Classical Mythology in Contemporary Basal Readers, 1962-2004

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American textbooks have long featured classical references to Ancient Greece and Rome, a practice likely derived from the general importance of Latin and Greek in the curriculum of early American schools. Although ancient language offerings declined during the 20th century, the attractiveness of classical mythology endured for some time; however, that attractiveness seems to have waned in recent years. This development appears to be particularly apparent in reading textbooks. In order to begin an exploration of this hypothesis, this study investigates the presence of classical mythology in American basal reading series published during the past 30 years.

This study uses a content analysis examination within a quantitative framework, employing a myth typology system created by May Hill Arubuthnot. It investigates 204 different basal readers from the 1960's to 2004. It employs the following *a priori* coding categories: 1) the nature of the myth, 2) the reading level at which the myth occurred, 3) the name of the publisher and 4) the reader's publication date.

This study found that particular myth subjects appeared more frequently than others in basal readers; namely, the weaving contest between Arachne and Athena, Daedalus and Icarus, and King Midas. It proposes that myth popularity reflects the influence of Nathaniel Hawthorne, who composed the first American literary compendia of Greco-Roman mythology published especially for children. A secondary reason for myth popularity relates to the thematic arrangement of the books; e.g. a section of a text dealing with astronomy may feature a more obscure myth with a celestial focus.

This research suggests that classical mythology has received decreased emphasis in the school curriculum during the latter part of the 20th century. The study investigates basal content in terms of Antoinette Brazouski and Mary J. Klatt's socio-cultural explanations of the popularity of Classical mythology. It argues that simplification of classical myth is possible without becoming reductive and presents the merits of including classical mythology in primary curricula.

Basal reader series historically have been the chief resource used in primary classrooms to teach children reading skills and to provide materials for reading. They were first popularized in America during the nineteenth-century, when public schools increased in number and children began to spend a greater amount of time attending school. Early series—like the 1840's *McGuffey Eclectic Readers*—contained traditional literary pieces that were usually unadulterated. Story selections reflected the predisposition of individual editors—some with an eclectic range of folk tales and nursery rhymes, others with underlying themes of patriotism or religion (Minnich 1936). Within a century, basal content diametrically shifted with the popularity of series like the 1930's Scott Foresman readers (famous for their two main characters, Dick and Jane). These texts depicted day-to-day suburban life using syntactically controlled, somewhat stilted language; in fact, such stories showed so much homogeneity that they were sometimes accused of classism, sexism and racism (Luke 1988, 86).

Basal series began to pull away from the Scott Foresman format during the 1960's. The last half of the twentieth-century ushered in a trend towards eclecticism similar to the McGuffey readers. Textbooks in the 1970's, 1980's and 1990's presented a better gender and ethnic balance while attempting a broader representation of literary genres. Such books were usually arranged according to levels[1] and contained story "selections" written in varying forms of discourse (e.g. narratives, poems, plays or expository texts). With the turn of the century, major textbook publishers have begun to pull away from traditional basal compendia in favor of "guided reading" programs featuring a multitude of small, individual, leveled publications. However, despite this trend, basal series are still used in some form or another in most elementary school classrooms.[2] Many school districts regularly use twentieth-century out-of-adoption series. Because of their widespread use, the content of basal readers is of great import; according to Allan Luke, "the forms and contents, ideologies and discourses of textbooks constitute an official and authorized version of cultural knowledge and literate practice" (Luke 1997).

Researchers have examined the literary content of basal reading series with varying range of foci. The most prevalent studies are general content analyses targeting forms of discourse; e.g. Flood and Lapp's (1987) study graphing the frequency of writing types using the following categorical descriptions: narrative, play, exposition, poetry, biography and hybrid (Flood and Lapp 1987, 299-306).[3] Particularly valuable are those studies that examine readers from the nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century, as many such books are now out-of-print and no longer easily accessible to researchers. R. R. Robinson conducted one such worthy study in 1930 in which he examined 1775-1926 era readers according to theme (Robinson 1930). The most recent studies commonly target ethnic, gender or age issues—e.g. occurrences of ethnic minorities like Native Americans (Reyhner 1986) and representations of women (Frasher and Walker 1973, 741-749).

Little has been done to extensively analyze specific forms of discourse (Johnsen 2001 37).[4] Although the Flood and Lapp (1987) study found that basal readers contained approximately 25% poetry, for example, little attention has been accorded to such maters as theme, author, and composition structure. Traditional literary forms like folk tales, fairy stories, fables and myths are examples of such understudied genres. While all these traditional narrative forms are significant, mythological stories provide a particularly rich and relevant study focus. Myths form what Carl Jung refers to as the "collective unconscious" of a society. The French sociologist Emilé Durkheim argued that mythology strengthens the social nature of society, intertwining elements of history, tradition, cosmology and moral belief systems. Thus, myths are powerful narratives important to the modern mind and are consequently the focus of this study.

There has been a seemingly "ebb-and-flow type" popularity of Classical mythology throughout the history of children's textbooks and anthologies. Vastly popular in colonial Britain and through the nineteenth-century (Nietz 1961)[5], myths were thought to be particularly useful teaching tools for early literacy acquisition—perhaps because of their universal structure and enduring themes. However, the prevalence of Classical mythology in American children's literature waned during the first half of the twentieth century (Marion 1969). Antoinette Brazouski and Mary J. Klatt, in their excellent annotated bibliography of mythology books for children, explained this pattern socio-culturally; for example, the Stock Market Crash of 1929 and the subsequent Great Depression resulted in a shift of priorities away from the Classics towards American domestic matters (Brazouski and Klatt 1994, 8). Classical mythology resurged in popularity slightly in the 1960's as a result of children's increasing fascination with heroes (e.g. the astronauts, Martin Luther King, JFK). In the 1970's and 1980's, movies like *Star Wars*, *Gremlins* and *E.T.* and games like *Dungeons and Dragons* spurned children's interest in monsters and epic tales—increasing the popularity of mythology once again. Does contemporary basal reader content parallel the same patterns noted by Brazouski and Klatt? What myths are the most popular, and why? What characteristics do myths prevalent in basal reader series share? At what reading levels do classical myths predominate? This project investigated these questions through a content analysis examination of popular basal reading series from the 1960's to present day (2004).

The only significant study to have explored previously these questions was undertaken by Phyllis Castle Marion in 1969. Marion conducted an evaluation of myths (Greek, Roman and Norse) appearing in basal reader stories as part of dissertation research for the University of Chicago. She used a content analysis research method with an emergent design framework to study the myths presented in basal reading programs of the 1960's. Although Marion's research has several weaknesses—mostly as a result of the study's age rather than methodology[6], it provides an invaluable background for contemporary scholarly research about mythological content in 21st century reading programs. The study is particularly worthy because many of the books Marion used for analysis are now out-of-print and no longer easily accessible to researchers.

Method

To examine trends and patterns concerning the mythological content of basal reading series, this project employed a content analysis research design. It examined 204 different basal readers from 25 different reading series. All books within complete series—e.g. those from which all books in the series were accessible—were examined.[7] Lone books, part of an incomplete series, were not included in the final data tabulations, regardless of mythological content.

The surveyed series were part of reading series readily available through the University of Texas library system, the Hays Consolidated Independent School District (Texas), and University Inter-Library Loan services. The dates of publication covered a forty-three year time span from 1962-2004, with the majority of the series clustering in the 1980's, making this decade an extremely prolific one for publishing.[8] The study examines at least one example from each of the traditional top-six basal publishing companies: 1) Silver, Burdett and Ginn, 2) Harcourt, Brace, and Jovanovich, 3) Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 4) Houghton Mifflin, 5) Macmillan and 6) Scott Foresman (Goodman et al., 46).[9] In the past ten years (circa 1994-2004), all five of these publishers essentially published only one new basal series—although they have reprinted them several times in multiple editions every few years. For example, the Scott Foresman 2004 series is the third reprinting (with a new cover and revised supplementary materials) of the same series first published in 2000 and again in 2002. The rationale behind these frequent editions is to maintain a recent publication in order to influence school districts to adopt the more "current" publication. Harriet Tyson-Berenstein, in *A Conspiracy of Good Intentions: America's Textbook Fiasco*, explains: "Publishers can legally qualify for a new publication date by changing only a small percentage of pages in the book . . . the changes are more often cosmetic than substantive" (Berenstein 1988, 40). Because of this trend of updating readers without adding new content, only the most recent edition from each of the current five basal publishers was included in this study.

Using each of the classical myths found, information was recorded using the following *a priori* coding categories: 1) the nature of the myth, 2) the reading level at which the myth occurred, 3) the name

of the publisher and 4) the book's publication date.[10] These categories, except for the first, are mutually exclusive and exhaustive. The first category—the nature of the myth—involved two pieces of information. First, the study recorded the subject of the myth (i.e. did the myth focus upon Hercules? Pandora? Arachne?). While mutually exclusive, the subject categories listed are not exhaustive; many possible subjects theoretically could appear in basals but are not listed as categories.

The second aspect of the "nature of myth" category involved an identification of the selection's myth-type, using a typology created by May Hill Arbuthnot in her *Children and Books* (Arbuthnot 1964, 307). Arbuthnot detailed four states as: 1) Myths that explain why (e.g. the story of Pandora explains why problems exist in the world), 2) Myths that are allegories (e.g. the story of King Midas illustrates greed), 3) Myths that deal with the interactions between gods and men (e.g. Bauchis and Philemon) or 4) Myths that deal with the interactions between gods and other gods (e.g. Poseidon and Athena and the contest for Athens). Arbuthnot's typology responsibly requires a fifth category to be exhaustive, i.e. 5) Myths that focus on mortal or semi-divine heroes. Examples of myths that fit into this category are the Minotaur (Theseus), the riddle of the Sphinx (Oedipus) and the wooden horse of Troy (Odysseus).

With the addition of a fifth possibility, these categories are exhaustive but not necessarily mutually exclusive; possibly one story may fit into several nature of myth categories. For example, the story about Arachne explains why (why spiders spin webs), contains an allegory (hubris) and details an interaction between a deity and a mortal. In this case, a decision was made to place each story in what seemed to be the predominant category. Placement into a myth type was not necessarily subject-dependent. For example, one Persephone story (Open Court's 1979 4th grade reader *Burning Bright*) focused mainly on deity relationships—between Demeter, Persephone, Zeus and Hades—seemed best suited to the god/god interaction category. However, another Persephone story (Scott Foresman's 1987 6th grade reader *Distant Views*) stressed, instead, the way that the myth explained the earth's seasons, and, thus, was placed among the myths that explain why category.

RESULTS

The 204 basal readers examined contained 42 tellings of classical myths in 19 different subjects. The most popular subject was the weaving contest between Arachne and Athena that appeared in 6 different basals. Other popular stories were Daedalus and Icarus (5 stories), King Midas (4 stories) and selections from the Odyssey (4 stories).[11] Of the five myth-types, most of these basal stories (14) were allegories. Ten myths focused on god/man interaction, seven myths dealt with heroes, seven myths explained why things happened, and four highlighted god/god interaction. All of these myths, except two, which were written as theatrical plays, were presented in narrative form. None of the books presented classical myths in poetic form.

The study found two problematic stories. Both of these selections ultimately were discarded and not used in the final data analyses. One of these difficult to code selections appeared in Macmillan's 1980 5th grade reader, *Echoes of Time*. It featured Alexander the Great and the horse of Bucephalus. Whether or not this story more properly can be labeled a myth or a history is debatable. Alexander of Macedon most certainly was a real historical personage, and several ancient historians mention Bucephalus as fact rather than myth.[12] Thus, this denied story was considered to be a historical selection, not a myth. The second problematic selection appeared in Silver Burdette and Ginn's 1984 5th grade reader, *Ride the Sunrise*. Entitled "Myths, Folktales and Legends", the selection deals in depth with classical mythology. However, it is a non-fiction description of a literary genre rather than a myth itself. In both cases, the researcher deemed that ignoring these two selections would not negatively impact the outcome of the analysis.

Twice, the same version of a myth written by the same author appeared in two different readers. The first of these, Olivia Coolidge's "Arachne" was featured in Harcourt Brace Jovanovich's 1989 5th grade reader, *At the Edge of the World*, and Houghton Mifflin's 1986 6th grade reader, *Pagents*. Ian Serrailler's "Theseus and the Minotaur" appeared in two different readers: Open Court's 1979 6th grade reader, *Close to the Sun*, and Harcourt Brace Jovanovich's 1989 5th grade reader, *East of the Sun*.[13] In both these cases, the text of the stories was virtually identical, despite the fact that the myths were featured in readers of differing grade levels.

Myths rarely were presented as early as the 2/1 level and representation continues through the 6th grade. Most classical myths were presented at the 4th, 5th and 6th grade levels. Only one 2/1 reader contained a myth ("Androcles" in Open Court 1979) and only one 2/2 grade reader contained myths (American Book Company, 1980, with "King Midas" and "The Contest for Athens"). Sixth grade readers contained 37% of the myths. Most often, classical myths were distributed intermittently, perhaps randomly, or appear only at the highest (4th-6th) grade levels. Only one basal series—the 1979 Open Court "Headway Program"—regularly included classical myths in most titles. Only two books in this series (after the 1st grade level) failed to include a classical myth. The reason for this omission apparently was thematic; that 2/1 book, *From Sea to Shining Sea*, is a thematic reader within which all selections relate to the United States. This finding is consistent with Marion's 1969 study, which found that an earlier Open Court basal reading

series—the *Open Court Basic Readers* (1963-1964)—included one classical myth in most grades covered by the series (Marion 1969, 19).

Results from the publication date examination are problematic, mainly because the analyzed series were not sampled randomly in terms of publication date. Thus, the clustering of series in the mid-eighties may lend doubt to credibility. However, since the most recent editions of the major basal reader publications were included in the study, a general discussion of the results is possible. Most basal series (83%) from the 1960's and 1970's contained at least one classical myth. Likewise, many of these series (71%) from the 1980's and 1990's also included at least one classical myth. However, only 40% of the most recent publications—from each of the five current basal publishers—contain a selection from Greco-Roman mythology. Additionally, the two recent series which did contain a myth (Houghton Mifflin 2002 and McGraw Hill/Macmillan 2002) included only one myth in their 6th grade level books.

Analyses

The Nature of the Myth

One possible reason for the increased popularity of certain myths in late 20th century basal readers is the influence of Nathaniel Hawthorne, who in 1852 composed *A Wonder Book for Boys and Girls*. This work was the first American literary compendium of Greco-Roman mythology published especially for children. Included in *A Wonder Book* are the stories of Midas and the golden touch, Pandora, the golden apples, Bellerophron and Pegasus, Baucis and Philemon, and Medusa.[14] With the exception of the story of Perseus and Medusa, all of these subjects appear as myth subjects in basal readers. Hawthorne added his own details, changed plotlines, bowdlerized mature content, and gave most of his stories happy endings. Because of these modifications, it is easy to trace the source of the mythological retelling back to Hawthorne. For example, in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*[15]—the original source of the story of Midas—the King receives the power of the golden touch from Dionysus, and repents after recognizing his inability to eat or drink. At Dionysus' bidding, Midas bathes in the Lydian river of Pactolus to remove the curse, thus explaining why Pactolus contains flecks of gold. Hawthorne's retelling mentions neither Pactolus nor Dionysus, but he gives the king a daughter named Marygold whom Midas transforms into a statue with his touch. All four basal reader selections found by this study follow Hawthorne's version of the Midas myth rather than the original Ovid. Other examples to support Hawthorne's source as a reason for subject popularity can be found in the Bellerophron and Pegasus myths (with stress Hawthorne's happy ending rather than the sad one found in both Homer and Pindar) and the Pandora myths (which make reference to Pandora's box rather than jar that Hesiod describes in his *Works and Days*).

Other popular sources for children's mythology in translation are Thomas Bulfinches' *Mythology* and Edith Hamilton's *Mythology*. Bulfinch wrote for both adults and children, based primarily on the original source but with a few literary embellishments. He often left out language and situations that he found morally offensive. Hamilton's retellings are more factual than literary and are usually well grounded in primary sources. The extent to which basal readers used Bulfinch and Hamilton as sources is less clear than Hawthorne, although all of the subjects which appear in readers also appear in one or both of these sources.

Only two traditionally less popular myths appeared in basal readers. Neither received treatment in either Hawthorne, Bulfinch or Hamilton. Both of these myths were found in the Economy 1975 series—Typhon (from the 4th grade reader *Silver Twist*) and Phaethon (from the 6th grade reader *Lavender Skywriters*). Why were these relatively obscure myths chosen for inclusion? The answer may lie in the thematic arrangement of the books. Typhon is featured in a section of the reader dealing with volcanoes (located next to a myth about the Hawaiian volcano goddess Pele) and Phaethon is in a section that features astronomy and the sky. Selection of these myths offers an interesting exception to the reasonable possibility that subject popularity is greatly based on the myths that Hawthorne selected for this books[16], and to a lesser extent, that Bulfinch and Hamilton later chose to treat.

Arbuthnot, in her discussion of myth-types, claims that "myths that explain why" and "myths that are allegories" are the most appropriate types for young children. She believes that myths that deal with "god/god interactions" are the least appropriate because they deal with complex issues of familial rivalry and improper "amatory adventures" (Arbuthnot 1964, 308). The contemporary basal reading series examined in this study seem to follow her logic.

The Level of the Myth

The absence of classical mythology at the preprimer level is not surprising. At these levels, modern readers are often synthetic in order to control vocabulary. However, the failure to include myths in primers and first grade readers is more problematic. Although publishers claim that "keeping language natural is important," (Goodman 1987, 87) they appear not to draw on authentic literature at these levels of instruction. In fact, simplification of lower-level texts for reading "readiness" appears to be a continuing trend in the basal reader market; publishers have found that they can "make their series attractive by offering more pre-primers with fewer words in each" Goodman 1987, 53). If the basic function of stories in the lower levels is to practice basic

vocabulary and skills only, the dangerous prospect exists that language will be isolated from its use.

Marion believes that "the relatively few myths offered in the second and third grades easily can be attributed to the lack at this level of the reading skills required to handle the vocabulary necessary for the reading of myths" (Marion 1969, 18). On the contrary, the myths found at the 2/1, 2/2, 3/1 and 3/2 levels in this study were quite successful in utilizing vocabulary that is at the same time level appropriate and rich in detail. Most 2nd and 3rd grade children easily can use the vocabulary needed to understand classical mythology. Perhaps better explanation is that basal reader publishers believe the subject matter of many myths is unsuitable for younger children. Reading series achieve more adoptions when they fit conventions of acceptability for subject matter, language, and moral codes. According to the 1988 publication *Report Card on Basal Readers*, "Even selections which will only be listed for suggested further reading are purged if anyone thinks they might be offensive" (Goodman 1987, 60).

Although this possibility may contribute to the reasoning of many publishers, it is not a viable argument. Some mythological subjects (e.g. Daphne, Philomena) are clearly inappropriate for younger children; some of these myths are so psychologically complex that adaptations are nearly impossible. However, many myths can prove valuable to young children and others can be simplified without becoming reductive. Skilled translators can downplay or reduce much of the violence and sexuality in classical myth. For example, telling of the Prometheus myth can omit the detail of the bird tearing his liver and the Persephone myth need not mention her rape by Hades. In such adaptations, the richness and value of the myth is not compromised. In fact, such modifications were made to the Prometheus and Persephone myths included in this study of basal readers. To be sure, all myths cannot be well crafted into children's versions; however, early introduction of classical myths is desirable even if some symbolic content is lost.

Discussion

There are an exceedingly low number of myths used as stories in basal readers. Introducing mythological subjects gradually into classroom reading programs will provide early name recognition of classical topics and help provide a basis upon which to later frame complex tales. Waiting until 4th grade for the introduction of classical mythology is too late. Lothorp-Green likens this process to the baking of a layer-cake; children are introduced to the frosted top layers as youths, and then, as they mature, they experience the darker, more complex layers. Critics may object to this kind of editing, but, as Lorthorp-Green aptly summarized, "A flat cake may be better than no cake at all" (Lorthop-Green 2002, 38-39).[17] This idea is similar to Harold Broudy's associative use of knowledge (Broudy et al. 1964). Associative learning involves linking previously learned bits of knowledge with newly learned knowledge; associative connections are metaphorical, involving imagination and feeling. The results of this study may suggest that contemporary reading textbooks marginalize such associative knowledge, perhaps due to recent moves toward state standards and high-stakes testing, which emphasize replicative knowledge only.

Greater diversification of myths in primary reading programs also seems desirable. Most of the myths included are based completely upon Hawthorne's choices. The relatively obscure myths of Typhon and Phaethon found in Economy's 1975 basal series offer a pleasant surprise, unique in nature and translated imaginatively. To incorporate less traditional myths into thematic units was both successful and powerful. Unfortunately, the chief problem with this implementation is practical; it seems unlikely even to be addressed by basal reader publishers. Adapting a fashionable myth from a popular retelling like Hawthorne, simply, is considerably easier than the adaptation of a tale from a primary source. In order to seek out unusual classical myths for thematic units, basal reader anthologists/authors must be well versed enough in classical authors successfully to locate sources of myths. Additionally, a textbook writer or editor who possesses the ability to read the myths in their original Greek and Latin would be able to craft better, finely nuanced translations. Unfortunately, basal reader editors and content-writers are not well paid (Goodman 1987, 57) and publishers unlikely will be able to find employees with the substantial qualifications to locate and translate unusual myths.

The shift away from classical selections in elementary basal reading programs can be generalized to include traditional materials as well. Readers from the 1970's and 1980's were just as likely to contain selections from *Alice and Wonderland* or Emily Dickinson as they were pieces written by contemporary authors. Contemporary publishers no longer include such selections in their basal readers. Rather, they focus on newly released, "best-seller" selections. They apparently seek popular authors who win awards and reap large profits. This trend has resulted in a marginalization of traditional children's literature, including classical mythology. If basal reading series are used within 85-90% of all elementary classrooms as noted by Aukerman and others, teachers likely do not use enough out-of-basal supplementary materials to make up for this low-rate of inclusion of myths and traditional literature.

In her 1969 study, Marion concluded that the inclusion of classical mythology in basal readers in the 1960's was more than sufficient. Even if her judgment might be credible, the current evidence

presents a different situation. Classical mythology has received decreased emphasis in literacy curriculum during the latter part of the 20th century. The current focus on popular modern literature has relegated classical mythology to a barely nominal position at best. Long-time standard literature selections have disappeared and have been replaced with current best sellers. Consequently, the inclusion of mythology in these recent textbooks is rare. Myth is integral part to literature study and should be included in twenty-first century reading textbooks.

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Basal Reading Series Surveyed

1962 Scott Foresman
1964 Witty, Bebell, Heath
1966 Holt, Rinehart, Winston
1971 Houghton Mifflin
1975 Economy
1979 Open Court "Headway Program"
1980 American Book Company
1980 Macmillan
1981 Houghton Mifflin
1981 Scott Foresman
1984 Silver Burdett and Ginn
1985 Scott Foresman
1986 Houghton Mifflin
1986 Macmillan
1986 Economy
1987 Scott Foresman
1987 Harcourt Brace Jovanovich
1987 Macmillan
1989 Harcourt Brace Jovanovich
1993 Silver Burdett and Ginn
2000 Scott Foresman
2000 McGraw Hill/Macmillan
2000 Harcourt Brace "Collections"
2000 Scholastic Literacy Place
2002 Houghton Mifflin

[1] In most series, these levels are generally: Preprimer, Primer, 1st, 2/1 (1st semester of 2nd grade), 2/2 (2nd semester of 2nd grade), 3/1 (1st semester of 3rd grade), 3/2 (2nd semester of 3rd grade), 4th, 5th and 6th. Some series continue with 7th and 8th "grade" readers. Occasionally series do not distinguish between a 2/1 and 2/2 reader and a 3/1 and 3/2 reader; instead, they offer only one book for each of those years.

[2] A commonly quoted statistic is that 80-90% of elementary classroom teachers use basals regularly in some form. See Robert C. Aukerman, *The Basal Reader Approach to Reading* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1981), p. 2; David Bloome and Sonia Nieto, "Children's Understandings of Basal Readers", *Theory into Practice*, Vol. 28. No. 4 (2001), p. 258; Patrick Shannon and Patricia Crawford, "Manufacturing Descent: Basal Readers and the Creation of Reading Failures," *Reading and Writing Quarterly*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (1997), p. 231.

[3] Another publication of what appears to be the same study : James Flood, Diane Lapp, and Sharron Flood, "Types of Writings Found in the Early Levels of Basal Reading Programs: Preprimers Through Second Grade Readers", *Annals of Dyslexia*, Vol. 34 (1984), pp. 241-155.

[4] Johnsen notes that "books devoted to the history of genres are extremely rare".

[5] Also see Caroline Winterer, *Ancient Greece and Rome in American Intellectual Life 1780-1910*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002.

[6] The report was manually typed before widespread accessibility of computer processing. Marion's findings would be a more helpful analytical tool if they were reworked into a clearer, more visually appealing series of charts. The limited chronological range (the series investigated spanned 10 years, from 1959-1968) is also a weakness.

[7] Some series continue with a 7th and 8th "grade" leveled reader. These readers were not included in the study, as not all basal series contained them. Two series, Scholastic 2000 and Silver, Burdett and Ginn 1993, did not have a 6th grade basal.

[8] Thus, basals from this decade are extant and readily available. Dolores Durkin, "Influences on Basal Reading Programs", The Elementary School Journal, Vol. 87, No. 3 (1987), pp. 355.

[9] Holt, Rinehart and Winston was purchased by Harcourt, Brace and Jovanovich during the 1980's. Silver Burdett and Ginn is now a subsidiary of Scott Foresman. Within the past few years, another company, Scholastic—which is represented in the study—has increased in popularity.

[10] The name of the myth's author was not recorded. This is because most readers do not credit the author's of individual stories, listing only the name of the book's editors. An attempt was made to note whether the myth was most likely: 1) a reasonable translation of the myth's original classical source [usually Ovid's *Metamorphoses* or Hesiod's *Theogany*], 2) a retelling of a popular secondary source of classical myths [e.g. Hamilton's *Mythology*, Bullfinches' *Mythology* or Hawthorne's *A Wonder Book*], or 3) an original adaptation of the myth. NB: This was an emergent coding sub-category, created after the start of research and is dicussed in the analysis section.

[11] One 3/2 reader—which as part of an incomplete series and thus not included in the final tabulations—contained an 80 page translation of Homer's *Odyssey*. While obviously adulterated for a younger audience, the epic essentially was presented in its entirety. This book, *Far Back Mornings*, is part of The Economy Company's 1980 Keys to Reading basal series.

[12] Diodorus, *Histories* 22.12, Plutarch's *Alexander* 6.1, 6.8. Despite Plutarch's romantic retelling of the story, most ancient historians agree that the Bucephalus story is based on historical fact, possibly from an eyewitness.

[13] In both these categories, the stories were treated as separate myths in the final data analysis.

[14] Tanglewood Tales, which Hawthorne published in 1853 as a sequel to the popular *Wonder Book*, featured: Theseus and the Minotaur, Herakles, the oracle at Delphi, the Odyssey (Circe), Persephone, and Jason and the Golden Fleece. These stories do not seem to share the same popularity as those featured *in A Wonder Book*.

[15] Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 11.134-232.

[16] Phyllis Castle Marion came to a similar conclusion. Marion p. 61.

[17] The story of Persephone, with her brutal rape and kidnapping by Hades, seems to be a particularly appropriate tool for investigating primary adulteration of myth. See also: Elizabeth Holtz, "Persephone and Preschoolers", New Advocate (v27, n4, pp.261-81), *in passim* and Karina Kerr, "Demeter and Persephone: What Our Children are Learning". Paper presented at the Annual Joint Meetings of the Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association (Philadelphia, PA, April 12-15, 1995), *non vidi*.