

OUR MYTHICAL HISTORY

Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to the Heritage of Ancient Greece and Rome

International Workshops

Faculty of "Artes Liberales"
University of Warsaw

May 19–21, 2019



ERC Consolidator Grant (681202)

Our Mythical Childhood...
The Reception of Classical Antiquity
in Children's and Young Adults' Culture
in Response to Regional
and Global Challenges



For more see: www.omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl

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May 19, 2019 (SUNDAY)

Arrivals of Participants, individual meetings and discussions

20.00 Dinner for Participants

May 20, 2019 (MONDAY)

OBTA, Faculty of "Artes Liberales" UW, Nowy Świat 69

9.45 **Opening of the Workshops** – Katarzyna Marciniak, Faculty of "Artes Liberales", University of Warsaw

10.00 **PhD-Students Session**

Moderator: Elżbieta Olechowska, Faculty of "Artes Liberales", University of Warsaw

- **Didymus T. Douanla**, Department of English ENS, University of Yaoundé 1, *The Construction of Postethnic Identities in J.M. Coetzee's Fiction*

This work entitled "Postethnic Identities in J.M. Coetzee's Fiction (*Waiting for the Barbarians, Disgrace, Age of Iron, and Diary of a Bad Year*)" attempts to study how Coetzee's characters transcend their (original) ethnic and/or diasporic identities in order to meet the exigencies of a globalised world. From a postcolonial perspective, the work argues that in Coetzee's novels, characters (re)negotiate their identities through a constructive engagement with the past and by so doing are able to forge new postethnic identities that enable them to navigate both their local and the international communities.

The work attempts to show how Coetzee through intertextuality, parody, unconventional narration, and imagery, contests and challenges mainstream modes of remembering and present his novels as archives containing alternative versions of past realities on which characters may anchor their search for self-definition. In view of this, the work operates on the contention that in Coetzee's novels, viable postethnic identities are constructed from a healthy balance between an engagement with memory and an appreciation of cross-cultural affiliations in the globalised world.

Drawing from discourses of postethnicity as well as postcolonial tenets of globalisation, orientalism, hybridity and cultural diversity/cultural difference, this work concludes that characters in Coetzee's novels are struggling to move beyond an insular understanding of their past and opt for cross-cultural affiliations in order to construct more viable and authentic identities.

- **Agnieszka Maciejewska**, Faculty of "Artes Liberales", University of Warsaw, *The Reception of Queen Cleopatra VII Philopator in Children's and Youth Culture*

Cleopatra is one of the most famous feminine historical figures. For centuries she has been an object of interest to many artists – painters, sculptors, poets, and movie makers. Movie industry has created a stereotypical image of Cleopatra which became a strong part of pop culture. The Queen's pop culture image consists of a characteristic hair style with fringe and an intense oriental make up. This image became permanent and Queen Cleopatra is usually connected with certain motifs and props. Until the end of the twentieth century her image was appealing mostly to adults. It has changed in the beginning of the twenty-first century when her figure became popular among younger generations of consumers.

In my PhD thesis I would like to analyze Cleopatra's image as perceived by the younger people. I will focus on literature and audiovisual texts, such as movies, videos, and games. In some texts, the Queen of Egypt is shown as a mother figure and in others, she is more like an authority and guide in a child's life. Audiovisual texts show a different type of image, unusual and original – Cleopatra as a mummy or a ghost. All sources I analyze in my PhD thesis show varying representations of Cleopatra's image in children's and youth culture. I also concentrate on many ways those texts incorporate themes inappropriate for children, like Cleopatra's death and how they are presented. Cleopatra does not have just one image but many different representations which leads to a conclusion that she is a very important and vivid element of our pop culture, specially to children's and youth culture.

- **Anna Mik**, Faculty of "Artes Liberales", University of Warsaw, *Signs of Exclusion. Monsters Inspired by Greek and Roman Mythology as Symbols of Rejected Minorities in Literature, Film, and TV-Series for Children and Young Adults: From Mid-20th Until Early 21st Century*

In my dissertation I discuss the subject of monstrosity as a sign of exclusion. The monsters appearing in works for young audience, inspired by characters and beasts known from classical mythology, are the starting point for interpretation of the

phenomenon of cultural monstrosity and its meaning revealed in the discussed examples. Various methodologies used in the study (teratology, animal studies, gender studies, children studies, etc.) will allow me to present a broad spectrum of monstrosity and show the problematic and fluent meaning of this term.

My goal is to determine the extent to which mythical monsters become signs of exclusion corresponding to representatives of minority groups: women, children, people with different sexual orientation, skin colour, etc. I also ask the question to what degree the excluded characters, thanks to their "monstrous" creation, emancipate and gain a voice, or remain isolated, aware of their inability to integrate into a society that cultivates "normality". I hope to prove that Greek and Roman mythology can serve as inspiration not only to create scary monsters but also to show how these creatures – misunderstood and mistreated – can represent the mythological monsters of our world.

12.30 Lunch for Participants

14.30 **Individual Research and Consultations**

18.30 Dinner for Participants

May 21, 2019 (TUESDAY)

Café "The Life Is Cool" ("Życie Jest Fajne"), Grójecka 68

ZYCIE
JEST
FAJNE

The Café "The Life Is Cool" was established in March 2016 in Warsaw, in the district Ochota, by the Foundation Ergo Sum and it employs 25 people with autism. Managing the Café, they can work and be independent. Even though they face many difficulties, they keep the faith and think in terms of community spirit, by trying to make the Café a meeting place for discussions and artistic activities. You can support this important initiative for example simply by visiting the Café. See also: <https://www.facebook.com/Klubokaw-iarniaZycieJestFajne/>.

10.00 **Elizabeth Hale**, School of Arts, University of New England, *"Alphabetical Odyssey"* – presentation of a volume in progress

10.30 **Lisa Maurice**, Department of Classical Studies, Bar-Ilan University, *"Our Mythical Education"* – presentation of a volume in progress

11.00 **Susan Deacy**, Department of Humanities, University of Roehampton, *Making Sixth-century BCE Athens All about Herakles for Autistic Children: Out of Myth – into History*

My first set of activities for use with autistic children – introduced during the 2018 *Our Mythical Childhood: The Present Meets the Past* workshops – present Hercules at a crossroads between two contrasting paths in life. My paper for *Our Mythical History* will take Hercules out of the strange landscape where he ponders his choice, rename him Herakles, and insert him into sixth-century BCE Athens.

As a time of turmoil, ferment and change, the sixth century is one with particular appeal as a source for activities for autistic children. The activities, linked with Herakles-themed events in the career of the would-be tyrant Peisistratos, will build on some of the challenges of being autistic that were explored in the 'Choice' activities including:

- What to do in times of stress,
- How to read what others do and say.

But they will also seek to create a space where autistic children can explore their autism.

The session will include some interactive activities for anyone who would like to participate.

With the participation of **dott. Edoardo Pecchini**, Faculty of "Artes Liberales", University of Warsaw.

A simultaneous translation of the panel from English into Polish will be provided.

13.00 Lunch for Participants

15.00 **Individual Research and Consultations**