Miriam Riverlea, "Entry on: Aesop's Fables [Le favole di Esopo] by Manuela Adreani ", peer-reviewed by Elizabeth Hale and Elżbieta Olechowska. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2020). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/987. Entry version as of October 30, 2026.

Manuela Adreani

Aesop's Fables [Le favole di Esopo]

Italy (2017)

TAGS: Aesop Aesop's Fables Aetiology Zeus





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

General information	
Title of the work	Aesop's Fables [Le favole di Esopo]
Country of the First Edition	Italy
Country/countries of popularity	Italy, United Kingdom, Australia
Original Language	Italian
First Edition Date	2017
First Edition Details	Manuela Adreani, *Le favole di Esopo*. Milano: White Star, 2017, 40 pp.
ISBN	8854035807; 9788854035805
Genre	Illustrated works
Target Audience	Children (Recommended for ages 6+)
Author of the Entry	Miriam Riverlea, University of New England, mriverlea@gmail.com
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Creators



Manuela Adreani , b. 1973
(Illustrator)

Manuela Adreani (Sept. 16, 1973) is an Italian freelance illustrator, who was born in Rome and lives in Turin. After attending art school, she studied graphic illustration at *ICEI Multimedia* and animation at the *IED Istituto Europeo di Design* in Turin.* She creates illustrations for children's books – working with such publishers as *White Star Kids Publisher*, *Benchmark and Scholastic India*.** In her portfolio we can find illustrations for many famous works for children: *Alice in Wonderland*, *Peter Pan*, *Pinocchio*, *Rapunzel*, *Snow White*, *The Beauty and The Beast*, *The Little Prince*, *The Owl and the Raven*, *The Poor Turkey Girl*, *The Snow Queen*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *The Wooden Camel*.*** At the time of writing, she is working on illustrations for *The Jungle Book*, *Greek Divinities* and *Aesop's Fables* for *White Star Kids Publisher*. Previously, she also worked on movie animations – she was a cut out animator, compositor, video editor and 2D painter at *Lastrego e Testa Multimedia Studio*, working on such TV productions as *Aladdin* (*Le avventure di Aladino*), *Amita from the Jungle* (*Amita della Giungla*), *The Creation* (*Creazione*) and *Marco Polo*.**** She was the winner of an illustration contest organized for the occasion of the 130th anniversary of the creation of *Pinocchio*.

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* See the info on the author's profile on LinkedIn (accessed: July 5, 2018).

** See the info on Milan Illustrations Agency website (accessed: July 5, 2018).

*** See the info on the author's blog (accessed: July 5, 2018).

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Sources:

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Profile on Instagram (accessed: July 5, 2018).

Official blog (accessed: July 5, 2018).

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Additional information

Translation

English: *Aesop's Fables*, trans. Tper S.r.l., Milan: White Star Kids, 2017, 47 pp.

Summary

Aesop's Fables includes twenty fables drawn from Aesop, accompanied by Adreani's surrealistic and dreamy paintings.* The collection features less famous stories, including *The Fox and the Donkey in a Lion's Skin*, *The Lion and the Stag at the Spring*, and *The Frogs Ask for a King*, rather than the widely known fables, such as *The Hare and the Tortoise*, *The Lion and the Mouse*, and *Town Mouse and Country Mouse*. Foxes, donkeys, lions, frogs, and various species of birds feature in most of the chosen tales. The final story in the collection is singular for mentioning one of the gods. In *Zeus and the Tortoise*, all the animals are invited to Zeus' wedding feast, but the tortoise refuses to attend, declaring that her home is her castle. Annoyed by the snub, Zeus punishes her by ordering her to carry her house wherever she goes, offering an aetiological explanation for why a tortoise has a shell.

The introduction highlights the fables' universal and timeless themes, as well as the tendency for human readers to identify with the animal characters and their behaviours:

> "With their brevity, simplicity, and timeless appeal, Aesop's Fables have been engaging and entertaining readers, both young and old, for centuries, describing human habits and behaviours that are impossible not to identify with." (p. 6)

The conclusion of each story clarifies its moral message, though these are more gently conveyed than in other versions of Aesop. *The Donkey and the Frogs* suggests that this "fable could be useful for someone that tackles serious situations bravely, to help someone weaker..." (p. 13), while *The Fox and the Quack Frog* poses a question: "How can he who is ignorant about science teach others? This is the moral of the fable." (p. 29).

* 8 images available on Amazon, accessed: December 2, 2022).

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Analysis	As with Adreani's other forays into the classical world (including *The Odyssey* (2016) and *Gods and Goddesses of Greek Mythology* (2017)), it is the visual elements of this book, rather than the written text, which has the greatest impact. With a colour scheme dominated by aqua, green and brown, the full page illustrations have a surreal, otherworldly quality. They focus on the animal characters featured in the tales, but present them less anthropomorphically than as a series of stylised shapes. For example, the pointed ears, nose and bushy tail of the fox are accentuated (pp. 34–35), while the frogs on pages 7, 12–13, and 38 are rendered with bumpy, bulbous bodies and elongated legs and feet. The physical form of the two creatures is contrasted directly in *The Fox and the Quack Frog* (pp. 28–29), where a drowsy frog rests on the haunches of an alert looking fox. In many of the paintings Adreani plays with discrepancies in size as a means of highlighting the dynamics of power, status and intellect. In *The Wolves and the Sheep*, a flock of six sheep grazes between skeletal trees that run along an earthy slope. But the hill is in fact the back of an enormous dog, who, as the written story reveals, is responsible for protecting the sheep from the marauding wolves. When the wolves persuade the sheep that the only reason for the enmity between their species is the presence of the dogs, the gullible sheep hand over their protectors, only to be betrayed and slaughtered themselves. The wolves do not appear in the illustration, while the protection offered by the dog goes unrecognised by the silly little sheep who graze along its back. A repeating pattern of sheep, silhouetted in cream on a khaki background, features on the endpapers of this attractive version of Aesop's stories.
Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Aesop Aesop's Fables Aetiology Zeus
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant	Animals Character traits Desires Emotions Justice Morality Philosophy Society Storytelling Talking animals Values

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