

MEANINGFUL TEXTS AND CREATIVE READINGS. GREEK ADAPTATIONS OF THE HOMERIC MYTHS FOR CHILDREN**Ioanna Kaliakatsou***University of AEGEAN, Greece*

The present study is based on a comparative examination of how the Homeric myth is perceived in adaptations for children. The study seeks to record how far the myth is removed from its Homeric roots and highlights the capacity of mythical content to be transformed and to absorb the pedagogical and ideological nuances of every age. Finally, it is assumed that the Homeric myth helps young readers to proceed with a critical reading and reinterpretation of poems.

Key words: adaptations; the Homeric myth; child reader; ideology.

Usually, when examining Homer adaptations, our attention turns to the relationship between the children's version and the original text. The author writing the adaptation, however, was initially a reader of the original text, as well as of a series of previous adaptations and literary studies. Thus, in many instances, what will guide the author's writing is that individual and very personal perception of the epic. At the same time, as an experienced reader, wishing to write for a reading audience of children, the author attempts to simplify the structure and language utilised in the text of the epic [17, p. 48]; intervenes in and in many instances censors the original text [21, p. 27]; includes cultural context [23, p. 4]; and calculates for the double reading direction of children's texts [24, p. 35].

While authors writing for adults have the privilege of saying the same thing in a variety of different ways, when writing for children, writers are limited, frequently selecting the manner which they consider will serve their communication goal better. As Peter Hunt [9, p. 157], Roderick McGillis [16, p. 202], Jill May [15, p. 18] and others have pointed out, adults write books for children, attempting to shape the child inside the world, as adults would conceive it to be. Jacqueline Rose clearly states that: "Children's fiction sets up a world in which the adult comes first (author, maker, giver) and the child comes after (reader, product receiver) but where neither of them enter the space in between... It is not an issue here of what the child wants, but of what the adult desires – desires in the very act of construing the child as the object of its speech. Children's fiction draws in the child, it secures, places and frames the child" [20, p. 2]. Consequently, "interventions" practised on the epic by authors of adaptations can be explained to a very great extent on the basis of the effort it takes to adapt a classical text which is for adults to a new environment, that of a child reader, and to render it to the child not as it really is, but as adults believe they wish it to be. A comparative examination of how the Homeric myth is perceived in adaptations for children, attempted in the present study, seeks to record how far the myth is removed from its Homeric roots and highlights the capacity of mythical content to be transformed and to absorb the pedagogical and ideological nuances of every age. In the present study typical examples, books published in Greece by well-known and well-established educators / authors of children's books on different areas will be examined.

Homeric myth and the pedagogical agenda over the final decades of the 19th century

In certain books that are thematically related to the *Iliad*, the authors adapting the texts have put a certain distance between themselves and the Homeric epic, drawing their subjects from the wide range of literary products that has processed the Trojan myth, differentiating the 'official' image of the Homeric Odysseus and formulating a morally distorted hero. The *Iliad* by Em. Galanis was first published in 1882, while the book *Diegemata kath' Omeron kai tragikous* [Tales from Homer and the tragedians] by P. Oikonomou had its second edition in 1880 and had been in print for at least twenty years [2, pp. 338, 396]. The book's reception by the reading public of the time was also so positive that the author referred to it in his prologue as a 'triumph' and felt the need to express his gratitude to his teachers [19, p. 5]. Both authors did not intend to produce a revision of the Homeric myths, but rather to operate in a didactic manner and to apply specific educational goals, such as understanding abstract ideas using images and building moral fortitude to defend all individuals from their passions.

For the purposes of the present study, it should be noted that in the eyes of his ancient creator Odysseus appeared heroic, with qualities that included inventiveness, patient fortitude in the face of misfortune, skepticism; and he is described with a host of other qualities being a conqueror, resourceful, strong, mild-mannered to his people, beloved by his companions [3, p. 134], having a 'balanced harmony in all virtues' according to Olga Komnenou-Kakridi [13, pp. 283–287]. Analyzing the first verse of the *Odyssey* semantically, I. Kakridi mentioned that the poet presents Odysseus as '*polytropo*' which 'does not mean disjunctively either far traveled or well-informed or clever or cunning, but rather means far traveled and well -informed and clever and cunning' [12, p. 70].

In the books we examine, the manner in which Odysseus deals with Tyndareus, the father of Helen, becomes the starting point revealing a misbegotten and malicious personality. After fair Helen has been seized, Odysseus attempts to get out of his oath to provide assistance to whichever suitor Helen selects for her husband [7, p. 196]; he attempts to fool the emissary and to avoid involvement in the war. The narrator in E. Galanis' book mentions that he conceived a 'cunning' plan to avoid the expedition [5, p.24]. This disengages Odysseus from the position of a hero. His unconventional action is connected to a weak soul, which seeks to avoid the war by using tricks. The narrator in P. Oikonomou's book mentions that he 'feigned madness' [19, p. 16]. Odysseus is reshaped into a mediocrity of doubtful moral worth, who became a hero by chance, through his instinct for survival.

Up to this point the hero is shadowed by his weak moral fibre. The hatred, however, that he expresses from that moment on for Palamedes, the emissary of the Atreides, is indicative of an individual whose motivation is shadowy, who is vengeful and thinks and acts without moral impediment and boundaries.

The positive image gained about Palamedes also contributes to the gradual demythologizing of Odysseus. In his book E. Galanis mentions that he is the one who invented 'dice and the beads of the abacus' [5, p. 39] and he is deemed 'a wise man', with virtuous motives [19, p. 30]. In contrast Odysseus 'hated Palamedes, first because he exposed his feigned madness, and then because in each instance Palamedes was distinguished for his wisdom, casting his shadow over the glory of Odysseus' [19, p. 30]. In presenting the various versions of the myth, P. Grimal noted that 'The death of Palamedes became the proverbial unjust death, due to the machinations of evil men against someone who was superior to them' [7, p. 523]. Thus Palamedes, a victim to Odysseus false pride was traduced by Odysseus and was stoned to death [5, p. 41]. Odysseus, a sympathetic figure in the Homeric epics was set aside in these texts for children and replaced by a small-

minded individual who is full of cruelty; who plots, undermines his competitor Palamedes, and takes his revenge.

The abandonment of Philoctetes on Lemnos is utilized to attempt a new characterization of Odysseus with a new form of accusation. The stench of Philoctetes' wound leads Odysseus and the Atreides to an inhuman act: 'to remove the noble hero from the army, who suffered dealing with public matters' [19, p. 24, 25]. The narrator attempts to embellish this excerpt with many sentimental expressions about Philoctetes, who was 'abandoned and forgotten by men' [19, p. 25]. After the death of Achilles, the author returns to the same topic, as set by the myth. The meeting of Neoptolemus – Odysseus – Philoctetes is presented briefly. Odysseus embodies the type of the cynical pragmatist, who would utilize any means to achieve his goal and advises Neoptolemus to castigate him in order to persuade an embittered Philoctetes to join them at war. Neoptolemus resists the advice of Odysseus and as 'a man, direct and just, showed mercy to the suffering man and revealed the deceit' [19, p. 131]. The behavior of Neoptolemus counterbalances the degenerate speech given by Odysseus, who is forced to flee in terror [19, p. 131]. The choice made by Odysseus to flee, registers once more his downward spiral.

These children's texts incorporate different passages from the mythic tradition to shatter the myth of Homeric Odysseus. He is an opportunist, who takes advantage of situations to benefit himself. A typical example concerns the claims on Achilles' armor put forward by Ajax and Odysseus after his death. In the *Odyssey*, when Odysseus meets Ajax in the Nether World, the latter appears to be still embittered by the decision of the Trojans and the goddess Athena.

In the text by P. Oikonomou the selection falls to the imprisoned Trojans in order to maintain the unity of the army. The text states that the Trojans 'Mainly voted in favor of Ajax. But the Atreides, jealous of Ajax's greatness, tampered with the vote. The entire army found this suspect, and this was also hinted by Ajax [19, p. 125]. The rigging of the vote by the Atreides, and the obvious injustice perpetrated against Ajax, as well as the acceptance of a trophy through nefarious means, weigh exclusively against Odysseus. The fact that he accepts and tolerates all this designates, even if in an indirect manner, the moral quagmire in which Odysseus found himself.

The clarity with which the narrative distributes blame and sets boundaries on the roles of perpetrators and victims creates a basic question that touches on both authors. Why, even though they support the pedagogic appropriateness of their stories with such passion [5, p. 3], do they portray Odysseus, one of the central personages of the Trojan myth, as somebody who commits such immoral acts? Both authors did their postgraduate work in Germany and had absorbed Herbart's pedagogical concepts, promoting Homer and the ancient authors as suitable reading matter for children [18, p. 110]. By adding topics from the literary processing of the Homeric myth, the authors expose the reader to various versions of the myth of Odysseus, while at the same time attempting to control the narrative and pillory his unsuitable actions and immoral behavior. The negative narrative judgments, their Spartan phrasing, or their sentimental explanations are all in line with the narrative zeal to guide emotions to the appropriate moral response and comprehension of abstract moral concepts. Being bound by a holy oath, solidarity with a fellow soldier and fair play are some of the lessons gained by readers following the actions and work of Odysseus during the Trojan War. Odysseus, at least as presented by Homer, may be lost in these books for children and replaced by an amoral hero, however he continues to provide useful life lessons to children.

Signs of childhood, the power of adulthood: a retelling published in 1931

If classic children's literature and fairy tales are the most overtly didactic of the genre, the retelling by D. E. Akritas of the Homeric myth for children constitutes a

characteristic example. The author borrows a young Achilles from a wide-ranging mythological tradition and invents childlike behaviour by Telemachus and Odysseus' mythical crew. Worth mentioning here is a valid observation by a previous researcher of fairy tales, who mentions that heroes in folk tales were changed into children when the narrative tradition of storytelling fell to women [14, p. 100]. This procedure, of creating a removal from a Homeric myth and adapting its characters to the nature and characteristics of the implied reader, produced the result that familiar characters from Homer lost some of their heroic symbolism and formed a break between childhood and adulthood. The young characters in the text occupy the object position and are directed by adult subjects in order to "teach" the child reader that needs the adult guidance and protection.

D. E. Akritas's book *Omerou Iliada kai Odyssea Eklekta meri gia paidia (Homer's Iliad and Odyssey, Selections for children)* was first published in 1931 and then republished with slightly tinted illustrations in 1982 by the publisher "Aster". At the time it was written, in the nineteen thirties, progressive intellectuals were setting aside the austere moral-forming catechism connected with the systems of Herbart, and had begun to be interested in the child itself and its psychology [22, p. 94–124]; they were perceiving the relationship between a children and an adult as "the plant accepting the sun". A typical example is the tome *How to raise our children* by Ferrière Ad., which was translated into Greek and published in 1926. The author opined:

"The parents must themselves have a wealth of good emotions, a wealth of willpower and a wealth of judgement, so that these merits can provide light and warmth for their children. The children must accept this light and warmth, as a plant accepts the sun and then, spontaneously, their emotions become finer, their willpower is strengthened, their judgement becomes ever clearer and more fair" [4, p. 19]. The writer D. Akritas attempted to recreate the world of the epics in the terms of his own age and to delineate the limits and capabilities of a child within the world of adults. Homer's epics were for him the most fertile example of injecting an imaginative voice into his pedagogically motivated narrative.

In the text, the story of Achilles does not commence with his rage at Agamemnon, but many years before, at the Palace in Phthia, where his mother, Thetis, takes steps to make him immortal. This is a version of the story that does not appear in Homeric myth, but was elaborated by the *Epic Cycle*, a collection of epics, of which only a few verses are preserved to this day and which were written in the seventh and sixth centuries BC. This was also the topic of *Achilleis*, an epic poem by the Roman poet Statius [7, p.134–135, 792]. The author borrowed elements from the wide-ranging and multi-faceted tradition of Trojan myths and created two conflicting images of the hero: the first, which shows him as a child, moving according to the choices made by his parents; the second, that of the *Iliad*, which shows him as a mature man, a hero, obedient to the twists of fate and willing to sacrifice himself on the altar of friendship. If one thing led to this writing choice, it was the challenge of creating a character that would be close to the young reader and would guide the latter into specific positions and behaviour. W. Iser noted that, in many instances, writers attempt to transfer an experience and mainly a position about an experience by organising degrees of relationship between the reader and the character [11, p. 291]. Such an observation is not unknown in the theory of Children's Literature, as it has been noted that one of the basic features distinguishing a text as being a children's book is the existence of the element of childlike heroes [9, p. 47]. Young readers of D. Akritas's book can identify with young Achilles, because they can recognise in him the traits of their age group, though they are combined with manliness and courage.

Young Achilles, like all children, is entranced by Peleus' tales of the Argonautic Expedition. He is enchanted by the passion and heroism of the Argonauts and is in a hurry to grow up to be like them. The texts present young Achilles being carried away by Peleus'

narrative and saying: “Won’t there be a time come when I, too, can do great deeds and gain glory, as well?” [1, p. 10].

The hero’s childhood is set before the reader. His parents are protective, tender, with an abiding and pure love that seeks to protect him from the danger of the expedition. In their attempts to avoid the first teenage rebellion, they hide the real reason why they are sending him to Scyros. The text mentions that “They didn’t tell him the truth, because they knew he wouldn’t listen to them. They wrought a fiction, persuaded him to dress in women’s garb and sent him to the palace of Lycomedes, who reigned on Scyros” [1, p. 14]. Peleus and Thetis were motivated by their excessive zeal to protect the youth from the unwelcome news of the oracle which foretold his death at Troy, because they realised he was still immature. Achilles, on the other hand, who dreamt of being like the Argonauts, imagines himself triumphant in the field of battle, but is still too young to go against the wishes of his parents. In a world he does not yet fully understand, he follows those he trusts, even though he wants to escape their shackles.

The narrator attempts to preserve Achilles’ honour, while, at the same time, attempting to delineate a hero that will be close to his implied readers, both in age and in behaviour. From this perspective one can also explain how certain feminine features are attributed to his figure. “As Achilles was still a beardless youth, dressed in women’s clothes he was no different than the other girls. He was blond and went by the name of Pyrrha” [1, p. 14]. Achilles is thus placed at a stage of development where his body has not yet started undergoing the normal changes that mark the end of childhood.

Moreover, the manner in which he reacts to Odysseus, when the latter recognizes him, is indicative of the awkwardness and naiveté of his thought processes. “How do you know that I am Achilles?” [1, p. 14]. On being informed by Odysseus, his reactions are nothing like those of the hero of the *Iliad*. When Achilles is informed about what has happened, “he started to be ashamed and blushed” [1, p. 15]. Despite the fact that he tears his dresses and announces “[...] I am not a girl. I will go”, he first returns to Phthia, to ask permission from Peleus, which in turn is granted [1, p. 16]. His furious tirade to his father is indicative of the fitful reaction of a proud youth, when the choices made by his parents offended his dignity and his pride. The young hero protests: “Father, you didn’t give me that kind of an upbringing, nor did Chiron! Better to die young, celebrated and famous for my bravery, than to live a thousand years unheard of and despised” [1, p. 16].

The author, in adapting the epic, had in mind both children and Homer. Presenting the childish nature of Achilles, he extended the text in order to provide an opportunity for young readers to identify with the hero. The untried youth described by Akritas, aflame with the passion to do manly deeds, foreshadows the skilful warrior that Homer tells took part in the expedition to Troy. His obedience to and respect for his parents are the reflection of his youth. Thus the heroic model is not negated by the book; it is simply diminished and put off till adulthood.

Correspondingly, in the adaptation of the *Odyssey*, several characters in the epic display weakened judgement and reasoning compared to what is expected of adults. They adopt the position of children who need guidance from Odysseus, who acts out the role of an adult. The mythical crew behaves in an entirely childish manner, appearing incapable of regulating its future, unstable and frivolous, seeking and needing the guidance of a more adult environment.

The companions of Odysseus appear linguistically deficient, speaking in a “childlike” language. The manner in which they attempt to persuade him to leave the cave of Polyphemus immediately is typical. According to the text, they say: “then we’ll come back and take the baby kids and the baby lambs from their pens and we’ll lead them to the

sea shore, then we'll put them in our swift ships and then we'll set sail right away for home" [1, p. 106].

Their simplistic, sweet and "childlike" manner of speaking immediately refers readers to specific age groups. What is intimated by such linguistic usage is that not only is the companion's speech "childlike", their behaviour is as well. The manner in which they behave indicates a frivolous and naïve reading of situations, which misinterprets or abuses the meaning of hospitality. The third-person, all-knowing narrator must needs intervene, in order to overturn these mistaken ideas. The person of Odysseus is formed through the distance he has from a childlike stance taken by his companion. Thus the narrator presents Odysseus objecting to and criticising his companions' idea stating: "Odysseus, however, didn't want to hear of it. He thought it was despicable to steal like a thief into the cave and take the giant's belongings without first seeing whether Polyphemus would receive him in friendship, and wanted to give other gifts in return for the wheat and wine he would receive" [1, p. 106].

The crew's journey also highlights that they are children of impulse, in the sense of dynamism, experimentation, and instability. On their mythical voyage, Odysseus' companions appear as an amalgam of adults and children. They are like children listening to fairy tales, afraid to walk by themselves, but they also lie to play with fire. This quality typifies the moves they make and is the source of their actions. Contrasting with the epic, in the text they appear to be solely responsible for the seizure and looting of Ismara, the city of the Cicones, indifferent to Odysseus' advice [1, p. 102].

Their behaviour creates the impression of adults who do not wish to grow up. Their impulsive and thoughtless nature may make them victims of their own innocence. When Eurylochus persuades the rest to break their promise to Odysseus and slay the Cattle of the Sun, "he committed a deed that was completely uncalled-for, as he was apt to do" [1, p. 134]. In contrast, Odysseus represents the protection and guidance shown by an adult in his relationship with a child. Throughout the dangerous voyage, his thoughts are occupied with the protection of his companions, and this sets his stance. When his companions provoke him with their behaviour, he criticizes them harshly and reprimands them. Consequently, in the text his paternalistic form appears to censure his companions when they break their oath and slay the Cattle of the Sun. According to the text: "One by one, he brought each of his sailors to task, but it was way too late" [1, p. 136].

This differentiation in the degree of maturity between Odysseus and his companions is also presented in the manner in which they express their emotions or display their remorse. Their emotionally impulsive reactions and genuine expressions of remorse that follow are indicative of individuals who are not yet able to use logic, and do not confront events with calm and maturity commensurate with their age. When they are in danger, in the land of the Lotus Eaters, they cannot perceive it, and react by crying to their adult guardian, Odysseus: "Odysseus dragged them away by force, because they cried and did not want to go" [1, p. 103]. Just like children, Odysseus' companions appear to have an inborn purity and seek the reassurance of love or pity after each thoughtless action. They externalise emotions by crying, which in the tale constitutes yet another characteristic of childlike behaviour. Their lament, after they have opened Aeolus' bag of winds, expresses that they are conscious of the disaster they have brought on and have a sense that they have committed a wrong. "When Odysseus' men saw their homeland disappearing once more on the horizon so that it could only just be seen as a small speck on the windswept sea, they began to weep" [1, p. 117].

What we observe in this retelling is that Odysseus keeps his distance from the rest, where genuine expression of pain or joy is concerned. The hero appears to have controlled participation; his psyche is isolated and barred from the rest.

To be concise, we would say that this antithetical structure of the narrative between Achilles' childhood and maturity, and the distinction between Odysseus and the other characters aim to transfer a message from the experience of Troy. The child reader may grow to like the frivolous mythical crew and may be charmed by Achilles' childlike demeanour, recognising certain of the traits of the child's own age group, but cannot, in the end, fully identify with them, because they are unable to control situations. For D. Akritas, this children's book was a means and Homeric myth constituted an example to pass a clear message to his young readers: That in a world full of challenges and dangers, they are duty-bound to obey adults, because of the latter's unfailing emphasis on logic, the fighting spirit they show and the security they embody.

Challenging the critical thought of the young reader: a contemporary comic book

The four-volume paperback comic series *I Odysseia tou Odyssea me sintrofo ton Karagiozi* [The Odyssey of Odysseus accompanied by Karagiozis] by Panagiotis Giokas is also particularly interesting. This "Odyssey" freely improvises, blending techniques from comics, the storyline from the epic poem with Karagiozis, the main hero of Shadow Theater in Greece, and a traditional folk hero. Homer's epic poem is adapted and narrated by Karagiozis, a typical grotesque. Karagiozis tells his children the story of the *Odyssey*, from his very limited perspective. This bald, barefoot, cunning rogue, the ever-hungry Karagiozis, becomes a companion of the long-suffering voyager as well as a narrator/commentator who wreaks havoc on the myth of Odysseus.

The social differences and inequities that shadow both the past when the *Odyssey* was written, as well as the present when the narrative is being told are uncovered and revealed to the reader. 'I long for my palace', says Odysseus. And Karagiozis responds: 'What do I have to long for? My shack?' [6, Vol. 1, p. 49]. How the secondary characters, Odysseus' companions, experienced the *Odyssey* was an unknown facet of the story, and as Panagiotis Giokas leaves us to suspect, the tale was warped in the telling. The marginal figure of Karagiozis casts doubt on the very definite and culturally defined person of Odysseus, even while remaining under his influence. He is a follower, a "manikin" being sarcastic about one of the most popular figures of Greek mythology, a brash and clever individual. Before reaching the island of Laistrygones, Odysseus tells his companion: 'Seven days and seven nights we've fought the sea and have yet to see land...', and Karagiozis responds: 'When we reach Ithaca you should see an eye doctor' [6, Vol. 2, p. 35]; or on meeting the swineherd, Eumaeus, the dramatic nature of the story invented by *Odyssey* concerning how the fields of the Egyptians were looted and their wives carried away brings on another interjection by Karagiozis who whispers aside: 'You're getting too tragic, cut something out' [6, Vol. 3, p. 24].

The reader may possibly react, be taken aback or bothered by the narrative, but also perceives and is frequently satisfied by the criticism, sharp and to the point, levelled by Karagiozis at Odysseus. When they reach the island of Ithaca, even though they are both unaware they have finally reached their goal, Odysseus wonders about the Phaeacians: 'Have they left us all the gifts? ... we should count them and see whether anything is missing!', while Karagiozis attempts to drag him back to the main purpose: 'Forget about the junk metal and let's see what we're going to do' [6, Vol. 3, p. 17]. The excerpts denounce Odysseus' greed, in a perhaps simplistic manner. P. Giokas utilized figures from the past to validate the epic world with their presence, while at the same time attempting to connect them to the contemporary world, prodding the reader to wonder about the image of the hero, and how the reader has perceived him through successive readings of the *Odyssey*.

The adaptor have utilized these character types, who are the warped imitation of warriors, in order to proceed with a pointed and derisive critique of the disposition of the characters in the epic and to entertain the reader with their conduct. The carnival spirit

undermines and ruptures the resilient shell of the heroic epic and helps the young reader to proceed with a critical reading and re-interpretation of the poem.

Rewriting Homeric myth in children books, these authors took a two-directional course: they commenced from the needs of their own time and sought recourse in myth, then laid their foundations in the protean elasticity of Homeric myth in order to recreate the heroes of the epic into vehicles for the self-representation of the society of their times. During the 19th century the educators sought to guide students into seeking what was right, moral and true. During the thirties, the author taught the young readers that in a world full of challenges and dangers, they were duty bound to obey adults, because of their unfailing emphasis on logic, the fighting spirit they showed and the security they embodied. Today the authors are trying to provoke thought, to articulate skepticism about the original messages of antiquity or the meaning of contemporary life. Homeric myth was the ideal example for young readers as it melded the substance of the Ancient Greek world with the explorations of the present. Thus a question arises in the recipient's consciousness concerning Homeric myth being lost and then being brought back, always current in education and culture.

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БАГАТОЗНАЧНИЙ ТЕКСТ ТА КРЕАТИВНЕ ЧИТАННЯ. ГРЕЦЬКІ АДАПТАЦІЇ ГОМЕРІВСЬКИХ МІФІВ ДЛЯ ДІТЕЙ

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Як засоби сучасної ідеології, казки та міфи відображають зумовлені культурою цінності дитинства, й у своєму жанрі – найвідвертіше повчальні. Своє дослідження ми ґрунтуємо на порівняльному вивченні того, як гомерівський міф сприймається в адаптаціях для дітей. Гомерівський міф віддаляється від гомерівських коренів. Це свідчить про здатність міфічного змісту перетворюватися та вбирати в себе педагогічні й ідеологічні особливості кожної епохи. За останні десятиліття XIX ст. тексти розвинули питання про аморальність природи Одисея та характеризуються моральною доктриною. У 1930-ті роки міф віддаляється від гомерівського коріння і наповнюється зображенням молодого й незрілого Ахілла, а також дитячої поведінки товаришів Одисея. Молоді персонажі займають у тексті позицію об'єктів і скеровуються суб'єктами-дорослими. Молодий Ахілл втрачає велич героя, яку подає Гомер, слухає батьківської поради і перетворюється на потенційного героя, а товариші Одисея, через свою дитячу поведінку й непослух до лідера, йдуть назустріч нещастю. Дитина-читач може співчувати легковажній міфічній команді та бути зачарованою дитячістю Ахілла, але не перейматиме їхньої позиції, бо вони не здатні контролювати ситуації. У ширшому контексті сучасних письменників, які вітають складніше залучення молодих читачів, ми спостерігаємо, що книга Гіока зриває з центральних гомерівських персонажів стійкий образ героїчного ідеалу й допомагає молодому читачеві критично читати та по-іншому зрозуміти поему. Гомерівський міф – ідеальний приклад для молодого читача, де поєднано старогрецький світ із сучасністю.

Ключові слова: адаптація; гомерівський міф; читач-дитина; ідеологія.