

# Welcome

**Name:** Robin Diver

**PhD:** Classics

**Thesis Title:** 'Wonderful Stories for Kids': Rape and Sexual Violence in Children's Anthologies of Greek Myth

## Thesis Description:

This thesis builds on my previous work at Masters to examine children's anthologies of Greek myth from 1850 to the present and analyse authorial strategies for retelling sexual violence. Anthologies of children's Greek myths (e.g. Hawthorne, Coats) are published regularly, receive reviews stressing their importance to children's education and are sometimes taught in schools. Their creation, however, necessitates reconciliation between the sexual violence prevalent in myth and the didactic aim of children's tales.

My thesis will engage with the increasing body of research in the new field of classical receptions in children's literature, particularly the Our Mythical Childhood project. It will explore both text and illustration, drawing on sociological research concerning the establishment of power structures and feminist research on sexual violence to interrogate the meaning present in these children's texts. As well as contributing to growing discourse on classical literary reception, my thesis will have a wider relevance in that it will examine those elements challenging to the popular view of Greek myth as didactic. Anthologies of Greek myth are the first classical sexual violence many children will encounter, possibly even the first sexual violence they will read about, making them perhaps influential on general modern views about rape. My thesis raises questions about enjoyment of disturbing material, why children read books, the value of classics to them and if and how material needs to be adapted for audience.

The myths focused on in my thesis are as follows: Persephone, Europa, Daphne, Syrinx, Medusa and Io.

## Supervisors and Institution(s):

**Dr Philip Burton, University of Birmingham**

**Professor Helen Lovatt, University of Nottingham**

## Publications (please include full details with page nos. or web links):

- Book Review - 'Sheila Murnaghan and Deborah Roberts, 2018. Childhood and the Classics: Britain and America, 1850-1965'. Rosetta Journal 2019, pp.69-72. Available here: <http://www.rosetta.bham.ac.uk/issue24/Diver.pdf>.

## Scholarly / Public Engagement Activities:

### Positions Held:

- Publicity Officer at UoB PG Rosetta Journal: October 2016-October 2018.
- Secretary at UoB MAC (Modern and Contemporary Forum): October 2017- September 2019.
- Book Reviews Editor at UoB PG Rosetta Journal: October 2017- September 2019.
- PhD SHaC 1st Year Student Rep: November 2017-August 2018.
- General Editor/Manager at UoB PG Rosetta Journal: August 2018-September 2019.
- SHaC PhD Student Mentor: July 2018-present.

### Conferences Organised:

- CAHA Colloquium - Bridges Over Barriers: Interdisciplinarity in Research; 2 May 2018, University of Birmingham.
- M3C Research Festival; 24 May 2018, Maple House, Birmingham. (Research Relay Organiser).

### Conference Papers Delivered:



**University email address:** RSD253@student.bham.ac.uk

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**Twitter:** @RobinDiver22

**Other Social Media:** <https://bham.academia.edu/RobinDiver>

- Mythology and Education: History and Practice; 27 October 2017, Cambridge. Conference paper delivered - 'Educating Hades?: A death god civilised'.
- Annual Meeting of Postgraduates in Ancient History (AMPAH); 17 March 2018, London. Conference paper delivered - 'Fleeing Rape: A Children's Tale? - Adaptations of Daphne'.
- Echoes: A Symposium on Classic-Modern Relations; 11 April 2018, Birmingham. Conference paper delivered - 'Fleeing Rape: For Kids! - Or: Receptions of Daphne in Anthologies'.
- Tea with the Sphinx – Reception of Egypt's Myth, Magic and Mysticism; 28<sup>th</sup> - 30<sup>th</sup> July 2018, Birmingham. Conference paper delivered – 'Morality, Sex and the Other: A Comparison of Anthologies of Egyptian and Greek Myths for Children'.
- CAHA Colloquium - 16th May 2019, Birmingham. Conference paper delivered - 'Virgins, Bitches and 'Smart Nymphs': Receptions of Daphne's Desire to Stay Unmarried in Late Modern Children's Anthologies of Myth'.
- Midlands4Cities Research Festival: Research Relays - 23rd May 2019, Birmingham. Research Relay paper delivered - 'Virgins, Bitches and 'Smart Nymphs': Receptions of Daphne's Desire to Stay Unmarried in Late Modern Children's Anthologies of Myth'.
- Shifting Notions of Modernity: A Modern and Contemporary Symposium - 5th June 2019, Birmingham. Conference paper delivered - 'Virgins, Bitches and 'Smart Nymphs': Receptions of Daphne's Desire to Stay Unmarried in Late Modern Children's Anthologies of Myth'.
- FIEC/CA; 5th - 8th of July 2019, London. Conference paper delivered - 'Rape, Sisterhood and Deadly Love: Attempting to Centre the Female Experience in YA Novels About the Trojan War'.

#### Papers Delivered at Forums:

- Rosetta Forum, University of Birmingham; October 2017. 'Educating Hades?: A death god civilised'.
- Modern and Contemporary Forum (MAC); October 2017. 'Educating Hades?: A death god civilised'.
- Rosetta Forum, University of Birmingham, 14 November 2017. 'Midlands 3 Cities Funding: And guidelines for funding applications in general'.
- Rosetta Forum, University of Birmingham, 13 November 2018. 'Midlands 4 Cities Funding'.
- Rosetta Forum, University of Birmingham, 27 November 2018. 'Mythology: A Discussion Panel'.
- Rosetta Forum, University of Birmingham, 26 March 2019. 'Rape, Sisterhood and Deadly Love: Attempting to Centre the Female Experience in YA Novels About the Trojan War'.

#### Teaching:

- Introduction to Roman Literature Seminars: 8 hours taught, 2018.
- Introduction to Roman Literature Marking: 33 exam papers marked, 2018.
- Introduction to Roman Literature Seminars: 10 hours taught, 2019.
- Access to Birmingham (A2B): Ancient History. Summer 2019. Module to prepare incoming undergraduates from low income Birmingham schools for undergraduate essay writing.

#### Other Research Interests:

- Food studies in classics; how ancient and early Christian attitudes to food have shaped modern ones.
- Euripidean drama.
- The adaptation of female mythological and classical figures in reception.
- Women in classical Greece.
- Animal studies in classics.
- Disability studies.