

**THE BIBLE, GRIMMS' FAIRY TALES  
AND CHANEL N°5****Comparative Literature****Keywords:** fairy tales, Bible, Grimms' Fairy Tales, Indo-European motifs, etc.**Milena Mileva Blažič**

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**Abstract**

The purpose of this article is literary analysis of commercial sand fairytales. For over a century, common fairy tales (i.e., Little Red Riding Hood, Snow White, Sleeping Beauty) have been used in pop culture, such as in Walt Disney's animated films (since the 1920s) and advertisements (since the 1950s). We especially focused on the use of motives from fairy tales in the 30-minute commercial *Le Loup*, made by the House of Chanel in collaboration with Luc Besson in 1998.

**Introduction**

Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm published the first collection of fairy tales *Kinder und Hausmärchen* with the international designation KHM<sup>1</sup> (*Children's and Household Tales*<sup>2</sup>, later *Grimms' Fairy Tales*) in 1812.

The first part of the fairy tales was published in 1812 (86 fairy tales), the second part in 1815 (70 fairy tales). The 1812 edition has been on the UN- ESCO World Heritage List since 2005.<sup>3</sup> The UNESCO website mentions the well-known fact that *Grimms' Fairy Tales* and Luther's *Bible* are the most widely distributed books in the world. The Gutenberg 42-line *Bible* from 1554 has been on the same World Heritage List since 2001.

The most frequently translated Grimms' fairy tales in Slovene, since the first published fairy tale *The Poor Man and the Rich Man* from 1849 (Bešter 2013: 25), are *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Snow White*, *Cinderella*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Hansel and Gretel*, *The Wolf and the Seven Young Goats*, *The Frog King or Iron Henry*, *Dwarf*, *The Wishing-Table*, *Town Musicians of Bremen*, *Hans in Luck*, *The Brave Little Tailor*, *Little Brother and Little Sister*, *Snow-White and Rose-Red*, *Rumpelstiltskin*, and *The Flail from Heaven* (Blažič 2013: 128).

<sup>1</sup> KHM is an internationally accepted acronym for *Kinder und Hausmärchen*.

<sup>2</sup> The Brothers Grimm have published KHM seven times since 1812 in t. i. large editions and ten times in small editions. Manuscript variants from 1810 have been translated into Slovene (Bedenk 2018), 47 of the 51 have been preserved. The Brothers Grimm wrote down fairy tales changed some elements in later editions and/or deleted some fairy tales from further publications (e.g., *Pussin Boots*). It is generally accepted that the last edition from 1857 is relevant for the public, in which 210 units (200 fairy tales and 100 legends) are relevant, and 269 fairy tales are relevant for researchers (210 published, 59 excluded in reprints).

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/memory-of-the-world/register/full-list-of-registered-heritage/registered-heritage-page-4/kinder-und-hausmaerchen-childrens-and-household-tales/> (accessed 8 March 2020).

## The Bible and Fairy Tales

In addition to one common feature, namely that Gutenberg's Bible and Grimms' Fairy Tales are on the World Heritage List, there are other similarities (and differences) at the level of common motifs (Lüthi 2011) that are immanent to both the Bible and Grimms' Fairy Tales.

**Table 1:** Common features of The Bible and Grimms' Fairy Tales

The Bible	Fairy Tales
1. The origin of the Moabites and the Ammonites Lot of Coar [...] live in a cave, he and both daughters. [...] Thus, both Lot's daughters became pregnant with their father (30).	Donkey skin ATU510B "I will marry my daughter [...]" (Grimm 1993: 352). Thus, he came back and said to his daughter: "I didn't come across anyone like you – I'll take you!" (Štefan 2019: 150)
2. John 6, 52–59 He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will awaken him on the last day (55).	Red Apple (Red Riding Hood) ATU333 "Dear mother," he says hesitantly, "the cat here says that I eat my mother's meat." "Chirp, chirp, chirp, don't drink anything! There is no wine in this cup, it is mother's blood!" (Makarovič 2008: 40)
3. Abraham offers Isaac (22) – He bound his son Isaac and laid him on an altar of wood (10). Then Abraham stretched out his hand and took a knife to slaughter his son (11).	Trusty John KHM6, ATU516 – The stone continued, "Life will be given to me again if you cut off both children's heads with your own hand and anoint me with their blood." The king [father] drew his sword and swiftly cut off the children's heads with his own hand (Grimm 1993: 49).

These are just three examples of intertextuality between the Bible and fairy tales, which are quotations or variations of the motif.<sup>4</sup>

### Little Red Riding Hood KHM25 and ATU333

The first variant of Little Red Riding Hood, supposedly for children, was published in the collection *Histoires ou contes du temps passé* (Stories or Tales from the Past) in 1697. Similar motifs can be found in ancient myths,<sup>5</sup> one of the first appearing in 1020 in Egbert of Liège's *Depuella a lupellis seruata* (About a Girl Rescued by Wolf Cubs) (Ziolkowski 1992: 559).

<sup>4</sup> E.g., the motif of an incestuous father: F. F. Straparola Tebaldo, G. Basile Orsa (Bear), C. Perrault Donkeyskin, J. and W. Grimm Allerleirauh, G. Križnik Sončevahčerka (Sun's Daughter), A. Štefan Zvezdanačelu (Star on the Forehead); title (Red Riding Hood–Red Apple) or persons (e.g., Petrosinella – Rapunzel).

<sup>5</sup> For example, the god Kronos who eats his own children.

Little Red Riding Hood was five years old. In the international type index, Little Red Riding Hood has the number ATU333,<sup>6</sup> in KHM26. The first version of the tale was told to the Brothers Grimm by Johanna and the second by Marie Hassenpflug. Little Red Riding Hood has been published (and corrected) seventimes, and if we compare the first (1812) and last (1857) editions, we notice visible differences (e.g., one wolf appears in the first variant, two in the last variant). In some variants, The Wolf and the Seven Young Goats and the ATU 333 Little Red Riding Hood are connected (Uther 2004: 225, Tehrani: 2013). It is well known that Little Red Riding Hood is one of the most translated fairy tales, which has also been disseminated in non-literary ways. This is most visible in the most popular versions of the Walt Disney Studio, which animated the fairy tale several times (1922, 1931), and also sexualized or combined it with other fairy tales (Little Red Riding Hood, The Three Little Pigs, 1934). Jack Zipes believes that fairy tales should be de-Disneyfied; he has written or presents five animated variants of Little Red Riding Hood in the article and video lecture (Zipes 2010). In the subversive version of the Russian animator Garry Bardin, Серый Волк и Красная Шапочка (The Gray Wolf and Little Red Riding Hood) from 1990, the gray wolf is a metaphor for ideology, weapons, war, etc., and the destination of Little Red Riding Hood's travel from Russia is Paris or the EU, while the surprising complications eventually lead to them singing the International.<sup>7</sup>

### Memetics and Cultural Evolution

Fairy tales are of polygenetic origin (Zipes 2006: XIV), created in an anthropological, Indo-European and/or migratory way. In the literary-historical process, only those motifs that are repeatable (variability), relevant (important) or memorable (structure) have been preserved. Relevant fairy tales have become the so-called literary universals, which mean that they are important in different cultures by adapting (assimilating) to a new culture.

The structuralist basis 'home-away-home' has been preserved at the structural level in advertisements, and of the seven fairy-tale characters (Propp 2005); two persons are mainly preserved in advertisements: the hero (Little Red Riding Hood) and the antihero (wolf). The latter can combine several functions: anti-hero (perpetrator), false hero (disguised as a grandmother), sender (sends Little Red Riding Hood to pick flowers). In the Grimms' fairytale, the function of assistant is performed by a hunter who is not yet present in the French (first) version for children from 1697. The fairy tale ends with the wolf devouring Little Red Riding Hood, and with the lesson:

*"Don't trust the young generation, especially not the girls who are endowed with beauty, as they are told by such and such a gentleman. It's true that there is nothing strange, if the wolf catches so many of them. I say 'wolf' because not all wolves are equally evil, among them are sweet-tongued, sneaky, still waters who present themselves as very sweet, and in doing so, they follow the girls to their houses,*

<sup>6</sup> ATU is an international designation or acronym based on the surnames of three folklorists (Antti Aarne, Stith Thompson, Hans-Jörg Uther) who published an internationally classified index of fairy-tale types (Uther 2004, 2008).

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jjq5iM9yNRc> (accessed 8 March 2020).

*they rush after them to their homes. After all – God help us – who has not yet realized that these are the worst of all wolves” (Kuret 1957: 47).*

Anton Martin Slomšek (1878: 23) also wrote a version of the fairy tale entitled Starlisjakin mladakura (Old Fox and Young Chicken). Roald Dahl combined Little Red Riding Hood and the wolf with the fairy tale Three Little Pigs in his Revolting Rhymes. In the subversive version, Little Red Riding Hood makes a fur coat out of wolf fur and a purse out of the leather of three pigs (Dahl 1995). The fairy-tale type of Little Red Riding Hood often appears and has many variants and titles (The Glutton, Petit Chaperon Rouge, Cappuccetto rosso, Rotkäppchen, also a Slovenian variant in the Terdialect Cappuccetto rosso). From the standpoint of psycho analysis, similar to B. Bettelheim’s position in *The Uses of Enchantment* from 1999, Lackner connects Little Red Riding Hood and the French phrase ‘to see a wolf’ [elleavueleloup] meaning to lose one’s innocence or virginity (Lackner 2011). Some regard the symbol of the wolf or other animal as the concept of S. Freud, the uncanny (German *unheimlich*) or phallic panic (Creed 2005: XVI). Little Red Riding Hood’s childlike innocence ends when the wolf reveals herself to her in his true image and devours her. When she is finally cut out of the wolf’s belly, she is reborn at a higher level of existence. She is now able to establish positive relationships with both her father and mother (Bettelheim 1999: 255).

### **Fairy Tales and Commercials**

The advertising industry often uses fables, proverbs, and riddles, but most of ten fairy tales. Advertisements are supposed to create a world of illusions, hopes and desires. Everyone who promotes products present them to consumers as a wish come true, and if the consumer buys a product, he will live as in a folk tale model with a frequent closing phrase in fairy tales: “And then they lived happily ever after”. Advertisements are based on the essential characteristics of the fairy-tale type: e.g., Rapunzel (essential feature is long hair) which is used in advertising hair products, Sleeping Beauty in the promotion of sleeping products, Cinderella in advertising foot wear, Snow White in mirror promotion, Hansel and Gretel (mobile phone with GPS), etc.

### **Chanel N°5**

In 1998, the fashion house Chanel shot a 30-second commercial with Luc Besson, *Le Loup (The Wolf)*, which expresses the essential connection between art and the brain. The main (fairy tale) character is played by a 20-year-old Canadian swimmer, then model and later actress Estella Warren in the dress of the fashion designer Karl Lagerfeld, and the music was taken from the film *Edward Scissor hands* (fairy tale *Struwelpeter*). A literary analysis of advertisements and fairy tale theories will show what the *Bible*, *Grimms’ Fairy Tales* and *Chanel N°5* have in common.

### **Composition of Chanel N°5**

Chanel 5 perfume is analdehyde (a compound formed by the oxidation of primary alcohols). Literary analysis of the aldehyde components finds many fairy-tale motifs associated

with flowers, as fairy tales about flowers and natural phenomena belong to the so-called etiological and/or explanatory tales. In addition to the ‘neroliessentialoil’ ingredient, which is an orange blossom and symbolizes the bride’s bouquet in the collective consciousness of fairy tale motifs, Chanel N°5 fairy tale ingredients areas follows<sup>8</sup> (intertextually related to Thompson’s (1997) International Motif Index), although there are of course more ingredients:

1. May rose – in literary history it symbolizes the flower of Greek muses; the love bed of Hera and Zeus is sprinkled with Mayroses; it is of central importance in the fairy tales *Beauty and the Beast*, *Sleeping Beauty*, also in Andersen’s *Thumbelina*, Wild’s *The Nightingale and the Rose*, Grafenauer’s *Mahajana*, etc. Often, the flower is also a female name and symbolizes biophilia, love and life. In fairy tales, there are metamorphoses of a man/woman into a rose/lily. In Italian fairy tales, rose water endows one with magical beauty. In some fairy tales it is said that eating pink roses means conceiving a boy, and eating white roses means conceiving a girl.
2. Jasmine (Jasmine Grandiflorum) – In fairy tales, jasmine is directly associated with Indo-European motifs, sometimes growing from the grave of an Indian princess who committed suicide because she was rejected by the sun god. It has the status of a sad flowering shrub. In Indian fairy tales, fairy-tale motifs of the search for the (most beautiful) flower – jasmine (lotus). In the collection of Arabian fairy tales *One Thousand and One Nights*, jasmine is an important symbol and is the flower of love and lovers.
3. Geraniumrosat does not appear directly, but a fairy-tale motif appears indirectly – a magical perfume in Thompson’s motif index (recognizable through perfume, resuscitation), with perfume in the sense used in the advertisement for the Chanel N°5 perfume – a magical perfume as a shield against various dangers.
4. Tuberose is a special type of flower – a perennial with the most pronounced scent. In Slovene literature, it was often mentioned by I. Cankar<sup>9</sup> in the sense of “a stunning, horny smell [...] of tuberose [...] sighs of lustful, unsaturated and insatiable love” (Cankar 1913: 1). In Indian fairy tales, tuberose is associated with a love potion.
5. The iris symbolizes wisdom, courage, fidelity and has a long literary tradition since ancient literature, e.g., Zeus sends the divine messenger Hermes to earth and the rainbow like an iris-shaped arrow.

Fairy tale motifs are often used in commercials, including the ones from Chanel,<sup>10</sup> where some fashion magazines or collections are the med by fairy tales. These are either fairy tales as such, e.g. autumn-wintercollection 2020/21 (H.C. Andersen: *The Snow Queen*), summer collection (H.C. Andersen: *Thumbelina*), Arabic collection (*One Thousand and One Nights*), or just certain fairy tale elements (Mirror, Mirror – J. and W. Grimm: *Snow White*), while the

<sup>8</sup> [https://www.chanel.com/en\\_WW/fragrance-beauty/fragrance/c/rose-de-mai.html](https://www.chanel.com/en_WW/fragrance-beauty/fragrance/c/rose-de-mai.html) (accessed 10 March 2020).

<sup>9</sup> Cankar, I.: Ubogerože, 1902; Cankar, I.: Milanin Milena, 1913; Cankar, I.: Monna Lisa, 1912; Cankar, I.: Pohujšanje vdolini Šentflorjanski, 1908; Cankar, I.: Ciganska sirota, 1914.

<sup>10</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCcIHSnngVTZK7LEOQAzcglw?sub\\_confirmation=1](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCcIHSnngVTZK7LEOQAzcglw?sub_confirmation=1) (accessed 08 March 2020).

perfume *Egoist* thematizes the ancient motif of *Narcissus* or a sonnet with echo by B.A. Novak (*Narcisin Eho [Narcissus and Echo]*), and *Paris-Bombay Metier'sd'Art 2011/12* thematizes *A Thousand and One Nights*, etc.<sup>11</sup>

## Findings and Discussion

L.Besson's short commercial with model Estella Warren, who appears in the image of Little Red Riding Hood, is based on a typical structure (home-away-home) and consists of 12 scenes.

1. The first scene represents a virtual path along the cat walk in a red dress (1998) (in the 2002 variant, the dress is black) to the number 5 which represents the goal. The character is guided by the law of desire (Žižek 1988), so she follows the realization linearly. In the gold vault of Chanel N°5 perfumes she presses on no.5 (elevator/safe).

2. The Little Red Riding Hood puts the basket in the vault, and takes Chanel N°5 from the vault (symbol of the dark forest) which symbolizes the treasure or magic helper.

3. She takes one bottle of Chanel N°5 and puts the perfume on (magic helper).

4. She puts a bottle of perfume in a typical rustic basket and puts on a *red cape* with a hood. It should be noted that she also has red shoes (intertextuality with H.C. Andersen's fairy tale *The Red Shoes*).

5. The commercial reaches its dramaturgical peak when Little Red Riding Hood is followed by a wolf with a pronounced *red tongue*.

6. Little Red Riding Hood kindly shows him to be quiet with body language and a finger on her lips.

7. We see the metamorphosis of the wolf and the perpetrator into a socialized character – the wolf sits down.

8. The film scenes shows these ated wolf, behind him the shadow of four statues of dogs (intertextuality with Cerberus, a Greek mythological dog/creature guarding Hades) standing in front of a vault in a golden forest.

9. At the end of the advertisement the so-called 'new home' of Little Red Riding Hood is shown opening its doors to the world, and that is the Eiffel Tower, Paris, while it snows lightly (intertextuality H.C. Andersen *The Snow Queen*).

10. The Little Red Riding Hood leaves the Chanel N°5 vault and the doors close behind her (cf. S. Makarovič, Rastiella door).

11. The wolf sitting in number 5 circle roars in a dark voice.

12. In the final scene, the interior and exterior are separated, reminiscent of the beginning of *Snow White* (white as snow [snowing], red as blood [shoes, hood, make up, dress, cape, bow], and black as ebony [black number 5, wolves]).

The advertisement for Chanel N°5 perfume is based on the subjectivation of women and a feminist conclusion. The director Luc Besson intertextually linked the story not to the patriarchal

<sup>11</sup>Chanel.com: <https://www.youtube.com/user/Chanel> (accessed 03. 11. 2022).

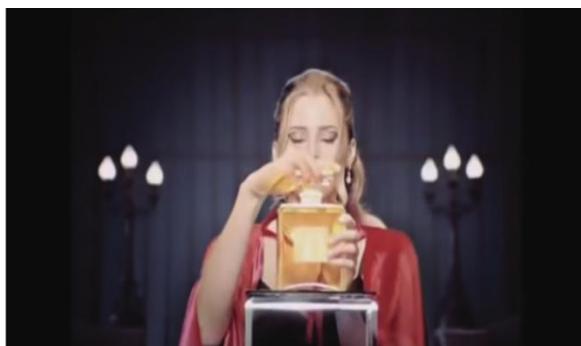
variant (solution with the help of a hunter) of Grimms' fairy tale Little Red Riding Hood, which ends either by 'the wolf devouring Little Red Riding Hood' or by 'the hunter saving Little Red Riding Hood', but on a distant motif of Little Red Riding Hood saving herself. In advertising, she is also saved with the help of the perfume, which can be interpreted in the spirit of Marie Louise von Franz and feminist explanations (Franz 2001); thus, the perfume exudes her inner power, which is only shown as a perfume, but is in fact the essence of her subject. Estella Warren is portrayed as a modern glamorous princess who builds on appearance and glamour (the princess syndrome).

The advertising can also be understood in the context of C.P. Estés and her book *Women Who Run with the Wolves* (2003), in which the author analyzes four types of mothers or women (collapsed, non-maternal, childish and glowing). The Little Red Riding Hood in the Chanel N°5 commercial is the glowing woman type.



**Figure 1:** Le loup 1998

The subjectivized Little Red Riding Hood in the Chanel N°5 commercial contains actress Marilyn Monroe's answer to a reporter's question of what she's wearing. Listeners wanted a sexualized response, and on the recording, we can hear her answer that she wears only Chanel N°5. By doing so, she implicitly connected with the distant motif of the Queen of Sheba, the motif of heroic girls/women, including Joan of Arc.



**Figure 2:** Le Musee 2002

In Andersen's fairy tale *The Emperor's New Clothes*, which is a characteristic 'male fairy tale' as there is not a single female character, everyone is bewildered about the Emperor's clothing and the 'king who has nothing on'; is seen as wearing a dress – just the opposite from Marilyn Monroe.



**Figure 29:** Marilyn Monroe (1952)<sup>12</sup>

The connection between the four wolves and Little Red Riding Hood in the advertisement for Chanel N°5 and the concept of C. P. Estés in her work *Women Who Run with the Wolves* is very obvious. The Little Red Riding Hood in the commercial expresses a warning in the first advertisement to a wolf with the interjection “shh” (1998), while in the second advertisement (2002) she socializes wolves with the same interjection, which can be a symbol for an external predator(wolf) or an internal wolf. This symbolizes the infantile part of anyone who is supposed to be socialized. In the first version of the fairy tale *Little Red Riding Hood*, the Brothers Grimm described an encounter with one wolf (1812) and in the second version (1857) with two wolves. The difference between the first (1998) and the second advertisement (2002) on the theme of Little Red Riding Hood is in the color of the dress: in the first she wears a red, and in the second a black dress, but both times she has a red cape. In the first commercial, the Chanel N°5 magic gadget is placed in a vault and resembles gold bars. In the second, the perfume is placed in the context of a museum, emphasizing historicity, while at the same time there is immanent intertextuality with Andersen's fairy tale *The Princess and the Pea* because the pea is shown at the end of the fairy tale in the museum.

<sup>12</sup> See also the video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r6AtDQZ8K28c> (accessed 8 March 2020).

## Conclusion

Fairy tale types or motifs are literary universals because they speak of relevant themes (birth, marriage, death) which they express in the language of symbols, including colors, e.g., white, red, black. People have a need to beautify the world, a need for utopia, to narrate the world (Homo narrans),<sup>13</sup> and fairy tales give readers and / or viewers a double sense of security: with form (morphology) and content.

People need faith in man, in the future, in the welfare state, so fairy tales are also related to the principle of hope (Bloch 1986) or the law of desire and touch on originality with text, advertising or smell. To paraphrase B. A. Novak's epistle,<sup>14</sup> we could conclude in the style of the *Poslanice ob mednarodnem dnevu knjig (Epistle on World Book Day, 1997)*,<sup>15</sup> namely that fairy tales are the childhood of literature and childhood is the fairy tale of life, so the use of fairy tale motifs found in the *Bible* and *Grimms' Fairy Tales*, on the UNESCO World Heritage List and in commercials and not just in the Chanel N°5 story is a logical choice.

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid. Niles 1999.

<sup>14</sup> B.A. Novak, *Otroš tvoje poezija življenja/Poezija je otroštvo sveta (Childhood is the poetry of life / Poetry is the childhood of the world)* (Novak 2016: 95).

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.ibby.si/index.php/int-ibby/ibby-2-april/109-poslanica1997> (accessed 12 March 2020).

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## Figures

**Figure 1:** [https://inside.chanel.com/en/no5/campaigns/1998\\_no5\\_le\\_loup](https://inside.chanel.com/en/no5/campaigns/1998_no5_le_loup)

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**Figure 2:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wand8dyDU8Y>

(Accessed: 10. 03. 2020).

**Figure 3:** <https://i.pinimg.com/originals/a2/db/ae/a2dbae386e7d2ba5e864ae57e0861768.jpg>

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