Transformative masculinities: re-examining the role of the male in Red Riding Hood.

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ABSTRACT:

Red Riding Hood is said to have been assembled from folktales that pre-date the collector Charles Perrault's 1697 re-telling and initial publishing (Dundes, 1989, Zipes, 1993). Since then, it is a story that has been re-told and re-imagined many times in various media contexts, with Beckett suggesting that it is one of the most familiar icons of Western culture, and a "highly effective intertextual referent" (Beckett, 2002 p. XVI). Even though this story has been generally regarded as a children's tale, adult themes of sexuality and transgression have been explored in modern re-conceptions. In this chapter, we examine the representation of gender and masculinity in commercial media output: the 2011 American film *Red Riding Hood* (Hardwicke, 2011) and the pilot episode of the NBC series *Grimm* (2011). In *Red Riding Hood,* a romantic horror film, the male characters may be regarded as satellites that cluster around the female protagonist whereas in *Grimm,* through its generic fusion of police procedural and horror genres, the text plays upon strong established examples of traditional male roles alongside more nuanced and contemporary representations of masculinity. Our analysis explores themes of transformation and

heteronormativity and the extent to which the texts challenge or conform to traditional tellings.

KEYWORDS:

Red Riding Hood, Grimm, Masculinities, Male character, Gender, Fairy Tales

Introduction

Fairy tales and folklore, as Warner highlights, have long been considered to hold symbolic significance for "psychoanalytic and mystical approaches" (1994 p. XXII) to texts, acting as universally distributed structures of human experience, making them powerful forms of narrative in culture (Zipes, 2011). Folklorists have made notable efforts in systematically mapping these tales in taxonomies, such as the work of Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson (AT) and their index of story types and motifs. Vladimir Propp (1968) too, in his assessment of Russian folktales, has been instrumental in providing a comprehensive typology of characters common to all fairy tale narratives.

Yet, as Warner asserts, this "thrust towards universal significance has obscured the genre's equal powers to illuminate experiences embedded in social and material conditions" (Warner, 1994, p. XXII). Indeed, Warner argues that echoes of former hierarchies and behaviours may co-exist in tales alongside those modern innovations of narration that feature in their constant revisions, speaking to their staying power in modern popular discourse. In this sense, folktales may be presented in various media that appeal to the new sensibilities of the intended audience while retaining echoes of previous ideologies. For example, feminist analyses have shown how of folk and fairy tale tropes can perpetuate gender stereotypes intertextually (Gilbert and Gubar, 2000 [1979]).

While much research focus is on the constructions of femininities, many have also argued for the study of the construction of masculinities as part of the feminist agenda and consideration of underlying gendered power relations (Robinson, 2020). It is with this in mind that we turn our attention to two media texts: the American television show *Grimm* (2011-2017), specifically the *Pilot Episode: Little Red Riding Hood* (Greenwalt et al, 2011) and the American romantic horror film *Red Riding Hood* (Hardwicke, 2011). Accordingly, we explore the representation of male characters specifically as a point of departure. We examine critically the use and re-conceptualisation of the original narrative, arguing that both texts use the motifs of the *Little Red Riding Hood* story to re-imagine and reconstruct gender relations in the contemporary narrative.

The morality[ies] of *Little Red Riding Hood*

As Beckett suggests, Red Riding Hood is one of the most familiar icons of Western culture, and a "highly effective intertextual referent" (Beckett, 2002 p. XVI). The primary signifier of the little girl wearing a red hood or cape is one that is recognisable in its various incarnations. Classed as the Aarne-Thompson (AT Index) tale type 333 "The Glutton" [Red Riding Hood], the child protagonist is usually pitted against a villainous antagonist, the wolf,

who intends to apprehend and eat the girl as she makes her way to her grandmother's house. In the 1961 revision of the tale type index by Stith Thompson (in Dundes, 1989 p. IX), this includes two outcomes: "the wolf's feast" whereby the wolf – pretending to be the mother/grandmother – devours the girl; or the "rescue" when she is cut from the wolf's stomach and rescued, alive.

Modern folklore scholars argue that these conceptualisations are based on two literary versions of the tales: Charles Perrault's *Le Petit Chaperon Rouge* (1697) and Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm's *Rottkäppchen* (1812). In Perrault's French version, the story begins with Little Red Riding Hood, the "little village girl, the prettiest that had ever been seen" (1697 in Dundes, 1989 p. 4) going to visit her ill grandmother in another village. She then encounters "old Father Wolf" as he rushes ahead to eat her grandmother before the girl meets the same fate (ibid). Perrault ends the tale with one of his *moralités,* warning of the dangers of wolves in more insidious guises, "with an amenable disposition / Neither noisy, nor hateful, nor angry, / But tame obliging and gentle, / Following the young maids / In the streets, even into their homes (ibid p. 6). Though this may be more 'tongue-in-cheek' in tone for the benefit of adult readers, according to Warner (2016) it situates the tale quite clearly as an "initiation, an allegory of carnal knowledge and social prohibitions, about innocent girlhood on the threshold of maturity, with the trackless forest standing in for the dangerous world, the predator for the seducer, the abuser of innocence" (pp. 114-116).

With the Brothers Grimm version of the tale, "Little Red Cap", we see the protagonist straying from the path and being eaten by the wolf, but meeting a happier fate after a local Huntsman kills the wolf and allows the girl and her grandmother to emerge from his belly unscathed (Grimm, 1812 in Dundes, 1989). Though the endings differ, both versions cement the allegorical reading of the "good girl gone wrong" (Zipes, 1993 p. 17) and the subsequent dangers of being led down the 'wrong path'.

Modern folklore scholarship has since established that both these literary versions impose upon the tale a more didactic tone than previous "rowdy" oral versions from the late Middle Ages in France, Tyrol and northern Italy (Zipes, 1993 pp. 18-25). For all their unruliness, these oral versions were more optimistic in tone with the young, quick-thinking protagonist outwitting the wolf, rather than the more allegorical versions of Perrault and the Brothers Grimm. Zipes argues that these tales are reflective of the material concerns and superstitions of the time, acting as warning tales about attacks from strangers and wild animals, including wolves and supposed werewolves (1993 p. 23). On the other hand, Dundes (1989 pp. 192-236) emphasises the usefulness of psychoanalytic interpretations of the tale, alluding to themes of infantile-fantasy/sexuality and orality/cannibalism to understand overarching narratives,

Later, Perrault produces a gentrified version to reflect and appeal to the moral and social concerns of the French bourgeoisie, with the removal of more puerile elements of the peasant tradition, but also the agency of Little Red Riding Hood herself. Thus, there is a shift from the sexual initiation to subsequent literary tales of rape and violence: "[transforming] a

hopeful oral tale about the initiation of a young girl into a tragic one of violence in which the girl is blamed for her own violation" (ibid, p. 7).

Feminist analyses of the folktale genre have focused on the lack of agency of female characters. Gilbert and Gubar, 2000 [1979], for example, engage with intertextual references to fairy tales and myths in the context of Victorian fictional characters, who are often rendered into archetypal angels or devils. The material and discursive shifts in the latter stages of the 20th century – resonating with the concerns of second wave feminism – have subsequently occasioned retellings which reappropriate and reframe historical narratives. In notable examples drawing on the Red Riding Hood tale, Angela Carter transforms the character of the wolf into a more ambiguous and potentially sympathetic figure (see *The Werewolf* and *The Company of Wolves* in Carter, 1979). In *The Company of Wolves*, the Red Riding Hood character, with her shawl "the colour of poppies, the colour of sacrifices, the colour of her menses", only prevails through embracing her emerging sexual maturity and desires in her encounter with the wolf (Carter, 1979 in Carter, 2012 p. 140)

As Bidisha (2016) writes, this is a tale which occupies a liminal space, between "fear and submission, choice and force, humiliation and annihilation, self-sacrifice and self-preservation". Here, Carter's Red Riding Hood's has a sense of self – "she knew she was nobody's meat" – which instead leads to the consumption and usurpation of her grandmother, culminating in her "[sleeping] in "granny's bed, between the paws of the tender wolf" (Carter, 1979). Therefore, retellings may simultaneously contest and confirm to the more traditional versions of the Red Riding Hood tale in complex ways and with increasingly complex gender dynamics.

The Red Riding Hood texts

This chapter explores two texts from 2011: the pilot episode from police procedural fantasy series *Grimm* (Greenwalt et al, 2011) and the romantic horror film *Red Riding Hood* (Hardwicke 2011). *Grimm* (2011-2017) is a generic fusion of supernatural/horror and police procedural; a postmodern text that is open-ended rather than one that closely interrogates the structure and characteristics of the traditional fairy tale. It is aimed at a young adult audience and is intertextually related to other shows like *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997-2003) or its spinoff series, *Angel* (1999-2004). David Greenwalt, the co-executive producer of these shows, is also the screenwriter and co-producer of *Grimm.*

This text, drawing on both cultural and generic verisimilitude, that is the proximity of the representation to both cultural conventions and also to the codes and conventions used by the specific genre, (Todorov, 1981, pp. 18-19) that fuses the natural world with a fantasy universe in which a variety of monsters from the Brothers Grimm fairy tales run amok. These creatures, called 'Wesen', are only visible to 'Grimms' (hunters) and other Wesen. In the episode analysed, the murder of a college student opens an investigation into a series of abductions and murders of young girls by a 'blutbad' (an evil kind of Wesen resembling a werewolf). The common signifier that links these individual cases is a red hooded jacket, a key motif of the Red Riding Hood tale. The heroic protagonist, traditionally the Huntsman

figure, is the police detective Nick Burkhardt (David Giuntoli), assigned to the case. Part of this story focuses on his discovery that he is a Grimm and can see the supernatural Wesen.

The film *Red Riding Hood* (2011), directed by Catherine Hardwicke, who also directed the *Twilight* series of films, is a postmodern pastiche that fuses young adult romance with neo-gothic horror, much like its *Twilight* vampire predecessor. This is particularly explicit in the way that the protagonist Valerie (Amanda Seyfried) and her romantic relationship with Peter (Shiloh Fernandez), is drawn. The main narrative takes place in an indeterminate historical age which points loosely to the mediaeval period and in the small and isolated village of Daggerhorn. Valerie, a young villager, is in love with her childhood friend, Peter, a woodcutter, although she is told by her mother that she must marry Henry (Max Irons), the Blacksmith's son. At the same time, the village is subjected to a series of wolf attacks. Ultimately, it is revealed that Valerie's father, Cesaire (Billy Burke), is the wolf and tries to pass on the generational curse to her, though in the end it is Peter that becomes the werewolf. The Red Riding Hood narrative, here, is re-told as a tale of sexual awakening in which gender, particularly the patriarchy, is authoritatively and traditionally established through the signifiers of the Church and the feudal system, as well discourses of masculine protectiveness, through Peter and Henry.

Representing the male in Red Riding Hood

Both the television and film texts use quotations (literally and allegorically) from the original Red Riding Hood tale to anchor this reference throughout the narrative. For example, the *Grimm* episode starts with an explicit, intertextual reference to the original fairy tale in an epigraph: "The Wolf thought to himself, what a tender young creature. What a nice plump mouthful" (Greenwalt, 2011). *Grimm*'s narrative moves between a more conventional fairy tale to a postmodern horror structure replete with multiple jump scares. In the opening scene, the werewolf/blutbad's victim is quickly swept away as the small doll she examines is revealed as a trap. There are echoes of the original narrative, but it is explicitly distorted to appeal to a more contemporary audience.

However, the film attempts to follow the style and motifs of the Little Red Riding Hood tale more faithfully than the TV episode which, while drawing broadly on the key events of the story, is significantly less dependent on the more traditional versions. The key signifiers of the original story, the red cloak, the cottage(s), the woods, the wolf, which sustain their denotative familiarity in the film *Red Riding Hood*, have been re-imagined for the *Grimm* episode as a pastiche-like blend of the contemporary urban setting. For example, the werewolf/blutbad cottage in the woods closely resembles an eerie, darkly stylised version of the grandmother's cottage. Contrastingly, the mise-en-scène in *Red Riding Hood* seeks to recreate a more traditional setting for the narrative, appropriating the mediaeval European context with dark, wood-based buildings in a rural, alpine setting.

In turning to the male characters, these distinctions are further emphasised in their characterisation, with the film drawing upon more clearly defined male hero and villain binaries, while the TV episode focusing more on fluid combinations of traditional and

reconstructed masculinity, perhaps due to the television series being based largely on the narrative conventions of police procedural drama. The film, by contrast, and due to the central positioning of the female character, represents masculinity through the construction of the heteronormative romantic relationships of Valerie and the father-child relationships that are of prominent significance. The patriarchal power structures evident in Daggerhorn are the duality of the church and feudalism, with the former presented more strongly than the latter, embodied by Father Solomon (Gary Oldman), a high-ranking cleric and witch-hunter who seals off the village to trap the wolf.

The film could also be seen as a form of post-feminist discourse where the positioning of the female protagonists in relation to the peripheral men, together with a "feminist identity" allows for the rehearsal of what would otherwise be stereotypical subject-matter (Gill 2016 p. 619). Despite the contemporary re-telling of the film and the positioning of Valerie as a 'feminist', it reproduces traditional tropes found in historical versions, including the male role of 'hero-rescuer' or where the male hero rescues the damsel in distress. This is in accord with Craven's view, who argues that the empowerment of the female protagonist is constrained by the ritualised and textured representations of masculinity (2016). She states, "the heroine's aspirations and achievements are presented in the viewpoint of an expanded group of male characters" (ibid p193) and this is evidenced in the way the male characters cluster around Valerie like satellites.

The Hero as Archetype

Contrary to the conventional readings of Propp, heroes, as Tatar (1987, p86) suggests, are difficult to classify in fairy tales and the conventional, theoretical classification of "active" and "passive" are not always stable as character traits can shift. However, she suggests that "in fairy tales all over the world, the one least likely to succeed paradoxically becomes the one most likely to succeed" (ibid, p. 87). True to form, in the film, at least, it is Peter that is destined to succeed rather than his rival Henry; as Peter, although unassuming and diffident at times, is Valerie's true love.

Furthermore, despite Peter's transformation from human to werewolf – or perhaps because of it – his position in her affections is reinforced. However, arguably Peter is defined *only* by his relationship to Valerie (as are other male characters) as she is the central figure in the narrative, and he has agency only because she is present. He, therefore, "...lacks an autonomous sphere of action" (Tatar, 1987, p. 91). Peter is contrasted directly with Henry, both occupying different positions of masculine form. Henry is conventional and deemed as a good match for Valerie and symbolically, he is the moral assertion of dutifulness. This is embodied by his final positioning in the film as "[choosing] a life of honour, protecting us from darkness" (Hardwicke 2011). Peter, on the other hand, is more fluid and open, operating outside the conventions of society and tradition. His ultimate transformation to the wolf further establishes his position as the outsider/loner. It is Peter, rather than Henry, who is written as the object of heteronormative fantasy. However, at the film's denouement when he moves to save Valerie from being wolf-bait, he does so with Henry as his companion. The moment in the spotlight is divided as both men re-live the traditional male

role of 'hero-rescuer', thereby asserting supposedly innate rescue qualities in maleness, while setting them apart from heteronormative alpha male dominance.

In *Grimm*, Nick Burkhardt, the detective hero, appropriates the 'problem-solving' skills of the original huntsman. His character is morally asserted at the beginning of the story as he is carrying an engagement ring, a literal signifier of his value and dominance within a heteronormative context. This conforms to the traditional moral authority of the original fairy tale, but this is not something that is so explicitly established in the character of Peter. His morality is left open to interpretation, thereby creating the vague framework onto which the audience can project their own fantasies. However, like Peter, Burkhardt, more than any other male character, is introduced to the audience as ordinary, and is gradually transformed into special and exotic on learning of his new status as a Grimm. This would appear to confirm, in part, Tatar's (1987) view of the ordinary and unassuming male character managing to win through in the end.

Burkhardt, however, does appear to have more of an autonomous sphere of action as compared to Peter. At the crime scene in the *Grimm* episode, the male police officers and park rangers are framed as rational, following standard protocols, contrasting with Burkhardt who demonstrates intuitive empathy. The camera focuses on his facial expressions as he pauses and crouches by the bloodied remains of the victim. It is also him who tunes in and hears the music playing from the victim's discarded iPod. Burkhardt could, therefore, be seen as a 'reconstructed' form of masculinity and is sharply contrasted with the other male characters who represent more traditional forms. He works on instinct, something which goes against procedure, and this conforms to similar narrative *s*tructures where the 'maverick' hero works alone, rejecting conventional practice. He is progressively identified as being different and gifted, one of the key characteristics that transform him into a hero. Therefore, in Propp's (1968) typology he conforms to the hero figure – someone undertaking a quest – who demonstrates resilience in the face of adversity. This is established through his contrast with police partner, Hank Griffin, the secondary protagonist and in Propp's typology, the helper (ibid). Griffin, framed as a more traditional portrayal of masculinity, wise-cracks with Burkhardt when the characters are first introduced, accusing him of noticing a woman in the street and asking, "why can't you just look at her ass like the rest of us?" (Greenwalt, 2011). Brother-like, Griffin seems to be a 'regular guy', someone based on stereotypical masculine characteristics including the trope of male rationality and logic as opposed to more stereotypical feminine traits of intuition and empathy.

The Paternal Figure

In the absence of strong paternal figures in *Grimm*, the following discussion refers mainly to the film text as this theme frames masculinity in a particular way. The relationships between fathers and children are explicitly framed in the film through the interplay between several pairs of characters, most notably, Valerie and her father, Cesaire, Peter and Cesaire, and Father Solomon and the villagers. In this theme, a strong parallel exists between Cesaire and Solomon. Both are fathers, biologically, but Solomon is also a symbolic father, a paternal

figure of authority within the context of the church. And Cesaire is not only a woodcutter (a role afforded to the hero in the original fairy tale) but also the wolf itself.

This is a position not established in more traditional versions of the tale where these characters are distinct binaries, protagonist, and antagonist respectively. Cesaire is, therefore, a character that exists outside the action in which the wolf is a central part. The paternal role is established within this dualism: firstly, in relation to his biological role as the woodcutter/father and secondly, as the wolf who is driven to sire his own offspring. Both Cesaire, as wolf, and Valerie, as daughter, are framed as outsiders that do not conform to the rules. These rules relate to village life, traditions, the church and in Valerie's case, the normative rules by which women should live.

Early in the film it is implied that Father Solomon may be the wolf, as he acts in a 'wolfish' manner. He is drawn as a lascivious and immoral symbol of power that sits outside censure and scrutiny: his Christian values are corrupt as evidenced explicitly by the way he kills and tortures throughout the story. He is, then, the symbolic (twisted) Christian father, as demonstrated by his murder of the young boy, Claude, whom he broils in his torture device (a metal elephant). The fate of his wife, too, is presented ambiguously, although later it is revealed that he killed her because she, too, was a werewolf.

Cesaire, by contrast, while enduring the burden of his werewolf alter-ego, is subjected to a circumstantial generational curse; a state that is specific only to his family. While pivotal, these anti-heroic paternal characters are only able to exist in relation to the central figure of Valerie herself. It is Valerie, in her startling menstrual-red, crimson cloak who stands out in the diminished, muted colour palette of the visual context. Both fathers seek to destroy her (one by passing on the curse to his biological daughter and the other by confirming his religious and patriarchal authority) and in attempting to do so these father figures are provided with agency because of their relation to her.

Valerie attempts to make her own decisions, to take control of her life and challenge tradition through sexual experimentation. In places, she tries to confront the paternalistic figures, both her biological father, Cesaire, and Father Solomon, but she is denied validation, resulting in her continued subjugation by the patriarchy. Even her relationship with Peter is drawn in a conventional and patriarchal way as the male gaze (Mulvey, 1975) is used as a lens through which we witness her internalisation and enactment of heteronormative romance. Both Valerie and Peter are confined to conventional roles in a restricted sphere of action as the narrative conforms to a relatively traditional re-telling of the story albeit one that is, according to Craven (2016), tinged by neo-gothic pastiche.

There is a parallel dualism in the principal male characters as both Peter and Cesaire are woodcutters and wolves and thereby occupy a living, active social space in village life and an external, isolated, animalistic existence in the woods. They are active in their roles of father and lover but predominantly as such in relation to the central character of Valerie. This dualism is simply expressed as a binary of good/bad and therefore the representation is limited and lacks nuance. Other male characters in the narrative are even more constrained

in their agency, permitted sphere of action and therefore lack textured realism. As the male characters cluster around Valerie, they are the conduits for her sphere of action, limiting her choices to those offered from these hegemonic constructions of masculinity.

The Feeding Wolf Trope

When the villagers engage in a carnivalesque celebration following the killing of the first 'supposed' werewolf, Valerie dances provocatively with one of her friends to attract Peter's attention. It is through the sexual dynamic of her interactions with Peter that we see his character established in relation to hers. After watching their display, an aggressive Henry confronts Peter for seemingly deserting the village men at their previous hunt for the wolf. It is Peter, however, that bests him in a display of strength as he defends Valerie, saying "you keep your hands off her, or I'll cut them up" (Hardwicke 2011). When she follows Peter and they are alone, she declares her love for him as they embrace to sexually consume their relationship. In a foreshadowing event, Peter says, "I could eat you up" but it is he, not Valerie who shows vulnerability at the point of consummation, with her questioning "don't you want me?" (ibid). Valerie appears as a post-feminist signifier, who can be seen to want to comply with her parents' wishes and do her duty and marry Henry, while also expressing control of her own feelings and sexuality. Peter, therefore, is, on the one hand, stereotypically assertive as it would be in the traditional hero role but also subordinate to Valerie's exaggerated "feminist" persona, again, demonstrating the positioning of his masculinity relation to Valerie's prominence in the narrative.

The story continues to reaffirm traditional tellings of the Red Riding Hood folktale with the transference of the werewolf generational curse between male characters, rather than familial bloodlines. Though Cesaire attempts to coerce Valerie into fulfilling this legacy, both she and Peter kill him, with Peter taking on the wolf role and accepting *her* "inheritance" (Craven, 2016, p28). This is constructed within a romantic frame that underlines their metaphysical love, with Valerie's red cloak growing in length in a highly stylised scene where they embrace. Peter, the unassuming hero (Tatar, 1987), finds heteronormative love with Valerie, despite his fragmented identity. He does not seem to embody the lupine archetype, and at the film's close we are led to believe that he is domesticated through the love of Valerie, conforming to contemporary narratives, much like the *Twilight* film series, where vampires or werewolves and humans can co-exist in harmony. The narrative is left open, implying that he and Valerie live happily ever after, notwithstanding the fact that he will have to bear the generational werewolf curse. His passive, rather than active, masculinity is affirmed, therefore, in this traditional context, contributing to the heteronormative framing at the conclusion of the film.

In contrast, in *Grimm*, from the outset we are confronted with a form of masculine authority in the form of the werewolf/blutbad that suggests that the only usefulness that Red Riding Hood possesses is her potential to be consumed. As already established from the epigraph, viewers are primed to see the character in the opening scene – the female college student with a red top – as a Red Riding Hood figure. As is revealed throughout the episode, the werewolf/blutbad is a dualistic, supernatural creature that resembles the original fairy tale

wolf, animalistic and predatory as it hunts and dismembers young women and girls. It is seemingly triggered by the sight of a red jacket, a symbolic representation of femaleness and the menstrual cycle (even though some of the victims are pre-pubescent).

When in human form, as 'The Postman', the werewolf/blutbad 're-homes' the young girls in his cellar which is decorated as a child's bedroom. In this place, there is a wardrobe full of red jackets and the implication of this is clear: he is a serial killer, and the red jackets are trophies. As he hangs up the jacket of his current victim, he asks her "do you want a chicken pot pie?". It is implied that he intends to turn her into a pie and eat her, in doing so reference is made to another fairy tale figure, the witch in Hansel and Gretel. Warner (1994) suggests that the wolf character can also be seen as a masculinised version of the witch figure: both consume humans, often children, but the echoes of the Red Riding Hood narrative here suggest more carnal and sexual consumption, as opposed to the old and sexless witch.

The imprisonment of the girls in this episode, then, involves a sinister grooming process with an underlying threat of physical and potentially sexualised violence. The werewolf/blutbad is fast, dark, and powerful. In contrast, his liminal alter-ego is, exemplified by more stereotypical feminine signifiers, with his focus on perfecting the pie pastry and his needlework, emphasising his archaic and fussy disposition. Rather than conforming to a stereotypical archetype, the werewolf/blutbad presents a masculine duality that is at the same time both physically dominant and hyper-feminised, working within the confines of hegemonic masculinity.

Conclusion

Both texts deliver varying representations of masculinities - which is, in part, to do with the different ways in which they are constructed. While the episode of *Grimm* presents a contemporary reimagining of the Red Riding Hood narrative, there is an absence of the active version of the Red Riding Hood figure as she is simply reduced to a plot device, fragmented, and distributed as several young girls. Though the morality of the tale is lost (this is not a cautionary tale about a girl "straying from the path") there is also an absence of the ingenuity of the little girl of earlier oral versions. Instead, the tale is represented as a dispersed metaphor for the vulnerability of girlhood, echoing the more didactic versions of the tale by Perrault and the Brothers Grimm. It is the ingenuity of the male character, Burkhardt, which is foregrounded instead, as a reconstructed, multi-faceted representation of maleness and distanced from traditional masculinity.

It is the buddying relationships (exemplified between Burkhardt and Griffin and Burkhardt and the supporting character Monroe, himself a reformed blutbad) that re-establish strong masculine representation through the use of familiar male tropes and at the same time overlayer a more sensitive and nuanced sense of masculinity. *Grimm* adheres broadly to the conventions of police procedural drama, reflecting a traditionally male-dominated world; this is exemplified by the aforementioned relationship between Burkhardt and Griffin, a relationship that has been repeated in many traditionally masculine media forms such as

westerns and action-adventure series. This episode of *Grimm*, therefore, contains strong and established examples of traditional male characters that are co-located with more nuanced and contemporary representations of masculinity.

In contrast, the film, *Red Riding Hood* (Hardwicke 2011), plays upon some of the tropes in both the oral tradition, and literary tradition, presenting these in a post-feminist frame where we are encouraged to believe in the (sexual) agency of Valerie and her pairing with Peter, yet they are still confined to specific roles. As Craven (2016) asserts, empowerment is consistently present in post-feminist pastiche, but the presentation only appears to be a more active redressing of previous passive roles and thus this tension in Valerie's character informs Peter's position as the traditional male role as love-interest and provider. These traditional depictions of masculinity prevail when after killing her father, Valerie and Peter subsequently begin a sexual relationship (in the alternative ending, she is holding their baby). Peter, therefore, assumes not only the animalistic lupine role inherited from the father but also the literal and traditional role of being the father to Valerie's child.

In consideration of the representation of male characters in these two texts, then, it is evident that despite differing in genre and style, there are still elements of the original tale which are recontextualised. The film relies on more traditional oral and literary tropes, and, while attempting to present the heroine in a more empowered position, this can be seen as part of a post-feminist sensibility that is still confined to traditional gendered constructions. This impacts significantly on the way in which the male characters are permitted to exist, limiting their agency and reducing them to anachronistic traditional male tropes that are either very bad and villainous or potentially very good.

Indeed, the male characters are presented as choices for Valerie (Peter, Henry, her father) but at the same time, the *only* choices in the confines of thinly veiled hegemonic masculinity. Choice is significantly limited in this text and audiences are explicitly directed towards Peter, the outsider, the bad boy who comes good, and Valerie's true love. Although there are other texts, such as *Once Upon a Time*, that subvert the conventions of the fairy tale narrative even further, in this analysis, it is *Grimm* that seems to offer greater narrative distance from the traditional tellings while paradoxically relying on several stereotypical male tropes, as illustrated by the dualism of the werewolf/blutbad, with deadly powerful maleness in wolf form, and abhorrent, transgressive femininity in his human form. While it also attempts to present a more complex male protagonist, it conforms to more traditional expectations of masculinity through playing intertextually on the tropes of other genres, such as police procedural and supernatural horror. Therefore, even though there may be attempts to break with traditional gendered constructions in these texts, there are still forms of masculine hegemony that constrain both the male and female characters in different and interesting ways.

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