

Redefined Gender Identity in Modern Adaptations of Classic French Fairy Tales: A Comparative Study of Perrault's *Little Red Riding Hood* (1697) and Catherine Hardwicke's *Red Riding Hood* (2011)

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This research study seeks to examine the manner in which prejudiced images of masculinity and femininity in the classic French fairy tale *Le Petit Chaperon Rouge* by Charles Perrault (1697) have been redefined in its modern cinematic adaptation, *Red Riding Hood* (2011) by Catherine Hardwicke. Originally written centuries ago, fairy tales never cease to reappear in literature in different forms, where modern adaptations often twist their original versions with significant modifications. Redefined gender identity is one such modification prominently observed in modern fairy tale adaptations. Accordingly, this research study primarily attempts to investigate two research questions pertaining to the nature of the images that are used to portray masculinity and femininity in the original tale and in its modern version, and the similarities and dissimilarities in the depiction of gender identities in the selected texts. This study was conducted according to a qualitative research design, where the selected texts were analysed to determine their individual character distribution, the development of the major characters and the plot, with focus on their influence on the construction of gender identity. Subsequently, the findings of this preliminary analysis were juxtaposed to identify their similarities and differences. This secondary comparative analysis revealed that women are redefined from victims to survivors and heroines, whereas men are redefined from supremely strong and frightening 'beasts' to sensitive beings capable of love. Moreover, the expanded character scheme, reconstruction of the major characters (both male and female) and plot resolutions in the modern version were identified to have played a substantial role in destabilising the gender constructs of the classic tale. Hence, this study concludes that the absolute gender images in the classic tale have been neutralized in the modern text.

Keywords: Gender identity, Classic French fairy tales, Modern adaptations