
The body in pain holds an extraordinary potential for signification. While the immediate and undeniable reality of physical suffering endows it with the force of truth, the resistance of pain to meaning leaves the content of that truth open-ended. The palpable truth of the body's suffering is thus open to appropriation, and nowhere is this appropriation more evident than in practices of torture. Torture, in other words, is a highly effective means of harnessing the signifying potential of pain as a rhetorical resource. The torturer is a ventriloquist, forcing the body to speak his message through its suffering.

These claims lie at the heart of Jennifer R. Ballengee's The Wound and the Witness: The Rhetoric of Torture, and while they are not unfamiliar, in Ballengee's hands they take on a renewed sense of urgency. In 1985, when Elaine Scarry published her groundbreaking study of, among other things, the ideological function of torture—a work to which Ballengee's own is deeply indebted—torture was something that happened somewhere else: Chile or Greece, Brazil or Vietnam. Twenty-five years later, in the wake of the shocking photographs from Abu Ghraib, this is no longer the case. Beginning with those photographs and closing with an extended epilogue focused on the representation of torture in the United States today, The Wound and the Witness is a thoughtful and sophisticated attempt to understand, from a perspective transformed by uncomfortable proximity, how “torture continue[s] to persist in a post-humanist global community” (1). It is also a perspective haunted by questions of complicity. For Ballengee cares deeply not only about the rhetoric of torture to which contemporary Americans have been exposed but also—and especially—about the ways in which audiences are implicated in the process by which violated bodies assume meaning.

Ballengee thus has her eye squarely on the present. Yet the four chapters of The Wound and the Witness engage texts drawn from Greco-Roman antiquity: the three “Theban” plays of Sophocles (Antigone, Oedipus Tyrannus, and Oedipus at Colonus), Achilles Tatius’s novel Leukippe and Kleitophon (ca. second century CE), and Prudentius’s Peristephanon Liber (ca. 402 CE). Antiquity offers Ballengee the emergence of a public space where rhetoric and spectacle meet, creating conditions ideal for the staging of torture. Exploring the dynamics of this space as it takes shape in the Greco-Roman past, she suggests, can give us the distance to assess critically the rhetoric of torture—and our own role as witnesses to it—in the media-saturated America of today. Ballengee’s aim here is not to forge an unbroken genealogy from ancient Greece and Rome to the present, although she does refreshingly set aside the common periodization according to which the pre-modern body is irreconcilably different from the modern one. Rather, she claims that “the association of bodily pain with understanding resonates from the ancient through the modern, within the idea of bearing witness” (6). If there is an undeniable looseness to the bond with the past here, it is nevertheless a bond richer for not being constrained by a sense of teleology. By not reading the past too narrowly through scenes of torture in the present, Ballengee is able to invest the ancient texts with more power to illuminate recent events in the War on Terror.

The remarkable richness of these texts is due in part to their participation in literary genres (tragedy, the ancient novel, martyrological poetry) in which questions of representation and spectacle, as well as truth and revelation, are paramount. These are texts...
that are deeply conscious not only of external audiences—readers and spectators—but also of internal audiences, who, in fulfilling their role as viewers, draw attention to and indeed shape our own position as witnesses. They are thus ripe for the kinds of patient, dense readings that are Ballengee’s preferred modus operandi.

Ballengee’s method is most successful in the last chapter, an analysis of the representation of the martyrdom of Romanus in Prudentius’s *Peristephanon Liber*. The poem provides the book’s most clear-cut scene of torture, performed as a deliberate show of imperial power. Romanus’s wounds, however, do not simply materialize Roman force. They communicate subversively as well, manifesting the power of the Christian God. Romanus’s story thus illustrates beautifully the unstable meaning of the tortured body. But what does it mean, after all, to say that the body’s injuries speak God’s word? The question is posed vividly by the case of Romanus, whose wounds are described as mouths after his torturers cut out his tongue. Ballengee interprets this displacement of speech as the liberation of a higher truth, one situated by Prudentius “outside the sphere of grammatical language” (115), “beyond interpretation” (116). To explore the Christian resonances of such excess signification she turns to Georges Didi-Huberman’s analysis of early depictions of Christ’s wounds. Didi-Huberman is working with Merleau-Ponty’s distinction between the *visuel*, which designates simply what the eye captures, and the *visible*, which describes the eye’s encounter with the symptom, the visible sign that, in pointing towards what is hidden, provokes an inference that folds within itself unrealized meaning. For Didi-Huberman, Christ’s wounded flesh is the paradigmatic symptom, a tear (*déchirure*) in the image that signals the limits of what can be seen. Ballengee reads Romanus’s wounds, too, as gashes in the surface of signification that gesture toward the divine. The ambiguity of the body’s “speech,” then, does not just enable the witness to read Romanus’s suffering outside the frame of interpretation imposed by the Roman state: it becomes the focal point of the Christian reading. At the same time, at the moment the witness recognizes the indeterminacy of the body’s meaning as sacred, he or she has made a decision to see the truth of the martyr’s pain in Christian rather than Roman terms. Indeed, the witness cannot not judge, Ballengee insists; he or she cannot not stabilize a fundamentally unstable sign and, in so doing, become implicated in the act of torture witnessed, both a voyeur and a judge.

Ballengee invokes the ethical fallout of such witnessing more than once, but she never adequately addresses its nature. In the introduction, she adopts Wayne Booth’s diagnosis of a tension between rhetoric and ethical judgment, but she jumps too quickly to the conclusion that witnessing torture, because of its rhetorical dimension, “forecloses the ethical” (15, emphasis added), a claim to which she returns in the epilogue. Yet if ethical judgment is, no doubt, destabilized in the force-field of torture, it does not follow that viewing the suffering of other people lies outside the ethical domain. Perhaps it is precisely under such conditions that the nature of the ethical most demands exploration. Such an exploration is not the aim of Ballengee’s analysis, however. Where her argument succeeds is in demonstrating the witness’s structural complicity in the production of torture’s meaning, and nowhere more so than in her analysis of Romanus’s martyrdom.

The suffering body’s excess of meaning is seen in erotic rather than sacred terms in chapter 3, a study of Achilles Tatius’s *Leukippe and Kleitophon*. Adopting Bakhtin’s conceptualization of the Greek novel in terms of “adventure-time,” Ballengee refines and deepens our understanding of this “most abstract of all novelistic chronotopes” (89, citing Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*) by populating it with unruly physical bodies. Rather than understanding adventure-time as a suspension of biographical time, as Bakhtin does, she reads the wound struck by *erōs* as the trigger for a series of violations that expose the inner body to public view before it is definitively sealed up—its integrity technically confirmed by the chastity test performed at the end of the novel—and the subject enters the social constraints of marriage.
One does not get far in the novel before noticing that the body that is violated (or apparently violated) is overwhelmingly the heroine’s, while the role of witness is most often assigned to Kleitophon (who is also the first-person narrator). It comes as no surprise, then, that critics in recent years have made Leukippe the object of a dominating male gaze. Without rejecting these readings outright, Ballengee deftly challenges the polarizing view of gender they imply. Dwelling at length on the novel’s subjection of exotic animals (the crocodile, the hippopotamus) to its penetrating scientific eye, as well as on the ambiguous sex of the phoenix, whose identity must be ritually authenticated, she argues that gender is unstable prior to the final public trials. Such instability resides, in fact, at the heart of Kleitophon’s fascination with the violation of Leukippe’s body, which “expresses a masochistic fantasy that is part of his own process of becoming an acceptable subject in formal society” (88). Ballengee’s readings, informed by the work of film theorists such as Kaja Silverman and Carol Clover on masochism and voyeurism, open up a complex and highly original perspective on the novel’s spectacular violence. In her commitment to blurred boundaries, however, she largely neglects and even at times obscures—she speaks, for instance, of “the lovers undergo[ing] their public trials” (86), although it is only the women (Leukippe and Melite) who are subjected to chastity tests—the ways in which sexual difference informs the novel’s representation of how one becomes a socially intelligible subject. Moreover, despite her emphasis on the social construction of gender, she has little to say about the intersection of the public and private and the formation of gendered subjects in the later Roman Empire. The lack of historical and cultural context occasionally causes the analysis to hover at the arid level of contemporary scholarly debates. But the chapter on the whole offers a fresh and nuanced reading of a text that is fully worthy of Ballegee’s careful eye.

The reading of Achilles Tatius hinges on the most gruesome of Leukippe’s Scheintode, her apparent disembowelment at the hands of bandits. Such a scene undoubtedly stages the brutal infliction of harm, and Kleitophon’s comparison of his lover to Marsyas intimates torture. Yet insofar as the scene dwells primarily in the territory of sacrifice, it begins to strain a narrow definition of torture. In fact, elsewhere in this chapter, as well as in the first two chapters of The Wound and the Witness, the boundaries of torture are often unclear. In the introduction Ballengee says that she is not interested in defining torture, but, rather, in “address[ing] instances in which bodily injury or suffering is presented as torture—whether by a specific linguistic designation or by direct association or context—before a witnessing audience” (5). In practice, however, the language of torture—most commonly designated by the word basanos (a word primarily meaning “touchstone” or “trial”)—rarely appears, so that in most cases torture has been identified on the basis of cues that are not always obvious.

Such fuzziness is not always a bad thing, to the extent that it frees Ballengee to explore from a number of angles the relationship between bodily suffering and truth. At times, however, the language of torture becomes so encompassing that it loses its critical edge, especially in the readings of the Theban plays. Does it matter, for example, if pain is inflicted by others or by one’s own hands (as in the case of Oedipus, who defiantly juxtaposes his self-blinding with the horrors inflicted on him by Apollo)? Is torture the same as pollution, from which the talismanic power of Oedipus’s body in the Oedipus at Colonus most obviously derives? What is the difference between publicly staged torture and Creon’s consignment of Antigone to a rock-tomb? Is the desecrated corpse of Polynices an object of torture? After all, pain, that most ambiguous of corporeal signs, “cannot touch a corpse,” as a fragment from Aeschylus’s lost Phoebetoe states. I raise these questions not to dispute the claim that the body materializes hidden powers and divine justice in the Theban plays; it commands that role in a number of Greek tragedies. However, in grouping every threat and injury under the loose rubric of torture, Ballengee neglects to outline a more precise lexicon of the suffering and damaged body, including the sacred-polluted corpse. And the result is that the often tenuous connections between readings limit their power to develop the problem of the body’s relationship to justice and punishment in Sophocles’ Oedipus plays.
These limitations do not mean that the readings are not valuable in themselves. The first two chapters are peppered with insights, and Ballengee’s analysis of the Antigone side-steps entrenched debates about the conflict between Antigone and Creon to offer an innovative take on the tragedy’s logic. These chapters attest to one of The Wound and the Witness’s great strengths, namely the wealth of conceptual resources it discovers in the ancient texts under consideration. Ballengee puts these resources to excellent use in the book’s epilogue to argue for the resonance of the past within present debates about torture. But she leaves us, too, with the sense that in the end these resources are, like the signifying potential of the body itself, inexhaustible, compelling, and not a little unruly.

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Greek Tragedy in Vergil’s Aeneid: Ritual, Empire, and Intertext. By Vassiliki Panoussi.  

In his 1991 article “The Aeneid and the Oresteia,” Philip Hardie notes that “sacrifice pure, inverted, and perverted, runs throughout the Oresteia” and that “sacrifice is equally pervasive in the Aeneid where more work remains to be done” (34). Since the publication of Hardie’s article, several works have carried forward this investigation of sacrifice in the Aeneid, most of them building upon studies of sacrifice in tragedy (Hardie, Epic Successors; Smith; Dyson; cf. also Bandera’s earlier work on the topic). Panoussi’s recent contribution to this sub-genre of work on the Aeneid is the most comprehensive look at how sacrificial patterns at work in tragedy find their way into the Aeneid, and she also expands beyond that topic to examine other tragic motifs such as maenadism, funerary rituals, and heroic identity.

Panoussi’s book, then, studies the Aeneid’s engagement with Greek tragedy not simply on the level of literary allusion, but on a religious and ideological level. She proposes that, like Greek tragedy, the Aeneid is rife with perverted rituals, such as human sacrifices or human killings metaphorically described as sacrifices. Unlike Greek tragedy, however, the Aeneid does not end with the restoration of religious order. Thus, the Aeneid’s tragic intertexts produce a work that is more “tragic” than tragedy. However, the Aeneid is also structured by epic intertexts that support Augustan ideology. Accordingly, the famed “two voices” of the Aeneid might be construed as “the tension between two generic models, epic and tragic” (3), and “the Aeneid thus emerges as a text in which these contesting ideologies still struggle for supremacy, with the poem oscillating between endorsing Augustus’s new regime and questioning its methods and efficacy” (7).

Panoussi’s book is convincing in its argument about the Aeneid’s pervasive engagement with the tragic genre. She is particularly effective at presenting the sustained pattern of ritual perversion in the Aeneid and nicely highlights the difference between tragedy’s ritual “closure” through the restoration of religious order and the Aeneid’s comparative lack of resolution on the level of ritual. Her ultimate argument about the dialectic between epic and tragedy in the Aeneid and its ramifications for an Augustan reading of Virgil’s work could be developed more clearly, however, and could also engage more fully with prior work on the subject.

Panoussi’s book is divided into an introduction and two main sections on “Ritual” (Part 1) and “Empire” (Part 2). Part 1, much the longer of the two, is further subdivided
into “Sacrifice” (chapters 1 and 2), “Restoration” (chapter 3), and “Women’s Rituals” (chapters 4 and 5). Part 2 (“Empire”) consists of a chapter on “Heroic identity: Vergil’s Ajax” (chapter 6) and a short conclusion summing up the dialectic between epic and tragic intertexts in the Aeneid (chapter 7). While certainly all of these topics are connected to tragedy’s role in the Aeneid, the first two, “Sacrifice” and “Restoration,” form the most cohesive section of the book since they focus consistently on one of the book’s primary goals, which is to show how Virgil “manipulates a representational pattern absent in the Homeric epics and specific to Greek tragedy: ritual corruption followed by ritual restoration” (6). Part 2 (“Empire”) feels somewhat arbitrarily separated from Part 1 (“Ritual”) since there is discussion of empire throughout the book, although admittedly this second part diverges from the topic of ritual. It might have been useful if the discussion of ideology in the concluding chapter had been placed instead in the introduction, since it provides the theoretical basis for the book and complicates the discussion of epic and tragic intertexts in the introduction. The introduction could also have benefitted from a longer discussion of Roman ritual and what can lead to its perverseness since so much of the argument hangs on the ramifications of corrupted ritual.

Chapter 1 focuses on the many deaths in the Aeneid that have sacrificial overtones because they take place at an altar, sacrificial language is used to describe the slayings, or literary allusions connect them to other sacrificial deaths. These deaths include, among others, those of Laocoon, Priam, Icarus, Marcellus, Pallas, Sychaeus, Lausus, Pyrrhus, Helen (her “almost-death” in Book 2), Dido, Turnus, and Mezentius; the last three deaths also allude to the heroic sacrificial ritual of _devotion_ (chapter 2). While for some readers Panoussi may be casting too wide a net in her search for sacrificial deaths, and some of the intertextual connections she draws are stronger than others (for example, she connects the “bloodied hair” of Lausus with Iphigeneia’s and concludes that “Aeneas’ responsibility for Lausus’ death may thus be said to be comparable to that of Agamemnon” [41]), her argument that human sacrifice is a pervasive image in the Aeneid, much as it is in the Oresteia, is certainly convincing. Indeed, as Panoussi shows, the key figure linking most of the sacrificial deaths in the Aeneid is Iphigeneia, whose death is briefly alluded to by Sinon in Book 2 (116–19) and who activates a web of allusions to Aeschylus’s and Lucretius’s versions of her death.

Panoussi’s point in detailing these cycles of perverted human sacrifices or quasi-sacrifices throughout the Aeneid is to suggest that the reader is led to expect some sort of closure at the end of the Aeneid through ritual restoration. The return to ritual order after corrupted sacrifice is the pattern present in Greek tragedy, and also the pattern suggested by Girard’s theory (largely based on Greek tragedy) of sacrificial crisis, which occurs when sacrifice fails and chaotic violence breaks out until the sacrificial killing of a scapegoat brings a return to social and religious order. While some scholars have proposed that Virgil applies this Girardian pattern to the Aeneid, and that Aeneas’ sacrifice of Turnus at the end of the epic is a success that enables the foundation of Augustan society (Bandera; Hardie, _Epic Successors_ 28), Panoussi problematizes this approach by pointing to the perversion present in this final sacrifice, “as Turnus is transformed from willing victim to slain suppliant” (77).1

Panoussi also points to the “Fragility of Reconciliation” (chapter 3) on the divine level as evidence of the relative lack of ritual closure in the Aeneid as compared with tragedy. Again, the Oresteia is the model tragic text. Panoussi compares the transformation of Aeschylus’s chthonic Furies into benevolent Erinyes associated with justice at the end of the Oresteia with the Aeneid’s merging of the Olympian and chthonic realms in Book 12: “In the Aeneid, by contrast, it seems that Jupiter, instead of converting the Dirae, is himself transformed into a version of Juno” (107). While it is frequently noted that Jupiter’s

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1 Smith, not cited by Panoussi, critiques Girardian readings of the Aeneid from a different angle by pointing out that Virgil’s exploration of perverted sacrifice in Book 2 shows him to be more interested in laying bare the deceptive aspects of sacrifice and scapegoating than in justifying them as effective strategies of civilization.
use of Furies (Dirae) in Book 12 effects a “confusion of Heaven and Hell in Virgil” (Hardie, Epic Successors 73). Panoussi also nicely demonstrates the many ways in which Juno and the Furies associated with her power infect the divine world throughout the Aeneid.\textsuperscript{2} As Hardie notes after giving a similar, though less comprehensive, demonstration of the merging of Olympian and chthonic worlds throughout the Aeneid, “Perhaps Jupiter’s use of the Fury should not come as such a surprise” (Epic Successors 74). Less convincing in this chapter is the argument that the gods contribute to ritual perversion in the Aeneid by using religious rites to further their own goals. It is difficult to imagine how else gods would use ritual in an epic poem, and it is also not certain that gods need to abide by the same rules as human beings in the performance of ritual.

“Women’s Rituals” focuses on maenadic imagery in the Aeneid via the characters of Amata, Dido, the Sibyl, and Helen (chapter 4), as well as on ritual mourning and lament (chapter 5). While the connection between Virgil’s maenads and their tragic counterparts is made clear;\textsuperscript{3} the underlying message of this chapter is not fully integrated into the overall thesis about the dialectic between tragedy and epic in the Aeneid. Panoussi concludes the chapter by noting that “the representation of these women as victims makes a compelling case for their point of view, rendering it an alternative ideological position to that of male authority and empire. To be sure, this position is ultimately untenable” (143–44). Yet, her other discussions of the dialectic between tragedy and epic leave the outcome more open to interpretation and allow for several “tenable” positions (see 225). Chapter 5 covers some familiar ground in pointing to the dangers of excessive mourning as demonstrated by Andromache’s obsession with Troy in Book 3 and the Trojan Women’s lament in Book 5, a mourning ritual that is followed by the burning of the ships. However, Panoussi carries these observations further by nicely integrating her discussion of the Trojan Women’s behavior in Book 5 with her earlier discussion of Virgil’s transformation of the tragic pattern of ritual corruption-restoration. She points out that Virgil, instead of following the Trojan Women’s “transgression of their role as ritual mourners” with a restorative hero-cult (i.e. Anchises’ funeral rites), reverses the order and thereby “underscores the fragility of the new civic identity and its ability to stop reciprocal violence” (173).

Part 2 begins with a chapter that focuses on how the epic and tragic versions of Ajax are in dialogue in the Aeneid via the characters of Dido and Turnus. Panoussi notes that the epic Ajax is “consistently associated with the idea of aidos, that is, responsibility to others and a sense of their importance to oneself” (179), while the tragic Ajax finds himself violating “the very virtue he champions in the Iliad” (181). The tragic Ajax is also marked by a “fixed behavioral code” that rejects any sort of moral relativism and cannot adapt to the “ever-fluctuating reality of societal structures” (180). Panoussi’s mapping of both the Homeric and tragic Ajaxes’ characteristics onto Dido and Turnus is effective in highlighting the community-oriented aspects of their characters—aspects that are often discounted by “Augustan” readers of the Aeneid who locate their fatal flaws in their self-ish surrender to passion (Dido) or to pride and violence (Turnus).

What is less successful in this chapter is the association of Aeneas and even Augustan Rome with the moral relativism of Odysseus: “Just as Odysseus in the Sophoclean play emerges as the alternative model to Ajax in the post-Achillean times and in the new sociopolitical reality of fifth-century Athens, so Aeneas constitutes the alternative to Turnus’ outdated heroism in the new Latium and in the new reality of Augustan Rome” (214). It is not obvious to me what is Odyssean about Aeneas in any ideological sense or as an analysis of Augustan Rome.

\textsuperscript{1} Again, some of the intertextual links Panoussi draws are stronger than others. For instance, while it is certainly valid to find connections between the Furies and the Harpies—especially since Celaeno the harpy calls herself the “greatest of the Furies” (Aen. 3.252)—the comparison between Eumenides 71–74 and Aen. 3.214–15 (Panoussi 89) is a less powerful piece of evidence for their kinship.

\textsuperscript{2} For example, Panoussi shows that the tragic themes of “resistance to male authority, negation of the bridal transition, and destruction of the household, are central in several episodes of the Aeneid, and they are closely linked with women’s engagement in bacchic ritual activity” (125).
how the interplay between the epic and tragic Ajaxes maps onto the generic dialectic being traced throughout the work. Panoussi concludes the chapter by suggesting that “in the case of Turnus, as in the case of Dido, the Homeric material serves to deploy a systematic tragic intertext, without which it would be impossible to appreciate the profound problems, tensions, and conflicts inherent in the sociopolitical changes that Aeneas’ new order, and by extension, Augustus’ Rome bring to bear” (217). Yet, “Aeneas’ new order” is not a well-defined concept in Panoussi’s text; in addition, an argument could be made that the Homeric Ajax’s intertexts suggest as many tensions in the opposition between Aeneas and Dido or Turnus as the tragic Ajax’s. Finally, it might have been useful to include the character of Mezentius in this chapter, since the Homeric and tragic Ajaxes are equally important for structuring his opposition to Aeneas.

The final chapter (“Contesting Ideologies: Ritual and Empire”) aims to bring more clarity to the dialectic between epic and tragedy through a brief examination of what ideology is and how it connects to cult, ritual, and Augustus. I will quote Panoussi’s conclusions directly since they are complicated and difficult to summarize. Following the theories of Catherine Bell, Panoussi states that “ritual practice constitutes a locus where such ideological negotiations are enacted and where ideologies are shaped” (219). She also emphasizes that “Augustus himself was deeply aware of the power of ritual to promote his policies” (222). Thus, the Aeneid can be “explained as another means for the reproduction of the nascent social and political order of Augustus” (223), just as Greek tragedy can be read as dramatizing “ideological battles . . . while ultimately affirming and justifying Athenian hegemony over its allies” (223). However, Panoussi resists this “unilateral interpretation of Vergil’s poem” (223) and instead suggests that “the ritual intertext of the Aeneid focuses on the fragility of ritual and the breakdown of ritual practices, exposing the artificiality of the power relations contained therein” and that “as a result, the ideological nature of the poem stands exposed, and the ritual, tragic intertext becomes a way of registering opposition, anxiety, and repression” (224). In addition, the ritual/tragic intertext “draws attention to the fact that the very idea of what it means to be ‘pro-Augustan’ is still in the process of being defined” (225).

Panoussi’s concluding discussion of ideology and ritual, epic and tragedy is thought-provoking; however, it also raises some problematic issues regarding her use of the tragic genre. To wit, it seems she is asking the tragic genre to do too much: it is used to set up a normative pattern of ritual corruption-restoration, which the Aeneid fails to replicate, and thus presents the Aeneid as a text that is potentially darker than tragedy and even “untragic” in its resistance to tragedy’s ritual closure. Yet she also uses tragic intertexts to represent the Aeneid’s voice of “opposition, anxiety, and repression” (224), as well as to give it, in a more neutral way, a “means through which ideological points of view of resistance and acquiescence are negotiated” (7). Adding further complication is the fact, which Panoussi acknowledges (e.g. 14, 223), that there are many competing interpretations of tragedy; some find the “restoration” at the end of tragedies deeply problematic and not a true solution or closure, while others find confirmation of a pro-Athenian and imperial voice—which might even be called the Homeric/epic intertext of Panoussi’s book.

In addition, if there seem to be too many definitions of the tragic/ritual intertext, the meaning of the Homeric/epic intertext is underdeveloped by Panoussi. While she acknowledges that her “analysis has privileged the tragic/ritual intertext” (218), it is still important to provide evidence supporting her definition of the Homeric/epic intertext, especially since she assigns it such an important role in challenging the tragic/ritual intertext. In what sense can the Homeric intertext really be said to support Augustan ideology (particularly if that ideology is still in the process of being negotiated and defined) or even be used as a representative of “positive, heroic values” and “empire without end” (226)? Surely the Iliad has more connections with tragedy than with that vision of epic, and perhaps Virgil’s incorporation of tragic intertexts into his epic is more a recognition of these genre’s affin-
of their opposing ideologies. Each genre has room for voices of triumph and despair, acquiescence and opposition.

Of course, Panoussi is not the first to suggest that the presence of other genres in the Aeneid complicates the epic’s ideology or “epic voice,” and perhaps it would have helped clarify her own use of the epic/tragic dialectic if she had engaged more fully with, for example, Lyne’s discussion of epic voice, or Rossi’s demonstration of how tragic and historical genres add different layers of meaning to Virgil’s epic. Ultimately, then, I would not say that Panoussi’s book “contributes to resolving the controversy of the ‘two voices’ of the Aeneid by grounding it in the tension between two generic models, epic and tragic” (2–3). “Pro-Augustan,” for all its failings as a label (224), is a more accurate description of what she labels the epic intertext in Virgil’s poem. Her “tragic voice” is certainly more complicated than “anti-Augustan,” but the added complication is sometimes at the expense of clarity. In the end, then, I prefer Hardie’s more simple conclusion in his examination of tragedy in the Aeneid: Virgil forged an “amalgam of the commemorative, panegyrical tradition of historical epic with the problematics of Attic legendary tragedy” (“Virgil and Tragedy” 325). Perhaps more can be gained from reading the tragic and epic voices in Virgil as inextricably linked rather than as “vying with the other for supremacy and meaning” (225).

Despite my hesitations about the underlying theoretical basis of the book’s tragic/epic dialectic, Panoussi’s ideas are stimulating and make many valuable contributions to Virgilian studies. Above all, she convincingly demonstrates that ritual in the Aeneid is an intertext that should be read closely with the literary allusions to Greek tragedy and with tragedy’s own deployment of ritual and religious imagery.

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* Rossi’s book is not in Panoussi’s bibliography, but it is relevant not just for her discussion of tragedy in the Aeneid but also for her discussion of Livy in chapter 2.
Misplaced Objects: Migrating Collections and Recollections in Europe and the Americas.
By Silvia Spitta. Austin: University of Texas Press. xii, 280 p.

Misplaced Objects takes its place in an ongoing series of critical studies dedicated to examining the effects of diaspora on the field imaginary of literary and cultural studies in the wake of the transnational turn. Transhistorical as well as interdisciplinary, Spitta’s richly illustrated study displays an impressive scholarly, cultural, and artistic range, telescoping backwards from contemporary to early modern instances of traveling things and cultures. Spitta’s focus is on the history of transatlantic displacement in the wake of the European conquest and colonization of the Americas; her study traces the “myriad objects that migrated between Europe and the Americas to find their new place within altogether alien contexts” (3). American objects that took their place as curiosities in European Wunderkammern (Cabinets of Curiosities) lead off the analysis in Part 1, followed, in Part 2, by the reverse migration of European icons such as the Virgin of Guadalupe to the Americas. Departing from the “paradoxically simple thesis that when things move, things change” (5), Spitta traces the wayward transformations in use and meaning that objects and cultures undergo in the wake of spatial and temporal dislocation.

A practical lesson on the chance and contingent emergence of things against the grain of origins, Misplaced Objects joins the chorus of anti-essentialist works in cultural studies that have asserted the discontinuities of cultural history, arguing that cultures and things need not retain the same meanings they had at their inception. To the contrary, things and cultures are liable to become raw material for ongoing flows of appropriation, co-optation, and subversion that may change their appearance nearly beyond recognition. Misplaced Objects is an exemplary instance of such a genealogy (rather than a teleological history) of culture. Originating in a provincial Spanish religious cult, the Virgin of Guadalupe, for example, went on to become the mestizo “goddess of the Americas,” a syncretic religious icon, Mexico’s patron saint, and, more recently, a secular icon making visible the longstanding Latino presence in the U.S. Equally important, Spitta’s study is a welcome addition because of its pragmatic case study approach. It carefully documents transculturations much celebrated in the abstract, but understudied in careful historical detail and depth such as offered here.

Part 1 offers a transhistorical and transatlantic genealogy of the European Wunderkammer, the “forerunner of our modern museums,” collections that were the earliest destinations of many displaced objects from the Americas (27). The impulse to collect, Spitta notes in her general discussion of the European Wunderkammern (chapter 1), is linked to power-knowledge, the intellectual attempt to control the chaos of the world. Tracking the Wunderkammer’s dismantling that occurred with the rise of modern museums and scientific academies, Spitta argues that objects arriving from the Americas were transformed into curiosities and, later, into scientific specimens. Invoking Enrique Dussel’s reminder of the often-overlooked fact that the conquest and colonization of the Americas played a crucial role in the constitution of European modernity, Spitta notes that, while they altered the epistemological order of the receptor culture, the “radical alterity of American objects was never completely assimilated” (41, 29). Wide-ranging and illuminating as the remainder of her study, Spitta’s discussion of the Wunderkammern is nevertheless marred by an undue emphasis on wonder as the central purpose and organizing principle of the collections (“wonder-containing spaces,” “theaters of the marvelous,” “the search for curiosities” [41, 36, 44]): “The operating assumption of the cabinets of wonders therefore was that in their wild, exuberant, encyclopedic inclusiveness they laid bare the marvels of the entire world” (57). While not entirely incorrect, this is a reductive reading that bypasses the collections’ fundamental organization, knowledge defined as all-encompassing, encyclopedic universalism. As art historian Horst Bredekamp notes (in The Lure of Antiquity and the Cult of the Machine, 1995), to associate cabinets of curiosities with pre-scientific wonder is a common misconception; indeed, varying names attributed to these early modern collections—
Wunderkammer, Kunstkammer (literally, cabinet of art)—are symptomatic of the widespread confusion over their identity. In fact, they were the expression of a unified conception of creation, at once natural and human, classical and modern, boldly trans-historical and pan-geographic, and encompassing objects from nature, art, and technology. In Bredekamp’s pithy catchphrase, the Kunstkammer epitomized the fusion of the “lure of antiquity and the cult of the machine”: indeed, just as telling as the collections’ incorporation of exotic objects from Europe’s expanding overseas empires in the Americas and elsewhere was their ambitious association, among human artifacts, of both works of art and machines. Technology and science (for example, clocks and early modern automata) were located within the same room, and on the same epistemological plane, as art. In the eighteenth century, this encyclopedic unity—ordered via a historical chain connecting “natural formations—ancient sculptures—works of art—machines” (Bredekamp)—was destroyed (along with the physical dismantling of the Kunstkammer collections) by the rising hegemony of utilitarianism and Enlightenment epistemology. As Spitta notes as well, a new order of things was imposed, drawing sharper “distinction between things” (53), which led to the break-up of the Wunderkammer’s undissociated taxonomy.

The history of the Real Gabinete (Royal Cabinet) (chapter 2) illustrates the general fate of the European Kunstkammern, dismantled for the most part in the course of the eighteenth century with the collapse of the pre-Enlightenment universalist order of the cosmos. Their collections were broken up and sent to specialized museums of art, natural history, ethnology, botanical gardens, and so on, although the Real Gabinete’s foundation (in 1771) and eventual dispersal (around 1867) lag behind by more than a century. As the sponsor of several expeditions in the Spain’s New World colonies, moreover, it illustrates the collusion between collecting and empire, knowledge and colonial power, as well as the often-neglected but “crucial role” the Americas, and displaced “objects from the Americas,” played in the “inception of modernity” and Western science (45, 57). Recently recovered due to the efforts of dedicated curator María de los Angeles Calatayud, the story of the Real Gabinete also exposes the “rarely highlighted fact that the Spanish Empire was a commercial venture” (61). Furthermore, challenging “stereotypes (that pit English industriousness against Spanish greed) . . . the development of the Real Gabinete shows the extent to which the continued Spanish presence in and colonization of the Americas came to be understood and theorized by the eighteenth century as a scientific and economic enterprise” (57). The chapter concludes with an anecdote illustrating the satisfying ironies stemming from anti-colonial uses of colonial knowledge. Thomas Jefferson, who famously refuted eighteenth-century naturalist Buffon’s thesis of the inferiority of American species and the degeneration of European species and people transported to the Americas, obtained important evidence for his rebuttal of Buffon from his correspondence with the Real Gabinete about Dinosaur bones found in Argentina: American Dinosaurs clearly established that “bigger was literally better” (64).

Chapter 3 tracks the survival of the Wunderkammer in popular culture through the nineteenth century to the contemporary period in, for instance, alternative museums and curio shops. The survival of the Wunderkammer order of things in subcultural strata after their delegitimation as serious knowledge/inquiry reveals the extent to which the cabinet of curiosity formula of display—blending spectacle and education, “sight and knowledge” (38), art and science—has persisted to the present day as a powerful trend within popular culture. This is documented by a rich array of examples, including P.T. Barnum’s American Museum and freak shows, Gunther von Hagen’s Bodyworlds exhibit, alternative museums such as L.A.’s Museum of Jurassic Technology, the current trend towards the (digital) reconstruction of European Wunderkammern dismantled in the eighteenth century, as well as the work of contemporary installation and performance artists including Guillermo Gómez-Peña, Coco Fusco, Rosamond Purcell, and Mark Dion. Increasingly, “critics, photographers, and installation artists are using the Wunderkammern as the frame with which to undo the frame” (92). In part making ironic use of the cabinet of curiosity to question
the museological politics of display, contemporary artists carry forward Duchamp’s chal-
lenge to the binary art/life (88). In parallel ways, Purcell’s collaboration with science writer
Stephen Jay Gould is an attempt to deconstruct the division between art and science.

Part 2 turns from secular collections to religious objects and sacred spaces, unfolding
the transatlantic migrations and transculturations of the Virgin of Guadalupe. Invoking
studies identifying the chief role of ritual as the construction of community, Spitta argues
that in each of its displacements, the cult of Guadalupe has functioned as the “glue” in
constructing imagined communities, albeit of radically different kinds—first religious,
then secular; initially colonial, subsequently anti-colonial. Transported across the Atlantic
as an instrument of the Spanish imperial mission in the Americas, the European Vir-
gin was implanted in New Spain as a sacred image of conversion in accordance with post-
Tridentine doctrine. Chapter 4 narrates how, once superimposed on an indigenous shrine
on a mountaintop site (the shrine of Tonantzin, Tepeyac Hill, now part of Mexico City),
this official Baroque icon was in turn soon consumed by an indigenous appropriation
from below that transculturated the Spanish Virgin into a syncretic figure, blended with
Tonantzin, Nahua mother/serpent goddess. Emblematic of the Catholic sacred spaces and
images in the New World created by Iberian colonization, Spitta argues, the brown Virgin’s
syncretic plasticity, manifest in parallel native and creole/colonial corpuses of veneration,
is due to its status as a religious icon and ritual, creating “solidarity without consensus”
(100) or the sharing of specific beliefs.

Chapter 5 further tracks what Spitta calls “Guadalupe’s wheels,” the “ease with which the
Virgin of Guadalupe has crossed continents and borders of all sorts” (120), by discussing
the Virgin’s contemporary transformations at the hands of Latinos in the U.S. Appearing
on the banner of César Chávez United Farmworkers, in the decoration of lowrider cars and
in pinto (prison) tattoos, in iconoclastic feminist appropriations by Chicana artists Ester
Hernandez, Yolanda López, and Alma López, in U.S.-based parades on the Day of the
Feast of Guadalupe (December 12) and transnational Mexican-U.S. pilgrimages honoring
the plight of undocumented workers, the Virgin, now speaking Spanglish and English as
well as native tongues, continues to build solidarity and community, albeit of secular and
counter-institutional kinds very distant from her conservative origins.

Chapter 6 concludes the discussion of Guadalupe’s travels and the genealogy of mestizo
and Catholic “sacred space [that] divides Anglo from Latin America” by focusing on New
Mexico, northern boundary of a landscape dotted by mountaintop crosses that had for-
merly been marked by indigenous altars (97). The “dynamics of enchantment” connect
New Mexico, “land of enchantment,” to Latin America. Spitta juxtaposes two rivaling con-
structions of New Mexican sacred space that engage and contest each other. One is per-
formed by Euro-American modernists Mabel Dodge, Willa Cather, Georgia O’Keefe, and
others who were drawn to New Mexico between the World Wars in their quest for a coun-
terculture of modernity that would inspire their modern art. The other comes from local
Indo-Hispanic religious myths and folk traditions, as represented by the Chimayó sanctu-
ary, the Penitente Brotherhood, folk artists such as santeros, or religious objects such as
bultos (statues). As with the Mexican cult of Guadalupe, New Mexican folk Catholicism is a
mestizo expression nourished by indigenous contributions. And in the wake of New Mex-
ico-inspired Euro-American modernist art, the “New Mexico/mestizo effect” now “perme-
ates artistic sensibilities all over the United States” (147).

The last two chapters in Part 3 approach displacement in contemporary writers and art-
ists from an autobiographical angle: Mexican American Sheila and Sandra Ortiz Taylor’s
Imaginary Parents: A Family Autobiography (1996), a collaborative project created by two sis-
ters, one a writer (Sheila), the other an artist (Sandra), a book illustrated by photographs
of miniature installations (chapter 7), as well as Cuban installation artist Sandra Ramos’s
work (chapter 8). Juxtaposing immigration and exile, chapters 7 and 8 also contrast Mexi-
can American immigrant expression with Cuban exile art, the latter represented from the
unusual perspective of those left behind on the island. Part 3 treats misplaced objects in a new guise, as the personal objects that constitute what Spitta refers to as our “identity kit,” objects (purchased on travels and brought back from our place of origin) “with which we surround ourselves and which we cherish” that “serve to anchor the self to the place we call home” (164).

The Ortiz Taylor sisters’ family autobiography illustrates Pierre Nora’s claim (in “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire,” History and Memory in African-American Culture, 1994) that, unlike history, memory takes root in the concrete: centering on the “lost objects with which the girls grew up” (the father’s saxophone, the mother’s sewing machine, a glamorous family heirloom—Pancho Villa’s whip), Imaginary Parents constitutes a part-visual, part-verbal private collection in which these lost family objects are re-created as “metonymic miniatures” (168). The “careful memory work of re-collection (object and memory)” in the Ortiz Taylor sisters’ family autobiography also illustrates the study’s larger claim—that things change when things travel—in a compelling way: consumer objects (a piñata of Pancho Villa, photographs of Hollywood stars) are transformed into individualized possessions charged with personal symbolism.

Sandra Ramos is a member of a new generation of Cuban artists and writers that emerged in the post-Soviet period of the 1990s (the so-called Special Period in Cuba). Characterized by economic hardship as well as a massive emigration crisis (on the part of Cuban artists, but also with ordinary Cubans’ attempts to cross the Florida Strait in small boats), the 1990s saw a relaxation of censorship and new levels of tolerance towards independent artistic expression and the treatment of previously taboo subjects. Squarely addressing the trauma of the balsero (raft) crisis, Ramos work exemplifies this trend. And, once again, the articulation of loss takes root in material objects: the things that Cuban exiles take with them on their exodus, suitcases, the Cuban flag that stands for a rejected Cuban nationalism but also for nostalgia for the homeland left behind. As the Taylor Ortiz sisters’ and Ramos’s works show, human displacement across national borders, whether in the form of immigration or exile, Mexican American or Cuban, takes place within a parallel flow of objects that embody and refract their owners’ wayward diasporic trajectories.

As indicated above, the chief value of this comparative study lies both in its detailed case studies and its surprisingly original trajectory across a wide-ranging terrain, some of whose segments have been the subject of much specialized scholarship. Misplaced Objects is itself a contemporary brand of scholarly Wunderkammer, collecting cultural objects from five centuries of transatlantic travel between its covers.

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Heinzelman is a “ramist.” But let me start at the beginning. Riding backward on a black ram into court is a curious and probably apocryphal custom reported in the collection of “ancient tenures” published by the lawyer and glossographer Thomas Blount, under the title Fragmenta antiquitatis, in 1679. As reported from two different sources, the riding of the ram, while reciting contrite verses, is a penance—“a pain”—performed by an incontinent
widow who otherwise would lose her lands. It is an English custom, associated with two vil-
lages in Berkshire and a manor in Somerset, that had sufficient hold and popular appeal
to reassert itself in literary texts, in legal apologia, and in political cartoons in the eigh-
teenth and nineteenth centuries, and then again in 2010 in Susan Sage Heinzelman’s
meticulous study of unruly women and errant literature unsettling the jurisdiction of law.

The persistence of the figure of a woman riding backward on a black ram is not only
remarkable but also lends the image a certain force, a customary status that, whatever its
“original,” amounts to something akin to precedent, meaning law formed through use
over time. Blount perhaps anticipated that switch of genres or augmentation of status, the
move from narrative to _nomos_, in the peculiarly ambivalent and somewhat mobile ascrip-
tion of authority that he gave to his collection. The work was intended to be a translation
of the records he compiled, but then he remarks endearingly (in “To the Reader”) that he
retains the Latin because “on second thoughts, I judge the original words would be more
acceptable both to the Learned and the Learner.” He also admits that some of the lan-
guage defies translation and challenges even the most erudite of glossographers, namely,
one suspects, himself. More than that, this resistance to the alteration and diminution that
translation portends is also reflected in the subtitle to the work, which indicates a Latin
translation in his 1912 _Lawyers’ Merriments_, and Josiah Beckwith Gent’s 1815 edition of Blount, carries
the subtitle _Focular Customs_. The common law tradition was not unaware of the importance
of the ludic, of the genre of *serio ludere*, and was equally familiar with the legal emblema-
tist’s view _ex nugis seria_, that out of trifles serious things emerge. Blount indicates as much
in his epigram, carefully ordered to progress from reading, through humor, to knowledge,
and it is that precise trajectory that Heinzelman follows.

The laugh, the smile, is in Freudian terms a mark of latent content, and it would be hard
indeed not to smile at the cartoon of Queen Caroline entering the House of Lords in 1820
for her trial, riding on a black ram. The humor is significant, symptomatic even, and hence
a clue to another scene, a backface, a properly covert content. Heinzelman discusses this in
terms of Freud’s uncanny—a mark of homelessness—and the desire to return. She aims to
reconstruct the hidden history marked by the repetition of the figure of the black ram and
revealed by the diversionary smile. Proceeding by means of readings of disparate feminine
figures—the Wife of Bath, Aphra Benn, Mary Delarivier Manley, Queen Caroline, Mary
Bland, Marie-Madeleine de Lafayette, and Hermione from _The Winter’s Tale_, a reasonably
syncretic conspectus—she argues for the presence of another law, a feminine _nomos_, which
she coins _nostos_, within the interstices, alive and nascent in common law.

The distinction between _nomos_ and _nostos_ is inventive and stipulative. _Nomos_ is defined as
the conceptual substrate of positive law. It encapsulates the historical hierarchy of appro-
priation, possession, and division, and the roles and offices that form the structural and
semantic context of legal rule. _Nomos_ is thus associated with what we English term “estab-
lishment,” the settlement of meaning, the external and objective order of things. Against
this, _nostos_, for Heinzelman, portends a gendered—specifically, feminine—norm, another
scene of resistance and meaning making, a subtle and largely ignored rewriting of the
tradition. In reconstructing the historical narrative so as to elicit and elucidate a feminine
law, a _lex amatoria_, that accompanies and contests the standard histories of the novel and of
legalism, Heinzelman stages a radical claim: she offers “what one might call a critical _nostos_,
a new way of reading the familiar which alters the paradigm that still dominates feminist
critical theory.” (xv) Women have already written themselves, their gender, into history, and have inscribed their own law. Women have always been powerful and have always had a relation to power that the concept of nostos, a gendered reading of the extant literature, both narrative and normative, can reconstruct and relay.

Some might challenge Heinzelman’s restriction of the nomos to the mere legitimation of positive law. While she acknowledges the role of equity as melior lex, the emendation of rigid laws, she could further allude to the role of the nomikoi, scholars who were not lawyers but who advised judges and legislators on matters of morals and ethical impact. They were still, however, overwhelmingly men, and the poetic boundaries they inscribed in law were not self-consciously gendered. What is genuinely significant and non-doctrinaire in Henizelman’s book is thus a recognition that gender is nonetheless immanent to the juridical and present although repressed in the literary and doctrinal history of law. Much to her credit, Heinzelman revives some of the early treatises on women’s rights, written as legal self-help and advice manuals at the very beginning of the early modern tradition. I will here neither rehearse her point nor summarize her various literary elaborations; she succinctly and successfully does so herself. I will rather take up and expand her theoretical point in the context of current trends in legal theory.

Law and literature has been a rather marginal discipline in law schools. It is treated as one of a litany of “law and” sub-disciplines and is viewed as entertainment with a possible utility for honing rhetorical and textual skills that should have been acquired pre-law. It is the beach vacation of the latter stages of the JD curriculum. As mentioned earlier, that ludic and leisured aspect of the literary, otium cum dignitate as used to be said, had significant theoretical import in Blount’s collection of antique customs, and so too in Heinzelman’s “ramist” project. Nostos precedes and exceeds law. It relates less to the externalities of sovereignty or the rule book of positive laws than to the prior contestation and inscription of gendered narratives and aesthetic sensibilities that operate at the level of institutional meaning and the other internalities of everyday action and administration. Here I will draw upon the recent work of Georgio Agamben to expand upon the doctrinal significance of Heinzelman’s “nostalgic” thesis, and particularly upon his elaboration of the baroque maxim rex regnat sed non gubernat—the sovereign rules but does not govern (Le Règne et la gloire 121).

The formal and external domain of rule, of apparent majesty and spectacular theatrics of dominance, of triumph and ceremony is only one part of the exercise of social power. For Agamben, the visible domain of rule, of formal declaration and general norms, rests upon or at least exists in an uneasy relation with the other dimension of power, that of administrative action, of things being done, of bureaucracy and institutional everyday governance. Formal law has a symbolic value and ceremonial significance, but it is modeled upon the theology of a deus otiosus, an inactive deity, a useless God, pure providence as compared to a forgotten theology of disposition and interior rule, the workings of an active deity and actual administration captured in the doctrine of oikonomia. The oikonomic is the apparatus of doing as opposed to declaring and exists in a generally antinomic relation to the generalities and declamations of formal rule.

Heinzelman’s recuperation of a feminine norm, does not coincide with the lost theology of oikonomia, but it does carry significant resonances of gynaecotopic governance. She at one point cites James the first’s accession speech to the effect that “I am the husband, and the whole Isle is my lawfull wife; I am head, and it is body; I am the Shepherd, and it is my flocke” (104). The Royal oikonomos, in Selden’s 1614 work on legal titles of honor “oeconomique rule,” was the original of all commonwealth and the model of both immediacy of rule and practice of governance. The common lawyers of the seventeenth century would refer to law, in this sense, as a “nursing parent” and the Crown as a “nursing father.” The uncanny quality of nostos—the familiar and yet occluded character of the narrative of gendered governance, the constituent practices of the intimate public sphere and
their recuperation through the legally marginal literary texts that Heinzelman re-reads—
provides an important avenue into a neglected history. In other words, what takes place in
the public sphere of ritual and spectacle has likely already been decided, has in fact been
done or at least predetermined in the oikonomic realm. And hence the uncanny feeling,
because these other stories, these gendered narratives of desire and intrigue that make up
the nostoi, the generative imaginings and creative acts of the intimate public sphere, the
doings in the modern equivalents of the Royal oeconomy, are both uneasily familiar and still
subject to repression.

Heinzelman does not go quite as far as Agamben. She acknowledges that common law
has a vein of illogicality and that it has its secret histories and practices that embody
much of what her nostos conveys, but she also harbors a lingering sense of the otherness
and exclusion of the feminine. The literature she relays embodies a history of dismissal
and marginalization. She cites Gerard Genette, arguing that “what defines plausibility is
the formal principle of respect for the norm” (33). The plausible, however, has its etymo-
logical root in the Latin plaudo, meaning to clap and by extension applause and appro-
bation. The plausibility of the norm, in other words, is rooted in the acclamatory, in the
tradition of laudes regiae, the pomp and circumstance that Agamben views as constituting
the precarious hymnological and choral apparatus of glorification that maintains the
sovereign in her majesty and power. My point is simply that the norm—dependent as it is
upon acclamation, upon glorification through ceremony and spectacle—is not free of the
“secret calumnies,” the alternate imaginings, the other scenes of gendered desire that
nostos heralds and relays.

It is tempting to argue that Heinzelman stays too close to the literary aspect of law and
literature. The tendency, for reasons of disciplinary specialization and academic status hierar-
chies so fondly relayed in the U.S., is for literary scholars to study the legal in the literary
rather than to unravel the literary in the legal. Heinzelman, however, takes up several doctr-
inal elaborations and the judgment in the Mary Bland trial. She steps out of her disciplin-
ary comfort zone, breaks the boundaries of the literary, and brings her battering ram to
the portals of law. Back, then, to her ramist tendencies and the image of a woman riding a
black ram, her gnostic icon. To the extent that her work addresses lawyers, its audience is
without question “ignoramist” and needs its complacency and theoretical insularity bat-
tered down. Heinzelman herself needs to ride the ram and enact the “cultural iconogra-
phy” (95) that the cartoon places a touch too safely in the confines of history.

Returning to that image—as an emblem of both gender politics and the relation
between the legal and the literary, nomos and oikonomos—one notices a satirical force to
the scene that deserves further elaboration. The scene—the apparatus—is a large hall with
a gallery, Robed and wigged lawyers accompany Queen Caroline on her black ram, other
lawyers sit behind a table, and there is no bench, no bar, and no raised thrones. This is a
court of literature, a popular assembly, a representation of lex amicitia otherwise variously
named a court of honor or law of love. As Queen Caroline rides the ram the audience
applauds her. She is “guiltless,” “innocent as our wives,” and “virtue is always triumphant.”
She is indeed “santa Carolina,” a nice touch given the images of covert encounters, secret
trysts, and other carnal coniunctuses, to use law French, that hang from the gallery. Here is
a satirical representation of the nomos of the oikos, or here court, and a depiction of the
desires that precede and exceed law. Here it is acclamation that decides in the explicitly
theatrical space of judgment. While it might seem merely humorous, it is also instructive.
Caroline has subverted the tradition to her own ends. She is riding facing forwards on a
black ram that bears the face of her male lover. She is gesturing to the court with the open
hand of rhetoric. To invoke Artemidorus on dream interpretation, the ram is the law, and
is auspicious, the word itself coming from “to rule” (93). The woman, nostos, rides the law
and subjects the man. The literary, one can extrapolate, directs and governs the legal.
Indeed, to cite Artemidorus again, “the ram is a swift animal and is believed to have been
used for the team of Hermes." Thus rhetoric here rides upon and over hermeneutics and the variously complex and antiquated arts of legal interpretation.

In conclusion, continuing with the play upon ram and ramist, neo-ramist no doubt, battering ramist too, the question is what this self-avowedly radical theory means for law and literature. As far as the ramism, the re-ordering, is concerned, this relates directly to the revaluation of the feminine and the literary, of gender and norm. Heinzelman’s recuperation of the black ram is precisely gauged to breaking down the barriers between the two disciplines and offering an account of the literary as the very mechanism, the essential imaginative device, by which the modern public realm obtains its semantic content. With its machinery of acclamation and glorification, emotive attachment and spectacular relay, identity and role, the literary sets the scene for law and lawyers. Nostos potentially dictates the norm, and nowhere could this be more evident than in the image of the trial of Queen Caroline. The cartoon, as I have described it, contains a portrait gallery of images of relationship, paintings within the picture, which are representations of the subject of the trial, the visible imaginary that populates the populace. The figures of the literary, the popular images of the emblem and then cartoon and now multiple relays of digital media all have a significance within law. Heinzelman is concerned that we pay attention to the techniques of the literary and the analyses of gender that are to be found historically from Chaucer to Mary Blandy. They are the real clues, the nostos that covertly determines what nomos will be declared.

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