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LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD: A CRITICAL AND TEACHING APPROACH TO THREE VERSIONS OF THE TALE

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RESUMEN

En este Trabajo de Fin de Máster se estudian y comparan en detalle tres versiones del texto de “Caperucita Roja”, para establecer las principales similitudes y diferencias entre ellos. El corpus literario que se ha empleado se compone de las variantes tradicionales, en inglés, del cuento de “Caperucita Roja”: “El Cuento de la Abuela” (1885), como la reconstrucción de la primera versión; “Caperucita Roja”, de Charles Perrault (1697) y “Caperucita Roja”, de los hermanos Grimm (1812). Se realiza un análisis de los rasgos más significativos junto con una explicación de los símbolos de la obra, su evolución e interpretación en cada versión y lo que esto puede implicar en un contexto educativo dirigido a jóvenes lectores. Se discute, asimismo, si estas variantes tradicionales son consideradas material didáctico apropiado en un entorno del siglo veintiuno y si se considera que pueden funcionar mejor con niños o con adolescentes.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Literatura infantil, literatura juvenil, Caperucita Roja, El Cuento de la Abuela, literatura folk.

ABSTRACT

This MA thesis studies three English versions of the traditional tale “Little Red Riding Hood”, comparing them in order to establish their similitudes and main differences. These three traditional versions of the tale are: “The Story of Grandmother” (1885), as the reconstructed first version; Charles Perrault’s “Little Red Riding Hood” (1697) and the Grimm brothers’ “Little Red Cap” (1812). An analysis of their most outstanding features is provided alongside with an explanation of the symbolism in the tale, its evolution and interpretation in each version and its implications in a teaching context that may involve young readers. It is discussed whether the tale’s main traditional variants are considered to be appropriate teaching material in a 21st century environment, and if they could work best for readers in their childhood or in their adolescent years.

KEY WORDS

Children’s literature, Young adult literature, Little Red Riding Hood, The Story of Grandmother, Little Red Cap, folktale.

1 INTRODUCTION

“Little Red Riding Hood” (henceforth LRRH) is a folk tale that belongs to the European oral tradition of the 17th century, although its origins can be traced back to 10th century Europe, (like the existence of the Italian story *La finta nonna* shows) The most popular versions of the tradition, out from the vast amount that exist, are by Charles Perrault (in French, during the 17th century) and the Grimm Brothers (in German, during the 19th century). LRRH is one of the best-known tales to the point that it is nowadays considered a *canonical narrative* in children’s literature, source of inspiration for various new contemporary versions. The tale about a young girl named after her iconic red hood (or cape or cloak) on a simple errand, bringing victuals to her grandmother, is a story with multiple variants that contains high amounts of symbolism. This is analysed in this MA thesis with the view of considering the tale’s suitability for being employed as didactic material for children from 3 years old and up in our post-modern society.

The naïveté of the girl, the stalking wolf in the forest who distracts her by encouraging her not to stay on the good path towards her grandmother’s house with his street smarts, plus his gluttonous desire to eat the girl (which has been understood in a metaphorical way, as we will see), and also the figure of the grandmother, they are all the backbone of this cautionary tale which has served historically to highlight the importance of not talking to strangers and the need to stay in the good path (both in the physical and moral senses). The implications of all this are examined in three traditional, different and significant versions, namely: “The Story of Grandmother”¹ (1885), Charles Perrault’s “Little Red Riding Hood” (1697), and finally Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm’s “Little Red Cap” (1812). I will try to examine the narrative beyond the tale’s apparently and deceitfully simplistic appearance, in order to ascertain the main significant differences amongst the different versions, with special attention to the happy or tragic ending of each one.

“Little Red Riding Hood” has been considered a highly symbolic piece of literature in which the characters, such as the girl, the mother, the grandmother, the wolf and the huntsman are very popular, but so is the tale’s structure: the journey and the aim of the journey. Elements such as the village, the forest and the hood/cap have likewise attracted the attention of the critics. Due to the short length and the apparent simplicity of the tale, we can find a clear contraposition of elements such as safety vs. danger, represented by the unknown forest

¹ Abbreviated “TSOG”.

inhabited by the wolf and the safe village. Yet, we can also find good and bad models of behaviour, which are portrayed in this tale with a clearly didactic function for children, in order to make them aware of the presence of predators, which are symbolized by the Wolf, but which –as I will try to show- in one approach to this tale stand for “male (sexual) predators”. Yet, what the reader finds in this very old tale is a number of hyper-signified elements (symbols and hidden meanings). These elements have been present in the different versions throughout the years. Some of these opt for softening and sweetening the story, modifying the plot, the relation between the characters and the moral ending of the story in order to innovate and produce children’s literature, whilst others show a much rougher and more disturbing version of the events.

As (post)modern approaches to the teaching of children have become predominant, classic tales like this one have been closely scrutinized, with the result that the teaching of classic literature to future generations has been endangered. Then, this MA thesis aims at rediscovering this old tale’s values and morals alongside its evolution, in order to support or oppose the possibility of keeping or removing this tale from the canon of children’s literature. Although not intending to exploit the texts for teaching purposes nor offering a didactic unit that exploits the tale, this work will try to establish to what extent these three versions of the story are suitable for teaching young learners.



Figure 1: Red Riding Hood (Watts)²

² From: <https://www.wikiart.org/en/george-frederick-watts/little-red-riding-hood> (Consulted on the 11/11/2019)

2 OBJECTIVES

- Examine current approaches to “Little Red Riding Hood” in what we consider the most relevant traditional versions ³.
- Study the origin and evolution of “Little Red Riding Hood” through different centuries and authors.
- Analyse the topics and symbols in the tale.
- Discuss the suitability of this tale for 21st century young readers and students.

3 METHODOLOGY

Since the topic of discussion in this thesis is the acceptability of a worldwide known piece of folk literature originated in the 11th century that has a multitude of versions from a philological and didactic approach, it has been necessary to narrow down the variants of the tale that make up the corpus of the study. For this reason, in order to proceed with this research, Tehrani’s (2013) study on different versions of LRRH stemming from the division of international tale types established by Aarne-Thompson-Uther (ATU) classification, has been crucial, especially to select the appropriate variants that showed a significant evolution in the development of the tale and its process of adaptation (Tehrani, 2013). It was found out that the most noteworthy versions were: the closest to the tale’s Ur-text which is “The Story of Grandmother” (1885 ⁴), this would be the original version that we assume is the one from where the following versions originated; Perrault’s version of 1697; and the Grimm brothers’ of 1812.

This MA thesis aims at studying a folk piece that has traditionally been intended for children. My study tries to explore, in a modern didactic context, the suitability of the piece in our current society in order to adapt to educators’ and children’s needs. In order to do so, it has been necessary to describe the current approach to children’s literature and the place that this literary piece occupies in our current classification of children’s and folk literature. One of the main and most challenging aims of the present work has been to provide an updated and complete definition of what is understood by “children’s literature”, as it will set the terms of

³ Here, *traditional versions* mean that they are widely spread variants before a more modern take was applied upon them during the 20th century.

⁴ The text Perrault had access to in the 17th century is appointed to be close to this variant. Though the publication date of TSOG is 1885, the real oral variant should date from the 11th century to the 17th, but it has not been conserved.

my discussion and will help determine whether we can consider LRRH children's literature, and what it involves.

Consequently, this study follows a structure that would correspond to the abovementioned needs:

First, as a theoretical background, it was necessary to be familiarised with the history of what has been considered to be "children's literature". Then, to question the term from this historical perspective focusing on such elements as the author, the text and the targeted audience. From this, I discussed the features that most of the pieces under the label "children's literature" should have. Due to the many considerations that should be taken to define this term, I preferred to start by stating what "children's literature" is not and discard those features which do not seem to conform with that definition. Then, I will describe what it is.

Secondly, I gave an overview of the most relevant subgenres included in this category which apply to our object of study, LRRH, so the careful examination of the subgenres of children's literature was oriented towards 'fantasy' and 'folktales' (or 'fairytales').

Then, I introduced the tale, LRRH, and gave an overview of the variants that can be considered as LRRH. For this, I referred to the ATU⁵ classification of tales into international types (where LRRH is labelled as "ATU 333"; number of tale 333) and Tehrani's (2013) study on LRRH, which helped define the features of the tale and specify the variants that can be considered as such. From there, I selected the most noteworthy variants that embodied substantial changes in the story of the tale and that showed its evolution, in order for me to provide an analysis of the features, characters, plot and symbols of the tale in its different variants. The choice of the corpus of this study comes from Zipes et al. (Zipes & others, 2005), that provides a rich and comprehensive assortment of variants of literary works for children, and focusing on LRRH, presents good examples of variants that were highlighted by Tehrani (Tehrani, 2013). This shows that the selection of the variants is rigorously and philologically motivated and responds to an accurate representation of the history of LRRH. I also appreciated the insights into the cultural context, headnotes and annotations, that definitely make the Norton Anthology of Children's Literature (Zipes & others, 2005) very rich and suitable for the purpose of this study.

⁵ ATU states for the Aarne-Thompson-Uther (A.T.U.) classification system of tales into international types, which will be discussed in the following pages.

Finally, I concluded by discussing the suitability of the tale in a didactic environment, reviewed the most relevant aspects of each variant and I proposed a suitable solution for using this material for educative purposes nowadays, taking into account the age of the readers or the target audience.

4 JUSTIFICATION

Since our evolving society has the constant demand of innovating in the educative field, it is common to revise our teaching materials and analyse them from different points of view depending on the field of study (philology, sociology, psychology, history, didactics...) to estimate if they compel with what our modern society wants to transmit to the new generations and if the contents adjust to our modern values. This happens with literary pieces, that gain or lose popularity depending on the interests of the moment, and the current fashion is to educate in the values of feminism, gender equality and respect.

In this light, the recent case of the folk tale “Little Red Riding Hood” (among other tales), that has been removed from the shelves of a state school in Catalonia has shocked the educative community in Spain and echoed in the International sphere, as traditional tales are nowadays increasingly considered to reinforce sexism, so they are beginning to be considered as inappropriate for children.

The purpose of this shocking didactic strategy was to eliminate those titles without a positive educational message in terms of gender perspective by analysing the reinforced stereotypes in gender roles. Hence, books and tales that contained rescued women and male heroes battling the ‘bad guy’ fell into the trash pit as an act of feminism, and the interest of this MA thesis is to review the value of the tale in its context, and consider the choice of removing international and well known titles as LRRH as a children’s book⁶.

The problem of removing this type of material is that it is only reviewed in a modern key to decide upon its current validity for our 21st century society to teach new generations, and considering it is incompatible that modern literary texts intended for children cannot coexist with what we consider the *classics*. Indeed, there is a certain potential for this topic to be discussed in schools from all over the world around the issue of whether on if widespread tales as LRRH are considered appropriate for children, but what is not demonstrated is that new literary texts for children without any gender bias and that reinforce gender equality are incompatible with centenary folk tales and legends in any of their variants (including modern ones) because the gender roles they portray do not reflect our modern society anymore.

⁶ Pieces of news related to this topic have been collected in Annex 1 to illustrate this point.

Certainly, these decisions upon the literary value of ancient folk tales is missing one ingredient: a philological perspective on children's literature, and specifically, on LRRH, which I desire to reflect on this MA thesis.

5 APPROACHES TO CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

As some critics have argued (M. O. Grenby and K. Reynolds, 2011, p. 1), children's literature is a powerful tool for shaping a child's thinking processes and understanding the world, providing great examples of experience linked to some educative piece of advice or other relevant carriers of information about a wide range of fields, such as the domestic, institutional, official, unofficial, etc. which can be of value to study how children in the past perceived the world:

“books for children are often used to teach the prevailing values and accepted behaviours of a particular time, studying the books produced – or suppressed – in earlier periods or at key moments in the history of a nation can highlight telling elements and debates from those times.” (M. O. Grenby and K. Reynolds, 2011, p. 1))

That is why we need to understand the development of this vast and ancient literary genre, that works as a “link to the past at multiple levels” (2011, p. 1) as it is in “the way we conceive, organize and manage societies” (2011, p. 2). This may not occur deliberately, as traditional ideas may be enclosed in earlier literary pieces, but literature is able to promote current social trends. The areas of *equality* and *diversity*, according to Grenby and Reynolds, , are two areas where it is very easy to appreciate what they call “seedbed for change” (2011, p. 2), which is the topic we are interested in when analysing the evolution of the tale LRRH and contrasting its original value to the current value we are giving to it.

5.1 A very brief review of children's literature

As this theoretical framework for the history of literature, if done extensively can occupy hundreds of pages, here have been selected the most relevant historic facts that affect the issue of this study, the creation, evolution and understanding of a particular tale, LRRH. On that account, we have chosen a culture-oriented point of view of the development of children's literature through the centuries, from the beginnings to our days through Zipes (2005) work.⁷

⁷ A review of titles of works and authors was impossible to be presented here, due to the length of this study, despite we recommend the reader to get informed of this extensive topic through the help of a children's anthology, as the work by Zipes (The Norton anthology of children's literature: the traditions in English, 2005).

Children's literature, as all literatures, has its origins in "oral traditions of myth, fable, legend, folktale and religion" (2005, p. xxvii). In the English language, the written tradition began in the medieval period. There, young males were the main target audience of the first written texts, which taught manners, morals and Latin (2005, p. xxvii). In the 15th century, the printing press was invented, which made it easier to increase literacy rates in the population. The first acknowledged children's book belongs to Comenius, *Sensualium Pictus* (Comenius, 1658) was "a Latin grammar that used pictures to convey "sensual" images of the world to students" (Comenius, 1658, p. 110). These illustrations of encyclopaedic nature were used with didactic purposes. These books evolved from teaching religious doctrines in the 17th century to focusing on children's entertainment in the 18th century. Then, in 1744, John Newbery, promoted gender-appropriate objects in his book *A Little Pretty Pocket-Book*, a successful marketing technique that links literature to toys that survives nowadays (Zipes & others, 2005, p. xxviii).

Through the 18th century, the Enlightened political philosopher J. J. Rousseau wrote his education treatise called *Emile, or On Education* (Rousseau, 1762), tackling essential questions as the relationship between individuals and society and discussing the so called "innate human goodness". This work is considered the first philosophy of education in Western culture. This work argues that "the naturally good child should be raised apart from, and thus uncorrupted by, society" (2005, p. xxvii). Later that century, the growing middle class demanded a rise in literacy rates, so new schools appeared with didactic innovations. It was at the late 19th century when universal compulsory education was established. For the working classes, this meant a "greater cultural and linguistic homogenization" (2005, p. xxvii).

In Victorian England, educating children that were all over the British Empire through children's literature was a political choice that allowed the colonizers to teach their language and culture to the colonized (2005, p. xxvii). Similarly, in the United States, this powerful tool was used to "Americanize" new immigrants (2005, p. xxvii). As Povey (1990, p. 124) states, "suddenly literature was recognized as a means by which native speakers extended their vocabulary and understanding".

It was in the 20th century when mainstream culture interacted with children's literature, as the radio, television and the Internet were technological advances that took children's contents beyond the printed text, as animated shows for children often originated in books.

Today, visual literacy is considered of great influence both for children and young adults. (2005, p. xxix).

Social transformations such as the struggle for women's rights and the civil rights movement that started from the 20th century up to the 21th, "have led to changes in the content of Anglo-American children's literature" (2005, p. xxix). The changes reflect the diversity of origins and experiences of this young audience by including "varied traditions, stories, and experiences of non-white childhood" (2005, p. xxix). Also, it begun to resemble "adult literature in subject matter, using frank and provocative language to depict and discuss social problems" (2005, p. xxix).

It is undeniable that children's literature has a high cultural role, and it is able to reabsorb classics, as folk and fairy tales have greatly influenced our culture and our ways of thinking (2005, p. xxix):

Its characters, images and narratives underlie much of what is seen on film and television. Children's literature is life-enhancing, life-changing, and profoundly influential; it provides a new lens with which to see the world. As such, writing for children is everything that literature claims to be. Yet, paradoxically, for all of its importance in Anglo-American culture and literature, the huge subject of children's literature long remained untreated in literary and cultural studies.

(2005, p. xxx)

During the 60's, university reforms included this literature in the canon so to explore the complexity of children's literature beyond the New Critical and formalist approaches. Feminist theory and Reader response theories helped understand implicit power structures and core structures in the narrative (2005, p. xxx) . More recently, the literary canons have expanded, and children's literature is nowadays a central element in literary and cultural research (2005, p. xxx).

5.2 The labels "children's literature" and "young adult literature"

The term "children's literature" outside the academic field has a largely "unproblematic, everyday meaning" (Reynolds K. , 2011), but there is no a single well stablished definition that states specifically what should be understood under that label. We want to address the attention to the target audience, the type of text, the length of the text and the characteristics of the text. children's literature' must imply that the target reader is a child, with the writer usually being an adult.

The protagonists and other characters may be of varied age, gender and ethnicity, and the topics, plots, morals, source language, source country, source culture, genre (comedy,

tragedy...) and subgenre (fiction, non-fiction, information books,...), written format (poetry, prose, drama) whilst being of a great variety, they shall be considered suitable for children by adults. Thus, all these fundamentals that define “adult books” fall into one single category for those who are of short age: “children’s books”. The variety of titles under this name is as wide as the just above mentioned elements, so we can state that it is a very wide, diverse and complex field of study, which only contributes to the notion that there is no single and clear definition of what children’s literature really is (Hunt, International Companion Encyclopedia of Children's Literature, 1996, pp. 15-16). One possible definition is the following:

“Children’s literature [...] can be defined as the books that are read by children as well as the books selected by children or by adults (teachers, parents, publishers, experts) as being appropriate for children. Due to being a literature normally addressed to children (who are traditionally considered to be immature readers), children’s literature has generally been considered to be at the bottom scale of literature.

(Demetriou & Ruiz Mas, 2009, pp. 9-13)

So, the target audience is characterised by its short age, but there is no consensus in the specific age group. For example, Grenby and Reynolds (2011, p. 2) consider this audience goes from 0 to 16 years old, but from 0 to 3, there are no readers as such, and the teenagers around 12 to 14 years old and up, this is no longer considered “children’s literature”, but “young adult literature” or “juvenile literature”, but there are authors who mix these categories or include ‘young adult’ in ‘children’s literature’. See these examples⁸:

[children’s literature] is understood to refer to the materials written to be read by children and young people, published by children’s publishers, and stocked and shelved in the children’s and/or Young Adult (YA) section of libraries and bookshops.

(Reynolds K. , 2011, p. 3)

“Children’s Literature” is defined as material written and produced for the information or entertainment of children and Young Adults”

(The Library of Congress, 2008)

This lack of specification of the terms “children’s literature” and “young adult literature” could be the result of the ambiguity of the very terms “children” and “young adults”. It may be clear to differentiate an adult from a child; Adulthood, at least, legally, is associated with reaching the age of majority, that varies depending on the country. In Spain 18 years old is the threshold of adulthood declared in law and entails assuming legal control over oneself. Childhood, on the other hand, spans from birth to adolescence, according to Piaget’s

⁸ Underlined words are mine, for emphasis.

developmental stage theory (1936, p. 412), but the teenage stage in the middle is difficult to state clearly, as it is an intermediate stage associated with adolescence viewed as a transitional period in which children are prepared for adult roles (Larson & Wilson, 2004, p. 14). In this stage, physical growth and cognitive development may begin and end sooner or later depending on the person, so age is only a rough marker here.

Understanding these life stages may depend from the perspective; sociological, psychological, biological, historical, anthropological, etc., which has made it hard for scholars to agree upon a precise definition of the terms. As a result of this, labels in the literary field are not specific on the type of reader the texts are aimed to. The distinction between a child, a teenager (or a young adult) and an adult seems not to be a clear cut, but a continuum in which it is difficult to distinguish one from another, and depending on the field of study, on social environment or on the individual, considering someone a child, a teenager or an adult may vary.

Here, so state a distinction among these three groups, I have chosen to follow the differentiation that is done in the Spanish Educative System⁹:

- Infant education¹⁰: from from 3 to 5 y.o. ¹¹
- Primary Education¹²: from 6 to 11 y.o.
- Compulsory Secondary Education¹³: from 12 to 15 y.o.
- Bachillerato¹⁴ (non-compulsory Education): from 16 to 17 y.o.
- Higher Education or Post-secondary Education (Vocational Education, Bachelor's Degree, University Degree, etc.): 18 y.o. and up.

Following this classification, those who are coursing Infant Education above 3 y.o and Primary Education will be referred as “children” in this MA thesis, so the literature intended for those would be “children’s literature” (from 3 to 11 y.o.). For those who are in the Secondary

⁹ As the age distinction may vary among countries, I have chosen the Spanish Education System because this MA thesis has been produced in Spain, but I also explain the equivalence in the British System in the following footnotes.

¹⁰ We are not considering the 1st cycle of this stage, pre-infant education. In the British Education System, this is equivalent to the stage between Nursery (Early Years) to Year 1 of Primary Education, so there is a year gap difference between the Spanish and the British System.

¹¹ “y.o.” is “years old” abbreviated here.

¹² In the British Education System, this is equivalent to the stage between Year 2 to Year 7. It is almost equivalent to the British Primary Education, that goes from Year 1 to Year 6.

¹³ In the British Education System, this is equivalent to the stage between Year 8 to Year 13. In the British System, this belongs to Secondary Education, despite it encompasses from year 7 to year 13, so it includes what in Spain is “Bachillerato”.

¹⁴ As it was explained in footnote **¡Error! Marcador no definido.**, this stage is included in the British “Secondary Education”. This would be Year 12 and Year 13. “Bachillerato” would translate as “General Certificate of Education” (GCE).

Education and Bachillerato groups will be called “teenagers”, “adolescents”, or “young adults”, and the literature intended for those will be “young adult literature¹⁵” or “juvenile literature” (from 12 to 17 y.o.), as they are not legally considered adults yet. Those who are in an age gap beyond 18 y.o., will be considered adults, as they have reached to the age of majority in Spain. The literature intended for those would be “adult literature”. In short¹⁶:

- Children’s literature: from 3 to 11 y.o.
- Young adult (YA) literature: from 12 to 17 y.o.
- Adult literature: 18 y.o. and up.

5.3 Defining “children’s literature”

Children’s literature, just as any other adult novel, has elements as plot, characters, point of view, tone and style of an imaginative work, it can provide enjoyment and understanding, it explores the nature of human beings and helps the readers to understand themselves, which are common features in literature, but with children’s literature, there are certain restrictions that differentiate it from texts as novels for adults.

Despite the definition of the studied topic in question usually comes at the beginning of these kind of thesis, due to the reasons given just above, it was necessary to describe the issues concerning children’s literature before providing possible definitions that do not deviate from an accurate point of accuracy.

A suitable definition for “children’s literature” would include aspects as the following (Lukens, 1999, pp. 9-10):

- It is a kind of literature that targets children between 3 to 11.
- The texts can frequently be accompanied by images.
- It tends to use direct language and simple ideas, so the grammatical style is limited to the reader’s level of proficiency of the language.
- The relationships amongst the characters tend to be quite obvious.
- Stories do not contain many elements, but those which appear are of high relevance.

¹⁵ Abbreviated “YA” literature.

¹⁶ Of course, inside each category, it is possible to subdivide into more age groups (for example, from 3 to 5, from 6 to 8, or 1st cycle, 2nd cycle of Secondary Education etc.), but for the sake of keeping this MA thesis comprehensible and due to the difficulties to justify making more divisions according to age groups, I have opted for a clear cut division based on the educative stage of the subject.

- It is frequent to find fantastic elements, as children accept it more readily than adults.
- There can be personified animals.
- It presents to children elements through which they can understand the real world.
- The contents should be “suitable for children”¹⁷.
- The texts tend to be short.

In fact, children’s literature does many of the things that other types of literature, such as adult novels do, like providing a pleasurable experience, with the difference that children’s literature is centred on providing this reward (1999, p. 10) to people with a limited variety of experiences, who do not know how to manage “success and failure” and do not yet have a fully formed standard of morality (1999, p. 10). In fact, what we consider *literature*, in a very general context is “reading that by means of imaginative and artistic qualities, provides pleasure and understanding” (1999, p. 5). “Understanding” is the second reward that Lukens (1999, p. 4) appoints literature does, as it explores the human condition, as “it is the province of literature to observe and to comment, to open individuals and their society for our observation and our understanding” (1999, p. 4). Here, in children’s literature, the information that is given on children’s stories is relevant; there are no complex ideas, they are expressed with straightforward language, limited vocabulary, no deviations from the plot such as digressions, and the acts, relationships and descriptions result very helpful for the general portrayal of the character. In summary, there are few elements, but they imply and signify more.

Despite this, and due to the reduced amount of elements and to the short length of tales, we can find that “the significance in terms of the character’s lives may be lacking—significance that helps us, whatever our age, to understand a little more about ourselves and others” (1999, p. 4) . As a result, the characters’ relations are usually depicted as relatives (father, mother, grandfather, grandmother, siblings, etc.), friends, acquaintances, enemies... and characters tend to be depicted as good or bad, as in a two-sided scale where good and bad behaviour are portrayed through the character’s actions, which represent their moral nature. In this way, the reader can focus on the essential elements in the tale, as the action, people, events and stresses (1999, p. 7).

¹⁷ Despite “suitable” depends on the accepted social values of the time (Hunt, 1994, p. 24).

In this line, Lukens (1999, p. 5) states that by showing human motives, the readers are invited “to identify or to react to a fictional character”, and even subconsciously seeing into the mind of this: “Through the writer’s careful choice of details from the past, we come to see clearly the character’s motivation for action” (1999, p. 5). The readers tend to identify with the characters when they see some similarity with their own experience, so they lean towards understanding the reason for the characters’ deeds or judging the errors that the characters commit. In this way, by approving or disapproving the behaviours we see in literature, readers are able to develop their sense of compassion and understanding, and beyond this, learn from unlived experiences; see examples of stories from which the readers can learn, despite not feeling represented in the tale, or seeing similar experiences to theirs. Here is where we can explain the fantasy element.

5.4 Defining “young adult literature”

Similar to children’s literature, young adult literature (YA literature) consists of the literary corpus targeted to teenagers, characterised by its heterogeneity in topics and styles. As I have stated above, it encompasses those readers from 12 to 17 y.o., as they have not reached yet the legal threshold of adulthood in Spain, to state an age limit. This life stage has been traditionally considered a very complex phase, it has even been defined as an “extremely precarious stage of human development” (Hall, 1904, p. 12), as many changes that involve the passing from childhood to adulthood take place in this stage. This type of literature has its origins in the 18th century, but did not differentiate from children’s literature until the 20th century (Arias-Bermúdez, 2016, p. 6), as industrialised societies started to distinguish adolescence as a stage with differentiated learning interests in literature. Not until recently, from the 80’s and onwards, this type of literature opened from being very based on teaching values to incorporating taboo issues to show teenagers the complexity of situations in life in an urban society, which is a big difference to children’s literature (Arias-Bermúdez, 2016, p. 8).

This type of literature as Demetriou and Ruiz Mas state (2009, pp. 9-13), “deals with topics as the physical, mental and psychological development of an adolescent towards childhood. The main issue in the interests for teenagers is sex, but not the only one. Other topic includes drugs, gangs violence”. In a similar line, Reynolds and Butler (2005, p. 35) affirm that YA literature is “concerned with acceptance in the social circles, emotional development, and the risks and temptations of the increasingly responsibility- free life of the middle- class teen.

The ‘adult’ issues of YA are often sex, pregnancy, abortion and drugs, but they are rarely work.” Also, there is a focus on topics as the value of the family, the critic to consumerist society and multiculturalism, in order to approach the literary settings to those of the readers to foster identification.

This type of literature is nowadays very commercial, though, it has been criticised for its mediocrity and undefinable style, result of its low literary quality (Arias-Bermúdez, 2016, p. 8). It is the intermediate stage between children’s literature and adult literature, as the users’ cognitive and receptive abilities are in development and the linguistic, emotional and intellectual immaturity of the readers is inherent to this literature, that adapts itself to the reader (2016, p. 11). So, this literature presents simple linguistic and formal structures but that essentially produces aesthetic pleasure to the reader. It is a bridge of progressive improvement that increases the difficulty for adolescents to reach adult literature, where literature is less transparent, the plot, the lexis and grammar are more complex (2016, p. 10).

5.5 Fantasy: subgenres

There is a wide range of children’s and young adults’ literature classifications, both in the old and new canons, despite the purpose of creating those types of books has remained the same and the types of books have also stayed as they were for ages. The interest of this dissertation is not to perfectly portray a full typology of children’s literature and YA literature, as this classification may neglect some types of literature subgenres. Instead, the aim is to have an approach to the literary framework in which the object of this study, LRRH, had been produced and to observe the features that are common in these characterizations, to which we can appreciate features that have appeared in the tale throughout its development in the different variations. Hence, this is a selection of the most relevant features in the classification of children’s literature oriented towards depicting the subgenres of literary fantasy and folk fantasy, in order to get an approach to where LRRH is framed.

Fantasy, which is as a synonym of “literary fantasy”, is applicable both to children’s literature and YA literature, as YA literature is a more modern label and YA texts were considered as children’s. Fantasy is quite popular among young readers and it can benefit them by stimulating their imagination and critical thought, by creating a safe space from where to explore disturbing issues and for encouraging the development of optimism (Livingston & Brown, 2017, p. 6). This interest often rises during early adolescence (between twelve and fourteen), as a result of the brain changes that lead young adults to question elements as

authority and received values (Carlsen, 1980, p. 40), but also “reading about completely different societies or environments encourages young readers to think critically about their environment, but also to tease out the full implications of radical social challenges” (2017, p. 6). This would help young readers explore crucial moral and psychological issues from a safe spot, as the portrayed worlds in literature are frequently detached from the real world. Tales, as Bettelheim ([1976] 1991, p. 45) claims, foster exploring children’s potentially terrifying desires and emotions from this safe place and from a distant context that should not perturb the children’s environment. As an example:

“Hansel and Gretel” for instance is not simply a story about a witch in a cottage made of sweets; it is a story about greed and the importance of controlling yourself and recognising the needs of others. Similarly, the Harry Potter series is not just a story about learning to be a wizard; it is a story about learning to deal with evil embedded in you, about confronting death and about the importance of love.

(Livingston & Brown, 2017, p. 7).

Fantasy can be defined as “the willing suspension of disbelief” (Coleridge, 1983, p. 62)¹⁸, although there is another definition of *fantasy* as a synonym for “folk fantasy” or “traditional literature” that refers to its unknown authorship (Lukens, 1999, p. 20). First, we will explain literary fantasy, and then, folk fantasy. With this definition, we can find again the problem of employing prescriptive labelling that may not help us open up to critical approaches, risking what Livingston and Brown (2017, p. 4) call losing important issues while arguing over «whether a text should be considered “marvellous” or “fabulous”»¹⁹.

5.5.1 *Literary fantasy*

Literary fantasy creates an imaginary world for the characters in the stories, and for the readers, who accept this invented framework, despite the story should be grounded in reality (2017, p. 21), being coherent and cohesive. Fantasy has different subgenres, such as fantastic stories, high fantasy and science fiction, despite there are no clear distinctions among the subgenres, as they usually overlap with one another (2017, p. 21).

Fantastic stories, as a subgenre of fantasy, are characterised by being mostly realistic stories that require us to suspend our disbelief, typically on the characters and themes. Fantasy can be combined with real possibilities, as in the example the same authoress proposes, in *The*

¹⁸ This is a modern edition by James Engell and W. Jackson Bate.

¹⁹ The use of « » is due to the “ ” symbols are used inside the quote by the cited authoress. This symbol is also employed throughout the MA Thesis for the same purpose.

Borrowers books by Norton (1965): “showing the daily lives of tiny people who face everyday problems like our own and make discoveries about fear of the unknown and about the disruption of family through greed” (Lukens, 1999, p. 21).



Figure 2: Cover of “*The Borrowers*” (*The Borrowers*, #1) (Norton, 1965)²⁰

In some other stories that are encompassed in the same subgenre, we might find that the characters are not necessarily people, but behave as such; having feelings, speaking, living in human-like houses and having similar lives as we do. These are the so called “fantastic stories of personification” (1999, p. 22), where we find personified animals or even objects that deal with human-life themes, as “*The Ugly Duckling*” by Andersen (1963).

High fantasy, on the other hand, focuses on the battle between good and evil, a conflict between these two forces. The point of view from which the story is told greatly influences the acceptance of the characters, amongst which the protagonists are usually encouraged to go through different adventures while strongly believing in their experience. Hence, heroes are frequent in this category. Elements as the setting and time may be very varied, the characters may portray human beings or even human-like beings, as it is the case in *The Lord of the Rings* by Tolkien (1974). These stories usually have a serious tone, as a result of dealing with topics that concern humanity and its greatest conflict: that of the balance between good and evil.

²⁰ From https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/348573.The_Borrowers (Consulted on the 11/11/2019)

Lastly, we have science fiction, a type of fantasy that is hardly differentiated from pure fantasy, as they share common themes, with the distinction that science fiction deals with scientific laws and technological inventions, nature forces and its limitations. Some of the definitions that Lukens (1999, p. 23) employs in order to describe the genre conjugate the real world as we know it with scientific or pseudo-scientific imaginative speculations in fields as physics, astrophysics, technology, philosophy, social sciences, etc., with some innovation in them trying to achieve verisimilitude “and win ‘the willing suspension of disbelief’ through scientific plausibility” (1999, p. 23). Stories such as *Back to the Future*, *The Animated Series* (2015) (Bob Gale, et al., 2015)²¹ contain these elements and fall under what Gunn (Blish, 1964, p. 14) describes a good science fiction narrative: “a story built around human beings, with a human problem, and a human solution, which would not have happened at all without its scientific content.”

5.5.2 Folk fantasy

Folk fantasy or traditional literature, as it was said above, is another type of “fantasy” literature. It makes the distinction harder in terms of literary theory. Traditional or “folk” literature is the one that has no identifiable authorship and is transmitted orally, having been passed down through generations, until one collector or writer records it in a written form. As Lukens (1999, p. 25) affirms, «Folktales have been called the “spiritual history” of mankind, the cement of society,” binding a culture together. They seem to express the universality of human wishes and needs». Those stories have been very much cherished especially amongst communities that did not employ writing, so these stories have now become “the property of all people” (1999, p. 25). Indeed, as they circulate for centuries amongst different people, there is a multiplicity of versions in which a same story can be found. They usually vary in the point of view and in the details, but what is important about the different versions is that they have a similar focus on “human yearning for social acceptance and material comfort” (1999, p. 25) ; so the “heart of the story” will still linger, while remaining relatable to the people by using universal themes and by conveying a message that can be easily understandable and valuable for the majority of the people.

Again, as in literary fantasy, the characters can be varied; they can be human, non-human or magic, but while varying in type and being diverse, they generally portray

²¹From: https://issuu.com/idwpublishing/docs/backtothefuture_01-pr?e=1013407/30808610 (Consulted on the 11/11/2019)

archetypical characters who share common characteristics. This can help the readers recognise the story's central issue, which usually goes around conventional themes in literature such as the conflict between good and evil, which is considered to be a universal topic that defines human condition, which has its roots in the classical tragedy. Here, fate, the tragic hero and the final catharsis²² are important and recurrent elements in the genre that have laid a foundation to which the tale of LRRH can still be related to.

²² “Catharsis” is a reference to the Greek concept *κάθαρσις* (“cleansing”). It means purifying our negative emotions through experiencing fear, like in drama performances as tragedies. Reference: OED Online (Oxford, 2019) “The purification of the emotions by vicarious experience, esp. through the drama (in reference to Aristotle's *Poetics* 6). Also more widely.”

6 “LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD” AS A CHILDREN’S TALE

“Little Red Riding Hood”²³, also known as "Little Red Riding hood", "Little Red Cap" or simply "Red Riding Hood", and even “Red Hood”, as most of the classic fairy tales that have been told to children in the Western world, has experienced a long history of oral transmission in which the tale has evolved through different interactions of distinct narratives. This has been done through the appropriation of themes, plots and characters. As a result, we have a wide range of discursive stories, since each writer, the audiences, the production context and the transmission were factors that determined the development of the story and highlighted and diminished certain elements in the story (Zipes & others, 2005, p. 338).

LRRH –like other tales such as “Snow White”, “Cinderella” and “Sleeping Beauty, amongst others- has served to instruct or educate children, greatly affecting their socialization at early stages. However, the significance of these stories is not completely clear according to some folklorists.

Traditionally, the plot of LRRH, has been linked to ancient myths connected to natural phenomena such as sunrise and sunset. Hence, the character of the female protagonist personifies the sun, especially due to her red garment, while the wolf has been linked to darkness. The story, then, represents the natural cycles and the passing of day to night. This has also been understood as a story of the forces of darkness trying to devour Christian purity (Zipes, 2005, 338). The basic elements that constitute what we currently know about the tale belong to its oral development during the Middle Ages, especially in France, Tirol and Northern Italy. The story, as it is understood, is a warning and initiation story, a cautionary tale, intended for both children and young adults, and it is a product of the influence of Charles Perrault’s 1697 version (2005, pp. 342-344), which “borrowed elements from popular folklore, recreating the tale to suit the needs of an upper-class audience whose aesthetic standards differed from the common folk” (2005, p. 339). The story that has been appointed by the folklorist to have served as an inspiration for the creation of Perrault’s version is “The Story of Grandmother”, collected in 1885 (2005, pp. 339-340).

6.1 The history of “Little Red Riding Hood”

There are a number of recorded variants of the tale LRRH in European oral traditions, but also from another regions such as Africa and East Asia, as Tehrani (2013) pointed: “One of

²³ “Little Red Riding Hood” (LRRH) is a synonym for ATU 333, as the general term to refer to all its variants, but the name coincides with Perrault’s (1697) version, so when the text specifically refer to his variant, it will state that is Perrault’s.

the most unexpected and exciting discoveries to emerge from these [folk literature] studies was the recurrence of many of the same plots in the oral traditions associated with different – and often widely separated – societies and ethnic groups”. This phenomenon was noticed by the Grimm Brothers; the allegedly German folktales they collected were related to other traditions, as the Slavonic, Indian, Persian and Arabic oral traditions, and as Tehrani (2013) explains:

These similarities have attracted the attention of folklorists, literary scholars, anthropologists, cognitive scientists and others for a variety of reasons: For example, cognate tales in other cultures have been studied to try and reconstruct the origins and forms of classic western fairy tales before they were first written down.

(2013)

The most modern studies have been carried out in order to differentiate and support the distinction of LRRH from the tale “The Wolf and the Kids”, with which it shares some elements of plot, such as the attack of a beast to a minor, . In the second tale, this usually involves multiple victims. The purpose of this section is to provide a brief account of the study that has finally given what variants can be considered as LRRH in the long history of the folktale.

Studies such as this, also, could potentially reveal past migrations, cross-cultural contacts between communities, the impact of geography in the spreading of literature and language barriers on cultural diffusion. The patterns of stability and change in the literary pieces can as well provide us with insights to “universal and variable aspects of human experience, and reveal how psychological, social and ecological processes interact with one another to shape cultural continuity and diversity”, in Tehrani’s (2013) words.

6.1.1 ATU classification: ATU 333

To begin with, historically, the oral medium of transmission of folktales has resulted challenging to the researchers in folklore of the 19th century. These have preferred to carry out studies that differentiated folklore with a historical-geographic approach, by classifying “similar folktales” from different oral literatures into distinct “international types” based on consistencies in their themes, plots and characters” (2013). Tehrani (2013) values the Aarne-Uther-Thompson (ATU) index for its comprehensibility and contemporariness. It is a system for the classification of folktales created during the years spanning from 1910 to 1961, and the last revision of which took place in 2004, giving the system its full name. Under the Aarne-Thompson-Uther classification system (henceforth ATU) (Uther, 2004), LRRH is “ATU 333”, as tales are labelled with the creators’ initials prefix, plus a number²⁴, that corresponds to the

²⁴ A hyphen between the prefix and the number is optional: “ATU 333” and “ATU-333” are the same.

number under which it is classified in the index. According to Uther (2004, pp. 134-285), it is renowned for its identification of more than two thousand “international types” (tales) of literary works worldwide, it distinguishes seven types of traditional tales; Animal Tales or Fables; Tales of Magic or Fairy Tales; Religious Tales; Realistic Tales, Tales of the Stupid Ogre (or demon, or giant); Tales of Anecdotes and Jokes; and, finally, Tales with formulas and repetitions, but, on the other hand, there is a classification of the different tale motives, as mythological, animal, tests, deceptions, society, sex²⁵... The numbers in the index correspond to the following classification, based on what has been explained:

ATU Tale Type Index (2004, p. 135)

- 1-299. Animal Tales
- 300-749. Tales of Magic
- 750-849. Religious Tales
- 850-999. Realistic Tales
- 1000-1199. Tales of the Stupid Ogre (Giant, Devil)
- 1200-1999. Anecdotes and Jokes
- 2000-2399. Formula Tales

According to this, LRRH (ATU 333) is a Tale of Magic or a Fairy tale. It was classified as such in the ATU Index because of its regional and cultural deviations that were often believed to relate to tale types that were common in Asia, especially in China (2008, p. 197). Tales as “Cinderella” (ATU 510A), “Beauty and the Beast” (ATU 425C) or “Snow White” (ATU 709) are examples of pieces that form part of this index. By using this method, folklorists intend to find the stories’ original archetype from where it spread, and then adapted to the cultural norms and preferences of each society.

This approach implies that there is a single original story (an Ur-text), the archetype or ideal form from which the variants stemmed, has been criticised for a number of reasons, namely: choosing arbitrary and ethnocentric criteria for the differentiation of folk stories, poor selection of motifs, being biased for its sample collection techniques and preferring some samples for study over others, and for offering a superficial classification of the oral tales, since

²⁵ See the whole Index classification here:
https://sites.ualberta.ca/~urban/Projects/English/Motif_Index.htm (Consulted on the 11/11/2019)

they are considered “too fluid and stable to be classified into distinct groups based on common descent” (2008, p. 197).

6.1.2 *Tehrani’s classification: the most influential variants*

The improved version of this methodology that intends to produce a taxonomy for folklore was carried out by Tehrani (2013), who employs quantitative methods of phylogenetic analysis in order to research evolutionary relationships among variants of the tale LRRH (ATU 333)²⁶ in order to prove that “it is possible to establish coherent narrative traditions over large geographical distances and historical periods” (2013), as it is done in biology for differentiating biological species:

Folktales represent an excellent target for phylogenetic analysis because they are, almost by definition, products of descent with modification: Rather than being composed by a single author, a folktale typically evolves gradually over time, with new parts of the story added and others lost as it gets passed down from generation to generation.

(2013)

Tehrani (2013) mentions the case of ATU 333 as “one of the most famous and controversial international types in the folktale literature”, for which Perrault’s version in 17th century France has served as the model that then spread around Europe. According to Haase (2008, p. 197), there was a common title of the tale LRRH in China called “Tiger or Wolf Grandma” (also called “The Tiger Grandmother” according to Tehrani (2013)), of which the earliest record dates the story in the mid-18th century, and was then circulating along that large territory. According to this, we can think that the Chinese versions (Asian, as they are called by Tehrani (2013)) are variants for ATU 333, but Tehrani, through his study, proves that the Asian versions do not belong to the group of variants that form LRRH.

In his study, Tehrani (2013) differentiates three major groups; the international tale ATU 333 (LRRH), the international type ATU 123 (“The Wolf and the Kids”), and East Asian tales. There are other non-western oral literatures signaled by Tehrani (2013) as capable of producing similar stories to LRRH, but they really belong to a different international type. For this MA thesis, the interest lies only in what is considered as ATU 333.

²⁶ As it has been stated, “Little Red Riding Hood” and “ATU 333” are synonyms in this section, although the tale appointed as ATU 333 in the ATU Index involves all the historical versions of the tale, that include “The Story of Grandmother”, “Catterinella” and “Little Red Riding Hood”; also, the variants from Liège, Iran and the Ibo tribe, and the variants by authors as Perrault and the Grimm Brothers. These are the most famous variants in the wide history of the tale, as it is explained below, and these are also the most studied and relevant in the phylogeny of the tale.

ATU 333 tells the story of a young girl who aims to visit her grandmother's but gets eaten by a wolf who had been waiting for her there. The critical assumption is that the author took the plot and characters from the story called The story of Grandmother (TSOG), which has survived in the oral traditions of rural France, Austria and northern Italy. This version and another one called "Catterinella"²⁷, have in common that the relative the girl was visiting (an aunt or uncle) turned out to be a werewolf ("On the way there, she eats the cakes and replaces them with donkey dung. When the aunt/uncle discovers her deception, she/he comes to her house at night and devours her in bed." (2013)) is that they were long recorded after Perrault had published his version. TSOG and Catt. relate to a common source: a poem written in Latin by a priest in Liège in the 19th century: "The poem, which purports to be based on a local folktale, tells of a girl who wanders into the woods wearing a red baptism tunic given to her by her godfather. She encounters a wolf, who takes her back to its lair, but the girl manages to escape by taming the wolf's cubs." (Tehrani, 2013). This means that the tale was circulating in a former version in Western Europe in medieval times.

ATU 333 includes the above-mentioned tale from 11th century Liège in one of its subdivisions, variants of Catt., variants of TSOG and variants of the familiar tale LRRH. In this last one type of variants, there are even non-European sources of the tale: from Iran and from Nigeria. The first division in this group would be Catt. and the Liège versions. This last one led to TSOG, that then was employed by Perrault, it reached Iran and the Ibo tribe in Nigeria and then, reached to the Grimm brothers in the final shape LRRH:

The analyses separated Catterinella from the other tales, and suggest that the 11th century Liège tale diverged from the lineage leading to Little Red Riding Hood before the latter split from the oral tale The Story of Grandmother. The Little Red Riding Hood clade separates Perrault's classic version from more recent versions, including the Grimms' 18th century German text.

(2013)

As a conclusion, for this study, here it is shown a representation of the lineage of the tale that is catalogued as the International type ATU 333 supported by qualitative proof regarding the historiography of the tales. With Tehrani's (2013) study, it is confirmed that LRRH, TSOG and Catt. are a single tale type (ATU 333) that is distinct from The Wolf and the Kids (ATU 123), being LRRH and TSOG descendants of the 11th century poem from Liège.

²⁷ Abbreviated "Catt."

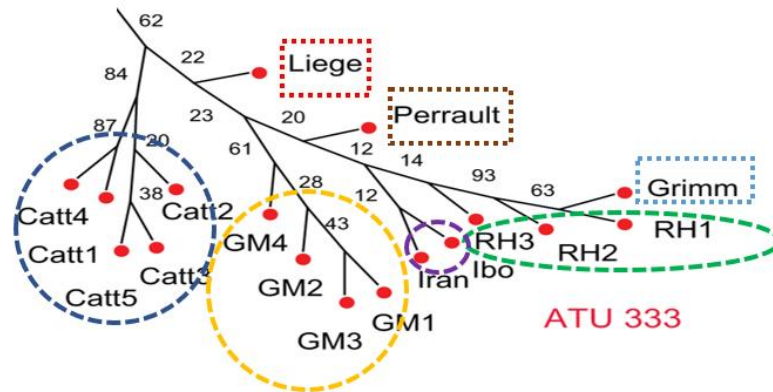


Figure 3: Lineage of ATU 333 (adapted from Tehrani (2013))

For this reason, the variants that have been analysed for this MA thesis have been the ones that have resulted to be more influential in the development of the tale from its composition to our days. The lineage that survived and spread the most was the one that originated in Liège (11th century), marked in orange in the image above (Figure 5), so it has been preferred over the group of variants of “Catterinella” (Catt.), circled in blue, with a much shorter lineage. But, as that the Liège variant is missing, the closest to that one is the group of variants of “The Story of Grandmother”, circled in yellow and called “GM” plus the number of variant (from 1 to 4). This tale has been reconstructed, as it is explained in section 6.2.1, and it has been the first variant that has been analysed, taken as a source for the following variants.

After this, the most influential variant is the one by Perrault (1697), marked in brown in the image above, very influential and widely spread. That is why in the image, in purple, it can be seen that there are variants that have been recognised as versions of this one by Perrault, one from Iran, in Middle East Asia and another one from Southeast Nigeria in West Africa, by the Ibo tribe. Perrault’s version was “reprinted hundreds of thousands of times, in many different formats and variants; (...) [and] mixed with oral versions” (Zipes & others, 2005, p. 345). That is why there are so many variants of “Little Red Riding Hood” (RH in the image, circled in green), until it arrived to the Grimm brothers, who made their own version of the tale, taking Perrault’s version as the main source, but also mixing with the just mentioned oral versions. Their version from 1812 (in a light blue rectangle in the image) has been considered one of the major and most influential variants from the group of variants that make up the corpus of tales that can be considered ATU 333.

6.2 The main versions of “Little Red Riding Hood”

The selection of tales that have been analysed comes from *The Norton Anthology of Children’s Literature*, edited by Zipes & others in 2005 (339-347).²⁸ It provides a rich and comprehensive assortment of variants of literary works for children rigorously chosen and with a philological motivation. Plus, it provides insights into the cultural context, headnotes and annotations.

This anthology presents good examples of variants of the tale LRRH that were highlighted and studied by Tehrani (2013), so it accurately represents its evolution. Following Tehrani’s conclusions of his study, this MA thesis is focused on the traditional variants of “The Story of Grandmother” (1885), which will be taken as a source for the following, Charles Perrault’s “Little Red Riding Hood” (1697) and the Grimm brothers’ “Little Red Cap” (1812), as it has been explained above. The reason for choosing these versions is that they have been the most spread, reprinted and reinterpreted, which makes them the most known and influential in the history of the tale. The ones by Perrault and by the Grimm brothers have set the foundations for future variants and, at the same time, collect, and mix elements from the oral tradition, which make them very rich and relevant because of their approach to the tale.

6.2.1 “The Story of Grandmother” (1885): The reconstructed first version

Despite this variant²⁹ is dated in 1885, it should be taken as a reconstructed form of the one Perrault took as inspiration to make his own in 1697. There is a substantial time lapse between the time the tale was composed (in the 11th century) and the century it was recorded in its written form (in 1885). This means that it circulated orally for a long time, or also, that there is missing evidence or research on the actual process of composition and evolution of TSOG, the main source for creating LRRH.

This version of the folktale was recorded by French folklorists in 1885³⁰ but published in 1951 under Delarue’s compilation³¹. Through this first variant that appears in the selection of Zipes et al. (2005, pp. 338-386), characters of the tale will be introduced, as the plot and symbols that will be developed in the following variations of the story that fall under the ATU

²⁸ All these texts are available in Annex 2.

²⁹ The pages that correspond to this version are available in section 10.1.1, in Annex 2.

³⁰ Following Zipes (2005, p. 339), this variant is from 1885 and does not state one particular author. After researching on this fact, I have found that folklorists as Millien was the first to retransmit around 1870 the version by Briffault in *Mélusine* 3 (1886-1887), p. 428-429, a folklore magazine. Due to the difficulty to state one particular author in a particular date, I will follow Zipes take on the authorship of this variant.

³¹ It was published in Delarue’s *Le Petit Chaperon Rouge*, (1951) and explained in Delarue’s, *Les contes merveilleux de Perrault et la tradition populaire. I. Le Petit chaperon rouge* (1953).

333 international type, as it has been explained. This tale³² is heir to the first recorded poem that led to the development of the most popular and versions of ATU 333, the Liège poem from the 11th century, which is not recorded in the Zipes et al. (2005) compilation.

TSOG is resumed by Tehrani (2013) as one of the versions in which the girl does not wear the typical red hood associated to the female character, and also, does not have a name. The ending is as well characteristic, as the girl manages to escape from the wolf who was trying to eat her by outwitting him:

“After finally seeing through the villain's disguise, the girl asks to go outside to the toilet. The wolf reluctantly agrees, but ties a rope to her ankle to prevent her from escaping. When she gets out, the girl cuts the rope, ties the end to a tree, and flees into the woods before the villain realises his mistake.”

This first version of the folk story contains elements that are open to many interpretations. This tale, which can be understood as a literal warning and as a moral tale, may also represent a symbolic journey of a woman from childhood to maturity, addressing also the development of her sexuality. This tale stresses the contrast of the safe village world versus the dangerous forest, home of the antagonist of the story, a wolf, which is depicted in this version as a werewolf. This is often identified in modern versions as “the Big Bad Wolf”. The simple style of the tale, with its straightforward and linear plot, the basic description of the characters and of the places adds to a vast amount of symbolism, which implies a deeper reading in the tale beyond a simple warning to the village people about the threats that can be found in the forest, the most obvious interpretation of the tale.

Through this first version, the symbol of the werewolf is studied in order to provide an explanation for its appearance in the tale, studying the history of the werewolf in Eastern Europe in past centuries to get an approach to its significance and implications in the tale. Here, it is also explored the medieval idea of innocence and the deviation from the ideal model with the coming of age, as women age, as they start discovering their sensuality. The theme of sexuality is portrayed in a negative manner, as the tale reports a case of a young inexperienced woman tempted by “a wolf” (synonym of “werewolf” here), which should be understood as an experienced man who leads the young woman to the wrong path, in the literal and metaphorical way, associated with the Christian idea of sin. The wolf is a symbol for the danger in a forest,

³² Please, refer to “Figure **¡Error! solo el documento principal.**”, as this represent the branch circled in yellow (GM1, GM2, GM3, GM4).

which has been a frequent and recurrent theme for centuries in various European traditions, as it can be seen below.

This story features a woman who wanted her daughter to bring her grandmother some bread and milk. In her path, the “little girl” met *bzou*³³, a werewolf, half-man and half-wolf. The *bzou* is a form of werewolf, despite it can differ from the modern image of lycanthropes, as they are characterized by their viciousness and their charming demeanor. This *bzou* is called “the werewolf”, not “a werewolf”, which indicates that there is only one werewolf in the area, or that the village is aware of his presence on the roads. The depiction of his character, a metaphor for a human who has become overwhelmed by his perverted desires, suggests that for previous generations there were literal werewolves roaming the area in their bestial form: “Testimonies of executed werewolves in sixteenth-century France and the Holy Roman Empire repeatedly referred to cannibalistic tendencies, particularly targeting children” (Pluskowski, 2015, p. 82). Indeed, during the 1600, theology backed the belief in werewolves, which explains the existence of trials during the 16th and 17th centuries in which men were accused of being werewolves, in a similar way to the witchcraft trials. The belief in these two magical creatures developed in a parallel manner in the Late Middle Ages and during the Early Modern period, although accusations of werewolfery were only a small percentage of all witchcraft trials. These trials started in current Switzerland in the early 15th century, but spread through Europe in the 16th century, until the 18th century.

³³ As it appears in Vronsky (2018, p. 110): “In the earlier French oral tale “The Grandmother,” on which Perrault based his written story, the wolf is described as a *bzou*, a French term for “werewolf” (“loup-*bzou*,” “loup-brou or “loup-garou,” depending on the French dialect of the region).”



Figure 4: Woodcut of a werewolf attack (Cranach, 1512)³⁴

With this context, the presence of this monster can be explained; it is a sign of depravation that represents the darkest human behavior associated with demons, as witches, heretics and shape changers were associated to evil forces. Despite this, and focusing on TSOG, it is found that “Cannibalistic infanticide had been associated with numerous heretical and minority sects in previous centuries³⁵, but these were a product of the literary tradition since the accusation never features in transcripts of inquisitorial trials” (2015, p. 82), so the story revolves around the fear of being eaten by a terrifying monster that devours human flesh and is specially drawn to children’s soft meat is a exemplification of the persistence of terror in literature. This means that there were not many wolf (or werewolf) attacks, but it reflects a popular anxiety during the Middle Ages within Christendom consisting on being consumed by beasts. Hell was represented as the digestive system of animals or monsters, or even an infernal kitchen, where “sinners were roasted on spits and cooked in pots, or consumed alive” (2015, p. 82), as it can be seen in the following images.

³⁴ From: <https://edmooneyphoto.wordpress.com/2014/10/24/in-search-of-the-werewolf/> (Consulted on the 11/11/2019)

³⁵ The author refers here to the 15 century and before.



Figure 5: Hell – detail from a fresco in the medieval church of St Nicholas in Raduil, Bulgaria (Zograf, 19th century)³⁶



Figure 6: Medieval illustration of Hell (Landsberg, ca. 1180)³⁷

It was from the 15th century onwards when shape-shifting creatures, such as wolves, were associated with cannibalism and then, accused of witchcraft in Switzerland, France and the Low Countries. Those areas of the former Holy Roman Empire and the eastern Baltic are said to have provided the “foundation for the development of a rich corpus of werewolf folk narratives, many of which were only written down much later” (2015, p. 82). The concept of the werewolf is a widespread one in European folklore, which has led to the proliferation of variants, of which the Christian interpretation was developed during the medieval period. This concept has greatly evolved from its origins, traced back to Proto-Indo-European mythology, as Norse mythology, and even found in Ancient Greek literature. The Scandinavian tradition was the one that gave rise to the Slavic werewolf tales, which gave form in Early Modern Europe to what is known as the Germanic werewolf, which was popularized around the 15th century with the rise of witchcraft panic. This concept of the werewolf is also known as a western version, as it was developed in France, German-speaking Europe and the Baltic, whilst a “eastern” take on the concept is associated with what is known nowadays as a “vampire”, and

³⁶ From: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hell-fresco-from-Raduil.jpg> (Consulted on the 11/11/2019)

³⁷ From: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Hortus_Deliciarum_-_Hell.jpg (Consulted on the 11/11/2019)

was developed in Central and Eastern Europe. Then, lycanthropy³⁸ was considered a disease in the 16th century and associated with shape-shifting in the 19th century.

With this depiction, it is seen that the myth of the werewolf was a vestige of pre-Christian beliefs which had an important presence in the Scandinavian regions, from where it spread throughout Europe and co-existed with Christianity. Indeed, pagan ideas concerning witchcraft, magic and shape-shifters were associated with diabolist practices by Christians during the Medieval period.

Continuing with the girl's story who just found the werewolf, whose implications have just been explained. He asks the girl where she was heading to, to which she answers sincerely. The werewolf then asks what path she intends to take; the path of pins, or the path of needles; she answers, "the path of needles", while the werewolf says that he intends to take the path of pins:

"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.

The little girl entertained herself by gathering needles. Meanwhile the werewolf arrived at the grandmother's house, killed her (...).

(Zipes & others, 2005, p. 339)

This dichotomy between the pins and the needles is a symbolic element that can denote that she aims to become a seamstress, a job that could serve as a finishing school at the time. The sewing tools act as a symbol for the representation of a woman's different life stages in life; the needles would indicate that she is finally a grown up woman, while the pins, that she is still an apprentice, as sewing with needles should be done by skilled people. The pins, on the one hand, are simple, and they are used in sewing as temporal fixes, while needles are more complex and are employed for permanent arrangements to clothing. Also, the act of threading a needle can be seen as a metaphor for sex. The reader may imagine that she is still on her learning period, as the description said she was a "little girl", but the girl sees herself as an already mature woman and answers indicating that she can do the "adult job" of a seamstress. This duality of pins versus needles is a symbol for the differentiation of childhood and maturity, from which it is seen that the female character does not identify herself as innocent, while the

³⁸ Or "werewolfery".

werewolf, who can be perceived as mature, behave as a trickster and as a seducer by choosing the path that immature apprentices of seamstress would choose, the pins.

In this image, it is portrayed how the girl's duty should be to keep working in her path of pins, while the werewolf can stay in the path of needles, according to their state of maturity, but they choose the opposite path of what they should; the girl adventures herself in the adult world, while the werewolf seizes the opportunity to enjoy himself with a very young and not yet ready woman, as the reader may understand later from the tale.



Illustration 1: 'The Path of Needles or Pins' (Terry, 2014)³⁹

While she was in her way, she entertained herself collecting needles. Again, this is a reference to this symbol, indicating the corruption of her innocence, detaching herself from the idea of Christian purity of virginity. The girl getting distracted is seized by the werewolf, who ran to get to the grandmother's house. There he killed her, and what is most disturbing, entertained himself to prepare a meal for the girl using the body of her grandmother ("Meanwhile the werewolf arrived at the grandmother's house, killed her, put some flesh in the cupboard and a bottle of her blood on the shelf" (Zipes & others, *The Norton anthology of children's literature: the traditions in English*, 2005, p. 339)). When she arrived to the grandmother's house, she found the wolf in her grandmother's bed. The latter invited her to leave the bread loaf and milk she was bringing and to have the meat and the "wine", which was

³⁹ From: <http://hazelterry.blogspot.com/2014/11/the-path-of-needles-or-pins.html> (Consulted on the 11/11/2019)

actually blood. After she had unintentionally cannibalised her grandmother, a cat commented that “for eating her grandma and drinking her blood, she was a “slut” (2005, p. 339).

This brief piece contains elements that appear in the Christian tradition, as the Eucharist ritual of Christian liturgy, a term related to Thanksgiving. Vronsky (2018, p. 111) comments that the *bzou* tricks the girl “into cannibalizing her grandmother in a perversion of the Christian communion, in which Christ’s flesh and blood are offered as bread and wine”. Despite the association between the tale and this Christian rite, Zipes et al. (2005, p. 340) denies the story is influenced by or Christian Theology or sun worships, but as many of the elements in the tale remind the critics of the ceremony, it is relevant to consider possible interpretations of the tale the critic has made regard these elements, which did not survive in next variants, as the one by Perrault.

It consists of a rite that is considered a sacrament in most churches and follows the New Testament’s tradition of Jesus giving his twelve disciples bread and wine during the Passover meal. The bread and wine refer to the body of Jesus and the wine, as the new covenant in his blood. Through this celebration Christians commemorate Christ’s sacrifice, while seeing the special spiritual presence of the Saviour in these two substances (as for the Reformed Christian branch), which for some branches of Christianity, have a meaning beyond just representation; the sacramental bread and sacramental wine are believed to actually become the body and blood of Christ, that is, they transubstantiate. Lutherans, on the other hand, do not believe in the theological doctrine of the Real presence of the body and blood of Jesus in the Eucharist.

In the tale we find the loaf of bread that the girl’s mother prepared, and this is present in the Eucharist, where it is a symbol for the body of Christ. The wine does too, though it is really blood, being wine and blood present also in the rite. The girl was carrying originally milk, which is not an element present in the rite. In this act of changing one food for another, the milk for the blood and the bread for the flesh, we see an echo of the Christian sacrament of the Eucharist, where Christians commemorate the death of Christ as a sacrifice for humanity with the purpose of obtaining God’s forgiveness. This, in the story has a similar meaning: the girl eating her grandmother’s flesh and drinking her blood is a metaphor for the transition from childhood to adulthood. It also alludes to the wisdom acquired through the knowledge received from the grandmother, which passed to the child through the old woman’s body. It is a representation of the passing of wisdom and power from the eldest generations to the newer, as those last grow up and experiment a physical, spiritual and mental development. This

knowledge allowed the girl to be cautious of the werewolf in the commonly known dialogue with the wolf in bed that, in this version, starts with the werewolf asking the girl to undress herself. This, in the recorded version in Zipes et al. (2005, p. 339) is summarized thus:

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

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

This is a heavily dramatic moment, emphasized through anaphora (almost a refrain, the repetition of the beginning of several lines: "Throw it into the fire...") in the dialogue between the girl and the werewolf. We see that the girl is doomed to failure, as the subtle and implied negotiation and begging of the girl is ignored by the werewolf, that is mercilessly coercing the girl to disrobe and then, get into bed with him. Though, there are authors that describe this excerpt as "an elaborate striptease, meticulous and fetishist"⁴⁰.

After this first persuasive dialogue had concluded, we can see how the girl, nervously tries to transmit her discomfort to the werewolf, as she lies in bed with him. She shows constant surprise with every observation she made on the physical condition of the male character, focusing on the typical masculine characteristics (hairy, with big shoulders), which are mixed with those of wolves (big nails, big ears, big nostrils, big mouth). To these remarks the girl made, the werewolf gave witty answers, saying how these physical characteristics aided him ("her", as he is disguised as the grandmother). For example, to having big shoulders, he answered "The better to carry the firewood, my child" (2005, p. 339), while for other comments the girl made, he replied that it was better for perceiving her better: "Oh granny, what big ears you have!" "The better to hear you with, my child!" (2005, p. 340), following with the typical anaphoric dialogues that tales usually follow based on repetition, and especially, this tale, of which the most recognisable part is the dialogue with the wolf.

⁴⁰ See Vronsky's (2018, p. 111) text: "When he invites her to join him in bed, she first performs an elaborate striptease for the wolf, removing each item of her clothing—her bodice, her dress, her petticoat, her shoes and her stockings —meticulously described in the story, item by item, with a fetishistic precision as she strips naked before the hungry, panting wolf and tosses the items one by one into the fire."

That part ends abruptly when the girl notices the talk time has finished, as the wolf reveals his real intention for which he has patiently long waited; to eat the child ("Oh granny, what a big mouth you have!" "The better to eat you with, my child!" (2005, p. 340)), which is understood as a metaphor for having sexual intercourse in the tale. As it happens with this tale, this dialogue has been considered as a "ritual of exploratory foreplay" (Vronsky, 2018, p. 111), stressing the sexual element in the tale. This is the dramatic climax of the story; the more the tale moves on, the more the feeling of speed stresses, and the more obvious the ending of the dialogue seems, unveiling a very likely impending disaster for the girl.

The now wise girl, after eating the flesh of her grandmother, which becomes a symbol of the process of acquisition of knowledge through experiences and the advice of the elders, now facing a fatal outcome, comes up with a witty excuse to get out of the uncomfortable situation and expresses her desire to "go" (to the bathroom) badly, a fairly comic pretence, given the rush of the moment: "Oh granny, I have to go badly. Let me go outside." (2005, p. 340). The werewolf accedes to this request with the condition of tying a rope to the girl's foot. After a while, the impatient wolf realises the girl had the time and occasion to make an escape to her house:

"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"

(2005, p. 340)

In this first variant of the tale, there is a happy ending; the girl gets to arrive home just in time for the wolf not to catch her, as he tried following her without success. We also have an example of a clear moment of realisation of a grand moment in a woman's life; the loss of her virginity, for which the moral in the story can be not to rush, take things slowly, be a child for as long as possible and do not enter in the adult world of sex if you are underage. It sends a message to inexperienced women in order not to trust, especially, experienced men, which are a threat to a woman's wellbeing. This is exemplified in the tale by the wolf wanting to eat the girl. Despite the story finishing without ending with fatal consequences for the girl, she still has to go through the escape to her house crossing the woods while being naked, as her clothes had to be thrown to the fire by the commands of the werewolf, that also serves as a lesson for the girl, apart from the tragic death of her grandmother due to her ingeniousness and lack of staying power in the "good path".

This cautionary or warning tale, as it is traditionally called, in the end, as Zipes et al. (2005, p. 340) explain, is mostly inspired by the animal attacks and, what is more, by the “human predators” to young people in the woods and the fields during the XV and XVI centuries, and serves to notice the young about the presence of violence in unwatched areas. Storytellers, with this tale, intended to transmit this knowledge to the listeners by showing a moment of terror that was saved through shrewdly outwitting the threat without anyone’s help. The grandmother’s death allows an interpretation as a story for the natural course of life; the younger takes the place of the eldest. This has been depicted by contemporary early Renaissance paintings that show the female life cycle focusing on matrilineal heritage:



Figure 7: *Three Ages of Woman and Death* (Baldung-Grien, *Three Ages of Woman and Death*, ca. 1510)⁴¹



Figure 8: *The Ages of Woman and Death* (Baldung-Grien, *The Ages of Woman and Death*, 1540-1543)⁴²

In these paintings by the same author, Hans Baldung Grien we see the theme of the different life stages of the human life, from childhood to maturity to eld represented by three different women plus the figure of the Death, represented by a rotting corpse. Both pieces have a heavy load of symbolic content and share the same concept presented in two different ways.

⁴¹ From: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hans_Baldung_-_Three_Ages_of_the_Woman_and_the_Death_-_WGA01189.jpg (Consulted on the 11/11/2019)

⁴² From: <https://www.museodelprado.es/en/the-collection/art-work/the-ages-of-woman-and-death/d5ef2c3e-48d1-40a8-8bb7-745314a1197c> (Consulted on the 11/11/2019)

In the left picture, we see a child being covered by a veil, as a symbol for her innocence. She is looking to the woman in the middle, who we see is appreciating her own beauty through a reflection, unaware that Death is after her, holding an hourglass, which suggests it is unavoidable. Behind her, we see an old woman, facing Death, afraid that she is unable to stop the consequences of time and Death approaching to her. This representation of time passing and the realization of dying is a demonstration of the cycle of life is a similar approach to the one we see in the tale *The Story of Grandmother* as the relationship of three generations of women is based on their age and in their stage in life; as the girl matures emotionally and physically, she is approaching to being able to conceive and become the middle stage in life, so the figure of her mother would pass onto the third stage because of her old age, and the grandmother's time would come to an end after having enjoyed many years of living, as there would not be a place for her in the cycle of life, represented just by three generations. Zipes et al. (2005, p. 340) explain that the purpose of the grandmother's death is to signify "the continuity of customs through her granddaughter, who symbolically replaces her by eating her flesh and drinking her blood".

Similarly, in the picture to the left, we see the same allegorical theme on the transience of beauty and the fragility of human life, and among the many comments that could be made about it, one which has not been explained in the first picture outstands in the context of the narration of the tale. In this picture, the child is resting her hand on the broken lance of Death, who holds another hourglass, marking the unavoidably fate of children also being close to their final days as elderly people, despite not being aware or close because of their short age. In the tale, the girl has to grow and evolve to her next life stage, maturity, though coming off age. She finds herself abruptly there and has to deal with situations she did not know existed (the encounter with the wolf) and needs to develop her sense of wit to survive.

Also, she has to find her place in life and society by falling into the right professional category, which by Zipes et al. (2005, p. 340) is called a depiction of "self-assertion through learning and conflict"; as a sewing learner or as a real seamstress, and she has to solve the tough situations she gets in due to her inexperience and ingenuity, a list of events that end unpleasantly triggered by the girl's first mistake informing the werewolf about her intentions, then having her grandmother killed by the evilness of the werewolf, eating her grandmother, having to disrobe, getting into bed with the werewolf, and having to run away naked through the forest. In the tale, metaphors as getting distracted in the path of needles, collecting them, instead of focusing on her task, arriving to her grandmother's house is the first real encounter she has with

the adult world, failing to successfully navigate in it and regretting hurrying to get to know it, as she finds herself running away from losing her virginity and choosing to remain unexperienced in that field at that point. Knowledge, patience and the value of experience are key values in the tale, as well as the need and capacity to save oneself from a situation as such.

6.2.2 Charles Perrault's (1628-1703) "*Little Red Riding Hood*" (1697)

As the folk tale gained popularity, and "the warning tale became part of a stock of oral repertoire of storytellers" (Zipes & others, 2005, p. 340), Perrault⁴³ innovated the tale's style and content and called it in French "Le petit chaperon rouge"⁴⁴, which translates as "Little Red Cap" literally, but was renamed as "Little Red Riding Hood" in 1729 in its first English version⁴⁵. Perrault was responsible for setting the foundations of further versions with his multifaceted discourse; the erotic take of the tale that is nowadays associated to the story of the girl and the wolf, as a "naughty story of seduction" (2005, p. 340), adapting the story to a more sophisticated and adult taste, which was that of the upper classes, but more importantly, changing the ideological content by giving it a new approach focused on values as vanity, power and attraction (2005, p. 340), that is understood as "refinement" of the tale by the critics. His approach is one that allows generality, ambiguity and clever erotic insinuations, while simultaneously preserving the didacticism present in former versions and rejecting the image of the smart girl who successfully escaped the wolf.

In Perrault's version, which is founded on the previous variant, the character of the girl who goes to check on her grandmother, manages to outwit the werewolf and save herself is changed to a helpless girl who "unconsciously enables her own violation or rape" (2005, p. 340). This alteration implies that one of the main parts of the story, the happy ending, now ends as a tragedy; the wolf eats the girl, which, on an erotic key is read as rape, as it was just mentioned. Perrault initiated a process of versioning this tale within western countries, and is considered a "pivotal" approach, as he took the oral tradition shaped by peasants, mostly women, and reappropriated it to fit the modern liking of upper-class ladies. His variant needed to be taken into account by the storytellers from that point onwards due to its fame ("Its enormous success and massive circulation in print in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries made it highly influential" (2005, p. 340)), and was reabsorbed by the oral folk tradition. One

⁴³ Please, refer to "Figure ¡Error! solo el documento principal.", as this represent the branch circled brown.

⁴⁴ The pages that correspond to this version are available in section 10.1.2, in Annex 2.

⁴⁵ Source: *The Blue Fairy Book* (Lang, 1891).

Lang's source: *Histoires ou contes du temps passé, avec des moralités: Contes de ma mère l'Oye*. (Perrault, 1697).

of the most famous versions that came after him, is that of the Grimm brothers (Jacob and Wilhelm) in 1812. Those authors, Perrault and the Grimm brothers, are responsible for shaping the oral and literary traditions informing folktales in the western world (2005, p. 340). The first one, in particular, started a massive debate around the world about the story of the naïve and girl who loses focus of her task and imprudently talks to a wolf with terrible consequences. This served to focus on her own behavior, suggesting she might deserve her fatal end on account of her lack of restraint, prudence and wisdom (2005, p. 342), since the end of the story, in this new version, has the girl eaten up by the wolf.

Perrault's intention was to caution "proper girls" (2005, p. 342) (referring to upper-class young women) and prevent them –on account of their innocence- from behaving in an inappropriate way, especially given the existence of male predators. There is a high focus on "blame" and "fault" on this story that has entailed that the tale is not considered as a mere positive warning tale anymore, but as a chauvinist portrayal of guileless girls who enable wolves to be fixated on them until the point of getting raped. This is a much more negative image than the one that was projected on TSOG, which focused on the process of coming off age, on learning, acquiring experiences, the power of wit and the succession of generations as a representation of the circle of life. Instead, we have a helpless ordinary girl who is not characterized by her intelligence anymore, but by her beauty, her looks, and by being spoiled by the women in her family⁴⁶: "Once upon a time there was a little village girl, the prettiest that had ever been seen. Her mother doted on her, and her grandmother even more" (2005, p. 343).

As for the name of the girl, Perrault adds the rationale; the hood (in the English version), or the cap (from the French "chaperon", following the literal translation of the title from 1697) is a symbol of the love the grandmother had for the girl, a gift the grandmother made her granddaughter with love by hand. The piece turns to be one of the girl's most worn garments, so people around the village started calling her by that name of "Little Red Riding Hood".

Instead of the widely known hood, cloak or cape, which is the strongest identifying feature of the character, Perrault pictured the character of the girl wearing a red cap, being the color associated to "harlots, scandal and blood, symbolizing her sin and foreshadowing her fate" (Orenstein, 2003, p. 36), which coincides with what Chadwick (2014, p. 29) says about the red color: "I would like to consider the color red as a marker of shame, incorporating

⁴⁶ This tale only mentions as relatives of the girl her mother and her grandmother, it does not mention any men, as a father, which the critic has appointed.

theories about shame as essential to ego formation”. According to these authors, the color would be an indicator of her guilty attitude and passivity which unwillingly led to facilitating her own rape because of her improper behavior. Zipes, (2005, p. 348), on the other hand, comments on the color being associated with the concept of *sin*, which has religious connotations, considering that the garment makes “her into a type of bourgeois girl tainted with sin, since red, like the scarlet letter A recalls the devil and heresy”.

It is hard to tell if the girl represented generalized femaleness⁴⁷, as Zipes (1993, p. 83) affirms that the color red does not denote femaleness, but can be associated with sin, sensuality, and the devil (1993, p. 26); this color is speculated to be a materialization of the intentions of the girl to seek for pleasure, despite it is unclear to tell why exactly this color was chosen by Perrault “it is difficult to determine exactly why Perrault used the color red” (1993, p. 88), as there is nothing in the story that would change if the reference to the color is omitted, as it happens in TSOG, where the plot is not affected without the iconic red cap or hood. Despite the just mentioned claims, everything points out that the color and the garment is not an indicator of sin, but in Perrault’s version, the sinfulness is connected to the female gender, as the girl would represent young upper class women who, like in the previous version, has just entered sexual maturity.

It makes more sense that the color merely has menstrual connotations, a frequent argument when discussing the rationale behind the way the girl is dressed in the tale according to Fromm (1951, p. 211). The onset of menarche could have been understood by Perrault through similar allegories to the ones that were made in TSOG, which were the pins and needles that symbolized being an apprentice (child) or a seamstress (adult), so the symbolism would remain despite the symbol being actualized in this newer version of the story. As the conversation between the wolf and the girl about the path of pins and needles is removed, it is logic that another symbol that denotes the characterization of the girl as a young adult emerges in newer versions. Perrault variant does not offer a full description of the girl either, apart from telling she is a village girl, remarkably pretty and greatly beloved by her mother and grandmother, so the way she dressed in would serve as a way of describing what stage she was in life, being the name “Little Red Riding Hood” (or “Le Petit Chaperon rouge” in French) a

⁴⁷ Chadwick (2014, p. 38) points out that the colors that represent “generalised femaleness” have been “pink in contemporary Western culture, or the blue of the Virgin Mary prior to that”.

synonym for “young lady” who has just entered adulthood, being consistent with the previous version.

The difference with TSOG is that the girl is defined at first for the things she *says she is* and for the things she *does* (this is a reference to the previously noted dialogue on the path of needles: «“The path of needles,” the little girl said. The little girl entertained herself by gathering needles”» (Zipes & others, 2005, p. 339)), while in Perrault’s version, it is her physical appearance and the things others say about her what defines the character, as she is called by the village people after the garment that covers her head, confectioned by her grandmother (“This good woman made her a little red hood which suited her so well that she was called Little Red Riding Hood wherever she went” (2005, p. 343). Unconsciously, we see how the girl is impersonalized in Perrault’s tale, as his approach detached itself from the individual perspective of the girl on herself and on her own appreciation of her life stage and is lead to this of the people’s. Also, by giving her a name after an object, Perrault gets the effect of neutralizing the identity of the girl, making it easier for her target audience mainly composed of bourgeois young women to identify with her, but at the expense of creating an archetypical helpless girl who does not possess control on what she thinks she is (a girl or a woman), and that does not have a real name, so she went under a process of objectification that detached her from her own identity and made her just be perceived by her physical appearance instead of by her individual values based on her experience; she lacks any kind of authority on how she is perceived and the capacity to act or think for herself. All this helps that in the tale, she is regarded merely as an appealing love object for beings as the wolf in the tale.

As for the form of the garment, whether it is a head piece as a cap or a bigger one as a cloak, it does not affect the plot either; it maintains its symbolism. It seems to be just an element that was culturally adapted though the translations from French to English, as it was previously mentioned, despite Zipes et al. (2005, p. 343) indicates that in the Middle Ages and Reformation there existed some red hats or other red symbols that indicated that those who wore them were social nonconformists or outcasts⁴⁸. The same author points out that hats as chaperones in France were worn by women who escorted little women, and they were called *grand chaperons*. Hence, *petit chaperon* could imply that she lacks enough protection from another female figure. The covering on her head, on another reading, could be a metaphor of her innocence, which in

⁴⁸ I have not found enough information on this particular aspect to affirm or deny that the head piece in the tale is a reference to this historic moment and that she forms part of one of these groups. The reference result ambiguous, too.

a sexual level might mean that she is still a virgin, so the cape could be a symbolisation of her hymen being untouched, and the removal of her clothing when she gets into her grandmother's tale would represent the loss of her virginity. Here, there are two representations of the girl in the tale where she is represented wearing this smaller hat:



Figure 9: Rotkappchen (Little Red Riding Hood), (Offterdinger, 19th century)⁴⁹

Figure 10: Le petit chaperon rouge (Little Red Riding Hood), (Anker, 1883)⁵⁰

On another note, the changes on what the girl carries to her grandmother's, in TSOG bread and wine, and in "Little Red Riding Hood" by Perrault, biscuits and a small pot of butter, are not significant changes either. It is a case of variation in the details that does not imply any other modification of the plot. Perrault also justifies the girl's trip by indicating that the grandmother was feeling sick, so the girl had to check on her grandma.

In this variant of the tale, we see the same story of the dangers of being close to those men who look like wolves. Instead of a werewolf or *bzou*, we find a wolf, described as a "old neighbor wolf" (2005, p. 343). He is presented as an intelligent and experienced human who desired to eat the girl⁵¹, again, in a sexual key, though he kept his "gluttony" at bay because of the presence of some woodcutters, so it is implied that the wolf was very familiar with that environment and knew that one of the functions of the woodcutters was to watch out that everyone was safe from beasts as him. In contrast, we find the innocent girl does not know talking to wolves could potentially entail

⁴⁹ From [https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archivo:Offterdinger_Rotkappchen_\(1\).jpg](https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archivo:Offterdinger_Rotkappchen_(1).jpg) (Consulted on the 11/11/2019)

⁵⁰ From: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Albert_Anker#/media/File:Le_petit_chaperon_rouge.jpg (Consulted on the 11/11/2019)

⁵¹ It is said that the reason why the wolf was so hungry was because he had not eaten in three days (343).

a great danger («He asked her where she was going, and the poor child, who did not know that it is dangerous to stop and listen to a wolf, said to him, “I’m going to see my grandmother (...)” (2005, p. 343). This is an indicator that the mother’s advice is not sufficient, as highly relevant information for the girl to be able to reach to her grandmother’s safely through the woods. The moral of the story could also be interpreted as a praise for the knowledgeable people and to the value of transmitting information, as an influence from the previous version, but at the same time, it is a critic for the mother and the other influences of the girl for keeping her ignorant from wolves. The story of the girl with the red hood, does the job of being entertaining for the audience, while making up for shortages girls may have during their education, as their bourgeois parents may have failed to properly let them know about the uglier sides of growing up and leaving their safe environments, represented by the village in the tale, whilst the forest represents the world beyond what the parents are able to control once the child reaches a certain age.

As the girl is unacquainted with the wolf, she commits the error of giving all sorts of explanations to the wolf about the path she intended to take, so she gives him the opportunity to outsmart her, by acceding to go on a different path, while the wolf took the shortest path and run fast enough to get to her grandmother’s. Then, he pretended to be the girl by making an impression of her voice so that the old lady opened the door for him. This suggests that the wolf is expert enough to deceive even the most experienced women. Then, the lady let him in, telling him how he had to get the door open, as she was not able to do it for herself because of her illness. The grandmother, as it happened in the previous version, gets eaten by the hungry wolf. This could be read in a sexual key, as it happens with the girl, despite the very act of being eaten is the same. It makes sense that Perrault enters in the fiction game, as it happened in TSOG and forgets about the metaphor that implies that “engulfing someone” means “sex”. This part of the story where the grandmother is devoured by the wolf, instead, plays with the meaning of the wolf being intellectually superior to a very expert woman, getting advantage, too, from the emaciated health state of the sick old woman.

In the story, the character of the grandmother represents *innocence* in a different way the girl does, signifying that in life, beginning and end are very similar; the grandmother is unable to safe herself from dangerous men who assault her and is unable to perceive them and defend herself or close them the door. Indeed, accidentally she lets the wolf in, thinking there is no harm in that, as she thought it was her granddaughter, but it results to be a witty wolf disguising himself as her. Similarly, the girl is innocent because of her age and lack of knowledge, as her life trajectory was still short, but also for being unexperienced in the field of conjugal relationships, that includes knowing about the existence of opportunistic wolves.

At the end of the tale, there is a moral that reflects the author's intentions towards his audience (“(...) young children, Especially pretty girls, Polite well-taught, and pure as pearls” (Zipes & others, 2005, p. 334)), that is advising them on the need to be alert against men, as failing doing so could lead to being eaten by a wolf, as a metaphor for a despicable kind of man. These wolves are said in the moral to show themselves in different forms: smart, smooth, kind... but they tend to be stalker of girls, even reaching to their own homes, or they might even be living under the same roof as them. In the text, this is a hint to incestuous relationships, assaults coming from the same family, a very hard reality. This warning is set as a truth which shall not be overlooked, at risk for the audience to fall into the charms of wolves that only intend to get sexually into them.

In conclusion, despite the story being understood as a chauvinistic portrayal on women nowadays for the lack of power the girl has, it is a result of the historical context the tale was born in (and after that, reborn and readapted). The difference with TSOG is that it represents a young woman who is able to take action herself and save herself, while in this one, the female, who is characterized by her weak feminine nature, is not smart enough to take a step back to her initial idea of entering the sexual game and gets eaten by the wolf. The finale is much more traumatic here, possibly for the purpose of creating a shock effect on the reader or audience which could make the moral permeate permanently on them. This touching ability of the tale would serve to empower girls and young women in a society where men can hide in the darkness and seek their victims, unseen by the crowd and without consequences, all by giving them relevant information that could serve those keep safe and identify wrongdoers early. This tale does not teach them to run away, as the first, but pays more attention to the need not to stray from the good path and not to get seduced by men.

One of the purposes of the tale is to denounce those in charge of the instruction of children for not properly educating them on the current situation of the world they live in: the dangers, the assaulters, how to identify them and how to stay away from them. Also, it is criticized the lack of supervision and care those give the child, demanding for more surveillance upon them and the environment. Nowadays, this is a current need of our society to fight sexual violence against people as young as children, as amongst all age groups who are also in risk of suffering assaults, those are very vulnerable. Despite the tale does not clarify exactly the age group the girl was in (that would be this of the target audience), it is inferred that it was a female in her early teens, fertile and starting to feel interested in the other gender, maybe from around

14 to 18 years old⁵², virgin and unmarried. This age group, for being underage, is still called as “children” by UNICEF (Unicef, n.d.)⁵³, and sexual violence against children is still a reality in all countries and social groups, in the form of sexual abuse, harassment, rape or sexual exploitation, so this topic is still of relevance in our society and we all should be aware of its existence and the need for fighting it.

6.2.3 The Grimm brothers: Jacob Grimm (1785-1863) and Wilhelm Grimm (1786-1859)’s “Little Red Cap” (1812)

This version⁵⁴ by the Grimm Brothers, dated in 1812 and originally titled “Rotkäppchen”, German for “little red cap,” has been included in Zipes (2005, pp. 345-347). It is heavily influenced, or based, on Perrault’s 1697 version, but also draws from the dramatic tragedy *The Life and Death of Little Red Cap* (*Leben un Tod des kleinen Rotkäppchens*) by Tieck (1800), as well as other folktales that were circulating at the time. It is more moralistic and more compassionate for the girl’s fate than Perrault’s, although it does not fail to blame the girl for her assault (Zipes & others, 2005, p. 345).

There are new motifs in this variant: the Jäger (gamekeeper or huntsman), who saves the girl once she has been eaten by the Wolf, and the active role of the Grandmother and the girl when they punish the wolf by placing stones inside the Wolf’s belly. Another new item is the expansion of the tale: in order to give emphasis to the lesson the tale preaches, there is a continuation of the story in which the girl finds another wolf called Grayhead, a reference to the wolf being experienced in life and as an evil doer. Then, she acts wisely by not letting this one get too close to her, as the first wolf did, then she warns her grandmother and, together, they carry out a plan to catch the wolf so that the girl can safely return home.

This version moral message is developed in the sequel referred as a tale of “another wolf” by Zipes (Zipes & others, 2005, p. 345). There it is shown that Little Red Cap has understood the teaching: a further tale within itself in which the protagonist finds another wolf called Grayhead. He lures her to stray from her path to the Grandmother’s, but she keeps in guard and shows she is able to identify the intentions of a predator («he had such a mean look in his eyes that “he would have eaten me if we hadn’t been on the open road”» (Zipes & others, 2005, p. 347)), she informs Grandmother and both come out with a strategy to get rid of the

⁵² As a follower of the previous tale, it must be a woman who has just entered adulthood and is transitioning from being an apprentice to a grown-up responsible individual.

⁵³ https://www.unicef.org/protection/57929_58006.html (Consulted on the 11/11/2019)

⁵⁴ The pages that correspond to this version are available in section 10.1.310.1.1, in Annex 2.

Wolf, who had followed her. They wanted to avoid contact with him and to keep quiet, but the Grandmother realizes the Wolf plans to wait on the roof of the house for hours until the Girl came out to go home. Then, the old lady planned to attract him with the smell of sausages so that he fell from the roof to a big trough, and they successfully accomplished their goal so that Little Red Cap can return home safely. This is an example of teamwork between two women of the same family who through experience learn the importance of communication and cooperation when facing a difficulty, which is a very good example of the process of learning life lessons as the importance of taking care of oneself, not talking to strangers and staying away of potential dangers.

This version, like the earlier one, portrays Little Red Cap as an extraordinarily beautiful maiden. Here, the term to refer to Little Red Cap changes from “girl” to “maiden”, a term that refers to her being a virgin. The girl’s (or maiden in this version) virginity is an element that remains now a constant thematic element, in TSOG and in Perrault’s “Little Red Riding Hood,” although it is expressed in different manners in each text: in the first, with the symbol of the pins and the needles, in the second with the girl wearing a red cap that symbolizes menstruation, and in the third by calling her a maiden. The Grimm brothers maintained the red cap in their version as it is the signature style piece of the main character, which gives her the nickname “Little Red Cap”. The Grandmother’s sickness is also the reason why Little Red Cap is sent to her place to bring her some food, cake and wine, the same as in Perrault’s. Unlike in the previous version, in the Grimm brothers’ the Mother gives some advice to her daughter; this piece of advice should be taken in a metaphorical way, referring to observing a good behavior:

“(…) Get an early start, before it becomes hot, and when you’re out in the woods, be nice and good and don’t stray from the path; otherwise you’ll fall and break the glass, and your grandmother will get nothing. And when you enter her room, don’t forget to say good morning, and don’t go peeping in all the corners.”

“I’ll do just as you say,” Little Red Cap promised her mother.

(Zipes & others, 2005, p. 345)

Here, it is evident the role of the cautionary tale as an educational tool: rising early and time management (“Get an early start”), having a proper and polite behavior (“be nice and good and don’t stray from the path”, “don’t forget to say good morning”) and curbing curiosity (“don’t go peeping in all the corners”). All of these lessons are expected to be learnt on the reader’s side, so there is a great stress on the teaching value of tales like this for children. Also, by not following her Mother’s advice, the girl is a bad example of behavior the reader can learn from, so the (young) reader is expected to act like the Mother says.

Despite this advice and the initially obedient Little Red Cap attitude, as soon as she gets into the forest, she encounters the Wolf. He starts a conversation with her in a polite manner, or so does Little Red Cap believe, and he gets all the relevant information on the direction the girl intended to take, the Grandmother's situation and the location of her house. The Wolf immediately thinks of a crafty plan to devour both of them, so he invites the girl to enjoy the lovely forest. The innocent girl, despite not acting in an evil manner, as the Wolf does, still does the wrong thing when she neglects her aim, that is, getting to her Grandmother's, forgetting that to talk to strangers and give them too much personal information –which may fall into the wrong hands, as is the case- can get her in big trouble. All of this is due to not having enough information or experience to deal with this kind of people, the wicked ones. Hence, Little Red Cap, despite her obedient and caste attitude and her mother's advice, still does not have the right information or proper tools to immediately dismiss the Wolf and be alert from the very beginning, which as it has been portrayed in these versions of "Little Red Riding Hood" make the girl somewhat guilty for her own fate.

The Mother's advice is very significant in this version; in the first one, TSOG, the girl wanted to enter the world of the grown-ups before she should, and that leads her to having to run away from an uncomfortable situation. In the second, Perrault's version, the girl was blamed for her own nature, for being an object of desire of male predators and for enabling them to act upon women, portraying a chauvinistic image of women. Perrault also emphasizes the importance of education and of keeping alert for girls and women; in the Grimm brothers' account, it becomes apparent that the girl has been educated with great care, which results in her being an obedient lady ("I'll do just as you say" (Zipes & others, 2005, p. 345)), but she still errs on the side of innocence. She assumes the same innocence and good intentions that she has from others and is not wary when talking to the Wolf because she did not have any previous notice on people like them ("Little Red Cap did not know what a wicked sort of animal he was and was not afraid of him" (Zipes & others, 2005, p. 345)), not just because she was innocent, not because of the lack of education and advice, but for expecting others to be as good natured as she is.

Here, the act of maturing is associated to learning from experience, not being limited to having a good behavior and acting with propriety, but also to being able to protect oneself through all situations in life, especially those that imply other's attacks. Education, at this point, goes beyond what is taught to children to do, because children are expected to grow up behaving in what is considered a good model of conduct in each society, but that is different than teaching

how to act when they face a problem or find a potentially dangerous individual. Through this tale, children can learn the existence of evil in the world and see a good model in the extended part of the tale, with another wolf. As the tale is intended for children, it does not go deep into the reasons for the existence of evil in this world; that is, why there is always someone looking for a prey, since tales tend to be rather simplistic on the surface, despite their underlying complexity where sociocultural elements are condensed.

In a way, the tale portrays an image of the world in which malicious acts are, in some way, inevitable, which could lead to question the very nature of the human being. In “Little Red Riding Hood”, the malicious acts are carried out by the Wolf. In Perrault, his kind, wolves, are portrayed as dangerous beings (“it is dangerous to stop and listen to a wolf” (Zipes & others, 2005, p. 343)) easy to encounter. The Wolf in the tale, in particular, is said to have a great desire to “eat the girl” since the very beginning (2005: 343), but he curbs his desires because of the woodcutters watching around, not because he ever feels his acts are immoral. The reason why he does not act viciously from the very beginning is because of the consequences of getting caught by these men, so the text implies that society is a safe place versus life in the wild, when evil goes unwatched. This creature knowingly chooses an easy victim, a young girl, which unintentionally leads him to another victim, the sick Grandmother. In the Grimm brothers’ tale, the figure of the woodcutters is reinterpreted, it is the inspiration for the creation of a new character called the Huntsman, who was doing the job of a police officer, in our modern days (Zipes & others, 2005, p. 346). The Huntsman represents social order and protection; he is a male guardian, that is, the opposite of what the deviant and outsider Wolf stands for, a threat to society or civilization. Through this character the reader knows that the Wolf has had a trajectory of bad acts, so he deserves justice («“So I’ve found you at last, you old sinner.” Said the huntsman. “I’ve been looking for you a long time”» (Zipes & others, 2005, p. 347)). The Wolf is the explicit enemy in the story who causes trouble by his transgressive behavior.

The tale by the Grimm brothers has a very similar approach to Perrault’s in the part in which the wolf finds the Grandmother, eats her up, then Little Red Cap arrives and realizes something is wrong («She was puzzled when she found the door open, and she entered the room, it seemed so strange inside that she thought “Oh, my God, how frightened I feel today, and usually I like to be at grandmother’s”» (Zipes & others, 2005, p. 346)). Likewise, the Wolf and the Girl have the famous dialogue, which has become a much-loved and often-repeated epigone about the looks of the Wolf, who, in this variant, is wearing the Grandmother’s clothes and lays in bed after gobbling her up. As in Perrault, the girl is eaten by the Wolf, which has

sexual connotations here, too, and after that, he lays in bed, having satisfied his desires. The warning message and the violence in the tale is conveyed with fear rather than entertainment, as the Girl is punished with being eaten for her being neglectful and has consequences for her Grandmother, who, as the Mother advised, she “will get nothing” (Zipes & others, 2005, p. 345)). Despite this, it may seem a contradiction that in a context in which the tale is being read to a child, the exchange between the girl and the Wolf can provide a nice opportunity for role-playing. Consequently, it can provide the reader(s) with enjoyment so that the violent terror can be transformed into violent delight; then it is understandable that violence can be instrumentalized in children’s literature as a teaching tool and defused in a playful manner (Goldstein, 1998, pp. 83-84).

In the tale, we read about how the above-mentioned Huntsman was casually walking around the Grandmother’s house when and he heard some strangely loud snores (“The way the old woman’s snoring, you’d better see if something’s wrong” (Zipes & others, 2005, pp. 346-347)). Then he found the Wolf sleeping on the Grandmother’s bed, which was the perfect opportunity to kill the beast. But before doing so, it came to his mind that the missing Grandmother could be saved from inside the Wolf. He took some scissors, opened the Wolf’s belly, and took the Girl and the Grandmother out alive. This is a turning point for the Girl, who after a terrifying experience comes out much more mature, as a young woman. This gives her a second chance, a rebirth. This ending in the Grimm brother’s tale is much kinder than the Perrault’s: the latter depicts a tragic ending in which the Girl is eventually eaten and consequently dies. In this one, there also is a moral side: negligence and going astray have consequences, but there is a chance for redemption, too.

After that, the Huntsman and the two women avenged the wolf for his deeds and filled his body with stones, which killed the Wolf. In this way, Little Red Cap and the others make the Wolf pay for assaulting the females and bring back a sense of social justice, a sense that had been lost on account of the existence of predators like the Wolf, which preys on the innocent. The story ends happily with the Huntsman taking the Wolf’s fur, the Grandmother getting better thanks to the Girl’s food, and Little Red Cap concluding with some valuable final thoughts: “Never again will you stray from the path by yourself and go into the forest when your mother has forbidden it.” (Zipes & others, 2005, p. 347). This closing moral message shows how well the protagonist has learnt her lesson and has matured to become a cautious young lady who shall take on responsibility for her own safety. If this is read from the standpoint of adult readers, and paying attention to all the sexual elements in the story, the message could be that curiosity

and the appetite of little girls must be regulated, especially after knowing about the existence of rapacious wolf-like beings.

7 CONCLUSIONS

In this MA thesis, the tale “Little Red Riding Hood” in three of the most known and spread versions has been examined in some depth. Also, I have tried to suggest to what extent they can be used with 21st young learners. To that aim, a description of what is understood by “children’s literature” has been provided, as it forms part of the tale’s theoretical framework. This has been contrasted with “young adult literature”, as they are concepts that are often mixed up, with the purpose of stating if the different variants of the tale would fit better under one of the two labels.

Within children’s and young adult literature, LRRH is classified under the genre of literary fantasy, and inside this, in the subgenre of folk fantasy. After explaining traditional approaches to the tale in history and its connection to the historical context, the variants that are considered LRRH or “ATU 333” have been stated, and from there, the selection of versions that have been studied have been chosen, following Tehrani’s (2013) study.

The traditional variants of the tale “The Story of Grandmother” (1885), as the reconstructed first version, Charles Perrault’s “Little Red Riding Hood” (1697) and the Grimm brothers’ “Little Red Cap” (1812) have been the literary corpus that has been analysed and explained. The elements that constitute each tale and their symbolism have been studied and compared from one version to the other, examining the most significant changes between variants and the reason for the changes. The evolution of the tale and the adaptation from one century to another naturally reflects the authors’ approach to literature, so each variant puts its emphasis in some features over others.

The first one, “The Story of Grandmother” (1885) reflects the medieval fear of monsters such as werewolves that attack the population, and establishes a connection between these and vicious experienced men who intend to pervert and abuse young girls who are about to become grown women. Because of the symbolism of the tale and the opacity of the references (the pins and needles), it should be more appropriate for young adults than for children. The fact that this version is about a girl who thinks she is old enough already to be considered a woman, but realises she is not ready for intercourse, makes it more suitable for readers in their teens, when they begin to explore sexuality and prepare for adulthood. This version is more focused on the actions of the girl, on her willingness to engage with the wolf, on her process of maturing and on her problem-solving skills, which paradoxically, give this oldest version a more feminist approach given the current literary preferences. Hence, this version could serve as good

teaching material for adolescents to deal with the physical, mental and psychological development that happens in the passing from childhood to adulthood, to talk about consent and being ready for maintaining sexual intercourse. Also, as it does not contain a moral at the end, it can foster critical thinking in teenagers, and the fact that there is a happy ending can serve as a good example of conduct that the readers may accept more readily, as it opens them the door for accepting that not being ready to have sex and communicating are personal choices that should be respected in their personal environment.

In the second version, by Perrault, “Little Red Riding Hood” (1697) and also in the third by the Grimm brothers, “Little Red Cap” (1812), the symbolism is still opaque for a child to understand that the tale is about a sexual assault. The wolf here is the main agent that defines the Girl’s tragic fate, the one that outsmarts a poor child, victim of an abuse she facilitated because of her innocence and naivete. She is someone who is not in control of her deeds and neglects her own safety and this of her surroundings (her grandmother) and is blamed for her getting assaulted. They portray a defenceless image of young lady that is viewed as an object of desire for sinful men who are constantly around, so these versions represent poorly healthy relationships between the two genders. The wolf is selfish, uncivil and disrespectful, and the girl is naïve and negligent, and the main message that is sent to women through these texts is that they should be very wary of their interests towards men, as they can be monsters. It presents interests on sexuality as improper behaviour for well mannered ladies, which may not help teenagers in the 21st century discover good models of conduct, but it can be effective for teaching them that there are people that trespass the barriers of what is socially and legally accepted.

These tales bring up the issue of the need for educating the young on how to behave in the real world, as educators may neglect aspects such as showing the young the ugly side of the human being, which Perrault criticises, and in consequence, missing the opportunity to teach how to avoid further problems with disruptive people. Perrault’s intentions may have resulted effective in its time, but it is reasonable that his variant results too violent and sexist for our current social context. There is still value in the text, the message of how important it is to watch the information we provide to others, as it may be used against us and the need to be self-sufficient is present in the three versions. However, due to the tale’s reputation, it may be considered as a tale that perpetuates negative gender stereotypes, as the girl in this text lacks being proactive and is seen as a weak example of a young woman, which is logical, as she represents a bad example that the readers should not follow.

This version's excessive hardness on the girl is fixed in the next one by the Grimm Brothers, who show a Little Red Cap who, despite her mistakes, has another chance in life and is able to mature and learn. This also portrays a gentler example of men, who watch and take care of the people who need them and that counteracts the evil in individuals as the wolf. It shows the importance of education and self-control for the young, and the need of watch, tutoring and help on the side of the adults. With this version, the reader can learn the importance of listening to educators and not getting distracted on the wrong path, as a mistake could be fatal. This version is more moralistic than Perrault's; it stresses more the process of learning from one's mistakes and shows a good example of conduct in the end, so it could be more helpful for children to teach them being obedient and listen to their parents' advice. It also maintains the teaching strategy of shocking the reader through fear and violence, but shows it does not mean the end, as things could get fixed and have another opportunity to do things properly, a more optimistic and positive approach to those who commit a mistake without necessarily having to be interpreted in relation to sex.

All three versions are susceptible to be exploited in different ways, highlighting some aspects above others, and may be read by both children and teenagers without having to be interpreted in a sexual key; the stories can be enjoyed and interpreted differently in both stages in life, they can also be adapted and sanitized to fit the audience's taste. This can be explained, as the readers mature, they will be able to extract more meaning from a text and will expand their knowledge on the world and apply it when dealing with literary texts. The readers' approach to literature naturally changes throughout their life, so how a same text is understood varies depending on the degree of maturity and literacy of the reader. For this reason, this study considers that it is not unadvisable the use of "Little Red Riding Hood" as teaching material for children nor for young adults, as the text does not impose a unique approach to literature to the readers and is susceptible of being interpreted in a plurality of ways, not necessarily in a sexual key.

It is advisable to revisit the text in its different versions in various life stages, if it is desired to get a fuller understanding to the texts' main message. As it was explained above, the version by the Grimm brother has been found to have more potential for working best with children because it is more moralistic and focuses more on forgiveness and on second chances, but also on listening to advice, whereas for young adults, "The Story of Grandmother" could fit better for the interest of a teenager, as it is more focused on consent and on the internal process of fulfilling one's desires and self-perception.

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9 ANNEX 1

Articles that report banning “Little Red Riding Hood” in Catalonia

9.1 In English

“Little Red Riding Hood” banned from Catalan school in sexism row (Visited on the 11th/11/2019): <https://www.thelocal.es/20190412/little-red-riding-hood-banned-from-catalan-school-in-sexism-row>

“Little Red Riding Hood” Banned From School Over Sexism Concerns (Visited on the 11th/11/2019): <https://www.newsweek.com/little-red-riding-hood-banned-school-over-sexism-concerns-1393134>

9.2 In Spanish

Prohibido leer ‘Caperucita Roja’: una escuela de Barcelona retira 200 cuentos por sexistas ("Little Red Riding Hood" gets forbidden: a school in Barcelona withdraws 200 stories by sexists) (Visited on the 11th/11/2019): https://www.elespanol.com/cultura/20190411/prohibido-caperucita-roja-escuela-barcelona-cuentos-sexistas/390211359_0.html

Vetada ‘La Caperucita Roja’ por sexista (Little Red Riding Hood" gets forbidden because of being sexist) (Visited on the 11th/11/2019) https://elpais.com/ccaa/2019/04/10/catalunya/1554930415_262671.html

Prohibido leer 'Caperucita Roja'. El feminismo se deshace de 200 cuentos en una escuela por 'sexistas' ('Little Red Riding Hood' gets forbidden). Feminism gets rid of 200 stories in a school because of being 'sexist' (Visited on the 11th/11/2019) https://www.hispanidad.com/enormes-minucias/prohibido-leer-caperucita-roja-el-feminismo-se-deshace-de-200-cuentos-en-una-escuela-por-sexistas_12009074_102.html

10 ANNEX 2

Texts in Zipes & others from *The Norton anthology of children's literature: the traditions in English* (2005, pp. 339-347).

10.1.1 "The Story of Grandmother" (1885): pp. 339-340

There was a woman who had made some bread. She said to her daughter: "Go carry this hot loaf and 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 flesh 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 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 anymore."

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 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 that the little girl had escaped. He followed her but arrived at her house just at the moment she entered.

10.1.2 Charles Perrault's (1628-1703) "Little Red Riding Hood" (1697): pp.343-344

343

LITTLE RED
RIDING HOOD

Little Red Riding Hood

Once upon a time, there was a little village girl, the prettiest that had ever been seen. Her mother doted on her, and her grandmother even more. This good woman made her a little red hood¹ which suited her so well that she was called Little Red Riding Hood wherever she went.

One day, after her mother had baked some biscuits, she said to Little Red Riding Hood, "Go see how your grandmother's feeling. I've heard that she's sick. You can take her some biscuits and this small pot of butter."

Little Red Riding Hood departed at once to visit her grandmother, who lived in another village. In passing through the forest she met old neighbor wolf, who had a great desire to eat her. But he did not dare because of some woodcutters who were in the forest. He asked her where she was going, and the poor child, who did not know that it is dangerous to stop and listen to a wolf, said to him, "I'm going to see my grandmother, and I'm bringing her some biscuits with a small pot of butter that my mother's sending her."

"Does she live far from here?" the wolf asked.

"Oh, yes!" Little Red Riding Hood said. "You've got to go by the mill, which you can see right over there, and hers is the first house in the village."

"Well, then," said the wolf, "I'll go and see her, too. You take that path there, and I'll take this path here, and we'll see who'll get there first."

The wolf began to run as fast as he could on the path that was shorter, and the little girl took the longer path, and she enjoyed herself by gathering nuts, running after butterflies, and making bouquets of small flowers that she found along the way. It did not take the wolf long to arrive at the grandmother's house, and he knocked:

"Tic, toc."

"Who's there?"

"It's your granddaughter, Little Red Riding Hood," the wolf said, disguising his voice. "I've brought you some biscuits and a little pot of butter that my mother's sent for you."

The good grandmother, who was in her bed because she was not feeling well, cried out to him, "Pull the bobbin, and the latch will fall."

The wolf pulled the bobbin, and the door opened. He pounced on the good woman and devoured her quicker than a wink, for it had been more than three days since he had eaten last. After that he closed the door and lay down in the grandmother's bed to wait for Little Red Riding Hood, who after a while came knocking at the door:

"Toc, toc."

"Who's there?"

When she heard the gruff voice of the wolf, Little Red Riding Hood was scared at

1. The French here and in the title is "petit chaperon rouge," which literally means "little red cap"; *chaperon* was misleadingly rendered "riding hood" in the first English translation of 1729, and the phrase has stuck ever since. This little cap was worn by bourgeois women and girls of the period, and Perrault used it to identify the girl with the bourgeoisie (or with aspirations toward that class). Another layer of complexity is added by the idiomatic expression *grand chaperon*, which refers to

an older matron who is supposed to escort young women. That Little Red Riding Hood has only a *petit chaperon* suggests that she lacks sufficient protection. The cap's color is obviously highly significant. Red is associated not only with blood, thus signifying menstruation or a girl's sexual coming-of-age, but also with the devil. In the Middle Ages and Reformation, social nonconformists and outcasts were stigmatized by being forced to wear a red hat or some red symbol.

first, but she thought her grandmother had a cold and responded, "It's your granddaughter, Little Red Riding Hood. I've brought you some biscuits and a little pot of butter that my mother's sent for you."

The wolf softened his voice and cried out to her, "Pull the bobbin, and the latch will fall."

Little Red Riding Hood pulled the bobbin, and the door opened.

Upon seeing her enter, the wolf hid himself under the bedcovers and said to her, "Put the biscuits and the pot of butter on the bin and come lie down beside me."

Little Red Riding Hood undressed and went to get into bed, where she was quite astonished to see the way her grandmother was dressed in her nightgown, and she said to her, "What big arms you have, grandmother!"

"The better to hug you with, my child."

"What big legs you have, grandmother!"

"The better to run with, my child."

"What big ears you have, grandmother!"

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

"What big eyes you have, grandmother!"

"The better to see you with, my child."

"What big teeth you have, grandmother!"

"The better to eat you with."

And upon saying these words, the wicked wolf pounced on Little Red Riding Hood and ate her up.

Moral

One sees here that young children,
Especially pretty girls,
Polite, well-taught, and pure as pearls,
Should stay on guard against all sorts of men.
For if one fails to stay alert, it won't be strange
To see one eaten by a wolf enraged.
I say a wolf since not all types are wild,
Or can be said to be the same in kind.
Some are winning and have sharp minds.
Some are loud or smooth or mild.
Others appear just kind and unriled.
They follow young ladies wherever they go,
Right into the halls of their very own homes.
Alas for those who've refused the truth:
Sweetest tongue has the sharpest tooth.

10.1.3 Jacob Grimm (1785-1863) and Wilhelm Grimm (1786-1859)'s "Little Red Cap" (1812): pp 345-347

Little Red Cap

Once upon a time there was a sweet little maiden. Whoever laid eyes upon her could not help but love her. But it was her grandmother who loved her most. She could never give the child enough. One time she made her a present, a small, red velvet cap, and since it was so becoming and the maiden insisted on always wearing it, she was called Little Red Cap.

One day her mother said to her, "Come, Little Red Cap, take this piece of cake and bottle of wine and bring them to your grandmother. She's sick and weak, and this will strengthen her. Get an early start, before it becomes hot, and when you're out in the woods, be nice and good and don't stray from the path; otherwise, you'll fall and break the glass, and your grandmother will get nothing. And when you enter her room, don't forget to say good morning, and don't go peeping into all the corners."

"I'll do just as you say," Little Red Cap promised her mother. Well, the grandmother lived out in the forest, half an hour from the village, and as soon as Little Red Cap entered the forest, she encountered the wolf. However, Little Red Cap did not know what a wicked sort of an animal he was and was not afraid of him.

"Good day, Little Cap," he said.

"Thank you kindly, wolf."

"Where are you going so early, Little Red Cap?"

"To grandmother's."

"What are you carrying under your apron?"

"Cake and wine. My grandmother's sick and weak, and yesterday we baked this so it will help her get well."

"Where does your grandmother live, Little Red Cap?"

"About a quarter of an hour from here in the forest. Her house is under the three big oak trees. You can tell it by the hazel bushes," said Little Red Cap.

The wolf thought to himself, "This tender young thing is a juicy morsel. She'll taste even better than the old woman. You've got to be real crafty if you want to catch them both." Then he walked next to Little Red Cap, and after a while he said, "Little Red Cap, just look at the beautiful flowers that are growing all around you! Why don't you look around? I believe you haven't even noticed how lovely the birds are singing. You march along as if you were going straight to school, and yet it's so delightful out here in the woods!"

Little Red Cap looked around and saw how the rays of the sun were dancing through the trees back and forth and how the woods were full of beautiful flowers. So she thought to herself, "If I bring grandmother a bunch of fresh flowers, she'd certainly like that. It's still early, and I'll arrive on time."

So she ran off the path and plunged into the woods to look for flowers. And each time she plucked one, she thought she saw another even prettier flower and ran after it, going deeper and deeper into the forest. But the wolf went straight to the grandmother's house and knocked at the door.

"Who's out there?"

"Little Red Cap. I've brought you some cake and wine. Open up."

"Just lift the latch," the grandmother called. "I'm too weak and can't get up."

The wolf lifted the latch, and the door sprang open. Then he went straight to the grandmother's bed without saying a word and gobbled her up. Next he put on her clothes and her nightcap, lay down in her bed, and drew the curtains.

Meanwhile, Little Red Cap had been running around and looking for flowers, and only when she had as many as she could carry did she remember her grandmother and continue on the way to her house again. She was puzzled when she found the door open, and as she entered the room, it seemed so strange inside that she thought, "Oh, my God, how frightened I feel today, and usually I like to be at grandmother's." She called out, "Good morning!" But she received no answer. Next she went to the bed and drew back the curtains. There lay her grandmother with her cap pulled down over her face giving her a strange appearance.

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

"The better to hear you with."

"Oh, grandmother, what big hands you have!"

"The better to grab you with."

"Oh, grandmother, what a terribly big mouth you have!"

"The better to eat you with!"

No sooner did the wolf say that than he jumped out of bed and gobbled up poor Little Red Cap. After the wolf had satisfied his desires, he lay down in bed again, fell asleep, and began to snore very loudly. The huntsman¹ happened to be passing by the house and thought to himself, "The way the old woman's snoring, you'd better

1. The German term used by the Grimms is *Jäger*, a gameskeeper hired by the lord of a grand estate to patrol the grounds and forest to prevent poach-

ing or other illegal activity. In other words, he was, among others things, a kind of policeman or security guard.

see if something's wrong." He went into the room, and when he came to the bed, he saw the wolf lying in it.

"So, I've found you at last, you old sinner," said the huntsman. "I've been looking for you a long time."

He took aim with his gun, and then it occurred to him that the wolf could have eaten the grandmother and that she could still be saved. So he did not shoot but took some scissors and started cutting open the sleeping wolf's belly. After he made a couple of cuts, he saw the little red cap shining forth, and after he made a few more cuts, the girl jumped out and exclaimed, "Oh, how frightened I was! It was so dark in the wolf's body."

Soon the grandmother came out. She was alive but could hardly breathe. Little Red Cap quickly fetched some large stones, and they filled the wolf's body with them. When he awoke and tried to run away, the stones were too heavy so he fell down at once and died.

All three were delighted. The huntsman skinned the fur from the wolf and went home with it. The grandmother ate the cake and drank the wine that Little Red Cap had brought, and soon she regained her health. Meanwhile Little Red Cap thought to herself, "Never again will you stray from the path by yourself and go into the forest when your mother has forbidden it."

There is also another tale about how Little Red Cap returned to her grandmother one day to bring some baked goods. Another wolf spoke to her and tried to entice her to leave the path, but this time Little Red Cap was on her guard. She went straight ahead and told her grandmother that she had seen the wolf, that he had wished her good day, but that he had had such a mean look in his eyes that "he would have eaten me if we hadn't been on the open road."

"Come," said the grandmother. "We'll lock the door so he can't get in."

Soon after, the wolf knocked and cried out, "Open up, grandmother. It's Little Red Cap, and I've brought you some baked goods."

But they kept quiet and did not open the door. So Grayhead circled the house several times and finally jumped on the roof. He wanted to wait till evening when Little Red Cap would go home. He intended to sneak after her and eat her up in the darkness. But the grandmother realized what he had in mind. In front of the house was a big stone trough, and she said to the child, "Fetch the bucket, Little Red Cap. I cooked sausages yesterday. Get the water they were boiled in and pour it into the trough."

Little Red Cap kept carrying the water until she had filled the big, big trough. Then the smell of sausages reached the nose of the wolf. He sniffed and looked down. Finally he stretched his neck so far that he could no longer keep his balance on the roof. He began to slip and fell right into the big trough and drowned. Then Little Red Cap went merrily on her way home, and no one harmed her.

1812