionate Hansel to Gretel is, which is shown by him who let Gretel walk ahead while he himself dropping pebbles to the ground, comforting Gretel when they were at the forest, playing with her, hold her hands when they were abandoned at the forest, and dancing happily after successfully escaped the old witch; and 4) their father is actually love them, which is shown by his gesture of opening both of his hands after looking for Hansel and Gretel all the time as if longing for the presence of both of them.



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