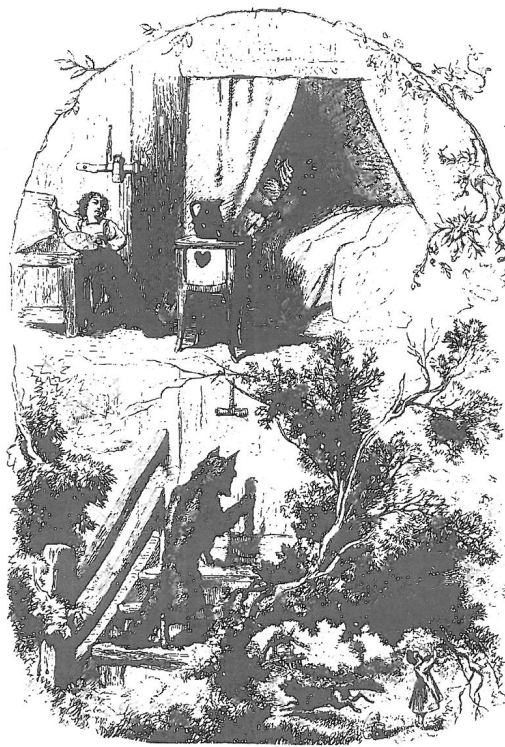




Les Contes de Fées de Perrault, Paris, Emile Guérin, ca. 1895. Illustrator unknown.

FROM: *THE TRIALS + TRIBULATIONS
OF LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD*
by JACK ZIPES

✿ *The Trials and Tribulations
of Little Red Riding Hood* ✿

LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD has never enjoyed an easy life. She began her career by being gobbled up by the wicked wolf. Later she was saved by an assortment of well-meaning hunters, gamekeepers, woodcutters, fathers, grandmothers, and fairies. Of course they all scolded her for being too carefree, and she obediently promised to mend her ways. However, she was not always compelled to be obedient and rely upon saviors. Using her wits, Little Red Riding Hood also managed to trick the wolf all by herself in many different ways. Sometimes she cut her way out of the wolf's dark belly and filled it with stones so that he would topple over dead. One time she shot him with an automatic, which she carried in her basket. It has always been difficult for Little Red Riding Hood to suppress her fear of the wolf especially when his lust ultimately forces him to bare his dreadful fangs. Yet, on a few occasions she does overcome her fear, realizes that the wolf himself is a victim of slander, and even decides to marry him. In other, more prudish, versions of her life, it is said that she prevented the wolf from laying his vulgar sexual paws on her and her granny.

As for her character, Little Red Riding Hood has been described as pretty and lovely, but too gullible and naive. Sometimes she has appeared vain and foolish, sometimes sassy and courageous. Much ado has been made about her fetish of the red hood or cap. Clearly her innocence in the story has been suspect. There is a touch of nonconformity and sexual promiscuity in her character. But whatever her reputation and destiny, she has always been used as a warning to children, particularly girls, a symbol and embodiment of what might happen if they are disobedient and careless. She epitomizes the good girl gone wrong, and her history appears to be an open-and-shut case. Yet, the hidden motives in the different

versions of her life suggest that she may be the victim of circumstantial evidence. Given the fact that the plot and signs have varied in the course of 300 years, there is something suspiciously manipulative about the way Little Red Riding Hood has been treated. She has suffered abuse after abuse, and it is time that the true history of this seductively innocent girl be revealed.

❁ *Background: The Tale Prior to Perrault*

For a long time, anthropologists, folklorists, and historians maintained that the plot of *Little Red Riding Hood* had been derived from ancient myths about the sunrise and sunset.¹ The red garment of Little Red Riding Hood was associated with the sun, and the wolf was considered to be the personification of darkness. From another erudite perspective, the tale was regarded as an offshoot of legends about swallowing, which hark back to Jonah and the whale.² Other scholars equated the tale with traditional Manichean myths about the forces of darkness seeking to engulf the purity of Christian goodness.³ Undoubtedly parallels may be drawn to ancient myths, beliefs, and rituals, but recent research has proven rather conclusively that *Little Red Riding Hood* is of fairly modern vintage. By modern, I mean that the basic elements of the tale were developed in an oral tradition during the late Middle Ages, largely in France, Tyrol, and northern Italy, and they gave rise to a group of tales intended explicitly for children.⁴ These warning tales were so widespread in France that they undoubtedly influenced Charles Perrault's literary version of 1697, which is generally considered to be his own creation (Tale 1). Again, critical research has now amply demonstrated that Perrault did not invent the plot and characters of *Little Red Riding Hood*. Rather, he borrowed elements from popular folklore and recreated *Little Red Riding Hood* to suit the needs of an upper-class audience whose social and aesthetic standards were different from those of the common folk.

But, before we turn to Perrault's tale and consider his major accomplishments, it will be important to examine the "rowdy" oral folk tradition that actually gave birth to the more "refined" bourgeois literary tale. Here the work of Marianne Rumpf,⁵ Paul Delarue,⁶ and Marc Soriano⁷ is most useful for restoring our sense of authentic history. Rumpf has revealed that one of the most common European warning tales (*Schreckmärchen* or *Warnmärchen*) in the Middle Ages involved hostile forces threatening children who were without protection. Either an ogre, ogress, man-eater, wild



dren after having assumed the shape of werewolves. Bourgot described his transformation and feats in great detail. He admitted to having killed a seven-year-old boy with his wolf's teeth and paws. However, he was chased away by a peasant, so that he never had time to eat his victim. Verdun admitted to having killed a small girl as she was gathering pears in a garden. However, he, too, was chased away before he could eat his victim. Four other attacks on small girls, which the two accused were supposed to have carried out, were mentioned in the same report, which included particulars as to the ages of the children and the places and dates of the incidents.¹⁰ In certain areas of 16th-century France people of all ages became afraid to pass through fields or woods alone because of werewolves or wolves. Rumpf's major point—and one that should carry great weight—is that wherever oral versions of the *Little Red Riding Hood* tale were found later in the 19th and 20th centuries, they were primarily discovered in those regions where werewolf trials were most common in the 15th, 16th, and 17th centuries.

Perrault's literary tale of 1697 was probably derived from stories about werewolves that were circulating in Touraine when his mother grew up there. In 1598 there was the sensational case of Jacques Raollet, who was sentenced to death in Angers, Touraine, for attacking and killing children as a werewolf. His case was appealed at the Parliament of Paris, and Raollet was declared insane and placed in the Hospital Saint Germain des Pres. This trial took place at a time when Perrault's parents and his nursemaid could have witnessed the events. Though we do not have concrete proof, the major authority on Perrault, Marc Soriano, tends to agree with Rumpf's general assertions:¹¹ Perrault knew oral folk versions of *Little Red Riding Hood* before he wrote his own fairy tale.

Soriano corroborates Rumpf's findings by demonstrating that Perrault took truncated elements from folklore to form his own creation. If we look at this independent oral tradition and its existence up through the present, a number of elements

have continued to survive in spite of the celebrity of the text published in 1697: the motif of cruelty—probably a reflection of a "primitive structure"—the motif of the blood and flesh of the grandmother which are placed on the bread-bin and which the little girl is invited to eat; the motif of the "familiar animal"—a cat or bird (or mysterious voice) which informs the child of what she is eating; the episode of the "ritual undressing," a sort of strip-tease by Little Red Riding Hood, who each time she

takes off a garment asks the wolf where she should put it, which leads to an enigmatic or frankly menacing response from the ferocious animal; and finally, a "happy ending" of a particular type, built on the scatological overtone of the "tie which sets free": the little girl pretends that she urgently needs to relieve herself, a pretext to escape from the monster.¹²

All of these elements, which were expurgated or refined in Perrault's literary text, have been kept alive in an independent oral tradition, and, thanks to the research of Paul Delarue, it has been possible to reconstitute an integral text uniting most of the elements *not* employed in Perrault's tale, though Perrault was probably familiar with them. Delarue's version of *Little Red Riding Hood* was recorded in Nièvre, about 1885.¹³ Entitled *The Story of Grandmother*, it reads as follows:

There was a woman who had made some bread. She said to her daughter: "Go carry this hot loaf and a bottle of milk to your granny."

So the little girl departed. At the crossway she met *bzou*, the werewolf, who said to her:

"Where are you going?"

"I'm taking this hot loaf and a bottle of milk to my granny."

"What path are you taking," said the werewolf, "the path of needles or the path of pins?"

"The path of needles," the little girl said.

"All right, then I'll take the path of pins."

The little girl entertained herself by gathering needles. Meanwhile the werewolf arrived at the grandmother's house, killed her, put some of her meat in the cupboard and a bottle of her blood on the shelf. The little girl arrived and knocked at the door.

"Push the door," said the werewolf, "it's barred by a piece of wet straw."

"Good day, granny. I've brought you a hot loaf of bread and a bottle of milk."

"Put it in the cupboard, my child. Take some of the meat which is inside and the bottle of wine on the shelf."

After she had eaten, there was a little cat which said: "Phooey! . . ."

A slut is she who eats the flesh and drinks the blood of her granny. "Undress yourself, my child," the werewolf said, "and come lie down beside me."

"Where should I put my apron?"

"Throw it into the fire, my child, you won't be needing it anymore."

And each time she asked where she should put all her other



Original artwork by Catherine Orenstein, 1990.

clothes, the bodice, the dress, the petticoat, and the long stockings, the wolf responded:

"Throw them into the fire, my child, you won't be needing them any more."

When she laid herself down in the bed, the little girl said:

"Oh, Granny, how hairy you are!"

"The better to keep myself warm, my child!"

"Oh, Granny, what big nails you have!"

"The better to scratch me with, my child!"

"Oh, Granny, what big shoulders you have!"

"The better to carry the firewood, my child!"

"Oh, Granny, what big ears you have!"

"The better to hear you with, my child!"

"Oh, Granny, what big nostrils you have!"

"The better to snuff my tobacco with, my child!"

"Oh, Granny, what a big mouth you have!"

"The better to eat you with, my child!"

"Oh, Granny, I've got to go badly. Let me go outside."

"Do it in the bed, my child!"

"Oh, no, Granny, I want to go outside."

"All right, but make it quick."

The werewolf attached a woolen rope to her foot and let her go outside. When the little girl was outside, she tied the end of the rope to a plum tree in the courtyard. The werewolf became impatient and said: "Are you making a load out there? Are you making a load?"

When he realized that nobody was answering him, he jumped out of bed and saw that the little girl had escaped. He followed her but arrived at her house just at the moment she entered.¹⁴

By collecting the different but related independent oral folk tales that contain the same elements missing in the literary tale of Perrault, Delarue has proven that a vital oral tradition in France preceded the conception of Perrault's "civilized" *Little Red Riding Hood*. Moreover, Gottfried Henssen has shown that similar tales of warning spread throughout Europe and Asia, which reveal that Perrault might have been influenced in a number of different ways.¹⁵ One of the most important discoveries is the fact that the independent oral tales lack the motif of the red riding hood or the color red. So much for the traditional interpretation of sunrise/sunset, or the Christian view of Manichean forces in combat!

The direct forebears of Perrault's literary tale were not influenced by sun worship or Christian theology, but by the very material conditions of their existence and traditional pagan superstition. Little children were attacked and killed by animals and grown-ups in the woods and fields. Hunger often drove people to commit atrocious acts. In the 15th and 16th centuries, violence was difficult to explain on rational grounds. There was a strong superstitious belief in werewolves and witches, uncontrollable magical forces of nature, which threatened the lives of the peasant population. Since antiquity, tales had been spread about vicious creatures in France, and they continued to be spread. Consequently, the warning tale became part of a stock oral repertoire of storytellers. Evidence indicates that the teller would grab hold of the child or children nearby when the final line in the well-known dramatic dialogue with the wolf was to be pronounced—"the better to eat you with!" We must remember that storytelling was a dynamic process, with give and take between narrator and listeners. But the child was not devoured by the teller, who was more interested in showing care for children, nor does it seem that the little girl was killed in any of the folk-tale versions. She shrewdly outwits the wolf and saves herself. No help from granny, hunter, or father!

Clearly, the folk tale was not just a warning tale, but also a celebration of a young girl's coming of age. This has been substantiated in the recent study by Yvonne Verdier,¹⁶ who convincingly demonstrates that the references to the pins and needles were related to the needlework apprenticeship undergone by young peasant girls, and designated the arrival of puberty and initiation into society in specific regions of France where the oral tale was common: districts of the Loire, Nièvre, Forez, Velay, and the Alps. The young girl symbolically replaces the grandmother by eating her flesh and drinking her blood. It is a matter of self-assertion through learning and conflict. Unlike the literary versions, where the grandmother is reified and reduced to a sex object, her death in the folk tale signifies the continuity and reinvigoration of custom, which was important for the preservation of society. As Verdier maintains,

the tale effectively reveals the fact that women transmitted the physical capacity of procreation among themselves, even though the radical character of this transmission illuminates the conflictual aspect, a rivalry which ends in physical elimination, the relationship of women among themselves concerning this matter. Classified by the maturation of their bodies, women find themselves divided and unequal. Perhaps one can see here the principal source of the violence in their conflicts? There are a number of tales which develop this aspect of elimination in the relationships among women, whether they be among women of the same generation (recalling the theme of the "hidden fiancée") or among women of different generations: mother and daughter, step-mother and step-daughter, grandmother and granddaughter, old and young.

Moreover, it is remarkable that each successful conquest of physiological capacity concerning the female destiny is marked in the tale by the acquisition of technique which is the equivalent in the stage of learning, and even in a certain order—the proper order—in the society: needlework for puberty, kitchen for the proper procreative function, flushing out for the hour of birth. All this knowledge and technique are in the hands of women in the traditional peasant society. These are the true "cultural goods" which are opposed in the tale to the ways of "nature" (the wolf devours the grandmother in the flesh). This knowledge imparts the "domestic" vocation and its rights of war upon women, a function which again underlines the autonomy and power of women in regard to their own destiny in this traditional peasant society.¹⁷

Although Verdier pays little attention to the werewolf aspect and warning motif in her interpretation of the folk tale, her overall

perspective does not actually contradict the views of Delarue, Rumpf, and Soriano, but rather amplifies them and makes them more concrete. Whether the story is about initiation, warning, or both, one thing is clear: the folk tale celebrates the self-reliance of a young peasant girl.

Perrault's Transformation of the Tale

Perrault, who appears to have had a low opinion of women and of the superstitious customs of the peasantry, changed all of this, and his "contaminated" upper-class version of the "pure" lower-class version makes the little girl totally helpless. Delarue maintains that

the common elements which are lacking in the literary story are precisely those which would have shocked the society of his epoch by their cruelty (the flesh and blood of the grandmother devoured by the child), their puerility (the path of needles and the path of pins) or their impropriety (the question of the little girl about the hairy body of the grandmother). And it appears likely that Perrault eliminated them, while preserving a folk flavor and freshness in the tale which have made it an imperishable masterpiece.¹⁸

Perrault's changes were substantive both in style and content, and they demand an even closer look if we are to grasp the continual impulse of later writers to make free with the fate of Little Red Riding Hood. To begin with, Perrault wrote for both children and adults of the upper educated classes. The irony of his narration suggests that he sought to appeal to the erotic and playful side of adult readers who took pleasure in naughty stories of seduction. This irony was lost on younger readers, who could still enjoy the warning aspect of the tale and the play between the wolf and Little Red Riding Hood that has a didactic anti-climax in the *morale*.

If we focus for a moment on the tale as written for children, the changes can be seen to reflect an appreciable difference in the way the upper classes, particularly the *haute bourgeoisie*, were coming to view children. We must bear in mind that, because of changes in the socialization process, the term "child" as separate from "adult" was in the process of assuming a new meaning. As Philippe Aries has demonstrated in *Centuries of Childhood*,¹⁹ an independent children's literature and culture were being developed to civilize children according to stringent codes of class behavior. Thus it is no



acceptable for upper-class audiences of children and adults. Whereas the oral tale referred directly to actual conditions in the country faced by peasants and villagers, Perrault's literary version assumed a more general aspect. It talked about vanity, power, and seduction, and it introduced a *new child*, the helpless girl, who subconsciously contributed to her own rape. Gone are the alleged cruelty and coarseness of the oral tale. However, the refined elements of the literary tale contributed to an image of Little Red Riding Hood which was to make her life more difficult than it had ever been.

Perrault's historical contribution to the image of Little Red Riding Hood is a contradictory one, and it must be viewed in light of French social history and Perrault's own personal prejudices. On the one hand, he is responsible for shaping folklore into an exquisite literary form and endowing it with an earnest and moral purpose, the influencing of behavior of children in a tasteful way. On the other, he set rigorous standards of comportment, which were intended to regulate and limit the nature of children's development. This contradictory position was also evident in the works of French writers of fairy tales, like Prechac, L'Héritier, D'Aulnoy, Murat, de la Force, and scores of others during Louis XIV's reign.²¹ they sought to civilize children to inhibit them, and as a result they contributed to a socially perverted configuration of natural growth. This is not to argue that Perrault and his contemporaries had nefarious plans and conspired to fill children's heads with illusions. On the contrary, despite his ironic attitude toward folklore and his double intention of writing for children and adults with moral fervor and charm, Perrault sincerely intended to improve the minds and manners of young people.

In the preface to his *Contes en Vers* (1695), Perrault argued that people of good taste recognized the substantial value of the tales. And he repeated this argument in the 1697 dedication to Elizabeth-Charlotte d'Orléans in *Histoires ou contes du temps passé*:

They all contain a very sensible moral which can be discovered more or less according to the degree of perception of the reader. Moreover, as nothing can stamp the vast scope of a mind but the elevating power of great things and the degrading power of little things, one will no longer be surprised that even the Princess whom Nature and education have made acquainted with everything that is most elevated, does not disdain to take pleasure from trifles (stories). It is true that these tales present a picture of what happens in the inferior families where the

praiseworthy impatience of instructing children make them imagine stories devoid of reason to prepare these same children who still lack reason. Yet, who but those persons whom heaven has destined to lead the people is most suited to learn how the children live?²²

It is apparent from his statements that Perrault composed his narratives to set standards and models of refined virtuous behavior for the children of his time. More precisely, he was interested in contributing to the prevalent discourse on *civilité* through the fairy tale. Here it is important to understand the cultural and political input of large sectors of the bourgeoisie in France if we are to grasp Perrault's role in "civilizing" the folk tale and transforming it into a literary tale for upper-class children. The French aristocracy of the 16th and 17th centuries displayed a unique capacity to adopt and use the best elements from other classes. The nobility provided access to its circles for a select group of reliable people of the third estate; these circles expanded as the need arose to secure aristocratic rule throughout the nation. Perrault was among the fortunate members of the *haute bourgeoisie* to be honored by the court.²³ He was a high royal civil servant, one of the first members of the *Académie Française*, a respected polemicist, and a significant figure in literary salons. Moreover, he endorsed the expansive political wars of Louis XIV, and believed in the exalted mission of the French absolutist regime to "civilize" Europe and the rest of the world. Perrault supported the "manifest destiny" of 17th-century France not only as a public representative of the court but privately in his family; he was also one of the first writers of children's books who explicitly sought to "colonize" the internal and external development of children in the mutual interests of a bourgeois-aristocratic elite.

The interaction between the French nobility and bourgeoisie must be carefully studied if one is to grasp the socio-genetic import of literary fairy tales for children in Western culture. Norbert Elias makes this connection clear.

Both the courtly bourgeoisie and the courtly aristocracy spoke the same language, read the same books, and had, with particular gradations, the same manners. And when the social and economical disproportionalities burst the institutional framework of the *ancien régime*, when the bourgeoisie became a nation, much of what had originally been the specific and distinctive social character of the courtly aristocracy and then also of the courtly bourgeois groups, became, in an ever widening move-

ment and doubtless with some modification, the national character. Stylistic conventions, the forms of social intercourse, affect molding, esteem for courtesy, the importance of good speech and conversation, articulateness of language and much else—all this is first formed in France within courtly society, then slowly changes, in a continuous diffusion, from a social into a national character.²⁴

By the time Perrault had begun writing his fairy tales, the major crises of the Reformation, which had been manifested drastically in the massive witch hunts between 1490 and 1650, had been temporarily resolved, and they resulted in greater rationalization and regulation of social and spiritual life. This civilizing process coincided with an increase in socio-economic power by the bourgeoisie, particularly in France and England, so that the transformed social, religious, and political views represented a blend of bourgeois-aristocratic interests. The *homme civilisé* was the former *homme courtois*, whose polite manners and style of speech were altered to include bourgeois qualities of honesty, diligence, responsibility, and asceticism. To increase its influence and assume more political control the French bourgeoisie was confronted with a twofold task: to adapt courtly models in a manner which would allow greater *laissez-faire* for the expansion and consolidation of bourgeois interests; and to appropriate folk customs and the most industrious, virtuous, and profitable components of the lower classes to strengthen the economic and cultural power of the bourgeoisie. In this regard the French bourgeoisie was indeed a middle or mediating class, although its ultimate goal was to become self-sufficient and to make the national interests identical with its own.

One way of disseminating its values and interests and of subliminally strengthening its hold on the civilizing process was through literary socialization. Since childhood had become more distinct as a phase of growth and was considered as the crucial base for the future development of individual character, special attention was now paid to children's manners, clothes, books, toys, and general education. Numerous books, pamphlets, and brochures appeared in the 16th and 17th centuries dealing with table manners, natural functions, bedroom etiquette, sexual relations, and correct speech.²⁵ The most classic example was Erasmus of Rotterdam's *De civilitate morum puerilium* (*On Civility in Children*, 1530). Also important were the works of Giovanni della Casa (*Galateo*, 1558); C. Calviac (*Civilité*, 1560); Antoine de Courtin (*Nouveau traité de civilité*,

1672); François de Callières (*De la science du monde et des connoissances utiles à la conduite de la vie*, 1717); and LaSalle (*Les Règles de la bienséance et de la civilité chrétienne*, 1729). It was impossible for a member of the aristocratic or bourgeois class to escape the influence of such manuals, which became part of the informal and formal schooling of all upper-class children. Coercion by members of high society to act according to new precepts of good behavior increased, so that the codes of dress and manner become extremely stringent and hierarchical by the end of the 17th century. Though not conspired, the rational purpose of such social pressure was to bring about an internalization of social norms and mores so that they would appear as second nature or habit. Yet, self-control was actual social control, and it was a mark of social distinction not to "let go of oneself" or to "lose one's senses" in public. As Elias has noted, the system of standardization and social conditioning had assumed fairly concrete contours with multi-level controls by the mid-17th century.

There is a more or less limited courtly circle which first stamps the models only for the needs of its own social situation and in conformity with the psychological condition corresponding to it. But clearly the structure and development of French society as a whole gradually makes ever broader strata willing and anxious to adopt the models developed above them; they spread, also very gradually, throughout the whole of society, certainly not without undergoing some modification in the process.

The passage of models from one social unit to another, now from the centers of a society to its outposts (for example, from the Parisian court to other courts), now within the same political-social unit (within France or Saxony, from above to below, or below to above), is to be counted, in the whole civilizing process, among the most important individual movements. What the examples show is only a limited segment of these. Not only the eating manners but also forms of thinking and speaking—in short, of behavior in general—are molded in a similar way throughout France, even if there are significant differences in timing and structure of their patterns of development.²⁶

Within the French civilizing process, Perrault's tales provided behavioral patterns and models for children which were intended to reinforce the prestige and superiority of bourgeois-aristocratic values and styles. Like the civilizing process itself, the tales also perpetuated strong notions of male dominance, and here it is important to take Perrault's own biases into account. In her *Introduc-*

tion aux contes de Grimm et Perrault, Lilyane Mourey has aptly demonstrated how Perrault portrayed women in his tales:

The concept of "morality" assumes here a very particular value mixed with irony and satire. Perrault argues for the total submission of the woman to her husband. Feminine coquetry (which is only the privilege of the dominant class) disturbs and upsets him: it could be the sign of female independence. It opens the way for the amorous conquest which endangers one of the fundamental values of society—the couple, the family. As we have seen, the heroines of the tales are very pretty, loyal, dedicated to their household chores, modest and docile and sometimes a little stupid insofar as it is true that stupidity is almost a quality in women for Perrault. Intelligence could be dangerous. In his mind as in that of many men (and women) beauty is an attribute of woman just as intelligence is the attribute of man.²⁷

If *Little Red Riding Hood* is studied in light of Perrault's personal prejudices and the male-dominated civilizing process, the underlying history of the tale and its reception, as it spread throughout western Europe and America in its changing literary form, assumes greater significance than the history of the original oral tale. *Little Red Riding Hood* is a projection of male phantasy in a literary discourse considered to be civilized and aimed at curbing the natural inclinations of children. The changes made in the discourse about the fictional helpless girl dubbed Little Red Riding Hood—her discipline and punishment—indicate real shifts, conflicts, and ruptures in the Western civilizing process.

31 The Grimms' Modification of Perrault's Version

Perrault's tale of *Little Red Riding Hood* had an unusually successful reception in the 18th century. In fact, it was one of the few literary fairy tales in history which, due to its universality, ambivalence, and clever sexual innuendoes, was reabsorbed by the oral folk tradition. That is, as a result of its massive circulation in print in the 18th and 19th centuries and of the corroboration of peasant experience, it took root in oral folklore and eventually led to the creation of the even more popular Grimms' tale, which had the same effect. Perrault's tale was translated into English in 1729 and was constantly reprinted by itself (e.g., by Robert Samber, 1729; Tale 2), in chapbooks and broadsheets, and in collections of children's tales. Eventually it made its way to America, where it became extremely popular (see, e.g., Tale 3).²⁸ In Europe the transla-

tions were made later in the 18th century; for instance, the first German translation appeared in 1790. But we must remember that everyone in the aristocracy and bourgeoisie read French or had French nursemaids, so the Perrault tale became extremely well known, particularly as a clever didactic tale for children just when it had been deemed necessary to rear children more prudently and prudishly. However, for the Grimms the tale was still too cruel, too sexual, and too tragic. They felt it necessary to clean it up for the bourgeois socialization process of the 19th century and adapted it to comply with the emerging Biedermeier or Victorian image of little girls and proper behavior.

Contrary to the general assumption of most "Grimm scholars," the Grimms' version was neither old Germanic nor told by some lovable old woman named Maria from Hessa. Heinz Rölleke has clearly established that the story was told to the Grimms between 1811 and 1812 by Marie Hassenpflug.²⁹ She came from a family with a German and French Huguenot background and was raised in the "French spirit."³⁰ Marie began contributing stories to the Grimm collection as early as 1808, and it appears that various members of the Hassenpflug family, steeped in the French cultural tradition, exercised a great influence on the Grimms. In addition, the Grimms were familiar with Ludwig Tieck's verse play *Leben und Tod des kleinen Rotkäppchens* (1800; Tale 4), which was based on Perrault's story, and they were probably exposed to the original story themselves during their youth. Finally, a close comparison by Harry Velten³¹ of the Perrault and Grimm tales has shown that the original source of the Grimms' tale was the Perrault version. In sum, when the Grimms revised *Little Red Riding Hood* to *Little Red Cap* for their collection of 1812 (Tale 6), they were consciously working within a bourgeois literary tradition, and the significant changes they made reflect the social transformations in how children were viewed and reared. Furthermore, there is some indication that the Grimms were writing a "political" fairy tale, which, ironically, may have been anti-French in tone. But before we plunge into the politics of *Little Red Riding Hood*—or *Little Red Cap*, as she was dubbed in German—let us examine how the Grimms, following Perrault's example, further cleaned up for the bourgeois a tale emanating from the French peasant tradition.

As is generally known, the major change made by the Grimms in their version of *Little Red Cap* was the happy ending. Here the Grimms borrowed a motif from the folk tale *The Wolf and the Seven*



Little Red Riding Hood Album, ca. 1900. Collection of Jack Zipes.

Kids. A hunter saves Little Red Cap and her granny, and they proceed to fill the wolf's belly with stones. When the wolf tries to jump up and escape, the stones cause his death. Yet the Grimms were not content to kill the wolf just once. They added an anti-climatic moral. Some time after the first incident, another wolf accosts Little Red Cap in the woods. This time she runs directly to granny, who gives her instructions on how to trick the wolf so that he drowns. Obviously, the Grimms found the Perrault ending too cruel and too sexual. However, what is most significant is that Little Red Riding Hood as Little Red Cap is transformed even more into the naive, helpless, pretty little girl who must be punished for her transgression, which is spelled out more clearly as disobedience and indulgence in sensual pleasures. As in Perrault's story, the girl cannot save herself. Whereas Perrault kills her, the Grimms have her saved, first by a male hunter or gamekeeper and, second, by a shrewd grandmother. Without their protection, she is lost and unable to cope with *foreign* or strange elements in her surroundings. Yet, we must reconsider why she was placed in this dilemma in the first place, for it is never by chance that she encounters the wolf. That is, beginning with the folk tale, the wolf is *sent* to teach her and the audience a lesson. Her degradation and punishment set an example. Symbolically linked to the devil, the wolf is a powerful agent, but he was not necessarily used to punish "sinners" in the folk tradition. The wolf was crucial in archaic thinking as a representative of the human wild side, of wilderness. He was more a hazard of nature linked to sorcery and part of organic nature. The

moral lesson, which the wolf brings with him, was both Christian and male and was first introduced by Perrault. The Grimms added some vital elements at the beginning of their narrative, which reinforced the didactic emphasis. Little Red Cap is *instructed* by her mother to behave and walk a *straight* path to her grandmother's cottage, and the girl promises to obey her mother. This "contract" is broken when Little Red Cap is tempted by the sensuous delights of the forest. For this—her indulgence in sensuality and her disobedience—she must be punished. The implicit and explicit notions of childhood and child rearing in this tale were an elaboration of bourgeois expectations, which Perrault consciously incorporated into the folk version. Then, more than a century later, the Grimms reacted to the civilizing process in Germany by making more changes. They eliminated the cruelty and sexuality from the tale, demanded that the child repress her own sensuality, and obligated her to meet the normative standards of responsibility set by adults. Little Red Cap was compelled to become eminently rational in her anti-climactic adventure.

Michel Foucault has referred to the process Red Riding Hood undergoes as a "pedagogization of children's sex," which had become typical especially among the middle classes in the 19th century. It was

a double assertion that practically all children indulge or are prone to indulge in sexual activity; and that, being unwarranted, at the same time "natural" and "contrary to nature," this sexual activity posed physical and moral, individual and collective dangers; children were defined as "preliminary" sexual beings, on this side of sex, yet within it, astride a dangerous dividing line. Parents, families, educators, doctors, and eventually psychologists would have to take charge, in a continuous way, of this precious and perilous, dangerous and endangered sexual potential: this pedagogization was especially evident in the war against onanism which in the West lasted nearly two centuries.³²

Clearly, what had formerly been a frank oral tale about sexuality and actual dangers in the woods became, by the time the Grimms finished civilizing and refining *Little Red Cap*, a coded message about rationalizing bodies and sex. Open sexual games and encounters were frowned upon throughout the 19th century. Hence, disciplinary measures had to be taken against all the Little Red Riding Hoods and Little Red Caps of the world.

However, in the Grimms' version, Red Riding Hood is not only punished and deprived for trying to express her imagination and

sexuality; there is also a political cutting edge to the discipline of the story. Far-fetched though it may seem, *Little Red Cap* was also a commentary on the French invasion of the Rhineland during the Napoleonic Wars. Hans-Wolf Jäger has argued³³ that the Grimms collected their tales at a time (1806–1811) when Kassel and the Rhineland were occupied by French troops. Although the French had been welcomed at the beginning of the century, the Germans came to resent French domination and expressed great relief and joy after the retreat of Napoleon's troops in 1813. According to Jäger, the Grimms recorded *Little Red Cap* during the French occupation and infused it with a remarkable combination of anti-French and anti-Enlightenment notions. The stark opposites of woods and path, nature and school make this apparent. The wolf exploits the unsuspecting nature of the innocent child. He plays upon her latent aversion to ordered and regulated normality and points seductively to the freedom of the colorful and musical woods. Thus, the conflict between freedom/wilderness/nature on the one hand versus school/straight path/order on the other is set up very early in the narrative to illustrate a socio-political situation.

Jäger documents his argument by pointing out how the French invaders had become associated with wolves in the German literature of the times. He demonstrates that the Grimms were familiar with Ludwig Tieck's verse drama *Leben und Tod des kleinen Rotkäppchens* (1800; Tale 4). It was Tieck who actually introduced historical and political motifs which were to find their way into the Grimms' version. First, Tieck created the gamekeeper or hunter, who does not save Little Red Cap but who does manage to kill the wolf. Here it must be emphasized that the German word *Jäger* (gamekeeper or hunter) was associated with the police. That is, the *Jäger* was hired by the feudal lord to protect his property from poachers and intruders. Second, Tieck made the stylish French *chaperon* into a cap (*Käppchen*) and drew parallels to the mode of wearing Republican or Jacobinite caps in honor of the French Revolution. Furthermore, the wolf incorporated a double identity: the French revolutionary who comes to liberate German youth and/or the French oppressor who comes to destroy the virtues of Germany. Little Red Cap symbolized the innocent German youth who is at first drawn by revolutionary enthusiasm to the French and is then repulsed by the actual cruelty and barbarism of the Revolution. Jäger sums up Tieck's drama by asserting that it could be rewritten this way:

Whoever—whether it be to keep in fashion or through the carelessness of youth—identifies too much with the idea of revolution will ultimately be seized and destroyed by the revolution itself. Or, dabbling with progress and revolution in a fashionable and harmless way produces an event which reveals the bitter truth about harmlessness and good-naturedness. This message which plays upon the rebellion of Little Red Cap against her parents and the authorities as well as upon the familial pedagogical and general political problem in the play is derived from the consensus of those times which recalls the saying, the revolution eats its own children.

Tieck himself distances himself from this message of his play and remains without a position and without judgement. It can be assumed that the Grimms, who mention Tieck's fairy-tale drama in the note to their own edition of their tale, understood the play upon the "red cap" and "wolf" and drew a connection to a Jacobinite, a Frenchman, and a revolutionary as givens and that they associated the major ideas discussed above in context with their tale. Their own warning tale does not eliminate the associations. It warns against being seduced and having youthful careless relations with the corrupter.³⁴

Evidently there are very few children or even adults today who read the Grimms' version of *Little Red Cap* as a depiction of how guileless German youth were swallowed by wicked France and then saved by the keepers of German absolutism. Nevertheless, Jäger's socio-historical explanation of why the Grimms made certain changes is in keeping with their tendency to sanitize and render bourgeois the tales for middle-class audiences. Their narration of *Little Red Cap* is fundamentally a justification of law and order and against individual autonomy and imagination. The reverence to be shown toward mother, grandmother, and male gamekeeper demanded by the tale is absolute. Salvation comes only in the form of a male patriarch who patrols the woods and controls the unruly forces of nature—both inner and outer.

It is not by coincidence that once the Grimms' version of *Little Red Cap* came into being, it virtually dwarfed Perrault's version because of the prudent and puritanical modifications. Though it is difficult to collect comparative statistics regarding the circulation of the tales by Perrault and the Grimms in the 19th century, we do know that the Grimms' collection took second place only to the Bible as the most widely read book in Germany. In addition, most literary variations and translations in Europe and North America appear to be based on the Grimms' tale.³⁵ At the very least, they show signs of having been influenced by the Grimms' story. This is

not to say that Perrault's version is not widely known and distributed, but it points to the fact that the Grimms were able to alter the tale ideologically to satisfy the morals and ethics of the emerging bourgeoisie in the 19th century more thoroughly than the 17th-century Perrault, and to comply more with the general Victorian taste which was rampant in Western culture up through the 20th century. In essence, they were able to project a notion of maidenhood or childhood that was closer than Perrault's to middle-class ideas of child rearing and child behavior.

If we look at the numerous translations and adaptations of *Little Red Riding Hood* in France, Germany, England, and the United States from the date of the Grimms' version—that is, shortly before the rise of the Holy Alliance and the Restoration—until the outbreak of World War I, it is interesting to note how uniform the tale remains, conforming either to the Perrault or Grimm paradigm. If changes are made, the modifications indicate prudery at work. Many writers of the 19th and early 20th centuries believed that Perrault and Grimm were too cruel, and they were afraid that children might be upset by the sexual undertones and violence in the original versions. References to Little Red Riding Hood being touched or swallowed were deleted. More stress was placed on obedience. Many bowdlerized versions indicated a Victorian-minded censorship,³⁶ which feared that Little Red Riding Hood might some day break out, become a Bohemian, and live in the woods with the wolf. Thus, consciously and subconsciously, more clamps were put on Riding Hood in these stories. However, Riding Hood did break out, and her various rebellions are indicative of the real changing social views of children, women, and political and sexual domination in the 20th century.³⁷ But before we analyze the radical changes of the 20th century, let us consider some of the more salient translations and adaptations of the 19th century, as examples of how middle-class morality triumphed in this fairy tale.

The 19th and Early 20th Centuries

Throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries the tales of Perrault and Grimm came to play a crucial role in the socialization process of France and Germany. Moreover, these tales were translated and adapted so frequently that they became part of the standard literary building blocks for children of all social groups in Europe and America. Up through World War I there were various prose and dramatic adaptations of Perrault's *Little Red Riding Hood*

in France.³⁸ One of the earliest dramatizations is the opera *Le Petit Chaperon Rouge*, with music by Adrien François Boieldieu and text by Marie E. G. M. Théaulon de Lambert.³⁹ This sentimental musical play experienced numerous successful productions during 1818 and 1819 in France and Germany, and eventually made its way to England and America. If Théaulon's libretto is significant at all, it is simply because it indicates the direction most adaptations would take for the next hundred years. Red Riding Hood becomes the model of virtue in danger of being molested and in need of male protectors to rescue her. In this melodramatic opera, set in the Middle Ages, Count Roger falls in love with a virginal country maiden named Rose d'Amour, who wears a red cap as talisman. Count Roger's intentions are honest, even though the maiden is beneath his class, and he must woo the girl in disguise as a shepherd named Alain because of a feud with his neighbor the Baron Rodolphe, who is known as the wolf because of his proclivity to prey upon his subjects, especially the females. Baron Rodolphe is angry at Count Roger, who has constantly refused to marry the baron's sister Baroness Zélinde, who in actuality has long had a relationship and child with another man. This is only one of many intrigues in the play; most important, of course, is Baron Rodolphe's plot to seduce the young Rose d'Amour, who has caught his fancy. He intends to seduce her when she carries some food to her sick spiritual father, the holy hermit, who lives in the woods. As long as Rose d'Amour wears her red cap, a magical virtuous force, she will be protected. However, the baron is also versed in black magic and threatens to compromise her virtue. Count Roger rushes to the rescue along with the hermit.

The hermit reveals that Rose d'Amour is actually the illegitimate daughter of the baron's sister, whom the hermit had raised as his own daughter to protect the good name of the Baroness Zélinde. This disclosure makes the baron stop short for fear of incest, and it appears that he will turn over a new leaf when he gives his blessings to the forthcoming marriage of Count Roger and Rose d'Amour.

Such a convoluted plot demonstrates to what extent writers would go to transform *Little Red Riding Hood* into a bourgeois morality play. To be sure, this opera was intended primarily for adults of the upper classes; however, all social groups were influenced by the new moral and political order of sexuality in *Little Red Riding Hood* through picture broadsheets and chapbooks at the beginning of the 19th century. Right about this time the Dutch publisher Rynden

began printing picture sheets of Perrault's fairy tales in French and Flemish, and he was soon followed by other printers in Europe.⁴⁰ Generally speaking, slight changes were made to stress the notion of *obedience*. Otherwise the pictures were serious renditions of the tale, clearly intended to serve as a warning to young girls who might be seduced by "men-wolves." The figure of the wolf is often clothed as a gentleman or even a soldier. The situation has nothing more to do with actual hazards of country living but more with town life, obedience, and general seduction of women by sly debonair men, a theme which had become common by the end of the 18th century. Many illustrations depict the mother pointing her finger at Red Riding Hood, as if to reprimand the child for the "crime" she is about to commit. The meeting with the wolf is usually portrayed more like a tête-à-tête than a dangerous encounter. The illustrations seek to establish the little girl's complicity in the ensuing violence. Gustav Doré's famous etchings of 1867 show a Red Riding Hood fascinated by the wolf, looking at him somewhat seductively from the bed. Obviously, if she were not gullible and disobedient, she could prevent the rapacious wolf from carrying out his designs.

This possibility did, in fact, occur to some French writers in the 19th century. Charles Marelle stresses the notion of obedience in *The True History of Little Golden-Hood* (1888; Tale 11), which was printed in English by Andrew Lang in 1890⁴¹ and adapted by the American James Baldwin in 1898.⁴² Marelle changes the name of the little girl to Blanchette, and then has her chastised for talking to the wolf; but neither she nor granny is touched by the beast. Blanchette is saved by her "gold-and-fire-coloured hood," representative of her sensuality, which she must learn to curb. Here the modifications of Perrault's tale are tailored to accommodate 19th-century strictures of purity, and female figures are used extensively to enforce an essentially male-oriented sexual pedagogization. Despite the clever twists, Marelle's tale never succeeded in superseding Perrault's classic in France, perhaps because it suggested that women were capable of fending for themselves.

Before World War I there was another curious endeavor to transform Perrault's tale along these lines. Émilie Mathieu wrote *Le Nouveau Chaperon Rouge* (*The New Red Riding Hood*) in 1908, remolding it into a sentimental moralistic tale with a realistic setting. The story takes place in 1780, and Mathieu describes in some detail the customs and life of the village Morvan (in Nivernais, a region known for its folklore about werewolves, wolves, and little

girls), providing background for the actions of a poor grandmother and her ten-year-old granddaughter. On the brink of starvation, the grandmother Monique prays to God for help, and the kind village priest listens to the imploring granddaughter and helps the two establish a small bakery. The granddaughter dons a costume that has a magic effect on prospective buyers, mainly because of her angelic disposition. People begin calling her Little Red Riding Hood, and she diligently helps the grandmother expand the business. Then one day, after having sold bakery goods in a neighboring village, Little Red Riding Hood returns home through the woods and discovers two robbers about to ambush a rich farmer. Paying no heed to the danger, she saves the farmer's life, and he not only rewards her with money but more or less guarantees that her virtue will be rewarded. Several years later, after she has become the "prettiest, most industrious, and gentlest girl of the village," the son of the rich farmer marries her. Despite the fact that the tale depicts an old woman and young girl as valiant, the narrative reads like a pious manual on how to rear the exemplary "good little girl." Red Riding Hood does everything she is told and has a kind heart. Typical of many heroines of the late-19th and early-20th centuries, she assumes the form of a little angel who willingly sacrifices herself to protect others, young and old. The tale is in this regard a fine example of the ambivalent social attitude toward women's role which was developing at this time: *women were expected to be strong and self-sufficient, yet dependent and self-denying*. Written by a female, the new quality in *The New Red Riding Hood* is the mixed message, a result of the changing code of civilization in the Western world, which now allowed the idealized girl to act out her own denial instead of being denied by the wolf. Here we can see how, in France, discipline and punishment had become fully internalized by the end of the 19th century.

In 19th-century Germany the Grimms' version of *Little Red Cap* remained as dominant as Perrault's was in France. There was little call to change it, and, if it was altered, it was generally made more Christian and sweeter for youngsters to digest. The Grimms themselves, particularly Wilhelm, kept changing and censoring all their tales so that the wolf in *Little Red Cap* is referred to as an "old sinner" by 1857. However, the most classically saccharine alterations were made not by the Grimms but by Ludwig Bechstein, whose *Deutsches Märchenbuch* was published in 1845 and achieved imme-

diate popularity, though it never vied with the Grimms' household tales for first place in the hearts of German readers. In 1853 Bechstein included *Little Red Cap* in his anthology,⁴³ and it is evident that the Grimms' story was his model. Although he sought to make his tales more witty, pungent, and folksy than those of the Grimms, Bechstein's mannered style and didactic intentions generally transformed them into cute narratives bordering on puerility. This is the case in his version of *Little Red Cap*, which is loaded with diminutives and harmless jokes. Otherwise Bechstein remained loyal to the Grimms and the bourgeois literary tradition.

Three other significant German versions reveal just how strongly the bourgeois civilizing process was making itself felt in the Red Riding Hood fairy tales. Gustav Holting embroidered his *Little Red Cap* (1840) by amply describing the idyllic nature of the little girl's village and by setting her on a pedestal as a model of virtue and beauty. But once she encounters the wolf, she commits the sin of confiding things to him which are not his concern. Her fate is sealed, and Holting follows Perrault by having the *sinful* wolf swallow the girl in the end. In Moritz Hartmann's version of *Little Red Cap* (1869), she is more gullible than disobedient. So the author treats Riding Hood with disdainful irony and shows her pity after the wolf swallows her: "But it would be a very sad story if it were to end this way, and there would be no justice on earth if wolves were to eat little Red Riding Hoods without being punished."⁴⁴ Therefore, the hunter/gamekeeper is sent to the rescue. And he also rides to the rescue in Ernst Siewert's naturalist and pious play *Little Red Cap* (c. 1880). Though Little Red Riding Hood has a devout belief in God and convinces her parents that He will protect her on her way to visit her sick grandmother, she is also stupid enough to believe the wolf when he tells her that he is a doctor and can help her grandmother. As in the Bechstein version, Little Red Riding Hood is duped—and swallowed. Fortunately there is a price on the wolf's skin, and the hunter saves granny and granddaughter. It is interesting that the German versions in the 19th century stress patriarchal governance more than the French; the latter tend to leave Red Riding Hood in the bed she has made for herself. Erotic play and seduction appear to capture the imagination of the French, whereas the Germans are more concerned with law and order.

In England and America, sweet, innocent, and helpless Little Red Riding Hood suffered through hybrid adventures. That is, the



Little Red Riding Hood, New York: Golden Press, 1948. Illustrator Elizabeth Orton Jones.

Perrault and Grimm versions were often mixed together, and, whether the plot was developed in verse, prose, theatrical scenes, or illustrations, there was a general tendency to make Little Red Riding Hood into a Victorian middle-class lass whose virtue is threatened because she forgets to control her sensual drives and disobeys her good super-ego mother. Ironically, the 19th century

began with a Gothic persiflage of *Little Red Riding Hood* for adults. *The Wolf-King* (1801; Tale 5) was untypical of English and American versions in that it was a critique of M. G. Lewis's ballad *The Water King* and was written mainly for a sophisticated adult audience.⁴⁵ The traditional features of the Perrault version were exaggerated and mocked, and the gory details were used to titillate and shock the reader rather than provide a real warning for children. The tradition of parody can be seen in two other remarkable adaptations. F. W. N. Bayley included a farcical *Little Red Riding Hood* with social commentary in his *Comic Nursery Rhymes* (1846; Tale 7). Its end effect was not much different from Perrault's tale, for Little Red Riding Hood is punished because she is idle and careless. In "Ye True Hystorie of Little Red Riding Hood; or, The Lamb in Wolf's Clothing" (1872; Tale 10), by Alfred Mills, bedlam and confusion are the results of careless actions by a vain Red Riding Hood and her lamb, who follows her to granny's house in a wolf's skin. Mills used the traditional story to poke fun at political issues of the day, and Thomas Nast, the famous German-American illustrator, supplied appropriate illustrations.⁴⁶

As I have indicated, the parodies of *Little Red Riding Hood* in the 19th century were the exceptions. For the most part the English and American adaptations printed after the horror story of 1801 were tame and prudent. The language was gilded, and the incidents were carefully transformed so that atrocities could be avoided, although harsh lessons were still conveyed so that children would at least learn to control their carnality. The major accomplishments of the translations and adaptations in England and America up through World War I were to shift most of the blame for Little Red Riding Hood's "rape" on to the girl herself. Her idleness, vanity, and negligence are stressed; she is treated as an accomplice in crime. The direction of this fairy-tale discourse about female indulgence in sin had been set by Perrault, expanded by the Grimms, and fully executed by a host of English and American writers.

The historical evolution of the literary *Red Riding Hood* parallels a development of sexual socialization in Western society. The socio-religious shifts in the late Middle Ages gave way to an obsession with sex and the body, an obsession that demanded new codes of governance and deployment of sexual energies. The family became

an agency of control and a point of sexual saturation: it was in the "bourgeois" or "aristocratic" family that the sexuality of children and adolescents was first problematized, and feminine

sexuality medicalized; it was the first to be alerted to the potential pathology of sex, the urgent need to keep it under close watch and to devise a rational technology of correction. It was this family that first became a locus of the psychiatrization of sex. Surrendering to fears, creating remedies, appealing for rescue by learned techniques, generating countless discourses, it was the first to commit itself to sexual erethism. The bourgeoisie began by considering that its own sex was something important, a fragile treasure, a secret that had to be discovered at all costs. It is worth remembering that the first figure to be invested by the deployment of sexuality, one of the first to be "sexualized," was the "idle" woman. She inhabited the outer edge of the "world," in which she always had to appear as a value, and of the family, where she was assigned a new destiny charged with conjugal and parental obligations.⁴⁷

There was the good "idle" woman as housewife, who could easily become hysterical, and there was the bad "idle" woman as prostitute, who could reap chaos. Each one is reflected in the trials of Little Red Riding Hood in America and England. Let us look at six classical examples of the Victorian mode.

Richard Henry Stoddard's *The Story of Little Red Riding Hood* (1864; Tale 9) is literally drenched with Christian sentimentality. The girl of this verse melodrama is daddy's darling, and she sets a standard that all little girls of the 19th century were expected to emulate: she is kind, diligent, and obedient. Not only does she help a wasp, a bird, and an old woman, but she also defends the wolf at one point. Of course, this is almost her undoing, for wolves are treacherous parasites. In contrast, everyone else is hard-working in the poem, especially Little Red Riding Hood, who is saved by the good fairy because she demonstrates that she is *not idle*. Stoddard constantly stresses the notions of idleness as sin and obedience as virtue. Neither girl nor granny is sexually molested, so the story ultimately pays great tribute to the Protestant ethic.

This is also true of an anonymous verse translation written toward the end of the 19th century. Here we are told that Little Red Riding Hood is instructed by her mother not to loiter on her way to her sick Grandma. Then in the very next stanza we learn:

But the pretty flowers that in the wood
Bloomed gay and bright on either hand,
So lured the maiden to gaze and pluck
That she quite forgot the strict command.⁴⁸

From this point on, after succumbing to the wiles of outer nature, Little Red Riding Hood is guilty of a heinous crime:

she "idly" chats with the wolf, and her *idleness* leads to her grandmother's death and her own near rape. Typical of many Victorian versions, the Perrault story is mixed with the Grimm narrative so that Little Red Riding Hood is saved by woodcutters and learns a hard lesson:

To her mother's words, ever after this,
Red Riding Hood gave better heed;
For she saw the dreadful end to which
A disobedient act may lead.⁴⁹

It is obvious from this verse adaptation that the entire story concerns the regulation of a child's sexuality and the internalization of social norms set by adults. To live, a child had to live *properly*, restraining natural instincts according to rules established by adults. To disobey these rules or to indulge one's sensual drives for pleasure meant death.

This is also the message of another hybrid prose version, by Sabine Baring-Gould, one of the leading late Victorian collectors of fairy tales.⁵⁰ In his *Little Red Riding Hood* (1895; Tale 12), *idleness* is again Red Riding Hood's downfall. She forgets her wise mother's commands and almost pays for her negligence. This time it is her father, the forester, who rescues her and kills the "cunning and cruel beast"; he bursts into verse at its happy end to preach the lesson of the tale:

A little maid
Must be afraid
To do other than her mother told her.
Of idling must be wary,
Of gossiping must be chary,
She'll learn prudence by the time that she is older.⁵¹

The tale reeks of sentimentality, and it is quite evident that Red Riding Hood can be "daddy's darling" only if she learns to toe the line. The image of Red Riding Hood is that of a helpless, foolish, pretty little thing, whose potential will be wasted unless she learns to discipline herself.

As I have mentioned, throughout the 19th century the Perrault version was generally garnished and transformed into a tale with more delicacy and ornateness, primarily for children of the upper class; this was also the case with the Grimms' tale. Most important was the inoffensive tone. Care was taken not to offend the fragile sensibilities of the child or to contradict the sexual and social ta-

boos set up by adults. The Grimms' tale needed less revision than Perrault's, since it was a product of the 19th century—though it, too, was toned down. The swallowing and regurgitating of granny and Riding Hood was considered too prurient by many translators and publishers; thus, intimate intercourse with the Wolf was avoided, and the wolf himself was made less ferocious.

By far one of the cleanest and daintiest versions of the *Riding Hood* pattern in the 19th century was the operetta for juveniles by George Cooper and Harrison Millard.⁵² Not only did they introduce a fairy queen and her court into the story, but the wolf is a former fairy who was transformed into a wicked beast because of her evil ways. Needless to say, vulgarity is avoided, innocence blessed, as fairies swarm through the woods to protect their ward. Though granny is eaten (offstage), not a hair on Riding Hood's head is touched. In fact, when the fairy queen intervenes and saves Riding Hood as the wolf is on the verge of devouring her, she is overly mild: after reprimanding the wolf, she exiles him to a cave deep in the woods, and teaches Riding Hood the usual lesson of good behavior:

Arise, sweet girl, whom we have saved from harm,
Still round thy way we weave our mighty charm.
Still may thy mem'ry live in glowing story,
Thy name still be each child's delight and glory.
With dance and song, we'll bear thee to thy home
Then to the hills and valleys we must roam
To shield the good and innocent from harm.⁵³

The only way Little Red Riding Hood can protect herself is by not being herself, or rather by being "good," which means denying her instincts for pleasure. Only if she remains obedient, innocent, and defenseless will she be saved. Otherwise her fate might resemble that of the wicked fairy's—to be transformed into a wolf with a gluttonous appetite. Obviously the swallowing of Little Red Riding Hood by the wolf amounted to a loaded warning for children in the 19th century. To become at one with the wolf was to become a transgressor, a nonconformist, a predatory beast with no control of one's appetite. In the operetta by Cooper and Millard the wolf is described as insatiable and depraved. Such depravity (like masturbation, nymphomania, sexual promiscuity) was continually associated with disease, and with the devil, particularly from the 19th century up through the present. In the immortal case of Riding Hood, her memory continued to live "in glowing story" as predicted in the operetta. In fact, by the 1890s Schultz and Company of



Star Soap Nursery Rhymes, Zanesville, Ohio, ca. 1890. Illustrator unknown.

Zanesville, Ohio, had already employed Riding Hood as the cover girl for advertisements of Star soap, which used nursery rhymes to convey two morals:

MORAL I
If in this world secure you'd be,
From danger, strife and care,
Take heed with whom you keep company,
And how, and when, and where.

MORAL II
And cleanly you should ever be,
And cheerful; never mope.
To accomplish both, my child, you must
Use ever our STAR SOAP.³⁴

Two other exceedingly clean Victorian versions of *Little Red Riding Hood*, and perhaps the most fascinating, were written by two prim and proper ladies, Miss Thackeray (Anne Isabella Ritchie) and Mrs. Harriet Louisa Childe-Pemberton. Both sought to write true-romance stories in a moralistic and realistic mode, and in so doing they exemplified the manner in which women writers of the 19th century contributed to their own oppression and circumscription.

Miss Thackeray's *Little Red Riding Hood* of 1866 is a 72-page tale about Patty and Rémy, first cousins of upper-class families, who fall in love. However, their families are vying for the inheritance of the eccentric grandmother Madame Capuchon, and blood has been spilled. Rémy, of French extraction, is something of a playboy, who at first wants only to seduce and marry his English cousin Patty because she will probably be the sole heiress of the grandmother. Yet, her angelic innocence is so powerful that the "wolf" Rémy mends his ways and wins the trust of Patty, her parents, and even the grandmother to boot. Virtue is rewarded here in elegant fashion because both Patty and Rémy are obedient and follow the dictates of upper-class breeding.

In Mrs. Childe-Pemberton's long version of 1882, *All my Doing; or, Red Riding-Hood over again*, we are presented with the opposite example: disobedience leads to a catastrophe, and it is obvious that the heroine's lack of virtue precludes her eventual "reward" of a bourgeois marriage. Here the first-person narrator is a spinster, who tells her niece her own life story in the form of the *Little Red Riding Hood* fairy tale because her niece does not believe that fairy tales can be morally instructive. The plot is superbly contrived: Pussy, a heedless young woman, is sent to live with her rich grand-

mother in hopes that she might learn some proper manners and provide company for her grandmother. Before her departure, Pussy is given a great deal of advice about being cautious, considerate, and trustworthy. Yet, by her own account, Pussy was already too spoiled to heed the sage counsel. During her train ride she speaks to a suspicious-looking stranger who manages to win her confidence. This elderly man steals her money and then pretends to want to help her when they arrive at her destination. Later, after Pussy is settled in the luxurious manor house of her grandmother, she encounters the con man again and foolishly invites him to the manor house when nobody is there. Eventually, he robs the house and causes granny to suffer a stroke and Pussy's suitor, Herbert, to lose a leg during his pursuit of the criminal. At the end of this first-person narrative Pussy confesses that she was to blame for the tragedy that befell her grandmother and Herbert. Or, as the subtitle of the story states, it was "all my doing." Pussy, like all traditional heroines of *Little Red Riding Hood* stories, is responsible for her own downfall and for the rapaciousness of wolflike creatures. The accusatory tone and moralistic message of this elaborately constructed fairy tale, which keeps within the bounds of a male discourse, are similar to most of the *Little Red Riding Hood* tales in 19th-century England, which insisted that girls clean up their acts, become doll-like angels, or else receive the punishment they deserve: a self-induced rape and murder.

These morals and messages were bought wholesale in Europe and America during the 19th century. However, Riding Hood's story began to undergo some important changes after World War I, reflecting gradual shifts in child rearing and sexual roles. Moreover, the male-dominated civilizing process was now faced with strong opposition from organized labor and women's movements, which were to leave their marks on the fairy-tale discourse about Riding Hood's fate.

Revisionism and Radicalism Since World War I

The period from 1919 to 1945 generated only the first cracks in the traditional cultural pattern inscribed in the plot of the fairy tale. (Here we must bear in mind that the Perrault and Grimm versions remained dominant during this time and are dominant even now.) There were various interesting revisions during the interwar period which were printed or broadcast by the mass media, and many of these are now lost or difficult to find. I want to discuss eight different adaptations—from France, Germany, England, Ire-