

On the occasion of a children's book about the Parthenon sculptures: Cultural curriculum and the construction of a museum kit.

SUMMARY

*This paper refers to the ways in which children's literature can sensitize students to the issue of the Parthenon marbles. The first part, on the occasion of a children's book titled **The Thirteenth goddess and the stolen marbles of Acropolis** published in Greek and English, presents the objectives, the stages and the activities of a program that can be applied when reading the book on elementary school and high school. The second part, with this book as an example, shows the way that an educational lending suitcase was made by the **Psichogios Publications** in Greece. Around this lending package offered for free to schools, libraries and organizations an entire program can be developed. Students learn about the stolen sculptures and develop actions in order to learn about the value of cultural heritage and to understand the importance of its protection.*

Mr President of the Australian International Committee for the return of the Parthenon Marbles,

Mr Secretary General,

Dear Organizing Committee of the Conference

Ladies and gentlemen delegates

Our proposal refers to ways in which children's literature can sensitize students to the issue of the Parthenon sculptures.

The importance and necessity of the introduction of children's literature in elementary school, does not relate only with the pleasure offered by reading a book, the emotion and aesthetic culture. A literary book, a story is a journey in an imaginary solar system where children will not only gain knowledge but also values and attitudes, they will cultivate the ability to solve problems, identify with positive role models and will distance themselves from non-ethical, will adapt (simulate) what they have experienced in real life situations. Literature offers many such opportunities through which children will cultivate judgment and imagination and strengthen their moral and social development.

In the recent years the issue of cultural heritage has joined the Greek literature as a subject category in many books for children. Particularly, the issue of the Parthenon

Marbles has also sensitized writers of children's books who intend to preoccupy the new generation about the Parthenon sculptures.

Our lecture will focus on the children's book ***The thirteenth goddess and the stolen marbles of Acropolis*** because the author did not stay only at the level of writing the book, but as an educator and certified trainer of the Greek Book Centre in Literature provided ways of extension and exploitation of the book by different bodies and educators, making an entire program with the help of **Psichogios Publications**.

A program implemented in schools, sensitizing thousands of students and led **Psichogios Publications** to translate the book and release it in English in print and e-book.

THE THEME OF THE BOOK

The book is part of the thematic category **Cultural Heritage - Loss of cultural property and monuments** proposed for school age children 7-10 years.

The educational program for the use of the book in education includes three proposals. Choice can be made or all three proposals can be worked on at the same time or separately.

First proposal of using the book

LITERARY

Objectives :

The children read the story and are encouraged :

- to express feelings and concerns about the stolen sculptures

- to reflect upon the meaning and value of cultural heritage

- to stand critically towards the theft of the Parthenon sculptures
- to take actions and initiatives
- to approach the tale experientially with the body and movement in space

Brief Summary of the Story

A young girl called Melina lives in a different city at the edge of the world, the Acropolis, along with her grandfather, Phidias, the great sculptor and creator of the

sculptures. Shortly before her grandfather dies, he reveals to her the big secret: The sculptures are alive.

The statues fall into a deep sleep

When the golden embroidered sunrise breaks

But every evening when you touch them

You'll give them the breath of life.

However, he told her also something else. "But beware. If a foreign, barbaric hand touches them with jealousy and envy and removes them, their soul and grace will fly away forever and they'll become simple statues again. And then you'll be lonely and on your own. So, take care that this shall never happen."

Melina will live the magic experience to see the sculptures come alive and tell her their story. However, someday Lord Elgin appears and asks to split the sculptures so that he can get some of them. And when he manages to do that by force, the sculptures lose their liveliness. And then a great mission starts for Melina. She must get the sculptures back and become the thirteenth goddess.

Separation of Units

For a better approach of the story from the students, it is suggested that the story is divided into 4 sections and each section is approached through four stages of processing.

Processing stages

1. Introduction

We show the book cover to the children and comment on the picture.

Sample questions:

- What do you see in the picture?
- Why is the girl on the horse?
- What does the title of the book want to express?

-Where possibly does the girl with the horse live?

2. Reading and comprehension

Reading by the teacher or children according to the age and experience in reading.

Comprehension questions of the text:

- Where did little Melina live?
- Who else lived on the Acropolis?
- What advice did grandfather Phidias give to his granddaughter?
- What was happening on the Acropolis when the evening came?
- What was happening when the dawn came?
- How was the strange visitor called?
- What did he ask from Melina?
- What did Melina reply?
- What did he do?
- How did Melina manage to get the sculptures back?
- How did Melina become a goddess?

3. Deeper comprehension of the fairytale

Sample questions:

- How did the sculptures feel when they were split with their other half?
- How did Melina feel when Lord Elgin took the sculptures?
- Have you lost something valuable and how did you feel when that happened?
- What was that which helped Melina achieve her goal?
- What it takes to achieve our goal?
- What would you say to Lord Elgin if you met him?

4. Activities of expansion

a. Dramatization

Selection of an image from the story and dramatization involving children.

b. Visual Approach

The children paint scenes from the story, they paint the alternations of little Melina's emotions, they choose and paint a scene from the Parthenon frieze, from the pediments etc.

c. Comics

Conversion of the story into comics in working groups.

d. Narration in first person

Conversion of a selected part of the story in first person narration for greater empathy.

e. Audiovisual projections for the Parthenon and the Acropolis.

f. Creation of matching cards

Creating cards from the story

FIRST TEAM OF CARDS

PHRASE – PICTURE CORRESPONDING CARDS

The children put next to the card with the phrase, the card with the picture that matches.

eg.

Scene from the pediment

Such mythical beings could be seen on the metopes

A centaur

SECOND TEAM OF CARDS

WORD – MEANING CORRESPONDING CARDS

The children match the card with the word with a card of meaning.

eg.

Phidias – sculptor

Perikles – politician

THIRD TEAM OF CARDS

TRUE – FALSE CARDS

The children put a True or a False card next to each card with a phrase.

eg

There were presentations of the Panathenaic procession on the frieze - RIGHT

Construction of a board game

Aim of the game

The game is a variation of the game “snakes and ladders”. The players representing the thirteenth goddess must reach the stolen sculptures and get them back. The person who reaches the end first, wins.

Each player takes a pawn and tries to reach the sculptures first. If they reach a card square they answer the question correctly and if they don't, they lose their turn. If they reach goddess Athena, they move ahead towards the square that shows the spear of the goddess. If they reach Lord Elgin, they go back to the square that shows his sword. If they reach the guard of the British Museum and “wake” him up, they move 10 squares back. If they reach the warriors, they move 3 squares ahead.

Second proposal of using the book

MUSICAL PERFORMANCE

The second proposal of the book concerns an adaptation for a school theatrical performance. It is based on the adaptation of the fairy tale “**The thirteenth goddess and the stolen marbles of Acropolis**”. It is ideal for a short theatrical performance of 40 minutes. It can be supplemented and extended, depending on the goals to be set by the teacher. The show follows the story of the book.

Objectives:

- The experiential approach of the story through speech and body
- The cultivation of theatrical education
- The development of empathy in children

Roles :

Narrators, Sculptures and Statues, Melina, Phidias, Elgin, Athena, Poseidon, Horse, Columns

This specific play was performed by students of schools of Athens causing thrill to the audience who watched it.

The text was adapted and directed by the writer of the fairytale himself who has done postgraduate studies in school theater and children's literature.

A short video excerpt follows :

Third proposal of using the book

UTILIZATION BASED ON EDUCATIONAL DRAMA

The third proposal of utilization concerns THE EDUCATIONAL DRAMA. The educational drama is a structured educational process that takes elements from the theatre aiming at the personal and social development of students. It sets goals, raises questions and dilemmas, applies techniques of the students' self-expression.

This type of process of the book was selected because the educational drama:

- Is suitable for the management of sensitive issues such as the Parthenon sculptures.
- Helps so that difficult or abstract concept can emerge and become clear.
- Uses facts of everyday life, enhancing the use of the knowledge and experiences of the participants.
- Achieves learning through practice in a process of examination and investigation.
- Is a collective, collaborative and creative process, the core of which is the relationship between the individual and the group.

The educational objectives that were set were :

- a. Understanding the meaning and the value of cultural heritage
- B. Exploration of the consequences of the destruction of cultural monuments
- C. Investigation of internal conflicts before making a decision
- D. Encouragement of reflection on the fighting mobilization for the integration of cultural monuments.

Main question

- How can man resist to the oppressive authority, money, exchanges in order to protect the moral values, the memory and the civilisation ?

Individual questions

- How can we get the courage of our opinion and say no to unreasonable demands?
- How can we fight to get back what belongs to us?

During the implementation process of the educational drama, a reading of the story and literary analysis takes place while slides of the monument and an effigy of the Parthenon are shown. Its architectural parts are identified, materials of written expression (eg letters) are used and additional techniques and terms of Dramaturgy are used such as:

Teacher in a role

Collective character

Corridor of consciousness

Written expression – Reflection

Teacher in a role

The teacher in the role of grandfather Phidias calls little Melina and announces the big secret of the work that he made .

Collective character

The children are alternated for the roles of Melina and statues (improvisation). Melina walks among the statues, touches them and they tell their story.

Corridor of consciousness

Melina walks among the columns and asks from the shredded sculptures advice on what to do to get back the stolen sculptures.

Written expression - Reflection

A. We ask the students to write a letter to the administration of the British Museum asking for their return.

B. We ask the children to write the rest of the story. What will Melina do to get the sculptures back?

The educational drama ends with the realisation of the proposals of the students. Optimism and the hope that the sculptures will eventually return and will be reunited with their other half in the New Acropolis Museum are dominant.

Around these three proposals above, the idea for the creation of an educational material that would give the teacher the possibility of using the book through instructions, materials, music, was inspired. As a result, a lending educational suitcase such a museum kit accompanying the book to schools and places of creativity free was created by **Psichogios Publications**. Its content consists of materials that are used through all three modes of processing (masks, visuals, music, cards, board game, posters, letters, watercolors, etc.).

The feedback from schools has been very high and continues with undiminished interest. The experiential nature of the program has intrigued children and increased their interest. In addition, training seminars for teachers took place for the use of the book and the educational suitcase where teachers were invited to apply themselves what they would suggest to the children. A questionnaire of evaluation and comments for the teacher and students was included in the kit. The proposals made are examined in order to enrich the material and be able to create multiple copies of educational suitcases that will be used by most schools of Greece and the Diaspora since the book is published in Greek and English. There is thus always a future possibility of a sponsorship for the creation of similar material for the educational suitcase in English, too.

Ladies and gentlemen,

This children's book talks about living statues , living sculptures. The sculptures talk with young Melina and tell their story. One could say that it is an imaginary animation, a personalization or a fictional literary device by the author . But please pay attention to something really interesting : The Greek language was careful to enclose to the word statue something alive and not static. Unlike the English language where the word *άγαλμα* is “statue” and comes from the ancient Greek verb “*istimi*” that says I stand motionless , the Greek word “statue” comes from the verb “rejoice” which means “ I admire , I am ecstatic watching the beauty.” Also the word “*αγαλλίαση*» which encloses the word «*ίαση*» (“cure”) comes from the same verb .This word , the word «*ίαση*» means “healing” in Greek . Now consider what it is that can bring healing to our souls . It must be something alive that can rejoice us and this is only the living art of the sculptures. And certainly not of separated sculptures but united sculptures, sculptures as a whole and symbol of art . That's why our fairytale supports that our sculptures will regain life, will become statues again and will offer joy only when they are united.

Thank you very much

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George Katselis

Greek-language literature on cultural programs at school

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