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Brazilian rewritings of
Perrault’s short stories

Nineteenth- and twentieth-century versus
twenty-first-century retellings and consequences
for the moral message

Anna Olga Prudente de Oliveira

Abstract
This chapter analyzes Brazilian rewritings of Charles Perrault’s tales from the book Histoires ou contes du temps passé, avec des moralités or Contes de ma mère l’Oye (Stories or Tales from Past Times, with Morals or Mother Goose Tales) from a diachronic and synchronic perspective with the aim of comprehending the different forms in which the seventeenth-century French writer's stories have been rewritten in the Brazilian literary system. Informed by Descriptive Translation Studies and based on André Lefevere’s theoretical work on rewriting and patronage, it is suggested that rewritings (translations, adaptations, etc.) exert a central role in establishing or maintaining literary canons and project new or distinct images of works and authors. These images align with the poetological and ideological conceptions of rewriters and their editors. Two time periods reflecting different perspectives are observed: from the end of the nineteenth century throughout most of the twentieth century, and from the 1990s into the twenty-first century. In the first period, the prevailing conceptions of literature and translation allowed Perrault’s tales to be retold with many kinds of modifications. However, from the 1990s to the mid-2010s, new editions have been published that give these stories a literary and authorial perspective by maintaining the full text, including the morals in verse, which were previously suppressed.

Introduction

Containing the tales “The Beauty in the Sleeping Forest,” “Little Red Riding Hood,” “Bluebeard,” “The Capable Cat or Puss in Boots,” “The Fairies,” “Cinderella or The Little Glass Slipper,” “Riquet with the Tuft” and “Little Thumb,” the book Stories or Tales from Past Times, with Morals or Mother Goose
*Tales*, by the seventeenth-century French writer Charles Perrault, went on to become one of the most famous works for children and young people. It was at its time of writing that the French term *contes de fées* [fairy tales] began to designate the literary genre in vogue in the salons of the Louis XIV court, which consisted of narratives made up and retold by women in the main, but also by men, like Perrault himself. As Jack Zipes explains:

The French writers created an institution, that is, the genre of literary fairy tale was institutionalized as an aesthetic and social means through which questions and issues of *civilité*, proper behavior and demeanor in all types of situations, were mapped out as narrative strategies for literary socialization, and in many cases, as symbolic gestures of subversion to question the ruling standards of taste and behavior. (Zipes 1999, 334)

In other words, while Perrault’s literary fairy tales may have gone on to attain the status of timeless classics, they were elaborated according to specific literary conceptions in a particular setting. It is in this way that the peculiarities of each of the eight tales from his book can be comprehended: stories told in prose followed by a moral in verse, in which the writer expresses – sometimes with a critical perspective, other times with irony – his own conclusions about the story told.

Informed by Descriptive Translation Studies, the theoretical perspective adopted here approaches the various rewritings of Perrault’s short stories as cultural artifacts belonging to different times and literary systems. These artifacts reflect the specific worldviews and literary conceptions of their rewriters (translators, adaptors, etc.) and their editors (as agents of patronage). *Rewriting* is understood here using André Lefevere’s concept, who defines rewriters thus:

> Whether they produce translations, literary histories or their more compact spin-offs, reference works, anthologies, criticism, or editions, rewriters adapt, manipulate the originals they work with to some extent, usually to make them fit in with the dominant, or one of the dominant ideological and poetological currents of their time. (Lefevere 1992, 8)

To study a foreign literature in a specific literary system, it is therefore necessary to analyze what I call the *rewriting factor*. This entails turning attention to the actual translations, adaptations, and other types of rewritings that exist in the literary system in question. If, as Donald Haase states, fairy tales are products of their time, with “specific sociocultural roots (…) [and] historically
determined values” (Haase 1999, 359), when rewritten as translations or adaptations, these tales will also express different ideological and poetological conceptions (Lefevere 1992, S). As such, they may significantly alter or transform how the target audience reads them. As this study will discuss, Perrault’s tales were first presented to the Brazilian readership at the end of the nineteenth century and continue to be present in different kinds of rewritings to the present day. However, the significance ascribed to Perrault’s tales will differ significantly according to the time and the rewriters’ perspectives on literature for children and young people. Perrault’s tales exist in their own context, as do the other (re)writings, such as those by the Brothers Grimm in the nineteenth century. Similarly, when a work is rewritten in another literary system, this new rewriting is permeated by the values of its culture and time, reflecting its own relations of patronage and the particular perspectives of its rewriters.

The role of rewriting in the development of Brazilian children’s literature

In Brazil, the development of a national literature aimed at children dates back to the nineteenth century, with writers such as Figueiredo Pimentel (1869–1914). It then reaches a striking and decisive moment in the early twentieth century with the writer Monteiro Lobato (1882–1948). (See Lima and Pereira’s contribution in this volume for more on the development of Brazilian children’s literature.) We can observe that rewritings exert a significant influence on this incipient literature, as Nelly Novaes Coelho points out:

The first literary books for children (...) appeared at the same time as forms of teaching designed to bring Brazilian culture into line with that of [so-called] civilized nations. These books were evidently not originals, but translations or adaptations of works that were popular amongst children in Europe.¹ (Coelho 2006, 18)

One of the first literary children’s book published in Brazil was an anthology of tales called Contos da Carochinha [Old Wives’ Tales], by Figueiredo Pimentel.

¹ Unless otherwise stated, all translations are by the author. In Portuguese: “os primeiros livros literários infantis (...) surgiram simultaneamente às formas do ensino que procuravam adequar a cultura brasileira à das [assim chamadas] nações civilizadas. Tais livros, evidentemente, não eram originais, mas traduções ou adaptações de obras que, na Europa, faziam sucesso entre os pequenos.”
Published by Livraria Quaresma in 1896, it contained sixty-one stories and was presented as a “book for children containing a wonderful collection of popular, moral and useful tales from various countries, some translated and others collected from the oral tradition” (Pimentel 1911, cover). Pedro Quaresma, the owner of the bookshop and publishing house, exerted an important role as an agent of patronage for Brazilian children’s literature. He published translations and adaptations into Portuguese and children’s books by Brazilian authors at a time when Brazilian children’s literature was still in its infancy. Quaresma subverted the prevailing order in the publishing market, which was dominated by foreign books and publishers based in Europe, such that many Brazilian writers had no choice but to publish abroad. In the Livraria Quaresma catalogue, alongside the aforementioned anthology of fables, there are other books published for children at the time, such as Histórias da Baratinha [The Cockroach’s Stories], Histórias do Arco da Velha [Amazing Stories], O Castigo de um Anjo [The Punishment of an Angel] and Histórias da Avozinha [Granny’s Stories], the last of which is presented as

a very fine volume containing 50 stories of the most varied kind, humorous, serious, happy and sad, which speak of werewolves, saints, miracles and fairies, all, however, very moral, in order to teach children to love their neighbor, to care for animals, to do good deeds and be virtuous; in short kind and good sentiments. (Pimentel 1911, 12; emphasis added)

By the end of the nineteenth century, there was already a need in Brazil for literature aimed at children. These tales were thus (re)written as children’s literature, based on the understanding that books for children should not only entertain, but must also have an educational and moral function, as can be seen from the paratexts of the editions. (Re)writing for children should exert its function of pedagogical art. This is made explicit in the text by the editors of the new book in the Livraria Quaresma catalogue:

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2 There is a previous edition (1894), which “was a small 200-page brochure, containing [only] forty stories” (“Preface to the 17th edition.” In Pimentel 1911, ix).
3 In Portuguese: “Livro para crianças contendo maravilhosa coleção de contos populares, morais e proveitosos de vários países, traduzidos uns, e outros apanhados da tradição oral” (original with updated spelling).
4 In Portuguese: “Lindíssimo volume contendo 50 histórias das mais variadas, sérias, humorísticas, alegres e tristes, onde se fala em lobisomens, em santos, em milagres e em fadas, todas, porém, muito morais, de modo a ensinar às crianças o amor do próximo, o afeto aos animais, a prática do bem e da virtude; em suma sentimentos generosos e bons” (original with updated spelling).
Written in simple language, as befits children, *Contos da Carochinha* is a valuable book, an eternal book, because in Brazil to this day nothing to equal [these tales] has been published; they are eternal, they date from centuries past and will last for centuries yet. To mothers, teachers and people in general, we recommend this precious book, the only one capable of leading children towards good and virtue, delighting and entertaining at the same time.\(^5\) (Pimentel 1911, 11; emphasis added)

The above paratexts about these two very popular books, *Histórias da Avozinha* and *Contos da Carochinha*, reveal some of the prevailing ideological conceptions concerning literature for children in late-nineteenth-century Brazil: moralism combined with an educational purpose. As Leonardo Arroyo states in *Literatura Infantil Brasileira* [Brazilian Children’s Literature], “tales with a moral basis [were] in accordance with the conceptions of the time about what children should read” (Arroyo 2011, 236).\(^6\) A review in the newspaper *Diário de Notícias* about *Contos da Carochinha* corroborates this perspective, considering it an excellent work of great usefulness for schools, because, at the same time that it delights children, interesting them in the narration of very well delineated moral tales, it arouses in them sentiments of good, of religion, and of charity, major elements of children’s education.\(^7\) (Sandroni 2011, 38)

As Coelho observes, the sixty-one stories in the book consisted of “tales by Perrault, Grimm and Andersen, fables, apologues, allegories, cautionary tales, legends, parables, proverbs, playful tales, etc.” (Coelho 2006, 30).\(^8\) These rewritings, however, were not related to their sources, as the edition contains no mention of the authorship or origins of each story. Figueiredo Pimentel

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5 In Portuguese: “escritos em linguagem fácil, como convém às crianças, os *Contos da Carochinha* são, pois, um livro valioso, um livro eterno, porque no Brasil até hoje nada se tem publicado que os iguale; eles são eternos, datam de séculos e séculos durarão ainda. Às mães de família, aos educadores e ao povo em geral, recomendamos este precioso livro, único que pode guiar as crianças no caminho do bem e da virtude, alegrando e divertindo ao mesmo tempo” (original with updated spelling).

6 In Portuguese: “contos de fundo moral [estavam] de acordo com os conceitos da época em matéria de leituras para crianças.”

7 In Portuguese: “excelente trabalho de grande utilidade para as escolas, porque, ao mesmo tempo que deleita as crianças, interessando-as com a narração de contos morais muito bem-traçados, lhes desperta os sentimentos do bem, da religião e da caridade, principais elementos da educação da infância.”

8 In Portuguese: “contos de Perrault, de Grimm e de Andersen, fábulas, apólogos, alegorias, contos exemplares, lendas, parábolas, provérbios, contos jocosos etc.”
made use of existing models in foreign cultures – fairy tales, folk tales from oral traditions, and other sources – in order to elaborate versions that he considered appropriate for Brazilian children. Without any identification of the source texts, Pimentel’s anthology would appear to contain six stories whose titles suggest they came from Perrault. However, after a textual analysis (Oliveira 2018, 124–126), it was found that only three can be regarded as rewritings of Perrault’s tales on the basis of plot similarities: “The Beauty in the Sleeping Forest,” “Bluebeard,” and “Puss in Boots.” A general feature of Pimentel’s tales is the absence of the moral in verse and the exclusion of the line “once upon a time,” typically used to open fairy tales by Perrault. Likewise, the stories are relocated, situated in specific times and places, and the characters are personalized and given proper names, which is not very common in fairy tales.

It is interesting to observe that the modifications made by Pimentel often do not bring the text any closer to the Brazilian reality; on the contrary, they introduce images of worlds distant from the readership’s reality, such as the ‘Ori-ent,’ as we see in “The Beauty in the Sleeping Forest,” whose father is introduced as “The Emperor of the Turks, Tamerlão I” (Pimentel 2006, 112).\(^9\) The values the rewriter inscribes on the text can be seen from the gifts the fairies bestow on the princess: “On the day of the baptism, all [the fairies] appeared and prophesied great happiness for the young Iris, wishing her *comeliness, beauty, fortune, kindness, talent, and a rich fiancé*” (ibid., emphasis added).\(^10\) At the end of the story, the princess and the prince, who have proper names (Iris and Heitor), get married “with such bounty that no longer exists, even in countries of the Orient” (ibid., 114).\(^11\) In this tale, Pimentel evokes a culture considered distant and exotic at the time, which provided an imagery of exuberance and opulence. *Contos da Carochinha*, published in the late nineteenth century, was a landmark in Brazilian children’s literature and was passed down through the generations, influencing readers throughout the twentieth century. Even in contemporary times, a new edition of the book was brought out by the publishing house Villa Rica (2006).

As one of the pioneers of Brazilian children’s literature, Figueiredo Pimentel played an important role in bringing literary models from the oral tradition and the foreign children’s literature canon to the national literary system and making these works fit for the purpose of the moral education of Brazilian children. However, it was with Monteiro Lobato that the development of a literature aimed at children gained more substance. A writer, translator, editor-in-chief and

\(^9\) In Portuguese: “O imperador dos turcos, Tamerlão I.”
\(^10\) In Portuguese: “No dia do batizado compareceram todas [as fadas], e vaticinaram à jovem Iris todas as felicidades, desejando-lhe formosura, beleza, fortuna, bondade, talento, e um noivo rico.”
\(^11\) In Portuguese: “com um brilhantismo que hoje não existe, nem mesmo nos países do Oriente.”
owner of a publishing house, Lobato was already “concerned with innovating and expanding the Brazilian publishing market, which was then very precarious” (Coelho 2006, 639). Although Pimentel’s and Lobato’s rewritings may have been produced at relatively similar times and driven by comparable beliefs about the existence of a child audience with specific demands, they differ in terms of their objectives and, as a consequence, the literature they produced.

While Pimentel’s work was guided by conceptions of an educational and moralizing function for children’s literature, Lobato planned to create a Brazilian children’s literature guided by the tastes and interests of children. With Lobato, Brazilian children’s literature gained a strong enough impetus to push the balance between art and education more towards art, toning down or making less explicit the didactic or educational intent. At the time, the incipient publishing market was restricted to a very few publishing houses, which focused on established authors. So it was that in 1919, Lobato founded Monteiro Lobato & Cia, later renamed Companhia Editora Nacional, and “introduz[ed] totally new processes to the publishing market: open[ed] space for new writers; modernize[d] not only the books’ graphic design, but also the sales and commercial distribution processes” (Coelho 2006, 637). In his plans to develop Brazilian literature, Lobato the editor became an important agent of patronage, while as a writer and translator he inaugurated a new literature for children.

Lobato worked to translate many authors of adult and children’s literature, believing that the existing Portuguese translations (Brazilian readers’ main way of accessing foreign literature) were hard to understand. He felt that the structure and vocabulary used were anachronistic. In the letters he wrote to his friend and translator Godofredo Rangel, published in the book A Barca de Gleyre [Gleyre’s Boat], Lobato set out his thoughts about translation and his general editorial approach. He treated all the works he intended to translate in a similar way; he did not regard them as ‘untouchable,’ but as works that should be translated in such a manner that the Brazilian audience could come to like and appreciate them. In a letter dated 1925, he therefore made Rangel a proposal:

I am sending the songs taken from Shakespeare’s plays so you can choose some of the most interesting ones to translate into quite singular language; I want to turn each song into a short book for children. Translate about

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12 In Portuguese: “preocupado em inovar e expandir o campo editorial brasileiro, então precário.”

three of your own choice and send us them with the original; I want to use the prints. Keep the style straightforward, OK? And feel free to improve on the original wherever you want. (Lobato 2018, 100, trans. Atkinson)

Lobato’s aim was to render the works accessible, transforming them to language that could be easily comprehended by everyone, and thereby making them pleasing to the audience. Writing against a hermetic literature, he finished the letter with a cry from the heart and a call to arms: “I’m taking a look at the tales by Grimm that Garnier gave me. Poor Brazilian children! What a Portuguese accent these translations have! We really must redo them all – make the language sound Brazilian” (Lobato 2018, 101, trans. Atkinson). Lobato imposed on his translation process – and also on the translators from his publishing house – the task of helping to constitute and fortify the nation’s incipient children’s literature. Rather than just translate, he wanted to “make the language sound Brazilian,” and he was not afraid of taking radical measures in the process, such as cutting out sections of the works, as we can see in a letter from 1924 (in this excerpt, talking about literature for adults):

Do not be in a hurry with Michelet. Take your time. I think it is a great book, even if it is quite big. We could abridge it by cutting the introduction. If you put some alum in the ink, you could shorten it by some fifty pages in the translation. (Lobato 2018, 100, trans. Atkinson)

Translation strategies that drastically alter the source text (severely abridging it, for example) can be seen as adapting this source text, taking into account a certain target literary system and a certain target audience, even if the publishers of such rewritings present them as translations. Concerning the development of works aimed at children, a letter from 1916 reveals how Lobato was already reflecting on his proposal to transform foreign stories into Brazilian ones, as well as his desire to create a new literature for this audience. Having published his first book for children in 1920, A Menina do Narizinho Arrebitado [The Girl with Little Nose Turned Up], he had already acted on behalf of a Brazilian children’s literature in his work as an editor/translator. Commenting on the reception of the stories told for children, Lobato shows his perception that the morals of the fables were not suitable for such readers and reveals how free he felt to make whatever transformations that he found necessary for his project, as we can see in another letter to Rangel:

I have many ideas in mind. One: to garb the old fables by Aesop and La Fontaine in national dress, using only prose and reworking the morals.
Something for children. It came to me when I noticed how engrossed my little ones are by the fables Purezinha tells them. They remember them and retell them to their friends – but without paying the least attention to the morality, as is normal. Morality stays in our subconscious to reveal itself later on as our understanding grows. It strikes me that a collection of fables with animals from here rather than from abroad, if it were done artfully and skillfully, would be an absolute gem. The fables in Portuguese that I know, normally translations of La Fontaine, are clumps of brambles in the forest – prickly and impenetrable. What can our children read? I haven’t a clue. Fables like that would be a first step in the literature that we lack. As I have something of a knack for pulling the wool over people’s eyes, so that they take my skill for actual talent, I am toying with the idea of starting something. Our children’s literature is so limited and stupid that I cannot find anything for my children’s early years. (Lobato 2018, 99–100, trans. Atkinson)

As part of this bid to bring out works that could be understood and appreciated by Brazilian children, Companhia Editora Nacional [1934] published Lobato’s translation of Perrault’s Tales, containing “Little Red Riding Hood,” “The Fairies,” “Bluebeard,” “Puss in Boots,” “Donkey Skin,” “Cinderella,” “Riquet with the Tuft,” “The Sleeping Beauty” and “Little Thumb.” The only one not from Tales of Mother Goose was “Donkey Skin.” This tale, originally written in verse, was presented in prose by Lobato. He translated the eight tales of Mother Goose, excluding the morals, and although he did not make any great alterations to the prose, he adopted a markedly colloquial style designed to give the effect of orality, with idioms, onomatopoeia and explanations of difficult or unknown terms – elements that were not present in the source text. An emblematic example is the term ‘ogre,’ used by Perrault in tales such as “The Beauty in the Sleeping Forest,” which Lobato translated as papão (masculine) and papona (feminine), a word that is very familiar to Brazilian children because of the expression bicho papão [bogeyman], a monster that would come out at night and eat little children. There is a passage in Perrault’s text with the following description: “La reine-mère envoya sa bru et ses enfants à une maison de campagne dans le bois, pour pouvoir plus aisément assouvir son horrible envie” (Perrault 2002, 126). (“The queen mother sent her daughter-in-law and her children to a country house in the woods, in order to assuage her unspeakable desire more easily” (Perrault 2002, 127, trans. Appelbaum).) Lobato translates this passage with an explanation:

a rainha-mãe enviou a nora e os meninos para uma casa de campo situada no meio da floresta, bem longe, onde ela, rainha, pudesse dar largas ao seu
apetite de bruxa, filha de ogro comedor de crianças, ou papão. Era paponha, a diaba.

The queen-mother sent her daughter-in-law and the children to a country house far away in the middle of the forest, where she, the queen, could unleash her witch’s appetite, as she was the daughter of a child-eating ogre, a bogeyman. She was a bogeywoman, a she-devil. (Perrault 2007, 72, my translation, emphasis added)

In this short passage, Lobato inserts an explanation of the term, putting it in a way that would be familiar to his target audience: children.

In translating Perrault, Lobato introduced Brazilian children living in the early 1900s to the famous fairy tales of world literature that were not yet available in translation in Brazil. Unlike his precursor, Pimentel, whose *Contos da Carochinha* gave no indication of the source authors used and were essentially free adaptations of tales from many origins, Lobato’s rewritings, despite dropping the morals in verse, gave Brazilian readers access to Perrault’s prose.

After these two books, which marked the early development of Brazilian children’s literature, other editions of Perrault’s tales were published in Brazil. These included the rewritings by Olívia Krähenbühl (Círculo do Livro 19--), Ariadne Oliveira (Melhoramentos 1983/1987), Maria Cimolino and Grazia Parodi (Rideel 1993), and also an edition by the publishing house Paulinas, from 1962, whose rewriter is not identified. All of these texts have one thing in common: the exclusion of the morals in verse. Some of them also abridge or significantly alter parts of the narratives, adjusting the text with their target audience in mind (Oliveira 2018). Even the edition by the translator Olívia Krähenbühl, which is presented as a “complete edition” of Perrault’s work, excludes the morals and gives no explanation for this in any of the book’s paratexts. Of the editions analyzed in my research, only at the end of the twentieth century, in the 1990s, did rewritings of Perrault’s tales begin to be published with the morals, as in the case of the rewriting by Ruth Rocha, a prominent name in Brazilian children’s literature. In her book *Contos de Perrault* [Perrault’s Tales], published for the first time in 1988, with the latest edition in 2010, Rocha announced in the Introduction that she was keen to “maintain the narratives of these tales totally faithful to their originals” (Rocha 2010, 5). Aimed at children, Rocha’s rewriting includes not only Perrault’s prose but also some of his verses.

14 In Portuguese: “manter as narrativas destes contos de Perrault inteiramente fiéis aos seus originais.”
Rewritings in the twenty-first century

Since 2005, many new rewritings of the work of the French author have been published in Brazil. The perspective envisioned in Ruth Rocha’s translation project is the dominant characteristic of contemporary rewritings. The rewriters tend to be well-known writers for children or literary translators: Ana Maria Machado (Global 2005), Rosa Freire d’Aguiar (Companhia das Letrinhas 2005/2012), Katia Canton (DCL 2005), Mário Laranjeira (Iluminuras 2007), Fernanda Lopes de Almeida (Ática 2008), Hildegard Feist (Companhia das Letrinhas 2009), Walcyr Carrasco (Manole 2009; Moderna 2013), Maria Luiza Borges (Zahar 2010), Ivone Benedetti (L&PM 2012), Leonardo Fróes (Cosac Naify 2015) and Eliana Bueno-Ribeiro (Paulinas 2016). Most of the rewritings are presented as translations, but there are some presented as adaptations or retellings. All of them, with the exception of Walcyr Carrasco’s rewriting, maintain the morals in verse and set about maintaining and/or recreating literary elements of Perrault’s text (writing style, vocabulary, plot, etc.).

Three books that exemplify this new approach, in which the literary elements of Perrault’s tales are reworked without any major cuts or radical alterations, are the recent translations by Rosa Freire d’Aguiar and Hildegard Feist. Published under the children’s literature imprint Companhia das Letrinhas of the publishing house Companhia das Letras, the books Chapeuzinho Vermelho [Little Red Riding Hood] and O Pequeno Polegar [Little Thumb], by Freire, and O Barba-Azul [Bluebeard], by Feist, contain just one tale each, large illustrations and paratexts aimed at children. Their purpose is announced for children in the introduction to the story of Little Thumb: “We think many of you will have already heard it, in all sorts of versions and adaptations – but never told as well as in this beautiful book, by the original ‘voice’ of Mother Goose” (Perrault 2005, 6).15

In “Little Thumb,” just as Perrault tells it, we read about the drama of the children living in extreme poverty who are abandoned not once but twice by their parents. In “Little Red Riding Hood,” we have the tragic end of the main character and her grandma, devoured by the wolf. Rosa Freire seeks to preserve the literary characteristics of Perrault’s tales: the plot, the pace of the narrative (with its repetitions, for instance), its structure and the moral in verse. The same applies to Hildegard Feist’s translation, which maintains

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15 In Portuguese: “Apesar de acreditar que muitos de vocês já a ouviram, em toda sorte de versões e adaptações – mas nunca tão bem contada como neste livro bonito, pela ‘voz’ original da Mamãe Gansa.”
the original structure of the tale without significantly altering the phrasal constructions of the narrative, working on the literary aspects of the text, the rhythm and style of Perrault’s writing, and maintaining the moral at the end. Below are examples of each of the translators’ work to illustrate their strategies.

In the translation of “Little Red Riding Hood,” Freire maintains the repetitions of sentences, such as are seen in the source text. In Perrault’s tale, some of the dialogues are repeated word for word, like the initial conversation between the grandmother and the wolf (pretending to be the girl), and then the one between the wolf (pretending to be the grandmother) and the girl. Such mirroring is present in Freire’s translation, with the repetition of almost every word in the dialogues; there is just the smallest of differences in the verbal form of the girl’s answer in the second dialogue, which is presented in brackets below.

Toc, toc.
Grand-mère/Loup: – Qui est là ?
Loup/Le Petit Chaperon rouge: – C’est votre fille le Petit Chaperon Rouge (…) qui vous apportez une galette et un petit pot de beurre que ma mère vous envoie.
Grand-mère/Loup: – Tire la chevillette, la bobinette cherra.
(Perrault 2002, 132–134)

“Rap, rap.”
Grandma/Wolf: “Who is it?”
Wolf/Little Red Riding Hood: “It’s your granddaughter, Little Red Riding Hood, (…) bringing you a biscuit and a little pot of butter that my mother is sending you.”
Grandma/Wolf: “Pull the little peg, and the little latch will open.”
(Perrault 2002, 133–135, trans. Appelbaum)

toc, toc.
Vovozinha/Lobo: – Quem está aí?
Lobo/Chapeuzinho Vermelho: – É a sua netinha, Chapeuzinho Vermelho, (…) que está lhe trazendo um bolinho e um potinho de manteiga mandados pela mamã. (É a sua netinha, Chapeuzinho Vermelho, que lhe traz um bolinho e um potinho de manteiga que a mamãe mandou).
Vovozinha/Lobo: – Puxe o pino, e o trinco abrirá.
(Perrault 2012, 10–17, trans. Freire)
English backtranslation of the Portuguese:
knock, knock.
Grandma/Wolf: “Who’s there?”
Wolf/Little Red Riding Hood: “It’s your little granddaughter, Little Red Riding Hood, (...) who is bringing you a cake and a little pot of butter sent by mother.” (It’s your little granddaughter, Little Red Riding Hood, (...) who brings you a cake and a little pot of butter that mother sent).
Grandma/Wolf: “Pull the peg, and the latch will open.”

This textual strategy demonstrates attention to the author’s style, which in this case plays with identical dialogues in the two situations of the arrival of the girl (the false and the real one) at her grandmother’s home. Another quite significant example concerning the translator’s textual choices can be observed in Feist’s translation of “Bluebeard,” in the scene where the wife is about to be murdered by her husband. Desperate, she urges her sister to go to the top of the tower and look out to see if their brothers are coming to save her. Repetition is used as a strategy to build expectations about the brothers’ arrival. In Perrault, there is a sequence of four repetitions of identical questions by the desperate wife, intensifying the suspense and expectations about what will happen next. The translator Hildegard Feist maintains the same structure, introducing just one small difference: in French, each question mentions the sister’s name twice, but in the translation only in the first question is her name repeated. In the dialogue between the sisters, the first two answers by the sister Anne are identical. The same occurs in Feist’s translation.

– Anne, ma soeur Anne, ne vois-tu rien venir? (4x)
– Je ne vois rien que le Soleil qui poudroie, et l’herbe qui verdoie. (2x)
(Perrault 2002, 144)

“All I see is the sun raising dust and the grass growing green.”

– Ana, minha irmã Ana, está vendo alguém?
– Estou vendo apenas o sol que reluz e a relva que verdeja.
(Perrault 2009, 19–21, trans. Feist)

English backtranslation of the Portuguese:
“Ana, my sister Ana, do you see anyone?”
“I see only the sun that shines and the grass that grows green.”
Such characteristics are important when thinking about the motivations of rewriters and their conceptions of literature for children. Whereas in the past the morals in verse and other parts of the stories or specific scenes were often cut or altered because they were deemed unfit for children, in the three new rewritings from the early years of the twenty-first century (as well as in the other new rewritings mentioned above), new perspectives have emerged. Freire’s and Feist’s rewritings do not propose a new or contemporary view of Perrault’s tales. However, by introducing children to stories that used to be abridged or adapted, they present the possibility of knowing the Mother Goose tales in their literary versions, as Perrault proposed in seventeenth-century France. As Jack Zipes points out, with regard to “Little Red Hood”, the French author changed many elements of an existing oral version by “refin[ing] and polish[ing] it according to his own taste and the conventions of French high society in King Louis XIV’s time” (Zipes 1993, 346). For that matter, “Perrault revised the oral tale to make it the literary standardbearer for good Christian upbringing” (ibid., 348).

The contemporary translators’ motivations and their strategies for dealing with the text are not restricted to telling the story (the events). They also have bearing on how the literary characteristics of Perrault’s tales are presented (such as the repetitions, as we saw, or the moral in verse, which was omitted by previous rewriters). Freire’s and Feist’s books are examples of how the plot, the structure and the rhythm of the author can be translated to another language and culture in works aimed at children, without the need to add explanations or abridge the text. The rewritings are published in formats that are easily handled by children, with large illustrations, and yet they can be read as literary tales, such as Perrault intended: a conjunction of a ‘story of the olden days’ and the author’s perspective on specific situations or realities, even if these realities are depicted in fairy tales.

Moral

As part of the children’s literary canon, Perrault’s tales rose to the status of timeless classics, while also hiding in the shadows of memory, disguising themselves as part of the collective or individual unconscious (Calvino 2007, 10). These are stories that everyone knows or has heard of. However, from the perspective adopted here, Perrault’s literature, like the literature of any author, is constituted through particular retellings, through rewritings, and thus in new or distinct ways of signification or interpretation. Retellings are contingent, cultural and historical, and a study of literary works can shed light on the visions of (re)writers and agents of patronage in relation to an author or a literary work.
From a diachronic perspective, two time periods were observed: from the end of the nineteenth century throughout most of the twentieth century, and from the 1990s into the twenty-first century. In the first period, the conceptions of literature and of translation allowed Perrault’s tales to be retold with many kinds of modifications, the most common being to cut the moral in verse. Such alterations were not explained in the paratexts of the editions; indeed, they were sometimes presented as ‘complete translations’ of the work. In the twenty-first century, however, new editions have been published giving these well-known yet not always so widely read stories a literary and authorial perspective. They are presented in their full versions with the morals in verse and emphasize the name of Perrault as their author. Yet there is a critical perspective that argues against the adequacy of the morals, especially when the work is aimed at children, as exemplified by Maria Tatar:

Those morals often did not square with the events in the story and sometimes offered nothing more than an opportunity for random social commentary and digressions on character. The explicit behavioral directives added by Perrault and others also have a tendency to misfire when they are aimed at children. (Tatar 2002, xv)

Curiously, most of the tales published in book form in contemporary times have included the morals in verse, as well as the complete text in prose. Unlike their predecessors, these new rewritings are consistent with the dominant ideological and poetological currents, namely, a tendency on the part of publishers to value direct and complete translations of literary works, whether for adults or for young readers. It could be speculated that two factors are at play here: the prevailing trend against the censorship or significant manipulation of literary works (such as limitations on the number of pages, on themes, etc.), strategies that were common at other times, such as during the military dictatorship; and the development of Brazilian children’s literature itself, with the emergence of well-known and respected writers for this age group. Children’s literature has essentially gained recognition as literature in its own right, which means that translations of works such as the classics tend to respect the authors’ literary choices. All of this is, of course, contingent and related to the perspectives of the agents responsible for setting the path taken by literature: (re)writers, editors, critics, researchers.

In this sense, by maintaining certain previously overlooked elements, the contemporary rewritings of Perrault’s tales give Brazilian readers access to a new way of knowing Perrault and thus a new image of the author and his
work, since the tales had not been published in their entirety either for adult readers or for children until the end of the twentieth century.

We have seen how Perrault’s tales have been an almost constant presence in Brazilian literature since its inception. This is thanks in the first instance to Figueiredo Pimentel and Monteiro Lobato. The tales have since been published over the years as translations, adaptations, and retellings rendered by translators or writers of prestige in the Brazilian literary system. Likewise, we have seen that the tales have taken root in the target culture according to the poetological and ideological conceptions of the rewriters and agents of patronage involved in their (re)production. They have appeared in many different guises: in books for children; with parts of Perrault’s texts abridged or cut out altogether; in dated and updated versions; and with greater or lesser regard for the source texts’ literary virtues, to mention just some of the many strategies employed. This means that any study of the transmission of the tales in Brazil, and particularly studies focused on rewritings, will have to put translation at the heart of the analysis. The works studied here clearly propose specific interpretations of Perrault’s tales – interpretations that reflect the prevailing ideological and poetological conceptions (Lefevere, 1992) of their time of production and publication.

It therefore follows that the recent rewritings, which have reproduced the tales in their entirety, not cutting any of the scenes or lexical items that have previously been regarded as inappropriate for children, are also indicative of a prevailing ideological trend: that the author and his work deserve the utmost respect. This does not preclude the existence of other perspectives, which may, for example, give rise to re-creations that subvert the way these and other popular or fairy tales, such as those by the Brothers Grimm, have traditionally been portrayed. Interestingly, however, this kind of transgression was not present in the rewritings analyzed here.

Just as the motivations and strategies of rewriters change over time, so too do the analytical perspectives used by researchers to understand them. Some contemporary rewritings have given fairy tales a feminist slant, constituting rich material for new research. The present study focused on rewritings as a means to examine how Perrault’s tales functioned in Brazil at various times throughout the history of its literary history. Surely, there are as many other ways to approach Perrault’s tales and their rewritings as there are ways of rewriting them.
Bibliography