3. 'Rotkäppchen' (*KHM* 26)

As Heinz Röllecke points out, in order to distinguish fact from speculation in the discussion of any tale from the *KHM*, its history before the Grimms, the form in which the Grimms became familiar with it, and the process by which it was adapted by the Grimms must first be examined.[1] This approach recognises that Grimms' tales have a 'pre-textual' history, and that examining this pre-textual history can afford insights as to the directions in which the Grimms modified the tales, or reveal limits in the extent to which this is possible. Through this process, some interpretative parameters can be delineated. In the case of 'Rotkäppchen' (*KHM* 26), the complex of sources and modification appears to be reasonably well understood. It is however necessary to recount this history briefly, partly because of the number of misconceptions which surround discussion of the tale.

Marianne Rumpf, the author of a comparative survey of oral and literary versions of 'Rotkäppchen',[2] has declared the tale in its original form to be a cautionary tale about the dangers of the forest involving a meeting between a small child and a threatening monster,[3] a conclusion which unfortunately does little to explain the nature of the tale as it appears in the *KHM*. Extant French oral variants of the cautionary tale, which can be separated into versions where the little girl is eaten, and versi-

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[1] Heinz Röllecke: "New Results of Research on *Grimms' Fairy Tales*." in: McGlathery (ed.): *The Brothers Grimm and Folktale*, pp. 101-111, p. 101.

[2] Marianne Rumpf: *'Rotkäppchen': eine vergleichende Märchenuntersuchung*. Diss. Universität Göttingen 1951.

[3] Marianne Rumpf: "Ursprung und Entstehung von Warn- und Schreckmärchen", *Folklore Fellow Communications* 160 (1955), pp. 3-16.

The persistence of these elements in oral versions of the tale into the late nineteenth century suggests that 'Rotkäppchen' was probably told in adult circles, and for the purpose of entertainment rather than edification:

> For centuries, adult audiences depended on the telling of tales [...] to shorten the hours devoted to repetitious household chores or harvesting tasks. Is it any wonder that they demanded fast-paced adventure stories filled with bawdy episodes, violent scenes, and scatalogical humour?[7]

Perrault avoided cannibalistic and scatalogical elements in his version of the tale, and also toned down obvious sexual elements such as the gradual removal of the little girl's clothes. However, his version emphasised the little girl's 'unhappy end', so that the tale, especially in conjunction with remaining sublimated sexual elements such as the wolf's invitation to bed and the addition of an explicit moral, is 'refunctioned' into a warning to innocent women of the dangers of the cultivated male seducer.[8] Perrault also motivated the little girl's down-

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can be found in *The Borzoi Book of French Folk Tales.* Paul Delarue and Marie Louise Tenèze (ed.), Austin Fife (trans.). New York: Knopf 1956, pp. 230-232. Comparisons between oral and literary versions of *Märchen* with respect to the historical development of tale structures are however problematised by the increasing interdependence of oral and literary traditions, and by the haphazard methods of many earlier collectors of oral tradition; many collectors were influenced by the Grimms' methods and hence did not hesitate to 'expurgate' and edit orally collected material.

[7] Tatar, Maria: *Off with their heads!: Fairy Tales and the Culture of Childhood,* p. 37.

[8] Perrault's version of the tale in reproduced in German translation in: Zipes: *Rotkäppchens Lust und Leid*, pp. 97-99, and in English in: Alan Dundes (ed.): *Little Red Riding Hood: A Casebook.* Madison, London:

fall by having her give directions to the wolf to Grandmother's house, and by having her climb into bed with the wolf. The sublimated sexual content of Perrault's version has suggested to some commentators that the tale thereby shows the complicity of the little girl in her own 'rape'.[9] The little girl's red cap does not exist in any extant French oral variant, which leads to the conclusion that, despite the prominence of this feature in most more recent versions of the tale, and indeed the naming of the tale after this feature, this detail was probably invented by Perrault.

Rolf Hagen has shown the relationship between Grimms' two-part version of 'Rotkäppchen' and other literary variants.[10] The Grimms' source for the first part of this version of the tale was an oral narrative deriving strongly from Perrault, contributed by Jeannette Hassenpflug. Marie Hassenpflug contributed a second part to the tale with probable connections to French oral tradition,[11] with an exemplary ending featuring a crafty Grandmother and the death of a second wolf. This second part was included in every edition of the *KHM* from 1812 onwards, in the form of an epilogue.[12] The Grimms seem to have put their narrative together using elements taken from these orally collected versions of 'Rotkäppchen', as well

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University of Wisconsin Press 1989.

[9] Jack Zipes comes to this conclusion, in: *Rotkäppchens Lust und Leid*, p. 23.

[10] Rolf Hagen: "Perraults Märchen und die Brüder Grimm", in: *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie* 74 (1955), pp. 392-410. See pp. 402-406.

[11] Walter Scherf: "'Rotkäppchen' (KHM 26, AT333)" in: *Lexikon der Zaubermärchen*. Stuttgart: Kröner 1982, p. 313.

[12] Röllecke (ed): *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*. Volume III. p. 58. Also see the Grimms' notes to the tale: *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*. Volume III. p. 454, where they state their source for the tale: 'aus der Maingegend'. The Grimms also present a related *Sage* version, which ends with "nur ein blutiger Arm des Mädchens [blieb] übrig", p. 454.

as elements taken directly from Perrault's 'Le petit chaperon rouge', and Ludwig Tieck's drama *Das Leben und Tod vom kleinen Rotkäppchen* (1800). Tieck's drama, itself a reworking of Perrault's version of the tale, is ironically infused with anti-French and anti-Enlightenment sentiments, which may explain some of its appeal to the Grimms.[13] Tieck's drama and Grimms' version have numerous similarities, principally the addition to the tale of a hunter figure, who kills the wolf in Tieck's version but also saves Little Red Riding Hood and the Grandmother in Grimms' version, but more distantly, the depiction of *schöne Natur* in the forest, the fact that Little Red Riding Hood does not climb into bed with the Wolf, and the beginning of the dialogue between Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf with the phrase *Ei, Großmutter.*[14] The motif of filling the stomach of the Wolf with stones to bring about its death seems to have been borrowed from 'Der Wolf und die sieben Geißlein' (*KHM* 5); indeed, the structural parallels between the two, and the existence of parallel versions of the tale in Asia which mix elements of the two tales suggest that the Aarne-Thompson tale types AT333 ('Rotkäppchen') and AT123 ('Der Wolf und die sieben Geißlein') are subtypes of the same tale.[15] The Grimms further modified the tale in comparison with Perrault's version, Tieck's drama and French oral versions, sublimating or removing all sexual references and creating a 'happy end' by introducing the hunter figure as

[13] Hans-Wolf Jäger: "Is Little Red Riding Hood Wearing a Liberty Cap? On Presumable Connotations in Tieck and in Grimm" in: Alan Dundes (ed): *Little Red Riding Hood: A Casebook*, pp. 89-120.

[14] Hagen: "Perraults Märchen und die Brüder Grimm", p. 406.

[15] Alan Dundes: "Interpreting "Little Red Riding Hood Psychoanalytically", pp. 202-204. See also: Wolfram Eberhard: "The Story of Grandaunt Tiger" in: Alan Dundes (ed.): *Little Red Riding Hood: A Casebook*, pp. 21-63, which discusses Asian versions of AT333/123.

'homo ex machina'.[16] Although the tale appeared in a structurally complete form in Volume I of the First Edition of 1812 as a result of this process,[17] Wilhelm Grimm's subsequent editing made minor changes to almost every sentence of the text, removing 'foreign' phrases, motivating the plot and producing stylistic consistency, resulting in the final, most widely known version of 1857.[18]

Content analysis of the *KHM* by commentators such as Ruth Bottigheimer and Maria Tatar has suggested that a productive approach to the examination of tales from the *KHM* lies in the examination of the relationship between any given tale and other tales in the collection.[19] Accordingly, a brief discussion of the tale will be undertaken in order to illuminate some facets of the relationship between 'Rotkäppchen' and other tales in the collection.

The tale 'Rotkäppchen' combines two plot structures common to many other tales in the *KHM*; on the one hand, a prohibition/transgression/punishment structure,[20] on the other, a victimisation/retaliation pattern.[21] The initial prohibition, which does not appear in Perrault's version and was expanded consi-

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[16] Hans Ritz's phrase. See: *Die Geschichte vom Rotkäppchen*, p. 16.

[17] 'Rotkäppchen' (*KHM* 26) in: Panzer (ed.): *Die Kinder- und Hausmärchen der Brüder Grimm*, Volume I, pp. 78-81.

[18] 'Rotkäppchen' (*KHM* 26) in: Röllecke (ed.): *Kinder- und Hausmärchen.* Volume I. pp. 156-158. For a sample of Wilhelm Grimm's editorial changes see Marianne Rumpf: *'Rotkäppchen': eine vergleichende Märchenuntersuchung*, pp. 212-214. See also Chapter 2, pp. 50ff. and p. 52.

[19] Bottigheimer: *Grimms' Bold Boys and Bad Girls.* Tatar: *The Hard Facts of Grimms' Fairy Tales.*

[20] Bottigheimer: "Prohibitions, Transgressions, and Punishments" in: *Grimms' Bold Boys and Bad Girls*, pp. 81-94. Also: Tatar: *Fairy Tales and the Culture of Childhood*, pp. 35-42.

[21] Maria Tatar: "Beauties vs. Beasts in the Grimms' *Nursery and Household Tales*" in: McGlathery (ed.): *The Brothers Grimm and Folktale*, pp. 133-145, p. 142.

derably between 1812 and 1857, takes the form of a series of explicit prohibitions by a benevolent, morally good figure (in this case, Little Red Riding Hood's natural mother):

> »Komm, Rotkäppchen, da hast du ein Stück Kuchen und eine Flasche Wein, bring das der Großmutter hinaus; sie ist krank und schwach und wird sich daran laben. Mach dich auf, bevor es heiß wird, und wenn du hinauskommst, so geh hübsch sittsam und lauf nicht vom Weg ab, sonst fällst du und zerbrichst das Glas, und die Großmutter hat nichts. Und wenn du in ihre Stube kommst, so vergiß nicht, guten Morgen zu sagen, und guck nicht erst in alle Ecken herum.«[22]

Interestingly, these behavioural admonitions on the part of the mother lead to a punishment at the hands of the Wolf which is not directly connected with the injunction itself; Little Red Riding Hood meets the Wolf "wie [sie] nun in den Wald kam",[23] making it likely that this injunction is a Grimmian invention. The injunction does however gain a meaning if considered from the perspective of a pedagogical intention to associate Little Red Riding Hood with sinfulness or sensuality, since the Wolf's offer of temptation is equated with sensuality in the text:

> »Rotkäppchen, sieh einmal die schönen Blumen, die ringsumher stehen, warum guckst du dich nicht um? Ich glaube, du hörst gar nicht, wie die Vöglein so lieblich

[22] 'Rotkäppchen' (*KHM* 26) in: Röllecke (ed): *Kinder- und Hausmärchen*, p. 157.

[23] 'Rotkäppchen' (*KHM* 26), p. 157.

singen? Du gehst ja für dich hin, als wenn du zur Schule gingst, und ist so lustig haußen in dem Wald.«[24]

This polite conversation between the Wolf and Little Red Riding Hood can be contrasted with his later identification as the devil by the hunter:

»Finde ich dich hier, du alter Sünder«[25]

This transformation of the wolf from seducer in Perrault's version into the devil in Grimms' version encourages the perception of a polarisation between Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf, identifying Little Red Riding Hood with the Biblical Eve and the Wolf with the Snake in the Garden of Eden, emphasising the role of female curiosity whilst implicitly mitigating the Wolf's guilt by suggesting that the Wolf acts from natural instinct. A similar pattern can be observed in Wilhelm Grimm's editing of the tales 'Fitchers Vogel' (*KHM* 46) and 'Der Räuberbräutigam' (*KHM* 40).[26] The narrative thereby creates a dichotomy between Freiheit/Wildheit/Natur and Schule/gerader Weg/Ordnung, which Hans-Wolf Jäger identifies as a *topos* of late-eighteenth century German literature,[27] by identifying Little Red Riding Hood's guilt in the transgression of her mother's injunction, in giving in to the Wolf's offer of sensual temptation and 'straying from the path'. Little Red Riding Hood is punished and 'victimised' by being

[24] 'Rotkäppchen' (*KHM* 26), p. 157-158.

[25] 'Rotkäppchen' (*KHM* 26), p. 159.

[26] Maria Tatar: "Beauties vs. Beasts in the Grimms' *Nursery and Household Tales*".

[27] Hans-Wolf Jäger: "Is Little Red Riding Hood Wearing a Liberty Cap?", pp. 96-97

eaten by the Wolf, and clearly identifies her guilt in disobedience and sensuality after being freed by the Hunter:

> »Du willst dein Lebtag nichts wieder allein vom Wege ab in den Wald laufen, wenn dir's die Mutter verboten hat.«[28]

The arrival of the Hunter to rescue Little Red Riding Hood and the Grandmother is consistent with the 'helpless female' and 'male as saviour' themes which pervade many tales in the *KHM*, including most of the female morality tales which the Grimms included in the *Kleine Ausgabe* of 1825. In tales such as 'Aschenputtel' (*KHM* 21), 'Sneewittchen' (*KHM* 53) and 'Dornröschen' (*KHM* 50), all of which appeared in the *Kleine Ausgabe* along with 'Rotkäppchen' (*KHM* 26), the male figure is a potential husband, but more generally "arrives to take over, to govern and control [the] future"[29] of the female protagonist. Meanwhile, female virtues such as docility, self-sacrifice, obedience and the possession of a long-suffering nature are stressed. In the case of 'Rotkäppchen', the virtue of obedience, or rather the lack of it, dominates the narrative. The appearance of the Hunter also makes it possible for Little Red Riding Hood's victimisation to be followed by retaliation, apparent in the death of the Wolf at the hands of Little Red Riding Hood, the Grandmother and the Hunter, and especially in the epilogue appended to the tale. The violent tableau in which many victimisation/retaliation tales culminate is evident in tales such as 'Aschenputtel' (*KHM* 21), where doves peck out the eyes of the stepsisters at Cinderella's wedding, and

[28] 'Rotkäppchen' (*KHM* 26), p. 158.

[29] Zipes: *The Brothers Grimm*, p. 64.

'Sneewittchen' (*KHM* 53), where the stepmother is forced to dance in red-hot shoes.

Seen in this light, the moral of the story, internalised in the structure of the plot, lies in the demand for rational control over sensual, bodily urges, and is strengthened rather than weakened by the 'happy ending'; Little Red Riding Hood lives in order to admit her mistakes. This interpretative possibility results from the combination of injunction/transgression/ punishment and victimisation/retaliation structures, and from consideration of the discrepancies and discontinuities which are traceable to the multiple authorship of Grimms' version of the tale. The more general theme of the punishment of female curiosity is also consistent with other tales in the collection, such as 'Frau Trude' (*KHM* 43), where a little girl disobeys her parents' prohibition and is turned into a log and thrown into a fire by an evil old woman. In 'Marienkind' (*KHM* 3), a little girl is punished for transgressing against a prohibition by the Virgin Mary, and only escapes death by admitting her 'sin'. A gender difference can be observed between these tales, where the moral message of the tale is made to function as the central plot motivator, and *Schwänke* such as 'Bruder Lustig' (*KHM* 81), where the male protagonist is rewarded and even implicitly exonerated despite repeatedly transgressing St. Peter's prohibitions. More distantly, in tales such as 'Doktor Allwissend' (*KHM* 181) and 'Daumerlings Wanderschaft' (*KHM* 45), the male protagonists cheat, lie and steal with impunity.

In light of this reasonably complex history of multiple authorship, numerous interpretations of Grimms' version of 'Rotkäppchen' (*KHM* 26), in particular symbolic interpretations, can be seen to consist of pure speculation.[30] Interpretations

[30] An enormous amount of secondary literature has been devoted to the interpretation of this tale. For overviews of the scholarship on the tale

which centre on the transcendental significance of Little Red Riding Hood's red cap are relativised by the fact that this detail was probably added by Perrault.[31] Interpretations which place transcendental psychological emphasis on the Wolf's swallowing of Little Red Riding Hood and Grandmother and their subsequent 'rebirth' at the hands of the Hunter, or on the instructions given to Little Red Riding Hood by her Mother neglect the fact that these details were added by the Grimms.[32] Interpretations which emphasise Manichean aspects of the confrontation between Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf neglect the cannibalistic elements in orally transmitted variants of the tale, which effectively reduce the difference between the devourer and the devoured.[33] Such elements are present in many children's games where children provoke another child playing an ogre/wolf figure, who then exchanges roles with the child whom s/he catches.[34] Interpretations which declare Little

see Ritz: *Die Geschichte vom Rotkäppchen*, pp. 39-52 and Dundes: "Interpreting Little Red Riding Hood Psychoanalytically" as well as his "Selected Bibliography" in: *Little Red Riding Hood: A Casebook*, pp. 239-247.

[31] Myth-ritual interpretations often see the confrontation between Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf as representative of the change in the seasons. For example: P. Saintyves: *Les Contes de Perrault et les récits parallèles.* Paris: Nourry, 1923. Psychoanalytic interpreters have also attached particular significance to the red cap, for example: Erich Fromm: *The Forgotten Language*, pp. 235-241.

[32] Sample Freudian interpretations in these terms are provided by: Fromm: *The Forgotten Language*, and Bruno Bettelheim: *The Uses of Enchantment.* pp. 163-183. A sample Jungian approach depicting the 'rebirth' in terms of individuation is: Verena Kast: *Märchen als Therapie.* Olten: Walter-Verlag 1986.

[33] The Wolf is explicitly identified as the devil in: Norbert Glas: *Red Riding Hood: Meaning and Exact Rendering of Grimms' Fairy Tale.* East Gannicox: Education and Science Publications 1947. The polarisation of masculine and feminine characteristics in Grimms' version of the tale has also abetted racist and fascist interpretations.

[34] See: Walter Scherf: *Die Herausforderung des Dämons: Form und Funk-*

Red Riding Hood to represent the Aryan people and the Wolf to be Jewish neglect the cosmopolitan origins of Grimms' version of the tale, and the world-wide existence of related tales, as do interpretations which seek to discover specifically German national characteristics in the tale.[35]

Although these supposedly definitive interpretations are relativised by consideration of the origins and production of the text, many could be argued for on the basis of immanent textual evidence alone. This is due to the consistently abstract nature of Grimms' narrative style, and the corresponding ease with which it can be interpreted symbolically. The stylistic consistency of Grimms' narrative combines with motifs common to other versions of the tale and modifications traceable to Grimms' version of the tale, to allow for the reading of 'unequivocal' moral messages, despite moments of heterogeneity and discontinuity. Thus, Jack Zipes can suggest that the moral structure of the tale functions as a justification of rape, and can be used pedagogically in the production of docile minds and bodies. In contrast, Bruno Bettelheim can claim that Little Red Riding Hood's "immature sexuality" and "oral greed" contrasts with the embodiment, in the Mother's instructions, of "cultivated orality". As Maria Tatar points out, such interpretations are based on "textual indicators which consistently construct a sybaritic heroine rather than a rapacious wolf".[36]

The enormous popularity and normative influence of Grimms' version of 'Rotkäppchen', established over the past hundred

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tion grausiger Kindermärchen. München: K. G. Saur 1987, pp. 53-71.

[35] A proto-fascist example is Werner von Bülow: *Die Geheimsprache der deutschen Märchen*, pp. 28-32. An example in which the author seeks to identify national characteristics is Robert Darnton: *The Great Cat Massacre*. New York: Vintage 1985, pp. 9-72.

[36] Tatar: *Fairy Tales and the Culture of Childhood*, p. 38.

and fifty years through all types of media, makes it unsurprising that material from the tale has been appropriated for a wide variety of purposes. Specifically, the fact that so many earnest yet inaccurate interpretations of the tale have been written provides ample opportunity for parody, operating on the tale itself and the secondary literature devoted to its interpretation.