

THE GIRL IN RED AND THE WOLF: A SYMBOLIC READING\*

*Franciso Vaz da Silva<sup>†</sup>*

The general theme underlying this paper concerns a peculiar, ongoing misunderstanding between fairy tales and scholars who study them. While fairy tales are perhaps the most complex symbolic materials in folklore, folklorists are arguably among the most reluctant scholars to embark upon studies of meaning. Ananda Coomaraswamy noted, on the folklorist's "science of fairy-tales," "it amounts to little more than a Ph.D. thesis of the sort in which literary attributions are based on statistical computations" (1944, 124). Likewise, Georges Dumézil complained about the "abuses of the 'science of folktales'" in its diligent reduction of every text to its constituent details at the cost of meaning (1986, 84-86). Bengt Holbek, describing his conversion to the idea that all problems in the realm of "oral verbal art ... had to be seen as being dependent upon that of meaning," acknowledged that he "had been brought up in a stern positivistic tradition in which questions pertaining to meaning were shunned" (1998, 8). And Alan Dundes could hardly be clearer in assessing that folklore "cries out for interpretation" (1980, vii, xi).

In this article I do not propose to deal with such shunning of meanings in an abstract or general way. Instead, I shall support the view that the study of folklore requires decrypting symbols by focusing on one delimited theme: the image of girls in red meeting with wolves. Half a century ago, Paul Delarue declared that in Perrault's famous version of "Little Red Riding Hood" the chaperon rouge is "an accessory trait, with no link to the theme." For this reason, Delarue furthermore refused to acknowledge any relationship between an 11th century exemplum featuring a girl in red who meets with wolves and Perrault's text. Moreover, he surmised that all extant oral versions presenting the red hood were influenced by Perrault's text-without, seemingly, ever pondering why should an accessory trait with no link to the theme turn out to be so popular in oral tradition (1951, 227, 251, 253). But should one thus dispose of the red headgear without ever attempting to understand what it is all about?

According to whether or not one accepts Delarue's stance, our perception of Perrault's work, of the relationship between *Le Petit Chaperon rouge* and oral tradition, and of the workings of oral tradition itself will of necessity vary. Overall, what is at stake here is whether or not one can abstract of meanings when dealing with folklore. In order to suggest that one cannot, I shall briefly examine Delarue's argument. Then I will take up the relationship between literary and oral folklore texts, as well as the issue of cultural diffusion, in order to show the need to take symbolic translations into account in studying folklore. In examining both the literary texts featuring a girl in red and some oral versions of "Little Red Riding Hood," as well as data lying outside the scope of fairy tales proper, I will suggest that a coherent symbolic pattern underlies, across centuries and genres, the image of girls in red meeting with wolves.

A CASE FOR SYMBOLIC ANALYSIS

Delarue feels sure that Perrault's text "is directly issued from an oral tradition to which it kept in close proximity [*de laquelle il est resté très proche*]" (1951, 286). Yet, this author thinks that Perrault omits a number of "primitive traits" that are characteristic of the folk background of the tale (199-200). In other words, Perrault supposedly eliminated folk traits of the tale while keeping to his version "a folk flavor and freshness" (Delarue 1980, 383). Therefore, Delarue suggests that "independent versions bearing primitive traits" reveal the folk background from which Perrault "softened, modified or eliminated" traits presenting a "savage, or overly irrational character" on the one hand, and to which the Academician added such details as the girl's red hood and her indulgence in flowers-collecting on the other hand (1951, 199-200, 252-54).

---

<sup>†</sup> Departamento de Antropologia-I.S.C.T.E. Av. das Forças Armadas. 1649-026 Lisboa. fgvs@iscte.pt.

However, the hypothesis that characteristic elements of the tale were eliminated should exclude the feeling that Perrault did not depart radically from tradition. Moreover, the very notion of "independent versions," owing their entire content to oral tradition not to Perrault, presupposes that Perrault's version was not taken from oral tradition in the first place. The whole argument is thus circular insofar as it takes for granted precisely such differences (between the written text and oral tradition) as it supposedly aims to show.

For instance, Delarue proclaims that the red hood is an "accessory trait, with no link to the theme," that spread from Perrault's text to a number of oral versions-hence, "independent versions" do not show it (1951, 251, 253). Since not showing the red cap is part of the definition of such versions, there is seemingly a vicious circle in the reasoning. Moreover, Delarue cannot but acknowledge the possibility that a local seventeenth century tradition-not necessarily limited to the particular version Perrault committed to writing-knew the name *Petit Chaperon rouge* (253). Imperceptively, the original claim is thus downtoned: it is "the name of *Petit Chaperon rouge*, in French modern oral versions, [that] cannot but be taken from Perrault's written version" (254, my emphasis). What Delarue really established concerns then but a specific linguistic form-not the underlying idea. In other words, Perrault's *chaperon rouge* could well be a specific variation on a wider theme to be found, under many guises, in oral tradition. For the very idea that the red hood is an "accessory trait, with no link to the theme" (Delarue 1951, 251), stumbles against precisely the fact that oral storytellers have repeatedly adopted the red hood image in their stories.

The case for the specificity of Perrault's text as regards oral tradition is then not sound in its principle. Now Delarue was experienced enough in the study of tradition that his basic feeling of close proximity to oral tradition can be trusted. On the other hand, it could be that this author's uncompromising refusal of symbolism (Delarue 1951, 289-90) is bound to lead him astray, for Delarue considers motifs on purely empirical grounds and, thus, semantic equivalencies are a non-issue for him. Whether or not Perrault preserved, through thematic transformations, the traits he apparently omitted must therefore remain an open question.

#### CULTURAL DIFFUSION AS TRANSLATION

Since here I cannot proceed to show at length that Perrault's "omissions" and "inventions" are to be considered as thematic transformations within French tradition,<sup>1</sup> I shall take a byway that leads through Portuguese ethnography. The notion of cultural diffusion thus enters the scenes, for-according to Delarue-oral versions of "Little Red Riding Hood" belong only in a restricted area in Western Europe that encompasses central-eastern France, the Alps, and Northern Italy (Delarue 1951, 225; Tenèze 1973, 45-48). Since, still according to this author, Perrault's version stems from this oral tradition and the Grimms' text seemingly proceeds from Perrault's, all oral versions extant outside that circum-alpine area should owe their existence to these literary versions (Delarue 1951, 254-57). This is, indeed, in agreement with my conviction that the only two versions of "Little Red Riding Hood" collected in Portugal do present traces suggestive of their origin in either Perrault's or the Grimms' texts (Silva 1995, 192-96).

However, to let the matter rest at this pronouncement of literary diffusion may be hasty. The fact that the theme of an avuncular monster who goes to bed with a girl it tries to eat is widespread at an Eurasian scale suggests that the particular plot we all know, featuring a girl in bed with a wolf at granny's house, is but a specific form of the wider theme (cf. Dundes 1989, 203-04). In other words, apparently different themes may be variant expressions of an encompassing semantic field. I propose to relate this to the idea that the Portuguese versions contain elements that one cannot simply ascribe to literary diffusion, since they are seemingly absent from the literary texts. For instance, while the Grimms' variant simply has the wolf drop dead under the weight of stones in the belly, one Portuguese version ascribes to the stones the causing of thirst and the consequent drowning of the monster (Vasconcelos 1963, no. 45). Indeed, stones in the stomach-for which coals are a

---

<sup>1</sup> I attempt this task in chapter 3 of my forthcoming book, *Metamorphosis: The Dynamics of Symbolism in European Fairy Tales*.

variant in French tradition (Tenèze 1976, T. 123 no. 22; cf. Delarue 1985a, T. 333 no. 2)-cause an internal "burning" that the wolf tries to quench by drinking water. Now such a connection of the wolf's death with both fire and water is a constant element in oral tradition, which usually has the wolf die burned, drowned, or yet burned and drowned.

Likewise, the other Portuguese version, *The Girl of the Little Red Hat* (which is clearly based on Perrault's text, where nevertheless the wolf's death is not an issue), has the monster drown with its fur in flames. Moreover, in this text the wolf dies "in the well of the mill" (Pedroso 1984, 299). This is reminiscent of the fact that Perrault situates granny's house near a mill. However, beyond Perrault's rather vague association, the Portuguese version actually joins a French oral text that presents granny's house as a mill in which the wolf meets death (Joisten 1971, 1: n° 48.4). Similarly, the Portuguese narrator's specification that the wolf is really a "wolf-man" (Pedroso 1984, 297) is in harmony with the fact that Perrault's wolf stands for a man. However, beyond Perrault's depiction of a wolf that is a man, the Portuguese narrator-speaking of a wolf-man who is "partly a man and partly a wolf but is not the same as a werewolf" (Pedroso 1984, 297)-joins (in negative form) a French narrator's specification that the monster is a *bzou*, meaning a werewolf (Delarue 1985a, 373 n. 2).

Therefore, some elements appear in common between Portuguese and French oral versions that are seemingly absent from the linking literary texts. In other words, Portuguese versions stemming from literary texts based on French tradition seem to reflect, beyond plain literary diffusion, an underlying thematic continuity between Iberian and circum-alpine folk traditions. This, in turn, suggests that literary diffusion could be but the outward aspect of complex symbolic translations occurring among regional forms of a wider oral tradition. The question arises, therefore, of how are we to conceive interaction between the event of literary diffusion and a deeper structural continuity among folk traditions.

Consideration of an enigma in the text of *The Girl of the Little Red Hat* may prove enlightening in this respect. The teller points out that the wolf-man, being partly a wolf and partly a man, is nevertheless not a werewolf. Now this seems strange insofar as the meaning of the Portuguese term for werewolf (*lobis-homem*) is precisely that of "wolf-man" (*lobo-homem*). Furthermore, the very fact that the narrator feels the need to deny that a wolf-man is a werewolf shows that this association is self-evident. Several elements concur with this view. Firstly, the justification the narrator gives for the monster's long legs-they are good for "covering much ground in little time" (*andar muita terra em pouco tempo*)-is in harmony with the idea that werewolves run through seven parishes, or even through the "seven parts of the world," in one night. Endurance of such destiny reads as *correr o fado*, "running one's fate," and its victims appropriately bear names meaning "runner," such as *corredor* and *galipante*, to which French *galipotte* may be compared (Delarue 1985b, 18). Furthermore, the justification given for the wolf's long hair-it avoids "being cold during the day"-joins the werewolf's affirmation, in a French tale, that its long hair keeps it warm (Delarue 1985a, 374). Moreover, the time specification (during the day) alludes to the periodic day/night alternation between man and beast, characteristic of werewolves. Such periodic metamorphoses supposedly involve discarding human clothes (in going into animal shape) or animal furs (in going back into human shape)-and these allegedly affect their owner's body comfort even after being discarded (see Silva 1995, 199-201). Furthermore, there is a stable notion that werewolves appear physically depleted during daytime, due to their heated nightly exertions.

In light of these representations, a fur that keeps one who is "partly a wolf and partly a man" warm during, specifically, daytime spells out the cyclic metamorphoses of werewolves. Therefore, one is bound to conclude that the Portuguese narrator is unconsciously describing a werewolf even while he maintains that his *lobo-homem* is not a *lobisomem*. The question is, then: What may cause this gap between a conscious definition and the actual contents of the tale? The issue is of course complex and admits, therefore, no self-evident solution. Nevertheless, one possibility to keep in mind is that the narrator be bent on being faithful to the letter of the wolf-man of Perrault's text while operating the inevitable folkloristic translation of this into a werewolf-which is, indeed, the model for Perrault's wolf-man.

Seemingly, Perrault's mitigated rendering of the werewolf of French oral tradition as a wolf-man appears then recognizable to a Portuguese narrator who, unwittingly, reintroduces the werewolf figure familiar to Iberian tradition. Moreover, I now have to add to the statement that both Portuguese versions feature the wolf's death by fire and water, even though the Grimms do not relate any fire and water overtones to the deadly stones (and Perrault's text does not feature the wolf's death), the specification that the Brothers do convey after all the underlying notion by presenting a second version of the wolf's death in boiling water. Thus, I return to the twofold idea that, on the one hand, some traditional elements seemingly absent in literary versions are nevertheless recognizably there and, on the other hand, a fundamental continuity appears among European regional traditions. In both cases, superficially different motifs turn out to express equivalent ideas-which is why, I suggest, folk narrators seamlessly reconstitute in the terms of Portuguese tradition elements of French tradition that are apparently absent in the linking literary texts. In short, this capacity suggests that a transmitted story may enter its new context as a variant of something previously known there. Let me explore this idea by examining the relationship of *The Girl of the Little Red Hat* to its ethnographic context.

"LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD" AND IBERIAN FEMALE WEREWOLVES

According to this tale, a woman living out in the mountains has two daughters. In the first of four narrative sequences, one day the girls' grandmother offers the older sister (named Maria) a red cap, which the girl is to fetch at the old woman's house. A wolf-man outraces her to the house, where granny falls asleep. The girl is then received in bed by the wolf in the guise of grandmother. As the monster prepares to eat the young woman, the old one wakes up; she enchants the animal and sets fire to its fur, thus causing it to drown in the well of the mill. Then, grandmother reprehends Maria for having been receptive to the wolf-man. She nevertheless hands the red cap to the girl, while advising her to always abide by the wish of anyone who asks for water. Now starts the second sequence. When mother asks Maria to go and fetch water at the spring, the girl refuses. Her younger sister offers to go. At the spring, this young lady finds the old woman that had given her the red cap. The fairy asks for some water. As the girl willingly complies, the woman asks her if she is the red-capped one-the answer is "yes"-and grants her the power of producing flowers whenever she speaks. As usual in the pattern of AT 480, the following sequence inverts these events. Maria herself wants to go to the fountain, but she refuses the old fairy water and is, therefore, cursed to produce toads whenever she speaks. Now the fourth and last sequence starts. The younger girl is expelled from home and wanders in the mountains until a prince finds her and-after seeing the girl produce flowers-proposes to marry her (Pedroso 1984, no. 52).

As may be seen, this story featuring the theme of "Little Red Riding Hood" (AT 333) in its first sequence is structurally a complex version of "The Kind and the Unkind Girls" (AT 480)-a mirror-like tale in which two girls appear as each other's antagonist dimension. This mirror structure is most obvious in the central part of the plot, where both girls go successively to the fountain with contrasting results. Beyond this core, however, the symmetry between sequences featured by opposite girls encompasses even the extreme moves of the tale. In other words, the imported "Little Red Riding Hood" theme is arguably the structural counterpart to the scene where a girl runs into the wilderness. Indeed, this relates to an Iberian tradition of meeting with wolves.

In the last sequence of the tale, the heroine wanders for a long time in the wilderness, "dead with hunger, her dress all in rags. Then she went to work as a serving maid" (Pedroso 1984, 300-301). This statement reads, in northwestern Iberia, as a shortcut for the fate of being a wolves' shepherd. Compare the following account. A girl once told her father that she "had a fate to run." Then she disappeared. A hunter later found her, dressed in rags, in the mountains. Once the time for the accomplishment of her fate (*fadário*) was over, the hunter could not find her again, for she had returned to her father's house and worked there as a serving maid until she made herself known (Pedroso 1988, 197). As may be seen, this purportedly real-life fate, "still remembered by many people alive today" according to the

informant, corresponds-except for the specifically fairy-tale themes of expelling flowers through the mouth and of marriage with a prince-to the contents of the tale's last scene. In both cases, a girl withdraws into the mountains, remains there for a long time dressed in rags, and finally achieves social reinsertion after working as a serving maid. Now the legend describes this as the fate of the *peeira dos lobos*, meaning one who keeps company to wolves (Pedroso 1988, 198; Vasconcelos 1980, 386).

Such allegedly real *peeiras* are supposedly seventh daughters-more precisely, the seventh element in uninterrupted series of daughters. Their male counterparts risk becoming werewolves. Werewolves are also recruited among the products of illicit sexual relations or of failed baptisms-they are, in other words, people unable to fully occupy a social position, who therefore must remain between two worlds. The reason seventh sons risk becoming werewolves is that, being supposedly born in excess, they have no social position of their own. For the same reason-which a fairy tale may appropriately render as having no place in the heart and hearth of an ill-disposed mother-seventh daughters have to endure an "exile" (*degredo*) for seven years, living with wolves while dressed in rags, controlling them and being in turn fed by them (Braga 1924, 288-89; Vasconcelos 1980, 386, 396).

One may say, thus, that each of the extreme sequences of *The Girl of the Little Red Hat* features one of two sisters meeting with wolves-one according to a French theme, the other featuring an Iberian one. This is still too simple, however, since an overall correlation of the two sequences, involving therefore the imported "Little Red Riding Hood" motif, expresses a well-known Iberian theme. To consider this matter, let us turn to a strange detail in the tale.

The narrator states that the elder sister, Maria, gets the little red hat from granny, but then he affirms that the younger sister is the girl of the little red hat. In order to understand this, let us follow the plot. After Maria gets into bed with the wolf, granny scolds her for "giving acceptance" (*dar aceitação*) to the beast-an expression with courtship implications-and warns her to never do it again. This spells out a fairy-tale qualifying test, usually imposed by a donor, in which the hero must prove to be nice and forthcoming-but in fact Maria faces an inverted test imposed, in formalist parlance, by an aggressor whose proposals she ought therefore to reject (Meletinsky et al. 1974, 84-86, 107). Therefore, in being forthcoming towards the wolf, Maria fails in the inverted qualifying test even as she apparently succeeds. This is why, when granny neutralizes and replaces the wolf-thus putting the inverted test back on its feet, so to speak-she scolds Maria instead of praising her. Now granny hands down to her, along with the red hat, recommendations for good behavior-namely, to speak nicely to everybody, abide by everyone's wishes, and give water with good will to anyone asking for it. However, when later on mother asks Maria to go and fetch water, it is the younger sister who abides by granny's advice and is henceforth associated to the hat. This simply confirms that Maria's meeting with the wolf qualifies as a failed test, which discloses the "false hero" in Propp's terminology-for meeting the wolf in bed qualifies as improper behavior, rife with erotic connotations.

Further consideration of Iberian legends allows grasping the cultural meaning of this. In northern Portugal and in Galicia there are, besides stories regarding a surplus girl who has to live with the wolves, narratives concerning girls condemned to actually turning into wolves. The usual cause for this is a parental curse, the reason for which is that the girl is either too avid for eating meat or too free in amorous matters (Bouza-Brey 1982, 1:252-55). Now excessive avidity in these correlative planes has been considered as characteristic of she-wolves since antiquity-thus, the word *lupanar* for brothel stems from *lupa*. Overall, the rationale of these stories is that a girl behaving like a she-wolf actually turns into one. And, sexual looseness being one defining trait of such lupine behavior, Maria's lying with the wolf in the tale implicitly qualifies her as a she-wolf.

Therefore, opposition in the tale between the elder sister who lies with the wolf and the younger one who runs into the wilderness is parallel to the correlation in folk belief of voracious girls actually turned into wolves and youngest daughters made to live near wolves, while retaining nevertheless their human form. Here is the place to note that in the tale the actions of each sister always determine the fate of the other, as if an underlying identity was

at play. Likewise, in folk belief the first and seventh sisters are intimately related. Thus, the eldest should act as godmother to the youngest in order to avoid having the lastborn follow fate as a *peeira*-but this fate may threaten the first sister as well as the seventh (Braga 1924, 288). Coherently, the information that in Galicia it is a terrible curse to say that someone will be a wolf-keeper in the wilderness (Pedroso 1988, 193) synthesizes the themes of the curse (typically sent on a "lupine" girl) and of being a wolf-keeper (characteristic of *peeiras*). Indeed, one particularly rich account specifies that a girl who is too eager for meat is one of many sisters. After her father curses her, so the narrative continues, the girl "turns into a fate" (*volveuse unha fada*) and alternates henceforth between wolf and human shapes, cyclically leading the wolves in their attacks and restraining them from doing harm. When, finally, someone causes her paw to bleed, her fate is lifted and she resumes human shape for good (Risco 1971, 22)-just as happens to werewolves, of whom clearly this woman alternating between the states of *peeira* and she-wolf is a feminine version.<sup>2</sup> Hence, representations of lupine metamorphosis and of *peeiras* add up to the two aspects of the periodic shifts of feminine werewolves, respectively emphasized in stories concerning "lupine" and lastborn girls-who, again, tend to shade into each other.

Of course, this fusing of opposites is what one finds in the association of both Maria and her younger sister to the one single red cap. This, in turn, leads to the observation that in the oral tradition of "Little Red Riding Hood" the heroine actually displays two behavior patterns. Sometimes she accepts to ingest granny and join the wolf in bed (thus displaying the two dimensions of a "lupine girl"), other times she refuses to eat granny and escapes the wolf after being near it (rather like a *peeira*). Seemingly, The Girl of the Little Red Hat synthesizes then the French theme of a duplicitous girl either literally turned into the wolf (by being ingested) or retaining her human shape, and the Iberian theme of fated girls who alternately display lupine and human shapes.

#### A FRESH LOOK AT THE LITTLE RED CAP

Since, furthermore, the Portuguese version translates the Iberian theme of opposite aspects of girls fated to meet wolves in terms of opposed girls under one single red hat, one may infer-Delarue notwithstanding-that there is a fundamental connection between meeting with wolves and wearing a red headgear. With this in mind, one may consider the fact that, six centuries before Perrault's text features a girl with a red hood meeting a wolf, a Latin text likewise probably drawn from oral tradition narrates a comparable story. Egbert of Liège tells, in his *Fecunda ratis* composed in the 11th century, the story of a five year-old girl wearing a red tunic who meets a wolf. Here is Jan Ziolkowski's translation of the poem:

About a Girl Saved from Wolf Cubs  
What I have to relate, countryfolk can tell along with me,  
and it is not so much marvelous as it is quite true to believe.  
A certain man took up a girl from the sacred font,  
and gave her a tunic woven of red wool;  
sacred Pentecost was [the day] of her baptism.  
The girl, now five years old, goes out  
at sunrise, footloose and heedless of her peril.  
A wolf attacked her, went to its woodland lair,  
took her as booty to its cubs, and left her to be eaten.  
They approached her at once and, since they were unable to harm her,  
began, far from all their ferocity, to caress her head.  
"Do not damage this tunic, mice," the lisping little girl said,  
"which my godfather gave me when he took me from the font!"  
God, their creator, soothes untame souls.  
(Ziolkowski 1992, 559; French translation in Berlioz 1989)

It is striking that the theme of a girl in red meeting with wolves should surface in two superficially different plots, likewise inspired in oral tradition, six centuries apart. While it

---

<sup>2</sup> As Tok Thompson insightfully noted when discussing my presentation at UC Berkeley in April 2000, this alternation could well relate to the phases of the moon.

seems pointless to attempt coalescing these two literary offshoots of a longstanding oral tradition, it may be worthwhile to focus on the invariant elements, across different plots and centuries, of the constant theme of a girl in red who meets with wolves.

Now we saw that the relationship in a Portuguese tale between an elder sister who lies with the wolf and a younger one who runs into the wilderness is parallel to the correlation, in Iberian folklore, between voracious girls actually turned into wolves and surplus daughters made to live near wolves (as *peeiras*). Furthermore, we noted that the fusing of both sisters under one single red cap in the tale is a variation on the dual behavior pattern of the single heroine in the French oral tradition of "Little Red Riding Hood," who sometimes qualifies as a "lupine girl" (by being ravenous) and other times refuses to eat granny and escapes the wolf after being near it (rather like a *peeira*). In this perspective, some preliminary comment of the position of Egbert's text in tradition is possible.

Note firstly that the preoccupation of the protagonist of Egbert's story with preserving her red tunic in face of wolves is in line with the acts of both the Portuguese *peeira*-strictly speaking, contiguous to but not mixing up with wolves-and of the "good" fairy-tale girl who is contrasted to the one that mingles with the wolf. Perrault's heroine, of course, is on the latter pole. Therefore, one may draw a preliminary contrastive articulation between Egbert's girl, intent in preserving the red tunic that godfather offered her, and Perrault's girl letting go of the red hood received from grandmother/godmother, in order to join the wolf in bed. This, in turn, leads to note that Perrault tacitly stresses the double meaning of the verb "to eat," thus suggesting that the girl in bed with the wolf is a pubescent girl, while in Egbert's text-concerning the meeting of a female infant with wolf cubs not quite up to the task of eating her-all sexual allusions seem diffused.

Therefore, we may compare the two literary versions in the light of an encompassing tradition. On the side of resemblances, we have the image of a girl in red meeting with wolves; the idea that the red gear was given to her by a godparent figure (grandmothers being traditionally assimilated to godmothers in western Europe); and the virtual certitude that in both cases the story happens in May (so much is suggested by Pentecost's Sunday in the Latin text, as well as by the luxuriant flowers and other significant details in the tradition of "Little Red Riding Hood"-see Verdier 1997, 107-08). And even the main difference to be found-that the sexual connotation inherent to meeting with wolves is emphasized by Perrault on the one hand, and subdued by Egbert on the other-accords with the polarity between the "bad" and the "good" aspects of the girl meeting with wolves that encompasses the oral tradition of AT 333.<sup>3</sup> Overall, both resemblances and the fundamental difference point then to a common semantic field. Let us further explore it.

Concerning Egbert's text, note in the first place that it may be read entirely in terms of Christian allegory-which of course was the author's likely intention. As Ziolkowski explains, "the red tunic ... can safeguard her ... because of the liturgical context ... Even the motif of the head caressing or licking could belong to the same liturgical nexus, since the unction of baptismal candidates on the head with chrism was believed to convey the gift of the Holy Spirit-the gift of tongues!" (1992, 571). However, despite Egbert's pious intentions, the underlying folkloric theme emerges in two anomalous details. The first is that a baptism tunic ought to be white, but the girl's tunic is red (Berlioz 1989, 137). The second is that a baptism tunic should not cover the head, but it is precisely as the cubs caress her head that the girl enjoins them not to tear the tunic. Let us examine the import of the two anomalous details that foreshadow the redheaded girl later to emerge in Perrault's story.

Regarding the articulation of red to white, Ziolkowski remarks that though the name Whitsunday given to Pentecost "recalls the custom of clothing the newly baptized in white baptismal robes on this day," the name "Red Sunday" would be equally fitting, since then "'red rose leaves were scattered from the roof of the church'; the Gospel book was covered in red, to signify the blood of Christ; and ... the vestments for that day were red" (1992, 570).

---

<sup>3</sup> There is of course, as I hope to show, a significant overall fit between Egbert's pedagogic and religious intention and his use of the "good" pole of the theme of a girl who meets with wolves.

Interestingly, blood still underlies Whitsunday in recent times. In France, Pentecost was customarily the day of first communion: the rite of passage to the status of "maidens in flowers." On this day, as Verdier notes, the puberty of each girl was under public scrutiny, the white dresses "enhancing if anything ... the possibility of comparison" (1979, 190. Cf. 70, 193). Therefore, on modern Pentecost white brings forth the underlying red in girls, and in Egbert's Pentecostal story red replaces a girl's white tunic. Thus, throughout the centuries Whitsunday is consistently underlain by the redness of blood. Note in this connection that the blood of Christ and the menstrual flux relate intimately on theological grounds, for the sacrificial blood of the Savior precisely redeems the Original Sin, that is the first menses (see Gaignebet 1985, 8, 15; Testart 1991, 288-93).<sup>4</sup> Ziolkowski could then be right in hypothesizing that Egbert coordinated the redness of the garment-presumably "too familiar an element in his sources to allow for its omission"-with the symbolism of the liturgy (1992, 571). This however does not entail saying that Egbert replaced "the menstrual associations of red with the religious symbolism of Pentecost," as Ziolkowski tentatively suggests (571), because there is manifestly no incompatibility in the first place.

This brings us to the second anomalous detail. The fact that Egbert associates the girl's red tunic to a head caressed by wolves makes sense in light of folk representations underlying the theme of "Little Red Riding Hood." Indeed, Verdier shows that in contemporary France redheaded women (*femmes rousses*) are likened to permanently menstruated women and that, moreover, menses supposedly trigger sexual desire-magnification of which is consistently associated to red-haired women (1979, 45-47). Verdier also shows that the moon of May, significantly called "red moon" (*lune rousse*), purportedly displays and magnifies the properties of the new moon, just as red-haired women supposedly magnify the properties of cycling women (65). Thus, the very time of year at which a girl in red meets a wolf-after ingesting granny's blood-is under the sway of the properties of feminine blood (72). This, in turn, brings up the matter that ancient Latin authors insistently mention a period, encompassing the end of April and the whole of May, that is prone to the action of *robigo*, "rust"-effects of which correspond precisely to those of the menstrual flux (Gaignebet and Lajoux 1985, 105; Silva 1997, 206-13).<sup>5</sup>

In short, whereas the background to redness in the Latin text is the sacrificial blood of Christ, folklore maps redness in the tale to cyclic blood. Overall, correspondences between Egbert's text, the tradition of "Little Red Riding Hood" (including Perrault's version) and folk representations reveal a bloody background to the theme of girls meeting with wolves.<sup>6</sup> Egbert's attribution of a tender age to both the girl and the wolves does I think make sense within this semantic context, since by presenting a non-bleeding girl he enhances the Christian dimension of the value of blood in Pentecost and, thus, puts forward his religious allegory by emphasizing the blood of Christ over that of Eve-thus, the new Law over the old. Moreover, in so adding a Christian dimension to the tale told by the pagensis he presumably takes footage in the traditional option whereby the girl does not strip, and thus escapes the wolf.

<sup>4</sup> Even though I cannot expand on this subject here, let me provide a couple examples of a longstanding tradition that relates the start of cyclic time upon the expulsion from Eden with the first menses. Present-day Turkish villagers still say that menstruation was "given to women because of Hawa's (Eve) act of disobedience against Allah in Cennet (Garden/Paradise)" (Delaney 1988, 79). In the same vein, Hieronymus Bosch presents in his *Garden of Delights* the tree of knowledge as a *Dracœna*-also named in Latin *sanguis draconis*, "dragon's blood"-the red fruits of which, as Gaignebet shows, the painter uses to symbolize the canonic six days of menstrual impurity (1990, 378-79, 382-83; see also Testart 1991, 284-85). This symbolism is of course fully compatible with a parallel representation of the tree of life as a vine (Eliade 1949, 245), and moreover explains the famous red apple of popular imagination (I thank Alan Dundes for reminding me of this). Last not least, "among the Jews it was a common rabbinical opinion that menstruation owes its origin to the serpent having had sexual intercourse with Eve in the Garden of Eden" (Briffault 1963, 315).

<sup>5</sup> For the basic homology between *robigo* and menstruation, see Pliny (7.64; 28.23, 222, 249-53, 275-280) complemented by Ovid (*Fasti* 4.904-32). For times especially prone to the maleficent action of *robigo*, see Columella (11.2.36), Ovid (*Fasti* 4.902) and Pliny (18, 258, 287). Cf. Varro (*Rerum Rusticarum* 1.1.6).

<sup>6</sup> It is of course Erich Fromm who proposed for the first time the idea that the red cap is "a symbol of menstruation" (1980, 240). The nonchalance of presentation of this unsubstantiated idea (right after the statement that "most of the symbolism in this fairy tale may be understood without difficulty"), along with the fact that Fromm took the Grimms' version as "the fairy tale" (235, my emphasis), were rightly castigated by folklorists. Still, the fact remains that Fromm's intuition was correct and went nevertheless unheeded for a long time. I dwell on this matter at length in chapter 3 of *Metamorphosis*.



Of course, Egbert would not even then be telling the story in exactly the same way as peasants would-but this is precisely his point as a pedagogue. Even among peasants no two versions are alike, and the cleric was-like everybody else in traditional settings-entitled to his share of embroidering on a theme. Likely, the art of his own rendering consists in conveying a supplementary layer of meaning through homeopathic modifications in details, as fits an cleric educator bent on "appropriating 'low culture' in the early stages of training children in the elements of 'high culture'" (Ziolkowski 1992, 558). But, in the end, the creative merits of Egbert (like those of Perrault) are quickly put back into perspective-appearing then as but minute transformations, among many others, on stable if protean themes-as soon as their particular version is compared to other extant texts of the same tradition.

Concerning this tradition, I proposed that the connection between having a red head and lying with a wolf makes sense in light of the persistent idea that menses induce sexual desire in both women and men, magnification of which was consistently associated to red-haired women (45-47). Georg Groddeck (from whom, incidentally, Freud took the concept of id) economically conveys such conceptions as he writes about "ardent girls, impassioned, recently menstruated, that is to say having red hair" (1973, 92). Thus, Perrault certainly knew what he was doing as he symbolized the folk heroine who absorbs the blood and breasts of her grandmother (Verdier 1995, 182-84; 1997, 108-09), then lies naked with a wolf/man, as a red-headed girl bearing flowers.

Indeed, *Le Petit Chaperon rouge* portrays a red-hooded girl who makes nosegays "out of little flowers she found" while the wolf runs to granny's house (Perrault 1977, 44). Following this trend, The Grimms' version specifies that Little Red-Cap does not proceed to the house until she had gathered so many flowers "that she could carry no more" (Grimm and Grimm 1980, 141-42). It is then a red-capped girl burdened with flowers who meets the wolf at grandmother's house. Now the fundamental connection between the red cap and flowers is clear in an Alpine version that attributes the name *Chaperon rouge* to the fact that the girl's hair "was covered by a poppy flower" (Joisten 1971, 1: 291). Another version, while not mentioning a red cap, retains the connection of red to flowers by specifying that the girl collects strawberries and flowers (Delarue 1985a, AT 333 no. 30). And, of course, in *The Girl of the Little Red Hat* grandmother grants the girl, along with the red hat, the power to exhale flowers that will take her to marriage (Pedroso 1984, 299-300). Such a stable connection between red and flowers, concerning a young girl, spells out the classic image of the *jeune fille en fleurs*-for expressions like *fleurs rouges* ("red flowers") and *Rosencrantz* (rose wreaths) indeed allude to menses (Grahm 1993, 231-33; Verdier 1979, 193).

#### A LUPINE GIRL AND FLORAL LANGUAGE IN FRENCH CONTEXT

Now I shall proceed to suggest that the text of "Little Red Riding Hood" that Delarue presents as an example of characteristic folk-versions (Delarue 1980, x) features these same notions. In *Conte de la Mère grand* the girl ate granny, but escapes the wolf. The narrator deals with this in a very interesting manner. After the fatidic "The better to eat you with" pronounced by the wolf, the following episode ensues:

"Oh, grandmother, I'm hungry to go outside!" [J'ai faim d'aller dehors!]

"Do it in bed, my child!"

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

"All right, but only for a short time."

The *bzou* tied a woolen thread to her foot and let her go. When the little girl was outside she attached the end of the thread to a plum tree in the courtyard. The *bzou* was getting impatient and saying: "Are you making ropes? Are you making ropes?" [Tu fous donc des cordes? Tu fous donc des cordes?]

When he realized that nobody answered him, he jumped out of bed and saw that the little girl had escaped. He chased her, but arrived at her house just at the moment she entered.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> In translating this extract of the French text as presented by Delarue (1985a, 373-74), I take into account the translations established by Austin E. Fife (in Delarue 1980, 230-32) and by Zipes (1993, 21-23).

I will take the girl's "hunger" to go outside as a starting point for analyzing this happy-end. Delarue explains the expression *J'ai faim d'aller dehors* as an "euphemism used in Nivernais" to say that one is pressed to "satisfy a need" (1985a, 374 n. 4). Note that the girl keeps the wolf hungry as she pretends to satisfy her own "hunger." Since the metaphorical sense of the wolf's "hunger" is plainly sexual, and the girl's "hunger" appears as the negative counterpart to the wolf's, it is likely that hers is urinary-in other words, physiologically incompatible with his. Furthermore, this is in keep with the recurrent symbolic equivalence of "mouth" and "vagina," which in turn underpins the hypothesis that her "hunger" primarily relates to her genitals. As a consequent, the widespread metaphorical sense of the wolf's "appetite" would correlate to the regional connotation of the girl's "hunger." This "crave," in other words, both bars her genitals from lupine appetites and indicates such appetites within the maiden.

Indeed, as the wolf interprets the satisfaction of the "hunger" that precludes his own satiation by saying *Tu fous donc des cordes?*-meaning, literally, "Are you fucking ropes?" and, figuratively, "Are you making ropes?"-he seemingly reads the sating of the girl's "hunger" in the terms of his own craving. In other words, the urinary and sexual senses of the girl's "hunger" are convergent in the overall hint that the girl who refuses to satisfy the wolf's craving is really refusing having him to satisfy herself.

The double meaning of the expression *foutre des cordes*, considered within the context of popular traditions regarding the wolf, confirms this reading. Indeed, the figurative meaning of the expression (i.e. to make ropes) evokes the well-known episode of the making of a hemp tail to the wolf by his enemy, the fox (Tenèze 1976, 107, 112; cf. Joisten 1971, 2: 42, 45, 49, 60). This follows the wolf's shameful loss of the tail containing his lupine essence.<sup>8</sup> What this loss amounts to is revealed by the old popular belief that "even the tail of this animal contains a love-poison in a small tuft of hair, and when it is caught it sheds the tuft, which has not the same potency unless plucked from the animal while it is alive" (Pliny 8.83).<sup>9</sup> Indeed the virile value of the lost tail is clear in French oral tradition,<sup>10</sup> and likewise the medieval Roman de Renart enchains to the loss of that member the defection of the wolf's wife, Hersent, to the arms of Renart the fox (Paris 1986, 65, 114-17, 250 sq.).<sup>11</sup> Now such rejection of the wolf corresponds to the sexual undertone of the expression *foutre des cordes* in our tale. In other words, the unity of the metaphorical and literal senses of this expression relates to the fact that the making of a rope-like tail connotes, in a widespread cycle of tales regarding the wolf, the predator's rejection as a sexual partner by a sexually active female.

If the foregoing analysis were valid, the picturesque expression *Tu fous donc des cordes* implies that the girl who ingests grandma, but runs from the wolf, is herself like a "she-wolf" under the empire of blood. Fortunately, consideration of another culturally significant detail allows testing this inference. When the heroine runs away she attaches to the thread, in replacement of herself, a plum tree. Now this specification is significant in light of the fact that, in Nivernais as in most of Burgundy, a "language of plants" was used each year, on May 1st, by the community of male bachelors to pass a public judgment on the character of unmarried girls (Gennep 1949, 1537-541, 1569; Verdier 1979, 68-69).

Let me review the available facts. Arnold van Gennep does not mention a symbolic use of plum trees in Nivernais (department of Nièvre), whence comes this text (Gennep 1949,

---

<sup>8</sup> For examples of the general idea that the essence of animals lies in the tail's hairs, see Sébillot (1984, 126). Generally the wolf is defeated, in deep humiliation, after it loses its tail (see Joisten 1971, no. 81.1; Tenèze 1976, 112-13).

<sup>9</sup> The same effect was supposedly granted by the "wolf's pizzle," according to a notice from the 16th century in Italy (Summers 1933, 70).

<sup>10</sup> For instance, in one plot the wolf, having lost its tail and having then been penetrated in the anus by a red-hot stick, is killed by other wolves after behaving fearfully (Tenèze 1976, 225-26)-as a castrated animal would. Moreover, in *Le roman de Renart* the fox, responsible in oral tradition for the wolf's loss of tail and subsequent anal penetration by an red-hot stick (introduced by a blacksmith), causes the same loss of tail and then penetrates the wolf's wife. Clearly, both the sexual appropriation of the she-wolf and the causing of the wolf's anal penetration symbolize the wolf's emasculation by his triumphing enemy.

<sup>11</sup> The importance of the wolf's lost tail motif in French oral tradition is emphasized by Tenèze, who tentatively proposes to establish a "semantic link" between the recurring "loss of that member" and the "rape" of his wife by the fox in the medieval cycle (Tenèze 1976, 69). The term "rape" may however prove misleading, as the she-wolf gives herself to her husband's enemy quite willingly (Paris 1986, 114-16, cf. 213).

1560-561). However, he does locate an "injurious" meaning ascribed to plum trees in the neighboring department of Côte-d'Or (1545). This is what one would expect, for two reasons. First, if the storyteller wished to specify as a derogatory tree the vague "piece of wood" to which the tale-heroine attaches her string, use of a neighboring "dialect" of the language of plants would be mandatory. Indeed, in Nivernais criticism would be expressed through non-arboreal plants (such as dry spines, bunches of onions or radishes, a spiny shrub such as holly, etc.-1560). The second reason is, the injurious meaning of the plum tree as used in most of Côte-d'Or would be unmistakable in neighboring Nivernais, since there are not (according to Van Gennep's data) any other recorded symbolic uses of such trees. Now such cases of regionally univocal meanings are scarce. Most other regional trees that are apt to convey a depreciatory value would appear ambiguous to a listener in Nivernais. For example, the ash is derogatory in most of Côte-d'Or while having a positive value in neighboring Morvan, and the cherry-tree is pejorative in Beaune but is regarded as positive in the rest of Côte-d'Or, as well as in Nivernais itself (1545, 1560).

The plum tree would then be a univocal symbol to popular audiences in Nivernais. But what is it symbolic of, exactly? It is "injurious," Van Gennep says. To specify this rather vague statement, one may take into account that these trees are noteworthy for having "showy clusters of usu. white or pink flowers first appearing in the spring often before the leaves." Also, one striking character of its fruits shows in the fact that in English "plum-like" means "a dark reddish purple," just like in French prune stands for "dark violet" (*violet foncé*).<sup>12</sup> In other words, the plum is a tree superlatively in flowers (even before presenting leaves) that produces juicy, reddish purple fruits. These traits make it comparable to the cherry-tree, which produces clusters of abundant flowers as well as fruits, the name of which stands for the color "red." Thus, in English the expression "cherry-like" denotes "hymen," "virginity," and in French "cherry red" (*rouge cerise*) equates to *vermeil*, which in turn evokes the notion of being "flowered" (*fleuri*).<sup>13</sup> Unsurprisingly then, cherry trees are recurrently used to convey the meaning of "girl to marry soon," "imminent marriage" (Gennep 1949, 1551, 1564)-even the demand that the girl be married soon (1981, 1:223). Furthermore cherry trees, in flowers, point out girls that gave in to the seduction of the senses before marriage (Gennep 1981, 1:220, 221; cf. 1949, 1550-51), since-according to a picturesque, if cruel, expression-"it is all too easy to climb upon a cherry tree" (1949, 1551).

It is then probably significant that in Côte-d'Or the cherry-tree "is favorable" while the prune "is injurious" to unmarried girls, except in Beaune where-prunes being not in symbolic use-it is cherries in flower that connote "a loose conduct" (Gennep 1949, 1545). In other words: where cherry- and prune-trees coexist it is the later that represents exuberant flowering, but cherries in flower may take up the same value in the absence of prune trees. Equivalent traits thus convey an unvarying meaning. This is clearly, in the case of the negative dimension of the value of cherries, "a loose conduct, and even one or more pregnancies before marriage" (1541). Seemingly, such is too the "injurious" meaning of plum trees: these appear to represent in Côte-d'Or, in a superlative mode, the exuberant flowering and abundance of fleshy fruits characteristic of cherries-and are thus the regional variant of a wider association of abundantly flowering trees, easy to "climb upon," to sexually active pubescent girls.

If this be so, the tellers of *Conte de la Mère grand* characterize the heroine who eats and drinks grandma (but refuses the wolf) as a "she-wolf," under the power of overbearing flowers/red juices, who looks for her own sexual gratification. Clearly, we are not far from Perrault's text centered on a girl with a red hat, burdened with flowers, on her way to meeting the wolf in bed. Angela Carter thus masterfully synthesizes this semantic landscape as she depicts the heroine taking off "her scarlet shawl, the color of poppies, the color of sacrifices, the color of her menses," before sexually meeting the wolf (1995, 117).

<sup>12</sup> Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10th edition (1997), s.v. "plum" and "prunus." Le Nouveau Petit Robert, new rev. Edition (1993), s.v. "prune."

<sup>13</sup> Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10th edition (1997), s.v. "cherry." Le Nouveau Petit Robert, new rev. edition (1993), s.v. "cerise," "cerisier," and "vermeil."

## CONCLUSION

Note that this discussion lays no claim to interpreting "Little Red Riding Hood," for-as Verdier(1997) has convincingly argued-a global analysis of this complex theme must take into account the crucial blood connection between the young woman and her female ancestor.<sup>14</sup> This, however, lies beyond my present purpose, which is that of considering the theme of girls in red meeting with wolves across genres, centuries, and national borderlines in order to stress the need to engage in symbolic analysis in the realm of folklore. I have suggested, concerning Delarue, that to shun semantic correlations entails thinking in such terms that it will seem obvious, e.g., that Egbert's text has nothing in common with Perrault's, which in turn substantially modifies French oral tradition, differences of which to Portuguese tradition will appear self-evident. Alternatively, my point is that it seems better to deal with folklore in terms of thematic transformations-for, as I tried to show, these data continuously appear as each other's local translations into new forms. By shunning meanings as a matter of principle, so runs the main implication of my argument, one risks committing one's labor to forever grouping and regrouping emptied signifiers-that is, spiritless matter-as if literary attributions could indeed be based on statistical computations.

## REFERENCES

- BERLIOZ, Jacques. 1989. La Petite Robe Rouge. In *Formes médiévales du conte merveilleux*. Ed. J. Berlioz, C. Brémont and C. Velay-Vallantin. Paris: Stock. 133-38.
- BOUZA-BREY, Fermín. 1982. *Etnografía y Folklore de Galicia*. Ed. J. L. Bouza Alvarez. 2 vols. Madrid: Edicións Xerais de Galicia.
- BRAGA, Alberto Vieira. 1924. *De Guimarães: Tradições e Usanças Populares*. Espozende: Livraria Espozendense.
- BRIFFAULT, Robert. 1963. *The Mothers*. Abridged ed. New York: Universal Library.
- CARTER, Angela. 1995. *The Bloody Chamber*. London: Vintage.
- COOMARASWAMY, Ananda K. 1944. Sir Gawain and the Green Knight: Indra and Namuci. *Speculum* 19: 104-25.
- DELANEY, Carol. 1988. Mortal Flow: Menstruation in Turkish Village Society. In *Blood Magic: The Anthropology of Menstruation*. Ed. T. Buckley and A. Gottlieb. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press. 75-93.
- DELARUE, Paul. 1951. Les contes merveilleux de Perrault et la tradition populaire: Le Petit Chaperon rouge. *Bulletin folklorique d'Ile-de-France* 13 (avril-juin, juillet-octobre, octobre-décembre): 221-28, 251-60, 283-91.
- , ed. 1980. *The Borzoi book of French folk tales*. Trans. A. E. Fife. New York: Arno Press.
- . 1985a. *Le conte populaire français: Catalogue raisonné des versions de France et des pays de langue française d'outre-mer*. 2nd ed. Vol 1. Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose.
- . 1985b. Le loup dans le folklore nivernais. *Recueil de Chants Populaires du Nivernais* 3: 15-20.
- DUMÉZIL, Georges. 1986. *Loki*. New ed. Paris: Flammarion.
- DUNDES, Alan. 1980. *Interpreting Folklore*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- . 1989. Interpreting "Little Red Riding Hood" Psychoanalytically. In *Little Red Riding Hood: A Casebook*. Ed. A. Dundes. Madison, Wisconsin: Wisconsin University Press. 192-236.
- ELIADE, Mircea. 1949. *Traité d'histoire des religions*. Paris: Payot.
- FROMM, Erich. 1980. *The Forgotten Language: An Introduction to the Understanding of Dreams, Fairy Tales and Myths*. New York: Grove Press, 1957. Reprint, New York: Grove Press.
- GAIGNEBET, Claude. 1985. Véronique ou l'image vraie. *Mythologie Française* 139 (octobre-décembre): 3-27.
- . 1990. Le sang-dragon au Jardin des Délices. *Ethnologie française* 20 (4): 278-390.
- GAIGNEBET, Claude, and Jean-Dominique Lajoux. 1985. *Art profane et religion populaire au Moyen Age*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- GENNEP, Arnold van. 1949. *Manuel de folklore français contemporain*. Vol 1: 4, Cycle de mai, cycle de saint-Jean et saint-Pierre. Paris: Picard.

---

<sup>14</sup> See, for one such analysis, chapter 3 of my *Metamorphosis*.

- . 1981. Le folklore de la Flandre et du Hainaut français. 2 vols. 1935. Reprint, Brionne: Gérard Monfort.
- GRAHN, Judy. 1993. Blood, Bread, and Roses: How Menstruation Created the World. Boston: Beacon Press.
- GRIMM, Jacob, and Wilhelm Grimm. 1980. The Complete Grimm's Fairy Tales. Trans. M. Hunt and J. Stern. New York: Pantheon.
- GRODDECK, Georg. 1973. Le livre du ça. Trans. L. Jumel. Paris: Gallimard.
- HOLBEK, Bengt. 1998. Interpretation of Fairy Tales: Danish Folklore in a European Perspective. 1987. Reprint, Helsinki: Academia Scientiarum Fennica.
- JOISTEN, Charles. 1971. Contes populaires du Dauphiné. 2 vols. Grenoble: Publications du Musée dauphinois.
- MELETINSKY, Eleazar, et al. 1974. Problems of the Structural Analysis of Fairytales. In Soviet Structural Folkloristics. Trans. T. Popoff and H. Milosevich. Ed. P. Maranda. The Hague, Paris: Mouton. 73-139.
- PARIS, Paulin. 1986. Le roman de Renart. Paris: Gallimard.
- PEDROSO, Zófimo Consiglieri. 1984. Contos Populares Portugueses. 2nd ed. Lisboa: Vega.
- . 1988. Contribuições para uma Mitologia Popular Portuguesa. Ed. J. Leal. Lisboa: Dom Quixote.
- PERRAULT, Charles. 1977. Contes de ma mère l'Oye. Paris: Gallimard.
- PLINY. 1983. Natural History. Trans. H. Rackham. 2nd ed. Vol 3, Books VIII-XI. Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, William Heinemann.
- RISCO, Vicente. 1971. Un Caso de Lycantropía (O Home-Lobo). A Cruña: Real Academia Gallega / Editorial Moret.
- SÉBILLOT, Paul. 1984. Le folklore de France. 2nd ed. Vol 5, La faune. Paris: Imago.
- SILVA, Francisco Vaz da. 1995. Capuchinho Vermelho em Portugal. Estudos de Literatura Oral 1: 187-210.
- . 1997. Capuchinho Vermelho II: Quadro Sazonal e Simbolismo Cíclico. Estudos de Literatura Oral 3: 201-21.
- SUMMERS, Montague. 1933. The Werewolf. London: Kegan Paul.
- TENEZE, Marie-Louise. 1973. Motifs stylistiques de contes et aires culturelles: Aubrac et France du Centre. In Mélanges en l'honneur d'Elisée Legros. Liège. 45-83.
- . 1976. Le Conte populaire français : Catalogue raisonné des versions de France et des pays de langue française d'outre-mer: Canada, Louisiane, îlots français des États-Unis, Antilles françaises, Haïti, ILE MAURICE, La Réunion. Vol 3. Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose.
- TESTART, Alain. 1991. Des mythes et des croyances: Esquisse d'une théorie générale. Paris: Maison des Sciences de l'Homme.
- VASCONCELOS, José Leite de. 1963. Contos Populares e Lendas. Vol 1. Coimbra: Universidade de Coimbra.
- . 1980. Etnografia Portuguesa: Tentame de Sistematização. Ed. M. Viegas Guerreiro, A. da Silva SOROMENHO and P. Caratão Soromenho. Vol 7. Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional.
- VERDIER, Yvonne. 1979. Façons de dire, façons de faire: La laveuse, la couturière, la cuisinière. Paris: Gallimard.
- . 1995. Le Petit Chaperon rouge dans la tradition orale. In Coutume et destin: Thomas Hardy et autres essais. Paris: Gallimard. 171-206.
- . 1997. Little Red Riding Hood in Oral Tradition. Marvels and Tales 11 (1-2): 101-23.
- ZIOLKOWSKI, Jan M. 1992. A Fairy Tale from Before Fairy Tales: Egbert of Liège's 'De puella a lupellis seruata' and the Medieval Background of 'Little Red Riding Hood'. Speculum 67 (3): 549-75.
- ZIPES, Jack. 1993. The Trials and Tribulations of Little Red Riding Hood. In The Trials and Tribulations of Little Red Riding Hood. Ed. J. Zipes. 2nd ed. New York and London: Routledge. 17-88.

#### RESUMO

Este artigo revisita o problema da famosa peça de vestuário de *O Capuchinho Vermelho* (AT333). Depois de pôr de parte a afirmação de Delarue de que o *chaperon rouge* é um traço

acessório, sem relação com o tema, considera-se a relação entre os textos literários e os folclóricos, assim como o ponto sobre a difusão cultural, para sugerir a necessidade de, no campo do folclore, tomar em linha de conta traduções simbólicas. Ao examinar quer os textos literários quer algumas versões orais de "O Capuchinho Vermelho", assim como dados que estão fora do âmbito dos contos, sugiro que, através dos séculos e dos géneros, existe um modelo simbólico coerente subjacente ao encontro de lobos com meninas de vermelho.

ABSTRACT

This paper revisits the issue of the famous red garment in *Little Red Riding Hood* (AT 333). After dismissing Paul Delarue's assertion that the *chaperon rouge* is an accessory trait, with no link to the theme, the discussion considers the relationship between literary and oral folklore texts, as well as the issue of cultural diffusion, in order to suggest the need to take symbolic translations into account in the realm of folklore. In examining both the literary texts featuring a girl in red and some oral versions of "Little Red Riding Hood," as well as data lying outside the scope of fairy tales proper, I will suggest that a coherent symbolic pattern underlies, across centuries and genres, the image of girls in red meeting with wolves.