

Charles Perrault and the Evolution of “Little Red Riding Hood”

In the first edition of *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* (1812), the Brothers Grimm explain that they took pains to convey the tales as simply and unchanged as possible and praised Charles Perrault for similarly retelling his *contes* almost unchanged. The brothers clearly thought that Perrault and they themselves were attuned in their decision to faithfully transpose folktales into writing, and they politely scoffed at the notion that Perrault invented those tales (Grimm, 8–9).

Such praise may seem misplaced. Perrault was no folklorist, and his tales are highly stylized. Moreover, Perrault's dabbling with tales was itself part of a literary argument. In the so-called quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns, Perrault argued against the authority of the classics in favor of the prevailing enlightenment in the kingdom of Louis XIV (*Parallele des Anciens et des Modernes*, 4 vols., 1688–1697). In this strain, he highlighted the achievements of contemporary illustrious Frenchmen (*Les hommes illustres qui ont paru en France pendant le XVII^e siècle*, 2 vols., 1696–1700). Perrault also argued that the folktales current in his time—which he called *contes d'ogre et de fée* (ogre tales and fairy tales), *contes de vieille* (old-women's tales), and, of course, *contes de ma mère l'Oye* (Mother Goose tales)—are not “pure trifles” because, unlike the old fables devised by the Ancients, they contain useful morals (Perrault 181–83, 217).¹ As the dedication of his famous book of Mother Goose tales with morals (*Histoires ou contes du temps passé, avec des moralités: Contes de ma mère l'Oye*, 1697) reiterates, there are sensible lessons to draw

from even the humble folktales recounted among the "lesser families" of the realm, despite the "childish simplicity" of those "trifles" (Perrault 241-42).²

In short, although Perrault was no folklorist, he did address folktales in order to raise the morally worthy "tales our forebears invented for their children" above the classic fables of the Ancients (Perrault 183). And not only did Perrault argue for the value of those old women's tales "told daily to children by their nannies and grandmothers" (181-82), but he also offered the occasional folkloristic note. An ogre, he explained, is a "wild man who ate little children" (217).³ He also took the trouble to note (in the 1695 manuscript) that in retellings of "Little Red Riding Hood" it is usual to pronounce the wolf's final phrase "loudly to scare the child as if the wolf was going to eat it" (Perrault 256n1; Barchilon 133).

Also noteworthy, the Brother Grimms' appraisal of the closeness of Perrault's *contes* to the oral tradition finds support in Perrault's own time. One close ally, Marie-Jeanne L'Héritier de Villandon (a literary tale-teller in her own right), opined that Perrault recounts "Donkey Skin" with as much "naïveté" as her own nanny used to tell it to her (cited in Perrault 184). And a hostile critic deplored that Perrault did not pour some of his *bon esprit* on the fable of "Donkey Skin" instead of retelling it much as numerous imbecilic nannies and young children babbled it throughout centuries ("Lettres," 99-100). This consensus regarding a laboriously versified tale ought to apply (all the more so!) to the simpler prose texts too.

Anyway, I suggest that the general closeness of Perrault's *contes* to the oral tradition is a verifiable matter. In the following discussion I focus on the relationship between Perrault's "Le Petit Chaperon rouge" and the tradition of "Little Red Riding Hood." Unlike other *contes* by Perrault, "Le Petit Chaperon rouge" bears no known literary influences. It is the first known variant of tale type 333 (Uther, 224-25), which makes an inquiry into its relationship with the oral tradition all the more relevant.

Chronology and Beyond

But caution is in order. You might justifiably ask, Is the relationship between Perrault's *contes* and the oral tradition a verifiable matter? After all, because folklorists did not start collecting oral tales before the nineteenth century, Perrault's seventeenth-century texts predate most folkloric variants by more than a century. So are they comparable at all? Is there not the risk of anachronism in this approach?

There would, indeed, be a risk of anachronism if I proposed to address a string of dated texts that could be arranged in chronological order and then

I ignored that order. Alas, when we address folktales, we cannot reason in terms of a chronological chain of texts. Most obviously, because oral utterances vanish as soon as they are pronounced, the availability of dated variants depends on the happenstance of tale recording. More important, oral tales come in many variants, none of which is more authoritative than the rest. Folktales are rather like capacious blueprints variously reflected in myriad retellings. Hence no single retelling, or variant, ever represents a tale—no folktale, in other words, is ever a fixed text.⁴ And because any variant is but a local retelling (among many other retellings) of a given tale, the fortuitous time when it happened to be couched in writing cannot date the folktale itself. The bottom line is that textual chronology is not a safe guide in the thickets of oral tradition.⁵

Therefore, addressing folktales requires different thinking. Given that the hallmark of folklore is constant retellings, addressing folktales requires tackling tale variation. And tackling tale variation entails grappling with symbolic equivalences. Consider this basic question: How can a folktale remain recognizable in the midst of constant variation? Obviously, its myriad variants must be roughly equivalent insofar as they convey the same tale. As Alan Dundes points out, if different motifs can fill the same slot in parallel variants of a tale—if the story works with any of them—then a semantic comparison of those “allomotifs” should clarify why they are permutable (321). In other words, comparing the equivalent motifs in different variants allows us to grasp the semantic field they variously convey. I use this approach to figure out how the allomotifs in Perrault’s text and in the folk variants of “Little Red Riding Hood” relate to one another.⁶ In addition, because Perrault’s text is a dated singularity frozen in time, the examination of the *logical* transformations in allomotifs has *chronological* implications after all. I return to this matter in the section “Perrault’s Craft: Euphemism and Wordplay.”

Empiricism to Semantics

The semantic approach I advise relies on paying attention to tale variations. I start with an empirical study published by the folklorist Paul Delarue in 1951. Delarue noted that nearly all of Perrault’s *contes* have matching texts in the French oral tradition. More important, he established that those oral texts fit into three categories: (1) oral variants bearing only independent traits that owe nothing to Perrault’s *contes*, (2) hybrid variants showing the typical independent traits while also bearing traces of Perrault’s influence, and (3) retellings clearly derived from Perrault texts taken from chapbooks and other literary works (Delarue, “Contes merveilleux: Introduction,” 199). In the case

of "Little Red Riding Hood," Delarue showed that twenty out of thirty-four oral variants found in the French tradition bear no motifs resembling the contents of Perrault's text, twelve variants display a mix of independent motifs and Perrault-derived imagery, and only two variants are copycat retellings of Perrault's text (Delarue, *Conte populaire*, 381–83; see Delarue, *Borzoï Book*, 381, and Delarue, "Story," 17). Overall, Delarue pinpointed an oral tradition of texts collected in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that is quite independent of Perrault's seventeenth-century text. Delarue also showed that a few oral variants testify to the feedback influence of Perrault's text on the oral tradition (cf. Tenèze 46–47). Both findings are relevant. They suggest that although Perrault's text is not the source of the tradition of "Little Red Riding Hood," it has a definite place within that tradition.

Specifically, Delarue found that Perrault's text differs from the independent oral variants in two ways. On the one hand, only "Le Petit Chaperon rouge" and the oral variants under its influence feature the *chaperon rouge* and the scene of flower picking along the way to granny's house. On the other hand, Perrault's text lacks three ubiquitous motifs shared by nearly all the oral variants. These motifs are (1) a choice between taking the path of pins or the path of needles to granny's house in the woods, (2) a cannibal meal in which the girl partakes of the dead grandmother's flesh and blood in the forest hut, and (3) allusions to the wolf's hairy parts in the famous dialogue in bed. Delarue suggested that Perrault eliminated these motifs on account of their "puerility," "cruelness," and "impropriety," respectively (*Borzoï Book*, 383).

Yet, despite claiming that Perrault changed the oral texts in two ways—by subtracting some motifs and by adding others—Delarue maintained that Perrault managed to keep "in the tale a folk flavor and freshness" ("Petit Chaperon," 260). Although this assessment echoes L'Héritier's assessment on the naïveté pervading "Donkey Skin," it also raises a crucial question: How could Perrault's twice-mutilated text—deprived of its folk motifs and adorned with invented imagery—possibly keep a "folk flavor"?

Clearly, Delarue's assessment falls short of an explanation. Delarue, a no-nonsense positivistic scholar, did not imagine the possibility of semantic equivalences. He took motifs at face value, without ever wondering about meanings. Alternatively, I suggest that reasoning along semantic-equivalence lines allows us to ask whether Perrault's new images might actually replace the expunged motifs—whether, in other words, Perrault's presumed inventions and omissions might amount to translations. Once we consider the thematic variations among texts from a semantic perspective, the way is hopefully open for finding the red thread that binds together all the variants of "Little Red Riding Hood." By then, the position of Perrault's text within the wider tradition should hopefully be clearer.

A Red Thread

Before we proceed, take good note that stories about a girl in red who meets the wolf have an ancient pedigree. A didactic poem titled "About a Girl Saved from Wolf Cubs" (Ziolkowski 103; cf. Berlioz 45–46), written in 1022 by Egbert, the schoolmaster at the cathedral school of Liège, suggests that in the early eleventh century a story about a girl in red who meets a wolf was known to clerics and peasants alike. Admittedly, Egbert's story is about a 5-year-old girl who is protected from wolf pups by the power of her red *baptism* tunic and who is thus saved by the grace of *God*. This pious story is a far cry from the modern tale about a pubertal girl who joins a wolf in bed. But, as Jan Ziolkowski notes, Egbert could have deliberately "expurgated" for children a story rife with sexual implications (116). It is true that such processes are well attested in our own time. Perrault himself made the tale's protagonist look childishly innocent (Simonsen 62). And, reportedly, a twentieth-century cohort of Canadian undergraduates acquainted with the story in children's books have presumed that the girl is about 8 years old (Nodelman, "Canadian Fairy Tale," 23)—a decent match for Egbert's 5-year-old *puella*. Clearly, the meeting of girls in red with wolves accommodates various degrees of sexual explicitness.

Bearing this point in mind, I turn to Ziolkowski's remark that "the redness emerges as the central mystery of the story" in the Latin hexameters and in the modern tale. Intriguingly, Ziolkowski speculates that the motif of the red hood constitutes an unbroken "red thread" in the story across time (111, 114). Ziolkowski is quite clear that Egbert's poem is not "the ancestor of Perrault"; still, he suggests that Egbert's tale—the unknown oral tradition it refers to—could well have its place "somewhere on the family tree" of "Little Red Riding Hood" (123, cf. 114).

This is an interesting thought. Redness is indeed front and center in the modern story of "Little Red Riding Hood," which first appears fully formed in Perrault's "Le Petit Chaperon rouge" and then reappears transformed in the Grimms' variant, "Rotkäppchen" (1812). These two literary texts have shaped the modern story as we know it. But again, as Delarue showed, a richer story used to be told in the oral traditions of France, Italy, and the Tyrol region. Delarue is adamant that the red headdress is "peculiar to the Perrault version, not a general trait" of the oral tradition (*Borzoï Book*, 382). Does this mean that the redness in the modern story is Perrault's own invention after all? Or, alternatively, as Jacques Berlioz asks, could Perrault have resuscitated the old theme "unwittingly, by intuition, or else by means of an oral tradition that still eludes us?" (Berlioz 259).

Berlioz could be right. Indeed, the old theme may have surfaced in the collective consciousness even after Perrault's lifetime. In the 1760s a highly

publicized string of murders of mostly women in the Gévaudan region was credited to a fabled wolf. At the time, printings of an elegy for a pubertal girl supposedly killed while wearing the red costume of her first communion, along with drawings of a pubescent naked girl mangled by the male beast, made the rounds (Velay-Vallantin, "Conte mystique," 36–41). Thus, less than one century after Perrault depicted the wolf devouring a red-capped girl in bed, a spate of wolf attacks again conjured the specter of an act of lupine rape regarding a girl in red. What is more, the girl who was supposedly attacked while wearing the red dress of her first communion looks like the grown-up version of Egbert's *puella*. Therefore, Catherine Velay-Vallantin thinks that the author of the elegy for the girl in red may have been privy to Egbert's story (46). That is possible, of course. But, to my mind, the fact that the core leitmotif of a girl in red who meets the wolf variously surfaced in (otherwise unrelated) eleventh-, seventeenth-, and eighteenth-century writings also suggests that a folk theme of ruddy encounters with wolves (including wolves, were-wolves, and lupine sexual predators) persisted across centuries. The following discussion lends support to this possibility.

Perrault and the Oral Tradition

To get started, consider the available options in assessing the position of Perrault's text in relation to the oral tradition. First, there is the notional possibility that Perrault's text might have started the oral tradition of "Little Red Riding Hood." We can discard this scenario. Barely one century elapsed between Perrault's early manuscript (1695) and the days when the instructors of the oldest known tale-tellers walked the earth. For example, Nannette Lévesque—an illiterate tale-teller from the Ardèche region, who in 1874 provided an oral variant, "The Girl and the Wolf," to folklorist Victor Smith—was certifiably born in 1803 (Tenèze and Delarue 4, 11–13, 99–103). Therefore she must have learned her traditional lore from people who were active by the end of the eighteenth century. If we wished to hypothesize that the French oral tradition stems from Perrault's text, then we would have to admit that within one century, in the illiterate backwaters of France, a literary text established a tradition that (as Delarue showed) lacked Perrault's imagery while hinging on a stable set of motifs not seen in Perrault's text—a mind-boggling scenario.

Alternatively, if Perrault's text is not the source of the tradition of "Little Red Riding Hood," then it has a place within that tradition. It is entirely possible that Perrault crafted his *conte* out of unknown seventeenth-century variants bearing a family resemblance—in Ludwig Wittgenstein's sense of a "complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing;

sometimes overall similarities, sometimes similarities of detail" (1:66)—to the nineteenth-century variants known to us.⁷ Alas, we cannot compare "Le Petit Chaperon rouge" with unrecorded seventeenth-century variants. But keep in mind that the folk motifs missing in Perrault's text prove remarkably stable in the oral tradition; they are featured in the earliest recorded independent variants, such as Lévesque's text, and in a late batch of texts collected in the 1950s, which are otherwise under the influence of Perrault (Tenèze 46–47). Such dogged persistence is surely not the product of happenstance; rather, it must have deep roots in the oral tradition.

So it may be fruitful to suppose, for the sake of argument, that those persistent folk motifs were already a feature of the oral variants in the late seventeenth century. In the following discussion I probe this possibility as I discuss the symbolic equivalences between Perrault's text and the modern oral variants. I hope to show that Perrault's distinctive images are creative adaptations of the folk motifs still displayed in the modern variants and that those folk motifs do not have a likely source in Perrault's imagery. Then, once that issue is settled, I take a panoramic view of the "Little Red Riding Hood" tradition and try to assess the role that Perrault's variant played in the evolution of this tale up to the present day. Here I advisedly use the word *evolution*. Evolution by cultural selection, as we might call it, is bound to happen whenever lore is transmitted with variations, and some variants fare better than others. This is usually the case with traditional lore. Arguably, each theme evolves in the interplay between its recreations by tale-tellers and the selective receptions by historically changing audiences (Vaz da Silva, "Tradition"). I suggest that (1) Perrault used the tale-teller's prerogative of appropriating folktales according to his own agenda and his target audience and that (2) the imagery he used in "Le Petit Chaperon rouge" was instrumental in transposing the old oral theme into its modern multimedia avatars.

Perrault's Craft: Euphemism and Wordplay

Let us turn to the allomotifs in Perrault's text and the modern oral variants. The story told by Nanette Lévesque in 1874 provides a good introduction to the independent oral tradition. Consider the beginning of Lévesque's "The Girl and the Wolf":

A little girl was hired out to a household to watch two cows. When her time was up, she left. Her master gave her a small cheese and a piece of bread:

"Here you go, little girl, take this to your mother, this cheese and this piece of bread, it'll be your supper when you meet your mother."

The girl takes the cheese and the bread. She went into the woods and met the wolf, who asked her:

"Where are you going, little girl?"

"I'm going to join my mother, my work contract is up."

"Did they pay you?"

"Yes, they paid me. And they gave me a small bread and also a cheese."

"Which side will you take as you go?"

"I'll take the side of the pins. What about you?"

"I'll take the side of the needles."

The wolf started running, got there first, killed the mother and ate her—ate a half of her. Then he lighted a good fire and cooked the other half and shut the door. Finally he took to the mother's bed. (Tenèze and Delarue 99)

The details in this variant are as distant from the familiar images in Perrault's story as you might dare imagine. Yet, despite the differences between the two texts, Lévesque's variant helpfully turns Perrault's rather vague "little village girl" into a more tangible character. The end of a time when a "little girl" must watch cows matches the fact that, in rural France, children from ages 7 to 14 used to work as animal keepers (Verdier, "Little Red," 106-7)—a time appropriately dubbed *au champ les vaches* ("at the fields [with] the cows," Zonabend 293). Then, in the winter of their fifteenth birthday, girls would spend time with the seamstress and would be introduced to the status of marriageable young women (Verdier, *Façons*, 195-208). As anthropologist Mary Douglas sums it up, an "informal system of age-classes" was in place; and, at the transition between two age classes, "staying in the dressmaker's house was like a period of ritual seclusion, a light-hearted time of initiation" into "the frivolous period of courtship, the time of pins and temporary attachments" (4-5). Just so, in the story the girl who did her cattle-herding time then goes into the woods, there to find pins and needles and to meet the wolf. So this folktale variant speaks about coming of age by means of imagery that would be meaningful to its contemporary rural audience. Bear in mind that the French expression "to have seen the wolf, applied to a girl means she has had amorous affairs" (*Dictionnaire de la langue française*, s.v. "Loup"), which is also Perrault's point.

The two variants are close to one another in that they follow the same plot line—the girl meets the wolf, they take different paths to the old woman's house, the girl slips into bed with the wolf, and she gets eaten. But this common framework actually emphasizes the differences between the two texts. Only Perrault mentions the red hood and the flower-picking scene; and only

Lévesque mentions the paths of pins and needles, the cannibal meal ("You are eating your mother's flesh and you are drinking her blood"), and the wolf's hairiness ("Oh mother, how bushy you are!"). According to my hypothesis, the distinct motifs featured in Perrault's text are semantic transformations of those featured in the oral variants.

Recall Delarue's argument to the effect that the ubiquitous oral motifs not featured in "Le Petit Chaperon rouge" have something in common: they are rough images that would have proved embarrassing in Perrault's courtly milieu. Therefore, Delarue proposes, Perrault got rid of them as he adapted the folktale for a refined readership.⁸ He dropped the popular motif of a choice between paths of pins and needles on account of its "puerility," expunged the cannibal scene because of its "cruelness" (also "savagery" and "primitiveness"), and elided the frequent reference to the wolf's hairy parts because of its "impropriety" (Delarue, *Conte populaire*, 383; Delarue, "Story," 20; cf. Delarue, "Contes merveilleux: Petit Chaperon," 251–55, 260). As Cristina Bacchilega notes, all the omitted elements are ultimately "related to flesh and sexuality" (*Postmodern Fairy Tales*, 159). All in all, Delarue's proposition that Perrault got rid of these motifs as he adapted the folktale for a courtly social milieu is most plausible. But Delarue misses one important point. The likelihood that Perrault got rid of those awkward images does not mean that he dropped the underlying ideas. Arguably, the opposite is true: Perrault used alternative images to convey his own take on the underlying ideas.

Let us start with the motif of the wolf's hairiness. In the context of a meeting of the sexes in bed, the discovery of the presumed grandma's hairiness is a broad hint for (among other things) the sighting of the wolf's maleness. Pointedly, a French variant named "Lhabit de fer" ("The Iron Dress") specifies that the girl spots the beast's "great tail" in bed (Delarue, *Conte populaire*, 377); and "El cappelin rosso," a Tyrolean variant, informs us that "Little Red Cap got into bed and noticed something hairy [*etwas Haariges*]" (Schneller 10).⁹ The apparent obfuscation about a hairy something—tail or phallus?—is really straightforward because "tail" is a long-standing euphemism for the phallus (see, e.g., Dumézil 182).

Clearly, Delarue has a point when he proposes that Perrault omitted this motif for the sake of "decency" ("Contes merveilleux: Petit Chaperon," 260). But he misses the fact that Perrault does not simply abolish the hairiness motif; on the same narrative slot, Perrault depicts the undressed girl getting into bed, where "she was quite astounded to see how her grandmother looked in her *deshabille*" ("elle fut bien étonnée de voir comment sa Mère-grand était faite en son *deshabillé*," Perrault 255). Perrault's expression is enticingly suggestive in French, which is why Marc Soriano notes that it is borderline saucy (156) and Jacques Barchilon likewise flags it as an "ambiguity of expression" (91; cf. Hennard 84).

Although the girl's surprise at how grandmother "était faite" refers to how granny looked, Perrault arguably plays on the literal meaning of *faite*—"made," hence "shaped"—to foreground the bedfellow's peculiar shape, thus hinting a male shape under the drapes. And although *déshabillé* is plainly an ironic reference to the semitransparent gowns in use by coquette ladies in Perrault's courtly milieu, Jennifer Schacker and Christine Jones rightly note that the word *déshabillé* in this context can be taken as "meaning 'completely undressed' or 'naked'" (7).

So, by dint of clever wordplay, Perrault insinuates that when the naked girl gets into bed, she meets the wolf's male nakedness—which is precisely what the illustration of the bed scene in the original edition of "Le Petit Chaperon rouge" suggests. This image, Catherine Orenstein notes, is "far more sexually suggestive" than Gustave Doré's latter-day illustration, for it "shows the wolf, without disguise, under the sheets with the girl" (25). Incidentally, note how the image—in line with the textual play between *déshabillé* and nakedness—displays the undressed girl in a *déshabillé* (fig. 1).

So it is true, as Delarue implies, that Perrault obfuscates the wolf's sexual body for the sake of propriety. But it is also true, as Delarue failed to acknowledge, that Perrault offers broad hints for anyone conversant in the art of double entendre.

Actually, Perrault appears intent on making sure that no intelligent grown-up can possibly miss his point. The morality he appends to the story—



Fig. 1. Engraving by Antoine Clouzier, in Perrault's *Histoires ou contes du temps passé: avec des moralitez* (Paris: Barbin, 1697), 47.

an accretion rarely seen in children's books (Orenstein 38)—explicates that the wolf is of the anthropomorphic kind, which adds a metaphoric level of understanding to the literal message of the story. This exegetic key invites seasoned listeners and readers to realize that the scene of a wolf eating a young woman—in a bed!—recounts a thinly disguised sexual violation (cf. Johnson).

And, one step ahead, Perrault's wolf-man arguably carries an extra layer of meaning that refers to popular traditions. Remarkably, the twofold dimension of the wolf-man's transgression—alimentary and sexual—meets the reputation of werewolves. For example, a high-profile judicial case in sixteenth-century Germany concerns Peter Stump, a supposed werewolf, whom a contemporary pamphlet accuses of (among other atrocious acts) both raping a woman and "most ravenously" devouring her flesh, which he "esteemed both sweet and dainty in taste" (Summers 257). Or take the fact that in the folklore of the Isle of Guernsey, where a great eater was proverbially said to eat like a *varou*, the expression "aller en *varouverie*" also entails "debauchery" (204). The point is that werewolves are supposedly ravenous creatures in both the alimentary and the sexual senses—in both the literal and the figurative senses of the verb *manger*, "to eat"—and Perrault plays on precisely this duality to depict an anthropomorphic wolf that eats a young woman in bed. Therefore it is hard not to agree with Orenstein when she states that Perrault's text "resonated with the meaning of the werewolf" (Orenstein 99; and see Zipes, "Trials," 20).

This is not really surprising because, in fact, the very text chosen by Delarue to represent the independent oral tradition portrays the wolf as a werewolf. Consider the beginning of "Tale of Grandmother," a variant given to folklorist Achille Millien by Louis and François Briffault around 1885:

It was a woman who had baked bread. She said to her daughter: "Go carry this hot loaf and a bottle of milk to your grandma."

So the little girl set off. At a crossroads she met the *bzou*, who said to her:

"Where are you going?"

"I'm taking a hot loaf of bread and a bottle of milk to my grandma."

"What path are you taking," said the *bzou*, "the Needles path, or the Pins path?"

"The Needles path," said the little girl.

"Well, I'll take the Pins path."

The little girl enjoyed herself picking up needles. Meanwhile the *bzou* arrived at her grandmother's, killed her, put some of her flesh in the crate and a bottle of her blood on the sink. (Delarue, "Contes merveilleux: Petit Chaperon," 221–22; *Conte populaire*, 373–74)

This variant testifies to the fact that in the French oral tradition the forest's resident ogre often comes across as a werewolf. It hardly needs saying that whereas Perrault's wolfish man is readily explainable as a clever euphemism for the werewolf, it would be absurd to suggest that the ancient werewolf belief derives from Perrault's wolf-man. So the imagery used by Perrault derives from the independent folk motifs rather than vice-versa. In "Le Petit Chaperon rouge" the werewolf of the popular imagination, reputedly cannibal and sexually deviant (Orenstein 96–103), becomes the "charming, handsome frequenter of the bluestocking salons who seduced and deflowered young girls of the upper crust" (93). Perrault, by means of wordplay and euphemism, repackages a folk character reeking of gore to suit a delicate readership.

Bearing this lesson in mind, let us consider whether Perrault might have also transformed the pins-and-needles and cannibal-meal motifs into elegant *mots d'esprit*.

Bristling Paths and Flowers

Let us start with the flower-collecting episode. Although Perrault does not use the traditional motif of the girl taking a path of pins or needles to granny's house, he does depict the young woman gathering hazelnuts, running after butterflies, and picking flowers along the path. The hazelnuts and the butterflies are meaningful, of course,¹⁰ but the oral variants influenced by Perrault (along with the artistic tradition of depicting the girl in a flowery setting, even in American cartoons; see Zipes, *Enchanted Screen*, 136, 138, 140) have focused on the flowers. For instance, two variants named "Le Petit Chaperon rouge," collected in the Alps in the 1950s, boil the path-walking scene down to this: "along the way, Little Red Riding Hood amused herself collecting flowers" (Joisten 286–87). In other variants from the same batch, the girl eats strawberries along the way (293–94). The gender-specific significance of these images is highlighted in a rare variant that presents Red Riding Hood as a male. In this variant the boy collects only hazelnuts—no flowers, no red fruits—and then stays out of the wolf's bed (289). The gender implication here is that picking flowers, eating red fruits, and slipping into the wolf's bed are feminine actions. Therefore, walking among pins or needles, picking flowers, and eating red fruits are equivalent statements about a young woman in transit. What do these images mean precisely?

Yvonne Verdier points out that the paths of pins and needles coexist in oral variants with paths of stones, thorns, and brambles, all of which share a crucial feature: they "scratch, prick, cut, and conform with the bloody symbolism of the pins" ("Little Red," 107). "El cappelin rosso" from Tyrol features a choice of going "over the stones or across the thorns" (Schneller 9), which

makes the bleeding implication tangible. Verdier mentions the bloody symbolism of the pins because she happened to study the French rural custom of sending girls who have completed their *au-champ-les-vaches* time to spend the winter of their fifteenth birthday with a seamstress. In her study Verdier finds that the girls' repeated pricking of their fingers by needles and pins throughout this winter of their transition to the status of young women connotes their "fresh menses" (*Façons*, 242). Moreover, Verdier notes that pins and needles convey different aspects of the feminine blood. Whereas pubescent girls could be defined as carriers of pins (and the pin would have been perceived as a symbol of maidenhood), needles—threaded through the eye—refer to "an emphatically sexual symbolism" (Verdier, "Little Red," 106; cf. Verdier, *Façons*, 243–46). Overall, Verdier proposes, the paths of pins and needles convey a sartorial language that would be readily understandable in a traditional milieu. The other scratching items confirm the meaning of this sartorial code.

It bears noting that in the oral corpus the girl chooses pins as well as needles, with no marked preference for either, as though both paths were relevant to her fate in the woods. Indeed, a girl walking along a spiny path will bleed according to the symbolism of pins. As she slips into bed with the wolf at the forest cabin, the girl faces further bleeding according to the symbolism of needles. I suggest that Perrault also conveys this double message—but he says it with flowers.

Indeed, Perrault translates the traditional path of the girl's fresh bleeding—her metaphorical transition to puberty—as a flowers-collecting path. This image literalizes the metaphoric expression *jeune fille en fleurs* (maiden in flower), which designates a menarcheal girl as someone who carries flowers and, indeed, is in bloom. The proximate rationale for this metaphor is that the menarcheal blood foreshadows procreation, just as in plants the flower precedes the fruit.¹¹

Astutely, Perrault uses this metaphor to imply two things. First, the girl taking the forest path is nubile. Second, she who goes down the path decked with flowers heads to her defloration. Hence Perrault's use of flowers precisely matches the sartorial code—the pins as well as the needles—found in the oral variants. Again, Perrault resorts to euphemism to adapt the tale to an elegant standard. His insouciant image of a girl "making nosegays of the little flowers she found" softens the bloody rawness of the young woman's spiny walk in the woods while nonetheless preserving the core meanings of the tale.

Does this mean that Perrault invented the flowers motif? Certainly, he did not invent the metaphor itself, which was widely used before his own day. Laurent Joubert, a sixteenth-century French medical doctor, states that the "menstrual purgations" of women are commonly called "flowers" because they ordinarily precede and prepare for the fruit, which is the child" (99); and he routinely uses the flowers metaphor in his discussions of feminine physiology.

Although it is conceivable that Perrault might have lifted the flowers motif from a local strain in the oral tradition of his time, he could also have been the first tale-teller to use the flowers image in this story. Either way, the point is that the flowery image Perrault embedded in his variant was a popular trope (*Dictionnaire de la langue française*, s.v. "Fleurs"). When Perrault used the metaphor of flowers as an euphemism for the bristling paths of the oral tradition, he was acting like a tale-teller. He gave a traditional yarn a graceful spin, which was preserved in writing for the delight of future generations.

Sans le rouge . . .

Much of the same reasoning goes for the *chaperon rouge*. Delarue allows that Perrault might have drawn on a local seventeenth-century tradition displaying this motif, yet he is adamant that the red cap is "an accessory trait, not connected with the theme" (Delarue, "Contes merveilleux: Petit Chaperon," 251). But why would a motif not connected with the theme actually come to represent it?

The hold of the red hood on the popular imagination is astounding. It has yielded a stream of literary retellings (see Beckett, *Red Riding Hood*; Beckett, *Revisioning*; Mieder; and Zipes, "Trials"), and a cursory glance at a plethora of contemporary filmic transpositions suggests that the mass appeal of the theme hinges on the red garment.¹² Even fairy-tale scholars have been under the spell. The red headgear has found its way into the title of tale type 333 (which used to be "The Glutton" and is now "Little Red Riding Hood"; see Uther 224). Moreover, recent books on fairy tales generally, not just on ATU 333 specifically, display the ubiquitous headgear on the cover (Bacchilega, *Postmodern Fairy Tales*; Bricout; Opie and Opie; Pullman; Uther; Zipes, *Irresistible Fairy Tale*). In short, more than 200 years after Perrault, the red cap is (pace Delarue) very much alive in the contemporary imagination. Why?

In 1993 Jack Zipes shared the following thought: "What attracted me to Little Red Riding Hood in the first place was 'her' commodified appearance as sex object, and how I was socialized to gaze at her gazing at me" ("Prologue," 8). Charles Dickens foregrounded the florid color when he famously confessed to his youthful attraction to the girl: "Good for Christmas-time is the ruddy colour of the cloak, in which . . . Little Red Riding-Hood comes to me one Christmas Eve. . . . She was my first love. I felt that if I could have married Little Red Riding-Hood, I should have known perfect bliss" (Dickens 8–9). The full import of the color red comes out in the 1983 French advertisement for Johnny Walker Red Label whiskey. This advertisement shows a White Riding Hood who is clueless and a wolf who is not interested. The reason for this state of affairs, the caption explains, is that "without the Red everything falls apart" ("sans le Rouge rien ne va plus," Zipes, "Prologue," 11). Obviously, the red hue encapsulates all the

oomph in the story (and whatever is special about the whiskey). Which brings to mind the wisdom in Ziolkowski's quip: "If you take Red Riding Hood out of the title 'Little Red Riding Hood,' what you have left is quite obvious: 'Little'" (123).

Correlatively, because the red hood conveys a definite sex appeal, it makes sense that in the present-day popular culture—always eager to explore the sensuality in the tale—the tendency is rather to leave "Little" out of "Red Riding Hood." All this is to say that if you take the red hue out of the hood, you are left with a little girl. Hence the sexual lure of the red hue has to do with the girl's menarcheal blood—with her "bloom," or her *fleurs*, as Perrault might say.

Angela Carter, in her celebrated rewritings of "Little Red Riding Hood," confirms the semantics of this chromatic interplay between white and red. In the short story "The Company of Wolves," Carter describes a girl whose red shawl, "today, has the ominous if brilliant look of blood on snow." Her cheeks are "an emblematic scarlet and white and she has just started her woman's bleeding, the clock inside her that will strike, henceforward, once a month." This red-on-white pattern connotes a menarcheal girl who "stands and moves within the invisible pentacle of her own virginity" (Carter, *Bloody Chamber*, 113–14). Her age, as the homonymous radio play specifies, is "twelve. Going on thirteen, thirteen going on fourteen . . . the hinge of your life, when you are neither one thing nor the other, nor child nor woman . . . untouched, invincible, immaculate. Like snow." But by the time the girl meets the werewolf, she is "fifteen going on sixteen," her white skin beckons under the red shawl, and her blushing is "like blood leaking into the snow" (Carter, *Curious Room*, 64–65, 75–76). What is more, this leaking blood alludes to the impending sexual initiation. In the short story, when the girl meets the werewolf, she takes off her "scarlet shawl, the colour of poppies, the colour of sacrifices, the colour of her menses"—and also, Carter adds, "red as the blood she must spill" (*Bloody Chamber*, 117).

These few contemporary examples all suppose a metaphorical passage between two life stages, hinging on puberty and sexual initiation—in chromatic terms, a passage from white to red.¹³ Recall that the oral variants depict the same metaphorical passage from white to red as a walk down a pricking path—a bleeding path—to meet the wolf, which Perrault translates as a walk down a path of flowers to the locus of the girl's defloration. A single symbolic pattern, variously recreated, underpins the range of images from the oral variants of yore to Carter's postmodern rewritings.

Carter's Fairy-Tale Archaeology

This being so, it may be worthwhile to have a closer look at Carter's management of the blood theme she inherited from both the oral tradition and the Perrault and Grimm texts (see Hennard 72–77). Bacchilega pertinently points

out that Carter's plural rewritings of "Little Red Riding Hood" are "acts of fairy-tale archeology" that revive "lost voices" and revalue "women's menstrual and birth blood" (*Postmodern Fairy Tales*, 59, 66). In light of this well-taken point, let us look at the bigger pieces of Carter's "Company of Wolves" trilogy—a radio play and a screenplay, the latter evolved from the former (Hennard 71–72).

In the radio play Carter defines the pubertal girl as a "little bud," a "blossom," who says (with a pointed nod to Perrault), "If it were summer, I should pick the flowers and chase the butterflies but now it is winter" (Carter, *Curious Room*, 73). One step ahead, in the screenplay for Neil Jordan's movie (*The Company of Wolves*, 1984), Carter upgrades the blossom girl into a character named Rosaleen. This youngest daughter, in fairy-tale fashion, outperforms her elder sister. After Alice gets killed by a wolf, the maturing Rosaleen gradually replaces her. First, the mother gives Rosaleen the locket she has taken from Alice's corpse (Carter, *Curious Room*, 189). Then, granny, who had planned to weave a shawl for Alice, instead starts knitting a "bright red wool" shawl for Rosaleen (193). And the last step of the symbolic demise of Alice in favor of Rosaleen happens at the graveyard. While granny knits the red shawl, Rosaleen replaces a bunch of "faded daisies" on her sister's grave with roses taken from granny's "best rose-tree" (206); then granny finishes her knitting and Rosaleen wears the red shawl for the first time, after which, the local priest—while cutting away "the old wood so the new branches can flower" (a neat paraphrase for the human drama taking place)—drops an entire branch "over Rosaleen's sister's gravestone, obscuring it completely" (209). Here Alice exits the story and Rosaleen comes of age—metaphorically, white gives way to red.¹⁴ Indeed, the next scene shows Rosaleen, perceptibly older, using red lipstick to draw "a new, red mouth" over her own mouth, which looks "voluptuous" (209). Shortly afterward she goes for her first walk in the woods with an amorous boy and deliberately strays from the path, "through the brambles," into a bush full of berries that, again, redden her lips (214).

It is plain that Carter conveys the transition from white to red with flowers, like Perrault, while also using the Grimm stray-from-the-path image along with the brambles and the berries of the oral tradition. As Bacchilega points out, Carter's "listening for the multiplicity of folktale voices revitalizes the fairy tale" (*Postmodern Fairy Tales*, 66). Like Perrault, Carter weaves anew the extant imagery according to her own agenda, as is the wont of tale-tellers. Whereas Perrault emphasizes the girl's carelessness, Carter underlines her subversive agency. And whereas Perrault focuses on the predatory wolf, Carter highlights a feminine theme. Indeed, she insists that Rosaleen's coming of age—her metaphorical passage from white to red—is a function of her relationship with granny. Soon after Alice's death, Rosaleen receives "a luscious

red apple" from granny's enclosed garden (Carter, *Curious Room*, 193). At the graveyard, when Rosaleen receives her shawl, she says, "Soft ... as snow"; granny replies, "and red as a berry"; and Rosaleen adds, "Red as blood" (208). So, the red shawl received from granny is the last installment of three red gifts (previously, an apple and roses) offered by the old woman to Rosaleen during her maturation.¹⁵

Vampiric Meal and the Red Hood: A Red Transmission

I suggest that Carter's exuberant imagery of a blood transmission between grandma and the maturing young woman enhances a crucial thread that Perrault took over from the oral tradition. I argue, in fact, that Perrault transformed that oral thread, for this is what his *chaperon rouge* is about.

Perrault, as you may recall, does not retain the cannibal scene ubiquitously featured in the oral variants. In this episode, before the girl joins the wolf in bed, she drinks grandma's blood in the guise of wine, or she cooks and eats the blood as fricassee—a plate that includes pieces of intensely blood-irrigated organs, such as the heart and the liver. According to a few variants, the girl also eats the older woman's breasts (Verdier, "Little Red," 109): her *titines* (Rolland 237), *tétions* (Joisten 286), or *tourtons* (Joisten 297).¹⁶

Verdier helpfully suggests that the girl's incorporation of feminine breasts and blood, located right "after the 'puberty' motif of the pins," concerns her "acquisition of the capacity to procreate." Therefore, Verdier suggests, the "macabre meal can be understood in terms of feminine destiny played in three stages: puberty, motherhood, and menopause." She also notes that a vampiric image is proposed here; when the blood flows for the girl, it must leave the older woman, "as though drawn from one vessel to another" (Verdier, "Little Red," 110).

Presumably, this vampiric image draws on the empirical facts that in each generation older women go into menopause even as young women come into menarche. I take it that the tale causally links these facts of life, as though menopause were a necessary condition for menarche. I also note that this scheme matches the logic of the image of limited good prevalent in peasant societies, according to which all the desired things in life, including health and fertility, exist in a finite quantity and are always in short supply (see Foster 296–300). Given the premise that fertility in a family is a finite quantity that cannot be increased, it follows that the menarche of young women depends on the fertility relinquished by menopausal women higher up in the family tree. Metaphorically, older women "transmit" their fertility to budding young women, who "absorb" or "incorporate" the procreative blood relinquished by their elders. The cannibal scene in our tale literalizes such metaphors in terms of the ingestion of an old woman's blood by a menarcheal girl.

Recall that the cannibal scene comes after the episode that literalizes the metaphor of puberty as a "passage" to a "red" phase in terms of walking along bristling, bleeding paths. Likewise, the cannibal scene literalizes in vampiric terms the metaphor of feminine fertility being transmitted among women. Taken together, these two episodes recall Maria Tatar's insight that in the marvelous realm of fairy tales "the figurative or metaphorical dimension of language takes on literal meaning. Ideas become matter" (Tatar, *Hard Facts*, 80).

Perrault presumably balked at describing an old woman being actually devoured by her own progeny,¹⁷ but the scene is crucial and a replacement was called for. Thanks to the famous opening episode of a family consisting of only three women—a decidedly unusual configuration (Bricout 79)—Perrault hangs the identity of his pretty "village girl" on something red she receives from her grandmother. From the outset of the story, the old woman offers her granddaughter a red hood "that became her so well that everyone called her *le Petit chaperon rouge*" (Perrault 254). A transmission of something red between the two women is also, of course, the point of the vampiric scene in the woods.

I take it that Perrault's successful innovation may have changed the imagery of this tale. At any rate, in the independent oral tradition the cannibal scene was ubiquitous. In the variants influenced by Perrault, the tale-tellers usually kept the cannibal motif while using the red hood image as a mere namesake (Delarue, "Contes merveilleux: Petit Chaperon," 253–54). One step ahead, in the contemporary multimedia tradition the cannibal motif fell into oblivion and the red hood took over its symbolic function in the story.

When we look at Kiki Smith's suggestive lithograph *Born* (2002), for instance, which depicts the Grimm scene of rebirth from the wolf's belly in terms of the fellowship of the girl and her granny in bloodhood (so to speak), the red hood has become the focus of the story, replacing the vampiric-cannibal motif in the symbolic function of connecting two women through blood.¹⁸ Similarly, Carter feels free to emphasize that the transmitted garment is "quite a bloody red. Quite bloody" (*Curious Room*, 61). Unlike Perrault, Carter emphasizes the transmission of the feminine power of life. And she is nothing if not thorough. After describing granny's ghastly beheading by the werewolf, Carter specifies, "There is no blood, though, and granny's body is very much like an overdressed, headless Victorian doll" (236). This scene, taken in isolation, would be meaningless. But, in light of the blood-transmission leitmotif, depicting an old woman who passed on her roses and bloody-red shawl as a bloodless doll makes brilliant sense.

Overall, the feminist uses of traditional images by Carter and Smith contrast with Perrault's androcentric stance and with contemporary ads and films that present the red hood as the iconic sign of "the seducer, the femme fatale" (Zipes, "Prologue," 8). These contrasting takes on the red hood are good examples of folklore as a perennial set of symbolic translations—a vast field of

shared themes where variants contend with each other, each refracting, disputing, and complementing the others. They also suggest that the red hood became the focal point of the story because it replaced other images of feminine blood extant in the oral variants.

It is tempting to think that even as the *chaperon rouge* replaces the discarded vampiric scene of transmitted blood, it also echoes (as Berlioz fancied it might) an old tradition about a girl in red and a wolf mentioned by Egbert in the close vicinity of northern France. Anyway, the foregoing discussion lends support to Ziolkowski's conjecture about an unbroken red thread between the obscure tradition in the background of Egbert's poem and the extant modern uses of "Little Red Riding Hood." But that red thread is not always ruddy on the surface; rather, it is conveyed by different motifs that need not be red, such as a cannibal meal, flowers, and pins and needles.¹⁹ The point is that a command of symbolic equivalences is required to spot the constant theme conveyed in different images.

Conclusion

The foregoing exploration in symbolic equivalences suggests that all tale-tellers, including the humble Lévesque and such literary stars as Perrault and Carter, are operators in creative processes that, as Valdimar Hafstein notes in another context, are "collaborative, incremental, and distributed in space and time" (36). In the wise words of Ségolène Le Men and Catherine Velay-Vallantin, tale-tellers, whether they are oral narrators, writers, or artists, play the "game that consists in making new with the old, using the usual forms in the extant repertoires and the patina of time" to reshape stories in their own ways, "even at the risk of duping a few folklorists" (7).

In such collaborative and incremental processes, tales evolve even as tale-tellers perennially concoct new variations that are selectively received by historically changing audiences. Along the way, some tales disappear and some morph into new tales, and still other tales successfully adapt to new trends and settings. It is noteworthy that only a few fairy tales have moved from the oral traditions of yore into the contemporary web of multimedia recreations.²⁰ "Little Red Riding Hood," of course, is a case in point. It is still profusely recreated in our time (Beckett, *Red Riding Hood*; Beckett, *Revisioning*; Mieder; Nodelman, "Little Red Riding Hood"; Nodelman, "Little Red Riding Hood Rides Again"; Zipes, *Enchanted Screen*, 134–57; Zipes, "Trials") and has enjoyed unparalleled scholarly fascination (Holbek, *Interpretation*, 219–322). I have argued that Perrault's literary variant was instrumental in launching this folktale into the modern popular culture. As Perrault made new with the old and opened the doors of literary salons and children's bedrooms to this multilayered tale, he helped an obscure provincial girl and her faithful wolf cross over into worldwide multimedia celebrity.

Notes

This essay is based on a plenary talk I gave at the sixteenth congress of the International Society for Folk Narrative Research in Vilnius, Lithuania (2013), titled "Tradition as Translation: The Byways of Symbolism in Folktales." I thank Lina Būgienė and Ulrich Marzolph for the invitation to deliver the lecture. The metamorphosis of that talk into this essay was a slow process. I am grateful to Cristina Bacchilega and Anne Duggan for their patience and helpful feedback. I also thank Valdimar Hafstein and Martine Hennard Dutheil de la Rochère for insightful comments along the way.

1. For convenience, I am translating from Marc Soriano's annotated compilation of Perrault's *contes*. Perrault makes the argument in favor of the contemporary *contes* and uses the term *conte de Vieille* in the preface to the 1695 edition of his versified tales (*Grisélidis, nouvelle, avec le conte de Peau d'asne, et celui des Souhairs ridicules*, Paris: Coignard). He uses the term *contes d'ogre et de fée* in his dedication of "Peau d'Âne" in the same volume.
2. I am quoting from the two versions of the dedication appearing, respectively, in the 1695 manuscript (see Barchilon) and in the 1697 edition of the prose tales. See a thorough discussion in Escola (11–74).
3. Again, the argument in favor of the contemporary folktales is in the preface to the 1695 edition of the versified tales, and the definition of an ogre is in a note to the dedication of "Peau d'Âne."
4. To be clear, "tale" in my usage is the core mental scheme variously expressed in myriad retellings, and I call those retellings "variants." I assume that a tale exists in the universe of its multiple variants, and no single variant represents a tale.
5. For an exemplary discussion, see Hansen (8).
6. A caveat is in order here. Dundes slipped a Freudian bias into his elucidation of symbolic equations, and—quite understandably—his proposition was taken to mean that "careful attention to allomotifs can often validate psychoanalytic arguments" (Carroll 226; cf. Holbek, "Interpretation"). As a result, folktale scholars have been reluctant to take up Dundes's challenge to tackle meanings. That is a pity. In the following discussion I suggest that facing up to symbolic variability does not require any external exegetic key.
7. I am using Wittgenstein's notion of family resemblance to underline my understanding of variants as expressions of a shared theme from multiple points of view and according to different criteria rather than as the monolithic set of corruptions of a single text.
8. Delarue also made a compelling case regarding Perrault's "La Barbe bleue" (*Conte populaire français*, 97–98), which Catherine Velay-Vallantin skillfully buttressed and expanded (*L'histoire des contes*, 44–93).
9. This variant was collected in Italian dialect and published in German.
10. Butterflies, which are the evanescent shape taken by worms hatched from a chrysalis to reproduce, arguably hint at both the transformative path taken by the pubescent girl and her short lifespan as she heads to her meeting with the wolf. Moreover, the hazel shrubs along the path match the remark in the Grimm variant that grandma's house is recognizable "from all the hazel hedges around it" (Tatar, *Annotated Grimm*, 149). Hazel trees (and nuts and wood) have strong

- otherworldly resonances in folklore (see Vaz da Silva, "Fairy-Tale Symbolism," 104–5). Taken together, butterflies and hazelnuts on the girl's path hint at a transformative path rife with disquieting overtones.
11. For a fuller discussion and sources, see Vaz da Silva (*Archeology*, 63–65).
 12. Besides the memorable *The Company of Wolves* (dir. Neil Jordan, 1984; www.rottentomatoes.com/m/company_of_wolves/?search=company%20of%20wolves), which was based on Angela Carter's homonymous rewritings of "Little Red Riding Hood" (see Hennard 72–73), a flurry of lesser movies illustrate the mass appeal of the red cape. See, for example, the images advertising *Red Riding Hood* (dir. Adam Brooks, 1989; www.imdb.com/title/tt0093831/?ref_=nv_sr_3), *Red Riding Hood* (dir. Randal Kleiser, 2004; <https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/red-riding-hood2004/>), *Red Riding Hood* (dir. Giacomo Cimini, 2005; www.rottentomatoes.com/m/red_riding_hood_2005/), *Red Riding Hood* (dir. Catherine Hardwicke, 2011; <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1486185/>), and *Little Red Riding Hood* (dir. Rene Perez, 2015; www.imdb.com/title/tt3591944/?ref_=nv_sr_1).
 13. More precisely, this is a passage from white to red by means of black, which is the color associated with the dark forest and its resident wolf. Black is generally a color rife with overtones of death and rebirth (see Vaz da Silva, "Red as Blood," 246–50), which suits the events unfolding in grandmother's dark house (see Verdier, "Little Red," 116–17), including (in the Grimm variant) a spell in the wolf's dark belly.
 14. The replacement of white flowers by red flowers over a grave transposes the oral theme of the girl's death and resurrection at grandmother's dark house (or in the wolf's dark stomach), which is Carter's way of using the white, black, and red basic color scheme of fairy tales (Vaz da Silva, "Red as Blood"). Carter's scene, by means of a composite granddaughter (white Alice, red Rosaleen), suggests the death of childhood and the bloom into puberty—a girl's passage from white (childhood), through black (the grave), to red (puberty)—by means of wolves: the proper wolf who kills Alice and the werewolf who deflowers Rosaleen.
 15. From another perspective, Donald Haase also highlights Rosaleen's shifting relationship to grandmother as she grows up.
 16. In "El capellin rosso" the girl eats the old woman's teeth and jaws, which she says are "very red," before she drinks the "very red" wine. As the emphasis shifts to bones, the redness of the meal is emphasized.
 17. But in his variant of "Sleeping Beauty" Perrault does depict an ogress grandmother trying to eat her grandchildren. Apparently he finds this acceptable because the old queen was an ogress and eating children is what ogres do. Also, she does not actually succeed. Last but not least, children in risk of being eaten are the usual fare of fairy tales, whereas cannibal girls eating their elders convey the coming-of-age leitmotif in unusually stark terms (see Katrinaki).
 18. Kiki Smith's lithograph *Born* can be seen at <https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/164809/>. This intriguing artwork adorns the cover of Jack Zipes's *Irresistible Fairy Tale*, in which, quite appropriately, the word *irresistible* is printed in the same red hue as the bloody-red hoods.
 19. See also Vaz da Silva ("Teaching Symbolism").
 20. On multimedia recreations, see Bacchilega (*Fairy Tales Transformed*, 16–30); cf. Greenhill and Matrix.

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