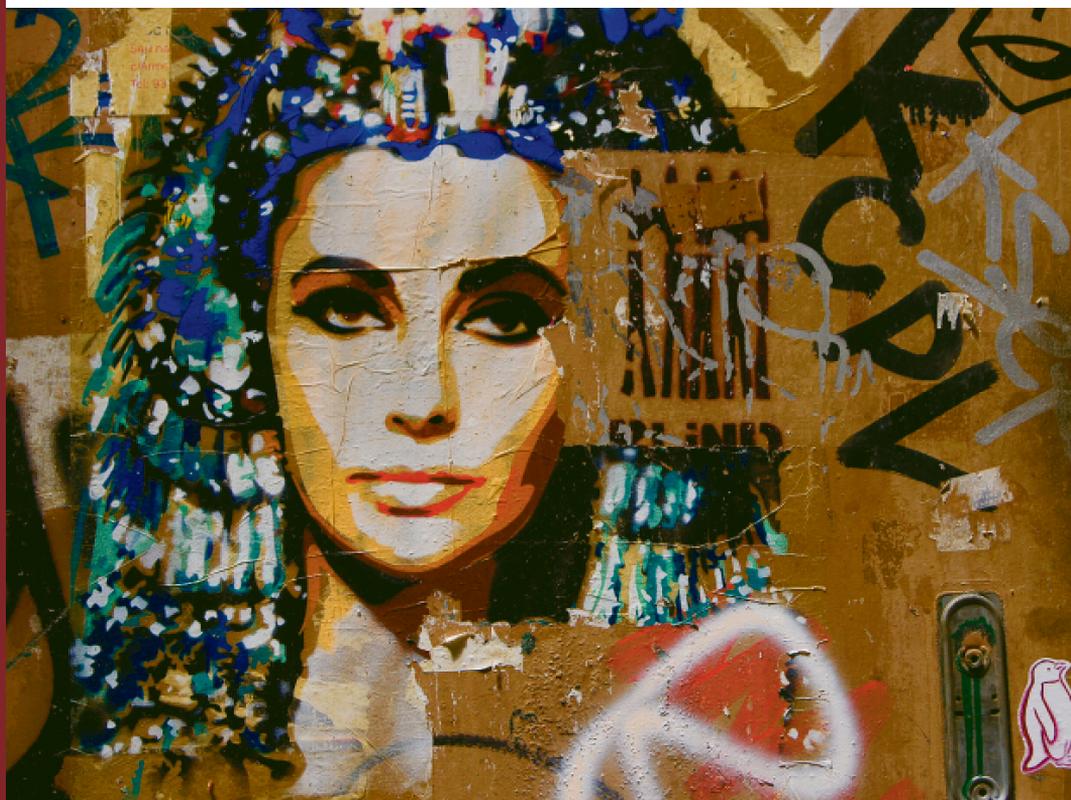


## Kindgerechte „Arbeit am Mythos“ II

Noch mehr moderne Rezeptionsstrategien von der Adaptation bis zur Transformation

## Child-friendly “Explorations of the Myth” II

A Continuation of Modern Reception Strategies from Adaptation to Transformation



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## Rezensionen

## Editorial

Am Freitag, dem 13. November 2020, lud die *Österreichische Gesellschaft für Kinder- und Jugendliteraturforschung* COVID-19-bedingt zu ihrer ersten *online*-Konferenz. Einen ganzen Nachmittag lang trafen sich via *Blackboard Collaborate* auf der *Moodle*-Plattform der Universität Wien zahlreiche Forscher\*innen und Studierende aus mehreren Ländern (und von verschiedenen Kontinenten), um einen bunten Strauß an Vorträgen von internationalen Referent\*innen zu hören und mit ihnen angeregt zu diskutieren: Großer Dank für die Einrichtung des Webkonferenzraums gilt unserem EDV-Fakultätsbetreuer Christian Wagner, der einen technisch reibungslosen Ablauf sicherstellte.

Ein Tagungsbericht kann auf der Website der ÖGKJLF nachgelesen werden: [https://oegkjlf.univie.ac.at/fileadmin/user\\_upload/p\\_oegkjlf/Tagungsbericht\\_OEGKJLF2020.pdf](https://oegkjlf.univie.ac.at/fileadmin/user_upload/p_oegkjlf/Tagungsbericht_OEGKJLF2020.pdf).

Das virtuelle Format eröffnete die erfreulich breit genutzte Chance zu Internationalisierung und Vernetzung weit über den eigentlichen Adressat\*innenkreis der ÖGKJLF hinaus: Zahlreiche Interessierte versammelten sich vor ihren Bildschirmen, um sich über die Spielarten von Mythologie, Mythisierung und Mythentransfer (1) in kind- und jugendgerechten Adaptationen, (2) in Werken, die (nur) vordergründig als Kinder- und Jugendliteratur erscheinen, oder auch (3) in klassischer *Crossover*-Literatur wissenschaftlich und didaktisch zu informieren.

Eröffnet wurde die Tagung von Susanne Blumesberger und Susanne Reichl in deutscher und englischer Sprache, um der internationalen Ausrichtung der Veranstaltung auch sprachlich Ausdruck zu verleihen.

Leider haben uns nicht alle Vortragenden ihre Manuskripte zur Verfügung gestellt. Nur zu gerne hätten wir alle Referate als verschriftlichte Beiträge in dieses *lili*-Heft aufgenommen. Doch zwei waren bereits für andere Publikationsorte vorgesehen. Sie sollen hier trotzdem gebührend Erwähnung finden, weil sie ein wesentliches Drittel der Tagung gebildet haben: Anna Maria Mik (Universität Warschau) stellte *Classical Mythology in a Polish Bestiary. The Example of Michał Rusinek's "The Book of Monsters"* (<http://www.omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item-export/477>) vor. Dabei handelt es sich um ein wunderschön illustriertes Werk, ein mit anspruchsvollen (auch poetischen) Texten ausgestattetes Buch, das von der Konzeption entfernt an Joanne K. Rowlings *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them* erinnert und mit einer vergleichbaren, und doch ganz anderen Tiefendimension aufzuwarten hat: Die sogenannten ‚Bestien‘ sind zumeist liebenswerte, freundliche Wesen mit Freuden und Sorgen, die dazu anregen sollen, hinter die Fassade des jeweiligen Gegenübers zu blicken und mit typisch menschlichen (Ur)ängsten fertig zu werden. – Markus Janka, Professor für Klassische Philologie/Fachdidaktik der

Alten Sprachen, und seine Mitarbeiter Raimund Fichtel und Berkan Sariaydin von der LMU München präsentierten ihr facettenreiches Projekt *HistorMythos. Intermediale, interkulturelle und diachrone Perspektiven der Antikenrezeption* (<http://www.cluster.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/>). Beleuchtet wurden Perspektiven auf Phänomene der Antikenrezeption vom 18. bis ins 21. Jh. unter Anwendung eines mehrdimensionalen Zugangs (stofflich/inhaltlich – formal/ästhetisch – philosophisch/politisch-ideologisch/didaktisch – medial): Wirkungslinien allein sind nämlich zu wenig; vielmehr geht es um die Bedingungen, unter und die Strategien, mit denen rezipiert wird. Der Medienverbundkultur kommt dabei eine besondere Rolle zu.

Das vorliegende *lili*-Heft 58 (2022) ist mit seinen vier Beiträgen das erste, das ausschließlich englischsprachige Abhandlungen enthält (und drei deutschsprachige Rezensionen). Für das englische Lektorat zeichnen Valerie Gföhler und Georg Wendt verantwortlich; Ihnen gilt unser Dank für solide, schnelle, hilfreiche und professionelle Arbeit. Bewährte Unterstützung bekommen haben sie von Sonja Loidl.

Eröffnet wird das vorliegende Heft von Marta Pszczolińskas Beitrag *Learning through Fun – Classical Antiquity in „Tytus, Romek i A'Tomek“, a Polish Comic Book Series*. Sie nimmt eine der langlebigsten und prägendsten Comicreihen Polens in den Blick, für die Henryk Jerzy Chmielewski (1924–2021) verantwortlich zeichnet: Der sprechende Schimpanse Tytus und seine menschlichen Freunde erleben Abenteuer in unterschiedlichsten Epochen, so auch in der Antike. Auf der stetig anwachsenden Plattform *Our Mythical Childhood Survey* (<http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/about>) sind weiterführende Einträge vorhanden, die die gelehrte Arbeitsweise (und das Quellenstudium) des liebevoll „Papcio Chmiel“ genannten Künstlers anschaulich zeigen (<http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/1122> & <http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/414>).

Maria José Carmen Campos Runcie entführt uns mit *Metafiction and Genre Hybridity in Naoki Urasawa's Manga "The Nameless Monster" by Emil Sebe* in das weite Feld japanischer Mythenverarbeitung und -aneignung. An hochentwickelten Text- und Bildkonzepten, Sprachspielereien und Sprachwechsellern lässt sie uns an einem vielfältigen Beispiel der Manga-Tradition teilhaben. Erzählt wird über die dunklen Seiten der menschlichen Natur mit Hilfe von Kinderbuchästhetik am Beispiel eines kunstvoll gestalteten Buches, das die Kraft hat, auf ‚Kinder‘ jeden Alters ideologisch einzuwirken.

Angelina Gerus stellt in *Paideia of Diogenes: Live Like a Dog to Become a Human* ein gerade durch seine Schlichtheit und klare Farbgebung kunstvoll illustriertes Bändchen aus der französischen Reihe *Les Petits Platons* (<https://www.lespetitsplatons.com/>) vor, in denen klassische Philosophie für kindliche Leser\*innen unaufgeregt und demokratisch, mit Gefühl und vielen Originalzitate(n) (in Übersetzung) aufbereitet wird und so einen gleichzeitig niedrigschwelligen und klugen Einstieg in die Gedankenwelt großer und prägender Denker ermöglicht.

Abschließend demonstriert Karolina Anna Kulpa in *Playing with Cleopatra: About the Image of the Egyptian Queen in Products for Children and Young Adults (Introduction to Research)* das enorme Marketingpotential, das die Spielzeugindustrie in der vielleicht bekanntesten Ägypterin der Antike erkannt und dementsprechend verwertet hat: Ausgehend von ‚klassischen‘ Kleopatra-Darstellungen wie derjenigen Liz Taylors, spannt sie einen weiten Bogen über das kinderkulturelle Spektrum und zeigt das damit verbundene ethnische Kolorit auf. Zentral dabei ist die Einbettung dieser Elemente der Popkultur

in der (hoch)kulturellen Landschaft und das Wecken der Akzeptanz für diese beliebte Rezeptions- und Transformationsform.

Die Evasion in das Reich der Mythen mitten in der *aetas Covidiana* war ein wohltuender ‚Ausflug‘ in so etwas wie Normalität: in wissenschaftlichen, kollegialen und freundschaftlichen Austausch über ein Thema, an dem alle Beteiligten Freude haben und in dem sie Zukunftspotential für Rezipient\*innen aller Altersstufen sehen.

Das vorliegende *lili*-Heft 58 (2022) = *Kindgerechte „Arbeit am Mythos“ II: Noch mehr moderne Rezeptionsstrategien von der Adaptation bis zur Transformation / Child-friendly “Explorations of the Myth” II: A Continuation of Modern Reception Strategies from Adaptation to Transformation* versteht sich als Fortsetzung von *lili* 54-55 (2020) = *Kindgerechte „Arbeit am Mythos“ Moderne Rezeptionsstrategien von der Adaptation bis zur Transformation / Child-friendly “Explorations of the Myth”*.

Frei nach Yoda: „Möge der Mythos mit Euch sein!“

Sonja Schreiner (für die ÖGKJLF)

# Beiträge



# Learning through Fun Classical Antiquity in *Tytus, Romek i A'Tomek*, a Polish Comic Book Series<sup>1</sup>

MARTA PSZCZOLIŃSKA

The series *Tytus, Romek i A'Tomek* is largely enjoyed by children and has been popular with generations of Polish readers since it was first printed in 1957 in the magazine *Świat Młodych*. Since 1966, the author Henryk Jerzy Chmielewski has been publishing the series in the form of independent booklets. The comics are about two boys and a chimpanzee, Tytus, whose intellect is similar to that of a human being. Their adventures feature many educational elements as the characters learn about the world, and yet they are still incredibly witty and entertaining. The focus of this analysis is to show how information about the ancient Olympic Games, Greek theatre and Roman gladiator fights can be successfully incorporated into a children's comic book.

*Keywords:* children's comic books, child protagonist, animal protagonist, antiquity, Atlantis, Olympic Games, Athens, Greek theatre, learning Latin, Colosseum, gladiator fights

**Lernen durch Spaß. Klassische Antike in der polnischen Comic-Reihe *Tytus, Romek i A'Tomek***  
Die Reihe *Tytus, Romek i A'Tomek* findet seit der Erstpublikation im Magazin *Świat Młodych* (1957) großen Gefallen bei Kindern und erfreut sich bei polnischen Leser\*innen seither konstanter Beliebtheit. Der Autor, Henryk Jerzy Chmielewski, hat die Bändchen der Reihe beginnend mit 1966 als separate Heftchen publiziert. Die Comics handeln von zwei Buben und einem Schimpansen namens Tytus, dessen Intellekt dem eines Menschen gleichkommt. Die gemeinsamen Abenteuer enthalten eine Fülle erzieherischer Elemente, da die Protagonisten auf stets geistreiche und unterhaltsame Art Wissen über die Welt erwerben. Der Schwerpunkt der vorliegenden Analyse liegt auf der Sichtbarmachung der Vermittlungs- und Gestaltungsstrategie, wie Informationen über die Olympischen

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<sup>1</sup> The research results presented in this paper have been obtained within the project *Our Mythical Childhood... The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, that has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales", University of Warsaw. – I would like to thank the Austrian Society for Scholarship on Children's and Young Adult Literature, and especially Dr Sonja Schreiner, for inviting me to the *Child-friendly "Explorations of the Myth" – Modern Reception Strategies from Adaptation to Transformation* conference which was an inspiring opportunity to exchange ideas about narrative strategies and conventions in incorporating the antiquity into children's literature.

Spiele, das griechische Theater und römische Gladiatorenkämpfe erfolgreich in Comicbücher für Kinder integriert werden können.

*Schlagwörter:* Comicbücher für Kinder, Kind als Protagonist, Tier als Protagonist, Antike, Atlantis, Olympische Spiele, Athen, griechisches Theater, Latein lernen, Kolosseum, Gladiatorenkämpfe

## Education and Entertainment – Comics for Children

Since many comic books are created to resonate with audiences of children, they were commonly considered only to provide entertainment which was also their main appeal. Nevertheless, many of them also carry educational value presenting important knowledge that can be effortlessly learned along with amusing content, which can be observed early on in the history of comics.<sup>2</sup> In addition, some of them feature child characters who explore the world themselves so that the reader can enjoy the protagonists' adventures and learn about the world and its culture along the way. This can be seen, for example, in the series *Tytus, Romek i A'Tomek*, where even elements of the tradition of classical antiquity considered inaccessible or too difficult for children are incorporated successfully and provide not only knowledge but entertainment as well.

### Tytus de Zoo and His Series

The series *Tytus, Romek i A'Tomek* was created by Henryk Jerzy Chmielewski, one of the most popular and influential creators of Polish comics, an alumnus of a humanistic gymnasium who studied Latin when it was obligatory, and acquired a thorough knowledge of classics. He was also the Knight of the Order of the Smile, an international award given by children in Poland in recognition of pro-children activities. At the time of the conference (2020), Chmielewski was 97; he did not draw much anymore but was still active on his (and Tytus') website. Unfortunately he passed away two months after the conference on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of January, 2021.<sup>3</sup>

The series is enjoyed most of all by children and has been widely popular with many generations of Polish readers since it was first published in 1957 in the magazine *Świat Młodych* [Youth's World]. The author, known to children by the diminutive Papcio Chmiel (Daddy Chmiel [Hop]), has been publishing the series in the form of independent booklets since 1966. The comic's basic plot focuses on two boys and a talking chimpanzee,<sup>4</sup> Tytus de Zoo, who is humanised through comprehensive learning. Their adventures

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2 For example learning about cultural, geographical and historical background in the series *Les Aventures de Tintin* [The Adventures of Tintin], or about cultural background of Roman (and other, like Gauls, Britons, Helvetians, Vikings etc.) societies in the *Astérix* series.

3 Born in Warsaw in 1923, a scout, a soldier of AK (conspirational Home Army) who participated in the Warsaw Uprising in 1944. After WWII he worked as a graphic designer and publicist for the magazine *Świat Młodych* [Youth's World], addressed at children and teenagers. He worked there since its beginnings till his retirement. He was the author of some of the most popular Polish comics. Full bio available at his official website <https://www.tytusromekiatomek.pl/tytus-papcio-chmiel-3-42-1.html> (accessed: May 9, 2022).

4 For other animals as friends in children's literature cf. e.g. *Winnie the Pooh* by A. A. Milne; *Stuart Little* by

feature many educational elements as the characters learn about the world and its aspects that are presented in an incredibly witty and entertaining manner.

Each booklet refers to a different theme. For example, Book VII<sup>5</sup> deals with the geography of Poland because Tytus' poor grades at school prevent him from advancing to a higher level, and the boys must teach him about different places in Poland. Book X<sup>6</sup> is about protecting the natural environment; Book XI<sup>7</sup> is about protecting historical monuments; Book XV<sup>8</sup> is about geology and XXX<sup>9</sup> about fighting obesity. The last one was published in 2019 and presents the protagonists travelling on the Silk Road.<sup>10</sup> In each book, they have another mission, use different unusual means of transport borrowed from prof. T. Alent;<sup>11</sup> they usually meet their "creator", i.e. Papiro Chmiel, himself – or rather a drawn version of the author. Particularly, the stories focused on the Olympic Games, Greek theatre and Roman games illustrate how the author successfully incorporates elements of classical antiquity into a children's comic book, allowing readers to assimilate facts effortlessly.

The classical antiquity is present in three of the books: Book VI *Tytus Becomes an Olympic Champion*,<sup>12</sup> Book XV *Tytus Becomes a Geologist*,<sup>13</sup> and Book XIX *Tytus Becomes an Actor*.<sup>14</sup> The reception of classics is expressed through short scenes within the main plot.

### The Olympic Games as Shown by Chmielewski

In the book about the boys trying to humanise Tytus by training him in different sports – first published in 1971 – they prepare Tytus for the Olympic Games in Kogutkowo Górne [Upper Cockerel Town]. During a boxing match, Tytus is accidentally drugged with sleeping pills and falls asleep. His dream is a clever narrative device, allowing him to experience Greek antiquity and meet ancient characters as if he was time travelling. He dreams

E. B. White; talking animals in *The Chronicles of Narnia* by S. C. Lewis; *Garfield* by Jim Davies.

5 Chmielewski, H. J., *Tytus, Romek i A'Tomek: Księga VII – Tytus poprawia dwójkę z geografii*, Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Harcerskie „Horyzonty”, 1972.

6 Chmielewski, H. J., *Tytus, Romek i A'Tomek: Księga X – Ochrona przyrody*, Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Harcerskie „Horyzonty”, 1975.

7 Chmielewski, H. J., *Tytus, Romek i A'Tomek: Księga XI – Ochrona zabytków*, Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Harcerskie „Horyzonty”, 1977.

8 Chmielewski, H. J., *Tytus, Romek i A'Tomek: Księga XV – Tytus geologiem*, Warsaw: Młodzieżowa Agencja Wydawnicza, 1982.

9 Chmielewski, H. J., *Tytus, Romek i A'Tomek: Księga XXX – Wyprawa po owoce chichotu*, Warsaw: Księgarnia Prawnicza, 2006.

10 Chmielewski, H. J., *Tytus, Romek i A'Tomek na jedwabnym szlaku*, Warsaw: Prószyński i S-ka, 2019. The very last one – a historical album about the Christianization of Poland – was published posthumously: Chmielewski, H. J., *Tytus, Romek i A'Tomek pomagają księciu Mieszkowski ochrzcić Polskę*, Warsaw: Prószyński i S-ka, 2021.

11 The professor is an inventor. His name in both languages – Polish and English – brings to mind an exceptional talent in creating extraordinary vehicles and other technical inventions.

12 Chmielewski, H. J., *Tytus, Romek i A'Tomek: Księga VI – Tytus olimpijczykiem*, Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Harcerskie „Horyzonty”, 1971.

13 Chmielewski, H. J., *Tytus, Romek i A'Tomek: Księga XV – Tytus geologiem*, Warsaw: Młodzieżowa Agencja Wydawnicza, 1982.

14 Chmielewski, H. J., *Tytus, Romek i A'Tomek: Księga XIX – Tytus aktorem*, Warsaw: Prószyński i S-ka, 1992.

that he is in ancient Greece being carried in an open litter pulled by two donkeys on his way to participate in the Olympic Games. In the background, we can see a simple drawing of a Greek temple (*Tytus Becomes an Olympic Champion*, 34). In Olympia, in the presence of stereotypical Greeks (long-bearded, with straight noses, wearing simple white tunics), Tytus is questioned by a redhead wearing a wreath. The Greek is dressed in a white chiton and a black-trimmed violet *himation*; he stands on a platform and holds a vine. A man in a white headband plays a single flute; another one fills the vessel of the Olympic fire from an amphora. All these details build an ambiance. The man, probably a priest, asks whether Tytus was born free and if the gods had cursed him. Tytus, always witty, answers that Mr Janitor<sup>15</sup> cursed him for breaking a window in the basement with a football. The priest urges for peace and admits Tytus to the competition, even though he is a barbarian. Then, under the Greek name Tytusokles, Tytus is given what he needs to wear – a vine leaf – and is offered a massage with olive oil performed by two servants on an outdoor *klínē* with a meander motif. Although the use of slaves, the vine leaf, and the meander motif are not directly explained, this scene is enough to demonstrate to the child reader what ancient Greek Olympic contestants could have looked like and what they would have experienced, and so the scene provides elements of the Olympic lifestyle and ancient pre-game practices, which the child can later easily associate with Greek antiquity. The games begin, opened with a modern key by the redhead Greek priest. Young people are competing in the *péntathlon*. The first part is the long jump, which Tytus wins by using a modern jumping technique. He also wins the second – running – using a pair of studded boots with bristles and a low start unlike the Greek contestants who start upright. Tytus also wins the discus throw and the javelin throw. The last part – wrestling, is won again by Tytus, who uses judo-style moves. Even though ancient contestants, in reality, competed naked, Chmielewski draws them wearing a loincloth or leaves, avoiding nudity in a book for children (the book was published in 1971).<sup>16</sup> What is important is that the real spirit of peace and courtesy during the games is present. The text in this part of the book includes some (rather programmatic and timeless) statements:

“May the world be free of crime, undisturbed by the tumult of war.”<sup>17</sup> (34);

“It is an honour to fight against you.”<sup>18</sup> (37);

“What a great fight it was! – Forgive me if I’ve been too brutal.”<sup>19</sup> (38);

15 Tytus uses the form *pan dozorca*. “Pan” (sir, sieur, milord, mister, master) or “pani” (madame) is a formal and/or polite form of addressing an adult.

16 Based on the analysis by Karolina Anna Kulpa, “Entry on: Tytus, Romek and A'Tomek (Series, Book 6): Tytus Becomes an Olympic Athlete [Tytus, Romek i A'Tomek. Księga VI: Tytus olimpijczykiem] by Henryk Jerzy Chmielewski [Papcio Chmiel]”, peer-reviewed by Katarzyna Marciniak and Elżbieta Olechowska. *Our Mythical Childhood Survey* (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2018). Link: <http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/414>. Entry version as of June 06, 2021.

17 “Niech będzie świat wolny od zbrodni, nie zakłócony zgiełkiem wojny.”

18 “Zaszczytem jest walczyć z tobą.”

19 “– Przeżyłem wspaniałą walkę!  
– Przepraszam, jeśli byłem zbyt brutalny.”

“We shall fight, but we shall never be enemies.”<sup>20</sup> (38);

“In our games, we only fight for the idea’s sake.”<sup>21</sup> (38).

These sentences highlight the real spirit of a truce, noble competition, fair play and mutual respect, which we usually consider to have been the basic premise of the ancient Olympic Games. Tytus, as the winner, is rewarded with a laurel wreath and with the fame attached to his name, which makes him a little bit confused as he asks (as a child would do) about material prizes or a place on Olympus. The Greeks explain that in their games, the rewards are of a different nature. Tytus, disappointed, teaches the Greeks how to play football and a match takes place between Syracuse and Thebes.<sup>22</sup> In a historically incorrect move, the author uses Arabic numbers on the team’s *chiton* and *himation* sportswear, and in the same manner as before, he uses a random compilation of Greek letters instead of the original ancient Greek words. Both inaccuracies only have one goal: to signal something. For example, to show the difference between the Latin and Greek alphabet, which is enough for children to understand and learn the general facts about, not the details. The football match ends when the ball destroys the marble head of Zeus’ sculpture, which resembles the Zeus of Otricoli bust in the Vatican Museum. Zeus, furious at the profanation of the Olympic Games and the beheading of his statue, strikes the barbarian offender with a thunder of million volts as punishment. Thus, Zeus is shown as a dangerous god, the master of electricity of both old school thunderbolts and modern technology (a voltmeter for his thunders). When Tytus wakes up with a wreath on his head, there is a storm outside the vehicle the boys travel in, so, thinking he is still dreaming, he wants to sacrifice a lamb for Zeus.

Although the scene is not very long (9 pages) and the image of the ancient games is conventional, simplified and stereotypical, it provides important elements of Greek antiquity, which the young reader can easily learn: Zeus and his attributes, the idea and description of the games, customs and disciplines, the techniques used, prizes, garments, haircuts or even body shapes of the contestants, as well as some typical buildings or decorative motifs. The image of ancient Olympia, shown through humour associated with the character of Tytus and the seemingly absurd situation (Tytus is neither Greek, nor even human), resonates with the child reader and is easily remembered. The addition of modern elements to the depiction of the ancient Olympic Games achieves a comedic result of contrast between the past and the present and highlights the origin of the modern Olympic Games. They are shown as a legacy of the games organised in ancient Greece, palpably alive in the collective memory of the modern society. Some references to antiquity in the text can also be easily understood and retained by children, especially because they are occasionally presented as slogans to remember.

20 “Będziemy walczyć, ale nigdy nie będziemy wrogami.”

21 “W naszych igrzyskach walczy się dla idei...”

22 The same solution which was used before by Goscinny and Uderzo in *Asterix in Britain*. See: Goscinny R. and Uderzo A., “Astérix chez les Bretons,” *Pilote* 307-334 (1965); Hachette Livre, 1966.

### The City of Atlantis

Another example of classical antiquity still being alive and remembered to this day can be found in Book XV *Tytus Becomes a Geologist*, published in 1982. The book includes a short mention of the city of Atlantis when the boys in their vehicle named “Screwdriver” go underground. Romek hopes that they can find the lost land of Atlantis. They reach an underground city with signs of advanced civilisation. As they walk through the city, Romek believes that it might be the legendary Atlantis, especially as they are under the Atlantic Ocean. A Tomek hopes that their discovery will shed light on the development of humanity. They meet strange crystals emitting light which is translated into the human speech by an analyser they carry with them. This way one of the crystals tells the story of the rise and fall of the Atlantean civilisation, and describes how its citizens turned into crystals to preserve their memories and consciousness. Even though the motif of Atlantis is not developed further, the story hints at ‘hidden’ elements of ancient Greek culture. For example, as the boys descend underground, a Greek Ionic column is shown amongst the rocks. While there is no direct mention that the story of Atlantis originated in antiquity, the association between Atlantis and ancient Greece is obvious. Such an approach illustrates Papcio Chmiel’s tendency to construct educational value through seemingly insignificant details not central to the story. Allusions of this kind highlight the need to ‘plant a seed’ in the child’s mind and provide a specific set of connotations, which are later crucial as a basis for learning about the ancient culture.

### The Greek Theatre and Roman Games

Book XIX *Tytus Becomes an Actor* was published in 1992; it is about the history of theatre and performances. The boys are going to the theatre, but Tytus, being not fully human, does not know how to behave there. In this comic book, the references to antiquity are introduced by two scenes; the characters use their imagination to explore the beginnings and development of theatre, first in ancient Greece and then in Rome.

When Greek antiquity is introduced, the protagonists, dressed in their contemporary outfits, “arrive” in Athens in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century or later (the Odeon of Herodes Atticus, built in 161 AD, is mentioned). A Mediterranean house with grapevines planted around is drawn as a background scenario. A local bearded man dressed in ancient garments shows the boys the way to the theatre of Dionysus. He considers them to be “foreigners” as they are not paying enough tribute to Dionysus. At the theatre, Tytus learns when and how the Athenian Dionysian theatre developed, who used to perform there, and who the Muses connected with the theatre arts are: Melpomene, Polyhymnia, Terpsichore, and Thalia. In the descriptions of the Muses, Chmielewski uses types of letters resembling the “Greek” alphabet – for example, uppercase Sigma instead of capital “E”. The boys want to re-enact a scene from the *Iliad* to consolidate the new knowledge. They change into stage costumes, masks and buskins and begin to play, while Tytus looks for less serious and dramatic entertainment. His wish is to go to a disco, which in Polish is *dyskoteka*, but a misunderstanding leads him to a pinacotheca. Such a funny situation facilitates learning and remembering new, difficult and sophisticated vocabulary, de-

rived from Greek. In the pinacotheca, Tytus views a painting and sculpture exhibition displaying the Greek gods and heroes as boring, and he makes jokes standing next to a painting of Zeus. The guards wearing Corinthian helmets consider this an offence and an insult to the god. They seize the chimpanzee and drag him across the city's streets to the guard of the goddess Athena. Then his friends convince the guards that he is their slave and rescue Tytus by bribing the guards with a few drachmas.<sup>23</sup>

The next imaginary journey takes the three of them to ancient Rome. First, Tytus should learn some Latin – the boys give him a pocket dictionary by Kazimierz Kumaniecki,<sup>24</sup> one of the most popular among students at the time, with a recognisable cover. Learning Latin seems to be quite easy, as the examples given for Latin words are spelled and sound just like the Polish equivalents (for instance: *horror*, *chirurgia* [surgery], *senator* or *temperatura* [temperature]). But the studying ends in a fight when they reach the word *idiota* (idiot), which Tytus considers an insult. The three friends then “arrive” at the Flavian amphitheatre during the games in its times of glory, although its later name – Colosseum – is used. A Tomek wears armour with a Roman eagle and has a laurel wreath on his head; Romek wears a wreath – *corona muralis*. They sit in a luxury box as the Emperor and his consul. Tytus, however, is to fight in the arena like a regular slave gladiator in order to learn about the Roman games from an insider perspective. Tytus and his robust opponent are only wearing waist-cloths; they carry Roman swords (*gladius*) and small, round shields. Before the confrontation, the gladiators yell the well-known phrase *Ave Caesar, morituri te salutant*.<sup>25</sup> Tytus prevails in the fight using his flatulence; based on a pun, as in Polish “death” *śmierć* sounds similar to “stink” *śmierdź*. In the next part of the games, Tytus must face a wild beast, which is a reference to *venationes*, but the lion kept in a cage goes on strike, so an elephant is let out instead. Clever Tytus makes the animal snatch Romek from the tribunes, which brings an end to the Roman adventure.<sup>26</sup>

Chmielewski effortlessly incorporated quite a few important aspects of spectacles and theatre in the Greek and Roman world in those two short scenes. Combining elements of the modern and ancient world results in situational humour (finding *pinacotheca* instead of a disco, a lion on strike) which makes the factual information in the comic book very enjoyable, accessible and amusing. This is exactly how Chmielewski

23 Based on the analysis by Marta Pszczolińska, “Entry on: Tytus, Romek and A Tomek (Series, Book 19): Tytus Becomes an Actor [Tytus, Romek i A Tomek. Księga XIX: Tytus aktorem] by Henryk Jerzy Chmielewski [Papcio Chmiel]”, peer-reviewed by Katarzyna Marciniak and Elżbieta Olechowska. *Our Mythical Childhood Survey* (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2020). Link: <http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/1122>. Entry version as of June 06, 2021.

24 Kumaniecki Kazimierz, ed., *Słownik łacińsko-polski: według słownika Hermana Mengego i Henryka Kopii*, Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1957. Revisions in: 1964, 1965, 1967, 1970, 1973, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1979, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1984, 1986, 1988, 1990, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002.

25 The same motif had been used before by Goscinny and Uderzo in *Asterix the Gladiator*. See: Goscinny R. and Uderzo A., “*Astérix Gladiateur*,” *Pilote* 126-168 (1962); Editions Hachette, 1964.

26 Based on the analysis by Marta Pszczolińska, “Entry on: Tytus, Romek and A Tomek (Series, Book 19): Tytus Becomes an Actor [Tytus, Romek i A Tomek. Księga XIX: Tytus aktorem] by Henryk Jerzy Chmielewski [Papcio Chmiel]”, peer-reviewed by Katarzyna Marciniak and Elżbieta Olechowska. *Our Mythical Childhood Survey* (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2020). Link: <http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/1122>. Entry version as of June 06, 2021.

designed nearly all of the other Tytus comics: he transformed the knowledge taught boringly at school into a fun experience for the young reader.

## Conclusion

Chmielewski perfected a great tool to teach children: they first notice the humour of the design and the wittiness of the plot without realising that they may be learning something. That is probably why the Tytus series remained so popular for over 60 years.<sup>27</sup> To this day, the Tytus' website<sup>28</sup> receives letters from adult fans who read the comics in their childhood, while many children send in their drawings of Tytus, for example, wearing a face mask,<sup>29</sup> demonstrating the effectiveness of the concept of learning through laughter, and showing how it can be done.

Although Chmielewski was a comic creator whose works were extraordinarily popular in Poland for over half a century, he remains virtually unknown beyond the Polish borders. The times when the first booklets were created were not conducive to free cultural exchange due to the Iron Curtain. After the political transformation and first free elections since WWII in 1991, when Poland could open up to the world more widely, Tytus had already been in publication for 34 years and 18 booklets with his adventures had been written. Unfortunately, many elements embedded in the Polish reality of when the comics were written (since 1957) became outdated, and even incomprehensible to non-Polish readers, which could be the reason why neither the author nor the publisher decided to follow with publications in other countries. While the cartoon humour is limitless, certain background elements and some indirect references from the bygone years would become impossible to translate for an international readership. It is perhaps why Tytus remained strictly popular with Polish readers, helping new generations of children to learn the delusive effects of taking *bzikotyki* (loony-drugs<sup>30</sup>),<sup>31</sup> learn how to surf the Internet,<sup>32</sup> how to fight obesity,<sup>33</sup> or learn about the most important events in Polish history.<sup>34</sup>

27 The educational value of Chmielewski's comics has also been discussed by Tomasz Marcinak in his articles: T. Marcinak, "Metakomiks dydaktyczny. Jubileusz H.J. Chmielewskiego i międzypokoleniowy przekaz *Tytusa, Romka i A'Tomka*" in *Guliwer. Dwumiesięcznik o książce dla dziecka* 2 (2004): 35–42; T. Marcinak, "O Tytusie polimedialnym" in *Guliwer. Dwumiesięcznik o książce dla dziecka* 3 (2011): 28–33.

28 See *Tytus Romek i A'Tomek* website: <https://www.tytusromekiatomek.pl/index.html> (accessed: May 09, 2022).

29 See *Tytus Romek i A'Tomek* website: <https://www.tytusromekiatomek.pl/?aktualnosc=580> (accessed: May 09, 2022).

30 From the Polish words: *bzik* – "loony", and *narkotyki* – "drugs".

31 Chmielewski, H. J., *Tytus, Romek i A'Tomek: Księga XXIII – Tytus i bzikotyki*, Warsaw: Prószyński i S-ka, 1997.

32 Chmielewski, H. J., *Tytus, Romek i A'Tomek: Księga XXVIII – Tytus internautą*, Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Egmont Polska, 2014.

33 Chmielewski, H. J., *Tytus, Romek i A'Tomek: Księga XXX – Wyprawa po owoce chichotu*, Warsaw: Księgarnia Prawnicza, 2006.

34 Besides regular, numerated Books (I–XXXI) Chmielewski also wrote some independent booklets with Tytus, Romek and A'Tomek concerning historical events, such as: *Tytus, Romek i A'Tomek jako warszawscy powstańcy 1944* (2009), *Tytus, Romek i A'Tomek w bitwie warszawskiej 1920* (2010), *Tytus, Romek i A'Tomek w bitwie grunwaldzkiej* (2011), *Tytus, Romek i A'Tomek w odsieczy wiedeńskiej 1683* (2012), *Tytus, Romek i A'Tomek jako rycerze Bolesława Krzywoustego* (2014), *Tytus, Romek i A'Tomek pomagają księciu Mieszcowi ochrzcić Polskę* (2021).

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# Metafiction and Genre Hybridity in Naoki Urasawa's Book *The Nameless Monster* by Emil Sebe

MARIA JOSÉ CAMPOS

*The Nameless Monster* (2008) is a fictional picturebook written by Naoki Urasawa, but authored both by him and Emil Sebe, and it appears in the Japanese popular manga series *Monster* (1994-2001) by Naoki Urasawa. The picturebook is very particular as it is a compilation of short stories and documents, which narrate the darkness of human nature, the theft of identity, monstrous destruction, and annihilation of life through children picturebook aesthetics. The following paper will attempt to define who is its implied reader, focusing on the boundary of metafiction and genre hybridity, and by analysing the book's materiality, marketing, the publisher's paratext and intertextuality through close reading. I conclude that this picturebook's implied reader is an experienced adult reader who is very familiar with the *Monster* universe and can decode the metafictional and genre hybridity codes in the text, and that it is an adult picturebook disguised as a children's book, which sends the message to its readers about the child's condition.

*Keywords:* metafiction, genre hybridity, monster, manga, picturebooks, Naoki Urasawa, children's literature in Japan

## Metafiction und Gattungshybridität in Naoki Urasawas *The Nameless Monster* von Emil Sebe

*The Nameless Monster* (2008) ist ein fiktionales Bilderbuch, geschrieben von Naoki Urasawa, aber mit einer doppelten Autorenangabe (zusätzlich Emil Sebe). Erschienen ist es in der populären japanischen Mangareihe *Monster* (1994-2001) von Naoki Urasawa. Das Bilderbuch ist sehr speziell, da es sich um eine Zusammenstellung von Kurzgeschichten und Dokumenten handelt, die die Dunkelheit und Abgründe der menschlichen Natur in den Vordergrund rücken, in Kombination mit Identitätsdiebstahl, monströser Zerstörung und Annihilierung des Lebens – unter der nur vordergründigen Optik von Kinderbuch-Ästhetik. Der vorliegende Artikel unternimmt den Versuch, den\*die implizite\*n Leser\*in zu definieren und auf die Grenze von Metafiction und Hybridität zu fokussieren, wobei mittels *close reading* die Materialität des Buches (der Beschreibstoff, der Textträger etc.), das Marketing, der Paratext des Verlagshauses und die Intertextualität in den Mittelpunkt des Interesses rücken. Es kann geschlussfolgert werden, dass der\*die implizite Leser\*in des Bilderbuches ein\*e erfahrene\*r Erwachsene\*r ist, der\*die mit dem *Monster*-Universum in hohem Maße vertraut ist und überdies imstande, die metafictionalen und hybriden Codes im Text zu entschlüsseln: Es handelt sich somit um ein Buch für Erwachsene im „Mäntelchen“ eines Kinderbuchs, das den Rezipient\*innen seine Botschaft über die Verfassung des Kindes vermittelt.

*Schlagwörter:* Metafiktion, Gattungshybridität, Monster, Manga, Bilderbücher, Naoki Urasawa, japanische Kinderliteratur

## Introduction

What if a children's picturebook was the defining trigger for a child to become an evil heartless assassin? *The Nameless Monster* [*Namae nai kaibutsu / Obluda, Která Nemá Svě Jméno*] (2008) by Emil Sebe is a fictional picturebook in the universe of the manga series *Monster* (1994-2001) by Naoki Urasawa, which was printed shortly after the 18 volume-manga *Monster* series and published on the Japanese market. *Monster* is a *seinen*, a thriller manga series with psychological and violent themes and targeted at young adult males. It is very popular in Japan and has been adapted to an animated series of 74 episodes (2004 to 2005). In *Monster's* storyline, a boy called Johan reads a picturebook entitled *The Nameless Monster* as a child and, through it, is brainwashed to eventually become a merciless mastermind murderer in Central Europe. *Monster* tells the story of Doctor Tenma, a Japanese surgeon, who saved Johan's life but is now trying to kill him after discovering that he is a merciless assassin and learning about the boy's dark past in post-war Germany and Czechoslovakia.

*The Nameless Monster* is a particular picturebook as it is a compilation of short stories and documents, which narrate the darkness of human nature, the theft of identity, monstrous destruction, and annihilation of life through children picturebook aesthetics. However, its use of metafictional elements and genre hybridity makes its reader constantly question who the implied reader of the text is. In this paper, I will answer one central question: Who is the implied reader of the picturebook *The Nameless Monster*? I will focus on boundary crossings in genre, and on metafiction. I will argue that the implied reader of this picturebook is an experienced adult reader because the genre hybridity and metafictional devices require decoding from an individual with substantial literary competence.

This topic is relevant for further studies because it reflects upon how genre hybridity and metafiction devices raise questions about the ethical aspects of children's literature. The general accessibility of picturebooks by children and adults can be dangerous, as they can be exposed to any type of content, if they are able to read it. Furthermore, analysing manga is relevant as it is hugely popular worldwide; Japan has one of the biggest comic industries and fan bases in the world. According to Catherine Makino, 2.4 millions of fans or *otaku* in Japan spend more than 2.5 billion of euros in these products every year (2009, n. p.). Manga is part of the fast consumption of everyday life not only in Japan but through translations also in different countries around the world. In addition, the topic of this paper is original as a Japanese picturebook is examined through Western theory. By making use of the concepts of the implied reader, genre hybridity and metafiction, it shows how manga connects Eastern and Western culture.

## Theoretical Framework

The concepts of implied reader, genre hybridity and metafiction are key issues for my research question and should therefore be theoretically framed by relevant studies. The implied reader is a concept coined by Wolfgang Iser and it has inspired many studies about the relationship between author, book and reader (Castleman 2011, 20). Aidan Chambers talks about a “reader in the book” (1978, 1) and proposes critical methods to explore it, as looking at the style, perspective, ‘taking sides’ and tell-tale gaps. The implied reader is one who has the intellectual and technical capability of decoding the meaning of the literary work. Moreover, Chambers also says that the implied reader must be identified through the literary work only, and not through the words and thoughts of the author (1978, 6). Defining the implied reader is surely a complex matter; nevertheless, the language employed by the ‘author in the book’ provides strong evidence on who may be the reader capable of decoding the message.

Furthermore, genre hybridity includes the term ‘genre’, which is not concretely defined. Paul Copley says that genre is a “set of expectations” on theme, audience and style (Copley 2001, 232). As genres are categories that have to do with the reader’s expectations and that are complex to define, it is almost inevitable that genres mix, and genre hybridity takes place. In Western children’s literature, genre classification has to do mostly with the types of “characters, settings, actions and overall form or structure” found in the book (Cullinan and Galda 1994, 6-7). Some examples include picturebooks, poetry and verse, folklore, fantasy, science fiction, realistic fiction, historical fiction, biography, nonfiction, taking into consideration that picturebooks constitute a genre based on format and not on content (ibid.). Picturebooks are natural hybrids, which create inherently the “synergy between verbal and visual language” (van Lierop-Debrauwer 2018, 81). Picturebooks are generally considered to be targeted at young children, whereas manga has a wider aged audience of mainly teenagers and experienced adults readers (Kümmerling-Meibauer 2013, 101). This suggests that a manga picturebook hybrid will play with the expectations of each genre through visual language, as well as playing with the tricky identification of the implied reader.

Genre classification in Japanese literature, particularly manga (Japanese comics), is made according to the target audience, labelled in the book’s paratext for marketing purposes. Manga is categorised mainly as *kodomo* (children’s manga), *shonen* (boys’ manga), *shoujo* (girls’ manga), *seinen* (young men’s manga), and  *josei* (young women’s manga) (Cohn and Ehly 2016, 23-24). Each genre has its own set of expected storylines, drawing style, layout, themes, and Japanese writing scripts, making the manga accessible to readers who can decode these elements successfully. An important distinction between *kodomo* (children’s manga) and other manga genres is that *kodomo* is exclusively written in *kana* (*hiragana* and *katakana*), the phonetical syllables that are understood by elementary school children. Other manga genres contain *kanji*, complex concept ideograms, learned by young adults and later in their school education. According to Wesley Robertson, the use of *kanji* and *hiragana* in manga “reflect the scripts’ respective links to adults and children”, representing the identities and conventions of characters in-text and allowing access to certain readers who can decipher the scripts successfully, according to their reading experience and knowledge (2019, 2).

Regarding metafiction, Patricia Waugh says that it is “a term given to fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality” (1984, 2). Maria Nikolajeva adds that it “reflects the chaos and ambivalence of our life and the loss of absolute values and truths” (2001, 206). This is often seen in a negative light when it is involved within children’s literature as it breaks radically with the elements of innocence and comfort, which are conventionally part of the childhood construct. In a way, metafiction in relation to children’s literature shows the bitter, disturbing side of mixing fiction and reality in a world of dichotomies between humans and monsters, author and reader, adults and children, and good and evil. Even though metafiction studies in children’s literature are emerging, Casie Hermansson claims that metafiction in children’s literature is mostly appreciated by a seasoned, literate, and experienced reader, such as an adult (2019, 5).

Regarding metafictional devices, Sylvia Pantaleo lists 16 of them to be considered when analysing picturebooks, which include “typographic experimentation”, “new and unusual design and layout”, “illustrative framing, including mise-en-abyme” and “availability of multiple readings and meanings for a variety of audiences” (Pantaleo 2005, 35-36). These non-conventional devices allude to materiality, showing the picturebook’s “quality as an artefact” (Nikolajeva 2008, 57) and bringing the book to life, through a “unique experience of performative reading” for the reader (Scott 2014, 40). Another way is to use paratext as essential part of the internal narrative of a book and use it to convey a particular atmosphere (Pantaleo 2018, 47). Sandra Beckett says that paratexts – which include credits, prefaces and notes – suggest a certain readership in their style and presentation and that they might not be of attention to a child reader (2009, 232-233). Intertextuality is another device that links one text with other texts through a verbal and/or a visual level and expects the reader to make the connection between these texts (Nikolajeva 2001, 228). This decoding expectation regarding metafiction and genre hybridity will then help define who the implied reader is.

## Analysis

### *Description of the Book*

*The Nameless Monster* consists of 50 pages, a front and back cover and a jacket, which has the title character as a holographic print and a promotional flap. The book follows the traditional Japanese binding format, from right to left, and it has two titles on the front cover; the main and larger one is the author and book’s title in Czech “Emil Sebe, *Obluda, Která Nemá Svě Jméno*” [A monster who has no name] and a subtitle in Japanese “*Namae no nai kaibutsu, chiku / Emil Sebe haka yaku / Urasawa Naoki*” [A monster with no name, by Emil Sebe and others, translated by Urasawa Naoki] (*The Nameless Monster* 2008, front cover). The book is a compilation of three stories as manga (‘The Nameless Monster’ written by Emil Sebe, ‘The Man with Big Eyes and The Man with the Big Mouth’ by Jakub Faroubek, and ‘God of Peace’ by Klaus Poppe), one manuscript titled ‘The awakening monster’ and Helmut Voss’ sketch collection. There is an editor’s note at

the end and some other paratextual elements, such as the credits page, publishing information for each story and end page artwork. By exploring the elements of the book, we can determine who the implied reader is.

### *Text Language*

All titles in *The Nameless Monster* are mainly written in Czech. There is English paratext on the tales' sources after the story's title page and there is a small caption for a publishing house illustration in German. In the manuscript's case, Czech text is used as a background watermark image and the Japanese translation is put on top, to show that the Japanese translation is based on the Czech text. The narrative text in the stories, as well as the editor's note and credits page are in Japanese, making this the main language in the book. All Japanese writing systems can be found within the book: *kana* only in the three stories and manuscript, and *kana* and *kanji* in the editor's note and credits page.

The use of language talks inherently of the book's accessibility to its readers. Even though there are four languages present in the book, it is not necessary to grasp them all to read the book as long as the reader grasps the basics of the Japanese language. There is a contradiction in the use of Japanese scripts as, on the one hand, the stories are written in basic *kana*, which are easily understood by Japanese children who read *kodomo* and *shounen* manga. On the other hand, there is an editor's note which is coded in formal, editorial language with *kana* and *kanji*, which implies an adult readership. This can lead to an interpretation that the three stories, which narrate dark themes, imply a dual audience of children and adults, while the paratext only implies an adult audience, where they learn that these stories have a dark origin and they might pose a threat to the young generation.

### *Book Materiality*

*The Nameless Monster* uses materiality, which makes the book appear as an artefact playing with the gap between fiction and reality. The most eye-catching element is the monster's materiality. First, the monster in the front cover appears as a holographic print (3D effect image), which creates the illusion of it occupying a physical space in the real world and being capable of moving. In the inner cover page, the monster is missing from the frame, suggesting that it can move in and out of the book. This artifice is used, too, through the end pages, at the beginning, and at the end of the book. The monster appears sitting on the moon and many pictures of the monster appear in sequence, as if they were animation frames, flying in a circular line through the end pages. At the last end page, it says "Bye-bye!" (*The Nameless Monster*, final page), which suggests it has the ability of addressing the reader directly. The monster's materiality is reaffirmed through the front cover, inner cover, and end pages suggesting that it has independence of movement, dimension, and speech, getting closer to the reader and appearing to be alive and real. This materiality can be perceived by children and adults alike, but while

it might be perceived differently by both target groups it will be certainly impactful and memorable for the performative reading experience.

There is also reference to the book's materiality as a codex. A ripped page is used at the end of the third story, making the story *God of Peace* finish abruptly, after the god discovers in his reflection that he is a monster. This refers to the actual book's materiality; someone ripped the page, and the end of the story is lost. This raises questions as: Was it done intentionally to create suspense? Who ripped the page? The reader participates in the decoding and thus is conscious of the book as an artefact, a codex that uses its own artefact's elements as part of the narrative.

### *Marketing, Editing, and the Publisher's Paratext*

As said before, the huge part of paratexts regarding marketing, editing, and publishing in *The Nameless Monster* is in English or high proficiency Japanese (*kana* and *kanji*), implying an experienced readership. The book has a *Monster* manga promotional flap which says: "The picturebook that appeared in the work of MONSTER printed in full color!", mentions Franz Bonaparta's sketches and bonus visual material, as well as promotes the *Monster* manga deluxe volumes and a side story called *Another Monster, The Investigation Report*. Moreover, next to every internal story cover page the following paratext can be read in English: "Japanese edition published by Shogakukan Inc., Tokyo. Japanese translation rights arranged with Moravia Inc., Praha through Japan Shogakukan Inc., Tokyo." (*The Nameless Monster*, 2008, 4, 14 and 21), which suggests that the book is a collaboration project between a Czech publisher and a Japanese publisher, and even includes a phrase in German as an image caption at the end: "Das schlafende Monstrum", Hermann Führ, Verlag Quintus, Wien/Österreich" (*The Nameless Monster*, 49), adding the collaboration of an Austrian publisher.

There are copyright disclaimers for each tale in the book, linking them to their respective authors and dates of original publishing: "Text & Illustrations © 1977 EMIL SEBE" (*The Nameless Monster*, 4), "Text & Illustrations © 1973 JAKUB FAROUBEK" (*The Nameless Monster*, 14), "Text & Illustrations © 1968 KLAUS POPPE" (*The Nameless Monster*, 21). In addition, there is a statement written by Takashi Nagasaki, the editor of the book, in Japanese *kana* and *kanji*, with no accompanying pictures. It appears as an afterword trying to explain the mystery behind these stories and documents in the book, reaching no conclusion, suggesting that no one knows the identities of the writers, the origins of the tales nor their links to real events in Europe, leaving more questions than answers to its readership. Finally, the credits page has the Czech title and Emil Sebe's name at the top, followed by the Japanese text "MONSTER Complete Edition Separate Volume Unpublished Kaibutsu October 5th, 2008, First edition issued (no stamping)" (*The Nameless Monster*, 48). The credit list in Japanese *kana* and *kanji* lists Emil Sebe et al. as authors and Naoki Urasawa, who was credited as a translator on the front cover, as the copyright holder.

Marketing, editing, and the publisher's paratext give plenty of background information regarding the book's supposed authenticity, authorship, and editorial history, connecting it to its origin in the *Monster* series. This information is encoded for an expe-

rienced readership in the paratext, which is often not read by children. In addition, this information suggests that there is a mystery involved in who the implied author is, regarding that the translator is the owner of the copyright and not the supposed authors. The information in the editorial paratext is the only one that explicitly questions the authenticity of the stories in *The Nameless Monster*, implying a trained and experienced reader who knows the difference between fiction and non-fiction. Moreover, as the flap and credits pages suggest, this book is part of the *Monster* manga series, implying that the *Monster* readership might be more suitable to decode the hidden information inside the paratext than other readers.

### *Intertextuality*

*The Nameless Monster* and its intertextual relationship with its 'mother' *Monster* manga series is greatly significant, as it is known as a plot device in the *Monster* narrative. *The Nameless Monster* is introduced for the first time as a Czech picturebook in a German library found by Johan who, when taking it into his hands, enters in deep shock and loses consciousness. This incident introduces a chain of events and anecdotes regarding the book, its origins, its creators, and its purpose; to brainwash and turn post-WWII Czechoslovakian children into criminal masterminds who would do anything to become monsters, such as kill, steal identities and submerge in eternal darkness. The book's images of Johan and Anna in the sketch collection, the story of 'A monster without a name' and 'The God of Peace' giving names to children acquire a deeper meaning and importance in the *Monster* manga series.

It could be said that *The Nameless Monster* is a type of intertextual mise-en-abyme, a book within a book, and both works cannot be seen independent from each other to fully understand their cryptic and terrifying message. In the *Monster* manga narrative, *The Nameless Monster* is a picturebook used as a pedagogical tool by the Czech secret police to inspire evil, trauma and dehumanisation in children. There is another important piece of information that the *Monster* manga gives to its readers. The multiple authors, Emil Sebe et al., in *The Nameless Monster* are mentioned in the manga *Monster* as pseudonyms to a single picturebook author called Franz Bonaparta, who is one of the main villains in *Monster*, responsible in raising and brainwashing the boy Johan to become a manipulative mastermind assassin. This fact is crucial for the added shocking value of *The Nameless Monster*, which can only be understood through the intertextuality with the manga series *Monster*, targeted to an adult demographic.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, based on my analysis and interpretation, the implied reader of *The Nameless Monster* by Emil Sebe is an experienced adult reader, mainly a *Monster* manga series fan. Such a reader will be able to decode effectively the metafictional and genre hybridity elements found in the manga picturebook, as they are aware of the book's background and history in the *Monster* universe because of the intertextuality between each literary

work. *The Nameless Monster* is a manga picturebook for adults disguised as a children's story collection through text usage and playful materiality in the stories. Nevertheless, its editorial paratext, the use of several languages, including Japanese *kana* and *kanji* usage shows that an experienced and trained reader will be able to decipher the book's code.

This study has limited itself to finding evidence on who the implied reader is in *The Nameless Monster*. However, it has raised questions on the ethical implications this book has as a potential pedagogical tool for imposing ideology on children. The book itself and the book as an intertextual *mise-en-abyme* in the *Monster* manga poses the literal question: "Humans [...] can become anything" (*Monster*, 13). If *The Nameless Monster* has, as the *Monster* manga suggests, children as implied readers, there is a dark message delivered by the implied author. Children's literature can be a very dangerous tool for manipulation and brainwashing and the implied author is constructing this situation and showing the implications it can have to his adult audience. The artistic work is a message to adults about the children's condition; children can access all types of literature, regardless of its content, and be ideologically manipulated and instructed to act in a certain way. He poses this message in a very imaginative and transgressing way to make a powerful impact on his adult audience. Anyone can become like Johan, anyone can become a monster, they just need to be exposed to monstrous motivation at a certain time in their life.

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## Paideia of Diogenes: Live Like a Dog to Become a Human

ANGELINA GERUS

*Diogène l'Homme Chien* by Yan Marchand presents the biography and the philosophy of Diogenes of Sinope for young readers of the 21<sup>st</sup> century: The fictive character Androsthène, a young Greek, sets off to Athens to complete his studies in the Platonic Academy. The children's book issued by the publishing house "Les Petits Platons" forms part of the eponymous series, which is famous for its fascinating adaptations of philosophical texts and ideas from different epochs. "Les Petits Platons" are actively spread worldwide, being translated into thirteen languages already. The paper highlights the transformation of the ancient text for the present-day recipient and the doubling of its new addressee, which includes both the youngster and the mediating adult.

*Keywords:* Diogenes of Sinope, Greek philosophy for children, *Les Petits Platons*, code chains, Gérard Genette, Michel Foucault, self-identification of young readers

### **Die Lehre des Diogenes. Lebe wie ein Hund, um ein Mensch zu werden**

*Diogène l'Homme Chien* von Yan Marchand vermittelt Biographie und Philosophie von Diogenes von Sinope an junge Leser\*innen des 21. Jahrhunderts: Die fiktive Figur Androsthène, ein junger Grieche, macht sich auf nach Athen, um seine Studien in der Platonischen Akademie zu komplettieren. Das Kinderbuch erschien im Verlag "Les Petits Platons" und ist gleichzeitig Teil der gleichnamigen Reihe, die für ihre gelungenen Adaptionen philosophischer Texte, Ideen und Konzepte aus verschiedensten Epochen berühmt ist. "Les Petits Platons" sind in der Zwischenzeit weltweit verbreitet und in 13 Sprachen übersetzt. Der Beitrag beleuchtet die Transformation des alten Textes für moderne Rezipient\*innen und die Zweifachadressierung (junge Leser\*innen und vermittelnde Erwachsene).

*Schlagwörter:* Diogenes von Sinope, griechische Philosophie für Kinder, *Les Petits Platons*, Code-Ketten, Gérard Genette, Michel Foucault, Selbstidentifikation junger Leser\*innen

### **Are we Something More than Featherless Bipeds?**

Although – as Plato taught – our nails are flat, the name of a real human still has to be merited. In order to find a perfect mentor for soul education and its genuine maturation, one may follow the route outlined in the book *Diogène l'Homme Chien* (*Diogenes the Dog-Man*; 2011) written by Yan Marchand, a doctor in philosophy and a contemporary French author.

The short story presents the biography and the philosophy of Diogenes of Sinope for young readers of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The main ideas as well as famous anecdotes from his life are gathered by Marchand in the newly constructed narration about Androsthène, a young Greek who sets off to Athens to complete his studies in the Platonic Academy. This children's book issued by the publishing house "Les Petits Platon" ("The Tiny Platos") forms part of the eponymous series, which is famous for its fascinating adaptations of philosophical texts and ideas from different epochs. "Les Petits Platon" are actively spread worldwide, being translated into thirteen languages already.<sup>1</sup> Diogenes is not the only ancient thinker whose ideas are adapted for the youth through the books of this series: in addition, it includes texts about Pythagoras, Epicurus, Epictetus, Socrates, Thales, Parmenides, and Heraclitus.

### A Question of Code-Switching

While passing from a hypotext to hypertext (to use Gérard Genette's terms) a reader certainly has to deal with code-switching.<sup>2</sup> Both the transformation of the ancient text for the present-day recipient and the doubling of its new addressee, which includes both the youngster and the mediating adult, is of significance.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, for the purpose of examining the reception of classical oeuvres in children's literature the semiological approach seems to be notably beneficial. Firstly, inasmuch as semiotics allows registering the transgression of the significant elements between the source text and the target one. Secondly, since it brings to light the changes brought about by this transgression along with the essence of this textual metamorphosis.

This very article is based on a method expounded by Roland Barthes in his book *S/Z* that stands as analysis of *Sarrasine*, the short story by Honoré de Balzac. Barthes formulates five main codes of the sense, which become helpful in "the decomposition of the work of reading" (Barthes 1974, 12). The hermeneutic code steers the narration being formed by various terms through which an enigma can be distinguished, suggested, formulated, held in suspense, and finally disclosed. The proairetic code embodies the sequence of actions. The semic code constitutes the accumulation of connotations, units of meaning or thematic groupings. The referential (otherwise cultural) code relates to the storehouse of knowledge either scientific, moral, cultural or to our everyday experi-

1 The books of the "Les Petits Platon" series are also available in Albanian, Arabic, Chinese, Croatian, English, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Lithuanian, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, and Turkish.

2 Cf. the scheme of literary translation described by Yuri Lotman, in Yuri Lotman, *Vnutri mysliščich mirov* [Inside the thinking worlds], Moskva: Yazyki russkoj kul'tury 1996, 16. See also Roman Jakobson, "On linguistic Aspects of Translation" in: Roman Jakobson, *Selected Writings II: Word and language*, Paris: Mouton, 1971, 260-267.

3 In the book *The Narrator's Voice. The Dilemma of Children's Fiction* (1991) Barbara Wall describes *single* addressing, when the author addresses the child from a superior position as an adult; and *double* addressing, when the author appears to be addressing the young reader, but in fact is addressing an adult co-recipient. In turn, Hans-Heino Ewers, defining adults in the course of reading a children's work as mediators, drawing on Umberto Eco, uses the concept of the implied co-reader alongside the implied reader. The researcher proposes the terms *monosemic* and *bisemic* for messages in children's literature and emphasises the possible plurality of addressees on a par with addressing a single reader. See Hans-Heino Ewers, *Literatur für Kinder und Jugendliche: Eine Einführung*, Munich: Fink, 2000, 45-47.

ence. Finally yet importantly, the symbolic code outlines a certain space of associations evoked by rhetorical figures or concepts (Barthes 1974, 19-20). Beyond that, each code finds its realisation in numerous subcodes. For this reason, in the case of *Diogenes the Dog-Man* the primary focus lies in the most significant chains that serve to sketch the stereographic space of writing and hence the plurality of the text.

### A Multitude of Sources

Explicitly or not, the children's book points to a multitude of sources. On the one hand, that could be explained historically, i.e. by the rudimentary theoretical framework of Cynicism. Such a *status quo* complicates any coherent storytelling on the subject and forces a writer to combine available antique fragments, whose authors, as a matter of fact, may have their own view of Cynicism (and therefore a different approach towards transmitting information about it). On the other hand, the wide range of hypotexts is caused by the genre or by the discourse type of the children's book itself. Being a short story, a fictional prose tale, it sets as a communicative purpose to acquaint a reader with the personality of Diogenes and his philosophy. However, given that this reader is supposed to be *primo* modern and *secundo* young, the story should be told clearly, provided with supplementary information and presented in an entertaining way. Certain source texts are therefore drawn to clarify the text or to bridge its gaps with details, while others have the aim to entertain a young reader. In this connection, the primary source is, without any doubts, book VI of *Lives of Eminent Philosophers* by Diogenes Laertios. The other significant work is Seneca's *On Benefits* insofar as its fragment V.4.3-4 is cited on the front flap of the children's book jacket:

Diogène (413 – 327 av. J.-C.)

Je dois nécessairement être vaincu par Diogène, qui marche nu au milieu des trésors de la Macédoine, et foule aux pieds les richesses des rois. Il était puissant, plus riche qu'Alexandre, alors maître du monde; car il pouvait refuser beaucoup plus qu'un roi ne pouvait donner.

Sénèque,

*Des Bienfaits*,

61 – 63 ap. J.-C.

Diogenes (413 – 327 BC)

I must necessarily have been defeated by Diogenes, who walks naked in the midst of the treasures of Macedonia, and tramples underfoot the riches of kings. He was powerful, richer than Alexander, then master of the world; for he could refuse much more than a king could give.

Seneca,

*On Benefits*,

61 – 63 AD<sup>4</sup>

4 If not indicated otherwise, the English translations were made by the author of this article.

It is worth noting, however, that the children's book does not contain the authentic antique fragment due to the elimination of some of its elements (the italics in Seneca's text and its English translation indicate omissions made in the French version):

Necesse est a Socrate beneficiis vincar, necesse est a Diogene, qui per medias Macedonum gazas nudus incessit calcatis regis opibus. [4] *O! ne ille tunc merito et sibi et ceteris, quibus ad dispiciendam veritatem non erat obfusa caligo, supra eum eminere visus est, infra quem omnia iacebant.* Multo potentior, multo locupletior fuit omnia tunc possidente Alexandro; plus enim erat, quod hic nollet accipere, quam quod ille posset dare (Sen. Ben. V.4.3-4).<sup>5</sup>

I must be worsted *in a contest of benefits with Socrates*, or with Diogenes, who walked naked through the treasures of Macedonia, treading the king's wealth under his feet. [4] *In good sooth, he must then rightly have seemed, both to himself and to all others whose eyes were keen enough to perceive the real truth, to be superior even to him at whose feet all the world lay.* He was far more powerful, far richer even than Alexander, who then possessed everything; for there was more that Diogenes could refuse to receive than that Alexander was able to give.<sup>6</sup>

Although the Latin and the French fragments are not identical, the cross-textual reference they make establishes the connection between two traditions (Greek and Roman), two epochs (Classical Greece and Roman Empire), two philosophers (Diogenes and Seneca) and two schools of thought (Cynicism and Stoicism) accordingly. Moreover, the quotation functions as a *prolepsis* for an episode with Diogenes and Alexander the Great in the children's book. As the result, from the perspective of signification, it presupposes not only a semantic comprehension of the fiction text by young readers, but also a semiotic one (referring to Émile Benveniste),<sup>7</sup> i.e. based not so much on cognition as on recognition of the signs already given.

In addition to the classical texts mentioned above, other important sources of *Diogenes the Dog-Man* are the letters attributed to Diogenes of Sinope (notably letter 6 to Crates; letters 13 and 16 to Apolexis; letters 7 and 30 to Hicetas; letter 19 to Anaxilaus), the Discourses of Dio Chrysostom and Emperor Julian (especially Oration 6), and several works of Plutarch. It should be noticed that since this range of the ancient hypotexts is highly cross-textual itself, tracing the source of every single fragment or estimating its influence frequently becomes an issue.

5 The text is taken from Perseus Digital Library: Seneca, *De Beneficiis*, ed. John W. Basore, online: <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A2007.01.0023%3Abook%3D5%3Achapter%3D4%3A-section%3D3> (Date of access: 09.05.2022).

6 The translation is taken from the Project Gutenberg library: Seneca, *On Benefits*, ed. Aubrey Stewart, online: <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/3794/3794-h/3794-h.htm> (Date of access: 09.05.2022).

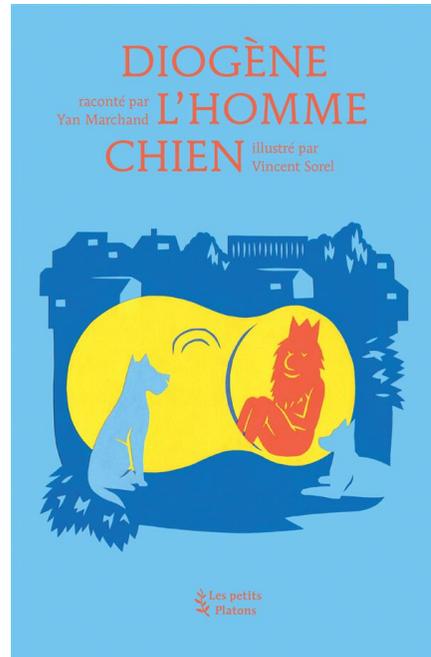
7 For further information on semantic and semiotic modes of significance see Émile Benveniste, *Problèmes de linguistique générale, t. II: 1965-1972*, Paris: Gallimard, 1980, 52-55.

### Intertextuality in the (Para)Text – Looking for Code Chains

Nevertheless, such intertextuality concerns not only the text, but its paratext<sup>8</sup> as well. The process of reading starts with the title and the cover. The title does not pose the question of whether Diogenes is a man or a dog but says directly: both. It contains a paradox that softly prepares a reader to embrace not less paradoxical cynical philosophy. On the cover of the book [Ill. 1], in turn, we find crowned Diogenes sitting in his *pythos* in the company of dogs, and then, on the title page, the thinker with a lantern [Ill. 2]: as if he was introducing himself to a young reader in a way that would later become recognisable, or – in case they had already met – as if the Cynic reminded them of himself.

Some very significant code chains appear therefore yet on the cover. Through the title and the image on the dust jacket, the following hermeneutic subcodes pose the riddles that will then have to be solved: Who is Diogenes? Why is he a Dog-Man? How is it possible to be both a man and a dog? etc. At the outset, the semic subcodes

sketch some subjects of the story, while the oppositions representing the symbolic code announce its future conflicts, both internal and external. Speaking of the reference code, it does not include all the possible associations, but only those cultural citations *sensu largo* that are embedded in the story as important for the author-reader communication and the process of reading as well. For example, textual references to the image of Diogenes appear relevant, in particular to his own words from so-called *Cynic Epistle* 19 to Anaxilaos, for the philosopher's regal attributes – the walking-staff (*baktron*) as a sceptre, the cloak (*tribôn*) as a king's mantle and the leather pouch (*pêra*) as a shield. Nonetheless, regarding dogs, the significance does *not* concern, e.g., their description by Pliny the Elder or by Anacharsis the Cynic to Frasiloh, *nor* does it concern the representation of dogs in Greek mythology, but it *does* concern everyday knowledge, because further on in the text it becomes essential for linking their behaviour with the lifestyle of Diogenes. With respect to the proairetic code, it comes into play later, as unfolding of the plot is demanded. Hence, the encoding nature of the title and cover can be demonstrated with the following table:



Ill. 1: Cover (Yan Marchand, *Diogène l'Homme Chien*. Paris: Les Petits Platons 2011), illustrations by Vincent Sorel.

8 'Paratext' should be understood according to Gérard Genette, see Gérard Genette, *Seuils*, Paris: Seuil, 1987, 7-8.

Hermeneutic code (the voice of truth)	Semic code (the voice of the person)	Symbolic code (voice of the symbol)	Proairetic code (the voice of empirics)	Reference code (the voice of citation / of knowledge)
[enigmas of the title] Who is Diogenes? Why is he a Dog-Man? How is it possible to be both a man and a dog?  [enigmas of the image] Where is he? Why is he sitting in a jar? Why is he wearing a crown?	[background] civilisation [crown] superiority, [pythos] modesty, [dogs] close-to-nature, [solitude] aurtarkeia, [smile] happiness.	I. A city versus an individual;  II. A man versus a dog / dogs;  III. A king versus a beggar.	—	I. Antique culture; II. The image of Diogenes [the story about the <i>pythos</i> ] (see letter 16 to Apolexis); <sup>1</sup> III. Common knowledge about character and behaviour of dogs; IV. Cynicism.

1 Cf. letter 16, from Diogenes to Apolexis with D. L. VI.22; D. Chr. IV.13; Stob. I.5.67.

Without dwelling further on examining the visual narration in the children's book, it is worth noting, however, that Diogenes' images often reproduce situations from the most famous anecdotes, such as his meeting with Alexander, or the thinker himself eating the *mortifer* octopus. At the end of the story, for instance, there is a picture of a dog above the colophon that may recall his posthumous marble monument described *inter alia* by Diogenes Laertios (D. L. VI.76) or Pausanias (Paus. II.2.4).

### Learning Philosophy by Decoding Diogenes

Proceeding *ad rem*, or rather *ad textum*: the children's story begins almost two-and-a-half thousand years ago, on Aegina. Onésicrite, its wealthy citizen, is deeply concerned that his well brought-up son had not received the last missing lesson, namely the education of his soul. At the father's request, Androsthène goes not just anywhere, but to Athens to address himself not to anyone, but to Plato. The young Greek does not appreciate preparation for entering the Academy too much, but the city fascinates him with its luxury.

The plot of the book, which is formed around the anecdote mentioned briefly by Diogenes Laertios (D.L. VI.2.75-76), gets transformed into the third-person narrative with an omniscient narrator and zero focalisation. The children's text also includes numerous chreias (*khreiai*), brief and useful anecdotes, that are typical for the cynic education. As a result, on the one hand, the story has a coherent form, which facilitates its perception. On the other hand, such a form is marked with particular semantics, as it is made – according to the cynic tradition – of such anecdotes intended for illustrating be-

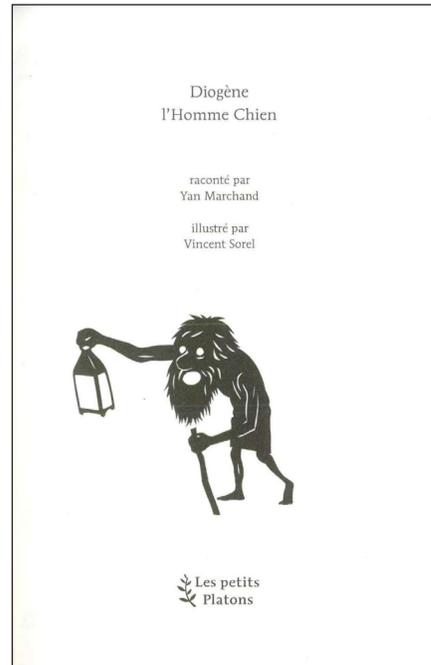
haviour patterns and relationship matrices.

The protagonist is young Androsthène. It is his actions that determine and expand the proairetic code, and therefore the chronotope of the story throughout its greater part: namely he is the person who encounters Diogenes in Athens, he gets bored during Plato's classes, he experiences a cynic lifestyle imitating Diogenes, etc. In addition, the figure of Androsthène becomes a main source for the hermeneutic subcodes due to the questions he poses to himself or to anyone around him (while a reader poses the same ones): "who is this strange character?", "is he [Diogenes – A.G.] always like this?", "is his [Androsthène's – A.G.] family happy despite their wealth?" (Marchand 2011, 9, 18, 20). Since this is an adolescent searching for a teacher but also searching for himself, it is not difficult for young readers to identify themselves with the character and thus get the impression of *de se fabula narratur*, that they read about themselves. In the ancient culture, as Michel Foucault states in his 1984 lectures

at the Collège de France, *Le courage de la vérité* (*The Courage of the Truth*), telling the truth about oneself was an "activity with one other person, a practice for two" (Foucault 2011, 5). For this reason, when Androsthène decides to join the cynics, there is a pact for *paideia* signed not only between him and Diogenes, but also between Diogenes and the present-day young reader. However, like everything else in Cynicism, this *paideia* is paradoxical in being an educational process without education in its proper sense.

As for Diogenes, for the first time he appears in the text in the same yet recognisable way as on the title page of the book. Then and later his actions or speeches are explained explicitly unlike in the source texts. For example, while looking for a human with the lantern in broad daylight, Diogenes adds that he sees no one, although, as the narrator points out, the Athenian *agorá* is crowded at the moment. This case is only one of many others when the meaning of Diogenes' act is additionally verbalised to assist the reader's understanding. Therefore, a *signifié*, every act of significance, is reinforced by redoubling its *signifiant*.

Other episodes from antique hypotexts may be modified to a greater extent, often in order to convey cynical ideas in a more concentrated way. This happens, for example, to the anecdote, where Diogenes sabotages the discoursing of Anaximenes, the rhetorician, with some salt fish. Unlike in the fragment of Diogenes Laertius (D. L. VI.2.57), in the children's book the Cynic summarises this accident with a rhetorical question: given that the audience was eventually more interested in the fish than in the performance,



Ill. 2: Title Page (Yan Marchand, *Diogène l'Homme Chien*. Paris: Les Petits Platons 2011), illustrations by Vincent Sorel.

which one is more powerful in dealing with the crowds, Anaximenes or the herring? In addition to that, the anecdote is supplemented with remarking on the luxurious dresses of the listeners who are afraid to get dirty. In this way, attention turns to be focused on Diogenes' own appearance and thus on the contrast between him and the society – both external and, symbolically, internal. A similar situation occurs with the anecdote about Diogenes and Demosthenes meeting in a tavern (D. L. VI.2.34; Ael. VH IX.19). The Cynic contrasts water with the wine of Lesbos, and thus proceeds to a discussion on whether one can buy pleasure and, then, more generally, what happiness is:

[Diogenes speaks to Androsthène – A.G.] Tu hésites à devenir un Chien! Je vois bien que tu préfères ton petit confort. Va, retourne voir Platon, ce vaniteux qui prétend enseigner la sagesse mais qui se vautre dans le luxe, qui complotte avec les tyrans pour devenir tyran à son tour. Rejoins-le, deviens comme lui, puis tu me diras si tu es heureux (Marchand 2011, 37).

You hesitate to become a Dog! I can see that you prefer your own comfort. So, go back to Plato, that vain man who claims to teach wisdom but wallows in luxury, who plots with tyrants to become a tyrant in his turn. Join him, become like him, then tell me if you are happy.

Therefore, if Androsthène is in charge of the enigmas of the story and their solutions, at the same time Diogenes becomes the central figure for semic, symbolic, and reference codes.

First, he determines the thematic fields of the text. The character of the thinker functions as a compendium of cynical notions: the modesty of his outfit and gastronomical preferences illustrate self-sufficiency (*autarkeia*), while his brutally sincere words embody courageously spoken truth (*parrêsia*), and his actions show shameless liberty (*anaideia*). Besides, Diogenes calls nature his only mistress. No mention of Antisthenes, his actual predecessor, portrays him both as an autodidact and as the founder of the philosophical school. At the same time, the question of his mysterious origin is of increasing importance: one of the secondary book characters is terrified of what kind of woman could give birth to such a monstrous creature as a dog in a human body. And he gets his answer: the mother is philosophy, *φιλοσοφία*. Indeed, such a Cynic, self-taught and nearly magically born, stands as a mythological<sup>9</sup> image of Diogenes of Sinope, which is easier to perceive for young audiences at the first acquaintance with his ideas.

In relation to the symbolic code, Diogenes of the short story is the starting point for different conflicts. He pushes the young Androsthène towards a choice: what to learn from and from whom. Hence, by opposing Plato and Diogenes, some specifics of Cynicism are demonstrated. Aristotle's teacher requires a student of his academy to be knowledgeable at least in Euclidean geometry. Beyond that, the Athenian talks for hours

9 'Mythologizing' here should be understood in Roland Barthes' terms. Firstly, because sense-making in the selected book consists in a constant interweaving of language-object (at the level of plot) and metalanguage (at the level of ideas). Secondly, because, in addressing the reader, they impose their own intention, both informing and prescribing. Thirdly, as in myth, in the book studied there is a Barthesian naturalisation of concepts: the text is seen as an innocent communication in which *signifiant* and *signifié* are naturally related, but they are also a means of communicating ideology.

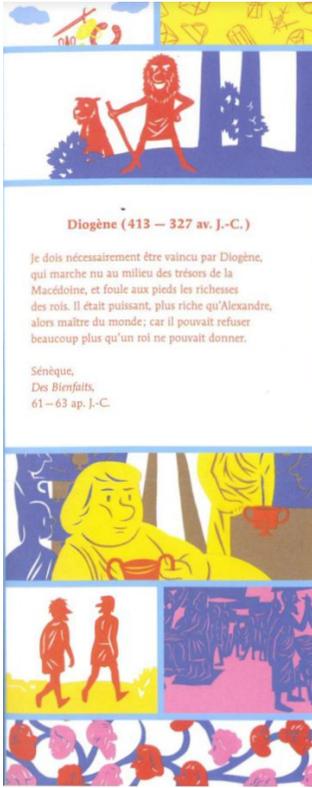
and, according to the book, treats his students with arrogance. On the contrary, Cynicism is represented as the simplest philosophy. It does not require any special preparation, it does not teach, but it exercises giving models to imitate a certain *modus vivendi*. Being a Dog demands nothing more than courage. Thus, on one side, Cynicism appears to be natural and generally available. However, on the other side, its popular character is somewhat smoothed in the children's book, since Diogenes' pupils (Androsthène and his family, Xenocrates and his sons) belong to nobility. Otherwise, such a lack of "class conflict" was not specific to antiquity. As Lucian mentions in his *Fugitivi* (*The Runaways*; Luc. *Fug.* 12), the people who are said to dedicate themselves to Cynicism were usually used to tough work since childhood, forced to earn their living and practice trades suited to their condition. So, in the children's story, Cynicism serves as an instrument of reevaluation: it replaces fame, wealth and power (questioned also by the episode with Alexander the Great) by the highest value – freedom.

As mentioned above, Diogenes challenges *doxa*, common opinions and traditions, with his own appearance and way of life. His vagrancy, poverty and the lifestyle in general is associated with *parrêsia*, the statement of truth. As Michel Foucault noted, typical of Cynicism was "life strongly connected to the principle of truth-telling, without shame or fear, which pushes its courage and boldness to the point that it becomes intolerable insolence" (Foucault 2011, 165). Besides, in the book Diogenes does not hesitate to satisfy physiological needs publicly. A dog, he states, wants nothing more than what is necessary for life, so he wants to imitate these tireless creatures who can endure any deprivation and be content with little (Marchand 2011, 29). Opposing nature to culture, Diogenes also opposes his honest shamelessness, his *anaideia*, to false morality. For this purpose, he uses – as Peter Sloterdijk writes in *Critique of Cynical Reason* – the animal body in the human and its gestures as arguments (Sloterdijk 1988, 103). The reversal of acceptable behaviour emphasises the innocence of human *physis* and suggests that it is rather a culture that can be worthy of shame. All together, *parrêsia* and *anaideia*, make the entire existence of the Cynic an *alethurgy* (in terms of Foucault), a manifestation of truth.

Finally, concerning the cultural code: Diogenes causes a great increase of the referential subcodes, to intertextuality in particular, because each of his appearances in the story may be interpreted as a reference to ancient authors. For example, the description of the attributes of the thinker is known not only from book 6 of Diogenes Laertios or *Oratio* 6 of emperor Julian, but also from several other sources. To put more emphasis on the cloak, which in the text is one of the symbols of *autarkeia*, there is an explanation in the children's text that Diogenes wore it both summer and winter. This fact may refer to *Oratio* 6.14 by Dio Chrysostom and to letter 30 of the so-called Cynic epistles from Diogenes to Hicetas,<sup>10</sup> his father, in which Diogenes' endurance to the cold weather is pointed out. As for the walking-staff, in Marchand's book it finds its comparison with a sceptre, like in letter 19 from Diogenes to Anaxilaus the Wise: the Cynic calls his walking-staff a sceptre, calls the double cloak a king's mantle, and his leather wallet a shield.<sup>11</sup>

10 See Epistle 30 (to Hicetas) in Abraham J. Malherbe, ed., *The Cynic Epistles*, Missoula: Scholars Press, 1977, 130-133.

11 See Epistle 19 (to Anaxilaus) *ibid.*, 112-113.



Ill. 3: Jacket’s Front Flap (Yan Marchand, *Diogène l’Homme Chien*. Paris: Les Petits Platon 2011), illustrations by Vincent Sorel.

### The Image(s) of Diogenes – Mythology vs. Reality

These references, even though they could be far from obvious for a young reader, play an important role in the short story, as they aim to provide it with factual matters. Details give the impression of authenticity, which makes the Cynic not only a fairytale character, but the real one in terms of history, albeit slightly mythologised. However, speaking of the referential code, it would be interesting as well to review transtextual links to later texts that may not be fundamental to Diogenes’ image, but which, nonetheless, actively function as basics of contemporary culture, especially French.

In this case, for instance, it could be beneficial to consider the associations, for example, between the children’s book by Yan Marchand and e.g. the works of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (as Diogenes exemplifies the natural man) or Karl Marx (since the importance of the community is particularly emphasised). From this perspective, the figure of Diogenes proves to be extremely propitious to trace ideological shifts from one period to the following one. In the texts of popular culture, Diogenes is often represented as either an ascetic or a hedonist. However, at all times the thinker’s image and the way it is treated may stand as a marker of the *mores* of each particular epoch.

### Fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

Being asked what was the most beautiful thing in the world, Diogenes replied, that it is freedom of speech (D.L. VI.2.69). In today’s world, full of mistrust and fake news, full of control and fear, when showing caricatures on sensitive subjects may lead to a violent assassination or when expressing one’s opinion may imprison, it is Diogenes who still delivers us relevant and effective survival instructions.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it may not be essential to sleep on the cloak or to pee on opponents, but of particular value is to be courageous to speak the truth and to act accordingly. Even though *pulchra res homo est, si homo est*, it is worth remembering that only getting along with a certain animal part within us is all we need to remain a real human.

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## Playing with Cleopatra About the Image of the Egyptian Queen in Products for Children and Young Adults (Introduction to Research)<sup>1</sup>

KAROLINA ANNA KULPA

In the more than two millennia that have passed since her death, Cleopatra has inspired generations of artists in immortalising their own visions of her image. In the process of reception, she was transformed into a hybrid of a historical figure and a pop-cultural image saturated with complex symbolism based on representations in literature, art, and film, and thereby reduced to an easily identifiable and stereotypical character. The paper focuses on some case studies including figurines, costumes, and games (board and video).

*Keywords:* Cleopatra, reception, hybrid, historical figure, pop-cultural-image

### **Spiel(en) mit Kleoptara. (Ab)bilder der ägyptischen Königin in Produkten für Kinder und Jugendliche: eine Einführung in die Forschung**

In den mehr als 2000 Jahren, die seit Kleopatras Tod vergangen sind, hat die Ägypterin Generationen von Künstler\*innen inspiriert, ihre jeweils eigene Vorstellung des Kleopatra-Bildes unsterblich zu machen. Während des Rezeptionsprozesses wurde sie in eine hybride Mischung aus historischer Figur und Proponentin der Popkultur transformiert, angereichert mit komplexem Symbolismus, der wiederum aus Literatur, Kunst und Film gewonnen wurde. Damit einher ging eine (gewisse) Reduktion auf einen leicht (wieder)erkennbaren, gleichsam stereotypen, wenn auch ikonischen Charakter. Der Beitrag präsentiert einige Fallstudien (z. B. Figuren, Kostüme, Brett- und Videospiele) als Anregung für weiterführende Forschung.

*Schlagwörter:* Kleopatra, Rezeption, Hybrid, historische Figur, Popkultur-Ikone

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## The Many Faces of Cleopatra

Cleopatra Philopator, queen of Egypt who lived in the first century BC, has fascinated me for many years, ever since I read Karen Essex's novels<sup>2</sup> as a teenager. This last representative of the Ptolemaic dynasty in the social consciousness may seem to be one of the best-known female rulers of antiquity. However, when we think of this Egyptian Queen,<sup>3</sup> do we have a historical figure in mind?

In the more than two millennia that have passed since her death, Cleopatra has inspired generations of artists immortalising their own visions of her image. In the process of reception, the Ruler was transformed from a historical figure to what I call the Egyptian Pop Queen – a hybrid of a historical figure and a pop-cultural image saturated with complex symbolism based on representations in literature, art, and film. Pop culture has reduced features of Cleopatra's image to an easily identifiable, stereotypical character, which was also transformed into children's and young adults' culture – literature, audiovisual and material works. Over time, this Egyptian Pop Queen became a product for sale, also for the youngest consumers.

In my paper, I focus only on a few case studies showing the use of various representations of Cleopatra in products for children and young adults<sup>4</sup> including figurines, dolls, costumes, board games, and video games. Of course, all these works (e.g. Playmobil sets, Lego Minifigures, Barbie, and Cleo de Nile dolls) require further analysis. Therefore, in the final part of this text, I indicate the methodological challenges faced by a researcher of the classical reception of antiquity dealing with research of contemporary products for children and young people.

## The Birth of the Egyptian Pop Queen

This statement may come as a bit of a surprise, but we know very little about Cleopatra VII,<sup>5</sup> one of the seemingly most famous ancient figures. The Queen's childhood and early youth remain obscure, the name and background of her mother remains a mystery, as well as the nature of the education she received, referred to by Plutarch.<sup>6</sup> We have particularly little information on the appearance of this last representative of the Ptolemaic dynasty. The surviving coin editions with her image and the few identified representations in relief and sculpture, in my opinion constituting canonical rather than realistic depictions of Cleopatra, do not allow a clear determination of what the Queen looked like.<sup>7</sup> Our knowledge of the life of this historical daughter of Ptolemy XII Neos Dionysos Philopator Philadelphos, called Auletes, is based on the few fragments devoted

<sup>2</sup> See Essex (2001, 2002).

<sup>3</sup> In the text, I use the terms "Queen" and "Ruler" in capital letters as referring to Cleopatra VII.

<sup>4</sup> In this article, I define the term as people under the age of 18.

<sup>5</sup> An ordinal number given by historians because there were at least five or six Ptolemaic queens named Cleopatra before the reign of the daughter of Ptolemy XII Neos Dionysos Philopator Philadelphos called Auletes. See S.-A. Ashton, *Ostatnie królowe Egiptu*, op. cit., 69-77; A. Świderkówna, *Siedem Kleopatry*, op. cit., 9-10.

<sup>6</sup> Plut. *Antonius* 27.

<sup>7</sup> More about representations of Cleopatra in ancient material sources, see Kulpa (2021, 34-46).

to the figure of the Ruler in ancient literary sources.<sup>8</sup> Texts written in the Roman Empire, with which the Queen was, after all, at war, depict her, obviously in a negative light and only in the context of events related to the main figures of the Tiber River political scene at the time, especially Gaius Julius Caesar and his adopted son, Octavian, as well as Mark Antony. Cleopatra had an intimate relationship with two of the Romans, and the war with the third led to her death and consequently to the end of Ptolemaic rule in Egypt. Ancient sources, mainly literary (e.g. by Horace, Plutarch, Cassius Dio, Appian of Alexandria, Galen), however, already constitute the first layers in the development of the Ruler's reception.<sup>9</sup>

When reconstructing the biography of Cleopatra, historians have to actually construct it anew, trying to extract facts about her life and death from the majority of negatively charged verses about the Queen. This process is like putting together an incomplete puzzle, most of the pieces of which may never be found.

In the Renaissance, the ancient image of Cleopatra became a paraphrase,<sup>10</sup> which permeated from descriptions of the Queen in ancient literary sources to artistic works, and was then consolidated. The physiognomy of the Ruler remained unknown, so her image was created, she was dressed in robes from artists' eras and given attributes (snakes), and the scene presented was to be unambiguously associated with this and not another historical figure.

Ancient authors described the aspects of Cleopatra's life that connected her with the Romans who were in power in her time, while post-antique artists have further simplified the biography of the Ruler, highlighting even more selected moments from her bio. In this process there has undoubtedly been a narrowing of the Queen's biography to a few events and the removal of several of the roles she fulfilled, most notably that of mother to a son, Ptolemy XV Caesar (Caesarion), who – as Cleopatra's minor brothers – ruled along her side. Most post-antique depictions of the Ptolemaic Queen until the 19<sup>th</sup> century present her metaphorically playing with Eros and Tanatos, the Greek deities of love and death. Cleopatra has become a culturally important figure as the ancient queen who entertains at banquets<sup>11</sup> and charms men (also during the meeting in Tarsus),<sup>12</sup> and eventually commits suicide,<sup>13</sup> depicted in paintings and sculptures by

8 More about representations of Cleopatra in ancient literary sources, see Kulpa (2021, 46-57).

9 This view is in line with Lorna Hardwick's conception of the classical reception of antiquity. See: Hardwick (2003, 10).

10 Paraphrase means a modification or expansion of a text which retains the key elements of the original work. The historical figure of Cleopatra is treated as a prototype for the contemporary representations of the Ruler. Over the following centuries of reception process, it was modified and developed, but kept the key elements of the Queen's image conveyed by ancient material and literary sources.

11 E.g. *Cleopatra's Feast* (1653) by Jacob Jordaens from the collection of the Hermitage in Saint Petersburg, no. ГЭ-8536, and *Il banchetto di Marcantonio e Cleopatra* [Feast of Mark Antony and Cleopatra] (1654) by Francesco Trevisani from the collection of Galleria Spada in Rome.

12 E.g. *Le Débarquement de Cléopâtre à Tarse* [Cleopatra's Arrival in Tarsus] (1642/1643) by Claude'a Gellée from the Louvre collection, no. 4716, and *Arrivée de Cléopâtre à Tarse* [Cleopatra's Arrival in Tarsus] (1741-1757) by Charles-Joseph Natoire from the collection of Musée des Beaux-Arts de Nîmes.

13 E.g. *Cleopatra* (circa 1636) by Hubert Le Sueur from the collection of Hampton Court Palace, London, no. 39714., *Cléopâtre se donnant la Mort* [Cleopatra Inflicting Death on Herself] (1640-1650) by Claude Vignon from the collection of the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Rennes, and *Selbstmord der Kleopatra* [Cleopatra's Suicide] (circa 1659-1662) by Guido Cagnacci from the collection of the Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, inv. no. Gemäldegalerie, 260.

applying a venomous snake to her exposed breast, while usually undressed or naked in the face of death.

Since Classicism, the image of the Lagid has undergone several changes. We do not find representations of Cleopatra as a Ptolemaic princess or a young queen but see her exclusively as an adult and, above all, beautiful woman. Moreover, facts from her biography were extracted in order to construct a story about a woman who brought destruction to the men associated with her, for which she ultimately suffered punishment. Cleopatra thus becomes the heroine of romance, a temptress and debauchee luring married Romans in order to gain unlimited power on the Egyptian throne, but she fails and commits suicide. That image of the Queen was dominated above all by William Shakespeare, who, by transferring the life of the Ruler to the stage in one of his plays, created an ancient *femme fatale*. It was the tragedy *Antony and Cleopatra* (1607) that not only changed the way the life of the Egyptian Queen was presented but also dominated perceptions of her, overshadowing other works within the period in art from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>14</sup> Placing invented character traits on the framework of a historical figure, built on the basis of ancient accounts considered reliable,<sup>15</sup> resulted in a blurred boundary between literary fiction and the perception of a real person. Thus, Shakespeare's vision, based on a reliable basis for the audience (ancient accounts), was merged with a historical figure. His Cleopatra is not a majestic, cool and balanced ruler, but a woman torn by passions. She is a whimsical coquette, emotionally blackmailing Mark Antony with her imaginary illnesses and fainting (Act I, Scene 3).<sup>16</sup> Their time together is filled with heated arguments, which, combined with the constant feasts, entertainment and fanciful games that the Queen organizes,<sup>17</sup> 'fuel' the affection in this relationship. Creating an ancient *femme fatale* out of Cleopatra makes the recipient – who reads the play or watches the stage performance – not feel sorry for the Queen. We probably could understand that her suicide is a just punishment for all her deeds, including the destruction of the men she supposedly loved. The death of the Ruler completes her image and gives sense to the story based on the plots of her life. The recipient has little sympathy for Cleopatra but is rather on Antony's side, dying a dignified death and in his last moments caring for the fate and safety of the Queen (Act IV, Scene XV). The ancient Ruler created by Shakespeare became the heroine of romances, operas, fiction, and plays.

At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the wave of 19<sup>th</sup> century Egyptomania and the development of popular culture emphasised the perception of Cleopatra as a seductive

14 See also Dante Alighieri (1472) and Rabelais (1532, 1534). Mark Rose claims that Shakespeare has made the play one of the most famous in history. He has created a spectacle out of the past, and the viewer admires the characters' struggle against fate, even though he knows the finale. We know that Cleopatra and Antony will die and Octavian will triumph over them, but to this day we are fascinated by watching the "becoming" of history as we know it. After: Ross (1977, 6).

15 It should be highlighted again that ancient sources written many years after Cleopatra's death distorted her biography in significant ways.

16 After Shakespeare (1922).

17 Cleopatra mentions the pranks she played on Antony while he was fishing, including tying a pickled fish to his fishing rod (Act II, Scene V). According to Shakespeare, entertainments at the Queen's court included not only fishing and all-day feasts (Act I, Scene IV; Act II, Scene V), but also a game of billiards (Act II, Scene V), which is an anachronism.

*femme fatale* from the East, a beautiful black-haired temptress destroying men in the trap of toxic love. The Queen was assigned the role of a perverse, beautiful, and alluring oriental ruler with a cold heart, playing with men for her own amusement and pleasure. The image of Cleopatra as a mostly young, dark-haired beauty in Egyptian dress was thus shaped for decades to come in sculpture and painting (e.g. by H. Makart and A. Cabanel)<sup>18</sup> as well as in literature (e.g. in *Caesar and Cleopatra* by G. B. Shaw, play from 1898, published in 1901) and the performing arts (e.g. *Cléopâtre* [Cleopatre] from 1890 by V. Sardou).<sup>19</sup>

Over time, more and more daring costumes of actresses playing Cleopatra, novels, and plays containing descriptions of her amorous conquests and excesses, as well as paintings depicting her luxurious life and suicidal death as a result of snakebite, have completely obscured the image of the real character, who lived in the first century BC. The Egyptian Pop Queen was born, a hybrid of the last Ptolemaic Ruler and her subsequent receptive representations that became an integral part of popular culture in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is no longer just a character portrayed by Alexandre Cabanel and Hans Makart or a heroine created by William Shakespeare, George Bernard Shaw or Victorien Sardou. The dynamic development of mass audiovisual media – cinema and television, and later the Internet – led to the fact that the image of Cleopatra began to be dominated by visual components taken from images projected on cinema screens and computer monitors. In particular, Elizabeth Taylor's portrayal of the Queen in Joseph Mankiewicz's 1963 film<sup>20</sup> has become a sort of "benchmark" for what a modern Cleopatra should look like. Despite various film interpretations of the figure of the Ruler over the past half-century, she has most often been portrayed as a coquette and temptress, spending her time on her beauty, feasting, and seducing successive men. Associations with Julius Caesar and Mark Antony continue to be the core on which the popular transmedia narrative (according to Jenkins' conception)<sup>21</sup> about the Queen is centered. Especially the relationship with Antony and the culmination of a love story is often portrayed as toxic and devastating to both partners. Interestingly and noteworthy, the Cleopatra's suicide scene is very often filmed in such a way as not to cause discomfort to the viewer or almost completely disappears from the plot. As I mentioned, in most post-antique representations until the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Cleopatra was depicted as playing with Eros and Tanatos, with the vast majority of paintings and sculptures showing her in a moment of agony. In 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century, the representations of the Queen with the first of these deities, undoubtedly marked by eroticism, begin to dominate.

The image of this Egyptian Pop Queen is often trivialized and reduced to an illustration of the figure of the black-haired beauty with the characteristic make-up (eyes emphasised with eyeliner, turquoise shadow on the eyelids), hairstyle of a long bob with

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18 *Die Niljagd der Cleopatra* [Cleopatra's Nile Hunt] (1874/1875) by Hans Makart from the collection of the Belvedere in Vienna, no. 5837, and *Cléopâtre essayant des poisons sur des condamnés à mort* [Cleopatra Testing Poisons on Condemned Prisoners] (1887) by Alexandre Cabanel from the collection of Royal Museum of Fine Arts in Antwerp.

19 See Sardou (2010).

20 *Cleopatra*, dir. Joseph L. Mankiewicz, 20th Century Fox, 1963. Julius Caesar is played by Rex Harrison and Mark Antony by Richard Burton.

21 See Jenkins (2006, 20-21, 95-104, 119, 293).

a fringe and quasi-Egyptian clothes. Such graphic representations of the Ruler become products for sale.

Interestingly, this image of Cleopatra is beginning to gradually change in children's and youth culture, especially in literature,<sup>22</sup> as creators increasingly focus on portraying the Queen not as a *femme fatale*, but as a young and dignified princess, sometimes even a leader fighting for her country. Therefore, it is important to analyze how the successive representations of Cleopatra's image in children's and young adults' culture work, and how this article's examples of toys, games and costumes have become elements of the so-called transmedia narrative about the contemporary Egyptian Pop Queen.

### The Queen of Egypt and Products for Children and Young Adults – Case Studies

Analyzing the image of Cleopatra VII in works dedicated to young audiences since 1965, we find different faces of the Ruler – from the capricious heroine ordering the construction of a palace in three months,<sup>23</sup> through the adventures of a mummified princess, Cleo de Nile,<sup>24</sup> to the mission of a young princess saving the universe from extinction.<sup>25</sup> It seems, therefore, that different faces of this Egyptian Ruler function in popular culture today, especially in children's and youth culture. Nevertheless, I will try to show with the indicated examples that they all create a coherent reception image of the Egyptian Pop Queen, whose biography can be divided into two periods and two roles. In the first, which covers her childhood and teenage years up to meeting Julius Caesar, Cleopatra is a young, dignified ruler. In the second, which concerns her relationship with Antony up to her suicidal death, she is depicted as a dangerous temptress. As we do not know much about the childhood of the historical Cleopatra, contemporary authors could let their imagination run wild when it came to portraying her life during this period. Particularly in 21<sup>st</sup> century publications for young recipients,<sup>26</sup> we find various descriptions of the adventures of a young princess, portrayed as a positive heroine. It is only after her encounter with Julius Caesar, as in G.B. Shaw's work, that we see Cleopatra's transformation into the *femme fatale* known from the play of Shakespeare, who, during her relationship with Antony, causes the destruction of her beloved and then commits suicide, as in the books by Karen Essex. The first role offers the recipient the opportunity to identify with the young princess and experience adventures together. The second face of the Queen, on the other hand, is often used by creators in their narratives as a negative character, an antihero or even an enemy to be defeated.

In this article, I would like to focus on selected examples of products by well-known manufacturers or available globally, aimed at children and young people, which can also be interpreted as showing the figure of Cleopatra in the two roles I mentioned above.

The analyzed figurines, dolls, and accessories, costumes, board games, and video games, as contemporary representations of the Queen's image, inspire new research

22 See Kulpa (2021, 234-245).

23 See Goscinny and Uderzo (1965); Goscinny and Uderzo (1968); Chabat (2002).

24 See for example *Monster High: Boo York, Boo York*, dir. William Lau, 2015.

25 See Maihack (2014-2020).

26 For example, see Gregory (1999), Holub (2007), Sheckter (2010), and Maihack (2014-2020).

questions, and their analysis requires new methodological tools, which I will mention at the end of this article.

### *Figurines and Dolls*

The image of Cleopatra has been used by such well-known toy manufacturers as LEGO, Playmobil and Mattel. The figure of the Ruler has also been portrayed by The Unemployed Philosophers Guild, a company that offers plush dolls of famous people. All these products share the image of the Egyptian Queen, based on a role played by Elizabeth Taylor. Both dolls and figurines are quite simply identifiable as representations of Cleopatra, created in the process of reception, thanks to the characteristic hairstyle of the bob with fringe, the applied kohl (ancient eyeliner), sometimes also turquoise shadows on the eyelid, as well as the quasi-Egyptian costume, usually a white, narrow dress decorated with turquoise appliqués, and jewelry – gold ornamental belt, bracelets, and necklace. The status of the Ruler is emphasised by the golden diadem, and sometimes identification with Cleopatra is indicated by the depiction of a snake's head in the diadem, referring to the Uraeus (Playmobil). The venomous reptile, snake or viper became, in the process of reception, one of the attributes ascribed to this Ruler, especially relating to her suicide.<sup>27</sup> Sometimes the creators emphasize this connection between the Queen and snake in the form of a toy accessory (LEGO).

The first Playmobil product referring to Cleopatra, is a figurine created in 1997 under the German name 'Ägypterin' [Egyptian] or the English name 'Nile Queen'.<sup>28</sup> The figure is dressed in a white quasi-Egyptian dress with blue and gold applications, a wide gold necklace and a golden crown, but the accessory of a cobra figurine with its head raised may suggest that it is Cleopatra who has been immortalized. The company released two more very similar figurines in 2006 (product no. 4651, Special Plus)<sup>29</sup> and 2014 (product no. 5459v10),<sup>30</sup> referring to the Ruler I discuss. It is worth noting that only the 2006 figure was sold under the name Cleopatra, while the other is labeled 'Ägypterin' [Egyptian]. In both cases, we see a dark-haired Egyptian queen in a characteristic bob hairstyle with fringe, with eyes emphasised with kohl, and in the 2014 version with olive skin. They are dressed in a white, narrow dress – with sleeves in the 2014 version –, which is decorated with red and blue applications, with the waist emphasised by a belt in the same colors. We also notice rich jewelry on the figurines – gold earrings and bracelets, as well as a necklace – in the 2006 version in blue and red colors, and the 2014 version in gold, multi-layered. The status of the figure as a queen is evidenced by the diadem topped with a snake's head and, above all, by the insignia of pharaonic power – the *nechacha*, a three-edged whip, and the *heka*, a short shepherd's staff. It should be noted that the historical Cleopatra was not called a pharaoh in her time, nor was she

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27 Although we do not know how the Queen died, as Plutarch already wrote (*Antonius* 85), the reception of the figure of Cleopatra is dominated by the depiction of her death as suicide by a venomous snake. The reptile bites Cleopatra's breast in many representations.

28 Playmobil 4546, see: <https://www.klickypedia.com/sets/4546-nile-queen/> (accessed May 09, 2022).

29 See <https://www.klickypedia.com/sets/4651-cleopatra/> (accessed May 09, 2022).

30 See <https://www.klickypedia.com/sets/5459v10-egyptian/> (accessed May 09, 2022).

portrayed as such. She was titled queen, and ruled alongside her minor brothers and later her son.<sup>31</sup> It seems that it was only in popular culture that the figure of the Queen began to function as the sole ruler of Egypt at the time, that is, the pharaoh. This is how Cleopatra was portrayed in Mankiewicz's 1963 film, as well as in subsequent literary, audiovisual and material works.

In my opinion, Playmobil products presented in 2016 are worthy of special attention.<sup>32</sup> In 2016, the company released nine sets in the series 'History: Romans and Egyptians'.<sup>33</sup> The series is linked to the animated film *Curse of the Pharaohs*,<sup>34</sup> which Playmobil released on YouTube in March 2017 in various languages. What draws attention is the plot showing a new interpretation of Caesar's arrival in Egypt, ruled by Cleopatra and her brother Ptolemy, in order to conclude an alliance between the two states, which the pharaoh wants to prevent by releasing the titular curse from the pyramid. Thanks to two brave Romans and the efforts of a young, wise Queen, a peaceful agreement is reached between the two nations, celebrated at a common feast. The producer also created an online booklet *Learn All about the Romans & Egyptians*<sup>35</sup> with additional information on the history and culture of the ancient Nile and Tiber states, in which the historical Cleopatra is presented as a positive figure on the political scene of the time.

All the sets in the series refer to scenes from the animated film, and one of them, 'Cleopatra and Caesar',<sup>36</sup> includes a figurine of the Egyptian ruler. The image of the Queen is almost identical to that depicted in the above-mentioned 2006 and 2014 products. The olive-skinned figure has the fringed hairstyle, characteristic of pop culture depictions of Cleopatra, a snake-head diadem, and her eyes are framed by kohl. The figurine has a long, simple dress with ornaments in blue, gold and turquoise, a gold bracelet and necklace. It is worth noting that neither the insignia of pharaonic power nor a separate snake figure can be found in the set, but the producers have included another reference to the images of Cleopatra as an oriental ruler. One servant, the third figure in the set, wears the skin of a wild cat, probably a leopard or a cheetah, and this animal since Orientalism has become one of the attributes visible in representations of Cleopatra, also been used in popcultural interpretations of her image, such as in the comics *Astérix et Cléopâtre* [Asterix and Cleopatra] by René Goscinny and Albert Uderzo from 1965.<sup>37</sup> We can also buy a plush version of Cleopatra, about 30 centimeters tall, dressed in the same way as the one from the set.<sup>38</sup>

A similar depiction of the last Ptolemaic Ruler can be found in LEGO products. In 2010, in the 'Minifigures' series, the Egyptian Queen figurine was released, also available

31 See Kulpa (2021, 34–36); Cauville (1990, 86); Reymond (1981, 139–143); Panov (2010).

32 See Kulpa (2022, forthcoming).

33 Based on the German Playmobil catalogue (2016/2017, 22–23).

34 See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kN3WSGA9DoM> (accessed May 09, 2022).

35 See [https://www.playmobil.co.uk/content/play\\_info\\_history\\_romans\\_2016\\_03/PLAY\\_INFO\\_HISTORY\\_ROMANS\\_2016\\_03.html](https://www.playmobil.co.uk/content/play_info_history_romans_2016_03/PLAY_INFO_HISTORY_ROMANS_2016_03.html) (accessed May 09, 2022).

36 Nr 9169, see <https://www.klickypedia.com/sets/9169-caesar-and-cleopatra/> (accessed May 09, 2022).

37 See Goscinny and Uderzo (1965).

38 See <https://cambodia.desertcart.com/products/61765244-playmobil-plush-toy-cleopatra-serie-2-11-30-cm> (accessed May 09, 2022).

<https://www.fishpond.com.fj/Toys/PLAYMOBIL-Plush-toy-Cleopatra-Serie-2-30-Cm-Playmobil/9999046089350> (accessed May 09, 2022).

for sale as 'Cleopatra'.<sup>39</sup> Regardless of the name of the product, I believe we can interpret it as a representation of this particular Ruler. As in the case of Playmobil, the image of the figurine shows the characteristic pop culture representation of Cleopatra as a black-haired Queen with a bob hairstyle and diadem, as well as quasi-Egyptian make-up – an extended line over the eye and turquoise shadow on the eyelids, undoubtedly referring to Elizabeth Taylor's role in Mankiewicz's film. The white, long dress is decorated with an elongated belt and a wide necklace in black, gold and blue. The attention is drawn to a green, writhing snake with its tongue extended; the figurine can hold this reptile in its hand. As I mentioned, the snake is one of the reception attributes of Cleopatra's imagery, so in the case of this product, we can interpret its presence as help in identifying the toy as a representation of the last Ptolemaic Ruler.

Two products from The Unemployed Philosophers Guild are some of the more interesting examples of the portrayal of the Queen figure characteristic of popular culture. 'Plush Little Thinker Cleopatra Doll'<sup>40</sup> has a bob hairstyle with fringe, and her hair is decorated with a blue and gold cord braid at the ends. The figure wears a delicate diadem, and attention is drawn to her strong make-up and huge gold earrings in her ears. Cleopatra's eyes are emphasised with a black eyeliner, the line under her eyes reaches her eyebrows, her eyelids are highlighted with a turquoise shadow, and on her lips we see red lipstick. The quasi-Egyptian outfit of the figure, as in the previous products analyzed, consists of a long white dress, gold bracelets, a turquoise belt and shoes. Its greatest decoration is a huge necklace or collar consisting of several rows of beads in orange, blue, turquoise and gold.

The 'Cleopatra Finger Puppet & Fridge Magnet'<sup>41</sup> is a simplified version of the puppet. Both characters have a prominent nose and similar make-up and hairstyle, except that the puppet's hair is decorated with gold at the ends, she does not wear a fringe and her diadem is wider. Furthermore, there are differences in her costume, as her white dress is decorated with a much more modest necklace, or rather a lace collar in blue, and the belt emphasizing her waist is in gold.

In my opinion, the company perfectly reflects the concept of edutainment through its activity,<sup>42</sup> i.e. it teaches about the historical characters in a friendly way, while providing entertainment at the same time. In the case of Cleopatra dolls, these are another popcultural reception and reinterpretation, rather than the attempt to convey the 'real' appearance of this historical figure. Of course, the products can be used both as toys for children and as funny gadgets for adults.

The products aimed more at older recipients are two collectible dolls from Mattel. First, 'Barbie Doll: Elizabeth Taylor as *Cleopatra* from 2000,<sup>43</sup> featuring Elizabeth Taylor

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39 No. 8805 from the Minifigures series five, see: <https://www.lego.com/en-us/kids/sets/minifigures/lego-minifigures-series-5-e5fc2f9719bd40dca67911ead8b6946b> (accessed May 09, 2022); <https://www.tokopedia.com/demolego/lego-original-minifigure-egyptian-queen-cleopatra-series-5> (accessed May 09, 2022).

40 See <https://www.etsy.com/pl/listing/857534958/plush-little-thinker-cleopatra-doll-the> (accessed May 09, 2022).

41 See <https://www.walmart.com/ip/cleopatra-finger-puppet-and-refrigerator-magnet/820852114> (accessed May 09, 2022).

42 The combination of education and entertainment see Iwanicka (2010, 307).

43 Elizabeth Taylor in *Cleopatra*, see: <https://www.amazon.com/Barbie-Elizabeth-Taylor-Cleopatra-Doll/dp/B001PB6RL4> (accessed May 09, 2022).

as the Egyptian Ruler from Joseph Mankiewicz's film, is a collectible doll, obviously at a higher price than the standard model, but its arms do not bend and the outfit cannot be freely removed without risk of damage. Of course, this limits the potential ability of moving the doll like other versions of Barbie, but the buyer gets a unique product in a costume made of good quality materials. In fact, Barbie is given the features of an actress and presented in a golden costume known from the film scene of her arrival in Rome – when the Queen with her son enters in a luxurious parade on a golden sphinx in an outfit supposed to refer to Isis<sup>44</sup>. Many thousands of dollars were spent on the actress' costumes, and the aforementioned creation was said to cost as much as \$6,500.<sup>45</sup> Not only has the doll been given the features of a beautiful actress, but both the gold costume and Taylor's make-up have been accurately reproduced. The eyes are lined with black eyeliner with an extended line running up to the eyebrows, and the eyelids, unusually, are highlighted with gold shadow, while the lips are covered with red lipstick. The costume itself has been rendered in every detail – it consists of a scooped-out dress and a coat cut to resemble wings, wrapping around Barbie's figure. The corset of the dress is embroidered in a feather-like pattern. The image of Cleopatra as a goddess is completed with a richly ornamented crown, consisting of a so-called vulture's crown with a Uraeus and a sun disk between two horns. In my opinion, this is one of the most interesting contemporary examples of the Queen's reception. Unveiling successive layers of the transformation of Cleopatra's image, we see a toy of a popular brand that has been given the appearance of the American Hollywood star featured in Joseph Mankiewicz's famous film, based on historical novels that use information taken from biased ancient literary sources about the Egyptian Ruler of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC. There could be no better example illustrating the transformation of this historical figure into a pop culture myth: the Egyptian Pop Queen. As I mentioned, it may not be a typical toy, but it is certainly a great decoration and a collector's gadget for lovers of Barbie, Elizabeth Taylor's works, and such "Cleopatrophiles" as the author of this text.

In 2010 Mattel produced 'Barbie Doll as Cleopatra',<sup>46</sup> also aimed rather at an older audience. In this version, we see Cleopatra as an ancient *femme fatale*, in a distinctive pop culture make-up, perhaps inspired by Monica Bellucci's creation in the 2002 French film *Asterix & Obelix: Mission Cleopatra*, directed by Alain Chabat.<sup>47</sup> Barbie's eyes are emphasised with eyeliner with an extended line, her eyelids are highlighted with turquoise and yellow shadow and her cheeks are delicately pink. The doll is presented in a gold and turquoise headdress decorated with a scarab and a snake's head, two wing-like elements which cover her breasts, a green and black skirt with a slit to the hip, a huge, orange and white cape, and gold sandals with green and black accessories, large green and gold earrings and a long scepter resembling a staff, topped with a figurine similar to the representation of the goddess Isis. This is another of the collector's items, so as with the version depicting Elizabeth Taylor the possibilities to play with the doll are limited.

44 This beautiful outfit is also seen in the Cleopatra's death scene.

45 Jon Solomon reports that over \$130,000 was spent on all the actress' outfits, including wigs and jewellery, see: Solomon (2001, 70).

46 Barbie Doll as Cleopatra, see: <https://wertoy.com/barbie-doll-as-cleopatra-gold-label-2010-mattel/> (accessed May 09, 2022).

47 See Chabat (2002).

More Mattel products are for the typical entertainment of children, especially girls. In May 2010, the *Monster High*<sup>48</sup> franchise was launched, over time including web series, animated films and dolls with accessories. The titular 'Monster High' is a high school attended by teenage protagonists, children of monsters known from popular culture and especially from Hollywood films: the werewolf, the vampire Dracula, Frankenstein's Monster, the mummy and the sea monster, and, as the brand developed, further characters.

The most notable is Cleo de Nile, one of the main characters of the series, who is the most popular girl in *Monster High*. The protagonist can be regarded as another of the caricatured representations of the Queen: on the one hand, comical as, for example, in the production *Carry on Cleo* with Amanda Barrie (1964, dir. Gerald Thomas) or, as already mentioned, in the film with Bellucci, and on the other hand, shown as a school beauty, thus fitting in with the film representations of Cleopatra, always portrayed by pretty actresses. The transformation of her character, as portrayed in subsequent web series and feature animated films, particularly *Boo York, Boo York* (2015, dir. William Lau), and *Welcome to Monster High* (2016, dir. Stephen Donnelly, Olly Reid, and Jun Falkenstein), is worth exploring. From the character biography on the official website and the diaries included with some of the dolls' sets, we learn that Cleo is the daughter of Ramses de Nile, and therefore a mummy. She is an Egyptian princess who is about 5843 years old, so she was born around 3843 BC, and she stays alive by wearing a piece of magic bandage, otherwise she would 'turn to dust'.<sup>49</sup> The creators, therefore, gave the character a biography, which has nothing in common with Cleopatra VII, however, both Cleo's name and her image refer directly to the cinematic representations of this Egyptian Ruler and exemplify the transformation of Elizabeth Taylor's creation.<sup>50</sup> The blue-green eyes of Cleo de Nile are always highlighted with violet, turquoise-violet or golden shadow, additionally edged with a black line for the effect of the so-called cat's eye, and under the right eye there is a blue diamond. In the first season of the series, as well as in the case of the basic version of the doll, the status of the daughter of the pharaoh was emphasized by rich clothing. The costume is a kind of jumpsuit made of bandages, with an additional scrap of material on the right hand, gold jewelry in the form of a diadem in the hair, earrings, bracelets, sandals and a decorative belt. The set with this doll is accessorized with a turquoise transparent cape, as well as a matching gold and black handbag and a mobile phone. In the version from the film *Boo York, Boo York*, the right eye is painted to resemble the eye of Horus, to emphasise the origin of the character. The doll's black hair is either cut in a bob or left longer to the waist (in the first season it had golden streaks woven into it), always with a distinctive fringe, although in subsequent models both the fringe and some of the streaks are turquoise. Cleo de Nile also has the same attributes that can be ascribed to the image of Queen Cleopatra. Her favorite pet is an Egyptian cobra named Hissette, a turquoise female with violet eyes, wearing a gold diadem, rings and necklaces. In addition, accessories referring to ancient Egypt are of-

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48 See [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monster\\_High](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Monster_High) (accessed May 09, 2022).

49 See [https://monsterhigh.fandom.com/wiki/Cleo\\_de\\_Nile/Generation\\_1](https://monsterhigh.fandom.com/wiki/Cleo_de_Nile/Generation_1) (accessed May 09, 2022).

50 The analysis of the dolls after Kulpa (2021, 228-231).

ten attached to the dolls' sets. For example, the golden dressing table<sup>51</sup> decorated with snakes and lotuses includes cosmetics containers in the shape of a sphinx, a cat, and a Canopic jar with the image of Duamutef. In the Death Tired model is a pyramid-shaped lamp, and in the Gloom and Bloom version a pot with a green snake, and in the Ghouls Rule! set a mask formed in the shape of the eye of Horus as an accessory to a ball gown (one of Cleo's outfits in the *Ghouls Rule!* film from 2012).<sup>52</sup>

All the dolls and figurines I have described depict Cleopatra as young, beautiful, and just entering adulthood (Cleo de Nile) or beginning a relationship with Julius Caesar (Playmobil). Only both Mattel collectibles dolls and the LEGO figurine, in my opinion, portray the Queen's transformation into an ambitious Ruler ('Elizabeth Taylor in *Cleopatra*'), a compelling *femme fatale* ('Barbie Doll as Cleopatra') who faces a suicidal death, accentuated by the presence of a reptile (LEGO).

### Costumes

There are many costumes on the market that allow you to impersonate Cleopatra on Halloween or at a fancy dress ball.<sup>53</sup> For the purposes of this text, I have analyzed those available online: 'Girls Shimmer Cleopatra Costume',<sup>54</sup> 'Classic Cleopatra Girls Halloween Costume',<sup>55</sup> 'Girls Cleopatra Costume (white)',<sup>56</sup> 'Kids Cleopatra Costume',<sup>57</sup> 'Girls Pink Cleopatra Costume Kids Egyptian Princess Dress Queen of The Nile Outfit',<sup>58</sup> 'Dazzling Cleo – Child Costume',<sup>59</sup> 'Girls Cleopatra Costume (black)',<sup>60</sup> 'All Powerful Girls Cleopatra Costume',<sup>61</sup> 'Cleopatra Girl Costume',<sup>62</sup> and 'Girls Dark Cleopatra Costume'.<sup>63</sup> Girls can choose from quasi-Egyptian costumes, usually slim white or black dresses, to which airy capes have been added. The outfits are decorated with golden stripes with black, turquoise, red or pink applications, and a wide necklace, or rather a collar matching the colors. An indispensable element is a diadem or a kind of crown topped with a shiny ornament or a shape referring to the head of a snake. The set is completed with bracelets, sandals and sometimes a wig cut in the shape of a hairstyle typical for pop culture representations of Cleopatra, which was popularized by Elizabeth Taylor's role. A unique

51 See <https://www.amazon.co.uk/Monster-High-Vanity-Dressing-Table/dp/B0063NPLTS> (accessed May 09, 2022).

52 See: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt2446108/> (accessed May 09, 2022).

53 The examples are easy to find on Amazon, eBay, etc.

54 See <https://www.partycity.com/girls-shimmer-cleopatra-costume-P447143.html> (accessed May 2, 2021).

55 See <https://www.wondercostumes.com/cleopatra-kids-costume-ptckcle.html> (accessed May 09, 2022).

56 See <https://www.wondercostumes.com/girls-cleopatra-costume.html> (accessed May 09, 2022).

57 See <https://www.halloweencostumes.com/kids-cleopatra-costume.html> (accessed May 09, 2022).

58 See <https://www.amazon.com/Cleopatra-Costume-Egyptian-Princess-Outfit/dp/B08PZ7DW8B> (accessed May 09, 2022).

59 See <https://www.partydelights.co.uk/egyptian-costumes/dazzling-cleo-child-costume-16207.aspx> (accessed May 09, 2022).

60 See <https://www.costumepartyworld.com/girls-cleopatra-costume> (accessed May 09, 2022).

61 See <https://www.halloweencostumes.com/girls-all-powerful-cleopatra.html> (accessed May 09, 2022).

62 See <https://www.thecostumeshop.ie/kids-costumes/cleopatra-kids-costume-en.html> (accessed May 09, 2022).

63 See <https://www.partycity.com/girls-dark-cleopatra-costume-P789628.html> (accessed: May 2, 2021).

proposal is the costume called 'Cleopatra Girl Costume',<sup>64</sup> which refers to the Hellenistic, specifically Macedonian roots of the Ptolemaic dynasty from which the Queen originated. You can buy a white dress resembling a *chitoniskos* (a shorter version of a *chiton*), fastened at the shoulders with hoops, possibly inspired by a *fibula* (an ancient type of brooch or pin used to fasten clothes), to which a decorated short cape made of the same material is attached. Both the bottom of the dress, the belt and the neckline are decorated with gold lace ribbons, and the set also includes a diadem, the shape of which resembles a wreath of leaves. All the costumes discussed are made of polyester, with the decorations usually being sewn sequins in various colors, while the cloaks in the Egyptian costumes are most probably sewn from synthetic chiffon. Accessories, especially diadems and bracelets are made of gold ribbons of shiny, golden polyester or plastic.

The attention is drawn to some of the descriptions of the costumes with which the vendors advertise their products. One of them, in a text about the 'All Powerful Girls Cleopatra Costume', writes that the historical Cleopatra was a leader on whom girls can model themselves:

Is your daughter a strong leader? When it comes to recess is she the one who organizes the races or decides what that group is going to pretend that day? Maybe she's always volunteering to read in class or bringing that science project to the next level. However she uses her leadership skills, you know that she could do anything, even lead a nation. [...] When your little girl dresses up as this mighty queen she's sure to feel as powerful as that immortal heroine that ruled in 51BC. Maybe she's dressing up for a school project or maybe she wants an imperial Halloween costume this year, either way, this Cleopatra Halloween costume is sure to support her leadership aspirations. She knows better than anyone that a queen doesn't follow the crowd, the crowd follows you.<sup>65</sup>

This is a remarkable portrayal of the Egyptian Queen as a positive heroine and role model. It should be noted, however, that information about Cleopatra's relationship with the Romans and her suicide have been removed from the description, presumably as being unsuitable for children. It may be obvious, but all the costumes I have mentioned should not be controversial for showing cleavage or exposing the belly of a child. Considering the reception image of Cleopatra in pop culture, I think this is an important change in showing the figure of the Queen to children, especially to girls, this ancient Ruler as a role model.

### *Board and Video Games*

Board games and video games are another category of products with the reception image of Cleopatra aimed at children and young people. Below, I will present seven examples that, in my opinion, will show the most important representations of this Queen, and I will point to different types of using her character in the games' plots.

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64 See <https://www.thecostumeshop.ie/kids-costumes/cleopatra-kids-costume-en.html> (accessed May 09, 2022).

65 See <https://www.halloweencostumes.com/girls-all-powerful-cleopatra.html> (accessed May 09, 2022).

The two analysed board games are *Cleopatra and the Society of Architects* designed by Bruno Cathala and Ludovic Maublanc in 2006, which was released in a new edition in 2020 with the additional description *Deluxe Edition*, and *Similo History*, created in 2019 by Martino Chiacchiera, Hjalmar Hach and Pierluca Zizzi. *Cleopatra and the Society of Architects*' plot follows Numerobis' task in Chabat's film, *Asterix & Obelix: Mission Cleopatra*, of building a palace for the Queen. Players take on the role of the eponymous architects, who compete with each other to obtain the best resources, sometimes resorting to bribery to fulfil Cleopatra's wishes. During the game, players build a three-dimensional palace and can take part in mysterious rituals to speed up the process, gain fame, and the position of chief architect. An interesting plot twist upon completion is the discovery of which player has been the most corrupt. Regardless of winning, this player is thrown to the crocodiles kept by Cleopatra (another reference to Chabat's film), and the architect with the second-most points is the winner. In its original version, the Queen figure is very small, about 3.5 cm, made of sand-colored plastic. It shows a standing figure of the Ruler holding a kind of scepter, wearing a long dress, a necklace characteristic for quasi-Egyptian representations, with half-long hair or a wig, on which we can see the so-called vulture crown. Unfortunately, due to the small size of the figurine and the uniform color, it is difficult to distinguish all the details. In the later version of the game, this element has been changed. The figure of Cleopatra is captured in motion, walking to the palace. The image fits in with pop cultural representations of her as a seductive beauty – her white dress<sup>66</sup> is slit up to her thigh, revealing her leg, her bust is emphasised through the tight top of the dress. The exemplification of the Egyptian Ruler is completed with make-up – an extended line highlighting the eye – and an elaborate crown, referring to the vulture crown, which is characteristic for Egyptian queens – made of two feathers, ostrich or falcon, and associated with Hathor's solar disk.<sup>67</sup> In both versions, the Cleopatra figurine is important, though rarely used. Moving it across the board means completing more elements of the palace, and placing it on the throne brings the game to a close. *Cleopatra and the Society of Architects* is aimed at audiences aged 10 and over, probably because of the multi-threaded gameplay.

*Similo*, on the other hand, is a deductive card game, and its *History* version features famous people from the pages of history, including Cleopatra. One of the participants takes the role of the narrator, while the others have to guess which of the famous people on the twelve cards in front of them is the mysterious figure.

The Egyptian Queen is depicted to her waist in front of a wall with hieroglyphs. She is an olive-skinned, black-haired beauty with a fringe – characteristic of her pop-cultural exemplifications – on top of which we can see a kind of diadem topped with a bird's head, with wings decorated with green stones surrounding Cleopatra's face – this is probably an interpretation of the vulture crown. She looks into the distance, while her almond-shaped eyes have been emphasised with kohl, her eyelids delicately highlighted with a pink shadow, and her lips in cherry lipstick depicted in a half-smile revealing her teeth. The Queen's dress consists of two strips of white fabric crossed over the bust, the

<sup>66</sup> In the premium version, all figures are painted.

<sup>67</sup> See Wilkinson (2003, 149-143).

neckline is accentuated with a wide gold necklace with green and turquoise stones, and a wide gold bracelet can be seen on her left arm.

Such a drawing of the Ruler together with a representation of Leonardo da Vinci can be also found on the first card in the box with the title of the game– interestingly enough, a wall with hieroglyphs was chosen as the background. On the card with the Ruler, as with other characters, there is short information about Cleopatra, that she is an Egyptian queen and the last ruler of the Ptolemaic kingdom (69-30 BC).<sup>68</sup>

Undoubtedly, the game has an educational value, is intended for an audience from 7 years of age and over, and provides entertainment, corresponding to the already mentioned concept of edutainment. It is also worth noting that the description of the Queen's life omits the threads of her relationships with the Romans and her suicidal death, focusing instead on the presentation of a young and dignified ruler.

Five selected examples of the portrayal of Cleopatra in video games are: *Cleopatra: Queen of the Nile*<sup>69</sup> by Break Away production from 2000, *Invincible Cleopatra – Caesar's Dreams*<sup>70</sup> by JetDogs Studio from 2021, *Cleopatra Gives Birth Into Water*<sup>71</sup> by Dress Up Mix from 2015, *Assassin's Creed Origins*<sup>72</sup> produced by Ubisoft from 2017, and *Dante's Inferno*<sup>73</sup>, an action video game created by Electronic Arts in 2010. We can find in them the exemplifications of Cleopatra as a young and dignified ruler of Egypt, but also a dangerous temptress, even the eponymous monster, *fatale monstrum*,<sup>74</sup> from one of Horace's odes. The games are also very different in terms of the possibilities for interaction with the Ruler's character.

*Cleopatra: Queen of the Nile* is an example of using the representation of the Queen only on the packaging or in the menus as she does not appear in the gameplay itself. In this add-on to the city-building game *Pharaoh* (1999), the player must complete a series of missions to build and maintain a city in Egypt during the reign of the last Ptolemaic Ruler. On the image on the cover Cleopatra is depicted in a quasi-Egyptian outfit, an ornate skirt with bands of colored, blue, gold, turquoise and brown applications, and a high waist, emphasised by a wide gold belt. On the skirt, we can also see a blue and gold belt. The Queen's bust is covered by a wide necklace made of several layers of beads in colors similar to those on the skirt. The black-haired beauty has eyes emphasised with eyeliner with an extended line under her lower eyelid, as well as red lips. A snake-head diadem is seen on her fringed hair or wig. In her hands, decorated with wide golden bracelets, the Ruler holds the insignia of pharaonic power. Additional decorations include golden beads woven into Cleopatra's hair or wig, and a golden necklace with a large turquoise scarab.

Very similar depictions of the Queen can be found in *Invincible Cleopatra – Caesar's Dreams* and *Cleopatra Gives Birth Into Water*. The first title is a time management game,

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68 Based on the Polish version of the game.

69 See [https://impressionsgames.fandom.com/wiki/Cleopatra:\\_Queen\\_of\\_the\\_Nile](https://impressionsgames.fandom.com/wiki/Cleopatra:_Queen_of_the_Nile) (accessed May 09, 2022).

70 See [https://store.steampowered.com/app/1475670/Invincible\\_Cleopatra\\_Caesars\\_Dreams/?l=polish](https://store.steampowered.com/app/1475670/Invincible_Cleopatra_Caesars_Dreams/?l=polish) (accessed May 09, 2022).

71 See <https://www.girlgames.com/cleopatra-gives-birth-into-water.html> (accessed May 09, 2022).

72 See <https://www.ubisoft.com/en-us/game/assassins-creed/origins> (accessed May 09, 2022).

73 See [https://dantesinferno.fandom.com/wiki/Dante%27s\\_Inferno](https://dantesinferno.fandom.com/wiki/Dante%27s_Inferno) (accessed May 09, 2022).

74 Hor. *Carmina* I 37.21.

in which players have to help the Ruler of Egypt get a magic amulet in order not to let the Roman army conquer her country. To do this in the successive levels we control the characters of the mummy and the young Cleopatra by gaining a certain number of resources, constructing buildings and defeating enemies, including the god Anubis. An important element is to finish the game boards in a certain time to gain additional gold stars, which we can exchange for elements of the outfit or additional attributes (cat, scarab) to increase the skills of the titular figure. Unfortunately, the character still has the same outfit during gameplay, namely a white, tight dress with a decorative belt in gold, red and turquoise. Cleopatra's image in the game is inspired by Elizabeth Taylor's creation in Mankiewicz's film, with her hairstyle in the shape of a characteristic bob with a fringe, her eyes are emphasised with eyeliner and purple shadow and her lips with red lipstick. The Ruler's hair is adorned with multicolored beads and she wears a snake-head diadem on her head. Additional decorations are a wide gold necklace, gold sandals and bracelets. They highlight the image of the Queen as a young leader, the eponymous invincible Cleopatra, who fights for her country.

*Cleopatra Gives Birth Into Water*, in turn, is an unusual exemplification of the Egyptian Ruler as a young mother. The player's task is to help the two servants who accompany Cleopatra to give birth to a blond-haired son. In the beautiful palace, the player performs certain tasks, from lighting candles, playing the lute and massaging, to preparing a fragrant bath and giving the child to the mother. The toddler is then presented by the Queen and a Roman, probably Caesar, to the Egyptian subjects. Cleopatra's image in this game is also reminiscent of Elizabeth Taylor's creation, as she has her characteristic bob hairstyle with a fringe, her eyes are emphasised with purple shadow and eyeliner, and her lips are colored with red lipstick. The royal status of the Ruler is highlighted by a golden crown, referring to the vulture crown, which she wears all the time. Only Cleopatra's clothing changes during the gameplay. At the beginning we see her in a gold dress, colorful necklace and snake-shaped bracelet (she does not take it off during the game, either). During birth, she is wearing a casual white robe with a delicate blue and gold decoration at the neckline. When presenting her son, on the other hand, she wears a white strapless dress decorated with a gold ribbon.<sup>75</sup>

It is worth noting that there are plenty of similar online games such as *Cleopatra Gives Birth Into Water* (especially available on websites dedicated to children and young people, mostly girls), in which the player has the task of helping in the birth of the child of a specific figure. Nevertheless, they do not feature any other women known from history, but fairy tales' female protagonists or princesses from Disney animated films: Belle from *Beauty and the Beast* (*Princess Belle Gives Birth*)<sup>76</sup> Cinderella (*Cinderella Gives Birth to Twins*),<sup>77</sup> Arielle from *The Little Mermaid* (*Pregnant Arielle Gives Birth*),<sup>78</sup> Anna and Elsa from *Frozen* (*Frozen Anna Gives Birth*<sup>79</sup> and *Frozen Elsa Gives Birth*<sup>80</sup>), and so on. The inclusion of Cleopatra in a series of fairytale heroines shows the extent to which her

75 Analysis after: Kulpa (2021, 228).

76 See <https://www.dressupwho.com/games/princess-belle-gives-birth/> (accessed May 09, 2022).

77 See <https://www.girlgames.com/cinderella-gives-birth-to-twins.html> (accessed May 09, 2022).

78 See <https://mycutegames.com/Games/Princess/Pregnant-Ariel-Gives-Birth.html> (accessed May 09, 2022).

79 See <https://www.girlgames.com/frozen-anna-give-birth-to-a-baby.html> (accessed May 09, 2022).

80 See <https://www.dressupwho.com/games/frozen-elsa-gives-birth/> (accessed May 09, 2022).

image has been transformed: from the real-life daughter of Ptolemy XII through being inspiration for paintings, literature, theatre, music, and later film and other areas of 20<sup>th</sup> century popular culture, to a character from the children's world.

In all of the aforementioned games, the Queen's image depicts a majestic young Ruler at the pinnacle of power – certainly not a *femme fatale* – and directly relates to pop culture reminiscences of Elizabeth Taylor's creations, including the birth of her son, Caesarion.

However, Cleopatra as the dangerous temptress is portrayed in the next two works. *Assassin's Creed: Origin* from the *Assassin's Creed* series is an action-adventure game intended for adults (+18), although younger people are also likely to participate in the gameplay.<sup>81</sup> The plot of this series is about the genesis of the conflict between the titular Assassins and their enemies – the Templars. The player takes on the role of warriors named Bayek and Aya (Bayek's wife), whose son was assassinated, and they decide to take revenge on his murderers. Players perform successive missions to defeat a secret society called the Order of Ancients, which, as it turns out over time, includes both prominent Romans and Egyptians. Players try to prevent this organization from taking power over Egypt, and the background of the game is an alternative version of events connected with Cleopatra's history, from the moment she regained the crown after being banished by her brother to the death of Julius Caesar. It is worth noting that an interesting plot point is a moment when the Queen, hidden in a rolled-up carpet, gets to the palace where Julius Caesar resides, as it is the player who helps the Ruler to get to the Roman leader safely.

Players do not get to control Cleopatra's character, but there is a lot of interaction between her, Bayek and Aya during the game. The Queen is presented as a black-haired, beautiful and sensual woman with a charming voice, wearing a characteristic hairstyle (probably a wig) of a long bob, dressed in rather skimpy Egyptian clothes, with her eyes emphasised with kohl. An interesting element of Cleopatra's appearance is her jewelry, especially her headdress with colorful beads and gold rings, above her temples connected by chains and a huge green stone above her forehead – forming a kind of mask surrounding her eyes.

In the first scene with the Ruler, we see her at a feast, asking for opium and challenging the men who are present to spend the night with anyone willing, on the condition that this volunteer is later executed. This is an obvious reference to scenes from films such as *Cleopatra* from 1912 (dir. Charles L. Gaskill), based on V. Sardou's play, and *Due notti con Cleopatra* [Two Nights with Cleopatra] from 1954 (dir. Mario Mattoli). The exemplification of Cleopatra in *Assassin's Creed: Origin* is a ruthless and vindictive manipulator who is not afraid to torture her subjects to get the information she needs (she is stopped by Aya) and unhesitatingly decides on a death sentence on her brother and co-ruler. She is a *femme fatale* who tempts the protagonists with the prospect of a safe and peaceful state, only to use their skills for her own ends, such as eliminating rivals to the throne, and then betraying them and going over to the enemy's side. She is not a 'monster' to be defeated, but her actions and choices become the *spiritus movens* of the centuries-old conflict between the Assassins and the Templars.

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81 Analysis after: Kulpa (2021, 224-226).

The titular monster from Horace's ode could be, in my opinion, an inspiration for Cleopatra's image in the action-adventure game *Dante's Inferno*, also intended for an adult audience and based on Dante Alighieri's *Divina Commedia* [Divine Comedy] (early 15<sup>th</sup> century, published in 1472)<sup>82</sup>. As a reminder, in the Italian author's work, the protagonist meets the Egyptian Ruler in the second circle of hell in the fifth song, in which people reside who have succumbed to the sin of lust. The creators based the game on this narrative poem and decided to make Cleopatra a size-shifting demon who must be defeated in order to complete the game and bring the murdered Beatrice back.<sup>83</sup> Interestingly, in *Dante's Inferno*, the Queen rules this part of hell along with Antony because she swore loyalty to Lucifer. Already in front of Cleopatra's residence, we meet stone snakes, probably a reference to her suicidal death by reptile venom, which has been perpetuated in pop culture. The Queen definitely cannot be called a beauty, as she has a grey body and her face brings to mind zombies or Kuchisake-onna,<sup>84</sup> her lips have been cut from the corners to the cheeks, and there are bloody streaks around her eyes.

Cleopatra's outfit includes a torn hip band and a gold necklace with the image of an eye covering her naked breasts. It is worth noting the creature's headpiece, which resembles a moody *nemes* with a golden diadem and scarabs, and the monster's long, golden fingernails. The Ruler in the game has many powers, she controls all the demons in the circle, can summon unbaptized babies from her nipples, and can release the murderous Antony from her maw, whom she can heal. Additionally, the Queen has the ability to cause electrical storms and seduce any being with a kiss. After Mark Antony is defeated by Dante, she tries to tempt the hero by taking on the size of an average woman, but fails and is killed by a blow to the chest. It would seem that this is a completely different image of Cleopatra from that found in the other titles discussed, but it is simply another version of one of the roles assigned to the Ruler, that of a dangerous temptress.

I believe that the diverse ways in which the Queen is portrayed to older and younger audiences is very interesting. I am very curious if the fact of presenting Cleopatra to children as a young and majestic Ruler, and not as a *femme fatale*, will significantly change the reception exemplifications of the Queen in the future.

### Instead of a Conclusion – The Methodological Challenges...

These examples of the functioning of the image of Cleopatra in products for children and young people obviously do not exhaust the issue, but only outline it. Therefore, I would like to share methodological challenges that, I believe, many researchers interested in studying contemporary representations of the Queen face, and more broadly in classical reception studies with material and audiovisual works aimed at young audiences. Of course, I am aware that every scholar will adopt a different research perspective

82 See Lansing (2010, 198, 201–202).

83 Analysis after Kulpa (2021, 226–227).

84 A demon from a Japanese urban legend, appearing in the form of a woman with her lips slit, who asks passerbys a question and kills or mutilates them depending on their answer, see Kamińska (2016, 198).

and choose different research methods, but I hope that outlining my methodological challenges will inspire scholarly discussion of the issue I am interested in, and, perhaps, make it possible to develop new research concepts in the future to enable the fullest possible analysis of these aspects of children's and young adults' culture.

The first and most important challenge I face during my research is to define the term 'toys' in the context of the technological revolution. The very definition of 'toys' may differ in dependence on a specific research perspective adopted or accordingly to the legislative law of a particular country that allows certain products for sale.<sup>85</sup> As an example may serve the definition proposed by Jan Bujak, which identifies a toy as

a material object deliberately made for entertainment purposes, which covers the cultural content of the epoch or past epochs relevant to him in the field of material, spiritual or social culture, and communicates them in a way that evokes specific attitudes, ludic, and through them it shapes physical, mental or emotional development.<sup>86</sup>

Étienne Benson claims that

toys have become high-stakes playthings. They provide children with fun and fantasy while teaching hard-edged social norms; they promise parents peace of mind while bringing the chaos of popular consumer culture into the home; they produce massive profits for multinational conglomerates whose public relations offices promise to put the child's interests first.<sup>87</sup>

It is worth noting that researchers more and more often associate the issue of the functioning of toys with popular culture and do include the analysis of those items' impact on the user.<sup>88</sup> From my perspective the most important studies on toys in the context of cultural studies concern recognizing them not only as an important element of popular culture, but also a cultural-media universe in which, bearing in mind the concept of a transmedia storytelling by Henry Jenkins, there is a convergence between various media. That term covers literature, audiovisual arts and material objects that these products might represent.<sup>89</sup> In my text, however, I use the term 'products' because I find it problematic to define board games and video games specifically as toys. The question is whether to include other products in the category of toys or to draw clear boundaries between toys such as dolls, figurines and costumes and games.

Another important methodological challenge is the definition of the concept of young adults. In my paper, I assumed that by using this term, I meant recipients under the age of 18, but the terminology in different disciplines can refer to people between 13 and 35 years of age. This large discrepancy definitely changes the perspective on this age group, as the potential difference between the youngest and the oldest audience is

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85 See Żoładź-Strzelczyk et al. (2016, 13-14).

86 Quotation translated by the author, see: Bujak (1988, 24).

87 See Benson (2006).

88 For example, see: Kline (1992); Fleming (1996); Lyon Clark and Randolph Higonet (1999); Wesseling (2018).

89 Examples of such works are: Bergesen (2006); Forman-Brunell and Whitte (2015); Steinberg (2012); Drotner and Livingstone (2008); Flanagan (2008).

more than twenty years – a whole generation. Connected to this issue is another question about the categorization of products for children and young people. In the case of the reception of the figure of Cleopatra, it can refer to the video games and collectible dolls mentioned in the paper, but also to cosmetics – young girls also do make-up. Where is the borderline between being a child and a young adult? How can you tell if a product is aimed at this age group if, for example, Playmobil figurines are collected by people of all ages, while games aimed at 18 and older are played by younger people too? I must admit that I am still looking for answers to these questions.

The most important research question is what research methods should be used in studying the reception of Cleopatra in products for children and young people. In my research as culture studies scholar and historian, I use the academic ideas of reception studies, principally proposed by Lorna Hardwick and Christopher Stray,<sup>90</sup> the authorities on classical reception studies, and Konrad Dominas,<sup>91</sup> a Polish philologist and IT specialist. One of Hardwick's assumptions is worth special attention:

(IV) The concept of cultural horizon (with its ancient analogue *paideia*) provides a useful, but not constraining framework for reception studies. How cultural horizons, with their assumptions, expectations, aspirations and transformations, can be related to classical material is a crucial area in modern reception studies which also have to take into consideration the impact of new technologies and art forms (such as film).<sup>92</sup>

That allows to classify pop cultural items, toys and other youths' products such as plushies, dolls, costumes, and video games just as important for contemporary reception studies as established art forms, such as paintings, books, and films. Secondly, it seemingly broadens our understanding of the ancient world's perception beyond contemporary western borders by inclusion of Hellenistic Egypt and, of course, the figure of Cleopatra VII. The next concept of transmedia storytelling accordingly to H. Jenkins<sup>93</sup> is a kind of narrative developed by various media platforms, each of which contributes to creation of a fictional world. The virtual world is a particularly important research area as an interaction platform that flows between literature, audiovisual culture and toys, costumes, and games. Helpful in the analysis of Cleopatra's convergence between audiovisual and material works (toys, board games, and costumes), as well as the analysis of video games, is furthermore the adoption of the concepts from visual culture studies,<sup>94</sup> especially the use of critical analysis of visual materials in terms of approach proposed by Ross Gillian,<sup>95</sup> and using, *inter alia*, the concept of intertextuality (a term introduced by Julia Kristeva),<sup>96</sup> recognized by John Fiske and Irit Rogoff as the basic competence in reading popular culture,<sup>97</sup> as well as visual sociology in the approach proposed by Piotr

90 See Hardwick (2003); Hardwick and Stray (2007).

91 See Dominas (2017).

92 See Hardwick (2003, 10).

93 See Jenkins (2006, 20-21, 95, 194, 119, 293).

94 See Jenks (1995); Mirzoeff (1998, 1-13); Mitchell (2002, 231-250); Bal (2003, 5-31); Smith (2008).

95 See Gillian (2000).

96 See Kristeva (1969); Kristeva and Roudiez (1980).

97 See Fiske (1989, 100); Rogoff (1998).

Sztompka,<sup>98</sup> allowing to focus on the issue of reading by a particular society using and transforming representations created both in conscious and accidental ways. Also worth noting are the academic ideas of material culture studies,<sup>99</sup> especially the Lash and Lury's concept of the medialisation of objects and the objectification of the media<sup>100</sup> that also focuses on how the global culture industry works through brands.

Of course, thanks to scrutinizing ancient literary and material sources in terms of credibility and authenticity applying methods of auxiliary sciences of history (source studies, genealogy, numismatics, epigraphy), it is possible to present the frequency of the multidimensional and heterogeneous image of Cleopatra's appearance in the reception process which in popular culture has been reduced to an often trivialized, superficial image that is easy to identify even by the youngest audience.

These are just a few of the possible research concepts to help analyze the issue that has been presented. I hope that this article, an introduction to research about Cleopatra's image in products for children and young people, will encourage further scholarly research and discussion.

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98 See Sztompka (2005); Sztompka and Bogunia-Borowska (2012).

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# Rezensionen



**Suzanne Collins (2021): Die Tribute von Panem auf Lateinisch. De sortibus Pani tributis. Ausgewählt, übersetzt und eingeleitet von Markus Janka und Michael Stierstorfer. Stuttgart: Reclam (Reclams Universal-Bibliothek 19646). ISBN 978-3-15-019646-5; 224 S.**

Seit vielen Jahren und auf ebenso vielen Ebenen (Universität, Schule, Lehrer\*innenbildung, Fachdidaktik, Rezeptionsforschung und internationale Kooperation) sind die Herausgeber und Übersetzer des umfangreichen Reclam-Heftes erfolgreich bestrebt, einen tragfähigen und allgemein akzeptierten Konnex zwischen Antike und Moderne, vormoderner und zeitgenössischer Kultur und alten Sprachen und aktueller Literatur(theorie) herzustellen. Die neueste ‚Frucht‘ dieser anspruchsvollen Vermittlungsarbeit ist eine Auswahlübersetzung signifikanter Passagen aus Suzanne Collins’ Trilogie *The Hunger Games* (2009; dt. *Die Tribute von Panem: Tödliche Spiele*, 2012), *Catching Fire* (2010; dt.

*Gefährliche Liebe*, 2014) und *Mockingjay* (2011; dt. *Flammender Zorn*, 2015). Dazu tritt eine substantielle „Einleitung: Bezüge zur griechisch-römischen Kultur“ (gegliedert in „Der Theseus-Mythos“, „Der Sirenen-Mythos“, „Gladiatorenspiele“, „Die Fabel des Menenius Agrippa“, „Weitere Anleihen bei der griechisch-römischen Kultur“ und „Fazit“), ergänzt durch ein konzises Literaturverzeichnis. Beschlossen wird das Bändchen mit einem „Anhang“ in zwei Teilen: Das „Verzeichnis der Eigennamen“ stellt lateinische und deutsche Namen einander gegenüber; ein etwas mehr als dreißig Seiten umfassendes zweiseitiges „Glossar/Vocabularium“ listet klassischen und neu(est)lateinischen, zum Teil erst für diese Übersetzung kreierten Wortbestand auf und stellt ein unentbehrliches Instrumentarium für (schulische) Benutzer\*innen im Besonderen und alle Interessent\*innen im Allgemeinen dar. Verantwortlich für das Register zeichnet Patrick König, der ebenso Mitarbeiter von Markus Janka an der LMU München (Abteilung für Griechische und Lateinische Philologie / Klassische Philologie / Fachdidaktik der Alten Sprachen) ist wie Raimund Fichtel und Berkan Sariaydin, die alle Texte einer kritischen Lektüre unterzogen und stilistisch an ihnen gefeilt haben. Der Absolvent des Münchener Instituts für Klassische Philologie, der engagierte Gymnasiallehrer Michael Stierstorfer, hat zusätzlich zur Übersetzung ein didaktisches Konzept beigesteuert.

Grundlage der Übersetzung ins (Neu)lateinische sind die deutschen Übersetzungen von Sylke Hachmeister und Peter Klöss, um den deutschsprachigen Rezipient\*innen einen direkten Vergleich mit den Fassungen zu ermöglichen, mit denen wahrscheinlich die meisten von ihnen den Erstkontakt mit Suzanne Collins’ Romanen erlebt haben. (Ein zusätzlicher Vergleich mit den amerikanischen Originalen wäre eine interessante Zusatzherausforderung für Freund\*innen des literarischen Übersetzens und eine Anregung für den fächerübergreifenden Unterricht.) Zu allen Passagen sind *incipit* und *explicit* der deutschen Vorlage und die Seiten in den jeweiligen Bänden vermerkt, was



eine willkommene Hilfestellung bei der eigenen Übersetzung darstellt, von Seiten der Fachübersetzer zum selbstbewussten Vergleich auffordert und aus dem einsprachigen Reclam-Heft auf diesem Weg gleichsam ein zweisprachiges macht, weil es den Text hinter dem Text präsent macht.

Aus den Bänden 1 und 3 sind jeweils 11 Passagen ausgewählt, aus Band 2 sogar 13. Kurze deutsche Überleitungen ermöglichen nahtloses Verständnis und schärfen die Erinnerung an die Erstlektüre (vornehmlich in deutscher Sprache, vielleicht aber auch in englischer). Den Reiz des Büchleins, eines *libellus* im besten (antiken) Sinn, macht die wohltdosierte Mischung von vergleichsweise leicht erkennbaren Antikeallusionen (z.B. bei Namen), verdeckte(re)n Anspielungen, die nicht zuletzt durch die Einleitung sichtbar gemacht werden (etwa der Vergleich zwischen der bei Titus Livius überlieferten Parabel von der Bedeutung des Magens für den gesamten Organismus, die sich auf das Ungleichverhältnis zwischen dem Kapitol und den Distrikten übertragen lässt), und lehrhaften Einsprengseln bei Suzanne Collins selbst (beispielsweise dann, wenn der römische Ursprung des Zusammenhangs von Brot und Spielen – beziehend auf den Satiriker Juvenal – erläutert wird). Dazu kommen ganz gezielt nur angedeutete Bezüge (vor allem bei Phoenix oder Daphne), die zu selbstständiger vertiefender Recherche anregen (und von *Harry Potter* bis Ovids *Metamorphosen* oder Shakespeares *Midsummer Night's Dream* reichen können).

Auf einer ganz anderen Ebene steht die Freude am Spiel mit der Sprache. Moderne Texte mit neuzeitlichem Vokabular und autor\*innentypischer Erzähltechnik ins Lateinische zu übertragen, stellt auch für Spezialist\*innen eine nicht zu unterschätzende Herausforderung dar. Als Leser\*in ist man eingeladen, in den gewählten Formulierungen nicht nur die (exakte oder freie) Übersetzung des Originaltextes zu entdecken, sondern auch Anspielungen auf Vorbildtexte in Wortgruppen zu finden, wobei der Eigenwert der Übersetzung stets im Zentrum bleiben soll: Übersetzer (insbesondere aus dem Lateinischen und Griechischen) mussten sich seit jeher zwischen einer dokumentierenden oder einer transponierenden Aneignung entscheiden, in anderen Worten: festlegen, ob sie ‚Fremdes‘ aus der Ausgangssprache bewahren und damit *otherness* sichtbar machen wollten, oder ob sie die Adaptation an das Eigene, das Gewohnte und Vertraute präferierten. Markus Janka, Michael Stierstorfer und ihr Team (Raimund Fichtel, Berkan Sariaydin und Patrick König) standen vor derselben Herausforderung – nur in der anderen Richtung: Sie haben sich dafür entschieden, den für das (Neu)lateinische fremdartigen Stil von Suzanne Collins und ihren Übersetzer\*innen zu belassen und damit einen lateinischen Text zu schaffen, der nicht Original sein will, sondern Vermittler. Dieses hochgesteckte Ziel haben die Herausgeber erreicht und damit einen wichtigen Beitrag zur Heutigkeit von nur vermeintlich Überkommenem geleistet. Die angeblich tote Sprache ist lebendiger denn je – weit über den Vatikan aus: Sie ist längst in der Literatur (für Erwachsene, für Kinder, für Jugendliche und im weiten Feld des *crossover*) angekommen. Mit *De sortibus Pani tributis* ist das lateinische Regal der sogenannten Klassiker wieder um ein Werk reicher geworden: Wer *Winnie ille Pu*, *Petrulus Hirrutus*, *Vinnetu* oder *Alicia in terra mirabili* reizvoll gefunden, über *Maxus atque Mauritius* und diverse *Asterix Latinus*-Alben geschmunzelt und Gefallen an *Harry Potter* gefunden hat, wird „Janka & Stierstorfer Fichtel, Sariaydin, König adiuvantibus“ als absolutes *must have* sehen. So viel ist sicher; und vielleicht gibt es dann sogar irgendwann einen Folgeband aus der *officina didactica Monacensis*, eventuell sogar auf Altgriechisch. In der Zwischenzeit gilt für das lateinische *best of* das augustinische Motto *tolle, lege!*

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**André Heller (2021): Tullios Geburtstag. Illustriert von Maïté Kalita & Esther Martens. Wien: Paul Zsolnay Verlag. ISBN 978-3-552-07258-9; 40 S. n.p.**

Wenn der Universalkünstler André Heller ein Kinderbuch schreibt, dann wird ein Traum zu einem Buch – und damit ein Buch zu einem Traum. „Eine Trostgeschichte für alle Kindsköpfe von 5 bis 135“ will *Tullios Geburtstag* sein, und diesem Anspruch wird das bunte Querformat wahrlich gerecht: Gleich zu Beginn sind Kinderphotos von André Heller, Maïté Kalita und Esther Martens abgedruckt, begleitet von kurzen Lebensläufen. Besonders ist überdies, dass an dem Buch viele (kleine) Mitarbeiter\*innen beteiligt waren: Kinder mit ihren Ideen und Inputs, die auf einzelnen Puzzlestücken abgebildet sind und auf der Innenseite des rückwärtigen Buchdeckels unterschrieben haben. Selten haben (nur) 40 Seiten so viel enthalten – darunter auch ein Faltblatt, das jedem Wimmelbuch alle Ehre macht.



Textlich erzählt wird (lediglich) die Rahmenhandlung: Tullio hat am 4. Oktober seinen Geburtstag; er wird acht Jahre alt und freut sich wie jedes Jahr auf eine phantasievolle Geburtstagsparty. Doch diesmal wird daraus nichts, da ein Virus die Welt fest im Griff hat und Zusammenkünfte verboten sind. Seine Eltern Carla und Giovanni trösten ihn auf eine doppelt so schöne Feier im nächsten Jahr, doch das will der Bub nicht gelten lassen, wird man doch nur einmal im Leben 8. Sprachkreativ („Donnerkakao“, „Hummelquatsch“) macht er seiner Enttäuschung Luft. Seelentröster ist sein ständiger Begleiter, ein schlappohriger Hund. (Hat Tullio vielleicht deswegen am Welttierschutztag Geburtstag, weil das zu einem tierliebenden Kind perfekt passt? Oder ist das nur ein Zufall? Leerstellen dieser und anderer Art werden noch öfter zu füllen sein und den Reiz des Buches signifikant erhöhen.) Jedenfalls schläft Tullio traurig ein und fühlt sich, wie André Heller schreibt, „unglücklich und von allen guten Geistern verlassen“. Das hört die Nachtpräsidentin und ruft alle phantastischen Gestalten ihres Zauberreiches zusammen, die Tullio den bisher schönsten Traum seines Lebens träumen lassen: von einem Maskenball mit schönen und grotesken Phantasiewesen. (Heißt der Bub wirklich nur zufällig Tullio – wie der u.a. für sein *Somnium Scipionis* („Scipios Traum“) berühmte Römer Marcus Tullius Cicero? Oder ist Tullio einfach ein wohlklingender italienischer Name?) Feststeht, dass Tullio, als er aufwacht, so begeistert ist, dass er daraus ein Buch machen will – und genau das halten wir jetzt in Händen.

Der Inhalt des Traums ist nicht in Worten beschrieben, sondern (aus)gemalt, in reicher Collagetechnik, voll von André Hellers unverkennbarer Kunst, gespeist aus all den Projekten, die ihn über die Jahrzehnte begleitet haben, und bevölkert von Gestalten, die in seinem Leben wichtig sind und für die umgekehrt auch er Bedeutung hat – z.B. Kasperl und Pezi aus dem Urania-Puppentheater, das er erworben und damit seinen Fortbestand gesichert hat.

Was man hier sieht und entdeckt, ist international und umfasst die Welt der Künste in all ihrer Vielheit.

Das Buch selbst ist ein integratives Gesamtkunstwerk: Das Logo des Zsolnay-Verlags ist als Geburtstagspackerl ‚getarnt‘. Neben dem Impressum sieht man einen Pfeil und den ‚handschriftlichen‘ Vermerk „Diese Zeilen gehören nicht zu unserer Geschichte. Sie sind technische Informationen über das Buch.“ Und auch ein (nur wenig versteckter) politischer und/oder gesellschaftlicher Seitenhieb darf nicht fehlen; denn Tullios Eltern haben unterschiedliche Ansichten zum Pandemiemanagement der Regierung; die sie sich – optisch wie ein Chatprotokoll gestaltet – mitteilen.

André Hellers Devise „Die wahren Abenteuer sind im Kopf, und sind sie nicht im Kopf, dann sind sie nirgendwo“ gilt für dieses hochkreative und künstlerisch wertvolle Bilderbuch in besonderem Maße: Die in die Rahmenhandlung eingebettete Traumerzählung, die Geschichte in der Geschichte, malt sich jede\*r selbst, schreibt sich jede\*r neu, erfindet jede\*r nur für sich. Somit enthält das Buch nicht eine, sondern viele Geschichten, so viele Träume eben, wie es Leser\*innen und Betrachter\*innen hat. In André Hellers Welt wird die literaturtheoretische ‚Leerstelle‘ zum ‚Volltext‘ und zum ‚Wimmelbild‘, woraus jede\*r anderes herausliest und worin jede\*r Unterschiedliches sieht. Und immer, wenn das gelingt, handelt es sich um wirklich gute (Kinder)literatur.

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**Thomas Brezina (2021): Die Bibel in Reimen. Sieh die Welt als großen Garten, wo Gottes Wunder auf dich warten. Wien: Jopy Verlag. ISBN 978-3-99001-466-0; 368 S.**

Der weit über Österreichs Grenzen hinaus für seine Kriminalromanreihen für Kinder bekannte, kommerziell höchst erfolgreiche und bei seinen jungen Leser\*innen seit vielen Jahren beliebte Bestseller-Autor Thomas Brezina, der seit 2017 auch als Verfasser von (Ratgeber)literatur für Erwachsene reüssiert, erschließt sich mit dieser von Pablo Tambusio zauberhaft und farbenfroh illustrierten (Kinder)bibel ganz neues Terrain. (Auf der Homepage <https://www.thomasbrezina.com/> firmiert der Band unter den Büchern für Erwachsene und ist auf dem rückwärtigen Buchdeckel als „Bibel für die ganze Familie“ beschrieben; tatsächlich handelt es sich also um eine klassische *crossover*-Publikation.)

In eingängigen Reimen und moderner Sprache erschließt Brezina elf Geschichten aus dem *Alten Testament*, das als „Erstes Testament“ bezeichnet wird, und 41 Episoden aus dem *Neuen Testament* für Rezipient\*innen jeglichen Alters. Alle Passagen stehen unter einer präzisen, bewusst einfach gehaltenen Kapitelüberschrift (z.B. „Wie war Jesus als Kind?“ mit den Versen „In der Bibel ist dazu wenig zu finden, Gedanken sind aber immer erlaubt. Jesus als Jungen kann jeder sich vorstellen, genau wie jeder das glaubt.“ [194] oder „Jesus bekommt Schüler“ [212], wenn es um seine Jünger, konkreter noch die Apostel geht, wobei mit „Schüler“ das in der lateinischen Bibel gängige *discipulus* aufgegriffen und für Kinder besonders gut verständlich ist). Zusätzlich ist die jeweilige Bibelstelle angegeben, um allen, die das möchten, einen direkten Vergleich zu ermöglichen.

In einem ebenso kurzen wie programmatischen Vorwort erläutert Thomas Brezina sein pädagogisches und literarisches Konzept, zu dem es gehört, moralisch-ethisch allgemeingültige Botschaften zu vermitteln, etwa ganz am Ende („Staune über Gottes Wunder, fühle in dir seine Kraft. Statt auf andere zu warten, sei der Mensch, der Gutes schafft.“ [365]). Auch die Erläuterung des siebenten Tages im Rahmen des Schöpfungsberichts, an dem sogar Gott ausruht, gehört in diese

Kategorie („Gott wünscht sich, dass wir lieben und lachen, aber niemals vergessen, auch Pausen zu machen.“ [25]), desgleichen die gut verständliche Neuformulierung des vierten Gebots („Achte Vater und Mutter, sie werden dich schützen. Denke aber, weil du sie liebst, gemeinsame Zeit stets zu nützen.“ [132]) und die Information, dass Gottes Präsenz nicht auf Kirchen beschränkt ist („Nicht nur in Kirchen ist Gott für uns da. In allem Schönen ist er uns nah.“ [26]). Sein Dank geht an den Dompfarrer des Wiener Stephansdoms, Toni Faber, und an Expert\*innen des Erzbischöfliches Amtes für Schule und Bildung in Wien (Christian Romanek, Katharina Grasi-Jurik und Heidemarie Sampt-Piribauer). Anstelle eines Nachwortes schließt das im Wortsinn schöne Buch mit Brezinas Biographie und einem Verweis auf Lesungen, eine Bühnenversion mit Musik und Songs (in Planung), die Hörbuchversion und die Homepages [www.bibelinreimen.at](http://www.bibelinreimen.at) und [www.bibelinreimen.de](http://www.bibelinreimen.de).

Das Buch besticht als Bilderbuch, durch die gelungene Einheit von Bild und Text, die vertiefenden und ergänzenden Ebenen, die sich aus dieser künstlerischen Kombination ergeben, und durch die nur vordergründig einfache Sprache: Der Reim, der bereits auf dem Cover – gleichsam als Motto und abgestimmt auf das Titelbild – präsent ist, ermöglicht dauerhaftes Memorieren; die gebundene Sprache lässt die Geschichten, die jede\*r kennt (oder wieder daran erinnert wird), in einem neuen, überzeitlichen Licht erscheinen. Gerade die vermeintlich alte Form ist es, die den Botschaften Modernität verleiht: etwa, wenn Thomas Brezina schildert, wie erbarmungslos gegen Jesus vorgegangen wird, weil er nicht ins traditionelle Konzept der Schriftgelehrten passt und ihnen (und ihrer Welt) aufgrund seiner Popularität den Rang abzulaufen droht („Die Ältesten meinten: Jesus muss sterben. Ist er tot, kann er die Leute nicht mehr verderben. Derzeit aber ist er zu beliebt, wir müssen vermeiden, dass es Unruhe gibt.“ [299]), oder wenn ein kleines Mädchen Petrus beim Lügen ertappt („Das Mädchen bleibt stehen, lässt Petrus nicht gehen. Sagt listig: ‚Ich habe dich gestern mit Jesus gesehen!‘ Petrus schluckt heftig, hustet dann kräftig. ‚Wie bitte, mich? Das war sicher nicht ich!‘“ [315]). Josefs Vaterrolle wird aufgewertet – durchaus vergleichbar dem berührenden Animationsfilm *Bo und der Weihnachtsstern* aus dem Jahr 2017 („In diesem windschiefen, klapprigen Stall, in dieser klirrend eisigen Nacht, hat Maria einen strampelnden Jungen mit Josefs Hilfe zur Welt gebracht.“ [176]), und die Schöpfung der Tiere in der *Genesis* sorgt für einen demokratischen Blick auf die Fauna („Am sechsten Tage erschuf Gott viele verschiedene Tiere wie Bären und Käfer, Elefanten und Stiere. Aber auch Spinnen, Tiger und Hennen, um ein paar nur zu nennen, ließ er genauso wie Leoparden, Ziegen und Hasen überall auf der Erde springen, laufen, klettern und grasen.“ [23]).

Viele von uns sind mit einer Kinderbibel aufgewachsen; bei mir war es die von Anne de Vries, die allein schon wegen der liebevollen Coverillustration, die die Arche Noah mit vielen und auch exotischen Tieren zeigt, einen unwiderstehlichen Reiz ausübte. Dadurch ist man vielleicht zum ersten Mal mit dem AT und dem NT in Berührung gekommen und war später überrascht, wie die ‚echte‘ Bibel, wie das ‚Original‘, das in den meisten, wenn nicht allen Fällen eine Übersetzung war, klingt und/oder sich liest. Die Erstlektüre und die bildlichen Eindrücke sind jedenfalls in bester Erinnerung geblieben – nicht unbedingt aus konfessionellen oder religiösen Überlegungen, immer aber wegen der Inhalte, die empathische Menschen berühren. Thomas Brezinas liebevolle Texte und Pablo Tambuscios kunstvolle Bilder verdienen es (und haben auch das Zeug dazu), sich in diese Riege einzuordnen.

Sonja Schreiner

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im *Jahrhundert des Kindes*  
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Sowohl im Buchhandel als auch in der schulischen oder Privatlektüre von Kindern und Jugendlichen ist zu beobachten, dass Kinder- und Jugendliteratur fast ausschließlich als Gegenwartsliteratur behandelt wird. Selbst im theoretischen Zugang auf diese Literaturgattung befasst man sich verständlicher Weise zum überwiegenden Teil mit ihrer Aktualität und nicht mit ihrer historischen Entwicklung. Aber schon bei der Kanon-Diskussion stellt sich die Frage, was an älteren Werken sollte noch im Gespräch bleiben? Kinderbuch-Klassiker wie »Oliver Twist« oder »Alice« aus dem tiefen 19. Jahrhundert lassen erkennen, dass die allgemeine Literaturgeschichte von bisweilen sehr faszinierenden Kindheits- und Jugend-Vorstellungen begleitet wird. Sie sind Gegenstand einer Geschichte der Kinder- und Jugendliteratur, zu der es auch in Österreich seit geraumer Zeit zahlreiche Publikationen gibt. Das vorliegende Buch stellt sich die Aufgabe, die Vielzahl solcher Beobachtungen mit Konzentration auf das 20. Jahrhundert in ihren teils beharrenden und teils innovativen Entwürfen und Experimenten erkennbar zu machen. Damit soll ein wenig beachtetes, vielfach aber erstaunliches Quellenmaterial in größeren stoff- und motivgeschichtlichen Zusammenhängen freigelegt werden. Im ersten Teil erfolgt dies in Jahrzehnte-Übersichten, im zweiten in Einzelstudien zu den wichtigsten Werken und ihren Autorinnen und Autoren.

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