

‘What if there was something dark inside of me?’: Gender, Red Riding Hood, and Internalising the Wolf on Screen

Karrie Ann Grobбен

University of Exeter

This paper explores cinematic incarnations of ‘Little Red Riding Hood’ at different moments in recent film history, in terms of how these adaptations revise and rethink the wolf as a danger posed from *within*, as well as without. This paper will demonstrate that the filmic fairy tale *mise-en-scène* creates a fantastical space in which a defamiliarized, wolfish interior self can be both spectacularly visualized and apparently contained.

However, the visualization of an internal ‘wolfish’ self is, in these films, often gendered in nature. Operating in a feminist framework, the paper considers the modern male ‘wolf’ characterized by his predatory sexual appetite and attacks in relation to his apparent opposite and victim, Red.

The ‘monster: girl victim’ binary is read as both paradoxically reiterated and undermined in these adaptations. If Red and the Wolf are fantasy positions between which the audience can oscillate identifying with (Clover), what happens when their roles merge, overlap or collapse altogether?

With the emergence of a revised, wolfish Red (who often hunts down the wolf herself) this paper reads the fairy tale film as intersecting with the rape-revenge film cycle. In doing so, it will be demonstrated that these films challenge the spectator to identify and confront an uncanny, internal wolfishness, by consistently reversing or challenging the roles of ‘Wolf’ and ‘Red’.

This, in films including but not limited to: *The Company of Wolves* (dir. Neil Jordan, 1984); *Freeway* (dir. Matthew Bright, 1996); *The Woodsman* (dir. Nicole Kassell, 2004); *Hard Candy* (dir. David Slade, 2005); *The Wolfman* (dir. Joe Johnston, 2010); *Red Riding Hood* (dir. Catherine Hardwicke, 2011).

Karrie Ann Grobбен is an AHRC-funded film studies PhD candidate at the University of Exeter, where she has also taught adaptation studies and visual culture. Currently, she is in the final stages of writing up her PhD thesis, ‘Female Representation, Identity and Trauma in the Filmic Fairy Tale’. Past research projects have included representations of Shakespeare’s Ophelia in nineteenth-century visual culture and representations of violence against women in American 1940s women’s films. Grobбен has an MA and a BA in English Literature from the University of Exeter and has also studied at Vassar College, in New York.