Ayelet Peer, "Entry on: Greek Gods and Goddesses by John Green, Drew Silver", peer-reviewed by Lisa Maurice and Susan Deacy. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2021). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/1203. Entry version as of November 19, 2026.

John Green , Drew Silver

Greek Gods and Goddesses

United States of America (2001)

TAGS: Adonis Aphrodite Apollo Artemis Athena Atlas Cronus / Kronos Demeter Dionysus / Dionysos Hades Hephaestus Hera Hermes Io Muses Odysseus / Ulysses Ouranos / Uranus Persephone Poseidon Rhea

We are still trying to obtain permission for posting the original cover.

General information	
Title of the work	Greek Gods and Goddesses
Country of the First Edition	United States of America
Country/countries of popularity	worldwide
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2001
First Edition Details	Drew Silver, ill. John Green, *Greek Gods and Goddesses*. New York, NY: Dover publications, 2001, 48 pp.
ISBN	9780486418629 (2020 reprint)
Genre	Activity book*
Target Audience	Young adults
Author of the Entry	Ayelet Peer, Bar-Ilan University, ayelet.peer@biu.ac.il
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Creators

John Green (Illustrator)

John Green is an illustrator for Dover, and in particular for Dover colouring books. His Amazon bio states that his specialism is in realistic styles of drawing, including people, animals and places (Source here, accessed: October 31, 2018).

His works with Dover relate frequently to horses (*Big Book of Horses to Color*, *Great Racehorses*, *How to Draw Horses*, *Horses of the World Coloring Book*, *Wonderful World of Horses Coloring Book*, *Horse Anatomy Coloring Book*), as well as dogs, flowers, history and myth. His colouring books relating to the ancient world include *Adventures of Hercules*, *Women of the Bible*, *Life in Ancient Greece*, *Life in Ancient Rome*, *Life in Ancient Mexico* and *Greek Gods and Goddesses*. Many of these colouring books are accompanied by significant text sections written by another Dover author. *Greek Gods and Goddesses*, for example, has a story by Drew Silver accompanying each illustration and is almost an anthology of myth in itself. In spite of being a colouring book, these stories are not as conventionally "child friendly" in terms of being free of dark and sexual content as Blaisdell's anthology.

Bio prepared by Robin Diver, University of Birmingham, RSD253@student.bham.ac.uk

Drew Silver (Author)

No information was available at present (November 2020).

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Additional information

Summary

This is a colouring book that contains 22 images of the Greek gods and goddesses. Opposite of each image, there is an information text on the deity. The images are a full-page, black and white illustrations with the name of the god/goddess and a caption describing the scene. For example: "Kronos attacking Ouranos", or "Pan playing his syrinx by the side of the stream". The illustrations are not childlike or cute, but the gods depicted in a beautified way.

The images and their accompanying captions areas follows: Kronos attacking Ouranos; Rheia giving the baby Zeus to the nymphs Adrasta and Ida; Zeus hurling thunderbolts at the Titans; Atlas shouldering his eternal burden; Hephaistos with a resentful Athena; Hera confronting Zeus over Io, whom Zeus has transformed into a cow; Hermes slaying the many-eyed Argos; Ares; a scene from the Gigantomachy,in which Ares fights Otos and Ephialtes; Prometheus on his rock, watched by the eagle of Zeus; Athena presenting the olive tree to the people of Attica; Aphrodite grieving over the body of Adonis, Hades abducting Persephone in his chariot; Demeter: Hermes bringing Persephone from the Underworld to a waiting Demeter; Dionysos reclining with a cup of wine as his companions revel; Apollo having just slain the serpent Python; Artemis hunting a stag; The Muses, without wings, gathered on helicon or Parnassos; Pan playing his syrinx by the side of a stream; Eos crossing he sky in her chariot; Aiolos giving Odysseus the leather bag containing the unruly winds; Poseidon rising angrily and striking the sea with his trident causing a violent storm that overwhelms Odysseos's (the author's spekking) craft; Psyche gazing on the face of Cupid for the first time.

At the end of the book, there is a list of names in transliterated Greek in comparison with the Latin/Anglicized versions.

Analysis

In the introduction, the author states that "in this little book we can do no more than hint at the great literary and historical interest of Greek mythology". The introduction appears academic as well with references to ancient texts (Homer, Hesiod, Homeric Hymns, Pindar, Apollodorus and Pausanias). There is no reference to the intended audience of this book since it is not a mere adaptation of myths but a colouring book.

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Colouring books are usually envisioned as being aimed at smaller children although they have become popular by all ages. They are meant to entertain the children as well as convey a simple story. Hence, it is a bit perplexing that among the colouring pages are quite violent scenes, such as Cronos holding a sickle while behind him his father is tied up in his sleep or Prometheus' naked body (genitals concealed) chained to a rock with a splash of blood on his abdomen.

While all the deities appear like handsome/beautiful beings, Hephaestus appears the ugliest, with a long nose and a head which seems disproportioned (he looks like an overgrown dwarf). Athena who looks at him with anger appears smaller than him. Perhaps the illustrator wanted to emphasize the deformity of Hephaestus, whose appearance fits his conduct in this book.

In the accompanying text, the castration of Ouranos is mentioned as well as other violent crimes (and Dionysus orgies). Hence this colouring book is not for young children.

Furthermore, it is mentioned that Hephaistos was given permission to marry Athena and when she refused he tried to take her by force and spilt his seed. This is quite a harsh and mature myth and its inclusion in a colouring book raises questions regarding the intended audience and the use of a colouring book for the depiction of the myth.

The book cover states that this book is "a great way to introduce youngsters to Greek mythology" and that the book will appeal to "coloring book fans of all ages." However, it should be noted that there is no caveat regarding the violence depicted in the text which is not appropriate to young readers nor is the level of the text fit for children.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Adonis Aphrodite Apollo Artemis Athena Atlas Cronus / Kronos Demeter Dionysus / Dionysos Hades Hephaestus Hera Hermes Io Muses Odysseus / Ulysses Ouranos / Uranus Persephone Poseidon Rhea
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant	Death Emotions Revenge Violence

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