

**Agrégation interne d'anglais**

**Session 2023**

**Épreuve EPC**

**Exposé de la préparation  
d'un cours**

**EPC  
580**

Ce sujet comprend 3 documents :

- Document 1: Arwa Mahdawi, extract from "Little Mermaid's racist critics pollute magical undersea world with bigotry", *The Guardian*, September 17, 2022.
- Document 2: Eric Deggans, extract from "Why Black characters in 'Rings of Power' and 'Little Mermaid' make fantasy better", *NPR Morning Edition*, September 18, 2022.
- Document 3: Trevor Noah, extract from "Between the Scenes", *The Daily Show*, Comedy Central, September 18, 2022.

Compte tenu des caractéristiques de ce dossier et des différentes possibilités d'exploitation qu'il offre, vous indiquerez à quel niveau d'apprentissage vous pourriez le destiner et quels objectifs vous vous fixeriez. Vous présenterez et justifierez votre démarche pour atteindre ces objectifs.

**Document 1:** Arwa Mahdawi, extract from “Little Mermaid’s racist critics pollute magical undersea world with bigotry”, *The Guardian*, September 18, 2022.

5 Grown men are getting triggered by a little mermaid. Disney recently released a trailer for a new live-action version of the Little Mermaid starring Halle Bailey, a Black actor, and it has sparked a depressingly predictable racist backlash. The trailer has received 1.5m dislikes on YouTube and caused a lot of bigots to have a conniption fit. If you’re getting a sense of  
10 déjà vu about all this, it’s because the same people already had a meltdown in 2019, when the live-action remake was first announced.

15 It’s not just the Little Mermaid: rightwingers, the people who love telling liberals to *toughen up snowflake*, routinely get their knickers in a twist over animated entertainment targeted at the four-to-12-year-old crowd. There seems to be a backlash about diversity onscreen every five minutes. Earlier this month, for example, the right were getting het up over a lesbian polar bear family in Peppa Pig. I don’t know how they have the energy to care about cartoon polar bears; it really must be very exhausting.

20 While there may be nothing new about bigots raging over animated entertainment, this particular backlash is noteworthy because of just how unhinged the response has been. An anonymous computer scientist, for example, went to the trouble of using artificial intelligence to whiten Halle Bailey’s appearance in the trailer. A (now-suspended) Twitter account jubilantly shared the altered trailer, announcing: “Credits to our memer Artificial intelligence scientist. He fixed The Little Mermaid and turned the woke actor into a ginger white girl.” Shortly after the Twitter account added: “This is purely for educational purposes, please do not misinterpret this in a racist way.” Uh huh.

25 Conservative political commentator Matt Walsh also spent a lot more time thinking about the physiology of fictional creatures than is healthy. Walsh told viewers of his eponymous show that “from a scientific perspective, it doesn’t make a lot of sense to have someone with darker skin who lives deep in the ocean. If anything, not only should the Little  
30 Mermaid be pale, she should, actually, be translucent. If you look at deep-sea creatures, they’re translucent. They have no kind of pigmentation whatsoever ... [The Little Mermaid] should be totally pale and skeletal where you can see her skull through her face.”

35 Walsh later said what all racists say when people call them out: his statement about a Black mermaid being unscientific was a joke! Which would have been a lot more convincing of an argument if Walsh hadn’t built his brand on far-right views.

Walsh clearly has an active imagination so I'd like to suggest a little thought experiment to him: try imagining a world where you grew up rarely seeing someone like yourself be a hero onscreen. Walsh is an able-bodied thirtysomething white guy. He grew up with no end of TV shows and movies starring boys who looked like him. If you take that representation for granted then it can be hard to understand how important it is to see yourself included in popular culture. It can be hard to understand how dehumanizing it is to be constantly sent the message that people who look like you can never be heroes. I'm speaking from personal experience here: the other day I found myself unexpectedly shedding a tear because Mo Amer was on The Tonight Show with Jimmy Fallon talking about how his new Netflix show, Mo, is "the first ever show created by, starring a Palestinian, and showing a Palestinian family on television". As a Palestinian, I wish there had been something like Mo on TV when I was growing up.

The nine millionth remake of the Little Mermaid may not be something that you personally care about, but do try and imagine how important it is for a little girl to see someone who looks like her playing a heroine onscreen. There's a very wholesome TikTok trend of Black girls watching the Little Mermaid trailer and being delighted that "she's like me! She's like me!" If your reaction to little girls feeling included is to dismiss it as "woke", then there is something deeply wrong with you. Not only are you a bad human, you're also a bad capitalist. The US is growing increasingly diverse, whether people like Walsh like it or not. In 2019 non-whites and Hispanics constituted a majority of people under age 16 for the first time. Forgive my cynicism, but I don't think Disney isn't trying to be "woke" with the Little Mermaid. It is simply responding to good old-fashioned market forces.

**Document 2:** Eric Deggans, extract from "Why Black characters in 'Rings of Power' and 'Little Mermaid' make fantasy better", *NPR Morning Edition*, September 18, 2022.

Document audio (2'41") à consulter sur la tablette multimédia fournie.

**Document 3:** Trevor Noah, extract from "Between The Scenes", *The Daily Show*, Comedy Central, September 18, 2022

Document vidéo (1'36") à consulter sur la tablette multimédia fournie.