

Acknowledgements

I do not believe it a coincidence that Pandora easily managed to set the evils free by herself, but she needed Epimetheus' help to let Hope come to the world. By means of these scenes, Hawthorne may have hinted at the fact that sometimes the lid is simply too heavy for one person and that Hope is a joint effort – you need a community of your near and dear to evoke her.

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It is an exceptional privilege and a source of great joy to see Hope roaming among us on her iridescent wings. That she is always near, this we owe to each and every member of Our Mythical Community – *gratias Vobis ago maximas!*

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The aftermath of the myth of Pandora according to Hawthorne takes us back to the Paradise of Children – this time, however, they are the children from his favourite manor. The author aptly observes that "[h]ad there been only one child at the window of Tanglewood, gazing at this wintry prospect, it would perhaps have made him sad" (111). Yet there are half a dozen of them, and they have

also a wise young adult in charge – Eustace Bright who invents several games to keep their spirits up (as you see, not without reason will this volume also start with playing). The children and Eustace's joy offer further testimony to the power of Community based on the Classics.

Those who enter the realm of myths not only behold Hope – they gain direct access to its source, at least in the stream that can be drawn from the masterpieces of ancient art and from the works inspired by Classical Antiquity in the reception process. If we look at all this closely, Pandora's curse can be also a gift – she is all-giving, indeed. The Golden Age is gone and we have to face Winter, but it brings its joys too, as the children from Tanglewood show, but on one condition – that we are not alone. The gift of Pandora is the understanding of the importance of a hopeful awaiting for Flora the Spring with our near and dear. And not passively, but like the protagonists of Hawthorne's tales – in the community that takes the best possible in the given situation, even from a snow-storm, and supports each other. We remember little cousin Primrose (also with a telling name, one indeed evoking Spring) who noticed Eustace's depression and immediately took action to cheer him up, at the same time bringing the primordial joy of storytelling to their whole group.

Eustace Bright decided to make his cousins acquainted with Greek myths as constitutive elements – together with other stories they will eventually come to know from all over the world – of the communication code that gives access to the global community of people joined by cultural experiences and the system of values developed in this process. Owing to this, we know what to expect when we hear the words "Once upon a time...", or "Long, long ago...", or "Open Sesame!" (in fact: to expect the unexpected), and we feel that we are not alone when we strive for the impossible. However, to make full use of this source, we need to maintain in ourselves a bit of "this naivety" that Cocteau sought from the viewers of his *Beauty and the Beast* – a small (sometimes a big) concession in terms of displaying childlike curiosity, trust, and faith, all necessary to enter the realm of myths and fairy tales, whether through novels, movies, television series, video games, or an old wardrobe. And through this volume, too, I do hope. There is some of the ancient wisdom in the saying repeated by the protagonists and fans of the CBS series *Beauty and the Beast* (1987–1990), founded on the story of Eros and Psyche and with many mythological references, during a Community celebration called Winterfest: "Even the greatest darkness is nothing, so long as we share the light".