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*Wobo's Fabulous Itinerary: From East African Mythology to a Polish Formative Novel for Youth*

While some creatures from Graeco-Roman mythology seem tamed today, there are still many fabled beings that have evaded domestication. The constant flow of sundry cultures favours their itineraries across the continents. Mythical beasts keep lurking among us – ready to surprise us, to talk to us, and to make us reflect on the nature of the world. This paper presents the results of a chase after the mysterious wobo – a creature from East African mythology that became part of one of the most important Polish novels for youth – *In Desert and Wilderness* (1911) by the Nobel laureate in literature Henryk Sienkiewicz. Indeed, the wobo recently welcomed my wife and me when we visited Africa.

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*The Awakening of the κνώδαλα, or Inside a Great Fish Belly*

In my presentation I will analyse the motif of a man inside a great fish belly as seen from the perspective of an adult person, i.e. I will scrutinise how probable the event seems, what species of a sea animal it could have been, what the character's chances of survival were. I will also look at the motif from a child's perspective, referring to the character's being fascinated by the inside of the fish body. Starting from Pinocchio's adventure in Pescecane, I will also look for other variants of this motif present in Greek mythology, the Biblical tradition, folktale, as well as modern and contemporary literature, also written in the 21st century. I will give special consideration to the way in which the narrators try to make their stories more probable (Pinocchio's paradox).

Marilyn Burton

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*Man as Creature: Allusions to Classical Beasts in the Novels of N.D. Wilson*

N.D. Wilson's Christian fantasy series *The Ashtown Burials* is teeming with characters drawn from Classical myth and ancient epic. While mythical beasts per se do not enter centre-stage, their presence is constantly felt through the character traits exhibited by the main actors. From the villain who calls himself Phoenix, and his alter-ego Mr Ashes, pursuing immortality and reworking his followers into monstrous hybrids through cycles of death and 'resurrection', to the transmortal Dracul Radu Bey who alternates between anthropomorphic and the more bestial dragon form, Wilson makes innovative use of bestial imagery to create his rich characterisations. This paper will explore how Wilson weaves together elements from mythology, history and Christian tradition to illuminate the boundaries and intersection between the natural and unnatural, creature and hybrid, and man and beast.

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*Winged Horses, Talking Horses and Unicorns in C.S. Lewis' "Chronicles of Narnia":  
Entwining Classical and Christian Motifs*

Studies of C.S. Lewis' thought have been permanently changed by Michael Ward's *Planet Narnia*, which convincingly and conclusively presented the seven heavens of the medieval cosmos as the elusive and long sought after imaginative and theological key to the *Chronicles of Narnia*. In doing so, Ward has opened up a completely new perspective on the rich mythological allusions within the *Chronicles*. Building on this, my paper will consider the way in which Lewis entwines classical and Christian motifs in his account of mythical horses in the first and last books of the *Chronicles* – a theological canvass spanning the creation, fall and eschatological consummation of Narnia itself. Examining the network of correspondences between these books, and their clear resonance with classical and especially Platonic themes, I will argue that Lewis' multi-faceted account of mythical horses is intended to serve as an allegory for the soul's ascent to God through grace and humility. In this way Lewis uses mythos, and specifically mythological creatures, as a way of signalling the hidden theological depths of the *Chronicles*, yet in a manner which remains attractive and in some way intuitively accessible even to the youngest reader.

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*Bright-Eyed Athena and Her Fiery-Eyed Monster*

This paper explores the potential of Cohen's theory of monsters and culture to frame a study of the beheading of the Gorgon in children's literature. The Gorgon, on Cohen's reading, is the monster that by 'dwell[ing] at the gates of difference' (1996: 7) signals an otherness that can be variously cultural, political, racial, economic and sexual – and more. I shall consider what kind of alterities are enacted by the Gorgon's appearance in children's literature, with a particular focus on Richard Woff's *Bright-Eyed Athena in the Stories of Ancient Greece*, where Perseus' quest is narrated under the aegis (as it were) of a 'bright-eyed', normalising and civilizing goddess. I shall explore how far the quest, as told by Woff, monsterises the other by demonising that which falls outside the norms signalled by Athena. I shall consider how Woff's Gorgon fits Cohen's premise of monsters as those against whom 'we' – here children – take action because they contravene the boundaries of 'I' or 'us'.

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*New Reception Spaces of Literature and Ancient Culture – Children’s Creations of Mythical Creatures on the Internet*

The aim of the speech is to show the problems of mythical creatures creation process in the new media, specifically in the Internet space. This space will be presented on four main areas: 1) as a space of creation, publishing and sharing of the content related to classical children’s mythology; 2) as a space of mythology reception in a digital media; 3) as a space where children’s mythology and its ideas becomes a part of commercial supersystem of transmedia intertextuality (Marsha Kinder’s concept) or transmedia storytelling (Henry Jenkins’ concept); 4) as a space for entertainment and fun. In the speech I suggest such an understanding of the reception, which is based primarily on the role and importance of the different mechanisms (technical, medial, cultural, social) in shaping the image of the children’s mythology in contemporary culture.

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### *Centaur in Russian Fairy Tales: From the Half-Dog Pulicane to the Centaur Polkan*

This paper discusses reception of ancient Greek centaurs in Russian tales and apocrypha. From the end of the thirteenth century, a number of tales from the international repertoire of medieval stories have appeared in Russia in translations and adaptations. Among them the tales of King Solomon and the beast Kitovras (the Russian transliteration of the Greek Κένταυρος), folkloric apocrypha based on Biblical stories, were presented. These tales tell how King Solomon decided to build a temple in Jerusalem and needed the help of a 'fleet-footed beast', a legendary centaur Kitovras. This half-man and half-beast, being a wizard and a prophet, appears as the king's rival who is even wiser than Solomon himself. Besides, he possesses enormous physical strength, and he has a weakness for wine and women, which destroys him.

From the end of the sixteenth century, medieval Italian and French adventure novels were translated into Russian from the German and Polish chapbooks versions. *The Story of Prince Bova* translated from Polish or Belorussian goes back through the Ragusa version to the Italian romance of Buovo d'Antona and finally to the Anglo-Norman *Bevis of Hampton*. This novel became extremely popular, and it acquired features of Russian folktale depicted in numerous and cheap *lubok* prints. The main hero Prince Bova has an enemy Polkan, a half-human half-horse creature of enormous strength and speed, who, after the first battle with Bova, becomes his best friend and defender. De-etymologisation of the Italian word Pulicane (a half-dog) as a Polkan [Pol-kon'] creates a new hero whose name in Russian could mean a half-horse, and who looks like a centaur.

Russian tales appear to fantastically reflect and contaminate too parallel traditions presenting centaurs since antiquity: on the one hand, centaurs are savage, violent and destructive creatures; on the other hand, one of them, Chiron was the wise prophet and the educator of main ancient Greek heroes.

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*Mazes Intricate: The Minotaur as a Catalyst of Identity Formation in British Young Adult Fiction*

As a general rule, appearances of the Minotaur serve a symbolic function, and young adult fiction is no exception. This paper examines the use of the Minotaur in British young adult fiction to explore how this mythical creature provides a way to explore the transitions that the target audience for these works experience. The paper will look at three case studies. *Stoneheart* animates the Minotaur statue found in the Barbican to serve as the final adversary facing the child protagonists. Similarly, in *Shadow of the Minotaur*, when Phoenix is drawn into a parallel world accessed by an immersive computer game, he must fight his way through the Minotaur myth to survive. Finally, in *Corydon and the Island of Monsters*, the Minotaur appears as a foe, helping young Corydon travel through the underworld and putting himself at risk in the process. The figure of the Minotaur, located ambiguously between man and beast thus serves as a vehicle for young male protagonists to explore parts of their identities with which they have previously struggled to come to terms.

Elizabeth Hale

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### *Medusas and Minotaurs: Metamorphosis and Meaning in Australian Contexts*

Classical mythical beasts appear in a range of genres in Australian fiction for children and young adults: children's comic chapter books and fantasy adventures, explorations of adolescent love and identity, portal fantasy, intrusion fantasy, and romantic reappropriations of classical myths. I shall discuss how in the works considered, according to their narrative context, mythical creatures (Medusas and Minotaurs) perform symbolic roles, functioning variously as a test of bravery, a signifier of individuality, a representation of otherness, and a connection with the mythical past and the heritage of Europe.

Works examined: Jennifer Cook: *Ariadne: the Maiden and the Monster* (2005)

Louise Elliott: *Wolf Hunting* (2001)

Joanne Horniman: *Loving Athena* (1997)

Melina Marchetta: *The Gorgon in the Gully* (2010)

Ian Trevaskis: *Hopscotch: Medusa Stone* (2009)

Nadia Wheatley: *Melting Point* (1994)

Edith Hall

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### *Cheiron the Centaur as Narrator*

One fascinating ancient text was believed to be the work of a mythical beast: Cheiron, the 'wisest and most just' of the Centaurs, as Homer calls him. It was variously entitled *Precepts of Cheiron* (*Hypothekai Cheironos*), supposedly addressed to Achilles, and sometimes attributed to Hesiod) or the *Cheironeia* (which may have been the title of an alternative epic poem about rather than *by* the wise centaur). It survives only in fragments and possible reflections in terracotta figurines and vase-painting. This paper looks at the ancient testimony – both visual and textual – for Cheironic poetry and its association with hunting, medicine and with education of the young through Cheiron's role as tutor of initiation-age heroes. It then uses the concept of the centaur-narrator/poet to open up the question of the reception of ancient mythical beasts in later literature, especially for young people, told in the voice or from the perspective of human-animal hybrids.

**Maria Handreck**

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*Murder in the Moonlight: Harry Potter and the Return of the Werewolves*

The idea of the transformation into a wolf has already existed for almost 4000 years and is constantly represented in human tradition as a real belief as well as a literary topos. Even though authors from Herodotus to Augustine place their werewolf stories in considerably different contexts, we may observe a number of common features that are at the very heart of the transformation. The wolf is an example of insatiable greed, cruelty, and pure malice and is thus always connected with the concepts of overstepping boundaries and breaking rules. At least, these are the distinctive characteristics to be found within Graeco-Roman mythology. Although she was obviously inspired by the ancient world and the Middle Ages in developing her beasts, Joanne K. Rowling, in the Harry Potter novels, puts her werewolves in a new, contrary, and provoking context. Furthermore, she plays with our ancestral fears, expectations, and with 'wolfish' connotations. My presentation picks out the famous story about the Arcadian king Lycaon told by Ovid in the *Metamorphoses* and traces similarities as well as differences with Rowling's figures.

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### *Reclaiming Medusa*

This paper will examine the figure of Medusa in a spate of recent children's and YA books that make the Gorgon a positive central character for girls to identify with, downplaying her bestial, monstrous features and/or emphasising her status as an ordinary woman unfairly transformed into a monster. Doubtless some of these vindications and rehabilitations of Medusa are influenced (consciously or not) by 'grown up' writing, in fiction and academia, starting with Cixous' famous 'Laugh of the Medusa'; but this paper will consider the features of Medusa in mythical and literary history that lend themselves to several children's authors for the creation of an almost-human character. The fact that she can 'pass' in some retellings – hair aside, and with the addition of glasses to prevent accidental petrifications – means that she can sometimes stand for anyone singled out from the other children for being different (physically and/or behaviourally). Her monstrosity may be an analogue for permanent kinds of 'difference', or for temporary ones such as the growing pains and self-perceived difference of an awkward teenage Medusa. In other versions, Medusa's bestial characteristics are exploited more subtly, giving the snakes minds of their own and hinting at the girl's unconscious feelings through their behaviour.

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*Semibovemque virum semivirumque bovem – Mythological Hybrid Creatures as Key Actors in Ovid's "Metamorphoses" and in the Postmodern Fantasy Literature for Children and Young Adults*

Today, series of books for adolescents that achieve immense success throughout the world (such as *Percy Jackson and The Heroes of Olympus* by Rick Riordan, *The Companions Quartet* by Julia Golding, *The Goddess Girls* by Suzanne Williams and Joan Holub, *Die Irrfahrer* by Gerd Scherm and *The Pig Scrolls* by Paul Shipton) bear witness to the remarkable dominance of Greek-Roman mythology in current literature for children and adolescents (LCA). By means of interdisciplinary analysis of texts and motifs, the speech works out the preeminent status of mythical creatures in postmodern LCA and films as well as their – explicit or implicit – reference to Homer's *Odyssey* or Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. In this context, it shall be worthwhile looking at the way in which the ancient creatures are being transformed and functionalised in current works of literature. Furthermore, we will analyse to what extent novels and films are being adapted on a pedagogical level in order to create cultural identity. In doing so, we shall focus on hybrid creatures like the Sirens, centaurs, Medusa, and Minotaur which, at central passages of the main classical epics that are being referred to, work as agents that expand the sphere of heroic experience and probation by further mythical/fantastic dimensions. Looking at postmodern adaptations of hybrid creatures that are main characters of myths, especially of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, we can show how Ovid's complex reformation of the mythical tradition has inspired today's authors to apply astoundingly similar techniques of transforming the fantastic. At the same time, we need to take into consideration the mythological beasts' design that is achieved through their positioning in modern culture – which frequently involves updating values and ideals in a way that is contradictory to the ancient context.

Katarzyna Jerzak

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*Remnants of Myth, Vestiges of Tragedy: Peter Pan in the Mermaids' Lagoon*

In the mythical universe, according to Walter Benjamin, a mortal is subjected to ruthless fate. Tragedy, however, offers an elevated exit from the brutal force of myth. Peter Pan is a tragic boy but he is at once a comic character capable of freeing himself from mythical reality. I analyze the *Mermaid Lagoon* chapter of J.M. Barrie's 1911 *Peter and Wendy* to show how Peter, whose "each tragic action throws a comic shadow", subdues the mermaids and thus the notion of monstrous myth. If, however, one lingers as a Peter Pan, one might turn into a J. Alfred Prufrock, who has "heard the mermaids singing, each to each".

Joanna Kłos

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*PHEME the Gossip (Series "Goddess Girls") by Joan Holub and Suzanne Williams*

The Greek goddesses from the novel series "Goddess Girls" by Joan Holub and Suzanne Williams can be described not only as 'eternally young', but also as 'still children'. The series' plot is set in the Mount Olympus Academy, an all but typical boarding school, which has Zeus as the principal, disciplines such as beautology and beastology (sic!) as the lessons' subjects and goddesses such as Aphrodite or Artemis as teenage students. Among them, there are also mythical creatures that usually are not associated with Olympian pantheon: Medusa, Cassandra, Pandora... One of those characters is PHEME – 'the goddess of gossip and rumour', as the authors call her in the novel devoted especially to her adventures. In the novel, PHEME is challenged not to engage in gossip or newsmongering for the whole day, yet, at the same time, she has to provide Zeus with some extremely important information.

This Gossip/Rumour-personification character is inspired mainly by Homer's and Vergil's epic descriptions of Phéme and Fama. Many allusions can be found in the novel – e.g., probably it is not a coincidence that in the opening scene PHEME is looking for the curious details in the lives of the students living on the 4th floor of the school's dormitory, just like Fama was exploring by night the world of the 4th book of the *Aeneid*. On the other hand, PHEME is deprived of many traits which were crucial for the looks and functioning of her equivalents in the ancient literature. Because she is not only anthropomorphic, but also childish, she can hardly be said to be a giant or a beast; because she is a positive character, her acts rather cannot be called malignant; because the problems she faces have not made her mature yet, she is not so extremely powerful in her self-consciousness, i.e. in understanding how important communicating facts and opinions is for shaping the human history. Thus, features such as monstrosity, extraordinary force, and complicated, a-sexual anatomy of mythical Gossip/Rumour vanish or become weaker in the creation of the character, probably in order to make it more approachable for the young girls to identify with. On the other hand, this happens partially to empower the readers and encourage them to force any obstacles and use their talents to become who they want to be (which in PHEME's case is, obviously, a newspaper columnist). It is this phenomenon of the reception of the potent figure with thousands ears and eyes as an immature girl that I would like to try to analyze in depth in my paper.

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*Modern Greek Children Face to Face with Hydra, Cerberus and Minotaurs*

My short study will be a cursory glance at contemporary Modern Greek books for children (written originally in Modern Greek and available now in bookshops) that present some mythological beast. It is of course impossible to talk in so short a time about all such beasts and all such books, so I chose three exemplary creatures: Idra, Kerveros and Minotavros. I will compare their images – pictorial and lexical – in various books on deeds of Theseus and Heracles, looking for traces of their 'domestication'. Are they scary or funny? Are they horrid or likeable? My intuition suggests their images will be quite 'toothless' and they will make the impression of a plush cuddling animal instead of a breathtaking abomination, but will there really be so?

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*Womanhood and/as Monstrosity: Cultural and Individual Biography of a "Beast" in Anna Czerwińska-Rydel's "The Baltic Siren"*

The goal of this paper is to analyse *The Baltic Siren* (2014) by Anna Czerwińska-Rydel, a fictionalised biography of Constantia Zierenberg. Born in 1605 in Gdańsk, Zierenberg was a gifted singer, a talented instrumentalist, and a painter. She was also an exceptional beauty. All these gave her an air of strangeness, mystery, and otherness, so that she earned a nickname of the Baltic Siren. This paper will cover the following issues:

- the image of a siren as a literary ploy to mythologise heroine's biography;
- Czerwińska-Rydel's strategies of intertextuality;
- the elements of cultural narrations about the so-called 'human monsters' as a tool to spin a story about the woman as the Other.

The analysis will use the theory of intertextuality, gender studies, and monstrosity studies.

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*On the Trail of Pan: From the Eternal to the Strange Child*

James Matthew Barrie's classical character Peter Pan has undoubtedly become a part of popular culture. From its first performance as a play in 1904 to its transition into a novel in 1911, to innumerable adaptations, sequels, and prequels since the 1980s, Peter Pan has continued to be a significant fictional character and has been the subject of much critical analysis. Based on the Greek god Pan, this figure experienced a revival during the late Victorian period, which culminated in an astounding resurgence of interest in the Pan motif between 1890 and 1926 in both literature written for children and adults.

This paper initially pursues two different strands concerning the depiction of Pan in children's literature. While authors such as Kenneth Grahame and C.S. Lewis introduce Pan as a mythological figure, Barrie and Frances Hodgson Burnett, for instance, intertwine features of the Greek god Pan with a child character, thus stressing its ambivalent ontological and epistemic status. I will then focus on the image of childhood that is manifest in these child characters. Starting from the awareness that Barrie's conceptualization of Peter Pan as 'the boy who would not grow up' is rightly inspired by the idea of the 'eternal child', it will be shown that this topic forms an alliance with the Romantic concept of the 'strange child'. Finally, I will discuss why the mythological figure of Pan is particularly suitable to represent an ambiguous child character, which shows traces of unreliability and consequently evokes conflicting feelings on the part of the reader.

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*Magical Beasts and Where They Come From: How Greek Are Harry Potter's Mythical Animals?*

This paper explores the significance of mythical beasts in assessing the classical elements of J.K. Rowling's hugely successful series. It focuses on the semi-canonical *Magical Beasts and Where to Find Them* and looks at the variety of mythical material from a number of cultures, and then explores which of these mythical beasts play significant narrative roles in the novels themselves. How Classical are their representations? To what extent do the novels differ from the films in the degree of Classical reference? How do the Harry Potter movies draw on earlier fantasy movies with classical themes? How much of a Classicist was Newt Scamander? How much does the search for obscure animals and knowledge about them parallel the experience of research and engagement with the ancient world in Rowling's representations?

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*Fantastic Creatures Seen by a Shipwrecked Sailor and by a Herdsman*

Classical Studies are not an isolated field. The Graeco-Roman world was closely connected with the Near East. The Orient is the homeland of literature for children. Sometimes there is no clear borderline separating the writings for children from stories for adults. Fantastic creatures appear in both. In this paper, the ancient Egyptian stories of a shipwrecked sailor and of a herdsman will be briefly discussed in context. It seems that they represent motifs which influenced other cultures and are present also in stories for children.

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*Chasing Mythical Muppets: Classical Antiquity According to Jim Henson*

This paper presents the results of an exciting chase after references to Classical Antiquity in Jim Henson's universe – from short forms, like various scenes in *The Muppet Show* and *Sesame Street*, through episodes of the *Muppet Babies* and *Fraggle Rock*, to Henson's longer structures: the TV mini-series *The Storyteller: Greek Myths* and the extravagant cult-movie *Labyrinth*. The paper's aim is to investigate the character and role of the reception of ancient myths by Henson's creatures, ones which themselves have become part of one of the most appealing myths in our popular culture.

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*"A Kind of Minotaur": Mythical Monsters in the Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne*  
(with Deborah H. Roberts)

In his pioneering collections of Greek myths for children, *A Wonder Book for Girls and Boys* (1851) and *Tanglewood Tales* (1853), the American author Nathaniel Hawthorne combines two approaches to reworking the monsters and other supernatural elements of mythology. For his child readers, he treats these features literally and light-heartedly, producing a playful blend of magic and reality. For his adult readers (and with a view to the adults his child readers will become), he treats them metaphorically and seriously, as cautionary allegories of spiritual deformation; this approach is also reflected in the mythical allusions found in his works of fiction for adults. This paper will examine the interplay of these two approaches, with particular attention to Hawthorne's account of the Minotaur myth and to visual interpretations of that account by some of Hawthorne's illustrators.

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*Animating Mythical Vase Scenes, with the National Museum in Warsaw*

The Panoply project involves the creation of digital animations based on the scenes that decorate ancient Greek vases. The primary aim of the animations is to increase understanding of ancient culture and to promote engagement and discussion. We will present the plans for our collaboration with the Museum within the project *Our Mythical Childhood... The Reception of Classical Antiquity in Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges* (ERC Consolidator Grant, PI Katarzyna Marciniak). Our animations offer an excitingly direct yet creative interaction with the classical world. We combine ancient art and digital artistry to retell ancient myths and present new stories.

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*Beasts and Creatures: Towards the Construction of Human Categories in Oral Tradition in Cameroon*

Controversy over the veracity and authenticity of beasts and creatures in certain pantheons, especially in African countries formerly colonised by the West remains topical in scholarly circles. Many mythologists claim that since most folk literature 'travel', and a large part of Africa's population has either experienced migration or displacement in the past, some beasts and creatures in their mythology might have been a copy of similar animal tales drawn from Classical mythology. This contention, however, is debatable: on the one hand, the uniqueness of most African animal tales appears very obvious; on the other hand, these creatures have deep rooted cultural, historical and geographical bearings within African communities for centuries. This present contribution examines beast literature in Cameroon, to assert the position that beast literature in Cameroon is a representation of authentic Cameroonian culture. To prove this, our analysis traces the cultural and histo-geographical bearings of the myths of 'Atutu' (literary meaning a 'beast with only a head'), 'Jengus' (water nymphs) and 'Ngalveng' (literary meaning 'fire-excreting creature') among four ethnic groups in Cameroon, namely Ngemba, Sawa, Batanga, and Beti-Fang. The paper also discusses the allegorical and transformational dimension of these animals to the individual and society at large, and argues for the relevance of inclusion of Classical mythology in school books. Our discussion is informed by current discourse in postcolonial and archetypal criticisms. The paper concludes that irrespective of origin, the existence of beasts in any pantheon only helps in the translation of human categories such as 'universality', 'identity' and 'representation'.

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*Heracles Facing Monsters in Twenty-First-Century French Comic Books by Joann Sfar and Édouard Cour*

Classical Antiquity has been abundantly present in French comic book universe since it was conquered by Uderzo and Goscinny's hero *Asterix the Gaul* in 1959. While Asterix & Co. have been poking gentle fun at contemporary French society for over five decades, the twenty-first-century newcomers Joann Sfar & Christophe Blain took a gloves-off approach to Olympic gods and their entangled progeny, creating in their 2002–2009 trilogy, Socrates the half-dog, son of Zeus' dog, as a companion to the brainless and bursting with testosterone Heracles who is soon joined by equally preposterous versions of Odysseus and Oedipus. Édouard Cour, a younger French author combining responsibilities for writing and drawing, dares to rescue Heracles from this assault on honour by putting him again through the paces of the twelve labours, performed for the glory of Hera.

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*Mythical Beasts in the Soviet Animation: Interpretation of the Monster Phenomenon*

Ancient mythology was not very popular theme in the Soviet animation, however several cartoons were made from the late sixties till the nineties. A reason for such underestimation of ancient topics could be an abundance of gods and demigods that were main heroes of the Greek and Roman mythology, which was in contradiction with realism as the main principle of the Soviet culture. The Soviet ideology has domesticated Slavic mythological creatures (not gods!) quite quickly and admitted their presence in popular culture, including cinema. Cartoons on ancient mythology were firstly made in sympathy with animated Russian folk tales. However, in this regard, it was necessarily to input new characters, including monster creatures. Ways of constructing images of these creatures, their relation to cultural and historical context, use for ideological purposes, a comparison with other similar creatures will be the focus of this study.

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*Picturing Duality: The Minotaur as Beast and Human in Illustrated Myth Collections for Children* (with Sheila Murnaghan)

The monstrosity of the Minotaur lies chiefly in a hybridity that is the more uncanny because the body is (as a rule) human and the head is animal. Few retellings of this myth in anthologies for children, with the exception of Hawthorne's in *Tanglewood Tales*, explore in any detail what it might mean to be both beast and human, or try to complicate the boundary between the two. Writers typically set out the basic dichotomy (part bull, part man) and in some instances introduce a few additional scary details (lion's teeth, red eyes, foaming mouth). But the many artists who have illustrated these retellings have had to decide how to represent, combine and balance the Minotaur's human and animal characteristics, where to draw or blur the line between the two halves, and how frightening to make him, given an audience of children. This paper examines the deployment of posture and facial expression, of hands, feet, and hooves, of nakedness, hair, and clothing, and the resulting effects of horror, pathos, and comedy in the illustration history of this myth for children.

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*Old Wine Bottled for the Young: The Image and Mysteries of Dionysos in Tadeusz Zieliński's "Skazochnaia Drevnost' Èllady"*

Tadeusz Zieliński presented his ideas on Greek mythology in three different genres: in his scholarly work, in his essays written for a broad audience without a background in classical philology, and in his mythological tales for children and young adults. The texts for the young audience originally published in Russian are partly a retelling of classical myths in the tradition of Gustav Schwab, partly 'modern' fairy-tales of Zieliński's own invention with figures taken from Greek mythology. Whereas in his scholarly work Zieliński attempted to unveil the secrets of ancient text, in particular of Greek drama, he encoded some of his views on classical texts and their meaning for his own times in his poetic tales. In Zieliński's vision of the lasting influence of classical culture the myth of Dionysos and the related myths had received a key role which is expressed most clearly in his Russian essays *On the Life of Ideas*. The very same Dionysos occurs in Zieliński's tale *The Songs of the Nightingale*, along with clear echoes of Polish literature.

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*The Nandi Bear: A Mythical Profile of a Ferocious Beast*

European settlers and explorers named it the Nandi bear after the Nandi, an ethnic group residing in Western Kenya and which claims not only to have sighted this beast but also to have been terrorized by it in the distant past. The Nandi refers to it as 'Keerit' or 'Magalaluut'. Cryptologists and Cryptozoologists have tried to explain what kind of creature the Nandi bear could be in view of the claims by contemporary science that Africa has no bears. It is one creature that has 'eluded capture and the collector's rifle'. I am, however, not interested in whether the Nandi Bear is a bear or not. This paper, instead, interrogates how this nocturnal carnivore enters the Nandi folklore and resurfaces as a brain eating beast that roamed the nights and terrorised all.

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*Protecting the Ancient Past and its Mythical Beasts: Julia Golding's "The Companions Quartet"*

What if all ancient mythical creatures still existed and lived secretly among us in our profane and polluted world? What if these divine and storied creatures had to be protected by a secret society whose members respected their dangerous, yet marvellous otherness and kept them hidden from human beings in safe habitats? This exactly is the premise of Julia Golding's *The Companions Quartet*, a fairly successful fantasy series for children and young adults published successively in the years 2006 and 2007. In this paper, I will focus on the series' portrayal of the ancient creatures in detail, analysing the way in which they are represented, which of their characteristics are emphasised and how they are used by the novelist for delivering her central message – for communicating the ideology and agenda of current environmentalism and promoting tolerance for the other in a timely way. I will then bring to light Julia Golding's general reflections upon the classical past, arguing that the society members do not only act like environmentalist campaigners who conserve the natural habitats of the mythical creatures, but they are also portrayed by the novelist as a kind of philological association who take care of the classical heritage.

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*Stanisław Pagaczewski and His Tale(s) of the Wawel Dragon*

According to the legend, the city of Kraków, a former capital and one of the most important cities in Poland, was founded by Krak (Gracchus). The ruler slayed the Wawel Dragon by feeding him a sheep filled with sulphur. The legend of the Dragon may have its origins in the History of Alexander the Great by Pseudo-Callisthenes. The figure of the Wawel Dragon reappears in the three-volume series of books for children by Stanisław Pagaczewski (1916–1984).

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*(Non-)Flying Horses in the Polish People's Republic: The Crisis of the Mythical Beast in Ambivalent Polish Children's Literature*

Under communist reign writing children's literature became a way to circumvent censorship. Children's literature offered a retreat, where Polish authors were able to communicate – albeit in a more or less concealed way – on political subjects with a readership consisting of children and adult readers alike. The result was a number of 'children's' books that are astonishing not only due to their content, but also to their original language and imagery. In addition to the camouflage provided by the genre (children's literature), some authors added a second layer of camouflage to conceal their criticism by using motifs and figures from mythology – amongst which mythical beasts. In my paper I will trace some of these mythical beasts in ambivalent Polish children's literature, enquiring their role in communicating with a dual readership in times of governmental censorship. I am particularly interested in the crises of the mythical beasts in these texts – not only of those, that do turn up in the books, but also of those, who's existence is reduced to a mere 'hypothesis' within the texts. Is the crisis of the mythical beast a symptom of Polish reality at the time?