

RENÉ GOSCINNY

SCÉNARISTE, QUEL MÉTIER !

AN ARTIST STARTING OUT

Today, the name of René Goscinny is synonymous with *Astérix* and *Lucky Luke*, stories that have been loved by generations of readers around the world. But while Goscinny is seen as the story writer, few are aware that he was a man of drawing more than he was a man of writing. Or at least, when he was starting out, he tried his hand at both these practices with a preference for caricatures and funny drawings, at a time where comic strips were not held in any regard.

Having grown up far from France and, like many artists of his generation, idolising Walt Disney, Goscinny's first professional footsteps took place in the United States during the years 1945-1950. It was in New York, alongside, most notably, Harvey Kurtzman, founder of *Mad Magazine*, that the young artist saw for himself what a tough market it was and learnt the tricks of the trade, relying on a prodigious capacity for work. Thanks to encounters with the cartoonists Jijé and Morris, the comic strip offered him a rewarding way to express himself. It was soon to become his favourite playground.

INVENTING A PROFESSION

René Goscinny was not the first story writer in the history of the comic book. Didn't the practice of organising drawn images into a story from a script and dialogues appear with the medium itself? But these pioneers used to take charge of the entire creative process, from the script, to the texts, the cutting room and to the board. Goscinny was therefore "the inventor" of the profession of story writer in that he revealed his existence to the world, before giving it legitimacy in an environment where the editor was king.

In the first half of the 1950s, Goscinny increased his collaborations with Morris and Uderzo but he remained, to hijack Gustave Flaubert's expression, "present everywhere, visible (almost) nowhere". Having signed an exclusive contract with Georges Troisfontaines' World Press, Goscinny frequently adopted pseudonyms, when his name was not simply forgotten or hidden. It was to take a violent structural crisis within this system and Goscinny's realisation that he was doing a real job to make the story writer a worthy descendant of Beaumarchais and Balzac in the fight for the rights of authors.

ASSEMBLY LINE STORY WRITER

After making a permanent move back from the United States in 1954, René Goscinny found a job in the Paris offices of the Belgian press agency World Press. There he met genius illustrators like Albert Uderzo and Jean-Jacques Sempé, who persuaded him to abandon the pencil in favour of the typewriter. From 1955, he worked like a "factory" and increased his collaborations, particularly at the *Tintin* comic. With his methodical and productive mind, each year he produced hundreds of pages of comic strip stories drawn by a myriad of French and Belgian artists.

From 1959, the burgeoning success of *Asterix* and *Little Nicholas* might have encouraged Goscinny to slow down his production rate. But, thanks to his talent finally achieving recognition and his desire for success, he instead increased his activity. As proof, the quantity of scripts, news, articles and creations from the year 1962 is testimony to this prodigious creativity. Unshaken by the upheavals which unsettled the world (the Cuban missile crisis) and France (end of the war in Algeria), Goscinny tried his hand at almost every genre, with comedy being the common thread.

GOSCINNY AND UDERZO: THE HEART OF THE REACTOR

"Because it was he: because it was I." Montaigne's famous phrase to describe his relationship with La Boétie has often been used to describe the friendship that united René Goscinny and Albert Uderzo. Their first meeting, in 1951, brought to life many series, doomed to disappear after the phenomenal success of *Asterix*. But the symbiosis between the two artists reached such a level of perfection that it is difficult today to reproduce with any accuracy the process that governed their shared works. Goscinny, an Ashkenazi Jew who grew up far from France, found in Uderzo, whose parents had emigrated from Italy, the perfect partner to portray the French way of life, as if it were observed from the outside.

This ability to look at things differently is one of the cornerstones of the *vis comica* that Goscinny gave us in *Asterix* and *Oumpah-Pah*. He also skilfully provided exactly the right framework for the graphic genius of Uderzo to be expressed. The score orchestrated by the maestro gave life to onomatopoeia and expressiveness, funny punch-ups, a play on opposites sometimes masking a more serious message.

GOSCINNY PYGMALION

Having become co-editor of *Pilote* in 1963, Goscinny worked to free the weekly magazine from the rules imposed at that time on publications aimed at young people: he abolished the readers' referendum, placed the names of cartoonists and story writers at the top of the pages and, as far as the law and customs of the time allowed, gave its authors the greatest of freedom. Above all, he welcomed with open arms the up-and-coming generation of French comic strip talent: Bretécher, Cabu, Christin, Druillet, Fred, Giraud, Gotlib, Lob, Mandryka, Mézières and many others, all of whom are considered classics today.

He gave many of these newcomers short scripts as a way of introducing them to readers before being awarded their own place in the paper. There was even greater complicity with a few of them. And so began a remarkable collaboration, as for Cabu for *La Potachologie* and with Gotlib for *Les Dingodossiers*. In both cases, this companionship helped illustrators to develop their own worlds, which would then lead on to the important works represented by Cabu's *Le Grand Dudoche* and Gotlib's *Rubrique-à-brac*.

CREATING STYLE

People who boast of having "*tombés dedans quand ils étaient petits*" [fell into it as a young child] or journalists who say that a politician "*veut être calife à la place du calife*" [wants to be Caliph instead of Caliph] are often unaware that it was René Goscinny who coined these colloquial expressions (along with many others), experiencing with it the ultimate success of any writer, which is to see their phrases pass into everyday language.

But Goscinny's writing is much richer than these little gems and hasn't been studied enough in its own right. The story writer's words have less visibility than the drawings he helped create. There is, however, a Goscinnian language. Dedicated to laughter, peppered with silliness, influenced by Anglo-Saxon humour, it is precision mechanics that shuns vulgarity, uses plays on words and a variety of figures of speech and rhetorical devices. In this creation where the text is at the service of narrative images, *Little Nicholas* started out as a comic book scripted by Goscinny before becoming short stories admirably illustrated by Sempé. So, could it be that these ingenious monologues therefore represent the purest form of the Goscinny style?

ROOM 1

Gosciny in New York

Stanislas Gosciny died in 1943.

His son René was 17 years old and his life was turned upside down. Abandoning his plans for higher education, he decided to devote himself to his true vocation: humorous drawing and caricature. Having been encouraged by a relative living in the USA, he left Argentina and, accompanied by his mother, landed in New York in October 1945, determined to try his luck in the American publishing capital. He was to stay there for seven years, not without making several return trips to France. As soon as he moved there, he took drawing lessons, approached the newspapers to offer them humorous drawings in vain and experienced poverty.

It was during this period in New York that he forged friendships that would prove decisive in his future. One such friendship with story writer and illustrator Harvey Kurtzman, future creator of Mad magazine, allowed him to illustrate half a dozen children's books and above all to learn his craft "on the job". His encounters with the cartoonists Jijé (Joseph Gillain) and Morris, who had just arrived from Brussels, steered him imperceptibly towards comics and encouraged him to meet Georges Troisfontaines, the flamboyant director of World Press, a Belgian press agency which owns offices in Paris. Driven by necessity, Gosciny arrived in Brussels in 1951 and offered his services to Troisfontaines, which hired him in its Paris offices. Gosciny was to make several trips to New York for the World Press until 1954 when his difficult but foundational time in America came to an end. His amazing story could begin.

The child who wanted to make people laugh

Overshadowed by the success of his literary work, René Gosciny's graphic creation has long been overlooked. One man who was to play a decisive role in the future of little René was his father, Stanislas, a scientist who worked as a chemical engineer. He was a Jew, a Polish immigrant in France and had recently been naturalised. In 1928, he moved with his family to Argentina. But the real turning-point for Gosciny came in 1938, when, during a trip to Paris. Stanislas introduced his son to the cinemas of the Grands Boulevards. Screening was Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. It was a revelation. The young boy then began to draw Pinocchio, Mickey Mouse and more.

In Buenos Aires came the distant sounds of war. The teenager produced hilarious caricatures in coloured pencil and charcoal, including that of a family of Nazis, the Müllers, as well as a disturbing Hitler and a threatening Mussolini dated 1940-1941. After the death of his father in 1943, he had to give up studying Fine Arts, putting his drawing talents to good use in an advertising agency as well as in the journals of the French high school in Buenos Aires, Notre Voix, the student gazette, and especially in Quartier Latin. The man who would become the illustrious boss of Pilote could not surely have imagined that these schoolkid magazines would be how he would learn his craft.

The invisible story writer

In the early 1950s, René Gosciny began to increase his collaborations with a number of illustrators. But while he signed his own comics with his name, this was not the case for his work as a story writer. His exclusive contract with the World Press, which called on him to quickly turn around humorous pieces and detective stories, resulted in him using a variety of pseudonyms for his writings. Gosciny's rich correspondence from that time sheds a complex light on the path he took to such high renown. The most significant missives were those exchanged with Morris. There, the two artists tackled key themes of their work together, such as the question of whether Gosciny should appear as the new story writer of *Lucky Luke* with the publisher Charles Dupuis – Morris having been solely responsible for the story and the illustrations of the solitary cowboy until 1955. While Gosciny initially seemed to prefer anonymity – the idea of challenging the invisibility of his status not being his primary concern – the situation changed once he was fired from the World Press in 1956. In a precarious situation, he wrote to Franquin about their collaboration on *Modeste et Pompon*: **"Regarding my signature on the boards, I must say that I have become quite attached to it, anonymity being for me a very bad deal."**

Gosciny the illustrator, confronting the classics: The Girl with the Golden Eyes

During the graphic and professional pilgrimages that took place during his New York period, René Gosciny embarked on an ephemeral but fascinating experience: that of illustrating some of literature's great classics. The Gosciny archives therefore include an edition illustrated by him of *La Fille aux yeux d'or* by Honoré de Balzac, a novel published in 1947 by Editions littéraires de France (ELF). But the copy is a unique specimen, aiming to enrich the author's book and which he intended to present to American contacts. Gosciny had in fact asked his family printers (that of Beresniak, his mother's maiden name) to produce a unique copy enriched with his illustrations, and which was therefore never published. Gosciny illustrated this short, dark and disturbing story, with six small black and white drawings, both elegant and sensual, irresistibly evoking those of Aubrey Beardsley for Oscar Wilde's *Salomé*.

Goodbye to illustration

The company of the Belgian authors who Gosciny met in New York influenced

his decision to become a comic strip writer. This is how, in 1951 the character of Dick Dicks came to be born, a blundering New York detective always rescued from disaster by outside elements. Nineteen short story boards were therefore produced. The very definitely minimalist illustration of Dick Dicks benefits from Gosciny's caricature mastery. But most of all it is the rhythm of the story and the mastery of the dialogue, playing on the absurd and on off-beat situations, which won over Georges Troisfontaines, on the recommendations of a certain Jean-Michel Charlier, another talented story writer and a future accomplice of Gosciny at Pilote. Another series, *Le Capitaine Bibobu* was created a few years later, in November 1955. This amateur sailor with his overflowing imagination fills his grandson with stories as unlikely as they are spectacular. But Gosciny soon had to take on the texts of *Little Nicholas* for Sempé, those of *Jehan Pistolet* and *Luc Junior* for Uderzo, not to mention the various columns he provided for magazines such as *Le Moustique* and *Bonnes soirées*. As Gosciny waited to take over the story writing for *Lucky Luke* from the hands of Morris, the company of these drawing geniuses succeeded in convincing Gosciny to give up drawing and focus only on writing.

ROOM 2

Morris, Lucky Luke and Gosciny

Of all the major series attached to his name, *Lucky Luke* is the only one that René Gosciny did not create. Morris called on him in 1955, nine years after the publication of *Arizona*

1880, first episode of the adventures of the lone cowboy. By this date, Morris had already drawn about fifteen stories and forged a reputation for his character: *Lucky Luke* is one of Spirou's star series.

Taking over the world of *Lucky Luke*, Gosciny did not begin again with a blank canvas but instead retained the key elements: *Lucky Luke*, phlegmatic hero accompanied by his horse *Jolly Jumper*; a humorous world inspired as much by the true history of the Wild West as by the fictionalised version offered by Hollywood. He prioritised some of Morris' trademark devices, such as the final panel in which *Lucky Luke* rides into the sunset singing. He sensed the potential of the Dalton brothers, inconsiderately discarded by Morris, and replaced them with cousins promised to a glory that was somewhat paradoxical owing to the four's stupidity and unkindness. Clearly, Gosciny streamlined and optimised the world of *Lucky Luke* and gave it ten times the narrative and comic efficiency, enabling Morris' drawing to reach new heights.

The geographical distance (Morris lived in Brussels and Gosciny lived in Paris) has left for our great enjoyment the letters sent between them. Retrospectively, we can follow the lineaments of a collaboration dedicated to excellence, efficiency – and laughter.

“The Goscinny Affair”

Copyright from Beaumarchais to Goscinny

When he died from a heart attack on 5 November 1977, could Goscinny have known that this year coincided with the bicentenary of the fight for the recognition of copyright in France? The story writer is part of a history that has its roots at the very heart of the Age of Enlightenment. Beaumarchais is recognised as the founding father of the cause of author copyright, for having initiated on 3 July 1777 the *Bureau de législation dramatique* [Office of Dramatic Legislation], which in 1829 became the *Société des auteurs et compositeurs dramatiques* [Society of Dramatic Authors and Composers]. Copyright was first recognised in the theatre, a literary genre which confines the author to the role of an apparently distant inspiration: their work is not read, it is first spoken. As the etymology suggests, and even more so in the context of printed culture, the text of the “author” can only be “enacted” by an “actor”. In this sense, the comic strip as a genre is indeed a theatre of images set in motion by an actor-illustrator. After the time of Beaumarchais and the first major copyright law in 1791, the success of the serialised novel underpinned the claims of Balzac, whose “Letter addressed to French writers of the 19th century”, published in the *Revue de Paris* on 2 November 1834, provided an abstract. Three years later, in December 1837, the Société des gens de lettres (SGDL) was created to defend the rights of authors, particularly with regard to press owners. Goscinny was become an active member of it.

Lucky Luke, The Black Hills,

Board 32

Guided by Lucky Luke, the expedition of scholars exploring the still wild Wyoming takes a break from hiking to get ready to spend the night at the foot of a cliff. The very professional precision, but also the absent-mindedness, of the surveyor Darryl Bundlofjoy allows the kind of double entendre gag that René Goscinny was so fond of. Both the precision and the conciseness of the descriptions that he provided to Morris were to be relished.

Lucky Luke, The Black Hills

Board 40

Lucky Luke having made a prisoner of Petit Roquet, son of the chief of the Native American tribe whom the bandit Bull Bullets had inebriated with impure whisky, the European scholars who had joined the expedition make a compelling plea against the evils of alcohol to the prisoner. Petit Roquet himself then makes a case for the arguments of the scientists to his own peers. Half-serious, half-ironic, Goscinny visibly enjoys detailing the devastating effects of alcohol on the human body, evoking without naming them the hangover, the furry tongue and the visual hallucinations of the *delirium tremens*.

Lucky Luke, The Daltons in the blizzard

Board 25

Fleeing to Canada, the Daltons find refuge in a village of Canadian trappers. It is there that, after a long hunt, Lucky Luke, Lieutenant Pendergast of the Canadian Mounted Police and Rantanplan prepare to flush them out. This page rich in gags exploits several types of humour: pantomime, with the two inextricably entangled wrestlers and the Daltons, perched on trunks in the middle of the river; the language used by Pendergast when he calls out to the Daltons because “[he] wishes to question [them] about a matter concerning [them]” is an administrative formula that he calmly repeats throughout the story. It ends with the well-known figure of Rantanplan escaping being drowned after plunging into the river. The sequence of all these gags is achieved with remarkable fluidity.

Lucky Luke, The Wagon Train

Board 14

As it continues along its way, the wagon train being led by Lucky Luke is repeatedly sabotaged. This time, the harness belonging to the leader of the settlers has been cut with a razor. Morris modified a few elements of the *découpage* proposed by Goscinny (instead of throwing himself on the runaway horses Lucky Luke shoots a pistol to stop them running), but preserved the text, rich in linguistic gags: the French hairdresser whose very American “OK” is flagged “in French in the text”; the long diatribe of the same hairdresser which is described as “entirely in French in the text”; the invariably crude words of Ugly Barrow, symbolised by unintelligible ideograms about which Lucky Luke says “that doesn’t mean very much”, translating the reader’s experience. Goscinny loved to play with words.

ROOM 3 MALBROUCK

Asterix and the Golden Sickle, the script writer at work

“I write a very long and precise synopsis for the forty-four pages. Once I’ve carefully worked out my story, I divide it up into boards, with the dialogues, the jokes, the graphic effects. So in other words, right from the start, I know where I’m going. A lot of script writers progress piece by piece, but in my opinion that’s a mistake. If you know where you’re going, you can pace your story and avoid dead time as much as possible. Whereas if you’re writing as you go along, two things happen: either you’ve said everything and you still have six pages to fill out. Or, and this is what happens most often, you arrive at the penultimate page without having explained anything. What happens then is that on the last page, everyone starts talking to explain it all. This is how René Goscinny summarises his poetics with regard to the script, while pointing out the pitfalls of alternative approaches.

Far from restraining Uderzo’s temperament, this structure offers the illustrator a framework that is both tight and open, giving him freedom at every level of the frame. Only in exceptional cases did Goscinny venture into a more micro scale to develop the words in his script, because he knew that Uderzo was immediately able to illustrate his vision in the most lively and expressive way possible. *Asterix and the Golden Sickle*, published between 1960 and 1961 in *Pilote*, is an important milestone in the series. This is the first time that Asterix and Obelix venture outside the Gallic village, specifically Lutetia. The story takes the form of an authentic police investigation, in the style of a *cui bono?* (“who benefits from the crime?”) used by Cicero. The two heroes are sent by Getafix to buy a golden sickle, an essential element for making the magic potion. To fulfil their mission, they need to find Amerix, Obelix’s cousin who has been captured by a band of thugs. *Asterix and the Golden Sickle* came therefore as a precursor to some great comic books whose focus is a symbolic object and its methodical research, such as **Asterix and the Chieftain’s Shield and Asterix and the Cauldron.**

ROOM 5

PANEL 3

The History like a nail?

“What is History? A nail on which I hang my novels!” This is how Alexandre Dumas replied to those who thought that his works, from the *Three Musketeers* to the *Count of Monte Cristo*, offered a way to interpret the chaos of the history of France. Throughout his collaborations, René Goscinny excelled in humorous stories with a historical flavour. The use of serious documents, however, had a varying degree of importance, depending on the comic books. Ultimately, for the Asterix comic books, Goscinny used sources that had changed little - most notably *Everyday life in Rome at the height of the Empire* written by the historian Jérôme Carcopino. So, the script writer’s portrayal of the Antiquity was most often borne out of mediation with other periods or other media. This made *Asterix and Cleopatra* more a response to Joseph Mankiewicz’s epic with Elizabeth Taylor in the title role than a fastidious exploration of the relationship between Rome and Egypt. Yet something that many of the comic books point implicitly to is the theme of the Resistance, collaboration and Vichy. These masterpieces, like *Asterix and the Chieftain’s Shield*, portray forms of resistance to Roman domination as well as collaborationist figures, even going so far as to re-enact the symbolic victory of Gergovia during the Gallic Wars.

PANEL 6

Asterix’s ancestors

The collaboration between Uderzo and Goscinny began in the autumn of 1951, and the different series they created before *Asterix* have characteristics that make them much more than just the pale matrices of the little Gaul. Two of them, *Jehan Pistol* and especially *Ompa-Pa*, were to provide a wonderful opportunity for experimentation. Jehan Pistolet is an aspiring corsair in the service of the king, inspired by reading pirate stories. The writing tempo is stunning and any regard for plausibility is absent from the first comic books, akin to the spirit of an American cartoon.

The more sophisticated *Ompa-Pa* marked a decisive stage in the association between Goscinny and Uderzo. Goscinny had dreamt up the story of a “Redskin” confronted with the modern civilization of the United States in 1951 but no buyer was found for the pilot of the series. In 1958, Goscinny dug out *Ompa-Pa* for the newspaper *Tintin*, but this time he placed the action at the heart of the colonisation of America by the English and the French. Goscinny deployed a more balanced art of the joke here than in *Jehan Pistol*, but most of all a unique ability to develop plots that superimpose several layers of reading, such as reflections on cultural otherness, a satire of superstition and prejudice and an exploration of the resources of language.

PANEL 8

1. THE SENTENCE

“The bravest of these three peoples are the Belgians, because they are the furthest from Rome and the elegance of civilisation.” As he read through pages of notes, Goscinny wrote down this key phrase, taken from the very first lines of *The Gallic Wars*, where Caesar presents the three peoples that make up Gaul (Aquitains, Belgians and Gauls or Celts). It was precisely this sentence, or at least its first part, which was to trigger the narrative mechanism of arousing the pride of the Gauls of the small village, determined to show that there is no reason to be envious of their Belgian counterparts.

2. THE NAMES

The proper nouns (Gueuselambix, Vanendfaillevesix, Wolfgangamadéus, etc.) that Goscinny throws into his notebooks show an adherence to a strategy proven since the beginning of the series – namely, proper nouns being puns that often refer to cultural elements of the country visited. Alongside his names, the script writer also makes a note of idiomatic expressions of the country in question (“faire blinquer les cuivres”) which can sit alongside other symbolic and anachronistic references - for example, here, “Tintin, Milou, Dupon(dt)” in a nod to Asterix’s great rival.

3. THE SEQUENCES

Like a composer, Goscinny establishes a score where each sequence (in blue marker) corresponds to a certain number of pages (in red). The scriptwriter, visualising his story in a global way, thinks here on different scales, depending on the pace he wants to give to the adventure of his heroes.

4. THE SYNOPSIS

After these first steps, Goscinny uses his typewriter to draft a synopsis in scrupulous detail, where each board corresponds to a text combining descriptions of the action and dialogues. This was probably the first scriptwriting tool that Goscinny gave his partner to read, so that Uderzo could best prepare his own introduction.

5. THE SCRIPT

Goscinny’s script, on which Uderzo relies, presents an unchanging form: on the left, the descriptive text adapted to each frame. On the right, the dialogues or words given to the characters who appear. With Goscinny, literally nothing is left to chance.

6. THE BOARDS

The masterful outcome of a process that is both rigorous and meticulous, Uderzo’s original board shows absolute respect for Goscinny’s instructions, who, for his part, gives his good friend all the freedom he needs to bring his text to life.

ROOM 6

PANEL 3

Goscinnian leitmotifs

Signifying the grand finale and culmination of long years of work and collaboration with Uderzo, Asterix brings together all the major themes and obsessions that run through the work of René Goscinny and some of these are reviewed here.

I. Double act and food

When we think of Asterix and Obelix, we of course think about the double acts that populate the pages of his scripts, big and small, enduringly linked: before the Gauls, there was Ompa-Pa and Hubert de la Pâte Feuilletée, then came Nicolas and Alceste, Iznogoud and Haroun El Poussah... All of them were inspired by Laurel and Hardy, the young René Goscinny’s favourite actors, but also by Zig and Puce, the comic strip heroes invented by Alain Saint-Ogan in 1925 and, more distantly still, by Cervantes’ Don Quixote and Sancho Panza. In these double acts, the big one eats often, and a lot. Food occupies a central place in the comic world of Goscinny; remember Alceste and his sandwiches, the gluttony of Averell Dalton, capable of swallowing grass, mothballs, candles, terracotta bowls ...

II. A variation on the classic figure of the hero’s pet, Dogmatix, started out as a graphic gag created in the first pages of *Asterix and the Banquet*. Noteworthy is that his first appearance is underlined by Goscinny in the typescript, a sign of the importance he attaches to this character, who he does not necessarily imagine will complement his double act of heroes. This stubborn little dog aroused the curiosity of readers of the time, before going on to win them over. Distinguishable both by his silence and his passion, he is a tree-lover, an eco-warrior before his time.

PANEL 4

The magic potion

Goscinny loved a fight... just for fun.

Little Nicolas’ friends often bicker without consequence, there are saloon brawls aplenty in the adventures of Lucky Luke, but it is of course in *Asterix* that we find the most battles, slapstick and other daftness. No one dies, but it has to be said that the magic potion, secretly concocted by Getafix, “kills the match” from the start. The ultimate and unbeatable weapon, it does not incite the Gauls to hegemonic conquest, but rather exalts and symbolises the Gauls’ spirit of resistance and union, eternally resistant to the dominant order.

PANELS 6/7

The novice script writer

René Goscinny, who produced his greatest hits –*Asterix, Lucky Luke, Iznogoud*... – in collaboration with illustrators of his generation, was never averse to working with authors younger than him. Script writer then editor-in-chief of *Pilote*, he was in the best place to discover the young illustrators with whom he would find himself in artistic partnership.

This was what happened in 1962 when Cabu arrived at the editorial office. Seduced by his graphics and on the principle that was to be the success of *Little Nicholas*, Goscinny proposed that he illustrate short humorous chronicles about high school students, schoolboys, of the time. *La Potachologie illustrée*, was to lead soon after to the creation of the Grand Duduche by Cabu, who took one of the characters “studied” by Goscinny to create, in his sole name and with great success, the prototype of the pre- then post-1968 high school student.

It was this shared passion for the American satirical magazine *Mad* that brought about the encounter between Goscinny and Gotlib in 1965. Goscinny was a friend of the magazine’s creator, Harvey Kurtzman. At the time, Gotlib was one of the few young authors to know and appreciate “the *Mad* spirit”. Together, they would create *Les Dingodossiers* to great acclaim among readers. When Goscinny, feeling overwhelmed, abandoned the series, Gotlib started over with *La Rubrique-à-brac*, an eclectic and offbeat comic strip premise which was to be his masterpiece. After a few months, the disciple joined the master.