Elizabeth Hale, "Entry on: Monster Fight Club: Gods and Goddesses by Anita Ganeri , David West", peer-reviewed by Elżbieta Olechowska and Lisa Maurice. Our Mythical Childhood Survey (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2019). Link: http://omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/myth-survey/item/650. Entry version as of November 11, 2026.

Anita Ganeri , David West

Monster Fight Club: Gods and Goddesses

United States of America (2012)

TAGS: Aphrodite Ares Cerberus Charon Cronus / Kronos Demeter Europa Hades Hera Olympus Orpheus Persephone Poseidon Styx Titans Trojan War Zeus





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

General information	
Title of the work	Monster Fight Club: Gods and Goddesses
Country of the First Edition	United States of America
Country/countries of popularity	United States of America, United Kingdom
Original Language	English
First Edition Date	2012
First Edition Details	Anita Ganeri and David West, *Monster Fight Club: Gods and Goddesses*. New York: The Rosen Publishing Group, 2012, 32 pp.
ISBN	978144885242-0
Official Website	rosenpublishing.com (accessed: February 6, 2019) davidwestchildrensbooks.com (accessed: February 6, 2019)
Genre	Instructional and educational works, Picture books
Target Audience	Children (6–10)
Author of the Entry	Elizabeth Hale, University of New England, ehale@une.edu.au
Peer-reviewer of the Entry	Elżbieta Olechowska, University of Warsaw, elzbieta.olechowska@gmail.com Lisa Maurice, Bar-Ilan University, lisa.maurice@biu.ac.il

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Creators



Anita Ganeri , b. 1961
(Author)

Anita Ganeri was born in Calcutta, India. Her family emigrated to the UK when she was a baby. She studied French and German and Indian Studies at Cambridge University. She worked as an editor for large publishing companies such as Walker Books and Usborne, before becoming a freelance editor and writer. She has written over 300 non-fiction titles for children which use humorous or unusual concepts to draw in young readers, such as the *Horrible Geography* series ("geography with the gritty bits left in"), and *Writing History* (exploring different types of writing in 6 historical periods) for Scholastic. She is a Fellow of the Royal Geographic Society. She lives in Ilkley, West Yorkshire, with her husband and children.

Sources:

hachette.com.au (accessed: February 6, 2019)

en.wikipedia.org (accessed: February 6, 2019)

goodreads.com(accessed: February 6, 2019)

Bio prepared by Elizabeth Hale, University of New England, ehale@une.edu.au

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David West (Illustrator)

David West studied art and graphic design at art school in Kingston-Upon-Thames and Harrow, specialising in information graphics. He is an illustrator, writer and publisher of children's books, usually non-fiction. He has created over 500 titles on topics such as mythology, dinosaurs, science and technology. His publishing company is called David West Children's Books, publishing mostly non-fiction picture books and graphic novels (*Graphic Mythical Heroes*, *Graphic Mythology*, *Illustrated Guides to Myth*, *Legends and Folklore*, and more. He lives in South London.

Sources:

Official website (accessed: February 6, 2019)

Interview at digitalartlive.com (accessed: February 6, 2019)

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Additional information

Summary

Monster Fight Club is a series of books written in collaboration by Anita Ganeri and David West. In this series, heroes, monsters, mythical beasts, legendary figures from around the world are pitted against one another, much as in a *Dungeons and Dragons* battle, or computer game. Readers are presented with some context, some facts and some figures about each pair of contestants, before they enter the ring for combat. A double-page narrative, with images of the fighting figures, sums up how the fight unfolds and which mythical figure wins.

In *Monster Fight Club: Gods and Goddesses*, only a few classical figures appear: Zeus, Hades, and Ares. The summary will therefore focus on the chapters/fights in which they feature. The entire list of gods and goddesses, however, covers a range of myths from different cultures (Norse, Aztec, Hindu, Irish, African, Native American, Egyptian): Odin vs Zeus, Hades vs Mictlantecuhtli, Durga vs The Morrigan, Anansi vs Loki, Malsum vs Set, Thor vs Ares. Each battle pits gods with similar attributes: i.e. kings (Odin vs Zeus), gods of the Dead (Hades, Mictlantecuhtli) and War (Thor vs Ares).

The introduction (pp. 4–5) asks readers to "watch in awe as gods and goddesses from myth and legend enter the ring to do battle." It explains the book's layout: profile pages, "crammed with fascinating and bloodcurdling facts about each of the contestants," statistics boxes and the main text, "a chilling account of how each fight progresses." A warning, "Blood will be spilled!" sits alongside splashes of blood.

Fight 1, between the Norse god, Odin, and the Greek god, Zeus, pairs two rulers of the gods. Profile pages highlight information about Valhalla, the future death of Odin when he meets the wolf Fenrir. Zeus's birth is discussed, and his tricky marriage with Hera. He is shown brandishing a thunderbolt (coloured lilac like his chiton). Perhaps predictably the fight ends in a draw. Zeus is immortal, and Odin can only be killed at Ragnarok.

Fight 2, between Hades, the Greek god of the underworld, and Mictlantecuhlti, the Aztec lord of the dead, emphasizes fear and terror. The division of the realms of sky, ocean and underworld is alluded to in Hades' profile, and the story of Hades and Persephone is

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also discussed. A prominent image features a black-clad Hades holding a Rottweiler-like Cerberus by a giant chain, and a painting of Charon is accompanied by a brief description of the journey to the underworld. The features of Mictlantecuhtli also explain the journey to the underworld through nine dangerous levels. Despite Mictlantecuhtli's terrifying appearance, Hades is victorious, though it seems as if Cerberus does all the work, fighting Mictlantecuhtli's demons and chasing him into a raging chasm of fire and flames. (Mictlantecuhtli, being already dead cannot be killed, merely chased away.) Stats for Hades emphasize his invisibility, his immortality, his three-headed guard dog; his weaknesses include anger and kindness.

Fight 6 features warrior gods Thor and Ares. Thor, the God of Thunder, wields his hammer, and his exploits are briefly discussed. Ares' unpopularity is discussed, and also how he fought for the Trojans against the Greeks. His "family feuds" are put down to his jealousness, and violence. He is depicted wearing armour and wielding a sword and shield. Thor wins this fight. Though Ares changes into a wild boar and gores Thor, Thor hurls a hammer at him, and hits the boar. "Resuming his human shape, Ares has no option but to return to Mount Olympus to recover from his wounds." (p. 28) Ares' strengths are listed in the Stats box as bravery, immortality and shape-shifting; his weaknesses involve violence, unreliability, and vulnerability to being "outwitted by giants, mortals, and other gods." A striking full-page image of Thor and Ares fighting in the clouds concludes this section.

Concluding pages offer readers the opportunity to create their own fights, suggesting ways to do some research, indicating some different possibilities to work with (Apollo, Athena, Cupid, Diana, Poseidon, Venus, Vulcan are the classical ones mentioned), suggesting how to write Stats Boxes, and working out ways to bring the two heroes together.

A glossary explains some words (acquitted, Asgard, barge, codex, defeating, Cyclops, gauntlets, immortal, legend, mortal, mythology, Norse, nymphs, obsidian, Olympus, omen, reputation, shape-shift, Titans, violent), providing hints for pronunciation, and an index provides a guide to different factual elements mentioned.

Analysis

As with other books in the Monster Fight Club series, this book

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performs a kind of mash-up among cultures, pitting gods from around the world against one another. The good and bad sides of the gods are not covered up, and the book encourages young readers to think comparatively across myths from different cultures by pairing the fighters thematically (i.e. gods of war fight one another, gods of the dead fight one another). Attempts at diversity are made, with figures from different myths, some goddesses as well as gods. Textual information is accompanied by images from famous sculptures or artworks featuring these gods, and the pages are presented as slightly yellowed, and splashed with blood to emphasize the thrilling violence of the fights. Images of the gods themselves are hyper-real digital images that foreground the gods' strength (most reveal bulging muscles), and highlights their totems (Cerberus, Lightning Bolts, etc). Despite the books' emphasis on violence, these books offer an interesting way to think about myth., encouraging young readers to weigh up and analyse the different types of gods and goddesses, to think about their characteristics and attributes, and to think about the function of mythic figures.

A final point: the book is highly visual. The Profile pages are presented as if in manila folders, with images held in by paper clips; the Fight pages are illustrated in a hyper-real digital art, as if the fights are photographed at low angles (thus emphasizing the godly or heroic aspects of the fighters).

Using statistics and profiles in a manner similar to Dungeons and Dragons, and related board, card, or video games, shows that the book situates itself in a particular context. The appeal of the book for young readers (perhaps mainly boys?), who may be becoming drawn to playing (violent) videogames, is clear.

Classical, Mythological, Traditional Motifs, Characters, and Concepts	Aphrodite Ares Cerberus Charon Cronus / Kronos Demeter Europa Hades Hera Olympus Orpheus Persephone Poseidon Styx Titans Trojan War Zeus
Other Motifs, Figures, and Concepts Relevant for Children and Youth	Boys Conflict Diversity Emotions Heroism Humour Learning Magic powers Resilience Survival Violence

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Culture

Addenda

The series is listed in the titles for David West Children's Books imprint, but I can find no examples of texts published under that imprint. It appears to be printed only in the United States by Rosen Publishing, an independent publisher of educational books), and its back cover bears the imprint "PowerKids Press":

rosenpublishing.com (accessed: February 6, 2019),

davidwestchildrensbooks.com (accessed: February 6, 2019).

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