

Europeana Learning Scenario

Title

Intertextuality and critical reading: the interest of parody (*Little Red Riding Hood*).

Author(s)

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Abstract

Some literary works never stop to question us. This is why they are constantly being rewritten, reinterpreted, thus maintaining a perpetual dialogue between different authors and different eras. This perpetual dialogue is analysed in this literature course: it is the process of intertextuality. I have already proposed a [Learning Scenario on intertextuality based on the myth of Robinson Crusoe](#).

This course allowed work between different disciplines, history, art history and philosophy. The one I propose now is easier to access and only concerns the literature course.

This course will also work on the definition of parody. We will work on Perrault's tale *Little Red Riding Hood*, rewritten many times:

Among all the rewritings, I chose to work on the Perrault version and on the adaptation of Tex Avery

Why? Tex Avery's adaptation raises two essential questions: that of interpretation and that of critical analysis. Tex Avery parodies Disney's mawkish interpretations and chooses to highlight the disturbing and violent dimension of the original tale.

Keywords

Fairy tale, intertextuality, parody, subversion, interpretation.

Table of summary

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Subject	Literature. Filmic analysis
Topic	Literature lesson. How to interpret a tale: functions of intertextuality and parody in different rewritings of <i>Little Red Riding Hood</i> .
Age of students	Between 10 and 15.
Preparation time	About 15 hours
Teaching time	About 8/10 hours.
Online teaching material	O365 TEAMS. Video: David Kaplan, Little Red Riding Hood .

Offline teaching material	Photocopies of the tales of Grimm, Perrault and Dahl.
Europeana resources used	Illustration of Stories from the Past . Analysis of images from Epinal on Little Red Riding Hood .

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Integration into the curriculum

Two themes are on the curriculum: reflecting on the hero and his evolution, getting to know, and building oneself. The two themes of reflection come together if we consider that *Little Red Riding Hood* belongs to the kind of initiatory story where the hero faces an ordeal and comes out of it grown up. The evolution of the character from a child to a young girl in the Tex Avery's adaptation also allows us to question the students on the **necessary questioning of norms** in order to build oneself. **The Tex Avery's character refuses to be a victim and asserts his power against the predatory wolf.**

Aim of the lesson

I would like them to understand a major issue **in reading** through the rewriting and adaptation of a story. Rewriting, it is responding to an author and proposing another meaning. Intertextuality manifests the infinite fecundity of works.

I would like them to perform researches on Europeana, with autonomy and in a relevant way.

Finally, I would like them to understand the interest of the interpretation of a work and that they know **how to identify a parody and its meaning.**

Trends

- Students inverted pedagogy: students master basic concepts of topic at home. Time spent in the classroom is used to reflect, discuss, develop topic. They complete some quiz on the online collaborative tool (O365 TEAMS), at home. (cf.appendix)
- Cloud-Based and open sources learning. Online tools (O365 TEAM) permit students to write and share their work
- Ability to perform a relevant search on Europeana.
- Sense of initiative and autonomy: for the oral presentation topics were assigned, but students could choose other references on Europeana.
- Collaborative Learning. Students work together in groups. Synthesis is written online, prepared in the group during the course. They have to assume shared responsibilities, respect different points of view.
- Communication skills: reading and understanding, express in a specific way their ideas.
- Development of critical thinking with the understanding of parody.

21st century skills

- Medias and technology skills: pupils learn how to use and combine resources from Europeana. In addition, by using TEAMS, pupils will develop ICT skills.
- Critical thinking: The ability to question thinking habits. Tex Avery's version questions the status of the woman as a victim and shows that she can defend herself. **The character of the grandmother transformed into a "cougar" who terrorizes the wolf by trying to seduce him, also shakes up the established models. An evolving society is a society that constantly re-evaluates its models.**
- Ability to understand criticism with the comprehension of tools such as caricature or parody. – analysing and understanding different sources of information (text and iconic); establishing connections to draw one own's conclusions; presenting arguments etc.
- Thinking about women rights and the evolution of women's role in society. This reflection can continue with the adaptation of a learning scenario on gender proposed by Maria Filomena Santoson on the platform teaching on Europeana: [A Farsa de Inês Pereira and gender equality: from the XVI to nowadays](#).
- Collaboration, pair work/ small group work; responsibility – autonomy during the whole process and accomplishment

Activities

Name of activity	Procedure	Time
What is a fairy tale? Definition and functions.	<p>Pupils goes on Europeana to analyze the frontispiece of a tale. They answer the questionnaire online. See Appendix 1. Quiz. Illustration of Perrault's tales.</p> <p>Work on Europeana: on the Europeana site, students research Charles Perrault and offer a report on the author. After this introduction, the teacher asks the students about their reading of Perrault's stories. What do they have in common?</p> <p>Based on the students' survey, the teacher offers a synthesis of the story and its functions. See Appendix 2. Synthesis on the Tale.</p>	3 hours
Tools to interpret a tale: definition and functions of parody in an interpretation	<p>The teacher asks the students to research Europeana on the Grimm brothers. Who are the Brothers Grimm? What era do they belong to? What is their contribution to the spread of fairy tales? What was their goal? Then, the teacher broadcasts the report on the Grimm brothers available on Europeana. The Grimm brothers' version of <i>Little Red Riding Hood</i> is read in class. Students compare the two versions.</p> <p>As a homework assignment, students must put on the collaborative platform of Teams a table summarizing the differences between the two versions.</p>	3 hours
Tools to interpret a tale: definition and functions of	<p>The pupils consult on Europeana Epinal pictures illustrating <i>Little Red Riding Hood</i>. They answer the questionnaire online. See Appendix 3. Epinal's illustration analysis.</p> <p>Then, students discover Tex Avery's world by viewing the documents available on Europeana. In class, with the teacher, the students watch</p>	1 hour

intertextuality in an interpretation	the short report on Tex Avery available on Europeana. What difference does the journalist make between Tex Avery and Walt Disney? The teacher then distributes in class the adaptation of <i>Little Red Riding Hood</i> by Tex Avery. As homework, students must answer an online questionnaire (TEAMS). Appendix 4. Tex Avery's adaptation quiz.	
Conclusion & Homework	As homework, students must answer an online questionnaire (TEAMS). See Appendix 4. Tex Avery's adaptation quiz. The teacher proposes an answer key. The notions of intertextuality and parody are explained. To finish the course, the teacher gives Roald Dahl's version to read.	2 hours 2 hours
Extra activities	The teacher can also propose the analysis of an advertisement of the director Luc Besson Chanel n°5 inspired by the tale, or the short film of 12 minutes by David Kaplan 1997. <i>Little red riding hood</i> . The teacher can also choose to study one of the many film adaptations among which: <i>Freeway</i> by director Matthew Bright (1996), or <i>Red riding hood</i> , by the director Catherine Hardwike (2011).	

Assessment

1 - Image analysis. Students answer a questionnaire on TEAMS that allows them to analyse the illustration of Perrault's tales. See **Appendix 1**.

2 - Image analysis. Students answer a questionnaire on TEAMS that allows them to analyse an Epinal's illustration of *Little red riding hood*. See **Appendix 3**.

3 - Film analysis. Students complete a questionnaire on TEAMS that allows them to analyse Tex Avery's adaptation of the story. The teacher will explain that Tex Avery blames Walt Disney for his mawkish and simplistic adaptation of the story.

4 - Pupils write an essay: Based on Tex Avery's literary and cinematographic findings, Roald Dahl and David Kaplan will reflect on the following topic:

Are fairy tales only for children?

or

Why do you think David Kaplan's adaptation is disturbing?

5 -The pupils could prepare **an oral presentation** on modern day examples of intertextuality like the rewrites of *Dracula*, *Snow White*, *Alice in Wonderland*. in ads/tv series/songs etc. They will have to try to explain why these stories still fascinate people.

***** AFTER IMPLEMENTATION *****

Student feedback

- Student self-assessment 1. See Appendix 5.
- Student self-assessment 2. See Appendix 6.

The teacher can suggest that students describe the course as a logbook, focusing on what interested them, bored, interviewed, etc.

The teacher can also suggest a class discussion to evaluate the contributions of the course and its shortcomings.

Teacher's remarks

This course allowed students to improve their general knowledge in an interesting and active way.

They understood that the arts maintain a dialogue (from the tale of a 17th century French author to a 20th century American director.) that knows no boundaries, whether temporal or geographical: the process of intertextuality proves it.

The "crudeness" of Tex Avery's adaptation didn't shock them, probably because of the comic and caricatural character. I could easily make them understand the "hyperbole" style. On the other hand, David Kaplan's adaptation, which I find very beautiful, more subversive, may have disturbed some pupils.

They are entering adolescence and Tex Avery's adaptation of the sexual dimension of the wolf's attraction has raised a lot of questions.

The feminist dimension of Tex Avery's and Dahl's discourse also gave rise to some very interesting debates. This allowed them to understand **how art was also a reflection of the evolution of a society.**

Finally, the fact of varying the materials and actively involving them in research on Europeana and the works online (O365 TEAMS) contribute to making the course dynamic and lively.

About the Europeana DSI-4 project

[Europeana](#) is Europe's digital platform for cultural heritage, providing free online access to over 53 million digitised items drawn from Europe's museums, archives, libraries and galleries. The Europeana DSI-4 project continues the work of the previous three Europeana Digital Service Infrastructures (DSIs). It is the fourth iteration with a proven record of accomplishment in creating access, interoperability, visibility and use of European cultural heritage in the five target markets outlined: European Citizens, Education, Research, Creative Industries and Cultural Heritage Institutions.

[European Schoolnet](#) (EUN) is the network of 34 European Ministries of Education, based in Brussels. As a not-for-profit organisation, EUN aims to bring innovation in teaching and learning to its key stakeholders: Ministries of Education, schools, teachers, researchers, and industry partners. European Schoolnet's task in the Europeana DSI-4 project is to continue and expand the Europeana Education Community.

Appendix 1

Quizz. Illustration of Perrault's tales



Document: Illustrations de [Histoires ou contes du temps passé avec des moralités](#), Bibliothèque nationale de France, No Copyright.

1. Describe the scene
2. What position are children in relation to adults? What can you deduce from this?
3. What are the elements that make this scene a pleasant one?
4. What is written on the wall?
5. Do you like this illustration? Why do you like it?

Appendix 2. Synthesis on the tale.

Tales had a dual function, that of entertaining and that of instructing. Originally, they were told orally. The tales carry a cultural charge from this oral tradition and have a timeless aspect in the sense that they do not relate to any place or time. They draw their origins, as is the case with myths and legends, from universal subjects. This is why they are found everywhere in different variants and versions. These successive transmissions have had the effect of simplifying the narrative. Each narrative set a particular variant in time and space. There were thus a multitude of versions of the same tale.

Charles Perrault invented the literary tale by setting down in writing stories that had hitherto belonged to the strict oral tradition. He composed his tales from 1691 onwards, including 3 stories in verse (including *Peau d'Âne*) and 8 stories in prose (including *Little Red Riding Hood*).

His writing in the **17th century** allowed his stories to be widely distributed... It is with the *Tales of My Mother Goose*, published in 1697, that the written word definitively took over the oral tradition. It should also be noted that the tale is one of the richest literary texts because it draws on all literary genres (storytelling, theatre, poetry: cf. morality versified and rhymed), song).

The fairy tale is thus a narrative. In its structure, it includes invariant ingredients. It is a marvellous universe where animals speak, outside of space and time. The repetition of formulas helps to create a magical atmosphere: "pull the anklet and the bobbin will open". The tale often frightens the child, it allows him to learn how to overcome difficulties. It stages the passage from child to teenager to adulthood. Starting from a complex family situation, the hero (the heroine) must overcome a series of trials to build his personality and find a stable situation, which is sometimes enshrined in the famous formula: "they got married and had many children". Fairy tales have the characteristic of posing existential problems in brief and precise terms. The child can thus face these problems in their essential form, whereas a more elaborate plot would complicate matters for him.

The fairy tale simplifies all situations. Its characters are clearly drawn... Just as a polarization dominates the child's mind, it dominates the fairy tale. Each character is either all good or all bad. One brother is stupid, the other intelligent. One sister is virtuous and active, the others infamous and indolent. One is beautiful, the others are ugly. One of the parents is all good, the other all bad... This contrast of characters allows the child to easily understand their differences, which he would be unable to do so easily if the protagonists, as in real life, were to present themselves with all their complexity. Cf. Bruno Bettelheim in *Psychoanalysis of fairy tales*.

In the **18th century**, **Mrs. Leprince de Beaumont** published moral tales, the most famous of which, *Beauty and the Beast*, is among the classics of children's literature.

However, after having become an object of contempt for the learned, who considered that "this type of narration [was] reserved for those on the margins of reason: women, children, peasants," traditional folk tales experienced a renaissance in the early **19th century** thanks to the **Grimm brothers'** book, published in 1812. In writing these tales, Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm's primary objective was solely of a linguistic and philological nature, since they wanted to preserve and study the German language through a corpus of collected traditional folk tales. Some of these tales have nevertheless become indispensable references in children's storytelling (notably *Snow White*, adapted as a cartoon by Walt Disney, or *Hansel and Gretel*).

One cannot talk about fairy tales without finally mentioning the Danish writer **Hans Christian Andersen**, whose stories such as *The Little Mermaid* (reprinted in films by Walt Disney, in a modified version), *The Ugly Duckling* and *Thumbelina* have become classics. Andersen's originality lies in his

imagination, for although influenced by traditional folk motifs, these tales do not draw directly on popular sources such as Perrault or Grimm.

By their continuous success since **1937**, **Disney films** have shaken the transmission of tales from the literary tradition since the cinematic versions have imposed themselves on young audiences to the detriment of written narratives. That's why most children today first know the cartoons of *Cinderella*, *Sleeping Beauty* and *Snow White* before learning about Perrault and the Brothers Grimm. However, cartoons are even less faithful than books to the tales they tell, because their creators have modified the original plot to add or delete episodes. The case of Andersen's *The Little Mermaid*, popularized among children by Walt Disney's cartoon, is a good illustration of the extent of these changes, since the film has a happy ending in which the Little Mermaid marries the prince and enters the world of humans for good. But Andersen's tale ends with a tragic ending in which the heroine agrees to sacrifice herself to save the prince and kills herself. The cartoon has therefore obscured from the children the true ending of the tale.

Conclusion: Centuries after Perrault's tales, and long after their ancient sources, the tales are still alive. They never cease to arouse the curiosity and interest of the reader and to generate new writings and reflections. *Little Red Riding Hood* alone has inspired more than a hundred texts, where the girl is not necessarily a victim and the wolf not always a predator. The transposition of texts from the past to contemporary events enriches them by creating new material with different views on well-known texts. The use of the parody of tales in children's editions has been in use for many years. Cf. Boris Moissard, Tony Ross, Gianni Rodari, Pierre Gripari, Grégoire Solotareff and Nadja etc.

Appendix 3. Analysis of Epinal pictures illustrating *Little Red Riding Hood*.

1. What is an Epinal's image? What is their origin?
2. Does these illustrations of *Little Red Riding Hood* correspond to the traditional image? Justify your answer.
3. What are the main stages of the story ?
4. How does the illustrator underline the disturbing dimension of the wolf?
5. Do you know other versions of the end of the story? Which versions?



Appendix 4.

Watch **Tex Avery's version of [Little Red Riding Hood](#)** (1943)

- 1-With what processes does the draftsman make fun of the traditional version of the story?
- 2-Describe the transformation of each of the characters. What comic elements can you identify?
- 3- What do you think about the evolution of the character of the little Red Hood?
- 4- How is Tex Avery's version surprising?
- 5- Which version do you prefer? Why?



Appendix 5

Student self-assessment 1. Name :

<p>What difference do you see between the morality of the original tale and that of Tex Avery?</p>	<p>What do you see in common between Tex Avery's version and that of Roal Dahl?</p>
<p>What do you see in common between Tex Avery's version and David Kaplan's version?</p>	<p>Which version do you prefer? Explain why.</p>

Appendix 6

Student self-assessment 2.

How to interpret *Little Red Riding Hood*?

Name :

<p><i>Description of the work done in class:</i></p>	<p><i>Has this work changed your understanding of fairy tales? In what way?</i></p>
<p><i>What did you like in this lesson? What difficulties did you had?</i></p>	<p><i>In your opinion, is Tex Avery right to make fun of Walt Disney? What did this course on intertextuality and parody teach you?</i></p>