

How radical are the changes to the gender roles



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The Company Of Wolves converts the classic character of Perusal's Little Red Riding Hood from a vive, gullible and helpless young girl to a ' strong-minded child' who has an awareness of the world around her while possessing the innocence and purity of a young woman also. Carter's protagonist is described as being ' strong-minded' which is radical in itself, as the classic gender role for a girl her age is the exact opposite - her innocence is a given, but it does not affect the way she thinks about things or how aware she is of her surroundings.

This is also evident in her '[laying] a carving knife' in her basket, as it conveys her mind set is one that knows of the dangers of the woods and the stories she as been told and still she ' insists' on going anyway with her own protection.

This is a radical change to the gender role because it shows a woman thinking for herself and putting herself in a position of danger by choice, because she knows how to protect herself without a man having to do it for her, as is so frequently the case in the Usual gender construction.

When this is contrasted with Perusal's Little Red Riding Hood, it is clear that the protagonist does not follow the conventions of fairy tales; Perusal's protagonist ' did not know that t was dangerous to stay and talk to a wolf which is an example of typical gender construction again, as she is naive and does not understand danger. Carter also radically adapts the quality of innocence; instead of the protagonist's chastity being the pinnacle of her weakness, it is the unseen protector that she possesses inside of her.

Carter describes her virginity as an 'invisible pentacle' that she moves within, as though it is the aura of purity that fends off danger, not attracts it.

'She does not know how to shiver' also reveals that she has never felt sexual pleasure, again instilling how pure she ally is. The innocence portrayed in Perusal's 'Little Red Riding Hood' is more of a child-like ignorance and a typically female ability to be distracted - while the wolf is making his way to her grandmothers, the protagonist is 'entertaining herself by gathering nuts, running after butterflies, and gathering bouquets of little flowers'.

This follows the convention that women's thoughts are more innocent, less intelligent and they do not have the ability to get down to the task at hand. Carter challenges this by showing that the protagonist is physically innocent, but not stupid.

Another radical change to the gender conventions is the lack of hysteria Carter's protagonist shows. This is clearly exemplified when her grandmother dies and she see's ; a tuft of white hair that had caught in the bark of an unburned log' and only thinks of the immediate situation (Owen the girl saw that, she knew she was in danger of death').

The protagonist has not cried, weeper or shrieked over her grandmother's death, but she has used it to further her knowledge and know that she needs to keep herself safe. This is radical because women are usually resented as crying, hysterical creatures who cannot control their emotions.

In Perusal's tale, however, the protagonist meets her demise due to a serious lack of awareness -? she points out all the features her grandmother does not usually have, and yet still fails to save herself.

This is clear in the last lines of the story -? for example, "' Grandmother, what big teeth you have the better to eat you up with. "' Although the protagonist had ample warning, as Carter's lead character did, she still doesn't realize the magnitude of the situation she is in. Carter challenges this by showing that women can take initiative instead of acting completely helpless.

The representation of men is also interesting in ' The Company of Wolves' because of the female reaction to him - instead of succumbing to the fate that her grandmother did, the protagonist uses her purity and womanly lure to get herself out of trouble. The contrast between her purity and his darkness is also explored, as the wolf ' brings night and the forest' into the kitchen ' tangled in its hair' - this conveys the idea that the wolf is the embodiment of darkness and represents men as irking, cunning and dark.

This is compared with the protagonist who ' brings with her the flurry of snow that melted in tears on the tiles'. As snow has been a symbol of purity throughout the tale, this conveys an image of her purity washing over the darkness Of the wolf and combining it with it. In this sense, the male is presented as less powerful - to a radical mind he is tender and willing to engage in sex with the protagonist instead of killing her. But to a conservative mind, the wolf is still very powerful, as either way the female protagonist can be seen as being taken advantage of.