INTRODUCTION:
HOW TO READ A FAIRY TALE

Jennifer Schacker and Christine A. Jones

Fairy tales seem to be everywhere in contemporary culture—featured in picture books and anthologies of classic children's stories; providing inspiration for postmodern fiction, young adult novels, animation, feature films, and popular television series; depicted in fine art and fashion, on ceramics and quilting fabric; and referenced in advertising, journalism, and political speeches. Approaching the reading of a fairy tale with an open mind and a fresh perspective can be something of a challenge, but that is just the task we would like to set for you as a reader of this volume.

As scholars trained in the fields of French Literature (Christine A. Jones) and Folklore (Jennifer Schacker), we share a passion for teaching and research centered on the genre of the fairy tale. In our own experiences with undergraduate and graduate students, and in our conversations with other academics in this field, we have observed how close study of fairy-tale texts can explode and transform perspectives on this (seemingly) familiar genre. We have also noticed the enchanting effect that scholarship can have on popular ideas about and ways of reading fairy tales. Significantly, though, there is something of a lag in the impact academic discourse has on the wider culture, which means that present scholarship awaits a future audience and past scholarship often shapes how we read *now*. In fact, some past scholarship has become so ingrained in us as North American readers that stories can appear to mean *only* what such approaches could see in them. It is our hope to challenge the trends we have inherited by introducing teachers and students to new ways of talking about fairy tales. We want to emphasize that the perspectives foregrounded in this volume are those that are currently emerging in scholarship—some fully formed,

others in an embryonic state, but all representing attempts to reinvigorate the academic field of fairy-tale studies—and thus the cultural reception of fairy tales—for the twenty-first century. Ideally, the generations of students who study the fairy tale through these emergent approaches will themselves generate new critical and creative visions for the genre.

One insight we hope to impart in pairing our own critical point of view with the voices of other present-day scholars is the historical nature of criticism itself and of a project such as this one. An explicit goal of this anthology is to reveal and explore how critics, including ourselves, have tended to draw the maps of folk- and fairy-tale studies according to national traditions and recurrent motifs. We are taking a modest stab in this volume at *re*drawing those established borders, and as a result this anthology juxtaposes many tales and also many critical ideas that are rarely considered in dialogue. We have been motivated to do so by the explosion of perspectives that characterized scholarship in Folklore and literary studies of the late twentieth century.[1] These developments shaped us as scholars and teachers, but we also hope that the re-envisioning of fairy tale history we are encouraging here will result in new research by future generations of fairy-tale scholars and provide creative inspiration for future writers, filmmakers, and artists.

In the millennial era, the very idea of the "anthology" has become a bit of a conundrum for critics who seek new conceptual paradigms through which to think about and teach tale history. Even as we edit this collection of fairy and folktales, we do so with respect for the vastness of these fields and a clear sense of *any* anthology's limits. On the one hand, we regard the present volume as just one contribution to an ongoing history of tale collections, each of which has the potential to mold our shared vision of the genre, and each of which has its limits. On the other hand, we are conscious that what sets the present volume apart from other available tale anthologies is that our fundamental shaping principle is historical: we are seeking to (re)integrate related histories across national, linguistic, generic, and communicative boundaries, and we draw on contemporary scholarship to do so.

As a team, we are most interested in the points of overlap and tension between the histories of the literary fairy tale and that of folklore study. In the past 60 years,

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1   Major innovations in late twentieth-century scholarship include (but certainly are not limited to) the turn in Folklore towards performance-oriented perspectives and ethnopoetics; critical reevaluations of fieldwork practice and the role of print in the history of folklore; the important work by feminists to restore women writers (particularly French seventeenth-century writers) to their rightful place in the development of literary tales; critical attention to a rich and highly exploratory tradition of late twentieth-century tales (many of which now bear the theoretical appellation "postmodern"); bold cultural rereadings of the Renaissance Italian tradition; attention to previously neglected periods and places in which the fairy tale flourished, such as the Soviet era; and scholarship on the genre's role in new media, such as graphic novels and manga.

these histories have tended to be treated as distinct in the fields of literary study and Folklore—and also in terms of anthology publication. This means that several generations of critics grew up working separately.[1] But this has not always been the case. If we look to centuries past, we see that our scholarly predecessors had a much more fluid understanding of the relationship between oral and print traditions, so there is precedent for the kind of collaboration out of which this volume emerged. That said, many of these earlier intersections of folk- and fairy-tale studies were connected to a search for universal forms and meanings across time and place—an enterprise that scholars now find problematic and certainly less compelling than questions that lead us to see the cultural *specificity* of stories. The present volume situates itself squarely within the newer cultural tradition in interdisciplinary scholarship, as we will detail in this introduction and throughout the volume.

We can trace the trajectory of these disciplinary conceits back some 300 years when readers and writers began engaging in the study of the fairy tale, developing theories about the genre and its significance. Although English-language commentators were by no means the only ones weighing in on the issue, then as now they played a significant role in the public perception of fairy tales in Europe.[2] As

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1   Adverse effects of the disciplinary alienation of folklore and literary studies include, for example, a deeply biased vision of fairy tale history in favor of literary print matter, with orality cast as a kind of backdrop, and, analogously, a vision of performance history that does not account for the influence and variability of forms of print culture. In Folklore, relatively little work has addressed the role of print in the circulation of ideas and texts, and in literary studies notions of orality often rely on outdated models. In the study of the fairy tale, dramatic performance and media studies—forms that can fall between the cracks of these disciplines—have been largely neglected until very recently. These and many more exciting avenues open up when we ask questions that are informed by the dynamics *between* the literary and the oral, or between print and performance.

2   One small but significant example is the description of Charles Perrault's heroine as Little Red Riding Hood in the very first English translation of his story collection by Robert Samber in 1729. In Perrault's language, what she has on her head, a *chaperon*, has a fascinating and spotty etymology that involves several leaps of logic for translators. According to the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* (DAF) of 1694, the word *chaperon* refers to a medieval and Renaissance style of headpiece with a tufted top and a kind of fabric tail that falls down onto the shoulders. Why should Samber cast this item as horseback riding gear? As it turns out, *chaperon* is a diminutive in French for *chape*, whose first definition is a long robe worn by the clergy, that is, a cassock. The word "cassock" was used in seventeenth-century England to refer to the long cloak that horsemen wore (*OED*). Thus, a *chaperon*, or little riding cloak combined with the idea of a bonnet, becomes "riding hood" in Samber's translation. The early English name has endured through history, baffling scholars, but proving tenacious to the point that they hesitate to change it for fear the eponymous heroine's identity will be destroyed. Jack Zipes, Maria Tatar, and Christopher Betts all keep the name in their translations of the Mother Goose Tales. Stanley Appelbaum hazards a minor change, Little Red Hood, but prints the old title in parentheses next to it. Christine A. Jones favors "Little Red Tippet" to capture the idea of a fabric trailing from the bonnet to cover the shoulders, but has retained the recognizable title in her translation for this volume.

of the early eighteenth century, when English writers raced to publish continental and "oriental" tales in translation, they noted in print what role these stories could play in the transmission of their own cultural values and refined behaviors. By the late eighteenth century, Romanticism gave rise to theories about the adaptation of fairy tales for use both in the acculturation of young children and in emergent interests in national character and national identities. In the Victorian period, scholarly debates about both the fairy tale and folklore captured the imaginations of general (non-scholarly) readers, and many of the theories and approaches developed in the late nineteenth century continue to resonate today in popular writing and thinking about the fairy tale.

The introduction of field-based research, and especially the international publishing success of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimms' collection of German oral traditional tales (what have come to be known as Grimms' fairy tales), inspired generations of folklorists and amateur collectors to create national archives of tales and fairy tale books of their own. The genre the Grimms had found so prevalent in Germany—*Märchen*, or what English translators and readers referred to as "popular tales," "nursery tales," "fireside tales," or "fairy tales"—was sought in cultural contexts from Africa to Japan and beyond. While oral narrative traditions can be found in every human culture, current scholarly practice emphasizes the importance of "emic" notions of genre—studying categories of story as they are defined, understood, and used by the community in question—as opposed to "etic" or outsider notions of genre, which shaped the varied (and often doomed) attempts to replicate the Grimms' work around the world. In short, versions of stories that have come down to us as part of the "fairy tale" tradition are culturally specific: there are certainly parallels and resemblances between various narrative traditions, but what contemporary readers tend to think of as "fairy tales" do *not* comprise a universal genre. Rather, this category of stories has emerged as significant, in different ways, in a select number of specific historical and cultural contexts.

Some of the most influential and enduring tales emerged in late seventeenth-century France and nineteenth-century Germany, but both their influence and their durability are rooted in their international success: they were and are texts that have been translated widely (and repeatedly) and now stand as "canonical" in English-language print culture. The long history of translation and international reception has had the effect of making the stories appear universal, as though they were not penned by historical people but by transcendent voices of humanity. The volumes known in English as *1001 Nights* or the *Arabian Nights*, Charles Perrault's "Mother Goose tales," and Grimms' fairy tales are the primary examples of this phenomenon, especially when they are translated for children's editions.

Not surprisingly, then, even today the collections destined for the university classroom in North America center on a fairly narrow canon: tales first published in

seventeenth-century France (including the "oriental" tales made popular in Europe by French writers of this period) and nineteenth-century Germany, with the Italian Renaissance writers Straparola and Basile sometimes included as inaugurators of the fairy tale's print history, and Hans Christian Andersen as their heir apparent, along with a few current reworkings of these classic tales thrown in for good measure. Anthologies tend not to position this relatively small sampling of tales (represented by the European print corpus) within the vast sea of stories generated in performance and in print by cultures across the globe, many of which have by now been influenced by the ubiquity of the European print traditions. Consequently, too, the crucial contribution that editors and scholars who reprint, translate, and annotate fairy tales make to their meaning and canonical status goes nearly unnoticed. As a result, fairy tales may be one of the most pervasive and intimately familiar forms of narrative for English-language readers, but less familiar are the theoretical and ideological assumptions we have inherited from centuries past, ideas developed and popularized by scholars that often shape the ways in which we read and interpret and use fairy tales today. Because critical approaches tend only to appear in anthologies once they have been accepted by the university community, we can also forget that the ideas of tomorrow are already emerging quietly in scholarship today.

In the past 25 years or so, the genre of the fairy tale has inspired a vibrant new body of scholarly and critical writing, including some heated debates about the fairy tale's form, function, meaning, history, and the definition of the genre itself. As we have suggested, much of this recent research has challenged older paradigms and ways of thinking about the genre. In particular, recent scholarship has shifted towards an interest in tale texts, oral and written, as situated events and artifacts, whose potential meanings emerge in their contexts of production and reception. In Folklore scholarship, performance theory in the late 1960s and early 1970s emerged from ethnographic studies of tales in social context and had a revolutionary effect on approaches to oral traditions. In literary studies, a parallel turn towards the study of the dynamics of print culture and book history had a profound effect on fairy-tale studies.

In both cases, tale "texts" are now seen in terms of layers and levels of context—for example, the social context in which a particular tale text is created or performed, the political or ideological context in which it is received, and the broader generic and discursive context in which the text circulates (including not only other texts categorized as "fairy tales," but also other forms of written and spoken language that resonate with the text under consideration). At the same time, much contemporary scholarship is highly attentive to textual detail and textual form—the particularities of the text itself. The reading process implied by these contemporary critical processes may be a bit different than the one ordinarily practiced by many readers of fairy tales. Rather than seek out tales' seemingly universal messages or morals, the reading

practice we encourage requires heightened attention to detail, a focus on texts' potential ambiguities and internal contradictions, an exploration of intertextuality—that is, the relationships between tale texts and between related discursive forms—and, above all, a very inquisitive mind. Along with our colleagues and our students, we have found that this approach to reading fairy tales can yield multiple and sometimes surprising interpretations: it is demanding, it is productive, and it is fun.

As many scholars before us, we now turn to "Little Red Riding Hood"—as Alan Dundes put it "one of the most beloved and popular fairy tales ever reported" (ix)—to open our own tale of twenty-first-century criticism. We begin with the scarlet-caped heroine because she presents an exceptionally clear illustration of how we have been trained by many critical theories not to see the trees for the forest of tale history. "Little Red Riding Hood" serves then as a case study for how to build a cultural lesson around just a few salient poetic details offered by the text and explored through basic research that begins with resources as readily available as a dictionary.

We grow up with Red Riding Hood. She feels familiar, especially because her transgression or disobedience—doing something she was told not to, in this case going into the forest—is a universal experience. As readers, we tend to see her foolishness—she does not recognize her grandmother, but also does not realize she is actually a wolf in disguise—as a function of her youth and apparent simplicity (or naiveté). The tale of Red Riding Hood appears to be loaded with timeless lessons and morals: don't talk to strangers; the forest (and any other unknown terrain) is potentially dangerous; maturity is a difficult but necessary rite of passage; girls on the verge of a sexual awakening should take care and heed their mothers' advice. This is, in any case, the "Little Red Riding Hood" many of us who grow up in the West have been told to see in the story. But if, as we argue in this volume, the meaning of the story is not predetermined or singular, but shaped in the details and particularities of each and every telling, then there are innumerable identities and potentialities that can be associated with this character.

Many contemporary writers and storytellers have explored these possibilities, rethinking and reworking this well-known heroine and her seemingly well-worn adventures—and there are always many more avenues left to explore. While each modern text appears to deliberately cast new light on this tale, the habit of revising a known storyline (the tale's familiar plot elements) in order to shift the meaning is nothing new at all. In fact, even (and especially) the best known versions of "Little Red Riding Hood"—namely, those of Charles Perrault as a literary author (1697) and Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm as collectors and editors (1857)—should be seen as creative acts. In their respective cultural and political contexts, both Perrault and the Grimms were taking risks and making a statement by attaching their names to this genre (in seventeenth-century France, the *conte*, and in nineteenth-century

Germany, the *Volksmärchen*). The details and the specific ways in which they are articulated distinguish "Le Petit Chaperon Rouge" (Perrault) and "Rotkäppchen" (the Grimms) from each other, but they also form the building blocks of meaning in each of these texts. It would surprise many adults to know that the seeds of other and very novel interpretations of "Little Red Riding Hood" are contained in the very versions of the story that they learned and loved as children.

Re/reading Little Red Riding Hood

Perrault's version of Red Riding Hood, the first to be written down and published with an author's name attached to it, tells the classic tale of a girl who encounters a wolf in the forest on the way to grandmother's house and ends by being eaten by him. Interpreting the story in terms of how it speaks across time is tempting, especially since it is followed by a short rhyming text called a "moral" that came to be a standard feature of the stories we associate with children. We have found that many young adults (our own students) have learned to read fairy tales (both those that are followed by a thing entitled "Moral" and those that are not) by searching for relatively clear-cut moral lessons that would seem to sum up the stories' meanings. If we can put aside that habitual reading practice and focus closely on the details of the text itself, then the implications of "Le Petit Chaperon Rouge" and the moral of Perrault's tale emerge as both more subtle and more complex than they may appear at first glance. In fact, our reading emphasizes their ironical and playful dimensions: rather than sum up the message of each of the seemingly simple tales that they conclude, Perrault's morals complicate the meanings and implications of each text, encouraging the reader to reread, rethink, and reconsider. We can already begin to make the text strange and new for ourselves as readers by looking for distinctive features of the story and exploring why they take this particular form in this particular narrative.

Here is the moral to "Le Petit Chaperon Rouge," both in its original French and in an English translation by scholar Maria Tatar:

> *On voit ici que de jeunes enfants,*
> *Surtout de jeunes filles*
> *Belles, bien faites, et gentilles,*
> *Font très mal d'écouter toute sorte de gens,*
> *Et que ce n'est pas chose étrange,*
> *S'il en est tant que le Loup mange.*
> *Je dis le Loup, car tous les Loups*
> *Ne sont pas de la même sorte;*
> *Il en est d'une humeur accorte,*

Sans bruit, sans fiel et sans courroux,
Qui privés, complaisants et doux,
Suivent les jeunes Demoiselles
Jusque dans les maisons, jusque dans les ruelles;
Mais hélas! qui ne sait que ces Loups doucereux,
De tous les Loups sont les plus dangereux.

From this story one learns that children,
Especially young girls,
Pretty, well-bred, and genteel,
Are wrong to listen to just anyone,
And it's not at all strange,
If a wolf ends up eating them.
I say a wolf, but not all wolves
Are exactly the same.
Some are perfectly charming,
Not loud, brutal, or angry,
But tame, pleasant, and gentle,
Following young ladies
Right into their homes, and into their chambers,
But watch out if you haven't learned that tame wolves
Are the most dangerous of all. (*Classic Fairy Tales* 12)

Even if one works only with a single English translation of this moral, there are signposts to suggest that the text is operating in complicated ways. The moral frames the tale it concludes as the story of a young girl whose walk through the woods brings her into contact with a wolf, but it also emphasizes that one can understand the text in terms of the particular dangers that face "pretty, well-bred" young ladies (rather than children in general) and in terms of the heightened danger posed by charming, quiet, polite, unassuming, complacent, sweet, and gentle "wolves"—not your run-of-the-mill wolf, and not one readily recognized *as* a wolf. If we keep these details in mind when rereading the text, then it becomes more difficult to see our heroine simply as a naïve girl: if she represents a well-bred young lady, then why doesn't she know a bit more about the world that surrounds her? Importantly, there seems to be a level of irony here: how good is a young lady's breeding if it doesn't prepare her for a walk through the woods that are at her own back door (so to speak)? What is the nature of the danger that she faces, if the most dangerous of wolves is charming, polite, and gentle—in short, a perfect gentleman? Can she learn to avoid this dangerous disguise?

If we expand our study to consider these themes in a seventeenth-century context, then some of these questions unfold further. Two elements of the scenario that stand out in the French are *humeur accorte*, associated in the moral with a specific kind of wolf, and *dans les ruelles*, one of the places into which wolves may pursue young girls. These two phrases bear discussion because they can further the line of inquiry we began when considering the English text and because they have specific resonance in the period during which Perrault wrote this tale.

Humeur accorte has several period-specific meanings: the phrase takes its primary connotation from the word *courtois*, which refers to the kind of behaviors expected of knights in the Middle Ages (200 years *before* Perrault wrote his text) and courtiers in later centuries. In the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* (1694), *courtois* is defined as *complaisant*, meaning given to accommodation, or the courtesy of conforming to the disposition of the person with whom you are interacting. In contemporary terms, we may think of this as a positive behavior—a kind sensitivity and thoughtfulness that we see as almost inherent character traits. But the mode of conduct suggested by *courtois* (and the temperament implied by *humeur accorte*) was once regarded as a skill, an art to be learned and cultivated, a social mask that was required and highly beneficial for courtiers who hoped to succeed under Louis XIV. Indeed, this seemingly innocent quality (from a modern perspective) or this set of courtly skills (from a seventeenth-century perspective) is associated in the moral with the wolf, our villain; *humeur accorte* is an attitude and behavior about which readers are *warned*. What, then, does the danger signaled in the moral actually look like? This is a question to which we will return in a moment; first, let's consider the spaces with which this danger is associated.

In the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* (1694), the word *ruelle* is defined as a small street (from the root *rue* or street). But as the *Dictionnaire* entry continues, it becomes clear that the word had additional usages, such as the one quoted above in Tatar's translation of the story's moral: "chambers." In the seventeenth century, *ruelle* refers specifically to two spaces associated with women: 1) an area of the aristocratic bedroom between the bed and the wall where one might place seating and where guests (even ones of the opposite sex) could be received, respectably; and 2) a salon, or social gathering of authors usually hosted by women and held in their homes, where ideas were discussed and texts read aloud. Salons were a famous institution during Perrault's lifetime and authors of fairy tales belonged to them. While it is not clear which meaning is being invoked in this line from the final moral of Perrault's "Le Petit Chaperon Rouge," these secondary meanings throw culturally relevant light on the phrase and on the warning that wolves may not only pursue girls when they are out in the street, but also when they are out in society, and even in their own homes. All of these spaces are figured as the "forest" in the story. Significantly, the

dangers faced by the girls addressed in this moral are found in the arenas of sociability that were familiar to women of the French court—and which they therefore might not recognize to be just as dangerous as an unknown forest.

Whatever the universal elements in the fairy tale, the moral offers culturally specific details that appear to be signposts meant to help the reader interpret these broader themes through the lens of local concern, in this case, young women at court. Read in this light, the story is about something wholly *other* than the fear of the wolf in the forest or a general warning about talking to strangers. Instead, the real problems are social wolves in sheep's clothing, who do not look or act like wolves at all: they are more pernicious than clear dangers and seem to be unavoidable (hence Red Riding Hood's unfortunate end in the wolf's belly). Now the moral looks something like a lesson in court antics. Perrault suggests that in late seventeenth-century society, there was a very specific brand of danger for female courtiers: male courtiers who had mastered the art of courtesy and who took advantage of ingénues—young women whose education could not prepare them for the full range of codes and behaviors to which they would be subject when they began moving in high social circles. Madame de LaFayette wrote a novel about this very phenomenon, *La Princesse de Clèves* (1671), published about 25 years before Perrault's tale. It is now considered one of the first modern novels, and its subject is a hapless young girl raised in the country who finds herself devoured by the sexual tensions at court. Whether or not this is a time*less* concern, then, in Perrault's day the lesson was modern and timely.

Indeed, if we interpret the tale of Red Riding Hood through the insights of the moral's language, we can conclude that the heroine is not a simple peasant girl but a young society woman who cannot dodge the wolves that inhabit her world by taking another path or avoiding the forest. She must move through the forest and learn to reckon with the ubiquitousness (*ruelle*) and the duplicity (*humeur accorte*) of courtly romance. To take this a step further, we could look at the plot detail that feeds Red Riding Hood to the wolf as a suggestion that women may be asked to embrace this kind of danger—to get in bed with this particular breed of wolf—in the form of a politically expedient marriage. The moral of the story may be that, alas, there is no escaping social and sexual politics. It is almost as if Perrault is suggesting that the fate of young ladies is to be devoured by these social practices; the best a young woman can do is to understand the unavoidable dangers that surround her.

Read this way, Perrault's story is a good bit more pessimistic in terms of its social message than it sometimes appears. Readers are perhaps more familiar with versions of "Little Red Riding Hood" that end happily and redeem the heroine. In the history of fairy-tale publication, this variant on the tale emerges in the collection of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm. The Brothers Grimm first published their tales in 1812 and 1815, but the process of editorial revision continued for several decades, culminating

in what is often called the "final edition" of their *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* in 1857. It is this version of "Rotkäppchen" (Little Red Cap) that is best known and that we will discuss here.

As in Perrault's text, the Grimms' heroine seems ill-prepared for the task she is given by her mother, despite her mother's accompanying litany of commands, reminders, and injunctions. To begin, let's consider Jack Zipes's translation of an early part of the tale, when the mother's words to her daughter are quoted:

> Come, Little Red Cap, take this piece of cake and bottle of wine and bring them to your grandmother. She is sick and weak. This will strengthen her. Get an early start, before it becomes hot, and when you're 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. (Zipes, *Tradition* 747)

The mother's speech stands out in the text—and is forceful—not only because it is detailed but also because it is quoted directly; as readers, we hear the mother's voice along with Little Red Cap. In the heroine's shoes, we are likely to be seduced by the tone of this voice, for who has not received the advice of a mother (or mother figure) and failed to act on it! Our tendency then is to attend to the content of the mother's speech, which seems to provide a moral compass for the text and to set the stage for the heroine's disobedience. By focusing on the content, however, we tend to overlook the form. In fact, this is only one of several notable examples of quoted speech in the Grimms' text; examples include not only the words of the mother, but also those of Little Red Cap herself, the wolf, the grandmother, and the huntsman. While many well-known fairy tales contain small amounts of quoted speech—often quite memorable, from the evil queen's "Mirror, mirror on the wall, who is fairest of them all?" ("*Spieglein, Spieglein, an der Wand / Wer ist die Schönste im ganzen Land?*" in the Grimms' "Schneewittchen," or "Snow White") to the disguised wolf's "Lift the bobbin and the latch will open" ("*Tire la chevillette, la bobinette cherra*" in Perrault's "Le Petit Chaperon Rouge")—this particular text stands out as unusual. Analysis of the varied uses of quoted speech in "Little Red Cap" offers another path into the tale's meaning and implications.

On a cursory read of the mother's language, the reader may want to assume that this woman is simply concerned for her daughter's well-being, but the mother's quoted speech is focused almost exclusively on the girl's "proper" behavior to ensure that the wine and cake reach Grandmother intact and that Little Red Cap presents herself politely once she reaches her destination. Furthermore, Little Red Cap is

sent into the forest by her mother—grandmother's house is "out in the forest, half an hour from the village" (Zipes, *Tradition* 747)—wearing bright red and, we can assume from everything her mother imparts, ignorant of the dangers that lurk close by. In fact, she is not given any of the tools she will need to face the challenges that we know await her. That said, when Little Red Cap meets the wolf the moment she enters the woods, she encounters him fearlessly *because* she "did not know what a wicked sort of animal" he is: her moral education has not prepared her for this encounter, and her ignorance makes her appear courageous.

The text does not fault (nor credit) Little Red Cap for being fearless, but her fearlessness manifests itself in language use: she is curiously, excessively forthcoming in her responses to the wolf's questions, offering *more* information than he requests. For example, she explains why she is carrying cake and wine, including who baked the cake, for whom, when, and why; she gives a detailed accounting of the location of her grandmother's house, including the amount of time it takes to walk straight there and the landmarks that mark the site. Like her mother, she is a talkative character aware of detail. And this perspicacity could be just the thing she needs to survive her journey. Of course we also know that this turns out not to be the case. Why would that be? A possible answer to that question can again be found in the conversational dynamics of the story.

At this point the conversation between the title character and the wolf shifts from Little Red Cap's reason for being in the forest to a focus on her body. In this text, the nourishment for grandmother is not carried in a basket, as it is in "Le Petit Chaperon Rouge," but *under* Little Red Cap's apron, against her body. The wolf's second question to the girl is "What are you carrying under your apron?" (Zipes, *Tradition* 747). Her response—cake and wine—is true enough, on two levels, because the wolf is also interested in what lurks a little further below: the girl's own flesh and blood, another kind of cake and wine (revolting as that may sound), and the wolf's ultimate nourishment. When the wolf becomes/dresses as Little Red Cap's grandmother, it is the yummy stuff under the girl's apron that he desires. Once he has the chance to gobble up "poor Little Red Cap," the text indicates that he has "satisfied his desires" (Zipes, *Tradition* 749). Little Red Cap's immediate willingness to give liberally of her speech—to open up more than she has to—foreshadows the unwitting offering of her whole body as she walks freely into the house that has become the wolf's lair.

Interestingly, the next verbal exchange Little Red Cap has with the wolf following their initial encounter is one in which she would seem to have some real agency and the opportunity to direct the conversation—but she doesn't turn this power to her advantage. The text quotes her thoughts upon reaching grandmother's house, where she is "puzzled" to find the door open. As she enters the house 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, *Tradition* 749). Her inner thoughts, with their language of anxious concern, should logically influence the rest of what she will say. Yet, the words Little Red Cap then speaks aloud are in tension with her quoted interior reflections. Since grandmother looks "strange" and Little Red Cap feels "frightened," active interrogation of "grandmother" (the wolf in disguise) would be appropriate here: she should ask, "Are you really my grandmother?" Instead, she issues a series of (infamous) exclamations starting with, "Oh, Grandmother, what big ears you have!" These declarations invite formalized response from the wolf, ones that do not impart any helpful information whatsoever. It could be that in denouncing "grandmother's" attributes, Little Red Cap hopes to dissimulate her fear. Indeed, the rapid exchange that we have all come to know demonstrates a curiously keen ability on her part to size up the things about this creature that give her pause and to voice them aloud. But that is *all* she is able to do. Rather than move from declaratives to interrogatives, and from speech to action, Little Red Cap just moves closer to her own demise, from statements about the oddness of ears to the oddness of the mouth—the last words she utters before being "gobbled up" (Zipes, *Tradition* 749). It would seem then to be Little Red Cap's lack of skill as an interlocutor—what she says or doesn't say and how she uses her words rather than her knowledge of the forest—that places her in the gravest danger and (in the terms of this analysis) renders her interpretation of the situation feeble at best.

In contrast, the quoted words of the wolf reveal and then help him to fulfill his desires. His quoted interior reflections indicate his goal of eating Little Red Cap and her grandmother, and his quoted verbal exchanges with the girl demonstrate his ability to use language skillfully and strategically in order to actualize his thoughts. He manages not only to conceal his intentions but also to achieve his goal, using his discursive skills to dissemble and then to exploit interlocutors less skilled than he. The disjuncture between what the wolf says and what he does, both in the woods and at grandmother's house, is readily apparent to readers of the text. Further, and in contradistinction to Little Red Cap, it is the wolf's ability to manipulate language that makes him so powerful.

The one character whose thoughts, words, and actions are in perfect harmony is the huntsman, who may be a well-known character to many contemporary readers and who ultimately saves Little Red Cap and her grandmother. In the Grimms' text, the huntsman is introduced after Little Red Cap is gobbled up: he happens to be passing by as the wolf, now sated, sleeps in the grandmother's bed. The huntsman thinks to himself: "The way the old woman's snoring, you'd better see if something's wrong" (Zipes, *Tradition* 749). Although his thoughts are presented as quoted speech—by now a familiar textual strategy—they include a curious use of the second person singular ("you"), as if he (or perhaps his social conscience) were

addressing himself. At the same time, the use of the second person in a text can be seen as a form of addressivity; that is, the text is pulling us, as readers, into a didactic conversation, signaling that it has something pointed to say *to us*. Unlike Little Red Cap and in the spirit of how the reader is meant to react to the text, the huntsman acts on sensory clues that indicate something is amiss. He enters the house, recognizes the wolf immediately, prepares to shoot him, realizes that the beast "could have eaten the grandmother and that she could still be saved," and proceeds to save both the grandmother and granddaughter by cutting open the Wolf's belly (Zipes, *Tradition* 750). The actions that ensue from the huntsman's internal reflections are indeed exemplary. This is a character who has mastered the use and subtle understanding of the power of language.

This reading is supported by the addendum to the tale—the short narrative epilogue that follows the text. Read in terms of the emphasis we have placed on the use of language in this text, it demonstrates that both Little Red Cap and her grandmother have learned something from their experiences. It is not simply staying on the path or avoiding the woods (or not that alone) that saves them from a future wolf. In the addendum, Little Red Cap is "on her guard" when she meets the next wolf, and despite his attempts to "entice her" she "went straight ahead." But her success is also due to the fact that she uses her words and her silence appropriately, and this leads to appropriate action: she kept silent when he "wished her good day" and spoke up about the incident when she reaches her grandmother's (Zipes, *Tradition* 750). Grandmother locks her door, and when the wolf attempts to impersonate Little Red Cap to gain entry, the two women remain silent within. While the wolf plans to wait them out and then to gobble up Little Red Cap when she emerges after dark, Grandmother anticipates this plan and counters with one of her own. Her quoted directives to Little Red Cap call the girl to action, and the girl sets out a trough of water still fragrant from boiling sausages, as instructed. The wolf's subsequent drowning in the trough and Little Red Cap's safe journey back through the woods to her home are thus due to much, much more than the conventional rendering of the story's message would suggest: they are due in very large part to Little Red Cap's acquisition of skill in social discourse, her newly found understanding of the implications of speech and silence, and her ability to think on her feet and to act accordingly. Indeed, this text does not so much imply that through obedience a girl can avoid danger—since *nothing* in her mother's quoted speech would have prepared Little Red Cap for her encounter with the first wolf!—it emphasizes instead that danger (as embodied by the two wolves) is *inevitable*. The text suggests that both girls and their grandmothers need to understand and master the subtleties of social interaction and discourse to navigate their way safely through the world.

Approached in this way, "Little Red Cap" is a story about the power of language and its use in discursive strategies (above and beyond simple politeness, as

emphasized by Little Red Cap's mother). As the Grimms' story shows, the acquisition of these skills is not only socially useful but also vitally important to bodily well-being. This is a text in which the heroine and, by extension, the reader must learn to become suspicious of the surface-level meanings of utterances. In this way, "Little Red Cap" may offer some very specific and pointed life lessons, but it also offers ones applicable to the process of reading itself: this particular text can be seen as operating on a meta-level, offering a critical perspective on its own interpretation and the reading of fairy tales more generally. One lesson the reader can take from a critical reading of this sort is that to take the tale at face value is to remain as passive as the young and easily victimized Little Red Cap—all declarative comments but no probing or illuminating questions. If we instead approach texts as always potentially double-voiced, coded, subtle, and strategic forms of discourse, and interrogate them accordingly as the huntsman does (and as both Little Red Cap and her grandmother learn to do), then we can gain a tremendous and liberating amount of agency.

Finally, we would like to underscore the fact that these kinds of interpretive perspectives are productively applied not only to tale texts but also to the words of writers and collectors themselves. Perrault, for example, claimed to be writing *au style du bas peuple* (in the style of common people), but placed in a social, political, and ideological context, these claims can be seen as strategic utterances, ones that draw on associations between telling stories and folk wisdom, and that downplay his tales' implications for (and references to) a courtly and adult audience. Likewise, one must take with a grain of salt the Grimms' claims to offer in print form the pure and unadulterated oral traditions of the German *Volk* (folk). Such claims resonate deeply with the Romantic Nationalist ideology that inspired their search for oral traditions (seen as pure, ancient, natural, and untouched by outside influence) set in opposition to literary traditions (which were then seen as cosmopolitan, modern, artificial, and heavily influenced by foreign literary models). The Grimms' work has an important place in the history of folklore study and the emergence of fieldwork methodologies, but it would be a mistake to take their claims simply at face value. For example, their own methods included the collection of tales from literate friends and neighbors, and the content of their collection of *Märchen* included tales that already had a "foreign" print history, as did "Little Red Cap" itself. While we don't mean to suggest that Perrault and the Grimms are wolves—that they are tricky speakers who sought to deceive in order to destroy (although that would be an interesting avenue to explore!)—still it is crucial to our argument to point out that *all texts* use the complexities of language strategically. Fairy tales, like any other print tradition, should be approached with a healthy dose of caution and a well-developed arsenal of interpretive strategies and discursive sophistication.

Our readings demonstrate that you don't necessarily need to read a postmodern version of "Little Red Riding Hood" to find new insights into the title character

and her misadventures. Part of the fun of (re)reading these old texts is decoding their tone, style, form, and word choice—a process that can unlock previously overlooked levels of meaning in the texts and that can lead to marvelous transformations of their own. This is precisely the process that twenty-first-century fairy-tale scholars promote and hope to encourage in their students. There is evident pedagogical benefit to suspending our belief in time-honored interpretations and allowing the specific versions of "Little Red Riding Hood" treated above to speak to us in fresh ways, ones that honor their distinctive textual features and their respective historical contexts as well as the reader's own individuality. In the following pages we hope to arm teachers and students alike with a variety of weapons they can wield in the challenging and exciting confrontation with fairy-tale complexity.

Tangled Webs

Reading fairy tales as literature and as situated narrative performances can engender many of the same issues that we encounter reading the Bible as literature in the classroom: there are few print documents to which readers bring more presuppositions and convictions. Texts that are near and dear to us also tend to elicit an emotional response that can be difficult to surmount for further reflection. Sometimes, too, as with biblical texts, the question of authorship is unclear or difficult to discuss in conventional ways—and without that familiar anchor, interpretation stalls or goes wild. In an effort to stave off these problems and move towards a pedagogy of textual engagement, it is helpful to outline what precisely we hope to accomplish by reading stories in this way.

    In the literary and folklore classroom we want to encourage beginning with the premise that individual documents in their narrative specificity are our subject of inquiry. In that case, our job is to engage primarily with specific texts, contexts, tellers, and authors—even when some of these details have been obfuscated or erased in the historical record—rather than transhistorical traditions or themes. Our first concern, in short, is the exploration and interrogation of what there is to be read, that is, what has come down to us as print matter. In the case of oral traditions, we must always be mindful of the complicated processes of "entextualization" through which oral narratives were and continue to be transformed into the specific *written* forms in which we encounter them. These processes include a number of players and can include individual tellers, listeners, transcribers, editors, and translators. One of our objectives as scholars should be to do justice to each document in its cultural and contextual specificity.

    Ever since the mid-nineteenth century, scholars have been debating genre definitions and terminology, including the use of the highly contested and admittedly problematic term "fairy tale." This is an issue whose history emerges in our

chronological selection of tales and the introductory notes we have provided for each group of texts in Part I of this volume; it is also an issue we theorize in Part II, because it is remains critical to contemporary scholarship on the tale in several related disciplines. We have chosen to use "fairy tale" as an umbrella term to categorize the various forms of story contained in this volume because it has powerful and enduring cultural currency among general readers today. What we want to emphasize here is that the collective histories of literary tales and entextualized oral traditions are tangled webs whose many tendrils interlock and whose pattern changes depending on the vantage point from which one looks at them. Rather than concern ourselves with teasing out all of the connections among the dots, we might set as our goal to understand how the web has been constructed by the critical discourses that brought these stories down through history.

As someone who has even a casual acquaintance with fairy tales, you have been influenced as much by fairy-tale criticism as by fairy tales themselves. What you know (or think you know) is not the fairy tale itself but a critical interpretation that has been culturally accepted as normative. These normative readings have become lenses through which we tend to view all new stories that we encounter. The organization of this anthology and the critical texts included in Part II are both meant to promote a different series of lenses—some cultural and some purely heuristic—that allow us to see otherwise. Far from exhaustive, the list of stories in this volume (as in any anthology) reflects the ideological commitments of its editors. We would like to take a moment to share with you the presuppositions that drove our choices so that you may better position this volume within your own pedagogical frame.

- **Chronology versus national tradition.** Rather than position stories within their national traditions, we present them here within a long history of tale production to avoid associating a particular period with a single linguistic tradition, and vice versa. Chronology demonstrates the flexibility of tales within a national culture, allows for examination of border-crossing, and also reveals the polyphony of contemporary influences and divergences within historical periods.

- **Stories representative of place and time rather than theme.** We have delineated periods according to the conventions of literary history, employing the terms for the most important aesthetic movements in Europe. While this vision of literary history is strongly Eurocentric, in this context it underscores and allows for critical examination of the fact that the history of this genre *has been* written and shaped by Europeans and, more recently, by North Americans. The advantage of this organizational principle is that it can help to situate texts in relation to the other arts and letters of their period, foregrounding elements of the tales' poetics and thematics—traits that are harder to see when stories are grouped

transhistorically and transculturally by type or motif. To give modern readers a sense of how fairy tales have looked through various periods of print history, we have maintained most period spelling and punctuation choices, even when they look slightly odd. This is part of what it means to read texts from the past.

- **Stories from traditions that are currently being researched and debated.** Once chronology rather than theme or nation drives the choice of texts, it is easy to drown in what Salman Rushdie called the Sea of Stories—that body of somatic and poetic matter from which tales everywhere seem to be drawn. An anthology that attempted to tackle "world tales" would face a formidable challenge, and we make no claim to representation of global tale traditions. To remain afloat and create an anthology that would be useful pedagogically, we gravitated towards traditions that have generated at least a modest body of scholarship and are on the minds of specialists working on the fairy tale today. This includes many of the stories now considered "classic" fairy tales—the ones you might expect to find in a volume of this kind—but also many that are now rather obscure, both for general readers and even for scholars outside of this field. The history we have constructed here reflects both the state of fairy-tale studies today and our own conviction that exploration of the breadth and depth of fairy tale history brings fresh perspective and new life to even the most familiar of stories.

Our decision about what types of critical readings to include was influenced by three main concerns:

- Fairy-tale anthologies have tended to reproduce excerpts from the earliest critical perspectives to the end of the twentieth century. Those lists rarely include pre-twentieth-century critics of the fairy tale as a genre, of which there are several that helped shape its history.

- Classic approaches to the fairy tale, while important, do not take account of the work that has been done in the past 15 years, which has dramatically reoriented the work of many young scholars.

- Reproducing critical work that was written for a different purpose in an anthology necessarily excerpts it from its own socio-historical context.

As the contextualization of fairy tales and critical traditions is a vital concern of ours as editors, we asked scholars to generate new material written specifically for this volume, essays that reflect upon the questions that interest them most and that draw on their own areas of research. We solicited essays organized around five key

terms that have both historical and current resonance in fairy-tale studies: Genre, Authorship, Reception, Ideology, and Translation. Three essays are included for each key term; within each group of three, you will find different approaches, different arguments, and sometimes disagreement. In this way we take up twenty-first-century debates and present the ideas generated by these debates in the historical and cultural contexts for which they were written. These pieces necessarily and intentionally bear the publishing date of this volume and will be remembered, we hope, as a sign of the times of fairy-tale criticism in 2012.

Although this volume is bound and its stories are presented in a linear history, readers need not receive it as a closed or predetermined (and thus overdetermined) narrative. Instead, we hope that you violate its limits and allow questions other than historical descent to determine the tales you choose to read and the order in which you do so. As you enter the tangled web laid out for you here in its fullness, please allow yourself to be caught up in it, jump around, wrestle a little with its tendrils, discover new textual strategies and new ways of reading in the process, and (most of all) enjoy the ride!

Suggested Readings

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