

PHYSICAL TOUCH IN FAIRY TALE RETELLINGS WRITTEN FOR ADULT AND  
YOUNG ADULT AUDIENCES: A CONTENT ANALYSIS

By  
Kerri Meeks

A Master's paper submitted to the faculty  
of the School of Information and Library Science  
of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Science in  
Library Science

Chapel Hill, North Carolina

July, 1999

Approved by:

---

Advisor

Meeks, Kerri. Physical touch in fairy tale retellings written for adult and young audiences: A content analysis. A Master's paper for the M.S. in L.S degree. July, 1999. 55 pages. Advisor: Brian Sturm

This paper examines the type and amount of touch found in fairy tale retellings in novel format. It compares touch in these novels to touch from a study of real world touch experiences. Also, it compares touch in books that were written for a young adult audience to those written for an adult audience. Latent content analysis was performed on five books written for a young adult audience and five books written for an adult audience. This study concludes that touch in books somewhat reflects real life experiences and that plot of the story has more to do with what types of touch are exhibited than intended audience.

Headings:

Content analysis – Treatment of touch.

Fairy tales – Evaluation

Content analysis – Young adults' literature

Young adults' literature – Evaluation

## CONTENTS

Abstract	ii
List of Graphs	iv
I. Introduction and Purpose	1
II. Review of Research Literature	3
III. Methodology	7
IV. Examples of Coding System	11
V. Works Read in this Study	14
VI. Analysis	17
VII. Summary of Results	49
VIII. Implications	50
IX. Suggestions for Further Research	52
X. Literature Cited	54

## LIST OF GRAPHS

Percentage of Primary Touch Type	18
Percentage of Primary Touch Type in Novels as Compared to Jones' Research	20
Percentage of Specific Touch Type	24
Percentage of Touch According to Intended Audience	27
Percentage of Primary Touch Type According to Intended Audience	29
Percentage of Specific Touch Type According to Intended Audience	32
Percentage of Primary Touch Type in Young Adult Retelling of Tam Lin As Compared to Adult Retelling	36
Percentage of Specific Touch Type in Young Adult Retelling of Tam Lin As Compared to Adult Retelling	38
Percentage of Primary Touch Type in Young Adult Retelling of Snow White and Rose Red as Compared to Adult Retelling	41
Percentage of Specific Touch Type in Young Adult Retelling of Snow White and Rose Red as Compared to Adult Retelling	43
Percentage of Violent Touch in Each Novel	45
Percentage of Sexual Touch in Each Novel	47

## **Introduction and Purpose**

### **Introduction**

Our sense of touch is one of the most versatile senses. It gathers data to help us make decisions. Also it is one sense that allows us to communicate our emotions to others. With a touch, we can communicate love, fear, hatred, support and many other emotions. Touch is the most important sense. One can function without being able to see, hear, taste, or smell, but one cannot function without the ability to feel. According to Colton (1983), “But we cannot survive and live with any degree of comfort and mental health when we are not able to feel. A complete loss of our sense of touch can send us into psychotic breakdown” (p. 20).

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this study is to find trends in the type of touch that is described in fairy tale retellings. Fairy tale retellings were chosen because these types of novels have been written specifically for both an adult and young adult audience. Also, these books have similarities because they are based on folk tales and fairy tales. These similarities include a transformation in characters, often the main character, and usually the use of magic. Finally, fairy tale retellings were chosen because two fairy tales, “Tam” “Snow White and Rose Red,” have been rewritten for both the adult and young adult audience.

Touch has rarely been studied in literature for amount or types of touch that are presented in books. This lack of research on this type of communication led me to develop this study.

### **Review of Research Literature**

In studies, touch has been linked to emotional well being. It was once thought that the attachment of children to their mother was a result of their mother providing food for them. Harlow's (1958) research on monkeys contradicts this theory. Four monkeys were fed by a wire surrogate mother. Four other monkeys were fed by a surrogate wire mother that was covered in cloth. Except to eat, the monkeys who were fed by the wire monkey were more likely to cling to the cloth surrogate mothers than to the wire surrogate mother. The conclusions developed from this study are that comforting touch is an important component of early development.

Spitz (1945) also found this touch to be important. In a study of children who lived in a Foundling Home as compared to children in a Nursery, it was found that the children at the Foundling Home were more likely to be developmentally delayed. In the Foundling Home, the babies were breast fed until they were three months old. At three months, the children's care becomes the responsibility of the head nurse and her five assistants. Each nurse is responsible for the care of at least seven children. In the Nursery, the child's actual mother or a substitute figure is responsible for the care of the child. According to Spitz (1945), "As soon as the babies in Foundling Home are weaned, the modest human contacts which they have had during nursing at the breast stop, and their development falls below normal" (p. 63). Although Spitz focuses on the mother-child relationship, one can infer that lack of touch in early development contributes to slowed development in these children.

Touch is not only important in early development; all ages need touch.

Unfortunately, adolescents do not get a lot of touch. According to Jones (1994), “This is a time when touching hits bottom in both quality and quantity” (p. 76).

The research on adolescents and touch is limited. Willis & Reeves (1976) studied touch in a junior high school setting. They replicated an earlier study Willis & Hoffman (1975) completed using elementary school students. In both studies, children were observed in school cafeteria lines, and all touches observed were recorded. Also, the researchers recorded what body parts were used to perform the touch and what body areas were touched. The age, sex and race of the students were also recorded. The data from the study of elementary school students was compared to the data from the study of the junior high students (Willis & Reeves, 1976). It was found that “the percentage of touch was about half as much as that observed in the younger children” (p.91).

Next, Willis, Reeves & Buchanan (1976) completed the previously mentioned methodology on high school students. They expected a decrease in the amount of touch these students displayed as compared to the junior high school students. The data did not support their hypothesis. It seems that the amount of touch exhibited by students drops as one leaves early childhood and enters adolescence. However, the amount of touch observed in junior high students and high school students is consistent. The result is that adolescents, junior high and high school students, participate in fewer touch experiences than elementary school students.

Jones & Yarbrough (1985) had study participants keep track of all touches experienced over a specific time period. A participant-observation technique was used. Participants were trained to record touch events in which they were involved. Eighteen

different aspects of each touch event were recorded. These aspects included items such as who was the initiator of the touch, descriptions of the touch and information such as age, sex and race of those involved in the touch.

They then took this data and developed a coding system for types of touch based on participants' descriptions of the actual touch and the context in which the touch was experienced. The schema they developed is adapted from Jones & Yarbrough's (1985) research and Jones' (1990) research. The following information is found in The Right Touch (Jones, 1994).

**Positive Touches** - touches that provide or are used to emphasize support, appreciation, togetherness or affection.

**Sexual Touches** - touches that express physical attraction or sexual interest.

**Playful Touches** – touches that lighten the actual touch interaction.

**Control Touches** - touches that attempt to get compliance, attention or to announce a response.

**Ritual Touches** - touches that are a simple greeting or a simple departure.

**Hybrid Touches** - touches that combine meanings, such as greeting with affection and departure with affection.

**Task Related Touches** - touches that refer to a person's appearance, are incidental or are instrumental.

**Accidental Touches** - touches that are perceived as unintentional.

### **Positive Touch**

**Support** – touch that serves to nurture, reassure, or promise protection.

**Appreciation** – touch that expresses gratitude.

**Togetherness** – touch that draws attention to the act of being together; suggests psychological closeness.

**Affection** – touch that expresses liking or loving.

### Playful Touch

**Playful Affection** – touch that lightens interaction by qualification of affection with a play signal.

**Playful Aggression** – touch that lightens interaction by qualification of aggression with a play signal.

### Control Touch

**Compliance** – touch that attempts to direct behavior.

**Attention Getting** – touch that directs others' perceptual focus.

**Announcing a Response** – touch that emphasizes a feeling of the initiator; often implicitly requests similar response from the other.

### Ritual Touch

**Simple Greeting** – touch that is a part of an act of acknowledging another at the opening of an encounter.

**Simple Departure** – touch that is a part of an act of closing an encounter.

### Hybird Touch

**Greeting with Affection** – touch that expresses affection at the initiation of an encounter.

**Departure with Affection** – touch that expresses affection at the end of an encounter.

### Task Related Touches

**Reference to Appearance** – touch that points out or inspects a body part or artifact referred to in a comment about another's appearance.

**Incidental** – touch that occurs as an unnecessary part of the accomplishment of a task.

**Instrumental** – touch that accomplishes a task in itself.

## Methodology

This study used latent content analysis to analyze every instance of explicit touch in ten novels. According to Krippendorff (1980), “content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context”(p. 21). Holsti (1969) defines it as “any technique for making inferences by objectively and systematically identifying specified characteristics of messages”(p. 14). Latent content analysis was used instead of manifest content analysis because latent content analysis involves a “matter of inference or interpretation on the part of the                      Robson, 1993, p. 276).

In order to compare books with similar plots, fantasy novels that retell a fairy tale or folk tale were selected. This subgenre of fantasy has been published for both the adult and young adult audience.

For this study, 10 books were selected. Five books were selected from the “Fairy Tale Series,” which is a series of fairy tale retellings written for adults. The decision of which books to select was made by reading book reviews in sources such as *Booklist* and *Kirkus Reviews*. The books selected from this series were Snow White and Rose Red by Patricia Wrede, Tam Lin by Pamela Dean, Jack the Giant Killer by Charles De Lint, Briar Rose by Jane Yolen and The Nightingale by Kara Dalkey. The Sun, the Moon and the Stars by Stephen Brust, which is also a part of the “Fairy Tale Series,” was not included in this study because reviews stated that it was not a fairy tale or folk tale retelling.

*Kirkus Reviews* states, “Is it in fact a retelling of a folk tale? No. And readers who buy the book on that basis will have every right to feel aggrieved” (1987, p. 338).

Five fairy tale retellings that were written specifically for the young adult reader were also selected. The young adult books for this study were selected using a variety of sources such as Teen Genreflecting, *VOYA*, *School Library Journal*, *Novelist*, and amazon.com. From this list five books were selected based on their accessibility in local libraries or bookstores. The books selected were Beauty by Robin McKinley, Snow White and Rose Red by Regina Doman, The Perilous Gard by Elizabeth Marie Pope, The Magic Circle by Donna Jo Napoli, and Zel by Donna Jo Napoli.

I read all ten of the books and highlighted every instance of touch in the novels. Touch for this study was defined as any body to body contact between two or more humans. Also, nonhuman characters that could be seen by other characters and that were considered humanoids in the story were included in this study. Examples include elves, ghosts and bogans.

The touch did not have to be skin to skin. For example, a character tugging on another character’s sleeve was included. All instances of touch that actually occurred in the story or where a character remembered a touch that actually happened in the past were included. Each description of touch was broken down to the lowest common denominator. If a description said “she touched his cheek and nose,” these were coded as two instances of touch.

Instances where a character dreamed about touch or wished for touch to happen and it did not occur were not included in this study. Ambiguous situations where touch likely occurred but is not described as having an actual occurrence of body to body

contact were not included. For example, someone handing money to another person was not included unless it specified that one character was touched by another character.

Another example of an ambiguous situation is a description such as “he led her through the door.” If this quote was preceded or followed by an explicit description of touch, it was included. For example, if before this quote it said “he grabbed her hand” or at the end of the passage it stated “he released her arm,” then this instance was recorded. If the surrounding context did not explicitly describe body to body contact, then descriptions using ambiguous words like “led” were not included. The reasoning for this is one can lead someone without touching him.

Instances where a person is touched by an object that another person held or was in control of were not included. For example, if someone was hit with a baseball bat, it was not included. Another example is being run down by a car.

After all the books were read and every instance of touch was highlighted, each quote was entered into an Access database and coded. First, each touch was coded according to the type of primary touch. Stan E. Jones (1994) developed the coding schema used. Primary touch types were positive, sexual, playful, control, ritual, hybrid, task related and accidental. For definitions of these types of touch see the literature review section of this paper.

After this initial primary touch coding, most of the touches were coded according to a more specific type of touch. The only types of primary touch that were not broken down into a more specific type of touch by Jones (1994) were accidental and sexual touch. For this study sexual touch is defined in more specific categories. They are as follows:

### **Sexual Touch**

**Sexual Body Parts** – holding, caressing, touching or kissing sexual body parts, which include the breasts, penis, buttocks, thighs and pelvis areas.

**Nonsexual Body Parts** –holding, touching or caressing body parts other than those mentioned above.

**Kissing** – touching or pressing with the lips slightly pursed.

A specific type of touch named violent touch was added under the primary type of touch labeled as control. It is defined as touch where one is purposely hurting someone physically while attempting to direct his or her behavior.

One instance of touch can have several meanings. For this paper, each instance of touch was categorized into one primary type of touch. All instances of touch, except accidental, were also categorized into one specific type of touch. Not only was the specific description of each instance of touch looked at when determining how to code it, events preceding and following the touch were considered. Then, the definitions of touch types were consulted to determine which types of touch best described this instance. The following section provides examples from the books read for each type of touch.

After all the books were read and coded, queries were made of the database to determine trends. First, the data were compared to data in Jones' (1985) study. Next, they were compared according to the audience for whom the story was written. Finally, comparisons were made between individual titles.

Yolen, p. 198)  
“He kissed her before she could think of a  
suitably puckish sort of reply.” (De Lint, p.  
220)

**Playful Touch**

- Playful Affection** – “Actually kissed Rose’s proffered dirty boot.” (Doman, p. 87)  
 “Mother’s hands run down Zel’s back . . . playing the ribs.” (Napoli, 1996, p. 198)
- Playful Aggression** – “He grabbed at her ankles, growling  
 Doman, p. 91)  
 “I yank on her braids and she laughs.”  
 (Napoli, 1996, p. 82)

**Control Touch**

- Compliance** – “. . . lifted bodily. . .” (Pope, p. 52)  
 “But mother pulls Zel behind her and stays on the path. (Napoli, 1996, p. 6)
- Violent** – “A bogan fist smashed into the side of her head.” (De Lint, p. 87)  
 “Kate thought of Master John’s fat white fingers sinking into the flesh of Dorothy’s arm and his story of the prying servant who had gone to walk in the Elvenwood and never come out again.” (Pope, p. 249)
- Attention Getting** – “He tugged at her sleeve.” (Pope, p. 230)  
 “She clutched at her sister, and Rosamund, too, awoke and saw him. (Wrede, p. 63)
- Announcing a Response** – None coded under this category.

**Ritual Touch**

- Simple Greeting** – “Janet got up, too, and held out her hand.”  
 (Dean, p. 118)  
 “. . .As he smiled and shook my hand. . .”  
 (McKinley, p. 219)
- Simple Departure** – “He rose to shake her proffered hand.”  
 (Doman, p. 29)  
 “This time he smiled—grinned, actually—and held out his hand. She took it. . .”  
 (Yolen, p. 94)

### **Hybrid Touch**

- Greeting with Affection** – “He dropped the canvas sack to the ground and embraced the other man.” (Wrede, p. 19)  
 “Hugging her as if he could not let her go.” (Pope, p. 263)
- Departure with Affection** – “Ger embraced me with his free arm.” (McKinley, p. 95)  
 “She hugged her parents.” (Dean, p. 5)

### **Task Related Touches**

- Reference to Appearance** – “Peter touches the mole.” (Napoli, 1993, p. 57)  
 “Hope stirred restlessly and sighed, she reached over to pluck at a fold of my long skirt and rub it between her fingers.” (McKinley, p. 210)
- Incidental** – None coded under this category.
- Instrumental** – “She lifts one of Zel’s long braids onto her lap and unravels it carefully. (Napoli, 1996, p. 109)  
 “I pull the reed from his throat and press my hand over the hole in his throat.” (Napoli, 1993, p. 40)

### **Accidental Touch**

- “Blanche gasped and took an involuntary stop forward, jostling her mother.” (Wrede, p. 235)  
 “Arkan’s hand brushed her shoulder. . .” (De Lint, p. 90)

### **Works Read in this Study**

In order to provide a framework of the novels read, a short synopsis of each story follows.

**Beauty** by Robin McKinley (1978)

A retelling of “Beauty and the Beast.” In this story, Beauty’s father is a wealthy sea merchant whose ships are lost in a storm at sea. The result is he loses all his money and the family must move to the northern part of the country. After getting settled in their new home, the father must make a trip back to the city for business purposes. On the way back, he stays at an enchanted castle. He picks a rose to take home for Beauty and the effect of his doing this is either he must die or his daughter must be sent to reside in the castle with the Beast that inhabits the castle. Beauty convinces the father that it would be best for her to go. While she lives at the castle, she falls in love with the Beast. Because of her love, the spell the Beast was under breaks. He becomes the handsome prince he once was, and they marry.

**Briar Rose** by Jane Yolen (1992)

A retelling of “Sleeping Beauty.” On her deathbed, a grandmother makes her granddaughter promise to find her castle. This search for the truth leads the granddaughter to Poland. It is there that she learns why her grandmother was so fascinated with the story of Briar Rose. Her grandmother used it as a way to cope with her past. After being gassed in an extermination camp during the Holocaust, she was saved by a group of partisans in the forest from death.

**Jack the Giant Killer** by Charles De Lint (1987)

A retelling based on “Jack the Giant Killer.” This story was set in present day Canada where both the fairy world and the real world live side by side unbeknownst to inhabitants of the real world. Jacky, a member of the real world, becomes aware of the fairy world around her after having too much to drink. After witnessing a murder, she learns of the evil section of the fairy world and their plot to take over the good section of the fairy world. Jacky vows that she will not let this happen. Her adventures lead her through all types of altercations, including killing a few giants. In the end, the good side is restored to their previous state of power.

**Magic Circle** by Donna Jo Napoli (1993)

A prologue to “Hansel and Gretel.” It describes how the witch in the story was once a great sorcerer but her greed caused her to become possessed by demons. She fled from her village so she would not be tempted to eat humans as the demons wanted her to. However, one day two small children arrived at her candy house. The witch was able to

overcome her urges for a while. In the end, the demons' possession was too much for her. She pretended to give into their desire for her to eat the children. Instead, her plan was to be burned exactly as she was in the original fairy tale by being pushed into the fire by Gretel.

**The Nightingale** by Kara Dalkey (1988)

A retelling of "The Nightingale" by Hans Christian Anderson. This version is set in ancient Japan. It is the story of Uguisu, "The Nightingale," who is brought to the emperor's court because of her ability to play the flute beautifully. Her dead ancestors wish for her to conceive a child by the Emperor on a special night so they will once again be in power. Uguisu does not follow their wishes. These ancient ancestors resort to their own powers to secure the throne. Uguisu is able to overthrow their plans with the help of some of the people she met while living at court. In the end, the Emperor is saved, and Uguisu and he marry.

**The Perilous Gard** by Elizabeth Marie Pope (1974)

A retelling of the ballad of "Tam Lin." It is set in England in the year 1558. A young girl is imprisoned in a castle by order of the queen. She is then captured by the fairy folk where she learns of their plan to sacrifice the brother of the owner of the castle. Because she loves him, she is able to save him by grabbing hold of him during the parade to the altar where he was to be sacrificed.

**Snow White and Rose Red** by Regina Doman (1997)

A retelling of "Snow White and Rose Red" set in modern day New York. An adolescent boy, nicknamed Bear, is searching for the murderer of the Catholic Priest at the high school he once attended. Through a twist of fate, Rose and Blanche, become involved in the search for this killer. After the killer is apprehended, Rose and Blanche begin to date Bear and his brother.

**Snow White and Rose Red** by Patricia Wrede (1989)

A retelling of the fairy tale "Snow White and Rose Red." This retelling is set in Elizabethan England. The Fairy Queen's youngest son is possessed by a spell that turns him into a beast. Rosamund and Blanche befriend him and his brother, Hugh. With their mother's help, they make several attempts to undo the spell. At the end Hugh is transformed from the Bear back to his normal self. Rosamund and John end up marrying, and Blanche and Hugh end of marrying. With their mother, the girls go to the enchanted fairy lands to live.

**Tam Lin** by Pamela Dean (1991)

A modern retelling of the ballad of "Tam Lin." It is set at a small liberal arts college. The first three quarters of the story seem to be a normal college experience with the focus being on classes, romance and friendships. Then, everything starts becoming really weird and Janet realizes that something unusual is happening at her school. She attempts to find out the truth. While searching for the truth, she falls in love with and becomes pregnant by a fellow student. This student happens to be the chosen sacrifice by the fairy

folk. Because Janet loves him, she is able to save him by grabbing hold of him during the parade to the altar where he was to be sacrificed.

**Zel** by Donna Jo Napoli (1996)

A retelling of the Rapunzel that is seen through the eyes of the three main characters: Mother, Zel (Rapunzel) and Konrad (The Prince). Mother takes Zel to town twice a year. Right before her thirteenth birthday, they take one of these trips. On this trip, Mother allows Zel to stay at the blacksmith's shop while she runs her errands. It is there that Zel and Konrad meet. Immediately they are attracted to one another. Zel's mother learns of this attraction, and locks her in a tower in order to protect her. Zel thinks there are evil people who want her dead, so she goes willingly. Zel spends two years in this tower where her mother visits her daily. Konrad searches for Zel for these two years. He finally finds her and is blinded after Zel's mother finds him in the tower. At the end of the story, the mother is no more and Zel and Konrad are reunited in a land far away, where Zel and their two twin daughters live.

## **Analysis**

### **Touch in Novels and the Real World**

The following graph shows the amount of total primary touch types found in the books read for this study.

When looking at all instances of primary touch for the whole group of books, it is found that positive touch occurs most often, followed by control touches. Seventy-three percent of these touches fit into these two primary touch categories. Task related and sexual touches are the next highest percentages of primary touch. Together, they only comprise 19% of touches. The other categories' percentages account for less than 5% of touch found in these books.

While the above data is interesting, it is more interesting when one compares the percentages of primary touch found in these novels to the percentages of primary touch that Jones' (1985) study participants experienced. Jones did not analyze his data for this, but the data are easily computed by dividing the number of each type of primary touch by the total number of instances of touch.

Graphs not available in PDF form

A comparison of total primary touch in this study and Jones' (1985) study can be analyzed using the following table and graph.

**Total Amount of Primary Touch in the Books Read and Jones' Research**

	Total Touch in Books	Jones' Research
Positive	396	143
Sexual	92	21
Playful	23	52
Control	341	187
Ritual	8	63
Hybrid	30	151
Task Related	97	121
Accidental	16	86

Graphs not available in PDF form

It is interesting to note in real life research, control touches account for a higher percentage than positive touches. This difference may be accounted for by the fact that hybrid touches are a much larger percentage in everyday life as compared to instances of touch in the books read.

A possible explanation for the difference in percentages between hybrid touch in the novels and hybrid touch in Jones' research is that all instances of touch were recorded by participants in Jones' study. Books do not necessarily record all instances of touch. For example, in Beauty, hybrid touches were recorded when she left to live with the Beast. However, everyday departures to the village were not recorded because they were not described in the book. It seems likely that some departure with affection (a hybrid touch) would likely occur if these sorts of departures were described in the book. Because all instances of touch were recorded for Jones' study, anytime a person touched another with affection while greeting them or leaving them the touch was coded as hybrid. If they merely hugged someone before leaving their house in the morning and when returning in the afternoon, they would have at least two instances of hybrid touch a day.

There is also a large difference in the percentage of accidental touch in novels as compared to accidental touch that occurred in Jones' study. Authors most likely do not include accidental touches in their novels unless they have some sort of application to the plot, such as in Snow White and Rose Red, by Regina Doman, when Blanche accidentally ran into Freel. Participants in Jones' study were asked to record all instances of touch except those leading to sexual intercourse. Therefore, they included instances where they accidentally touched someone or someone accidentally touched them.

The smaller percentage of sexual touch in Jones' study as compared to sexual touch in novels is probably not a valid percentage. In order to protect participants' privacy, Jones asked that touches that led to sexual intercourse not be recorded.

While the comparisons of primary touch types in novels and primary touch in real life exhibit some differences, one can conclude that touch in novels somewhat reflects real life. The top three types of primary touch in novels are positive, control and task related. The top three types in Jones' research are control, hybrid and positive. From this data, one can conclude that positive and control touches are prevalent in real life and the novels read.

Specific touch type was also analyzed. To see how specific touch was broken down for all books see the following table and graph.

**Total Amount of Specific Types of Touch in Novels Read**

Specific Types of Touch	Total Amount of Touch
Support	199
Appreciation	10
Togetherness	69
Affection	121
Nonsexual body parts	38
Sexual body parts	15
Kissing	39
Playful affection	5
Playful aggression	18
Compliance	134
Violent	180
Attention getting	27
Announcing	0
Simple greeting	3
Simple departure	4
Greeting with affection	9
Departure with affection	22
Reference to appearance	2
Incidental	0
Instrumental	95

Graphs not available in PDF form

It is interesting to note that support touches have the largest percentage of specific touches. This is followed by violent touch. For each type of primary touch, it is interesting to see which specific touch occurs most often. Sexual touch consists of a larger amount of touch to nonsexual body parts than sexual body parts. Playful aggression occurs more than playful affection. Violent touch is the largest type of specific touch from the control primary touch category. In both ritual and hybrid categories, touch is more likely to occur at a departure than when greeting someone. In task related touches, instrumental touches are most prevalent.

As a result of the fact that touch is more likely to occur at departures instead of during greetings in the ritual and hybrid categories, one can infer that touch is related to emotional closeness. People usually know each other better after spending time together. Therefore, they would be more likely to touch others at a departure than during a greeting when they are first meeting someone.

## **Audience**

First the data were examined to determine which type of books, those written for adults or those written for young adults, contained the most instances of touch.

Of the 1003 instances of touch, 517 or 52% were found in the “Fairy Tale Series” and 486 or 48% were found in the books written for a young adult audience. The amount of touch found in books written for adults versus those written for young adults was similar.

It is interesting to note that the amount of touch in books written for a young adult audience as compared to those written for an adult audience is not very different, especially seeing that research shows that adolescents touch less (McArney, 1984). One explanation for these similar amounts of touch is that most of the main characters in all the books used in this study are under the age of twenty-five.

Graphs not available in PDF form

The percentages of each type of primary touch were analyzed according to books written for an adult audience as compared to those written for a young adult audience.

The results are in the following table and graph.

**Total Primary Touch in Books Written for a Young Adult Audience as Compared to an Adult Audience**

	Young Adult Audience	Adult Audience
Positive	181	215
Sexual	42	50
Playful	16	7
Control	166	175
Ritual	3	5
Hybrid	18	12
Task Related	56	41
Accidental	4	12

Graphs not available in PDF form

When looking at what type of primary touch is most prevalent for the books written for adults as compared to those written for young adults, one finds that positive touches are most common to both fairy tale retellings written for adults and young adults. Forty-two percent of the touches in the books written for adults are positive. Although positive touches are the most common type of touch in the books written for a young adult audience, the actual percentage is lower than those written for adults at 37%.

The percentages of most of the individual primary touch types are similar in books written for young adults and those written for adults. Task related touches had the largest percentage difference at 4%. This difference can most likely be explained by the fact that four out of five of the young adult novels included a situation where someone received medical attention.

It is interesting to note that the books written for adults had more sexual touch than the ones written for young adults. After reading all the books, I expected the young adult books would yield a higher percentage of sexual touch based on the images I remembered from the various novels.

Based on the similarities in percentage of each type of primary touch in books written for an adult audience as compared to a young adult audience, one can conclude that authors do not cater primary touch types exhibited in their books to a particular audience.

For a comparison of specific touches according to if the book was written for an adult or young adult audience see below.

**Total Specific Touch in Books Written for A Young Adult Audience as Compared to an Adult Audience**

	Young Adult Audience	Adult Audience
Support	79	120
Appreciation	3	7
Togetherness	26	43
Affection	72	49
Nonsexual body parts	25	13
Sexual body parts	6	9
Kissing	11	28
Playful affection	5	0
Playful aggression	11	7
Compliance	60	74
Violent	84	96
Attention getting	8	19
Announcing	0	0
Simple greeting	1	2
Simple departure	2	2
Greeting with affection	8	1
Departure with affection	12	10
Reference to appearance	2	0
Incidental	0	0
Instrumental	54	41

Graphs not available in PDF form

Most of the specific touch types have similar percentages when comparing novels for the adult audience against those for the young adult audience. The types of touch where there is a difference in percentage of touch that is greater than 5% according to intended audience are support (7%) and affection (6%). All the other specific types of touch have less than a 3% difference when the data is analyzed according to intended audience.

It is interesting to note that while there are more support touches in the books written for an adult audience as compared to a young adult audience, there are more affectionate touches in books written for a young adult audience.

### **Specific Books**

The data were compared by specific titles to determine if there were any trends. The following table provides a count of how many instances of primary touch and specific touch were recorded for each novel.

Table 5 and 6

### **Same story different intended audience**

A comparison of the same folk tales rewritten for different audiences shows the following results.

The story of “Tam Lin,” an old Scottish ballad was rewritten for both adults and young adults. Pamela Dean wrote the book Tam Lin for an adult audience. Elizabeth Marie Pope wrote The Perilous Gard for a young adult audience. A comparison of primary touch for these two books is as follows.

Graphs not available in PDF form

The most interesting aspect is that while the book written for an adult audience has more positive touch, the book written for young adults includes more control touches. This can be explained by looking at the plot of these two books. The adult retelling focuses more on the love story. The Perilous Gard, written for a young adult audience, focuses more on the fairy folks' violent ritual of paying the teind. In this story paying the teind means sacrificing a human life in order to get his force and power.

Also, notable is that sexual touch occurs more often in the adult retelling as opposed to the young adult retelling. One cannot infer that young adult books have less sexual touch based on this analysis. The Perilous Gard, the young adult book, was written in 1974, and Tam Lin was written in 1991. This difference in publication date may influence this statistic more than the specific audience for which the book was written.

A comparison of specific touch for these two books is as follows.

Graphs not available in PDF form

Looking at specific touch types in the adult retelling of “Tam Lin” as compared to the young adult retelling reiterates the idea that plot influences the type of touch presented in a novel.

The adult version, which explores the love story in more depth, has more togetherness, affection, nonsexual body parts, kissing and playful aggression touch. The young adult retelling, which focuses on paying the tiend, has more compliance, violent, attention getting and instrumental touch.

Most of the types of touch that are more prevalent in each type of retelling are easily explained by the primary plot for the novels. However, the fact that the young adult retelling has more instrumental touch makes sense only when one considers that the story is set during a time period when women needed help getting dressed because of the fashions of the day. Also, the main character’s hand is sliced, and she receives medical attention.

Finally, the comparisons of greeting and departure touches are interesting. The adult version has simple greetings but the young adult version does not. A possible explanation is that the adult version takes place in a college setting. The initial meetings of new roommates and hall mates are ritualistic and formal with lots of handshaking. Once the characters get to know each other, they do not have simple departures. Instead, they have departures with affection.

The explanation for why there is more greeting with affection in the young adult retelling is plot related. The main character is reunited with her father and sister at the end of the book. This is where the greeting with affection occurs.

“Snow White and Rose Red” was also retold in novel format for both an adult and young adult audience. Patricia Wrede wrote the book intended for an adult audience, and Regina Doman wrote the book intended for a young adult audience.

A comparison of primary touch for these two books follows.

Graphs not available in PDF form

The two largest percentages of primary touch for both audiences are similar. Positive touch for the young adult audience is 37% compared to 42% for the adult audience. Control touch is the same for the young adult audience and the adult audience at 34%.

The differences in primary touch types are that the young adult retelling has sexual, playful and ritual touch, but the adult retelling does not have any of these types of touch. However, the adult retelling has hybrid touch and the young adult retelling does not.

A possible explanation for this is the time period in which these two versions are set. The young adult retelling, which includes sexual and playful touch, is set in the present. These types of touch are prevalent and accepted in our society so the author probably felt comfortable including them in the story. The adult retelling is set in Elizabethan times. The mores of that time period were different than today. Therefore, the author may have felt it was inappropriate to include these types of touch.

Task related touches are found more often in the young adult retelling. Accidental touch is found more often in the adult retelling. Once again the explanation for this may be plot related. In the young adult version, there are more instances where medical touch is used. In the adult retelling, there are several instances where a character “accidentally” runs into another character. Since the definition of accidental touch is touches that are perceived as unintentional, these instances were coded as accidental touch.

A comparison of specific touch for these two books follows.

Graphs not available in PDF form

When looking at the graph, one quickly notices that the young adult version includes a lot more violent touch. The adult version includes a larger amount of compliance and attention getting touch. The larger amount of violent touch makes sense when one considers the primary subject of the young adult novel is the search for the murderer of a Catholic Priest.

Another interesting difference is that 5% of touch in the adult version is coded as appreciation. No touch in the young adult version is coded as appreciation. Once again, the explanation of this could be the time period in which each of these books is set. As sexual harassment has become a predominant issue in our society, are we less likely to show appreciation with a touch and is this apprehension being reflected in our literature?

### **Violent touch**

Violence is a pressing issue in our society. Books were analyzed for violent touch. Each title was analyzed for percentage of total touch that was coded as violent. The titles and percentages are as follows.

Graphs not available in PDF form

Jack the Giant Killer was found to have the largest percentage of violent touch. There are several possible explanations for this. First of all, this novel is based on a folk tale that's main theme is conquest. Another possibility is it is the only book that was written by a male. Finally, it's setting in the present time period could influence the amount of violence described in the book.

It is interesting to note that of the three books that are set in the present, two of the novels (Jack the Giant Killer and Snow White and Rose Red by Regina Doman) are among the top three books with the highest percentage of violent touch. Tam Lin is the novel that is set in the present that has limited violent touch. This may be explained if one remembers that most of this novel follows the romantic relationships of three college coeds.

After reading all these books, I remember Beauty, Tam Lin and Briar Rose's main plots being a love story. It is interesting to note that these three novels have the lowest percentage of violent touch.

### **Sexual touch**

Books were analyzed for sexual touch. Each title was analyzed for percentage of total touch that was coded as sexual. The titles and percentages are in the following graph.

Graphs not available in PDF form

It is important to note that both books written in the 1970's were in the lower half of the percentage of sexual touch in each book. While Beauty is a love story, sexual touch in it is lower than the other love story retellings, which were written in the late 1980's and 1990's. It makes me question if this renowned book would be published with it's limited sexual touch if it had just been written.

The most interesting comparison is when one compares the amount of sexual touch to violent touch in each book. Jack the Giant Killer has the largest percentage of violent touch and one of the smallest percentages of sexual touch. Tam Lin has the largest percentage of sexual touch and one of the smallest percentages of violent touch. It seems the higher the percentage of sexual touch, the lower the percentage of violent touch, and the higher the percentage of violent touch, the lower the percentage of sexual touch.

### **Summary of Results**

Touch found in these novels somewhat replicates the amount of touch experienced in real life according to data from Jones' study. In this study, it was found that the audience for whom a novel is written rarely influenced the type of touch described in the books. The only types of specific touch that seem to be audience related are support and affectionate touch. Support touch is found more often in books written for adults and affectionate touch is described more often in books written for young adults. When looking at particular books, it is not the audience for whom the story is written that determines the types of touch that are described. Instead, it is the plot of the story that determines the types of touch that are exhibited. Finally, books with a larger percentage of sexual touch have a lower percentage of violent touch, and books with a larger percentage of violent touch have a lower percentage of sexual touch.

### **Implications**

Touch in novels somewhat reflects what was experienced by Jones' study participants in real life. I don't think authors consciously try to replicate types and amounts of touch in their novels to real life. Instead, it could be an unplanned outcome from their attempt to describe a world, even if it is a fairy world, based on their experiences. Interviews of authors should take place to see if they are consciously aware of the types of touch they describe in their stories.

Touch occurred more often at departures than during greetings. An implication of this is that touch could be a means of connecting physically with someone who has just connected with emotionally.

Some of the books I read that had less sexual touch left more sexual images in my mind. One should understand that context analysis of the amount and types of touch is not an adequate measure of assessing what types of images are formed in one's mind while reading a story.

While I expected the number of touches in types of touch to be different for books written for an adult audience compared to those written for a young adult audience, this was not evident. Instead, it seems that touch types are more related to plot than the intended age of the reader. Books about the quest for power included more control touches, while love stories had more positive and sexual touch. Perhaps this is the case because all ages experience most of the types of touch used in this study. In real life, it is usually the situation that determines what type of touch is exhibited, not the age of the

participant. Therefore, it would make sense that it is the plot of the story, not the age of the intended audience that determines which types of touch are described in the story.

### **Suggestions for Further Research**

Since there is limited research on touch in literature, there are many areas that could and should be researched.

It would be interesting to replicate this study using books written for adults that have main characters who are above the age of thirty-five as compared to books written for young adults that have characters under the age of twenty-five. If differences were found in the data, one might conclude that age of the main characters could have a larger impact on the amount of touch included in a book rather than the intended audience.

Another study would be to compare these fairy tale retellings written for a young adult audience with fantasy novels that are perceived to be read more by males, such as retellings of King Arthur, to determine differences in touch based on the perceived gender of the majority of the audience.

Another possible study would be to have people read all these books and rate them according to how much sexual touch they thought occurred in the books. Then one would want to compare these ratings to the actual number of touches to determine if the books with the most sexual touch were perceived as the most sexual. This same process could be adapted for any of the primary or specific touch types.

It is interesting to note that while there are more support touches in the books written for an adult audience as compared to a young adult audience, there are more affectionate touches in books written for a young adult audience. It would be interesting to research this statistic to see if it is similar to what adults and young adults experience in

the real world. If it is similar, a possible meaning is that adolescents may be receiving affection from their families, friends, and significant others, but they may not be receiving touch at times when they need support.

The instances of touch used in this paper can be analyzed further. One could look at each instance of touch and code it according to who initiates the touch based on gender. Then, one could analyze the data to determine if certain types of touch are more likely to be initiated by one gender as compared to another. For example, one could determine if females initiate more violent touch than males.

Another way to expand on the instances of touch found in these novels is to look at the relationship of those involved in each instance of touch. One could code each instance of touch into the following categories: friends, lovers, parent and child, siblings acquaintances, foes and strangers. It would be interesting to see what type of relationship is more likely to exhibit each type of primary and specific touch.

These recommendations for further research on touch are only a beginning. Touch should be analyzed further in novels for both adults and young adults. However, research on touch in literature should not be limited to these areas. Children's literature, both juvenile fiction and picture books, should be researched.

### Literature Cited

- Colton, H. C. (1983). The gift of touch: How physical contact improves communication, pleasure and health. New York : Seaview/Putnam.
- Dalkey, K. (1988). The nightingale. New York : Ace Books.
- Dean. P. (1991). Tam Lin. New York : Tom Doherty Associates.
- De Lint, C. (1987). Jack the giant killer. New York : Ace Books.
- Doman, R. (1997). Snow White and Rose Red. Minto, ND : Bethlehem Books.
- Harlow, H. F. (1958). The nature of love. American Psychologist, 13, 673-685.
- Holsti, O. (1969). Content analysis for the social sciences and humanities.  
Reading, MA : Addison-Wesley Publishing Company.
- Jones, S. E. (1990). Communicating with touch. In J. A. Devito & M. L. Hecht, (Eds.) The nonverbal communication reader. (p. 233-244). Prospect Heights, IL : Waveland Press.
- Jones, S. E. (1994). The right touch: Understanding and using the language of physical contact. Cresskill, NJ : Hampton Press.
- Jones, S. E. & Yarbrough, A. E. (1985). A naturalistic study of the meanings of touch. Communications Monographs, 52, 19-56.
- Krippendorff, K. (1980). Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology. Beverly Hills : Sage Publications.
- McKinley, R. (1978). Beauty. New York : Harper Trophy.
- Napoli, D. J. (1993). The magic circle. New York : Puffin Books.

Napoli, D. J. (1996). Zel. New York : Puffin Books.

Pope, E. M. (1974). The perilous gard. New York : Puffin Books.

Robson, C. (1993). Real world research. Oxford, UK : Blackwell.

Spitz, R. A. (1945). Hospitalism: A follow-up report. The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child, 1, 53-74.

The sun, the moon and the stars. (1987, March 1), Kirkus Reviews, 55, 338.

Willis, F. N. & Hoffman, G. E. (1975). Development of tactile patterns in relation to age, sex and race. Developmental Psychology, 11, 866.

Willis, F. N. & Reeves, D. L. (1976). Touch interaction in junior high school students in relation to sex and race. Developmental Psychology, 12, 91-92.

Willis, F. N., Reeves, D. L. & Buchanan, D. R. (1976). Interpersonal touch in high school relative to sex and race. Perceptual and Motor Skills, 43, 843-847.

Wrede, P. (1989). Snow White and Rose Red. New York : Tom Doherty Associates.

Yolen, J. (1992). Briar Rose. New York : Tom Doherty Associates.

