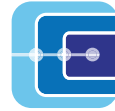




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ECONOMIC CONCEPTS IN CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE


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1. Study design

Commentators frequently lament that the youth do not read enough and instead only use new, digital media: “Educators are raising the alarm that while all around them everything is flashing, beeping and flickering, children no longer understand complex texts.” (Hörnlein 2019) But one should keep in mind that tens of thousands of children’s and young adult books are published each year – which would not be the case if they weren’t being read.

Children’s and young adult literature shapes economic world-views at an early age. In this paper, we review the following categories of books: classics like “Robinson Crusoe” or “Pippi Longstocking”; bestsellers such as J.K. Rowling’s “Harry Potter”; novels with or without an explicit educational objective relating to business and economics; and economic non-fiction written for children and young adults.

In this paper, we base our assessment on how the following are portrayed in the children’s and young adult literature:

- Businesspeople and entrepreneurs,
- Competition,
- Money,
- Profit,
- Wealth,
- Altruism.

Each category concludes with a brief summary. The literature analysis is preceded by an explanation of the various types of children’s books and their importance for cognitive development.

2. Executive Summary

Books for children and young adults play an important role in their cognitive development and shape the way in which the readers see the world, but current bestsellers barely even mention economic concepts. The protagonists are wealthy, but nobody knows how they acquired their wealth. Businesspeople are presented in an unfavourable light and are superficially sketched out, with few details.

Even though many older classic novels describe economic concepts more competently, books like Pippi Longstocking show that the economic preconditions for wealth and riches are often ignored. In the novels, wealth is often created *deus ex machina* and appears as if out of nowhere: for instance, by discovering hidden treasure or through an inheritance.

Parents who wish to introduce their children to economic concepts through the classics should look to books like Charles Dickens’s “David Copperfield”, which paints a subtle picture of social and economic conditions during the 19th century. Daniel Defoe, prolific writer and a pioneer of business journalism and economic journalism, provides a plausible economic background to the plot of “Robinson Crusoe” – despite the limitations of the setting, consisting as it does of a single, self-sufficient economic actor. Mark Twain, himself an entrepreneur, also covers some economic aspects in his works.

In contrast, and with few exceptions, most novels that do not pursue an explicit educational objective in the field of business and economics are not terribly productive in this respect.

The way in which entrepreneurs and businesspeople are depicted is ambivalent. In “Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone”, for instance, little is said about how Harry’s parents obtained their wealth, but the protagonist does get to meet the goblins that manage Gringotts Wizarding Bank. The goblins are punctilious and precise and represent their financial institutions in a serious and respectable fashion. They inspire confidence.

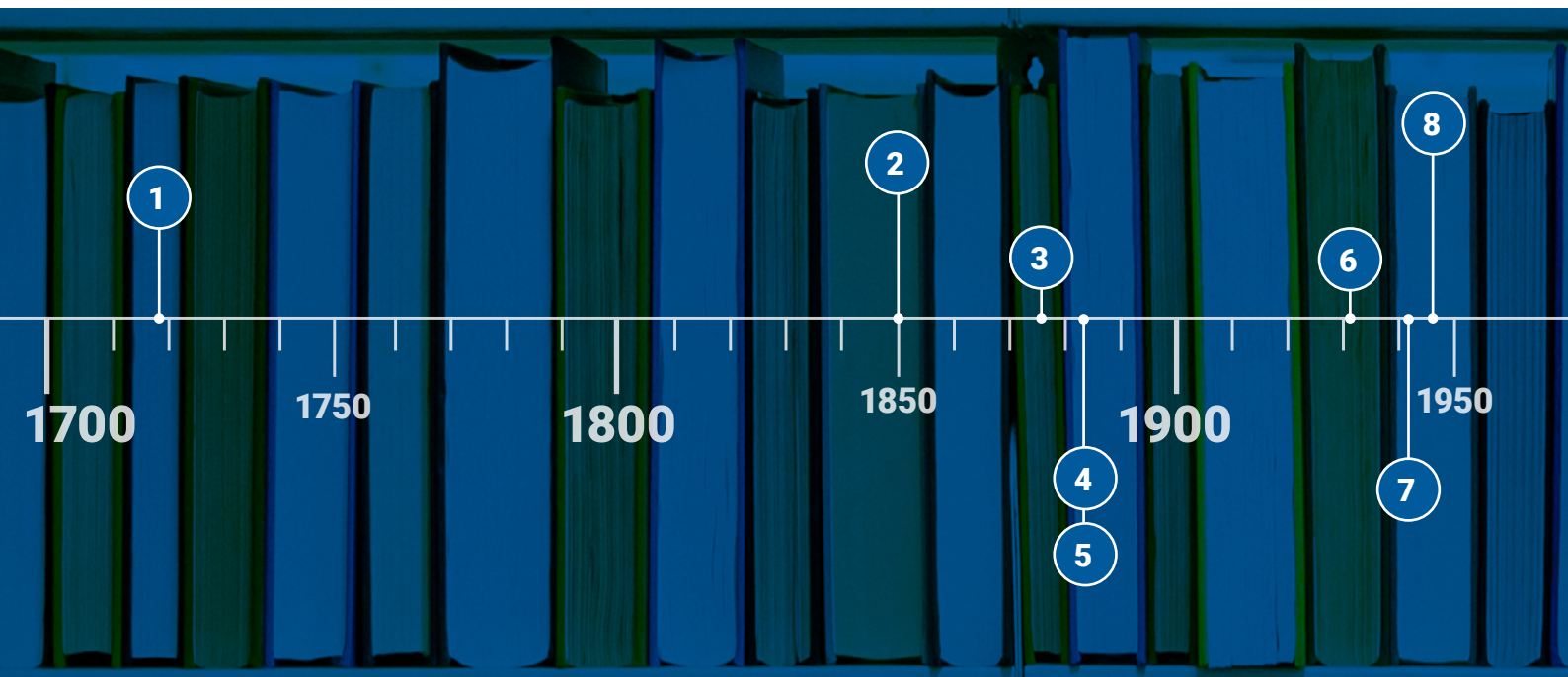
Conversely, fiction that pursues an explicit educational objective generally addresses economic concepts in greater detail. Businesspeople are described thoroughly, sometimes favourably, sometimes less so. This study therefore also finds that there are certainly books that can give children and young adults an age-appropriate introduction to economic concepts. The works of fiction surveyed include some that are very hostile to free markets, as well as others that explicitly support them.

The most suitable approach for introducing children and young adults to economic concepts currently rests with non-fiction books that are essentially economically correct and balanced – but which are sometimes written in a somewhat boring style.

Children’s and young adult books open doorways to new worlds, but the treasure chamber of basic economic understanding often remains locked. The effects on basic attitudes towards a market economy and entrepreneurship should also not be underestimated.

CLASSICS

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1 Robinson Crusoe (1719) Daniel Defoe (1660–1731)</p> <p>2 David Copperfield (1850) Charles Dickens (1812–1870)</p> <p>3 Tom Sawyer (1876) Mark Twain (1835–1910)</p> <p>4 Die Schatzinsel (1883) (<i>Treasure Island</i>) Robert Louis Stevenson (1850–1894)</p> | <p>5 Robin Hood (1883) Howard Pyle (1853–1911)</p> <p>6 Pünktchen und Anton (1931) (<i>Dot and Anton</i>) Erich Kästner (1899–1974)</p> <p>7 Die rote Zora und ihre Bande (1941) (<i>The Outsiders of Uskokan Castle</i>) Kurt Held (1897–1957)</p> <p>8 Pippi Langstrumpf (1945–1948) (<i>Pippi Longstocking</i>) Astrid Lindgren (1907–2002)</p> |
|--|--|



BESTSELLERS

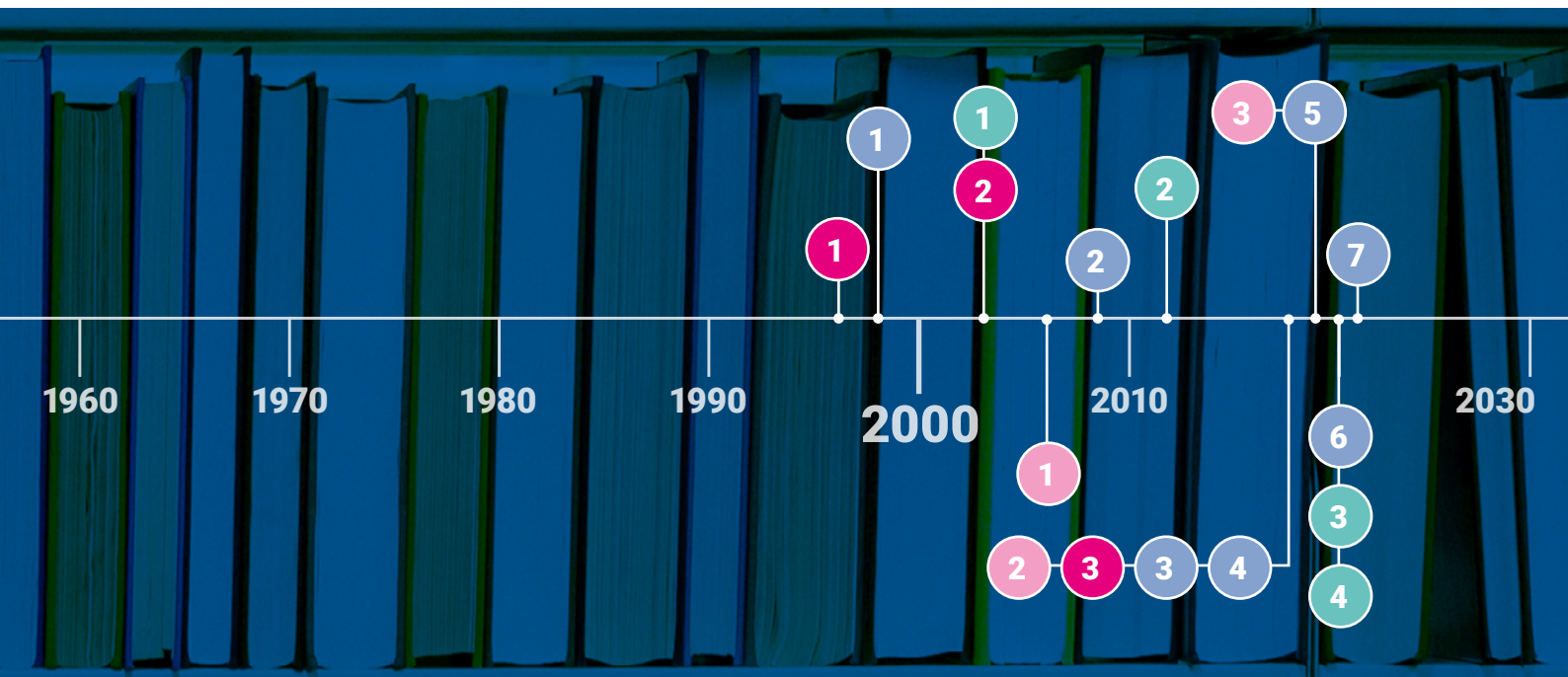
- 1 Harry Potter und der Stein der Weisen (1997)** (*Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*)
Joanne K. Rowling (*1965)
- 2 Molly Moon und der Verwandlungszauber (2002)** (*Molly Moon and the Morphing Mystery*)
Georgia Byng (*1965)
- 3 Mein Lotta-Leben. Da lachen ja die Hunde (2018)** (Books 1-4 have been translated into English under the series title "My Life as Lotta"; Book 14 has not been translated yet)
Alice Pantermüller (*1968); Daniela Kohl (*1972)

FICTION WITHOUT AN EXPLICIT EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVE IN ECONOMICS

- 1 Hier kommt Lola! (2004)** (not available in English)
Isabel Abedi (*1967)
- 2 Louisianas Weg nach Hause (2018)**
(*Louisiana's Way Home*)
Kate DeCamillo (*1964)
- 3 Der magische Blumenladen. Der gefährliche Schulzauber (2019)** (*The Magic Flower Shop*)
Gina Mayer (*1965)

FICTION WITH AN EXPLICIT EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVE

- 1 **Felix und das liebe Geld. Roman vom Reichwerden und anderen wichtigen Dingen (1998)** (not available in English)
Nikolaus Piper (*1952)
- 2 **Ostwind. Rückkehr nach Kaltenbach (2014)** (not available in English)
Kristina Magdalena Henn (*1977)
Lea Schmidbauer (*1971)
- 3 **Die Tuttle-Zwillinge und ihr spektakuläres Showbusiness (2018)** (The Tuttle Twins and their Spectacular Show Business)
Connor Boyack (*1981)
- 4 **Adresse unbekannt (2018)** (No Fixed Address)
Susin Nielsen (*1964)
- 5 **Lauf um dein Leben! Die Weltreise der Sneakers (2019)** (not available in English)
Wolfgang Korn (*1958)
- 6 **Unheimlich peinlich. Das Tagebuch der Ruby Black (2020)** (not available in English)
Cally Stronk (*1977)
Constanze von Klitzing (*1964)
- 7 **Valérie, die Meisterdiebin von Paris (2021)** (not available in English)
Andrea Schütze (*1970)



NON-FICTION

- 1 **Geschichte der Wirtschaft (2002)** (not available in English)
Nikolaus Piper (*1952)
- 2 **So funktioniert Wirtschaft. Ein Sachbuch für Jugendliche (2016)** (not available in English)
Reinhard Engel (*1957)
- 3 **101xWirtschaft! Alles, was wichtig ist (2020)** (not available in English)
Ulli Gericke (*1953)
Hannes Koch (*1961)
Katharina Koufen (*1970)
- 4 **Wirtschaft einfach verstehen! (2020)** (Economics for Beginners)
Lara Bryan
Andy Prentice

Years refer to the publication date of the book in the original language

3. The importance of children's books for their cognitive development

3.1. Children's and young adult literature as a separate domain of literature

Kinder- und Jugendliteratur (KJL) kann als ein eigenes Segment der Children's and young adult literature (CYAL) represents a distinct literary segment. Children's books are often published by specialised publishers or form part of a specialised series of a general publishing house. The arts and culture section of major newspapers often dedicates a page or a page section to reviews of CYAL.

In Germany, as in other countries, there are specialised CYAL research institutes such as the *Institut für Jugendbuchforschung* (Institute of Children's and Young Adult Literature Research) at the University of Frankfurt. There are also university professorships and courses, such as the course on German didactics at the University of Tübingen or the workshop conversations at the research centre for writing culture at the University of Siegen. Courses are also offered at the Institute of German Studies at the University of Vienna, and there is a Guest Professorship in Memory of Astrid Lindgren at the Linnaeus University of Kalmar/Växjö in Sweden. CYAL research also has its own associations and societies, such as the International Research Society for Children's Literature.

A further indication of the field's status as an independent area of research is the development of CYAL textbooks, such as the standard reference work, "Essentials of Children's Literature" (7th edition) by Lynch-Brown, Tomlinson and Short (2014). In German-speaking countries, prominent publications in the field of CYAL literature research include Ladenthin (1992), Schikorski (2012) und Seibert (2008).

As Ewers (2002) writes, children's and young adult literature can be identified as a relatively independent subsystem, equipped with all required instances, within a complex literary polystem consisting of many parts.

3.2 Definitions and types of children's and young adult literature

Children's and young adult literature is typically viewed as literature aimed at the target group of six- to twelve-year-old readers (children's literature) and twelve- to eighteen-year-old readers (young adult literature) (Schikorski 2012; for a more critical view, see Bachmann-van Helt 2015). This "specific" type of literature, aimed at children and young adults, started emerging from about 1750 (Schikorski 2012).

Often, specific CYAL is driven by a clearly didactic purpose. The children's books by Erich Kästner, who viewed himself as a "schoolmaster" (Richter-Vapaatlo 2007, pp. 11), serve as an example. CYAL with a didactic objective is typically characterised by an all-knowing narrator, as is the case with Kästner.

A further example of didactic CYAL is "Robin Hood" (1883) by Howard Pyle. But not all specific CYAL was written by authors pursuing a didactic purpose; there also exists a category of narrator in children's and young adult literature who does not pursue a pedagogic objective.

CYAL not written for the target group of children and young adults, but which is read by members of this group, is considered "non-specific" CYAL or CYAL "in the broader sense". This consists of literature which is read by children and young adults without having been specifically written for them.

But this distinction becomes less clear when looking at concrete examples. For instance, even though Daniel Defoe did not write "Robinson Crusoe" (1719) as a children's and young adult book, these groups continue to read it to the present day. However, the version they read is not the original, which many young readers find difficult to understand, but rather a shortened and simplified version, which is the version on which we base our analysis. This places the book in an intermediate position: it was not written as a children's book, but it was turned into one.

Literature not written as CYAL, but recommended to children and young adults by grown-ups – parents and teachers – is termed "intentional" or "intended" CYAL. This was how educated and well-off families treated Defoe and – later – Dickens. "David Copperfield" first appeared as a serialised novel, but soon turned into a book for children and young adults. Not because that was the original plan, but because adults interpreted it as such.

In this context, it is worth noting that J.K. Rowling did not originally conceive of her books as being aimed at children and young adults:

"I didn't write with a target audience in mind. What excited me was how much I would enjoy writing about Harry. I never thought about writing for children – children's books chose me. I think if it is a good book anyone will read it."
(As quoted by Audsley 2019).

In this way, literature that was not originally intended to be CYAL can turn into CYAL after the fact.

Beyond non-specific, but intended CYAL, there is a category that can be described as "de facto" CYAL, consisting of what is actually read. This includes "non-intended" CYAL: secret, tolerated, forbidden reading.

A further distinction which is of significance for our analysis is the difference between fiction and non-fiction. Lynch-Brown et. al (2014, p. 167) write that non-fiction books fulfil a very important information function, rather than an entertainment function, for children:

"Its primary purpose is to inform. In contrast, the content of fictional literature is largely, if not wholly, a product of imagination, and the purpose is to entertain".

An important aspect of this type of literature is that non-fiction provides children and young adults with the opportunity to inform themselves without having to ask a grown-up (Lynch-Brown et al. 2014).

We consider the "classics" of CYAL to include books which have established a reputation over the course of generations – or decades, at least – and which continue to be of importance today. Such literature is pioneering and exemplary. It is of a high quality.

A further type of CYAL consists of "bestsellers". This category is composed of literature which sells much better than average within its segment. Classics may be bestsellers, but in the narrow sense bestsellers are positioned closer to changeable fashion trends than classics are, and "bestselling" refers to a shorter time period.

Overview: Definitions and types of CYAL

| Specific CYAL | Written for children and young adults |
|-------------------|---|
| Children's books | Ages 8-12 |
| Young adult books | Ages 12-18 |
| Non-specific CYAL | Not specifically written for children and young adults, but read by them |
| Intentional CYAL | Not necessarily written for children and young adults, but recommended by grown-ups |
| De facto CYAL | What children and young adults actually read, possibly in secret, tolerated, forbidden (not intended) |
| Fiction CYAL | Fiction, designed to entertain; can be moralising and didactic |
| Non-fiction CYAL | Non-fiction, designed to inform; can be didactic |
| Classics of CYAL | Pioneering, exemplary, lasting |
| Bestselling CYAL | High sales numbers compared to the average |

3.3 What children's and young adult literature conveys

In this analysis, we aim to identify patterns of thought, behaviour and action that CYAL conveys and which can be applied to the lives of the young readers, at least in part. Our approach focuses on content (specifically: economic and socio-economic content) and we adopt a critical stance towards the raising of readers' awareness (Doderer 1984, p. 165).

But we emphasise that real-life applicability is not a strict requirement. In keeping with Dahrendorf, we hold that reading also means developing the ability to distance yourself from reality (see Wagner 2003). Similarly, Lynch-Brown et al. (2014, p. 2) note that children are interested in many things which do not form part of their daily reality, such as dinosaurs, Egyptian mummies and world records.

Shwanam (2020, p. 1794) emphasises the importance of CYAL for the cognitive development of children, including their thought patterns, convictions, behaviours and mindset:

„Children literature can be a very proficient medium for constructive development of the cognitive and analytical mindset of a child“.

Crippen, too, comments on the importance of CYAL for developing cognitive skills – in the case of “quality literature”, at any rate – and for forming one's own opinion on the topics addressed (Crippen 2012). In the context of this analysis, this means economic content. Children and young adults “learn to... summarize and hypothesize about the topic” (Crippen 2012). In the process, worldviews and dispositions are shaped for the future.

A similar process unfolds when readers are presented with role models. Children and young adults take their cues from role models like the ones supplied by CYAL. Depending on the model, this can have negative or positive consequences.

Role models offer

- A sense of direction in uncertain settings and new situations,
- Opportunities for self-affirmation,
- Relief by reducing complexity (Luhmann 2017)
- The opportunity to achieve predictable successes.

Today, the theory of social “learning by models” (Bandura 1976) is considered well-established. Children and young adults view role models as representing a form of desirable behaviour corresponding to cultural norms, which they adopt as a personal yardstick. Often, role-based behaviour is class-specific (Bourdieu 2016).

“Role models” (Merton 2012) are viewed by children and young adults as exemplary standards. They give them a sense of what is achievable, demonstrate patterns of behaviour, and serve as sources of inspiration. They can be very helpful for the personal development of young readers – but they can also have the opposite effect. For example, if clichés – often negative – relating to entrepreneurship and market behaviour are frequently presented, then traditional role perceptions are cemented, leading to the formation of distorted worldviews.

4. Rationale for choosing the selected children's and young adult books

Between 8,000 and 9,000 new books are published annually in Germany in the CYAL segment (Statista 2021). The numbers illustrate the challenges involved in making a representative selection.

Most buyers of children's and young adult books are over the age of 40. This implies that the segment consists mainly of intentional CYAL. The source consulted (German Publishers and Booksellers Association 2013) means that only specific CYAL was included in the review. This analysis is therefore based exclusively on intentional, specific CYAL.

We excluded non-intended books. The study therefore does not account for the totality of de facto CYAL. We know too little about the consumption of non-intended books by children and young adults.

The objective was to include both children's books and those intended for young adults. In both cases, we included classics because of their cultural importance, as well as bestsellers because of their empirical relevance.

Both fiction and non-fiction CYAL was reviewed, but only insofar as it was specific.

5. Qualitative analysis

5.1 Classics

5.1.1 Corpus works

The works were chosen because they can be interpreted as exemplary classics in the CYAL segment dating from the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. The books can be identified as specific or, at least, intentional children's and young adult literature. They include bestsellers, but were not assigned to that category because doing so would not do justice to their quality as classics. We specify the editions on which we based our analyses. The fact that this literature has proved of lasting value and continues to remain relevant today is shown by the fact that the books continue to be published (or have been published until recently).

Overview of the "classics" corpus literature

Defoe, Daniel (1984): Robinson Crusoe.
Schneider, ISBN 350508747, 210 pages.

Dickens, Charles (2008): David Copperfield.
Fischer Klassik, ISBN 9783596900091, 1017 pages.

Held, Kurt (2019): Die Rote Zora und ihre Bande.
Fischer Klassik, ISBN 9783733500917, 413 pages.

Kästner, Erich (year not shown): Pünktchen und Anton.
Deutscher Bücherbund, 00409/3, 206 pages.

Lindgren, Astrid (2020): Pippi Langstrumpf.
Alle Abenteuer in einem Band.
Oettinger, ISBN 9783789114502, 395 pages.

Pyle, Howard (1986): Robin Hood.
Loewes Verlag, ISBN 3785520794, 342 pages.

Stevenson, Robert Louis (1988): Die Schatzinsel.
6th ed., Loewes Verlag, ISBN 3785516193, 232 pages.

Twain, Mark (1986): Tom Sawyer.
Kaiser Verlag, no ISBN, 237 pages.

5.1.2 Background information on the authors and their works

Among the classics we selected, Defoe is unique in the sense that he – in addition to being a dazzling figure in general – was an economist. "Robinson Crusoe", written by an economist, is, in all likelihood, the most-cited work of fiction when it comes to economic matters. Defoe reflects his economic knowledge in his fiction (Novack 1962, p. 66). We therefore dedicate considerable space to Defoe.

As an economist, he is no longer of any great relevance today. Schumpeter, who only mentions Defoe in footnotes, writes that Defoe's ambitious "attempts in our field... do not exceed the level of business journalism" in his chapter on mercantilist literature (Schumpeter 1965, p. 460, footnote 60).

Defoe's current popularity is not as a result of his merits as an economist, but rather thanks to "Robinson Crusoe". Defoe was a mercantilist who was very much a man of his time when it came to economic theory. He was certainly no supporter of free trade or laissez-faire economics. His worldview is reminiscent of Hobbes's, in which man must assert himself in a hostile world, a stance that is clearly evident in "Robinson Crusoe".

This places Defoe at far remove from the later, optimistic interpretations of Adam Smith, who viewed markets, economics and the division of labour as expressing mutually beneficial cooperation and as a method for overcoming the Hobbesian dilemma. Robinson's island is nothing more than an autarchic, one-man kolkhoz. Technicity alone (in the sense of technological expediency, Kosiol 1962) governs Defoe's thinking and therefore that of Robinson.

But "Robinson Crusoe" casts a long shadow. Even centuries later, critics of the market economy accuse it – as well as modern economics – of being based on Defoe's approaches: "All Robinsonades are erroneous" (Hoffmann 1977, pp. 14). From a Marxist perspective, Robinson Crusoe was interpreted as a bourgeois and a capitalist, but also elevated to "the prototype of the new man, the hero of labour, ... the 'homo politechnicus'" (Rittersberger 1967, pp. 8).

We have observed in many years of academic and non-academic practice that many people are unable to see the economy in a way other than the perspective presented by Defoe: they replace Robinson Crusoe, the individual, with a group that decides who is to produce what and how labour should best be distributed etc. In this way, Defoe's novel plants and anchors the old mercantilist planning concept in people's minds.

In contrast to Defoe, Charles Dickens grew up in humble surroundings and was his family's only breadwinner – among eight children – when his father was jailed in a debtors' prison, where he was joined by his wife and their four youngest children. Dickens's early work experience and his career as parliamentary reporter and law clerk are reflected in "David Copperfield" (Ackroyd 2002). This *bildungsroman* first appeared from 1849 to 1850 as a serialised novel.

Howard Pyle was a Quaker, author and illustrator. "Robin Hood", published in 1883, was his first children's book and was illustrated by him.

Samuel Langhorne Clemens first used the pseudonym Mark Twain on 3 February 1863. "Mark Twain" was a call used by Mississippi riverboatmen to indicate water found to be two fathoms (3.65m deep), meaning that the river was navigable at that point. In addition to his writing, Mark Twain was also a successful publisher and businessman from 1869.¹ "Tom Sawyer" was first published in 1876.

Robert Louis Stevenson was a Scottish writer and the author of "Treasure Island", a classic children's novel with characters influenced by those of Daniel Defoe. The marooned sailor Ben Gunn, for example, is reminiscent of Robinson Crusoe. The book was specifically written for a young audience, in this case: his stepson. It was first published in 1883 and was an overnight success. It forms a core part of the children's literature canon and has been adapted for the screen over 20 times, produced as an audio drama and made into a theatre play. There is even a Latin version: "Insula Thesauraria".

Kurt Kälber, alias Kurt Held, first joined the *Wandervogel* youth movement before later becoming a member of the Spartacus League and the German Communist Party. He was a member of the League of Proletarian Revolutionary Writers and died in Switzerland in 1959. He met Red Zora and her gang in 1940 while travelling through Yugoslavia and lived with the youths for several months (MDR Zeitreise 2016). "The Outsiders of Uskoken Castle" (as the English version of the book is titled) was first published in Switzerland in 1941 as a story from Dalmatia. The novel has been translated into 18 languages and has also been published in various audio drama versions as well as an opera, movie and television series.

Erich Kästner's children's novel "Pünktchen und Anton" also appeared as a comic book and was turned into a movie on several occasions. There is a theatre version, a children's opera and a musical version, a board game – and in Bonn there is a monument to the burning of books.

Astrid Lindgren told the story of Pippi Longstocking to her daughter Karin 1941 while she was ill, upon her request and in accordance with her wishes. She submitted the manuscript to the Albert Bonniers publishing house in 1944, which rejected it in September.

Lindgren had also submitted the manuscript of "The Confidences of Britt-Mari" to a competition organised by a small, newly established publishing house called Rabén & Sjögren. Her book won second prize, was published in November 1944 and is her first published book. The following year, she submitted the modified manuscript of Pippi Longstocking to the Rabén & Sjögren competition and won first prize (Astrid Lindgren Company).²

5.1.3 How entrepreneurs and businesspeople are portrayed

Business and entrepreneurship plays a certain role in all of the books, with the exception of Pippi Longstocking. The depictions are essentially correct, but somewhat critical in Held and Pyle. Interpreting the brigandry of Robin Hood and Zora as entrepreneurship strikes us as somewhat frivolous.

Robinson develops his business skills on a voyage to Africa (Defoe 1984, p. 18), as owner of a plantation in Brazil (Defoe 1984, pp. 42–43) and plans to enter the slave trade next (Defoe 1984, p. 44).

The young David Copperfield spends some carefree days with a fisherman by the seaside with his nanny (Dickens 2008, pp. 46, 48). Back home, he meets his stepfather and his stepfather's sister, who own a company in London that trades with all social classes (Dickens 2008, pp. 61, 184).

In Howard Pyle's "Robin Hood", the innkeeper is depicted as a businessman who is not averse to demanding that a tab be paid twice (Pyle 1986, p. 35). Robin Hood negotiates with the sheriff, but lets him pay what he can afford (Pyle 1986, p. 74).

Tom demonstrates his entrepreneurial mindset from the outset (Twain 1986, p. 14) and possesses pronounced negotiating skills (Twain 1986, p. 18).

In "Treasure Island", too, a businessman is someone who knows how to negotiate:

"Two guineas!" roared Merry, shaking it at Silver. "That's your seven hundred thousand pounds, is it? You're the man for bargains, ain't you? You're him that never bungled nothing, you wooden-headed lubber!" (Stevenson 1988, p. 204)

In "The Outsiders of Uskoken Castle", the authorial narrator introduces one of the protagonists, Branko, via his parents, him as a successful violinist and her as a destitute tobacco worker (Held 2019, pp. 6, 8).

As in "Robin Hood", Red Zora and her gang are intent on harming businesspeople (Held 2019, p. 110), but they apologise for doing so in due form (Held 2019, p. 243). The entrepreneurial initiative of the gang of orphans consists in robbing the sons of the town's businesspeople because they steal from

¹ Official website on Mark Twain.
<https://www.cmgtw.com/historic/twain/>. last accessed on 14 April 2021

² <https://www.astridlindgren.com/de>

their fathers, something Red Zora and her gang readily admit to (Held 2019, pp. 166–167). The town's businesspeople employ the orphans, even though they have been criminally delinquent (Held 2019, p. 243).

In "Pünktchen und Anton", the authorial narrator characterises the businessman via the effort he puts into his work (Kästner, no year, pp. 14–15). Later, the business skills of the two children are juxtaposed against each other:

"The business is flourishing," whispered the child. "We have already earned two marks and thirty pennies and only given up five matchboxes in exchange." (Kästner, no year, p. 83)

"He had no business skills. He didn't know how to evoke pity in people, even though he felt closer to crying than laughing. He'd promised the landlord he'd pay off the rent the day after tomorrow, but the household money had already been used up. He would have to buy margarine tomorrow, and was even planning to buy a quarter pound of liver sausage." Kästner, no year, p. 84)

But Anton is a conscientious administrator who keeps accurate account of his income and expenditure (Kästner, no year, p. 97).

Pippi Longstocking uses a gold coin to pay for a horse (Lindgren 2020, p. 12). She takes care of herself and learned to cook on her father's ship (Lindgren 2020, p. 74).

5.1.4 How competition is portrayed

Competition is mentioned in the books, but it isn't market competition, and certainly not for money. Money is treated contemptuously.

Robin Hood's price finding at the Nottingham market is meant to be "socially just", but it is in fact price discrimination. His approach to finding a price benefits him, although not in the main for monetary reasons. From an economic perspective, this is only possible if the supplier has market power and is able to segment the market. But this isn't made clear in the book. For children and young adults, this is a happy economy:

"Now, who'll buy? Who'll buy? Four fixed prices have I. Three pennyworths of meat I sell to a fat friar or priest for sixpence, for I want not their custom; stout aldermen I charge threepence, for it doth not matter to me whether they buy or not; to buxom dames I sell three pennyworths of meat for one penny for I like their custom well; but to the bonny lass that hath a liking for a good tight butcher I charge nought but one fair kiss, for I like her custom the best of all." (Pyle 1986, pp. 70–71)

Pippi Longstocking also dismisses the money offered as a prize in a competition. She participates willingly in a competition against the strongest man in the world, but refuses the prize money (Lindgren 2020, pp. 90–91):

"Here you are, young lady, here you are," he said. "One hundred dollars."

"That thing!" said Pippi scornfully. "What would I want with that old piece of paper. Take it and use it to fry herring on if you want to." (Lindgren 2020, p. 93)

5.1.5 How money and investment are portrayed

An important aspect in the literature is that youths should handle money responsibly and not live beyond their means:

David Copperfield works as a day labourer and sees no prospect of escaping his dismal existence (Dickens 2008, p. 205). His landlords are living beyond their means (Dickens 2008, pp. 189–190). When they have to leave London, the landlord gives David the following advice:

"My other piece of advice, Copperfield," said Mr. Micawber, "you know. Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure nineteen nineteen and six, result happiness. Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure twenty pounds ought and six, result misery." (Dickens 2008, p. 207)

In some cases, money is simply hoarded: Mark Twain describes a robust method of storing money, considered obvious at the time.

"... What'll we do with what little swag we've got left?"

"I don't know – leave it here as we've always done, I reckon. No use to take it away till we start south. Six hundred and fifty in silver's something to carry."

"Well – all right – it won't matter to come here once more."

"No – but I'd say come in the night as we used to do – it's better."

"Yes: but look here; it may be a good while before I get the right chance at that job; accidents might happen; 'tain't in such a very good place; we'll just regularly bury it – and bury it deep."

"Good idea," said the comrade, who walked across the room, knelt down, raised one of the rearward hearth-stones and took out a bag that jingled pleasantly. He subtracted from it twenty or thirty dollars for himself and as much for Injun Joe, and passed the bag to the latter, who was on his knees in the corner, now, digging with his bowie-knife." (Twain 1986, p. 174)

On other occasions, sound investment is addressed, and Twain doesn't demonise interest: as the two boys are still underage, grown-ups manage the money on their behalf.

"The Widow Douglas put Huck's money out at six per cent., and Judge Thatcher did the same with Tom's at Aunt Polly's request. Each lad had an income, now, that was simply prodigious – a dollar for every weekday in the year and half of the Sundays. (...) A dollar and a quarter a week would board, lodge, and school a boy in those old simple days – and clothe him and wash him, too, for that matter." (Twain 1986, p. 232)

This passage makes apparent that Twain, as a businessman, had a realistic appreciation of money and investing. While Tom proves able to fit into society and its rules, this is more difficult for Huck, who values his independence and freedom more highly than a secure life as an upstanding member of society (Twain 1986, p. 235).

But even as part of a "free life", strict rules apply, as in "Robin Hood". In Robin's society of outlaws and yeomen, a clear pecking order is reflected in remuneration: Robin's deputy receives "three suits of Lincoln green each year, and forty marks in pay" (Pyle 1986, p. 21), while a yeoman receives three suits and twenty marks (Pyle 1986, p. 39).

Money also matters in "Treasure Island". The pirates discover a skeleton belonging to one of the men whom Flint had murdered. Morgan remembers the man because he owed him money (Stevenson 1988, p. 196).

In Kästner's book, Pünktchen practices begging in the living room, not because she needs to, but because her nanny forces her to (Kästner, no year, pp. 13–14, 31).

In "Pippi Longstocking", the dominant attitude towards money is contempt: Annika and Tommy's father gives them some money to go see the circus, and the two protect the money like precious treasure (Lindgren 2020, p. 83). Pippi, on the other hand, pays using her gold coin and refuses to accept the change, as a result of which everybody is given a first-class seat in the circus, and Annika and Tommy don't have to pay at all (Lindgren 2020, pp. 85–86).

5.1.6 How profit is portrayed

Profit is not generally scorned, but a distinction is drawn between that which is legitimately acquired and that which is not.

Robinson Crusoe is given an opportunity to seek his fortune in the New World. Defoe does not demonise profit:

"I went on the next year with great success in my plantation: I raised fifty great rolls of tobacco on my own ground, more than I had disposed of for necessities among my neighbours; and these fifty rolls, being each of above a hundredweight, were well cured, and laid by against the return of the fleet from Lisbon." (Defoe 1984, p. 43)

Robin Hood refuses any profit improperly acquired: he steals from the Bishop of Hereford because the bishop deals harshly with his tenants and only thinks of his income (Pyle 1986, p. 194). The representatives of the Beggars' Guild are relieved of their earnings because they are thieves (Pyle 1986, p. 243). Robin Hood robs a wealthy grain trader because he always holds back grain to sell it to the poor at inflated prices (Pyle 1986, p. 244, 248–249). However, there is no discussion of what gives Robin Hood the right to assess the appropriateness of profits, or on who confirms his assessments. Robin Hood simply takes the law into his own hands.

In "Treasure Island", greed and the profit motive cloud the mind:

"The thought of the money, as they drew nearer, swallowed up their previous terrors. Their eyes burned in their heads; their feet grew speedier and lighter; their whole soul was found up in that fortune, that whole lifetime of extravagance and pleasure, that lay waiting there for each of them" (Stevenson 1988, p. 202).

Kästner, too, condemns unearned riches such as those acquired through blackmail. For example, Pogge, the businessman, pays Klepperbein, the concierge's son, for information; but when the lad tries to blackmail him, he loses his temper and slaps him (Kästner, no year, pp. 151–152).

In "The Outsiders of Uskoken Castle", the rich are portrayed as cruel and hard-hearted: Branko's father, a violinist, refuses to share his earnings with his wife and his son (Held 2019, p. 6). The landlord of Branko's mother is only interested in the rent payable and refuses to contribute money towards a coffin because Branko's mother still owes him two months' rent (Held 2019, p. 9).

Pippi Longstocking has no need of an income because she owns a fortune so large that she can hardly count it (Lindgren 2020, p. 95). However, she does not let anyone take it from her. Clearly, her contempt for money has limits, and after all, theft is an inappropriate form of acquisition. She is intent on keeping her fortune when two tramps try to claim it (Lindgren 2020, p. 99).

5.1.7 How wealth is portrayed

Defoe is as sanguine about wealth as he is about profit. However, he is aware of – and this is something that rarely occurs in the novel – the social nature of money. In “Robinson Crusoe”, wealth is shown to be contingent on the context, and the value of money is compared to the value of other resources.

“It was after long searching that I found out the carpenter’s chest, which was, indeed, a very useful prize to me, and much more valuable than a shipload of gold would have been at that time.” (Defoe 1984, p. 64)

Money has a different value on a desert island than in civilisation.

“I had, as I hinted before, a parcel of money, as well gold as silver, about thirty-six pounds sterling. Alas! there the sorry, useless stuff lay; I had no more manner of business for it. (...) There it lay in a drawer, and grew mouldy with the damp of the cave in the wet seasons; and if I had had the drawer full of diamonds, it had been the same case—they had been of no manner of value to me, because of no use.” (Defoe 1984, p. 70)

But when he is saved by a ship and his return to civilisation seems imminent, the value of the money is restored.

“I forgot not to take the money I formerly mentioned, which had lain by me so long useless that it was grown rusty or tarnished, and could hardly pass for silver till it had been a little rubbed and handled, as also the money I found in the wreck of the Spanish ship.” (Defoe 1984, p. 208)

Dickens reveals little sympathy in his description of the gloomy, sadistic and wealthy Murdstones. The wealth of Miss Murdstone is described in repulsive terms.

“She brought with her two uncompromising hard black boxes, with her initials on the lids in hard brass nails. When she paid the coachman she took her money out of a hard steel purse, and she kept the purse in a very jail of a bag which hung upon her arm by a heavy chain, and shut up like a bite. I had never, at that time, seen such a metallic lady altogether as Miss Murdstone was.” (Dickens 2008, p. 61–62)

She gives David, the day labourer, only the bare necessities (Dickens 2008, p. 205). David Copperfield has in the meantime advanced to become a parliamentary reporter and has gotten married. The young household had to deal with the loss of the maidservant.

“The next domestic trial we went through, was the Ordeal of Servants. Mary Anne’s cousin deserted into our coal-hole, and was brought out, to our great amazement, by a piquet of his companions in arms, who took him away

handcuffed in a procession that covered our front-garden with ignominy. This nerved me to get rid of Mary Anne, who went so mildly, on receipt of wages, that I was surprised, until I found out about the tea-spoons, and also about the little sums she had borrowed in my name of the tradespeople without authority.” (Dickens 2008, p. 733)

Poverty, the opposite of wealth, is disastrous. David Copperfield’s former landlord finds himself in such dire straits that he ends up in debtors’ prison (Dickens 2008, p. 923), then decides to emigrate after serving his sentence, to seek his fortune abroad.

Debts have to be repaid; it is a question of honour.

“My aunt and I, when we were left alone, talked far into the night. How the emigrants never wrote home, otherwise than cheerfully and hopefully; how Mr. Micawber had actually remitted divers small sums of money, on account of those ‘pecuniary liabilities’, in reference to which he had been so business-like as between man and man; how Janet, returning into my aunt’s service when she came back to Dover, had finally carried out her renunciation of mankind by entering into wedlock with a thriving tavern-keeper (...).” (Dickens 2008, p. 957)

In “Tom Sawyer”, too, the legitimacy of wealth plays a role: The bonanza is unexpected and unearned.

“There – what did I tell you? Half of it is Huck’s and half of it is mine!” (...) The money was counted. The sum amounted to a little over twelve thousand dollars. It was more than any one present had ever seen at one time before, though several persons were there who were worth considerably more than that in property.” (Twain 1986, p. 231)

Robin Hood also criticises improperly acquired wealth but has no reservations about stealing it himself if he believes the victim deserves it. However, Robin also shares his wealth with the poor.

Robin Hood does not approve of Little John and the Cook’s having relieved the Sheriff of his silverware because he treats his tenants well (Pyle 1986, p. 99, 102). Robin Hood relieves the Bishop of Hereford of two-thirds of the possessions he is carrying with him, giving one third to the poor and the other to his followers (Pyle 1986, p. 194).

Pippi Longstocking appears always to be rich. She takes a suitcase full of gold coins belonging to her father from the ship (Lindgren 2020, p. 11).

16 5. QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

5.1.8 How scarcity and shortages are portrayed

None of the books describes a concept of scarcity as it is understood in economics. Scarcity is only addressed in the context of poverty and indigence.

Robinson Crusoe is the only survivor of the shipwreck and salvages only a little tobacco in a box, a tobacco pipe and a knife (Defoe 1984, p. 56). However, his constraints ease when he finds some tools.

Dickens describes the economic circumstances of a ten-year-old day labourer based on his own experiences.

"Mr. Quinion then formally engaged me to be as useful as I could in the warehouse of Murdstone and Grinby, at a salary, I think, of six shillings a week. I am not clear whether it was six or seven. I am inclined to believe, from my uncertainty on this head, that it was six at first and seven afterwards. He paid me a week down (from his own pocket, I believe), and I gave Mealy sixpence out of it to get my trunk carried to Windsor Terrace that night: it being too heavy for my strength, small as it was. I paid sixpence more for my dinner, which was a meat pie and a turn at a neighbouring pump; and passed the hour which was allowed for that meal, in walking about the streets." (Dickens 2008, p. 187)

David Copperfield resigns and makes his way to his aunt because she is his only relative. Along the way, he has to sell his jacket and waistcoat and is robbed by a tinker (Dickens 2008, pp. 213–223, 225–226).

In Howard Pyle's "Robin Hood", the impoverished knight who has pawned his castle and his lands to the Priory of Emmet is at risk of losing his possessions altogether.

In Erich Kästner's "Pünktchen und Anton", the authorial narrator contrasts Pünktchen's world with that of Anton Graf, who has to take care of his sick mother (Kästner, no year, pp. 32–33). Pünktchen explains her friend's situation to his class teacher.

"So how does he earn money?" he asked. "I'm not going to tell you," said Pünktchen. "All I can say is that the poor boy labours day and night. He loves his mother, and so he toils and cooks and earns money and pays for food and pays the rent, and when he needs a haircut he pays it off in instalments. And I'm not at all surprised that he sleeps while attending your class..." (Kästner, no year, p. 110).

In his sixth musing and in the seventh, which emphasises the earnest of life, the authorial narrator underlines the importance of poverty (Kästner, no year, pp. 88–89, 100–101).

In "The Outsider of Uskoken Castle", Branko's mother is so poor that when she dies, she is buried in a shroud (Held 2019, p. 9).

5.1.9 How trade and exchange are portrayed

Trade and exchange are time and again linked to the idea of outsmarting the other person. In general, the attitude towards trade and exchange is ambivalent, but often it is negative.

In "Tom Sawyer", pupils can earn tickets for being diligent. The value of the tickets is precisely defined.

"Ten blue tickets equalled a red one, and could be exchanged for it; ten red tickets equalled a yellow one; for ten yellow tickets the superintendent gave a very plainly bound Bible (worth forty cents in those easy times) to the pupil." (Twain 1986, p. 30)

Tom then exchanges the tickets for a bound Bible.

"The boys were all eaten up with envy – but those that suffered the bitterest pangs were those who perceived too late that they themselves had contributed to this hated splendor by trading tickets to Tom for the wealth he had amassed in selling whitewashing privileges. These despised themselves, as being the dupes of a wily fraud, a guileful snake in the grass." (Twain 1986, p. 35)

Tom meets Huckleberry Finn, the outcast of St Petersburg, and trades him his tooth for a wood tick.

"Tom enclosed the tick in the percussion-cap box that had lately been the pinchbug's prison, and the boys separated, each feeling wealthier than before." (Twain 1986, p. 54)

Robin Hood is born a nobleman, but after killing another outcast (Pyle 1986, p. 169) he withdraws into the forest. In "Robin Hood", unjust taxes, rents etc. are associated with similar moral opprobrium as a fraudulent exchange.

"So, in all that year, fivescore or more good stout yeomen gathered about Robin Hood, and chose him to be their leader and chief. Then they vowed that even as they themselves had been despoiled they would despoil their oppressors, whether baron, abbot, knight, or squire, and that from each they would take that which had been wrung from the poor by unjust taxes, or land rents, or in wrongful fines. But to the poor folk they would give a helping hand in need and trouble, and would return to them that which had been unjustly taken from them." (Pyle 1986, p. 16)

Robin Hood pays a butcher 6 marks for his cart and meat, even though the butcher would have been satisfied with 4 marks (Pyle 1986, p. 70).

5.1.10 How altruism is portrayed

Altruism often appears in the form of gifts. Larger gifts are often not accepted, be it for reasons of pride or because it is considered inappropriate to accept such excess.

The impoverished knight refuses to take 500 marks from Robin Hood as a gift, but accepts them as a loan (Pyle 1986, p. 194). He repays the loan after he manages to double the capital twice. When Robin Hood wants to give it to him again as a gift, he refuses it again (Pyle 1986, pp. 212–213).

Pippi Longstocking is a very generous friend who heaps gifts on Annika and Tommy (Lindgren 2020, p. 20, 32–33). The teacher to whom Pippi gives a gold watch as a present because she caused stress and trouble in class is hardly able to accept the consideration (Lindgren 2020, p. 54).

5.1.11 Summary

With the exception of Pippi Longstocking, economic aspects play a certain role in the selected classics and tend to be described fairly accurately. Fundamental economic knowledge is not imparted, but that is not the purpose of these works.

“Robinson Crusoe” contains the most economics, but mainly from the perspective of technicity. Dickens supplies a magnificent and highly complex portrayal of the economic and social circumstances of his age.

Pyle, Held and Stevenson address economic aspects, not without a certain brigand romanticism. That “The Outsiders of Uskoken Castle” is critical of capitalism is not surprising, considering the political background of the author – and surely intentional, as the German title, “Red Zora and her Gang”, indicates.

Lindgren appears to have been under the impression that economic aspects might play a role. But she defines them away by describing Pippi as being very wealthy. The origins of her wealth are left uncommented. Presumably her father acquired it in his time as “Terror of the Seas”.

5.2 Bestsellers

5.2.1 Corpus works

The works were chosen because they serve as examples of bestsellers in CYAL. Apart from the defining feature of bestsellers – sales figures far exceeding the genre average – bestsellers were often adapted for the big screen and achieved a high viewership. Bestsellers also include a large number of translations.

Overview of the “bestseller” corpus literature

Byng, Georgia (2011): Molly Moon und der Verwandlungszauber (Molly Moon and the Morphing Mystery), Hanser, ISBN 9783446237827, 346 pages.

Pantermüller, Alice /Kohl, Daniela (2018):

Mein Lotta-Leben. (My Life as Lotta).

Book 14: Da lachen ja die Hunde.

Arena, ISBN 9783401603339, 159 pages.

Rowling, Joanne K. (2018): Harry Potter und der Stein der Weisen (Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone), Carlsen, ISBN 9783551354013, 335 pages.

5.2.2 Background information on the authors and their works

Molly Moon is the main character in the eponymous children’s book series by English author Lady Georgia Byng, daughter of the Earl of Stafford. The first volume was made into a movie. The high degree of market concentration is reflected in the fact that the producer of the Harry Potter movies also secured the rights to the Molly Moon film adaptations (Hanser 2021).

“Molly Moon and the Morphing Mystery” is the fifth book in the series and was published in 2010 (Hanser 2021). It is laden with clichés. Good battles evil, and the money that is spent was earned in previous books or is simply available. There is almost no character development. The baddies are bad and the goodies are good. There is therefore no room for economic thinking, in which trade-offs and managing conflicting objectives play an important role. In the epilogue, the author admonishes the reader to protect the climate and persuade grown-ups to do so as well. And in case that doesn’t work, she suggests that readers should try to hypnotise the adults.

“Mein Lotta-Leben” (My Life as Lotta), by Alice Pantermüller and Daniela Kohl, has been translated into 29 languages (Pantermüller 2021a and b). The first four books in the series have been translated into English, but Book 14, “Da lachen ja die Hunde” (“It’s a Dog’s Life”), first published in 2018, has not. A movie version appeared in 2019.

Joanne Kathleen Rowling started writing stories at the age of six and wrote her first novel – which dealt with enchanted diamonds and their owners – when she was eleven. While studying French and Classics at the University of Exeter, she read far beyond the course requirements, having to pay over 50 pounds in penalties for late returns. She developed the idea for Harry Potter in 1990, while travelling by train. She taught English as a foreign language in Portugal while living there with her husband, but spent every free minute working on Harry Potter. In 1992 she returned to England with her daughter. She taught in Edinburgh and completed the manuscript for the Harry Potter books. She sent the first three chapters to various publishers, of which only the small publishing house Bloomsbury Children's Books requested the full manuscript. In 1997, the publishers advised her to publish under the name "J.K. Rowling" as it was feared that boys as a target group might reject a female author (Rowling 2021).

The bestsellers reviewed in this paper do not address the topics of scarcity and shortages or trade and exchange.

5.2.3 How entrepreneurs and businesspeople are portrayed

The only protagonist who bears some resemblance to a businessman in "Molly Moon" is the botanist Bas, who saves Molly after a plane crash. He studies rainforest plants and is familiar with medicinal plants, about which he writes a book (Byng 2011, pp. 278–280).

In J.K. Rowling's book, Harry Potter buys supplies for Hogwarts at various shops in Diagon Alley. Even though all the shopkeepers appear to know him, they remain generic and forgettable, with the exception of the seller of magic wands (J.K. Rowling 2018, pp. 86–98).

In Alice Pantermüller's book, the professions of various parents are described, some of whom are businesspeople. One of them is malicious, and the others operate unassuming businesses.

"I make deals. Grown-up deals. No mercy. And the last thing I need are schoolkids getting on my nerves. So: not another word." (Pantermüller/ Kohl 2018, p. 42)

In "Mein Lotta-Leben", one of the mothers runs a dog grooming parlour (Pantermüller/Kohl 2018, p. 65, 70); a pastry shop doesn't bake the goods it sells, but only sells what it buys (Pantermüller/Kohl 2018, p. 95, 96); and one of the fathers owns a tattoo studio (Pantermüller/Kohl 2018, p. 97).

5.2.4 How money and investment are portrayed

In a different book in the series, Molly Moon earned a lot of money through a role in a Broadway musical (Byng 2011, p. 47). For their expedition, Malcolm and the children plan to buy the equipment on site and to sleep in ecolodges (Byng 2011, p. 240). It is unclear whether the money is contributed by the children or by Malcolm.

J.K. Rowling provides the most detailed descriptions when it comes to money. In "Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone", a special currency is used to pay owls for delivering newspapers (Rowling 2018, p. 71). Gringotts Wizarding Bank, where Harry Potter's parents had deposited their money, is operated by goblins (Rowling 2018, p. 72). Clearly Harry Potter's parents had some form of investment, whatever its origins might have been. As was the case with Pippi Longstocking, Harry is also wealthy, and just like Pippi, he inherited his money from his parents. But the origins of their wealth are murky.

In Harry Potter's world, there is a currency which is quite elaborate compared to what is usually described in CYAL fiction:

"The gold ones are Galleons," he explained. "Seventeen silver Sickles to a Galleon and twenty-nine Knuts to a Sickle, it's easy enough." (Rowling 2018, p. 85)

Harry only took a small bag full of money, but doesn't know how to convert the amount into English pounds. But still: he is certain that his Uncle Vernon never in his life had as much money (Rowling 2018, p. 86). It's not clear how he can know that without knowing the exchange rate. This remains Rowling's secret. But she did comment elsewhere that one Galleon was equivalent to five pounds (Magische Welt 2021).

In Diagon Alley, Hagrid and Harry Potter do their shopping in various establishments. But prices are only mentioned in the pharmacy: "silver unicorn horns at twenty-one Galleons each and minuscule, glittery-black beetle eyes (five Knuts a scoop)" (Rowling 2018, p. 91).

Rowling's descriptions are enchanting and entertaining, but don't go into detail. The goblins who operate the bank are extremely diligent and professional, and they are very respectable. In this case young readers are clearly not given the impression that banks are disreputable and not to be trusted.

5.2.5 Die Darstellung von Gewinn

As in the classics, the question of whether profits were earned honestly plays an important role in Rowling's writing. Money should be earned and not simply taken.

The Gringotts inscription reads:

*"Enter stranger, but take heed
Of what awaits the sin of greed,
For those who take, but do not earn,
Must pay most dearly in their turn.
So if you seek beneath our floors
A treasure that was never yours,
Thief, you have been warned, beware
Of finding more than treasure there."*
(Rowling 2018, p. 82)

In "Molly Moon", Mrs Hunroe wants to conserve cultural sites and special cities because she loves museums and wants to go shopping (Byng 2011, pp. 248–249).

5.2.6 How wealth is portrayed

All of the protagonists are wealthy. There is no scarcity and therefore there is no economic problem to address: the wealth of wizards – coins and precious stones – is stored in Gringotts (Rowling 2018, p. 82–83). One of the chambers holds Harry Potter's vast wealth, which exceeds even that of Pippi Longstocking because it cannot be quantified.

"Inside were mounds of gold coins. Columns of silver. Heaps of little bronze Knuts." (Rowling 2018, p. 84)

The siblings Molly and Micky grow up in a wealthy household (Byng 2011, p. 10, 21, 22, 47). Precious stones on the cover of a book are the key to changing the weather in a region or in the entire world (Byng 2011, p. 207). Thus, wealth can be made to serve the climate.

5.2.7 How altruism is portrayed

Molly, Micky and the airline pilot do something for the climate, Byng's favourite topic in the book. They undertake an expedition to the Andes to save the weather. For this, they organise an airplane and clearance for take-off with Molly's help (Byng 2011, pp. 233–235, 242).

5.2.8 Summary

There is very little economic content in the bestsellers analysed. The protagonists are rich, but nobody knows how they acquired their wealth. Businesspeople are shown as being disagreeable and are sketched out with few details.

J.K. Rowling plays a special role. Her description of the bank operated by goblins is warm and affectionate. However, Rowling also fails to address the origins of wealth, and the picturesque goblin bank plays hardly any role in Rowling's remaining works.

5.3 Other fiction

In this section, we address CYAL which belongs to the fiction category, but which does not belong to the segments "classics" or "bestsellers", or cannot be easily identified as such.

In the category "Other fiction" we distinguish between books without an explicit educational objective in the field of economics and those that explicitly aim to contribute to the economic education of children and young adults.

5.3.1 Fiction without an explicit educational objective

5.3.1.1 Corpus works

The selected books were chosen because they were recommended as being appropriate for the target group on various forums (e.g. Stiftung Lesen) or because they were awarded CYAL prizes.

Overview of the corpus literature "Fiction without an explicit educational objective in the field of economics"

Abedi, Isabel (2007): Hier kommt Lola!
Loewe, ISBN 9783785551691, 186 pages.

DiCamillo, Kate (2020): Louisianas Weg nach Hause
(Louisiana's Way Home), DTV Junior,
ISBN 9783423762878, 208 pages.

Mayer, Gina (2019): Der magische Blumenladen. Book 9:
Der gefährliche Schulzauber (not available in English) (2019)
Ravensburger, ISBN 9783473404186, 132 pages.

5.3.1.2 Background information on the authors and their works

Isabel Abedi is a German-Persian author who lives in Hamburg. She completed an internship in film production in Los Angeles and worked as a copywriter for 13 years. Her novel "Hier kommt Lola!" was first published in 2004. The series has been produced as an audio drama and the first book has also been made into a film. Isabel Abedi was invited to the *Sieger Werkstattgespräche*, a series of workshops with children's book authors at the University of Siegen. She writes books that "bring children joy and the pleasure of reading, that address new topics and that show that children's literature can meet literary-aesthetic criteria and still be entertaining" (*Sieger Werkstattgespräche* 2015, pp. 5–6).

Gina Mayer is a professional graphic designer and copywriter. The series "Der magische Blumenladen" was supported by a working scholarship from the state of North Rhine-Westphalia, and a further book in the series was recommended via the *Leseknirps* of the University of Siegen (Mikota 2019). Our analysis focuses on the ninth book in the series, "Der gefährliche Schulzauber", published in 2019. However, the novel offers little in terms of economic content.

Kate DiCamillo sees herself as a storyteller for children and grown-ups. She was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, grew up in Clermont, Florida, and lives in Minneapolis, Massachusetts. Her first essay, written after an encounter with a musician in front of a supermarket, was described as exceptional by her lecturer. Kate DiCamillo's "Louisiana's Way Home" was published in 2018 as a continuation of the Little Miss Florida story.

5.3.1.3 How entrepreneurs and businesspeople are portrayed

In Isabel Abedi's novel, Lola's family is described in terms of professional occupations: her mother works in a hospital, her father and grandfather in a restaurant (Abedi 2007, p. 20); the grandmother works three days a week in a book store (Abedi 2007, p. 23). The family's big project is the restaurant of Lola's Brazilian father (Abedi 2007, p. 38, 64). Business decision-making is illustrated in the reasoning provided for employing a waitress:

"Because Penelope has excellent references," Papai said strictly. "Because Penelope has often been to Brazil and even speaks our language a bit. Because Penelope is a very kind woman and is desperately looking for a decent job. Because Penelope would otherwise have to continue working in this stinking fish stand in the evenings and would have no one to look after her daughter. Are those reasons enough?" (Abedi 2007, p. 100)

DiCamillo's book describes a road trip where granddaughter Louisiana travels through America's South with her grandmother. Louisiana, the chief protagonist in this road movie, had won a substantial prize in an earlier book entitled "Little Miss Florida" (DiCamillo 2020, p. 31).

In the petrol station shop, Louisiana explains her grandmother's strategy.

"How expensive are your peanuts?" I asked.

I asked despite not owning a penny.

Granny always said: "Ask for the price in a way that shows you intend to pay it." ...

"Take as many peanut packets as you like," he said and nodded in the direction of the peanut stand.

"No charge," he added, and rolled back behind the counter. (DiCamillo 2020, p. 20)

When it comes to the mousy Dr Fox, who pulls all her grandmother's teeth and provides her with medication, Louisiana's entire attention is focused on his bloodstained coat (DiCamillo 2020, pp. 52–53).

Louisiana is able to organise a room in a motel, but the owner is energetic.

"The woman in the motel, Bernice, says: 'Go out and fetch your granny. Nothing in this world is for free and I'm not a charity, as you will have noticed by now.'" (DiCamillo 2020, p. 61)

Louisiana is taken in by Burke's family. The father and grandfather work in the agricultural machine factory which they own, while the mother works in a salon (DiCamillo 2020, pp. 131–132).

In Mayer's book, businesspeople appear as part-time workers: the school's caretaker sells food during school breaks and does so better than her predecessor. Mrs Cherry, the businesswoman, assesses her former employee correctly and fairly:

"She used to clean my supermarket. After her husband died, she was in urgent need of money. I was always very happy with her" (Mayer 2019, p. 88).

5.3.1.4 How money and investment are portrayed

Louisiana swindles her way into a free dental treatment by giving the receptionist a made-up billing address (DiCamillo 2020, p. 54, 138).

The motel owner and the organist wonder how much money they can demand for Louisiana's singing at a funeral (DiCamillo 2020, p. 77).

Louisiana has no money for fuel or food (DiCamillo 2020, p. 66), but her grandmother paid for a night's accommodation at the motel (DiCamillo 2020, p. 68). Is it the remaining prize money from 1975 (DiCamillo 2020, p. 31)?

5.3.1.5 How profit is portrayed

The opposite of earning money – stealing it – is addressed on Louisiana's way back home. Burke, a boy from the neighbourhood, steals from the motel owner by dropping self-made metal coins in the vending machine (DiCamillo 2020, p. 117).

Louisiana sings "Amazing Grace" at the funeral because she has sung it many times before – and to allow the person who called herself Granny to earn a little money (DiCamillo 2020, p. 168).

5.3.1.6 How scarcity and shortages are portrayed

In Isabel Abedi's book, Lola wants to hang out with a girl from her class in the afternoon; but her mother shows her her financial limits.

"The jazz dance group is unfortunately full," she said when I arrived home from school the next day. "And vaulting is terribly expensive. We can't afford it at the moment." (Abedi 2007, p. 104)

Louisiana's grandmother persuades a driver to drive her to the petrol station, buy her petrol and drive her back to her car (DiCamillo 2020, p. 18). Louisiana's comment in response:

"The truth is that I wasn't only fed up with having to stay strong, I was also fed up with being a burden for other people. Granny and I did this all the time. It was the only way we could keep our heads above water. We were a burden for other people. And we indebted ourselves. Sometimes, we also stole." (DiCamillo 2020, p. 16)

Burke steals crisps and a chocolate bar from the vending machine for Louisiana because he notices that she is hungry (DiCamillo 2020, p. 91). Later, at home, he makes her some sandwiches because she is still hungry (DiCamillo 2020, p. 95).

5.3.1.7 How barter is portrayed in books for children and young adults

Louisiana's grandmother knows how talented she is at singing and makes use of her gift.

Granny said: "Alright. I don't have any money, but I have Louisiana."

....

"She can sing," said Granny to Bernice.

"So what?" responded Bernice.

"She sings like an angel." (DiCamillo 2020, p. 70)

Bernice only wants to return Louisiana's possessions to her after she has sung at the funeral (DiCamillo 2020, p. 158). It is a tit-for-tat deal. The priest redeems Louisiana's suitcase at the hotel (DiCamillo 2020, p. 160, 162).

5.3.1.8 How altruism is portrayed

Louisiana is able to organise a room in a motel, but the owner is energetic.

"The woman in the motel, Bernice, says: 'Go out and fetch your granny. Nothing in this world is for free and I'm not a charity, as you will have noticed by now.'" (DiCamillo 2020, p. 61)

5.3.1.9 Summary

Fiction without an explicit educational objective does not offer much economic content, with a few exceptions. Economic concepts are only addressed indirectly, if at all. Businesspeople are portrayed in a way that is ambivalent, ranging from toughness – "I'm not a charity" – to the Honourable Merchant. But at least some companies make an appearance.

5.3.2 Fiction with an explicit educational objective

5.3.2.1 Corpus works

The selected books were chosen because they were recommended as being appropriate for the target group on various forums (e.g. Stiftung Lesen) or because they were awarded CYAL prizes.

Overview of the corpus literature “Fiction with an explicit educational objective”

Boyack, Connor (2020): Die Tuttle-Zwillinge und ihr spektakuläres Showbusiness (The Tuttle Twins and their Spectacular Show Business). Ed. Connor Boyack, Libertas Press, ISBN 9781943521463, 60 pages.

Henn, Kristina Magdalena /Schmidbauer, Lea (2014): Ostwind. Rückkehr nach Kaltenbach. CJB, ISBN 9783570158128, 224 pages.

Korn, Wolfgang (2021): Lauf um dein Leben! Die Weltreise der Sneakers. DTV Reihe Hanser, ISBN 9783423627351, 232 pages.

Nielsen, Susin (2020): Adresse unbekannt (No Fixed Address). Urachhaus, ISBN 9783825152260, 284 pages.

Piper, Nikolaus (2008): Felix und das liebe Geld. Roman vom Reichwerden und anderen wichtigen Dingen Beltz, ISBN 9783407740793, 365 Seiten.

Schütze, Andrea (2021): Valérie, die Meisterdiebin von Paris. Planet, ISBN 9783522506915, 254 pages.

Stronk, Cally/ von Klitzing, Constanze (2020): Unheimlich peinlich. Das Tagebuch der Ruby Black. DTV Junior, ISBN 9783423762748, 212 pages plus appendix.

5.3.2.2 Background information on the authors and their works

“The Tuttle Twins and their Spectacular Show Business” by Connor Boyack has the aim of explaining economic concepts to children and young adults, based on the theory of Israel Meir Kirzner – an economist of the Austrian School (Boyack 2020, p. 58). Boyack is the president of the Libertas Institute in Utah, USA. The book is intended for children aged 5–10 years (Boyack 2020, p. 59; Libertas Institute 2021). The book is dedicated to John Pestana: “He showed all the good a businessman can do.” (Boyack 2020, p. 0)

John Pestana is a co-founder of ObservePoint, a software company dedicated to improving online trading. Previously, he founded Omniture, which was sold to Adobe in 2009.

“Ostwind” by Henn/ Schmidbauer (2014) is the only book in this selection that was first produced as a movie before being released as a book later. The authors co-wrote both versions. The film and the book were both successful. The authors address economic concepts in depth.

Wolfgang Korn is a science journalist who first published “Die Weltreise einer Fleeceweste” (2016), followed by “Lauf um dein Leben!” in 2019. In “Lauf um dein Leben!” he describes the process of making sneakers and thereby straddles the boundary between fiction and non-fiction.

Susin Nielsen is a Canadian author who highlights invisible homelessness in her novel “No Fixed Address”. The appendix includes resources for those affected as well as instructions for teachers (Nielsen 2020, pp. 280–282).

Nikolaus Piper is a journalist who works for the Süddeutsche Zeitung newspaper. He was the head of the business and economics section from 1999 to 2006 before moving to New York as a correspondent. Piper has been awarded several prizes, including the Ludwig Erhard Prize for Economic Journalism. “Felix und das liebe Geld” is a book that is overloaded with content. It lets children and young adults perform financial transactions for which they don’t have the legal capacity.

Andrea Schütze is a qualified dressmaker and holds a degree in psychology. She takes inspiration for her marvellous children’s and young adult books from Astrid Lindgren (Fabelhafte Bücher 2021). The author prefaces her book with two aphorisms: *Voler des voleurs, c’est pas voler* (“stealing from thieves isn’t theft”, French proverb) and *Follow a thief and you’ll learn how to steal* (African proverb). Her manner of narration in this book is unusual. A non-authorial narrator, like a camera setting, sees everything through Valérie’s eyes, meaning: we experience everything from her perspective, either through direct experience or dialogues.

Cally Stronk studied economics and communication science. She has been writing children’s books since 2011, several of which were nominated for awards. She was awarded the IF Communication Design Award 2012 for “Bosch-Berufe-ABC” (Edenspiekermann/Bosch) (Stronk 2021 a, Stronk 2021 b).

5.3.2.3 How entrepreneurs and businesspeople are portrayed

The businesswoman in “Ostwind”, the book by Henn and Schmidbauer, finds herself in a difficult situation:

“But... I have just sold some pieces of furniture, so I can use the income to make a small down payment. And the Kaltenbach Classics are taking place in two weeks. That’s one of the most prestigious tournaments for up-and-coming show-jumpers. It’s held annually,” she added by way of explanation, as the young banker frowned at her questioning. “Afterwards we’re sure to get more orders. It’s like that every year.” (Henn/Schmidbauer, 2014, p. 45)

In Korn’s book, the owner of a sneaker store looks so young that it’s hard to believe he’s the businessman. “Everybody thought I was the intern. But I’m the owner of the store. And I know pretty much all there is to know about sneakers...” (Korn, p. 33–34).

A Chinese businessman begins his working day with a military-style roll call. The employees stand ramrod straight, like toy soldiers. The interpreter explains what is going on:

“Mr Zhang spoke about how great the responsibility is which he bears for his company. And how great each employee’s responsibility is to preserve the reputation of their shoe company worldwide through the quality of their work. Furthermore, the scale of the challenge is rising: competition on global markets is growing from day to day. And that is why all employees have to work harder and longer. Without any compromises on quality.” (Korn 2021, p. 60–61)

This is followed by a self-representation of the businessman. He proves to be rather egocentric and does not exhibit much of a social conscience.

“He started out as a simple shoemaker who had taken over the trade and his tools from his father. He was so poor that he made shoes from his kitchen at home. But then he decided to become successful, worked day and night and produced the best shoes of Wenzhou. With the earnings he was able to rent a store, and he continued to work like a madman. Like every businessman, he attributes his success exclusively to ‘his’ hard work and ‘his’ frugality. The workers also played a role, but in general they were more trouble than it was worth. And therefore – he indicated – it was fair that he owned everything and the others, nothing. Communism or no communism.” (Korn 2021, p. 61).

Readers may wonder whether Zhang’s staff owned more under communism than today. The formulation “like all businessmen” generalises certain character flaws of Zhang’s across all businesspeople.

Phil Knight, the founder of Nike, was a student of business administration who produced his sneakers in a garage and distributed them countrywide using military planes (Korn 2021, p. 105, 108–110). Korn describes him as one of the wealthiest men in the world and as an exploiter (Korn 2021, pp. 198, 199). And the illustration shows the obligatory cigar in the factory-owner’s mouth.

Africa also has examples of entrepreneurship with a sense of tradition:

“Shoemaking has a long history in Ethiopia,” responds Haille. “People here are skilful artisans. If you like, we can go and take a look in the artisan quarters. We also have a long history of larger shoe factories... the first was Anbessa Shoe S.C, which was founded in 1927.” (Korn 2021, p. 133).

Chinese companies are granted privileges.

“Furthermore, the Chinese negotiated special tax conditions. They don’t have to pay any taxes on imported machines and raw materials... And they are given a five-to-seven-year tax exemption on goods which they export.” ...

In Africa, too, companies exploit workers.

“And the workers?” I asked. “Are they at least able to make a living from their wages?”

“Ha! After deducting rent and other costs, they’re usually left with no more than a euro per day to live on. Even though most of them have a family that needs their support.” (Korn 2021, p. 134).

Korn’s documentary novel also addresses educational competition. Li, a hotel boy, grew up in a village in the countryside; despite being the top student in his class, he wasn’t able to secure a place to study at university, and only got a trainee job in a hotel through connections in his village (Korn 2021, p. 68).

And Africans also wish for fair competition:

“If you just give us a small chance, we’ll stay at home. Because we love Africa: the sun, the air, our animals, the familiar sounds and smells, our customs and traditions. As Africans, we are world champions in repairing things and coping with a world that is not as perfect as yours. Give me just a little prospect: a piece of land, a business – a secure income. Then you won’t see Mammo on your beautiful holiday beaches, spoiling your vacations with his refugee boat.” (Korn 2021, p. 195–196)

In Piper's book, "Felix und das liebe Geld", Becker, the businessman, has leased some fishing rights. The rights are contested by Felix and Peter:

"Don't be a scaredy cat," said Peter. "Old Becker needs to catch us first. Anyway, he didn't earn those fishing rights. Property is theft, says Robert." (Piper 2008, p. 22).

This quote is repeated by Mr Friedmann, who is Jewish (Piper 2008, p. 325, 327).

Peter and Felix want to earn their own money mowing lawns and get to know their customers (Piper 2008, pp. 33–36). A baker responds very positively to their offer and reacts with a modern vision of companies despite his comment on olden times:

"That's crazy, real baker's boys! Just like in the old days. That's going to be a success! We don't just sell bread, we sell a service." (Piper 2008, pp. 49–50)

The publishers of the local newspaper are shown as foolish businessmen who don't understand marketing and leave it to others to face the music. (Piper 2008, pp. 328–329)

As with the Tuttle twins, Felix, Gianni and Peter get materials from their parents and use their resources. (Piper 2008, pp. 95–96)

In Susin Nielsen's book, "No Fixed Address", Felix steals from Ahmadi, the businessman. Ahmadi explains what this means for a businessman:

"Do you know how often kids in this suburb try to take something from us? ... When people steal from us, it hurts us. We are the ones who have to cover the costs, and our profit margins are already low." (Nielsen 2020, pp. 161–162)

In the TV show *Dragons' Den*, entrepreneurs pitch their business ideas. The situation is described in an age-appropriate fashion by Elijah Stanfield's illustrations in the "Tuttle Twins" book (Boyack 2020, pp. 6–8). The Tuttle twins want to start a theatre for musicals and plays (Boyack 2020, p. 15). They have to find out if they have any entrepreneurial talent. This is where the personality of the entrepreneur comes into the picture. The twins have to answer five questions that illustrate risk appetite, human capital, networks, equity capital and customer orientation in a child-appropriate way (Boyack 2020, pp. 22–30). Mr Tuttle explains the business plan (Boyack 2020, p. 32) and the Tuttle twins create their own business plan reflecting expenditure (Boyack 2020, p. 34–37) and income (Boyack 2020, pp. 38–39).

In Gina Mayer's book, the caretakers are employed, but have different entrepreneurial visions. While the previous caretaker kept house badly, the new caretaker understands how to make use of the opportunity and enjoys some success (Mayer 2019, pp. 41–43). The owner of the supermarket had found the caretaker, who is now suspected of being a thief, to be reliable and had recommended her (Mayer 2019, p. 90). And the owner of the flower shop only appears as a businesswoman

via a forgotten and an almost forgotten bouquet; apart from that, she is a flower sorceress (Mayer 2019, pp. 92–93; pp. 56–58). These three episodes remain superficial and provide little incentive to dig deeper.

In the factual novel by Piper, the parents of Felix's best friend own a petrol station which also repairs bicycles (Piper, p. 19). Felix and Peter have started working as baker's boys and now want to get into chicken production with Gianna (Piper 2008, p. 57, 91–92). Here, a business cliché is used: that of the cigar-smoking capitalist (Piper 2008, p. 58). The retired businessman, Mr Friedmann, wants to invest in an advertising paper and make Felix's father the editor-in-chief.

"Two million aren't a problem. You become the editor-in-chief and think about who else you need."

"Did you just offer me a job?"

"Don't you want it?"

"But there are so many challenges. Where are we going to print the newspaper..."

"Listen, young man, when you get an offer like this you don't talk about the challenges. You go for it. Got it?" (Piper 2008, p. 333)

In Stronk's book, the diary writer's mother runs a small café at the cemetery (Stronk 2020, p. 14). The father is a coffin designer (Stronk 2020, pp. 15, 18). The grandmother owns a flower shop (Stronk 2020, p. 16). The parents drive a hearse and the dead bodies are made up and dressed up in the basement (Stronk 2020, pp. 24, 33).

The non-authorial narrator in Schütze's book describes the work of Valérie's dad, who organises food for the two of them, as a "profession" or almost a profession (Schütze 2021, p. 24). In a conversation between Gustave and Valérie, the narrator describes their self-subsistence as a disaster. (Schütze 2021, p. 36) To exercise her profession, Valérie needs skills which other occupational groups also keep available for their (legal) endeavours (Schütze 2021, p. 61). The venture by Gustave, whom Valérie considers to be a lousy thief, is overambitious in her estimation (Schütze 2021, pp. 71–72) and draws the attention of the police to both of them because he stole a treasure map from a museum (Schütze 2021, p. 76). The raid by Gustave illustrated his expertise because there were enough other treasure maps lying around in among the decorations (Schütze 2021, p. 119). The reporters allege insider knowledge, long-term planning and specific knowledge of the building (Schütze 2021, p. 79); all characteristics of a kind traditionally associated with entrepreneurs.

Valérie knows that she has to reverse the deed for her own protection (Schütze 2021, pp. 85–86). She puts herself in great danger when she takes the map back to the museum (Schütze 2021, p. 93). In this case, her entrepreneurial initiative is motivated not by moral or monetary reasons, but by the desire for self-preservation.

5.3.2.4 How competition is portrayed

In Boyack's book, the Tuttle twins are able to use their grandmother's dance studio because the city created competition for the dance studios when it built a leisure centre (Boyack 2020, p. 18). The authorial narrator lets the former dance studio owner explain the reasons:

"That's how it goes when you're an entrepreneur. You win some, you lose some." (Boyack 2020, p. 18) and

"Competition is great. Competition motivates you to get better and find ways to reduce your costs." (Boyack 2020, p. 50)

In the book by Henn and Schmidbauer, two competitions are described from the perspectives of the respective protagonist:

"No matter whether or not she won the competition, and never mind whether the newspaper printed it, she was happy with herself. Fanny breathed deeply, then clicked on the e-mail software. A final read-through, hit send, done!" (Henn/Schmidbauer 2020, p. 191)

In the book by Korn, business centres are described as bazaars where all the companies have their own showrooms (Korn 2021, pp. 48, 51). The representative of the German-Chinese chamber of business estimates that there are 4,000 shoe factories in Wenzhou, of which some are companies with their own buildings, which they like to show to foreign customers and partners. But most are backyard operations where cheap knock-offs are made (Korn 2021, p. 63).

"In one part of the factory they manufacture for a global brand, while in a different, completely separate section they produce imitations. And that's not only true of shoes. Here's what happened to a medium-sized German company that manufactures drilling equipment and pumps: the Chinese built an exact replica of the company a few kilometres away..." (Korn 2021, p. 65)

Competition also rules in Germany:

"Adi founded Adidas and Rudi founded Ruda, which was renamed to 'Puma' a short time later. Both companies were engaged in intense competition. But this created a competitive atmosphere of the kind which is needed to be creative and productive – competition is good for business." (Korn 2021, p. 95)

In "Ostwind", the representative of a wealthy sheik appears as a deus ex machina. The sheik wants to hire Mika as a trainer for his horse:

"Omar Ali Saifuddin IV," responded the man with a polite nod. "Money is no object." (Henn/Schmidbauer 2020, p. 217).

In Piper's book, Felix and Peter have been employed as baker's boys by the local baker. Once business is humming, a

competitor enters the market and starts delivering Sunday bread rolls free of charge (Piper 2008, p. 157). This is illustrated in more detail using Adam Smith's example in chapter 13 of the book (Piper 2008, pp. 170–184).

In Andrea Schütze's book, the narrator shows how competition between two thieves begins (Schütze 2021, pp. 16–17).

5.3.2.5 How money and investment are portrayed

Financial transactions are portrayed in unambiguous terms in the book by Henn/Schmidbauer.

"Mrs Kaltenbach, you have already taken out a huge mortgage on the farm, with whose..." he said with a hint of schadenfreude in his voice." (Henn/Schmidbauer 2020, p. 44)

And:

"Unfortunately, it's true, Maria. If you can't make payment in the coming weeks or at least give us a realistic prospect of receiving payment, then we will be left with no other choice..." (Henn/Schmidbauer 2020, pp. 44–45).

To reduce her debt, Mrs Kaltenbach should sell Ostwind, because she could generate half a million euros in income by doing so. The bank grants her an extension through to the date of the tournament, but after that, foreclosure beckons (Henn/Schmidbauer 2020, pp. 45–46).

The bank demands a long-term perspective:

"Maria," he said, "no offense, but that's not going to be enough. Even if everybody starts talking about Kaltenbach again, even if there are new horses and orders, then..." He looked at her – and he obviously felt uncomfortable about what he was about to say – "it's not a long-term prospect. You're no longer young. How will manage Kaltenbach when you're no longer around? What's the long-term perspective on our money? And on the riding school?" (Henn/Schmidbauer 2020, pp. 88–89)

A turn for the better occurs after a police raid on a neighbouring horse farm.

The older policeman looked at her disapprovingly and took over again: "What my colleague means to say is this: Does your riding... stud have the capacity to take in these horses? The state will of course pay for the costs." Maria needed a moment to process all the information. Then she said: "Of course. Yes. We do have the capacity." (Henn/Schmidbauer 2020, pp. 213–214)

Korn's book on the sneaker industry addresses making sacrifices:

"Many, many people from all over China come to Wenzhou to work in some or other factory. These apartments are being built for them, but the workers can't afford to buy expensive apartments because they send all their money back home to their families." (Korn 2021, p. 68)

In Piper's book, a savings account is used to illustrate the difference between a transactional account and one that generates returns. Pithy sayings like "Take care of the pence and the pounds will take care of themselves. Start saving early to become wealthy later..." (Piper 2008, p. 15) are used to emphasise the point. The text also notes that the bank has to earn the interest it pays on credit balances by loaning out the money and charging interest (Piper 2008, pp. 16–17). But it remains questionable whether pithy proverbs are going to "get through" to today's youth.

Later in the book, the boys are introduced to bookkeeping and shown ways to start a company (Piper 2008, pp. 62–65). After the investment swindler is arrested, the friends receive a reward for having provided the information that led to his arrest. So a deus ex machina plays a decisive role here, too, as with Henn/Schmidbauer (Piper 2008, pp. 330–331).

In Susin Nielsen's "No Fixed Address", Astrid inherits a house and some money from her mother, but less than expected because part of it goes to a Nigerian prince (Nielsen 2020, pp. 15–16).

In Schütze's novel, monetary aspects are ignored, with one exception. After Gustave has stolen the treasure map, he gives Valérie ten euros so that she can buy herself some food (Schütze 2021, p. 85). The narrator has Valérie invest her money in the products of a bakery to allow her to spy on the museum without drawing attention (Schütze 2021, pp. 87–88). On a different occasion, while planning a museum robbery, Valérie tells Matteo that she estimates the value of the artwork at 30 million euros per painting (Schütze 2021, p. 142).

Rabriqueur bribes the cleaning lady, and the conversation turns to insurance:

"... in case you find anything, my insurance is going to give you a voucher... let's say, for free supplementary dental insurance. For the whole family. Lifelong." (Schütze 2021, p. 174).

5.3.2.6 How profit is portrayed

In Boyack's book, price-setting is illustrated using entrance fees. The Tuttle twins know that they want to make a profit, but realise their pricing has to be competitive with that of the cinemas (Boyack 2020, pp. 38–39).

Korn's book provides some information on the market for sneakers:

"Thousands of different pairs of sneakers are on offer on the internet, including special editions and collectibles at astronomical prices." (Korn 2021, p. 30) and

"The market is enormous. In Germany, an average of 1.5 pairs are sold; in the USA, the average is 4.5 pairs." (Korn 2021, p. 34)

In "Ostwind", a greedy horse trader gets up to his tricks in the vicinity of the stud farm. As in many CYAL works, illegitimate profits are condemned.

"If they're still more or less in shape, he sells them on to guys who organise illegal horse races. There, they're ridden until they're completely exhausted. In the case of mares, he lets them foal once more because he can sell the foals for a high price as they have a good pedigree. Many die while giving birth because they are too sick and too weak..." (Henn/Schmidbauer 2020, p. 96)

And a famous show-jumper also abuses the horses:

"Hanns de Burgh is a wolf. It may be that he's wearing sheep's clothing, but underneath he's a predator. ... I saw what he did to the horses to win. Your grandmother looked away at the time! He called it 'training' – but it was torture!" (Henn/Schmidbauer 2020, p. 189).

Profit is acceptable, but greed isn't:

The two bankers looked silently from Hanns to Maria, then back from Maria to Hanns, as if they were watching a tennis match.

Maria continued to page hastily through the contract.

"You're offering me three-quarters of a million for... Ostwind?"

Hanns de Burgh looked at her coldly. There was nothing but greed in his gaze. (Henn/Schmidbauer 2020, p. 205)

In Piper's book, the young entrepreneurs stumble across a share certificate and several scrips and gold coins in an old clarinet case (Piper 2008, pp. 102–106). Motivated by greed, Felix, Gianni and Peter invest in commodity futures. When they go bust, they meet a detective who explains to them that making 70 percent in profit isn't possible (Piper 2008, pp. 286–289). Mr Friedmann's father, a Jewish dentist, had speculated on the stock market and deposited the treasure in his son's clarinet case (Piper 2008, pp. 316–320).

In Stronk's book, the mother of the diary writer also wishes for normal guests, but she can earn the most money with funeral receptions (Stronk 2020, pp. 62–63). Ruby explains that she's working in a café as a waitress to gain working experience, hoping to go from rags to riches (Stronk 2020, p. 65). The Halloween class party takes place in the café and is a huge success (Stronk 2020, pp. 197–198, 204).

In Andrea Schütze's book, the main focus isn't on profit because Valérie takes not only stolen goods from a group of female thieves, but also their mobile phones. She deposits them on the roof of the elevator in the Eiffel tower rather than selling them through a fence (Schütze 2021, p. 22). When Valérie and Matteo steal paintings from a museum, the media speculate:

"The selection of paintings suggests a profound knowledge of art," the spokesperson continued, "and indicates a commissioned theft, according to expert opinion. The perpetrators proceeded with great accuracy and ruthlessness." (Schütze 2020, p. 167)

Rabraqueur's motivation is anything but altruistic; he is driven by the need for revenge. "Every crook in this shitty town should get a slip of paper and want to sell Gustave out to me. And then I'm getting the child." (Schütze 2020, p. 177)

5.3.2.7 How wealth is portrayed

Mrs Kaltenbach's anticipated wealth is described from the perspective of the young, indiscreet banker in "Ostwind":

"Three-quarters of a million! For that you could get a semi-detached house with a gravel driveway. And now that old woman is in the passage to drive up the price even further. In the end she'll get a million for a single lame nag! For that you could get... two semi-detached houses! Or, hold on, that would be a whole house...right?..." (Henn/Schmidbauer 2020, pp. 207–208)

Globalised capitalism is criticised using the market for sneakers as an example: Nike owes its breakthrough to Michael Jordan. He signed up with Nike and makes \$100 million a year, thanks to the Nike Air Jordans (Korn 2021, p. 113).

"He did what others also did. He exploited the advantages which globalised capitalism offers – but more efficiently and aggressively than the others. The result: The people for whom branded sneakers are produced become rich. The people who make these shoes famous throughout the world – usually top athletes – also become rich. The people who collect the sneakers are already rich and become even richer. And the people who buy and wear the sneakers think they're cool. They're willing to pay top dollar for them. At the same time, the people who produce the shoes aren't able to make a decent living from their work and often risk their health." (Korn 2021, p. 200)

The wealth of others in "No Fixed Address" is illustrated using investment ruins in Vancouver. The protagonists use the outside electrical sockets of these buildings to charge their WiFi devices and batteries (Nielsen 2020, pp. 73–74).

The mother of the diary writer is shown on the cover of "Rich People Magazine", but unfortunately the father is shown on the cover of "Beautiful Funerals" with his latest coffin design (Stronk 2020, p. 139).

In Schütze's novel, wealth is defined in non-monetary terms:

"Stealing something like the Mona Lisa is something you could do before breakfast, but the photo of your mother is a true treasure. I completely get it. We only have one chance and everything has to go off without a hitch." (Schütze 2021, p. 192)

And subsequently, Rabraqueur's wealth is also defined in non-monetary terms:

"... You don't have to become anything, because you are already somebody special: you are a master thief. I think I've said it before. Because, by the way, you stole Raoul Rabraqueur's most precious possession!" Matteo paused dramatically. "The secret book of thieves. Now..." he started giggling, "you are the queen of thieves... This..." he tapped the book, "was the apple of Rabraqueur's eye. It was in his library in the castle. It even had a special castle guard..." (Schütze 2021, p. 247).

"And it has the world's most valuable bookmark," said Valérie and opened the book on the page where the photo was. (Schütze 2021, pp. 248–249)

5.3.2.8 How scarcity and shortages are portrayed

In the books analysed for this paper, scarcity is generally equated with poverty or impoverishment.

The impending foreclosure in “Ostwind” threatens not only the stud farm, but also the employees:

“Do you know what’s going to happen if the bank takes Kaltenbach? My granddad is going to be evicted from his trailer, which would mean certain death for him. I’m going to lose my apprentice position and... and...,” he stopped. “And my home,” he finally added softly. (Henn/Schmidbauer 2020, pp. 48–49)

In Piper’s book, Felix and his friend Peter can’t go on holiday for various reasons. Felix can’t go because his parents don’t have enough money (Piper 2008, p. 6) and Peter can’t go because the petrol station has to remain open during summer (Piper 2008, pp. 21–22).

In Nielsen’s novel, Felix and his mother gradually became poorer and poorer; they had to move from a large apartment to a smaller one, from there to a friend’s basement and finally into a VW bus (Nielsen 2020, p. 13). They wash superficially in cafés and McDonald’s restaurants, and take a long shower twice a week in the community centre (Nielsen 2020, pp. 74–75).

In Piper’s book, the authorial narrator describes at the outset how tight things are in the Blum family:

“You have to face the facts,” his mother said. “We can’t afford the trip. There’s no money. Full stop. Other families also stay home during the holidays.” (Piper 2008, p. 6).

Valérie and Gustave live in a ramshackle dwelling on top of a house in Paris, with a view of the Eiffel tower. Like Felix and Astrid, they tap into the house’s water and electricity supply (Schütze 2021, p. 33).

Korn (2021) addresses global scarcity:

“The truth is: more and more often, farmers are driven off their land and resettled elsewhere to allow the large-scale commercial farms to expand. The food produced on these farms is exported to the countries of origin of the multinationals, leaving precious little foreign exchange remaining in the country. Ethiopia is dependent on food imports, which the state has to buy with its scarce resources. Contrary to all promises, the villages in the vicinity of the large-scale farms are not supplied with electricity, water, new roads, schools and clinics. Only very few jobs are created. Usually children work in the fields for little money, preventing them from attending school.” (Korn 2021, p. 153)

5.3.2.9 How barter is portrayed

In Nielsen’s novel, the pupils interview Bob the bard, who has been homeless for a long time. For ten dollars, he tells them the story of his fall from being a computer expert working in management, with a wife and children, to a homeless man without family or friends; he explains that this could happen to anyone (Nielsen 2020, p. 108).

Gustave tells Valérie about a different kind of barter – the grasping reflex test:

“... It is a gruesome, inhumane ritual, especially for the mothers whose babies are snatched from their breasts. But Rabraqueur pays well, the rewards are attractive and after a while they overcome the pain of separation... Anyone who serves the king of thieves – and it’s not like you’ve got a choice, it’s a different world, don’t forget that –, is protected by him and has a secure income.” (Schütze 2021, p. 42)

5.3.2.10 How altruism is portrayed

In Korn’s novel, the first-person narrator describes his part-time cooperation:

“I’m now working on a voluntary basis – without pay – with a start-up based in Ethiopia that makes sneakers by hand – customised and yet no more expensive than so-called branded products.” (Korn 2021, p. 8)

The gold coins which were discovered in the clarinet case are a treasure from the Nazi era, which the company Heinzel-männchen wants to return to their rightful owner (Piper 2008, pp. 184–194; 211–212; 238–239; 246–247).

In Nielsen’s book, the first-person narrator has Felix tally his mother’s thefts in various shops because he wants to repay the victims once they have more money (Nielsen 2020, pp. 114–117).

As in “Robin Hood”, Andrea Schütze’s novel also deals with altruism. Valérie, the master thief, wants to return the goods previously stolen by other thieves to the tourists affected (Schütze 2021, p. 20, 21–22). The non-authorial narrator sees this in nuanced terms in the example of the two wallets. Valérie returns a wallet to its owner because she saw the theft happen. She tells him that he lost it to let him save face. As for the other purse, she throws it in a letter box because it belongs to a woman and she didn’t see the theft happening, in the hopes that the papers will be returned to the woman by the police or the lost-and-found office (Schütze 2021, pp. 26–27).

In Schütze's novel, altruism turns into a vendetta when Valérie and Matteo plan to provoke Rabraqueur (Schütze 2021, pp. 137–138). This turns the expedition of the two protagonists into a campaign against the Mafia and the Mafia boss. In the run-up to her break-in at the museum, Valérie returns wallets to two tourists from whom other thieves had stolen them (Schütze 2021, pp. 149–150).

5.3.2.11 Summary

Fiction that pursues an explicit educational objective addresses economic topics in detail. In particular, the perception of businesspeople is addressed in depth, both in a sympathetic and in a critical sense. "Die Weltreise der Sneakers" has a pronounced anti-capitalist bias, while the opposite is true of the Tuttle Twins book. Overall, novels with an explicit educational objective transmit a great deal of economic context, but not always in an impartial fashion.

5.3.3 Non-fiction

5.3.3.1 Corpus works

On the topic of business and economics, there are several accomplished non-fiction books aimed at young readers, but only a few have found widespread distribution. A further important factor in choosing the non-fiction books was that the selected books had to cover the entire spectrum of economic topics rather than just certain aspects. For that reason, several good non-fiction books, some of which only address specific topics such as money, were not selected.

Overview of the non-fiction corpus literature

Bryan, Lara/Prentice, Andy (2020): *Wirtschaft einfach verstehen!*. Usborne. ISBN 9781789413373, 127 pages.

Engel, Reinhard (2016): *So funktioniert Wirtschaft*. Ein Sachbuch für Jugendliche. Leykam. ISBN 9783701180202, 176 pages.

Gericke, Ulrich/Koch, Hannes/Koufen, Katharina (2020): *101xWirtschaft! Alles, was wichtig ist*. Berlin. Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft. ISBN 9783806241884, 272 pages.

Piper, Nikolaus (2007): *Geschichte der Wirtschaft*. Beltz. ISBN 9783806241884, 208 pages.

5.3.3.2 Background information on the authors and their works

Nikolaus Piper is a journalist who works for the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. He was the head of the business and economics section from 1999 to 2006 before moving to New York as a correspondent. Piper has been awarded several prizes, including the Ludwig Erhard Prize for Economic Journalism. Piper's book, "Geschichte der Wirtschaft", is highly appropriate for its target group and particularly engaging as a work of non-fiction.

Reinhard Engel is a business journalist who has written for many Austrian and international business papers and journals. He was the founder, publisher and editor-in-chief of *New Business* magazine, head of the business and economics section of the *Kurier* newspaper and editor-in-chief of *Wirtschaft in Ungarn*.

Ulrich Gericke studied economics and started working in adult education before becoming a correspondent for *vwd (Vereinigte Wirtschaftsdienste)* and a business journalist for the *Börsenzeitung*, *WAZ* and *taz* newspapers (Gericke/ Koch/Koufen 2020, p. 272).

Hannes Koch studied history and works as a freelance business correspondent for the *taz*, *Badische Zeitung* and other media. His reportage "Karim, ich muss dich abschieben" (*Karim, I have to deport you*) was awarded the Thedor Wolff Prize in 2018. In his book, "Soziale Kapitalisten" (Koch 2007), he discusses the social responsibility of businesspeople (Gericke/ Koch/Koufen 2020, p. 272). Hannes Koch is the co-founder of the press office *Die Korrespondenten* (Die Korrespondenten 2021).

Katharina Koufen studied economics, politics, Ibero-American history, and Spanish. Her last job as a journalist was working as the Berlin correspondent for *Wirtschaftswoche*, a leading business magazine. In 2010, she moved to the press office of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research. She works as an expert on comparative international educational studies (Gericke/Koch/Koufen 2020, p. 272).

Lara Bryan is an English non-fiction author whose books have been published by Usborne.³ The following books have been published as part of the series "Einfach verstehen": "Jetzt geht's ums Geld" (Eddie Reynolds, Matthew Oldham and Lara Bryan) and "Wirtschaft" (Lara Bryan and Andy Prentice). Books by Andy Prentice in the series include "Klimakrise – einfach verstehen! Was kannst du zur Lösung beitragen?" (Andy Prentice and Eddie Reynolds) and "Wirtschaft" (Lara Bryan and Andy Prentice).

3 <https://www.usborne.de/suchergebnisse/?searchText=lara+bryan&age=-1>

5.3.3.3 How entrepreneurs and businesspeople are portrayed

In Piper's tour through the history of economics, from its earliest beginnings almost up to the present, several chapters are dedicated to entrepreneurship.

"Factories: James Watt and the steam engine" presents James Watt as an innovator who enabled the economic use of the steam engine by exploiting the low-pressure principle. (Piper 2020, p. 114)

The chapter "Entrepreneurs: pioneers and joint-stock companies" uses Emil Rathenau as an example to explain how Thomas Alva Edison's applications of electricity were commercialised in Europe (Piper 2020, p. 131).

To raise the capital needed to make use of electricity, he founded a joint-stock company and issued five million marks in share capital. He called the company "Deutsche Edison Gesellschaft für angewandte Elektrizität". In 1887, Rathenau severed the business relationship with Edison and founded the "Allgemeine Elektrizitätsgesellschaft", or AEG. (Piper 2020, p. 131)

Other famous entrepreneurs introduced in the book include: Friedrich Krupp and the cast steel process; Carl Zeiss with his improvements and commercialisation of microscopes; the engineers Carl Benz and Gottlieb Daimler with their refinements of the internal combustion engine; and the German tailor Löb (Levi) Strauss, son of a poor peddler who died of tuberculosis. Levi Strauss conquered the US market with his blue jeans. Also listed are the Americans Henry Ford with his assembly line production, and John D. Rockefeller with his dominance of the U.S. oil market (Piper 2020, p. 133).

The chapter "Management: the art of leading a company" attributes the development of management as a discipline to Marvin Bower, who, while liquidating eleven companies in 1930, recognised that the companies could have survived if their leadership hadn't been strictly hierarchical. During a crisis in his own company, Bower was recruited by James O. McKinsey. After the latter's death, he founded McKinsey & Co. and thus invented the profession of the management consultant (Piper 2020, pp. 185–187).

Engel presents Phil Knight as an innovator:

"In the history of Nike, that was the white Cortez running shoe with its red 'swoosh' in the early 1970s... On the other hand, they bet on new technologies such as cushioned running soles, and Nike Air is one of the most famous innovations in the history of sporting goods" (Engel 2016, p. 24).

A series of Austrian entrepreneurs is mentioned in connection with the steam engine (Engel 2016, p. 87). The chapter also discusses a company started by a female master confectioner (Engel 2016, p. 93) as well as a maker of dirndls who exchanged her first dirndl for a wheel of cheese (Engel 2016, pp.

117–118). A nano entrepreneur who supplies the market with stain-resistant clothing and only employs five staff members joins the line-up of start-ups (Engel 2016, pp. 145–147).

Engel also addresses Niki Lauda in his role as entrepreneur:

"I have nothing to give away" was Niki Lauda's catchphrase in an advertisement for a bank. Even though the former Formula 1 world champion – and owner of several airlines – played with his image as a penny pincher in the ad, what he said wasn't entirely wrong. (Engel 2016, p. 30)

Gericke et al. treat the business ethics of businesspeople from a historical perspective. While the Honourable Merchant and the businessman who cared for the welfare of his workers and employees were widespread stereotypes from the Middle Ages through to the early modern era, Max Weber lamented: "Man is the nature-destroying economic animal" (Gericke, Koch, Koufen 2020, p. 95).

Bryan et al. describe businesspeople in unflattering terms. In the comic book, they are described as greedy people who buy out their competitors (Bryan, Prentice, Mariani 2020, p. 60). And the common cliché of the businessman smoking a cigar is also present. He even becomes angry when an environmental tax is levied on him (Bryan, Prentice, Mariani 2020, pp. 102–103).

5.3.3.4 How competition is portrayed

Engel bases his description of the competition for future workers on a factory tour in a Hungarian Audi plant (Engel 2016, pp. 16–18). FACC is introduced as a globalised company with relationships:

...with Airbus in Europe, with Boeing in the US, Bombardier in Canada, Embraer in Brazil, Sukhoi in Russia and with Aviation Industry Corporation in China (Engel 2016, p. 42).

Competition is also addressed in the context of cyberwars, where different teams, monitored by referees, respond to online attacks (Engel 2016, pp. 76–79). Anticompetitive behaviour and its legal consequences are illustrated using collusion between German supermarket chains REWE, Spar, Hofer (Aldi) and Lidl as an example (Engel 2016, pp. 150–153). The emergence of new competitive structures is shown using Airbnb, Uber and Drive Now as examples (Engel 2016, pp. 162–165).

Bryan et al. emphasise that competition leads to innovation:

"Competition leads to the emergence of novel ideas and better-managed companies, but it can also lead to companies having to close down. This process is called creative destruction" (Bryan, Prentice, Mariani 2020, p. 59).

In the US, deregulation of the telecommunications industry promoted competition (Bryan, Prentice, Mariani 2020, p. 61). The authors emphasise the relationship between competition and trade:

"Trade across great distances makes markets more efficient and boosts competition" (Bryan, Prentice, Mariani 2020, p. 91).

5.3.3.5 How money and investment are portrayed

In Piper's book, the topic of money and investment is introduced in the chapter "Power: robbers, smiths, kings" with reference to metal smelting in the 7th millennium BC (Piper 2020, p. 24).

Money "became the symbol representing all other goods... The German word 'Geld' is related to 'gelten', which in one of its meanings signifies 'to have worth'. The summarises the function of money well: money can be used to represent the worth of all other goods." (Piper 2020, p. 31)

Piper addresses the concept of capital using the Fugger banking family as an example, although his explanation isn't entirely clear:

"His method... was a unique combination of commercial business and banking; his money worked for him, it became his capital." (Piper 2020, p. 83)

Engel introduces the functions of money: it serves as a store of value, a medium of exchange and a unit of account (Engel 2016, p. 60). The more recent developments in banking – from analogue to digital investment – are illustrated using Austrian banks as an example (Engel 2016, pp. 133–136).

In "101x Wirtschaft" by Gericke et al., the chapter "Budget" deals with the topic of money under the aspects of remuneration (Gericke, Koch, Koufen 2020, pp. 010–012), sources of income (Gericke, Koch, Koufen 2020, pp. 018–019), basic income (Gericke, Koch, Koufen 2020, pp. 020–023) and inheritance (Gericke, Koch, Koufen 2020, pp. 024–027). The roles of consumers, employees and the company are each addressed.

"Work creates work, income generates income, consumption by some people creates the prerequisites for consumption by others. From this perspective, the economic roles are not in conflict, but rather represent the poles in a cycle" (Gericke, Koch, Koufen 2020, pp. 012).

One of the main chapters addresses the economic aspects of money in depth (Gericke, Koch, Koufen 2020, pp. 108–147).

In the same chapter, profit is explained using cryptocurrencies (Gericke, Koch, Koufen 2020, pp. 122–123), sovereign money (Gericke, Koch, Koufen 2020, pp. 124–125), stock markets and shares (Gericke, Koch, Koufen 2020, pp. 126–128), financial investments (Gericke, Koch, Koufen 2020, pp. 130–136),

real estate (Gericke, Koch, Koufen 2020, pp. 135), investment trusts (Gericke, Koch, Koufen 2020, pp. 136) and crowdfunding (Gericke, Koch, Koufen 2020, pp. 138–139). Financial crises and their risks are also covered (Gericke, Koch, Koufen 2020, pp. 140–141).

5.3.3.6 How profit is portrayed

The chapter "Capital: The Fugger family" covers both double-entry bookkeeping (Piper 2020, pp. 83–84) and the flip side of profit, namely a loss.

"According to contemporary calculations, the Fugger family suffered losses amounting to 8 million florins in their business dealings with the Habsburg family, and a loss of 4 million ducats in their dealings with the Spanish crown" (Piper 2020, pp. 87–88).

The chapter "The state: Louis XIV and his finance minister" addresses the mercantilism of Jean-Baptiste Colbert, whose high import tariffs and export subsidies for French products provoked a war with the Netherlands, at the end of which he had to drop the tariffs. Colbert's way of thinking continues to hold sway in many people's minds today, e.g. among the opponents of globalisation (Piper 2020, pp. 98–101).

The chapter "The cycle: Madame Pompadour's personal physician" introduces the first economist to describe basic aspects of a cyclical model of the economy, François Quesnay, a model which was later refined by the Soviet-American economist Wassily Leontief (Piper 2020, pp. 102–106). The chapter "Adam Smith: the invisible hand" presents his theory of the wealth of nations, which he juxtaposed against Quesnay's theory. Smith favoured mutual free trade. This theory was further refined by David Ricardo and forms the basis of trade liberalisation policies (Piper 2020, pp. 107–111).

Engel addresses the topic of profits using Inditex, the world's largest textile company, as an example (Engel 2016, p. 279).

In Gericke et al., the chapter "Companies" discusses the topic "Profit: nothing but worship of the golden calf?" and illustrates it graphically. The authors also cover the business function of profit:

In addition to disbursements to the owners, the company should earn enough money to fund research and development, make investments and prepare the company for the future. (Gericke, Koch, Koufen 2020, pp. 061).

Speculative earnings from cryptocurrencies are covered from a critical perspective (Gericke, Koch, Koufen 2020, pp. 122–123).

Bryan et al. illustrate profit using the homo oeconomicus model:

Some economists even claim that all of our decisions, even the most minor ones, are based on the calculus of self-interest. They believe that we are always thinking about how much profit we can derive in any given situation. (Bryan, Prentice, Mariani 2020, pp. 38–39)

The homo oeconomicus model is juxtaposed against insights from behavioural economics (ultimatum game).

5.3.3.7 How wealth is portrayed

A distinction is drawn between wealth that is acquired legitimately and that which is not – here, the example used is that of hiring out young men as soldiers.

The chapter “Banks: the rise of the Rothschild family” describes how the Prince of Hesse hired out young men from his own country to other countries for military service against payment. He then lent the wealth thus acquired – plus interest – to impoverished nobles, e.g. the English king. He commissioned Mayer Amschel Rothschild to manage his growing fortune, and when Napoleon deposed him, his wealth was invested in English sovereign bonds. Through such transactions, the Rothschild family emerged as a global bank within a generation (Piper 2020, pp. 117–122).

Engel addresses wealth using the Leica brand as an example of a luxury segment in the economy (Engel 2016, pp. 139–142).

Bryan et al. believe that wealth should be kept within reasonable limits:

The people who owned land, factories and machinery, the so-called capitalists, earned a great deal of money. (Bryan, Prentice, Mariani 2020, p. 70)

But it's unfair if the boss of a company earns a hundred times more than an unskilled labourer. There are limits to how much somebody can get done in one day, even if he or she is the boss. (Bryan, Prentice, Mariani 2020, p. 109)

5.3.3.8 How scarcity and shortages are portrayed

Like most of the other authors, Piper addresses scarcity from the perspective of poverty. The chapter “The workers: Oliver Twist and Karl Marx” discusses the precarious position of workers, based on the writings of Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx as well as those of the economist Thomas Malthus and of the writers Charles Dickens and Heinrich Heine (Piper 2020, p. 123–130). Their perspectives are critically discussed in the chapter “The false hope: Lenin, Stalin and the command economy”. (Piper 2020, pp. 161–166) Here, Piper is one of few authors to address economic systems.

Gericke et al. also address scarcity from the perspective of poverty, using the “working poor” as an example (Gericke, Koch, Koufen 2020, p. 053).

In contrast, Bryan et al. explicitly address the economic concept of scarcity in terms of economic theory (Bryan, Prentice, Mariani 2020, p. 5). They also briefly discuss Elinor Ostrom's concept for dealing with the problem of the commons (p. 49).

5.3.3.9 How trade is portrayed

The function of long-distance trading is explained using a textile innovation – fustian, a strong cotton and linen fabric – in the chapter “Capital: The Fugger family”. The Fugger family had branches in all European centres of trade from the end of the 15th century and became a political power to be reckoned with.

In the chapter “The bourse: fairs, shares, and tulips”, Piper traces the origins of the stock exchange (or bourse) to the Belgian de Beurse family, which managed an inn for travelling merchants and displayed three purses on its coat of arms. The flashiest speculation was the tulip bubble of 1634, in which large sections of the population participated.

In Bryan et al.'s comic book, trade is introduced via the concept of barter and described in positive terms. (Bryan, Prentice, Mariani 2020, p. 21)

“Trade across great distances makes markets more efficient and boosts competition” (Bryan, Prentice, Mariani 2020, p. 91).

“According to theory, free trade makes goods and services cheaper and makes everybody better off.” (Bryan, Prentice, Mariani 2020, p. 95)

5.3.3.10 How altruism is portrayed

Piper describes the Fugger family as ruthless and profit-oriented in the chapter "Capital: The Fugger family". However:

Nonetheless, Jakob Fugger founded one of the first social housing projects in history: the "Fuggerei" in Augsburg. (Piper 2020, p. 88)

Gericke et al. discuss honorary offices and volunteering:

"Many unpaid activities are honourable, but costly for the person performing them: not only do they depress current income, they also reduce future pension claims and may precipitate old-age poverty despite a lifetime's hard work." (Gericke, Koch, Koufen 2020, p. 017)

But they also point out that without unpaid work – be it volunteering or involuntary work as a measure to bring the long-term unemployed back into the labour market – "no economy anywhere in the world can make ends meet". (Gericke, Koch, Koufen 2020, p. 017)

5.3.3.11 Summary

The non-fiction books generally present their subject in a balanced and appropriate manner, but are sometimes written in a boring style. The book by Piper breaks the mould and deserves special mention. The didactic nature of some of the books is unlikely to engage the interest of younger readers. As regards the content, little fault can be found from an economic point of view; but with suitable revisions by the authors, all of the books reviewed could be made more interesting for younger readers.

Conclusion

Economic concepts often play almost no role in children's and young adult literature, even when the young protagonists are wealthy. They have access to money, but its origins lie in an inheritance or hidden treasure, leaving it unclear how the wealth was generated in the first place.

However, there are also some positive examples that show that economic concepts can in fact be addressed engagingly in children's and young adult literature. Classics such as "David Copperfield" by Charles Dickens provide a detailed description of the social and economic circumstances of the 19th century. The economically oriented author and project creator Daniel Defoe supplies a plausible economic background to the plot of Robinson Crusoe – despite the limitations of the setting, consisting as it does of a single, self-sufficient economic actor. Mark Twain, a businessman himself, also addresses economic aspects. In most other cases, economic explanations are superficial or missing entirely, even in bestsellers.

Conversely, fiction written for children and young adults with an explicit educational objective in mind does explain economic concepts. Some of the works are supportive of free markets, while others are highly critical of capitalism and globalisation. In the latter case, businesspeople are described in critical to unflattering terms. In such cases, illustrations often refer to the cliché of the businessman smoking a cigar. Wealth and profit are judged based on whether they were acquired legitimately or not.

Non-fiction books on economic concepts are generally well produced. They reveal the authors' policy preferences, but are mostly factually accurate. The register ranges from engaging to dry. Only one of the books reviewed mentions Elinor Ostrom, the only female winner – to date – of the Nobel Prize in Economics.

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