From Cap to Cloak: The Evolution of "Little Red Riding Hood" from Oral Tale to Film

Abstract
As co-written with scholar and storyteller Angela Carter, Neil Jordan's The Company of Wolves (1984) represents a unique case of adaptation as it radically revises the figure of "Little Red Riding Hood." The Company of Wolves transforms the pervasive myth of coming-of-age folklore by stimulating hallucinatory visions embedded in a structure effectively simulating the unconscious logic of dream. This paper investigates the evolution of the mythos in the original Little Red Riding Hood fairy tale, its progression and eventual reworking in Carter's literary and filmic takes, as she shifts the focus from the frightened, naïve girl clad in red, reliant on male heroes to the sexually awakened, self-reliant young woman in a crimson cape. To make the texts transparent, this essay analyses The Company of Wolves and its sources through the lenses of adaptation theories including those by George Bluestone and Sarah Cardwell whilst exploring Angela Carter's relationship to fairy tale as chronicled by Jack Zipes. The mechanisms and symbols of the dream imagery manifested in The Company of Wolves distinguish Carter's and Jordan's feverish brainchild as an enticingly instructive exemplar of rendering unconscious desires visible and visceral on celluloid.

URI
http://hdl.handle.net/1808/10673

Collections
Theses [3409]
School of the Arts Dissertations and Theses [133]
Does Little Red Riding Hood survive her visit to grandmother's house? It depends on where you grew up. In some European tellings, the child meets a gruesome end in the jaws of a wolf, but in others she escapes. And in other parts of the world, the victim is a goat rather than a girl, or the villain is a tiger rather than a wolf. Or have parents around the world independently invented the obviously good idea of terrifying their offspring with tales of child-munching monsters before sleep? By applying a bit of evolutionary biology to the tale, a researcher says he now has an answer. In the most popular European version of Little Red Riding Hood, a wolf devours an old woman and then imitates her, wearing her clothes and getting into her bed just in time for the arrival of her granddaughter. "Little Red Riding Hood" (or "Little Red Cap") is a French fairy tale for young children about a young girl and a wolf. The story comes from a folktale which means that it was a spoken story for a long time before it was a written story. It was first written down in the late 1600s, by Charles Perrault. The best-known version (the way the story is told) is Rotkäppchen by the Brothers Grimm and dates from the 19th century (1800s).