Swords, Sorcery, Sandals and Space: The Fantastika and the Classical World. A Science Fiction Foundation Conference

29 June – 1 July 2013
At The Foresight Centre, University of Liverpool

Guests of Honour/Plenary Speakers: Edith Hall, Nick Lowe, and Sophia McDougall

Schedule

Saturday 29 June

09:30-10:15 Registration
10:15-10:30 Introduction and welcome to conference
10:30-11:00 Plenary Session 1
   Sophia McDougall (Author): “Dreams of Rome”
   Chair: Edward James (Science Fiction Foundation)
11:30-12:00 Main Hall
   Leon Crickmore (Independent Scholar):* “In the Beginning”
   Chair: Edward James
   *Leon is unfortunately unable to attend the conference, and his paper will be read by Tony Keen
12:00-13:00 Lunch
13:00-15:00 Three Parallel Sessions

Session 1: Homer
   Chair: Shana Worthen (Science Fiction Foundation/University of Arkansas at Little Rock)
   13:00-13:30 Sarah Miles (University of Durham): “‘By the Great Galaxies!’ Ulysses 31, Animé and Homer’s Odyssey”
   13:30-14:00 Frances Foster (University of Cambridge): “Lands of the Dead: Homer’s Hades and Le Guin’s Dry Land”
   14:00-14:30 Amanda Wrigley (University of Westminster): “Odyssean Echoes in The Dark Tower by Louis MacNeice (1946)”

Session 2: Britain
   Chair: Penelope Goodman (University of Leeds)
   13:00-13:30 Elizabeth Gloyn (University of Birmingham): “‘By a Wall that faced the South’: Crossing the Border in Classically-influenced Fantasy”
   13:30-14:00 Sandeep Parmar (University of Liverpool): “Hope Mirrlees’s Lud-in-the-Mist and the Ritual World”
   14:00-14:30 Cara Sheldrake (University of Exeter): “Time-travel to Roman Britain”
   14:30-15:00 Stephe Harrop (Rose Bruford College of Theatre and Performance/Royal Central School of Speech and Drama): “‘To keep out bad things’: Representing ‘The Wall’ in A Song of Ice and Fire”
**Session 3:** Literature and Poetry  

Chair: Nick Lowe (Royal Holloway, University of London)

13:00-13:30 Rosamund E. Williams (Independent Scholar): “War worse than Civil’: echoes of Lucan’s *Bellum Civile* in George R.R. Martin’s *A Song of Ice and Fire*”

13:30-14:00 Mariano Martín Rodríguez (Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania): “From Cicero’s *Somnium Scipionis* to Stapledon’s *Star Maker*: The Visionary Cosmic Voyage as a Genre”

14:00-14:30 Melanie Bost-Fivet (EPHE, Paris): “The Lady in the Tree: A Bridge between Worlds, from Latin Poetry to Holdstock and Burnett Swann”

14:30-15:00 Cleuci de Oliveira (Independent Scholar): “The Cruel Hands of Time: The Horae, Mortality and Resentment in *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*”

15:00-15:30 Coffee  

Chandler Room  

15:30-17:00 Three Parallel Sessions

**Session 4:** Television SF  

Chair: Fiona Hobden (University of Liverpool)

15:30-16:00 Amanda Potter (Open University): “The Fans were There First: *Doctor Who* Fan Fiction and Classical Monsters”

16:00-16:30 Torsten Caeners (University of Duisburg-Essen, Germany): “Frak the Gods’ – (Re-)Negotiating the Classical World in *Battlestar Galactica*”

16:30-17:00 Melissa Beattie (Aberystwyth University): “‘Always faithful to the soil’: Autochthony, Genre and Language in *Caprica*”

**Session 5:** Ancient Civilizations  

Chair: Stephen Trzaskoma (University of New Hampshire)

15:30-16:00 Liz Bourke (Trinity College Dublin): “The Reception of Minoan Civilisation in Science Fiction”

16:00-16:30 Jason Lundock (King’s College London): “Arcane Treasure and Sacred Relics: The Lost Treasures of Antiquity and their Influence in Folktales and Fantasy”

16:30-17:00 Christos Callow (University of Lincoln): “Science ‘Fiction?’ in Ancient Greece: Advanced Technology and Knowledge in Ancient Greece and Contemporary Hypotheses Regarding their Origins”

**Session 6:** Creatures  

Chair: Sophia McDougall (Author)

15:30-16:00 Otta Wenskus (Universität Innsbruck): “If Humans were Centaurs: Galen on the Limits of Genetic Engineering”

16:00-16:30 Christina Pouros (Royal Holloway, University of London): “Jim Henson: Greek Mythology in *Labyrinth* and *The Storyteller*”

19:30 Evening banquet
### Sunday 30 June

**09:30-11:00 Three Parallel Sessions**

**Session 7:**  *The Hunger Games*  
Chair: Juliette Harrisson (Newman College)  
09:30-10:00 Sara Buggy (University of Limerick): “If we burn, you burn with us’: Spartan Influences in Suzanne Collins’ *The Hunger Games* Trilogy”  
10:00-10:30 Aimee Schofield (University of Manchester): “A Game of Two Halves: The Past and the Future in Suzanne Collins’ *The Hunger Games*”  
10:30-11:00 Eleanor OKell (University of Leeds): “Beyond ‘Panem et circenses’: Roman Culture and Names in Suzanne Collins’ *Hunger Games* Trilogy”

**Session 8:**  *Greek Authors*  
Chair: Beverley Scott (University of Liverpool)  
09:30-10:00 Stephen Trzaskoma (University of New Hampshire): “The First Alternate History Novel: Chariton’s *Callirrhoe* and History that Never Happened”  
10:00-10:30 Brett M. Rogers (University of Puget Sound): “Orestes & the Half-Blood Prince: ‘Ghosts’ of Aeschylus in the *Harry Potter* Series”  
10:30-11:00 Robert Cape (Austin College): “Silverberg’s Sophoclean Science Fiction in *Man in the Maze*”

**Session 9:**  *Masters of Science Fiction*  
Chair: Andy Sawyer (University of Liverpool/Science Fiction Foundation)  
09:30-10:00 Edward James (Science Fiction Foundation): “The Ancient World in the Writings of L. Sprague de Camp (1907-2000)”  
10:00-10:30 Andrew J. Wilson (Independent Scholar): “Lost as Atlantis Now: Classical Influences in the Work of C. L. Moore (1911-1987)”  
10:30-11:00 Simon W. Perris (Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand): “Rome and Byzantium in Asimov’s *Foundation* Trilogy”

11:00-11:30 Coffee  
**Chandler Room**

**Session 10:**  *The Whedonverse*  
Chair: Amanda Potter (Open University)  
11:30-12:00 Janice Siegel (Hampden-Sydney College): “The Cyclopic Reavers of Joss Whedon’s *Firefly*”  
12:00-12:30 Jennifer Ann Rea (University of Florida): “You Can’t Stop the Signal/Signum: ‘Utopian’ Living in Whedon’s *Serenity* and Vergil’s *Aeneid*”  
12:30-13:00 Juliette Harrisson (Newman College): “Oracles in Vampire Fiction: Greek Oracles in *Angel: The Series* and *The Southern Vampire Mysteries*”

**Session 11:**  *Alternate Histories and Present-Day Politics*  
Chair: Glyn Morgan (University of Liverpool)  
11:30-12:00 Katherine Buse (University of Cambridge): “‘Frightened animals snarling over water rights’: Narrating History at the Edge of Nature/Culture”  
12:00-12:30 Richard Howard (Trinity College Dublin): “Rome as the Underground Self of the Irish Free State in Joseph O’Neill’s *Land Under England*”  
12:30-13:00 Jim Clarke (Trinity College Dublin): “Remembering Imperfectly: *Julian Comstock*, dystopic Christianity and the Roman Empire”
### Session 12: Philosophy and Rhetoric

Chair: Andrew J. Wilson (Independent Scholar)

11:30-12:00  Gary Flood (University of Central Lancashire): “Other, Auteur, Oratoria: A Rhetorical Perspective on the Thing-world”

12:00-12:30 Cat Wilson (University of British Columbia): “Reading Science Fiction with Aristotle”

13:00-14:00 Lunch  Chandler Room

14:00-16:00 Three Parallel Sessions

#### Session 13: Divine Updates – Myths of the Classical World in Popular Literature

Chair: Brett M. Rogers (University of Puget Sound)

14:00-14:30 Meret Fehlmann (University of Zurich, Switzerland): “Between Re-narration and Vision – Images of Classical Mythology in the Novels of Robert Graves and Elizabeth Hand”

14:30-15:00 Scott Brand (University of Zurich, Switzerland): “A Gordian Knot – Classical Elements in the Graphic Novel Watchmen”

15:00-15:30 Petra Schrackmann (University of Zurich, Switzerland): “‘Where’s the glory in repeating what others have done?’ Mediating the Ancient and the Modern in Rick Riordan’s Percy Jackson & the Olympians series”

15:30-16:00 Aleta-Amirée von Holzen (University of Zurich, Switzerland): “Immortals vs. Independence: Gods and Humans in Anne Ursu’s Cronus Chronicles”

#### Session 14: Greeks

Chair: Janice Siegel (Hampden-Sydney College)

14:00-14:30 Vincent Tomasso (Ripon College): “Engaging the Past in Simmons’ Ilium (2004)”

14:30-15:00 Alexander T. Millington (University College London): “Visions of Ares”

15:00-15:30 Luis Uncetta Gómez (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid): “Chroniques de l’Antiquité galactique: Antiquity and Space Opera in French bande dessinée”

15:30-16:00 Mark Thorne (Wheaton College): “Spartans in Space? The Enduring Image of the Classical Warrior in Science Fiction”

#### Session 15: Epic

Chair: Liz Bourke (Trinity College Dublin)

14:00-14:30 Ralph Covino (University of Tennessee at Chattanooga): “And then what happened? – Expanding a Universe: From the Trojan War to Star Wars”

14:30-15:00 Chris Pak (University of Liverpool): “‘Their acts, mortal and cast away, /Are crystalled in the melt of history’: Frederick Turner’s Genesis: An Epic Poem (1988)”

15:00-15:30 Beverley Scott (University of Liverpool): “The Argo in Space and Time: Science Fiction Receptions of the Argonautic Myth”

15:30-16:00 Charul Patel (Lancaster University): “The Shape of a Hero’s Soul: A Roman Conception of Fate in the Development of the Epic Fantasy Formula (as seen in The Curse of Chalion)”

16:00-16:30 Coffee  Chandler Room

16:30-17:30 Plenary Session 2  Main Hall

Nick Lowe (Royal Holloway, University of London): “Fantasising about Antiquity”

Chair: Andy Sawyer (University of Liverpool/Science Fiction Foundation)
Monday 1 July

10:00-11:00  Two Parallel Sessions

**Session 16: The New Wave and after**
Chair: Edward James (Science Fiction Foundation)
- 10:00-10:30 Jonathan Davies (Oxford/Princeton): “The Quest for the Historical Glogauer: The Reception of Scholarship on First Century Judaea in Moorcock’s *Behold the Man*”
- 10:30-11:00 Tom Garvey (Brooklyn College, CUNY): “Classical Resonances in Neal Stephenson’s *Diamond Age*”

**Session 17: Young Adult Fantasy**
Chair: Audrey Taylor (Anglia Ruskin University)
- 10:00-10:30 Leimar Garcia-Siino (University of Liverpool): “Resurgence of Mythology in Young Adult Fantasy”
- 10:30-11:00 Lisa Maurice (Bar-Ilan University): “From Chiron to Foaly: the Centaur in Classical Mythology and Fantasy Literature”

11:00-11:30  Coffee  
11:30-13:00  Two Parallel Sessions

**Session 18: Warhammer 40K**
Chair: Otta Wenskus
- 11:30-12:00 Alexander McAuley (McGill University): “*Divus Imperator*: The Divine Emperor in Virgil and the *Warhammer 40K* Universe”

**Session 19: Reusing Mythical Figures**
Chair: Tony Keen (Open University)
- 11:30-12:00 Elke Steinmeyer (University of KwaZulu-Natal): “The Reception of the Figure of Cassandra in Marion Zimmer Bradley’s Fantasy Novel *The Firebrand* (1987)”
- 12:00-12:30 Pascal Lemaire (Independent Scholar): “Arthur in Atlantis, a Vessel for the Myths”
- 12:30-13:00 Jessica Yates (Independent Scholar): “The Fate of Astyanax”

13:00-14:00  Lunch  
14:00-15:00  Plenary Session 3  
Chair: Tony Keen (Open University)

15:00-15:30  Coffee  
15:30-16:00  Two Parallel Sessions

**Session 20: My Little Pony**
Chair: Elizabeth Gloyn (University of Birmingham)
- 15:30-16:00 Robert Harris (University of Birmingham): “Dusty Old Books: Greek Mythology in *My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic*”
- 16:00-16:30 Jennifer Cresswell (University of Edinburgh): “The Classical World is 20% Cooler: Greco-Roman Pegasi in *My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic*”
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**Session 21: Screen and media**

*Chair: Edith Hall (King’s College London)*

**15:30-16:00**

Jarrid K. Looney (Royal Holloway, University of London): “‘There is both the god in man, which reaches for fire and stars, and that black dark streak which steals the fire to make chains’: The Dual Identity of Prometheus in Modern Media Culture”

**16:00-16:30**

Daniel Goad (Royal Holloway, University of London): “A Tale of Two Empires: Ancient Rome as a Model for Two Fantasy Empires”

**16:30**  End of conference

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### Abstracts

**Leon Crickmore (Independent Scholar): “In the Beginning”**

The Science Fiction Foundation (SFF) was established in 1970. It later became attached to the Department of Applied Philsophy at the North East London Polytechnic (NELP) of which the present speaker was then the head. The society’s journal *Foundation* dates from 1972, and its first editor was a member of staff of that department. This paper will first reflect on the origins of the SFF. It will next consider briefly the origins of the arts and the sciences in human culture. Finally, it will speculate on the likely integrative role of Science Fiction with regard to the arts and sciences and its possible function in the maturation of human subjectivity.

**Homer**

**Sarah Miles (University of Durham): “By the Great Galaxies!” Ulysses 31, Animé and Homer’s Odyssey”**

*Ulysses 31* was a twenty-six episode animated series for children which provided a fusion of space-adventure and Homer’s *Odyssey*, set in the thirty-first century but carefully interweaving characters and stories from Homer, Greek literature and mythology. Each episode followed the adventures of Ulysses and his son Telemachus (accompanied by the hapless robot Nono and Yumi from the planet Zotra) as they strove to return to Earth and Penelope. UK viewers may recognise this programme from its 1980s airing on BBC children’s television (and various repeats, e.g. on “Fox Kids” in 2004, or recent DVD releases). However, the original *animé* was a Franco-Japanese production aimed at a French-speaking market, pooling the talents of Shingo Araki, Bernard Deyries and Jean Chalopin (perhaps best known in the UK for his *Mysterious Cities of Gold* and *Inspector Gadget*). *Ulysses 31* became a highly popular export and was dubbed for UK, Japanese, US, German, Spanish, Greek and other European audiences.

The influence of this single *animé* is quite remarkable, but because of its label as a form of popular culture, children’s entertainment and animation, *Ulysses 31* has been largely ignored in work on the reception of Greek myth and particularly Homer’s *Odyssey*. This paper explores the unique intersection between ancient and modern worlds that *Ulysses 31* as a work of popular children’s animation affords us in terms of visual, live-action depictions of imagined pasts and futures. The stories, characters, art-work and overall story-arc in *Ulysses 31* show a surprisingly acute awareness of the ancient sources in episodes that are, nonetheless, as creative with Greek myths as they are knowledgeable about their workings. Additionally, the paper considers to what extent the futuristic setting provides an imaginative freedom for those working on familiar Greek models, while still bound by contemporary ideas about ancient and modern worlds.

**Frances Foster (University of Cambridge): “Land of the Dead: Homer’s Hades and Le Guin’s Dry Land”**

It is a feature of classical mythology that a hero may make a journey down to the land of the dead. Odysseus claims to have travelled to Hades to consult Teiresias about his future, and he relates an (albeit highly contradictory) account of the place.

His Hades is, for the most part, a “murky realm”, reachable by sailing west across the sea. The journey to the land of the dead forms an element of modern fantasies which sometimes contain actual or analogous journeys through death.

Ursula Le Guin’s *Earthsea* series responds to and develops the heroic images of Homer’s Hades. Initially, the dry land Ged visits in *The Farthest Shore* bears some resemblance of Odysseus’s description of Hades: it is a land which contains and normally keeps contained the spirits of the dead, stagnant and unchanging. The heroes Odysseus claims to have met are eager for news of the living, as there are no events among the dead. Ged’s journey, like Odysseus’s, takes him to the western edge of the world, a heroic physical journey through death.
However, in Le Guin’s more recent Earthsea stories, the dry land has become more complex than the heroic aspect of Odysseus’s voyage to Hades. In *The Other Wind* the dry land is no longer sealed, and the shades of the dead seem to call on the living, in a bizarre reversal of the nekumantic rites by which Odysseus summons the dead at the edge of Hades. Yet, unlike Odysseus’s Hades, the dry land is revealed as an entirely human construction, the Hardic people’s attempt to challenge mortality, but stolen from a domain outside human experience, the other wind in the “west beyond the west” where the dragons “fly the wind”. By unmaking the dry land, and allowing light to return to the place beyond, Le Guin suggests a future beyond Achilles’s despair in Hades.

**AMANDA WRIGHT (UNIVERSITY OF WESTMINSTER): “ODYSSEAN ECHOES IN THE DARK TOWER BY LOUIS MACNEICE (1946)”**

“Give me the Odyssey every time as against the Iliad.”

In 1946 Louis MacNeice wrote and produced one of the most acclaimed works for BBC Radio, *The Dark Tower*, a parable play with exciting music by Benjamin Britten, which resists easy interpretation: “I have my beliefs and they permeate *The Dark Tower*”, he wrote, “But do not ask me what Ism it illustrates or what Solution it offers.”

This paper explores how MacNeice combined both fantastic elements and classical motifs in this morally and structurally complicated post-war meditation on the competing demands of heroism, authority and duty, and temptation, free will and personal legitimacy. Exhausted by the realism and reportage of the war years, MacNeice in this play set out to explore the “fact in fantasy”, relying on the ease with which the techniques of radio effect the numerous temporal and spatial shifts required by the fantastic elements in the dramatic narrative, and also capitalising on the medium’s ability to explore characters’ motivation from within.

This anti-realist work of creative imagination is imbued with classical references, especially to Homer’s *Odyssey* (a text he would return to later in his career). The young protagonist Roland’s quest is reminiscent of Odysseus’ long journey home from the Trojan War: he is, for example, drawn back to the *Penelope* (a text he would return to later in his career). The young protagonist Roland’s quest is reminiscent of Odysseus’ journey to Hades. But there are also resonances with the “Telemachy”, the first four books of the *Odyssey* in which Odysseus’ son bravely embarks on a voyage to find news of his long-absent father. But, for Roland, *The Dark Tower* presents not so much a coming-of-age as a coming-of-death as, at first reluctant and then determined, he follows in the fatal footsteps of his brothers, father and ancestors.

**Britain**

**ELIZABETH GLOYN (UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM): “‘BY A WALL THAT FACED THE SOUTH’: CROSSING THE BORDER IN CLASSICALLY-INFLUENCED FANTASY”**

Boundaries are profoundly significant in the literature of the ancient world; fantasy also often features explicit “crossing the border” episodes where characters travel from normality into fantasy. Examples of this trope in fantasy with an ancient setting have continued to shape representations of borders through the genre’s development. This paper examines two examples from early works in the fantasy canon and traces their legacy through two modern works.

Charles Kingsley’s *The Heroes; Or, Greek Fairy Tales for My Children* (1856) retells the stories of Perseus, the Argonauts and Theseus for a mid-nineteenth century children’s audience. Borders in this work are mainly represented by geographical features which the heroes must pass in order to journey into mythical territory. Hope Mirrlees reinvents the geographical border in *Lud-in-the-Mist* (1926). She takes Kingsley’s description of the mountains that Theseus purifies before reaching Athens and of Perseus first leaping from a cliff using Mercury’s winged sandals, but withholds any knowledge of what exists on the other side of the border from the reader, creating a fantastical realm only known through the liminal area immediately before the fixed border.

By contrast to natural boundaries, the man-made Hadrian’s Wall plays a central role in Rudyard Kipling’s *Puck of Pook’s Hill* (1906). The wall serves as a barrier between the Romans on the one side and the native European tribes on the other. Whenever Parnesius, the Roman narrator, crosses the wall, norms are subverted and he enters a world already othered by Puck’s intervention. Neil Gaiman’s *Stardust* (1998) combines the two traditions, interweaving Mirrlees’ imagery with the idea of the wall as a strict dividing line between reality and faery; he thus creates a new incarnation of Kipling’s Hadrian’s Wall. The concept of the boundary inspired by the ancient world continues to shape fantasy’s representation of transitional points.

**SANDEEP PARMAR (UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL): “HOPE MIRRLEES’S LUD-IN-THE-MIST AND THE RITUAL WORLD”**

Until very recently, the literary reputation of the British modernist writer Hope Mirrlees (1887-1978) was based on her psychogeographical long poem *Paris*, published by the Hogarth Press in 1920. Less read in terms of literariness is her well-known and much lauded fantasy novel *Lud-in-the-Mist* (1926). As Mirrlees’ only foray into the genre, *Lud* stands as a curious but brilliant event in her literary career – and its ties to the scholarship of Mirrlees’s partner, the
classicist Jane Ellen Harrison, have not been fully explored. Harrison’s work on the presence and significance of ritual in Greek religion and aesthetics read alongside Mirrlees’s novel highlights the origin of Mirrlees’s imagined world within the paradigms of Orphic mysteries and the Spirit-of-the-Year festivals so central to Harrison’s thinking. The forbidden fairy fruit of Lud signals the fear of an imagined ancient society and their staunch rituals preserve “civilization” in the way that Harrison hypothesized about ancient Athens. My talk will consider the issue of influence of classics on Mirrlees’s fantasy novel. I will also perhaps incorporate other early examples of modernist fantasy writing to see if classical thought – and modernism’s fascination with the classical world and its themes – feeds the literary experimentation that culminates ultimately in hybrid and new genre formations. I intend to bring in much previously unknown detail and research into my paper – material amassed from my years of archival research at Newnham College and elsewhere – such as her own estimations of literary and social Sapphism (the fairy fruit) and her experiences in Paris during the years that Lud was written.

CARA SHELDRAKE (UNIVERSITY OF EXETER): “TIME-TRAVEL TO ROMAN BRITAIN”

In the final book of Susan Cooper’s teenage fantasy series, The Dark is Rising, Will Stanton time-travels to a Roman encampment in order to fulfil part of his mission and end the ancient battle between Light and Dark. Within the series the understanding of Latin and the study of archaeology is used to signify education and understanding and the segment in the last book aims to evoke some of the key themes of that book by talking about what it means to be connected to place.

More recently, Doctor Who has also used the motif of Roman soldiers in Britain to discuss mass control, duty and commitment (Series 5: “The Pandorica Opens”, “The Big Bang” and others) and Rory’s Roman Soldier is both a model of individuality and of selfless devotion in a volatile multiverse.

Time-travel is an important method of contrasting the present and the past; it allows the actors to revel in their differences and the audience to acknowledge both the alien and the familiar. As such Roman Britain has interesting resonances for those interested in antiquity, in social practices and in discussion of control, rebellion and notions of home.

In the forty odd years since Susan Cooper was published, the conceptions of what it meant to be a Briton in the Roman Empire have been rewritten by classical scholars but fictional contrasts between the modern and the classical have explored a different set of themes. This paper looks at some ways the Roman conquest and occupation of Britain has been used to address modern values and to promote themes in fantasy. By talking through a handful of examples of time-travel the paper will look at aspects highlighted as especially different, confusing or inspiring for the modern interloper and consider what that tell us about social conceptions of Roman Britain.

STEPHE HARROP (ROSE BRUFTORD COLLEGE OF THEATRE AND PERFORMANCE/ROYAL CENTRAL SCHOOL OF SPEECH AND DRAMA): “‘TO KEEP OUT BAD THINGS’: REPRESENTING ‘THE WALL’ IN A SONG OF ICE AND FIRE”

“The Wall” looms large in George R.R. Martin’s fantasy saga A Song of Ice and Fire (1996–), and its TV adaptation Game of Thrones (2011–), and Martin has cited a visit to Hadrian’s Wall as part of the series’ genesis:

We walked along the top of the wall just as the sun was going down. It was the fall. I stood there and looked out over the hills of Scotland and wondered what it would be like to be a Roman centurion from Italy, Greece, or even Africa, covered in furs and not knowing what would be coming out of the north at you.

In keeping with this traditional reading of the defensive function of Hadrian’s Wall, “the Wall” is initially represented as the limit of civilisation, a bulwark against inhuman terrors inhabiting the northern landscape beyond. In the same interview, Martin identified its function as being “to keep out bad things”.

But as A Song of Ice and Fire develops, so its representations of “the Wall” have become more complex and contested, the imposing frontier landmark being passed through, infiltrated or occupied, provoking dramatic shifts perspective, allegiance and identity.

The evolution of Martin’s Wall can be read as mirroring current scholarship on Hadrian’s Wall, which in recent years has increasingly explored the monument as a “frontier” site, a location of contact, hybridity and cultural exchange, rather than the impermeable barrier of popular mythology. This paper explores this convergence between Martin’s fantasy landscape and the models of Hadrian’s Wall being developed by contemporary archaeological and historical study, before assessing the literary value of the ancient monument’s “debatable” status to the writer of fantasy adventure.
Literature and Poetry

ROSAMUND E. WILLIAMS (INDEPENDENT SCHOLAR): “WAR WORSE THAN CIVIL’: ECHOES OF LUCAN’S BELLUM CIVILE IN GEORGE R.R. MARTIN’S A SONG OF ICE AND FIRE”

This paper will examine the portrayal of civil war in George R.R. Martin’s A Song of Ice and Fire series in comparison with that in Lucan’s Bellum Civile (also known as the Pharsalia).

Lucan’s poetic take upon the war between Julius Caesar and Rome (instigated by Caesar’s crossing of the Rubicon in 49 CE) is an inverted epic in which heroic glory is displaced by senseless violence between fellow Romans, and which allows little hope for the immediate future. Lucan’s work has had significant influence on later civil war narratives.

Civil war casts a long shadow in Westeros, the focal land in George R.R. Martin’s A Song of Ice and Fire series; strife fifteen years prior to the events of the first novel still has significant impact upon the characters – indeed, many of the series’ initial protagonists were participants in that conflict – and the threat of future war is present from the very beginning.

In this paper I aim to focus on the significant ways in which Lucan’s portrayal of civil war, its inception and its after-effects can enrich our reading of A Song of Ice and Fire. In particular, the paper will focus on: the corruption of power, supernatural elements at play, the importance of theatricality, and the inherent horror of a land tearing itself apart. As background to this, I will also briefly discuss the influence of Lucan upon later depictions of civil war, particularly Renaissance treatments of the War of the Roses (a conflict considered to be of great influence on Martin’s series).

MARIANO MARTÍN RODRÍGUEZ (BABES-BOLYAI UNIVERSITY, CLUJ-NAPOCA, ROMANIA): “FROM CICERO’S SOMNIUM SCIPIONIS TO STAPLETON’S STAR MAKER: THE VISIONARY COSMIC VOYAGE AS A GENRE”

Due perhaps to its genre, the literary appraisal of Stapleton’s Star Maker has long been clearly insufficient. This particular literary work is usually perceived as a novel or even an epic poem, the narrative and poematic qualities of which may seem not good enough. However, this is clearly misleading, as it does not present the essential formal features of either genre. Star Maker is in fact a modern example of a different, ancient genre, i.e. the visionary cosmic voyage. In this kind of a literature of a rather descriptive nature, the author usually tells of his/her dream or vision of the universe, depicted according to the scientific knowledge of the time, in order to convey a philosophical and/or astronomical cosmic view. This genre has its origin in the Cicero’s influential Somnium Scipionis. After its allegorical and religious/supernatural imitations throughout the Middle Ages and later on, Kepler’s Somnium adopted a secular protoscience-fictional approach to the genre, the same that Stapleton subsequently embraced. Between the two visionary cosmic voyagers stand several canonical writers who have followed the Ciceronian taproot text to create impressive visions of the universe, and so did Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (Primero sueño), Jean Paul (Traum über das All), and one of the founders of science fiction, Camille Flammarion (Lumen). Star Maker falls within this tradition, having brought it to its culmination in both ambition and scope, while remaining faithful to Cicero’s and to his best followers’ pattern as to the literary exploitation of the sublime. Cicero’s Scipio’s Dream is, thus, to be considered one of the two main ancient forerunners of science fiction, due to its status as founder of the visionary cosmic voyage, and of the science-fictional sublime, while Lucian’s True Story created both the satirical imaginary voyage and the science-fictional grotesque.

MELANIE BOST-FIEVET (EPHE, PARIS): “THE LADY IN THE TREE: A BRIDGE BETWEEN WORLDS, FROM LATIN POETRY TO HOLDSTOCK AND BURNETT SWANN”

The wood-nymphs or Dryads are perhaps among the best-loved mythological creatures borrowed by the fantasy genre. This is hardly surprising, since these minor goddesses were the matter of local lore and legends in Antiquity. The bucolic poets, Virgil most of all, made them into the ideal listeners for the shepherds’ song, desirable and harmonious at the same time, while Ovid, by narrating their misfortunes and metamorphoses, used the stories of Daphne or the Heliads to figure the everlasting presence, in vegetal form, of the now truly immortal woman. Indeed, in the works of both C.S. Lewis and Tolkien, the tree-women are symbolic of a time long lost and sorely missed: their arousal by Aslan will mark the rebirth of Narnia, while the Entwives are sung by a melancholy Treebeard. They provide a link between the past and present, an affirmation that the stuff of legends can, in fact, be reawakened; they are at the same time eternal and immediate.

I will study how their various functions – erotic, poetic, and philosophical – are woven together in several fantasy novels, chiefly those of Robert Holdstock (Mythago Wood) and Thomas Burnett Swann (the Minotaur and Latium trilogies). My purpose is to show how their recreation of the Dryad is, in the creative process of fantasy, very much akin to that of the Latin poets, as well as their Renaissance readers, while the pattern, considerably enriched, comes to embody the distance between the real world and a fantasy realm that is both dangerous and endangered.
CLEUCI DE OLIVEIRA (INDEPENDENT SCHOLAR): “THE CRUEL HANDS OF TIME: THE HORAE, MORTALITY AND RESENTMENT IN ALICE’S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND”

Lucky for us when shy, withdrawn authors moonlight as diligent diarists. Lewis Carroll detailed the Alice origin story in his: an up-river excursion with the three Liddell sisters, their pleas for a fantastical story prompting Carroll to conjure tales of misadventure starring the middle one, Alice, in Wonderland; to W.H. Auden, a 4th of July “as memorable a day in the history of literature as it is in American history”.

Carroll re-tells this creation myth in the prefatory poem to Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland. Though a springboard to the narrative, the verse receives scant scholarly attention to date, its Classical foundation all but ignored. In my paper, I demonstrate that three characters elsewhere identified as the Liddell sisters double as the Greek Horae; more specifically, the renewed version of the Horae myth popularized by Carroll’s contemporary and professional associate, Lord Tennyson, in the 1860 poem “Tithonus”.

I show that by conflating the sisters with the Horae, Carroll establishes the framework through which major themes are negotiated: memory as haunting ruminations during mortal decline, the elastic (but never malleable) properties of time and the autobiographical, complex aggression the aged narrator feels towards youth. Finally, I show that the verse’s temporal structure reappears at the start of the tale itself instances a deliberate mirroring of the experience of time evoked in “Tithonus”; the chasm between the off-felt (and always illusory) sense of timelessness and the traumatic realization of time-passed.

Television SF

AMANDA POTTER (OPEN UNIVERSITY): “THE FANS WERE THERE FIRST: DOCTOR WHO FAN FICTION AND CLASSICAL MONSTERS”

In 2011 two episodes of Doctor Who were broadcast featuring classical monsters; “The Curse of the Black Spot” (6.3) features a Siren who appears on board a pirate ship and in “The God Complex” (6.11) a Minotaur feeds on people trapped in a 1980s style maze-like hotel. These were the first “New Who” episodes to feature classical monsters, and were not particular fan favourites. However, before these episodes were produced, fan writers had posted online fan fiction featuring the Minotaur and the Sirens; the short works “The Maiden and the Minotaur”, “Songbirds and Sirens” and “Sirens of Titan”, and the novel-length “The Lure of the Sirens”.

In this paper I will discuss the treatment of mythical monsters by fan writers compared with their treatment in the episodes. I will describe how writers and readers of fan fiction engage with classical myth through the world of Doctor Who, and with reference to fan fiction based on films and other series I will make an argument for classical crossover fan fiction as a specific sub-genre.

TORSTEN CAENERS (UNIVERSITY OF DUISBURG-ESSEN, GERMANY): “‘FRAK’ THE GODS’ – (RE-)NEGOTIATING THE CLASSICAL WORLD IN BATTLESTAR GALACTICA”

Like its own classic predecessor, the re-imagined TV series Battlestar Galactica is steeped with references to the classical world. Names like “Apollo” and “Athena” are used as callsigns for the fighter pilots in the ragtag fleet that journeys through space following the apocalyptic destruction of their homeworlds by the robotic Cylons. Humanity in the series worships the gods of classical antiquity. Ancient artefacts play a vital part in the narrative such as the Tomb of Athena or the Arrow of Apollo. Kara Thrace is a main character and her name clearly refers to the Thracians of classical myth and history. On the whole, the series’ narrative reiterates Homer’s Odyssey and Virgil’s Aeneid. Aeneas’ epic voyage in particular is clearly a foil for the series; like the Trojans after the fall, Battlestar Galactica depicts the flight and fight for survival of a people after the destruction of their home. There is even a ravishingly beautiful woman who is responsible for the fall of humanity by planting a computer virus, a Trojan, in the firewalls of the defence network mainframe. In my paper I will delineate the manner in which the series uses the classical world as a metaphorical foil to tackle questions and problem current in contemporary culture, namely (1) the relationship between polytheism, monotheism and fanaticism, (2) the practical application of democracy in a society under threat from internal and external forces, (3) the relationship of power between government and the military, and (4) the applicability of stoic philosophy. In short, I will show that the series’ narrative questions, (re-)negotiates, and (re-)figures central themes and concerns of the Western cultural archive of the classical world for a postmodern, contemporary world.

MELISSA BEATTIE (ABERYSTWYTH UNIVERSITY): “‘ALWAYS FAITHFUL TO THE SOIL’: AUTOCHTHONY, GENRE AND LANGUAGE IN CAPRICA”

The Syfy series Caprica is noteworthy for its frequent use of the Tauron language, a hybrid of Ancient (Attic-Ionic) and Modern Greek. This paper shall use textual analysis of the series and its associated paratexts (including parent series Battlestar Galactica) to examine, with examples, how the language is used in different ways. On one level, Tauron/Greek diegetically reinforces the idea of autochthony for those familiar with Athenian culture, whilst the narrative itself argues against this essentialist reading, following the theory of discursively constructed national and
cultural identities (e.g. B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 2nd ed., London: Verso, 2010). On a second level, however, the way in which the language is used in the series itself reinforces its “roots” in its resemblance to the use of Italian in Mafia-based films. The antiquity of the language also reinforces the sense of the “past” in the series, as it is a prequel to *Battlestar Galactica*; as the parent series utilised design sensibilities of the contemporary present (cf. D. Pank and J. Caro, “‘Haven’t You Heard? They Look Like Us Now!’ Realism and Metaphor in the New *Battlestar Galactica*”, in L. Geraghty, ed., *Channeling the Future: Essays on Science Fiction and Fantasy Television*, Plymouth: Scarecrow, 2009, pp. 199-216) so the daughter series utilises design sensibilities from the mid-twentieth century.


**Ancient Civilizations**

**LIZ BOURKE (TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN): “THE RECEIPTION OF MINOAN CIVILISATION IN SCIENCE FICTION”**

In the early years of the twentieth century, Arthur Evans published the first reports of his excavations of the island of Crete. There, he’d discovered evidence of an extensive Bronze Age civilisation, which he termed *Minoan* after the mythical king Minos – the king in whose labyrinth tribute youths from Athens were fed to the minotaur.

Thanks to Evans’ interpretation of the material remains, Minoan civilisation entered public consciousness as a peaceful and priestly society, with a goddess-figure central to their religion. While elements of Evans’ analysis have been challenged in the intervening years, his interpretation remains pre-eminent in public consciousness of Minoan civilisation. This paper sets out to examine the image of the Minoan in science fiction. It focuses on two particular examples, one from visual media, and one from literary science fiction. “The Broca Divide”, the fifth episode of *Stargate SG-1*’s first season, sees a community of civilised, peaceful “Minoans” living with the threat of a curse which causes individuals to become animalistic and uncivilised; while Laura E. Reeve’s *Major Ariane Kedros* novels (*Peacekeeper, Vigilante, Pathfinder*) envisage an unfathomable alien race of masked “Minoans” who enforce a tense peace on the space-faring “Hellenic” human civilisation.

Employing comparative approaches, we will investigate how Minoan civilisation is received in the sphere of science fiction, and how reception of *Minoan* civilisation is in turn coloured by a Classical tradition which has come to claim the Bronze Age Minoans as part of the narrative of western civilisation, in a way that it does not claim the Minoans’ Bronze Age neighbours in Egypt and the Levant.

**JASON LUNDOCK (KING’S COLLEGE LONDON): “ARCANE TREASURE AND SACRED RELICS: THE LOST TREASURES OF ANTIQUITY AND THEIR INFLUENCE IN FOLKTALE AND FANTASY”**

Hardly any fantasy novel, film, or *Dungeons and Dragons* game would quite feel complete without the quest for the sacred relic or the lost treasure hoard of a by-gone civilization. The mysticism and romance associated with objects which reflect a lost past and the promise of forgotten knowledge is too alluring to be ignored, and has motivated both factual and fictional treasure hunts for centuries. This paper seeks to analyze the development of this facet of the culture of the fantastic, from its roots in Late Antiquity up to the present day use of lost treasure in our various forms of storytelling. First, the fall of what we may term the Classical World in Late Antiquity will be discussed, particularly touching on the subject of hoarding and how this contributed to the development of the “Lost Treasure” concept in the western mind. Secondly, the development of the preoccupation with treasures from the Classical world and the belief that they may contain mystical properties will be traced in the development of western literature and folk tales, such as the tales of King Arthur and the Norse and Icelandic sagas, as well as the real life obsession with relics of the ancient world embodied in the pursuit of holy relics in the Medieval period and the search for Classical art in the Renaissance and Enlightenment. Finally, the paper will conclude with a review of how this theme is transmitted into modern tales of the fantastic and how our current ideas about antiquities reflects the accumulation of centuries of mythos and storytelling surrounding these venerated objects of the Ancient world.

**CHRISTOS CALLOW (UNIVERSITY OF LINCOLN): “SCIENCE ‘FICTION’? IN ANCIENT GREECE: ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY AND KNOWLEDGE IN ANCIENT GREECE AND CONTEMPORARY HYPOTHESES REGARDING THEIR ORIGINS”**

According to traditionalists like Julius Evola, humanity doesn’t get better as it ages, only older. Stories of lost advanced civilizations – most notably, Atlantis – inspire writers of alternative history and conspiracy theories alike. In the end, the question that classicists and futurologists both need to address in their research is whether the golden
age of humankind is ahead of us or far behind. In either case, the modern “utopian dogma of technology”, as Calin Mihailescu calls it, insists “that the Golden Age of the human species is ahead of us.”

But what if the modern inventions that feed mankind’s delusion of progress were mere re-discoveries of technologies long lost? Although it is impossible to know everything about ancient civilizations, evidence shows they were far more advanced than pop culture references suggest. The first Greek philosopher, Thales, famously predicted the 585 BCE eclipse of the sun. His student, Anaximander, gave us the first theory of the birth of the cosmos, and the concept of *apeiron*. Others later taught that the earth is round. Another notable case is Heron of Alexandria, who wrote on the first coin-operated machines, and the first steam engine. And there is of course the famous ancient computer from Antikythera, which Michael Edmunds has argued is “more valuable than the Mona Lisa” in terms of its historic value and scarcity.

Following from contemporary theories regarding the above evidence (such as the ancient astronauts hypothesis, as in von Daniken’s pseudoscientific *Chariots of the Gods*?), my paper looks at ancient Greek “science-fictional?” concepts, such as the golden robots mentioned by Homer, and the Minotaur, the outcome of Daedalus’ genetic engineering experiments. In short, I examine science fiction myths from and about Ancient Greece, claiming that the Greeks still contribute to our science-fictional visions and that their visions were no less advanced than our own.

**Creatures**

**OTTA WENSKUS (UNIVERSITÄT INNSBRUCK): “IF HUMANS WERE CENTAURS: GALEN ON THE LIMITS OF GENETIC ENGINEERING”**

While centaurs are occasionally seen as a distinct species from the late fifth century BCE onwards, they are usually supposed to be hybrids. Whether such hybrids existed was hotly debated: the Elder Pliny was convinced he had actually seen a dead baby centaur, but Aristotle, Lucretius and Galen argued that such hybrids were biologically impossible. Galen’s argument is actually the best one: even if such a hybrid were conceived and carried to term – how would we feed it? Wouldn’t it need two stomachs? The same thought occurred to C.S. Lewis in *The Silver Chair*. Galen then takes the argument a step further and discusses, at considerable length, a question first attested in Xenophon’s *Education of Cyrus*: would it be advantageous for us to have four equine legs but human arms, hands and heads? No, he answers, and while some of his arguments are valid, others are naive, some to the point of absurdity: while it is quite true that we wouldn’t be able to climb a ship’s riggings if we were centaurs, we could still read and write, activities which, according to Galen, require a sitting position. Not only does his anthropocentrism seem to make it impossible for him to put himself in the place of a different kind of creature which would just invent a different kind of ship (propelled, say, by treadmill-operated paddle wheels), he lacks the technical imagination to envisage a simple lectern. But this, of course, is hindsight speaking. The important thing is that Galen actually distinguishes between fantastic literature and science when, in this context, he refuses to accept Pindar’s account of the generation of centaurs as non-fictional, which may seem pretty basic to us but wasn’t at the time.

**CHRISTINA POUROS (ROYAL HOLLOWAY, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON): “JIM Henson: GREEK MYTHOLOGY IN LABYRINTH AND THE STORYTELLER”**

Jim Henson’s *Labyrinth* (1986) is a fantasy film which tells the tale of a young girl, Sarah, whose baby brother is kidnapped by a goblin king and taken to the centre of a labyrinth. Sarah meets and befriends fantastical creatures and overcomes various obstacles in the labyrinth on a journey of self-discovery, and ultimately reaches the castle in the centre of the labyrinth and defeats the goblin king to save her brother and prevent him from being turned into a goblin.

Jim Henson’s *The Storyteller* (1990) is a television series which devoted four episodes to Greek Myths, including Daedalus and Icarus and Theseus and the Minotaur, which feature the stories surrounding the labyrinth, as told through the oral tradition as well as highly visual imagery.

This paper demonstrates how Jim Henson manipulates ideas from ancient Greek mythology into *Labyrinth*, not only through the challenge of solving the labyrinth itself, but by subverting subtle elements from the mythological stories of Theseus and Ariadne. Henson’s protagonist Sarah is a young girl whom the goblin king has fallen in love with, in comparison with the male hero Theseus whom princess Ariadne has fallen in love with. The goblin king thwarts Sarah’s journey through the labyrinth with obstacles, rather than helping her solve it as Ariadne does for Theseus. At the centre of the labyrinth Sarah must face the king himself in order to obtain her prize rather than fight a fearsome beast like the Minotaur. However, she is aided in her quest to reach the castle by a friendly beast called Ludo who is reminiscent of the Minotaur, with horns, great size and strength. Sarah ultimately defeats her enemy, not through the use of weapons or physical strength, but through overpowering him with the strength of her words and her character.

This paper also compares the depictions of the myths in the two episodes of *The Storyteller* that deal with Daedalus and Icarus and Theseus and the Minotaur with some of the surviving ancient literary sources in order to understand how ancient mythology has been interpreted for the modern context of television entertainment. My paper explores how Jim Henson’s fascination with the labyrinth, his visionary creativity and the talent of his production team and Creature Shop has continued the reception of Greek mythology so successfully into modern popular culture.
The Hunger Games

SARA BUGGY (UNIVERSITY OF LIMERICK): “IF WE BURN, YOU BURN WITH US’: SPARTAN INFLUENCES IN SUZANNE COLLINS’ THE HUNGER GAMES TRILOGY”

From the publication of the first novel in the series in September 2008, Suzanne Collins’ young adult dystopian trilogy The Hunger Games has become a cultural phenomenon, selling over 50 million print and digital copies in the United States alone as of July 2012 (“Scholastic Announces Updated U.S. Figures for Suzanne Collins’s Bestselling The Hunger Games Trilogy”, Scholastic, 19 July 2012, http://mediaroom.scholastic.com/press-release/scholastic-announces-updated-us-figures-suzanne-collins-hunger-games-tril). The widespread success of the novels, in conjunction with the release of the first installment of the resultant film series, has led to much comment regarding the trilogy’s Graeco-Roman influences; indeed, Collins herself cites the “Theseus and the Minotaur” myth as a significant inspiration for the series (Sheila Marie Everett, “A Conversation: Questions and Answers – Suzanne Collins”, Scholastic, http://www.scholastic.com/thehungergames/media/qanda.pdf, p. 1). Other widely noted manifestations of the trilogy’s classical influences include the proliferation of Greek and Roman names, particularly in the Capitol; Katniss’ apparent similarity to Spartacus; and the gladiatorial nature of the Hunger Games themselves, all of which support the assertion that the classical does indeed provide much inspiration for the text.

One less remarked upon element of Collins’ series, however, is the appearance of Spartan influences throughout the novels. These can be seen variously in the guise of the “career” tributes, in the relationship between the Capitol and its surrounding districts, and most significantly, in District 13. Described in Mockingjay, the final book in the series, District 13 shares numerous traits with classical Sparta, such as its emphasis on militarism and its relative lack of subjugation of women. This paper examines in detail the elements of Spartan society which are reflected in The Hunger Games series, paying particular attention to their relevance for District 13. In doing so, it aims to uncover the extent to which District 13, presented as containing utopian potential, does little to dispel the common perception that utopia possesses “too much Sparta and too little carnival” (Gregory Claey, Searching for Utopia: The History of an Idea, London: Thames and Hudson, 2011, p. 37).

AIMEE SCHOFIELD (UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER): “A GAME OF TWO HALVES: THE PAST AND THE FUTURE IN SUZANNE COLLINS’ THE HUNGER GAMES”

The Hunger Games Trilogy has proved itself popular among teenagers and adults alike. Estimates suggest that over 36.5 million print copies of the books have been sold worldwide; the recent film version of the first book, on its release, had the third highest takings for any film at its opening weekend. The Hunger Games is a dystopian view of the future, in which two children are selected yearly from each of twelve “Districts” to fight to the death in the Hunger Games (a live reality-TV show) until only one remains.

The books are full of allusions to the Classical world: the country in which the books are set is called “Panem”, and in the third book, Mockingjay, one character directly cites Juvenal Satires 10.81 and quotes his famous line of panem et circenses. Characters scattered throughout the books are given names from the classical world, including “Plutarch”, “Seneca”, and “Cato”.

The influence of the ancient world runs deeper than this. Just as in Homer and Vergil we find catalogues of ships or fighting groups, or in Herodotus we are given ethnographic lists of peoples, the “Tributes” (or the children who have been selected for the Hunger Games) are paraded before their audience – and the reader – with descriptions of their clothing and appearance, which is designed to replicate visually the characteristics of their Districts. Just like athletes in the ancient Olympics, the Tributes are forced to train under the supervision of judges (or, in the Hunger Games, the “Game Makers”).

This paper will look at classical reception in The Hunger Games in much more detail, and will show how the ancient world has had an influence on such a popular series of futuristic books.

ELEANOR O’KELL (UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS): “BEYOND ‘PANEM ET CIRCENSES’: ROMAN CULTURE AND NAMES IN SUZANNE COLLINS’ HUNGER GAMES TRILOGY”

The Hunger Games’ cornucopia-centred arena in which contestants battle to the last man for the entertainment of a TV audience, owes a great deal to the Roman games but it is only in her supporting material for teachers that Suzanne Collins acknowledges this, preferring to credit channel-hopping between war footage and reality TV.

Nonetheless, Panem is predominantly Roman, from the tesserae used to claim a food-dole, to the Capitol practice of “eating to vomit and vomiting to eat”, to the popular appeal and equipment of Finnick Odair (an unmistakable retarius), to the twenty-year (marriageless, childless) term of the Peacekeepers, to sentencing to the arena. The Roman dimension is confirmed when Plutarch Heavensbee (the former Head Gamemaker) uses and explains the phrase panem et circenses when drawing a parallel between the Capitol and Rome as civilisations that deserved to fall.

Thus, readers can use Roman culture and history to interpret Panem and be in a position to identify power-structures and loyalties, predict events and critique Katniss’ understanding of individuals and the rebellion.
In *The Hunger Games* (2008) Roman names serve two functions: (1) identifying “bad guys”: Capitol citizens (e.g. Ceasar Flickerman, Claudius Templesmith, Venia, Flavius, Octavia) and tributes from Capitol-friendly districts (e.g. Titus and Cato); (2) strengthening the suspicion that District 12’s stylists (Cinna and Portia) are acting against President Snow. In *Catching Fire* (2009) these usages are increasingly aligned with action, e.g. Romulus Thread’s loyalty is to the Capitol, Seneca Crane’s execution is for appearing to support rebellion. In *Mockingjay* (2010) there is a further purpose of blurring boundaries (e.g. Presidents Snow and Coin are Coriolanus and Alma). These usages lead the reader to question the loyalty of Greek-named Plutarch Heavensbee to the rebel cause, a position which Katniss finally reaches.

**Greek Authors**

**STEPHEN TRZASKOMA (UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE): “THE FIRST ALTERNATE HISTORY NOVEL: CHARITON’S CALLIRHOE AND HISTORY THAT NEVER HAPPENED”**

In a famous section of the ninth book of his *Ab Urbe Condita*, the Roman historian Livy (59 BCE-17 CE) is widely regarded as having produced the earliest example of counterfactual historical investigation by speculating on what would have happened if Alexander the Great had lived to engage the emerging power of Rome in the western Mediterranean. By contrast, the related phenomenon of distinctly *fictional* alternate history (or uchronia) is usually seen in scholarly and popular discourse as a distinctly modern pursuit (Gavriel Rosenfeld, *The World Hitler Never Made: Alternate History and the Memory of Nazism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, pp. 4-5) that arose relatively late in the development of the contemporary novel. We need to revise that timeline.

In the western tradition, our earliest fully extant work of ancient Greek prose fiction, Chariton’s *Callirhoe* (first century CE) is, in fact, a work of alternate history. Chariton has long been recognized as engaged in interesting ways with the Greek historiographical tradition, but scholars have been troubled by the obvious anachronisms that are inherent in the setting (e.g., the Greek general Hermocrates and the Persian king Artaxerxes II are contemporaries in the novel, but historically the former died a few years before the latter acceded to the throne). Explanations for this variance between novelistic and historical realities have generally centred on either the incompetence of the author (who had his history wrong) or his readers (who would not have recognized the unhistorical events as such).

I would propose that a better solution is to view the book as an alternate history novel, which purposely deploys as its “point of departure” the historical defeat of the Athenians by Hermocrates and the Syracusans in 413 BCE, after which very little in Chariton’s novelistic world corresponds to what really happened, or at least to history as recorded in historiographical sources. This was not incompetence, however, but one of our author’s fundamental techniques of constructing his fictional world.

**BRETT M. ROGERS (UNIVERSITY OF PUGET SOUND): “ORESTES & THE HALF-BLOOD PRINCE: ‘GHOSTS’ OF AESCHYLUS IN THE HARRY POTTER SERIES”**

This paper examines the role of Aeschylean drama in the novels *Harry Potter & The Half-Blood Prince* (HP 6, 2005) and *Harry Potter & The Deathly Hallows* (HP 7, 2007). I emphasize how J.K. Rowling draws on Aeschylean notions of tyranny in the *Oresteia* and *Prometheia* plays (*Prometheus Bound* and the fragmentary *Prometheus Unbound*).

First, I articulate the grounds upon which we identify “reception”, briefly surveying strategies, including direct quotation, allusion, and epistemological “ghosting” (cf. T. Keen, “The ‘T’ Stands for Tiberius: Models and Methodologies of Classical Reception in Science Fiction”, *Memorabilia Antonina*, 10 April 2006). I then examine the quotation of *Liberation Bearers* (466-478) in the epigraph of *HP 7* (p. xi), linking the explicit reference to blood-feud and intergenerational strife to the issues of tyranny and legitimacy that are crucial to the *HP* series. Next I link this to the critique of tyranny offered by Dumbledore in *HP 6* (pp. 510-11), which, I argue, offers a “ghosting” of both the *Prometheia* and *Oresteia* in its particular alignment of tyranny with fear and prophecy. Rowling thus re-encasts the Aeschylean plot in which the offspring lost in intergenerational strife (Orestes/Herakles/Harry) overthrows the regime of the fearful tyrant (Aegisthus/Zeus/Voldemort) who attempts to use prophecy in order to protect the integrity of his bloodstream/tyranny. I conclude by considering the implications of Rowling’s relocation of the solution to intergenerational conflict from the law courts (as in *Eumenides*, although cf. Y.L. Too, “Legal Instruction in Classical Athens”, *Education in Greek and Roman Antiquity*, Leiden, Brill, 2001, pp. 111-32) to the school (as in the Epilogue to *HP 7*).

**ROBERT CAPE (AUSTIN COLLEGE): “SILVERBERG’S SOPHOCLEAN SCIENCE FICTION IN MAN IN THE MAZE”**

Robert Silverberg has woven Greek and Roman mythology, literature, and history into a prodigious number of science fiction stories, from his first sale, “Gorgon Planet” (1954), to his recent novel, *The Last Song of Orpheus* (2010). Silverberg attributes his transformation from fast-paced producer of filler stories into serious literary writer to fully understanding the nature of drama through H.D.F. Kitto’s analyses of Greek tragedy (*Science Fiction 101*, 2001). The first novels of his literary period are often listed as *Thorns* (1967), *To Live Again* (1969), and *Dying Inside* (1972). In this paper, I argue that Silverberg makes this transition most clearly in *Man in the Maze* (serialized 1968; novel 1969), his treatment of Sophocles’ *Philoctetes*. Silverberg had already used elements of the Philoctetes theme in *Hawthorne
By reassessing the serialized version of Man in the Maze (in the magazine If) and comparing it to the novel and Hawkbell Station, I argue that Silverberg transcends the simple device of yoking together two themes that he had used for years and imbues the Philoctetes story with power, contemporary relevance, complexity, and depth. Following Kitto’s analysis of Aeschylus and Sophocles, Silverberg enhances the tensions, human and cosmic/divine, to elevate physical disability to a disease of the soul and securing the fall of Troy to ensuring the survival of humanity. Extensive passages added to the novel emphasize references to the action as a Greek tragedy resolving – and not resolving – itself in unexpected ways. Silverberg’s treatment aligns with the renewed interest in Greek tragedy in the 1960s and the fondness for interpreting ancient plays as relevant to contemporary social issues. By consciously reworking a Sophoclean theme in a Sophoclean manner, Silverberg began his most successful period as a science fiction writer.

Masters of Science Fiction

Edward James (Science Fiction Foundation): “The Ancient World in the Writings of L. Sprague de Camp (1907-2000)”

L. Sprague de Camp is probably best known today for his reworkings and continuations of Robert Howard’s Conan cycle. But he was a very prolific writer (a bibliography ending in 1982 collected 709 items) and one who ranged widely across genres. He not only wrote heroic fantasy, but wrote the first book about heroic fantasy (Literary Swordsman and Sorcerers, 1976); he wrote metafictional fantasy, like The Castle of Iron, and planetary romance, such as the Viagens series. He wrote non-fiction about various subjects also, but particularly about the ancient world. In the early 1940s he published articles on Hellenistic science for John W. Campbell’s Astounding, and later in his career he published a series of books: The Ancient Engineers (1963), Ancient Ruins and Archaeology (1964), and Great Cities of the Ancient World (1972). This paper will concentrate on his fictional involvement with the ancient world, however. It will above all reassess Lest Darkness Fall (1939), his classic rewriting of Twain’s Connecticut Yankee at King Arthur’s Court, which focusses not on Arthur, but on his much more crucial contemporary Theodoric. Time travel to the ancient world has paved the way for many other female authors of speculative fiction. This paper will examine how she exploited and re-imagined Classical sources in her effort to bring a greater level of emotional depth and sophistication to the genre.


Catherine Lucille Moore was a pioneering American writer who paved the way for many other female authors of speculative fiction. This paper will examine how she exploited and re-imagined Classical sources in her effort to bring a greater level of emotional depth and sophistication to the genre.

Moore made her writing début with “Shambleau”, a ground-breaking and highly praised story featuring a seductive but parasitic alien. The creature’s special powers and vulnerability echo those of Medusa, and it is hinted that this species may have inspired the Gorgon myth. The story also introduced Northwest Smith, one of two serial characters who defined Moore’s early work. Smith is an anti-hero, an interplanetary outlaw whose complete adventures represent a space odyssey in themselves.

“Black God’s Kiss” saw the first appearance of the beautiful but ferocious Jirel of Joiry. A warlord – or more properly, a war-lady – in medieval France, she was sword and sorcery’s first heroine. Many stories in this second series involve journeys to magical realms. In “The Dark Land”, the entity that rules a parallel world claims Jirel as his bride, evoking the myth of Hades and Persephone. However, Moore’s subversion of genre conventions also applies to her use of tradition.

Ultimately, with Henry Kuttner, Moore was to write “Quest of the Starstone”, a story that would allow these characters to meet. After this, Moore and Kuttner would not only marry, but form a creative partnership that produced a prodigious amount of science fiction and fantasy under several pseudonyms. This paper will also discuss later work published under Moore’s own name – such as “No Woman Born” and its obverse “The Code” – and her Lawrence O’Donnell pseudonym. These stories, not least “Judgment Night”, continued and refined the themes she had previously explored, especially her use of Classical sources for inspiration.

Simon W. Perris (Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand): “Roman and Byzantine in Asimov’s Foundation Trilogy”

This paper concerns the Foundation trilogy’s treatment of the Roman Empire. Specifically, I argue that (1) the Byzantine Empire is as present as the Western Roman Empire, and (2) this illuminates Asimov’s turn to history. I thus reassess the Foundation mythos, the Galactic Empire trope, and the significance of classical presences in classic sf.

Gibbon allows plenty of room for the Byzantine Empire, and the Foundation stories do likewise, especially in “The General” (“Dead Hand”, Astounding, April 1945): a strong general, Bel Riese – “Belisarius” – contends with the last strong emperor; his success in reconquering lost parts of the empire brings him into imperial disfavour. Broadly speaking, this mirrors the story of Justinian and Belisarius as told by the historian Procopius, and retold only recently by Robert Graves in Count Belisarius (1938).

Asimov acknowledged his borrowings – in “Social Science Fiction” (in D. Allen, ed., Science Fiction: The Future, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971, pp. 263-90, at pp. 278-9; originally in R. Bretnorn, ed., Modern Science Fiction, New York: Coward-McCann, 1953), for example – yet many critics ignore Byzantium and, at the same time, disregarde his use of history. I identify three causes: dismissing Rome’s decadent successor; privileging mythopoesis over historiography; and prioritising originality, as epitomised by the novel. For each, the positive exemplar is Frank Herbert’s acclaimed Dune trilogy, a planetary romance staged in the last version of the Holy Roman Empire. In response, I thus reconsider allusions to historical empires in Asimov’s trilogy, reading translatio imperii as an exercise in intertextuality and adaptation. The co-presence of Rome, Byzantium, and even Timur/Tamerlane (viz. the Mule) complicates Asimov’s model; considering this complex furthers our appreciation of Asimov’s artistry.

**The Whedonverse**

**JANICE SIEGEL (HAMPDEN-SYDNEY COLLEGE): “THE CYCLOPIC REAVERS OF JOSS WHEDON’S FIREFLY”**

In Firefly (TV, 2002) and Serenity (film, 2005), Joss Whedon introduces the Reavers, vicious marauders who strike fear into the hearts of even the most battle-hardened veterans. In the opening episode of the television series, crewman Zoe describes their atrocities with searing imagery: “If they take the ship, they’ll rape us to death, eat our flesh, and sew our skins into their clothing – and if we’re very, very lucky, they’ll do it in that order.” The mythic nature of these threats is not unlike the horror posed by many anthropophagic monsters in Greco-Roman mythology, particularly the Cyclops. The Cyclops scene in Homer’s Odyssey 9 provides a starting point for comparisons with the scenes of Reaver violence sprinkled throughout series and film. Both captains are initially driven by curiosity and greed to put their crews (bands of pirates, both) into harm’s way. The disturbing violence of the attacks on defenceless human beings is similar, as is the monsters’ disdain for human culture and values. Similar too is the urgency to survive and palpable terror of the attacked. Both captains are quick thinkers and come up with similar plans to hide in plain sight to save their crew. Roman authors’ expansion of the tale of the Cyclops offers further opportunity for comparison. The story of Achaemenides (Virgil’s Aeneid 3 and Ovid’s Metamorphoses 14) shows human enemies choosing to ally with one another in the face of this attacking anthropophagic monster. A similar scene plays out early in Serenity. But this distinction between Ourselves and the Other is obliterated when it is discovered that these Reavers, once human themselves, are mutated victims of Man’s desire “to improve humanity,” an overreaching comparable to mortal acts of hubris in classical mythology. In the end, the captain and crew of Firefly risk everything in an attempt to redress this galactic injustice by revealing the Truth to an unsuspecting universe.

**JENNIFER ANN REA (UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA): “YOU CAN’T STOP THE SIGNAL/SIGNUM: ‘UTOPIAN’ LIVING IN WHEDON’S SERENITY AND VERGIL’S AENEID”**

This paper compares the Aeneid’s Golden Age prophecy with the movie Serenity’s utopian sub-plot and offers new insight into how the threat of imperial dominance in the Aeneid continues to speak to modern audiences. Postmodernists and post-colonial scholars have asked: “What can stories – both ancient and modern – that explore how war and technology create a constructive citizen body, reveal about the possibility of humanity’s future?” T. Lewis and D. Cho (“Home is Where the Neurosis is: A Topography of the Spatial Unconscious”, Cultural Critique 64, 2006, pp. 69-91) and R. Evans (Utopia Antiqua: Readings of the Golden Age and Decline at Rome, London, 2008) have used this question to study post-war societies where imperial rule leads to a golden-age-gone-wrong scenario. The Aeneid’s theme of a Golden Age restored contrasts with the poem’s ambiguous ending, where the audience is left wondering what price the Romans will pay for their new empire and, if the death of Turnus, Aeneas’ arch-rival, was required to achieve peace. Serenity also plays with the tension between utopian living and the violent means to achieve it. Like the Aeneid, Serenity reveals what can go wrong when humans try to recreate a Golden Age existence.

Whedon’s Buffy the Vampire Slayer because both characters must confront violent and destructive characters; I extend her argument to suggest that Aeneas is also a cultural companion to Serenity’s Mal, because both characters strive to eliminate potential threats to their societies’ futures. Vergil and Whedon create a vision of the future that is both a warning and a challenge regarding societies founded through violence and bloodshed. Do Aeneas’s actions suggest he has sacrificed his ideals for the promise of future security (J.A. Rea, “Pietas and Post-Colonialism in Ursula K. Le Guin’s Lavinia”, Classical Outlook 87, 2010, pp. 127-32; L. Fratantuono, Madness Unchained: A Reading of Vergil’s Aeneid, Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007; R. Thomas, Vergil and the Augustan Reception, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001)? Whedon’s characters’ moral and ethical choice to expose a government conspiracy and Aeneas’ decision to eliminate any potential threats to Rome’s future highlight approaches to the question: are wars and heroes required to save humanity’s future?

**JULIETTE HARRISSON (NEWMAN COLLEGE): “ORACLES IN VAMPIRE FICTION: GREEK ORACLES IN ANGEL: THE SERIES AND THE SOUTHERN VAMPIRE MYSTERIES”**

Greco-Roman oracles appear with relative frequency in speculative fiction. In the Western world, the growth of Christianity resulted in most forms of prophecy outside of dreams and visions being considered irreligious. But prophecies and oracles can be very useful for storytellers ancient and modern; Greek tragedy and the Greco-Roman novels are full of prophecies as plot devices, driving the story forward. As a result, when Western speculative fiction writers need a prophecy or an oracle to use as a narrative device, they usually turn to the Greco-Roman world. In some cases, the required prophecy is contained in an ancient scroll, but in others, the audience or reader is introduced to an ancient Oracle in person.

The ancient nature of these Oracles and prophecies is often part of their power. If a prophecy was delivered yesterday, it is unlikely to be taken seriously, but the idea that the ancients had access to knowledge since lost is a strong one. However, the representation of Oracles themselves as people varies. In futuristic fiction like The Matrix, as an idea, the Oracles tend to hold on to an aura of age without overly emphasising their antiquity. The Matrix’s Oracle is middle-aged and has Latin above her door, but she also bakes cookies, wears modern clothes and lives an apparently fairly normal lifestyle.

In the two examples discussed in this paper the Oracles are quite different. Angel’s Oracles exist outside of Time, but are costumed according to a Classical aesthetic. Charlie Harris’ “Ancient Pythones” is an unusually elderly, blind vampire who is even more stuck in her own time than most of Harris’ vampires. Unlike futuristic fiction, vampire fiction is backward-looking, romanticising lead characters who are not just long-lived, but historical. This paper will explore how that backwards-looking approach affects the representation of ancient Oracles.

**Alternate Histories and Present-Day Politics**

**KATHERINE BUSE (UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE): “FRIGHTENED ANIMALS SNARLING OVER WATER RIGHTS”: NARRATING HISTORY AT THE EDGE OF NATURE/CULTURE”**

My paper considers references to ancient heritage in Morgan Llewellyn’s ecological fantasy The Elementals. The Elementals is situated in 1990s discourses about the emerging problem of climate change, and re-narrates a series of time periods from pre-history to the near future. The narrative mobilizes depictions of the classical world to criticize contemporary Western values by ideologically connecting an ancient Graeco-Roman city (historically inaccurate Minoans who are presented as worshiping Greek gods and speaking Greek) with near-future America. Both are laid waste by eco-disasters that are cast as Nature’s defence against a Western tradition of hubris, greed, and exploitation. The novel’s history privileges an alternative ancient tradition, vindicated in Llewellyn’s narration by the threat of ecological crisis: Celtic and Native American cultures, depicted as laudable for regarding the whole earth as a single living and thinking entity.

This case study illuminates how fears about the future generate anxieties about narrating the past and present. What I wish to consider here is the relationship between notions of historical “heritage” (a cultural phenomenon) and categories that are more biological, such as race, sex, and kinship. In moments of danger such as that threatened by global environmental decline, narratives of catastrophe in speculative fiction ask how we will survive, a “we” that shifts between humanity as a species (nature) and specific human societies and traditions (culture). Historical accounts are never fully objective as they must define groups and their trajectories, privileging some stories over others. Speculative fiction about the future similarly asks who will determine the shape of “things to come”. Whose stories become heritage and which are rendered irrelevant? These calls to self-preservation based on historical narratives are common in the SF of climate change. They often take on discriminatory tones, a phenomenon which reveals how history, heritage, and tradition remain uncomfortably entwined with the biological implications of ideas such as race, gender, kinship, and survival.

The Elementals sets out to describe the necessity of respect for cultural difference, which is in line with an ecological vision of balance, interconnectedness and planetary unity. However, the idea of “heritage” slips between a relation of collective narratives and practices and a relation of biological kinship. Writing at the intersections of scientific and historical accounts of “truth”, the novel seems to lose control of its liberatory eco-politics: as if against
the author’s intent, it continually calls up racist, sexist, eugenic and dehumanizing rhetoric from which the narrative cannot fully retreat.


Joseph O’Neill’s 1934 novel *Land Under England* details the adventures of a young English man Anthony Julian as he follows his Rome-obsessed father into a secret cavern beneath Hadrian’s Wall; his father’s obsession has led to the discovery of a hollow beneath the historic wall into which the Roman civilisation have retreated; as a result of its isolation from the rest of humanity the Romans have evolved telepathic mind-control techniques in order to control its subjects and exist as a society of automatons.

Although O’Neill was a close friend of W.B. Yeats and a prominent civil servant in the nascent Irish state, *Land Under England* remains relatively ignored in Irish studies. However, the novel has gained mention in works concerning the science fiction genre in which it is typically referred to as an allegory on the rise of European fascism. While it has to be acknowledged that events in Europe had a great influence on Irish society and politics in the 1930s, this paper will attempt to situate the novel within the context of the Ireland in which its author lived, worked as a civil servant and engaged in literary endeavours in his spare time. It will examine how O’Neill displaces a critique of the Irish state onto England, using the obsession of Julian’s father with Roman civilisation to critique the project of Gaelic cultural nationalism, thereby problematising the practice of seeking validation in the classical world for contemporary political ideologies. It will refer to theorists who discuss Ireland in a postcolonial context such as Terry Eagleton and Declan Kiberd, and utilise articles written by O’Neill in his role as a civil servant and letters written to O’Neill by the controversial author Francis Stuart.

**Jim Clarke (Trinity College Dublin): “Remembering Imperfectly: Julian Comstock, Dystopic Christianity and the Roman Empire”**

In Robert Charles Wilson’s 2009 post-apocalypse novel *Julian Comstock*, the eponymous hero is largely drawn from a Roman antecedent, Julian the Apostle, a short-lived Emperor who ruled Rome for a mere two years in the fourth century. Like his Roman predecessor, Comstock is revealed to be a thoughtful, progressive philosopher as well as being a young, charismatic military leader beloved of the people. Also like the historical Julian, Wilson’s fictional Julian faces the complex challenges of a society in decay with a programme of subversive liberal humanism predicated on a misremembered past, which brings both the past and future Julians into conflict with the hegemonic regressive social force of both their eras – Christianity.

Wilson’s depiction of America in the twenty-second century is an extended ecological post-apocalypse, aligning his fiction with eccritical SF such as that of Kim Stanley Robinson and Paolo Bacigalupi. However, Julian Comstock also bears strong similarities to a previous generation of SF post-nuclear apocalypses, such as Edgar Pangborn’s *Darv*, in its depiction of a dystopic anti-scientific society dominated by an authoritarian Christian hierarchy. This in turn has a lineage descending from the anti-Catholic alt-history dystopias by British writers Kingsley Amis and Keith Roberts, where a Jonbar point of the Reformation being excised from history is shown to lead to a technologically-retarded present dominated by an authoritarian and dystopic Catholicism.

Comstock’s analogy for Darwinian evolution – DNA remembering itself imperfectly – thus can be read as an analogy for Wilson’s own achievement in reimagining Julian the Apostle into a post-apocalypse future. Yet it also functions as the most recent iteration of a longstanding literary SF tradition, in which Christianity, and specifically Roman Catholicism, is misremembered as anti-science and fundamentally socially regressive.

**Philosophy and Rhetoric**

**Gary Flood (University of Central Lancashire): “Other, Auteur, Oratoria: A Rhetorical Perspective on the Thing-world”**

While a considerable body of scholarly literature exists on science fiction, the horror genre and the cultural impact of both, very little work in the field has attempted to try and understand such texts using the tools of ancient, Classical Rhetoric. Specifically, the tradition of “persuasion” and “speaking well” that began in the fifth century BCE and was already established enough to become a polemical target of Plato’s Socratic Dialogues, but which was almost immediately re-valued by Aristotle, can be shown to have many useful things to say to help us understand the impact of such works. Such an exercise could be to look at a discrete corpus of sf/horror – that of “The Thing”, starting with the original 1938 “pulp” short story by John W. Campbell through the Hawks classic (1951) and Carpenter (1982) movie adaptations toition to the disappointing 2011 prequel and the various paratexts that have come to surround this specific narrative world – and see to what extent classical Rhetoric can help understand what is going on. A key question is that of “value”; does a Rhetorical prism allow us to talk meaningfully about what is “good” or “bad” in such a corpus. This presentation will explore these ideas with close reference to Rhetoric plus acknowledgement of other perspectives on the texts, e.g. mainstream narrative theory, Bakhtin and Kristeva.
CAT WILSON (UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA): “READING SCIENCE FICTION WITH ARISTOTLE”

Aristotle’s Poetics attempts to formulate a concrete, coherent, and comprehensive set of criteria by which literary compositions may be evaluated. In the 1970s, sf criticism evinces a similar critical groping toward a “poetics” of science fiction: Lem (Fantasy and Futurology, 1970) lays out the principles for a “unified field theory” of art and then applies it to sf. Suvin (“On the Poetics of the Science Fiction Genre”, College English 34, 1972, pp. 372-82) and Todorov (The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to Literary Genre, 1973; Introduction to Poetics, 1981) attempt to codify essential elements of the genre and to identify “good” and “bad” science fiction through the presence or absence of those elements, an explicitly Aristotelian activity. Scholes (Structural Fabulation, 1975) describes the emotional effect of fiction in Aristotelian terms, while Delany (The Jewel-Hinged Jaw: Notes on the Language of Science Fiction, 1977) addresses the inability to divorce content from style. More recently, Kincaid (What It Is We Do When We Read Science Fiction, 2008) tackles the problem of science fiction from another angle.

This process can be seen as an attempt to further legitimate science fiction, or to re-invent a critical wheel better suited to a fresh and forward-looking genre. Critical works that are not explicitly Aristotelian still display Aristotelian influence, and looking back to an ancient critical model may serve science fiction well, in that it stresses the importance of the relationship between text and individual reader, and analyzes the text not for its “spectacle” (viz. advanced technology), but for the solid core components of its plot and characterization.

This paper briefly considers Keyes’ Flowers for Algernon (1959, 1966), Scalzi’s Old Man’s War (2006), and “The Best of Both Worlds” (Star Trek: The Next Generation 3.26-4.1, 1990) as Aristotelian texts. This willfully anachronistic reading challenges us to consider sf’s larger purpose, the relationship of the tragic to the fantastic, and other unrecognized critical debts.

Divine Updates – Myths of the Classical World in Popular Literature

With their focus on characters who encounter Greek gods or whose lives are at least heavily influenced by beliefs and figures (both literary and historical) primarily associated with the classical world, retellings and reinterpretations of mythological stories offer a rich repertoire of references to the old world as well as to fundamental notions of contemporary western civilization. Focusing on a range of works from so-called popular literature (i.e. works for children and young adults, fantasy, science fiction, graphic novels) published since the mid-twentieth century, the four papers of the panel will show how the narratives in question do not simply transfer some of the more typical artefacts and characters of classical mythology to a modern setting. On the surface these classic stories might seem to be updated and retold chiefly in order to secure their preservation for generations to come; however, the stories are also fundamentally marked by the underlying contemporary views and values they convey, thus mediating between the ancient and the modern.

The works in question presuppose a revival or a continuing existence of the gods of ancient times, respectively, or they at least draw palpable parallels between characters and the lives and reputations of historical personalities. By presenting a world in which events and destinies are seemingly bound to repeat themselves indefinitely, the novels in question are calling into question the (im)possibility of individuality, free will and social change. The panel will ultimately offer a critical examination of values and ideologies latent reflected and debated within these narratives by concentrating on ideologically charged concepts such as self-determination, individuality, gender roles, the nuclear family, power structures, the responsibilities of power and the preservation and strengthening of the numinous.

MERET FEHLMANN (UNIVERSITY OF ZURICH, SWITZERLAND): “BETWEEN RE-NARRATION AND VISION – IMAGES OF CLASSICAL MYTHOLOGY IN THE NOVELS OF ROBERT GRAVES AND ELIZABETH HAND”

The notion that the myths of ancient Greece reflect a conflict between an older goddess-centred religion and the male-dominated gods of Olympus has been widespread since the early twentieth century. The paper’s aim is to discuss the adaptation of this notion in three particular examples. One of the propagators of such a vision of the past was Robert Graves who was partly responsible for the changes in the approach to mythological themes in the 1950s: Mythology was no longer considered as mainly suitable for children in the form of re-narration but evolved into more complex universes in works of fantasy or science fiction.

Graves’ novel The Golden Fleece (1944) retells the adventures of the Argonauts, initially triggered by a feud between the primordial goddess and her son Zeus. According to Graves, there is a pattern underlying the relation between the goddess and her male worshippers culminating in the ritual death of the male. He considers the love story of Aphrodite and Adonis as one of the models for this pattern.

Graves’ fantasy/science fiction novel Seven Days in New Crete (1949) is set in the future after the decline of the occident. He imagines the return to a lifestyle inspired by the ancient Greeks combined with a cult of a goddess as a utopian model. For Graves, the actualization of the antique world is a positive reference and linked to the hope of a return of the great goddess.

Elizabeth Hand’s fantasy novel Waking the Moon (1995) shows a different, more pessimistic view of a return to the world of ancient Greece and its deities. The novel has strong mythological undercurrents and deals with the
ultimately failed attempt of a woman to become a goddess herself by ritually killing males following the pattern of the deathly attraction between goddess and mortal man.

**SCOTT BRAND (UNIVERSITY OF ZURICH, SWITZERLAND): “A GORDIAN KNOT – CLASSICAL ELEMENTS IN THE GRAPHIC NOVEL WATCHMEN”**

One of the best known phrases from Juvenal’s Satires is also a central motive of one of the best known comic books of our age. In *Watchmen* Alan Moore creates an alternative reality in which real life superheroes appeared during the first half of the 20th century, as they did in the comic books of our universe. But these masked vigilantes are still very human. All of them have their own distinct views on the world and moral flaws. This set-up is used by its author to discuss the fears and politics of the 1980s and to criticise the veneration of heroes. Accordingly the comic’s title refers to Juvenal’s famous line: “Quis custodiet ipsos custodes”.

Another link to the classical world is even more striking. Industrialist Adrian Veidt is generally regarded as the most intelligent man of his age. He also used to be a superhero named Ozymandias, a Greek translation of the throne name of Rameses II. He shows a great passion for Alexander the Great, but even more respect for the pharaohs of old. This interest in the classical world shows in the illustrations in the graphic novel and influences the plot strongly, with the Cold War being compared to the endless Gordian Knot, which only can be severed by a decisive and violent move. The ancient Phrygian legend therefore can be seen as the focal point of this graphic novel.

Ozymandias and his view of the classical world are also the points of greatest interest to me in this speech. The influence of the lives and reputations of Alexander and Rameses shall equally be considered in my deliberations; as will the choice of a Greek version of the pharaoh’s name, references to Bastet and other classical sources.

**PETRA SCHRACKMANN (UNIVERSITY OF ZURICH, SWITZERLAND): “WHERE’S THE GLORY IN REPEATING WHAT OTHERS HAVE DONE? MEDIATING THE ANCIENT AND THE MODERN IN RICK RIORDAN’S PERCY JACKSON & THE OLYMPIANS SERIES”**

Rick Riordan’s fantasy series *Percy Jackson & the Olympians* (2005–2009) presents a world both strange and familiar to its readers, since the gods of Greek mythology turn out to be very much alive and a vital part of the modern-day USA. This second layer of reality is hidden from mortals’ eyes, and only those who are chosen to be a part of this dual world – mainly by blood relation – can perceive the many divine beings, monsters and strange events. On first glance, one might be tempted to assume that Riordan simply employs characters, places and storylines from traditional mythology and transposes them to the twenty-first century in order to tell a rather generic adventure fantasy tale. Indeed, the young demigod Percy, who is the protagonist of the five-part series of novels, bears striking resemblance to many fantasy heroes who, after a childhood as an outsider, turn out to be the one hero chosen to save the world from impending doom.

There is, however, more to the series than a simple opposition between good (embodied by the (demi)-gods of Olympus, who fight for the preservation of Western civilization) and evil (embodied by Titan Kronos, who seeks revenge by plunging the world into chaos). Riordan does not use elements from Greek mythology randomly: obviously the series aims to acquaint young readers with the Classics by retelling many of the iconic heroes’ journeys. But Percy’s adventures are also marked by many instances where opposing standings on moral concepts such as views on modern Western civilization and family, predestination, self-determination and individuality are reflected.

The paper aims to show how the series oscillates between ancient and modern world and how the underlying concepts and the mythical elements are employed to comment on the reality of today’s youths and civilization in general.

**ALETA-AMRÉE VON HOLZEN (UNIVERSITY OF ZURICH, SWITZERLAND): “IMMORTALS VS. INDEPENDENCE: GODS AND HUMANS IN ANNE URSU’S CRONUS CHRONICLES”**

In a setting not unlike the Percy Jackson series, Anne Ursu’s *Cronus Chronicles* trilogy (2007–2009) sees 13-year-old cousins Charlotte and Zee realizing that the Greek myths are actually true and gods and monsters are only too real. In their fantastic adventure, the two eighth graders not only need to deal with Philonecron, a young half-demon/half-god with sinister plans; they also travel to the underworld, to the Mediterranean Sea and to Mount Olympus, where they face the “Big Three” of Greek mythology: Hades, Poseidon, and Zeus.

The mythic realms are complemented with various modern contributions – Hades’ underworld, for instance, is portrayed as a bureaucracy-infested business organisation. These updates, combined with the often humorous and playful language, provide a distinctly contemporary outlook on mythic stories. But since the plot structures remain unchanged, the world of the gods obviously hasn’t seen much development – with the exception that the immortals let humans think they are “just a myth”. Especially the gods’ disdainful perception of humankind – humans are a bother or mere playthings – hasn’t changed since the days when Prometheus stole the fire.

Prometheus’ creation of mankind and his defying the gods is arguably one of the most important myths for the trilogy. The Promethean flame, symbolizing knowledge in general and specifically the knowledge of the gods’
existence, is an important element in discussing the problematic relationship between gods and humans. At the heart of their confrontation lies the opposition of destiny and free will. The immortals’ firm belief in a given order of things and predestination contrasts with contemporary Western values, namely the power of choice. As the paper will argue, the engagement with such a mythical world serves to propagate human individuality as, ultimately, superior to divinity; eventually, when the human kids hold their ground against the gods and demonstrate their independence, a possible “return” of the gods is declined.

**Greeks**

**VINCENT TOMASSO (RIPON COLLEGE): “ENGAGING THE PAST IN SIMMONS’ ILIUM (2004)”**

This paper seeks to understand the relationship between the classical past and the modern present in Dan Simmons’ 2004 novel Ilium. Set in the distant future, Ilium tells the story of Thomas Hockenberry, a Classics scholar of the late twentieth century, and his observation of a Trojan War on a terraformed Mars. Nano-technology-enhanced posthumans, whose appearance and actions are very similar to the Greek gods, have resurrected the Greeks and Trojans to re-create the war. Hockenberry and his fellow scholars have also been resurrected to observe and report on the events and ensure that the war follows Homer’s poem. At the beginning of the novel, Hockenberry observes some events diverging slightly from the Iliad, and, driven by hatred of his posthuman overseers, seeks to change the narrative of Homer’s poem. He meets Helen of Troy, who persuades him to help her change the future “fate” so that she and others can prevent the destruction of the city.

If, as Scott Bukatman claims in Matters of Gravity, science fiction “compensate[s] for the loss of the human in the labyrinths of blip culture by transforming it into an arena susceptible to human control”, to modernity classical antiquity is a fixed past that cannot be controlled. Simmons’ Ilium collapses the two in order to allow his characters to inscribe the values of modernity onto the Iliad. Simmons’ audience can otherwise only passively consume classical texts, but by reading the novel they, like Hockenberry, are able to engage more directly with it. The novel thus enacts a dynamic relationship between a past that is no longer fixed and the malleable future, and thus mediates between antiquity and modernity.

**ALEXANDER T. MILLINGTON (UNIVERSITY COLLEGE LONDON): “VISIONS OF ARES”**

In the modern world, the story of the Trojan War is generally retold, whether in novels, films, or radio plays, with the gods taken out, despite key roles they play in the narrative of the Iliad. The gods are seen as an intrusive, problematic, “unbelievable” element, which a modern audience may find it hard to relate to, and which may detract from the human story.

Science fiction and fantasy represent a rare corner of modern literature in which anthropomorphic gods still frequently appear, whether as personifications of abstract nouns, as mysterious alien super-beings, as figments of collective imagination, and as direct re-imaginings of the gods of Greece, or India, or Scandinavia, sometimes presented as faded survivals of these old deities.

Versions of Ares have appeared in several prominent novels and series within these genres, including Dan Simmons’ Ilium and Olympus, Rick Riordan’s Percy Jackson & The Olympians, John C. Wright’s Chronicles of Chaos, Tom Holt’s Ye Gods!, and Fred Saberhagen’s Books of Swords. Even when the god bears the name of Roman Mars, he is consistently closely identified with the Ares of the Homeric poems.

In this paper, I will discuss the relationships between these recent re-imaginings of Ares, and portrayals of Ares in the Iliad and the Odyssey. I will examine the ways in which these novelists have received and adapted the Homeric stories about and characterisations of the god, the ways in which these reflect developments in scholarly and popular reception of the poems, and the ways in which these may differ from ancient understandings of the god’s roles and identity, deeply rooted in widespread and enduring cult. I will explore all of these issues within the wider context of ancient and modern attitudes to war, warriors, and mortality, and Ares’ roles in articulating these ideas.

**LUIS UNCETTA GÓMEZ (UNIVERSIDAD AUTÓNOMA DE MADRID): “CHRONIQUES DE L’ANTIQUITÉ GALACTIQUE: ANTIQUITY AND SPACE OPERA IN FRENCH BANDE DESSINÉE”**

This paper aims to offer an analysis of the reception and use of classical elements and narrative patterns in the comic book collection Chroniques de l’Antiquité galactique (Chronicles of Galactic Antiquity) by the French scriptwriter Valérie Mangin. This collection includes, at present, four series (Le dernier Troyen, Le fleur des dieux, La guerre des dieux and Imperator) of which the latter two are still in progress. The comic books narrate the mythical origins of a galactic Roman Empire, the Orbis, starting with the Trojan War and the return home of Odysseus and Aeneas (freely inspired by Homer’s Odyssey and Virgil’s Aeneid). It also reworks important episodes of the History of Roman Empire, such as the war between Attila, King of the Huns, and the Roman general and senator Flavius Aetius. Valérie Mangin’s works are therefore a good example of classical reception in contemporary popular culture, within the framework of Classical Tradition. The present paper will compare her work with other alternate histories of the Roman Empire, such as Robert Silverberg’s Roma Aeterna or Sophia McDougall’s Romanitas, and other rewritings of epic poems as science fiction.
MARK THORNE (WHEATON COLLEGE): “SPARTANS IN SPACE? THE ENDURING IMAGE OF THE CLASSICAL WARRIOR IN SCIENCE FICTION”

“War. War never changes.” This famous tagline from the Fallout video game series serves as a reminder that one constant of any age is the inevitability of conflict. While recent work has illuminated some of the strong influences that the classical past has had upon more traditional sf (e.g. Asimov’s Foundation series), one area that remains largely overlooked is the vast influence that the military traditions of ancient Greece and Rome have had upon fantastic depictions of the wars of the future.

Exploration of a few examples, particularly from the sub-genre of military sf, will help illustrate how science fiction frequently draws upon images of warfare from the Classical world – in particular the machine-like precision of unstoppable Roman legions or in contrast Sparta’s more independently-minded martial spirit. Glen Cook’s The Dragon Never Sleeps (1988), for example, describes giant spaceships named after actual Roman legions (e.g. Guardship IV Trajana) that help maintain an intergalactic empire. The legendary heroism of the Spartan hoplite features, however, in such works as Pournelle and Sirling’s Go Tell The Spartans (1991) – complete with a planet named Sparta ruled by a Dual Monarchy – and Andrew Keith’s “The Legacy of Leonidas” (1993) about a self-aware, cybernetic war-tank that finds itself defending a position that parallels the 300’s last stand at Thermopylae. More recently the successful HALO franchise gives the Master Chief a background story heavily based on ancient Sparta’s agoge system for training soldiers to defend the state. And finally, Orson Scott Card’s Ender’s Game consciously references both the Spartan agoge with its orbiting battle school for children and even gives the most powerful official of Earth ancient Greek names. Such use of ancient imagery works by offering “timeless” thematic building blocks that render the wars and warriors of science fiction more meaningful to today’s audience.

Epic

RALPH COVINO (UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE AT CHATTANOOGA): “‘AND THEN WHAT HAPPENED?’ – EXPANDING A UNIVERSE: FROM THE TROJAN WAR TO STAR WARS”

George Lucas created the Star Wars saga with the express intention of providing a new mythology for a generation; in that, he undoubtedly succeeded. Their cosmic conflict pitting good and evil introduced a whole new cast of characters who have since become enmeshed in our cultural tapestry – both the heroes with virtues worthy of emulation and the villains whose vices should be eschewed. In such an obvious way, then, does the saga contain echoes of the mechanism for the transmission of social and cultural nomoi to the ancient Mediterranean world employed by the Homeric epics, though the latter were by necessity of genre less melodramatic. But what to do after that, when the audience so clearly wanted more?

This paper seeks to consider the development of the Star Wars universe and overarching storyline in terms of both chronology and subjects covered. It will argue that despite the fact that the “Expanded Universe” of the comics, novels, and other associated media have been (more or less) carefully managed since the appearance of Foster’s Splinter of the Mind’s Eye, the first literary effort beyond the cinema, Star Wars’ known pattern of growth is one which can be instructive to scholars of the ancient world. The paper will consider the impact of applying the Star Wars as a model for expansion of a central base story on our understanding of the expansion of the songs and stories of Troy. In doing so, the paper will demonstrate that the realm of science fiction does not merely derive matter from the ancient world, but it can also assist us in our understanding thereof.


Frederick Turner’s Genesis (1988) tells the story of the terraforming and colonisation of Mars, and of the ensuing conflict between Earth and its interplanetary rival. Unusually for science fiction, however, the narrative is recounted in the form of an epic poem, whose ten thousand lines consciously align this futuristic epic to that of the Classical tradition of epic poetry (exemplified by Homer’s The Odyssey and The Iliad). Other Greco-Roman influences are significant: James Lovelock’s Gaia Hypothesis, with its implicit mystical element, alludes to the Greek Goddess and helps furnish the narrative with an Ecologist movement that provides an ideological opposition to the conduct of science on Earth and amongst the Martian colonists. The tradition of the bard inspired by a Muse to recount the stories of heroes is transferred into the future. Two narrative voices, a narrator located in the future of the events told of in Genesis and a narrator contemporaneous with the writing of the poem, resonate with the Stapledonian narrator in Last and First Men (1930).

This paper examines the effect of the use of the form of the epic poem to render terraforming, environmental and geopolitical conflict, considering both the resonances between this terraforming narrative and the conventions of the Classical tradition, and the transformations to this tradition in the light of the global context represented in the text. What does the form of the epic poem do for the presentation of Olympian feats of technological achievement and landscape restoration and how far is epic an appropriate form for recounting tales of terraforming and interplanetary conflict?
BEVERLEY SCOTT (UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL): “THE ARGO IN SPACE AND TIME: SCIENCE FICTION RECEPTIONS OF THE ARGONAUTIC MYTH”

For the Romans, the Argo was the first ship in existence, and was therefore a boundary-breaker. The first century CE Roman poet Valerius Flaccus depicts the Argo as the first ship, showing that the invention of navigation signals the end of primitive man, and the beginning of progress. The genre of science fiction often considers transgressive themes too, exploring technological innovation, the limits of space and time, and other worlds. Interestingly, science fiction writers have referenced the Argo or the Argonauts in their works from the early days of the genre. For example, H.G. Wells writes about both: in The Chronic Argonauts (1888), a forerunner of The Time Machine, the protagonists travel on an invention called The Chronic Argo, a vessel capable of time-travel; in The Argonauts of the Air (1895), the protagonists endeavour to achieve human flight, and are nicknamed “Argonauts”. More recently, in Robert J Sawyer’s novel Golden Fleece, the Argo is a space-going vessel, initially constructed, the crew believe, to carry a chosen few to explore the planet “Colchis”; in fact, it is a rescue ship, and the first of its kind.

It seems that the idea of the Argonauts’ pioneering efforts in antiquity appears to have endured, and these modern writers have seen the Argonautic myth as a suitable template with which to explore their own concerns about transgressive themes. How do these receptions reflect back onto Valerius Flaccus’ work? I will argue that by viewing his poem through the “lens” of science fiction, we can discover new and yet more innovative readings of this work, which highlight the transgressive themes therein.

CHARUL PATEL (LANCASTER UNIVERSITY): “THE SHAPE OF A HERO’S SOUL: A ROMAN CONCEPTION OF FATE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EPIC FANTASY FORMULA (AS SEEN IN THE CURSE OF CHALION)”

Joseph Campbell, J.R.R. Tolkien, and John Cawelti demonstrate that formula fiction, and in particular fantasy, is a dwindling down of mythological tales. As Campbell concentrates on mythology more than on modern fantasy, my research picks up on Campbell’s description of the “Call to Adventure” and suggests that the stoic maxim of ducent volentem fata no lentem trahunt (Seneca) develops into the motif of prophecy in the epic fantasy formula. “Fate leads the willing and drags the unwilling.” The hero of Virgil’s Aeneid is described as pious because he recognizes his duty in following the Gods’ commands despite his desires to follow another path.

Italiam non sponte sequor, Aeneas tells Dido. “I seek Italy not of my own free will.” This dynamic of free will and destiny make up an essential part of the modern epic fantasy and is often revealed through the motif of “prophecy”. The idea of prophecy suggests that the future is at once both open and closed, as a prophecy can only predict the rise of a protagonist who is capable of completing the required task without suggesting that he or she will be successful. This paradox is important in the development of the protagonist as a hero. The hero or “a saint is not a virtuous soul, but an empty one. He – or she – freely gives the gift of their will to their god. And in renouncing action, makes action possible” (Bujold The Curse of Chalion, p. 225). Using Caziril, the main character of Lois McMaster Bujold’s The Curse of Chalion as a case study, I argue that the epic fantasy protagonist is only able to succeed in his role as hero if he is able to effectively combine this paradox of fate and free will.

The New Wave and after

JONATHAN DAVIES (OXFORD/PRINCETON): “THE QUEST FOR THE HISTORICAL GLOGAUER: THE RECEPTION OF SCHOLARSHIP ON FIRST CENTURY JUDEA IN MOORCOCK’S BEHOLD THE MAN”

Michael Moorcock’s extraordinary novella-turned-novel Behold the Man (1966/1969) is one of the most complex and controversial time-travel stories ever written. This paper will argue for a reading which sees this work as, among other things, an academic satire, and a direct comment on the epistemological underpinnings of the discipline of history itself.

I will begin by identifying in the work indications of Moorcock’s engagement with scholarship on first-century Judaea besides simply reading the Gospels. I will then examine Moorcock’s relationship to such scholarship by drawing on the interpretative tools of narratology. Moorcock initially focuses Judaea primarily through his protagonist, Glogauer, who sets out on his journey infused with the same (perhaps naive) faith in the knowability of the “objective truth” about the past that characterises historical Jesus scholarship in particular, and he is thus a quasi-historian. However, Moorcock deploys a variety of narrative strategies from the outset to diminish Glogauer’s objective “outsider” status. It rapidly becomes clear that Glogauer is not a detached observer, but fully a part of the world he sets out to study. This tendency reaches its apogee when Glogauer assumes the role of Jesus, and the focalization shifts dramatically away from Glogauer. Now we are not observing an alien word through his eyes, but observing him integrated fully into that world. Like any historical Jesus scholar, Glogauer ends up, very literally, making his own Jesus. The “objective truth” about the past is forced to yield to Glogauer’s own preconceptions, and history itself is thus transformed. Through Glogauer, Moorcock comments on the inescapable subjectivity of historical enquiry, and the human tendency to map the alien by forcing it to conform to our own assumptions and preconceptions.
TOM GARVEY (BROOKLYN COLLEGE, CUNY): “CLASSICAL RESONANCES IN Neal Stephenson’s DIAMOND AGE”

As one might expect of a work by an author as erudite and scrupulous in his research as Neal Stephenson, The Diamond Age, or A Young Lady’s Illustrated Primer weaves seamlessly not only the classical into the futuristic, but also the Western into the Eastern in a manner simultaneously enjoyable and what Isaac Asimov would call “sociologically significant.” While the allusions to classical myths (such as those of Ariadne, Minos’ labyrinth and the Minotaur, and Odysseus and the Cyclops) are intentionally obvious, others are much more meaningfully woven into modern and futuristic analogues (most noteworthy, technological equivalents of eating lotuses). Likewise, the loss of self associated with the ecstatic revels of Bacchus finds a parallel in the orgiastic rites of the Drumpers, a group infected with a sexually transmitted computer virus. What is more, Stephenson’s basic division of the world into “phyles” hearkens back to Athenian demography in meaningful ways, as does the correlation between the infanticidal practices of the ancient Spartans on the one hand and the modern Chinese on the other. And while some buzz-words and names (like the “New Atlantis Clave”) seem to have little to do with their classical forbears, at other times we see issues as complex and recurrent as debt slavery and transformations into a trivium-styled educational system based on the Three Graces. While there is certainly plenty for the fan of “gadget” and “adventure” science fiction, the true testament to Stephenson’s skill is in his commentary on how projected technological advances will affect the lives of everyday people. As a classicist, I will focus especially on how his melding of Western culture into Eastern as the latter grew to dominate the former in the novel pays homage to the debts ancient Rome owed to Greece and the Near East.

Young Adult Fantasy

LEIMAR GARCIA-SINO (UNIVERSITY OF LIVERPOOL): “RESURGENCE OF MYTHOLOGY IN YOUNG ADULT FANTASY”

Modern Western fiction is founded on many of the principles, characteristics, structures and forms that developed during classical Greco-Roman times. Fantasy in particular has benefited greatly from mythology, fables, the epic tale, and even from prominent philosophers and thinkers of the period. While the genre has often been accused of relying too strongly on these traditional Story tropes and archetypal elements (from the noble hero, the dark villain, the implausible quest, the vanquished evil, the epic battle, the wondrous creatures and the ample use of deus ex machina), the presence and use of Classical forms in Fantasy is mostly undisputed, as is their impact on the mainstream readership. This paper will focus on the Classic period’s influence on Young Adult fantasy and explore the manner in which these novels are currently making extensive use of Greco-Roman elements. Recent years have seen a resurgence and increase of popularity in Classic mythology, from Troy (2004), the remake of Clash of the Titans (2010), its upcoming sequel, and the Immortals (2011) film, to video games like the God of War series (2005-2012). Young Adult Fantasy in particular has made extensive direct use of these ancient resources, targeting teenagers with the “young boy/girl discovers s/he’s a descendant of the gods” storyline (see Tera Lynn Child’s Oh. My. Gods, 2008, or P.J. Hoover’s The Emerald Tablet, 2008). Significant among these are Rick Riordan’s Percy Jackson and the Olympians series (2005-2009) and James A. Owen’s The Chronicles of the Imaginarium Geographica (2006-present). These last two works provide suggestive material for the study of the ways in which these YA fantasy novels interact with their young readers, expand their knowledge of myth, fable, and Classic Greco-Roman structures, contribute to fantasy literature by transforming and subverting its taproots and ultimately enrich the fantasy-myth metanarrative.

LISA MAURICE (BAR-ILAN UNIVERSITY): “FROM CHIRON TO FOALY: THE CENTAUR IN CLASSICAL MYTHOLOGY AND FANTASY LITERATURE”

The figure of the centaur is a well-known, yet ambiguous, character in classical mythology that, even in the ancient world, represented the union of human and animal in both a positive and negative light. On the one hand, there the figure of Chiron was a respected healer, prophet and astrologer, the wise educator of heroes. On the other hand, other centaurs were portrayed as savage and prone to drunkenness, whereby their beastly, uncontrollable natures emerged, most famously in the battle with the Lapiths. Clearly, these two depictions are very different, and must originally have come from separate traditions and origins.

These two different traditions associated with centaurs have both filtered through to the portrayal of centaurs in children’s fantasy literature, where they feature frequently in writers such as C.S. Lewis, J.K. Rowling, Eoin Colfer, Rick Riordan and Diana Wynne Jones. In these works, centaurs are often noble creatures, highly intelligent, loyal and with healing powers and astrological and prophetic abilities. Thus, for example, Rick Riordan’s Chiron is a wise and benevolent teacher of heroes, and Eoin Colfer’s Foaly is a technological genius. J.K. Rowling’s centaurs are also stargazing prophets, but are at the same time, savage and wild, in many ways more animal than human. This violent, bestial element also features in Ellen Jensen Abbot’s Watersmeet, but in a nuanced manner, as the centaurs are used to explore the themes of racial discrimination and prejudice.

This paper outlines the typical characteristics of Centaurs in the classical sources, and goes on to examine how these elements have been received and transformed within the genre of fantasy literature. Drawing on both book and
screen versions, it highlights how this reception both idealises and sanitises the classical figure of the centaur for modern juvenile audiences.

**Warhammer 40K**

ALEXANDER MCAULEY (McGILL UNIVERSITY): “DIVUS IMPERATOR: THE DIVINE EMPEROR IN VIRGIL AND THE WARHAMMER 40K UNIVERSE”

For a literary science fiction universe with such unmistakable imitation and re-appropriation of the Classical – specifically Roman – tradition, it is striking that Warhammer 40K novels have yet to fall under the gaze of scholarly scrutiny. My paper aims to begin the exploration of this under-appreciated view of the far future by beginning at the top of society, with the God-Emperor of mankind himself. The God-Emperor is the dystopic universe of the Forty-First Millennium depicted by the Warhammer novels acts a divine force bringing cosmic order and stability to a universe that would otherwise be ridden with chaos, and in his description, in his divinity, and the role he plays in the society and cosmology of the Imperium of Man he emerges as a character whose Augustan influence cannot be denied. To further explore this modelling, I shall compare and contrast the figure of Augustus in the Aeneid with the God-Emperor of Warhammer 40K, teasing out direct vectors of inspiration and critical points of divergence. The emperor as a figure of divine worship, and as the founder and guarantor of cosmic order within the empire, as well as the language with which both are described will form the basis of my examination. In particular, I shall discuss the *Horus Heresy* series of novels in order to track differences and similarities between the ascents of Augustus and the God-Emperor, and their respective experiences of civil war and challenges to their power.

LUKE VICTOR PITCHER (SOMERVILLE COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD): “THE PROMISE OF PROGRESS? THE PROBLEM OF THE ROMAN PAST IN WARHAMMER 40K”

Warhammer 40K is a tabletop miniature game, created in 1987. The fictional universe which this game assumes has steadily grown and developed. Since 1997, The Black Library (a division of Games Workshop) has published numerous novels and audio books set in it. As an example of a multi-media “shared universe”, to which hundreds of individuals have devoted their talents, it makes a fine subject for analysis in a conference of this nature.

Warhammer 40K focuses upon the Imperium of Man, a galaxy-spanning human empire of the Forty-First Millennium, protected by its innumerable armies, the Adeptus Astartes (Space Marines), and the patronage of its master, the God-Emperor of Mankind. This fictional universe is rife with classical intertextualities. The formal language of the Imperium is so-called “High Gothic”, which takes its vocabulary from corrupted Latin. The Ultramarines of the aforementioned Adeptus Astartes, are consciously patterned on Ancient Rome.

I argue that Warhammer 40K uses intertextualities with classical Rome to emphasize the setting’s ambivalent relationship to its own past. The Imperium of Man, though futurist, is backward-looking, obsessed by a history which it both fetishizes and fears. The Emperor of Mankind is a relic of this past; a god-like entity who is also a rotting corpse, sat immobile on the Golden Throne of Earth for the last ten thousand years. The Ultramarines, through their modelling on Romans, symbolize this ambivalence; quintessential amongst the Space Marines, they can nevertheless also be portrayed as rule-bound, nostalgic, and stagnant. The Classical world is thus used to explore some very twenty-first century tensions, where the far past can be figured as both a land of lost salvation and, potentially, a nullifying prison of inherited convention.

**Reusing Mythical Figures**


Marion Zimmer Bradley is probably one of the most famous authors in Fantasy literature and particularly well known for her novel *The Mists of Avalon* (1982). In her novel *The Firebrand* she retells the plot of Homer’s *Iliad* (and beyond) from a strong feminist point of view, by making Cassandra the protagonist of the story. As in her earlier work, she introduces several matriarchal elements into her reworking of the ancient myth: Cassandra is sent to live for some time with the Amazons and will survive the Trojan War (as in some Greek and Roman authors in Late Antiquity); the female characters bear some traits of the suppressed matriarchy – a struggle which can be found already in *The Mists of Avalon*; some of the female characters such as Hecabe and Andromache are depicted as stronger and more dominant characters than in the ancient sources.

In paper I shall investigate which changes Marion Zimmer Bradley introduced in her new interpretation of the figure of Cassandra, which elements are characteristic for her work and which may be characteristics for Fantasy literature in general. I would like to conclude with a glimpse at the novel *Kassandra* (1983) by the German author Christa Wolf, who also retells the *Iliad* for Cassandra’s point of view, but with a political agenda.
PASCAL LEMAIRE (INDEPENDENT SCHOLAR): “ARTHUR IN ATLANTIS, A VESSEL FOR THE MYTHS”

Atlantis has long been a tool for authors wishing to immerse the readers in an universe that could be recognized as familiar despite being, in fact, completely alien. The city was thus transformed into a vessel through which various messages could be sent to the public. Atlantis could also be used as a carrier between eras and myths thanks to the power of magic and Arthur C. Clarke’s Third Law.

Another myth that has been used quite often in literature is the Arthurian cycle, recycled in many guises but still recognizable underneath its new clothes as a tool for quests, adventures and chivalry: Arthur, Merlin, the Knights or Excalibur are often mentioned in science fiction.

Yet more surprising than the various usages made of those two myths are the usages of the mixed myths of both Arthur and the sunken city. Various novels, movies and television series do indeed combine the two universes to enlarge the amount of cultural references available to their authors.

Three main examples will be examined here in some details to determine if specific aspects of those myths are reused and, should that be the case, re-used in the same way. Those examples are Marion Zimmer Bradley’s Mist of Avalon cycle, one of the first times when the two myths are mixed; the Stargate SG-1 series (seasons 9 and 10), a universe where the weapons of Merlin the Atlantean can save Earth from an extra-terrestrial invaders; and Andy McDermott’s Nina Wilde series, where the true power of objects, including Excalibur, is only revealed to carriers of the Atlantean genes.

Links with other novels, including David Gibbins’ Atlantis and The Gods of Atlantis and Clive Cussler’s Atlantis Found, will also be made in order to widen the perspective opened by this study.

JESSICA YATES (INDEPENDENT SCHOLAR): “THE FATE OF ASTYANAX”

The climax of Euripides’ play The Women of Troy is the execution of the baby Astyanax, Hector’s son and Priam’s grandson and thus the future ruler of Troy, who is thrown off the city walls by the Greeks. The Latin authors Ovid, Virgil and Seneca all agree on this. However, as we move into the Middle Ages a tradition develops which allows Astyanax to survive and found a French royal dynasty. In this cross-cultural essay I show how some authors save Astyanax’s life; others accept his death but concentrate on the survival of a surrogate Astyanax, such as Ascanius, Aeneas’ son. Others, such as Tolkien, compose a whole new story where the homage to this aspect of the Fall of Troy is obvious.

Racine’s play Andromaque is a noteworthy example of Astyanax’s survival, as is the film Troy. Tolkien’s The Fall of Gondolin, the first of the Tales which became The Silmarillion, is a new story in which the young prince Eärendil is rescued by his father, who hurls the would-be assassin over the city walls instead.

Several fantasy writers, for example Marion Zimmer Bradley, Ursula Le Guin, and David Gemmell in his trilogy completed by his widow Stella, combine a modern story, an episode of TV crime drama which, I believe, pays homage to Greek drama in its climax which, as with Tolkien, reverses the fate of Astyanax.

My Little Pony

ROBERT HARRIS (UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM): “DUSTY OLD BOOKS: GREEK MYTHOLOGY IN MY LITTLE PONY: FRIENDSHIP IS MAGIC”

Over the past two years, the animated television show My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic has garnered considerable critical attention and acclaim. Frequently cited as a leading reason is the sophistication of the show’s writing, in comparison both to competing children’s programming and to earlier generations of the My Little Pony franchise. Uniquely for a show of its genre, Friendship is Magic is replete with references to classical antiquity, and is conspicuously interwoven with familiar elements drawn from Greek mythology. This paper will demonstrate and explore the specific ways that Friendship is Magic deploys these mythological elements in its construction of various characters, creatures, and storylines. In particular, close attention will be paid to the show’s reframing of the Icarus and Minotaur myths, and to its subversion of traditional modes of representation for pegasus characters on screen.

The paper will also consider the wider implications of the show’s use of mythology with regards to its primary audience of young girls (and its intended function as both an educational program and a marketing tool), and to the secondary audience of adults who have embraced Friendship is Magic with unexpected and unabashed enthusiasm.

JENNIFER CRESSWELL (UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH): “THE CLASSICAL WORLD IS 20% COOLER: GRECOC- ROMAN PEGASI IN MY LITTLE PONY: FRIENDSHIP IS MAGIC”

This paper will look at the successful fantasy cartoon series My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic and its representation of Greco-Roman aesthetics in the depiction of the Pegasus tribe in the series, in particular within the episodes “Sonic Rainboom” and “Hearth’s Warming Eve.” Whilst the show is primarily a children’s show, the creator, Lauren Faust, has been adamant on its adult elements for the parents, and the largest fan base for the show are the Bronies, men aged

26
15-30. This group has been fully embraced by the creators and artists who insert elements popular with the Brony community. The dual audience means that the inclusion of adult elements such as cinematic references is commonplace. This also shows how the artists draw on their own library of filmic references for inspiration. By using an iconological approach, combined with theory regarding the viewing of children’s television, I aim to show the origins of the Graeco-Roman imagery used within the series and the significance of its association with the Pegasus horse. This stems from two distinct sources, namely the pre-existing artistic depictions within popular culture, and the desire to present a military association with the pegasi tribe. The origins of these sources will be explored through the history of visual and cinematic representation to establish the significance and acceptance of the identification of the pegasi as Greco-Roman in a land of fantasy and cupcakes.

Screen and media

JARRID K. LOONEY (ROYAL HOLLOWAY, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON): “‘THERE IS BOTH THE GOD IN MAN, WHICH REACHES FOR FIRE AND STARS, AND THAT BLACK DARK STREAK WHICH STEALS THE FIRE TO MAKE CHAINS’: THE DUAL IDENTITY OF PROMETHEUS IN MODERN MEDIA CULTURE”

Throughout the course of this paper, I will analyse the mythical figure of Prometheus in modern media culture with a special interest being placed upon his influence and reception in science fiction and fantasy settings including, but not limited to, table-top roleplaying, novels, comic books, television, and video games. Through exploring the various incarnations of this titan, not only will I make a case for his modern relevance as a figurehead of intellectual enlightenment, as has been traditionally done, but will also highlight the dread which may be attached to his progressiveness.

This survey of the Promethean tradition will be far from comprehensive, but will instead focus on his reinterpretations in Star Trek, White Wolf Publishing’s World of Darkness’ franchise, Liquid Entertainment’s Rise of the Argonauts, Iron Lore Entertainment’s Titan Quest, DC and Marvel comics, and, of course, Mary Shelley’s gothic masterpiece Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus. In each of these reinterpretations of the classical Hellenic figure, the implied hamartia of Prometheus is his namesake – his foresight – and I plan to examine the duality of encouragement for and warning against rapid intellectual evolution in each of these pieces.

DANIEL GOAD (ROYAL HOLLOWAY, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON): “A TALE OF TWO EMPIRES: ANCIENT ROME AS A MODEL FOR TWO FANTASY EMPIRES”

In this paper I will be looking at two very different empires from different realms of Fantastica and examining how they both borrow heavily from ancient Rome. The first is the Romulan Star Empire, from the Star Trek television and film series. First appearing in the original Star Trek series in 1966, the Romulans quickly developed an antagonistic relationship with Captain Kirk and his crew. As their history began to be explored, their links to ancient Rome were shown to go much deeper than their name. From their relationship with Spock’s Vulcan race – the Trojans to the Romulans’ Romans – to their political system, the parallels are many.

The second empire is the Tevinter Imperium from the Dragon Age series of computer games. The story of Dragon Age takes its cues from fantasy such as Lord of the Rings and A Song of Ice and Fire, but much of the backstory is influenced by the real world. The continent the game takes place in, Thedas, closely resembles medieval Europe. Playing the role of the Byzantine Empire is the Tevinter Imperium. One of the first locations in the game is Ostagar, an abandoned Tevinter fortress serving as a Hadrian’s Wall to keep out the barbarian “Wilders” beyond. The game, its sequel and spin-off material reveal that the Imperium once spanned the continent, but has since lost most of its original empire. This is the first clue to the shared history of the fictional and real empires.

With both of these empires I’ll demonstrate a relationship with ancient Rome that becomes more apparent the more you learn about them. Finally I’ll be asking the question: has Rome been used because it is an easy and convenient model or is there something deeper to the association?