

focus reverts back onto humans, where the Quiché are aided by the gods to defeat their enemies from other tribes. This final part ends with the genealogy of the Quiché rulers from the first four men who were created out of corn to the thirteenth generation. The non-linear narration as well as the interpenetration of myth and history, superhuman and human activity, is essential to Mayan cosmology. For his young readers, Montejo reduces the complexity by dividing the four main titled parts again into titled subsections. Some of these, such as "The Founding of the Tribes," constitute autonomous tales which seek to explain some natural or historical phenomenon. The original manuscript is not divided into parts at all. It runs without divisions from beginning to end.

The classified glossary of Quiché words that Montejo provides helps to unravel the interlocking worlds of men and gods. However, it must be noted that this is perhaps more useful to the informed reader. To the novice it will not be immediately clear whether "Junajpu," for example, should be looked up under the category of gods, demi-gods or human world. Furthermore, it would have been helpful to children or to the adults who read the stories to them to have a pronunciation guide as well.

Montejo's young readers will no doubt adore the illustrations of Luis Garay for their boldness and their colour. Every one of his paintings in this book covers a whole page and sometimes two, as is the case of his delightful illustration of the first creation. His masterful artwork is reminiscent of the murals of the Mexican painter Diego Rivera (1886-1957) in its boldness of colour and the massiveness of figures, flora and fauna. The similarity is perhaps not surprising as Garay, like Rivera, appears to find his inspiration in pre-Columbian murals. It is probably from this source that Garay gets his prominent figures, made even more so in the way in which he downplays perspective, a technique well suited to the portrayal of the greatness of the gods of whom the stories speak.

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The Myths of Crete in Modern Garb

Daedalus and the Minotaur. Priscilla Galloway. Illus. Normand Cousineau. Annick Press, 1997 (Tales of Ancient Lands Series). 112 pp. \$27.95, \$14.95 cloth, paper. ISBN 1-55037-459-1, 1-55037-458-3.

Some of the most fascinating Greek myths are set on the island of Crete — stories of King Minos, the labyrinth, the Minotaur, Theseus and Ariadne, Daedalus and Icarus, and Queen Pasiphae. Retelling these stories for the modern reader, and especially for children, is a challenge for both authors and teachers. While the basic outlines cannot or should not be changed, the filling in of the narrative line can be variously managed.

Purists may prefer an Homeric ethos, evoking the Iliad, the Odyssey, and the Homeric Hymns. Galloway, however, takes "relevance" as her watchword, and relates the story to what children nine to twelve are likely to identify with today. The Minotaur, far from being a man-eating monster justly slain by a heroic warrior, is a helpless child suffering from birth defects. The hero Daedalus (who might easily have been given sinister and wizardly characteristics) has the qualities of a modern scientific inventor, such as Nikola Tesla. In some areas, Minoan culture itself suggests a suitably relevant approach. The high position of women in Ancient Crete allows for an empowerment of woman theme.

Galloway retells these myths in the form of short biographical novels. This focuses the interest on the characters and their interaction, especially through dialogue. A major theme is parenting, including the disparate reactions of the King and Queen to the Minotaur, and Daedalus's own aloofness to his son Icarus. Icarus feels torn between his friendship for the Minotaur and his duty to his preoccupied father.

Galloway, a teacher, contrives to tell much about Minoan civilization in the course of the story. The characters live in the palace at Knossos and descriptive snapshots of design and decoration appear throughout. She blends in ideas from other ancient cultures and periods, however, and explains her approach in the "Afterword."

Cousineau's illustrations are based on Minoan designs and add atmosphere to the book. On the other hand, illustrations with more narrative qualities might be helpful for younger readers.

On the whole, I find Galloway's approach to retelling myth appropriate for younger readers. Although some of the wonder of "long ago and far away" is lost, it is useful to make connections to the past. Even university students need to learn about the continuity of past and present; and for children whose frame of reference includes "Goosebumps," "Spice World," and "The Baby Sitters' Club," this is even more important.

Hercules, A Hero for Today

My Hero, Hercules. Priscilla Galloway. Annick, 1999. 128 pp. \$16.95 cloth. ISBN 1-55037-569-5.

Priscilla Galloway's new book in the Tales of Ancient Lands Series tells the story of the ancient Greek hero, Hercules, as seen through the eyes of a youngster named Jason. Jason's father wants his son to be a scribe, but the boy is attracted to the exploits of Hercules, and wants to be like him. Eventually (since he magically accompanies Hercules on some of his adventures), Jason understands that heroism has its down side too. He not only learns a more measured appreciation for his hero, but also he realizes that having faults does not necessarily make one less heroic.

Galloway's strategy is to make the past relevant by viewing traditional