A Postmodernist Fairy Tale

Denise A. Godwin

Summary

A complex fairy tale, Pierre Gripari's *Fairy Tale Patrol* is explored and revealed to be entirely postmodernist in its approach and its techniques. It begins where most writers of subversive fairy tales end: with a modulation of old ideologies, and ends in subversion subverted.

Opsomming

Pierre Gripari se komplekse sprokie, *Patrouille du Conte* word ontleed. Wat na vore kom, is die feit dat die verhaal geheel en al postmodernisties is wat sy aanslag en die tegnieke wat gebruik word, betref. Die boek begin waar die meeste skrywers van gemoderniseerde sprokies eindig: met die wysiging van vroeëre ideologieë, en dit eindig met die ondermyning van ondermyning.

1 Background

Fairy tales – a genre whose name, in English, is problematic because its tales do not always include fairies (Barchilon 1991)[1] – have their origin in an unknown past and are believed to respond, in mostly indefinable ways, to deeply felt needs of people of all ages, and of all times, For some, like Bettelheim (1986) any change in the shape, content or message of such tales is undesirable. For others, in the words of Michel Butor (1973: 362) "changing times and changing needs" validate the "giving of new names to the fairies". Profiting from a power for influence they attribute to the genre, writers sharing Butor's belief reappropriate tales and attempt to make them relevant to their own age.

The reappropriation of elements of such tales can be traced back at least to the Roman satirist Lucius Apuleius. The last three decades of the twentieth century have seen a proliferation of manipulations of the traditional tales. Some of these, slight both in appearance and effect, could be called mere modulations, while others, more radical, are subversions.

In all cases, the fundamental characteristic is, of course, the interplay of similarity and difference relative to given hypotexts. Linda Hutcheon (1989: 44) believes the similarity between versions explains the impact on the reader, "existing representations (. . .) [being] loaded with pre-existing meanings", while for Zipes (1986: 227), it is the difference that is important: "the familiar text is rendered unfamiliar in a deliberate attempt to give it new meaning". Ultimately, such a dispute seems academic: it is the modality of change, the (variable) significance of the distance separating text and hypotext that must dictate its influence.

An exploration of modified texts reveals that there is alteration of the two domains of form and content. The disruption of either can affect both message and impact on the reader; although distinguishable, they are not usually separable. It also becomes evident that there are at least three modes

of subversion. There is firstly a "simple subversion" (Godwin 1991a), an imitation of a normally functioning tale, which may change structure and motif[2] but still provokes the willing suspension of disbelief. A reader will read a text of this type, according to his recognition or ignorance of the existence of a model, at one or both of two levels: that of *story* and that of implied (new) meanings. The second mode intentionally disrupts the bond between reader and text, drawing attention to the fictionality of the fiction and preventing an escapist reading at least some of the time. A double subversion, it is a subverted text containing a subversive meaning (Godwin 1991b). These two modes tend to be simple with regard both to the number of their messages and to the number of texts they reappropriate. The third mode is seen in only one text known to us, and differs from the other two by its polysemy, by the large number of pre-texts alluded to, and most importantly, because of its self-contradictory nature – it is a mode of subversion subverted, as will be seen.

2 A Complex Text

The text in question is Gripari's *Fairy Tale Patrol* (1983). Gripari warns the reader, right from his dedication, of the wealth of sources to be used, for he invokes authors ranging from the seventeenth century to the modern day: Perrault, the Brothers Grimm, Afanassiev (an ethnographer and recorder of Russian tales), Galland (whose translation of the "Thousand and One Nights" – also called the "Arabian Nights" – has been the most widely accepted through the ages, first in France and then in England), Mardrus (also known for translation and adaptation of the "Arabian Nights"), and Poul Anderson, author of two works called "Guardians of Time" and "High Crusade", and who is the only one listed still alive after 1949. The range of hypotexts recalled in the course of the book is even greater.[3]

The dedication is in fact ambiguous: it was written *sous l'invocation de*, which implies both cause and consequence – "under the influence of" and "in homage to" – the named authors. Such ambiguity is typical of the fairy tale genre. It is a paradoxical combination of fantasy given as reality, and somehow accepted as reality. Its characters belong to each new generation of readers without being forgotten by the older generation, thus fusing past and present in a subtle way. There is also permanent dualism of readership. The tales have always belonged to both adult and child, and authors like Perrault can intensify this duality by means of a technique which implants false naïveté. In other words, there is normally more than one set of meanings, more than one way of reading the majority of fairy tales. This is doubly true of subverted tales. Gripari, however, appropriates, and intertwines all of these possibilities, increasing in each case the density and the complexity of the processes.

The *Fairy Tale Patrol* is layered. The reader discovers each new stratum, not as part of a linear succession of episodes and effects, but as a closely integrated part of a whole, each element always exerting its chemistry on the rest. The book will be presented here, initially, in a way that imitates the

effect of cumulative revelation managed by Gripari. The number of examples will have to be rigorously circumscribed, and it may be taken for granted that every type of episode described has at least one other illustration, if not several.

2.1 A Reassuring Appearance of Convention

The reader is initiated slowly and gently. The "teaser" on the back jacket of the book provides an adequate summary of the central story-line, which is faithfully established in the first few pages:

> A patrol composed of eight children, led by a lieutenant and directed by a captain, is given the mission of policing the Kingdom of Fairy Tales. For in that kingdom a lot of things happen which folklore tolerates, but which are far from moral: wolves eat little girls, which is cruel; ogres eat little boys, which is wicked; one may even meet the Devil there, which is not secular,[4] or even marry a prince or princess, which is not democratic (. . .).
>
> Our Patrol is supposed to impose a better order, and will go so far as to overthrow the king in order to transform the Kingdom of the Fairy Tale into a Republic.

The reader can thus expect to encounter two processes familiar from other readings of modulated tales: a movement from the real world into the fairy tale world, and a subversion of motif, character or resolution, perhaps all three, governed by a clear ideological policy, in this case stated by the leader of the patrol as

> the triple point of view of morality, mental health and human rights [which will involve] suppression and prevention of murder, (. . .) cruelty to animals, fraud, disloyalty, theft and class, racial, religious, nationalistic and élitist prejudice. . .in a word, anything bearing witness to a persistence of christian, feudal or monarchist mentalities.
>
> (Gripari 1988: 12)

The reader's expectation is fulfilled, at first. The patrol's first mission is to ameliorate the rhyme of *Mother Michael*. Her neighbour, the innkeeper, is prevented from stealing her cat to cook and serve it as rabbit stew. After this success, the group is sent on a second mission, that of stopping the wolf in *Red Riding Hood* from eating people. It is accepted that, being a carnivore, the wolf needs a daily dose of protein, and the grandmother is asked to provide a daily pie containing meat, eggs or cheese.

2.2 Convention Subverted

Unfortunately, the satisfactorily moral and antivivisectionist rescue of the cat from the innkeeper is not the end. Stories should cease to exist once their "crime" is eliminated, but *Mother Michael* does not disappear from the next edition of nursery rhymes, the story has merely changed: Mother Michael herself has cooked and eaten the cat. A further intervention by the patrol persuades her to spare the cat – but the three little pigs have the last word (or

the last bite. . .). Similarly, Red Riding Hood's grandmother, in a parody of the welfare system, decides she cannot afford to feed the wolf without compensation from the state. The patrol intends calling on the help of Red Riding Hood, but the three voracious little pigs get to the wolf first. The process for the prevention of crime does not seem to work, and the lieutenant (although he seems shocked most of all by the new mention of a chamber pot in a rhyme intended for children) recognises this for the case of *Mother Michael*, saying "the result of your intervention is even worse than the initial situation" (p. 29).

The gentle initiation is rapidly complicated by the author, and very soon, when spontaneous mutation has begun to occur in episodes and characters that had not yet been selected for revision, the patrol is forced to recognise a more global danger in their actions: "In short, our intervention, meant to humanise the fairy story, has made it a thousand times more barbaric" (p. 75). The story passes into a new phase, with the characters, as we shall see, escaping from the constraints not only of the new roles and scripts envisaged by the patrol, but also from their old, prototypal roles and scripts.

The reader periodically believes he has found a stable footing; it always turns out he is on shifting sands. We refer, for instance, to a version of *Cinderella* (pp. 79–86). For the duration of the reading, one is swept along on a wave of illusion, except for the disconcerting transformation of the Prince into a Devil. But one is also forced to read with the divided attention a good, polysemic text can provoke, and here, there is play at multiple levels. Firstly, there is the simple modernisation of motifs. Instead of lizards and rats and pumpkins, found in the garden – not a usual adjunct of French suburban life which is mainly lived in apartment buildings – the coach and driver are fabricated from an aubergine out of the fridge, and a dog. The product is a beautiful, shiny, maroon car and chauffeur. Gripari's Cinderella, having left the ball too late, is trapped within the remetamorphosed brinjal, and eaten by scavenging animals. There is a pastiche of Perrault's two moralities: the simple moral urging little girls to generosity and virtue has become a warning against the danger of leaving one's hearth; the indirect, worldly moral pointing out to parents the value of having influential patrons now takes the form of a warning to parents against the disruptive influence of falsely modest children.

The intertextuality of this story is not merely dependent on confrontation with Perrault's version. There is patently an answer – or a challenge? – to existing critical approaches. There is a riposte for the psychocritic: Cinderella is not a badly treated waif, she is a spiteful, manipulative child who feigns an exaggerated humility to make her new stepfamily ill at ease, and who, after she has refused their repeated persuasions to accompany them to the ball, resents the fact that they "took [her] at [her] word". Later in Gripari's book, the fairy godmother will lose her magic and be, instead of a witch, a psychoanalyst. There is even an answer to the polemic regarding the material from which Cinderella's shoes are meant to have been made.[5] Gripari's godmother explains her choice of material: the floor of the ballroom is carpeted, and glass will glide smoothly during a dance.

3 Techniques of Subversion

3.1 Intertextuality

It is now possible to attempt to describe the global approaches and effects of this book. As indicated earlier, it refers to a multiplicity of hypotexts, from Perrault to Asterix, and it is also autoreferential, since there is an intertextuality operating between internal stories and the text that contains them. The scavenging animals who eat Cinderella in her brinjal are in fact the three little pigs, characters who reappear throughout the book. This multiple intertextuality applies to all phases of the book and not just to the *Cinderella* tale. The book, in the happy phrase coined under other circumstances by Johan Degenaar (1990: 166), is an "intertextual event", and represents infinitely more than the mere modulation of a prior model, since it subverts, simultaneously, motif, structure, resolution and functioning, and not just of a single hypotext.

3.2 Archetype, Role, and the Blurring of Boundaries

The boundaries that in traditional tales keep the various motif-combinations and tale-types separate (Thompson 1955, 1964), begin to crumble rapidly as the reading continues. The theory of the existence of archetype and role is underlined at least twice. The patrol is told "there is only one king in story land, one wolf, one ogre, one witch – the same archetype serves in every tale" (Gripari 1983: 55). When "President" Tom Thumb and the lieutenant of the Patrol set out to ensure that the Sleeping Beauty falls asleep according to the prediction, the lieutenant offers some "advice" to Tom Thumb.

> In a fairy tale (...) the principal actions have to occur three times, the first two in vain and succeeding on the third try. No-one has ever known why, but each of us feels, deep inside, the need for that repetition: the desire, the urgent need for a ternary rhythm which alone gives us a feeling of satisfaction, of fulfilment, of perfect success.
>
> (Gripari 1988: 114)

Elsewhere, the patrol accepts the "necessity" of getting lost if they are to succeed in finding the ogre's house (p. 40).

This acceptance of tradition and archetype permits a complex fusion of character, role and function (Propp 1970), and consequent confusion of motif and episode across tale-types in the practice of the book. Tom Thumb and Puss-in-Boots' master-become-the-Marquis-of-Carabas-become-king- become-President, end up practically indistinguishable from each other. A double wedding at the end unites a single heroine who is both Snow White and Sleeping Beauty, to the son of the Marquis of Carabas, called "Charming Thumb" (*Poucet Charmant*). The second couple consists of *Riquet à la Houppe* and his usual bride. She is one of two sisters usually called in type-studies "Kind and Unkind" and frequently opposing, as in Perrault's tale, intelligence and stupidity; they are also associated, because of Riquet's ugliness, with "Beauty and the Beast" in a parodic pun (*bête* has the dual meaning of "ugly" and "unintelligent") as "The Ugly and the Stupid".

3.3 A Destruction of Chronology

These examples of the amalgams accomplished by Gripari also permit the comprehension of the way in which time is fused – a traditional tale never sees the heroes age, unless in the last line indicating longevity and happiness. (Such timelessness is, for instance, underlined by one of the world's traditional formulaic endings "If they've not died, they're living there still".) In Gripari's book, the intervention of the patrol seems also to liberate the characters from temporal constraints and it is a second generation that gets married in the case of the Marquis of Carabas' son, yet Riquet à la Houppe belongs to the previous generation. The temporality of the traditional fairy tale is disrupted in other ways too, since although the "new" version of *Cinderella* is read in "real time" by the members of the patrol who use the latest editions to check on the results of their policework, its events have also occurred in the fairy tale world, and what is more, are a spontaneous mutation – the patrol had not yet got around to tackling the immoral, undemocratic aspects of the story. Even stranger, the events can still be modified, at a future date....Time tends to ravel, and unravel, both backwards and forwards, changing what "had already" occurred.

3.4 Two Worlds Intertwined

The structure of the book is that of a framed story, with the movement of the patrol from the real world frame into the internal fairy stories, through the intermediary step of the parameters of the mission. The names of the patrol, *Am*, *Stram*, *Gram*, taken from a nonsense children's picking-rhyme (equivalent to "Eeny, Meeny, Miny, Mo") should prepare the reader for the ambivalence of the situation, and very swiftly it becomes virtually impossible to distinguish frame story and framed stories, real and fairy tale worlds, actual time and story world time. A television reporter, anachronistic visitor from today, is able to attend and commentate the events of the double wedding. At the end of the book, for reasons still to be shown, a glorious chaos is unleashed with the invasion of the whole of the real world, from China to the Morvan in France, by fairy story characters. And the breadth of Gripari's culture is evident in the specific fairy types he enumerates, fox-ladies for China, *korrigans* (sprites particular to the region) for Brittany, "Iznogoud" in a reminder of Goscinny and Uderzo's creation Asterix,[6] djinns for Marakesh...

3.5 Ambiguity of Style

The style and lexical registers are a source of ambivalence regarding the target audience. At the start of the book, *Bluebeard* is explicitly excluded from manipulation because it centres on questions of conjugal relations which have no part in a story aimed at the moral edification of children ("it will be done, but by adults" (Gripari 1983: 11)), and the youngest member of the patrol does not understand certain sexual allusions – he doesn't even know the meaning of the word "pornography" (p. 11). Yet the patrol consists of

soldiers, and their vocabulary reflects the slang and the earthiness of "the ranks" the world over. One soldier does not hesitate to call a spade a spade when he sees a stable hand and a scullery maid frozen, as it were, *in flagrante* in Sleeping Beauty's palace.When the palace is revisited, the author himself describes, as part of the havoc wrought by the three pigs, the wounds caused to sexual organs by selective nibbling. A broad, scatalogical, Rabelaisian humour is added to explicit sexuality when demons invade churches at the end of the book. Yet these aspects are counterbalanced by passages of sheer poetry. The author writes, when the patrol first penetrates the forest of the land of enchantment: "The trees, even the known species, take on strange forms. The trunks are unfamiliar, twisted, zigzag. The branches move like insect legs, searching, like antennae. The leaves gossip in the wind. . ." (pp. 39–40).

3.6 An Ambiguous Ideology

Gripari's ideological intentions, implicit or explicit, are never presented in the light of a simple, unequivocal moralism, likely to furnish guidelines for the reader. The three little pigs, for example, are simple and deliberately simple-minded, self-seeking and manipulative. Even the patrol feels they went too far when they ate Cinderella, a human being. But there is a dig at popular French journalism that loves to find alibis for "victims" of rigorous judiciary processes: "A crime? Oh . . . Yes and no! If it had been anyone else, you see, it's not the same thing. . . . They have special rights that others don't have, they are protected. . . they have suffered so!" (p. 51).[7] A traditional fairy tale is virtually never ambivalent with regard to its morality, whether implicit or explicit. Right is right and is seen to be so. In Gripari's book, it is frequently hard to decide whose side the author is on.

An example of the ambivalence in operation recalls the typical subverted tale's approach to discrimination and also the rediscovery and use, in France and the United States of the 1950's, of the word "negritude". The patrol, sent to persuade the ogre to desist from eating children, is to call him "Mr Man-eater" or "Mr Cannibal" to spare his feelings. The ogre is scornful of such tact, and declares that euphemisms are more hurtful than accuracy. He "is not afraid to assume his ogritude" (p. 46). This is a fair approach to the understanding of racism, and good intentions are also shown to be misguided during the visit to Arabia, where the patrol, sublimely ignorant of Muslim feelings and codes, is deservedly pursued and expelled from the territory. This is an example of the "normal" functioning of a tale in that it stimulates the reader to think about the reasons for the attitudes displayed. It is also a caution inserted by Gripari concerning the dangers of interfering with processes that one does not understand.

4 A Resolution?

The ending is prefigured by the lines, not yet quoted, that complete the "teaser" on the book jacket:

Is there no danger in attempting to censure things that originate in the wells of history and the collective subconscious? Isn't the process of democratisation also in a way a means of repression? Isn't Egaliterianism also a form of bigotry? Doesn't evil, stamped out in one place, tend to crop up elsewhere? Surely this grand attempt at humanising the fairy tale runs the risk of provoking a spectacular explosion of violence?

In the imaginary world, just as in nature, is it not wiser to let the various species consume each other, according to the preaching of ecologists?

4.1 Pastiche

All the answers are in the affirmative, and the process at work is thus patently complex, and disconcerting. Usually, subversion is the vehicle of an irony aimed at a particular politics or ideology, unless it is that rarity that Linda Hutcheon (1989 *passim*) calls "empty pastiche". Gripari's book is more than mere pastiche, which, according to the French *Robert* (1989), is "the imitation of the style or the manner of a master...with the intention of personalising that style and manner, or of showing stylistic virtuosity, or of parodying the author or his work". Gripari does all three at once, with the concomitant paradox implied by simultaneous appropriation and derision. It is certainly not simple, ludic "empty" pastiche. Admittedly the target is not one particular ideology; if Gripari achieves what Ihab Hassan calls "unsettling and resettling of codes" (in Hutcheon 1989: 18), he also adds a further unsettling... All the ideologies ever targeted by subverted fairy tales are again targeted in the *Fairy Tale Patrol*, but not as new or parallel persuasive theses, since each is in turn demolished or distorted. The effect is never that of an "ordinary" subversion. The same is true of critical approaches which are periodically applied to fairy tales. Gripari pretends to take them into account – but leaves the reader with no certitude regarding the model or the substitute. The story too brings the reader full circle, and the consequence is the destruction of the very principle of subversion.

4.2 Anarchy

By the end, utter chaos is unleashed on the real world and it is invaded by fairy tale characters, as already pointed out. The word "chaos" is used advisedly. It is as if the characters are liberated, because of the patrol's intervention, from necessary constraints that accompany their role and script, and they are able to fulfil any potential for anarchy that they may have possessed. They certainly have no interest in subscribing to ideals of morality, egalitarianism, socialism such as the patrol had hoped to implement in their world. The only recourse is to cancel the whole exercise, to nullify the subversions and return to the *status quo ante*; the "errors" in the traditional tales are a lesser evil.

4.3 And an Explanation

A longish quote shows that Gripari did not intend the reader to miss the point he is making. "The Ministry for fairy tales and the cultural environment"

requires the patrol to cease its efforts and disband, and the minister explains thus:

> We wanted to play with a world that is not ours, whose laws we do not understand. We wanted to impose our moral ideas on it, our political notions, our ideological imperatives. . .and we caused rejection, rebound, violent reactions. "The transplant failed to take?" "Exactly! Everything seems undeniably to lead to the conclusion that tyranny, cruelty, slavery, violence, superstition, bogies had a salutary effect, a purifying function. Everything seems to indicate that evil had to exist at any price, if not in the real world, then in legend and story; as if a place had to be made for it, a pedagogical importance accorded to it, a kind of legal representation.[8] When one tries to suppress it, it is repressed, concentrated, and it explodes in one's face. . ."
>
> (Gripari 1983: 156)

5 Conclusion

Gripari's book, the product of the modern era, needs the lexicon of modern times to describe it satisfactorily. Its verve makes it comparable to a theatrical and artistic "happening", "a spectacle of American origin (1950–1960) which requires the active participation of the public and which seeks to provoke spontaneous artistic creation" (Larousse 1980). For the reader does indeed participate, both by recognising the intertextual richness and in thinking about solutions to the dilemmas the patrol cannot resolve. The original participants show the requisite spontaneous behaviour, eluding both the "script" provided by the prototypal tale and that which the patrol attempts to impose.

The definition Linda Hutcheon (1989: 1–24) gives for postmodernism applies, point by point, to the *Fairy Tale Patrol*: it gives rise to "self-undercutting", its style is apt nevertheless to "acknowledge" the forms and contents it can never "escape"; "exploiting and challenging" simultaneously, its irony is always "complicitous". Revealed as creator and critic, for his book is consciously focused on pre-texts, Gripari has undertaken an exercise in deconstruction in the sense defined by Palmer (1988: 381): a text that "undermine[s] and refute[s] its own theses" – and he takes the process of deconstruction to its (il)logical limits, by challenging not only existing theses, but also those he apparently sought to put in their place. He is, in fact, both endorsing and parodying a postmodernist approach to literature, juxtaposing salutary exploration and a frustrating lack of finality.

The consequence of his exploration is a reaffirmation of the true nature of fairy tales as discourse whose origins were oral, elusive rather than fixed in written text,[9] which belong to an irretrievable past, and whose moral stance is not always fully comprehended. In so doing, he joins a long line of students of the fairy tale who warn of the likely distortions and the inevitable limits inherent in the modification of its texts. Such a warning is neatly expressed by Méchoulan (1992: 500) who concludes a recent study with a revealing pun on the homonym *fées* (fairies) and *faits* (facts), borrowing Nietzsche's phrase "there are no facts [or fairies], there are only interpretations".

Gripari's exploration of motif and technique thus vindicates the beliefs of both Bettelheim (1986) and Butor (1973), critics who stand at opposite ends of the spectrum of fairy tale readings. Bettelheim insists that the fairy tale is the bearer of profound, elusive existential significations (1986 *passim*); that being so, "the true meaning and impact of a fairy tale can be appreciated, its enchantment can be experienced, only from the story in its original form" (p. 19). Yet Butor's belief that modern times require modernised stories ("Fairies with New Names"), has been proved by Gripari to be equally valid. He shows that the fairy tales, after all, live on, untouched, but benefit from reflection on the *doxa* of the genre, on the methods by which subversion is achieved, on the reasons for which subversion is undertaken and on the difficulty of fully realising any subversion in view of the uncertain burden of pre-existent meaning.

Notes

1. All translations in this study are ours.
2. For the purposes of this article, the term "motif" is used in its broadest sense following Stith Thompson (1955) whose *Index* remains an indispensable tool for comparative studies. It thus indicates indifferently both conventional storysequences and their constituent elements. Criticism of Thompson's failure to distinguish between actions, characters, objects, and configurations is well known; consensus on how to accomplish such refinement in practice has not been reached (see for example, Meletinsky 1989: 21).
3. There are important modulations or glancing references in the book at least to: the picking rhyme "Am, Stram, Gram"; the Nursery rhyme "Mother Michael"; the tales of "Bluebeard", "The Three Little Pigs", "Tom Thumb", "Cinderella", "Riquet à la Houppe", "The Two Sisters", "Beauty and the Beast", "Babayaga" (a Russian sorceress), "Asterix", "Alibaba", "Sleeping Beauty" and "Snow White"; and to the fables of "The Wolf and the Lamb" and "The Crow and the Cheese".
4. After centuries during which the Church dominated most aspects of life and particularly education, the French considered it (and still consider it) a major step forward when education was taken out of the hands of the Church and made a function of the state, freed from all religious ties.
5. It is commonly believed that the slippers envisaged by Perrault were made of a mottled leather called *vair* in French and that the subsequent notion that they were made of glass (French *verre*) is due to confusion in transcriptions and translations caused by the homonym. Such a simple explanation has not prevented a great deal of speculation by critics on the putative importance of the material, which can vary. (See, for example, Usher, The Slipper on the Stair (Dundes 1988: 193–199)). The slippers of the Grimms' heroine Ashputtel are of "spangled silk" for the first ball, are not mentioned the second time, and are made of gold for the third ball. Mme d'Aulnoy's Finette Cendron drops a red mule as she leaves the palace.
6. Goscinny and Uderzo indulge in intertextuality too; when Asterix and Obelix visit Persia, the sultan refers to his cousin Iznogoud, the hero of a different series... (*Asterix and the Magic Carpet* 1987: 43).
7. A backlash against the trend for excusing undesirable behaviour appeared in *Time Magazine* (1991: 32). The author of an article entitled "Crybabies: eternal victims" affirms: "'We're not to blame, we're victims' is the increasingly assertive rallying cry of groups who see the American dream not as striving fulfilled but as

unachieved entitlement..." (p. 52) and "Under the corrosive influence of victimology, the principle of individual responsibility for one's own actions, once a vaunted American virtue, seems like a relic" (p. 53).

8. Compare the article on "The Uses of Monsters" in *Time Magazine* (1991: 32). "Monsters were created to teach lessons" (p. 45).
9. Eric Méchoulan (1992: 489–500) has recently demonstrated the existence, in Perrault's "Red Riding Hood", of a conscious celebration of the power of writing as bearer of more complex, more abstract and less literal sociomoral values than those inherent in the oral tradition from which the story derives.

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