Our Mythical Hope
in Children's and Young Adults' Culture...

The (In)efficacy of Ancient Myths in Overcoming the Hardships of Life

Workshops & Conference, May 15-21, 2017

Centre for Studies on the Classical Tradition (OBTA)
Faculty of "Artes Liberales", University of Warsaw

ABSTRACTS

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Kotick the Saviour: From Inferno to Paradise with Animals

Animals are the central characters of countless books for children, and have been since the very beginning of this kind of literature. They undergo various metamorphoses – all in the aim of being the most efficient guides for young readers in their meanders through life. Whether in anthropomorphic incarnations or as their "wild-selves", these animals – under the pen of talented authors – accompany and support young people on their way into adulthood. Often, they are our first

This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (Consolidator Grant 681202, OurMythicalChildhood).

teachers of friendship and love, and help us build our own (human) identity. They also stand by us during the most difficult experiences, as with loss or the end of one's life. In their role as *psychopompoi*, such animal protagonists are surprisingly successful and often they indeed do manage to achieve what Orpheus had failed to. In my talk, I will focus on the case of Kotick the White Seal by Rudyard Kipling to discuss the role of animal characters as the bearers of mythical hope for their reading wards.

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Literacy through Classical Myth: Teaching Stories and Languages in Wales

This talk explores the myths used to teach Classics to primary school pupils in the *Literacy through Classics* project, a university-led schools' project, in South Wales. Teaching Classics to pupils in deprived areas (so-called Communities First areas, with high unemployment and benefit dependency and low education) is challenging, and to make the content relatable, Classical stories need to be connected with Welsh cultural heritage of pupils. This talk will explore how we assemble the syllabus based on Classical and Welsh myths and legends, with particular attention to varying pupil abilities and ages, and how the syllabus has developed since we started in 2011.

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"Somewhere Else" and "Like Nowhere Else on Earth" – Making the World "a Better Place": Antipodean Representations of Aesop's *Fables*

This paper explores the representations of Aesop's *Fables* as interpreted by Antipodean author-illustrators whose anthologies incorporate global and regional perspectives as a segue to the development of a social and environmental conscience in young people.

Australian Rodney McRae's vision of Aesop's *Fables* (1990) as having originated and being disseminated from "somewhere else" in Classical Antiquity are interpreted through a range of international art forms and visual references, including classical Athenian vases and the prehistoric cave paintings of Lascaux.

New Zealand author-illustrator Ray Ching has a deep appreciation of his country as a land "like nowhere else on earth," one in which fragile and unique native species are threatened to extinction by the importation of European and Australian fauna. He substitutes the traditional Aesopian characters, the fox and

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the wolf, for example, with native fauna, the flightless Kiwi, who features frequently, the Morepork owl, and the prehistoric Tuatura lizard. These Antipodean interpretations of Aesop's *Fables* offer more nuanced interpretations of the traditional telling. The original didactic intentions of Aesop's *Fables* are often subverted by these illustrators through multiple readings of animal and human interactions. Hence, the race, for the hare and the tortoise is not always about winning, but surviving in an environment that is hostile or possibly unsustainable.

In acknowledging the challenges that face young people today, these Antipodean retellings of Aesop's *Fables* demonstrate scenarios and strategies for navigating the difficult journey to adulthood, whilst hoping to make the world a better place for themselves and future generations.

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'Steeds of Magical Capacity': The Trojan Horse as Children's Toy since the Nineteenth Century

The Trojan Horse has become a by-word for malicious trickery. However, this successful stratagem – by which the Greeks stormed the city of Troy after ten years – has been successfully marketed to child consumers for over two centuries. Its iconic role as plaything is epitomised by the November 1991 cover of *New Yorker* magazine, which featured a miniature Trojan Horse and soldiers coming to life in a night-time nursery. A few years later, Fisher-Price's toy was one of the few in its "Great Adventures" series to animate a specific myth while a giant mechanised version marked the entrance to a prominent American toyshop. Today, even a brief trawl of toy-shop websites shows the continuing potency of this myth in an incredible range of educational jigsaws, 3D interactive board games, and more.

The Trojan Horse was firmly established as a children's toy from the early nineteenth century, when children became mass consumers and archaeological investigations brought the historicity of the Trojan War into question. Toy-theatre adaptations based on circus performances in the 1830s brought the Horse into British homes with a script that encouraged the re-enactment of alternative endings. A generation or so later, a children's magazine series on "Toys" exhorted children to imagine their toy horse as Trojan Horse, while another generation on, one such fictional toy asked to have its hollow inside filled with leaden soldiers, thereby ensuring a happy ending for that school-story.

This paper will examine such instances of the Trojan Horse as vehicle for children's amusement and education. I will examine how consumers engaged with the Trojan Horse in a variety of forms, including through re-purposing more affordable generic horses and soldiers. How did the interaction encouraged by toys relate to mythological stories? And how did newly-available, cheaper retellings fit with those in more expensive books? When evidence from print, ephemeral, and

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material cultures are juxtaposed, a lively tradition emerges of children's imaginative re-animation of the Trojan Horse – and the enduring commercial and cultural power of a toy which enables children to change the outcome of this most recognisable of ancient myths.

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La Fontaine's Reeds: Adapting Greek Myths to Model Resilience

Jean de La Fontaine's seventeenth-century adaptation of Aesop's *Fables* included a highly modified version of *The Oak and the Reed* that emphasized the reed's ability to adapt and survive in a storm, contrasted with the oak's brittle strength, which failed. Although La Fontaine's moral is commonly recognized today, the ancient moral preserved in Avianus, that obscurity breeds safety, differed widely. Like La Fontaine's reed, the characterization of women in Greek myth has been adapted to teach the important lesson of how to endure hardship to today's youth. Novelizations of Greek myths offer an especially fertile medium to model productive behavioral responses and build resiliency in children and young adults. In particular, Greek myths that focus on female characters who are without agency within their own stories are useful tools in modeling resilience. Psychological Resilience is the key characteristic necessary for children and teenagers to survive the setbacks of childhood, minor and major. The term was coined in the 1980s to describe the quality of responding in a positive manner to adverse events, from minor setbacks to catastrophic personal trauma.[1]

Highly resilient children have the necessary coping mechanisms to recover quickly from adversity and exhibit few later risky behaviors, such a drug taking, absenteeism from school, and unsafe sexual practices. One of the strongest predictors of resilience among children and young adults is literacy (Jones 2003, 26-27). Primary and secondary school students who read extensively often have encountered successful coping strategies for adverse events as a result of their exposure to similar situations within the safety of the fictional world and are able to apply them to the similar event encountered in real life (Bettelheim 1977, Du Toit 2011, 106-107).[2] Students who encounter similar situations to theirs after a trauma recover more quickly because they are able to contextualize their

[1] To quote the American Philological Association's definition, "Resilience is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress - such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems or workplace and financial stressors. It means 'bouncing back' from difficult experiences." (The Road to Resilience).
[2] Bettelheim suggests that myths are unsuitable vehicles for childhood development because of the exceptionalism of the characters and events, but he ignores the possibilities of adaptation and multiformity, as well as the presence of myth in the modern oral tradition (35-41).

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experiences and draw connections to the fictional characters (Malchiodi 2008, 167-168; MacGillivray 2010, 2-3).

Like Persephone, Ariadne, Cassandra, and their mythical sisters, many of the children reading their stories are constrained in their freedom of movement and their choices. While the mythological women are overmastered by the men in their life or forced to follow a certain path by uncaring gods, children and teens are dependent on the adults around them for the basic necessities of life and as such lose their personal agency. The similarity in the two situations makes Greek mythological heroines ideal for modeling positive and productive responses to traumatic situations that are beyond the control of the individual, i.e. how to endure and make the best of a bad situation. The coping mechanisms exhibited in novelized adaptations of Greek myths are applicable to multivarious situations that children might encounter in the real world. For example, in Laura Ruby's *Bone Gap*, the Persephone character is isolated from her friends and family, but still constantly plans different methods of escape without becoming discouraged by failure. In Patrice Kindl's *Lost in the Labyrinth*, the Minotaur's sister finds solace for her brother's death in her religion, and in Clemence McLaren's *Inside the Walls of Troy*, Cassandra endures the disbelief of her people by forging close social bonds with her sisters.

As most children are exposed to popular myths in the United States by the age of 10, Greek myths are familiar to children and teenagers, which ensures that the stories are both accessible and appealing to readers. At the same time, myths are far enough removed from real life that there is minimal risk of retraumatizing children and teens that might already be suffering under adverse situations. Finally, the very exceptionalism of the characters, the fact that they are often divine or semi-divine beings, conveys to young readers that both suffering adversity and being unable to overcome adversity without outside aid are normal occurrences for all persons and do not reflect a private weakness. As a result, Greek mythology is an excellent vehicle for promoting the coping skills necessary to develop resilience and providing a small amount of the support necessary for resilience to grow.

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Mythical Delight and Playfulness in C.S. Lewis' *Till We Have Faces* and *Chronicles of Narnia*

C.S. Lewis' acclaimed 1956 work *Till We Have Faces: A Myth Retold* was his final novel. While not his favourite of his own works – that honour went to *Perelandra* – it was the one he considered his most mature and accomplished. *Till We Have Faces* presents a powerful retelling of the myth of Cupid and Psyche. One of its principal themes is that of innocent delight in the divine and the disastrous consequence of renouncing that childlike state in the name of a false, and ultimately cynical, maturity. Significantly, the work was published in the same year as Lewis' *The Last Battle* and it clearly resonates with major themes in that book as well as in the *Chronicles of Narnia* more broadly. In particular, the story of Susan's tragic journey from childlike wonder to adult cynicism inverts disturbingly the conversion narrative of Orual, Psyche's jealous sister, without closing the door on the possibility of redemption. More positively, the simple delight that Psyche shows in Cupid finds many echoes in the *Chronicles*, above all in the joyful, romping reunion with Aslan in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* and the

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heaven sequence of the *Last Battle*. For Lewis, Christianity was to be understood as the 'True Myth' echoed and anticipated in all the other myths of the world. Drawing principally on *Till We Have Faces* and the *Chronicles of Narnia*, this paper will explore the way in which we see Lewis using the vehicle of myth on multiple levels to engage adults and children in the fundamental questions of life.

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Playing with Life Uncertainties

A number of Attic and South Italian vases depict maidens playing various games, together, with young men or deities such as Aphrodite and Eros. The depictions convey a metaphorical discourse on the perception of love and marriage as risks for girls in prenuptial age. They are often based on verbal puns associated with the double meaning of *paizô*, 'play' and 'play amorously,' or 'toy with love emotions.' A divinatory dimensions appears in several games, reflecting the agency of maidens training to control their fate.

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Hercules and the Autistic Imagination: Introducing the 'Autism' Strand of Our Mythical Childhood

This paper will introduce my work for the autism and classical myth strand of the OMC Project. I shall set out two key things underpinning my research: that teachers and other professionals welcome new ideas for their work with autistic children, and that classical mythology provides a rich source of such material. I will focus especially on the resources I am creating around stories of Hercules, especially his difficult journeys into fantasy lands and his comparably difficult experiences in the mundane world where he often remains an outsider. In particular, I shall explore the potential of these stories in:

- Stimulating the imagination,
- Extending experience,
- Developing social and personal skills,
- Giving cultural experience,
- Aiding interaction with others.

This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (Consolidator Grant 681202, OurMythicalChildhood).

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Australian Reveries and Floating Schoolgirls: Intertextual Mysteries in Ursula Dubosarsky's *The Golden Day*

In *The Golden Day* (2011), eleven girls from a private school in Sydney are taken on an expedition by their mysterious teacher, Miss Renshaw: "Today we will visit the gardens and think about death," she says, as she leads them through the gardens, to the shore, and into a cave, where she then mysteriously disappears. As they learn their Latin, read their Thucydides, the girls wonder about Miss Renshaw. Is she alive or dead? Has she run away with the gardener, a poet who may be her lover? Has he murdered her and run away himself? As they wonder, they think about life: their own lives, those of the people around them, and the life of Australians more generally.

The Golden Day is set against the backdrop of the Vietnam War, and the execution of Ronald Ryan (the last man to be executed in Australia), in 1967. Hope is not a dominant emotion in this novel, which is a chilly reverie, layered with multiple intertexts from classical myth, history, and Australian literature and art. As I shall explore, most important of these are Joan Lindsay's 1967 *Picnic at Hanging Rock* and a series of paintings of schoolgirls by Charles Blackman, including *Floating Schoolgirl* (1954). This curious novel shows the possibilities of classical and Australian intertextuality to add depth and force to Australian explorations of adolescence, national identity, and its place in the world.

Charles Blackman, *Floating Schoolgirl* (1954)

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Facing Family Trauma in Natalie Haynes' *The Children of Jocasta*

Three years on from her debut novel *The Amber Fury*, published by Corvus in 2014, Natalie Haynes once again adapts Greek tragedy in ways designed to illuminate the

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psychological challenges facing teenagers and young adults. Where *The Amber Fury* is set in the contemporary world, and the myth of Electra as told by all three Greek tragedians, tragedy played a role both as the ancient material being studied by delinquent teenagers and as a metanarrative guiding the reader through the psychological quagmires faced by its bereaved protagonist and the adolescent girl she befriends, *The Children of Jocasta* (Pan Macmillan, published May 4, 2017) is set in Bronze-Age Thebes. It retells the stories in Sophocles' *Oedipus* and *Antigone* but from the perspectives of two women, Jocasta and Ismene, whose subjective experiences of trauma as very young women on the threshold of adulthood are too often overlooked. Yet the hardships and deprivations they face in a world run by men, and in which the grievous problems afflicting their families are cross-generational, do not, in Haynes' reading, turn them into passive victims with no moral agency to resist or attempt to take charge of their destinies. In a final twist to the ancient tale, hope of a happier future beyond the temporal scope of Sophocles' plays is held out to the reader, making the novel both therapeutic and emotionally sustaining.

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Orphic Resonances of Love and Loss in David Almond's *A Song for Ella Grey*

David Almond's *A Song for Ella Grey* (2014) is a thoroughly modern YA novel, which explores the loves (familial, romantic, friendly, and 'complicated') and the losses of a group of ordinary-seeming seventeen-year-old school pupils in the north of England, by weaving the myth of a returned, young again Orpheus into their lives. The narrator Claire is the best friend of Ella Grey, who dies unexpectedly after being bitten by adders (Britain's only venemous snake – but not venemous enough to kill humans) shortly after a makeshift 'marriage' to Orpheus on the beach conducted by their friends. Claire and her friends learn much about love and loss through their shared experiences throughout the novel, while their learning about literature at school provides one frame of reference for making their very individual and localised stories (complete with both Tyneside dialect and scenery) universal. Claire and other characters question the relevance of 'ancient' stories to their real lives, thus inviting the reader to pose similar questions. In metaliterary manner, Claire, as narrator, also problematises the novel's integration of ancient myths that 'have no place' in the modern world, and that cannot be explained in its own terms; as a character, she questions whether the events she described can really have taken place, only to dismiss such doubts – but again, the reader is invited to ask the same questions, and to wonder whether it was simply 'the madness of being young, the madness of knowing love for the first time.'

This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (Consolidator Grant 681202, OurMythicalChildhood).

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Hercules as Hero of Hopeful Culture in Ancient Poetry and Contemporary Media for Children and Young Adults

Since Greek and Roman antiquity Hercules has staying power as *the* embodiment of heroism constituted by qualities like superhuman power, excessive emotionality, immense suffering and triumphant apotheosis. This ambivalence has become characteristic of *the heroic temper* established within Greek literature above all in the epic cycle and in Attic tragedy. Apart from the manifold personality of the hero, a decisive element of hope lies in his stunning achievements as cultural hero eliminating primordial monsters and dangers threatening civilization.

This paper first follows the traces of Hercules' 'mythopoesis' which made him a cultural icon in Greek and Roman antiquity. It can be demonstrated that this process already then was multimedia, since literary evidence is to be situated in a dialogue with visual art and other forms of self-representation of the *polis*. The postmodernistic reception of this multimedia Heracles myth(s) in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* builds the bridge to examples of hopeful images of the ambivalent cultural hero in contemporary media for children and young adults. From this heuristic perspective I will analyse books for children (e.g. *The Goddess Girls* by Joan Williams and Suzanne Williams) and recent blockbusters as well.

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Myth and Suffering in Modern Culture: The Mythical Chronotope from Oscar Wilde to Woodkid

In *Language and Myth* (1925), Ernst Cassirer analyzes the interconnectedness of two human prerogatives: communication in language and mythmaking. He quotes Max Mueller, who claims that "Mythology is inevitable, it is natural, it is an inherent necessity of language, if we recognize in language the outward form and manifestation of thought […]. Depend upon it, there is mythology now as there was in the time of Homer, only we do not perceive it, because we ourselves live in the very shadow of it." Using Cassirer's fundamental ideas on mythical thinking developed in his *Philosophy of Symbolic Forms* (1923-1929), I analyze the persistence of myth in modern literature for children and youth. I focus first on two canonical authors, Oscar Wilde (*The House of Pomegranates*) and Antoine de Saint-Exupéry (*The Little Prince*) and demonstrate how they both formulate a mythical chronotope that allows for a combining of the two traditional literary forms, the myth and the fairy tale, into a seamless new authorial genre in which great

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importance is attached to a particular spatiotemporal setting. The issues of overcoming suffering, loss, and death are at the core of the two authors' oeuvre.

I then turn to the contemporary expression of the mythical chronotope, both in children's literature and in other media. I analyze the direct and somewhat reductive renderings of the ancient Greek myths in Katherine Marsh's *The Night Tourist* (2010) and *The Twilight Prisoner* (2014) which make overt use of, respectively, the story of Eurydice and the myth of Demeter and Persephone, but stage them both in twenty-first-century New York City and its Underworld. Space is crucial in these texts and combined with an uncanny warping of time, points to a mythical chronotope. In psychological terms, the original novel and its sequel deal with loss and mourning as well as with the role of friendship in adolescence.

Last but not least, I will analyze the video clips and the lyrics of the French artist Woodkid's first musical album, *The Golden Age* (2013). The music and the imagery were used by Ubisoft in their video game series *Assassin's Creed*, thus reaching millions of young people and children. I demonstrate how the ostensibly ultra-modern medium employs the mythical chronotope and mythical thinking in the depiction and overcoming of violence, trauma, and addiction. Mythical thinking, it seems, persists up to our era and the mythical chronotope lends itself to the depiction of suffering, grief, and, occasionally, resilience that accompany liminal rites of passage from childhood into adulthood.

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'For the Children': Children's Columns in Australian Newspapers during the Great War. Mythic Hope or Mythic Indoctrination?

During the early decades of the twentieth century, children's columns in Australian newspapers began to address more adult issues, including politics, religion and history. This was in keeping with the tenor of similar columns in western media that began to incorporate editorials and articles on world events. Such topics were usually covered in a gentle, light style that reflected an editorial approach of informative but non-threatening edification. The reasoning behind the broadening of the subject matter was, essentially, the moral and intellectual pedagogy that underpinned the columns from their early development in the nineteenth century.

A regular topic of children's columns, the retelling of Greek myths, was also, at times, massaged to include references to broader issues of global significance. This propensity not only reflected the Victorian and Edwardian principle that Classics per se was a touchstone of formative education, but also that it provided a means by which children could be mentored in appropriate responses to events of national significance. While there were clear tones of nationalism and patriotism sustaining these retellings, the use of Greek myths to interpret events such as the

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Great War may also be regarded as an attempt to provide solace, even hope, during crucial and difficult times in children's lives.

This paper explores the inclusion of more adult issues in retellings of Greek myths in children's columns in Australian newspapers with a focus on the topic of the Great War. The case study provided is from the column, "For the Children," published in the *Australian Christian Commonwealth* on September 25, 1914. This entry, which retells the myths of Persephone and Iphigeneia, is framed by an editorial that directs the children in how to 'read' the stories. The tale of Persephone is to be interpreted as an example of maternal love, while the tale of Iphigeneia is to be understood as an example of sacrifice. Both tales, particularly the second one, present a strongly articulated response to the first month of the Great War that, arguably, seeks to help young readers understand a crucial event in a world entering crisis. The extent to which this use of ancient myth may have been successful in assisting children to make sense of the Great War is a cornerstone of this exploration.

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Bandar-log in Action: The Polish Children's Experience of Disaster in Literature and Mythology

The expression 'bandar-log' was popular in Poland in the first half of the twentieth century among readers of Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book*. Before the First World War, in families of both the landed gentry and the intelligentsia, 'bandar-log' served to describe unruly children (*The Jungle Book* was not available in Polish translation until 1923). Thus, it referred to boisterous, frolicsome behaviours that clashed with the standards for proper child-rearing. Yet well-heeled children did have the right to vent their emotions – hence, the concept of 'bandar-log', borrowed from a 'suitable' book, permitted albeit fleeting acceptance of behaviours otherwise frowned upon.

The concept lost its meaning together with the decline of good manners and the acceptance of a 'playground model', in which children's behaviour was regulated not by readings, but by adaptation to their group. Nonetheless, 'bandar-log' did persist after the Second World War in rump form, as an echo of a bygone world.

My presentation addresses children's behaviours during the wrenching transformations that are part and parcel of war and revolution, and their reflection in literature and mythology. So, I examine the loss of childhood as coupled with the destruction of the world – and its subsequent recreation.

Thus, I analyze literary representations and childhood as recalled much later, during adulthood. The founding myth of the *Kresy* (Poland's onetime eastern borderlands) was that of an Eden. However, during the interwar period, a

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significant shift in society's vision of childhood had occurred. In the following generation 'bandar-log' was but a shadow. I shall wish to portray the influence of childhood experiences on way the mythology of the *Kresy* was shaped before the *Kresy* were definitively lost in the wake of WWII. When in the course of WWII Poles were expelled from that Eden, the myth of the happy family in the 'Recovered Territories' replaced it.

The thesis of this article is that, within the process of eliminating childhood, 'bandar-log' took an unforeseen and startling turn. The capacity of children to release their emotions proved to be an important resource in the process of accepting responsibility: it also helped assure the maintenance of emotional balance in circumstances of traumatic loss.

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The Utopia of an Ideal Community: Reconsidering the Myth of Atlantis in James Gurney's *Dinotopia* Novels

Since its first reference in Plato's dialogues *Timaios* and *Kritias* (fourth century BC), the myth of the sunken island of Atlantis has enthralled readers ever since. Myriads of retellings and adaptations testify of the never-ending interest in the Atlantis myth as a universal story about an ideal state. Moreover, the complete destruction of Atlantis by a natural catastrophe has triggered multiple interpretations, which allegorically refer to human arrogance and *hubris*. The representation of Atlantis as a lost civilization, which initially incorporated the ideal of a peaceful coexistence, particularly inspired philosophers, such as Francis Bacon and Thomas Morus, to devise utopian societies. Likewise, the Atlantis myth gradually surged in literature, film, and the arts, even leaving clear traces in international children's literature.

This paper focuses on the depiction of Atlantis in James Gurney's *Dinotopia* (1992) and its sequel *Dinotopia: The World Beneath* (1995; rev. ed. 2012), whose imaginative realism and lavishly created images captivated readers from the outset. Set in the 1860s, both novels are written in the form of diaries and focus on the adventures of the diarist, a British natural scientist, and his son, who are shipwrecked on an unknown island called Dinotopia. This island is populated by humans and dinosaurs, who live together peacefully. The shipwrecks are gradually introduced into the history, culture, and political system of Dinotopia and eventually discover that Dinotopia originates from a sunken island, whose remains are hidden in a mysterious cave system beneath the actual island. An officially commissioned expedition reveals that the sunken kingdom of Poseidos is the source for the Atlantis myth. Furthermore, the Atlantis myth is connected with the history of Ancient Egypt, the Sumerians, Old China, and Classical Antiquity, thus creating a meta-myth. What is more, the time frame of this meta-myth is extended into the

This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (Consolidator Grant 681202, OurMythicalChildhood).

past and the potential future by encompassing the Mesozoic era – as the official period of the dinosaurs – as well as references to advanced alien societies in outer space. The hybrid blending of these diverse cultural and mythical concepts provides a utopian social system, which clearly contrasts with the political situation in the Western hemisphere of that time. The peaceful cohabitation of dinosaurs and humans and the refusal of colonialism, suppression, and intolerance set up an exemplary and timeless model by transferring the Atlantis myth from a given historical moment to our present time.

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Hungry and Hopeful: Greek Myths and Children of the Future in Mike Carey's Melanie Stories

A girl holds the key to the future of mankind: she has to choose between sacrificing herself and creating a new human race. In one version she is Iphigenia, in another Pandora. Mike Carey (or M.R. Carey) has now produced three versions of this story, all of which follow the child character Melanie through horrific trauma, which she navigates with the help of Greek myth. The first was a short story called *Iphigenia in Aulis* which appeared in an anthology of dark fantasy school stories, called *Apple for the Creature*. This then developed into both a novel and a film script, both with the title *Girl with All the Gifts*, referring to the myth of Pandora that takes over from Iphigenia. None of these are written for children, but they play with the conventions and expectations of children's literature, especially the short story with its school setting. They feature strong focalisation, simple words, a child protagonist, and a child's perspective. But Melanie is not just a child. All three stories also feature strong language, violence, and intensely adult themes. The novel and film were particularly successful among young adult readers.

The myths first emerge in the school room, where Melanie falls in love with them along with her teacher. They shape her identity as she struggles to understand her place in the world. Is she human or monster? Should she sacrifice

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herself and her kind, or carry out a generational coup? Greek myth, it seems, has quite a repertoire of characters who fear children at the same time as exploiting, even consuming them. This coming of age story shows a child setting the past in dialogue with the future in order to address some very big questions about what it means to be human and what it means to hope.

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How to Become a Hero?

Becoming a hero is the master plot of modern popular (especially Hollywood) narrative, manifesting in such diverse contemporary forms as coming-of-age tales, superhero origin stories, monomyth quests of refusing the call and returning with the elixir, and "emotional journeys" of self-discovery and stepping up. Yet despite the widespread claims of mythological prototypes for this master plot, classical myth itself is only sporadically interested in its heroes' childhood and adolescence – and the handful of exceptions, from the *Telemachy* to the *Achilleid*, offer an instructive gallery of the narrative and ideological differences between ancient and modern notions of the narrativity of childhood and the agency of youth. Modern fiction for pre-adult readers and viewers has colonised this vacant space in a variety of ways, populating the adolescence of heroes with adventures which overlay classical myths and models with distinctively modern ideas of young-adult narrativity and the nature of heroic growth. Two notable extended cases include the *Young Heroes* series by Yolen and Harris (2002–2004), and the *Young Hercules* television series (1999), both of which offer sustained measurements of the distance between ancient and modern popular conceptions of adolescence, and of how a classical hero's journey differs from its modern mythical constructions.

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"I Found Hope Again that Night...": The Orphean Quest of Beauty and the Beast

The tale of Beauty and the Beast, rooted in the ancient myth of Eros and Psyche, ranks among the most engaging stories of our culture, as the overwhelming success of its recent Disney version attests. It appeals to both young and old, for it deals with the timeless ideas of love, loyalty, courage, loss, and the search – beneath surface appearance – for authentic values worthy of the highest sacrifice. Among the myriad versions of the tale (Disney's 1991 animation and 2017 movie being the most famous ones), I have chosen a very particular retelling that is also considered

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spectacular – the TV series *Beauty and the Beast* (1987–1990). Deemed "too strange to succeed," it was nonetheless broadcast globally and followed by more than 19 million viewers at its *acme*, and still enjoys hosts of devoted fans today.

Set in New York, the global metropolis in the New World that has never severed its ties with the Old Continent and its ancient history, the series lifts contemporary civilization into the realm of myth. It universalizes the emotions of young and mature protagonists and acquaints the audience with classical culture – in the broadest meaning of the term – through numerous references to such authors as Virgil, Ovid, Shakespeare, Dickens, Carroll, Wilde, Eliot, and Rilke, and to masterpieces of music by Schubert, Beethoven, Chopin, and Vivaldi.

In my presentation I will focus on the first season's episode 8, *Song of Orpheus*, which deals with that most traumatic experience – the death of a loved one – and which shows how a seemingly devastating descent into the Underworld might turn into a quest for hope.

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From Joppa to Jaffa: Percy Jackson and Israeli Fanfiction: A Case Study

Adaptations and rewriting of existing works has been around as long as the works themselves have existed; in the words of Lev Grossman, "When Virgil wrote *The Aeneid*, he didn't invent Aeneas; Aeneas was a minor character in Homer's *Odyssey* whose unauthorized further adventures Virgil decided to chronicle."[3] The Internet, however, has given new shape and life to a specific type of such reinterpretation in the form of fanfiction. One of the most popular genres for fanfiction is fantasy, as amateur authors reinvent, rewrite and recast events and characters of their favourite novels. Series such as J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* and Stephanie Meyer's *Twilight* have given rise to a vast and ever growing number of fanfictions. Most interestingly for our purposes, Rick Riordan's *Percy Jackson* books and their subsequent film versions, which were enormously popular in Israel, have given rise to a large body of such fiction. In this paper, I investigate how and why young Israeli fanfiction writers have used the *Percy Jackson* series as inspiration for their own writing, examining their attraction to Greek mythology in general and Percy Jackson in particular, and exploring how this interpretation of Greek mythology enables them to engage with their own contemporary Israeli society.

[3] Lev Grossman, "The Boy Who Lived Forever," *Time* , July 7, 2011, at http://content.time.com/time/arts/article/0,8599,2081784,00.html (accessed 5 March 2017).

This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (Consolidator Grant 681202, OurMythicalChildhood).

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Greek Tragedy for Modern Children: Ali Smith's *The Story of Antigone*

This paper will address the challenges and possibilities involved in retelling tragic myths for children, with particular attention to Ali Smith's *The Story of Antigone*. Smith's version of the Antigone myth was published in Italian in 2011 and in English in 2013 as part of the "Save the Story" series sponsored by the Scuola Holden in Turin; in this series, canonical classics are retold for children by well-known novelists with the goal of preserving culturally important stories from oblivion. Unlike recent works of revisionist mythmaking by authors such as Coreena McBurnie and Natalie Haynes, in which the struggles of Antigone and Ismene are assimilated to those of modern teenagers, *The Story of Antigone* does not attempt to reimagine the characters' subjectivity in contemporary terms. Instead Smith preserves not only the story but the form of the original, recapitulating the spectacle of Sophocles' play by presenting its action through the eyes of an observant crow. This use of an animal perspective, along with some gentle lampooning of the chorus of elders and a set of restrained, eloquent illustrations by Laura Paoletti, is a strategy for making the story more engaging to child readers. But it also has the effect of defamiliarizing the actions and motivations of the human protagonists, in keeping with an approach that invites those readers to benefit from the play's treatment of difficult and troubling subjects (conflict, death, divided loyalties, the demarcation of friends and enemies, and the boundaries of the human) by forming their own questions and drawing their own conclusions about the connections between ancient myth and modern experience.

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Animating the Ancient World in Warsaw: The Making-Of

Steve Simons and Sonya Nevin run the Panoply Vase Animation Project, making animations from the scenes on real ancient Greek vases. For *Our Mythical Childhood* they are creating five new animations on mythical themes from vases in the National Museum in Warsaw. The animations will help people to explore ideas about the nature of gods and the adventures of heroes, with stories featuring Zeus, Iris, Dionysus, and Heracles. The importance of performance in the world of myth will also be opened up, particularly through a splendid recreation of the poet Sappho in action. This work-in-progress presentation is an opportunity to see the animations taking shape.

This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (Consolidator Grant 681202, OurMythicalChildhood).

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Ayi Kwei Armah's *Two Thousand Seasons* and *Osiris Rising* as Pan-African Epics

The Martiniquian theorist, Frantz Fanon (*Wretched of the Earth*), who formulated the Neo-classical theory, has and continues to serve as a catalyst to the myriad revolutions in writings, especially amongst postcolonial writers. Writers enshrined in this doctrine include Ayi Kwei Armah, whose texts continue to serve as nucleus for similar revolutions, especially among post-independent youths, who at one moment were misconstrued to believe that an upward trend in development in Africa is a long day's journey into the night. Known for his extremely high visionary symbolism, poetic energy, and firm pan-African vision, Armah, besides his indoctrination in the Neo-classical theory, has taken another leap into dredging up the Egyptian regeneration myth of 'Osiris and Isis' and other related myths in *Two Thousand Seasons* and *Osiris Rising* as tools for reconstructing what has been fragmented by slavery, colonialism, and neo-colonialism. Within this framework, he places most of his characters on an epic journey as scapegoats for the Africa he envisions. In this light, our presentation examines four things: first, the relationship between Ayi Kwei Armah's writings and myths; second, Armah's diagnoses of the germinal to the genesis of the fragmentation, the obstacles, and the revolution therein; third, Armah's historical and mythological swerve as well as the medium in effecting change; and fouth, *provincialising* other cultures as a means of asserting the self. In sum, Armah's revolutionary aesthetics responds to the immediate developmental needs of the continent.

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Battle between Hope and Destiny in Young Adults Television Series *Atlantis* (2013-2016), *Olympus* (2015), and *Once Upon a Time*, Season 5-6 (2015-2017)

Three heavily mythological television series broadcast practically simultaneously for an audience who watches little or none traditional TV having access through the Internet to any British or US show, demonstrate what elements of Greek mythology contemporary creators consider attractive to predominantly young audiences and how they go about incorporating mythology into their productions. The motif of destiny, both in the uplifting sense of mission and as implacable and unavoidable *Fatum* is present in all three shows, tempered in varying degrees by the concept of hope, essential for maintaining interest and viewing pleasure of young audiences.

This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (Consolidator Grant 681202, OurMythicalChildhood).

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Soviet Cinematic Tragedies as a Help in Growing Up

Soviet cinema for children experienced a shock in the 1980s when few tragedy movies were made for children and young adult audience. The most important were *Chuchelo* [Scarecrow] by Rolan Bykov, 1983, and *Dorogaya Yelena Sergeyevna* [Dear Elena Sergeevna] by Eldar Ryazanov, 1988. Although the movies do not have straight connections with Antiquity, their style recalls that of Greek tragedies and they contain other echos to Greek mythology and culture. Analyzing the movies in the sociocultural context and in comparison with the texts they were based on, I would like to determine how ancient elements of the movies and the tragedy genre itself could help children to resolve their growing up problems.

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Promoting Mental Health through Classics: Hercules as Trainer in Today's Labours of Children and Young People

Hercules' myth will be discussed in my presentation on the ground of selected psychological and pedagogical theories. The hero will be compared with other characters along with pros and cons of their use as models in psycho-educational situations. I will reflect on possible applications of Hercules' Twelve Labours cycle in clinical and educational contexts, and particularly in cases such as high functioning autism, disruptive behaviours, and conduct problems.

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Growing Up Manga Style

Is Olympus our paradise or our cage which we must ruin? In children's and young adults' literature, growing up narratives or coming of age stories occupy a considerable part of the genre. The young hero must face difficult challenges, some life-threatening, which he must overcome in order to save others and be saved himself. In order to become truly an adult, he must also find his way alone, or with the help of friends. The crystallization of our hero's character is constantly refined (and redefined) through his relations with his surroundings: his measuring

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up to his rivals as well as his interaction with his friends. This literary trope is very common in Japanese medium of manga, especially the one aimed at young boys (Shōnen manga). The prepubescent hero often finds himself alone (orphaned or as a cast aside in a dysfunctional family) and he must prove his worth by gaining strength and along the way, growing up. In this paper, I shall review how Arion, an adolescent boy, the alleged son of Poseidon, is fighting his inner and outer demons on his own, in his quest to save his mother in Yoshikazu Yasuhiko 1980's manga, *Arion*. In the story, Olympus is a symbol of power, corruption, a broken promise. Our hero must break free from Olympus in order to form his own identity.

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The Magic World of Antiquity

Magic and mythology share the following: they try to catch a glimpse behind the visible world, the try to explain the visible world by the mythical characters and their stories. But what happens when magic art and Classical Antiquity meet on stage? The German magician and author Ulrich Rausch is planning for the 2019 Conference a symposion *The Magic World of Antiquity*, where classical mythology and modern magic art will meet. For the workshops and the conference *Our Mythical Hope…*, as a sort of introduction to the symposion, he will cast a first light on the project, show and illustrate the earliest magic trick historically attested, which Paul Daniels (1938-2016), the best known British magician of the modern time, shares with the Sophists.

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Gilgamesh as Special Child: Saving the Story

"This is a story about how a child with an extraordinary yet destructive power became a man of wisdom and strength. This child, like you, had a very special name: Gilgamesh" (Li 2014, 7). In the opening sentences of her prologue to *The Story of Gilgamesh*, Yiyun Li recasts the story as an account of maturation from childhood to adulthood and at once suggests and denies the exoticism of the hero's name and thus of his tale: 'Gilgamesh' is not foreign, or antiquated, but special, and in this respect it is no different from the reader's own name. Li's version (published in Italian in 2011 and in English in 2014) is part of the "Save the Story" series, which seeks to preserve the central stories of canonical texts from different times and places by retelling them for modern children. She cannot evoke (as

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retellers of Graeco-Roman myth often do) canonicity itself – that is, the importance of the myth in a later cultural tradition; and she is in any case careful not to assume any particular cultural context for her audience: "Gilgamesh," she says, "lived in a different time and *possibly* [my italics] a different place than you and I" (7). Instead, Li seeks to carry out her mission by showing that what appears to be "old and foreign" (7) really isn't so; by treating Gilgamesh as a child who (as he grows up) gradually learns to control himself, to make friends, and to confront violence, loss, and death; by telling her child reader that this is the way to understand the story; and finally by calling on the child reader – at the beginning and again at the end of the book – to be a partner in the act of preservation. Once children have understood that this is a story that (in a familiar trope) "never grows old" (90) precisely because it is a story about themselves and their friends and the adults they know and love, they may be willing to pass it on to their own children.

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From an Adolescent Freak to a Hope Spreading Messianic Demigod: The Curious Transformations of Modern Teenagers in Actual Mythopoetic Fantasy Literature

In international fantasy literature for teenage readers based on motifs of the ancient Greek and Roman mythology often an adolescent protagonist is focused on, who has a lot of problems with growing up. Therefore a mythic narrative emerges in the plot to help the main figure mastering his problems. This narrative filled with supernatural incidents is a vehicle for the protagonist to become a strong and selfconfident adult, who saves the world from evil mythical creatures. During this process of the teenager's metamorphosis from an outsider to a hero in current fantasy literature, the imagination of power plays an important role.

This gain of power is realized in fantasy with the help of supernatural abilities, with which the hero can impose his will on cruel enemies and defeat them. Therefore fantasy literature is critizised by a lot of researchers to support fantasies of juvenile omnipotence. But on the other hand this sort of literature gives the figures in the story and even the young readers in the real world hope that they are able to win against bad forces, even though they are handicaped.

In this paper I will focus on the famous *Percy Jackson* series by Rick Riordan and the popular *Blue Secrets* series by Anna Banks and argue that normal human protagonists are described as holy Redeemer-figures by amalgamating them with the mythic god Poseidon. In this way mythic motifs are mixed with Christian values to create a modern kind of superhero giving people a new sense in life. This superhero spreads hope for the threatened mankind, which is very important in dark times.

This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (Consolidator Grant 681202, OurMythicalChildhood).

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Joe Alex (Maciej Słomczyński) and His *Czarne okręty* [*The Black Ships*]: A History of a Trojan Boy in Times of the Minoan Thalassocrasy

Maciej Słomczyński, writer, poet and playwright, a prominent translator of the English literature and the author of acclaimed crime fiction stories, published under the pseudonym Joe Alex, is also the author of a historical-adventure novel for youth *The Black Ships* [Czarne okręty]. Originally published in parts as a series, the novel shows us the fate of a Trojan boy, entangled in the intrigues of the Egyptian priests and conspiracies of the rulers of the Minoan Crete, who finally goes for a quest to the far North in search of the mythical land of amber. The quest, resembling – due to its exotic itinerary – the Expedition of the Argonauts, despite the initial success, ends in fact in a disaster; the novel itself can be used as an example of a specific range of *Bildungsroman* dressed in ancient robes.

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Project of the Ancient Art: Gallery of the National Museum in Warsaw, 2019

The new exposition is designed to present the crucial role of ancient art and ancient civilizations in the evolution of Europe. To reach this aim it is essential to present the Greek, Roman, Egyptian and Near Eastern Art and their mutual merging in the ancient times as well as in the modern period (focusing on chosen examples). Planning the exposition we also took into consideration educational programmes in primary and high schools with the intention of including visits to the Gallery in these programmes. In the consequence we created a scenario completely different from the previous Gallery project.

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Images of a Good Life: Gods in Early Readers for Children in Greece

In this paper, I discuss the text and illustrations in early readers of Classical Mythology designed for young children, aged 4+, in Greece. Specifically, I examine the following two main questions. Firstly, how and why is the mythological narrative entangled with contemporary (fairy) tales? Some books show, for

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example, Greek gods as well as favourite folklore creatures, such as foxes. Secondly, to what extent do the illustrations of Greek gods take cues from Classical art? Gods, including Dionysus and Athena, are customarily shown with few of their identifying attributes known from vase iconography and sculpture. Instead, the gods' slim, beautiful, and youthful bodies recall those of iconic images in modern popular culture. Aphrodite, goddess of love, can appear with lipstick and nail varnish, as if she were a Barbie doll. These modern-looking bodies are utterly funny and humorous, and for a good reason.

In bringing the two questions together, I argue that the blending of past and present narratives and paraphernalia aims to communicate messages about a happy life in the world of Greek gods. Regardless of fighting with one another (e.g., against the Titans) and with their passions (e.g., with jealousy and the need for revenge) Greek gods enjoyed a happy life and co-existence with mortals and heroes. Thus, learning Greek Mythology does not only relate to identity building, what the Greeks (or the people living in these lands) did in ancient times, but learning about happiness, success, and endless feasting.

This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (Consolidator Grant 681202, OurMythicalChildhood).

Abstracts for the Session of the Students
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The Siren Fatale: Facing Female Eroticism in Children's Culture

While growing up, children build their identity, also on the basis of the surrounding culture. Analyzing why femininity and eroticism become attributes of evil and "dark side" in children's culture, I will focus on Sirens and their images in the animated movie *My Little Pony: Equestria Girls - Rainbow Rocks*. The main characters have to compete with three friends with enchanting voices and power to create mayhem (the Sirens), who are the embodiment of evil. Their sexual features are highly emphasized, they dance in the burlesque style and their bodies are changed to match the modern canon of beauty. I will attempt to answer the question why this particular female mythological creature is used as an example of *femme fatale*?

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When Your Parent Is an Ancient God

Family is a very important element of everyone's life. To be a child who has both father and mother is best, however, life is not always how we want it to be. When a young couple are being separated or decide that they are incompatible and cannot remain together, it is their child who suffers the most.

Three examples from a cycle about Greek mythology, written by the American writer and school teacher, Rick Riordan, will show what are the consequences of a divorce on the child. What do the children of divorced parents think about them? How should the parent who has custody of the child encourage contacts with the other parent? How the child's feelings for the parent who left may degenerate?

This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (Consolidator Grant 681202, OurMythicalChildhood).

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Mythological Female Figures Struggling with Pains of Adolescence

References to mythological female figures are increasingly appearing in literature for young girls and teens. We can find them in stories about brave girls gifted with extraordinary powers, teens who had to grow up fast, good and bad witches, dangerous female monsters, etc. As the most famous archetypes of femininity, mythological female figures occur in literature in a variety of ways and contexts – they are presented both in narratives about love, courage, and friendship, as well as in stories about violence, rebellion, or bad family relations.

References to mythological female characters, present in modern literature for adolescents, are often used as suitable spokeswomen telling teenagers how to deal with real life issues. In this context, I will analyze several books written by Italian authors in the hope of finding out what insight and consolation mythological female figures can offer to young girls living in our times.

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Hope as a Weapon – Hesiodus' Myth of Pandora's Box in "God of War" Video Game Series

Being one of the most popular series of video games for the Playstation, "God of War" offers highly interesting research questions in the area of the reception of Antiquity. One such question deals with the way "God of War" portrays hope – simultaneously, an inherent part of all evil and the ultimate weapon to fight it. This idea closely relates to Hesiodus' portrayal of the Pandora myth, which I intend to demonstrate during my presentation.

The series itself is identified by the producers as PEGI 18, which means that its intended main target is adult audience. Nevertheless, there are reasons why we can analyze the game within the context of children and YA culture, the most obvious being its general availability to this younger demographic.

This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (Consolidator Grant 681202, OurMythicalChildhood).

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The Reception of Medusa among Young Adults in Post-Internet Aesthetics Visual Art

In Aesthetics graphics and memes created by young adults the mythical character of Medusa appears occasionally. How the ancient monster, whose original mission was to instill fear and petrify people, was recycled today to express their uncertainties and weaknesses? Are we dealing here with Medusa transformed by the twentieth-century reception of Antiquity into a feminist icon and a commercial motif? Or possibly an entirely new, post-feminist, post-commercial, and post-Internet Medusa who found her place in the imagination of young people?

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Ti etheleis...? – Child Rebellion against a Mythological Background on the Example of Francesca Simon's *Helping Hercules*

Susan (in the Polish translation Zuzia) is the main character in Francesca Simon's book *Helping Hercules* (in Polish: *Harując z Herkulesem*), first published in Great Britain in 1999. Susan's problems are typical during adolescent and teenage rebellion. One day she finds a magical coin. *Ti etheleis...? – What do you want...?* This question appears on the magical object every time Susan feels that her parents or siblings do not understand and support her. Every time Susan makes a wish, she finds herself in a mythological world where she meets characters such as Hercules, Orpheus, Paris, or Midas. By helping figures known from Greek mythology (who are not always model grown-ups), she learns patience and consistency, and overcomes her jealousy.

Simon's book shows how mythology can help children solve problems that are so challenging to them, yet so trivial for adults – the problems of adolescent rebellion, when children struggle with emotions and start questioning their parents' will.

This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (Consolidator Grant 681202, OurMythicalChildhood).

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Disney Mythical Sanctuary? In Search for Hope in the 1940 *Fantasia* with the Use of Children-, Gender-, and Animal Studies

Fantasia by Walt Disney Productions might be perceived as a true marriage of the so-called high and low culture – in this case classical music and children's animation. Although those two blend and it is hard to distinguish what is for children, what for adults, this movie certainly might be perceived as a true masterpiece combining various motifs, both from popular culture and more sophisticated art. Among them stand out motifs received from Antiquity – full of hopes for the world to come – serving also as a metaphor for cosmic and social isolation.

In the 1940s, war was obviously one of the major everyday topics, and this also is reflected in *Fantasia* – even if not literally. The fight took place somewhere else – at the foot of the Mountain Olympus – where centaurs have been trapped in an oppressive social cage. Chauvinism, racism, and general social conflict are still there, very often criticized, but never reformulated. I want to investigate where in all this is the mythical hope, an important factor in creating children's perception and sensitivity in a world constantly faced with intolerance.

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All Is (Not) Lost: Myth in the Shadow of the Holocaust in *Jutka's Insomnia* by Dorota Combrzyńska-Nogala

Jutka's Insomnia (*Bezsenność Jutki*, 2012), a Polish novel written by Dorota Combrzyńska-Nogala, is a story of a young girl who lives in the Łódź ghetto with her aunt and grandfather. The latter tells her stories not only to lull her to sleep, but also to help her overcome the surrounding horror of the Holocaust. The text contains mythical stories about Daedalus, Minotaur, Theseus, and Ariadne, but also Jutka's observations of the ghetto reality and its interpretations influenced by the mythical themes. In my paper I intend to show the relation of fear between the child and the adult and the influence of mythological stories on the child's perception, bringing hope – an essential feeling during unspeakable experiences such as the Holocaust.

This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (Consolidator Grant 681202, OurMythicalChildhood).

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A Mythical World of Hope in *Mythopolis* by Alexandra Hetmerova

This short animation directed in 2013 by the Czech illustrator Alexandra Hetmerova introduces viewers to a new world populated only by mythical creatures. The plot revolves around Medusa, a nurse and a single mother who is doggedly trying to find a man, a perfect lover and new father for her son, Mino. Despite failures, they live a fairly happy and simple life. Until one day, when little Minotaur gets lost on his way back home after school. Luckily, a friendly shepherd Cyclops offers him help and together they manage to reach the safe destination. *Mythopolis* not only offers a new interpretation of a typical monster but also teaches how to build friendship and how to love within and outside the family.

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Abstracts for the Poster Presentations
by the Students of the Classical Philology Department, Faculty of Philology
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(Fellows at the Faculty of "Artes Liberales" in May 2017)

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Dryads: Eco-friendly Mythology

Dryads are the most known creatures among the other nymphs so they were quite frequent figures in the ancient Greek and Roman literature. Callimachus, Pausanias, Oppian, Ovid, Statius and a lot others ancient authors mentioned them in various situations and with certain purposes. The Polish writer Andrzej Sapkowski in *The Sword of Destiny* (first edition in 1992), and the Belarusian author Olga Gromyko in *The Loyal Enemies* (first edition in 2005) and *The Trap for a Necromancer* (first edition in 2008) interpret the character of dryads in a different from previous way. Dryads according to their conception teach the youth to be eco-friendly by the attractive appearance, mentors abilities, militancy and ecological lifestyle. It may inspire the young generation to protect and to care about the environment.

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Hercules as a Superhero: Interpretation of the Ancient Myths in Marvel Comic Books

Marvel Comics are very popular among young people nowadays. A lot of superheroes are becoming an example for boys and girls in real life. Hercules is the well-known character, whose name is familiar to all of Marvel Comics readers. He is well known as an ancient hero. Marvel tries to revive the myth of Hercules and transfer his image to the modern world. Our poster is about the friendship between the seventeen-year-old genius – Amadeus Cho – and Hercules. Hercules was the crucial part of Amadeus' journey to become a real hero, serving as an example to him as well as being his best friend.

This project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme (Consolidator Grant 681202, OurMythicalChildhood).

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Images of Greek Mythological Characters in "Persona" Game Series

"Persona" is a role-play game, which is developed by Atlus (a Japanese video game developer, publisher and distribution company). "Persona" game series shows the interactions of characters and often gives a player to pick the storyline. It offers a really good story about friends, their relationships and difficulties that they try to overcome. "Persona" game series has many characters from lore and mythology of many cultures, but in the poster only five of them are described, i.e., Prometheus, Hades, Orpheus, Thanatos, and Nyx.

Nyx and Thanatos show that your thoughts matter, that life and deeds are not divided as only black and white, that resolve and friends can help to overcome many difficulties in life situations, that despair and apathy can burn you from the inside. Orpheus and Hades show that there is always a way to reach your dream, that our 'social links' and environment can help us to stay on our feet. Prometheus shows that there are always more than one point of view, that you cannot predict consequences until things happen and you will never know what will follow them.

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The Image of Hercules in Soviet Cartoons

Our poster is entitled *The Image of Hercules in Soviet Cartoons*. Soviet cartoons about ancient Greece are the perfect examples of the art of animation, they are full of lively and vivid characters. In addition to the fact that they are of high aesthetic value, these cartoons also offer moral points for the younger generation. The aim of our work is to analyze how the image of Hercules is manifested in Soviet cartoons. For this purpose we have chosen two cartoons whose protagonist is Hercules: *The Return from Olympus* (1969, directed by Alexandra Snezhko-Blotskaya) and *The Birth of Hercules* (1982, directed by Yulian Kalisher).

Hercules' cult was widespread in ancient Greek world: the hero was revered as the defender of people from evil and was considered closer to people than the other gods. Soviet cartoons about Hercules correspond to the ancient tradition and have a clearly expressed humanistic orientation. Using aesthetic means of animation as the language accessible to children, they explain the main function of Hercules as the greatest of the heroes – protecting people from monsters. The cartoons show the value of human life to children, instill in them a sense of justice, call for struggle against wars and violence.

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