

## When Modern Little Red Riding Hoods Cross Borders... or Don't...

Sandra L. Beckett

Volume 48, numéro 1-2, mai 2003

Traduction pour les enfants  
Translation for children

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/006955ar>  
DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/006955ar>

[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

Éditeur(s)

Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal

ISSN

0026-0452 (imprimé)  
1492-1421 (numérique)

[Découvrir la revue](#)

Citer cet article

Beckett, S. L. (2003). When Modern Little Red Riding Hoods Cross Borders... or Don't.... *Meta*, 48(1-2), 15–30. <https://doi.org/10.7202/006955ar>

Résumé de l'article

Un grand nombre de réécritures contemporaines du *Petit Chaperon rouge*, le plus connu de tous les contes, sont d'auteurs et d'illustrateurs primés, mais ils restent trop souvent complètement inconnus dans le monde anglophone. Cet article examine des réécritures de nombreux pays pour démontrer pourquoi ils traversent ou ne traversent pas des frontières internationales.

# When Modern Little Red Riding Hoods Cross Borders... or Don't...

SANDRA L. BECKETT

Brock University, St. Catharines, Canada  
sbeckett@spartan.ac.brocku.ca

## RÉSUMÉ

Un grand nombre de réécritures contemporaines du *Petit Chaperon rouge*, le plus connu de tous les contes, sont d'auteurs et d'illustrateurs primés, mais ils restent trop souvent complètement inconnus dans le monde anglophone. Cet article examine des réécritures de nombreux pays pour démontrer pourquoi ils traversent ou ne traversent pas des frontières internationales.

## ABSTRACT

Many contemporary retellings of *Little Red Riding Hood*, the best-known of all fairy tales, are by major, award-winning authors and illustrators, but all too often they remain completely unknown in the anglophone world. This paper examines retellings from numerous countries to show why or why not they cross international borders.

## MOTS-CLÉS/KEYWORDS

Little Red Riding Hood, retellings, fairy tales, international borders

My research on retellings of *Little Red Riding Hood* began several years ago on an entirely French corpus, but was extended beyond French borders for the tricentenary conference of Perrault's *Histoires ou contes du temps passé* (*Stories or Tales of Past Times*, 1697), organized by Jean Perrot at the Institut International Charles Perrault, in order to illustrate that the famous fairy-tale heroine celebrating her three-hundredth birthday was an inveterate globetrotter (see Beckett 1998: 365-75). An impressive number of international children's authors and illustrators have retold the story of Little Red Riding Hood in one form or another and I collected well over two hundred retellings from twenty countries in twelve languages while researching a book titled *Recycling Red Riding Hood*.<sup>1</sup> One of the greatest challenges in preparing the book was the fact that the majority of the texts written in other languages have not been translated into English. Many contemporary retellings of the world's best-known fairy tale are by major, award-winning authors and illustrators, but all too often they remain completely unknown in the anglophone world. This paper examines some of the interesting translation issues encountered in my travels with modern Little Red Riding Hoods.

Marcel Aymé plays cleverly with *Little Red Riding Hood* in "Le loup" (The wolf), the first story in his timeless French classic, *Les contes du chat perché* (1939). More fortunate than many national children's classics, *Les contes du chat perché* has been translated into English, but *The Wonderful Farm* (1951) is not well-known in the anglophone world even though it is the very first children's book that Maurice Sendak illustrated. Surprisingly, "Le loup" is not one of the tales included in the volume

illustrated by Sendak, even though it is a charming story in which the protagonists, Delphine and Marinette, allow the “reformed” wolf into their house in spite of the fact that he admits to having eaten Little Red Riding Hood in his youth. Like many French retellings of Perrault’s tale, “Le loup” is full of inventive wordplay and verbal acrobatics that are virtually impossible to translate into English.<sup>2</sup> While the two girls are playing with the wolf, Delphine sticks her little hand “dans la gueule du loup” (into the wolf’s mouth), which has the figurative meaning of throwing oneself into the lion’s jaws, and then appropriates Little Red Riding Hood’s line to remark “what big teeth” he has (18). In a very humorous scene, the girls decide they should play *Loup y es-tu?* (Wolf-where-are-you?), a popular French children’s game, but they have to explain the rules to the wolf who doesn’t know how to “play wolf” (26). The obliging wolf ends up playing the game so well that he gobbles the girls up. The drawing Philippe Dumas did for the Folio Cadet edition depicts the big-bellied wolf eating an arm as blood drips into a puddle on the floor, where a pair of clogs are all that remain of the girls. Apparently Norman Denny felt it necessary to eliminate this gory, but absolutely essential, scene from the text when he translated “Le loup” into English, because he has the wolf swallow a flat-iron instead.<sup>3</sup>



Gianni Rodari is considered by many to be Italy’s most important twentieth-century children’s author and the 1970 winner of the Hans Christian Andersen Award has been translated widely in many European countries. Bernard Épin points ruefully to the “superb ignorance” of Rodari’s works in France, but it is much greater in anglophone countries (Épin 1985: 175, 180). The Italian author published a retelling of *Little Red Riding Hood* in his popular collection, *Favole al telefono* (*Telephone Tales*), under the title “A sbagliare le storie” (Getting stories wrong). In 1973, he used the same title for a chapter of his groundbreaking work, *Grammatica della fantasia* (*The Grammar of Fantasy*), which was not made available to English readers until Jack Zipes published a translation more than two decades later. The title Rodari gave to his retelling of *Little Red Riding Hood* reflected his desire to insist on the tale’s function as a demonstration of the strategy outlined in *The Grammar of Fantasy*; his French translator, Roger Salomon, therefore gives the two texts similar, double-barrelled titles that also emphasize the narrative strategy: “Conte défait *ou* Il n’y a plus de grands-pères” (A tale undone, or There are no more grandfathers) and “Contes défaits *ou* Comment faire dérailler les histoires” (Tales undone, or How to

derail stories). When Rodari's *Telephone Tales* were published in English in 1965, only forty-four of the original fifty-two tales were included, but his retelling of *Little Red Riding Hood* was retained and its title was faithfully translated as "Telling Stories Wrong." The prediction on the dustjacket that the tales would be "just as popular in the English-speaking world as they are in Italy and many other countries" proved to be erroneous, as the collection was never reprinted. However, Rodari's parodic rendition of *Little Red Riding Hood* was reprinted in the children's magazine, *Cricket*, in 1973, under a new, catchier title: "Little Green Riding Hood," which was retained by Jack Zipes when he included the tale in *The Trials and Tribulations of Little Red Riding Hood* in 1983.

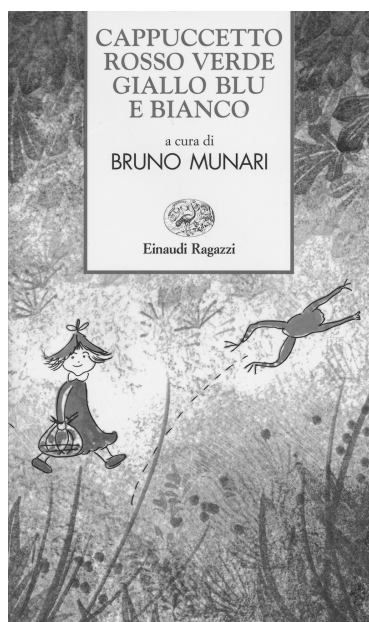
The choice of the colour "green" for the new title in *Cricket* is somewhat arbitrary, as the heroine of the very muddled version of the tale told by the grandfather is called in turn "Little Yellow Riding Hood," "Little Green Riding Hood," and "Little Black Riding Hood." He persistently gets the heroine's colour wrong in a deliberate attempt to bungle the story so that he can get back to peacefully reading his newspaper. There is method in the grandfather's madness when he has the wolf give the following instructions to Little Red Riding Hood: "Take the 75 bus, get out at the main square, turn right, and at the first doorway you'll find three steps. Leave the steps where they are, but pick up the sixpence [replaced by a "dime" in *Cricket*] you'll find lying on them, and buy yourself a packet of chewing gum" (95). Although the child expresses withering contempt for her grandfather's storytelling ability, she admits that she wouldn't mind some gum, and the old man obligingly hands her a coin before returning to his newspaper.<sup>4</sup> Like the other tales, "Little Green Riding Hood" is essentially autonomous, but something is nonetheless lost when it is extracted from the original context, where it is part of a narrative in the story-telling tradition of *The Thousand and One Nights* or *The Decameron*. *Telephone Tales* is composed of the bedtime stories that Mr Bianchi, a pharmaceuticals salesman who is only home on Sundays, tells his daughter every evening by telephone. The tale about the bungling storyteller is told by a very skilled storyteller who has already related almost fifty tales to his daughter by the time he tells her "Little Green Riding Hood," and whose storytelling talent is also appreciated by the Varese telephone operators who neglect other calls to eavesdrop on his.

In 1977, Philippe Dumas and Boris Moissard published *Contes à l'envers* (Upside down tales), a collection of tales which contains a parody of *Little Red Riding Hood*, titled "Le Petit Chaperon Bleu Marine" (Little Navy Blue Riding Hood). As is the case in many modern retellings, a colour substitution in the title alerts readers to the authors' parodic intent. When Jack Zipes translated the story for *The Trials and Tribulations of Little Red Riding Hood*, he retained the heightened comic effect that results from the specification of a particular shade of blue, but he substituted aqua for navy, transforming the heroine into "Little Aqua Riding Hood." Although the colour aqua may make the heroine's hood even more distinctive, a certain irony is lost since navy blue was undoubtedly chosen because it is often associated with prim and proper little children dressed in sailor suits. Lorette is nicknamed Little Navy Blue Riding Hood "in honour of her grandmother," the "ex-Little Red Riding Hood," and because she wears a navy blue duffle coat that was bought on sale at Galeries Lafayette (16-17). Zipes adds a descriptor for the benefit of readers who may not know that Galeries Lafayette is one of the major department stores in Paris. Many



contemporary retellings are transposed to a modern setting, but few are situated as precisely as Dumas and Moissard's tale. The entire text is sprinkled with place names that often only French readers will recognize and that therefore lose some of their humorous effect when they are retained in translation. The significance of Lorette's descent from the bus at the stop for the Jardin des Plantes will not be immediately evident to non-French readers unaware that the Botanical Garden is the site of the Paris zoo, although this is made clear shortly thereafter. The little girl later takes her dumbfounded grandmother, at knife-point, to the Jardin des Plantes and locks her in the wolf's cage. The narrator tells the reader that Lorette was obviously a little bothered by the fact that in order for her to become as famous as her grandmother, the old lady had to be eaten, but she quickly consoles herself with a proverb: "You cannot make an omelette without breaking eggs" (21). The popular wisdom of proverbs, which often finds its way into retellings of fairy tales, can pose translation problems, but in this case, the equivalent exists in English.

Bruno Munari is another Andersen Award winner whose work has not received the critical attention that it deserves in the English-speaking world. His *Cappuccetto verde* (Little Green Riding Hood) and *Cappuccetto giallo* (Little Yellow Riding Hood) were published separately by Einaudi in 1972, and three years later, Enrica Agostinelli's *Cappuccetto blu* (Little Blue Riding Hood) appeared in the same series. In 1981, all of the Little Riding Hood stories were published together, along with the Grimms' version, in a collection titled *Cappuccetto rosso verde giallo blu e bianco*, which was dedicated to Rodari. None of the stories have ever appeared in English, in spite of the fact that the urban setting of *Cappuccetto giallo* looks much more like New York than Milan or Rome, and *Cappuccetto*



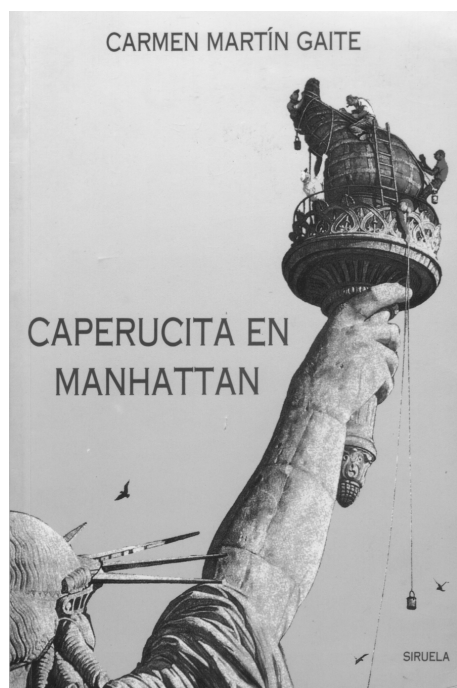
*bianco* is set in a snow-covered world and dedicated to Remy Charlip, the well-known American children's author and choreographer whose snowlike greeting card inspired the tale. The brief text appears on otherwise blank pages, which depict a story in which everything is white and therefore invisible in a world entirely enveloped in snow, with the exception of one page where the preoccupied, blue eyes of Little White Riding Hood stare out of the white at the surprised viewer. The extensive wordplay with colour cannot be rendered satisfactorily in English.<sup>5</sup> The colour white is implicit in the proper names of Little White Riding Hood's Grandma Candida and the painter Bianconi, who has paradoxically lost his box of paints in the snow. The wolf's indigestion is due to the fact that his prescribed diet is not grandmothers, but plain rice, *riso in bianco*, which means literally "white rice." Little White Riding Hood turns red and then green from emotion, and eventually somewhat purple from the cold. Most non-Italian readers will be mystified when the heroine compares her story to one from "un libro giallo" (a yellow book), which is a reference to the colour coding used by Italian publishers: yellow identifies an adventure or mystery novel (122). The colour wordplay in the final line, where the narrator predicts that his strange story will give readers a sleepless night (*notte in bianco* is literally "a white night") can be retained in Spanish (*una noche en blanco*) and French (*une nuit blanche*), but is lost in English (125).

Janosch, whose real name is Horst Eckert, is one of Germany's most successful children's author-illustrators. His award-winning children's books are popular in many European countries, but surprisingly few have been translated into English, as demonstrated by the fact that over thirty Janosch titles were in print in France in 1998, but only a couple were available in English about the same period. *Janosch erzählt Grimm's Märchen und zeichnet für Kinder von heute* (Janosch tells Grimm's fairy tales and draws for today's children), published in 1972, is one of the few books by the internationally renowned author-illustrator to have been translated into English. *Not Quite as Grimm* appeared in London in 1974, but it has never been reprinted; in addition the numerous German editions contain between fifty and fifty-four tales, but the English edition includes only thirty-six (an even more drastic reduction than for Rodari's *Telephone Tales*). Janosch turns the Grimms' fairy tales upside down to create hilariously funny re-versions that are, as the wordplay in the English title announces, "not quite as Grimm" or as grim. In spite of the fact that the hypotext is one of the most popular fairy tales in the world, Janosch's parodic retelling of the Grimms' *Rotkäppchen*, titled "Das elektrische Rotkäppchen" (The Electrical Little Red Cap), is among those eliminated. The tale is retained, however, in the unabridged Spanish edition, as is the short text titled "Das



Rotkäppchenspiel" (The Little Red Cap Game) that Janosch appends to his re-version. In it, the author explains the rules of the game he has just demonstrated in his story. Those who want to continue to play the game are to follow the author's example and put an adjective in front of as many words as possible. He demonstrates by using the word "square": "Once upon a time there was a sweet square girl, that everyone loved squarely, most of all her square grandmother...' and so on." After giving a number of other examples – "Chinese," "chequered," and "transparent" –, the author takes his wordplay one step further by suggesting that new words can be invented, for example "moralide," a nonsense word that could be translated as "moralidic." The translator of the Spanish edition got caught up in Janosch's game and continued to play it by gratuitously substituting her own examples for the author's, so that "square" becomes "rectangular" and "Chinese" becomes "Japanese" (107).

Carmen Martín Gaité's *Caperucita en Manhattan* (Little Red Riding Hood in Manhattan, 1990) has enjoyed a great deal of success in the languages into which it has been translated, but English is not one of them. In 1993, the Italian edition appeared immediately on the list of bestsellers of *Tuttolibri*, the literary supplement



of Turin's newspaper *La Stampa* (see Calvi 1998: 2-3); in 1998, a French translation was published in Flammarion's popular Castor Poche paperback series for children; in 2000, *Rødhette på Manhattan* won The Ministry of Cultural Affairs' award for the best translation into Norwegian. The lack of an English translation is particularly surprising since the well-known Spanish author, who was the first woman to win the Premio Nacional de Literatura in 1978, got her inspiration for the novel during an extended stay in New York in 1985 when she was Visiting Lecturer at Barnard College. An English translation would be a particularly fitting tribute to the author who was elected an Honorary Fellow of the New York-based Modern Language Association in 1987, and who died one year before the tragic events of September 11, 2001 changed Manhattan forever.

The cover illustration for the novel is Norman Rockwell's *The Statue of Liberty*, from a July 1946 edition of *The Saturday Evening Post*. As the landmark and icon of New York for people all over the world, the statue provides a particularly fitting image for a novel set in Manhattan, but it also plays a highly symbolic role in a retelling that posits an independent Little Red Riding Hood in search of freedom in the Big Apple. Whereas the specific contemporary setting into which Dumas and Moissard transpose the classic tale is very familiar to their young French readers, the many New York locations and landmarks mentioned in Martín Gaité's novel will be foreign to her young Spanish readers: Brooklyn, where

Sara lives on the fourteenth floor of a rather ugly apartment block; Morningside, where her Grandma Rebeca lives; the Brooklyn-Battery Tunnel that Sara and her mother take to visit the grandmother; Central Park, where this Little Red Riding Hood encounters the wolf, a millionaire cake king by the name of Edgar Woolf whose cake empire (*The Sweet Woolf*, or *El Dulce Lobo*) is housed in a forty-story building that takes the form of a cake and is somewhat reminiscent of the Empire State Building; and so forth. Sara plays the role of matchmaker, arranging a meeting of Edgar Woolf and her unconventional grandmother, a former music-hall singer who smokes loose tobacco and has had several husbands and lovers. The term “lagarta” (a female lizard), which is used to refer humorously to Sara’s free-spirited grandmother, loses its figurative meaning of a sly minx and its popular meaning of a promiscuous woman or prostitute when translated into another language (31).

The unconventional, “reruminated” version of “Little Red Riding Hood” that the prolific Alsatian author, Tomi Ungerer, published in *A Storybook from Tomi Ungerer*, appeared in New York in 1974, while the author was still living in the United States. The full plate that accompanies the retelling of *Little Red Riding Hood* depicts the wolf-Duke standing on the rampart of a huge castle, whose Germanic architecture reminds us of Ungerer’s Alsatian origins. The story was translated into German by Hans Wollschläger for the Swiss edition, *Tomi Ungerers Märchenbuch*, published in 1975. Although it was first published in English, only the Swiss edition has been reprinted, most recently in 2001. Ungerer’s controversial and subversive books often disturbed adults and were “still on the blacklist in the United States” in the early 1990s (Ungerer 1996: 51). Winning the Andersen Award in 1998, a year after his return to the children’s literature scene with *Flix* (published in Switzerland), constituted, in his eyes, a “revenge” on certain Puritan leagues (qtd. in Perrot 1998: 47). Censorship issues certainly play a role in the lack of translations of more controversial European children’s books into English.

An unusual Brazilian continuation of *Little Red Riding Hood* exists in an English translation for the purposes of proselytism. *O Lobo Mau Reencarnado*, published in Brazil in 1974 and translated into English as *The Big Bad Wolf Reincarnate* in 1981, was written by Roque Jacintho for a series of books published for children by the Federação Espírita Brasileira (Brazilian Spiritist Federation). The tale begins in *media res* just after the wolf has gobbled up Little Red Riding Hood and her grandmother. True to the Grimms’ version, the Wolf drowns in a lake, but, as he sinks to the bottom, all the wicked things he has done in his life flash before his eyes. The scene that haunts him most is, of





course, the murder of poor Little Red Riding Hood and her grandmother. At the Institute of Moral Reform in the afterlife, a doctor assures the Big Bad Wolf that he can and will become good, but only after a number of reincarnations. Jacintho takes advantage of the universal popularity of the story of Little Red Riding Hood and the wolf to retell it with the intent of spiritually enlightening his young readers. Surprisingly, the English version of *The Big Bad Wolf Reincarnate* is now in its third edition in Brazil.

The retellings of major anglophone authors tend to be translated rapidly into most major European languages. Roald Dahl's outrageous remake, "Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf," in his collection of alternative fairy tales in verse form, *Revolting Rhymes* (1982), is an excellent example. The ambiguity of the alliterate title Dahl gives his collection leaves readers to decide if these are rebellious or nauseating rhymes, or perhaps both. The Catalan translator found a comparable two-word title that emphasized the genre, but replaced the alliteration with rhyme: *Versos perversos* (Perverse verse, 1986). In the longer Spanish title, *Cuentos en verso para niños perversos* (1985), the genre is defined as "tales in verse" and the "perverse" quality passes from the text to the implied child reader. It brings to mind the provocative title of another French children's classic that has never appeared in English, *Contes pour enfants pas sages* (Tales for naughty children), published in 1947 by the poet Jacques Prévert. The French translator of Dahl's *Revolting Rhymes* eliminates the reference to poetry altogether to highlight the more popular genre of the fairy tale, and more specifically the hypertextual tale: *Un conte peut en cacher un autre* (A tale can conceal another, 1995). The image of one tale on top of another evokes that of a palimpsest, the image that provided the title of Gérard Genette's groundbreaking work on intertextuality which appeared the same year as *Revolting Rhymes*.<sup>6</sup> French translations of reworked fairy tales often tend to highlight the actual process of retelling. Another widely-translated parody of *Little Red Riding Hood* is "Little Red Running Shorts," the hilarious version that Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith include in their hugely popular *The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales* (1992). In France, the title of the tale is translated faithfully from the English as "Petit Jogging Rouge," but the title of the collection, *Le Petit homme de fromage et autres contes trop faits* (1995), as in the case of Dahl's *Revolting Rhymes*, focuses on the manner in which the tales have been retold, aptly describing them as "overdone tales."

Sometimes a slight modification of the name traditionally used to refer to Little Red Riding Hood alerts readers immediately to the fact that they are not dealing with the heroine of the classic tale. In 1964, Antonio Robles published his playful reversion, "Caperucita Encarnada pasó un susto...y luego ¡nada!" (Little Red Riding Hood Incarnate had a scare... and then nothing!), in the collection *Rompetacones y 100 cuentos más* (Rompetacones and 100 more tales), which bears the unusual signature, Antoniorobles, that he often used for his children's books. It is not surprising that the tale has never been translated into English, as the prolific Spanish children's author who spent many years in exile in Mexico has only recently begun to receive the recognition he deserves in his own country. The replacement of the traditional adjective *roja* (in Spanish, the title of the classic tale is *Caperucita Roja*) with *encarnada*, which means "incarnate" as well as "red," suggests that the heroine is not the original Little Red Riding Hood. Her grandmother has given her a red outfit, but it is a short cape with a red hood that suits her so well that everyone calls her Little

Red Riding Hood Incarnate. It is perhaps for the benefit of young Mexican readers that the narrator underscores the versatility of a garment that does not just protect from the wind and the rain, but also the sun. Robles deliberately set about to rewrite the cruel ending of Perrault's tale, and his charming, but watered-down, version, concludes with the ritualistic ending of Spanish fairy tales: "y con eso, colorín, colorado, este cuento se ha acabado" (65), which is roughly equivalent to "And they all lived happily ever after" but would be more accurately translated as "and that's the end of the story."



Like "Caperucita Encarnada," the title of Fam Ekman's picture book, *Rødhaten og Ulven* (Red Hat and the Wolf, 1985), indicates immediately that it is an innovative retelling of the classic tale, since *Little Red Riding Hood* is called *Rødhetten* in Norwegian. The gender change of the noun reflects the gender reversal in the story. In several languages, the gender of the noun referring to the protagonist has engendered intriguing variations on the well-known story. In keeping with the current trend to feminize the French language, the masculine in the title of Perrault's classic tale, "*Le Petit Chaperon Rouge*," is replaced in Pierre Léon's politically correct tale by "*la petite Chaperonne rouge*." The Bolivian author, Hernán Rodríguez Castillo, on the other hand, replaces the Spanish feminine (*Caperucita Roja*) with a masculine in his retelling *Caperucito azul* (Little Blue Riding Hood, 1975), which, like Ekman's story, casts a male protagonist in the role of Little Red Riding Hood. The inability to translate this type of gender play in English and other languages that do not have a gender no doubt explains why some superb retellings never travel beyond national or regional borders.

Some books that use *Little Red Riding Hood* as an intertext cross international borders particularly easily because they require little or no translation. Little Red Riding Hood often appears in wordless picture books because author-illustrators can expect their readers to reconstruct her familiar story on their own. Little Red Riding Hood and the wolf are perhaps the most recognizable figures in the multitude of European cultural markers that crowd the pages of Mitsumasa Anno's *Tabi no Ehon*

(*Anno's Journey*), which won the prestigious Golden Apple Award of the Bratislava International Biennale in 1977. With the exception of the paratext, Anno's wordless "journey" books require no translation and therefore travel with particular ease. *Anno's Journey* appeared almost simultaneously in Denmark, France, Great Britain, Switzerland, the Netherlands, and the United States the year after its publication in Japan, and the following year in Italy, Spain, and Sweden as well. The Japanese author-illustrator's significant contribution to children's literature worldwide was recognized when he was awarded the Andersen Award for Illustration in 1985. Wordless books of this nature often have paratextual matter intended to guide readers through the visual narrative, and it is virtually the only element of the book, other than the title, that requires translation. A publisher's blurb on the dustjacket of the English edition of *Anno's Journey* draws attention to the "familiar characters from favorite tales" that readers should recognize and a partial list of those "beloved stories," including *Red Riding Hood*, is provided at the end of the book. One might imagine that this paratextual information was initially meant to guide young Japanese readers through European culture, but, paradoxically, it is not found in the original edition.<sup>7</sup> Likewise, Tord Nygren's *Den röda tråden*, which appeared in Sweden in 1987, was published in English as *The Red Thread* (1988) with paratextual matter that attempts to provide readers with some assistance in decoding a very enigmatic wordless picture book. Little Red Riding Hood is one of the figures mentioned in the "Can you find" list on the dustjacket that seeks to reduce the strangeness of this imaginary world in which readers follow a meandering red thread that winds its way through a multitude of disparate characters and scenes.

Elise Fagerli's *Ulvehunger* (Wolfhunger, 1995) is a very unique visual retelling of the story of Little Red Riding Hood in strikingly dramatic woodcuts. According to the cover, *Ulvehunger* is a tale "after Grimm," and the only page of text is a kind of



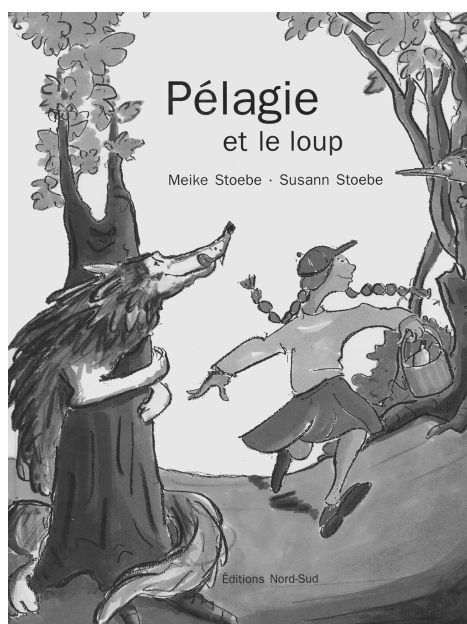
prologue that relates the familiar admonitory scene from the beginning of the classic tale. It was taken word for word from a 1990 Norwegian translation of the Grimms' *Kinder-und Hausmärchen* (*Children's and Household Tales*) and ends with Little Red Riding Hood promising to do just as her mother says. The reader is led to believe that Fagerli's illustrations are going to take up the story where the text leaves off and continue the well-known classic tale. The book's fascination lies in the ambiguous double meaning of the expression *ulvehunger* in Norwegian. The title immediately evokes the hunger of the wolf who gobbles up both Little Red Riding Hood and her grandmother, but in Norwegian, as in French, being as hungry as a wolf or having a *wolfhunger* is also a common expression for being very hungry. Unfortunately, the wordplay is lost in English where the expression is "to be as hungry as a bear," and the English text provided for the catalogue of the memorial exhibition of Fagerli's work translates the title as "Ravenous Hunger" (1996: 3). Even Norwegian readers are likely to presume, however, that the expression refers to the hunger of the big bad wolf. Fagerli plays cleverly with the ambiguity of the expression *ulvehunger* to create an astonishing turn of events: Little Red Riding Hood eats both the wolf and her grandmother! The striking illustrations won second prize in a picture book contest organized by the Society of Illustrators, in cooperation with J. W. Cappelen publishing house in the spring of 1994, but unfortunately, this unforgettable visual retelling appeared only in Norway. *Ulvehunger* was Elise Fagerli's only book, as she was killed tragically in a car accident in 1996, only ten days after completing her exam at the Institute of Illustration and Graphic Design at the National College of Arts and Crafts in Bergen.

In Warja Lavater's *Le Petit Chaperon rouge* (1965), which the Swiss artist herself calls "une imagerie," Perrault's story is retold by means of a pictorial language in which colours and forms are invested with meaning and become signs or symbols in a semiotic game that equates signifier and signified. The only words in the accordion-like, folded book are found in the legend at the beginning which explains the elementary code based on colours and forms: Little Red Riding Hood is symbolized by a red dot, the forest by a cluster of green dots, the wolf by a black dot, the huntsman by a brown dot, the house by a brown rectangle, and so forth. The artist insists that she is not an "illustrator" but an "author" who "draws books that tell stories by means of visual codes" (1991, p.183; 1993, p.45). Guided by the symbolic icons, readers create their own tale in their own language. The publication history of Lavater's unique *imageries* indicates how effortlessly they cross international borders. By simply translating the code menu into several languages, her works have been easily converted into multilingual books. The publisher's insert states that the graphic sign is, like music, an international language, a means of communication unhindered by borders. In 1960, Alfred Barr, founding Director of The Museum of Modern Art in New York, chose *Little Red Riding Hood* and *William Tell*, "another story which everyone knows, in which all nationalities meet," to be printed with an English legend. In 1962, the MoMA edition of *William Tell* appeared simultaneously with a Swiss edition containing a German legend. A year later, the Parisian editor, Adrien Maeght, agreed to the co-publication of a limited edition of *Le Petit Chaperon rouge* with The Museum of Modern Art, but the special edition in English did not actually appear until 1971. Eventually, a multilingual legend was included, first in French, English, and German, then with the addition of Japanese.

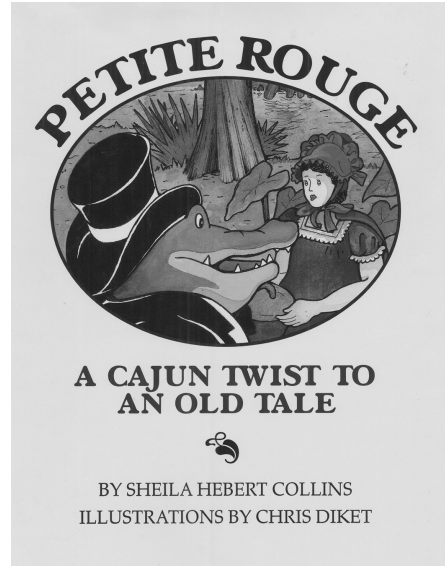
Jean Ache uses geometrical shapes to retell Perrault's "Le Petit Chaperon rouge" and "Cendrillon" in *Le Monde des ronds et des carrés* (The world of circles and squares, 1975), a bilingual book published in Tokyo in Japanese and French. The process he calls *abstraction narrative* is strikingly similar to the pictorial code of Lavater's *imageries*. Although *Le Monde des ronds et des carrés* was never published in France, a collection of tales and fables with a very similar title, *Des carrés et des ronds*, had appeared in Paris the preceding year, in French only. It contained two other Perrault tales, "Le Petit Poucet" and "La Belle au bois dormant" (Huet-Ache 2001). The legend that Ache provides at the beginning of his "Le Petit Chaperon Rouge," in both Japanese and French, is remarkably like Lavater's. Although the visual code used by the two artists is very similar, Ache's pictorial retelling is supported by a verbal narrative that makes it less daring. The story is told briefly on the verso in both Japanese and French, and readers will no doubt read the text before studying the facing illustration, which is also accompanied by a bilingual caption excerpted from the text.

Little Red Riding Hood has inspired a number of other interesting multicultural and multilingual creations. Viviane Julien adapted *Bye Bye, Chaperon rouge* (1989), published in Quebec first in French and then in English, from a family film by Rock Demers in the series *Contes pour tous* (Tales for all). The series is filmed in different languages, and *Bye Bye, Chaperon rouge*, directed by Marta Meszaros in 1989, was produced in Hungarian, with French, English, Polish, and Hungarian-speaking actors, and later dubbed in French and English. The Cuban-American writer and professor, Alma Flor Ada, has been a pioneer in the development of multicultural and bilingual books for children. *P. S. Thanks to Little Red Riding Hood* was scheduled to appear in fall 2001 as a sequel to *Dear Peter Rabbit* (1994) and *Yours Truly, Goldilocks* (1998), a series of books in which the story is told in the form of letters written by characters from children's classics. As it turned out, the publisher did not think that "P.S." was suitable for a title and it was changed to *With Love, Little Red Hen*, although

Little Red Riding Hood appears, as she does in all the books in the series. Alma Flor Ada wrote the books first in English, but the first two have also appeared in Spanish. *Dear Peter Rabbit* was published in both Spanish and English by the American publisher Atheneum. Recently, the author completed a new book, titled *¡Feliz cumpleaños, Caperucita Roja!*, that appeared first in Spanish and then in English in a bilingual collection *Puertas al sol/ Gateways to the Sun* (Ada 2002). Meike and Susann Stoebe's retelling came out in 1996 with the bilingual Swiss publisher Nord-Sud as *Waldtraut und der Wolf* in German and *Pélagie et le loup* in French. Not only is the heroine's name appropriately adapted to the target readers, but so too is the wolf's, as



he is called Jehan-le-Loup in the French edition and Wolfgang in the Swiss edition. Whether deliberate or accidental, it is most felicitous that this bilingual German/French retelling blends motifs from the Perrault and Grimm versions: Waldtraut/Pélagie takes her grandmother a cake and a little pot of butter, but also a good bottle of red wine. Sheila Hébert Collins goes one step further in her *Petite Rouge: A Cajun Twist To an Old Tale* (1997), which blends English and French in an attempt to imitate Cajun speech. The protagonist is a cute little Cajun girl named Clotilde Mouton, whom the inhabitants of Bayou Tigre call Petite Rouge because of her beautiful red cloak and *garde-soleil* (a traditional Cajun sunbonnet); one day on the way to her grandmother's with *etouffée*, she encounters the big gator *taille-taille* in the swamp. A dictionary of Cajun terms is appended at the end of the story to assist English-speaking readers.



Gianni Rodari suggests that the series of words – girl, woods, flowers, wolf, grandmother – immediately brings the tale to mind for everyone, regardless of the language (Rodari 1996: 34). This is illustrated convincingly by an exhibit at the Exploratorium in San Francisco, which plays a very strange version written in 1940 by a professor of French, H. L. Chace, who wanted to show his students that intonation is an integral part of language. Although the story, titled “Ladle Rat Rotten Hut,” is written in an unintelligible language, children have no difficulty identifying the tale when they listen. *Little Red Riding Hood* is no doubt the best-known and most reinterpreted, recontextualized, and retold story in the world. The famous fairy-tale heroine is certainly one of the most familiar icons of Western culture. Yet, even her universal popularity does not seem to be sufficient to ensure that retellings of her story continue to be translated into English. One can only hope that the current, widespread popularity of the little girl in red, who celebrated her three-hundredth birthday in 1997, will encourage publishers in the anglophone world to translate more of the numerous, diverse, and innovative retellings that exist in so many countries and offer such a wonderful opportunity to introduce important international authors and illustrators through a story that has appealed to readers around the world for generations.

#### NOTES

1. See *Recycling Red Riding Hood* (New York and London: Routledge, 2002).
2. Because Perrault's tale is known by heart by most French children and the picturesque archaic expressions have taken on a kind of nursery-rhyme independence, in particular the famous “Tire la chevillette, la bobinette cherra,” French retellings of the tale tend to have a great deal of clever wordplay that makes them extremely difficult to translate into English. An excellent example is the nonsensical wordplay in Jean-Loup Craipeau's *Le Petit Chaperon bouge*. In one passage, the heroine tells the Wolf that she is talking to “la Mer Grande” (the Great Sea), a homonym of *la Mère-Grande*

(grandmama). An even more absurd substitution of a homonym occurs in a later fragment in which Little Red Riding Hood asks the wolf if she can “cheminer avec toi” (walk along with you), but he turns her down, saying he already has “cheminée avec toit” (roof with chimney) at the Three Little Pigs (6). On learning that the grandmother has been eaten by the wolf, who is now ill, Little Red Riding Hood’s mother’s complaint that the old lady never ceases to “empoisonner” the world has a humorous double meaning: in a figurative sense, *empoisonner* means to be a pain in the neck but it is taken here in its literal sense as well, since the mother tells her daughter to call SOS-Poisons immediately or they will have problems with the Society for the Protection of Animals.

3. Bettina Hürlimann mentions this scene in *Three Centuries of Children’s Books in Europe* (p. 88, no. 1), but I have been unable to locate an English edition that includes this tale.
4. Rodari gives no indication of the child’s sex in his story. The acclaimed author-illustrator, Bruno Munari, illustrated *Favole al telefono*, but his sole picture for this particular tale, a very simple drawing depicting only sticks of chewing gum, leaves the characters entirely to the reader’s imagination. Yet, when the story is published in other countries, the child is often given a gender, not by the translator, but by the illustrator. The grandchild is portrayed as a girl by Walter Lorraine in *Crickets* and as a boy by Françoise Boudignon in a French collection of tales about wolves (Rodari 1983: 106). Dick de Wilde’s single illustration for the tale in the English edition of *Telephone Tales* highlights the relationship between the storyteller and his characters rather than the grandfather and his grandchild/listener: Little Red Riding Hood and the wolf point an accusing finger and paw respectively at the storyteller who has made such a mess of their story.
5. I would like to express my gratitude to Corrado Federici, my colleague from the Department of Modern Languages, Literatures, and Cultures at Brock University, for his generous assistance with the translation of this text.
6. Gérard Genette’s *Palimpsestes: La littérature au second degré* (1982) was not translated into English until 1997.
7. This information was obtained from the International Institute for Children’s Literature, Osaka.

#### REFERENCES

- ACHE, J. (1975): *Le monde des ronds et des carrés*, adapted and translated by Christine Huet. Tokyo, Librairie Ça et Là.
- ADA, A. F. (2002): E-mail, 12 February.
- BECKETT, S. L. (1998): “Le Petit Chaperon rouge globe-trotter,” in *Tricentenaire Charles Perrault: les grands contes du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle et leur fortune littéraire*, edited by Jean Perrot, Paris, In Press, pp. 365-75.
- BECKETT, S. L. (forthcoming): *Recycling Red Riding Hood*, New York, Garland.
- Calvi, Maria Vittoria (1998): “La recepción italiana de Carmen Martín Gaité,” *Especulo: Revista de estudios literarios* (Universidad Complutense de Madrid), 8 pp. <[http://www.ucm.es/OTROS/especulo/cmgaite/mv\\_calvi2.html](http://www.ucm.es/OTROS/especulo/cmgaite/mv_calvi2.html)>.
- Elise Fagerli, catalogue of the memorial exhibition held in Bergen in 1996, Bergen, Grafisk Hus.
- ÉPIN, B. (1985): *Les livres de vos enfants, parlons-en!* illus. Pef, Paris, Éditions Messidor/La Farandole, pp. 174-181.
- GENETTE, G. (1982): *Palimpsestes: La littérature au second degré*, Paris, Seuil. Translated by Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky under the title *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree* (Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1997).
- HUET-ACHE, S. (2001): Unedited letter, 10 July.
- HÜRLIMANN, B. (1967): *Three Centuries of Children’s Books in Europe*, trans. Brian W. Alderson, London, Oxford University Press.
- LAVATER, W. (1991): “Tête à tête: Entretien avec Warja Lavater,” interview by Bernadette Gromer, *La Revue des livres pour enfants*, Winter, pp. 137-138.
- LAVATER, W. (1993): “Perception: When Signs Start to Communicate,” in *The Faces of Physiognomy: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Johann Caspar Lavater*, ed. Ellis Shookman, Columbia, SC, Camden House, pp. 182-187.
- PERROT, J. (1998): “The Seriousness and Playfulness of an Artist from Alsace: Tomi Ungerer, ‘bomb’ or ‘blue flower?’” in *Tomi Ungerer’s Toys and Tales*, ed. Jean Perrot, Paris, In Press, pp. 47-69.

- RODARI, G. (1973): *Grammatica della fantasia*, Torino, Einaudi. Translated by Jack Zipes under the title *The Grammar of Fantasy* (New York, Teachers & Writers Collaborative, 1996).
- UNGERER, T. (1996): "Tomi Ungerer par Tomi Ungerer," *La Revue des livres pour enfants*, no. 171, September, pp. 48-57.
- Primary Sources
- ADA, A. F. (1994): *Dear Peter Rabbit*, illus. Leslie Tryon, New York, Atheneum.
- ADA, A. F. (1998): *Yours Truly, Goldilocks*, illus. Leslie Tryon, New York, Atheneum.
- ADA, A. F. (2001): *With Love, Little Red Hen*, illus. Leslie Tryon, New York, Atheneum.
- ANNO, M. (1977): *Tabi no ehon*. Tokyo, Fukuinkan. Published in English as *Anno's Journey* (New York, Collins & World, 1978).
- AYMÉ, M. (1951): *The Wonderful Farm*, illus. Maurice Sendak, trans. Norman Denny, New York, Harper & Row.
- AYMÉ, M. (1987): "Le Loup," in *Les contes bleus du chat perché*, Paris, Gallimard, pp. 8-28.
- CHACE, H. L. "Ladle Rat Rotten Hut," 1940. See <[www.exploratorium.edu/exhibits/ladle/index.html](http://www.exploratorium.edu/exhibits/ladle/index.html)>.
- COLLINS, S. H. (1997): *Petite Rouge: A Cajun Twist to an Old Tale*, illus. Chris Diket, Louisiana, Pelican Publishing.
- CRAIPEAU, J.-L. (1997): *Le Petit Chaperon bouge*, illus. Clément Oubrière, Paris, Hachette Jeunesse.
- DAHL, R. (1982): "Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf," in *Revoltin' Rhymes*, illus. Quentin Blake, New York, Knopf, pp. 30-33.
- DUMAS, P. and B. MOISSARD (1977): "Le Petit Chaperon Bleu Marine," in *Contes à l'envers*, illus. Philippe Dumas, Paris, L'École des loisirs, pp. 15-26.
- EKMAN, F. (1985): *Rødhaten og Ulven*, Oslo, Cappelen.
- FAGERLI, E. (1995): *Ulvehunger*, [Oslo], Cappelen.
- JACINTHO, R. (1974): *O Lobo Mau Reencarnado*, illus. Joel Linck, Rio de Janeiro, Federação Espírita Brasileira. Translated by Evelyn R. Morales and S. J. Haddad under the title *The Big Bad Wolf Reincarnate* (Rio de Janeiro, Federação Espírita Brasileira, 1981).
- JANOSCH (1972): "Das elektrische Rotkäppchen," in *Janosch erzählt Grimm's Märchen und zeichnet für Kinder von heute: 50 ausgewählte Märchen*, Weinheim, Beltz & Gelberg, pp. 102-107. Translated into Spanish by María Dolores Abalos under the title *Janosch cuenta los cuentos de Grimm* (Madrid, Anaya, 1986).
- JULIEN, V. (1989): *Bye Bye Chaperon Rouge*, Montréal, Québec/Amérique.
- LAVATER, W. (1965): *Le Petit Chaperon Rouge: une imagerie d'après un conte de Perrault*, Paris, Adrien Maeght.
- LÉON, P. (1996): *Le mariage politiquement correct du petit Chaperon rouge et autres histoires plus ou moins politiquement correctes avec notices explicatives pour servir à la morale de notre temps*, Toronto, Éditions du GREF.
- MARTÍN GAITE, C. (1990): *Caperucita en Manhattan*, Madrid, Siruela.
- MUNARI, B. and E. AGOSTINELLI (1993): *Cappuccetto rosso verde giallo blu e bianco*, Trieste, Einaudi Ragazzi.
- NYGREN, T. (1988): *Den röda tråden*, Stockholm, Raben & Sjögren. Translated as *The Red Thread*. Stockholm, R & S Books.
- ROBLES, A. [Antoniiorobles] (1964): "Caperucita encarnada paso un susto...y luego ¡nada!" in *Rompetacones y 100 cuentos más Mexico*, Oasis.
- RODARI, G. (1962): "A sbagliare le storie," in *Favole al telefono*, illus. Bruno Munari, Torino, Guilio Einaudi. Translated by Patrick Greagh under the title "Little Green Riding Hood," in *Telephone Tales*, illus. Dick de Wilde (London, George G. Harrap & Co., 1965). Reprinted in *Cricket* 1, no. 1 (September 1973), pp. 17-19.
- RODARI, G. (1983): "Conte défait, ou Il n'y a plus de grands-pères," in *Le grand méchant Loup, j'adore*, ed. Simone Lamblin, illus. Françoise Boudignon, Paris, Le Livre de Poche, pp. 105-107.



- RODRÍGUEZ CASTELLO, H. (1989): *Caperucito Azul*, illus. Jaime Villa. 5th ed., Quito, Talleres Heredia.
- SCIESZKA, J. and L. SMITH (1992): "Little Red Riding Shorts," in *The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales*, New York, Viking.
- STOEBE, M. (1996): *Waldtraut und der Wolf*, illus. Susann Stoebe, Zurich:, Edition Jürgen Lassig, Nord-Süd Verlag. Translated by Michelle Nikly under the title *Pélagie et le loup* (Zurich, Nord-Süd, 1996).
- UNGERER, T. (1974): "Little Red Riding Hood," in *A Story Book from Tomi Ungerer*, New York, Franklin Watts, pp. 84-91.