

How children appropriate themes they find in media products

Michael Charlton
Institute of Psychology, University of Freiburg (Germany)

1. Theoretical Considerations

The importance of literary themes is, at this time, a frequently considered subject matter (cf. Bremond, Landy & Pavel, 1995; Gibbs, 2001; Kurtz & Schober, 2001; van Peer & Louwse, 2001; Sollors; 1993; Trommler; 1995; Witten & Graesser, 2001). Although there is not any consensus as to when one should speak of a literary theme, there are, nevertheless, some remarkable definitive propositions which can be found in the above mentioned literature. According to Brinker (1993, p. 26) literary themes are to be seen as a subject matter where artistic literary texts meet other texts - as a sort of metaphor to a party. Staying within the metaphor of a party, one text mingles and chats with other "guest" texts. However in addition to texts, other guests have also been invited: such as pictures or autobiographical stories. It is not integral that the texts involved in this "small talk" always discuss the the same topic as their neighbor. The most important thing is that they continue to converse with one another.

Themes not only show relationships between diverse written or verbally reported texts, but they also consider structures and connections in the real world. Therefore, themes can bring fiction and reality in contact with each other (Dolezel 1995).

This kind of double life of the themes - in the fictional as well as the real world - makes it easy for the reader to draw correlations between his own knowledge of life and a literary text, and vice-versa: The reader fills the vacancies of the text with his own experience and applies the media themes at the same time to the descriptions and specifications of his personal life history.

In the `80`s, the psychologists Freeman (1984) and Sarbin (1986) almost simultaneously commented on the "storied nature of human conduct". The representatives of so-called "Narrative Psychology" verified that persons find their own identity within stories (cf. Laszlo and Rogers, 2002). If one examines the way people talk about themselves, one finds that they frequently deal with themes, motives or narrative patterns similar to the heroic legends of antiquity, biblical stories (for example, the fight of David against Goliath) or the christian-catholic narratives about the lives of saints. In our recently concluded research project, we have verified this finding in, for example, the self-reported illness histories of chronically ill or disabled persons (cf. Rösler, in press). Some Self-Help movements, for example Alcoholics Anonymous, see their task solely in supplying their new members with a formulated life history. A self-biographer can speak of his donated identity life history to others, not only in order to present himself as a person who earns social recognition, but also in order get to know himself.

Holland (1975) remarked in his important book "Five Readers Reading" that readers particularly addressed, on the one hand, literary themes that corresponded with the reader's identity theme. He also noted that the reader must also be able like the way a theme is handled in the text. Psychoanalytically oriented literary critics speak of the defense of and/or the reconciliation with one`s own urges and desires, which must match for the reader and text ("defenses must be matched", Holland, 1975, p. 115). But the underlying idea of a subject who is governed by the tendency to avoid troublesome associations and information

is not restricted to psychoanalytically oriented authors. It can also be found in the realm of cognitive-behavioristic theory (Lazarus, 1966) and of neo-Piagetian thinking (Haan, 1977) as well.

Holland describes the reader as a person who is not passive to the media stimuli, but himself critically and actively selects which texts are acceptable and which are not. This determination leads directly to the second topic mentioned in the title of this lecture, the question of the appropriation of media contents and the relationship between otherness and ownness in terms of the preoccupation with language and texts (cf. Wertsch, 1998; Aukrust, 2001; Nicolopoulou, 2001). Bakhtin (1981) pointed out, that " ... the word does not exist in a neutral and impersonal language ... but rather it exists in other people's mouths, in other people's contexts, serving other people's intentions: it is from there that one must take the word, and make it one's own". (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 293).

Therefore cultural interpretation models never fit the experience of life of their recipients exactly. Media themes are never, in fact, identical with the self theme, but they are nevertheless indispensable in creating a sense of self. Individuals make cultural symbols their own in order to find their own voice with the aid of the other voices and therefore to be able to represent themselves successfully in current life situations. In order to gain our own voice, we must take over pre-made expressions from others, but we must pay attention simultaneously that we don't become strangers to ourselves. Bakhtin calls this course of events "appropriation", a term that is associated with individual volition and free choice of action. "Somehow it suggests that the process is one of an individual standing back and considering alternatives and then making a decision". (Herrenkohl and Wertsch, 1999, p. 432) If we want to know whether and how children grasp media themes, we must surmise a certain reservedness or aloofness on the part of the media consumer.

2. Empirical Section

2.1 Question formulation and design of the Freiburg long-term study for the media reception of preschool children in the familial context

In our own long-term study that was completed several years ago in Freiburg, we examined

- whether preschool age children search in media stories for themes that have to do something with their own life situation, and
- how they appropriate these themes, whereby we paid particular attention to the relationship between otherness and ownness..

A full representation of the study and its results can be found in Charlton and Neumann (1990), shorter contributions in Charlton and Neumann, 1990a; Orlik, Charlton and Neumann, 1990).

During the search for a definition of the psychological construct "Theme", which would be applicable to media content as well as the actions of children we recalled the "Thematic apperception test" of Murray (1943; cf. also Dolezel, in 1995). Murray acknowledged that within a person's current life situation, there is a specific combination of action wishes and action constraints which are weighed against one another. Moreover, there is a definite relationship felt by the person to the needs and presses in their current situation and what that person makes available for an observer to observe.. In a test procedure developed by Murray, the TAT (Thematic Apperception Test), the test persons are required to formulate made up histories to ambiguous picture presentations.

The medium (here: the picture plate) offers an equivocal theme. The test instruction reads: "Tell what happened before and what is happening now. Say what the people are feeling and thinking and how the story wants to turn out " (Murray 1943, p.4). Murray expects that the narrators will project their own themes (need-press-combinations) into the pictures and that the stories they tell will give an insight into the personal themes of the narrators. The subjects appropriate within a relatively open text genre: the polyvalent picture.

Table 1: Murray's test situation

<u>Offered Media Themes</u>	<u>Observed Media Themes</u>	<u>Personal Life Themes</u>
20 ambiguous picture plates are presented	were derived from the made up histories	are developed under the assumption that they agree with the themes of the made up histories
The most common interpretation of the pictures was earlier examined empirically		

In our own investigation we pursue a similar, but not identical question.

The test psychologist Murray wanted to find out something about the subjective needs and presses of the research subject's experience with the aid of the picture plates. It became, however, apparent that the plates were exceptionally ambiguous. That is, the plates call for the observer to give free reign to their personal fantasy. Due to the fact that the Murray test has been conducted on numerous samples there are, despite the ambiguity of the plates, answer sets which can be deemed common or "normal". .

Of course we did not submit Murray's picture plates to the children in our study. Our media offerings consisted of picture books, fairy tales, song cassettes, and television films. We worked with material whose content was indeed less ambiguous than the pictures in the TAT, but on the other hand, we had no empirical basis for their general meaning. The children we examined did not obtain the medium from us either, we accompanied them only if they used media spontaneously in their everyday life. Nevertheless the same basic idea suited our investigation and the TAT: we also wanted to put the theme offered by the medium, the media theme perceived by the child and the life situation as perceived by the child (childish and/or familial themes), in relation to one another.

Table 2: Observation situation in the Freiburg long-term study

<u>Offered Media Themes</u>	<u>Observed Media Themes</u>	<u>Personal Life Themes</u>
child decides, whether and with which media themes he wants to occupy himself with.	are derived from the participative observation with the child.	are obtained through the parent and derived from the domestic observation.
The media themes were interpreted later using hermeneutic methods.		

In order to derive how the media theme and the child's theme come together, we must first find a way to describe both aspects - media offering and child - independently of each other.

For the work analyses we used hermeneutic methods as they are common in the literary critics. The child's suitable materials (very simple texts and pictures) made this easy. Occasionally we could also resort to published work interpretations, such as Maurice Sendak's children's book "Where the Wild Things Are".

In order to understand the childsubject, we used the method of participative observation. We visited six families with preschool children at home, in each case about 20 visits over a period of 18 months (at the beginning of the investigation the children were between 9 months and 5 1/2 years old; we made a total of 107 house visits). During the visits we played with the children for several hours, drank coffee with the family and made behavior records. We also took photographs and made tape recordings. In addition, there were three to six extensive parental conversations which were recorded on tape per family. Important sections of the tape recordings were evaluated, transcribed and conversation-analyzed (cf. Braun et al. 1989).

The house visits in every family were always carried out by the same team, in each case a man and a woman. Team members met weekly to discuss, review and interpret their observations. At times a supervisor would be present to observe and offer helps, similar to a psychotherapeutic family consultant. Of course no therapeutic task existed and the participating psychologists abstained from every kind of intervention in the families. The goal of the domestic observations was to develop a picture of the child and his/ her family and to describe their change over the time. So it was, among other things, possible

- to indicate a theme that occupied a child during a specific stage, for example, "A small sibling was born; one must share the attention (according to Murray: a need) of the parents with this rival (according to Murray: a press)", "The child is now of Kindergarten age; more independence (need) is possible, but also necessary (press)";
- and in the same way family themes can be determined (cf. Hess and Handel, 1975), for example "Members of the family should always be (press) there for each other (need)" or "The family is similar to a service station - after the refueling (need) the child leaves quickly in order to avoid all obligations (press)".

On the other hand, two aspects of the child's media contact were to be observed very closely:

- The context of the media use (In precisely what situation does the child request to use one or more media? Which media themes are selected? Who would he like to read to him? When does the child withdraw from a medium? And what comes afterwards?)
In total, 120 media use situations were described in this manner.
- The actual reception process (Media selection, beginning and end of the reception, omissions and repetitions, secondary occupations, and so on).
In total 80 media reception situations were described in this way.

Table 3: Two aspects of the child's media contact

<p>The context of the media usage</p> <p>In exactly what situations does the child request to use one or more media (simultaneously)? Who would he like to read to him? When does the child withdraw from a medium? And what happens afterwards?</p> <p>A total of 120 media use situations had been described</p>
<p>The actual reception process</p> <p>Which media theme is selected? Who determines the beginning and end of the reception? Which parts of the media offer are omitted or repeated? Are there any secondary activities of the child during reception?</p> <p>A total of 80 media reception processes had been described</p>

2.2 Results of the study

In the following two case examples will be presented. They both touch on the subject of "Fear vs. Self-confidence and Strength". In addition to the single case descriptions it will be shown how in these individual cases general reception strategies of children can be expressed.

Case example 1: Susanne and the book about the cat "Susanne"

Susanne, who is lovingly called Sanne by her parents, repeatedly plays a self-thought out role game with the visitors (female, 27 years old and male, 42 years old). The female visitor is a wild cat which must be tamed. Sanne laces a leather band at the wrist. She requests the male visitor to pay close attention to the "wild cat". She proposes that he and she could cut the "cat" claws together. Later she frolics about restlessly and with delight with the "cat" through the room.

From numerous observations and conversations with the mother it becomes clear that Sanne recognizes her own wildness in the visitor and tames this representative vicariously. Just as the mother requests Sanne again and again to restrain her temperament and to deal in particular with the small newborn brother gently, so Sanne directs and treats the visitors.

The cat symbol is repeatedly present in the child's room, as a soft toy animal as well as the protagonist of a children's book. In the picture book the cat belongs to a girl by the name of

Susanne. It is not provable, but well conceivable, that Sanne's willingness to identify with the cat symbol was awoken by the parents while reading aloud from this book.

A typical reading of the cat book is as follows:


- Sanne and the two observers play the above mentioned game "Pay attention to the wild cat"
- The visitor discovers the book on Sanne's bookshelf and proposes they look at it together.
- Sanne agrees gladly. She determines the reading speed as she turns the pages and explains to the visitors what is there to see. Obviously she knows the book almost by heart. The book contains large formatted picture pages in which the cat is looked after by a small girl and stroked. Or the cat investigates the house and its environment. The cat can be also dangerous and aggressive, but Sanne explains these pictures without fear. She changes her voice and says in a higher pitch " ... and there I chased the mice".
- In two pictures the cat enters into dangerous situations. It encounters a mole that has very large claws and it is chased by a dog. Sanne turns the pages on these two pictures quickly. Nevertheless the omitted picture of the mole still has an impact, and she breaks off the reading shortly after she would have to look at the dog picture. She closes the book and puts it back into the shelf.
- During one reading observer stated that the book was fun for him. To this Sanne replied: "You can get it for yourself", because for her the reading had definitively ended.
- Later the role play with the "cat" is taken up again.

Table 4 displays the typical action steps in their chronological course, the options open and the selected actions at each step. Here and in the following tables only a part of the steps during reception is shown.

The reception develops mostly out of a preceding game situation. Since the visitors themselves do not make any thematic proposals for the child's play, this game is frequently in close connection with the current theme of the child. If the child or another person proposes to receive a medium, (intentional or not) a modification of the theme can be induced. The same is valid also for the termination of the reception and for the bridge to a subsequent activity.

Table 4: Thematic options in the case example "Sanne"


STEPS OF ACTIONS	OPTION 1	OPTION 2	OPTION 3
child's actual life theme in preceding play	yes	partly	no
who selects media theme ?	child	visitors	others
thematic steering by beginning media use	play theme continues	play theme interrupted	no thematic steering
child's actual life theme in media: objective perspective	yes	partly	no
child's actual life theme in media: subjective perspective	yes	partly	no
thematic steering by ending media use	media theme continues	media theme interrupted	no thematic steering
child's actual life theme in following play	yes	partly	no

 = behavioral options exercised in the play and during the reception of the cat book by Sanne

One can see clearly that Sanne examines her cat symbol intensely during this visit. Obviously the symbol stands for her own and other wild and uncontrollable feelings. However, the cat is not only untamed and occasionally a hazard to her surroundings, but also injurious and dangerous to itself. The breaking off of the picture book reading presumably serves to end the feeling of vulnerability and fear. Because Sanne knows the pictures of the book very well, she can deliberately select which aspects of the story she wants to turn to and which ones she wants to avoid.

**Table 5: The most frequent form of thematic steering
(in 11 of 80 evaluated situations)**

STEPS OF ACTIONS	OPTION 1	OPTION 2	OPTION 3
child's actual life theme in preceding play	yes	partly	no
who selects the media theme ?	child	visitors	others
thematic steering by beginning media use	play theme continues	play theme interrupted	no thematic steering
child's actual life theme in media: objective perspective	yes	partly	no
child's actual life theme in media: subjective perspective	yes	partly	no
thematic steering by ending media use	media theme continues	media theme interrupted	no thematic steering
child's actual life theme in following play	yes	partly	no

 = most frequently found pattern of behavioral options exercised in the play and during the reception

During the course of our observations we identified a type of reception process that favoured dealing with the self theme from the beginning to the end and was to a large extent defined by the child (Table 5) more often than the course of actions shown by Sanne (Table 4).

However it was by no means unusual that children interrupted the pursuit of the theme short-term, when, for example, they did not listen to a fairy tale cassette all the way to the end or did not want to look at a picture book in its entirety (Table 6).

A further frequent behavioral option was that children tried to re-interpret a media statement to satisfy their personal thematic needs - ignoring the discrepancy between the self theme and the media theme, as rated from a more scientific, objective viewpoint - table 7). From the last two shown tables an obvious typical course is observed for which children strive in order not to alienate the defaulted media subject from their own needs. This discovery stands in very good agreement with the previously quoted statements of Bakhtin (1981). Children want to come into contact with their personal themes, but they want to decide how close and how emotionally moving this contact should be.

Table 6: The second most frequent form of thematic steering
(in 9 of 80 evaluated situations)

STEPS OF ACTIONS	OPTION 1	OPTION 2	OPTION 3
child's actual life theme in preceding play	yes	partly	no
who selects the media theme ?	child	visitors	others
thematic steering by beginning media use	play theme continues	play theme interrupted	no thematic steering
child's actual life theme in media: objective perspective	yes	partly	no
child's actual life theme in media: subjective perspective	yes	partly	no
thematic steering by ending media use	media theme continues	media theme interrupted	no thematic steering
child's actual life theme in following play	yes	partly	no

■ = a further frequently found pattern of behavioral options exercised in the play and during the reception

Table 7: The third most frequent form of thematic steering
(in 5 of 80 evaluated situations)

STEPS OF ACTIONS	OPTION 1	OPTION 2	OPTION 3
child's actual life theme in preceding play	yes	partly	no
who selects the media theme ?	child	visitors	others
thematic steering by beginning media use	play theme continues	play theme interrupted	no thematic steering
child's actual life theme in media: objective perspective	yes	partly	no
child's actual life theme in media: subjective perspective	yes	partly	no
thematic steering by ending media use	media theme continues	media theme interrupted	no thematic steering
child's actual life theme in following play	yes	partly	no

■ = a further frequently found pattern of behavioral options exercised in the play and during the reception

The validity of our research results depends, of course, strongly on the correctness of our interpretations. We asked ourselves how we can shield ourselves against the far too careless assumption that, in fact, the observed child searched for and found his actual life theme in media stories. In a retrospective analysis one tends to regard things as being identical flowing too easily as while they were occurring they wouldn't have been correctly anticipated. Therefore we decided to proceed with every child differently at least once and try to predict the reaction to a media offering from the knowledge of the child's theme.

We considered as a team which media offering or which toy could correspond to the actual life theme of the child examined by us and then confronted the child with this subject. The bargaining between the child and the selected thematic offer or impulse was recorded by the visitors in the same manner as in the other visits in the child's family. If it becomes recognizable that the child is attracted by the thematic offer, there is a type of non-linguistic dialog consensus validation for the quality of the interpretations of the research team.

Table 8: Proposal and acceptance of selected thematic impulses

child's code letter	A	A	B	B1	B	C	C	D	D	D	E	F	F
contact number	16	25	13	6	26	17	23	15	17	25	27	9	20
kind of impulse													
new book proposal													
new toy proposal													
new game proposal													
which thematic field is proposed													
child's actual life theme													
family's actual life theme													
play theme with visitors													
involvement of the child													
high involvement													
short investigation													
no occupation													
acceptance by the child													
child accepts impulse													
child is ambivalent													
child refuses impulse													

 realized option of conduct in a certain contact

As shown in Table 8 only in one case (child A, 16th house visit) was the impulse not acted upon. Otherwise we can register positive or at least ambivalent reactions to the thematic offer. The results achieved are therefore quite satisfactory. Nevertheless, it is very reasonable in the light of the appropriation concept to take a closer look at such an ambivalent dealing with the thematic impulse in order to find out which positive and negative comments of the child regarding the theme could be observed.

Case example 2: Christian and the wild fellows

Christian (code letter C) was marked to be an anxious child when we first visited him at the age of 4 years and 9 months. The encoding in Table 8 shows the 17th contact (C17, cf. table 8), which was immediately after his 6th birthday. During the course of our observations he has become sometimes quite rebellious and insolent to his mother. Christian himself also observes this change. Not without pride did he tell of how he recently thumped the behind of the kindergarten teacher, but nobody had suspected him because he was, up to now, always so well mannered.

The visitor team describes his present theme as "Increasing confidence in his own strength against the background of earlier anxiety", and chooses the book "Where the Wild Things Are" by Maurice Sendak as a thematically corresponding game impulse. There exists already a psychoanalytic interpretation for this book (Spitz, 1988). The story deals with the preschool child Max, who is one evening particularly up to a lot of nonsense (in the picture: wearing his wolf skin) and is finally sent to bed without dinner by his nerve-racked mother. Max dreams he goes into the country of the wild fellows, becomes their king and dances the big Rumpus with them. Finally he leaves the monsters, who do not want to release him because they would have liked to eat him, and returns to reality with his boat. He awakes in his room and sniffs the food that the obviously forgiving mother put on the bed for him. The book shows the ambivalent situation of a child at the threshold of school age who begins to free himself from the mother, who enjoys his own strength, and who, however, still has fears and at least for the time being finds his way back to the considerate mother.

Christian thanks us in a well-behaved way for the present of the book, and says that he had already looked on it once in the kindergarten. Then he shows his other birthday presents. Only in the following contact (C18, cf. table 8) he is willing to look at the book together with the visitors. A long reading conversation develops in which he reports on his ambivalent feelings to the book's contents. It becomes clear that the wild fellows with their claws and teeth frighten him. He declares as his favorite page the picture that shows departure of Max from the monster country.

The ambivalence between being wild and being insolent, to rebel against the mother and nevertheless to be still in need of maternal protection and thoughtfulness, finds itself both as actual life theme of the child and in the media story. The characterization of the childish theme by the visitor team was therefore correct. In spite of that, Christian approaches the book only very cautiously.

There can two different explanations be given for the reluctance shown by the child:

Firstly: The ambivalence to the thematic impulse corresponds to the ambivalence in the child's life theme. Christian would obviously like to determine how much excitement he wants to have at a given time and when he needs safety instead. Holland writes about the satisfied

reader "He must have found something in the work that does what he does to cope with needs or dangers" (Holland, 1975, p. 115). This need for a fit is necessary for the themes (media themes, personal themes), for the way of handling the thematic situations (coping or defending), and obviously also for the manner of writing and the act of reading. The reader here calls for an "individual standing back and considering alternatives and then making a decision". (Herrenkohl and Wertsch, 1999, p. 432), a right, which the hero in the picture book story also takes for himself: They both decide when and how long they want to expose themselves to an adventure.

While Max is climbing into his boat and travelling back and forth between the child's room and the monster world, the reader Christian can turn to or away from the book or read specific pages and not others. This sort of behavior we have deemed "reading strategies" (cf. Charlton, Burbaum and Pette, in prep.). With the concept of „reading strategy“, all the operations and actions shall be described, that readers apply when they examine a literary text. Such reading strategies can occur before, during and after reading. They include both the behavior to the text in it's material form (e.g. browsing through a book, throwing it in the trash) as well as emotional reactions and cognitive operations (e.g. identifying oneself with the protagonist, furthering the story in one's own daydreams) as well as social interaction and communication over the text (e.g. talking about the book with the bookseller or with friends).

Secondly: The brilliant children's book author Sendak wrote the book so that the reading situation corresponds to the reading content: The mother offers a protective frame within which the child can abandon himself to his rebellious fantasies while reading aloud - with the certainty that there is a good end. The reading mother and the mother in the story both remain fond of their child. This artful concept of the author is met only, however, if it is in fact the child's own mother that reads the book aloud and not a kindergarten teacher or the visitors from the Psychological Institute.

3. Discussion: The importance of the results for a theory of the appropriation of media themes by the reader

Table 9 summarizes the treated points once again. It becomes apparent that themes and their handling are an issue in the life of the reader, in the reception situation and in the media content.

Table 9: Themes and actions in real life, reading situation and media content

	reader's life	reading process	story read
themes	actual life theme of the reader (perceived own needs; options and constraints of action)	reading context (context model: needs and presses as perceived in the reading situation)	theme in the media narrative (situation model: needs and presses in the story as perceived by the reader)
actions	preferred strategies of coping and defending	performed reading strategies (e.g. focusing on certain themes; skipping ahead or flipping back; interrupt reception)	perceived coping strategies (acting strategies of the hero; narrative strategies of the author)

Themes are the interfaces at which a mediation can occur between the media story and the child's own life story.

As early as pre-school, children can select media stories so that they allow a reference to their own life situation. Children search in media stories for an expression of their own experience (ownness). They also, however, protect themselves against alienation through an inappropriate symbolic (otherness). Not only the theme (the need-press-combination), but also the overcoming styles (coping and defending) of medium and recipient must correspond so that the reader feels good.

The meeting between the media history and a child's themes does not follow an All or Nothing Principle. Different reading strategies, for example turning the pages, postponing the reading until later, calling for declarations by adults, allow the degree of involvement to be self-determined by the child.

The situative context of the reception is important. The reading situation also is to be regarded as a special theme. Children that are read to appropriate the media in the sense of a "guided participation" (Rogoff, 1990).

Literature

Aukrust, V. G. (2001). Agency and appropriation of voice - cultural differences in parental ideas about young children's talk. *Human Development*, 44, 235-249.

Bakhtin, M.M. (1981). *The dialogic imagination: Four essays* (edited by M. Holquist). Austin: University of Texas Press.

Braun, B., Charlton, M., Neumann, K., Orlik, W. & Rapp, R. (1989). Freiburger Längsschnittuntersuchung der Medienrezeption durch Vorschulkinder im familialen Kontext (Text-Kontext-Korpus). *Forschungsberichte des Psychologischen Instituts der Universität*

Freiburg. Nr. 53 (7 Bde).

Bremond, C. J. , J. Landy & Th. Pavel (eds.)(1995). *Thematics. New approaches*. Albany: SUNY Press

Brinker, J. (1993). Theme and interpretation. In: Sollors, W. (1993). *The return of thematic criticism*. (pp. 21-37). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Charlton, M., Burbaum, C. & Pette, C. (in prep.). Reading strategies in everyday life. Different ways of reading a novel which make a distinction. (under review: *Poetics today*)

Charlton, M. & Neumann(-Braun). (1990). *Medienrezeption und Identitätsbildung. Kulturpsychologische und kultursoziologische Befunde zum Gebrauch von Massenmedien im Vorschulalter* (Bd. 28). Tübingen: Narr. SkriptOralia.

Charlton, M. & Neumann(-Braun) (1990a). Reception research as structure analysis. . In: M. Charlton & B. Bachmair (eds.). *Media communication in everyday life* (pp. 21-44). New York: Saur.

Dolezel, L. (1995). A thematics of motivation and action. In: C. J. Bremond, J. Landy & Th. Pavel (eds.)(1995). *Thematics. New approaches*. (pp. 57-66), Albany: SUNY Press.

Freeman, M. (1984). History, narrative, and life-span developmental knowledge. *Human Development*, 27, 1-19

Gibbs, R.W. (2001). Proverbial themes we live by. *Poetics*, 29, 167-188

Haan, N. (1977). *Coping and defending. Processes of self-environment organization*. New York: Head Press

Hess, R.D. & Handel, G. (1959). *Family worlds*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press.

Murray, H.A. (1943). *Thematic Apperception Test - Manual*, p.4, Harvard University Press, Cambridge: MA.

Herrenkohl, L.P. & Wertsch, J. (1999). The use of cultural tools: Mastery and appropriation. In: Sigel, I. E. (ed.) *Development of mental representation: Theories and applications* (pp. 415-435). Mahwah, NJ, US: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.

Holland, N. (1975). *Five readers reading*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press.

Kurtz, V. & Schober, M.F. (2001). Readers' varying interpretations of theme in short fiction. *Poetics*, 29, 139-166.

Laszlo, J. & Rogers, W.S. (eds.)(2002). *Narrative Approaches in Social Psychology*. Budapest: New Mandate

Lazarus, R.S. (1966). *Psychological stress and the coping process*. New York: McGraw Hill.

Nicolopoulou, A. & Weintraub, J. (2001). Appropriation as theoretical problem and folk model: Opening up some important and promising agendas. *Human Development*, 44, 235 - 249.

Orlik, W., Charlton, M. & Neumann, K. (1990). Media symbols and self symbolisation - steps taken by the child to overcome anxiety. In: M. Charlton & B. Bachmair (eds.). *Media communication in everyday life* (pp. 137-142). New York: Saur.

Van Peer, W. & Lowerse, M.M. (eds.)(2001). *Thematics in psychology and literary studies*. Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press

Rogoff, B. (1990). *Apprenticeship in thinking: Cognitive development in social context*. London: Oxford University Press.

Rösler, Ch. (in press). *Individuelle Identitätskonstitution und kollektive Sinnstiftungsmuster. Narrative Identitätskonstruktionen in den Lebensgeschichten chronisch Kranker und Behinderter und die Bedeutung kultureller Sinngebungsangebote* (Philosophical Dissertation, University of Freiburg – Germany)

Sarbin, Th. (ed.)(1986). *Narrative psychology: The storied nature of human conduct*. New York: Praeger

Sollors, W. (1993). *The return of thematic criticism*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

Spitz, E. H. (1988). Picturing the child's inner world of fantasy. On the dialectic between Image and word. *The Psychoanalytic study of the child*, 43, 433-447.

Trommler, F. (1995)(ed.). *Thematics reconsidered: essays in honor of Horst S. Daemrlich*. Amsterdam: Rodopi

Wertsch, J. (1998). *Mind as action*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Witten, S. & Graesser, A. (2001). Introduction: the psychology of themes. *Poetics*, 29, 135-138.