EDITED BY
SOPHIA HENDRIKX
MEREL OUDSHOORN
LIEKE SMITS
TIM VERGEER

Arts in Society

Academic Rhapsodies

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in Society

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INTRODUCTION

The articles included in this publication are products of the diverse research taking place at the Leiden University Centre for the Arts in Society (LUCAS). What unites this institute is a shared interest in the relationships between the arts and society, explored from a multitude of angles. LUCAS researchers study cultural production from Classical Antiquity to the present, and in doing so strive for a deeper understanding of the cognitive, historical, cultural, creative, and social aspects of human life. This collective interest inspires a wide variety of research topics, as well as the title of the present publication. A rhapsody is, after all, a set of distinct stories or musical pieces woven together to form a new whole, episodic yet integrated, its strength lying in its diversity.

Each of the articles in the present publication is the result of a PhD project at LUCAS, and, more specifically, is an endeavor of LUCAS PhD researchers to present facets of their research to both the wider academic community as well as non-academic audiences. In March 2016, at the initiative of the PhD Council, the Leiden Arts in Society Blog was founded. The blog, intended as a platform for PhD researchers affiliated with LUCAS, serves a fourfold aim: firstly, to showcase current research to the widest possible audience; secondly, to provide a platform that contributes to the training of accessible writing skills for graduate students, through meetings, workshops and a peer feedback system; thirdly, to provide authors the opportunity to organize their thoughts on their research, explore new directions, or make new connections; and lastly, to promote scholarly contact, discussion, and exchange within the PhD community. The latter aim has also led to collaborations between LUCAS PhDs, resulting in articles on topics ranging from paleontological treasures appropriated by Napoleon, to Early Modern cooking, to knowledge repositories in history and fantasy, to name a few.

Over the years we have communicated LUCAS-based research to a wide audience; many blog posts have reached several thousand readers, while others have led to radio interviews. Additionally, we have linked our research to current events via theme weeks and

months, such as a series of blog posts dedicated to the *Fish and Fiction* exhibition at Leiden University Libraries in September 2018, and, in response to the theme of the Dutch National Week of the Book, a series dedicated to different aspects of motherhood in March 2019. Therefore, we were pleased to produce this collection, allowing blog authors to expand their initial posts into full articles. The resulting papers provide more insight into the projects that inspired different blog posts, and present additional research carried out since the publication of the original blog post. The tone of the following articles adhere to the original blog style: they aim to be accessibly written and of interest to a diverse audience. The present volume reflects the multifaceted research undertaken by PhDs at LUCAS on the arts and society from Antiquity to today.

Focusing on collections and technical innovations, Jun P. Nakamura and Liselore Tissen explore practices of art collecting, presentation, and reproduction. Further exploring a topic discussed in his blog post published earlier this year, Nakamura interprets the late seventeenth-century collecting of dollhouses by wealthy Dutch women as an extravagant practice which shared traits with other contemporary collecting practices such as the *Wunderkammer* and curiosity cabinet. Expanding on her blog posts "Masterpieces Remastered: Rembrandt in the Age of Technical Reconstruction" (2018) and "Authentic Copies" (2019), and focusing on the 3D print of Rembrandt's *Saul and David* (1651-1655 and 1655-1658), Tissen explores whether a 3D-printed reproduction can be considered an authentic copy of an original work of art.

Analyzing texts and the process of reading, Andrea Reyes Elizondo, Céline Zaepffel, and Amaranth Feuth explore continuing influences, receptions, and innovations of and through literary works. Highlighting two of the topics discussed in her blog series which appeared between 2016 and 2018, Reyes Elizondo critically reflects on the meaning of the verb 'to read' as also encompassing image interpretation or listening to someone reading aloud. Focusing on children's literature and expanding on her blog post published in 2018, Zaepffel discusses the history of Jean de La Fontaine's *Fables*. She shows that it has often been considered a delightful and instructive book for children, taught in French schools for this and other traditional reasons which she discusses and problematizes. Feuth's article is based on

her blog post published in 2017, and explores the numerous intertexts of the Western literary tradition in the creation of a new Caribbean epic in Derek Walcott's *Omeros* (1990). In a comparison which inspired the title of the present publication, she notes that in Antiquity one who recited poetry was called a rhapsodist, meaning 'a man sewing a song', that is, composing something new based on existing elements.

Marion Bracq, Nynke Feenstra, and Looi van Kessel explore topics related to pop culture. Bracq's article, based on her blog post published in 2017, examines how the Italian epic poem *Orlando Furioso* (1516-1532) by Ludovico Ariosto has inspired comic books, focusing on two examples: *Paperino furioso* (1966) by Luciano Bottaro and the Dylan Dog issue *Il re delle mosche* (2009) written by Giovanni di Gregorio and drawn by Luigi Piccatto. Finally, Feenstra and van Kessel explore different aspects of LGBTQ+ and Deaf identifications, based on four blog posts published in 2016. Their article reflects on the importance of intersectionality as a challenge to the boundaries of the Deaf community, the LGBTQ+ community, and in communication with an audience outside these communities.

This volume would not have been possible without the help of various colleagues at Leiden University and elsewhere. First and foremost, we are grateful for the funding provided by the 2017–2019 LUCAS Management Team (Anthonya Visser, Jan Pronk, Rick Honings, and Ylva Klaassen) and PhD Council (Nynke Feenstra, Amaranth Feuth, Andries Hiskes, Renske Janssen, and Céline Zaepffel). Our special thanks is extended to the authors who enthusiastically expanded their blog posts into articles; it was a pleasure working with them. We thank Jenneka Janzen for her help in the last stages of editing, Tatiana Kolganova for designing this issue's layout, and Marion Bracq for the cover design.

Sophia Hendrikx, Merel Oudshoorn, Lieke Smits, and Tim Vergeer
Leiden, 9 September, 2019

COLLECTION AND REPRODUCTION

SMALL WORLDS

THE MINIATURE LOGIC OF THE SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY DUTCH DOLLHOUSE

Jun P. Nakamura
University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, USA

A small corpus of extant late seventeenth-century Dutch dollhouses evidences an extravagant collecting practice among a select group of wealthy Dutch women. These dollhouses differ in significant ways from those made elsewhere before and after — in material, form, and cost — but share traits with other contemporary collecting practices such as the wunderkammer and curio-cabinet. Like curio-cabinets, Dutch dollhouses served as display cabinets for wonderous objects, but they also demonstrate different potentials for microcosmic thinking. The miniaturization of the objects compresses the intricacy of their facture and the potency of their materials while also putting strictures on viewers, demanding certain manners of viewing and interaction. In doing so, the dollhouses (and their owners) made viewers conform to the miniature logic of the dollhouse, incorporating the audience into the small worlds of the seventeenth-century Dutch dollhouse.

INTRODUCTION

The seventeenth-century Dutch dollhouse is having a bit of a moment. Jessie Burton's best-selling novel *The Miniaturist* (2014) centres on the wife of a wealthy Amsterdam merchant who furnishes her lavish dollhouse with gifts from a mysterious miniaturist; a BBC mini-series based on the book — filmed in our own Leiden on the Rapenburg — aired in 2017 and 2018; and the Boston Museum of Fine Arts recently acquired a collection of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Dutch miniatures, housed within a recreation of a period dollhouse.[1] Interest in these objects has thus soared, but in order to grasp the significance

[1] The MFA installed the miniatures in rooms (modern recreations) housed within a seventeenth-century cabinet. They come from the Rose-Marie and Eijk van Otterloo collection.

of Dutch seventeenth-century dollhouses and what makes them so unique, one must first examine the broader practices amongst which they were collected and assembled. Only then does it become possible to understand the potential power of this peculiar form of miniature thinking.

There are three extant seventeenth-century dollhouse cabinets (Figs. 1-3), which by some strange quirk of history were all assembled by women named Petronella (also the name of Burton's protagonist). The most famous and lavish example is that of Petronella Oortman, now displayed in the Rijksmuseum alongside another dollhouse assembled by Petronella Dunois. The third, in Utrecht's Centraal Museum, is that of Petronella Oortmans de la Court.[2] Two eighteenth-century examples were created by Sara Rothé from parts of

Fig. 1. Various makers
The dollhouse of Petronella Oortman,
c.1686-1710.
255 × 190 × 78cm (+ 28cm extension
on back), various materials
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
BK-NM-1010

[2] The standard texts on these dollhouses (including inventories of their contents) are Jet Pijzel-Dommisse, *Het Hollandse pronkpoppenhuis: Interieur en huishouden in de 17de en 18de eeuw* (Zwolle: Waanders, 2000); Ibid., *Het poppenhuis van Petronella de la Court* (Utrecht/Antwerp: Veen/Reflex, 1987); see also Susan Broomhall, "Imagined Domesticities in Early Modern Dutch Dollhouses," *Parergon* 24 (2007), 47-67.

Fig. 2. Various makers. *The dollhouse of Petronella Dunois*, c. 1676. 200 × 150.5 × 56 cm, various materials
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, the Netherlands, BK-14656

dollhouses assembled in the previous century by Cornelia van der Gon (these at the Frans Hals Museum, Haarlem, and the Kunstmuseum, The Hague).[3] These five examples give a good sense of what set the dollhouses of the seventeenth-century Netherlands apart from those made elsewhere before and after. Unlike other dollhouses, these took the form of cabinets with closable doors, which from the outside had no semblance of a miniature house. They were made of the most precious materials, incorporating ebony, brazilwood,

Fig. 3. Various makers
The dollhouse of Petronella Oortmans de la Court, c. 1670-90
206.5 x 189 x 79 cm,
various materials
Centraal Museum, Utrecht, the Netherlands, Inv. Nr. 5000
[© Centraal Museum, Utrecht / Adriaan van Dam]

[3] Jet Pijzel-Dommisse, *'t is poppe goet en anders niet: Het poppenhuis in het Frans Halsmuseum* (Haarlem: De Haan, 1980); Ibid., *Het poppenhuis van het Haags Gemeentemuseum* (The Hague: Gemeentemuseum Den Haag, 1988); Michelle Moseley-Christian, "Consuming Excess: Pronk Poppenhuisen and the Dollhouses of Sara Rothé," in *The Uses of Excess in Visual and Material Culture, 1600-2010.*, ed. Julia Skelly (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), 63-88.

tortoiseshell, ivory, silver, porcelain, and more; the craftsmanship of both the cabinets and their contents was of the highest quality. They were not made for children or for play but were instead a serious collecting practice and the purview of only a small group of very wealthy women. One early eighteenth-century visitor estimated that Oortman's cabinet must have cost between twenty and thirty thousand guilders — rivalling the cost of an actual canal home, fully-furnished.[4] Although this estimate likely exceeded the actual cost, it speaks to the overwhelming extravagance of the dollhouse and the impression it must have had on viewers.

THE DOLLHOUSE AND THE CURIO-CABINET

On account of their form, cost, and materials, Dutch dollhouses have often been seen as gendered counterparts to the curio-cabinets and *wunderkammern* of the early modern period. In these cabinets and rooms, collectors — generally men — amassed natural specimens, exotica, curiosities, and examples of fine craftsmanship.[5] They were seen as representations of the world in microcosm, or "a world of wonders in one closet shut", containing specimens from all over the world, of all manner of animal, mineral, plant, and crafted object.[6] The microcosmic thinking behind the curio-cabinet reflected similar ideas manifest in cartographic and scientific endeavors, which aimed to collapse the complexities of the world into a map, atlas, or magnifying lens.[7] Like their curio-cabinet counterparts, Dutch dollhouses were contained within cabinets, fashioned from rare and costly materials, and filled with examples of exquisite craftsmanship. They similarly organized the world into discrete compartments, each with its own domain. While an early modern

[4] Pijzel-Dommisse reproduces the 1718 eyewitness account of Zacharias Konrad von Uffenbach, *Het Hollandse pronkpoppenhuis*, 247; J.R. ter Molen, "Een bezichtiging van het poppenhuis van Petronella Brandt-Oortman in de zomer van 1718," *Bulletin van het Rijksmuseum* 42 (1994), 122-25; Michelle Moseley-Christian, "Seventeenth-Century 'Pronk Poppenhuisen': Domestic Space and the Ritual Function of Dutch Dollhouses for Women," *Home Cultures* 7.3 (2010), 344-45.

[5] Jennifer Spinks and Susan Broomhall, *Early Modern Women in the Low Countries: Feminizing Sources and Interpretations of the Past* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 99-100.

[6] This description is taken from a seventeenth-century English collector's epitaph. Paula Findlen, *Possessing Nature: Museums, Collecting, and Scientific Culture in Early Modern Italy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 17.

[7] For more on *kunst-* and *wunderkammern* see Lorraine Daston and Katharine Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature, 1150-1750* (New York: Zone Books, 2001); Findlen, *Possessing Nature*.

wunderkammer might contain objects grouped by geographic origin or by material properties, the dollhouse organized the rooms through their ostensible functions in the domestic sphere: the kitchen, the sitting room, the study, the nursery — each had its place and was furnished accordingly.

But the microcosmic logic behind the *wunderkammer* differed in a significant way from that of the dollhouse. The scope of the former was always going to be limited, as any specimen could only stand in for a much larger corpus. A shell might stand in as a representative of all shells of that variety, or of all shells in general. Or otherwise, it might serve as an aberrant specimen whose identity was defined *vis a vis* an ideal.[8] Its relationship to the greater world was synecdochal, but in a dollhouse objects did not function as representatives of greater *genera*. In this way, their microcosm was more of a closed system, rather than one that required outside referents. Although a dollhouse object might resemble a full-size equivalent, contrary to what has sometimes been claimed, no dollhouse owner ever commissioned an exact replica of her own home in miniature.[9]

The dollhouses contained original — if exiguous — objects, rather than replicas or copies. They were often made of the same materials as their full-size counterparts, and in some cases they were made by the selfsame craftspeople. The miniature paintings by Willem van Mieris that hang on the walls of De la Court's dollhouse are not simulacra of Van Mieris paintings, they *are* his paintings. Dollhouses held works by the same hands that furnished regular-sized art collections (Fig. 4). The reed baskets were woven strand by strand in the same meticulous manner as full-size examples. The silk was real silk, the linen real linen. Books were fashioned from details of prints cut down and bound together or filled with handwritten and entirely legible texts (Fig. 5). Such books were unique objects that only

[8] Daston and Park, *Wonders and the Order of Nature, 1150-1750*, 154, 272; Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, trans. Alan Sheridan Smith [uncredited] (Milton: Taylor & Francis, 2005), 34-35.

[9] Martha Hollander claims that De la Court's dollhouse was an exact replica of her home, an impossibility given the fact that one room is actually a trompe l'oeil outdoor garden. *An Entrance for the Eyes: Space and Meaning in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 125; Melinda Vander Ploeg Fallon argues otherwise, as there were different numbers of rooms in the home versus the dollhouse. Other differences, such as lack of liminal spaces, will be discussed later in this article. "Petronella de La Court and Agneta Block: Experiencing Collections in Late Seventeenth-Century Amsterdam," *Aurora* 4 (2003), 102.

existed in these collections. Miniature porcelain was shipped all the way from China and Japan, as was a painted Japanese folding screen. De la Court and Dunois' dollhouses even include actual dried flatfish, sticklebacks, and turtles apparently preserved since the seventeenth century.[10] Oortman's dollhouse features a miniature curio-cabinet filled with actual tiny shells; it is not a representation of a shell collection, but rather is one (Fig. 6). Similar tiny collections of shells, coral, pearls, coins, minerals, and stones fill cabinets in a number

Fig. 4. Various makers Detail of Fig. 3 (*Salon room*), c. 1670-90 Centraal Museum, Utrecht, the Netherlands Inv. Nr. 5000 [© Centraal Museum, Utrecht / Adriaan van Dam]

[10] For inventories of the dollhouses' contents, and specifically Asian imports, books, and preserved animals, see Pijzel-Dommisse, *Het Hollandse pronkpoppenhuis*, 230, 314-15, 335-45; Ibid., *Het poppenhuis van Petronella de la Court*, 22-25, 50; Ibid., *Het poppenhuis van het Haags Gemeentemuseum*, 59-60; Ibid., *'t is poppe goet en anders niet:*, 14.

of the dollhouses. One such miniature curio-cabinet features a tiny room — or *doorkijkje* — at its centre, which would have been used to display one of the objects the cabinet contained: a display within a display within a display.[11] In this way these differ significantly from many later eighteenth- and nineteenth-century miniatures which are often made entirely of silver (or other ersatz materials), be they baskets, chairs, plates, or otherwise.[12]

Although, admittedly, some material substitutions do occur, such as a ceiling decorated with a large engraving or a still-life 'painting' made with gouache on paper, the Dutch seventeenth-century dollhouse is remarkable and set apart from other dollhouses in its close concordance between the material and facture of the miniature objects and those of a normal size. Most of the objects within the dollhouses are imbued with all the craftsmanship

Fig. 5. Anonymous (various makers?), *Books from the dollhouse of Petronella Oortman*, c. 1690-1710. 3 × 2.5 × 0.9 cm, leather and paper (hand-coloured intaglio prints) Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, the Netherlands BK-NM-1010-148-A

[11] Pijzel-Dommisse, *Het poppenhuis van het Haags Gemeentemuseum*, 10, 59, 83-85; Ibid., *Het poppenhuis van Petronella de la Court*, 35-37.

[12] See, for example, the number of silver objects (including items such as a loom and bassinet, made of wood or reed in the seventeenth-century examples) in the eighteenth-century dollhouse of Anna Maria Trip, c. 1750, now kept in the *zilverschatkamer* of the Rijksmuseum Twenthe, or the collection of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century silver miniatures (including chairs) in the Museum Bredius in The Hague.

and materiality of their full-size counterparts, merely condensed. In these dollhouses, one could peruse and even read the books that filled the miniature libraries, admire the varieties of shells and minerals that filled the curio-cabinets, or inspect the artful handling of a mythological scene by Van Mieris or a landscape by Herman Saftleven.

Fig. 6. Anonymous
A miniature cabinet of shells from the dollhouse of Petronella Oortman, c. 1690-1710
28.2 × 23.2 × 9.0 cm, fruitwood, shells, wax
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, the Netherlands
BK-NM-1010-2

The fascination with these dollhouses came then, as it does now, from this reduction of scale without compromising the potency of the objects they contained. In his *Poetics of Space*, Gaston Bachelard claimed that:

> The cleverer I am at miniaturizing the world, the better I possess it. But in doing this, it must be understood that values become condensed and enriched in

> miniature… One must go beyond logic in order to experience what is large in what is small.[13]

Cornelia, Sara, and the Petronellas were indeed very clever at miniaturizing their worlds, and they did so at the expense of much time, effort, and resources — both their own and of those whom they commissioned. All of that labour and material was then imbued into the objects in the microcosm of the seventeenth-century Dutch dollhouse. It is no wonder that such objects retain our interest and admiration today.

Experience miniaturized

The dollhouses also hold obvious connections to both genre and still-life painting of the period. For an art in which so much might depend upon the pitted skin of a curled lemon peel or the sheen of a Wan Li bowl, the dollhouse emptied of its figures offered a near-inexhaustible still life. But unlike the offerings of Willem Kalf or Jan De Heem — accessible only optically — here one could pick up and feel the shells, rotate the porcelain, and flip through and read the books. This interactive element distinguishes the dollhouse from similar painted scenes, while also granting it a certain power over its viewers. The miniature world of the dollhouse was eminently accessible to its audience, so long as they were allowed in by its owner and submitted to the physical constraints of the miniature objects. A viewer's ability to interact with the dollhouse objects in real, substantive ways assimilated them into the miniature world as a participant, who then took the place of the diminutive dolls who might normally serve as proxies.[14]

When inviting someone to look at her dollhouse, a Petronella (or Cornelia or Sara) was also asking them to conform to the demands of her miniature world. The dollhouse's furnishings, decorations, and collections would have forced their audience to handle and view

[13] Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon, 1994), 150.

[14] Moseley-Christian has argued that the interactive aspect was more performative, ritual, and didactic for the owner, but does not address how it would have functioned for other viewers. Such a reading minimizes the agency of the women who carefully commissioned, curated, and arranged these intricate collections. "Pronk poppenhuisen," 344-46, 356-57.

them in particular ways. A viewer could read a book, but only if they pulled it close to their face, tucking in their elbows and making themselves small so that they might delicately flip through its tiny pages.[15] Their movements too had to become small, lest they knock over a miniature porcelain cabinet like the proverbial bull in a china shop. Or a viewer might wish to examine the ceiling paintings of some room, crouching down and contorting their head in order to get a better view from below. In viewing and interacting with the dollhouses, viewers would have had to minimize their posture and movements, in a way miniaturizing themselves in order to participate in the logic of the dollhouse. Thus, by inviting a guest into her dollhouse, the owner also assimilated them into a realm over which she had knowledge, power, and control.

The power of the dollhouse (and its owner) over its viewers was psychological as well as physical. A number of experimental studies have shown that one's perception of time is affected when interacting with miniatures and scale models.[16] Although findings vary depending on the experiment's conditions, the general trend is that time is also compressed for viewers when thinking and interacting in miniature scale. The studies demonstrated that someone handling or examining something at a small scale overestimates the amount of time that has passed compared to when they interact with a similar object or image at a larger scale. In effect, time flies when you're thinking small. The microcosm of the dollhouse thus imposed on its viewer not only its own requirements of viewing but also

[15] Benjamin Tilghman has discussed how the physical constraints of viewing and handling miniature books was also conducive to meditative thought. "Divinity in the Details: Miniaturization and Meditation in a Passion Cycle by Johannes Wierix," *Journal of the Walters Art Museum*. 68-69 (2012), 130-31.

[16] There are a number of studies cited in the literature and their conclusions vary widely, but all seem to point to some correlation between miniatures and a compression of perceived time. The very different results may have come from the wording of their questioning, dependent on whether subjects were asked to imagine how much time had passed for a miniature figure within a scale model, or for themselves while they imagined performing tasks within a scale model. But in all cases, interaction with the miniature had some effect on the perceived compression of time. Discussion of these findings within the humanities often misses the important detail that only in the 1986 study were subjects actually asked to accurately guess how much time had passed for themselves. Thomas Mitchell and Roy Davis, "The Perception of Time in Scale Model Environments," *Perception* 16.1 (1987), 5-16; D. J. Bobko, P. Bobko, and M. A. Davis, "Effect of Visual Display Scale on Duration Estimates," *Human Factors* 28.2 (1986), 153-58; A. J. DeLong, "Phenomenological Space-Time: Toward an Experiential Relativity," *Science* 213. 4508 (1981), 681-83; Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1984), 65-67.

its own temporal logic. A dollhouse owner's affective power over her viewer was very real, and it was augmented by the power differential already resulting from her perfect knowledge of the dollhouse's contents, hidden away in countless tiny cabinets and drawers, and enclosed within the greater cabinet's doors.

Maximizing Display

While dollhouse cabinets could be closed to hide and separate their contents from the outside world — making access a privilege to be granted by their owners — they were at the same time built to maximize display. The standard format of the dollhouse room had one wall removed, with furnishings arranged so as not to block the frontal view, as if on a stage. Such a perspective presents the viewer not with a coherent interior space of a whole home, but rather with a series of vignettes or *tableaux vivants*, with each discrete space functioning independently of its adjacent compartments.[17] That the dollhouse functioned more as a collection of isolated rooms is reflected in the fact that, remarkably, none of the surviving Dutch dollhouses included any stairwells from which to get from one floor to the next. In this respect too, they differ from earlier and later dollhouses which more closely reflect the layouts of actual homes.[18] Despite the unprecedented fidelity of the dollhouse's miniature objects to their models, the home and its rooms were merely framing devices for the display of these objects. The navigability of the interior spaces relative to one another was of no concern. Many of the rooms in the dollhouses lack doors, and when present, they are often not functional or only appear on one side of a wall, unable to provide passage from one room to another. The lack of liminal spaces emphasizes that dollhouses were never meant to be replicas of actual houses in miniature; they were instead collections of objects organized according to their proper place, much like the curio-cabinet, and were arranged to maximize display of the objects they housed.

[17] Mariët Westermann discusses how dollhouses reflect the increasing specialization of rooms in actual Dutch homes. "'Costly and Curious, Full of Pleasure and Home Contentment': Making Home in the Dutch Republic," in *Art & Home: Dutch Interiors in the Age of Rembrandt*, ed. Mariët Westermann (Zwolle: Waanders, 2001), 43-45; Moseley-Christian, "Pronk poppenhuisen," 352-53; Stewart, *On Longing*, 54, 62-63.

[18] A number of them do, however, have stairwells in the peat-loft rooms on the top floor, some of which lead to a dead end at the ceiling.

Jacob Appel's painting from around 1700 of Oortman's dollhouse further reflects this understanding of dollhouse logic (Fig. 7). Appel depicted the dollhouse cabinet in its entirety, pushed up against a wall and viewed frontally with curtains pulled back and doors splayed open. While the cabinet itself and everything outside of it is rendered as a perspectivally coherent space, the interior refuses to yield to the logic of the outside world. Instead, each of the nine miniature rooms is accorded its own vanishing point, with a shallow depth of field that allows one to see the floor, ceiling, and walls all at once, again maximizing display. Each room is a world unto itself, completely detached not only from

Fig. 7. Jacob Appel
The Dollhouse of Petronella Oortman, c. 1710
87 x 69 cm, oil on parchment on canvas
Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, the Netherlands
SK-A-4245

the space outside of the cabinet, but also from one another. The perspectival logic is as if the viewer had approached the cabinet from afar, and then situated his or her face right in front of each room one by one, gaining independent perspectives into each compartment. The feasibility of the overall view of the cabinet is compromised by its subordination to the experience of the individual rooms over time.

The *tableau-vivant*-like quality of the dollhouse and its construction as a collection of independent scenes is also emphasized by the figures in Appel's painting. The dolls — if one could call them that — interact with one another, exchanging glances and performing tasks with a dexterity foreign to the stiff and inexpressive manikins that have come down to us in other dollhouses. They instead appear more like actors on stages, or perhaps like a series of genre scenes like those made famous by Johannes Vermeer or Pieter de Hooch. The figures, no less than a dozen children and almost as many adults, populate nearly every room, enacting a wide variety of scenes. Two men play backgammon in one room while a wake is held for a dead child just downstairs. Such events are temporally and narratively incompatible, and instead each room functions as a self-contained space and moment. In some ways the seventeenth-century dollhouse looked remarkably like its full-scale counterpart, but it also diverged from its model in significant ways and adhered to its own internal logic independent from that of our world.

HUMAN AND OBJECT AGENTS

It has been argued that early modern Dutch women assembled these dollhouse collections because spending money on other art might have been seen as indecorous, and in framing their collections as domestic exemplars they insulated themselves from such criticism.[19] Indeed there are indications that, much like still-life painting, dollhouses could impart the moralizing lessons of a *vanitas*, warning of the impermanence of all earthly things. One dollhouse wall-hanging is adorned with verses from an emblem book warning that "All things that one sees here on Earth / are dolls' goods and nothing more".[20] But Petronella

[19] Moseley-Christian, "Consuming Excess" 65, 71–73; Vander Ploeg Fallon, "Petronella de La Court and Agneta Block," 95–96.

[20] "AL wat men hier op AERDEN SIET / Is poppe goet en anders niet". Moseley-Christian, "Consuming Excess," 72.

de la Court was no ascetic: she owned a large collection of paintings and sculpture, as well as a *wunderkammer*-worthy selection of *naturalia* and *artificialia* including stuffed birds, an ostrich egg, Asian drawings, an elaborate atlas, and albums of drawings of insects, plants, and birds.[21] Such collecting practices — usually the purview of men — demonstrate De la Court's exceptionalism, and if there were some amount of Calvinist decorum to be preserved by limiting one's collection to a dollhouse, De la Court was already well past that point. Her dollhouse was not a proxy for a 'real' collection, but a significant part of a broader collecting program. The dollhouse collectors were of such means that they could, and did, have other collections, but the dollhouse was a peculiar mode of collecting that they intentionally cultivated.

Annabel Wharton has discussed Carrie Stettheimer's early twentieth-century dollhouse in terms of the agency of objects, elucidating how "scale models act independently of both their archetypes and their originating ideas [… and also] of their makers and their consumers".[22] She further explains that models can act as strong or weak agents, partly but not entirely dependent on their relation to their referents. Strong models, she contends, are distinguished by their ability to produce affect in those who come into contact with them. Dutch dollhouses of the seventeenth century certainly acted independently of their makers and viewers, and in their unique form distinguished themselves from their full-size counterparts. In her will, Petronella de La Court left instructions that while the majority of her collection could be sold off and dispersed, the dollhouse and atlas were to remain in the care of her children for at least three years.[23] Though her motivations remain unclear, the dollhouse apparently held particular power for — or over — her.

CONCLUSION

I have argued above that part of the power of the dollhouses of the Petronellas, Cornelia, and Sara lie in their independence from their ostensible referents. Dollhouses did not

[21] Vander Ploeg Fallon, "Petronella de La Court and Agneta Block," 103.

[22] Annabel Wharton, "Doll's House/Dollhouse: Models and Agency," *Journal of American Studies* 53.1 (2019), 29.

[23] Vander Ploeg Fallon, "Petronella de La Court and Agneta Block," 101-2.

reproduce the homes of their owners but were instead independent worlds with their own logic and rules. They acted on their interlocutors by demanding certain posturing, both physical and mental. They mediated interactions between their owners and visiting guests, serving as physical embodiments of their owners' knowledge and possession of rarefied and miniature worlds. In form, they maximized display while also maintaining a certain inaccessibility — compartments within compartments that had to be opened and explored. And they were filled with objects that were just foreign enough to their models to arouse curiosity, wonder, and an affect in their viewers which, as Wharton argues, "works on the viscera of those who encounter it — through bodily sensation and intuition rather than through cognition and intellect".[24] Perhaps this is what Bachelard meant when he declared: "One must go beyond logic in order to experience what is large in what is small". The seventeenth-century dollhouse had its own kind of miniature logic that granted it power over, and agency with respect to, its viewers. Lured into the dollhouse by its condensed complexity, viewers could spend hours investigating its microcosmic world. As the adage goes, *multum in parvo*; the small contains multitudes.

Jun Nakamura is a PhD candidate in the History of Art at the University of Michigan and a 2018-2020 Kress Institutional Fellow at Leiden University. He specializes in seventeenth-century Dutch topics and the history of printmaking, with further research interests in transoceanic trade and early modern science and technology. His dissertation explores rhetorics of prints and printedness by looking at how certain styles within printmaking were established, manipulated, appropriated, and subverted in the Netherlands in the long seventeenth century.

[24] Wharton, "Doll's House/Dollhouse," 37.

AUTHENTICITY VS 3D REPRODUCTION

NEVER THE TWAIN SHALL MEET?

Liselore Tissen
Leiden University, Leiden, the Netherlands
Delft University of Technology, Delft, the Netherlands

This article discusses a 3D print of Rembrandt van Rijn's Saul and David to introduce the debate on art reproduction. Confusion about and a rejection of 3D printing is caused by the fact that this technology is hard to define as a form of art reproduction. Furthermore, 3D printing causes tension within the way that value is granted to original paintings. Walter Benjamin's theory of aura and other contemporary texts, such as Thierry Lenain's book on art forgery and David Lowenthal's articles on the authenticity of artworks and reproductions, provide a theoretical framework with which to introduce the current debate on 'original' and 'copy', a discourse that is becoming more important because of the increasing quality of reproductions through 3D printing. Exploring the concept of authenticity, this article shows how contemporary society grants value to artworks and reproductions. Authenticity as a concept is not static; it is a social construction that allows various perceptions of art that can change over time, resulting in shifting perceptions of both original artworks and (3D) reproductions. Finally, this article relates the various perspectives of authenticity to 3D prints in assessing whether these reproductions can become authentic in and of themselves.

INTRODUCTION

As you walked into the exhibition *Rembrandt*? *The Case of Saul and David* at the Mauritshuis in The Hague (2015), your eyes were left to wander as you were inclined to think you were seeing double: the recently restored painting *Saul and David* (1651-1655 and 1655-1658) by Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-1669) was displayed next to a three-dimensional (3D) print of the painting that was almost indistinguishable from the original. This shocking encounter prompted various questions: What does this reproduction mean for the artistic and

authentic value of the original? What value does the 3D print have on its own? Will this technology change the way we perceive original artworks?

The reproduction of artwork has been a topic of debate since philosopher Walter Benjamin identified that reproduction decreases art's historic value and relevance.[1] Nonetheless, today's reproduction technologies offer possibilities Benjamin could have never imagined: we have the ability to print paintings in 3D. Even though we are familiar with art reproduction, there is a rising awareness of the possibility of replicating artworks through 3D printing, which is new compared to previous replication methods (e.g. photography and film). 3D technologies enable rapid replication of both the texture and visual qualities of art at a high resolution.

3D printing, its accuracy, and the way it mediates original artworks — both in physical and digital form — creates tension in our perception of authenticity. Therefore, by means of an in-depth examination of advancements in reproduction technology, this article explores what the introduction of 3D printing means to the value of artworks in the twenty-first century. Reflecting on 3D printing within the realm of 'mechanical' art reproduction (e.g. etchings, virtual copies) unveils some of the new opportunities and dangers this technology introduces to original artworks. A deeper investigation of authenticity as a concept, and Benjamin's comparable concept of 'aura', demonstrates the changing meaning of originals and their 3D reproductions. In this way, their reciprocal connection become more clear: reproductions and originals are undeniably intertwined. In the spirit of 2019, being the 350th anniversary of Rembrandt van Rijn's death, a 3D print of Rembrandt's *Saul and David* (Figs 1 and 2) — which was made to show the painting's original format before it was cut into pieces in the nineteenth century — is used as a case study.[2] Through an analysis of the role of authenticity in the relationship between existing artworks and their copies, my article concludes by discussing whether a 3D print can itself be considered original and authentic in the near future.

[1] Walter Benjamin, "Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit," *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* 5 (1936), 40-68.

[2] Rembrandt van Rijn, *Saul and David*, 1651-1655 and 1655-1658, oil on canvas, 130 x 164.5 cm, Mauritshuis, The Hague, the Netherlands.

Fig. 1. Rembrandt van Rijn, *Saul and David*, 1651-1655 and 1655-1658. 130 x 164.5 cm, oil on canvas. Mauritshuis, The Hague, the Netherlands

3D PRINTING AS THE NEXT GENERATION OF ART REPRODUCTION

We encounter reproductions and representations of Rembrandt's paintings everywhere on a daily basis: in catalogues, on posters, on the Internet, and on tourist miscellanea. Yet, 3D printing offers something different than already existing reproduction methods.

Reproduction, however, is not a new practice: the Romans copied Greek statues out of admiration, and Renaissance painters reproduced the work of their masters to become better artists.[3] As the

[3] Nicole Ex and Ernst van de Wetering, *Zo goed als oud: de achterkant van het restaureren* (Amsterdam: Amber, 1993), 59-64.

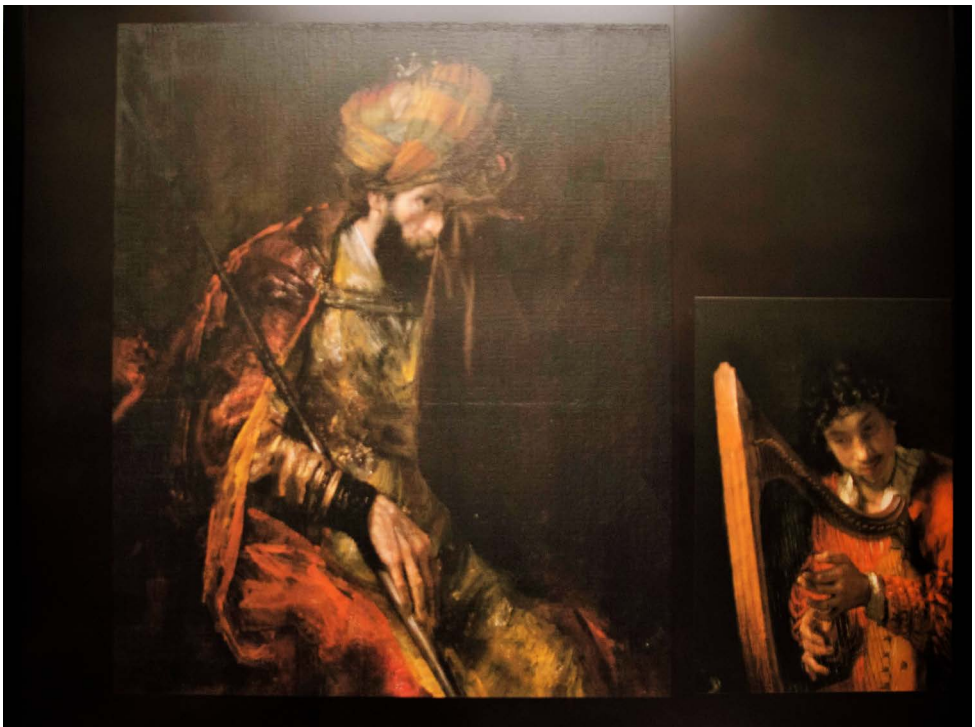

Fig. 2. TU Delft and Océ Technologies, *Saul and David*, *3D printed*, 2015. 130 x 164.5 cm, PLA elevated printing. TU Delft, Delft, the Netherlands

sixteenth-century historian and artist Giorgio Vasari (1511-1574) explained in his 1546 work *Vite*, reproduction is essential to artworks and the creation of new ones: "Design cannot have a good origin if it has not come from continual practice in copying natural objects, and from the study of pictures by excellent masters and of ancient statues in relief […]".[4] Vasari's emphasis on the necessity of reproduction would be repeated by others over time. In the artistic practice of the seventeenth century, reproduction was especially common. Rembrandt expert Ernst van der Wetering explains that painters such

[4] "Il qual disegno non può avere buon'origine, se non s'ha dato continuamente opera a ritrarre cose naturali e studiato pitture d'eccellenti maestri ed statue antiche di rilievo […]"; Stefano Pierguidi, "Vasari, Borghini, and the Merits of Drawing from Life," *Master Drawings* 49.2 (2011), 171.

as Rembrandt supported the replication of their works as this practice contributed to the spreading of their oeuvre, artistic knowledge, and ideas.[5] Rembrandt and his contemporaries did not solely rely on hand-painted reproductions made by pupils, but gladly used technologies that facilitated the creation of multiple works, such as etching and engraving. These techniques and developments in the technologies of the printing press sped up the process of creating high-quality copies. In his 1936 essay, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, Walter Benjamin referred to this phenomenon as the start of a radical change in replication history.[6] According to Benjamin, 'mechanical reproduction' allows the fast creation of multiple high-quality reproductions of one original. He emphasized that art has always been more or less reproducible (e.g. multiple bronze statues from one cast), but that the *nature* of copying had changed with the invention of photography in the nineteenth century: "With photography, in the process of pictorial reproduction the hand was for the first time relieved of the principal artistic responsibilities, which henceforth lay on the eye alone as it peered into the lens."[7]

Benjamin specifies that the artist's hand is no longer present or needed to create reproductions of art, having been replaced by machines. Moreover, this new kind of replica is made with a different medium and materiality than the original.[8] This means that the original artwork is translated into the 'language' and material of the reproduction medium, resulting in a product without physical traces of time (*patina*). Besides, the artwork is shown in a two-dimensional way, causing a loss of the unique material qualities of paintings, such as *craquelure* (the fine pattern of cracks on painted surfaces), transparency, reflection, and *impasto* (the thick application of a pigment or paint): elements that express the three-dimensionality of painted surfaces.[9] Nowadays, computers can also be considered mediums that transform the qualities of artworks into their own digital or virtual language. Because

[5] E. van de Wetering, et al., "Licht en kleur bij Caravaggio en Rembrandt door de ogen van hun tijdgenoten," *Caravaggio-Rembrandt* (Zwolle: Waanders/Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, 2006), 164-79.

[6] Benjamin, "Das Kunstwerk," 6-10.

[7] "Mit der Fotografie war die Hand im Prozess bildlicher Reproduktion zum ersten Mal von den wichtigsten künstlerischen Obliegenheiten entlastet, welche nunmehr dem ins Objektiv blickenden"; trans. J.A. Underwood, Ibid., 6.

[8] Ibid., 6-9.

[9] Ibid., 22-26, 42.

of this change in medium, Benjamin says that the reproduction itself can become autonomous as it no longer needs to be presented in the same medium in order to be considered a replication. Additionally, the replication technique can manipulate the way an artwork is presented — for example, by changing the scale or colour saturation — allowing for more and different ways of interpretation. Many of these types of technologies followed, such as film, digital imaging, and more recent reproduction methods like augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR) which are concurrent with the technology central to this article: 3D printing.[10]

3D printing has existed since the 1980s, but its technology has recently boomed in various sectors — including the medical and mechanical industries — where its possibilities are endlessly explored and perfected. To 3D print an object, two elements are needed: rapid prototyping and stereo lithography (SLA). Rapid prototyping is a technology that translates computer data into a three-dimensional product. This technology is combined with stereo lithography, which involves hardening polymer by exposing it to ultraviolet (UV) light.[11] This invention made it possible to print forms layer by layer by curing photopolymers with UV light lasers (Fig. 3).[12]

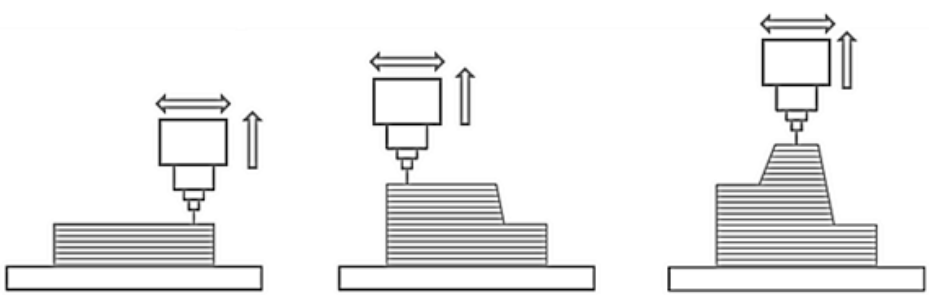

Fig. 3. Additive manufacturing

[10] Andrea Witcomb, "The Materiality of Virtual Technologies: A New Approach to Thinking About the Impact of Multimedia in Museums," *Theorizing Digital Cultural Heritage: A Critical Discourse* (Cambridge, MA, MIT, 2007), 35-47.

[11] The polymers used for 3D printing are Polylactic Acid (PLA), Acrylonitrile Butadiene Styrene (ABS) and Polyvinyl Alcohol Plastic (PVA).

[12] Petar Kocovic, "History of Additive Manufacturing," in *3D Printing and Its Impact on the Production of Fully Functional Components: Emerging Research and Opportunities*, ed. P. Kocovic (Hershey: IGI Global, 2017), 1-21.

The technique used to reproduce paintings is slightly different from 'regular' 3D printing because texture is printed on a flat polymer base. As this printing technology does not print a three-dimensional object but a textured layer, it is referred to as 'elevated printing'.[13] To print a painting, both texture and pigments are measured by scanning the surface. By looking from different angles and combining this information, it is possible to measure the craquelure, irregularities, and the reflection of the painting's surface. Paintings are especially valued because of their visual qualities, so not only does the texture of the print have to be accurate, also the paint has to be nearly flawless in order to be convincing.[14] The layers that are used to create texture are uniform and monotonous. Only the final layer is printed in colour with an inkjet printing system. The end result is a three-dimensional polymer print of a painting including all its textural characteristics and its aesthetic qualities (Fig. 4).

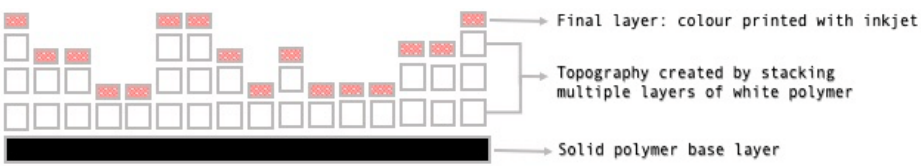

Fig. 4. Construction of a printed painting using elevated printing

In comparison to the reproduction technologies mentioned, a 3D print is not just a visual representation of the original painting like a poster you would buy at IKEA or in a museum shop. It is a body double — a second version, if you will — that includes every detail of the painting's surface: its colour, *patina*, and topography (Fig. 5). Besides, 3D printing is different from the newer and more recent technologies AR and VR, because their reproductions are mainly digital and therefore do not function within the physical realm, meaning that — in contrast to 3D printing — no confusion between original and reproduction can exist.

[13] Willemijn Elkhuizen, personal interview, 11 October 2017.

[14] Willemijn Elkhuizen, et al., *Digital Manufacturing of Fine Art Reproductions for Appearance*, poster session presented at the 3rd International Conference on Innovation in Art Research and Technology, Parma, Italy (2018).

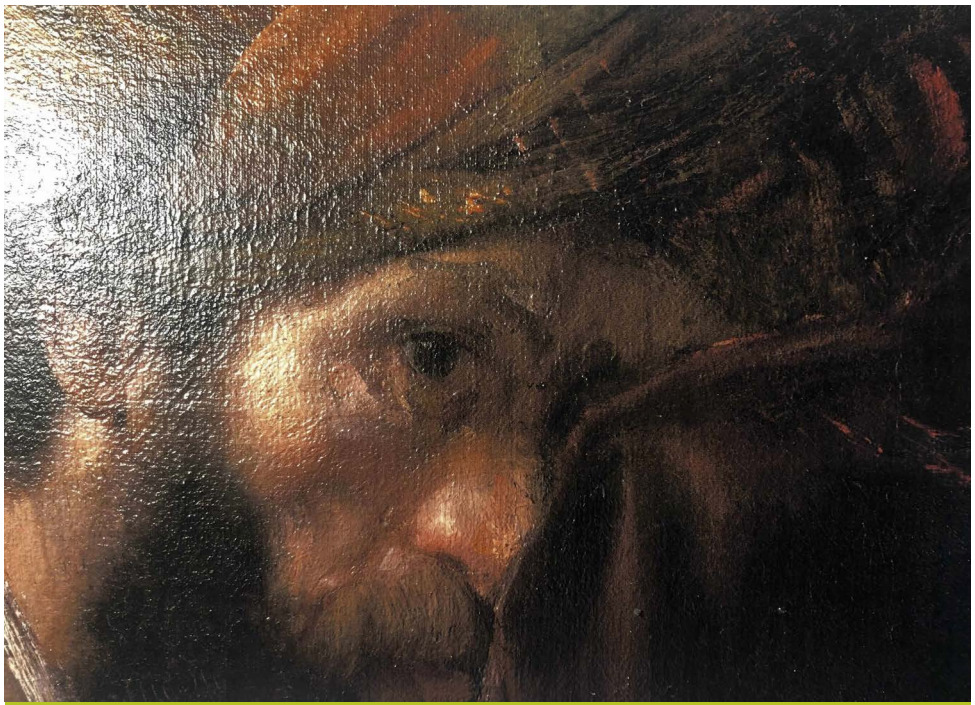

Fig. 5. Detail of the face of Saul with raking light from the left (3D print of Saul and David)

During research conducted in 2018, I interviewed museum visitors and art specialists (directors, curators, and conservators) of various Dutch museums and cultural institutions. My research showed that the technology is often rejected because it is hard to compare 3D prints to existing two-dimensional reproductions such as posters and photographs. It is still unclear how the added three-dimensionality of these replicas affects the perception of originals and reproductions.[15] To understand the effects of this technology on the function, perception, and appreciation of the original — good or bad — it is necessary to first explore how the 3D-printed *Saul and David* should be understood as the body double of Rembrandt's original.

[15] Liselore N.M. Tissen, "Indistinguishable Likeness: 3D Replication as a Conservation Strategy and the Moral and Ethical Discussions on Our Perception of Art" (Master's thesis, Leiden University, 2018), https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/handle/1887/64816.

3D PRINT VS REPRODUCTION VS FORGERY

Relating 3D printing to Benjamin's definition of 'mechanical reproduction' is rather problematic. It is undeniable that this technology is 'mechanical' because machines — 3D printers — enable endless replication of existing artworks. Nevertheless, it is hard to define 3D prints as 'reproductions' of art. According to the Oxford English Dictionary *reproduction* is "1. The act or process of copying something […] 1.1. A copy of a work of art, especially a print or photograph of a painting". Synonyms include copy, replica, facsimile, reproduction, reconstruction, and duplicate.[16] Even though *reproduction* and its synonyms all refer to things that closely resemble an original, many art scholars emphasize that these concepts have divergent meanings — especially within the art world — and should not be used interchangeably.[17] Still, there are few to no texts that provide an overview of the differences between these concepts. Texts that do provide an overview, such as The International Council on Monuments and Sites' (ICOMOS) *Burra Charter* (1979) and *Terminology for Further Expansion* in the *Tate Papers* (2007), do not consider the applicability of these concepts to paintings nor 3D printing.[18] Thus, a short description of these concepts is needed.

A 'copy' is the result of the act of copying, usually made by someone or something other than the artist who created the original. It can be endlessly reproduced and does not necessarily need the original artwork for multiple versions to be created.[19] The goal is to refer to the original artwork by preserving some visual resemblance. For this reason, it does not need to be identical, allowing variations in size and material. For example, when we see a painting, we can copy it by photographing it. We can later reproduce the painting using the photograph instead of the original artwork. The 3D print of *Saul and David* is a copy in the sense that it shows a visual resemblance with the original painting, is not made by

[16] Lexico Online Dictionary (2019), https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/reproduction.

[17] Darren H. Hick, et al., *The Aesthetics and Ethics of Copying* (London: Bloomsbury, 2016); Thierry Lenain, *Art Forgery: The History of a Modern Obsession* (London: Reaktion Books, 2011).

[18] ICOMOS, *The Australia ICOMOS Charter for Places of Cultural Significance ["Burra Charter"]* (2013), https://australia.icomos.org/wp-content/uploads/The-Burra-Charter-2013-Adopted-31.10.2013.pdf; Matthew Gale, et al., "Terminology for Further Expansion," *Tate Papers* 8 (2007).

[19] Dieter Birnbacher, "Copying and the Limits of Substitutability," in *The Aesthetics and Ethics of Copying*, ed. D. H. Hick et al., 26-39.

Rembrandt himself, and can be recreated endlessly. However, 3D printing's goal is not to have a slight visual resemblance to the original, like a poster, but to recreate every aspect of the original as closely as possible.[20] Thus, this definition is not specific enough and does not suffice.

Replicas and duplicates are visually identical to the original. As art scholar Thierry Lenain describes, the replica is a 'second version' of the original — ideally made by the same artist — which has a symbolic resemblance, allowing some variations in size, and can function as a 'stand in' when the original is not present.[21] Examples of this are Auguste Rodin's bronze sculptures that were made with the same cast: they are all more or less identical and equally original. The difference between duplicates and replicas is that duplicates are identical copies of an original —allowing no variations of any kind — and are valid replacements. Philosopher Nelson Goodman describes paintings as autographic works: there is one definitive object that compromises a work; hence, duplicates of paintings cannot exist.[22] The 3D print of *Saul and David* is a visually detailed copy, but is not made of the same materials, nor at the same time, nor by the same person, and can for this reason not be considered a replica nor a duplicate.

Although 'facsimile' is a term mostly used to refer to photomechanical reprints of books — which are often made with reproduction in mind — it is still worth mentioning. 'Facsimile' is derived from the Latin *fac simile*, which means 'make alike'.[23] It is, like a replica, as true to the original as possible in terms of content, appearance, and dimension. However, Lenain explains that a facsimile does not function as a 'body double', but as a 'new body', one that records every aspect of the original. It can function as a replacement if the original were to decay beyond repair, for example.[24] In this way, the original's value is transferred to a newer or different version in terms of its materiality. In the case of 3D printing, the

[20] Willemijn Elkhuizen, personal interview, 11 October 2017.

[21] Lenain, *Art Forgery*, 36-40.

[22] Nelson Goodman, *Languages of Art: An Approach to a Theory of Symbols* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1968), 194-98.

[23] Lexico Online Dictionary, https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/facsimile.

[24] Lenain, *Art Forgery*, 36-40.

technology directly and closely reproduces the painting's topography and colours without a loss of knowledge or detail, suggesting that a 3D print can indeed be a facsimile. Because of the latter, in the case of *Saul and David*, 'facsimile' seems the most fitting of the above-mentioned terms.

Thus far, we have seen that copying, replication, duplication, and facsimilation are all acts that create a product that is as close to the original as possible, some allowing more variation and interpretation than others. Reproduction and reconstruction are forms of copying that allow more dissimilarities and visual discrepancies than the previously mentioned acts, because their focus is not visual similarity, but alikeness of the artist's practice or the object's function.[25] An example is the television show *Het geheim van de meester* ("The Secret of the Master") produced by the Dutch public broadcasting station AVROTROS, where a group of specialists elaborately research various Dutch masterpieces — such as Rembrandt's *Self-portrait* (1628) — to understand with which technique and materials the artist created his or her painting (Fig. 6).[26] Afterwards, artist Charlotte Caspers uses the information gathered during the research to accurately reproduce the original painting.[27] She explains that reproductions are made by using the same process and idea with which the original was made, with the intent to learn more about the artist, materials, and technique.[28] In summary, art historian Robert Verhoogt (2007) says that this means that a reproduction is a close copy made after the original, allowing minor differences, in the same technique but with comparable or newer materials.[29] Comparing Rembrandt's *Self-portrait* with Caspers' version shows that they are very alike, but not identical.[30]

Using this definition, the 3D print of *Saul and David* fits the idea of recreating the original painting in a newer and fresher material with the intention to learn more about the artist

[25] Gale, et al., *Terminology*.

[26] Rembrandt van Rijn, *Self-portrait*, 1628, oil on canvas, 22.6 x 18.7 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

[27] *Het geheim van de meester*, AVROTROS, TV series aired 2016-2019.

[28] "Van vernis tot vermiljoen: vervalsen," *Het geheim van de meester*, AVROTROS, TV episode aired 19 February 2019.

[29] Robert Verhoogt, *Art in Reproduction: Nineteenth-Century Prints after Lawrence Alma-Tadema, Jozef Israels and Ary Scheffer* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University, 2007), 31-38.

[30] "Rembrandt – zelfportret op jeugdige leeftijd," *Het geheim van de meester*, AVROTROS, TV episode aired 15 September 2016.

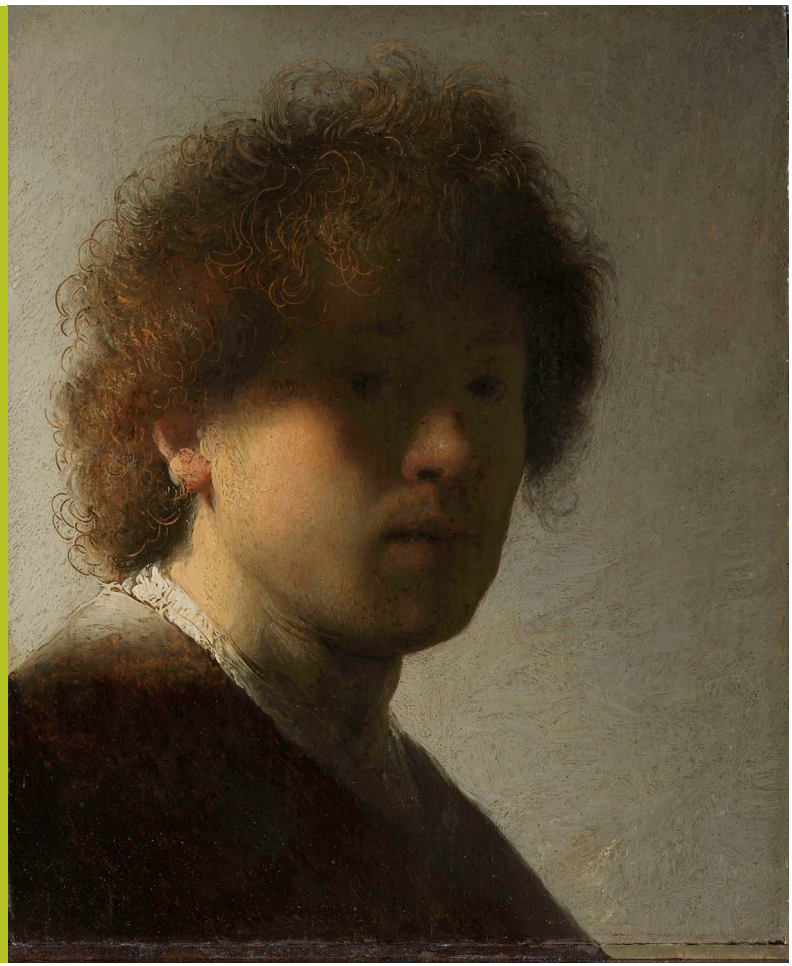

Fig. 6. Rembrandt van Rijn, *Self-portrait*, 1628
22.6 x 18.7 cm, oil on canvas, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, the Netherlands

and painting. Yet, the 3D print is not made of oil paint or canvas, nor with the same techniques Rembrandt used. Reconstruction, on the other hand, does allow the use of newer materials. Reconstructions are rarely made of fine art (i.e. paintings and statues), but are more often employed in architecture and archaeology to restore something that has been damaged or lost to a preferred historical time or visual state.[31] New materials are combined with original components to durably recreate something in a new perspective, using newly

[31] ICOMOS (2013); Gale, et al., *Terminology.*

gathered information to puzzle together what an artifact might have looked like at a certain point in time. In the case of *Saul and David*, 3D printing was used to visualize what was revealed during a restoration project, and it facilitated the reconstruction of the original shape of the painting in new materials. Reconstruction, then, replaces facsimile as the most precise designation for 3D printing.

So far, it seems that copying and 3D printing are acts that are usually harmless to or in favour of an original. Nonetheless, nowadays any form of copying leaves a bad aftertaste and it is often associated with forgery. As Lenain and other scholars indicate, forgery is a 'negative' copy that is made with the intention of deceiving. It is a product that deliberately steals the identity, place in time, and status of the original it simulates.[32] The intention of creating the 3D print of *Saul and David* — and any other 3D-printed painting — has not yet been of this kind. However, with the increasing likeness of reconstructions and the growing number of copies we encounter daily, the fear of counterfeit is rising. This has resulted in rigorous measures: the International Council of Museums' (ICOM) *Code of Ethics* (2017) describes that one of museums' main tasks is to display primary evidence of history, and that if museums decide to use copies, reproductions, and facsimiles they should label them clearly as such.[33] Interestingly, although we live in a world with more and better reproductions than ever, there still exists a mania for showing authentic artworks in museums, resulting in a rejection of reproductions and their potential value or use. It is necessary to explain where this urge for preserving an authentic experience is rooted, and if 3D reconstructions are changing this phenomenon. This way, what the 3D print of *Saul and David* means to the original at the Mauritshuis can be explained.

AUTHENTICITY IN THE AGE OF 3D PRINTING

According to Benjamin, 'mechanical reproduction' and the plural existence of artworks alters the 'holy' status of an authentic artwork.[34] The importance granted to artworks can

[32] Lenain, *Art Forgery*, 35-45; Hick, et al. *Aesthetics and Ethics.*

[33] *ICOM Code of Ethics* (2017), https://icom.museum/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/ICOM-code-En-web.pdf.

[34] Benjamin, "Das Kunstwerk," 12-16.

be attributed to their unique existence in history, provided by their materiality: the paint, canvas, and colours offer proof of a unique moment in the past, and create an emotional bond with the viewer. Benjamin defines this phenomenon as 'aura'; a quality that provides the artwork with the ability to become the relic of a social cult, causing the work of art to obtain a 'cult value'.[35] With the introduction of 'mechanical reproduction' methods, such as 3D printing, art loses its exclusive nature as a cult object and becomes an object of the masses. It evokes a diminution of artistic value and 'aura', as the importance of art is no longer based on historical and emotional connections but on its omnipresent aesthetic qualities. The latter marks a shift from 'cult value' to 'exhibition value': the dominant cultural connections of the artwork shifted from one that is unique in time (*Einmaligkeit*) to one that is ephemeral and repetitive (*Reproduzierbarkeit*). So according to Benjamin, the 'cult value' of the original will vanish together with the 'aura', leaving the original and the myth of the artist.[36] Benjamin ends his essay with the idea that mechanical reproduction marks the death of art: art is transformed into a tool for propaganda and consumerism, losing all of its significance for human history and artistic achievement.[37]

Even though Benjamin wrote this assumption almost a century ago, it could be argued that his stance towards art reproductions is still meaningful in today's world of 3D printing. Marking 2019 as the Year of Rembrandt perfectly exemplifies his statement that art's status has changed from 'cult value' to 'exhibition value': museums everywhere promote Rembrandt's artworks — or the artist as a brand — via numerous exhibitions, events, and reproductions. Nevertheless, Benjamin's idea about the increase in reproductions and art's popularity has not caused a decrease in the value of the original. On the contrary, the Dutch organization *Museumvereniging* shows that Dutch museum visits are continuously increasing, suggesting that people still want to see original artwork and feel the sensation of an artwork as proof of history and artistry.[38] When we come face-to-face with the

[35] Ibid., 20-22.

[36] Ibid., 14-16.

[37] Ibid., 40-46.

[38] Museumvereniging, *Museumcijfers 2017*, 2 October 2018, https://www.museumvereniging.nl/media/publicationpage/publicationFile/2017_museumcijfers-nieuw.pdf

original *Saul and David*, we seek proof of the past and a connection with the artist through the uniqueness of the material features of the painting. A 3D print cannot substitute the original in this sense: it is indeed a reconstruction of something that was, but one which does not carry traces of time and connection with history.

Even though today we value artworks primarily through their materiality, this has not always been the case: the focus on material authenticity in the West began only two centuries ago with the French Revolution, during which the romanticization of nationalism amplified the emphasis on individuality and consequently changed the role of individual artworks and artists. Before that time, artworks were enjoyed because of their context, function, and collective significance, as with the *Ghent Altarpiece* (1432) attributed to the brothers Hubert and Jan van Eyck, for instance, which was valued because it was perceived to possess a magical connection to the saints of the Church and for its function as a visual reinforcement for understanding the liturgy (Fig. 7).[39] Therefore, various art and conservation specialists have noted that authenticity is a social process with variations in cultural and historical preferences. Art historian David Lowenthal emphasises that it is important to understand that there is no single perspective of granting value to originals (and reproductions), and most importantly, these perspectives are fluid and can change over time, perhaps one day resulting in a different appreciation of originals and 3D prints.[40]

AUTHENTICITY AS A MATTER OF PERSPECTIVE

Authenticity is regarded as something that has the quality of being authentic, original, or genuine. It refers to something that is genuinely made or done in a traditional way that faithfully resembles an original based on reliable facts. Early twentieth-century art historian Alois Riegl described artworks as 'monuments'.[41] He states that monuments are artifacts that can be granted 'age value' and 'memory value'. Anything can acquire 'age

[39] Lenain, *Art Forgery*, 74-76.

[40] David Lowenthal, "Authenticity? The Dogma of Self-Delusion," *Why Fakes Matter: Essays on Problems of Authenticity*, ed. Mark Jones (London: British Museum, 1992) 184-90.

[41] Alois Riegl, *Der moderne Denkmalkultus, seine Wesen und seine Entstehung* (Vienna: K.K. Zentral-Kommission für Kunst-und Historische Denkmale, 1901), 23-49.

Fig. 7. Jan van Eyck, Hubert van Eyck, *Ghent Altarpiece*, 1432. 350 x 460 cm, oil on panel.
St. Bavo's Cathedral, Ghent, Belgium

value': as time passes, objects become proof of an earlier moment in time. This value is steadily advancing, unchangeable, and inherent to an artwork. In contrast to 'ordinary' objects, Riegl says that 'monuments' also have 'memory value': a value that in a way satisfies humanity's social, psychological, and intellectual needs. 'Memory value' is not fixed like 'age value'; it transforms over time.[42] It is a phenomenon that is better understood as an assessment made by a particular evaluator in a particular context. Therefore, 'memory values' can be granted in many forms, but together with an object's 'age value' they generate the authenticity, or 'aura', of artworks ('monuments').

But what are these 'memory values'? Ex and Lowenthal explain that 'memory value' can be

[42] Ibid.

granted in various ways.[43] One specific 'memory value' that is becoming more important today is the originally nineteenth-century ideal of *l'art pour l'art*, which is presently interpreted as a 'conceptual authenticity': this means that the thought and production process of the artist are the most valued aspects of an artwork. Furthermore, Lowenthal and Ex describe functional or contextual authenticity as a form of granting value that safeguards the original function of artworks, an interest in showing artworks only in the environment or context that properly belongs to them. In the case of the *Ghent Altarpiece*, it becomes dislocated when placed in a museum (i.e. the crypt of the cathedral that was turned into a permanent exhibition space); showing it in Saint Bavo's Cathedral in Ghent would be true to the function and context of the artwork.

So, if a 3D print can never replace an artwork's material authenticity, can it ever become more than just a copy? By approaching the 3D print of *Saul and David* from the other mentioned stages of authenticity — conceptual, functional, and contextual — it can be determined if the 3D reconstruction can become authentic on its own.

THE AUTHENTIC 3D PRINT

In terms of 'age value', a 3D print can obtain this characteristic: all it takes is time. The 3D print of *Saul and David* will become authentic in terms of 'age value' as it will one day be a material reference to what could be achieved with 3D printing, and also function as a reminder of the Mauritshuis exhibition. Yet, in terms of 'memory value', the authentication in relation to the original is rather contradictory: the 3D construction by its nature is considered to be something that can never be original because it depends on an existing artwork, but it has to have an 'aura' to become acceptable as authentic.[44] In other words, the acceptance of the 3D print as authentic happens when the reproduction realizes a 'memory value' the original cannot. This has happened, for example, to the copy of Michelangelo's *David* in front of the Palazzo Vecchio that fulfils the original's functional authenticity, because the

[43] Ex, *Zo goed als oud*, 30-31, 56-64, 66-70, 82-85, 94-97, 108-9, 115-23; David Lowenthal, "Counterfeit Art: Authentic Fakes?" *International Journal of Cultural Property* 1.1 (1992), 81-85, 90-97.

[44] Lowenthal, "Counterfeit Art," 90-97.

original would have been long gone if it had not been preserved in a museum.[45] *David* is important both because of its *materiality* as a proof of Michelangelo's skills and because of its *function* in front of the Palazzo as a symbol for the independence of Florence; therefore the reproduction takes on its own value — one that the original cannot fulfil anymore due to its materiality — making it as meaningful as the original for its own reasons.

Another example of an authentic copy is *Lascaux II* (the copy of the parietal wall paintings in the French Lascaux caves). Like the 3D print of *Saul and David*, it is a reconstruction of an original in a newer material, and was made because the original prehistoric cave was no longer accessible due to the fragility of its material.[46] To ensure an authentic experience, *Lascaux II* was placed close to the original cave. Like the reproduction of *David*, *Lascaux II* conserved a quality — an authenticity — the original could no longer sustain: it took over the function of the original cave, because without *Lascaux II* the murals of the prehistoric cave would no longer be visible and accessible. It is worth mentioning that as time passed, the material of *Lascaux II* decayed, just like its original. However, instead of reproducing the replica, *Lascaux II* was restored and later declared a historical monument.[47] This emphasizes the possibility for a reconstruction to increase in value and obtain its own material value and importance.

As the examples have shown, a replica obtains 'memory value' when it fulfils a purpose the original cannot (anymore). In the case of the 3D print of *Saul and David* — keeping in mind that it is now rather new — the 3D print *could* replace the original's functional authenticity: its materiality allows the painting to be shown in a manner that is more like the conditions in which Rembrandt and his contemporaries saw the artwork (e.g. in candlelight or near a fireplace). However, what is more interesting is that not only does the original artwork age, but so too does the 3D print. In contrast to Rembrandt's painting, the 3D print of *Saul and David* is made of polymer, a material that decays more slowly than the materials of the original. The 3D print is a snapshot of the material state of the original painting in 2015. In

[45] Ex, *Zo goed als oud*, 60-62.

[46] Jon Bryant, "Prehistoric Cave Art Celebrated at New Lascaux Centre in Dordogne," *The Guardian*, 15 December 2016.

[47] Ibid.

Lowenthal's words, this means that over time the print will provide a more historical and conceptually more correct version of *Saul and David* than Rembrandt's oil-painted version, as it will eventually show less decay and discolouration than the original.[48]

In the case of material authenticity, it is clear that the 3D print cannot take over the material qualities of the original painting while it is still accessible to provide the 'auratic' experience. Nonetheless, if *Saul and David* were to vanish or decay beyond repair, there is a possibility that the 3D-printed facsimile could become a new body that reminds one of the original work and which can eventually (partly) replace the original. Even though this is speculative, this technology prompts us to consider what is more valuable to us over time: is it *Saul and David* which is older in materiality, but a ruin of what it once was, or will it be the 3D print that is different in materiality and newer, but in concept or composition (i.e. conceptual authenticity) closer to what Rembrandt intended? This discussion driven by the authentic copy may one day affect the authenticity society grants Rembrandt's painting and has the potential to change our perception of original artworks.

CONCLUSION

The introduction of 3D reproductions that are almost indistinguishable from the original liquefies the borders between what is 'real' and 'authentic' and what is not, making it hard to identify what, precisely, a 3D print is, and how this technology should be understood as part of reproduction and art history. Benjamin's fear that 'mechanical reproduction' together with technological invention would mean the death of art can be refuted: technology has increased the obsession with the materiality of original artworks. The existence of 3D prints can be seen as a *conditio sine qua non*: appreciation of the original's 'aura' would not exist if there was not something — in this case a copy — to threaten it. Simultaneously, artworks and 3D prints gain their own 'age value' as they withstand the passage of time and become symbols of artistic and technological triumph. It is important to emphasize that the perceived authenticity of both the original and the 3D print is a social construction that is not static, but changes according to what society considers to be 'authentic'. Shifts

[48] Lowenthal, "Counterfeit Art," 96-97.

in the appreciation of functional, material, or conceptual authenticity changes the meaning of the original, which can elevate the 3D print's relevance and its own historical value detached from the original it was based on. The importance of material authenticity that has been inherent to the Western perception of art is shaken as 3D reconstructions disclose new information about original artworks. Additionally, 3D prints are created through code, meaning that information about artworks can be easily shared and even tweaked according to one's liking. For example, *Saul and David* can be reprinted in the state it was in before it was restored. In this way, the story behind the painting and the artist can be disclosed in different ways, prompting a reinterpretation of the artwork's qualities and its importance to history. It is society's task to reach a consensus about the way 'aura' is granted in an age where different versions of Rembrandt's original masterpieces exist. Returning to the title of this article, it could be argued that as time passes and society changes its perception of art, there is a chance that 3D reconstruction and authenticity shall one day meet.

Liselore Tissen is based at Leiden University and Delft University of Technology, where she is currently preparing a doctoral dissertation on the applicability of 3D printing for the conservation of paintings, and the moral and ethical discussions prompted by the introduction of this technology to the art world. She specializes in conservation studies and 3D printing fine art, with a particular interest in the sociological importance of this technology, and the development of this technology for material science and practical conservation and presentation purposes.

TEXTS AND READERS

TO READ OR NOT TO READ

TEXTUAL VS MEDIA INTERPRETATION

Andrea Reyes Elizondo
Leiden University, Leiden, the Netherlands

The act of reading is an elementary cultural technique which, together with writing, has allowed humans to pass on and access information beyond spatial and temporal limitations. Its importance is evident in the many uses and guises given to the verb 'to read'. For example, the interpretation of other media is often referred to as reading. This expansion stems from the different aspects of the activity itself as well as its history. Thus, for book and reading historians, reading often includes the interpretation of images or listening to an oral performance. In this article I first reflect on why this conceptual expansion has taken place and how it has been useful to book historians. Given that concepts are never neutral, I also look critically at the ethical ramifications of considering certain modes of communication as 'reading'. Lastly, I propose the use of a clear distinction between reading practices of the literate from media interpretation practices by illiterate people.

INTRODUCTION

Humans invented the complex yet ubiquitous technology of reading around 4,500 years ago simultaneously with writing. Owing to the complicated first writing systems and the deep class and working divisions of ancient societies, few people knew then what these activities involved. Following the advent of universal education as an ideal in the nineteenth century, most people would now describe reading as decoding text from a paper or screen.[1]

In book and reading scholarship, the concept is sometimes expanded to include the interpretation of images — or even objects — as well as listening to someone read aloud. The

[1] The pursuit of universal education was not grounded solely on ideals. Beyond their emancipatory potential, books are commercial products. Spreading literacy also increased the potential pool of customers, as well as serving the interests of trade-oriented societies.

first conceptual development, interpreting images, owes to the field's objects of study. Manuscripts and products from the printing press often have both texts and images. The further jump to interpreting objects stems from the language and terminology of other disciplines in cultural history, such as semiotics. According to the historian Jonathan Rose, "historians of reading agree with postmodern critics: all things are texts, which can be read, and are open to interpretation".[2] The second development in considering listening to someone read aloud as 'reading' originates from the history of the activity, in which people would read to one another.

These expansions of the concept of reading are understandable. Concerning the first expansion, many scholars would find it ludicrous to study only the texts in manuscripts or books and exclude images along with the many roles they fulfil. As for the second, reading aloud is one of the many forms and manners of reading and likewise cannot be ignored. At the same time, the activity of reading and who 'possesses' it has huge implications for societies, as well as for individuals. Not only does the technique allow for a greater access to information in a heavily textual-based society, but our brains change as well once we have learned how to read.

Considering this, I argue that there can be unintended consequences when equating unreflexively the activity of reading with other means of interpretation. These consequences can affect not only scholarship focused on current affairs, such as low literacy or functional illiteracy,[3] but can also impact historical approaches. For example, arguing that the poor and uneducated read through images — whether in the past or the present — leaves out vital contextual information. Did these people *read through images* due to a lack of capacities, or was it due to systemic inequalities? This paper first elaborates on how the concept

[2] Jonathan Rose, "The History of Education as the History of Reading," *History of Education* 36.4-5 (2007), 595-605.

[3] The first universal definition of literacy was proposed by UNESCO in 1951 as "a person who can, with understanding, both read and write a short, simple statement on his everyday life". The definition was expanded in 1962 by adding that the knowledge and skills must be sufficient for the individual to function effectively in their group or community, thus including more complex sentences. Many education experts argue that a literate person must not only be able to read, but also "to write and compute with the functional competence needed for meeting the requirements of adult living". Thus individuals who can recognize a basic vocabulary, but cannot understand complex sentences, are considered by some researchers as functional illiterates. D. Harman, "Illiteracy: An Overview," *Harvard Educational Review* 40 (1970), 226-28.

of *reading* has been expanded to include image interpretation and listening to someone read aloud. Next, I consider the unintended consequences of this expansion for historical research as well as for educational policies. Finally, I propose a way by which more clarity can be given when referring to and studying the activity of reading. It is not my intention to propose new definitions; rather, I emphasize the importance of highlighting the differences that are overlooked when using overarching definitions.

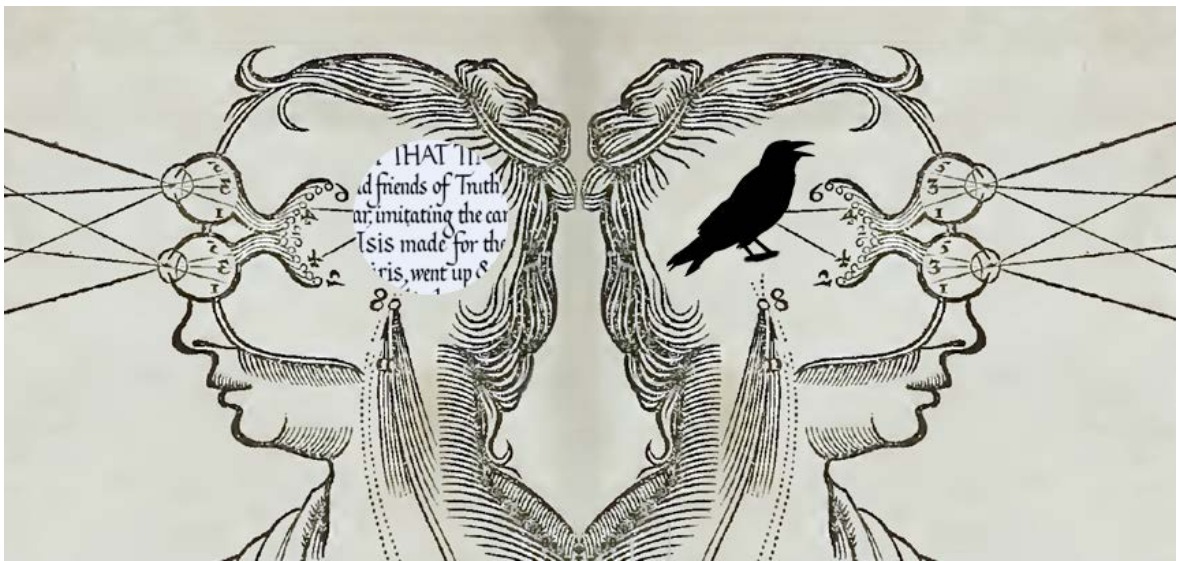

Fig. 1. Image and text perception are not equal in the brain.
Andrea Reyes Elizondo, *Textual vs media interpretation*
Digital image based on Descarte's *Tractatus de homine, et de formatione foetus*, CC BY-NC-SA

THE MANY FORMS OF READING

The acts of reading and writing are two elementary cultural techniques which have proven vital for us as a species: they have allowed us to pass on and access information beyond spatial and temporal limitations.[4] There is a relationship of reciprocity between the two,

[4] Bernhard Siegert, "Cultural Techniques: Or the End of the Intellectual Postwar Era in German Media Theory," *Theory, Culture & Society* 30.6 (2013), 48-65; Carl F. Kaestle, "The History of Literacy and the History of Readers," *Review of Research in Education* 12.1 (1985), 11-53.

however in this article I focus mainly on reading. The activity of reading knows many forms and manners. Some of these are related to (a) sonority, that is, whether it is done aloud or silently; (b) imagery, the relation between text and images; (c) speed; (d) prescriptions, on approved texts and how to interpret them; and (e) distance, the mediation of lost and very large texts. Of these, sonority and imagery have contributed in particular to an expanded concept of "to read".

Intuitively, most people would define reading as interpreting text from a paper or screen with the eyes and — if inclusivity-minded — with the fingers, where text is generally understood as a "graphic scriptorial sign system" that represents a "continuous stretch of discourse having linguistic coherence and semantic cohesion".[5] Being read to might also be considered by some as reading, especially when concerning an audio-book. For book historians, sonority is a constant in the history of reading. Not only did people use to read aloud to themselves, as some still do, but the activity itself can often be communal where one person reads to others.

Fig. 2. Reading can be a communal activity. C.W. Sharpe after Frederick Goodall *Groups of people are gathered outside a building reading newspapers and letters* Engraving. Credit: Wellcome Collection. CC BY.

[5] Daniel Chandler and Rod Munday, "Text," *A Dictionary of Media and Communication* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Adriaan van der Weel, *Changing Our Textual Minds* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), 50.

Throughout history there have been plenty of instances in which reading was performed orally. In Antiquity, the literate would gather at public readings to hear one another's works recited.[6] In ancient Rome, writings were read orally due to the phonetic nature of script in *scriptura continua* which knew no word separation.[7] During the Middle Ages, a monk would read aloud to his brothers during their meals as part of their devotional practice, as some religious orders still do. Reading aloud was both a consumption activity where the text was apprehended, and also part of how texts were produced. During some periods, such as in the early Middle Ages, texts would be composed orally in a group: an author would have secretaries to whom a text would be dictated, usually first as drafts onto wax tablets. Then these texts would be re-read and re-written in various iterations in which the scribes would often alter or correct the text.[8]

ISEGRIMTHEWOLFWITHHISLINEAGEAND FRIENDSCAMEANDSTOODBEFORETHE KINGANDSAIDHIGHANDMIGHTYPRINCE MYLORDTHEKINGIBESEECHYOUTHAT THROUGHYOURGREATMIGHTRIGHTAND MERCYTHATYEWILLHAVEPITYONTHE GREATTRESPASSANDTHEUNREASONABLE MISDEEDSTHATREYNARTTHEFOXHATH DONETOMEANDTOMYWIFE	Isegrim the Wolf, with his lineage and friends, came and stood before the King, and said, "High and Mighty Prince, my Lord the King, I beseech you that through your great might, right, and mercy, that ye will have pity on the great trespass and the unreasonable misdeeds that Reynart the Fox hath done to me and to my wife

Fig 3. Excerpt from *The History of Reynard the Fox* in scripto continua and spaced transcription
Andrea Reyes Elizondo, *Scripto continua and spaced transcription,* Digital image, CC BY-NC-SA

[6] Guglielmo Cavallo, "Between Volumen and Codex," in *A History of Reading in the West*, eds. Guglielmo Cavallo and Roger Chartier (Oxford: Polity, 1999), 75.

[7] In languages where polysyllabic words (usually more than three syllables) are written in continuous script, the reader has to manipulate the phonetic symbols in their mind "to form properly articulated and accented entities" in order to make sense of the words. Paul Saenger, "Silent Reading: Its Impact on Late Medieval Script and Society," *Viator* 13 (1982), 367-414; Ibid, *Space Between Words: The Origins of Silent Reading* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 4-5.

[8] Paul Saenger, "Reading in the Later Middle Ages," in *A History of Reading in the West*, 133; Mike Kestemont, Sara Moens, and Jeroen Deploige, "Collaborative Authorship in the Twelfth Century: A Stylometric Study of Hildegard of Bingen and Guibert of Gembloux," *Digital Scholarship in the Humanities* 30.2 (2015), 199-224.

Reading aloud is also realized in educational contexts. For example, during the nineteenth century, factories in Cuba had *lectores* (readers) who would read novels or newspapers aloud.[9] And until our current day, reading aloud has been a fundamental element of teaching children how to read. Other occasions when reading is done aloud is to people who are ill, or to less-able individuals who do not have access to the necessary tools with which to approach a text, such as magnifying devices or braille books. As a result of the various practices that involve reading aloud, there is often no differentiation made between whether one is directly reading a text aloud or one is being read to. Both activities are considered reading.

Fig. 4. A *lector* in a cigar factory.
Anonymous, *A lector reads at a cigar factory*
Photograph. Credit: havanajournal.com.

Similar to sonority, imagery is an element that shares a long history with reading. The earliest writing systems evolved from images such as early Sumerian script, which was based mostly in pictograms — characters "which represent an object … by a picture of it".[10] Through time, pictograms were substituted by logograms (characters that represent

[9] This practice extended to Florida in the nineteenth and twentieth century. Aberto Manguel, *A History of Reading* (New York: Viking, 1996), 111-14.

[10] P. H. Matthews, "pictogram," *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Linguistics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Ignace Jay Gelb, "Sumerian System," in *A Study of Writing* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 61-72; Jean-Marie Durand, "Cuneiform Script," in *A History of Writing: From Hieroglyph to Multimedia*, ed. Anne-Marie Christin (Paris: Flammarion, 2002), 20-32.

whole words as in Chinese Hanzi) and phonograms (letters or combinations of them which can represent sounds as does the Latin alphabet). Yet even without pictograms, texts are often found in tandem with images, which are not necessarily illustrations of the text itself, but are often complementary to it.

In the High Middle Ages, diagrams, maps, and charts in texts did not have the same function as illuminations. Where the latter would often serve to merely illustrate an event — such as a passage of the Bible — the former would transmit information previously known to the reader but which was not necessarily found in the text.[11] In other words, authors of specific texts could assume the reader was already familiar with a concept which did not require elaborate explanation in the text itself. These visualisations had the primary function of being "conceptual enclosures for stored information", similar to the role diagrams and infographics fulfil nowadays.[12]

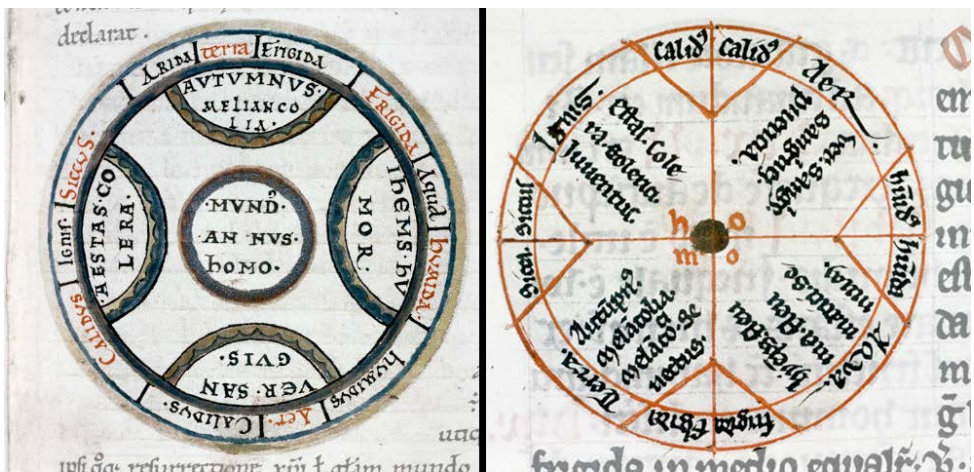

Fig. 5. Two circular diagrams of the four elements.
Isidore of Seville? / William of Conches?, *Circular diagram of the four elements and the four season (De natura rerum) Bodleian Library MS. Auct. F. 2. 20 Folio/page: fol. 006r / Circular diagram labelled with names of the four elements (Dragmaticon) Bodleian Library MS. e Mus. 121 Folio/page: fol. 050v*
Manuscript illustration. © Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford

[11] Paul Saenger, "Silent Reading," in *The History of Reading*, ed. Shafquat Towheed (London: Routledge, 2011), 117.

[12] Naomi Reed Kline, *Maps of Medieval Thought: The Hereford Paradigm* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2001), 10.

When a person who knows how to read sees an image alongside a text, whether an illustration or a diagram, it is perhaps unnecessary to elaborate on whether the person is reading or interpreting the image. The same applies to a literate person who listens to somebody reading aloud. As I later argue, there is however an issue when the act of *interpreting images* or *being read to* is considered *reading* for those who do not possess the skill of reading. This issue arises because reading is such a ubiquitous activity that we are not conscious of the neurological processes that precede it. Subsequently, it is usually assumed that seeing an image or a text are akin to each other.

It is unclear when the text-image equation began, but perhaps it can be traced back to pedagogy. In a letter, St Nilus of Ancyra (d. c. 430 CE) argued for the decoration of churches with scenes from the Bible as they could "serve as books for the unlearned, teach them scriptural history and impress on them the record of God's mercies".[13] Similarly, Pope Gregory the Great (540-604 CE) was of the opinion that "for the common folk, pictures are the equivalent of reading".[14] In any case, for almost five centuries, children have learned how to read with alphabet books that link letters to images (for example *A* for *Apple*), thus making a strong case for linking the interpretation of images to reading.[15]

The three activities of reading a text, interpreting images, and listening to someone read aloud are cultural practices which serve as communication tools. It may seem counter-intuitive to try to demarcate them by stating a border of where one stops and the other begins. After all, the three activities might take place at the same time. Nevertheless, there is a fundamental difference which has relevance beyond the activity of reading itself: acquiring the skill.

[13] Quoted in Manguel, *A History of Reading*, 97.

[14] Ibid., 97.

[15] The oldest known printed alphabet book in English that uses images linked to letters is John A. Hart, *A Methode or Comfortable Beginning for All Vnlearned, Whereby They May Be Taught to Read English* (London: Henrie Denham, 1570).

Fig. 6. Paintings in churches have been long seen as 'reading material' for the illiterate.
Anonymous, *Nativity scene at Kiliclar Kilise*
Byzantine wall painting. Universität Wien. CC BY-NC-ND

Learning how to read

The main difference between a literate person and an illiterate person interpreting images or listening to someone read aloud lies in the possession of reading skills. As the adjective says, the literate person has *learned* how to read, while the illiterate has not. This fact might seem obvious, but it is important to stress that in most cases the lack of skill does not owe to capacities, but rather to circumstances. Unless a person is severely mentally impaired, every human being can learn how to read, least the proper conditions are met. This is one of the contextual details that becomes lost when several interpreting activities are considered reading.

When we read, our brains assign meaning to each word in its context by using several language and comprehension processes. The brain connects each differentiated visual symbol (the letters) with their sonic information (the phonemes) to interpret the text; it then integrates this information with the knowledge it already has (cumulative knowledge).[16] To sum it up, reading depends heavily on the ability to connect and integrate visual, auditory, linguistic, and conceptual information.

Given that vision and speech are natural — or genetically programmed — cognitive processes, it could be assumed that something similar happens when an illiterate person listens to somebody read aloud. While the neurological pathways for vision and speech are already formed in every human brain, the pathways for reading are arranged *artificially* by combining these two. In other words, once a brain has learned how to read, its pathways have been changed. Therefore, the process of a literate person listening to someone read aloud is presumably neurologically different from that of an illiterate, in whose brain the pathways have not been combined. The different pathways that are created when a brain has learned how to read may have significance for human civilizations beyond the skill of reading. According to Stanislaw Dehaene, the development of the reading brain — which entails the creation of novel pathways — has allowed us to "arrive at new combinations of ideas and the elaboration of a conscious mental synthesis".[17] Thus someone without the possibility to acquire the cultural technique of reading should not be ignored.

All this is not to say that an illiterate activity of interpretation is of less value than reading, but rather a difference of having had or not having had the opportunity to form those pathways. In this sense, reading is related to power structures that determine who can or could make use of it, possess it. These complexities in the opportunities to learn how to read are what I argue to be the most significant objection against making a blanket equation of reading to any form of interpretation. Arguing that the poor or illiterate read through images or listening can have profound ethical implications avoided by recognizing the interpretation of images and oral utterances as modes of communication with their own particularities.

[16] Maryanne Wolf, *Proust and the Squid: The Story and Science of the Reading Brain* (Cambridge: Icon, 2008), 8.

[17] Stanislas Dehaene, *Reading in the Brain: The New Science of How We Read* (London: Penguin, 2019), 317.

THE PROBLEMS FOR HISTORICAL RESEARCH

In his seminal *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts*, D. F. McKenzie called for the inclusion of other forms of sense-making as reading by arguing that land and referents to land can be conceptualized as texts. This argument was based on how land has a textual function to the Australian Indigenous Arunta: land features not only had a symbolic significance as sacred objects, but also had a specific narrative function that coded a story.[18] The argument also rested on the hypothesis that Maori signatures scribbled on the document preceding the Treaty of Waitangi (a document by which the British colonizers eventually secured sovereignty over New Zealand) resembled "representations of natural features", assenting the signatories sovereignty over their own lands and thus had different meanings than a Western signature.[19]

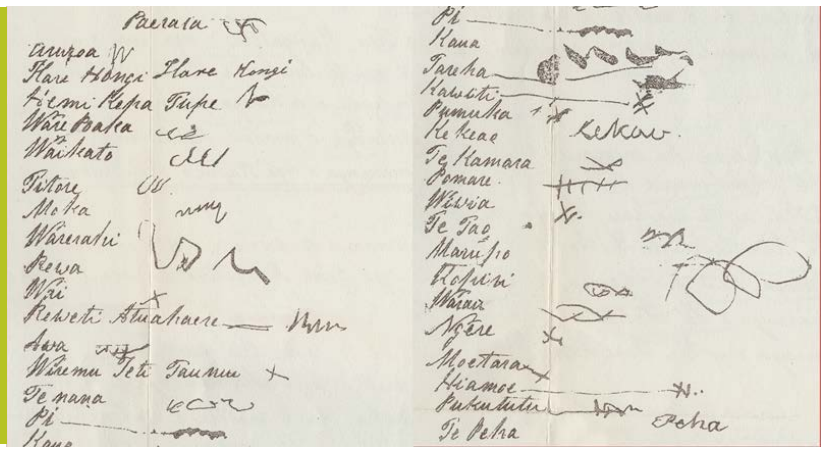

Fig. 7. Signatures which according to McKenzie allude to the landscape
Archives New Zealand
He Whakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Nu Tireni
Archival document (IA1 9/1/1a), excerpt. CC BY 2.0

The European narrative on colonization has long argued that this project was legal as it was done by signing contracts, and that it was justified because those who possessed lesser skills had fewer rights. McKenzie's view was a fair response to that narrative in that

[18] D. F. McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 39-40.

[19] The document preceding the treaty was called 'He Whakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Nu Tireni' (Declaration of Independence of the United Tribes of New Zealand) and was signed in 1835. The treaty, which dates from 1840, has two versions: one in English and one in Maori. The latter one is not a precise translation, and thus the different interpretations on what it meant to each side might stem from the incomplete and rushed translation, or the translation might have been intentionally inaccurate. Ibid, 42, 79, 110-28.

specific context. Yet, if taken as a generalization for any period and region, his appeal can have unintended consequences for the wider history of reading.

This becomes apparent when we look at colonized areas in general and their dynamics. Once the conquering of a region had been completed, resources had to be extracted to cover the investment of colonization which required a strict work division with stark differences between most of the original inhabitants and the newcomers. Many of these inhabitants carried out manual labour and had no time to read, let alone the resources to acquire the skills or reading materials. This is not to say that there were no other forms of cultural expression and sense-making, such as festivals, the creation and interpretation of images, as well as public readings; but including these in the concept of 'reading' is counterproductive and feels artificial, as it ignores the differences rooted in systemic inequalities.

Besides seeking justice in historical narratives, equating reading to other forms of interpretation stems from the products of the printing press. In addition to books with images, printed stamps were widely available. Stamps were illustrations of well-known scenes of a story or the image of a saint which could contain some words or a prayer. They were extremely popular because of their accessibility and their appeal: they were cheap and did not require the ability to read.[20] Separating images from text in book history scholarship might be in many cases impossible and frankly unnecessary. Yet claiming that every consumer of stamps was reading is a step too far in the opposite direction: not only does such a use of the concept lump different activities into one, it ignores that some individuals had not been allowed to learn how to read.

As mentioned above, listening to someone read is an intricate part of the history of the activity. For various communities, reading aloud has been — and still is — a vital practice to various ends: from textual production to education and spiritual edification, as well as

[20] In Spanish colonial America, stamps and devotional images were common household objects. They were also often given away after a special sermon or a celebration. Pedro Rueda Ramírez, "Las estampas o ver por papel. La llegada de grabados a tierras americanas en los siglos XVI-XVII," *Representaciones* 2.1 (2006), 35-58.

Fig. 8. Stamps were cheaper to produce as printers could re-use etchings from books and were easy to sell due to their low price. Most stamps do not survive due to their ephemeral nature.
Jérôme David *D. Quixote maltraité des Bergers*
Stamp, etching. Biblioteca Nacional de España, INVENT/80577

being a performance mode for some groups.[21] Reading aloud cannot simply be excluded from the history of reading, but can it be said that every person being read to is also reading? Similarly to the case of imagery, there is a problematic element in the case of sonority that complicates differentiating these activities. For example, what happens when one listens to somebody recite a poem that is not being read, but is rather learned by heart? Or to a radio programme? For many disciplines, a text is not strictly confined to written or printed words.[22]

Under specific contexts, listening to someone on the radio or seeing a theatre play can be considered *reading*. Historians should, however, be careful when taking the metaphorical use of reading from other disciplines into the study of the strictly defined activity of reading itself. Both these examples — interpreting visual objects, as well as listening to someone read aloud — are valuable forms of communication that enact meaning to the communities that utilize them. They attest to social practices that resemble what is done when reading is done: in every case a message is decoded. Yet the crucial difference remains in the circumstances: some individuals acquired non-natural neural pathways that allow for innovative cognitive breakthrough. Furthermore, the non-acquisition of these pathways does not owe to genetic differences, but to policies on access to knowledge transfer. Thus in some periods and regions, the access to certain kinds of information was limited due to the constrains upon the acquisition of the necessary skills.

Equating every act of image interpretation or listening to someone read aloud to the activity of decoding and making sense of a written text (i.e. reading), might seem an inclusive measure to value other communicative practices. But these practices should have an intrinsic value of their own, without being absorbed by reading. The contract that the Maoris signed was unfair as their signatures did not share the same meaning for them as

[21] For some examples on oral poetry see Daniel Kane, *All Poets Welcome: The Lower East Side Poetry Scene in the 1960s* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003) and Duncan Brown, *Voicing the Text: South African Oral Poetry and Performance* (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1998).

[22] For example, McGann suggests that "texts, like all other things human, are embodied phenomena, and the body of the text is not exclusively linguistic". Jerome McGann, *The Textual Condition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 13. See also McKenzie, *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts*, 13, 39, 61.

they did for the colonizers. Recognizing that their signatures functioned as landscape *texts*, will not make it any less unfair. Image interpretation by the illiterate is of no less value than what a literate person does by reading a book, but it is different from being able to read. Likewise, listening to a person recite a poem in a town's festival is neither more nor less of a cultural activity than reading. Highlighting the differences does not diminish other forms of communication, it only recognizes the particularities of each of them.

THE PROBLEMS FOR POLICY

By detaching the complex process of acquiring and maintaining literacy from the activity of reading, policies which may have good intentions might fail the people whom they intend to serve. Herein lies the danger of equating different forms of interpretation as reading: ignoring inequities in other periods can blind us for the inequities of access now.

Although most countries consider literacy as being able to read and write, it can be broadly defined as the skills needed to participate in society. Because of the intricacy of our societies where laws, contracts, and knowledge are widely recorded in writing, being able to read complex texts is vital for operating in our social world.[23] According to UNESCO, literacy rates have never been so high. Nevertheless, 14% of adults in the world were still illiterate in 2014 (750 million).[24] Literacy can be further divided into low-literacy and active literacy. The former refers to situations in which the basic skills have been taught but individuals cannot understand a complex text necessary for daily life, while the latter refers to a high proficiency in reading that is used often.

In the Netherlands it is estimated that 10% of the population in 2012 (1.3 million) had low-literacy levels.[25] Such figures are more difficult to estimate for the whole world as

[23] Stichting Lezen & Schrijven, "Feiten & Cijfers Laaggeletterdheid 2018," https://www.lezenenschrijven.nl/uploads/editor/2018_SLS_Literatuurstudie_FeitenCijfers_interactief_DEF.pdf.

[24] UNESCO Institute for Statistics, "Literacy Rates Continue to Rise from One Generation to the Next," FS/2017/LIT/45, September 2017, http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/fs45-literacy-rates-continue-rise-generation-to-next-en-2017_0.pdf.

[25] Marieke Buisman et al., *PIAAC: Kernvaardigheden voor werk en leven*, ROA External Reports ('s Hertogenbosch: ECBO, 2013). Stichting Lezen & Schrijven, "Veelgestelde vragen," https://www.lezenenschrijven.nl/over-laaggeletterdheid/veelgestelde-vragen/.

only around 40 countries have participated in an assessment of adult competencies from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and not even all of those have delivered a report.[26] Given the tendency of many countries to overestimate what literacy entails and the stigma that surrounds illiteracy, the real worldwide figures for active literacy might be much lower than the literacy figures from UNESCO.

While illiteracy levels seem to give a clear number of the people who have not received any sort of formal education, low-literacy levels indicate a common problem for the acquisition of literacy. Not only do people need to learn phonemes, syllables, and words to be able to read, but the skill also demands sufficient practice to reach a level that allows for the comprehension of certain complexity in texts. This step of sufficient and appropriate practice can differ for certain groups, as Maryanne Wolf's research has demonstrated. Her work has focused on developing methods for the acquisition of reading skills by dyslexic children and struggling readers. These methods require investing in interventions at the beginning of the reading acquisition process, such as elaborating a system of "core words that exemplify critical phonological, orthographic, and semantic principles", and following up on their acquisition by different learners.[27]

If the activity of reading is equated to other forms of interpretation and its complexities disappear from the foreground, the spreading and promotion of reading can quickly fall on easy 'solutions'. The most common programmes for promoting reading consist of spreading texts. For example, in the Netherlands, there is a reading promotion activity called *Boekenweek* (Books Week) where a book is given away to the buyer upon the purchase of another book.[28] In Mexico, the director of public libraries declared in 2019 the intention of his department to provide contemporary poetry books to libraries as a means to promote the habit of reading in every region of the country.[29] While providing engaging reading

[26] OECD, "Country Specific Material, Survey of Adult Skills (PIAAC)," http://www.oecd.org/skills/piaac/publications/countryspecificmaterial/#d.en.489838.

[27] Maryanne Wolf et al., "The RAVE-O Intervention: Connecting Neuroscience to the Classroom," *Mind, Brain, and Education* 3.2 (2009), 84-93.

[28] Maarten Dessing, "Nieuw merkenbeleid geeft CPNB meer focus," *Boekblad*, 15 June 2018.

[29] "Presenta ITC análisis de la poesía mexicana a cargo de Marx Arriaga Navarro," *Noticias Es Imagen*, 1 June 2019, https://www.noticiasesimagen.com/presenta-itc-analisis-de-la-poesia-mexicana-cargo-de-marx-arriaga-navarro/.

material is without doubt one of the requisites to foster avid readers, this type of programme assumes that the presence of books will magically suffice to promote reading.[30] Yet, some people will not read because they never learned to do so. There are a variety of reasons for this, from learning difficulties to a lack of proper teaching environments.

Fig. 9. Give away books cannot tackle the problems of illiteracy.
Ali Eminov *Free Little Library, Madison*
Photograph. CC BY-NC

Researchers of literacy are well aware of the difficulties of acquiring reading skills. When releasing a recent study of different literacy campaigns, UNESCO highlighted the

[30] These type of programmes are also highly prescriptive, as the top decides what must be read, and can stand in the way of readers discovering their own books, thus paradoxically hampering the promotion of reading. For a French example, see Céline Zaepffel, "Jean de La Fontaine's *Fables* and the Tradition of Both Delighting and Instructing Children," in this publication.

"inadequate understanding of the complexity of designing and implementing successful literacy campaigns and programmes".[31] Regardless, if 'reading' is used in book historical research for other interpretational activities, and this use is dispersed to the general public through popular scientific publications or presentations, a blind spot for the complexities of reading can develop. Although some inadequate policies might exist due to budget and infrastructure limitations rather than historical studies, scholars should reflect upon the possible implications of the language used when advising policy makers and the public in general.

LONG LIVE THE DIFFERENCES

Although most humans can learn how to read, acquiring the skill is an extremely complex process which requires a huge investment in resources, from sufficient time to proper methods and materials, as well as well-paid teachers and continuous practice. Beneath this process lies a series of situations that are often not made explicit. Can the person afford not to work in order to learn? Is there an educational system in place where teachers are sufficiently trained to aid different types of learners? Are there spaces where people can practice? Are there tools for the short-sighted or blind? Are texts widely available? Are these situations dependent on gender or race?

The emancipatory power of reading is a trope that may have aided to its conceptual expansion to cover other activities. Yet, the power of communication in general should not be underestimated by focusing solely on reading, nor should the communal and multi-modal aspects of reading be ignored. My proposal is to remain aware of the neurological aspects of reading and the context that allows the acquisition of the skill. In doing so, we can acknowledge the different practices that surround reading without necessarily conflating every one of these acts with reading. The nuances of each practice will need to be historicized, linked to the period and place in which the activity occurs.[32] For example, when

[31] UNESCO, "The Evolution and Impact of Literacy Campaigns and Programmes 2000-2014," https://uil.unesco.org/literacy/capacity-development/evolution-and-impact-literacy-campaigns-and-programmes-2000-2014.

[32] David Armitage, "What's the Big Idea? Intellectual History and the Longue Durée," *History of European Ideas* 38.4 (2012), 500.

illiterate cigar-factory workers in nineteenth-century Cuba listened to a *lector* they were participating in a communal mode of oral reading, but it cannot be said that all of them were reading as some did not know how to. Medieval monks reading to one another were also participating in communal reading, the difference being that they were literate. In both instances, communication did not end when reading aloud stopped. The factory readings were prohibited because the texts prompted debates among the workers, while the monks would often use the oral mode as a basis for the production of texts. Highlighting the differences in both these cases does not do any disservice to the uses of reading, but rather allows us to not push aside the context that created those differences. The distinction between practices and uses may seem obvious to the extent that there is no demand to outline them. Book and reading historians should, however, be aware of the reach that their work can have. With the advent of digital and Open Access texts, scholarly works can be more easily read by non-historians. At the same time, universities and funders demand that scholars valorize their research by sharing their knowledge through more popular outlets. It is therefore crucial to be cognizant of how our terms and concepts can be received and further utilized by non-specialists.

CONCLUSION

Concepts are never neutral. The meanings ascribed to the concept of reading are related to its different forms and manners, as well as the various practices that this activity has known throughout history. Yet the activity of reading is also beholden to power structures and policies in knowledge transfer which translate into who can or could make use of this activity, and why. In this paper I argued why certain practices related to reading should not be named 'reading' itself. Although interpreting images and listening to someone read aloud are part of reading practices, there is a neurological and contextual difference between those who are literate and those who are illiterate. Ignoring the differences can create blind spots for historical research and literacy policies. Scholars in the humanities are clear in their use of concepts. At the same time, the trade demands fine writing and the use of poetic devices. For example, calling images 'books for the illiterate' or claiming that while listening to someone read, the audience also reads are both highly evocative statements

which convey the cultural importance of reading. However suggestive, they obscure the differences between reading and other forms of interpretation, as well as the complexities of acquiring literacy. Stating the differences in modes of communication and the context that allows reading to take place can only benefit research and policy. The wonders that reading can afford should be highlighted, but so too the complexity of acquiring and maintaining the skill.

Andrea Reyes Elizondo is based at Leiden University where she covers the double function of PhD candidate at the Leiden University Centre for the Arts in Society (LUCAS) and researcher at the Centre for Science and Technology Studies (CWTS). Her dissertation seeks to reconstruct the possibilities of reading in a society by looking into the context of this cultural technique and the elements that influence it. Her geographical area of research is New Spain during the eighteenth century. Andrea holds a BA in Communication Sciences, a BA in Dutch Studies, and an MA in Book and Digital Media Studies.

TO DELIGHT AND INSTRUCT

JEAN DE LA FONTAINE'S *FABLES* FOR CHILDREN

Céline Zaepffel
Leiden University, Leiden, the Netherlands

More than 350 years after their first publication, Jean de La Fontaine's Fables (1668) are still republished every year in French children's books, used in school curricula, and often considered as a way of both delighting and instructing children at the same time. This is an important aim in the history of French literature since Nicolas Boileau's Art poétique *(1674), inspired by Horace's* Ars Poetica *(19 BCE). It became a significant principle in French children's literature too, especially after Jan Amos Comenius'* Orbis sensualium pictus *(1658), the first picture book for children, was translated into French in 1666. Because they have been written in the same context as the* Orbis sensualium pictus *and officially dedicated to the aspiring future king, the Fables have often been considered a delighting and instructing book for children, while the efforts made by authors, illustrators, and editors in their adaptations show it is not entirely obvious that they are indeed meant for children. Therefore, I argue that they seem to be taught in France primarily for traditional reasons in order to reinforce national and cultural cohesion, which is a practice that is worth being questioned and discussed.*

An overview on the Legal Deposit of the Bibliothèque nationale de France shows that Jean de La Fontaine's *Fables,* published for the first time in 1668, are still republished every year in several editions, many of them intended for children.[1] Of the more than 80,000 children's books published from 2007 to 2018 and listed in the Study of the French Legal Deposit in 2018, around 3,800 books are poetry books, among which there are 99 adaptations or republications of the fables of Jean de La Fontaine (1621-1695), Aesop (c. 620-c. 564 BCE), Jean-Pierre Claris de Florian (1755-1793) or even anthologies of several of these

[1] This paper presents preliminary hypotheses and ideas that are part of doctoral research on illustrated fables in French pedagogy from 1500 to 2010 for the NWO project *Aesopian Fables 1500–2010: Word, Image, Education* directed by Prof. dr. P.J. Smith, expected in January 2021.

authors.[2] These books were mostly published in France (ninety-two books) but also in the Francophone parts of Belgium (five) and Canada (two). Seventy-eight of these books rely exclusively on the *Fables* of La Fontaine, and four books bring several authors together, always including Jean de La Fontaine. Despite its established popularity, the French government has further promoted the book from 2008 to 2010, and every year since 2017, when it offered various editions of it to all the children leaving primary school for secondary school, by means of a national initiative named "Un livre pour les vacances".[3] The editions published in 2018 and 2019 are introduced by Jean-Michel Blanquer,[4] the French Minister of Education, who links this national project with a famous tradition in French literature: *plaire et instruire* (to delight and instruct). Today's appeal of the *Fables*, however, seems debatable, especially as summer reading, let alone the decision to offer children a book that they did not choose themselves: these fables were not originally intended for children and do not always seem moral enough to educate them.[5] On the other hand, considering the many editions of Jean de La Fontaine's *Fables*, the omnipresence of this piece of literature in French schools, and the frequency of the argument of *plaire et instruire* in the editors' catalogues and other media dealing with the *Fables*,[6] one can believe they do both delight and instruct their young readers. If not, why would they be so frequently republished and used at school? This article aims to rethink this generally admitted idea by giving an overview of the evolution of the principle of *plaire et instruire* in French literature, and especially in children's literature, considering at the same time whether it applies to the *Fables* as a children's book, in order to finally posit another reason for why the *Fables* survived until today as school material that is both popular and elitist.

[2] Bibliothèque nationale de France, *Observatoire du dépôt légal: La Jeunesse*, https://multimedia-ext.bnf.fr/docs/Observatoire_depot_legal/Observatoire_DL_2018.pdf (study), https://multimedia-ext.bnf.fr/docs/Observatoire_depot_legal/Focus%20jeunesse%20-%20Indicateurs%20du%20dépôt%20légal%202018.xlsm (data).

[3] The French for "a book for holidays". Ministère de l'Éducation nationale et de la Jeunesse, "Opération 'Un livre pour les vacances' - édition 2019," *Eduscol*, http://eduscol.education.fr/cid130373/operation-un-livre-pour-les-vacances-edition-2018.html.

[4] Jean de La Fontaine, Joann Sfar, and Jean-Michel Blanquer, *Fables* (Futuroscope: Réseau Canopé, 2018).

[5] Claire Lesage, "Trahison et Chance, la destinée enfantine et scolaire de La Fontaine", in *Jean de La Fontaine*, ed. Claire Lesage (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale de France/Seuil, 1995), 208-21.

[6] A comparison between the descriptions of several editions of Jean de La Fontaine's *Fables* on the website of La Fnac (https://livre.fnac.com/), a French bookshop, proves the recurrence of this argument in editors' catalogues.

Plaire et instruire: A short history of the motto

As early as 19 BCE, a prominent Roman lyric poet named Quintus Horatius Flaccus, better known as Horace, advised poets to both instruct and delight their readers in his practical guide, the *Espistle to the Pisos* or *Ars Poetica*.[7] As Horace explains, it is important for the poet to always keep the reader in mind when writing: "He who joins the instructive with the agreeable, carries off every vote, by delighting and at the same time admonishing the reader" (Fig. 1).[8]

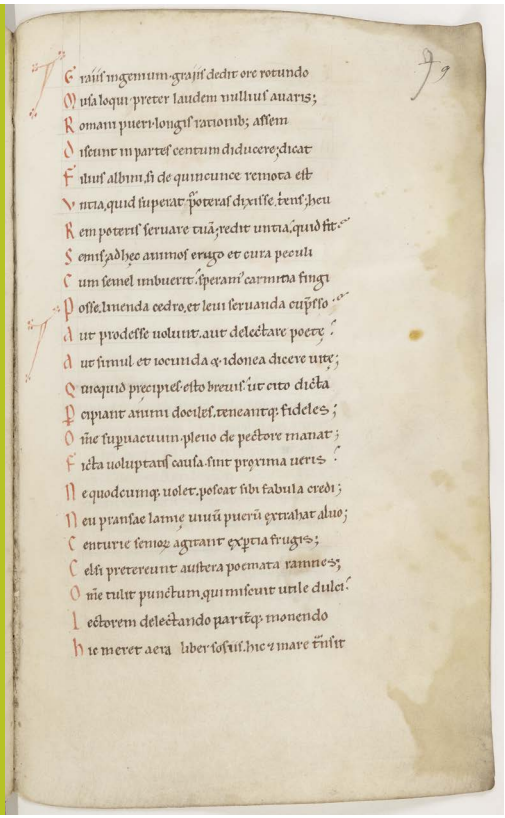

Fig. 1. Horace, *Ars Poetica*,
Bibliothèque municipale de Valenciennes, Ms. 409, f. 9r,
c. 1101-1200 (Source gallica.bnf.fr/ Bibliothèque municipale de Valenciennes)

[7] Horace, *Ars poetica, Epistolae et Sermones*, twelfth century, https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84525906.image.

[8] "Omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci,/lectorem delectando pariterque monendo", trans. C. Smart and E. H. Blakeney, The Poetry Foundation, *Ars Poetica*, accessed 26 July 2019, https://www.poetryfoundation.org/articles/69381/ars-poetica.

In this case, delighting the reader is not meant to make him or her learn better; it is not a way of transmitting a lesson more efficiently. Pleasure and instruction seem to have the same value for Horace and are both necessary in order to write a successful poem. Nevertheless, literature has ever since more or less combined instruction with pleasure, however prioritizing sometimes one aim over the other. According to Raymond Lebègue's article "Horace en France pendant la Renaissance", Horace's verses were still read and imitated during the Middle Ages throughout Europe, but were rarely quoted.[9] He was rehabilitated during the Renaissance, like many classical authors. Horace's complete work has been translated into French for the first time in 1501, followed by many other translations between 1501 and 1550, including some for students.[10] It was finally thoroughly reconsidered during French Classicism, which was indeed a perfect context to bring back Horace's advice, since Classicism exhorted authors to follow poetics, themes, and texts as defined in Antiquity. Inspired by Horace, the French poet Nicolas Boileau then published his own advice to poets in *L'Art Poétique* in 1674.[11] His adaptation became a reference, a guide to write according to the principles of Classicism, especially the verses meant to both delight and instruct: "May your prolific muse everywhere in her wise lessons mix the pleasant with the sound and useful".[12]

Jean de La Fontaine is not mentioned in *L'Art poétique*, probably because his relationship with King Louis XIV became compromised due to his frequent criticism of the King, which might have convinced Nicolas Boileau to distance himself from La Fontaine.[13] Nevertheless, La Fontaine seems to have followed Horace's advice too, especially in his *Fables*, published in 1668 and dedicated to the dauphin, the aspiring future king. Among other examples, he indeed writes in the introduction:

[9] Raymond Lebègue, "Horace en France pendant la Renaissance," *Humanisme et Renaissance* 3 (1936), 141-64.

[10] Ibid., 141-64.

[11] Nicolas Boileau, *Oeuvres diverses du sieur D***, avec le Traité du sublime ou du merveilleux dans le discours, traduit du grec de Longin*, (Paris: Denys Thierry, 1674), 134-42.

[12] bid., 137 : "Qu'en savantes leçons votre muse fertile / Partout joigne au plaisant le solide et l'utile", trans. Céline Zaepffel.

[13] Laurent Dandrieu, "Le Soleil, l'Écureuil et les deux Baladins" in *Le Figaro hors-série, Dans le secret des fables de La Fontaine. L'ami retrouvé* (2018), 42-49.

> I do not doubt, Monseigneur, that you entertain a favourable opinion of compositions which are at once so useful and so agreeable; for what more can one desire than the useful and the agreeable? It is these that have been the means of introducing knowledge amongst men.[14]

That the *Fables* were dedicated to the dauphin practice relies on a long tradition, and perhaps also on Jean de La Fontaine's desire to prove his devotion to the king, since he was no longer welcomed at Versailles after having officially supported Nicolas Fouquet, arrested for peculation and lèse-majesté by order of the king in 1661.[15] In other words, the *Fables* were associated with a child through their dedication to the young prince, and even though it is unknown whether they were actually written for children or not, this association has stuck. The *Fables* was considered educative for children since its release: descriptions of the *Labyrinthe de Versailles* by travellers tend to confirm this hypothesis. Indeed, in 1669, Charles Perrault advised Louis XIV to add to the maze created in 1665 by the landscape architect and principal gardener of the Château de Versailles, André Le Nôtre, thirty-nine fountains representing Aesopian fables for the wanderer to admire as he walks the garden.[16] These fountains were erected between 1671 and 1674, reproduced into a book engraved by Sébastien Leclerc (Fig. 2), and finally destroyed in 1775 because there were poorly preserved. Under each of them, four verses written by Isaac de Benserade helped the wanderer understand the allegorical meaning of the fountains.

Jean de la Fontaine did not contribute at all to the project, but the success of his *Fables* may have influenced the king when he chose the fables he wanted to see reproduced in the maze, since twenty-four of the thirty-nine fountains were based on fables made famous by Jean de La Fontaine a few years earlier.[17] Moreover, the dedication of his *Fables*

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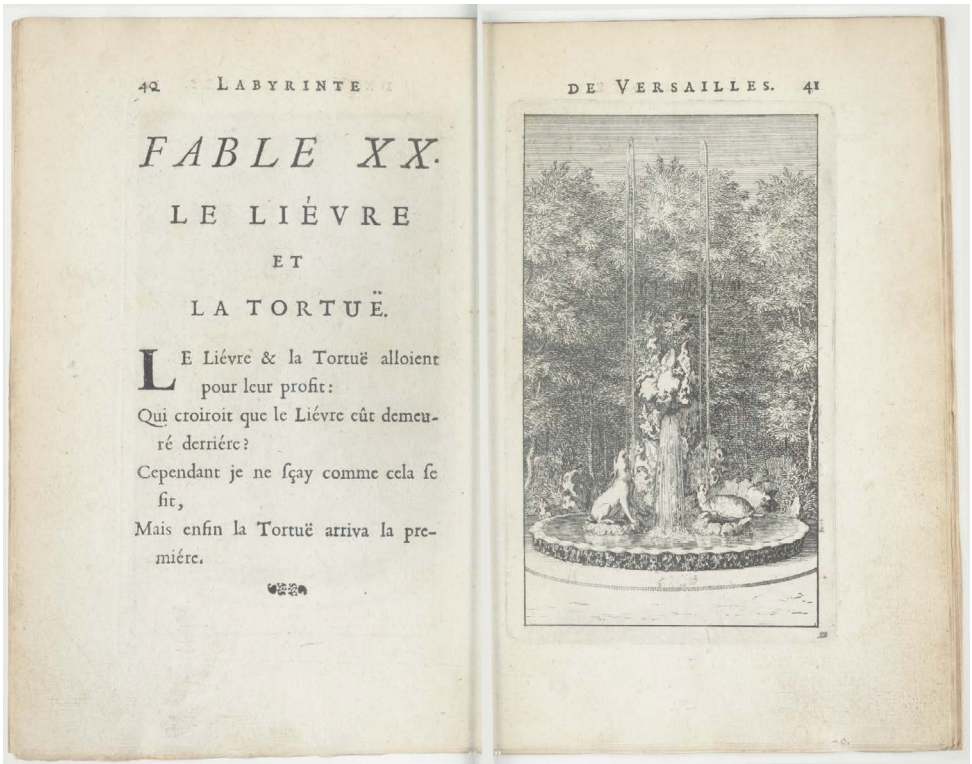
[14] Jean de La Fontaine, Gustave Doré, *The Fables of La Fontaine translated into English Verse by Walter Thornbury and illustrated by Gustave Doré, (London: Cassell, Petter and Galpin, 1886)*.

[15] Timothée Chevalier, "La Composition d'un bosquet-recueil, de l'ornement aux quatrains," in *Le labyrinthe de Versailles: du mythe au jeu*, ed. Élisabeth Maisonnier and Alexandre Maral (Paris: Magellan & Cie/Bibliothèque municipale de Versailles, 2013), 187-201.

[16] Élisabeth Maisonnier, "Représenter le labyrinthe : construction d'une image," in *Le labyrinthe de Versailles*, 78-99.

[17] Maisonnier, "Représenter le labyrinthe: Construction d'une image," 78-99.



42 LABYRINTE

FABLE XX.

LE LIÉVRE

ET

LA TORTUË.

LE Liévre & la Tortuë alloient
pour leur profit:
Qui croiroit que le Liévre eût demeu-
ré derriére?
Cependant je ne sçay comme cela se
fit,
Mais enfin la Tortuë arriva la pre-
miére.

DE VERSAILLES. 41

Fig. 2 Charles Perrault, Isaac de Benserade and Sébastien Leclerc, *Le labyrinthe de Versailles* (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1677), 40-41 (Source gallica.bnf.fr/BnF)

truly influenced the way the visitors considered the maze: Martin Lister, an English traveller, described it as "ad usum Delphini" in 1698.[18] Nothing other than La Fontaine's *Fables* seems to link the dauphin and the genre. [19] This example shows that they were obviously considered instructive for at least one child, without explaining why besides their dedication, nor why the principle of 'to delight and instruct' became an aim for children's literature in general.

[18] Martin Lister, *A Journey to Paris in the Year 1698* (London: Jacob Tonson, 1699). The term "ad usum delphini", used by Martin Lister in his book, means "for the use of the dauphin", trans. Céline Zaepffel.

[19] Chevalier, "La Composition d'un bosquet-recueil, de l'ornement aux quatrains," 187-201.

There is another earlier book that changed the whole landscape of children literature in Europe by explicitly applying the principle of *plaire et instruire* to a young audience: in 1658, Comenius published the *Orbis sensualium pictus*[20] in order to complete and adapt his first vocabulary book *Janua linguarum reserata* (1629), considered too difficult for young children. The *Orbis sensualium pictus* was promptly translated into several European languages, with a French version published as early as 1666.[21] His introduction, a simplified and summary version of the pedagogy explained in his "Schola infantiae" in *Opera didactica omnia* (1657),[22] influenced European pedagogues such as John Locke (1632-1704) and teachers such as François de Salignac de La Mothe-Fénelon, also known as Fénelon (1651-1715), for decades.[23] According to Comenius, it was important to respect the natural rhythm of children, but also to adapt the educational discourse to them as individuals with special needs. Pleasure is the best way for them to learn, and can best be found in pictures, which makes them the most efficient way of delighting children:

> Which such Book, and in such a dress may (I hope) serve,
> I. To entice witty children to it, that they may not conceit a torment to be in the school, but dainty fare. For it is apparent, that children (even from their infancy almost) are delighted with Pictures [...]
> Let [this book] be given to children into their hands to delight themselves withal as they please, with the sight of the pictures, and making them as familiar to themselves as may be, and that even at home before they be put to school.[24]

The necessity of delighting and instructing the reader becomes a tool that helps teach children efficiently, through the pleasure offered by pictures. Thanks to those on the left-hand

[20] Full original title: *Orbis sensualium pictus, hoc est, omnium fundamentalium in mundo rerum, et in vita actionum, pictura et nomenclatura*.

[21] Annie Renonciat, "De l'Orbis sensualium pictus (1658) aux premiers albums du Père Castor (1931): formes et fonctions pédagogiques de l'image dans l'édition française pour la jeunesse," in *La pédagogie par l'image en France et au Japon*, ed. Marianne Simon-Oikawa and Annie Renonciat (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2009), 55-73.

[22] Johann Amos Comenius, *J. A. Comenii Opera didactica omnia* (Amsterdam: Christophorus Cunradus, 1657).

[23] Renonciat, "De l'Orbis sensualium pictus (1658) aux premiers albums du Père Castor (1931)," 55-73.

[24] Johann Amos Comenius, *The orbis pictus of John Amos Comenius,* trans. Charles Hoole, (Syracuse: C.W. Bardeen, 1887).

side of each opening, children are then able to easily identify all the things they are supposed to name, and finally read in Latin on the right-hand side of each opening. With this book, not only did new illustrated literature appear, all meant for children, but this literature also gave itself an aim: helping young readers grow up. Therefore, even if nothing in the *Fables* indicates their suitability to delight and instruct children, their historical and cultural context closely linked them to this tradition, while Comenius' pedagogy likewise applied this principle to children.

FABLES: A LEGITIMATE SYMBOL OF *PLAIRE ET INSTRUIRE*?

Adults, the main book prescribers to children, seem to have long undertaken the mission to always instruct or educate children through children's literature, even if they did not themselves read only to learn.[25] This logic results in a highly edifying kind of literature, among which Jean de La Fontaine's *Fables* take a primary place. One reason for this phenomenon, could be the oral origins of fables, and their "legendary creator" Aesop,[26] which places them in the category of popular culture. Popular culture, oral culture, and childhood are often considered to be linked, as is demonstrated by the genres of legends, riddles, popular songs, fairy tales, and fables. The latter two in particular are often confused, as La Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie did, since installations based on *Fables* entered an exhibition called *Once Upon a Time: Science in Fairy Tales* (Fig. 3).[27]

An important part of the *Fables* is their moral role — more essential than in fairy tales[28] — which makes them instructive. However, the fact that a moral is expressed in fables does not actually make fables moral for children. For example, *The Fox and the Crow* tells its reader about a fox who flatters a crow to make it speak, in order to steal the cheese it keeps in its beak by making it drop it by opening its beak to respond. With this fable,

[25] Francis Marcoin and Christian Chelebourg, *La littérature de jeunesse* (Paris: Colin, 2007), 79-81.

[26] Antoine Biscéré, *Jean de La Fontaine et la fable ésopique: Genèse et généalogie d'une filiation ambigüe*, unpublished dissertation (Paris: Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2018).

[27] *Il était une fois la science dans les contes*, 3 October 2017-4 November 2018 at La Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie, Paris; trans. Céline Zaepffel.

[28] Jean-Paul Sermain, "Fables, contes, nouvelles: Liaisons poétiques," *Féeries* 7 (2010), 9-19.

Fig. 3 Installation inviting children to play with Jean de La Fontaine's *Fables* at the exhibition *Il était une fois la science dans les contes*, from 3 October 2017 to 4 November 2018 at La Cité des Sciences et de l'Industrie, Paris (Source Céline Zaepffel)

children are taught that they could be fooled by flattering people, but might also learn that they can get what they want by flattering weak people. In *Émile ou de l'Éducation* (1762), Jean-Jacques Rousseau stated this very clearly:

> Emile will not learn anything by heart, not even fables, not even the fables of La Fontaine, simple and delightful as they are […]. Men may be taught by fables; children require the naked truth.
> All children learn La Fontaine's fables, but not one of them understands them, […] for the morality of the fables is so mixed and so unsuitable for their age that it would be more likely to incline them to vice than to virtue.[29]

Many authors tend to prove his idea when re-moralizing the *Fables* for children. Instead of writing new fables that would suit children better, they choose to adapt Jean de La

[29] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile,* trans. Barbara Foxley (Project Gutenberg, 2004).

Fontaine's *Fables*. An interesting example of this phenomenon is *Quelques fables de La Fontaine* (1936), written and illustrated by Georges Ripart.[30] The author announces his project of re-moralizing the *Fables* from the very beginning of the book, since as a frontispiece — the first illustration in a book facing the title page — he draws a balance, the symbol of justice, weighing a sad fox on one side and an happily avenged crow on the other (Fig. 4).

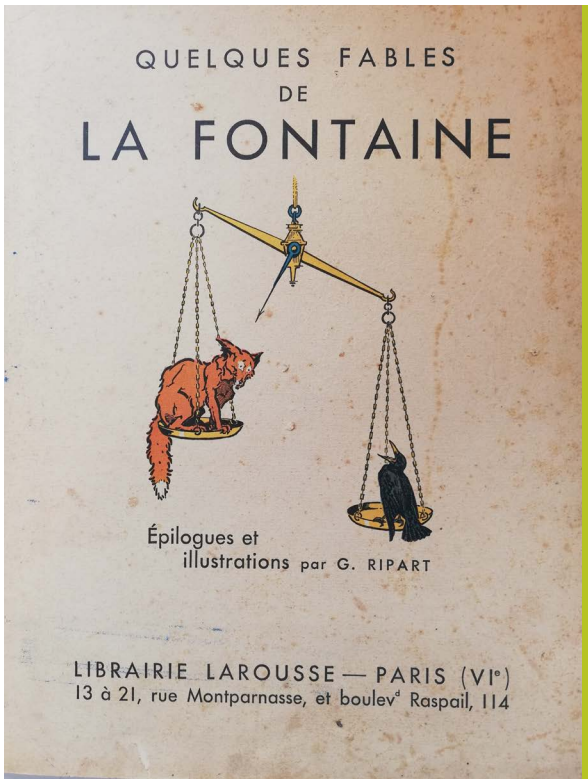


Fig. 4. Frontispiece of Georges Ripart, *Quelques fables de La Fontaine* (Paris: Larousse, 1936) (Source Céline Zaepffel)

The whole book is built on this duality: sixteen fables are reproduced and illustrated in black and white on the left-hand side of each opening, while an added epilogue by the author is illustrated in colour. These epilogues are meant to do justice to the animals who are the original losers of each fable, positioning them as victims of their mean and immoral

[30] Georges Ripart, *Quelques fables de La Fontaine* (Paris: Larousse, 1936).

counterparts in many of Jean de La Fontaine's *Fables*. Thus, in this new version of *The Fox and the Crow* (Fig. 5), the Crow later lets another cheese fall after taunting the Fox. When the Fox jumps on it in order to eat it, he realizes that it is fake as it breaks his teeth.

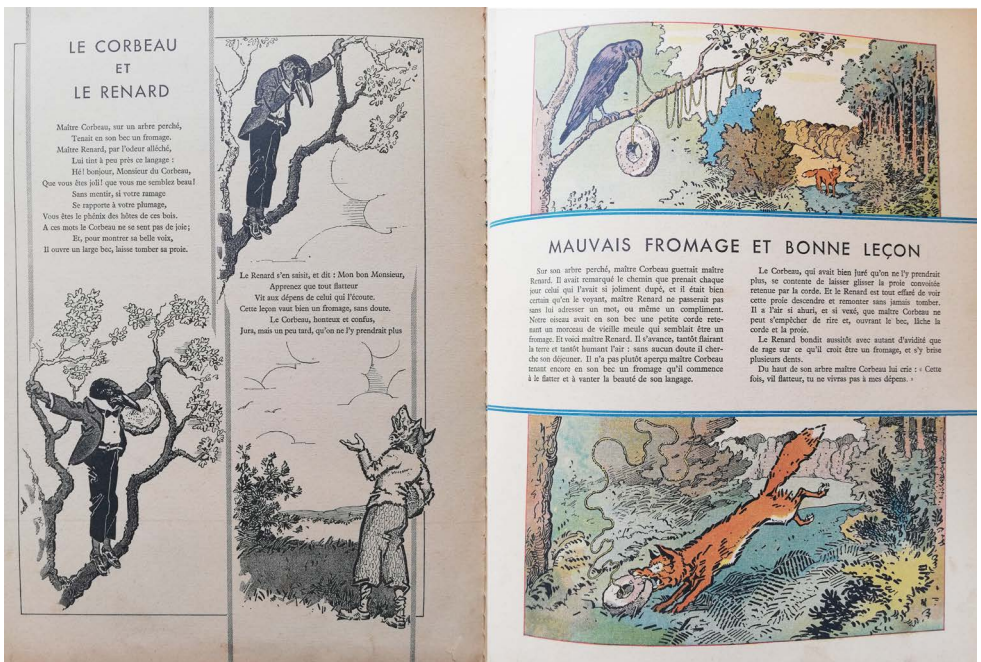


Fig. 5. Georges Ripart, "Le Corbeau et le Renard", in *Quelques fables de La Fontaine* (Paris: Larousse, 1936)

Other authors have tried to simplify the *Fables*, such as A. Carrière-Doisin with *Les fables mises en action* in 1787.[31] He not only re-moralized some of them, but also adapted them into short theatre plays with dialogued epilogues explaining their meaning. In his introduction, he answered Rousseau by stating that, when performing fables, children understand them better because they seem less abstract. Nevertheless, the *Fables* became the French incarnation of *plaire et instruire* for children, even in their original versions. One of the best-known *Fables*' frontispiece shows how this principle, linked to Comenius' pedagogy, participates in the way *Fables* are used and transmitted in French pedagogy (Fig. 6).

[31] A. Carrière-Doisin, *Les fables mises en action, suivies de pièces fugitives et de quelques comédies, par M. C**** (Paris: De Senne, 1787).

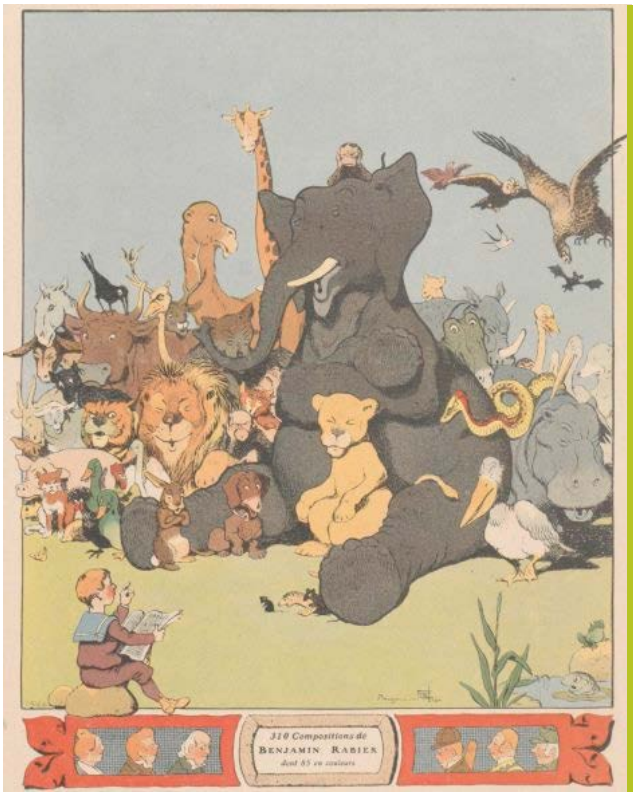


Fig. 6. Frontispiece of Jean de La Fontaine's *Fables*, by Benjamin Rabier (Paris: Jules Tallandier, 1906) (Source Céline Zaepffel, facsimile)

In this frontispiece from Benjamin Rabier,[32] the child adopts the teacher's position, which recalls Comenius' pedagogy inviting pedagogues to help children become active in their own education by letting them manipulate the book as much as possible and explain its content by themselves. On the other side, the anthropomorphized and colourful animals, by looking disobedient, promise the reader that he will have fun while reading this book. Besides these examples, the *Fables* have been adapted into many different media including prints (Fig. 7), rebus,[33] or even board games (Fig. 8), in order to help children understand or memorize them in their original versions.

[32] Jean de La Fontaine and Benjamin Rabier, *Fables de La Fontaine illustrées par Benjamin Rabier* (Paris: Jules Tallandier, 1906).

[33] Ville d'Epinal, "Les collections du musée de l'image," https://webmuseo.com/ws/musee-de-l-image/app/collection/record/6302?vc=ePkH4LF7w6yelGA1iKUSSsKCJug0kHuKoTUikWlHH0_wAQBJOC0M.

Fig. 7. “Fables de La Fontaine N° 5, L’enfant & le maître d’école” (Pellerin & Cie, Épinal, 1895), (Source gallica.bnf.fr/BnF)

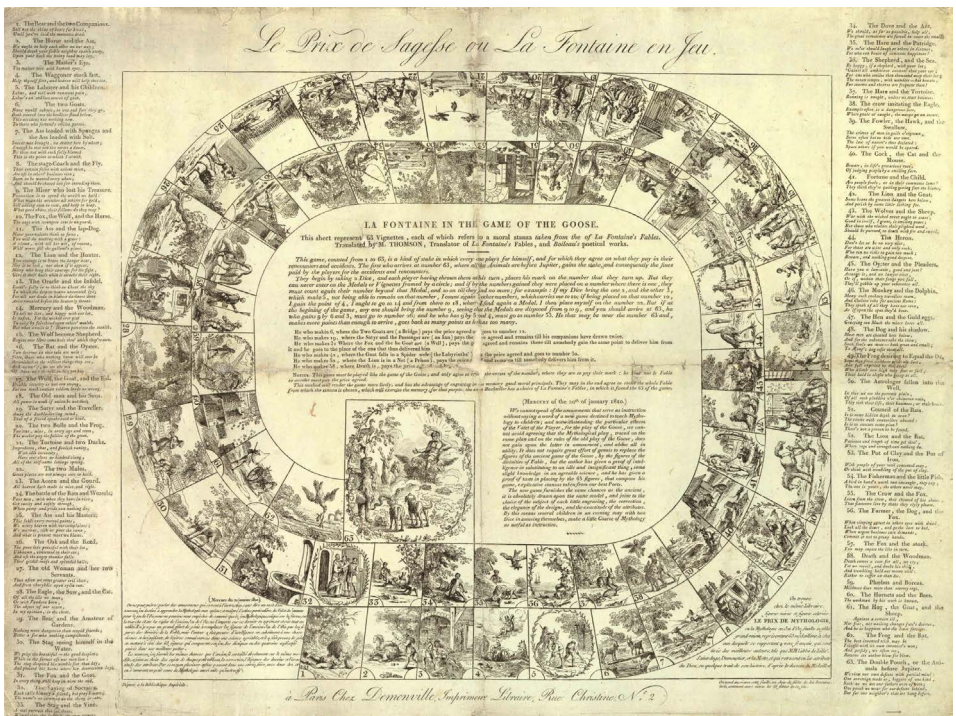


Fig. 8. *Le Prix de Sagesse ou La Fontaine en Jeu* (Paris: Demonville, 1897), (Source British Museum)

In 1914, Maurice Bizeau, a French teacher, also imagined triptychs illustrated by Benjamin Rabier and meant to be hung on classroom walls. They sum up a few of the *Fables* into three important episodes, enabling the teacher to show children these pictures one by one while they recite them.[34] Already in 1818, Lambert Aîné used the power of pictures to help children memorize the *Fables* too, by inviting them to first read one fable, and then to try to recite or explain it by placing the animals into a landscape after cutting them from the book (Fig. 9).

Fig. 9. Lambert aîné, *Le Jeu Des Fables, Ou Fables de La Fontaine Mises En Action, Avec Figures Coloriées et Découpées, Dessinées et Gravées Par Lambert Aîné* (Paris: Lambert, 1818), (Source Céline Zaepffel)

These are only a few examples among many others, but they all aim to make the *Fables* more accessible to children, showing how many pedagogues shared their opinions on the use of the *Fables* in children's education over centuries.[35] Therefore, transmitting Jean de La Fontaine's *Fables* to children seems to both question pedagogues and require efforts from their adaptors, which proves that they are not intrinsically delightful and instructive for children. Why would it be worth making such an effort?

[34] Maurice Bizeau and Benjamin Rabier, *Les Fables de La Fontaine en action: L'auxiliaire du maître (guide et fablier)* (Paris: C. Delagrave, 1914).

[35] Robert Granderoute, "La fable et La Fontaine dans la réflexion pédagogique de Fénelon à Rousseau" *Dix-huitième Siècle* 13 (1981), 335-48.

Fables binding readers across cultures and generations

By reading Jean-Michel Blanquer's introduction for the edition of the *Fables* offered to children leaving French primary school, it appears that they are also a means to bind readers across cultures and generations: "You will discover poems that impressed generations of pupils before you. […] [The beautiful illustrations by Joann Sfar] show how much these fables still feed our imagination, that they are bridges between our present and future".[36]

This aim was already mentioned by Ralph Albanese, who studied the role that the *Fables* played in French pedagogy during the Third Republic (1870-1940) as a way for the state to teach children republican morals, intended to help them later integrate into social institutions.[37] According to him, *Fables* contributed to giving children a nationalist sentiment relying on an ideological and moral education, transmitted at school in a context of worldwide tensions.[38] Because of the flexibility of this material, the exploitation of the *Fables* by French schools turned them into pamphlets against the Germans during and between both World Wars, by depicting Germans as evil and the French as victims through aligning them with the *Fables*' anthropomorphized animals.[39] Of course, the transmission of a cultural reference across generations does not always imply exploitation, using them to spread political opinions. However, it seems artificial to consider the *Fables* as something children must learn only because their parents and grandparents also learned, since this argument results in an infinite loop: the next generations will be in the same position as the current ones, learning the *Fables* – or any other traditional book – because generations before them did, even if the material may no longer be relevant to them anymore. What is more, the government's current initiative seems essential on the one hand, for some children do not own any books at home, and pointless on the other, because it once again makes

[36] Jean de La Fontaine, Joann Sfar, and Jean-Michel Blanquer, "Préface", in *Fables*, trans. Céline Zaepffel (Futuroscope: Réseau Canopé, 2018), 3-4.

[37] Ralph Albanese, *La Fontaine à l'école républicaine: Du poète universel au classique scolaire* (Charlottesville: Rookwood, 2003), 39-41.

[38] Ralph Albanese, "La Fontaine et l'identité nationale", in *La Fontaine à l'école Républicaine*, 131-59.

[39] Thaïs Bihour, "'Haro sur le baudet!': la figure de l'Allemagne au prisme des Fables de La Fontaine en 1914-1918," publication in progress in *Le Fablier* 30 or 31, 2019 or 2020.

schools a book prescriber for children, presuming that the majority of children would come to love the book anyway once they have read it.

THE QUESTION OF SCHOOL AS BOOK-PRESCRIBER

Being a reader is not only about being able to read something from beginning to end, but also about being able to choose a book, to enjoy the freedom in doing so (Fig. 10), and to feel emotions while reading it.

Fig. 10 A child enjoying books: an allegory of the reader's freedom? (Source Céline Zaepffel)

The role of school as book prescriber has already been discussed in French literature. In his book *Comme un roman*, published in 1992, Daniel Pennac, a French writer and former teacher, begs adults and teachers not to use books to "torture" children with their pedagogy and most importantly, not to force them to read anything in order to analyze it. To underline his statement, he establishes ten Inalienable Rights of the Reader:

1. The right to not read
2. The right to skip pages
3. The right to not finish a book

4. The right to reread
5. The right to read anything
6. The right to escapism
7. The right to read anywhere
8. The right to browse
9. The right to read out loud
10. The right to not defend your tastes.[40]

As a teacher, Daniel Pennac agrees on the importance of making children read, but he believes that a teacher's priority is making them discover that they like reading. Of course, this does sound a bit utopic: prescribed readings could also be a good way of discovering pieces of literature some children would never have discovered by themselves, and to make them realize they are able to read books they thought were too difficult for them. However, it seems important first to stop using the principle of *plaire et instruire* as a pretext to ask children to recite the same texts throughout their whole schooling, sometimes without even ensuring that they understood it, and above all, to have the honesty to regularly question the choices made by educational institutions, especially when the argument for why a book is taught relies mostly on tradition. Nevertheless, this principle may have influenced the way the *Fables* are perceived in France today: they seem as elitist as popular, since they are both school material that is essential but difficult to learn, and poems which participate deeply in French culture and could later remind readers of their sweet old days at school.

Céline Zaepffel is based at the Leiden University Centre for the Arts in Society, where she is currently preparing a doctoral dissertation on illustrated fables in French pedagogy from 1500 to 2010 for the NWO project *Aesopian Fables 1500-2010: Word, Image, Education*, directed by Prof. dr. P. J. Smith. She specializes in French children's literature and popular culture, with a particular interest in the relationship between pictures and text from the nineteenth century to the present.

[40] Daniel Pennac and Quentin Blake, *The Rights of the Reader*, trans. Sarah Ardizzone (Somerville: Candlewick Press, 2015).

THE SHROUD IN *OMEROS* AND CATULLUS 64

DEREK WALCOTT AS *POETA NOVUS*

Amaranth Feuth
Leiden University, Leiden, the Netherlands

Derek Walcott's Omeros *(1990) adapts numerous intertexts from the Western literary tradition in the creation of a new, Caribbean epic. It is well known that in* Omeros *Walcott made use of the* Iliad*,* Odyssey*, and Virgil's* Aeneid*. In this article I argue that Walcott also used texts and motifs beyond this hardcore epic tradition. It is in particular his echoes of Catullus' poem 64 and its ekphrasis in Maud's shroud which make Walcott a true* poeta novus*.*

INTRODUCTION

In a famous comment, V.S. Naipaul stated in the 1960s that "nothing has ever been created in the West Indies", suggesting that Caribbean literature is mere mimicry.[1] Caribbean poet Derek Walcott parried this insult as follows: "Nothing will always be created in the West Indies, for quite long time, because what will come out of there is like nothing one has ever seen before".[2] It seems that this statement has come true in Walcott's highly intertextual poem *Omeros* (1990), which adapts the Western literary tradition from Antiquity to Shakespeare and beyond, creating a new Caribbean epic.[3] Thus, it turns the qualification 'mimicry' into a honorary nickname. It is, for example, common knowledge that in

[1] V. S. Naipaul, *The Middle Passage. Impressions of Five Societies — British, French and Dutch — in the West Indies and South America* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1962), 27, 29.

[2] Derek Walcott, "The Caribbean: Culture or Mimicry?" *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, 16.1 (Feb. 1974), 9. For Walcott's stance towards mimicry, see also his 'What the Twilight Says,' *What the Twilight Says: Essays* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1998), 3-35.

[3] For general discussions of *Omeros*, see Don Barnard, *Walcott's Omeros: A Reader's Guide* (Boulder: FirstForumPress/Lynne Rienner, 2014); Robert D. Hamner, *Epic of the Dispossessed: Derek Walcott's Omeros* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1997); and Rei Terada, *Derek Walcott's Poetry: American Mimicry* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1992), 183-212.

Omeros Walcott brought Homer to postcolonial St Lucia in more or less the same way that in *Ulysses* Joyce took Homer to (post)colonial Dublin.[4] Nevertheless, it appears to be less known that in *Omeros* Walcott also made use of Classical intertexts and motifs beyond the hardcore epic tradition of the *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, and Virgil's *Aeneid*, echoing in particular the Roman 'new poet', or *poeta novus*, Catullus and his poem 64.[5] In this article I discuss some overlooked Classical echoes in *Omeros* to position Walcott as a modern *poeta novus*, and — in unsuspected ways — as a creator of "nothing one has ever seen before".

For the sake of clarity, I first sum up some relevant plot details of *Omeros*. Narrator Derek, an alter ego of Derek Walcott himself, is a middle-aged Caribbean writer living in the US and visiting his native island St Lucia. In a quest for his poetics he frequently engages with representations of the arch poet, such as Omeros, Seven Seas, and the ghost of his deceased father. In a bar on the island he also meets the aged couple Dennis and Maud Plunkett, who show some traces of the *Odyssey*'s Odysseus and Penelope. After WWII Dennis, a retired British army officer, and Maud, an Irish woman, married and settled on St Lucia where they have a pig farm. Despite the success of their farm, they still suffer from the fact that they never had a son. Dennis secretly adores Helen, a young woman who works for Maud. Helen, however, alternately carries on love affairs with two local fishermen, Achille and Hector. Nevertheless, Plunkett spends most of his time researching the history of St Lucia for her. In this way, he discovers the history of a young namesake, who died in 1782 during the Battle of the Saintes between Britain and France, which gave Britain control over St Lucia and other islands in the West Indies.[6] The discovery of his namesake is Dennis Plunkett's way of compensating for his lack of a son. While Dennis is writing, Maud, in

[4] For some similarities between Walcott's *Omeros* and Joyce's *Ulysses*, see Geert Lernout, "Derek Walcott's *Omeros*: The Isle is Full of Voices," *Kunapipi* 14.2 (1992), 95-97.

[5] There has been considerable debate about whether *Omeros* can be identified as an epic, especially because Walcott denied the qualification himself. For Walcott's *recusatio*, and various arguments *pro* and *contra*, see Stefania Ciocia, "To Hell and Back: The Katabasis and the Impossibility of Epic in Derek Walcott's *Omeros*," *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 35.2 (2000), 87; Gregson Davis, ""'With No Homeric Shadow'': The Disavowal of Epic in Derek Walcott's 'Omeros'." *South Atlantic Quarterly* 96.2 (1997), 321-33.; Hamner *Dispossessed*, 3-4, 8-32; and Line Henriksen, *Ambition and Anxiety. Ezra Pound's Cantos and Derek Walcott's Omeros as Twentieth-Century Epics* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006), 233-46. Considering Walcott's intertextual use of the epic tradition in *Omeros*, I will treat the text as an epic here.

[6] *Britannica Academic*, s.v. "Battle of the Saintes" (2019).

her loneliness, spends her years gardening and doing needlework, embroidering a large piece of silk as "her silver jubilee gift".[7] She feels unwell and near the end of *Omeros* dies of cancer. Her coffin is covered with the jubilee quilt, which has become her shroud.[8] It is this shroud that carries the intertextual and metaliterary overtones that are the subject of this article.

MAUD'S SHROUD

Early in the poem, Walcott renders Maud's quilt elaborately. For the sake of clarity, I first quote this rendering and list the points relevant for the analysis below before turning to the intertextual echoes and their interpretation:

> Maud with her needle, embroidering a silhouette
>
> from Bond's *Ornithology*, their quiet mirrored
> in an antique frame. Needlepoint constellations
> on a clear night had prompted this intricate thing,
>
> this immense quilt, which, with her typical patience,
> she'd started years ago, making its blind birds sing,
> beaks parted like nibs from their brown branch and cover
>
> on the silken shroud. Mockingbirds, finches, and wrens,
> nightjars and kingfishers, hawks, hummingbirds, plover,
> ospreys and falcons, with beaks like his scratching pen's,
>
> terns, royal and bridled, wild ducks, migrating teal,
> pipers (their fledgling beaks), wild waterfowl, widgeon,
> *Cypseloides Niger, l'hirondelle des Antilles*

[7] For Maud's loneliness, see Walcott *Omeros*, X.i and L.i; for the jubilee gift, see ibid., XVI.ii.

[8] For Maud's funeral see Walcott *Omeros*, LIII.ii, and for the time spent embroidering, ibid., XVI.ii and LIV.i.

(their name for the sea-swift). They flew from their region,
their bright spurs braceleted with Greek or Latin tags,
to pin themselves to the silk, and, crying their names,

pecked at her fingers. They fluttered like little flags
from the branched island, budding in accurate flames.[9]

We read that Maud embroiders a piece of silk with branches, or perhaps trees, and birds, which she copied from the main ornithological book of the West Indies, James Bond's *A Field Guide to the Birds of the West Indies*.[10] The birds are embroidered with Greek and Latin name tags on their spurs. The narrator names quite a few of the birds, ending with the sea-swift, the one that constitutes a motif in the larger epic itself. It is the migrating swift that guides the narrator and the local fisherman Achille, on their travels across the Atlantic and back home again. The composition of the birds on the quilt is said to be inspired by the constellations of the stars. In this way, the birds suggest the exact location of St Lucia, turning the quilt into a celebration of the island itself. In a passage much later in *Omeros*, we also learn that the silk is green, thus evoking the greenness of both St Lucia and Maud's native Ireland.[11] There are, moreover, some details that prompt a more elaborate interpretation: the birds on the shroud are blind and they sing, their beaks compared to nibs, and the birds seem to come alive, pecking at Maud's fingers. These details will be examined below.

In order to establish the metaliterary implications of this passage, I first analyse its use of classical intertexts.[12] As Christina Dokou observed, the shroud itself brings to mind a famous shroud from high epic, the one which Penelope, according to the *Odyssey*, spent

[9] Walcott *Omeros*, XVI.ii.

[10] James Bond, *A Field Guide to the Birds of the West Indies* (Philadelphia: Academy of Natural Sciences, 1936).

[11] Walcott *Omeros*, LXII.ii; for the quotation, see below.

[12] For intertextuality as an implicit form of metaliterarity, see Eva Müller-Zettelmann, *Lyrik und Metalyrik. Theorie einer Gattung und ihrer Selbstbespiegelung anhand von Beispielen aus der englisch- und deutschsprachigen Dichtkunst* (Heidelberg: Winter, 2000), 221-22.

three years weaving — and unweaving — for her father-in-law Laertes. In this way she tried to delay in choosing a new husband during Odysseus' ten-year-long journey home when many had assumed him dead.[13] There are, however, differences between the two shrouds. In Maud's case there is no ruse intended, and Dennis' absence is emotional rather than physical. Furthermore, she originally intends her quilt to celebrate her and her husband's jubilee anniversary rather than as a shroud for her funeral. Walcott also diverts from the *Odyssey* in the sense that Maud embroiders her own shroud, rather than a shroud for someone else. Finally, while in the *Odyssey* we never hear anything about Penelope's design, in *Omeros* the birds Maud embroiders, their constellation, and their actions are represented in the text. Thus, in *Omeros* the content of the shroud forms a separate textual level within the frame of the larger text. In other words, the passage of the shroud in *Omeros* is, contrary to that in the *Odyssey*, an ekphrasis.

EKPHRASIS

Ekphrasis, a 'verbal representation of visual representation', has a long tradition, dating from the ekphrasis of the shield of Achilles in the *Iliad*, and appearing in multiple genres ranging from ancient epic and rhetoric to postmodern poetry.[14] Ekphrasis has been analyzed from numerous different angles, varying from the maker of the object, the materiality, the making process, and the contents, to the viewer, the focalizer, the gendered gaze, the paragone between literature and the visual arts, and the relationship between the ekphrasis and its narrative frame.[15] A distinction is often made between actual and notional

[13] *Od*. 2.94-110; see Christina Dokou, "'Fruit of the Loom': Νέες προσεγγίσεις της Πηνελόπης στους Walcott και Marquez," Σύγκριση 15 (2017), 153-74.

[14] James A. Heffernan, *Museum of Words. The Poetics of Ekphrasis from Homer to Ashbery* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 3; William John Thomas Mitchell, "Ekphrasis and the Other," *Picture Theory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 152; *Il*. 18.478-608.

[15] See, for example, Jaś Elsner, "Introduction: The Genres of Ekphrasis," *Ramus* 31.1-2 (2002), 1-18; Don Paul Fowler, "Narrate and Describe: The Problem of Ekphrasis," *Roman Studies* 81 (1991), 25-35; Simon Goldhill, "What Is Ekphrasis For?" *Classical Philology* 102.1 (2007), 1-2; Heffernan *Museum*; John Hollander, 'The Poetics of Ekphrasis,' *Word and Image* 4.1 (1988), 209; Irene J. F. de Jong, *Narratology and Classics, A Practical Guide* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 37; Andrew Laird, "Sounding out Ecphrasis: Art and Text in Catullus 64," *Roman Studies* 83 (1993); Mitchell *Ekphrasis*, 151-81; John Pier, "Narrative Levels," in *The Living Handbook of Narratology,* ed. Peter Hühn et al., §21; Ruth Webb, *Ekphrasis, Imagination and Persuasion in Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Practice* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009).

ekphrasis, i.e. the representation of existing works of art that the reader may already know or see for themselves, and artworks imagined by the author.[16]

In Classical ekphrasis, the represented objects vary from shields to cups and architectural elements, and, occasionally, to textiles. Famous examples of textiles in Classical ekphrasis are Jason's cloak in Apollonius' *Argonautica*, and the two artworks from the weaving competition between Minerva and Arachne in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.[17] Considering the purpose of the quilt, the closest model for Maud's shroud appears to be the coverlet of Peleus' and Thetis' wedding bed in Catullus' poem 64.[18] It now seems to be particularly meaningful that Maud's shroud was originally intended as a gift for her silver wedding anniversary and therefore probably as a quilt for her marriage bed. Thus, apart from Penelope's woof, there is a second model for the shroud in *Omeros*. The double purpose of Maud's quilt, for marriage bed and deathbed, thus aptly evokes the shroud from the *Odyssey* and Catullus' coverlet in one.

Catullus

In order to clarify the implications of Walcott's use of Catullus 64 as a hypotext, I briefly introduce it here.[19] The poem is an *epyllion*, or miniature epic, which was favoured by poets in Catullus' cycle. These so-called *poetae novi*, or neoteric, or new poets, turned from traditional epic as it was brought from Greece to Rome, to the Alexandrian tradition of shorter and, to some extent, experimental poetry.[20] The frame narrative of Catullus' poem 64 consists of the myth of the wedding of Peleus and Thetis, that of a heroic man and a goddess. During the party, the mortal guests may have a look at the wedding bed

[16] Heffernan *Museum*, 7, 146; Hollander *Ekphrasis*, 209.

[17] Apollonius, *Argonautica* 1.721-68; *Met*. 6.70-128.

[18] Catullus 64, 47-266.

[19] There is a vast amount of literature on Catullus 64. Influential commentaries include C. J. Fordyce (ed.), *Catullus: A Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961); Wilhelm Kroll, *C. Valerius Catullus* (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1960); Kenneth Quinn, *Catullus. The Poems* (London: St Martin's, 1970, 1973); Douglas F. S. Thomson, *Catullus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003).

[20] Peter L. Schmidt, 'Neoteric Poets,' in *Brill's New Pauly*, eds. Hubert Cancik and Helmuth Schneider.

and its purple coverlet or *vestis*, which is represented in an ekphrasis.[21] The coverlet is decorated with events from the myth of Ariadne on the island of Naxos, her lament after her abandonment by the negligent hero Theseus, and the approach of the god Bacchus.[22] After admiring this coverlet, the mortal guests leave and the gods arrive. They listen to a wedding hymn 'spun' by the *Parcae*, or Fates, about the actions of the couple's future son Achilles in the Trojan War. This song constitutes, like the ekphrasis about Ariadne, a separate narrative level.[23]

There are a number of similarities between Catullus 64 and *Omeros*. First, Catullus 64 and *Omeros* bear some thematic resemblance: they both make use of the Greek myth of the Trojan War. While Catullus 64 begins with the wedding of Achilles' parents, Peleus and Thetis, and ends with Achilles' horrific bloodshed at Troy, *Omeros* deals with the aftermath of a colonial Trojan War and its effect on a descendant of the victims, a postcolonial Achille. Furthermore, both poems feature a love triangle. Helen, Hector, and Achille in *Omeros* not only evoke their counterparts in the *Iliad*, Helena, Menelaus, and Paris, but also match Ariadne and her two lovers, Theseus and Bacchus, in the ekphrasis of Catullus 64. Perhaps there is even an echo in the relationship between Helen, Maud, and Dennis in the frame text of *Omeros*. These love triangles perhaps represent some of the cultural issues experienced in the Caribbean, such as the complicated relationship of Caribbean culture with Europe and Africa, or perhaps with the European tradition and local reality.

Secondly, both ekphraseis seem to hold the middle between notional and actual ekphrasis. While both objects themselves — Catullus' coverlet and Walcott's shroud — do not exist outside their narratives and we know next to nothing about the more detailed spatial arrangements of their designs, the ancient reader was familiar with variants of the myth of Ariadne, much like the reader of *Omeros* can look up Maud's individual birds in a copy of Bond's *Ornithology*. Hence, both ekphraseis represent the rearrangement of

[21] The word *vestis* occurs at the beginning at the end of the ekphrasis in 64.50 and 265.

[22] Theseus is called *immemor*, unmindful or forgetful, three times in ll. 58, 135, and 248, underlining his lack of attention to Ariadne.

[23] Julia Haig Gaisser, "Threads in the Labyrinth: Competing Views and Voices in Catullus 64," *American Journal of Philology* 116.4 (1995), 579.

familiar material. There is a further resemblance between the ekphrasis of the shroud in *Omeros* and that in Catullus 64: both passages contain the suggestion of sound. Andrew Laird observed that, technically, a picture cannot render words, apart from in embroidered or woven lettering. He therefore classified ekphrasis with speech as 'disobedient', that is, inconsistent with the representation of a work of art.[24] However, while the ekphrasis in Catullus 64 indeed includes Ariadne's lament and Aegeus' instructions for Theseus in direct speech, in *Omeros* it mentions the singing birds but does not represent their song.

Besides poem 64, Maud's shroud also evokes two other poems by Catullus. The birds' pecking at Maud's fingers may evoke his poems 2 and 3 about Lesbia, the speaker's married mistress who distracts herself from the pains of love with her little bird, letting it peck her fingertip on her lap.[25] Like Lesbia, Maud distracts herself from the absence of her love by 'playing' with her birds. In this way, there is another love triangle at work in the background. However, while Lesbia is a married woman secretly engaging in a love affair, Maud is the ignored spouse, coping with grief rather than impatient excitement.

These references to Catullus suggest that Walcott in his ekphrasis drew close to the Classical poet who challenged the conventions of high epic. This observation alone has some bearing on Walcott's poetics: with *Omeros* he does not simply take Homer to the Caribbean, but in his echoes of neoteric poetry he taps into a Classical attempt to adapt the elevated genre. In following and adapting Catullus, Walcott tries to be a modern *poeta novus* himself. The intertextuality of the ekphrasis of the shroud thus has metaliterary implications.

Textiles and birds

The echoes of Catullus 64 in Maud's shroud have more metaliterary implications. Catullus 64 contains a number of implicit and explicit associations of textile work with narration. For example, the wedding hymn sung by the *Parcae* contains a refrain, another Alexandrian

[24] Laird Ecphrasis, 19.

[25] *cui primum digitum dare appetenti / …solet*, ('whom she always gives her fingertip to peck'), Catullus, 2.3-4.

device, which suggests that the song is spun: '*currite ducentes subtegmina, currite, fusi*'.[26] Thus, the singing of a song is imagined as spinning, in particular by figures of authority. In Latin literature, the *Parcae*, probably ancient birth goddesses, were imagined as women spinning the threads of fate and thus determining the duration of people's lives.[27] In this way, Catulllus 64 may be taken to imply that a poet or bard is a divine creator, defining the lives he invents. Furthermore, Laird argued that the use of the word *vestis* for the coverlet may have rhetorical overtones. Laird bases his interpretation of the word on passages in Petronius and Quintilian, who compare the treatment of speech to that of *vestis* or cloth.[28] Laird suggested that the use of *vestis* in Catullus 64 implies that the ekphrasis represents "a spoken text as well as a woven one", a notion which is enhanced by the close association of spinning and the song of the *Parcae* later in the poem.[29]

The metaliterary use of textile has a more elaborate intertextual tradition than just Petronius' and Quintilian's use of the word *vestis* alone. Textile work has been used as a metaphor for poetry since at least the earliest traces of European literature, the Homeric epics. Our very word 'text' was derived from the Latin noun *textus* ('tissue'), related to the verb *texere* ('to weave'), and its use as a metaphor for 'construction, combination, connection, context' has also been attested since Quintilian's.[30] In the Homeric epics and Greek lyric poetry, weaving also functions as a metaliterary metaphor for poetry.[31] Although a modern reader might be inclined to notice the visual resemblance of weaving and writing, it seems that ancient poets compared the acts of thinking, singing, and the composition

[26] 'Run, shuttles, passing the threads', Cat. 64, 333, 337, 342, 347, 352, 356, 361, 365, 371, 375, and 381.

[27] Albert Henrichs, 'Parcae', in *Brill's New Pauly*.

[28] Petr. *Sat*. 118.5; Quint. *Inst. Or.* viii.5.28.

[29] Laird *Ecphrasis*, 27, 28.

[30] Charlton Thomas Lewis, *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975), s.v. "textus," "texo."; Laird 1993, 18-30.

[31] Barbara Clayton, *A Penelopean Poetics: Reweaving the Feminine in Homer's Odyssey* (Lanham: Lexington 2004, rpt. 2017), 155-56; Jane McIntosh Snyder, "The Web of Song: Weaving Imagery in Homer and the Lyric Poets," *Classical Journal* 76.3 (1981), 193-96; Hanna M. Roisman, "Helen in the "Iliad" "Causa Belli" and Victim of War: From Silent Weaver to Public Speaker," *American Journal of Philology* 127.1 (2006), 1-36.

and performance of oral poetry to weaving.[32] Other forms of textile work are also used as metaliterary metaphors. A professional reciter of, for example, the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* in later Ancient Greek history was called a rhapsodist, 'a man sewing a song', (ῥαψῳδός), someone who patches pieces of already existing songs together.[33] Furthermore, in the tale of Philomela, the subject of Sophocles' largely lost play *Tereus*, and which was mainly handed down to us in the account by Ovid, embroidery replaces speech when Philomela conveys her rape in embroidery sent to her sister Procne through handwork after her rapist, who happened to be her sister's husband, had cut out her tongue.[34]

Seen in this light, the fact that Walcott chose a textile for his ekphrasis may suggest that the shroud is a symbol for poetry in general, and perhaps for *Omeros* itself. The ekphrasis is also a *mise-en-abyme*, a "situation when part of a work resembles the larger work in which it occurs".[35] This notion is enhanced by the fact that Maud's shroud contains another metaliterary symbol in its design, the singing bird. Like textiles, poetry has also been compared to birdsong at least since Aristophanes' comedy *Birds*.[36] This also occurs in the tale of Philomela. After the rape, Philomela and Procne first avenge themselves by brutally killing the son of Procne and her rapist husband. At the end of the tale, the two women manage to escape by metamorphosing into birds. One of them became the swallow, the other the nightingale, lamenting the death of her son.[37] Subsequently, the Ancient Greek word for nightingale, ἀηδών (*aedon*), was also used as a metaphor for poet.[38] Moreover,

[32] See, for example, Snyder Web, 193-96; Anthony Tucker, "Singing the Rug: Patterned Textiles and the Origins of Indo-European Metrical Poetry," *American Journal of Archaeology* 110.4 (2006), 539-50.

[33] H. G. Liddell et al., *A Greek-English Lexicon*. Repr. 9th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), s.v. "ῥαψῳδός."; Joachim Latacz, 'Rhapsodes' in *Brill's New Pauly*; Tucker *Rug*, 546.

[34] *Met*. 6.412-74. There is also a brief summary in Apollodorus' *Library*, 3.14.8.

[35] De Jong *Narratology*, 37.

[36] Leonard Lutwack, *Birds in Literature* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1994), 45-52; Douglas J. Stewart, "The Poet as Bird in Aristophanes and Horace," *Classical Journal* 62.8 (1967), 357-61; Jeni Williams, *Interpreting Nightingales: Gender, Class and Histories* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 17.

[37] Classical accounts differ in the attribution of the birds to the sisters. While in fragments of Sophocles' *Tereus* and in Apollodorus' account Procne changed into a nightingale and Philomela became a swallow, Ovid turned Procne into a swallow and Philomela into a nightingale; Williams *Nightingales*, 20.

[38] Liddell and Scott, s.v. "ἀηδών."; Albert Schachter, 'Aedon,' in *Brill's New Pauly*; see also Williams *Nightingales*, 20; Lutwack *Birds*, 47-48.

the fact that the birds on Maud's shroud are said to be blind brings to mind the traditional blindness of classical seers, the wise poet Homer, as well as the character Omeros and his alter ego Seven Seas in Walcott's *Omeros*.[39]

A NEW LANGUAGE

Based on the intertextuality of the metaliterary use of textiles in Classical literature, it seems that embroidering Maud in *Omeros* is presented as a rhapsodist, composing a new song by stitching together the songs of others. Furthermore, the ekphrasis suggests that these songs belong to the Greek and Latin tradition: Maud's birds or 'poets' have "Greek and Latin tags" at their spurs, the tags referring to the bird guide Maud copied from. The birds, moreover, are embroidered "in an antique frame", indicating the embroidery hoop as well as the framework of Classical literature. Nevertheless, according to a later passage in the poem, the poet-birds also appear to adapt to their new surroundings:

> And those birds Maud Plunkett stitched into her green silk
> with sibylline steadiness were what islands bred:
> brown dove, black grackle, herons like ewers of milk,
>
> pinned to a habitat many had adopted.
> The lakes of the world have their own diaspora
> of birds every winter, but these would not return.
>
> The African swallow, the finch from India
> *now spoke the white language of a tea-sipping tern*,
> with the Chinese nightingales on a shantung screen,

[39] Cf. Dokou *Loom*, 159. Perhaps even the little bird in Catullus 2 and 3, the famous *passer*, could be interpreted as a metaphor for the poet. In that case, Lesbia distracts herself from love with poetry or perhaps even values poetry over love. For the erotic interpretation of the bird, see Julia Haig Gaisser, *Catullus* (Oxford Readings in Classical Studies. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 305-7.

> while the Persian falcon, whose cry leaves a scar
> on the sky till it closes, saw the sand turn green,
> the dunes to sea, understudying the man-o'-war,
>
> *talking the marine dialect of the Caribbean*
> with nightjars, finches, and swallows, each origin
> enriching the islands to which their cries were sewn.[40]

Adopting the melting-pot St Lucia as their new home, the birds are said to have kept their colours, but also to have made an important adaptation. Their language is now specified as that of "a tea-sipping tern" and "the marine dialect of the Caribbean", or in other words, Caribbean English and perhaps French patois.[41] When transferring this to *Omeros*, it may imply that Walcott used a number of intertexts from the Old World, but also adapted them — if only in his choice of language — to his present surroundings.

CONCLUSION

It seems that Walcott's favourable adoption of the sneer of mimicry becomes particularly pronounced in his use of the shroud in *Omeros*. The two quotations about the shroud above suggest that Walcott acts as a modern rhapsodist and *poeta novus*, on the one hand paying tribute to his Classical ancestors, while on the other changing their designs. As a first act of renewal, Walcott combined Penelope's shroud from the *Odyssey* with the coverlet of Peleus and Thetis' wedding bed from Catullus 64, thus rolling into one an example of ancient epic with a newer form of epic. Furthermore, Walcott also replaced Catullus' idea of a heroic, mythical design, and opted instead for a home-made quilt, filling it with elements of the local environment rather than with heroes or gods. In this way, Walcott left out the contrast between humans and gods from Catullus 64, making art the domain of ordinary people instead. In the same way, the frame of *Omeros* deals with local people who have been attributed names from the heroic Greek tradition, rather than with the mythical gods and heroes in Catullus.

[40] Italics my own. Walcott *Omeros*, LXII.ii.

[41] Don Barnard, *Walcott's Omeros, A Reader's Guide* (Boulder: FirstForum, 2014), 248.

Moreover, in his choice of medium (textile work) and contents (birds) Walcott used two metaliterary symbols, confirming that the shroud expresses his poetics. It seems that according to Maud's shroud in *Omeros,* poetry is produced in the here and now, attributing an important, but subservient role for the high-brow literary tradition of the Classical past. Like a postmodern descendant of the neoteric poets, Walcott cherishes the small as true and honest, preferring over the traditional grandeur of high epic the ordinary daily life of the Caribbean. Thus, *Omeros* is indeed an example of Walcott's idea of mimicry. In Maud's shroud, as well as in *Omeros* as a whole, Walcott mimicked the Classical tradition, but only in order to produce something new.

Amaranth Feuth is based at Leiden University, the Netherlands, where she is currently preparing a doctoral dissertation on the allegorical and metaliterary motif of katabasis and dream-vision in English literature. As a Classicist as well as an Anglicist, she specializes in the reception of Ancient Greek and Latin texts in modern and contemporary English literature.

POP CULTURE

ORLANDO, DONALD, AND DYLAN DOG

TWO COMIC BOOK ADAPTATIONS OF ARIOSTO'S *ORLANDO FURIOSO*

Marion Bracq
Université Charles-de-Gaulle, Lille, France

The epic poem Orlando furioso *(1516-1532) by Ludovico Ariosto is considered a masterpiece of Italian literature. This work has been, and still is, a great source of inspiration for various arts, especially in pop culture. My* Leiden Arts in Society Blog *post, "A tribute to Ludovico Ariosto:* Orlando furioso*'s legacy in pop culture", highlighted several examples – including fantasy novels, comic books, and movie adaptations – aiming to help a new audience discover (or re-discover) the epic world created by Ludovico Ariosto. This art-icle intends to continue this endeavour by exploring Ariosto's legacy in pop culture with a selection of two comic books:* Paperino furioso *by Luciano Bottaro (1966) and* Dylan Dog issue 270 "Il re delle mosche" *by Giovanni di Gregorio and Luigi Piccatto (2009). I study how they rewrite some episodes of* Orlando furioso*, especially* cantos *XXIII and XXXIV which narrate, respectively, the madness and recovery of the poem's protagonist, Orlando.*

ORLANDO FURIOSO THROUGH THE CENTURIES

Published for the first time in 1516, and in a revised version in 1532, *Orlando furioso* is an Italian epic poem written by Ludovico Ariosto.[1] It is a continuation of Matteo Maria Boiardo's *Orlando innamorato* (1483-1495),[2] commissioned by the powerful Este family of Ferrara with the aim of affirming the prowess of their legendary ancestors, the Christian warrior Bradamante and the Saracen knight Ruggiero, and glorifying their family name.[3] Composed of 38,736 verses, Ariosto's poem is divided into 46 *cantos* and has a complicated

[1] We will refer here to the following edition: Ludovico Ariosto, *Orlando furioso*, 2 vols, ed. Lanfranco Caretti (Turin: Einaudi, 2013).

[2] Matteo Maria Boiardo, *Orlando innamorato,* 2 vols (Turin: Einaudi, 1995).

[3] Belinda Cannone, "Sublime Roland," in *Figures de Roland*, ed. Belinda Cannone and Michel Orcel (Paris: Klincksieck, 1998), 18.

structure involving many stories and characters. The reader is immersed in the conflict between Charlemagne, King of the Franks, and the Saracen King Agramante. Set onto this background, multiple storylines cross, including two main storylines: first, the plot concerning the love between Bradamante and Ruggiero, and then the story of Charlemagne's nephew Orlando and his doomed and unrequited love for the pagan princess Angelica, with whom he fell in love in Boiardo's *Orlando Innamorato.* In trying to find her after her escape from Charlemagne's camp (*canto* I), he finally discovers that she has fallen in love with the Saracen Medoro and thus begins his descent into madness (*canto* XXIII). Over the course of several *cantos*, Orlando demonstrates his mania through fits of violence, such as rooting out a tree and destroying the place where Angelica and Medoro used to meet (*canto* XXIII), and attacking peasants and fighting bears (*canto* XXIV). Fortunately, Orlando is saved by the knight Astolfo,[4] who during *canto* XXXIV makes a spiritual journey from Hell to Earthly Paradise, where he meets Saint John. The saint explains to Astolfo that Orlando's madness is God's punishment, because Orlando abandoned his king to chase Angelica, and he tells Astolfo how he can save Orlando: as the madness is a divine punishment, the resolution must also be celestial. Therefore, Saint John leads him to the moon to bring back Orlando's reason. During the sixteenth century, *Orlando furioso* was a bestseller, as of its first version already seventeen editions were published between 1516 and 1531.[5] Of the definitive version of 1532 we can count no less than 138 Italian editions of the text[6] published before 1600 by famous printers of the time such as Gabriel Giolito, Valvassori or Vincenzo Valgrisi.[7]

Proof of its success, the lively world described by Ariosto full of knights, magicians, and marvellous creatures became an abundant source of inspiration for later authors and artists. Therefore, since the sixteenth century *Orlando furioso* has been heavily referenced

[4] English paladin, son of Othon, King of England, Astolfo is Orlando's cousin.

[5] Maxime Chevalier, *L'Arioste en Espagne 1530-1560; recherches sur l'influence du Roland Furieux,* (Bordeaux, Féret et fils : Institut d'études ibériques et ibéro américaines de l'université de Bordeaux, 1966), 7. Some of these editions are listed by Giuseppe Agnelli and Giuseppe Ravenani, in *Annali delle edizioni Ariostee,* t. I (Bologne, Nicola Zanichelli, 1933), 21-36. Giuseppi Agnelli gave more details about several edition from 1524, 1525, 1526, 1527, 1528 and 1530.

[6] Maxime Chevalier, *L'Arioste en Espagne 1530-1560, op. cit.*, 7.

[7] Daniel Javitch, *Ariosto Classico, la canonizzazione dell'Orlando Furioso*, (Milano, Bruno Mondadori, 1999), 15.

in literature, even beyond the Italian border, appearing in France in Ronsard's *Franciade* (1572), and in England with Shakespeare's *As You Like It* (1623). During the eighteenth century especially, the *Orlando furioso* enjoyed a prolific career in opera. Some episode appear in titles that are still performed today, including Vivaldi's *Orlando furioso* (1727) and Handel's *Ariodante* (1735).

Likewise, Orlando's stories retain a position in popular culture. Already during the sixteenth century, Montaigne described in his travel narrative how he heard an Italian peasant singing a *canto* taken from *Orlando furioso*.[8] Later, during the nineteenth century, the success among the working classes of the *Opera dei Pupi* (*Opera of the Puppets*) in Sicily demonstrated the vivid tradition surrounding Ariosto's masterpiece.[9] Although this once-popular puppet performance is played less frequently nowadays, *Orlando furioso*'s legacy is still present in popular media including fantasy novels (Chelsea Quinn Yarbro's *Ariosto furioso,* 1980), a movie adaptation (Giacomo Battiato's *I Paladini*, 1983), and in comic books. Concerning the latter, *Orlando furioso* was a great source of inspiration, especially in Italy where we can find retellings such as that of Pino Zac (1975), or references to Ariosto's universe as, for example, in "Roncisvalle" (1990) in which the detective Martin Mystère investigates the legend of Orlando.[10]

Among multiple adaptations, two caught my attention most: *Paperino furioso* (1966) by Luciano Bottaro, and the episode of Dylan Dog, "*Il re delle mosche*" (2009), written by Giovanni di Gregorio and illustrated by Luigi Piccatto.[11] At first, these two comics books seem remarkably dissimilar: *Paperino furioso* is a comedic publication intended for

[8] Michel de Montaigne, *Œuvres complètes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1962), 1297.

[9] Inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2008, the *Opera dei pupi* is a particular type of puppet theatre originating in Sicily at the beginning of nineteenth century and based on chivalric romances such as the *Song of Roland* (1090)*, Orlando furioso*, and the *Storia dei Paladini di Francia* (Giusto Lo Dico and Giuseppe Leggio, 1902). *S*ee A. Pasqualino, *L'opera dei pupi,* (Palermo: Sellerio, 2008); Albert T. Serstevens, *Sicile, Éoliennes, Sardaigne* (Paris: Arthaud, 1957), 83-86.

[10] Pino Zac, *Orlando furioso di Ludovico Ariosto* (Milan: Corno, 1975); Alfredo Castelli, Nando Esposito and Denisio Esposito ["Esposito Bros."], "*Roncisvalle*," *Martin Mystère* 94 (Milan: Bonelli, 1990).

[11] Luciano Bottaro, "*Paperino furioso,"* Topolino 544-545 (Milan: Arnoldo Mondadori, May 1966); Giovanni di Gregorio and Luigi Piccato, "*Il re delle mosche,*" *Dylan Dog* 270 (Milan: Sergio Bonelli, March 2009).

children, whereas Dylan Dog stories are set in a fantasy or horror context. Despite this, as I demonstrate below, they draw from the same source of inspiration: *Orlando furioso*. While they adapt the original story in different ways, they also show a common handling of specific features taken from the epic poem, such as travel to the moon (*canto* XXXIV) and the particular use of the hippogriff (Fig. 1). Here, I investigate what they share in common and offer a comparative analysis between these new iterations and the original text in order to determine whether the new narratives inspired by Ariosto are only a tribute to him or if they also provide a new reading of his masterpiece.

INTRODUCING DONALD AND DYLAN

"Paperino furioso" is not the first time that Disney's Paperino, known as Donald Duck in English-speaking countries, wears armour in his adventures. In fact, since "Topolino in Inferno" (1949),[12] which was inspired by Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Disney has regularly published parodies of literary masterpieces.[13] One of the most recent was "Metopolis" (2017),[14] based on Fritz Lang's science-fiction film *Metropolis* (1927). During the 1960s, these parodies were often based on chivalric poems, and more specifically, stories about Charlemagne's reign. In 1966 and 1967, two of the most important Italian chivalric poems were adapted as comic book parodies: first, Luciano Bottaro wrote and drew "Paperino furioso", and in the following year, in "Paperopoli liberate", Guido Martina and Giovan Battista Carpi adapted Torquato Tasso's *Gerusaleme liberata* (1581), an epic poem about the First Crusade.

In "Paperino furioso", a witch sends Paperino on a journey back through time to the medieval court of Papero Magno (Charlemagne). During his adventure, Paperino must prove his merit by accomplishing several chivalric feats. He saves Angelica from the magician Basilisco but, due to a misunderstanding, Angelica thinks that Paperino's squire, Ciccio, is instead the one who saved

[12] Guido Martina and Angelo Bioletto, "*L'inferno di Topolino*," Topolino 7-12 (Milan: Arnoldo Mondadori, October 1949-March 1950).

[13] P. P. Argiolas, et al., *Le grandi parodie Disney. Ovvero i classici fra le nuvole* (Rome: Nicola Pesce, 2013).

[14] Francesco Artibiani and Paolo Mottura, *Metopolis*, Topolino 3189 (Modena: Panini Comics, January 2017).

her, and thus marries him. Like Orlando before him, when Paperino learns of his lost love he becomes mad. Thanks to the technology of Archimedes, however, a solution is found: Gastolfo (Astolfo) must go to the moon to retrieve Paperino's reason. The witch appears one last time during Gastolfo's journey to the moon, where she is supposed to hand over a magic vial to cure Paperino. Instead of his mind, the vial contains a potion that brings him back to the present.

Fig. 1. Dylan Dog, *Il re delle mosche*, Issue 270, March 2009, Milan, vignettes 3-4 p.47,
© Sergio Bonelli Editore, Disegni di Luigi Piccatto. Dylan Dog is a character created by Tiziano Sclavi.

Forty-three years later, Dylan Dog, a paranormal detective created by Tiziano Sclavi in 1986, meets Ariosto's epic world. Published by Sergio Bonelli Editore, Dylan Dog is one of the most popular comics in Italy and new episodes are still released monthly. Even the author Umberto Eco is a fan of the series: in an interview he declared that Dylan Dog was a key reference for him, just like the Bible or Homer.[15] Some story lines in the series took their inspiration from literary classics like Mary Shelley's horror *Frankenstein*.[16] In "Il re delle mosche" ("Lord of the Flies"), the issue that borrows from *Orlando furioso*, Dylan Dog investigates a crime in the chemistry department of London University in which the

[15] "Umberto Eco and Tiziano Sclavi. Un dialogo," in *Dylan Dog, indocili sentimenti, arcane paure,* ed. Alberto Ostini (Milan: Euresis, 1998), 13-32.

[16] "Frankenstein," Dylan Dog 60 (September 1991).

sinister Laurence Skinner, the director of the chemistry department, seems to be involved. During his investigation, Dylan is helped by Rose, a doctoral student. Unlike "Paperino furioso", this storyline does not explicitly revisit Ariosto's epic, but there is a clear reference to it nonetheless. In fact, during his investigation, Dylan has a strange dream in which he meets Astor (Skinner's dog) who has transformed into a hippogriff (Fig. 1). Dylan flies to the moon on its back, in a journey similar to Astolfo's in *canto* XXXIV of *Orlando furioso*.

TWO DIFFERENT WAYS TO PAY TRIBUTE TO *ORLANDO FURIOSO*

Initially, the two comic books stand apart in the ways in which they incorporate Ariosto's narrative differently. "Paperino furioso" is a parody rewriting which pays tribute in a comedic way to Ariosto's masterpiece, while the brief reference in *Dylan Dog* is more an allusion that serves the broader story written by Giovanni di Gregorio.

A good parody requires considerable knowledge of the original plot. To that end, Luciano Bottaro appears to be faithful to his source. In his adaptation, the reader finds some key moments of *Orlando furioso*'s episodes. For example, in the comic, the battle of Sarrazino against Papero Magno refers to the siege of Paris in the sixteenth-century romance,[17] and significant moments of Orlando's madness, especially when he roots out a tree,[18] and Astolfo's flight to the moon are captured in the parody. The nature of the main character Orlando is conserved in Paperino: Paperino is mad for a considerable part of the story as is the poem's protagonist,[19] and moreover describes his state as "una furia devastatrice!!!" ("A devastating fury") referring explicitly to the title *Orlando furioso*.[20] Still, the comic's subtitle, "Poema poco cavalleresco" ("A Barely Chivalric Poem") indicates that we are obviously reading a parody. In fact, Luciano Bottaro overturns all the rules and clichés of epic literature. Instead of being the best knight at court, Papero Magno accuses Paperino of being unimpressive.[21]

[17] "*Paperino furioso*," 38; *Orlando furioso*, *cantos* XVI-XVII.

[18] "Paperino furioso,"45; *Orlando furioso*, *canto* XXIII, 134.

[19] "Paperino furioso" from page 31 until the end of the story; in *Orlando furioso, cantos* XXIII-XXXIX.

[20] "Paperino furioso," 48, vignette 4.

[21] Ibid., 10-11.

Magic is replaced by technology. There is no magician Atlante in this version but instead an inventor, Archimedes, who creates two machines during the story: one to find Papero, and the other to fly to the moon.[22] We also find comical futurisms in the context of the original's medieval setting, such as the magician Basilico watching a TV programme with an advert for a magical filter. [23]

Concerning the rewriting of Orlando's madness itself, while Paperino is furious indeed, the violent outburst depicted in Ariosto's epic is replaced by a more comic depiction. In *Orlando furioso,* Orlando's furor gives rise to overt violence, such as the scene in *canto* XXIV in which he savagely slaughters and dismembers peasants.[24] In Luciano Bottaro's version, Paperino is depicted as mad on three pages where his mental state is caricatured merely by jumping in the air and grinning without reason.[25] Over the remainder of the story, Bottaro draws Paperino more as an angry character than as a mad one. His use of the onomatopoeias "urg" and "krrr"[26] contribute to this entertaining depiction of Paperino's madness. Likewise, the introspection of the original version in which Orlando defines himself as a dead man: "I am not — am not what I seem to sight: / What Roland was is dead and under ground, / Slain by that most ungrateful lady's spite / Whose faithlessness inflicted such a wound."[27] is replaced by the incongruous interrogation: "I'm so confused! Am I a kangaroo or something else? If I can still remember ...",[28] arguably far less tragic than the original version. In short, by rewriting *Orlando furioso* in a parodic way, Luciano Bottaro provides the reader with a new reading of the book, one that is more light-hearted and humorous.

[22] Magician and necromancer Atlante was in charge of Ruggiero's education in *Orlando furioso*. He tames the hippogriff discussed later in this article. Ibid., 41-45, 61-62.

[23] Ibid, 27, vignette 4.

[24] *Orlando furioso*, *canto* XXIV, 5-11.

[25] "Paperino furioso," 32-34.

[26] Ibid., 45, vignettes 3 and 4.

[27] "Non son, non sonno io quel che paio in viso: / quel ch'era Orlando è morto et è sottera; / la sua donna ingratissima l'ha ucciso: / sí, mancando di fé, gli ha fatto guerra." *Orlando furioso*, *canto* XXIII, 128, v. 1-4; trans. William Stewart Rose, *Orlando furioso*, vol. 4, (London, J. Murray, 1825), 225.

[28] "Che confusione ho in testa ! Sono un canguro o sono qualcosa'altro? Si`, mi pare di ricordare...", "Paperino furioso," 47, vignette 3.

The echoes of *Orlando furioso* are quite different in Dylan Dog's story. If the *Orlando furioso* references in the dream contribute to the usual fantastic and uncanny atmosphere in Dylan Dog's stories, they also serve as a pause in the narration that highlight some peculiar aspects of "Il re delle mosche". As Dylan travels to the moon, the reader travels into the character's mind and sees there what obsesses him. In fact, the dream refers to two important elements of the *Orlando furioso* plot: the vial refers first to Dylan's investigation in the university's chemistry department, but also to the romantic plot with Rose. In *Orlando furioso* the purpose of this moon quest is to cure Orlando of his lovesickness. In fact, the vial found by Astolfo contained Orlando's reason that he lost in his desperate love for Angelica. In "Il re delle mosche", di Gregorio changes the vial's function: instead of the paladin's reason, it supposedly contains "Rose's love" as specified on its tag (Fig. 2). This modification of the original material is a revealing example of Dylan Dog's nature: he does not want to forget his love for Rose but instead conquer her as he attempts to do with ladies in each of his episodes' adventures.

Fig. 2. Dylan Dog, *Il re delle mosche*, Issue 270, March 2009, Milan, vignettes 4-5 p.49,
© Sergio Bonelli Editore, Disegni di Luigi Piccatto. Dylan Dog is a character created by Tiziano Sclavi.

Despite the clear differences between the two comic book stories, their narratives both use the moon journey in a dream sequence to introduce Ariosto's marvellous world to the plot. In "Il re delle mosche", after struggling to fall asleep Dylan goes outside for a walk where he meets the dog who will soon become the hippogriff in his dream. At this moment, the character understands that he is already dreaming: "S-sto sognando vero?" ("I-I'm dreaming, aren't I?") he asks.[29] He wakes up just after he retrieves the potion.[30] The dream's position in the plot is more ambiguous in Paperino's story: as he naps under a tree, the witch appears and puts him under a spell. Even if the narrative was not a dream, when he returns to his own time, he will interpret it this way: "Non so perchè, ma questa volta il sonno mi ha confuso più che mai le idee!" ("I don't know why, but this time sleep confused me more than ever!").[31] But, the protagonists' dream-trip to the moon is not the only common point between the two comic books.[32] There is also an episode in each in which they encounter the emblematic fantasy creature of *Orlando furioso*: the hippogriff.

THE REIGN OF THE HIPPOGRIFF

The hippogriff finds its roots in the literature of Antiquity with the mythological winged horse Pegasus and in Virgil's *Eclogues* where an unnamed animal born from the union of a mare and a griffin (another fantastic beast) is mentioned.[33] As Pio Rajna demonstrates, although the origin of the hippogriff can be linked to various winged horses of ancient literature, Ariosto was the first to name and describe this creature in any detail.[34] The hippogriff appears in *Orlando furioso* for the first time in *canto* II where it is described as a "gran destiero alato" ("a large winged steed").[35] It is presented as a rare but real animal

[29] "Il re delle mosche," 47.

[30] Ibid., 50.

[31] "Paperino furioso," 48, vignette 5.

[32] In another comic book, "Roncisvalle," mentioned above, Martin Mystère travels in a parallel dimension which looks like the moon in the *Orlando furioso*.

[33] Virgil, *Eclogues* VIII, 27.

[34] Pio Rajna, *Le fonti dell'Orlando furioso* (Florence: Sansoni, 1975), 68-70.

[35] *Orlando furioso*, *canto* II, 37, v. 8.

living in the Riphaean hills and born, as Virgil says, of a mare and a griffin. According to Ariosto, the front half of the hippogriff's body is that of a griffin, with wings, a beak, and the talons of an eagle on its front legs, while the rest of the body is that of a horse.[36]

The hippogriff played an important role in the plot of *Orlando furioso*, as is ridden by several important characters: the magician Atlante, the Saracen Ruggiero, and most notably Astolfo, who rides it more than the others, from *canto* XXII to *canto* XLIV when he sets it free. It has been emblematic of *Orlando furioso* since the poem's creation; many artistic renderings of it have been made, especially of Ruggiero with the hippogriff as in the sixteenth-century engraving of *Orlando furioso*'s Valgrisi edition (Fig. 3) and the painting of Girolamo da Carpi,[37] the eighteenth-century painting by Giovanni Battista Tiepolo,[38] and

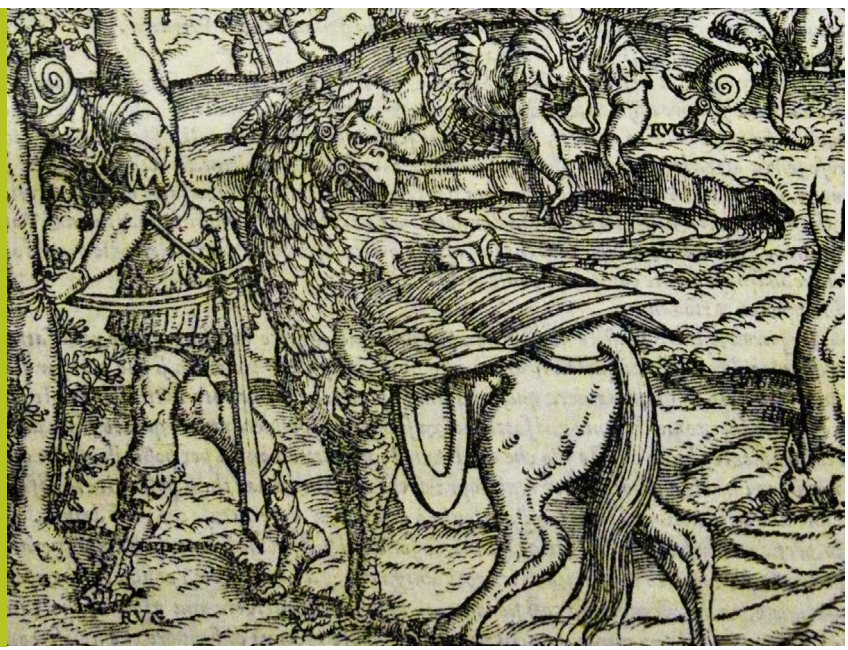


Fig. 3. Ludovico Arioste, *Orlando furioso*, Venezia, Valgrisi, 1568, illustration canto VI, xylography, 50, details, fonds Agache, A-1084, réserve patrimoniale, Service commun de la documentation de l'université de Lille (Photo Marion Bracq)

[36] *Orlando furioso*, *canto* IV, 18.

[37] Girolamo da Carpi, *Ruggiero saving Angelica,* c. 1501-1556, tempera on wood panel, El Paso Museum of Art, El Paso, Texas, United States.

[38] Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, *Ruggiero Mounted on a Hippogriff,* c. 1757, Vicenza, Villa Valmarana, Italy.

the nineteenth-century painting by Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres (Fig. 4).[39] These artists each represent a moment taken from *canto* X of the liberation of Angelica from the sea monster of Ebude by Ruggiero. In addition to the success of this scene, other visual representations of the hippogriff participate in a centuries-long artistic tradition, including the recent comic book illustrations that reinvent his role and characteristics.

Fig. 4. Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *Roger délivrant Angélique* (1819) Oil on canvas, 147 x 190, Musée du Louvre, Paris, France
Photo (C) RMN-Grand Palais (musée du Louvre) / Franck Raux

[39] Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *Ruggiero saving Angelica,* 1819, oil on canvas, Musée du Louvre, Paris, France.

In "Il re delle mosche", the hippogriff has a narrative function, since the little dog Astor's transformation into the winged creature indicates to the reader that Dylan Dog has switched from reality to dream. The hippogriff is also used in a comedic way in both the adventures of Dylan Dog and Paperino. In "Il re delle mosche" the creature speaks directly to Dylan, making fun of him: "Certo che stai sognando! Nella vita reale non è così facile conquistare l'amore di una donna" ("Of course you're dreaming! It's not that easy to win the love of a woman in real life").[40] In "Paperino furioso", the majestic hippogriff is degraded to a machine made of iron and wood which Archimedes lands like a rocket.[41]

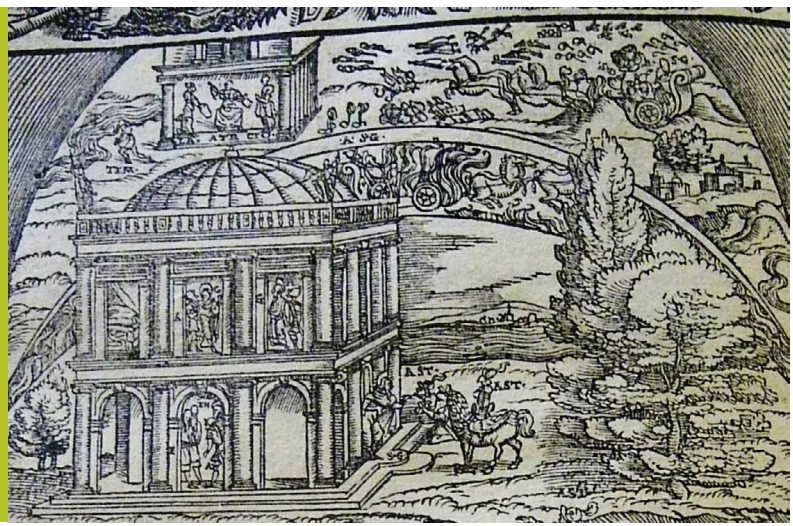


Fig. 5. Ludovico Arioste, *Orlando furioso*, Venezia, Valgrisi, 1568, illustration canto XXXIV, xylography, 383, details, fonds Agache, A-1084, réserve patrimoniale, Service commun de la documentation de l'université de Lille (Photo Marion Bracq)

The most important change is that the hippogriff is used in both stories to travel to the moon despite the fact it never did so in *Orlando furioso.* In *Orlando furioso*, Astolfo goes to the moon with Saint John on the same chariot on which Elijah ascended to heaven.[42] In an engraving in the Valgrisi edition we can follow Astolfo in the chariot with Saint John on their ascension into the sky (Fig. 5).[43] Although Gastolfo and Dylan went to the moon

[40] "Il re delle mosche," 47, vignette 5.

[41] "Paperino furioso," 61.

[42] *Orlando furioso*, *canto* XXXIV, 68.

[43] *Orlando furioso* (Venice: Valgrisi, 1568), *canto* XXXIV, detail.

for almost the same reason as Astolfo before them (retrieving the vial that resolves the narrative tension of the respective scenes), there is a significant change in the story's cast of characters: it seems that popular culture forgot Saint John the Evangelist and the religious meaning of this text by focusing on the marvellous travel and replacing the saint's chariot with the hippogriff. We can also assume that removing Saint John serves to simplify the plot in the case of the cartoonish "Paperino furioso" which is more a synthesis of the main events of Orlando's tale than a complete adaptation of the original story. As Astolfo travels primarily atop the hippogriff, in Luciano Bottaro's story the corresponding character (Gastolfo) still rides it, even if it's a 'fake' in his case. Furthermore, we must consider that the strong pictorial tradition of the hippogriff has surely influenced the authors in their choice to highlight the famous winged animal at the expense of Saint John's participation. In fact, the presence of the hippogriff even in an episode where it was not originally found confirms that the animal has become emblematic of Ariosto's poem, signalling it by its very presence. Even in Dylan Dog issue 270 "Il re delle mosche", where Dylan meets the hippogriff on just a few pages, the cover illustration by Angelo Stano represents the particular moment when Dylan and the hippogriff reach the moon (Fig. 6).

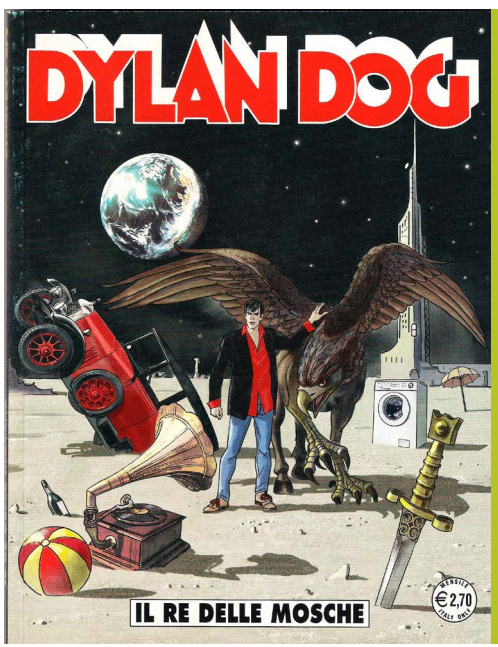


Fig. 6. Dylan Dog, *Il re delle mosche*,
Issue 270, March 2009, Milan,
© Sergio Bonelli Editore, Disegni di Angelo Stano.
Cover by Angelo Stano.
Dylan Dog is a character created by Tiziano Sclavi.

In addition to demonstrating that Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* is still very present in popular culture, the study of these two works shows us how comic books have played with the original material as the tradition around this masterpiece epic has slowly evolved. At first sight, the two comics books studied here appropriate the poem differently: "Paperino furioso" offers a parodic reading that pays tribute to the original source and contributes to the transmission of the Ariosto's masterpiece to a new, perhaps younger, audience; whereas *Orlando furioso'*s reference in the "Il re delle mosche" episode of *Dylan Dog* highlights some parts of its fantasy plot. At the same time, the common element in both comics of the hippogriff's journey to the moon in place of Saint John shows that the creature became, without a doubt, emblematic of Ariosto's masterpiece in the Italian popular imagination. Made malleable by its appropriation by comic books, the hippogriff is crystallized in the perspectives of two different authors: in "Paperino furioso" it becomes another comedic detail of the narrative, while in *Dylan Dog* it participates in the characteristic fantasy atmosphere of the series.

Marion Bracq is a doctoral researcher at the University of Lille (ALITHILA) and a guest researcher at Leiden University (LUCAS). She first worked on epic literature during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance during her Master's degree. She is now researching the reception of *Orlando furioso* in the French Renaissance and the relationship between science and literature, two central themes in her dissertation, "The treatment of madness and love passions among the French translators and imitators of Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* (1544-1601): The building of a literary tradition". She has taught courses on the history of poetry, Encyclopaedism between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, and on the link between novels and science in the nineteenth century.

DEAFIES IN DRAG

ROLE MODELS AT THE INTERSECTION OF QUEER AND DEAF REPRESENTATION

Nynke Feenstra
Leiden University, Leiden, the Netherlands
Looi van Kessel
Leiden University, Leiden, the Netherlands

In this article, Nynke Feenstra and Looi van Kessel think through the challenges of putting intersectional theory in practice by tracing a history of role models at the intersection of deaf and LGBTQ+ identifications in the Netherlands and the United States. They argue that, while the concept of intersectionality has taken great leaps in academic debates, formal institutions still sometimes struggle with the practical applications of insights that this concept offers. By looking into the history of Dutch activists such as Bea Visser and advocacy groups such as Roze Gebaar*, and the current work of the deaf drag performers Deafies in Drag, Feenstra and van Kessel argue that a more practical attention to the intersection of minoritizing identifications foregrounds tensions and issues that arise from within the deaf and LGBTQ+ communities, as well as from without. The practice of drawing attention to intersecting minoritizing identifications can be found in the function of role models who identify across different marginalized communities, and thus can help work towards forms of activism that pay attention to specific issue advocacy as well as inclusivity.*

INTRODUCTION

Meet Selena and Casavina, two Latinx drag queens who, since October 2015, post a weekly sketch video to YouTube in which they dramatize struggles that occur in their day-to-day life. As expected, these sketches deal with dating life, being part of the LGBTQ+ community,

or performing in drag.[1] What makes these sketches stand out, however, is that Selena and Casavina are not just two regular drag queens. They are Deafies in Drag.

By naming themselves Deafies in Drag, Selena and Casavina address both a deaf and an LGBTQ+ audience. Many deaf-born people self-identify as members of the deaf community. They are proud of being deaf and share Deaf culture, a core part of which is communication in sign language.[2] They identify as 'culturally deaf' as opposed to 'being handicapped' — a medical understanding of deafness.[3] Within the deaf community, role models are very important. Everybody has role models and for most people their parents are the first ones. Writer and clinical psychologist Andrew Solomon calls this phenomenon 'vertical identification'.[4] However, most deaf children (about 90-95%) are born to hearing parents and experience the world from a different perspective than do their family.[5] Their identification process takes place horizontally: among peers within the deaf community. Deaf role models show other deaf people what they are capable of as a deaf person and inspire them to believe in their personal capabilities, regardless of their deafness. Role models are therefore of great value to the social and emotional development of deaf children and the self-esteem of deaf people.[6]

Similar horizontal identification processes take place within the LGBTQ+ community. In 1994, Andrew Solomon was the first to draw parallels between deaf and gay and lesbian

[1] There are many varieties of acronym to indicate a broad community of different sexual and gender identifications. We have opted for LBGTQ+ in which the plus signals the plethora of different identifications which might not have even been named yet. Where we cite sources that use different versions of the acronym, we have retained those other versions.

[2] Anja Hiddinga and Onno Crasborn, "Signed Languages and Globalization," *Language and Society* 40.4 (2011), 40.

[3] See for a detailed discussion Paddy Ladd, *Understanding Deaf Culture: In Search of Deafhood* (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2003), 15-7.

[4] Andrew Solomon, *Ver van de boom: Als je kind anders is*, trans. Pieter van der Veen, et al. (Amsterdam: Nieuw Amsterdam, 2013), 12; Andrew Solomon, "Defiantly Deaf," *The New York Times Magazine,* 28 August 1994.

[5] Corrie Tijsseling, *Anders doof zijn: een nieuw perspectief op dove kinderen* (Twello: Van Tricht, 2006), 3; Ladd, *Understanding Deaf Culture*, 35; Hilde Haualand, "Sound and Belonging: What is a Community?" in *Open Your Eyes: Deaf Studies Talking*, ed. H-Dirksen L. Bauman (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 116.

[6] S. W. Cawthon, et al., "Role Models as Facilitators of Social Capital for Deaf Individuals: A Research Synthesis," *American Annals of the Deaf* 161.2 (2016), 125.

communities in an article in the *New York Times*.[7] Although this comparison was experienced as uncomfortable by some deaf people, American Sign Language (ASL) scholar M. J. Bienvenue argues there is likely to be a crossing between the two communities, namely in the importance of sharing stories and fighting stigma.[8] Although the identification as deaf is a strong unifying factor, it does not necessarily prevent stigmatization and exclusion based on other identifications within the same community. Indeed, many deaf LGBTQ+ people fear stigmatization both within the deaf community and within the LGBTQ+ community.[9] Community members might raise the question of whether identifying as gay threatens their highly valued deaf identity. That is, there is a fear that a politically unified deaf community might be fracturing because of the intrusion of other identitarian questions that do not directly speak to the deaf community at large.

Deafies in Drag, we argue, show in their videos the importance of recognizing both identifications simultaneously. Their videos are a form of intersectional activism which does not give primacy to one identification over the other, but instead highlights the value of thinking about what happens when deaf and LGBTQ+ identifications overlap. In this article, we look at some of Deafies in Drag's videos, and also look into the history of LGBTQ+ and deaf activism in the Netherlands, to think through the complexity of intersectionality, which as a concept is already well established, but which remains difficult for many to put into practice.

PAVING THE WAY: BEA VISSER

In the Netherlands, Bea Visser (1936-2017) made an undeniable contribution to the social emancipation of deaf people, as well as to the emancipation of lesbian or gay deaf people within the Dutch deaf community. Bea's memoir was written by Petra Essink in 2009.[10] Bea spent the greater part of her childhood at the Christian Institute Effatha in Voorburg at a

[7] Solomon, "Defiantly Deaf."

[8] M. J. Bienvenue, "Queer as Deaf," in *Open Your Eyes*, ed. Bauman, 267, 273

[9] Ibid., 266, 270

[10] Petra Essink, *Bea Visser, Dove Prinses: Het levensverhaal van Bea Visser opgetekend door Petra Essink* (Zwolle: Petrapen, 2009).

time when deaf children were taught through spoken language.[11] She learnt signs from older children on the playground and in the dormitory. After finishing school, already at the age of fourteen, Bea was not hindered by the restrictions deafness imposed on her: she continued her education through night classes and later at the *Volkshogeschool voor doven.*[12] As of the 1960s, Bea was actively involved in and a driving force within deaf social life – primarily through sports – and was one of the first Dutch activists to teach sign language to deaf children.

These are Selena (left) and Casavina (right), and together they are Deafies in Drag. Video: *Gay 101 (Unseen Footage)*, ©Deafies in Drag, 2017.

[11] For approximately a century, in various countries of Europe and in the United States, sign language was banned at schools for the deaf. This period of repression, known as 'Oralism', had a profound impact on the development of deaf children, sign languages, and Deaf culture. See for further reading Ladd, *Understanding Deaf Culture* (Index subject: Oralism and Deaf education).

[12] In the second half of the nineteenth century, the *Volkshogeschool* in Bergen (later in Bakkeveen) offered annual courses for deaf people to expand their general knowledge and organized various activities to contribute to deaf people's participation in society.

At the age of 41, Bea fell in love with a (deaf) woman for the first time. This caused great confusion as she had never heard of the word, or concept of, 'lesbian' before. In the following years, she withdrew her active participation in the deaf community as she suffered as a result of disapproval by part of the community of her sexuality. Her engagement with the deaf community reached a turning point when other lesbian and gay deaf people came to Bea to share their experiences. Together, they realized that many deaf people are effectively barred from knowing about homosexuality and thus decided to organize an information weekend in collaboration with the Volkshogeschool. Shortly after, in 1981, Bea and two peers, Dick Kerkhoven and Corinne Munne, founded *Roze Gebaar* (Pink Gesture) of which Bea was named Chair.[13] In 1986, Roze Gebaar became part of the national LGBTQ+ advocacy group *COC Nederland*.

Deafies in Drag target both deaf and hearing audiences in their videos on queer topics. Video: *Latinx!*, ©Deafies in Drag, 2018.

Documentation of the history of Roze Gebaar and the experiences of L/G deaf people in the Netherlands are limited. However, the personal story of Bea touches upon two themes that are recurring in the sources available;[14] 'coming-out to deaf friends' and 'access to

[13] Essink, *Bea Visser, Dove Prinses*, 49, 59, 67-68, 73, 83-86, 101-4, 108-14.

[14] The archival sources used for this research are interviews (newspapers and magazines) and the documentation of the *Roze Gebaar* symposium in 1996. All sources are accessed through *IHLIA: LGBT Heritage*. IHLIA manages Europe's biggest collection of LGBTQ+ history. Thanks to this collection we were able to write the historical paragraph on *Roze Gebaar* for this article. For more information see https://www.ihlia.nl/.

information'. A 1993 article on Roze Gebaar in *De Gaykrant* mentions that the coming-out process of deaf people produces similar feelings to those of hearing people, but comes with the realization that coming-out to one deaf person means that soon the entire deaf community will probably know, due to its small size. Deaf people often fear losing deaf friendships, which are perceived as essential in a society dominated by hearing people.[15] Similar reasoning can be found in a 2006 interview with Barbara Otten in the deaf magazine *Woord & Gebaar*. During the experimental process she shunned the 'deaf world', Barbara reports, fearing that she would lose friends if they found out.[16]

It can be understood from Barbara's interview that she knew about homosexuality before she herself identified with it. However, considering Bea's story, this was not self-evident in the previous decades. One of the founding objectives of Roze Gebaar was to fill the information gap in sexuality.[17] In 1996, Roze Gebaar organized the symposium "Zit Roze Gebaar nog in de kast?" (Is Roze Gebaar still in the closet?). Main topics discussed included coming-out processes, the lack of understanding for L/G deaf people, social isolation, and accessibility of education on AIDS prevention. Nowadays, Roze Gebaar still stands up for the interests of LGBTQ+ deaf people.[18] In addition to this, the organization seeks to make important events for the LGBTQ+ community accessible for deaf people and have established a network of interpreters who either identify with the LGBTQ+ community themselves or are 'gay-friendly'.[19]

Online dating: problems and opportunities

Despite local differences, such as national sign languages, the deaf community extends beyond national boundaries and can be considered a global cultural community.[20] Deaf

[15] Emiel Bootsma, "Wij moeten twee keer een isolement doorbreken," *De GAY Krant*, 21 August 1993. IHLIA: LGBT Heritage.

[16] Tamara van Meer, "Leven op een Roze Wolk?" *Woord & Gebaar* 26.3 (April 2006), 11. IHLIA: LGBT Heritage.

[17] Bootsma, *De GAY Krant*.

[18] Roze Gebaar, "Over ons" (2019), https://rozegebaar.coc.nl/over-ons/.

[19] Roze Gebaar, "Tolken" (2019), https://rozegebaar.coc.nl/tolken/.

[20] Hiddinga and Crasborn, "Signed Languages and Globalization," 489.

people feel a strong connection to other deaf persons because of their shared visual-gestural language and primarily visual perception of the world. Therefore, they often seek contact with one another wherever they are. These transnational exchanges have expanded rapidly thanks to recent technological developments such as Skype, YouTube, and WhatsApp. An increased proficiency in different sign languages, continuing debates on diversity and representation, and developments in the field of sociolinguistics have led to reflection on the use and appropriateness of particular gestures within the deaf community.[21] Similarly, deaf history has mostly been written by white hearing men, and is based on white, straight, and cisgender people's experiences. In recent years, the desirability of this situation has been up for debate.[22]

The turn to online platforms, however, also brings to light a set of disadvantages that deaf people, and queer deaf people in particular, might experience. As social life is moving increasingly to online forms of communication, dating, too, has moved at a rapid speed towards smartphone apps and other online outlets. These platforms come with a unique set of online etiquette that involves unwritten rules, ranging from how to flirt via text message to when or when not to send someone an image of your private parts. For some queer communities this move to online dating is considered a form of progress since it has become much easier for certain persons to meet others who share similar sexual interests. Whereas dating used to be a game of recognizing each other's body language and thus running the risk of misinterpretation, online dating now uses mostly text-based communication. Thus, for some this online communication means that they can flirt in a safer context. It has been suggested, however, that the move to online dating privileges mostly white cis-male members of the LGBTQ+ community while disadvantaging others, because on online platforms it becomes easier to discriminate against non-white and trans identifications. A growing body of work that researches the effect of online dating on people with disabilities shows that these communities, too, are affected by changing communication strategies involving the renegotiation of disclosure practices that further complicate

[21] Ceil Lucas*, Multilingual Aspects of Sociolinguistics in Deaf Communities,* (Washington, DC: Gallaudet University Press, 1996).

[22] Arlene Blumenthal Kelly, "Deaf HERstory," in *Open Your Eyes*, ed. Bauman, 259-60.

online communication.[23] Indeed, deaf persons might encounter two disadvantages during online dating: first, the move towards text-based dating disadvantages persons whose verbal communication predominantly relies on body language, facial expression, and verbal cues rather than on spoken words; second, deaf persons might feel apprehensive about disclosing their deaf identity out of fear of being discriminated against. Andrew Shield, in his study on discrimination on Grindr, discusses the case of a deaf person who relates that "some of his friends 'avoid using the words Deaf or Sign Language in their profiles' out of fear of being excluded".[24]

In the Netherlands, advocacy groups have begun to draw more attention to the effects of these intersecting identifications. The history of Bea Visser and *Roze Gebaar* shows that the discussion about the different experiences of LGBTQ+ people living with disabilities was already a pressing issue long before online dating became a widespread phenomenon. A similar conclusion was drawn by COC Netherlands in 2003. The COC conducted a research investigating the needs of LGBTQ+ people with mental or physical disabilities and concluded that there is a demand among this community for more opportunities to socialize and for better sexual education aimed specifically at their individual situations.[25] While issues of intersecting LGBTQ+ and disabled identifications in the Netherlands might have been present before the advent of online dating, only in recent years have the complexities of such intersections gained more widespread recognition, perhaps even because of an increased online visibility.

One of these, *AutiRoze* (AutiPink) tries to create safe spaces for LGBTQ+ persons on the autism spectrum by organizing monthly gatherings at which people can share stories

[23] For some more recent research, see Jitka Sinecka, "'I am Bodied'. 'I am Sexual'. 'I am Human'. Experiencing Deafness and Gayness: A Story of a Young Man," *Disability and Society* 23.5 (2008), 475-84; John R. Porter, et al., "Filtered Out: Disability Disclosure Practices in Online Dating Communities," *Proceedings of the ACM: Human-Computer Interaction* 1 (2017), 1-13; Andrew D. J. Shield, "Grindr Culture: Intersectional and Socio-Sexual," *Ephemera* 18.1 (2018), 149-61; Johnathan Smilges, "White Squares to Black Boxes: Grindr, Queerness, Rhetorical Silence," *Rhetoric Review* 38.1 (2019), 79-92.

[24] Shield, "Grindr Culture," 156.

[25] COC, "Gehandicapte homo's willen meer contact en informatie," 5 December 2004, https://www.coc.nl/jong-school/gehandicapte-homos-willen-meer-contact-en-informatie.

and experiences, but also by creating awareness and visibility of persons on the autism spectrum within the LGBTQ+ community.[26] Similar initiatives include the website *Zonder Stempel* (Without Label) for LGBTQ+ people with mental disabilities, and the working group *Homo en Handicap* (Gay and Handicapped) for people with physical disabilities.[27] These organizations respond to a growing call by LGBTQ+ persons with disabilities for care and information that is tailored to their specific needs. *Zonder Stempel*, for example, addresses people working in health care that might feel uncomfortable talking about the sexuality of their patients, or who are unfamiliar with the LGBTQ+ community at large. These initiatives have prompted us to look a little closer at recent developments in thinking about intersectionality. After all, the concept has become something of a buzzword in current Dutch debates on inclusivity, but putting insights that the notion of intersectionality has to offer into practice often proves easier said than done.

INTERSECTIONAL THEORY IN PRACTICE

Above we addressed the inaccessibility of the (gay male) dating scene for people with disabilities or other minoritizing identifications. Whether intentional or not, people who do not correspond to the norm of able-bodied, fit, white, and cisgender males will often experience exclusion and blatant discrimination in the gay dating scene.[28] The interventions of Deafies in Drag address some of these issues by trying to establish more understanding for deaf people in romantic situations. In a video published in September 2016, they humorously address some 'do's and don'ts' of dating a deaf person, the latter including covering your mouth with your hands while speaking.[29] This makes it impossible for your deaf date to lip-read what you are saying. This video, for example, flips the discussion and calls for more understanding for people with disabilities when dating. As they suggest, it is often the lack

[26] AutiRoze, "AutiRoze: van, voor en door LGBTI+ met autisme" (2019), https://www.autiroze.nl.

[27] COC, "Zonder Stempel" (2019), http://zonderstempel.coc.nl; COC Midden-Nederland, "Homo en Handicap" (no date, accessed 5 August 2019), http://www.cocmiddennederland.nl/homo-en-handicap.

[28] Sinecka "'I am Bodied'," 477; Porter, et al., "Filtered Out," 9; Shield, "Grindr Culture," 153-57; Smilges, "White Squares to Black Boxes," 90.

[29] Deafies in Drag, "The Do's and Don'ts: Dating Deafies," 16 September 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JXQaYnGi6qY.

of experience with and knowledge about dating people with disabilities that makes some uncertain of how to behave on a date or forego dating people with disabilities altogether.

Deafies in Drag, then, does not just reach the deaf community with their episodes.[30] As they emphatically act out their different identifications in their videos, they also speak to communities beyond those who are deaf or hard of hearing. The recent surge in popularity of drag performance, for example, gives them a means by which to reach able-bodied and relatively privileged sections of the LGBTQ+ community that would usually not encounter persons with disabilities through their normal dating practices or social networks. When Selena and Casavina from Deafies in Drag shared one of our blog posts, "#DeafiesInDrag #Challenges",[31] on their Facebook page it was accompanied by the following message:

> "Guess what?! We've been recognized by two students that are from Holland and they have written [a] prestigious article about us. This article talks about the complex of having multiple identities, in our case, being Latino, Gay, Deaf and Drag! This is something that confuses many people who follow the ideal "norm" society's rules. We are breaking barriers and we love Being who we are and proud of it!"[32]

Selena and Casavina have become role models both for deaf LGBTQ+, and deaf Latinx persons in particular, and actively contribute to creating understanding for intersecting identifications within the deaf community. However, they stress that this understanding is also not guaranteed in society in general. Marginalization and discrimination on multiple grounds is an issue that is gaining awareness yet is still an under-recognized problem. To deepen our understanding of the importance of intersectional role models such as Deafies in Drag, it is necessary to examine the ways in which 'intersectionality' as a theoretical

[30] While not on the scale of so-called influencers, Deafies in Drag have a significant online presence, boasting over 200,000 followers on their Facebook page, many of whom do not identify as deaf.

[31] Looi van Kessel and Nynke Feenstra, "#DeafiesinDrag #Challenges," *Leiden Arts in Society Blog,* 1 September 2016, https://www.leidenartsinsocietyblog.nl/articles/deafiesindrag-challenges.

[32] Quoted in Nynke Feenstra and Looi van Kessel, "Series Final: The Intersection of Multiple Minoritizing Identifications," 31 March 2017, https://www.leidenartsinsocietyblog.nl/articles/series-final-the-intersection-of-multiple-minoritizing-identifications.

tool was established and, consequently, how it manifests itself beyond academic debates within our wider society.

The concept of 'Intersectionality' was first introduced by legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989 to address the marginalization of black women within antidiscrimination laws, antiracist politics, and feminist theory. With her ground-breaking 1989 article and a subsequent article in 1991, Crenshaw established the beginnings of what would become an esteemed analytical tool, adapted by scholars across disciplines and across the globe. [33] In the introduction of a special issue of the *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race* (2013) on intersectionality, Crenshaw et al. argue that intersectionality is always a work-in-progress. An intersectional approach is 'necessarily particularized' in order to continue exploring other (and sometimes new) contexts.[34] In this article, for example, we focus on the intersection of deaf and LGBTQ+ identifications to seek a better understanding of the ways in which these two communities parallel and intersect. This fosters a deeper understanding of deaf and LGBTQ+ identifications, within and between these communities, and also beyond them.

A noteworthy example of the intersection of deaf and LGBTQ+ identities is *Queer ASL*, a programme that aims to create a safer space for hearing queer people to learn ASL. In 2009, Zoée Montpetit, a deaf queer person, began teaching sign language to her hearing friends from the queer community in Victoria, BC, Canada (and later in Vancouver, BC) in order to increase outsider access to the community. By now, their initiative has grown into a successful multi-level sign language course (1-4) and a network of deaf queer instructors.[35] The organization's importance is demonstrated by the fact that most sign instruction methods, just as other teaching methods, do not take into account the diversity

[33] Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics," *Univeristy of Chicago Legal Forum* 1 (1989), 139-67; Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review,* 43.6 (1991), 1241-99.

[34] Devon W. Carbado, et al., "Intersectionality: Mapping the Movements of a Theory," *Du Bois Review* 10.2 (2013), 303-12.

[35] *Queer ASL*, "How Did *Queer ASL* Start?" (2018), http://www.queerasl.com/how-queer-asl-began/.; "What is *Queer ASL*?" (2018), http://www.queerasl.com/what-is-queer-asl/.

Some videos are explicitly targeted at a hearing audience. Video: *The Do's and Don'ts: Dating Deafies*, ©Deafies in Drag, 2016

of those who use their manuals and methods. In a blog post from 2016, Alex Lu, a deaf queer person of colour, argues that one of the most-used methods of ASL instruction, Vista Signing Naturally, facilitates normative gender roles and sexual identifications by consistently featuring heteronormative examples or structuring assignments along binary gender divides. Furthermore, the creators of methods such as these are unaware that they have a queer target audience. Therefore, these methods fail to provide sign language speakers the vocabulary and means to talk about non-normative identifications. LGBTQ+ learners will not always identify with the examples or assignments, which may make them feel uncomfortable and alienated from their fellow learners.[36]

Among both deaf and hearing LGBTQ+ communities there is a growing interest in understanding one another and providing safe spaces for sign language learning. Besides learning sign language, the *Queer ASL* courses also provide information on Deaf culture (history,

[36] Alex Lu, "How the Deaf and Queer Communities are Tackling Oppression Together," *Medium*, 28 June 2016.

norms, identity politics).[37] According to Montpetit (quoted by Lu) queer people can relate to the experiences of deaf people: "There is a real sense of kinship, a desire to increase access, and an ability to understand how hearing people can oppress Deaf people, just like how straight people can oppress queer people".[38] Lu also mentions that the exposure of a large group of hearing queer people to ASL and Deaf culture has had an enormous impact on the accessibility of the queer community. *Queer ASL* graduates, for example, use their knowledge of deaf culture and ASL to increase the accessibility of queer spaces. In reverse, understanding the importance of queer-friendly ASL sends positive ripples into the deaf community as well.[39] *Queer ASL* thus shows how a particularized intersectional approach can foster a deeper understanding of deaf and LGBTQ+ identifications within and between communities.

These developments between deaf and hearing LGBTQ+ communities have also contributed to a wider debate on the lack of diversity among interpreters. According to Sara Gold, a white queer interpreter, recent theoretical assessments of interpreting substantiate that the values and identifications of interpreters inevitably influence the ways in which they receive and pass on information. The current increase of queer interpreters, stirred by *Queer ASL*, enables queer deaf people to have interpreters that mirror their own experiences. Similarly, it is important to have interpreters of colour: Lu illustrates this with an example of a Black Lives Matter panel in which a white interpreter translated the experiences and anger of black women.[40] *Queer ASL* thus shows that an intersectional approach can empower two communities to act together for acceptance, but also that this can lead to a deeper understanding of other contexts as well. Near the end of his blog post, Lu says: "While the movement towards increased interpreter diversity is challenging, it is extraordinarily important for Deaf people who stand at the intersection of multiple marginalized identities".[41]

[37] *Queer ASL*, "*Queer ASL* 101-104 Classes" (2018), http://www.queerasl.com/queer-asl/.

[38] Lu, "Deaf and Queer Communities."

[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid.

WHERE DEAF MEETS DRAG

The flight in popularity that drag culture has taken over the past ten years, combined with the ever-increasing availability of online access, has significantly transformed the ways in which the LGBTQ+ community engages with its own cultural production and politics.[42] Popular television shows such as *RuPaul's Drag Race* have driven an interest in drag culture that allows drag queens to set up successful YouTube channels, giving them both the opportunity to reach wider audiences beyond their local community and also transform how they communicate their art and activism. Deafies in Drag, too, have benefitted from the increased popularity of drag culture, as it has given them access to a platform with which they can reach both deaf and hearing queer audiences. In doing so, they have found a way to publicly bring their identifications as queer persons into conversation with their deaf identifications. Indeed, what makes their videos so attractive is the coincidence between drag culture and sign language that their videos showcase. That is, both parts of their identification — being a drag queen and being deaf — amplify each other as their style of drag works with, rather than against, their communication methods.

Already in her seminal books on gender performativity, Judith Butler recognized the way in which drag performance can challenge the perceived stability of gender categories.[42] By toying around with and exaggerating gendered stereotypes, drag queens draw attention to the fact that our everyday gendered behaviour is merely the performance of what is considered socially desirable. The convergence of drag performance with the visual-gestural language of signing makes this point even more apparent. Just as gender performativity operates on the indexicality of gestures and language — that is, certain gestures and words are associated with certain gender identities — so too does sign language often operate within the arbitrary relationship between certain signs and their meaning. These relationships often belie socially received notions of how men and women are supposed to dress

[42] Looi van Kessel, "Digital Drag: Queer Potentiality in the Age of Digital Television," in *Queer TV in the 21st Century: Essays on Broadcasting from Taboo to Acceptance*, ed. Kylo-Patrick R. Hart (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2016), 123-26.

[43] See Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 186-89; Judith Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'* (New York: Routledge, 1993), 121-40.

Selena, portraying a male persone, signs the word for gay. Video: *Deaf Coming Out*, ©Deafies in Drag, 2019

Selena's family misinterprets the sign as meaning that he wants to eat. Video: *Deaf Coming Out*, ©Deafies in Drag, 2019

and behave. For example, in Dutch Sign Language (Nederlandse Gebaren Taal), the sign for "woman" has the signer touch their earlobe as if to indicate the presence of an earring.

The arbitrariness of these gestures is amplified by Deafies in Drag's particular style of drag. They present themselves as comedy queens: drag queens who in a comedic fashion exaggerate gestures and make up styles to poke fun at gendered stereotypes. Their comedic style not only destabilizes gendered performance but also amplifies the arbitrary and indexical nature of many sign languages. This is often expressed in comedic sketches, such as that in the video titled "Deaf Coming Out".[43] In it, Casavina plays a young deaf man who

[44] Deafies in Drag, "Deaf Coming Out," 31 May 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M_KnDCbpESo&t=3s.

is coming out in front of his hearing family (played by both Selena and Casavina in drag). His family members, however, are still learning ASL and struggle with some of the signs Casavina uses. Thus, when Casavina uses the sign for 'gay', his family confuses it with the sign for 'eating', assuming that he is hungry, or even worse, that he might be vegan. The confusion that arises draws attention to the reality that the experience of coming out for a deaf person can be vastly different from those of hearing persons. In other videos, such as the one titled "Latinx", Selena and Casavina emphatically connect their experiences of being deaf and queer to their Lantinx identities.[44] The aforementioned video, "The Do's and Don'ts: Dating Deafies", and others like the one titled "ASL Dance", seem to be less about identifying as queer.[45] Instead, these videos address the complexities of navigating a predominantly hearing world as a deaf person, particularly on the dating scene. However, while in these videos Selena and Casavina's queer identities are foregrounded less, they continue to perform most of their roles in drag, and it is in their female personas that their facial expressions and body language seems to interact more profoundly with their use of ASL. The male personas, if they sign at all, are more subdued in their facial expressions and gestures. The contrast between their male and female personas draws more attention to the interaction of drag performance with deaf communication. Their play on gender expression through the art of drag creates a space in which queerness and deafness not only amplify, but also complement one another.

The comedy style of these videos is obviously meant to make its audience laugh, but it also points to a more serious issue that deaf LGBTQ+ persons struggle with: because of their intersecting identifications as both deaf and queer, their queerness could run the risk of getting lost in translation while they navigate a hearing world. The videos of Deafies in Drag also address the accessibility of the gay dating scene for deaf LGBTQ+ persons by situating a series of videos that address the do's and don'ts of dating in a queer setting. In doing so, Deafies in Drag cleverly adopt an intersectional approach to their art and activism. Their sketches highlight the fact that their identifications as deaf, gay, drag queens, and Latinx

[45] Deafies in Drag, "Latinx," 27 April 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G0BDnIXlohU.

[46] Deafies in Drag, "The Do's and Don'ts,"; Deafies in Drag, "ASL Dance,"1 August 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WwtRE7vpzjo.

are never fully separable, but always operate in relation to one another. These intersecting identifications result in unique situations that would not be as poignant had they focused only on their deaf, gay, or Latinx identities. Ultimately, it is at the intersection of their different identifications that Deafies in Drag make their art available to audiences that exist beyond any one of these identifications. It is herein that lies the hope that through their modes of communication, role models such as Deafies in Drag can continue to spark reflection on the ways in which deaf LGBTQ+ persons navigate both the deaf and hearing worlds differently.

Nynke Feenstra is an external PhD candidate at Leiden University and preparing a dissertation on the accessibility of museums for deaf people. Since 2013 she has been actively involved in the improvement of museum accessibility in the Netherlands through workshops, lectures, and consultancy. She conducts her activities in close collaboration with the Dutch deaf community, particularly through *Wat Telt!*. Furthermore, she has applied her knowledge of the Dutch deaf community and museum organizations in her teaching in the BA and MA Art History programmes at Leiden University.

Looi van Kessel has recently completed his doctorate at Leiden University in Comparative Literature with a dissertation on the post-war American author James Purdy. He is interested in the ways in which Purdy undermines narratives and fantasies of stable identities through aesthetic strategies such as melodrama and mise-en-scène. Looi has been a visiting scholar at Dartmouth College and the University of Texas at Austin and is an editor for the *Tijdschrift voor Genderstudies* (*Journal for Gender Studies*).

Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands