Lisa Dunbar Solas, "Entry on: The Odyssey Told to Children [La Odisea Contada a los Niños] by Rosa Navarro Durán , Francesc Rovira", peer-reviewed by Elizabeth Hale and Elżbieta Olechowska. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2021). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/1332. Entry version as of November 21, 2026.

Rosa Navarro Durán , Francesc Rovira

The Odyssey Told to Children [La Odisea Contada a los Niños]

Spain (2007)

TAGS: Anaximander Greek Philosophy Pericles Socrates





We are still trying to obtain permission for posting the original cover.

General information	
Title of the work	The Odyssey Told to Children [La Odisea Contada a los Niños]
Country of the First Edition	Spain
Country/countries of popularity	Albania, Argentina, Canada-Quebec, Italy, México, Turkey
Original Language	Spanish
First Edition Date	2007
First Edition Details	Rosa Navarro Durán, *La Odisea Contada a los Niños*. Spain: Edebé, 224 pp.
ISBN	9788423693214
Official Website	Book's profile on the publisher's website (accessed: August 12, 2021).
Genre	Chapter book*, Illustrated works
Target Audience	Children
Author of the Entry	Lisa Dunbar Solas, OMC contributor, drlisasolas@ancientexplorer.com.au
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This Project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme under grant agreement No 681202, *Our Mythical Childhood… The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges*, ERC Consolidator Grant (2016–2021), led by Prof. Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" of the University of Warsaw.

Creators



Rosa Navarro Durán by Javierfresan. Retrieved from Wikimedia Commons, licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0 (accessed: February 7, 2022).

Rosa Navarro Durán , b. 1947
(Author)

Rosa Navarro Durán is a philologist and Professor of Spanish Literature at the University of Barcelona. Navarro was born in Figueras, a town located in the Gerona province, Catalonia, in 1947. She has enjoyed a long and distinguished career, making important contributions to the study of Spanish Literature, Classics and Education.*

For more than 30 years, Navarro has published extensively on Classics-related topics and has adapted classical texts for children. In 1996, she published the book, *¿Por qué hay que leer los clásicos?*, which examines why classical texts should be read in the modern age. Meanwhile, she has also strongly advocated for their adaptation. As she highlighted,** these texts are widely recognised as important but few can access them because of cultural and language barriers. For Edebé's *Classics Told to Children Collection*, Navarro wrote 13 adaptations of classical texts for children, including *La Ilíada* (2018), and *La Odisea Contada a los Niños* (2007). These books were illustrated by Francesc Rovira.

Throughout her career, Navarro has held a number of distinguished positions in organisations and committees related to education. Between 2001 and 2005, she was the coordinator of Philology and Philosophy for Administración Nacional de Educación Pública (ANEP). Then, between 2005 and 2009, she was the president of the Humanities Commission for teacher evaluation for La Agencia Nacional de Evaluación de la Calidad y Acreditación (ANECA). ANECA is the governmental body which is responsible for the planning and regulation of the Spanish education system. Subsequently, until 2014, she was a member of the Catalan University Quality Assurance Agency's (AQU) Commision for the Evaluation of Research in Humanities.

For 19 years, Professor Navarro was on the panel for several prestigious awards. Between 2001 and 2020, she was on the panel for the "Princess of Asturias and Cervantes Awards". The Foundation honours individuals and organisations for their achievements in Public

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Affairs, Science, or Humanities. At the same time, she was also on the panel for the Edebé prize for Youth Literature. Between 2008 and 2020, she was also a panelist for the Gerardo Diego Prize for literary research.

In 2019, she was awarded the International Jovellanos Essay Prize for her work, Secretos a voz, which was first published in 1994 and celebrated its 25th edition in 2019.

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* Fresán, Javier, "Rosa Navarro Durán. De la mano del Lazarillo", Revista Clarín, 2008, p. 38 (accessed: June 20, 2021).

** Navarro Durán, Rosa, "¿Por qué adaptar a los clásicos?", Revista TK, núm. 18, 2006, 17.

Sources:

Author's profile on Edebe Group (accessed: August 12, 2021).

Author's profile on Wayback Machine (accessed: August 12, 2021).

Bio prepared by Lisa Dunbar Solas, independent researcher, drlisasolas@ancientexplorer.com.au

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Francesc Rovira , b. 1958
(Illustrator)

Francesc Rovira is an illustrator, who specialises in children's literature. He was born in Barcelona in 1958 and studied at the School of Art and Crafts (Artes y Oficios) in Barcelona. In 1982, he was commissioned by the Barcanova publishing house to illustrate his first book. Since then, he has made a significant contribution to children's

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fiction, illustrating for magazines and book publishers. To date, he has illustrated more than 370 books. For the company Edebé, Rovira has illustrated 13 books for their collection "Classics Told to Children", including *La Odisea*. He has also illustrated educational games for Educa.

Previously, Rovira has worked for various newspapers, including El País, the Spanish daily newspaper. Meanwhile, he has also worked for "El Tatano", a magazine aimed at young children around 4 years of age. The educational magazine is centred on the character El Tatano. He occasionally contributes to "Cavall Fort", a similar magazine aimed at older children, featuring the character, Cavall, who is the older brother of El Tatano.

Rovira has exhibited as a solo artist and also contributed to group exhibitions. These have included published and unpublished works. Meanwhile, he has also been awarded twice La Comisión Católica Española de la Infancia Prize (CCEI), one of the oldest and prestigious in Spain.

Sources:

Author's website (accessed: August 12, 2021).

Author's Instagram (accessed: August 12, 2021).

Author's profile on Edebe Group (accessed: August 12, 2021).

Bio prepared by Lisa Dunbar Solas, independent researcher, drlisasolas@ancientexplorer.com.au

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Additional information

Summary

La Odisea Contada a los Niños (*La Odisea*) is an adaptation of *The Odyssey*, the classical Greek epic poem by Homer. The illustrated chapter book narrates the adventures of Ulysses ("Ulises" in Spanish), the king of Ithaca, on his long and treacherous journey home from Troy after successfully winning the war against the Trojans. Ulysses faces many challenges on his journey. He battles with supernatural, terrible and ghastly monsters and creatures, loses members of his crew and his possessions, but still he perseveres, motivated by the desire to see his wife Penélope and their son, Telemachus (Telemaco in Spanish) again. Meanwhile, Telemachus searches for news of his father. *La Odisea* is divided into 37 short chapters.

Analysis

The adaptation of *La Odisea* is based on a close reading of the Homeric poem. While it is written in clear and modern prose, its plotline remains faithful to the original narrative. When compared with other Spanish adaptations, its fidelity is a distinctive quality. For example, in a more recent adaptation by Shackleton Books, the original plotline is streamlined; the role of Telemachus, for example, is reduced. The narrative concentrates primarily on the journey of Ulysses, the Greek hero.

As a "trained reader" who has extensive knowledge in classical studies, Navarro acts as the modern reader's guide on Ulysses' journey. The adaptation provides additional details about the classical world when appropriate. Therefore, the modern reader requires no prior knowledge of Ancient Greece and can easily follow the plotline, while also understanding the emotions, motives, and gradual transformation of the main characters. The narrative's structure and style correlates with Navarro's views regarding the purpose of adaptation. As she has argued previously, "[...] neither the reading ability of children or adolescents, nor their knowledge of the language allow them to read, neither with pleasure nor with use, a good part of our classics, as many were written in a language that is not exactly the same as the one we use now, as it has lexical or syntactic variants typical of its time; or simply, by its very condition as a work of art, which tells us about its stylistic beauty, its complexity; and thus, enjoying it supposes an already trained reader" (translated by L. Dunbar).*

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La Odisea affords the Spanish-speaking reader the opportunity to explore the world evoked by Homer in his poem. As Hall highlights, Homer creates a "strong visual" world, which offers "an astonishing variety of sensory experience."** Navarro and Rovira vividly bring this world to life. In particular, Rovira utilises a naturalistic illustration style to animate important facets of everyday and religious life in ancient Greece. For example, *La Odisea* portrays the active role deities played in the lives of the ancient Greek, communicating through portents and omens. The gods were perceived as "greater" and "more knowledgeable" than humans and therefore, exercised influenced over their decisions and actions.*** In *La Odisea*, the gods oversee, influence and create challenges on Ulysses' journey, which can be thought of as an ancient transitional rite of initiation.**** Notably, Rovira draws heavily on the natural world to depict this dimension of the story. In particular, deities are frequently represented as meteorological phenomena as opposed to personifying them as the Ancient Greeks often did in their art. For example, on numerous occasions, Zeus, the sky god and the supreme ancient Greek deity, is depicted as lightning and thunder and also violent storms.***** This illustration style helps the reader to begin to understand the causal relationship between the gods, nature and people, while enjoying Ulysses' journey.

The book is an engaging adaptation of the classical epic poem, affording Spanish-speaking children the opportunity to step into the ancient Greek world created in the Homeric poem and follow Ulysses as he returns home to his family.

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* Navarro Durán, Rosa, "¿Por qué adaptar a los clásicos?", *Revista TK* 18 (2006): 18.

** Hall, Edith, *The Return of Ulysses: A Cultural History of Homer's Odyssey*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2008, 11.

*** Sissa, Guilia and Marcel Detienne, *The Daily Life of the Greek Gods*, Stanford University Press, 2000, 28.

**** Hall, Edith, *The Return of Ulysses*, op. cit.

***** Navarro Durán, Rosa, "¿Por qué adaptar a los clásicos?", op. cit., 76, 136.

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Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Anaximander Greek Philosophy Pericles Socrates
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth Culture	Coming of age Humanity Individuality Intellect Knowledge Love Religious beliefs Science Students Subjectivity Teachers Utopia and dystopia
Further Reading	Fresán, Javier, "Rosa Navarro Durán. De la mano del Lazarillo", *Revista Clarín*, 2008 (accessed: June 20, 2021). Hall, Edith, *The Return of Ulysses A Cultural History of Homer's Odyssey*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2008. Navarro Durán, Rosa, "¿Por qué adaptar a los clásicos?", *Revista TK* 18 (2006): 17–26. Sissa, Guilia and Marcel Detienne, *The Daily Life of the Greek Gods*, Stanford University Press, 2000.

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