

*Reception Studies: State of the Discipline and New Directions*  
Online conference

24-27 June 2021 (Northern Hemisphere)

25-28 June 2021 (Southern Hemisphere)

Conference Organiser: Anastasia Bakogianni

Hosted by Massey University, New Zealand

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Reception studies have made a significant impact on the field of literature and helped build new bridges for dialogue across historical periods and disciplines, including theatre, film, and art history. This conference invites papers that reflect upon the theories and methodologies of reception studies and our interdisciplinary connections to fields such as comparative literature, adaptation studies, cultural studies, and media studies. We seek to investigate the current state of the discipline, to debate where its boundaries might lie, and to explore what kinds of cross-disciplinary dialogue lie ahead in this exciting and fruitful nexus of scholarly endeavour.

In particular, the conference seeks to address a series of key questions. What are the central concepts that guide inquiry in reception studies and related fields? What kinds of research have they enabled, and how has this research enriched the exploration of comparative literature, national literature, theatre, and film in an age that sees itself as global? Are these concepts in need of critique, and if so, how? Why have certain disciplines like classics assumed a prominent place in reception studies? What concerns should reception, adaptation, and media studies be addressing?

The conference aims to interrogate the very processes of reception, and actively seeks to complicate the notion of a pure source text or point of origin, thus helping to dissolve hard boundaries between text, reception, tradition, and interpretive communities. Papers may engage with these questions theoretically and / or through an examination of texts. Possible topics include but are not limited to the role of the scholar or artist in the process of reception, the concept of juxtaposition, the uses of myth, the implications of orality, and the possibility of “masked” receptions where the nature of the connection between points of reference is unclear. We welcome papers that problematize the notion of a western canon and actively seek to push the geographical boundaries of reception as both a local and a global phenomenon.

## PANELS

**Day 1: 24 June 2021 (for Northern Hemisphere participants)  
25 June (for Southern Hemisphere participants)**

**Welcome by Professor Kerry Taylor**

Head of the School of Humanities, Media and Creative Communication  
Massey University, New Zealand

**Greetings and brief opening remarks**

Anastasia Bakogianni (Massey University, New Zealand) and Luis Unceta Gómez  
(Universidad Autónoma de Madrid)

### **Timings:**

New Zealand: 7:00-8:45am (morning of the 25<sup>th</sup> June)  
Spain and Italy: 9:00-10:45pm (evening of the 24<sup>th</sup> June)  
UK: 8:00-9:45 pm (evening of the 24<sup>th</sup> June)  
US East Coast: 3:00-4:45pm (afternoon of the 24<sup>th</sup> June)  
US West Coast: 12:00-1:45pm (afternoon of the 24<sup>th</sup> June)

### **Panel 1: Rethinking Classical Reception Theory and Methodology**

Chair: Konstantinos P. Nikoloutsos (Saint Joseph's University)

- *Suspended Temporalities, Female Otherness, and Classical Reception*  
Zina Giannopoulou (University of California Irvine: UC Irvine)
- *Rethinking Dialogue Models: The Case of the Phaedrus*  
Lauren Wilson (The University of Nottingham)
- *Fortuna dell'antico (and Beyond): The State of Reception Studies in Italy*  
Tiziana Ragno (Università di Foggia)

### **Break**

### **Timings:**

New Zealand: 9:00-10:30am (morning of the 25<sup>th</sup> June)  
Spain: 11:00-12:30pm (night of the 24<sup>th</sup> June)  
UK: 10:00-11:30pm (night of the 24<sup>th</sup> June)  
US East Coast: 5:00-6:30pm (early evening of the 24<sup>th</sup> June)  
US West Coast: 2:00-3:30pm (afternoon of the 24<sup>th</sup> June)

### **Panel 2: Screen Receptions**

Chair: Luis Unceta Gómez (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid)

- *Palimpsestic Idols: Classical Receptions in Silent Film Stardom*  
Michael Williams (University of Southampton)
- *Mocking the Hollywood Canon: Parodies of Celluloid Classics from Latin American Cinema's Studio Era*  
Konstantinos P. Nikoloutsos (Saint Joseph's University)

- *Masked Celluloid Classics? In Search of the Tragic Heroine Electra in Film Noir*  
Anastasia Bakogianni (Massey University, New Zealand)

## **Day 2:**

### **Friday 25 June (for both Northern and Southern Hemispheres)**

#### **Timings:**

New Zealand: 7:00-8:00pm

The Netherlands: 9:00-10:00am

The UK: 8:00-9:00am

With sincere apologies, this workshop is scheduled during the early hours of the morning for colleagues based in the US.

#### **Workshop 1: New Voices in Classical Reception**

Ronald Blankenburg, Nils Lommerde, Jarnick Maarse and Loes Wolters (Radboud University, The Netherlands).

Ronald Blankenburg will open the discussion with a brief introduction of the theories and methodologies he employs in his classroom. This will be followed by three case studies presented by his students designed to illustrate the problematic relationship between academia and fan discourse that characterises the *weak thesis* in Reception Studies teaching

## **Long Break**

**25 June 2021 (Northern Hemisphere)**

**26 June (Southern Hemisphere)**

#### **Timings:**

New Zealand: 7:15-8:45am (morning of the 26<sup>th</sup> June)

Spain: 9:15-10:45pm (night of the 25<sup>th</sup> June)

UK: 8:15-9:45pm (night of the 25<sup>th</sup> June)

US East Coast: 3:15-4:45pm (afternoon of the 25<sup>th</sup> June)

US West Coast: 12:15-1:45pm (afternoon of the 25<sup>th</sup> June)

#### **Panel 3: Popular Culture**

Chair: Anastasia Bakogianni (Massey University, New Zealand)

- *Classics on the Surface: Classical Reception as an Emergent Process*  
Luis Unceta Gómez (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid)
- *The Merging of Eastern and Western Traditions: Manga and the Power of the Classical Object*  
Amanda Potter (Open University) and Guendalina Daniela Maria Taietti (University of Liverpool)

- *Escaping ‘Hades’: Playing with Classical Reception*  
Hamish Cameron (Victoria University of Wellington)

### Break

#### Timings:

New Zealand: 9:00-10:30am (morning of the 26<sup>th</sup> June)  
Italy: 11:00-12:30pm (night of the 25<sup>th</sup> June)  
UK: 10:00-11:30pm (night of the 25<sup>th</sup> June)  
US East Coast: 5:00-6:30pm (early evening of the 25<sup>th</sup> June)  
US West Coast: 2:00-3:30pm (afternoon of the 25<sup>th</sup> June)

#### Panel 4: Performance Reception

Chair: Martina Treu (Università IULM, Milan)

- *Theatre, Politics, and Money: Karolos Koun’s Art Theatre, the Greek Dictatorship, and the Ford Foundation*  
Gonda Van Steen (King’s College, London)
- *The “Advent of the New Order”: An Oresteia in Prague (1947) and the Epistemological Limits of Archivalia*  
Alena Sarkissian (Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague)
- *Persistence of Tragedy: Antigone Today*  
Meryem Denyz (Stanford University)

#### Timings:

New Zealand: 8:00-9:30pm (evening of the 26<sup>th</sup> June)  
Italy: 10:00-11:30am (morning of the 26<sup>th</sup> June)  
UK: 9:00-10:30am (morning of the 26<sup>th</sup> June)  
With sincere apologies, this workshop is scheduled during the early hours of the morning for colleagues based in the US.

**Workshop 2:** *Greek Tragedy in a Time of Pandemic* with Declan Patrick (University of Waikato), Holly C. Luton (AUT) and Stephe Harrop (University of Hope, Liverpool) in conversation with Anastasia Bakogianni.

The three theatre practitioners, two from New Zealand (Patrick and Luton) and one from the UK (Harrop) discuss their productions of Greek tragedy during the Covid-19 pandemic and the challenges they faced and overcame. Join us for a lively conversation illustrated with images, video and three unique perspectives.

### Day 3: 26 June (Northern Hemisphere) 27 June (Southern Hemisphere)

#### Timings:

New Zealand: 7:15-8:45am (morning of the 27<sup>th</sup> June)

Spain and Egypt: 9:15-10:45pm (night of the 26<sup>th</sup> June)  
UK: 8:15-9:45pm (night of the 26<sup>th</sup> June)  
US East Coast: 3:15-4:45pm (afternoon of the 26<sup>th</sup> June)  
US West Coast: 12:15-1:45pm (afternoon of the 26<sup>th</sup> June)

**Panel 5: Modern Societal Challenges and the Classics**

Chair: Zina Giannopoulou (University of California Irvine: UC Irvine)

- *The Master's Tools?: Towards a Politics of Reception*  
Jesse Weiner (Hamilton College)
- *Ecoclassicisms: Ecocriticism and Classical Reception*  
Samuel Cooper (American University in Cairo)
- *Classical Reception in Disability Studies: Mary Duffy Imagining Alternative Futures*  
Amanda Kubic (University of Michigan-Ann Arbor)

**Timings:**

New Zealand: 9:00-10:00am (morning of the 27<sup>th</sup> June)  
Italy: 11:00-12:00pm (night of the 26<sup>th</sup> June)  
UK: 10:00-11:00pm (night of the 26<sup>th</sup> June)  
US East Coast: 5:00-6:00pm (early evening of the 26<sup>th</sup> June)  
US West Coast: 2:00-3:00pm (afternoon of the 26<sup>th</sup> June)

**Workshop 3: *Playing with Design*** with Hamish Cameron (Victoria University of Wellington)

If you've ever thought about designing a tabletop game about your research area to play in the classroom but don't know where to start, then this is the workshop for you! Classicist and game designer Hamish Cameron will give a brief introduction to some general design concepts and considerations, then you'll split into groups to brainstorm how you might start turning your idea into a game. The session will be a combination of Game Design for Academics and social hour. You probably won't design a complete game, but you might get some cool ideas that lead to a complete game later. You'll also get to chat with other folk interested in designing games for the classroom.

**Day 4: 27 June (Northern Hemisphere)  
28 June (Southern Hemisphere)**

**Timings:**

New Zealand: 7:15-8:15am (morning of the 28<sup>th</sup> June)  
Spain: 9:15-10:15pm (night of the 27<sup>th</sup> June)  
UK: 8:15-9:15pm (night of the 27<sup>th</sup> June)  
US East Coast: 3:15-4:15pm (afternoon of the 27<sup>th</sup> June)  
US West Coast: 12:15-1:15pm (afternoon of the 27<sup>th</sup> June)

**Panel 6: Education in Academia and Beyond**

Chair: Gonda Van Steen (King's College, London)

- *Social Justice-Engaged Reception Pedagogy: "Classics Beyond Whiteness" at Wake Forest*  
T. H. M. Gellar-Goad (Wake Forest University) and Caitlin Hines (University of Cincinnati)
- *Talking about Silence: How and Why to teach Classical Rape Stories*  
Caroline Bristow (University of Cambridge), Susan Deacy and Aimee Hinds (University of Roehampton)

### **Break**

#### **Timings:**

New Zealand: 8:30-9:30am (morning of the 28<sup>th</sup> June)

Spain: 10:30-11:30pm (night of the 27<sup>th</sup> June)

UK: 9:30-10:30pm (night of the 27<sup>th</sup> June)

US East Coast: 4:30-5:30pm (afternoon of the 27<sup>th</sup> June)

US West Coast: 1:30-2:30pm (afternoon of the 27<sup>th</sup> June)

#### **Panel 7: Digital Pedagogy and Public Engagement**

Chair: Jesse Weiner (Hamilton College)

- *Classical Reception Meets Pedagogy: The Creation and Uses of the Panoply Vase Animation Project's Our Mythical Childhood Animations*  
Sonya Nevin (University of Roehampton/Panoply Vase Animation Project)
- *Classical Reception Beyond the Classroom: Engaging Public Audiences with Remaking Ancient Myths*  
Emma Bridges (The Open University)

#### **Brief concluding remarks**

Anastasia Bakogianni

**Practicalities:** How to sign up for the whole conference or only for the panel(s) and/or workshop(s) you are interested in attending.

<https://masseyuni.wufoo.com/forms/mlagvqub0ndacqr/>

Registration and attendance are free. All are welcome, but there is a limited number of places.

## **ABSTRACTS**

### **Day 1**

#### **Panel 1: Rethinking Classical Reception Theory and Methodology**

*Suspended Temporalities, Female Otherness, and Classical Reception*

Zina Giannopoulou (University of California Irvine: UC Irvine)

One of the key concepts of classical reception is that of bilinear temporality whereby a target text traces its origin in a source text, and a source text is reimagined by a target text. This paper seeks to complicate this concept by exploring the notion of suspended temporality whereby various features of the target text, such as typographical oddities, semantic rifts, or metrical disturbances, create “bubbles of time” which encode an irreducible otherness of the source text. At these moments, the source text resists assimilation, insisting on its own alterity. My case study is Anne Carson’s rendition of Cassandra’s exchange with the chorus in her translation/adaptation of *Agamemnon* (*An Oresteia*, 2010), especially her use of transliteration, wordplay, and the interjection “[scream],” each in reference to a different stage of Cassandra’s grief (from initial shock to blame to resignation). In Carson, the foreigner and conquered slave Cassandra frustrates the chorus’ need for knowledge even more than her Aeschylean counterpart by rendering acute moments of her experience of sorrow semantically opaque to them and thereby reclaiming her undefeated individuality. By bringing aspects of the source text wholesale into the target text, Carson confronts the limits of translation and makes Cassandra speak in a voice that cannot be subsumed by the English idiom. Classical reception emerges as a site of resistance to linguistic dominance in the western world.

*Rethinking Dialogue Models: The Case of the Phaedrus*  
Lauren Wilson (The University of Nottingham)

In Renaissance studies of the dialogue genre, a general trend when referring to the classical origins of the genre appears to be a tripartite division of dialogues into Ciceronian, Lucianic and Platonic; it is found in Cox (1992), Snyder (1989), Smarr (2005) and others. While useful when referring to dialogues written by Cicero, Lucian and Plato, this paper will argue that such distinctions are unhelpful when considering later dialogues from a classical reception point of view because the processes of reception, imitation and emulation are more nuanced than such a schema can explain. Indeed, Seneca’s image of the bee gathering nectar from various flowers was used by Renaissance writers to describe the process of imitatio: a more organic method of composition where multiple models could be combined and adapted. The paper will then examine as a case study the afterlife of Plato’s ‘Phaedrus’: a dialogue used by Lucian in his ‘Hermetimus’ and Cicero in his ‘De Oratore’, a work inspiring Baldassare Castiglione’s enormously influential dialogue ‘Il Libro del Cortegiano’ (published 1528), which was itself, according to Buranello, parodied by Pietro Aretino in his ‘Ragionamenti’ (1534). It will explore the interconnections between the works to demonstrate that elements and themes of the ‘Phaedrus’ are not transmitted in an entirely linear way through the different works and to draw attention to the roles of other genres and influences on the later dialogues.

*Fortuna dell’antico (and Beyond): The State of Reception Studies in Italy*  
Tiziana Ragno (Università di Foggia)

Italy’s distinctive approach to its classical past and the implications for the study of Classical Reception is a subject that repays closer attention. Building on, amongst others, the work of Maurizio Bettini, in particular his seminal *A che servono i Greci e i Romani* (2017), this paper examines the current state of Classical Reception in Italy. It analyses the historical circumstances that helped forge a cultural and ideological connection between the surviving material culture, a long-established literary tradition rooted in and shaped by the classics, and

a philological-philosophical approach to the study of our source texts. Italy enjoys, moreover, a long and distinguished history of classical studies pedagogy and the subject has played a key role in the school curriculum, where courses primarily focus on the linguistic and philological analysis of ancient texts. The Italian context is therefore both conducive to the development of Reception Studies because of the country's cultural connections to the classical past and its educational system, but also unfavourable for the very same reasons. Furthermore, historical distortions, most famously the fascist appropriation of ancient Rome in the twentieth century, influenced responses to the study of antiquity and still need to be fully addressed in order to reclaim the classical past for the new generations of Italian students.

Beginning with an analysis of several key metaphors traditionally used to express the concept of Classical Reception, this paper illustrates the Italian perspective, in light of the long history of Classical Studies as both a school and an academic subject. My discussion references key older approaches that have helped mould the Italian position on Reception Studies (for example, Humanism and Fascism), but also touches on the importance of current academic debates in this flourishing area. In the search for a fresh perspective on Classical Reception within the Italian context, new metaphors can help us locate it within a wider European framework, but also put it in dialogue with current global public and academic debates.

## **Break**

### **Panel 2: Screen Receptions**

*Palimpsestic Idols: Classical Receptions in Silent Film Stardom*  
Michael Williams (University of Southampton)

From its emergence in the early 1910s, film stardom in Hollywood and Europe has been influenced by the myth and art of the ancient past. Prominent in this, if we were to undertake an archaeological excavation of the new idols of the cinema, would be classical sculptural representations of divine and human ideals. To look upon the discourse of screen stardom, even today, I argue, is to apprehend a palimpsestic history of cultural reception. This runs back through different iterations of screen stars – often film ‘Venuses’ and ‘Apollos’ – and their precursors in other arts, including theatre, and draws from the innumerable receptions of classical art back to antiquity itself.

This paper draws from scholarship by Richard Dyer, Leo Braudy and others, and presents archival research into the role of film trade papers and fan-magazines in engaging audiences in the active reception and construction of stars in the 1920s. This includes a recourse to the Pygmalion myth to explain the uncanny effects of the moving image, the playful ‘switching of pedestals’ between star and sculpture to construct cinematic aura, as well as the use of iconotexts – artworks juxtaposed with, or embodied by, the star. I present an overview of the different ways in which classical discourses were appropriated in audience reception, including for queer audiences, and the tropes that emerged that negotiated the local with the international, and the ancient with the modern.

*Mocking the Hollywood Canon: Parodies of Celluloid Classics from Latin American Cinema's Studio Era*  
Konstantinos P. Nikoloutsos (Saint Joseph's University)

Scholarship on big screen Greece and Rome has traditionally focused on films set in antiquity that offer a straightforward, face-to-face interaction with the classical world. Recently, critical attention has been shifted to celluloid recreations of the classical past situated in modern times

as well as to masked receptions, productions whose thematic and ideological debt to Greece and Rome is not pronounced and often stems from mediated knowledge of antiquity found in popular culture. The paper calls attention to another type of cinematic engagement with the classical past: parody (also known as spoof). A subgenre of the comedy film that has been treated with disdain by scholars on the grounds that it does not represent a lofty form of art, parodies of iconic revivals of the classical world on screen merit critical consideration because they can help us redraw the boundaries of the field and rethink what constitutes reception and how pervasive the influence of antiquity has been in the industry of cinema.

The paper will examine two case studies from Latin America, a geographical region that is rarely included in Anglophone inquiries into the cinematic afterlife of antiquity: *La vida íntima de Marco Antonio y Cleopatra* (Mexico, 1947) directed by Roberto Gavaldón and *Carnaval Atlântida* (Brazil, 1952) directed by José Carlos Burle. By focusing on select scenes, I shall illustrate that both films offer a parodic critique – at the diegetic and visual level – of the hegemonic epic model established by Cecil B. DeMille in the late silent and early sound eras. The paper will contextualize the power dynamics between Hollywood and Latin American studio cinema in the postwar period paying attention to the economics of the industry and locate the satiric subversion of the DeMille canon in two distinct areas in the two case studies respectively: gender and race.

*Masked Celluloid Classics? In Search of the Tragic Heroine Electra in Film Noir*  
Anastasia Bakogianni (Massey University, New Zealand)

It is an exciting time for classical reception as we continue to test and expand the boundaries of our discipline, while forging meaningful cross-disciplinary links with Adaptation Studies, Comparative Literature and Media Studies. This paper seeks to challenge the traditional approach of measuring source text A against reception text B by engaging with ‘indirect’, ‘masked’ instances of reception and arguing for the value of including them. Bakogianni draws on recent developments in classical screen reception theory and methodology to analyse two examples of the reception of diffuse notions of the myth of Electra in two noir films, Theo Angelopoulos’ *Reconstruction* (1979) and Nicolas Winding Refn’s *Only God Forgives* (2013).

Moving beyond ‘authorial’ intention as a selection criterium, Bakogianni argues for a bolder approach to practicing classical reception, one that highlights the role of the scholar in the selection and juxtaposition of ‘texts’ on the basis of rich thematic links. There are meaningful connections that can be drawn between the myth of Electra, its portrayal in Greek tragedy, its subsequent reception, and these two screen case studies from the film noir genre. Bakogianni seeks to demonstrate that embracing ‘masked’ receptions is incredibly rewarding and can be used as a tool to interrogate the state of our discipline, but also move it forward towards new horizons.

## Day 2

### Workshop 1: *New Voices in Reception Studies*

Ronald Blankenburg, Nils Lommerde, Jarnick Maarse and Loes Wolters (Radboud University, The Netherlands).

In the rapidly developing field of Reception Studies, the *travelling concept* can be utilised as a means of establishing a new pedagogical community and new critical practices (Bal 2002; De Pourcq 2012), while *the extended form of thematic criticism* (De Pourcq, De Haan & Rijser, 2020) testify to *Liquid Antiquity*’s methodological breadth. The *pushing*

(understanding an ancient text through reception works) and *pulling* approaches (looking back from reception works; see Hodkinson & Lovatt, 2018), combined with the basic frame of the *weak* and *strong thesis* (Martindale, 1993) facilitated the field's polymorphous stances. The 2021 classroom has moved away from the chronological approach of Classical Tradition, towards reader/viewer response. As a consequence, both the *weak* (cf. *pulling*) and the *strong thesis* (intermediaries are necessary and help 'create' the classical world) are applied from an exploratory rather than an informed starting point.

Ronald Blankenborg will open the discussion with a brief introduction of the theories and methodologies he employs in his classroom. This will be followed by three case studies presented by his students designed to illustrate the problematic relationship between academia and fan discourse that characterises the *weak thesis* in Reception Studies teaching. First, the *Odysseus Unbound* Project (2005), a search for Homer's epic Ithaca: The concepts of authenticity and nostalgia, embedded in tourism studies, provide insights into the underlying marketing mechanisms and strong ideological components of the project. Next, the empire-building strategy-game *Total War Saga: Troy* (2020), not intended as an adaption of Homer's famous story, but advertised as "the truth behind the myth". Finally, the epic quest central to *The World's End* (2013) illustrates Simon Goldhill's (2009) *anti-chronology* thesis.

### **Long Break**

#### **Panel 3: Popular Culture**

*Classics on the Surface: Classical Reception as an Emergent Process*  
Luis Unceta Gómez (Universidad Autónoma de Madrid)

The permeability of Classical Reception Studies to different academic disciplines and its interrogation of its own theoretical and methodological practice, has re-defined the agenda and even the very margins of the field of Classical Studies itself. As Martindale (2006) argues Classics is becoming increasingly aware of the complex interactions of past and present. Among these newer objects of study, the expanding academic interest in popular culture artefacts demonstrates a remarkably interdisciplinarity. Classical Reception borrows from Cultural Studies, Media Studies, Adaptation Studies, Film Studies to redefine itself as well as the discipline of Classical Studies itself. As Jenkins puts it, '[m]ore than any other category, pop culture receptions interrogate the notion of 'what is a classic' with more savagery (and sometimes bravery) than other modes of discourse' (2015: 30). Mass media are generating unheard-of modes of perceiving and understanding classical antiquity (Unceta Gómez 2019). Classical receptions in popular culture have challenged the alleged linearity and univocity of this cultural process, thus blurring the boundaries between past and present, between the classics and us. In this paper I respond to the idea that the 'chain of receptions' (Martindale 1993), understood as a series of successive layers of interpretation accruing over the source text and/or artefact, can darken its 'actual' meaning (an idea developed further by Manguel 2007 and echoed by Butler 2016). Such theorists believe that it is the responsibility of classicists to explore those layers more deeply in order to recover their core content. In contrast, in my paper I utilize a select number of popular culture case studies (mainly from comics) to problematize the localization of the 'point of reception' (Kennedy 2006). In our postmodern world, classical presences should be sought on the surface of all those layers and not just located at an imagined 'original core'.

*The Merging of Eastern and Western Traditions: Manga and the Power of the Classical Object*

Amanda Potter (Open University) and Guendalina Taietti (University of Liverpool)

In its native Japan, manga is a well-respected, popular art form, but since the 1980s its appeal has also grown abroad, particularly in the US and Europe, where it found fertile ground among local traditions of producing comics. Like manga in Japan, in France and Belgium comic books are not viewed negatively as a low art form, suitable only for children, as was the case in the UK and the US. More recently in the UK, as elsewhere in Europe, manga, alongside other traditions of comics, have gained a significant audience along with wide critical acclaim. In 2019 the *British Museum* organised a major exhibition on manga. However, to date, there has been limited critical attention paid to manga by classicists. This paper seeks to address this gap, because like many other popular art forms, manga draws on tropes from different cultures, including Graeco-Roman mythology. The manga texts we explore in our joint paper blend European and Asian traditions, but what distinguishes them is that their classical connections are primarily linked to specific material objects. This is unsurprising, as three of the texts were specifically commissioned by two famous European museums, the *British Museum* and the *Louvre*, as made explicit in their titles.

In *Guardians of The Louvre* the famous Winged Victory of Samothrace comes to life. In *Rohan at the Louvre*, the manga artist Rohan visits the Louvre basement and passes several classical objects, clues that aid his quest. In *Professor Munakata's British Museum Adventure* museum employee Chris Caryatid protects the BM, and Stonehenge, from thieves. Chris literally holds up the museum, as the ancient caryatids did ancient Greek temples (raising the problematic separation of the four columns of the Erechtheion temple, given that one of the caryatids is exhibited in the British Museum, while her sisters are in the Acropolis Museum). In the *Legendary Musings of Professor Munakata*, an accidental discovery leads the protagonist to discover previously unknown connections between the ancient Hittites, Chinese astronomy, and Greek and Japanese mythology.

In all four of our case studies ancient objects are integral to the story, they influence the characters and drive the plot. Through the art of manga these objects can gain new audiences, widening their global impact, even among readers who have not had the opportunity to see the objects in situ in the museums. In a post-COVID world, when potentially the availability of museum collections online will gain even more impetus, the role of such texts in creating an interest in ancient objects, and the ancient world more generally, becomes ever more important.

*Escaping 'Hades': Playing with Classical Reception*

Hamish Cameron (Victoria University of Wellington)

Classical games are an increasingly important site of popular engagement with the classical past. Like the mythic tradition itself, games are characterised by fluidity, multivocality and interactivity (Kapell and Elliott 2013; Chapman 2016; Rollinger 2020). These characteristics are also shared by sites and processes of reception (Hardwick 2017; Joannou 2017; Zajko and Hoyle 2017; Pourcq, Haan, and Rijser 2020). This paper plays in the dynamic space occupied by games, myth and reception studies to examine how the critically-acclaimed video game *Hades* (Supergiant Games, 2020) adapts, interprets and presents historical strands and modern popular imaginings of Greek myth. In *Hades*, you play as minor mythological figure Zagreus, here a rebellious Prince of the Underworld, who is attempting (and repeatedly failing) to escape from Hades (in both classical senses). Through his repeated escape attempts, Zagreus meets, helps and fights an array of charmingly characterised mythological gods, monsters and heroes. Although no prior knowledge of Greek myth is required to play

the game, frequent partial allusions to mythic narratives beyond the game provide psychic rewards to players with pre-existing classical expertise and encourage players without such expertise to engage with sources of information about Greek myth external to the game itself. In this way, myth serves as a paratext to the game, informing, deepening and nuancing the experience of play. However, an important consequence of the increasing popularity and accessibility of digital ludic representations of the ancient world and the increased advertising focus on historical or mythological accuracy in games is that these games also serve as paratexts to the myths, adding meaning from sites of reception back to the player's understanding of myth. In doing so, the interaction between game and myth blurs the line between source and received text and influences the construction of collective memory and historical consciousness by players in potentially problematic ways. While these effects can lead to popular interpretations of classical texts that are not supported by the ancient sources themselves, they can nevertheless provide a productive venue for exploring methodological questions about accuracy, authority, and canonicity.

## Break

### Panel 4: Performance Reception

*Theatre, Politics, and Money: Karolos Koun's Art Theatre, the Greek Dictatorship, and the Ford Foundation*

Gonda Van Steen (King's College London)

The mid-twentieth-century development of Greek dramaturgy took its most important step forward with the singular achievements of Karolos Koun (1908–1987) and his Art Theatre (*Theatro Technis*, founded in 1942). The success story of the Art Theatre is also the story of an emerging Greek avant-garde or, as Patricia Kokori has defined it, of “the Greek version of theatrical modernism.” The Art Theatre pursued artistic integrity over commercial profit and, in the course of several decades, essentially transformed the post-war Greek stage by introducing new aesthetics and also contemporary sensibilities. Koun created a progressive theatre circle in Athens of the 1950s and 1960s, built on the ideals of a more democratically organized company structure, and he also very intently fostered audience participation. Given how post-war theatre and cinema were dominated by the trappings of either conservatism or commercialism, Koun's building up of a theatre, an audience, and an ethos remains a truly remarkable achievement. What went sometimes unnoticed, however, is that Koun also needed to build up a cash flow. His precarious financial position created dependencies that subsequent reception studies have been keen to forget or minimize. This paper will discuss the first topic on the basis of Greece-based research and writing, but it delves into American archives to shed new light on the latter theme. It makes a case for a more global approach to the figure of Koun, while demonstrating that the pragmatics of the Art Theatre's daily management deserve our attention as well.

*The “Advent of the New Order”:<sup>1</sup> An Oresteia in Prague (1947) and the Epistemological Limits of Archivalia*

Alena Sarkissian (Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague)

This paper explores the limits of archival research for the study of the reception of ancient drama in modern theatre, with reference to Karel Dostal's production of the *Oresteia* (1947). Dostal's on the whole conservative production, nonetheless (and perhaps unintentionally)

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<sup>1</sup> Dostal, K. *Oresteia*. In *Národní divadlo*, 24.2 (1947) 32.

conveys a revolutionary message. The production premiered at the National Theatre in Prague in February of 1947, almost exactly one year before the communist coup d'état in what was then Czechoslovakia. Researching the seventy-year-old production is only possible because of the existence of a dense network of theatre and other archives in the Czech Republic that has its roots in the notoriously meticulous Austro-Hungarian administrative system. This network did not vanish with the dismantling of the monarchy in 1918, but was transformed and formed the basis for both the Communist and democratic archival systems that followed.

Using Dostal's *Oresteia* as my case study, I demonstrate how different types of archival documents enter into dialogue with each other to reveal the nature of a long-ago performance and its historical context, but also the contradictory and lacunose nature of such documents. A playscript, stage and costume designs, performance photographs, and other ephemera survive from Dostal's production and show a rather conservative, even slightly dull staging of Aeschylus' seminal trilogy. The extant press reviews also express doubts about the production's merits. However, a closer look at the sources hints at the possibility of a much more nuanced assessment of Dostal's *Oresteia*. Bills, contracts, and other administrative documents testify to the personal and economic management of the theatre. In addition, personal correspondence and other private documents offer us an insider's perspective into the power-games that the country's political apparatus was playing with the theatre management during this transitional period, just before the Communist regime's rise to power. These documents reveal the inner working of Czechoslovakia's most important theatre company at a turning point in its history. A seemingly mediocre production and the period it spent in the theatre repertoire can thus be re-accessed as a taster of how the Communist party would manage the National Theatre once it gained power.

*Persistence of Tragedy: Antigone Today*  
Meryem Deniz (Stanford University)

Classical myth is neither static nor limited as it has constituted itself through its reception. The appropriation and recontextualization of myths show that antiquity and modernity are in continuous dialogue. The reception of tragedy as a dramatic form of myth concerns with the afterlife of the plays, including their adaptation and reperformance. Despite numerous performances of Greek tragedy in the last decades and its impact on the formation of modern critical theory, the status of tragedy and the idea of tragic in literary, theoretical, political, and performative contexts are still debatable. For Raymond Williams, tragedy fulfils its function in every society at every time by questioning the instability and inadequacy of the current social, religious, and political systems. Tragedy, as a genre in motion, urges transition to new forms of consciousness. I argue that the modern receptions of Greek tragedies embody tragedy's potential to reveal contemporary identities that are shaped through struggles around class, gender, migration and race. I will focus on Sophocles' *Antigone* and her unbending and self-certain character that is taken by the modern adaptations not as an extraordinary experience but rather as mundane and contemporary. I look at Janusz Glowacki's play *Antigone in New York*, which addresses homelessness and immigration and a 2018 performance *Antigone in Ferguson*, which focuses on the racialized violence against communities of colour and their resistance.

**Workshop 2:** *Greek Tragedy in a Time of Pandemic* with Declan Patrick (University of Waikato), Holly C. Luton (AUT) and Stephe Harrop (University of Hope, Liverpool) in conversation with Anastasia Bakogianni.

The three theatre practitioners, two from New Zealand (Patrick and Luton) and one from the UK (Harrop) discuss their productions of Greek tragedy during the Covid-19 pandemic and the challenges they faced and overcame. Join us for a lively conversation illustrated with images, video and three unique perspectives.

### Day 3

#### Panel 5: Modern Societal Challenges and the Classics

*The Master's Tools?: Towards a Politics of Reception*  
Jesse Weiner (Hamilton College)

As Nancy Rabinowitz writes (2008: 237), many recent classical receptions use the cultural output of Greece and Rome “as a way to think through contemporary problems from a politically progressive point of view.” These receptions of the classics have addressed such modern contexts as the Atlantic slave trade and its legacies in the United States, serial violence against women in Latin America, and the worldwide plight of refugees, to name but a few. The cultural outputs of ancient Greece and Rome are indeed more global today than they ever were in antiquity. But I have often worried, even while celebrating this democratization of the classics, whether there remains something regressive, some legacy of cultural imperialism in these axiological turns to the Greco-Roman canon as models, as if what has since the Renaissance formed a core of the Western or European canon has “triumphed” in some way—perhaps following Antonio Gramsci’s formulation of “cultural hegemony” that lays claim to universality. This paper investigates the dynamics and politics behind the activity of reception in progressive, postcolonial, and revolutionary contexts.

Is there something subversive and radical in adapting Greek and Latin literature to undermine and challenge Western imperialism, racism, misogyny, and classism? Or are these receptions of the Western canon doomed to reinforce the very hierarchies of power they purport to challenge? I take as a starting point Audre Lorde’s iconic formulation of this question and her answer to it (2017: 17-19, originally published in 1984): “What does it mean when the tools of a racist patriarchy are used to examine the fruits of that same patriarchy? ... The master’s tools will never dismantle the master’s house.”

What, then, are the possibilities and limits of classical reception when these receptions are performed by and for those at the margins of social, economic, and political power? Can we reconcile the political aim and context of any particular reception with the activity of turning to the Greeks and Romans—or Shakespeare for that matter—as models? As a preliminary gesture towards answers, I draw on two case studies in reception—one classical; one not—that to me point towards the possibility of resolving or working within tensions between the political aims and limitations of reception. The first is Hélienne de Crenne’s sixteenth century French translation of the first four books of Virgil’s *Aeneid*; the second is “True,” a twenty-first century hip-hop song by Chamillionaire and Paul Wall (featuring Lil’ Flip), which sets its lyrics against an anthem of the American Civil War.

*Ecoclassicisms: Ecocriticism and Classical Reception*  
Samuel Cooper (American University in Cairo)

This paper examines an emerging focus of reception studies, namely receptions of a “classical” past that are also receptions of a “natural” past and imagine a particular relationship between the two. I call these “ecoclassicisms”. Mark Payne has devoted the most sustained attention to ecoclassicisms (though he does not use that term). This paper is in part

a critical survey of Payne’s recent work that seeks to identify and develop the general research program for ecocritical classical reception studies that is implicit in Payne’s numerous case studies--ranging from Schiller’s “On Naive and Sentimental Poetry”, to the “weird tale”, to Arte Povera--but never articulated by him in a programmatic way. I argue that Payne is not always sufficiently critical of how ecoclassicisms often romanticize both classical and natural pasts in mutually reinforcing and problematic ways. However, I also argue that progressive ecological ethics and aesthetics cannot entirely dispense with the sense of loss that is central to romantic ecoclassicisms. Finally, I consider the notion of “survivance” that in *Hontology* (Zero Books, 2019) Payne borrows from Gerald Vizenor to analyze specifically non-romanticizing receptions of “classical” cultural and natural pasts that need not be just Greek or Roman. Survivance is similar to what Donna Haraway calls “staying with the trouble” and as such points towards ecocultural (if not ecoclassical) reception as a necessary skill in an era of ecological crisis.

*Classical Reception in Disability Studies: Mary Duffy Imagining Alternative Futures*  
Amanda Kubic (University of Michigan-Ann Arbor)

The introduction to “Classical Reception and the Political” reimagines classical reception as more than a “passive inheritance” of ancient ideas. Classical reception can in fact allow us to imagine an alternative future—“a future that has been concealed or obscured by the present, and to which the past, paradoxically, allows us access.” This notion of alternative futures is critical in the growing field of disability studies. In *Feminist, Queer, Crip*, Alison Kafer seeks to articulate a “crip time” for disability studies that is not curative and does not reject futurity, but that imagines different futures for disabled bodies and communities not visible at present. I will take up the question of how disability studies and classical reception studies can work together to imagine alternative futures for the disability community by looking at two performances by disabled artist and activist Mary Duffy. In a 1987 photo series and a 1995 documentary, Duffy, an Irish woman born without arms, poses nude as the Venus de Milo in an effort to dismantle androcentric, classical, Winckelmannian ideals of beauty and the body. While there is some debate over the complex politics of gender and whiteness in Duffy’s posing practice, Duffy’s commentary in the documentary reveals her view of this embodied act of classical reception as a political act—one that looks towards an alternative future where people living with disabilities have the right to exist as empowered, creative subjects.

## Break

**Workshop 3:** *Playing with Design* with Hamish Cameron (Victoria University of Wellington)

If you’ve ever thought about designing a tabletop game about your research area to play in the classroom but don’t know where to start, then this is the workshop for you! Classicist and game designer Hamish Cameron will give a brief introduction to some general design concepts and considerations, then you’ll split into groups to brainstorm how you might start turning your idea into a game. The session will be a combination of Game Design for Academics and social hour. You probably won’t design a complete game, but you might get some cool ideas that lead to a complete game later. You’ll also get to chat with other folk interested in designing games for the classroom.

## Day 4

## Panel 6: Education in Academia and Beyond

*Social Justice-Engaged Reception Pedagogy: "Classics Beyond Whiteness" at Wake Forest*  
T. H. M. Gellar-Goad and Caitlin Hines (Wake Forest University)

The Classics classroom is a key place not only for the study of classical reception but also for reception itself: our students contribute to this process as they study it. Current theories of classical reception acknowledge it as an ongoing, contingent process, one in which the point of reception can exert as much influence on the source as the source does on its reception. It is therefore incumbent upon us as we work on and in classical reception to remain cognizant of and, to the extent we are able, engaged with the overarching concerns and crises of our own societies as well as the ones we study. Signal exemplars of this approach include Rabinowitz and Hardy's edited collection, *From Abortion to Pederasty: Addressing Difficult Topics in the Classics Classroom* (2014) and a large portion of the *Eidolon* corpus.

In this paper, we discuss a major initiative we co-founded at our university, in response to (and in anticipation of) increased racial conflict in the United States and a renewed rise in white supremacy and ethnic nationalism across the world. Titled CLASSICS BEYOND WHITENESS, the initiative has included two different courses, guest lectures, workshops and reading groups, art and film exhibitions, and publications both in print and in preparation. Just as our university as an institution has been challenged by high-profile bias incidents to take steps to address its historical complicity with systems of white supremacy, the field of Classics must come to terms with its participation in abusive and exclusionary practices that have caused real and lasting harm to communities and students of colour. This series provides programming for students, faculty, and the larger Winston-Salem community that examines our field's misleading and damaging tendency to centre "whiteness" in its scholarly and educational practices and charts new paths forward for a more inclusive, constructive vision of the discipline. The program celebrates the unique pedagogical, scholarly, and artistic contributions of Black Classicists, foregrounds the reception of Classical antiquity by artists and communities of colour, highlights recent efforts to create a more diverse and inclusive field, and confronts the hateful backlash — both online and in professional settings — that has targeted those efforts. One of the two courses challenged students to produce their own creative receptions throughout the semester, which resulted in a wide variety of artistic and intellectual projects bringing Classics to the modern world in a humane and empathetic way.

*Talking about Silence: How and Why to Teach Classical Rape Stories*

Caroline Bristow (University of Cambridge), Susan Deacy and Aimee Hinds (University of Roehampton)

This paper will introduce work we are doing - individually and together - into how, and why, to teach classical stories involving rape, sexual trauma and sexual violence in schools and universities. As we shall discuss, it is increasingly the case that students come to sessions that address these topics with only partial understandings of the stories that entail them, due to the proliferation of reception including literature, visual media and even social media. These partial understandings are evident among school students at several age levels across primary and secondary levels, and at university. We shall consider how, as is the case with other difficult subjects, as educators we are experiencing issues around the need to be ready to deal with these subjects carefully and sensitively, rather than try to avoid them. As a case study we will discuss the story of Persephone: to explore what it means to create safe spaces, use content warnings, and talk about silence. We shall consider how, as a "popular" myth in

children's and young adult literature, Persephone's tale is constructed in such a way that places the myth at constant risk of perpetuating stereotypes around rape, sexual trauma and consent. Conversely, we shall argue that this myth by its very nature offers an opportunity to do real good in the classroom – not just avoid doing active harm. Through the lens of Persephone we shall explore the importance of stories in shaping the heuristics with which humans make decisions. We shall also consider how the Persephone story can be used to avoid perpetuating *societal* narratives of victim blaming, silence and shame.

## Break

### Panel 7: Digital Pedagogy and Public Engagement

*Classical Reception Meets Pedagogy: The Creation and Uses of the Panoply Vase Animation Project's Our Mythical Childhood Animations*

Sonya Nevin (University of Roehampton/Panoply Vase Animation Project)

The Panoply Vase Animation Project makes animations from the scenes on real ancient Greek pottery ([www.panoply.org.uk](http://www.panoply.org.uk)). The animations are both artistic works of classical reception and a versatile pedagogical tool. They have become a popular resource for use in the secondary school classroom and in the university lecture-hall (or their online equivalents) where they provide a lively yet artefact-based illustration of a topic, help learners to understand ancient iconography, and provide an engaging springboard into further creative responses to ancient culture, such as storyboarding, vase design, or script-writing, as well as discussions of interpretation and adaptation. Animation undoes the fixity of an image and reveals the possibilities that surrounded its creation. The process of examining a vase, watching its animation, and considering an alternative can help learners to understand the process of choice needed to create the original scene, to recognise the interpretation that has led to the animation, and to have confidence in their own responses - which draw on and reinforce what they have learned about ancient culture.

As part of the ERC-funded project, *Our Mythical Childhood... The Reception of Children's and Young Adults' Culture in Response to Regional and Global Challenges* ([www.omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/#](http://www.omc.obta.al.uw.edu.pl/#)) Panoply have created five new animations. They see Heracles hunt the Erymanthian Boar, Dionysus orchestrate a revel, Zeus pour a libation, Iris take flight, and Sappho perform *A Wedding at Troy*. The Sappho animation is the most elaborate, including geometric figures acting out her poetry and a reconstruction of the tune that the poem would once have been sung to. This discussion of the creation of the animations and of further educational resources developed to support them will be of particular interest to those involved in formal teaching at all levels, those involved in museology, and those with an interest in ancient art and its reception.

*Classical Reception Beyond the Classroom: Engaging Public Audiences with Remaking Ancient Myths*

Emma Bridges (Independent Scholar)

How can researchers of classical reception take their pedagogy beyond the formal teaching context of the university campus or school classroom? The stories, characters and themes found in ancient myth – particularly in combination with hands-on activities – provide a rich starting-point for public engagement. Drawing on examples of public-facing events which I have devised in partnership with creative practitioners (including artists, storytellers and theatre-makers), this talk will illustrate some of ways in which non-specialist audiences can

become involved in the actual process of classical reception. It will focus in particular on a series of creative classics-focused events which I delivered for the annual Being Human Festival, the UK's only national festival which shares humanities research with the wider public. 'Weaving Women's Stories' (2018) explored the connections between weaving and storytelling in the lives of ancient mythical women. With the support of a local community organisation it brought together researchers, poets, and a textile artist, and combined a live performance of newly-commissioned poetry with hands-on weaving activities. In 2019, a collaboration with a storyteller and a puppet theatre led to 'Making Medusa', a day-long workshop at which families created a giant Medusa puppet. Many of the lessons learned from these events are readily transferable to other contexts, including for public engagement activities in the era of pandemic-related social distancing. My talk will therefore also offer practical advice as to how academics can begin engaging the wider public with their work, particularly if they have limited time or money: I will share suggestions for working with community partners, identifying and connecting with target audiences, choosing appropriate formats for events, and working on a tight budget.

**Brief concluding remarks**

Anastasia Bakogianni

**The End!**