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Contents
News p. 5
Senior Colloquium: A Sample of Senior Abstracts p. 9
Danny Dilulio, "Nero's Cautious Consigliere: Examining How Seneca Imbues His Literary Devices With a Soft Tone in De Clementia" p. 13
Amanda Ball, trans. Horace—Carmina 3.30 p. 27
Jeremy Cohen, "Writing As Reading in the Textual Tradition" p. 29
Connor Clerkin, trans. Cicero—De Re Publica 1.2-1.3 p. 34
Lauren Kaufmann, "'Though both not equal, as their sex not equal seemed': The Role of Gender in Epic Teleology in the Iliad and Paradise Lost" p. 37
Julie Nishimura-Jensen (faculty interview) p. 52
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Comments
Contents

News p. 5

Senior Colloquium: A Sample of Senior Abstracts p. 9

Danny DiIulio, "Nero's Cautious Consigliere: Examining How Seneca Imbues His Literary Devices With a Soft Tone in De Clementia" p. 13

Amanda Ball, trans. Horace—Carmina 3.30 p. 27

Jeremy Cohen, "Writing As Reading in the Textual Tradition" p. 29

Connor Clerkin, trans. Cicero—De Re Publica 1.2-1.3 p. 34

Lauren Kaufmann, "'Though both not equal, as their sex not equal seemed': The Role of Gender in Epic Teleology in the Iliad and Paradise Lost" p. 37

Julie Nishimura-Jensen (faculty interview) p. 52

Isabella Reinhardt (post-baccalaureate student interview) p. 66

Sarah Wilker, "A Question On Display: The Debate Over the Parthenon Metopes" p. 68

Allyson Zucker, "Madison and Sulla" p. 73

Sean Carpenter and the Classical Studies UAB, "Tweets From Socrates" p. 75

Morgan Williams and Cara Cugley, on a pyxis from the Penn Museum (back cover image)

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CONTENTS

NEWS

5

SENIOR COLLOQUIUM

A Sample of Senior Abstracts 9

RESEARCH

Nero’s Cautious Consigliere: 
Examining How Seneca Imbues His Literary Devices With a Soft Tone in De Clementia
By Danny DiIulio 13

Horace—Carmina 3.30
Translated by Amanda Ball 27

Writing As Reading in the Textual Tradition
By Jeremy Cohen 29

Cicero—De Re Publica 1.2-1.3
Translated by Connor Clerkin 34

“Though both not equal, as their sex not equal seemed”:
The Role of Gender in Epic Teleology in the Iliad and Paradise Lost
By Lauren Kaufmann 37
CONVERSATIONS

Dr. Julie Nishimura-Jensen 52

Isabella Reinhardt 66

REFLECTIONS

A Question On Display:
The Debate Over the Parthenon Metopes
By Sarah Wilker 68

Madison and Sulla
By Allyson Zucker 73

Tweets From Socrates
By Sean Carpenter and the Classics UAB 75

SPOTLIGHT 78
NEWS

Favorite Pages with Professor Farrell

Professor Joseph Farrell joined the Undergraduate Advisory Board (UAB) and other interested students for a Favorite Pages symposium in February. As his favorite page from all of ancient literature, Professor Farrell selected the description of the death of Laocoon in Vergil’s Aeneid, but Professor Farrell did not simply choose his passage from the Loeb Aeneid or any modern translation. He brought in copies of a page from a late antique manuscript with a beautiful illustration of Laocoon on the Trojan beach. Professor Farrell led a discussion of the intricacies of a manuscript—from the original handwriting and ‘corrections’ to the Latin to the illustrator’s apparently poor grasp of perspective drawing. Professor Farrell demonstrated that a manuscript can tell its own story about the history of the work it bears on its pages.

Aristophanes’ Birds: A Dramatic Reading

The month of April found the former chair of the UAB hurling ludicrous obscenities at the current chair. Unlike a similar incident with a different Penn student group, this was not an issue of election fraud but an impassioned, unrehearsed interpretation of Aristophanes’ Birds. In the UAB’s sixth biannual dramatic reading, Michael Freeman directed, and Professors Murnaghan and Rosen made guest appearances. The dramatic readings—formed to allow students to engage with ancient plays in a format closer to how they were actually intended to be consumed—have provided fodder for rich discussions over the last three years on the difficulties and surprising joys of staging an ancient play in the twenty-first century. With the casual language of the translation used,
the goofy and vulgar *Birds* might even have been mistaken for a Will Ferrell film. Whether or not Aristophanes and his fellow comedy writers would have been disappointed with such a comparison remains unclear.

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**Rome’s Birthday Games**

On the twenty-first of April, the Department celebrated the birth of Rome with the first annual Birthday Games—envisioned as a more engaging and entertaining replacement for Certamen, the traditional quiz bowl that pitted undergraduates against grad students and faculty in a competition of Greek and Rome trivia. In the crisp air of a beautiful spring evening, undergraduates and faculty met on Perelman Quad to compete in three challenges.

In the first task, each team composed a short, persuasive speech in response to a unique classical prompt. The undergrads presented a strong case for why Odysseus should remain with Calypso on her island, repeatedly
emphasizing that he would be able to have sex with a goddess for all eternity. But the faculty—represented by Professors Farrell, Ker, and Rosen—stole the win, demanding that Cicero not be a sissy and take part in the assassination of Julius Caesar.

The second challenge saw the faculty pull ahead farther when their Platonic dialogue rendition of lyrics from the Beatles’ “Back in the USSR” edged out the undergrads’ Homeric interpretation of the same song.

Finally, in the third challenge, the faculty fell to the undergraduates with an ever-so-slightly inferior composition of Dr. Seuss’ account of the Battle of Salamis. With the score even after three events, the Department held its breath as champions from both teams stepped up to compete in the tiebreaker: the buttermilk pancake discus. Professor Farrell—the faculty champion—stepped up to the line first, Greek Lady pancake in hand. Slowly, his body coiled, tensed, and then released, his arm traveling in a smooth arc, fingertips releasing the pancake at the apex. The fluffy discus sailed through the air, landing on the stone some fifty feet from the starting mark.

With one chance to clinch victory, the undergraduate champion, Katie Levesque, approached the thrower’s mark. For a single breath, she stood upon the mark, motionless. Then in a blur of movement, her right arm whipped across her body. Before the crowd even registered its release, the pancake was fifty feet downfield and still traveling. It skidded onto the stone tiles at least seventy feet from its thrower. The
Games were over. The undergraduates had won, and the trophy was theirs—at least until next year.
Reclaiming a Selected Past: Mussolini’s Rome and Bacon’s Philadelphia
By Kate Goldenberg

Benito Mussolini, reigning in Rome in the 1930s, and Edmund Bacon, influencing Philadelphia in the 1950s, each incorporated and presented the past in modern cityscapes. While imperfect parallels, the changes to the urban fabric of Rome and Philadelphia reveal how historical monuments shape the modern city, leading the public to re-interpret space and enabling leaders and planners to construct memory, evoke nostalgia, and assert ideology. Analysis of photographs, archival data, and secondary sources reveal both Mussolini and Bacon incorporated antiquity into modern cityscapes at the expense of more recent historical structures to borrow the political legitimacy conveyed by monuments able to evoke collective history.

Food in Roman Britain: A discussion of current issues in scholarship and a proposed new approach
By Julia Hurley

This paper reviews current scholarship in the field of Romano-British foodways and the relevance of food in the archaeological record more generally. It aims to address
basic issues with scholarly attitudes and methodologies in this field, arguing that there is a conflict between the highly interdisciplinary nature of foodways and the highly specialized knowledge of modern experts in archaeology, and that recent overviews of foodways in Roman Britain are weakened by the thin datasets on which they are based. Finally, it proposes possible solutions to some of these problems, and presents an ongoing research project in which archaeological evidence for food is mapped, using GIS, across the province of Britannia. This “pilot” project uses animal remains data from R.W. Davies’ 1971 article, “The Roman Military Diet,” and synthesizes it with current archaeobotanical data gathered from a variety of sources by the author. The preliminary results of this project are presented, and potential issues with this approach and future directions are discussed.

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The Professional Role of Women in the Hippocratic Corpus
By Jenna Nickas

The medical treatment of women in Classical Greece was a topic not overlooked by the Hippocratic tradition. In fact, women appear not only as patients and family members of the ill, but also occasionally as medical practitioners themselves. This paper investigates the existence of female medical professionals in the 4th and 5th century BC, and their influence on medical practices of the time. In a larger context, this paper aligns the role of these women with that of the Hippocratic female patient, particularly in the area of obstetrics and gynecology. I found that although trained midwives (maiai) appear in many treatises within the Corpus, there is a lack of evidence of female physicians during the 5th century BC. This finding suggests a void of female doctors
treating other women during this time, and I propose that this void created a barrier of care for female patients.

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Dionysus and the Cultural Identity of Thrace: A *xenos* god for a *xenos* people
By Elizabeth Potens

Numismatic material provides significant insights into the culture and daily life of a group of people. Past excavations of Maroneia and the Molyvoti peninsula have uncovered much coinage, providing clues to the culture of the ancient Thracian people there. In my study of a portion of these coins, I highlight the imagery and iconography of Dionysus and grapes as indicative of Thracian culture. The origins of Dionysus, in ancient histories, literature, and myth, reflect the influences of Greek and Eastern cultures on this deity, something also reflected in the Thracian people and their cultural influences and interaction throughout history.

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Dahan-e Golaman: A Case Study in Center-Periphery Perspective
By Morgan Williams

The Achaemenid dynasty governed a vast and diverse empire in the ancient Near East. Most scholarship on the Achaemenids has focused on material from the imperial center, as most of what remains in the archaeological record comes from the Achaemenid heartland (Fars). More recently, settlements in the outer regions of the empire, such as Dahan-e Golaman, have drawn interest in scholarly discourse. Ancient Near Eastern scholars hope that further investigations of the ‘peripheries’ together with recent
cultural interaction theories will contribute to a broader understanding of how the empire functioned. As an Achaemenid town located at the eastern edge of the empire, Dahan–e Golaman has the potential to shed light on the proliferation of Achaemenid imperial culture and how it interacted with that of the peripheries.
RESEARCH

Nero’s Cautious Consigliere: Examining How Seneca Imbues His Literary Devices With a Soft Tone in De Clementia

By Danny DiIulio

Seneca the Younger’s manner of writing typifies the concise style commonly associated with the “Silver Age” of Latin literature. As Summers observes in relation to Seneca’s letters, the “general tendency towards brevity of expression” that he shares with his first-century BCE predecessor Sallust makes his arguments as clear and as easily understood as possible for his reader.1 While Seneca seems to maintain this proclivity for succinctness across his many genres of writing, different scenarios still require him to adopt different tones when addressing his intended audiences. As such, he must imbue a given structure or poetic device with one tenor or another depending on the goal of the work. Perhaps nowhere is it more imperative for him to fine-tune elements of his concise style in this way than in his treatise on clemency written for Emperor Nero. In De Clementia 1.5-6, 5.4, and 9.6, Seneca’s choice of an example to serve as a model for his reader, the manner in which he employs his addressee as an interlocutor, and his selection of imagery and decision to make use of interlocutors within a comparison help him adopt

the soft tone necessary to keep himself in the emperor’s good graces even as he offers him advice on the importance of clemency.

In order to best understand the nuances of Seneca’s choice of example in *De Clementia* 1.5-6, it can be quite useful to first consider the way he employs an example in his writing when not addressing Nero. The following passage from *De Providentia* 2.11 makes for a fruitful comparison:

2.11 Liquet mihi cum magno spectasse gaudio deos, dum ille uir, acerrimus sui uindex, alienae saluti consulit et instruit discendentium fugam, dum studia etiam nocte ultima tractat, dum gladium sacro pectori infigit, dum uiscera spargit et illam sanctissimam animam indignamque quae ferro contaminaretur manu educit.²

Seneca, *De Providentia* 2.11

It is clear to me that the gods watched with great delight while that man, the fiercest avenger of himself, considered the safety of others and prepared the escape of those departing, while he drew along his studies even on that final night, while he thrust his sword into his sacred breast, while he scattered his entrails and led out with his hand that most pure spirit, which was not deserving of being contaminated by iron.³

Within this section of *De Providentia*, as Mayer points out, Seneca seeks to present Cato as the greatest example of a

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³ All translations are my own.
good man overcoming misfortune. In the lines above, he uses anaphora to both organize and emphasize the reasons why Cato is so worthy a model (dum…dum…dum…dum, De Providentia 2.11). At once considering “the safety of others” and continuing “his studies even on that final night,” he retains the resolve to complete his suicide attempt “with his hand” when the sword fails him ( aliena saluti consulit; dum studia etiam nocte ultima tractet; manu, De Providentia 2.11). As might be expected for an author describing a model to be emulated, we see here that Seneca provides Lucilius with the example of a different person accomplishing a great act (a significant historical figure in this case) to help his reader understand how good men are supposed to overcome hardship.

This is not exactly what we see in De Clementia 1.5-6. In the following lines, Seneca explains to Nero what type of model he should emulate as a ruler:

1.5 Refertur tibi gratia; nemo unus homo uni homini tam carus umquam fuit, quam tu populo Romano, magnum longumque eius bonum. 6 Sed ingens tibi onus imposuisti; nemo iam divum Augustum nec Ti. Caesaris prima tempora loquitur nec, quod te imitari velit, exemplar extra te quaerit; principatus tuus ad gustum exigitur. Difficile hoc fuisset, si non naturalis tibi ista bonitas esset, sed ad tempus sumpta. Nemo enim potest personam diu ferre, ficta cito in naturam suam recidunt; quibus veritas subest quaeque, ut ita dicam, ex solido enascuntur, tempore ipso in maius meliusque procedunt.

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Seneca, *De Clementia* 1.5-6

Gratitude is brought back to you; no one man was ever as dear to one person, as you are to the Roman people, its great and long-lasting good. But you have placed upon yourself a huge burden; no one now talks about divine Augustus or the first times of Tiberius Caesar nor searches for an example which he would have you imitate outside of you; your rule as emperor is made to conform to the first taste. This would have been difficult, if that goodness of yours were not natural, but assumed for the occasion. For no one is able to bear a mask for a long time, fiction quickly falls back into its own nature; those things beneath which truth, so to speak, sprouts up from solid ground, advance into the greater and the better with time itself.

Structurally speaking, Seneca takes an approach similar to the one he takes in *De Providentia* 2.11 in the lines above. Here, too, he employs anaphora to both organize and emphasize his description of a model for his reader to emulate (nemo…nemo…nemo, *De Clementia* 1.5-6). The major difference between these passages is that in the latter, the model offered to the reader is that of the reader himself. Prima facie, this would suggest that the author’s goal is to flatter his addressee rather than to instruct him (i.e. by providing a real model—like Cato in the previous passage). Indeed, as Braund observes, the first and second *nemo* clauses succeed in appealing to “Nero’s vanity” by “stress[ing] the outstanding nature of the relationship between Nero and the *populus Romanus*” and by “suggesting that [he] has already
relegated Augustus to obscurity.”

While Braund’s point about the first two *nemo* clauses is well-taken, the third *nemo* clause seems to serve a somewhat different purpose within the passage. Instead of continuing entirely in the vein of the flattery of the preceding two, here Seneca seems to offer his reader a lesson on wearing a “mask” (personam, *De Clementia*, 1.5-6). Since “no one is able to wear a mask for a long time,” he tells Nero, it “would have been difficult” for him to use his early reign as a model if it had been the case that the goodness he had displayed “were not natural, but assumed” (nemo enim potest personam diu ferre; si non naturalis tibi ista bonitas esset, sed ad tempus sumpta, *De Clementia* 1.5-6). Given the fact that Seneca chooses to take the time and space to include this short reflection on the difficulty of wearing a mask directly after his discussion of what a great model Nero has been for himself, it seems likely, as Leach notes, that Seneca actually has doubts about Nero’s desire to be a clement ruler and, quite possibly, about the emperor’s character more generally.

Ostensibly in the interest of preserving his relationship with the emperor, he does not say what he really thinks in a direct manner. Rather, Seneca stealthily manages to provide Nero with some constructive criticism (regarding “assuming” goodness as a facade) within the overly-laudatory description of Nero serving as his own best model by making the meaning within the “mask lesson” ambiguous (the reader can interpret Seneca’s words about Nero’s “natural” goodness as sincere, or as tongue-in-cheek) (ad tempus sumpta; naturalis, *De Clementia* 1.5-6). Thus, we might regard this third *nemo*

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clause as genuine counsel for Nero veiled by the tone of flattery adopted in the preceding two clauses within the anaphoric construction.

We find another example of Seneca adjusting a device characteristic of his succinct writing style in order to effect a soft, non-provocative tone toward the emperor in his use of an interlocutor in De Clementia 5.4. Before examining this passage, however, it is again worthwhile to first consider an instance in which Seneca uses the same tool for a different audience. The following excerpt from Epistulae Morales 2.3-4 serves as a good example of the way Seneca utilizes his addressee’s voice when crafting an instructive letter to a friend:

2.3 Distingit librorum multidudo; itaque cum legere non possis quantum habueris, satis est habere quantum legas. 4 “Sed modo” inquis “hunc librum evoluere volo, modo illum.” Fastidientis stomachi est multa degustare; quae ubi varia sunt et diversa, inquinant non alunt. Probatos itaque Semper lege, et si quando ad alios deverti libuerit, ad priores redi.

Seneca, Epistulae Morales 2.3-4

A multitude of books pulls in different directions; thus when you are not able to read as much as you have obtained, it is enough to have as much as you can read. “But just now,” you say, “I wish to unroll this book, now that one.” To take a taste of many things is a symptom of a fussy stomach; when these things are diverse and varied, they pollute and do not nourish. Thus always read proven authors, and if anytime it pleases you to turn to others, fall
back on the previous ones.

In this passage, Seneca employs the voice of his reader (his friend Lucilius Iunior) to further his argument in favor of fully digesting a smaller number of books written by “proven authors” (probatos, *Epistulae Morales* 2.4). The most important thing to notice here for our purposes is that Lucilius is used as a “disagreeing” interlocutor. Indeed, after Seneca lays out his beliefs regarding the drawbacks of a “multitude of books,” he has Lucilius respond in a contrary fashion by saying that he enjoys perusing “now this book, now that one” (librorum multitude; hunc librum…modo illum, *Epistulae Morales* 2.3-4). The immediate juxtaposition of Lucilius’ words with a maxim that states unequivocally that his present way of going about reading is very poor indeed functions to make Seneca’s disapproval of his addressee’s current behavior all the more clear (fastidientis stomachi est multa degustare, *Epistulae Morales* 2.4).

When we look at *De Clementia* 5.4, we see Seneca use his reader’s voice in a slightly different fashion:

5.4 Clementia, in quamcumque domum pervenerit, eam felicem tranquillamque praestabit, sed in regia, quo rarior, eo mirabilior. Quid enim est memorabilius quam eum, cuius irae nihil obstat, cuius graviori sententiae ipsi, qui pereunt, adsentiuntur, quem nemo interpellaturus est, immo, si vehementius excanduit, ne deprecaturus est quidem, ipsum sibi manum inicere et potestate sua in melius placidiusque uti hoc ipsum cogitantem: “Occidere contra legem nemo non potest, servare nemo praeter me?”

Seneca, *De Clementia* 5.4
Clemency, into whatever house it will have come the whole way, will make it happy and peaceful; but into kingdoms, in which it is rarer, it is on that account more extraordinary. What in fact is more worthy of remembering than that he, whose anger nothing obstructs, whose more serious opinions themselves are assented to by those who are ruined, whom no one is about to interrupt, indeed, if he became violently angry, not even about to beg for mercy, himself takes possession of himself and uses his own power in a better and more gentle manner thinking this very thing: “No man is not able to kill against the law, no man except me is able to save against the law”?

Just as he does with his friend’s voice in the *Epistulae Morales* 2.3-4 passage, here Seneca uses the voice of an emperor (or Nero) as a tool to help make his argument as well-structured and as easy to follow as possible. Indeed, the words of the emperor at the end of this excerpt concisely explain the type of kingly mindset necessary to be able to do what is described as “more worthy of remembering” than anything else (i.e. display clemency when it is possible to get away with the greatest cruelty) (memorabilius, *De Clementia* 5.4) Still, there remains a significant difference between these two cases. Whereas the voice used in *Epistulae Morales* 2.3-4 is an example of a “disagreeing” interlocutor, the voice used in *De Clementia* 5.4 is an example of an “agreeing” one. Instead of using his interlocutor’s voice to anticipate and subsequently answer the reader’s arguments to the contrary, as he does with Lucilius’s voice (and, of course, as he does with the “third-party voice” of what “someone might say”
across many of his works, such as in *Ad Helviam 2.2*), when writing in the voice of the emperor for Nero, Seneca makes the interlocutor both assent to the argument already outlined and provide an additional reason why emperors ought to be merciful (because it flaunts their unique power to “save someone against the law”) (*servare nemo praeter me*, *De Clementia* 5.4). This “positive” usage of the Emperor’s voice in *De Clementia* 5.4 allows Seneca’s writing to enjoy the benefits of using an interlocutor while still refraining from directly disagreeing with “literary Nero” about the subject at hand.

Perhaps the most revealing example of Seneca fine-tuning a poetic device to adopt a soft tone toward his reader in the whole work is the comparison he employs in *De Clementia* 9.6. Prior to looking at those lines, however, let us again first consider an instance in which he utilizes the same tool for a different audience. In the following passage taken from the introductory portion, or “exordium,” of *Ad Helviam*, Seneca uses violent and aggressive imagery to list and strengthen his mother’s reasons for grieving (before providing arguments as to why she should still find solace):

3.1 *Gravissimum est ex omnibus quae umquam in corpus tuum descenderunt recens vulnus, fateor; non summam cutem rupit, pectus et viscera ipsa divisit. Sed quemadmodum tirones leviter saucii tamen vociferantur et manus medicorum magis quam ferrum horrent, at veteran quamius confossi patienter ac sine gemitu velut aliena corpora exsaniari patiuntur, ita tu nunc debes fortiter praebere te curationi. 2 Lamentationes quidem et eiulatus et alia per quae fere muliebris dolor tumultuatur amove.*

Seneca, *Ad Helviam* 3.1-2
I admit, the recent wound is the most serious of all those which have ever descended into your body; it did not just break the highest skin, it divided the breast and the internal organs themselves. But just as slightly wounded newly recruited soldiers nevertheless cry out and fear the hands of doctors more than the sword, whereas veterans although stabbed bravely and without a groan tolerate that their bodies be drained as though they were someone else’s, so too now you ought to offer yourself up to therapy bravely. At the very least keep away lamentations and wailing and other things through which the grief of women generally makes a disturbance.

Here we see Seneca employ a comparison with gory imagery to urge Helvia to offer herself up for treatment. After comparing the hardships that she has had to bear up till this point to wounds which “have descended into [her] body,” he goes on to claim that his exile (the “recens vulnus”) has plunged even deeper into her innards (in corpus tuum descenderunt recens vulnus; Ad Heviam 3.1). From there, the images become even more gruesome. In the simile that follows, Seneca counsels Helvia to take up the courage shown by veteran soldiers who “allow their bodies to be drained” without “a groan” (sine gemitu…corpora exsaniari patiuntur, Ad Helviam 3.1). In doing so, as we can see, he is speaking to her in a very direct fashion about how he thinks “[she] ought” to act (debes, Ad Helviam 3.1).

When we look at the comparison Seneca uses in De Clementia 9.6, we find that he employs a very different strategy to give advice to the Emperor. Instead of using his
own voice to assert that Nero should behave in this or that way in a harsh, forceful manner, he writes in the voices of others (historical figures) to impart lessons on clemency to his powerful pupil. The speaker in the comparison contained in the passage below is Augustus’ wife, Livia:

9.6 Interpellavit tandem illum Livia uxor et: “Admittis” inquit “muliebre consilium? Fac quod medoci solent, qui, ubi usitata remedia non procedunt, temptant contraria. Severitate nihil adhuc profecisti; Salvidienum Lepidus secutus est, Lepidum Murena, Murenam Caepio, Caepionem Egnatius, ut alios taceam, quos tantum ausos pudet. Nunc tempta, quomodo tibi cedat clementia; ignosce L. Cinnae. Deprensus est; iam nocere tibi non potest, prodesse famae tuae potest.”

Seneca, De Clementia 9.6

His wife Livia has finally interrupted that man: “Do you allow,” she says, “the advice of women? Do, that which doctors are accustomed to doing, who, when conventional remedies do not succeed, test out opposing ones. You have made progress not at all up till now with strictness. Lepidus followed Salvidienus, Murena followed Lepidus, Caepio followed Murena, and Egnatius followed Caepio, so that I am silent on others, for whom there is shame at having dared so great a deed. Now test out how mercy may go for you; forgive Lucius Cinna. He has been discovered; now he is not able to harm you, but he is able to be beneficial to your reputation.
Before even examining the word choice or imagery contained in this passage, the reader is able to sense that Seneca adopts a much softer, weaker tone in addressing Nero than he did in addressing Helvia simply by noting that the advice given here is relayed to Nero not through an example but via an “example within an example.” Indeed, Seneca has Livia employ an example to advocate in favor of showing mercy to Cinna within a discussion on Augustus (which, as a whole, is already functioning as a historical example on the importance of clemency). This method of imparting a lesson to Nero (as opposed to the more direct means used to instruct Helvia) seems to have the effect of distancing Seneca from the advice being given.

A closer inspection of this passage offers further support for the conclusion that Seneca is attempting to instruct the Emperor without sounding too authoritative. In addition to employing another voice to advise Nero, Seneca also makes the individual giving the advice a woman and has her ask permission to give it to a different emperor (“Admittis” inquit “muliebre consilium?”, De Clementia 9.6). Not only do these subtleties serve to distance Seneca from the advice being supplied to an even greater extent, but they also function to make the tone of the advisor—both Livia and Seneca—seem softer and weaker than that of the forceful advisor in Ad Helviam 3.1-2. This difference in tone is reflected in the verbs used in the imperative form within each passage. Whereas Seneca bluntly orders Helvia to “keep away” female expressions of grief, he has Livia encourage Augustus (and thus Nero) to simply “test out” clemency (amove, Ad Helviam 3.2; tempta, De Clementia 9.6). The implication in the De Clementia 9.6 case is that it will be up to the advisee to determine for himself at a later date whether or not the proposed display of clemency has worked out well;
in the *Ad Helviam* 3.1-2 case, by contrast, the advisee is told plainly to deal with her grief in the one “correct” fashion. Moreover, the image of doctors “test[ing] out opposing remedies” used in the *De Clementia* 9.6 comparison makes the advisee—both Augustus and Nero—appear to be a more significant individual than Seneca’s military imagery makes Helvia appear to be (medoci...temptant contraria, *De Clementia* 9.6). Indeed, whereas he equates Helvia to a patient (a weakened person in a position of powerlessness under another’s care) failing to deal with grief in a proper manner, he has Livia equate Augustus—and therefore Nero—to a doctor: a learned individual in a position of power over others employing different methods to solve a problem (quemadmodum tirones leviter saucii tamen vociferantur... ita tu nunc debes fortiter praebere te curationi, *Ad Helviam* 3.1). Here again, we see that Seneca appears to treat his advisee in *De Clementia* 9.6 with a greater level of respect.

In *De Clementia* 1.5-6, 5.4, and 9.6, Seneca uses an example, an interlocutor, and a comparison to help convey the points he wants to make about clemency in the clearest possible fashion for his intended audience. By comparing and contrasting his approach in using these same literary tools in works where his addressee is someone other than the most powerful individual in the Western Hemisphere (*De Providentia*, *Epitulae Morales*, and *Ad Helviam*), we are able to appreciate the ways that Seneca fine-tunes elements of his style in *De Clementia* in order to adopt the soft, non-confrontational tone necessary to remain in the emperor’s good graces while providing him with instruction on clemency. For further research, as this paper focuses on the different usages of the aforementioned literary devices in *De Clementia* and on only three other passages in Seneca’s vast corpus, it might be worthwhile to identify and analyze additional cases where Seneca employs these tools. This
would provide us with more extensive data on all the various ways Seneca utilizes such structures in his writing and might thus serve to enrich our understanding of the three De Clementia passages discussed here even further.

References

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Horace—Carmina 3.30

Translated by Amanda Ball

Exegi monumentum aere perennius
regalique situ pyramidum altius,
quod non imber edax, non Aquilo inpotens
possit diruere aut innumerabilis
annorum series et fuga temporum.
Non omnis moriar multaque pars mei
uitabit Libitinam; usque ego postera
crescam laude recens, dum Capitolium
scandet cum tacita uirgine pontifex.
Dicar, qua uiolens obstrepit Aufidus
et qua pauper aquae Daunus agrestium
regnauit populorum, ex humili potens
princeps Aeolium carmen ad Italos
deduxisse modos. Sume superbiam
quaesitam meritis et mihi Delphica
lauro cinge uiolens, Melpomene, comam.7

I raised a monument, more enduring than bronze,
and loftier than the royal ruin of the pyramids,
which neither demolishing rain, nor the unbridled North Wind
could raze: nor the incalculable
succession of years and times flight.
I will not die entirely, and a grand part of me
will escape Libitina; and I will grow ever anew
with the praise of posterity, as long as the pontifex
will climb the Capitoline with the silent virgin priestess.

I will be legendary, powerful though from humble origins,
where violent Aufidus roars and where
Daunus poor in rivers ruled rural people,
the foremost to compose the Aeolian song in
the Italian measures. Take the pride you sought,
Melpomene, for merits, and gladly crown my head
With the Delphic laurels.
“Very well, my dear fellow,” Socrates says to his interlocutor Phaedrus, “but you must first show me what it is that you have in your left hand under your cloak, for I surmise that it is the actual discourse” (477). Very little could invalidate an argument more rapidly, in Plato’s terms, than reading it from paper. Centuries later, by the time Macrobius was personifying and fetishizing the worthy passage, an entire textual tradition of Greek and Latin had moved to the forefront of Hellenic and Roman culture. The ability to read – for authorial intent and concealed meaning alike – became vital. Plotinus optimistically yearned for beautiful emanations of universal truth throughout the world. Informed by Christian theology and acosmistic love, Augustine aspired to the salvation of souls. Compared to these lofty aims, the endeavors of Horace and Longinus – noble pagans both, direct heirs to the classical heritage – seem trivial. Effectively writing clever, self-fulfilling guides to composing good poetry and sublime oratory, their concern is in perfecting a craft (pragmatic ars and techne, respectively), yet the authors are far more playful and passionate than Aristotle in his detached treatises. For a poet and a rhetorician not obviously concerned with close readings, they find tremendous vitality in engagement with the literary tradition.

Fundamentally, Horace and Longinus both set good reading as a logical prerequisite to good composition. Much of the craft, they equally maintain, cannot be taught – shown in Longinus’ notion of “great thoughts” (138) and Horace’s humorous evasiveness regarding specific prescriptions.
Throughout their works, they default to literary legends with frequent allusion to Homer and the Greek dramatists; Longinus even devotes a significant portion to quoting and interpreting poetry: “Sappho’s excellence, as I have said, lies in her adoption and combination of the most striking details” (140). At the same time, Horace contends against inspiration from the Muse, emphasizing individual strivings: “Wisdom is the starting-point and source of correct writing. Socratic books will be able to point out to you your material, and once the material is provided the words will follow willingly enough” (129). The oxymoron “Socratic books” is microcosmic to Horace’s unique brand of tongue-in-cheek seriousness: the good poet really ought to read all the old masters, even Plato’s repudiations of poetry itself. Indeed with sardonic solemnity, he beseeches, “Study Greek models day and night” (128). Glimmers of a cultural inferiority complex – a common Roman sentiment – seep into his Greek-Roman comparisons:

Your ancestors praised Plautus’ metre and his humour. On both counts their admiration was too indulgent, not to say childish, if it’s true that you and I know how to distinguish a witless jest from a subtle one and if we’ve skill in our fingers and ears to know what sounds are permitted. (128)

Hidden beneath the jibe is his truth: the necessary skill of the good reader. Longinus is more overtly inspired in his readings: “These great figures, presented to us as objects of emulation and, as it were, shining before our gaze, will somehow elevate our minds to the greatness of which we

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8 Latin: *Socraticae chartae*, literally “Socratic paper” and equally absurd.
form a mental image” (143).

Longinus’ statement is significant particularly for his use of *emulation*, a term he delineates earlier: “Plato, if we will read him with attention, illustrates yet another road to sublimity, besides those we have discussed. This is the way of imitation (*mimesis*) and emulation (*zelos*) of great writers of the past” (142). Imitation is the copy spurned by Plato and embraced by Aristotle. Emulation is an entirely different animal: *zelos* for Longinus and *aemulatio* for Horace; a zealous rewriting of vital cultural works; a literary appropriation with love. The conventional mimetic tradition involves the artful representation of real-life events accessible to a layperson audience. The emulator, far more esoterically, writes for other readers. Under this framework, it quickly becomes clear which Horace prefers: “My advice to the skilled imitator (*imitatorem*) will be to keep his eye on the model of life and manners, and draw his speech living from there” (129). (How limiting!) With a clever reworking of the *Odyssey*’s opening lines as his device, Horace entreats: “The common stock will become your private property if you don’t linger on the broad and vulgar round, or anxiously render word for word, a loyal interpreter, or again, in the process of imitation, find yourself in a tight corner from which shame, or the rule of craft, won’t let you move” (125). Emulation, counterintuitively, *liberates* the writer. Longinus compares reading to the transcendent, supernatural of the Pythia at Delphi:

Similarly, the genius of the ancients acts as a kind of oracular cavern, and effluences flow from it into the minds of their imitators. Even those previously not much inclined to prophesy

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9 Aristotle’s notion of verisimilitude.
become inspired and share the enthusiasm which comes from the greatness of others.

It is a righteous burden, to read the greats and attempt to write as greatly: “Truly it is a noble contest and prize of honour, and one well worth winning, in which to be defeated by one’s elders is itself no disgrace” (142).

In one of the Phaedrus’ ultimate rejections of written texts, Socrates declares: “They seem to talk to you as though they were intelligent, but if you ask them anything about what they say, from a desire to be instructed, they go on telling you just the same thing forever” (521). Plato’s argument rests upon the then-fundamental truth that a written work lacks the truth-seeking, engaging dynamism of the dialectic. He had no notion of the Greek and Latin textual tradition about to develop, leading scholars like Longinus to pose once unfathomable queries: “Even more stimulating is the further thought: ‘How will posterity take what I am writing?’” (143). To write sublimely, for Longinus, is to outlast a specific cultural milieu; for Horace, effective poetry which pleases and instructs is that which improves upon the most ubiquitous of extent works. Unlike the Platonists’ absolute truths, the learned pagans recognized a dynamic tradition influenced by varying circumstances – not relativism exactly, but certainly something appreciable for modernists. Learning to compose meant, above all, reading the greats: for inspiration, opportunity, and challenge.

References


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Nec vero habere virtutem satis est quasi artem aliquam nisi utare; etsi ars quidem cum ea non utare scientia tamen ipsa teneri potest, virtus in usu sui tota posita est; usus autem eius est maximus civitatis gubernatio, et earum ipsarum rerum quas isti in angulis personant, reapse non oratione perfectio. nihil enim dicitur a philosophis, quod quidem recte honesteque dicatur, quod non ab iis partum confirmatumque sit, a quibus civitatibus iura discripta sunt. unde enim pietas, aut a quibus religio? unde ius aut gentium aut hoc ipsum civile quod dicitur? unde iustitia fides aequitas? unde pudor continentia fuga turpi dinis adpetentia laudis et honestatis? unde in laboribus et periculis fortitudo? nempe ab iis qui haec disciplinis informata alia moribus confirmarunt, sanxerunt autem alia legibus.

quae est istorum oratio tam exquisita, quae sit anteponenda bene constitutae civitati publico iure et moribus? equidem quem ad modum 'urbes magnas atque inperiosas', ut appellat Ennius, viculis et castellis praeferendas puto, sic eos qui his urbibus consilio atque auctoritate praesunt, iis qui omnis negotii publici expertes sint, longe duco sapientia ipsa esse anteponendos. et
quoniam maxime rapimur ad opes augendae \generis\ humani, studemusque nostris consiliis et laboribus tuiorem et opulentiorem vitam hominum reddere, et ad hanc voluptatem ipsius naturae stimuli incitamur, teneamus eum cursum qui semper fuit optimi cuiusque, neque ea signa audiamus quae receptui canunt, ut eos etiam revocent qui iam processerint.\textsuperscript{10}

(2) Truly it is not enough to have virtue, as if some other quality, unless you make use of it. Even though knowledge itself is able to be preserved, indeed even when that knowledge is not used, virtue lies entirely in its own use. However, the advantage of virtue is most clear in the management of the state and the completion through actions, not with only words, of those very matters which some men only clamor about in their nooks. For nothing is said by a philosopher, or nothing is said by them honorably and rightly, which was not brought forth and proven by those who established laws for the state. For from where is it said does duty come? From where religion? From where law, both international and local? From where justice and faith and equity? Where decency and temperance, flight from shame and the seeking of glory and honor? From where does bravery in labors and dangers arise? Certainly from those men who developed some of these things with teaching and morals, and yet others they enacted with laws.

(3) In fact they even say Xenocrates, an excellent man among the best of philosophers, when asked what his followers pursued, responded that they did that from their own wishes which they would be forced to do by law. Therefore that citizen, who compels all with his command and with the punishment of law to do that which philosophers are able to

\textsuperscript{10} Latin text: \textlanglehttp://www.thelatinlibrary.com/cicero/repub1.shtml\textrangle.
persuade only few to do with words, must be preferred to even those teachers who discuss the arguments for those things. For what is so exquisite about their teaching that it must be valued higher than a state founded with public law and morals? For my own part I think that in the same way that “great and powerful cities,” as Ennius calls them, are preferred to villages and towns, those men who lead their cities with counsel and authority must be thought far better with respect to wisdom than those who lack any experience in public work. Seeing that we are carried off to the work of bettering the human race, and we strive with our plans and actions to return a safer and richer life to mankind, and to this pleasure we are incited by the goad of nature itself, let us hold that path which the best men always held, let us not hear those horns which sing for retreat, those horns which recall even those who already have pushed forth.
“Though both not equal, as their sex not equal seemed”:
The Role of Gender in Epic Teleology in the 
*Iliad* and *Paradise Lost*

By Lauren Kaufmann

*For contemplation he and valour formed,*
*For softness she and sweet attractive grace,*
*He for God only, she for God in him*

*Paradise Lost* IV. 297-9

...But you,
*The gods have replaced your heart*
*With flint and malice, because of one girl,*
*One single girl...*

*Iliad* IX. 657-60

Reading a Homeric epic is not an exercise in narrative suspense and revelation. Rather, the plot ineluctably pushes toward an unavoidable end—a finality that must be. Episodes of misdirection or meandering, from the perspective of the epic genre, exist to be overcome and subsumed by the broader narrative, thus demonstrating ever more strongly the teleological form.¹¹ In the Judeo-Christian tradition, the story of Adam and Eve is an exemplary case of the epic with its fixed, inevitable telos: Eve must eat the forbidden fruit and humanity must fall. However, the idea of strict causality in

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Eden from pre- to postlapsaria is complicated by David Quint’s *Epic and Empire*. He articulates a distinction between two types of epic: those of the imperial victors, modeled by Virgil and characterized by its linear teleology, and those of the defeated, associated with Lucan and containing the meandering tendencies of romance.\(^{12}\) He argues that, while Milton’s epic illustrates the teleological movement supporting its overarching political-theological narrative, *Paradise Lost* nonetheless bestows upon Adam and Eve psychological freedom, demonstrating the potential for individual choice to derail a romance-epic altogether, thereby suggesting that “individual choices of conscience… can have far-reaching, indeed world-historical consequences.”\(^{13}\)

With this genre framework in mind, I seek to investigate the nature of gender in epic. I engage Miltonic literary criticism due to its profound focus on the psychology of gender in Eden to formulate my own conclusions. Then I gaze retrospectively at the *Iliad*. I seek to glean an understanding of the notion of epic telos in the grandfather of Milton’s epic poem, Homer’s *Iliad*, and will conclude with a reflection upon the heroic natures of Adam and Hector.

I. Milton and *Paradise Lost*: Gender, Dynamism, and the Fall

When Milton composed *Paradise Lost*, he was a blind man in his fifties, utterly disappointed by the failure of the so-called “English Revolution” and restoration of the monarchy in 1660.\(^{14}\) He aimed to write a new kind of epic poem focusing on sacred truths in order to “assert Eternal Providence, / And justify the ways of God to men” (I. 25-6).

\(^{12}\) Quint, *Epic and Empire*, p. 8-9.

\(^{13}\) Quint, *Epic and Empire*, p. 283.

He incorporates features of Homeric epic—beginning in *medias res*, invoking the muse, emphasizing aristocratic and martial themes, employing so-called epic similes, and more—but he also revises and challenges these conventions. Indeed, the character in *Paradise Lost* who most embodies the Greek martial virtues is Satan “in his unwavering pursuit of personal glory and imperial ambitions.”

Satan’s obsession with external honor and rejection of subservience aligns him with the heroes Achilles and Hector who sacrifice their lives for ephemeral social status and the hope for eternal glory demonstrating how “fully their sense of self is bound up with these external marks of honor.” Milton also employs features of the romance genre, characterized by dynamism, wandering, and the possibility—but not promise—of learning. On the divine level, these features of romance highlight “the aimlessness of the eternally fallen Satan.”

Satan always ventures higher than his divinely-granted, creaturely lot and engages in an eternal repetition of trial and failure. But Milton presents these same narrative characteristics in a positive light for his human protagonists. In Eden, Adam and Eve find a dynamic space of discovery that works to advance Milton’s own theological project: God-given free will. Read within his corpus of political and religious writings, Milton’s portrayal of the gendered dynamics between Adam and Eve serves both his ideological and political ends and also contributes to the telos of the epic narrative.

Most critics who discuss gender, hierarchy, and power in Eden consider Milton’s cultural moment and his political

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17 Quint, *Epic and Empire*, p. 303.
and religious tracts including *Areopagitica*, *Tetrachordon*, and *De Doctrina Christiana*\(^{18}\) to aid the reader in situating *Paradise Lost* within the broader scope of his intellectual project. As the quotation I use to open this paper exemplifies, Milton constructs Adam and Eve as essentially different but ineluctably related via a hierarchy atop which man reigns. While in scripture female subordination is a purely postlapsarian condition,\(^{19}\) Milton’s portrayal of women is that of presupposition—and thus inborn diminished status—due to their inherent distance from God’s image.\(^{20}\) Reading Eve’s creation, then, with an understanding of Milton’s theology yields an interpretation of her role solely as Adam’s companion. In *Paradise Lost*, God creates Eve as the “embodiment of Adam’s wise longing”\(^{21}\): “Thy wish, exactly to thy heart’s desire” (VIII. 451). Eve, in both mind and body, is formed in Adam’s image to “permit unity with him.”\(^{22}\) She is meant to exist alongside—not share—his preeminence. Thus, while Milton grants Eve an autonomy rarely seen in the works of other seventeenth-century male writers who tend to “under-develop...their [female characters’] moral and

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\(^{18}\) *Areopagitica* today remains an enduring defense of the right to freedom of speech and rejection of state censorship; *Tetrachordon* is a scriptural rationalization of legalized divorce; and *De Doctrina Christiana* is a collection of Milton’s theological beliefs and arguments.

\(^{19}\) “Prior to the Fall, there is no mention in the *Bible* of woman’s subordination to man; female subordination is a postlapsarian condition imposed on woman by God in Genesis 3.16 for her role in the Fall.” Desma Polydorou, “Gender And Spiritual Equality In Marriage: A Dialogic Reading Of Rachel Speght And John Milton,” *Milton Quarterly* 35.1 (2001): 23.

\(^{20}\) Polydorou, “Gender And Spiritual Equality In Marriage”, p. 22.


intellectual faculties,”23 a fundamental theological belief nonetheless operates in the text: “The Pauline notion that male is to female as head is to body or as spirit is to flesh.”24 In Tetrachordon, Milton emphasizes the pronoun “him” in the phrase “in the image of God created he him” from Genesis 1:27, arguing along with 1 Corinthians 11 that “woman is not primarily and immediately the image of God, but in reference to the man.” Mutual-egalitarian interpretations of the Adam-Eve relationship indeed existed in Milton’s time, such as in the writing of Rachel Speght, but Milton’s distinctly masculinist readings of Genesis and Paul’s epistles serve his own political and theological ends and emerge in his poetics. He portrays Eve’s nature as inherently subordinate to Adam’s. However, it is precisely this hierarchy that Milton complicates in Paradise Lost: it is both protagonists’ misunderstandings of this hierarchy that will lead to the Fall and thus fuel the narrative teleology.

“O yet happiest if ye seek / No happier state, and know to know no more” advises Raphael to the blissfully sleeping Adam and Eve in Book IV of Paradise Lost, revealing the danger imminent when venturing higher than the cognitive state granted by God (IV. 774-5). Despite this warning Eve aims upward toward equality with Adam—“for inferior who is free?” she asks—demonstrating her misinterpretation of the nexus of power in which she has been placed (IX. 825). She does not possess inborn knowledge of her relation to Adam as his rightfully subordinate partner, a lack of understanding demonstrated explicitly by Milton in her creation scene. When she first sees Adam, she finds his appearance “Less winningly soft, less amiably mild,/Than that smooth wat’ry image” of her own reflection (IV. 479-80). It is not until

24 Polydorou, “Gender And Spiritual Equality In Marriage”, p. 22.
Adam seizes her hand that Eve recognizes his “manly grace/And wisdom, which alone is truly fair” (IV. 490-1). Here, Eve verbally acknowledges her inferiority but fails to understand that her subordination means her individual teleological success: serving as Adam’s wife via adherence to her assigned, essentialist gender role. Already, Milton depicts Eden as a world in which his characters are able to explore and grow.  

Thus, the depiction of Eve and Adam is not merely one of static characters existing in rigid hierarchy; the two grow in prelapsarian Eden by learning from one another and developing as individuals. An interpretation of their marriage as inclusive of trial and error of this sort is also in keeping with Milton’s theological and political ideals. For him, true liberty which “must be contingent in order to be free” essentially includes the potential for failure—whether embodied through Christian free will allowing sin or through civic liberty that can cause the acceptance of a king such as Charles II.

The plot of *Paradise Lost*, of course, depends upon

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25 The extent to which the prelapsarian Adam-Eve relationship includes individual and personal dynamism is a topic of continued scholarly debate. Influencing many critical responses to this question is an understanding of Milton’s own theory of marriage revealed most pointedly through his philosophy of divorce in *Tetrachordon*. I position myself with scholars such as Edwards, Belsey, and Pruitt who argue that Milton’s marriage ideal—embodied by Adam and Eve—includes a reciprocity requiring both types (personal and interpersonal) of dynamism. Further, this dynamism corresponds to the Miltonic notion of free will: as McColley says, “If Adam and Eve are not sufficient as well as free, God will in effect have inclined the scale toward disobedience. Their responsibility for their conduct derives from their capacity to obey.” Diane McColley, “Free Will and Obedience in the Separation Scene of Paradise Lost,” *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 12 (Winter 1972): 103-20.

26 Quint, *Epic and Empire*, p. 300.

Eve’s rejection of Raphael’s advice to remain content in her subservience, upon the failure of learning her rightful relation to Adam, and on the “self-assertion and independence”\textsuperscript{28} of “adventurous Eve” (IX. 921). Eve’s prelapsarian failure to learn fully the nature of her marriage to Adam—destined not for full equality but for harmonious, hierarchical coexistence—thus culminates in her sin. This portrait of Eve’s cognitive state as innately limited is in keeping with seventeenth-century gender norms and also adheres to Milton’s theological belief in female presubordination. Duped by Satan’s wiles, she eats the apple in order to make herself more appealing to her husband and “add what wants/In female sex, the more to draw his love” (IX. 821-2). As Quint argues, “Eve’s seeking of independence thus grows out of her relationship with Adam as much as from diabolic suggestion.”\textsuperscript{29} She fails to understand her individual ontology and falls prey to demonic deception. However, Adam’s subsequent indulgence in the forbidden fruit is an event of a fundamentally different sort.

Milton’s God creates both Adam and Eve “Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall” (III.99). The double alliteration in this line, separated by the comma caesura, creates a symmetry separated by the pivotal \textit{though}, which concedes the choice. The whole of humankind is not fallen until Adam joins Eve in the postlapsarian state. This fall is the result of free choice and active rejection of reason. Adam articulates his mental and physical superiority: “I understand in the prime end/Of nature her the inferior, the mind/And inward faculties, which most excel,/In outward also her resembling less/His image who made both” thereby recognizing his duty to lead Eve with his “inward faculties,” his rationality and wit (VIII.540-4). Adam actively rejects his

\textsuperscript{28} Belsey, \textit{John Milton}, p. 60.
\textsuperscript{29} Quint, \textit{Epic and Empire}, p. 292.
divinely granted role as leader of humanity when he fails to fulfill husbandly duty and mistakes the fallen Eve for the righteous wife God initially creates for him. The “effeminate slackness” (XI. 633) of which the angel Michael accuses Adam manifests when he stoops “to join [Eve] in sin rather than trusting divine providence and using his own unfallen virtue to free her from it.”\(^{30}\) Adam chooses not to live—in his case, an everlasting condition—without the fallen Eve and instead follows her into sin by eating the forbidden fruit. In turning away from the virtuous Eve given to him by God and committing a theological adultery against the bond that originally unites him to her, Adam makes his contribution to the teleology of Milton’s poetic project. Both Adam and Eve must sin for the Christian faith to develop, but in striving toward this telos—the apocalyptic ending of all endings—Milton depicts divergent reasons for the fall of the two genders. The grandfather of humanity exercises free will and chooses to fall—despite knowledge that tells him to do the contrary. Milton adheres to the Bible’s statement in 1 Tim. 2:4 that “Eve was deceived—and that Adam was not.”\(^{31}\)

Despite the difficulties of power and perceived hierarchy that inform the Fall, Milton emphasizes the ever-present counterfactual: Adam could have chosen otherwise. Indeed, it is the fact of human free will that enables him to exonerate God from responsibility for the inevitable sin.\(^{32}\) This seeming paradox illuminates divergent systems of logic and necessity within and beyond the epic plotline: in Eden, Adam and Eve are free to choose while in the global scheme of teleology they must fall. Milton presents Eve as a catalyst

\(^{30}\) McColley, “Free Will and Obedience in the Separation Scene of Paradise Lost,” p. 118.

\(^{31}\) Edwards, “Gender, Sex, And Marriage In Paradise”, p. 155.

\(^{32}\) Lowenstein, “The seventeenth-century Protestant English epic”, p. 150.
whose beauty is so striking that, when she turns away from Adam at her birth, her apparent ability to exist apart “seems to have inflicted upon him a psychic wound” that informs his irrational choice to join her in sin. It is from the female sex then that challenges to textual rationality arise in Paradise Lost. A similar argument can be made for the Iliad.

II. Homer’s Iliad & Heroic Men

As in Milton’s Eden, Homer’s Troy contains gender dynamics that both allow and problematize the narrative’s teleology. It is the adultery of Helen, “running off with a glamorous Oriental, which triggered the disasters of the Trojan War” and the expropriation of Briseis that impels Achilles to refuse to fight, prolonging the bloody battle. The interactions between men and women in the Iliad show female characters as demonstrating the “dangers, temptations, and deceptions that are involved with that problematic sex” and thus serve as barriers that must be overcome or vanquished in order to maintain both community and narrative cohesion. When Achilles rejects Agamemnon’s ambassadors and their offer of reconciliation, he sacrifices his broader community—drastically prolonging the war until his dramatic reentry—due to the social offense committed when Agamemnon takes Briseis. Phoenix, Achilles’ mentor, recounts the Meleager story to encourage him to accept the offered retribution, linking the possession of gifts with social honor. Though these offerings constitute a critical mark of social status, Achilles rejects the advice and declares, “I don’t need that kind of honor, Phoenix” (IX. 624). Achilles’ anger at the theft of his booty, an earned trophy from battles well

33 Quint, Epic and Empire, p. 290.
35 Griffin, “Greek epic”, p. 19.
fought, demonstrates the extent to which his sense of pride and honor are anchored in external markings. Thus, while his denial of the gifts seems to demonstrate the rejection of community standards, his conception of shame and honor inform this choice and work to position him as maintaining cultural cohesion and reinscribing himself within a culturally normative system of logic. This exchange of the female body as social capital exemplifies the rigid importance of status to the Homeric hero and allows Achilles to enact his adherence to society’s values.

As this example illustrates, women in the *Iliad* function as catalysts for male action and either adherence to or deviation from their heroic scripts. Females present potential crises to the collectivity in *Paradise Lost* and the *Iliad* and, in this way, drive the teleological movement of the epics; their desires must be rejected and vanquished. The final exchange between Hector and his wife Andromache is a poignant example of this collision of gendered ideals. Unlike Adam, whose *failure* to lead rationally defines his contribution to epic teleology, Hector’s staunch *adherence* to his heroic ideals—a feature characterized in Milton as superhuman via the single-minded Satan and Abdiel—in this domestic scene constitutes the fulfillments of his ontological goal as Homeric hero and of the narrative teleology.

When Hector reenters the walls of Troy in Book VI of the *Iliad*, he encounters three women—his mother Hecuba, his sister-in-law Helen, and his wife Andromache. His exchanges with each of them demonstrate how fully he, a military man, is “cut off from the community he is risking his life to protect.”\(^{36}\) During their final conversation as husband and wife, Andromache presents to Hector an argument at odds with the heroic rationality of the Iliadic world: claims to the

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individual family superseding the larger community. She says, “Possessed is what you are, Hector. Your courage/ Is going to kill you, and you have no feeling left/ For your little boy or for me, the luckless woman/ Who will soon be your widow. It won’t be long/ Before the whole Greek army swarms and kills you” (VI. 427-31). Like Adam, Hector is here presented with a choice: he can heed Andromache’s entreaty and fight defensively instead of in the front lines and thereby preserve her seemingly valid claims to family, or he can sacrifice his own life and the happiness of his family by maintaining his heroic modus operandi and fall by the blade of a sword. Andromache, like Eve, is described as remarkably beautiful and virtuous: “blameless,” “gracious,” and “white-armed.” A captivating female figure, Andromache expresses a challenge to the internal logic of the text in a moment at which Hector could deviate from the all-important community principles that define heroism. Unlike Adam, though, Hector rejects her request by appealing to his prevailing martial code: “Yes, Andromache, I worry about all this myself,/ But my shame before the Trojans and their wives,/ With their long robes trailing, would be too terrible/ If I hung back from battle like a coward./ And my heart won’t let me” (VI. 463-7). Hector’s words show that he is unwilling, due to his unwavering adherence to the distinctly Homeric conceptions of shame and cowardice, to respond favorably to his wife’s desperate plea.

This is, as it is for Adam, a matter of life and death. Hector chooses premature mortality, reflecting the “blindness and self-destructiveness that are bound up with heroic glory.” It is through the rejection of the desires of his lovely wife Andromache that Homer here enacts what Milton would have recognized as akin to his own model of free will in his

own recasting of epic as theological history. Hector maintains his status as hero—despite the highest of costs—by adhering to his rigidly defined ontology and sacrificing his own life and his wife’s compelling claims to family. In adhering to his heroic script—by standing when he could fall to Andromache’s appeal—Hector thereby fulfills both his personal ontology as Homeric hero and the teleology of the epic narrative: he must die, and Troy must burn.

III. Gendered Relationships in Eden and Troy

Milton’s strict adherence to God-granted free will creates a space of narrative romance in which Eve and then Adam fail to learn and grow in such a way that would preclude the fall of humanity. Conversely, Homer depicts a hero with a logical system utterly incompatible with the meanderings and deviations that Adam undergoes; as such, Hector is able to maintain his own heroic ontology.

Why is Hector able to reach his personal teleology while Adam and Eve fail so dreadfully? Though both tales are mythohistories, it is critical that no one has ever actually lived in a heroic age. It is a perspective “reserved for posterity, looking back with admiration, or with envy, at the truly great and memorable actions of the past.”38 We can covet Hector’s single-minded adherence to his martial, heroic duty precisely because we cannot identify with him. Milton, on the other hand, writes his epic from the viewpoint of a fallen Christian—hyperconsciousness of the mutability and imperfection of his creaturely nature. Adam’s adherence to emotion over rationality and Eve’s misunderstanding of her subordination to her husband involve psychological complexities and misinformed assumptions that are characteristic of the difficulties of human existence.

38 Griffin, “Greek epic”, p. 16.
Milton presents his reader with an alternative to the hierarchical gender constructs that characterize Eden. In the heaven of Paradise Lost, there exists no gender differential at all; the angels are free to change form at will and share a union of equality unattainable by humans: “Easier than air with air, if spirits embrace / Total they mix, union of pure with pure / Desiring” (VIII. 626-8). Without a gendered hierarchy there can exist no gender stereotypes, no divergent ontologies, no privilege and inferiority—characteristics that, in Milton’s Christian worldview, have no place in humanity. The unity of his angels harkens not to the mutable and irrational failings of the human mind but, rather, to the singular mindset of Homeric heroes. Unity, conformity, and singularity are the traits Hector possesses and Adam lacks. Perhaps Milton would have preferred that God had given humanity Hector instead of Adam. In the poet’s world, it could have made all the difference.

References


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Conversations

Julie Nishimura-Jensen

Lecturer and Director of the Post-baccalaureate Program in Classical Studies

Discentes: Let’s start by talking about your role in the department.

Dr. Julie Nishimura-Jensen: I have an interesting role in that I am not a full faculty member, so I am not involved in some of the faculty decisions. But I am full-time: I direct the post-baccalaureate program here. So I teach two courses each year for the post-baccs, and I also teach two non-post-bacc courses. I usually do the beginning Greek sequence. My role
is as an administrator and a teacher. I am involved in admissions right now, and I am also involved in advising—making sure that they have a good year.

D: What is your overall goal for students coming out of the post-bacc program?

JNJ: There are two outcomes we’re looking for. We have students coming from all over the country and international students. They’re here to decide what their next step should be. Most of them want to go into grad school in classics or a related field like ancient history or archaeology. And for some of them that’s the right step. I help them with their applications and finding them the best match in a graduate program. Others come in not really sure, or they discover here, taking upper-level classes, that this is not really what they signed up for. For them, that can be sort of difficult, if you’ve been identifying yourself as a pre-PhD student then realizing, “Oh, this isn’t right,” is upsetting for some people, but it really is the right thing. An important part of my job is to help people understand that’s fine, and that they might have a better life doing something entirely different. That doesn’t necessarily mean that I can tell them what it would be, but I can help them figure out that this isn’t what they want. And that’s great too.

D: What would you say to a student who decides that graduate study in ancient history is not for them and feels like they might have wasted a year?

JNJ: I explain to them that serious study in any subject is going to sharpen your critical thinking skills, your analytic skills. Even if you’re not going to use these languages, the ability to study something at depth is an important skill to have. And I think it’s going to be fine on a resume—it doesn’t look like they’ve been dinking around—and it’s fine to explore different fields. It’s a good time in their lives, too; it’s a lot easier in your early 20’s than in your early 40’s. I tell
them that it’s not a wasted year. It’s some time that maybe feels like a dead end, but hopefully the critical thinking skills are things they can use later on. I certainly know a lot of classics majors who have gone on to law school, medical school, business school, teaching. There are so many things they can still do.

D: What first attracted you to Latin and Greek?

JNJ: I started taking Latin in high school because my sister told me to. It seemed like a crazy idea to me because it was a dead language. Who wants to take a dead language? At the time, I was taking French. You could go to France and seem very cosmopolitan, but my sister was four years older than me and had just done the Latin sequence and said, “You should do the Latin sequence. It’s great! You’ll do better on your SATs. It’s really worth it.” Since she was my older sister, I said, “Okay fine, I’ll take Latin.” And she was right. My teacher, Mrs. Small, was life-changing. She did more than just drilling of the language. We did history and art. It opened the whole culture up. It was just one of those transformative experiences. By the time we were done, I had fallen in love with Aeneas. In college, I knew that majoring in classics was a pretty good possibility. When I went to Carleton College, and they said, “Oh look, you have all this Latin. You should take Greek!” And I said, “Oh, yeah, I think I’ll do that!”

D: How did you see yourself moving into the classics world beyond college?

JNJ: I thought about going to grad school while I was still an undergrad. I would get teased by my friends a lot. They would say, “Oh, you’re such a classics professor, hahaha!” Every time there was something in a movie about a crazy Latin professor, my friends would always point at me. But actually, when I got to the point where I was writing my application essays, I couldn’t think of a good reason to go to grad school except that I didn’t know what else I’d do. That
didn’t seem like a very good reason to go. It was also scary because it seemed like all of my other friends had a plan. I thought, “How do you know what you want to do?” I just didn’t feel at all certain at that point that that was what I wanted to do. So I called my parents, and I said, “I don’t think I want to go to grad school.” And they said, “Well, what are you going to do?” And I said, “I think I’m going to move to Minneapolis and work with friends and maybe get a job and figure things out.” I was dancing a lot, so I thought I’d try out dancing and see if that would lead anywhere. I danced and found that, even though I love performing, it was not something I could see myself doing long-term. It was just too hard a life. I also really missed the intellectual stimulation of academia. When I sat down to write my application essay, it was a lot easier because I really knew why I wanted to do this. Part of it was teaching—I taught dance, and I could see how teaching could be an extension of performing. So I did nothing academic at all for four years, but it was a good time in my life to do it. You can’t do that when you have kids or are trying to pay a mortgage.

D: How is it having a full-time job—directing the post-bacc program, teaching—and also raising kids?

JNJ: It’s always juggling, always balls in the air. It’s different for every person, so I would never presume to tell people to do one thing or the other. But for me, it was very important to be with my kids as much as possible. I’m seeing this with one kid already in high school, how fast they grow up. In four years he’s going to be in college. I know I’m never going to regret coming home early to make sure I’m home to make him a snack when he comes home and take him to soccer practice and take my younger son to track meets and over to his jazz band concerts. I’m very lucky that my job is such that I am able to do that, and Penn has been wonderful in making that happen. I came here as an adjunct, teaching just one
semester at a time. In some ways, that was very helpful when raising kids. But when I had a full-time job, I said, “I’m going to be on a 3:00 PM train every day,” and that was absolutely fine. I try to be as available as possible on email—thank God for the internet!—but I also make it very clear that when I’m home, I am home, and there are times when I say that I am not going to be monitoring the computer because I want to be able to help my kids with their homework, I want to be able to go to all their soccer games. I want to be able to be there for them all the time. I feel incredibly fortunate that I can do this. If I had been working for tenure when they were younger, there would have been times where I just couldn’t be there for them. I have friends who have done similar things to this, and they had to put their kids in daycare all day every day. My kids have been in daycare, and I understand that choice, but I’m just glad that I’m able to be there for them a bit more.

D: You mentioned that your husband is also a professor. What does he teach?

JNJ: He teaches astronomy at Swarthmore College. We’re fortunate because we live five minutes from his office. He’s a tenured full professor now, but he was working toward tenure when the kids were little. So I did feel like I was taking a step backwards for feminism when I was the primary caregiver in some of those years, and that was something that I struggled with—the sense that I was giving things up to be able to raise the kids so that my husband could have this job. On the other hand, with our first jobs, he gave up a great job to come with me while I was the primary breadwinner. This was before we had kids. I know that he would do that for me. With the options we had, it made the most sense for us to work this way. And frankly, I’m happy that it worked out that I’m home more than my husband is because I would be so jealous if he was able to come home in the afternoon and I had to be at
work all day. He’s very happy, though. He does research, but he does make it a rule that he’s always home in the evening. When he’s home, he’s home. He can help with homework, he can do whatever the kids need, he comes to all the soccer games, concerts, all that. So I feel like we’ve been very fortunate in our ability to be with them and balance these things.

D: I think that two-body problem is something that a lot of people are concerned about because a lot of the people whom you’ll meet and interact with are academics and the chance of settling down with a fellow academic is pretty high. So how did you and your husband talk about that: who’s going to make the sacrifice, how you’re going to organize that?

JNJ: That’s a great question. It is a huge thing that looms over a lot of people. For us, it was something we knew could be an issue very early on. I chose grad school partly because of where my future husband was at that time. It so happened that the program that I really liked was where he was. (He started a year before I did.) We got married while we were in graduate school, and we knew all along that we’d be finishing about the same time and looking for jobs at the same time. We talked about it quite a bit—we didn’t go into this blindly at all—and we agreed that the thing that was most important was to be together. We knew that for a lot of couples they were okay with a year, two, three years apart, and we just said, “That’s not negotiable.” If we were an hour apart by car, maybe, but we wouldn’t take jobs across the country from each other. When it came time to apply—with astronomy, like classics, it’s not like you have your choice of jobs—we applied as broadly as we could. I was offered a tenure-track job at Arizona State University the same day he was offered a really good post-doc at Harvard-Smithsonian for astrophysics in Boston. They were both great jobs and not close at all. Luckily since we had talked about it, we said we want to stay
together but we’re also going to look at our job situation, what’s the best choice for a couple. It’s not like whichever job Eric gets that’s better or whichever job Julie gets that’s better. I had applied to some jobs in the Boston area, but I hadn’t gotten offers or interviews, so I knew that those were dead in the water. But when I went down for my interview at Arizona, they said, “Legally, there are some things we can’t ask you about, but if you want to tell us anything, now’s the time”—sort of nudge, nudge, wink, wink. I have a hyphenated last name. I have a wedding ring. It’s pretty obvious I’m married, so I said, “I have a husband who will need a job,” and they said, “Okay, we’ve got something in place.” They said, “Give us his resume,” and he flew down and met everyone, and they said, “Okay, we’ll find him a place.” They hired him as a half-time instructor which wasn’t nearly as prestigious and didn’t pay as much as this other job he would have had, but we were able to be together. We were down there for two years. When the job came open here at Swarthmore, he applied in a really good situation because he had teaching experience at Arizona, he had taught high school, and he was researching. He got the job at Swarthmore, and I was left going, “Oh, but...” because I hadn’t applied for anything that year. I had thought, there’s no way he’ll get this job. He was only two years out of his PhD, and Swarthmore is a really good college. I didn’t think there was any way they’d hire him, but they did. Good for them! We were faced again with the two-body problem. At that point, we had decided that there was no way I wanted to stay at Arizona State—just didn’t like the big university, hated Phoenix. I took a year’s leave from Arizona, and we both moved out here. He took the job, and I immediately started calling around. One of the first people I called was Ralph Rosen: “Hi! You don’t know me, but I have a classics PhD.” He was great. We met for coffee, immediately clicked, had a great time. He put me in touch
with a bunch of people and said, “Oh by the way, we often need people to teach a course or two. Would you be interested?” I said, “That would be great.” About that time, Eric and I were thinking, we also want to have kids. We decided this would be the perfect time. When we moved here, I was pregnant with Alex, our older son, so I said, “I don’t want to teach *right* now but soon!” The first few years were kind of a blur because Eric had this new job, was working really hard towards tenure, we had a baby, we were in this new place, I knew no one, and then I started teaching. Through all that, we had a second kid, and Eric got tenure so he was set. I was still adjunct and balancing. That was the point when I thought, I’ve thrown my career down the toilet by moving here, having kids. I don’t have a job. And thank god for Ralph Rosen and Bridget Murnaghan—she was chair at the time—for getting me set up here. I had been teaching at Penn for five or six years, off and on, when this job came open as the post-bacc director. They said, “You’d be a great person for this,” and I said, “Yes, that would be perfect.” By that time, Tim, our younger son, was just starting kindergarten, so we had a more regular schedule with the kids. The timing was perfect. It did end up happily-ever-after, but it took a while. We faced the two-body problem for quite a while. Every time I would hear about someone who managed to do this, I thought, great! But then I’d always hear about people who were still living apart and trying to juggle kids. I just wasn’t willing to do that.

**D:** There’s a big debate these days over adjunct faculty. It seems like almost an abuse of labor by the universities—paying measly sums for people who are, more or less, qualified to be full professors. Having been an adjunct professor, what is your perspective?

**JNJ:** I feel like I’ve been extremely fortunate not to have been in that rat race. I know people who only get a thousand
dollars for a class with no benefits, and they’re teaching eight or nine classes at two or three different schools at the same time. I’ve been so lucky that personally I haven’t had to deal with that. My husband has had a stable job, so it hasn’t been as big a deal for me. Even so, Penn and Haverford and Swarthmore all pay a lot more than a lot of other schools. But it’s so unfortunate for so many people who are fully-qualified but can’t find a job. I think it should be the role of academia, of the field to think about how many PhDs they’re granting because, when you have a glut of PhDs, they just don’t have a future. It’s been self-perpetuating with these poor, exploited people who are teaching so much and making so little.

D: Academic departments pay for PhD students—they pay them a stipend in addition to the education and services they’re giving them—so it seems like there would already be a financial argument to reduce the number of new PhDs. Can you theorize as to why that hasn’t happened?

JNJ: There is some shrinkage. Seeing it from the post-bacc side of trying to get my post-baccs into programs, there are fewer slots open in PhD programs in classics. But I think that there will always be a larger number of people who go into a field thinking that this is going to be what they want to do but with the reality that there just aren’t that many jobs. There will always be a mismatch, and sadly, I don’t see how that’s going to change.

D: At a dinner a few weeks ago, I was questioned aggressively about why people are still studying classics, something that’s been done for two thousand years. I answered the why classics question, and the other person said, “Okay, so how many people do we actually need doing this stuff?” What is your reaction when someone asks you, “How many people do we really need studying the ancient Mediterranean world?”

JNJ: Honestly, I do think that there are too many people who
go into it just because the job market is so uncertain. People need to have a realistic view that you need to really love something to get a PhD in it. You can’t be doing it thinking, this is what I’m going to do for the rest of my life. You need to think of it in the shorter term: I’m doing this because I really love it, and then we’ll see what happens. In some ways, it’s easy for me to say that in my situation because I have a job. To come out at age twenty-five, thirty with a PhD but no job prospects is really scary. Even if you say, “These are skill sets that transfer,” it’s not easy to make your case: “Oh, I have a PhD in classics but I can do whatever you want!” In terms of the numbers—how many people studying classics—I don’t really know what the right answer is. When I’m questioned, “Why would someone do this? Why do we need this?”, I ask, “Why do we need other fields?” There are so many things that humans are interested in, and there are always new ways of looking at things. Whether that translates into an actual job, though, is a big question, a big problem. You have to be interested in the ideas enough to say, “That’s enough.” It’s wonderful if you can get paid to be a student, but you need to be prepared and aware that it only qualifies you to do a few things, and there are not many slots for that. I wish I had a better answer. It’s something we come back to a lot in questioning our reasons for having a post-bacc program: “Are we benefiting our field as a whole by existing?” I think we are. There are so many people who are interested in going on in classics who don’t have the background in Latin or Greek, and we help them. I do think it’s a really important part of our mission to help people think about whether this is the right thing for them. We see ourselves a little like gatekeepers. There are some people who are just not strong enough students that we can ever see them getting a job at the end. It’s kinder to tell them no now rather than have them go through the post-bacc and possibly go through an MA
program and barely getting to the end. Those are the people who are not going to get jobs. It’s a hard conversation to have with some people, saying, “I’m sorry. I just don’t think you can do it.” Some people say, “I’ll come back, and you’ll see!” My response is “Great! If this lights a fire under you, great! But I’ve seen a lot of students in the post-bacc program, so you kind of get a sense.”

D: How do you think those tough conversations relate to the culture in the U.S. that has developed into “you can do anything you set your mind to” and “everyone is special”?

JNJ: That kind of drives me crazy because not everyone is special. I do find that whole culture really disturbing. I see it a lot with my kids: you have to get a ribbon for coming in last. I understand that, when they’re five, it really helps to get a ribbon, but by the time they’re in middle school, no. It’s like the idea that you have to have a snack for everything you do. No! That is not necessary. I really think it’s doing people a disservice just to think, if you put in the hours, you’re there. Some people are naturally talented at different things. Some people are not naturally talented at languages, and no matter how much they love it, it’s not going to come easily. I can’t imagine going into classics and not being a naturally gifted linguist; it’s just going to be such a tough life for you. It doesn’t make any sense. We have this culture where people believe that they’re somehow entitled to do this. We get students who really feel like this should be handed to them. Having to come in and say no is difficult because you are going against years of ingrained sentiment that, if you work hard, everything will work out in the end. I love those up close and personal things at the Olympics where they say so-and-so worked hard. Things like that are very inspirational, but you know that those people would not be in the Olympics if they weren’t naturally athletic. It’s that and hard work. It’s not just the hard work. You couldn’t turn me into a champion
skier. I remember they did a feature on Michael Phelps, the swimmer. One of the things I really liked about it is that they talked about how hard he works but they also talked about how he has a really freaky body. He has unusually long arms, and his feet are weirdly flexible. So he’s really clumsy on land, but he’s built for the water. It’s great that they said this because it points out that Phelps has these genetic anomalies that allow him to swim so well. I’m sure hard work helped, but it didn’t make his arms grow.

D: I was looking at your CV, and it says one of your chief interests is Hellenistic poetry. How did you become interested in this subject?

JNJ: When I started grad school, I was sure I was going to do Latin poetry, having read the *Aeneid* at a very formative time. I thought Augustan poetry was the best and brightest and nothing could top it. But I actually took a Hellenistic poetry course in grad school and thought, this is the best thing I’ve ever read. That one class just blew the top off my head. I couldn’t believe how self-referential and interestingly modern it was. In this course, we read a bunch of different poets, and they were all coming at the idea of poetry in a slightly different way. But they all went in thinking, we all know this body of work, and we’re going to see what we can do to try to twist it and change it. It wasn’t just the way you think of poetry like Homer is the ocean, Homer is everything, and Vergil recreated it with this lovely Roman gloss. The Hellenistic poets said, “Let’s take Homer and everything we know, and we’re going to forget about it. We’re going to change everything up.” I thought that was fascinating. The work I was doing for my dissertation was about genre in Apollonius’ *Argonautica*. Even though it’s an epic in form—it’s in dactylic hexameter, it’s long, there’s a hero on a journey—there are so many parts that are so not epic which I thought was really interesting. A lot of scholars you read say
it’s terrible. All the older criticism I was reading for my dissertation said, “Vergil does this, and Apollonius—ugh!—he had no idea what he was doing.” I remember reading one about how he couldn’t control his narrator—as if his narrator was somehow running amok. I thought, these are all conscious decisions! And this is a really interesting aesthetic program. It’s very different from anything you find in Homer or Vergil. It seemed so modern with the narrator interrupting himself to say, “Oh, you don’t want to hear that.” The criticism said, “Apollonius couldn’t decide what he wanted. He couldn’t control this narrator,” and I said, “No, it’s a way of calling your attention to what he’s not saying!” There are these bits that look like bits of tragedy or comedy embedded into this epic narrative. It’s continued to be something I’m really interested in: how the Hellenistic poets are taking these known stories and known genres and saying, “We’re not going to follow convention. We’re going to see how much we can twist this until it breaks.” It makes you rethink your assumptions. When people think about classics they generally think about seriousness. Yes, there’s Aristophanes, and he’s funny and bawdy, but you tend to think about The Poetry as beautiful and serious. So much of it, though, has these really interesting things that are going on. There’s an idea of pushing boundaries, asking, “Where are the boundaries of a genre?” Clearly, they weren’t set. The artists themselves were trying to do different things with them.

D: Have you seen the seventies film version of Jason and the Argonauts?

JNJ: Oh yeah! That’s a wonderful one with the Harryhausen skeletons.

D: As someone who is so interested in the intricacies of the text, do you still enjoy the story as portrayed in a different medium? This could apply not just to the Argonautica but to other Hollywood representations of classics.
JNJ: I find it really interesting. There is always the impulse to say, “That’s wrong”—like seeing the movie *Troy* you want to shout, “That’s wrong—totally wrong!” But at the same time, I really enjoy the idea that creators are taking these old stories and seeing what you can do with them in these other media—changing them and figuring out at what point is it no longer the story. There are times when I look at them and think, this is so wrong, but at the same time, sure, why not? In antiquity, that’s what they did: stories were retold in different ways. It’s completely natural. The Disney movie *Hercules*—again, totally wrong, so many things are wrong, but it’s a great movie. You’re taking these elements that are absolutely right classically, that make sense and putting them together in a different way. Sure, come up with something new.

D: And if you could ask Hollywood to make one ancient work into a film?

JNJ: That’s tough. I would love to see what Disney could do with *Medea*: Medea, the Disney princess. In some of the earlier versions, she did not kill her kids; that was a later innovation. When Euripides did it, it would have been very shocking. They’re surely not going to have a Disney princess kill her children, so how could they get around that? I would love to see how they deal with that challenge.
Where have you been?
I grew up in Millbrook, New York with my four siblings. I attended the University of Virginia where I was a member of the Jefferson Debating Society and a double major in classics and English. During my summers, I worked for a start-up gold mine in the Nevada desert. After graduating, I moved to Germany and taught kindergarten in Munich for a year before returning to the U.S. and spending a year working for a children's literary agency.

Why are you here?
I came to the post-bacc program for the same reason that I
imagine most of my classmates did: I'm interested in pursuing a classics PhD. I had been out of school for two years, and I knew I needed to improve my Greek and Latin.

**Where are you going?**
For the immediate future, I'm spending a second year in the post-bacc. Next year, I'll apply to PhD programs again. One of the unintended consequences of the post-bacc is that it has drastically expanded my interests, and made me newly appreciative of how much I have to learn. I feel my language skills have improved enormously here, but I would like to continue developing new research interests.
In the early years of the nineteenth century, Thomas Bruce, the seventh Earl of Elgin, removed a collection of Greek sculptures from the Acropolis. Among these sculptures was a collection of metopes—sculpted elements covering parts of a building’s frieze—from the Parthenon. Lord Elgin removed a significant portion of the surviving Parthenon metopes and shipped them to England. Lord Elgin’s actions were immediately questioned, and though he cited the wish to preserve the marbles as his motive, others expressed skepticism or outrage. A century has passed since Lord Elgin removed the metopes, but the debate over their rightful home continues today.

The British Museum has held the metopes since 1832. They have become a permanent fixture and tourist attraction. Of course, the Greek government is not likely to forget that the sculptures were made for the Parthenon on the Athenian Acropolis and argues vehemently for their repatriation to Greece. The British Museum, for its part, firmly asserts that it saved the metopes from the irreparable damage they would have sustained on the Acropolis. Yet the question remains: were the metopes theirs to save?

Originally, ninety-two metopes adorned the Parthenon. The metopes illustrated four different episodes—one on each
side of the Parthenon. The east side depicted the Gigantomachy: Olympian Gods fighting a fearsome battle against the giants. The west side of the Parthenon showed the Amazonomachy: a battle between the Amazons and the Athenians. The south side portrayed the Centauromachy: a fight between the centaurs and the Lapiths that occurred at a Lapith wedding. Finally, the north side depicted scenes from the Trojan War.

Why do the scenes of the metopes matter? Is this not simply a question of Greece desiring to reclaim material culture from the British Museum? To answer these questions, we must delve into the concept of national identity. The scenes represented in the metopes—whether mythical or realistic—share the common theme of order vanquishing disorder. This concept of a powerful force of order is indicative of the time period in which the Parthenon was built; though earlier forms of the Parthenon existed prior to the fifth century, the ‘classic’ Parthenon we see reconstructed on the modern Acropolis was constructed between 437 BCE and 432 BCE as part of the Periclean building project, the first monumental building program since the Oath of Platea which declared that buildings on the Acropolis and elsewhere in Greece must be left in ruins after the destruction of the Persian Wars. In their historical context, the myths depicted by the metopes are revealed to be more than stories; they are symbols of Athens—and of all Greece—triumphing over her enemies.

Modern Greece is faces its own enemies. In the past several years, Greece has suffered an extremely public and severe financial crisis. Increased spending after adoption of the euro, concealment of debt, and tax evasion contributed to one of the largest financial crises in history. The resulting layoffs continue to hurt Greek citizens. Greece appears to be on the road to recovery, but it is a treacherous path, a hard
fight to win. I have lived in Athens, seen the protests, and climbed the Acropolis, and I cannot help but wonder if Athens needs its triumphant marbles more than the British Museum ever will.

In 2007, the Acropolis Museum was constructed in Athens. A wondrous balance of ancient and modern, the clean lines and simple, open architecture provide the perfect display platform for material from the Acropolis. One can spend hours wandering the floors, gazing up at the monumental sculptural projects that once adorned Athens’ highest place. The third floor of the museum is devoted exclusively to the Parthenon. Built on a different axis than the rest of the museum, it lines up perfectly with the axis of the Parthenon itself. The surviving pieces of the Parthenon frieze make their home here. This frieze is displayed around a cement rectangle with the exact same dimensions as the Parthenon. Like the rest of the Acropolis Museum, huge windows open the third floor to city and sky, so that one may look at the reconstructed original temple on the hill and the original frieze in the museum almost simultaneously.

The third floor, however, is incomplete. Walking around the perimeter of the Parthenon frieze display, you cannot help but feel the expectancy of the room. The third floor is more than just a display; it is a beautiful request, a question displayed in the highest elegance. The third floor is missing its metopes. One of the champions of the museum was Melina Mercouri, a former minister of culture who advocated for the return of the Parthenon metopes and hoped the new museum would help her request. Yet the marbles remain firmly in the British Museum.

It is tempting to view Lord Elgin’s removal of the Parthenon metopes as a grievous theft, but Lord Elgin did not really steal the marbles. He took them with the written consent of the Ottoman Empire, the power ruling Greece at
the time. Furthermore, the British Museum restored, preserved, and displayed the marbles for decades, suggesting some degree of effective ownership be conferred to the Museum as the caretaker of the artifacts. The metopes have become a permanent fixture in the British Museum, so permanent that moving them feels somehow wrong. We find ourselves facing an interesting conclusion: the Parthenon metopes seem to belong in two places.

Unfortunately, this equation does not balance. There is one set of Parthenon metopes and two homes for that set. So who has the right to the metopes? Who has the right to determine the answer to that question? I have no simple answer.

At some point the marbles will need to stay or go, return to their birthplace or remain in their current residence. Governments, academics, and citizens all have their own opinions on whether the metopes should move. Both sides have a reasonable claim. Whatever the ultimate conclusion, one of the two countries will be unhappy. I am still puzzling out my own opinion on the metopes’ proper home. Living in Greece certainly colored my vision. As I listened to neighbors tell their stories of hardship, followed the schedule of protests, and walked around the too-empty third floor of the Acropolis Museum, I felt an overwhelming desire to fly to Britain and snatch the metopes back. The marbles have two homes—that much is clear—but their birthplace is struggling and perhaps, somehow, the metopes could help.

References
The British Museum. “What are the ‘Elgin Marbles’?”
Madison and Sulla

By Allyson Zucker

Sulla became a dictator of Rome in the first century BCE. James Madison was a revolutionary and founding father of the United States of America in the 18th century. Both Sulla and Madison strongly believed in republican government. The differences between their two faces suggest Madison’s determination to avoid the mistakes of Rome—coupling the creation of a republic with political debate instead of violence.
Tweets From Socrates

By Sean Carpenter and the Classics UAB

Σωκράτης
@Socrates

b as u wish 2 seem

433 BC - via Twitter · Embed this Tweet

σωκράτης
@Socrates

wonder=the beginning of wisdom

428 BC - via Twitter · Embed this Tweet

Σωκράτης
@Socrates

the only tru wisdom is in know u kno nothing

2:10 PM - April 415, BC - via Twitter · Embed this Tweet
2 find urself, think 4 urself

strong minds discuss ideas, avg minds discuss events, weak minds discuss ppl

education is the kindling of a flame, not the filling of a vessel
b kind 4 everyone u meet is fighting a hard battle

death may b the greatest of all human blessings
The lid of this ceramic *pyxis* depicts a processional scene with heroic nudes on horseback. The bottom part of the vessel features dancing satyrs and maenads. The revelers surround two central figures, possibly Dionysus and Ariadne. The *pyxis* was made in Greece during the Archaic Period but was discovered in an Etruscan tomb in Orvieto, Italy. Even though the vessel was made by Attic potters, it is characteristically Etruscan in shape, indicating that workshops in Greece manufactured goods specifically for the Etruscan market. With its combination of cultural influences, the *pyxis* sheds light on the interconnectivity of the ancient Mediterranean.