Edited by
MATHURA UMACHANDRAN
AND MARCHELLA WARD

CRITICAL ANCIENT WORLD STUDIES

The Case for Forgetting Classics

Critical Ancient World Studies

This volume explores and elucidates critical ancient world studies (CAWS), a new model for the study of the ancient world operating critically, setting itself against a long history of a discipline formulated to naturalise a hierarchical, white supremacist origin story for an imagined modern West.

CAWS is a methodology for the study of antiquity that shifts away from the assumptions and approaches of the discipline known as classical studies and/or classics. Although it seeks to reckon with the discipline's colonial history, it is not simply the application of decolonial theory or the search to uncover subaltern narratives in a subject that has special relevance to the privileged and powerful. Rather, it dismantles the structures of knowledge that have led to this privileging, and questions the categories, ideas, themes, narratives, and epistemological structures that have been deemed objective and essential within the inherited discipline of classics. The contributions in this book, by an international group of researchers, offer a variety of situated, embodied perspectives on the question of how to imagine a more critical discipline, rather than a unified single view. The volume is divided into four parts – "Critical Epistemologies", "Critical Philologies", "Critical Time and Critical Space", and "Critical Approaches" – and uses these as spaces to propose disciplinary transformation.

Critical Ancient World Studies: The Case for Forgetting Classics is a must-read for scholars and practitioners teaching in the field of classical studies, and the breadth of examples also makes it an invaluable resource for anyone working on the ancient world, or on confronting Eurocentrism, within other disciplines.

Mathura Umachandran is a Tamil scholar from London, trained at Oxford and Princeton in classics. They teach ancient Greek at the University of Exeter and dream of ways of making more just knowledge.

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Critical Ancient World Studies

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For all those that Classics in its current colonial formation has excluded, othered and dehumanised – with love and hope for a different future.

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Acknowledgements

It was not easy to put together this volume. The CAWS collective began its life as a group of junior scholars around the world, and its meetings regularly involve coordination across at least four continents and many more time zones. As a collective we initially operated from a position of relative lack of power and resources. Many of us were graduate students and early career researchers employed on insecure, temporary and part-time contracts and feeling the hard edge of the neoliberal university's undervaluing of labour and the human. (Some of us are less precarious than this now, employed in our first permanent positions; others have been pushed further to the margins of academia or outside of its fortress walls entirely). We were exhausted, many of us having spent years working in access and outreach, in curriculum reform and on equality, diversity and inclusion committees without seeing substantial change (or even honest commitment to change, beyond outward facing statements, diversity-speak, defensiveness and public-relations-focused initiatives that prioritised looking diverse to the outside world over being equitable). We had grown weary of false promises.

We were also living through a period of industrial action, of COVID-19, of underfunding in the humanities, of undergraduate student organising (including movements like "Decolonise the Curriculum" and "Rhodes Must Fall" and the open letters calling out disciplinary and departmental racisms in classics at many higher education institutions), of environmental collapse, of the growth of fascism, anti-Blackness, Islamophobia and other racisms, and of increasing inequalities that structured how we related to each other as well as to our disciplines and the wider world around us. We were aware that this project was unlikely to be advantageous to our careers. We knew that the phrase "forgetting classics" in particular carried the potential to provoke the wrath of those content with the colonial formation of the discipline. We worked together on this volume in the belief that the attempt to create more equitable modes of knowledge production was worth enduring the wrath it might provoke. We hope that this last point proves to be true! Our thanks, first and foremost, then, go to all of the members of the CAWS collective, who have been our companions in thinking over these last few years. Not just to those in this volume – though thank you to those too – but those whose writing, thinking and activisms shaped this project. Thank you to Sam Agbamu, Qasim Alli, Lena Barsky, Anurima Banerji, Marcus Bell, Ashley Chhibber, Shadreck Chirikure, Eleonora

Colli, Nicolette D'Angelo, Rebecca Georgiades, Bet Hucks, Ahuvia Kahane, Gifty Etornam Katahena, Leo Kershaw and Andi Marsh. It has been an enormous privilege and an even greater pleasure to think in community with you all.

This task may not have been easy, but it was made easier by a number of kind individuals and supportive organisations. Thank you to Jo Quinn, who talked us out of starting a CAWS journal on the grounds that as early career researchers it would consume our entire professional lives, and suggested that we do a volume like this one instead. And thank you to Constanze Güthenke and Fiona Macintosh for all of their sage advice. Thank you to the teams behind *ReOrient* and critical Muslim studies at the University of Leeds, who, in searching for a more critical relationship with their own parent disciplines, created a model we could use to build the foundations of CAWS from classics. Thank you to the Archive of Performances of Greek and Roman Drama at the University of Oxford, who invited us to hash out some of what we thought "decoloniality" meant alongside Joanna Page at one of their seminars – and to the Open University, who invited us to give a tentative retrospective on this first exploratory stage of the project at their "Global Classics" seminar. Thank you to Queer and the Classical and the Res Difficiles teams, who have on different occasions provided opportunities for so many of us in this volume to try out our ideas at their conferences. Thank you also to the Hellenic Society, who provided us with a small grant to buy the internet access that enabled one of the speakers at our initial conference to present his work. We would like to thank the University of Exeter for their generous support in making this volume Open Access, since accessibility is a core part of the vision of CAWS in making and disseminating our knowledge. And thank you to all of the justice activists worldwide from whom we have learned so much in the course of these last few years – and from whom we still have enormous amounts left to learn.

As well as not being easy, the task of CAWS will not ever be finished. Stillness, as Frantz Fanon pointed out, describing the motionless colonial world as a "world of statues" (1963, 50), is anathema to critical scholarship. This volume's aim is not to replace one fixed discipline with another. It is beyond the purview of many of us in this volume, who have been formed by the discipline of classics, to imagine a closed, final discipline of which we can be proud. Instead, our "weedy hope" (to use words we will borrow in this volume's introduction) is to offer some starting points for the changes that we believe to be urgently needed in the study of the ancient world. Our final thanks, then, go to all those who will join us in imagining this justice-focused future. We hope that you will find inspiration in the things we have got right, call us in on the things we have got wrong, work together with us to unsettle the colonial foundations of the discipline we have been trained in and develop methods, tools, approaches and ideas that in this present moment we are unable even to imagine.

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Introductions

1 Towards a Manifesto for Critical Ancient World Studies

Mathura Umachandran and Marchella Ward

Critical ancient world studies (CAWS) is a methodology for the study of antiquity broadly defined (temporally, ideologically and geographically) that makes the following four critical steps away from the field known as classical studies and/or classics. Firstly, it critiques the field's Eurocentrism and refuses to inherit silently a field crafted so as to constitute a mythical pre-history for an imagined "West", in particular, by rejecting the "universal" as synonym for the "Western" or the "European". While classics has been content to construct an ancient world whose value lies in its mirror image of modern Europe, CAWS investigates the ancient history of a world without accepting the *telos* of the West. Secondly, it rejects the assumption of an axiomatic relationship between so-called classics and cultural value, divesting from cultural capital as a mode of knowledge-making in the field. Thirdly, it denies positivist accounts of history, and all modes of investigation that aim at establishing a perspective that is neutral or transparent, and commits instead to showcasing the contingency of history and historiography in a way that is alert to the injustices and epistemologies of power that have shaped the way that certain kinds of knowledge have been constructed as "objective" within the discipline known as classics. Fourthly, it requires of those who participate in it a commitment to decolonising the gaze of and at antiquity. It is not simply, however, the application of decolonial theory or the search to uncover subaltern or "wretched of the earth" narratives within a subject that has special relevance to the privileged and the powerful.[1] Rather, it dismantles the structures of knowledge that have led to this privileging, and questions the categories, ideas, themes, narratives and epistemological structures that have been deemed objective and essential within the inherited discipline of classics.

In practice, these four epistemological orientations will require two further practical commitments: (1) to confronting the inequalities and inequities that structure access to the field and imbalance who gets to work and study within it and (2) to rejecting the centrality of ancient Greece and ancient Rome within the study of the ancient world. In this approach, CAWS takes its theoretical and epistemic example from *ReOrient*, a journal of critical Muslim studies that has taken a similarly critical attitude to its own parent disciplines. Summing up

their critical distance from such disciplines, the authors of the *ReOrient* mani-festo state,

> In the process of the forging of a critical space, we are de-naturalizing the historiographies, ideologies and teleologies that are normalized, produced and enabled by unquestioned protocols of knowledge formation.[2]

The goal of CAWS is not to defend the discipline known as classics from criti-cism, or to argue simply for wider access to the subject, but to take up the invita-tion of such critiques to change the epistemological structures of the study of the ancient world such that access to the subject would, by definition, be equitable. This will involve not only denaturalising the methodologies that go unquestioned in the discipline of classics but the active creation and dissemination of more criti-cal methodologies.

   In the course of this book, the contributing authors will set out some of the ways that they see these new methodologies for the study of the ancient world operating critically, setting themselves against a long history of a discipline formulated (both from inside and outside) so as to naturalise a hierarchical, white supremacist ori-gin story for modern Europe (and by extension the United States). Much has been made in recent years of the uses of classics for explicitly racist purposes, with clas-sicists often leaping to defend their subject from what they positioned as "misuses" of the ancient world, distinguished from the academic study of the subject by their moral depravity.[3] As we will see throughout the contributions to this volume, how-ever, many of the assumptions that permit and legitimate such uses of the ancient world in support of white supremacist, ableist, Islamophobic or otherwise hateful aims are not only evident in *mis*uses of the ancient world, but are fundamental to the structures of knowledge formation in the discipline known as classics.

   The chapters that make up this book result from a series of conversations and a virtual conference in September 2020 that set out to find different – and more critical – ways of studying the ancient world. They offer a variety of situated, embodied perspectives on the question of how to imagine a more critical discipline – rather than a unified single view of such a discipline (though all of them respond, at varying levels of distance, to the four key critical steps away from classics that those of us working within the CAWS collective sometimes refer to as our "mani-festo").[4] CAWS is a journey rather than a destination; it is by definition activist, unfinished and partial. It represents a search rather than a discovery.[5] This volume presents the initial results of that search for more critical methodologies.

Why Be Critical?

Classics is – we are not the first to say it[6] – the disciplinary equivalent of a haunted house. The spirits are summoned both by those who make their intellectual homes within the old creaking mansion walls and by those who stand outside and call upon those spirits to do their ideological bidding. To enter the haunted mansion means not only to encounter these ghosts but also to risk possession by them: to

have one's ways of being and thinking controlled from within by a spirit summoned from a past time, whose prejudices persist among the living. "To reckon with being haunted" writes the disability justice worker and artist Johanna Hedva, "is important political work. It can account for how the world has come to be as it is, and it can reimagine a world that is not already foretold".[7]

Ghosts have for some time been an image for imagined transhistorical community with the inhabitants of antiquity: there are two chapters about ghosts in *Deep Classics: Rethinking Classical Reception* (2016), for example, and the seances and other occult practices by which Victorian classicists communed with the ancients are a well-known part of the history of the discipline.[8] More recently, those critical of the colonial ideological formations of classics have made particular use of ghosts as a disciplinary image. Setting out the futility of increasing access for under-represented groups to a subject often distinctly hostile to such students, Dan-el Padilla Peralta referred, in his address to the Society of Classical Studies annual meeting in 2018, to the ghosts of classics:

> What exactly do we propose to do by expanding access? Are we simply in the business of bringing fresh blood to the ghosts?[9]

The critique levelled here is one familiar to those who work in access to higher education, where schemes designed to increase access are frequently co-opted to serve an agenda that seeks to project an image of diversity to the outside world without tackling the institutional inequities that produce the access problem (an institutional reflex that is discussed at length in Nadena Doharty, Manuel Madriaga and Remi Joseph-Salisbury's 2020 article "The university went to 'decolonise' and all they brought back was lousy diversity double-speak!"[10]).

This access problem is particularly pronounced in classics, where access projects often rely on precisely those ideological and methodological orientations that exclude under-represented groups to make the case for the subject. One of the clearest examples of this is the charity Classics for All's impassioned vaunting of the western civilisation narrative, affirming the relevance of classics on their website on the basis that "it shows us why we in the West are as we are". The article, entitled "Why Classics?" replaced Peter Jones' article of the same title and which celebrated Homer as "the first voice of the West" only recently.[11] The same charity were also in December 2020 widely criticised for benefitting from an auction that included the unethical sale of unprovenanced Egyptian, Greek and Roman antiquities. Following criticism from large numbers of academics (with the art historian Erin Thompson describing the charity event as "a bit like trying to support a charity that helps protect people from human trafficking by auctioning off the services of an undocumented worker to clean your house without pay"), the charity later withdrew from the event, but it served to illustrate the role that some of the most harmful practices and ideologies can have even in projects designed to increase access to the discipline.[12] Projects that feed fresh blood to the ghosts, as Dan-el Padilla Peralta has it, are unsurprisingly also complicit in their summoning. The goal of CAWS will not be to romanticise these ghosts, scoff affectionately at their

summoning or indulge their bloodthirsty natures any further by making a defence of classics. Rather, we will seek to name (some of) the ghosts of the discipline in this introduction, so as to find alternative ways of studying the ancient world that set themselves against their summoning throughout the rest of this volume. In short, to use Johanna Hedva's language, we wish to "reckon with being haunted".

It is now widely acknowledged that the discipline known as classics benefitted from and lent weight to oppressive systems of power, serving to naturalise certain kinds of bodies, power structures (particularly settler colonialism) and epistemologies as normal or neutral – and even universal. Emily Greenwood (2009) and Phiroze Vasunia (2013), among others, have written of the ways in which the discipline of classics and its materials of study were weaponised within particular colonial contexts (Caribbean and Indian schoolrooms respectively), but the idea that the colonial can persevere in neocolonial epistemologies has been much more explicitly theorised outside of classics than inside of it.[13] Boaventura de Sousa Santos in his "archaeology of knowing", *The End of the Cognitive Empire: The Coming of Age of Epistemologies of the South* (2018), writes against what he calls "dominant epistemologies" that take for granted a Eurocentric notion of objectivity:

> The dominant currents in the epistemologies of the North have focused on the privileged validity of modern science that has developed predominantly in the global North since the seventeenth century. These currents are based on two fundamental premises. The first one is that science based on systematic observation and controlled experimentation is a specific creation of Western-centric modernity, radically distinct from other sciences originating in other regions and cultures of the world. The second premise is that scientific knowledge in view of its rigor and instrumental potential, is radically different from other ways of knowing, be they lay, popular, practical, commonsensical, intuitive or religious.[14]

Although Santos does not say so explicitly, his critique of the assumed objectivity of the science of the so-called West echoes in many ways the challenges that Black studies and in particular Black feminist philosophy had long been levelling at the very notion of objective knowing. Sylvia Wynter's critique, in particular, was for much of her career levelled at the ways in which the epistemological structures of much of so-called Western philosophy elevated a certain kind of humans and particular way of defining human knowing to the level of the universal, returning throughout her work to Aimé Césaire's critical approach to the presumed objectivity of science.[15] Critical discussions around the impossibility of objective knowing are well known from feminist philosophy (perhaps most famously Donna Haraway's 1988 *Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective*), but Wynter's demand for the overthrowing of colonial epistemology took explicit issue with the involvement of the classical in the sustaining of epistemological dominance. Wynter referred scathingly in a 2015 interview with Katherine McKittrick to "the Western bourgeoisie's projected Grecian norm of being and beauty".[16] Knowledge-making's reliance on pretended

objectivity was, Wynter wrote much earlier, evidence of the need for "a new sci-ence of human discourse".[17]

In their chapter in this volume, Salman Sayyid and AbdoolKarim Vakil demand not a new science of human discourse but a new history of the world, looking to CAWS to provide a new prologue to a critical history of the world that is "built within multiple world histories, shorn of their Eurocentric trappings and partitions, able to narrate the historical ontology of the present".[18] In recent years, classicists looking to provide new ways of understanding how the past comes to influence the present (or to narrate its "historical ontology") have leaned on scientific meta-phors to explain how that relationship might be structured, with Shane Butler in the introduction to his edited collection *Deep Classics: Rethinking Classical Reception* (2016) calling on metaphors not only of geologic layering and stratigraphy but of Darwinian and genetic inheritance to explain the endurance of the classical. But while some of the contributors to Butler's volume (among them Helen Slaney) rightly counter that the classical is "a necessarily imaginary property", Butler's sci-entific metaphors bring with them the false objectivity that Santos, echoing Wynter and Césaire, decries.[19] The past, such metaphors assume, really *is* in the present, and our relationship with it is epigenetic and measurable. A number of chapters in the present volume offer paradigms of classical reception that negotiate a relation-ship with the past that is actively created rather than passively inherited (see, for instance, Holly Ranger's chapter), or understood to be an imaginary property – and the relationship between historical positivism and objectivity will be the subject of a later section of this introduction. But the new history of the world that Sayyid and Vakil call for requires the establishment of a critical methodology for describing its relationship with the ancient past – and it is this critical mode of figuring the study of the ancient world, where the ancient world constitutes a prologue to a decolo-nised world history and not an imagined pre-history for a hegemonic and colonial idealised vision of Europe that CAWS seeks to provide.

Critical Muslim studies, the discipline from which CAWS takes its inspiration, began its criticism of the Western episteme with the desire to leave behind the Ori-entalising gaze that sought to establish a hierarchical privileging of the West over the Rest (a residual category that designates not the East in any geographical sense, but the Orient against which the West directed both its material violence and its imperialist gaze).[20] This hierarchical and constructed opposition between the West and the Rest, a structuring of knowledge that is both taken for granted and carefully established in the "dominant epistemologies" that Santos describes, has a long his-tory of opposition in decolonial studies, but the term "critical" in CAWS brings with it the opportunity to unsettle and interrogate received conceptual categories and frames beyond this structuring. That empire and the logics invented to justify it both constructed and were co-constructed by epistemological models for the study of the past is beginning to become apparent in studies of historiography. In *Time's Monster: History, Conscience and Britain's Empire* (2020), the historian of the British Empire Priya Satia recounts "the twinned story of the history of empire and the history of history", and her account sets out in particular to be critical of the way that a narrative of progress, disguised as history, "has conveyed us to the brink

of disaster".[21] Progress, like East versus West, is for Satia (among others) an epistemological model that is fundamentally colonial in its structuring of knowledge.[22] Decolonisation movements have repeatedly called for the dismantling of the figureheads of empire (literally, in the case of Rhodes Must Fall and similar movements) and a critical approach to the memory of the imperial past.[23] CAWS takes aim not simply at the trappings of empire within the discipline of classics but at the epistemological frameworks by which classics and empire co-sustained each other.

Recent years have seen the prefix "critical" incorporated within reorganised and rebranded versions of a number of subjects of academic study, appearing in tandem with the much-lamented decline of critical theory.[24] The "death of theory" was announced for classics by Charles Martindale in a review in the classics journal *Arion* in 2002, but much like the death of the author, it seems to have gone unperceived in most parts of the discipline: critical theory, like the author, is it seems perpetually dying and never quite dead. Many contributors to this volume have by now grown used to their provocations for altering the epistemological orientations and structures of knowledge in the discipline known as classics meeting with the response that a series of canonical critical theorists have said all of this before. The names of such theorists are littered throughout this volume (Michel Foucault, Henri Bergson, Gilles Deleuze, Karl Marx, etc.), but this veneer of criticality that has characterised the field for some time seems not to have done much to alter the field's epistemological orientations.

Classics is hardly one singular entity, and it would be incorrect to suggest that certain scholars had not made use of the critique of these positionalities to alter the epistemic structure of the discipline, but the field has on the whole remained structured by the very Eurocentrism, teleological notion of history and abetting of power that many of these theorists had themselves decried. Further, the deploying of this canon of – almost exclusively white and male – critical theorists has the consequence of further marginalising voices from disciplines that might have carried a much greater weight of critique for the epistemological orientations of classics. Though many contributors to this volume have been told that they ought to be reading Foucault or Heidegger or Bergson, none have been told that they ought to be reading Achille Mbembe, Zakiyyah Iman Jackson, Sumaya Kassim, Stacey Park Milbern or other philosophers and writers working within activist disciplines that have levelled their critique at concepts central to the sustaining of the Western episteme.[25]

In the last 15 years analyses that explicitly address the relationships between the classical and coloniality or between empire and the discipline of classics have begun to surface in increasing numbers (see, for instance, Mark Bradley's edited collection *Classics and Imperialism in the British Empire*, 2010). But such analyses often restrict themselves to describing the nature of that relationship (which is weighty enough to fill several such volumes) or to setting the harms of the classical firmly into the imperial past rather than engaging with their ongoing harm in the present. Such disciplinary-historical work, crucial though it is for a critical re-evaluation of the study of the ancient world, is not alone sufficient for reimagining the study of the ancient world for a decolonial future. Attempts to do this reimagining have thus

far been met with the requirement that the discipline apologetically document its colonial past for the benefit of critics who seek to redeem their beloved discipline from such accusations (and stall any attempts to refashion it). And in this repeated requirement that those wishing to undertake a more critical study of the ancient world prove over and over again to their detractors that classics *really was* structured by and *really did* co-construct European cultural hegemony lies the difficulty of imagining a future for CAWS. The demand becomes a tool for distraction, a tactic for delay.[26] Like the pre-emptive counter that critical theory has done all of this before, this disciplinary reflex which incessantly demands proof of coloniality serves to stall change and shift it further into the distant future.

This problem presents itself similarly for many in other disciplines who have sought to reimagine their study in the light of decolonial thought and to unsettle the categories and epistemologies taken for granted within their disciplines. Writing of anthropology, Ghassan Hage asked a question similar to the one this volume is asking of classics, in an article entitled "Anthropology is a white colonialist project' can't be the end of the conversation" (2017). In the article, Hage offered some suggestions for a critical future for Anthropology beyond simply denouncing or redeeming itself from its white supremacist structuring of knowledge. Not all of Hage's suggestions are compatible with the CAWS project, but his overt recognition that "the history of anthropological knowledge is the history of white colonial knowledge of non-white cultures", and desire to ask the question "what next?" offers a starting point for a future-focused CAWS.[27] Beyond simplistic and never-ending conversations that return compulsively to the same questions hoping to redeem the subject (were the ancient Greeks and Romans exclusively white? is it possible to write a good grammar of Latin and also be an enslaver of people? who really owns classical antiquity?), there is, in Hage's suggestion, the potential for a critical mode of studying the ancient world that seeks *to learn* from the fact of classics' relationship with white supremacy, not simply to prove or disprove it.

Hage is not alone in his suggestion that future modes of knowing need to be built on the recognition of the field's complicity as well as on a desire for decolonial "disentanglement".[28] In *Recalling the Caliphate: Decolonization and World Order* (2014), Sayyid refers to the need for "a clearing of the ground, a clearing of the objections that are constantly made and endlessly recycled".[29] It is this process of "clearing" that opens up, for Sayyid, the possibility of a "decolonial horizon" and in this, he notes, "the division between clearing and dreaming cannot be absolute".[30] Acknowledging, then, as Sayyid does, that there is a relationship between clearing and dreaming, this book refuses to engage to such an extent in clearing the ground that it loses the impetus to reimagine (dream) it. Proving the coloniality of the classical will not be the object of this book, though the idea will recur as a referent throughout. The case has by now been made frequently that the discipline of classics was shaped by a desire to legitimate coloniality and by the Western episteme – handbooks and companion volumes now exist characterising this relationship in close detail (including, most recently, Blouin and Akrigg [eds., forthcoming], *Handbook of Classics and Postcolonial Theory*) – this volume will not repeat the work of these books. Instead, it will (for the most part) accept the

"clearing" as already accomplished, and will perform the work of "dreaming" a new critical discipline – the second part of the "reckoning" with being haunted that Hedva refers to.[31] Laying bare the complex interdependencies of the field of classics with various kinds of power structures will occasionally be necessary; the main focus of this book, however, is not on cataloguing those relationships but on reimagining a discipline that is equipped to critically confront them.

Forgetting and Remembering (Against Positivism)

The disciplinary boundaries drawn around classics, as currently formulated, engage a complex process of remembering and forgetting. Those boundaries are geographical, linguistic and temporal – and in so being they are not simply neutral facts of the discipline, but the ideological curation of a specific slice of the past, remembered in such a way as to render it a justification and authentication of the present condition of the world. That memory results less from passive inheritance than it does from active – and ideologically laden – choice, is made apparent by Saidiya Hartman, who writes in *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route* (2006),

> Every generation confronts the task of choosing its past. Inheritances are chosen as much as they are passed on. The past depends less on "what happened then" than on the desires and discontents of the present. Strivings and failures shape the stories we tell. What we recall has as much to do with the terrible things we hope to avoid as with the good life for which we yearn.[32]

This active choice of a particular past as the special inheritance of modern Europe (and by extension the US) affects how that past is studied in the discipline of classics – and how the ancient past is perceived by those outside the discipline. Lylaah Bhalerao's chapter in this volume exemplifies this, showing how the presumption that ancient Greece constitutes a global universal past has the effect of dismissing Islamic heritage. Such presumptions are of course a-geographical – they redraw the geography of the world so as to imagine antiquity at its centre. Moving beyond these assumptions requires a commitment to local histories and a critical separation between "the classical" and "the European", but this process will also require, as Mathura Umachandran's chapter in this volume points out, a re-evaluation of the methods by which geographical knowledge is organised in the discipline.

As well as a redrawing of the world's maps, classics' idealised memorialising of a distant past also entails the forgetting of a more recent past.[33] Despite the fact that classics as a subject is – in the UK at least – taught in only very few maintained-sector secondary schools (and much more widely in independent and public schools intended for the training of Britain's elites), it is easy to forget how the material legacy of colonialism shapes the spaces where classics is studied. One of the most revealing features of classics' disciplinary memory is the choice to forget empire: to forget that the buildings that once housed and trained bureaucratic elites also trained them to read Greek and Latin texts; to forget that the wealth that has

been amassed in Britain over centuries and given power to these very institutions of learning was stolen from the rest of the world.[34] (This forgetting is not limited to Britain – see Lyra Monteiro on the ideological programme and classical self-fashioning of Thomas Jefferson as part of the white settler colonial project of the United States.)[35] Classics has some degree of comfort in accepting that empire happened, but it chooses to look away from its ongoing material intimacy with colonialism.

And moreover when classicists do acknowledge the fact of empire, they too often relegate this less-than-palatable fact of the discipline to the stuff of the early to mid-20th century. This temporal move constitutes what Janet Mawhinney in her master's thesis (subsequently analysed by Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang) named "settler moves to innocence".[36] By setting the harms of classics firmly in the past, scholars of classical antiquity can safely proffer arguments about the polychromy of ancient sculpture or the racial and ethnic diversity of populations in the ancient world, without this work inviting them to confront how empire continues to structure the foundations of their institutions and knowledge-making practices. Such gestures allow scholars to make the case for their own innocence and position themselves as outside of complicity with their discipline's coloniality, without attending to (much less dismantling) the colonial structures of thinking that make such gestures necessary.

Scholar of British immigration law Nadine El-Enany acutely observes the contemporary effects of the repeated choices of a national culture that undertakes such forgetting of empire:

> The abstraction of day-to-day life in Britain from its colonial history means that immigration law and policy, whether in the form of the hostile environment, visa requirements or other external border controls, are not seen as ongoing expressions of empire. Yet this is what they are; part of an attempt to control access to the spoils of empire which are located in Britain. British colonialism is thus an ongoing project, sustained via the structure of law.[37]

But the kind of disciplinary forgetting that is common in classics is not simply dangerous because of its naturalised forgetfulness, but because of the way that this subjective, partial and ideologically laden remembering and forgetting is elevated to the level of universal point of origin. This fantasy of universalism, coupled with the cultural authority and abetting of power that has long been curated for classics, allows the discipline to frame its partial and selective memory as objective knowing (or "history"). Contra to often-voiced claims on historicism and a rigorous insistence on historical and cultural distance of the scholar within the field, classics still traffics in the universal. It makes a set of historical particulars into the formula for thinking through the world and its history, privileging white Europe as the regnant subject. This is most evident in the most public-facing parts of the discipline, with writing for a wide audience often defaulting to patronising images of universal beginnings, origins, cradles of civilisation and a special ongoing relevance throughout the modern world.

Feminist thought has brought attention to deconstructing the notion that any given particular could be elevated to the status of universal. Critical theorist and proudly self-declared "feminist killjoy" Sara Ahmed describes the universal as "a structure, and not an event" and argues that as a structure, the universal cannot apply to all people across time and space.[38] She describes how the universal works in and through a set of contradictions:

> The promise of the universal is what conceals the very failure of the universal to be universal. In contemporary theory this paradox of the promise that conceals its own failure . . . has led to the reinvention of universalism as formalism: the universal as pure or empty form, as abstraction from something or anything in particular.[39]

The universal, for Ahmed, is a failed promise because it is – and always was – an empty form. Any given idea or concept might be put into the place of the universal, *except for the fact that it has not been*. It is the West that has been placed at the heart of the universal by way of classical antiquity as its self-authenticating *mythos*, with its claims to have found first the best tools and best expressions of human organisation in philosophy, politics and culture. There is a kind of epistemic violence entailed in making any particular the content of the structure of universalism – of abstracting the particular and elevating it to the level of universal. In naming the contradictions of the universal, Ahmed points out how abstraction is violent:

> But remember: abstraction is an activity. To abstract is to drag away. The very effort to drag the universal away from the particular is what makes the promise of the universal a particular promise; a promise that seems empty enough to be filled by anyone is how a promise evokes someone.[40]

Greece and Rome's position as the contents of the structure of the universal is not accidental, or ideologically neutral – not least because the process of abstraction from the particular required by universalism, as Ahmed points out, is an active one.

Fabricating Greek and Roman antiquity into the structure of the universal takes effort. It is a set of conscious and unconscious choices to build a framework (through partial and selective memory) in relation to which the rest of the world cannot fit. The disciplinary work of classics has been to invent an understanding of the past and relationships to the past that could underwrite a particular kind of present.

> It is the emptiness of the promise that is the form of the universal; it is how the universal takes form around some bodies that do not have to transform themselves to enter the room kept open by the universal.

Entry to the room of the universal is carefully policed, through the exclusion of critical voices (for example, those in Black studies) that offer the opportunity to overthrow the epistemological ordering that masquerades as neutral in the unexamined

classical. Classics closes the door of the universal with certain bodies inside it and certain bodies outside of it.[41]

It is unsurprising, given Ahmed's formulation of the universal as a promise extended to some and not to others, that considerable energy has been spent attempting to recuperate and redeem the discipline of classics. Diversity and inclusion have been key to this model, with fresh blood being brought to the ghosts of classics (as Dan-el Padilla Peralta has it) in efforts to justify the continued existence of the discipline. Such work masquerades as the generous extension of the universal but in fact often serves to underline classics' supposed universality without altering the pedagogical formation of the discipline so as to serve an increasingly diverse student body. The litmus test here is to ask the question *cui bono* – for whose good is it to recuperate classical mythology as tools for political resistance? If it is for the good of the ghosts of the discipline of classics, then it will simply serve to abstract such struggles from the particular, and to lend weight to the notion of Greece and Rome's universality.

In response to the rhetorical question she poses at the end of her introduction to *Antigone Rising: The Subversive Power of Ancient Myths* (2020) – "Who owns antiquity? Who owns culture?" – Helen Morales answers triumphantly, "We do".[42] Morales' question, despite its optimistic aspirations to inclusion, serves to reinscribe a model of ownership in the study of classical antiquity (and in this, Morales is not alone, in his 2018 book *Classics: Why It Matters*, Neville Morley makes a similar observation: "there is always a struggle over it's [antiquity's] ownership, who gets to claim it and define it").[43] Morales' question also pre-supposes a universal "we", a category made up of unmarked bodies that function as natural inheritors of this ancient past – and who do not struggle to access the room of the universal. The project of CAWS refuses this assimilation of the classical with the universal, insists that the "we" is not a unified, naturalised category or mode of mutual recognition. The idea of a universal "we" in the study of antiquity is its own particular kind of violence that erases the various ways that antiquity is kept from certain groups and shared out freely to others.[44] CAWS rejects relationships to history or people defined as property (and thus commodified or fetishised). Ownership of this past cannot be righteously corrected or stringently policed by a certain subset of scholars who have the rights to exclusive access. It has long been a *topos* of Black studies that the notion of the human requires a renegotiation that denies its universality: being readily recognised as "human" is a particular experience that has (historically and actually) only belonged to certain humans but is falsely elevated to the level of the universal in much socio-cultural and political thought.[45] Rather than seek to deny particular experiences in favour of the universal or simply expand the universal so as to include those previously excluded by it (without protecting them from its harms), CAWS looks to alternative modes of knowledge-making that do not pre-suppose unmarked subjects or objective encounters with the ancient past or with its long history.

For these reasons, CAWS demands that we divest from positivism, notions of absolute objectivity, universalism and ownership, and centre in our analyses of the ancient world the partiality, bias and embodied nature of all knowing,

contextualising it within its histories of empire and other power structures (Ashley Lance and Helen Wong each offer, in their chapters, frameworks for confronting epistemic injustice through a re-evaluation of embodied and particular modes of knowledge-making[46]). And insomuch as memory is already acknowledged as partial, it will be a useful replacement for positivist historiography and claims to distanced or objective historical knowing. The productive partiality of remembering has been perhaps most useful in queer studies where, as Rahul Rao points out in *Out of Time: The Queer Politics of Postcoloniality* (2020):

> [W]hat becomes evident is that memory is less a treasure trove of stories than a battleground on which competing accounts joust for hegemony. The point of the turn to memory is not that it promises to end conflict, but that it sometimes offers queers a more hospitable terrain for it.[47]

CAWS is a call to do different kinds of remembering (and forgetting) of the past, to seek out more ethical relationships that do not fall under the rubric of power, ownership and exclusion, universalism, dehumanisation, hegemony and supremacy. We argue collectively, over the course of this volume, that our scholarly activity in studying the ancient world has as much to do with fabricating the realities of the present as making stories of the past, and that it is only in finding ways to acknowledge the impossibility of objective knowing and universality that the study of the ancient world will cherish and foreground the partial perspectives that might craft their pasts around a more equitable present. As Saidiya Hartman insists, "the past depends . . . on the desires and the discontents of the present".[48] We take up Hartman's invitation to critically establish pasts and to organise with care the relationships curated between those pasts and the contemporary world, acknowledging the selective nature of all memory and not seeking to naturalise the forgetting of power structures by disguising memory as positivist or objective history. Our call is for a more critical mode of remembering – and for a forgetting of the seeming neutrality of the epistemological organisation of the discipline of classics.

Imagined Kinship: The *Telos* of the West

This call to forget classics – or rather to de-essentialise and re-contextualise its constructed primacy, universality and privileging – is also a demand to cast off the faux biological and inheritance-model trappings of the field.[49] Forgetting requires imagining and making kinship in a new way. The challenge of theorising a new understanding of kin-making is taken up by Donna Haraway in her *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (2016) and is well commented on in other works that sit at the intersection of the biology and philosophy of the Anthropocene, such as by multiple contributors to Elaine Gan, Anna Tsing, Heather Swanson and Nils Bubandt's edited volume *Arts of Living on a Damaged Planet: Ghosts and Monsters of the Anthropocene* (2017). The developmental biologist Andreas

Hejnol, in his contribution to the Gan, Tsing, Swanson and Bubandt volume, makes an impassioned case for leaving behind some of the metaphors that have given shape to narratives around inheritance and evolution in biology:

> For centuries, biology has relied on a particular set of metaphors – including ladders and trees – to classify and order living beings. Such metaphors have depicted life as a slow but inexorable march upward – as a stairway of creatures with humans at the top, positioned as the most advanced beings. This hierarchical understanding of life, which defines "progress" as a linear movement from the so-called simple to the complex, has long haunted biological inquiry . . . new biologies are forcing us to tell very different stories with dramatically different metaphors.[50]

These metaphors of evolution and ascent, which set their course to the *telos* of modern humanity, are for Hejnol grounded in a simplistic (and no longer accurate at the molecular level) understanding of genealogy:

> Put simply, molecular data uproot the phylogenetic tree. Not only do they strengthen the deconstruction of the teleological elements in the understanding of the processes in evolution, including hierarchical orderings of beings, they also demonstrate that evolution itself is non-directional and unpredictable.[51]

But more than inaccurate at the micro level, metaphors that suggest linear descent – which Hejnol terms "ladder-thinking" – are problematic because they restrict the ways in which we can think about multi-species interactions and ecologies. The points that Hejnol makes here have been anticipated in many ways by Indigenous people, as the environmental biologist and Citizen Potawatomi Nation member Robin Wall Kimmerer explains in *Braiding Sweetgrass* (2013), where she remarks on the problems caused when metaphors from nature (particularly trees) are pressed into the service of an anthropocentric hierarchisation of the world.[52] Hejnol continues,

> Ladders and trees – structured around the idea of human superiority and linked to problematic ideas of complexity and hierarchy – have proved particularly discouraging of curiosity.[53]

Hierarchical metaphors of tree and ladder thinking, in other words, are unhelpful to the structuring of relationships because they discourage a more varied landscape of ways of knowing. In their place, Hejnol advocates rhizomatic understandings of biological relation, "meshlike" metaphors such as the image of branched coral, or at the very least "tree metaphors, read nonteleologically".[54]

For Donna Haraway there is a real urgency to altering the metaphors we use to describe biological relation and the stories we tell about ontology. Elaborating on

the anthropologist Marilyn Strathern's "it matters what ideas we use to think other ideas", Donna Haraway continues,

> It matters what thoughts think thoughts. It matters what knowledges know knowledges. It matters what relations relate relations. It matters what worlds world worlds. It matters what stories tell stories.[55]

For classicists, the genealogical model of ontological relation so strongly rejected by these biologists has a familiar feel to it. While Gan, Tsing, Swanson and Bubandt hold up the idea of organising life forms according to a great chain of being as an anthropocentric shift of the Renaissance, the image is familiar to students of classical reception from Charles Martindale's articulation of the process of reception as a chain in *Redeeming the Text: Latin Poetry and the Hermeneutics of Reception* (1993). The metaphor of the chain arises, as summarised by Gan, Tsing, Swanson and Bubandt, as follows:

> In Europe, northern Renaissance thinkers came up with a great scheme linking classical, religious, and emergent modern thinking. They claimed that life had evolved from simple to complex. This was a grand and optimistic view that placed humans at the top of the Great Chain of Being, the highest rung of the ladder, where God had once resided. Like the Christian religious thought before it, this scheme assumed that we were all in a single time, on a single trajectory.[56]

This chain made its way into biology, as Hejnol explains, in the 18th century, as scientists began to fit evolution to the model they understood to have been outlined by Aristotle (the *scala naturae* or "ladder of nature"), organising life forms along a scale – or a chain – that positioned those at the end as both the latest in time and the most developed. And while Charles Darwin's work on evolution might be the best remembered description of this model, he was far from alone:

> Up to the eighteenth century, the classification of organisms remained largely ahistorical. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, however, the scientific community began to debate historical ideas and consider that organisms might change over time. The integration of time and history into the discourse of ordering nature was a radical new view on the order of nature that became one of the foundations of modern science. Darwin's nineteenth-century publications about evolutionary theory are the most well-known example of classification based on historical principles. Yet Darwin's theory was only one of many.[57]

This evolutionary moment in the history of biology – when a particular way of understanding time and metaphors of progress and genealogy now understood to be inadequate joined together to reinforce the supremacy of certain humans over

others – was also, as Michael Silk et al. (2014), point out, the moment at which the idea of a classical tradition came into use.[58]

The echo of a genealogical and evolutionary logic in the metaphors used to make sense of classical reception has not gone unnoticed, Shane Butler in the introduction to his edited volume *Deep Classics: Rethinking Classical Reception* (2016) addresses the Darwinian logic of classical inheritance.[59] Butler is interested in the Deep Time of this new science (which he relates to the Deep Time of geology and stratigraphy),[60] and having offered an example of Deep Time as geological stratification, he proffers further examples of the concept:

> Other kinds of Deep Time manifest themselves as similarly jarring juxtapositions of distant past and immediate presence, such as evolutionary time, which leaves pieces of the genetic code for our pre-human ancestors embedded in the DNA in our own bodies, or cosmic time, more dizzying than any earthly abyss, but still connecting everything in and around us to the matter with which the universe burst into being.[61]

But for the CAWS collective, the fact that the notion of a classical tradition and the genealogical models of science grew up concurrently is not cause to meditate on the depth of time or on the way that time resists knowing. Rather, these shared metaphors and epistemological frameworks indicate one of the ways that classics as a discipline was structured in service of European cultural hegemony and white supremacy that needs to be opposed and overcome. Such metaphors alarm rather than inspire us.

Haraway's 2016 book has as its aim to de-essentialise genealogy and human exceptionalism as the organising structures of ontology, to unseat the ways they come to be naturalised into kin relations, and to offer instead a myriad of messy possibilities for "making generative oddkin".[62] The de-essentialising of kin relations, in which kinship is wrongly understood to be natural-biological, is called for by the scholar of English and Black Studies Christina Sharpe, in an article she wrote for *The New Inquiry* in 2016:

> Rend the fabric of the kinship narrative. Imagine otherwise. Remake the world. Some of us have never had any other choice.[63]

Sharpe's desire to tear up the existing narrative of kinship results from the role of imagined kinship in the sustaining of white supremacy. In the article she explains that the Jim Crow laws that governed chattel slavery in the United States worked by recognising white familial relations as kinship, while unmaking Black kinship by refusing to recognise the personhood of Black people.[64] "Kinship relations structure the nation", Sharpe writes, referring to the way that the assumption that whiteness indicates kinship continues to contribute to the ongoing unjust social order. Sharpe does not mention the Darwinian scientific precedent for this false-kin making, but the active creation of false kin relations was the explicit aim of much of the racist pseudoscience that sought to invent a justification for white supremacy

in the 19th century.[65] In their 2017 essay for the online classics journal *Eidolon*, Mathura Umachandran comments on the pervasiveness of this false kin-making in the present orientation of the discipline of classics. "Let us finish the fantasy of pure whiteness: in the past and in the present", they write, referring to the way in which the fantasy of genealogical relation between Greek and Roman antiquity and white Europeans is retro-projected onto an antiquity imagined as a realm occupied solely by white ancient people, just as much as it is used to justify white supremacy in the present.[66]

While Darwin and his cousin, the eugenicist Francis Galton, were busy organising life forms within their genealogical models of evolution, classicists were engaged in constructing their very own chains of being. The pretence of scientific justification established for the enslavement of people was abetted in no small part by the Egyptologists Josiah Nott and George Gliddon, who, along with the physician Samuel Morton, spent much of their lives making false kin with the ancient Egyptians, by using the pseudoscience of craniometry to racialise them as "Caucasian".[67] Their abhorrent practice rested not only on a genealogical model popularised by Darwin and others (that imagined a scale of humanity ascending through evolutionary stages from a chimpanzee to a white man, represented by the head of the statue of Apollo Belvedere), but also on a particular way of positioning the classical as the inheritance of white Europeans specifically. And while Butler does not raise this as a critique of the epistemological models of classics he does remark that Darwin's work had a peculiar emphasis:

> Darwin, on the one hand, despite his title's promise of "origins", is ultimately concerned with accounting for the present diversity of life forms on the planet, including of course, our own.[68]

The *telos* of Darwin's work, then, is a defence of the world as it is in his own time – and this fact is as important to note for biology (as Hejnol and Haraway do) as it is for classics. Genealogical models that imagine the world to be organised along a scale of progress that reifies inheritance and creates false bonds of kinship are as much as feature of the discipline of classics as they are of biology, and just as Hejnol says of them in biology, they have the effect of an epistemicidal stalling of curiosity and of the myriad forms of knowledge-making that need to be excluded from these disciplines in order for these genealogical models to be sustained. The *telos* of classics, like Darwin's *telos*, is to provide a justification for the modern world, and classics as a discipline has organised itself throughout its history around an aim to provide a justification for European hegemony and white supremacy (often disguised as a narrative of "Western civilisation"). Biologists, like classicists, have relied on these genealogical models to provide an imaginary kinship relation that justifies their elevation of the classical to the level of universal importance, and by pinpointing false kinship as the sustainer of white supremacy, Sharpe offers a challenge to CAWS: Rend the fabric of the kinship narrative. Refuse to allow the classical to provide justification for European cultural hegemony through

an imagined genealogical relationship with white Europeans. Remake the ancient –
and in so doing the modern – worlds.[69]

CAWS will need to find a new justification for the study of the ancient past in
the present – one that does not rely on imagined kinship, on constructed genealogi-
cal relations and inheritance, or on any idea of the *telos* of the West. In its critical
toolkit, CAWS will require new and more critical theories of relation and contigu-
ity, but it will also need to find new justifications (both internal to the discipline and
public-facing) for its continued relevance to the modern world.[70] Much has been
said about the appeal to the myth of Western civilisation to justify the continued
attribution of value to and privileging of the classical, and the very idea of Western
civilisation itself is now widely acknowledged to have been a fancy of empire and
of an ongoing white supremacist desire to organise the world into two warring
blocs.[71] But despite this widespread denunciation both of the concept and of its
misuse to position ancient Greece and Rome as the history of the mythical origin
of white people (sustaining precisely the kind of false kinship narrative referred
to earlier), the idea remains in circulation, and is often strongly defended by con-
servative voices in the field or accepted as simply an unavoidable side effect of
studying antiquity even by more progressive ones.

Denying classics the justification of imaginary kinship with an even more imag-
inary Western civilisation comes, for CAWS, with the very real possibility of the
subject's irrelevance to a whole variety of questions about the modern world. An
ethical mode of studying the ancient world relies on the existence of a varied ecol-
ogy of knowledges that are not secondary to or perceived as less rigorous than the
study of the ancient world.[72] CAWS will not be able to – nor will it want to – argue
that the ancient world "continues to underpin Western culture and politics" (as
Mary Beard offers in the opening pages of her bestselling book on Roman history,
SPQR), and for that reason we anticipate that it will not be welcomed with open
arms in all quarters, particularly by such institutions as have sold the study of
classics to their students on this or similar bases.[73] In the place of classics, CAWS
will offer something else: the opportunity to unpick the European hegemony and
neocolonialism of which classics continues to be placed in service, to hyper-
contextualise the subject within histories of empire, oppression and domination
and to cast off the structures of genealogical relation that limit curiosity (as Hejnol
puts it) in order to imagine more just and livable futures.

Classical Pasts and Critical Futures

The intervention of CAWS is by no means the first invitation classics has had to
seek a more critical epistemological framework or to reckon with its suprema-
cist structuring. Perhaps the most famous among such missed opportunities was
the publication, in parts from 1987 onwards, of Martin Bernal's *Black Athena:
The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilisation* (hereafter: *Black Athena*) – but
the emergence of classical reception studies is now increasingly being under-
stood as another such (missed) opportunity.[74] Those arguing for a dismantling
of supremacist structures in the discipline or seeking to be critical of embedded

ways of knowledge-making are often confronted with two temporal positions that seek to diminish the effects of their critique: that the critical revolution sought has already happened and that change will come at some distant point in the future.[75] CAWS arose from the conviction that a more critical approach to the discipline was both immediately possible and urgent and that previous invitations to reckon with the epistemological structures of the discipline had largely gone unheeded. Bernal's invitation to classics to reconsider its Western civilisation narratives and its implicit Eurocentrism was met with defensiveness – as we will demonstrate – and failed to produce the disciplinary transformation (pedagogical or epistemological) that it might have provided an opportunity for. The opportunities unheeded are further examples of the forgetting and remembering that has characterised the discipline, as we have pointed out throughout this introduction: most classicists remember that the publication of Bernal's book happened, but many forget that the book was received with knee-jerk defensiveness, and the specifics of its critiques were quickly covered over with platitudes about the importance of historical positivism.

The publication of sinologist Martin Bernal's *Black Athena* might have signalled to classicists their over-reliance on notions of history's objectivity. In the first volume Bernal traced how, up until the 18th century, European elites knew that their cultural, political, and intellectual achievements were later than and significantly dependent on those of Asia and Africa. The Enlightenment's formulation of a universalism (paradoxically predicated on European exceptionalism) required a refashioning of this pre-history of modernity.[76] Bernal argued that classical scholars from the 18th century produced an idea known as "the Greek miracle" – a supposedly rationalising revolution in politics and philosophy located all over Greece but particularly on the Ionian coast in the late sixth century BCE. In framing a sociological critique of knowledge production about the ancient history of Europe in step with the contemporary intellectual priorities of the Enlightenment, Bernal was not making use of or laying claim to the methodologies derived from classics. Rather he was leveraging his scholarly position from outside the field to cast light on its unmarked categories of knowledge-making and to lay bare the way that certain ideological assumptions masqueraded as neutral in the discipline.[77] Though Bernal would himself deny the similarities between *Black Athena* and Edward Said's 1978 *Orientalism*, the connections between the two are evident in their sociological attention to knowledge production as well as their respective critiques of the West's historical self-narration as *narrative*, that is, as discursive constructions which relied on techniques of exclusion (whether romanticising exclusions from history or ontological exclusions from humanity), but were naturalised as objective knowledge-making in their respective fields.

As Denise McCoskey observes, the responses to Bernal's monumental challenge to classics as a field fell into two distinct camps.[78] Confronted head-on with a charge that the positioning of white Europe as the fountainhead of Western civilisation might in fact be historically inaccurate and a myth perpetuated by Eurocentric and

racist scholarship, *Black Athena* terrified many in classics into silence – a retreat towards (what was perceived to be) a neutral stance with respect to the politically charged discussion with far reaching cultural consequences, felt far beyond academic discussions and reverberating in the so-called culture wars of the 1990s. It is easy to forget that outside of classics, *Black Athena* was hugely celebrated: the first volume won the *Socialist Review* prize in 1987 and an American Book Award in 1990, and the subsequent volume won an ANC Kwanzaa Award in 1991, was the Mainichi Shimbun Book of the Year in 2004 and was translated into multiple languages. This silence on behalf of those classicists who refused Bernal's invitation to question the *status quo* of their discipline reverberated loudly when thrown into relief by the optimistic and enthusiastic reception of the book outside of the discipline.

But there was yet a louder camp of more outspoken classicists who in their attempts to ridicule Bernal's thesis, revealed their firm commitment to defending the intimacy of classics with the idea of the West as civilisationally prior and superior to the Rest. The latter camp took Bernal to task for his lack of expertise or diligence in a response McCoskey aptly characterises as follows:

> [C]lassicists' response to *Black Athena* often remained bogged down in interminable detail, painstakingly focused on refuting *Black Athena* as an historical argument while remaining oblivious to *Black Athena* as a cultural phenomenon.[79]

Discussing the same group of scholars' reactions to *Black Athena*, as evidenced in Mary Lefkowitz's sole-authored *Not Out of Africa: How Afrocentrism Became an Excuse to Teach Myth as History* and co-edited volume (with Guy MacLean Rogers) *Black Athena Revisited* (both published 1996), the professor of African American studies Molefi Kete Asante put his criticism of these scholars in stronger terms than McCoskey:

> The authors of this volume [*Black Athena Revisited*] are essentially agreed that Bernal's Black Athena undercut the rather placid Eurocentric world of classicists who had been content to hide behind the enduring myth of some noble and unadulterated miracle of Greece . . . I believe that what is especially troubling to some of the writers of this volume is that Bernal is a European scholar who, in their judgement, should have known better than to open the can of worms of racist research in the classics. It is a case of Bernal being viewed as traitor to the tradition of European and American scholarship that projected the white model of intellectual development as superior to all others and consequently had appropriated so much of ancient classical Africa as part of the "Mediterranean" or "Near East" or "Oriental" world that any disturbance of such a tradition had to be confronted . . . Nothing seems to bring out the circling of the wagons of Europe more than the questioning of European cultural superiority.[80]

The readings of Asante and – much later – McCoskey converge with our own on this central point: that by doubling down on the normative criteria by which scholarship is judged to be objective or scientific, a vocal group of classical scholars dismissed Bernal's critiques and refused to allow the work's publication to constitute an opportunity for self-reckoning in the discipline. Crucial to the development of CAWS is the recognition that this was not simply an opportunity accidentally missed, but one actively avoided and that those who sided with Mary Lefkowitz and her instinctive fear of Afrocentrism[81] were not in any way fringe white supremacists or far-right political figures, but classicists, many of whom are still canonical figures in the discipline today. And although their methods may have seemed little more than academic pedantry, the stakes of swerving Bernal's political critique were high: for those not committed to reinscribing the civilisational supremacy of the so-called West, the issues raised by *Black Athena* could have been an opportunity to scrutinise and reassess the disciplinary structures of classics, including its sociological commitments, in order to build a disciplinary future (with tools and textbooks, methods of meaning-making, as well as epistemological structures) orientated towards justice.

With only a small number of exceptions there have been few takers of Bernal's challenge within classics (*African Athena: New Agendas* edited by Gurminder Bhambra, Dan Orrells and Tessa Roynon in 2011 is a notably sustained engagement with Bernal), and they have not catalysed the widespread disciplinary transformation that *Black Athena* surely calls for. As Nicholas Anakwue shows in his chapter on the false positioning of classical philosophy as "European" (amounting to the exclusion of Egyptian philosophy) in this volume, the critiques raised by Bernal have much more yet to offer for a CAWS that wants to prioritise learning from Bernal's critiques and from the possibilities that Afrocentrism offers for reconceiving of the discipline of classics beyond Eurocentrism, over dismissing, evading and closing down such critiques for the sake of pedantry (or worse, for the sake of reinscribing narratives of the superiority of so-called Western civilisation).

Black Athena is not the only moment at which a refiguring of the epistemological models of the discipline of classics away from Eurocentrism and a flawed search for a view-from-nowhere perspective on ancient history might have been possible. Over the last few years, a number of scholars have made reference to the lost opportunity that classical reception studies presented for a fundamental change to the discipline. At the end of a pungently pessimistic essay, classical reception scholar Luke Richardson frames the idea as follows:

> While classical reception's moment seems to fade from view, we are left wondering about the revolution that never was, and what happens to the discipline next.[82]

Richardson is not alone in his disappointment that the revolutionary potential of classical reception studies has gone unrealised. Charles Martindale, widely considered to be if not the founder of classical reception studies (a title more usually

conferred on such scholars of hermeneutics as Hans-Georg Gadamer, Hans Robert Jauss and Wolfgang Iser), then certainly its most important popularising force in Anglophone classics, via his 1993 *Redeeming the Text: Latin Poetry and the Hermeneutics of Reception*, has expressed similar disappointment. In a 2006 volume of reflections on the role of reception theory in the discipline of classics, Martindale writes,

> [I]t is worth asking if the concept of reception today serves any useful purpose, now that the word's power to provoke has largely subsided.[83]

Both of the editors of this volume are trained predominantly in classical reception studies, and it is therefore unsurprising that this particular missed opportunity should be the one most apparent to us. But CAWS is not limited to classical reception in its scope, and no doubt classicists reading this introduction familiar with other subfields of classics are aware of similar proclamations of missed opportunities for critical disciplinary transformation.

These missed opportunities are apparent not only in analyses of the kind provided by Richardson or McCoskey but in the current organisation of the discipline. Scholar of Late Antiquity Blossom Stefaniw, in exploring how to bring about a feminist transformation of Late Antiquity studies (a field adjacent to classics and structured by similarly overlapping supremacist logics) observes that

> [a] discipline which is striving for justice looks different from one which is only striving to make the minimum number of incremental changes necessary to sustain its own image of righteousness. A discipline which hungers for justice looks a lot different from one which is squirming around trying to get itself off the hook.[84]

We have already remarked on some of these attempts that the discipline has made "to get itself off the hook" earlier in this introduction, and named them as "settler moves to innocence", to use Janet Mawhinney's term again. As Tuck and Yang point out, in their analysis of Mawhinney's master's thesis (in which she coins the term), however, settler moves to innocence often serve to deliberately stall change and preserve the status quo:

> Settler moves to innocence are those strategies or positionings that attempt to relieve the settler of feelings of guilt or responsibility without giving up land or power or privilege, *without having to change much at all*. In fact, settler scholars may gain professional kudos or a boost in their reputations for being so sensitive or self-aware. Yet settler moves to innocence are hollow, they only serve the settler.[85]

Our point here is that not "having to change much at all" is an important goal of many initiatives that are self-styled as "progressive" within the discipline but seek

to maintain its fundamental structures (the "squirming" of Stefaniw's assessment) – and it is easy to see why. The current structures of the discipline are not solely epistemological, they are also pedagogical and financial and relate to the ways that students and scholars are recruited and employed by classics departments. Radically altering the discipline will mean making changes that will be uncomfortable to those comfortable within the discipline's current organisation, and it is this that explains the effusion of settler moves to innocence whenever opportunities for change present themselves.[86]

CAWS will require scholars in classics to recognise that there is no addition to the syllabus or (not-too-time-or-labour-intensive but well documented on social media) "outreach activity", one-off panel discussion or "difficult topic" seminar that can offset or undo the forms of colonial knowledge-making that constitute much of the discipline. Settler moves to innocence thrive not only in spite of a history of empire but *because* of that very history – Tuck and Yang point to the settler colonial scholar who gains professional advancement because of their performative, partial acknowledgement of supremacist logic and limited actions of redress that do not in any way compromise their established research agenda. Discomfort (personal or epistemological) can constitute a ready starting point for critical self-reflection because it registers a structural problem and a personal stake in that problem – but settler moves to innocence seek to address the discomfort rather than the structural problem that it underscores.

That there has been *a series* of missed opportunities for disciplinary transformation, *Black Athena* and beyond, is evidence that the discipline of classics, left unchecked, will not resolve itself around a more justice-focused future. We cannot simply wait patiently for such a future to come. A serious reckoning might have taken several guises: it could have looked like an abandonment (or reimagining) of language requirements, a clearer articulation of the relationships classics formed with other disciplines in the humanities and social sciences, a sociological transformation in the composition of the discipline's knowledge-makers, a critical embedding of the history of the discipline within its pedagogy and modes of study, the widespread integration of decolonial pedagogies and opportunities to learn about colonialism and neocolonialism within its curricula, genuinely collaborative projects of inquiry within, across and beyond the field. In the "Critical Philology" section of this volume, the contributors each address, in different ways, the temporal problem of change in the discipline. For Krishnan J. Ram-Prasad, Proto-Indo-European's settler moves to innocence (in particular its claim to be intrinsically beyond Eurocentrism) need to be contextualised within the relationship between linguistics and race science that was key to the subfield's formation; for Hannah Silverblank, as for Ella Haselswerdt, philology's ableist and queerphobic assumptions are aided and abetted by its tools and techniques, which need to be left behind for a more justice-focused subdiscipline. The chapters in this volume are practical as much as they are epistemological, and many of them bear witness to alterations within subdivisions of the field formerly known as classics (see, for instance, Ashley Lance's pedagogical interventions or Nicholas Anakwue's "Critical Ancient Philosophy"). In each chapter, the authors argue not for a progress narrative, for

the repetition of endless settler moves to innocence or for the redemption of their own subfield within the discipline but for a break with existing practices and the establishment of new methodologies and epistemological structures. Accordingly, the four sections are addressed not to particular categories of texts or artefacts, periods of time or theoretical approaches but are grouped around specific kinds of interventions and tools required for CAWS as a new composite discipline.

Our call then, in the title of this introduction, to "forget classics" is a deliberately provocative one – but it speaks to the reality of the radical transformation of this discipline that will be necessary, as we understand it. Classics has, as we have shown, been characterised by certain kinds of forgetting and remembering that have been naturalised as the tools of the discipline, masquerading as objective knowing, historical positivism, the *telos* of the so-called West and the view-from-nowhere, obfuscating their own ideological origins and biases. In calling for the forgetting of classics, we are requiring of classicists an acknowledgement that the changes required to transform a colonial relic into a justice-focused discipline will be fundamental, and will require radical alterations of the ways in which we study and teach the ancient world, as well as who is employed or admitted to teach and learn about it.

The notion that the forgetting or ending of the present disciplinary formation is necessary might be troubling to some (particularly those most empowered by the field's current organisation), but anthropocenic modernity in its current moment of ecological crisis is already familiar with the idea that ends that seem world-ending can in fact be not only necessary but generative. Writing of the realities of extinction, Gan, Tsing Swanson and Bubandt in the volume cited earlier in this introduction return us to the ghosts with which we began:

> Ghosts, too, are weeds that whisper tales of the many pasts and yet-to-comes that surround us. Considered through ghosts and weeds, worlds have ended many times before. Endings come with the death of a leaf, the death of a city, the death of a friendship, the death of small promises and small stories. The landscapes grown from such endings are our disaster as well as our weedy hope.[87]

The ghosts with which we are so familiar in the discipline of classics also serve to remind us that the end of the discipline as currently organised might in fact serve as the beginning of a more critical, more equitable and justice-focused mode of studying the ancient world. CAWS is an invitation not to save the existing discipline from extinction but to find in that extinction the drive to establish something better. It is an invitation to more collaborative and collective thinking, with the past, present and future as well as with thinkers from a huge variety of disciplines aimed at establishing a decolonial future both inside and outside of the academy.[88] And it is an invitation that is perpetual: the critical approach to the ancient world that CAWS offers will always be in the process of becoming, responding to the ever-changing nature of power and supremacist structures, and will never materialise as a closed set of tools, ideas or topics of study. It is our hope that students, scholars and other

interested parties will return to this volume in the future and will offer more critical, more decolonial and more justice-focused approaches to the ancient world than we or our contributors are capable of imagining in our present moment.

Notes

1 And it is suspicious of the recent proliferation of so-called decolonising perspectives within scholarship, many of which have done little to shift the material conditions of colonial extraction or the neocolonial structures that mark the academy and many academic disciplines. The term "wretched of the earth" is a common translation of the title of Fanon's (1961) French-language work *Les Damnés de la Terre*.
2 Sayyid et al. (2015). A version of this statement can also be found here: www.critical-muslimstudies.co.uk/manifesto/.
3 See Morales (2020) for an example of these defences of the subject from misuses. Most recently Beard (2020) and Higgins (2020) have both acknowledged the misuses of classics but reminded non-specialists (repeatedly, in Beard's case) that Karl Marx was a classicist, as if the fact of Marx's doctoral dissertation alone would redeem the subject by association. Kiran Pizarro-Mansukhani's chapter in this volume addresses the Karl Marx defence explicitly.
4 For the term "situated" used of knowledge production, see Haraway (1988).
5 And this is a deliberate shift: completeness, like "discovery", comes from the colonial imaginary.
6 Dan-el Padilla Peralta's Natalie Boymel Kampen Memorial Lecture in Feminist Criticism and History was titled "The Haunted House of Classics", delivered on 5 March 2020.
7 Hedva (2016).
8 Payne (239–254) and Susanetti (255–268) in Butler ed. (2016). The occult practices of Victorian classicists are mentioned in their biographies and in books on the history of their scholarship. See, for instance, Stray et al. (2019).
9 Padilla Peralta (2018). For evidence of the hostility that minoritised students experience in studying classics, see, for instance, the open letters composed by students of Oxford and Cambridge's classics faculties. Students, staff and alumni signed the letters in large numbers in the aftermath of the racist killing of George Floyd (and there was a similar movement at some universities in the United States). For the Oxford letter, see: https://docs.google.com/document/d/11ZpPeC4bFd1QIOzfQJBvq7etsVvxAxYB5j9k OcsKaW4/edit?usp=sharing For the Cambridge letter see: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1SmCCvM4Psmk25lWnx1WHTpzbZZ-hxwQnRgkNHoOTyW8/edit.
10 Doharty et al. (2020). The editors thank Qasim Alli for puzzling out with them the unethical nature of so many classics access projects.
11 See https://classicsforall.org.uk/what-we-do/why-classics.
12 Thompson (2020). See the statement from the charity's trustees here: https://classics-forall.org.uk/news-and-events/events/christmas-charity-auction.
13 See also Goff (2013) for the West African colonial context.
14 de Sousa Santos (2018, 5). Santos' work on the epistemologies of the Global South is cited here because it is the most canonical reference point on this subject in English – not because he was the originator of these ideas, which have long circulated in the work of Global South thinkers and scholars. Shortly before this book went to press, according to a statement made by the Centre for Social Studies at the University of Coimbra on the 14th April 2023, Boaventura de Sousa Santos was accused of sexual misconduct and suspended from his post pending the outcome of an investigation. References to his work occur throughout this book, and like all citations, they refer to the specific ideas cited and are not in support of wider behaviours or positions. These allegations serve as a reminder beyond this specific case that even disciplines, and epistemological frameworks ostensibly committed to justice are not immune from abuses of power.

15 See Wynter (2003), and on the relationship between Wynter and Césaire see Wynter and McKittrick (2015). Dabashi (2015) applies some of Wynter's critiques of this kind to the history of philosophy.

16 Wynter and McKittrick (2015).

17 Wynter (1990, 356). Ruha Benjamin's 2019 *Race After Technology* continues Wynter's project of unsettling assumptions of science's objectivity in normative ideas about bodies.

18 This formulation comes from Sayyid and Vakil's presentation in September 2020. For more on this idea, see their chapter in this volume.

19 Slaney (2016, 87).

20 See note 2 for the manifesto of the journal *ReOrient*. Both critical Muslim studies and CAWS are possible in the first instance because of the critique of Orientalism as articulated by the Palestinian-American critic Edward Said (1978).

21 Satia (2020, 1, 3).

22 Keeler (2019, 9) similarly presents "progress" as the organisation of history as a triumphant narrative told from a privileged point of view. For some critical approaches to structuring time beyond this progress narrative, see Marchella Ward's chapter in this volume.

23 See, for instance, Dalia Gebrial's history of the Rhodes Must Fall movement in Bhambra, Gebrial and Nisancioglu eds. (2018).

24 Harrison (2001) tells the story of the so-called "theory wars" in classics in the introduction to his edited collection *Texts, Ideas and the Classics: Scholarship, Theory and Classical Literature*. In the preface to their 1994 supplement to the journal *Mnemosyne*, "Modern Critical Theory and Classical Literature", the editors Irene de Jong and John Sullivan comment on their attempts at securing a diversity of contributors and contributions ("the editors have aimed at a representative coverage, in terms of themes, gender, Latin-Greek and even nationality"), but put their inability to source a diverse group of contributors down to the requirement that papers be published in English, which placed "constraints on the selection of authors from the non-English-speaking world". Critical theory's inability to solve the exclusionary nature of classics was apparent, clearly, even as early as the mid-1990s, and even this volume which addresses itself to critical theory explicitly lacks a clear definition of what precisely the term encompasses or accomplishes.

25 See, for instance, Mbembe (2001) on the challenges to historical narratives of the notion of postcolony, Jackson (2020) on the inadequacy of the idea of humanity, Kassim (2017) on the museum as an inherently imperial institution that resists all efforts at decolonisation and Milbern (2019) on the contingency of ancestorship. Jackson's work on the notion of the human in particular has a long history in Black studies that has had almost no recognition in the field known as classics (see, for instance, Alexander Weheliye's (2008, 2014) contributions to rejections of the notion of universal humanity advanced throughout Sylvia Wynter's work).

26 Recalling Toni Morrison's now infamous remarks: "The function, the very serious function of racism is distraction. It keeps you from doing your work. It keeps you explaining, over and over again, your reason for being. Somebody says you have no language and you spend twenty years proving that you do. Somebody says your head isn't shaped properly so you have scientists working on the fact that it is. Somebody says you have no art, so you dredge that up. Somebody says you have no kingdoms, so you dredge that up. None of this is necessary. There will always be one more thing". Morrison made these remarks at the Portland State Library's Black Studies Center Public Dialogue (pt. 2), 30 May 1975.

27 Hage (2017).

28 Ibid.

29 Sayyid (2014, 11).

30 Ibid., 15.

31   See above.

32   Hartman (2006).

33   See Chirikure (2020) for another example of the forgetting of the recent past. Chirikure was originally a contributor to the initial CAWS conference in 2020, whose contribution does not feature in this volume. We are grateful to him for all of the ways his insights shaped the collective's ongoing work.

34   Some insight into this is given by Stray (1998, 2018) on the British context, but the implications of this context for the *doing* of classics more broadly rarely make it out of volumes dedicated to the history of classical scholarship, of particular historical figures or of particular colonial education systems.

35   Monteiro (2020).

36   Tuck and Yang (2012, 9).

37   El-Enany (2020, 2).

38   Quotations from https://feministkilljoys.com/2015/12/15/melancholic-universalism/, published 15 December 2015, non pag. Ahmed has elsewhere theorised and argued against the essentialism that lurks in the figure of the "stranger", rendered constantly alien (a danger) or the source of an ethics of alterity (a fetish), in order to better critique the limits of who is admitted to or disbarred from the "universal we". See *Strange Encounters: Embodied Others in Post-Coloniality* (2000, 1–19), especially 6–7 and her call for a transnational feminism that avoids both universalism and cultural relativism (2000, 161–181).

39   Ahmed (2015) https://feministkilljoys.com/2015/12/15/melancholic-universalism/, published 15 December 2015, non pag, last accessed 15 March 2023.

40   Ibid.

41   Ahmed's figure of the universal "room" here is clearly related to Dipesh Chakrabarty's critique of John Stewart Mill's paternalistic arguments about why the colonies should not be granted independence – they simply were not ready for it, had not attained sufficient equal civilisational maturity to have their liberty and in fact required imperial rule in order to learn. Chakrabarty (2000), 7 articulates this as the "imaginary waiting room of History". Ahmed's focus on bodies usefully shifts the historiographical critique of the universal towards thinking about uniquely situated processes of knowledge-making with attention to gender, race, class, ability, etc. As Patrice Rankine shows in his chapter in this volume, the critique of the notion of the universal that *CAWS* levels at classics is also a feature of Afropessimism.

42   Morales (2020, xviii).

43   Morley (2018, 91).

44   Ward (2023). Lehua Yim refers to the "arrogance of assumption" in the idea of a universal we, an idea discussed by Margo Hendricks in her 2019 lecture *Colouring the Past, Rewriting our Future: RaceB4Race* at the Folger Institute.

45   See, for instance, Wynter (2003), Weheliye (2008) and Jackson (2020) on this.

46   And we are grateful too to Lena Barsky, who was a part of the initial 2020 CAWS conference, but whose contribution does not feature in this volume, for shaping the collective's ongoing work in this area.

47   Rao (2020, 23).

48   Hartman (2006, 168).

49   This section shares much of its impetus with Ward's chapter in Haselswerdt, Ormand and Lindheim eds. *Routledge Companion to Classics and Queer Theory* (2023), and develops ideas presented to the Res Difficiles conference in 2022. We are grateful to those who have commented on this material in those venues.

50   Hejnol (2017, G87).

51   Ibid., G91.

52   Kimmerer (2013, 11–21).

53   Hejnol (2017, G100).

54 Ibid. A call to more coral-like and less hierarchical thinking in classics is also made by Constanze Güthenke and Brooke Holmes (2018). See Ward (2019) on assemblage-thinking as one possible anti-hierarchical way of figuring classical reception.

55 Haraway (2016, 34), citing Strathern (1992, 10). She also compares this recognition of the need to find new stories to explain ontological relation to that recognised by Bruno Latour. It is also to Latour that Haraway looks for the multiple varied modes of knowing that she proposes as a part-solution to the over-representation of certain biological metaphors: "Latour embraces sciences, not Science" (41).

56 Gan et al. (2017, G9).

57 Hejnol (2017, G88).

58 Silk et al. (2014, 3). They cite an 1877 use of the term "classical tradition" by John Addington Symonds. Albanese (1996) sees the relationship between knowledge formation and power arising in a different moment, but in her description of the relationship between science and colonialism she makes a similar argument that science organised ontology so as to lend weight to the supremacy of certain groups over others.

59 The Postclassicisms Collective (Blanshard et al., 2020) also comment on Nietzsche's formulation of modernity's kinship with antiquity as a chain, citing his comment that "we are the outcome of earlier generations" and that "it is not possible to wholly free oneself from this chain", 165.

60 On which see Ward (2023).

61 Butler (2016, 4).

62 Haraway (2016, 3).

63 Sharpe (2016).

64 Sharpe cites in her analysis, the influential work of Saidiya Hartman on this question of kinship and the enslavement of people – see Hartman (2006).

65 On this racist pseudoscience, see Saini (2019).

66 Umachandran (2017).

67 For the assertion that the Egyptians were white men and "Caucasians", see Gliddon (1843, 45). Bernasconi (2007) details the work of Gliddon, Morton and Nott.

68 Butler (2016, 7).

69 Remaking kinship relations so as to problematise genealogy is a frequent topos of speculative fiction by Black women writers in particular (see, for instance, N. K. Jemisin's (2011) short story *The Effluent Engine* or Octavia Butler's novels), discussed at length in Schalk (2018).

70 For the former, Emily Greenwood in her 2010 *Afro-Greeks: Dialogues Between Anglophone Caribbean Literature and Classics in the Twentieth Century* provides a model of classical reception that is perhaps a starting point for *CAWS*, using the notion of "frail connections" (drawn from an interview between the Guyanese writers Wilson Harris and Fred D'Aguiar) to counteract the disciplinary assumption that the connection between the classical and the postclassical is always the most important (and the strongest) connection worthy of analysis in any given web of associations. Greenwood's model provides a helpful starting point for *CAWS*, but it is important to note that where connections with the classical are *not* frail, this is not a reflection on the much mythologised longevity of the classical, or of its universality, but on the way that remembrance of the classical was mandated by empire. One important methodological commitment for *CAWS* is the rejection of the idea that ethical consideration of how the past can be weaponised to justify oppression in the present is solely the role of the classical reception scholar.

71 See, for instance, Patterson (1997), Appiah (2016) and Kennedy (2019).

72 Dan-el Padilla Peralta expressed this idea clearly in conversation with Marchella Ward at an event hosted by the Christian Cole Society for Classicists of Colour, 20 November 2020. The editors are grateful to him for his ongoing conversation with us, and to the Christian Cole Society for hosting this (and so many other) events.

73 Beard (2015, 1).
74 See Richardson (2017).
75 Ahmed (2012) finds similar temporal positions evident in all institutional equity work.
76 We are less interested in Bernal's "Revised Aryan Model", the historical model proposed in volumes two and three, than in the reception of Black Athena here. But see further Anakwue in this volume.
77 Bernal was not the first to mount the critique outlined in *Black Athena* – thinkers in the genealogy of Black studies continued to insist on the historical (if not always cultural and political) priority of African civilisation. For example, W. E. B. Du Bois (2014) "The Spirit of Modern Europe" essay c. 1900 in *The Problem of the Color Line at the Turn of the Twentieth Century: The Essential Early Essays* is committed to linking Europe with modernity and Africa with antiquity.
78 McCoskey (2018). McCoskey was not the first to read the reaction to *Black Athena* in this way. A. K. Jayesh (2007), for instance, laments the fact that Bernal "has been a subject of much ridicule and little curiosity."
79 McCoskey (2018). An account of the circumstances of *Black Athena* is given in Stray (1997).
80 Asante (1996, 206).
81 Lefkowitz's opposition to Afrocentrism may have been articulated around *Black Athena*, but the acknowledgement that this opposition resulted in fact from her racist fear of Afrocentrism's growing intellectual importance is apparent not only from Bernal's (1996) characterisation of her in the *London Review of Books* but from the preface to her own monograph, where she notes that she is concerned about an Afrocentrist account of ancient history being readily available because "[i]t confers a new and higher status on an ethnic group whose history has largely remained obscure" (xiv).
82 Richardson (2017).
83 Martindale (2006, 11). In 2017, Johanna Hanink returned to Martindale's concerns about reception's "power to provoke", arguing for "critical classical reception" or "Reception 2.0" in her *Eidolon* article "It's Time to Embrace Critical Classical Reception". See Ranger in this volume.
84 Stefaniw (2020, 267). Stefaniw's footnote here points her reader to a work by a scholar who has already been discussed in this introduction and has been fundamental to our development of thinking critically about disciplines and institutions: Sara Ahmed's 2012 *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life*.
85 Tuck and Yang (2012, 10).
86 Umachandran (2017) closes the introduction to their "Fragile, Handle With Care: On White Classicists" article for *Eidolon* with the rhetorical question "Are you sitting uncomfortably? Then I'll continue".
87 Gan et al. (2017, G6).
88 Haraway's (2016, 34) "companions in thinking", which she adapts from Isabelle Stenger's image of the multiple hands required to manipulate a cat's cradle, offers a useful model for such a collaborative discipline.

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2 Critical Muslim Studies and the Remaking of the (Ancient) World[1]

S. Sayyid and AbdoolKarim Vakil

Disorienting Classical Studies and Muslims

Classics, as a field of study and cultural comportment, is to the West what origin stories are to comic superheroes: a foundational narrative that sets the protagonist apart from the rest of humanity.[2] Origin stories help anchor the identity of the superhero despite the changing contexts of different writers, different times and different mediums. Origin stories may not necessarily be the most compelling adventures involving the superhero, but they are the ones that shape his/her/their distinctive character beyond any escapade or breakdown in continuity. Similarly, the classics ground the distinct characteristics of the West, underwrite Western exceptionality, and act as a guarantor of the West's temporal depth. The classics mark the beginning of a historical sequence occupied by ancient Greeks and Romans, followed by the Dark Ages, the medieval world and, finally, the extended inexorable march to modernity. Such a sequence is not just a hang-over from the Eurocentric historiography of the long 18th century or imperial narratives of the 19th century, but a vital continuing cultural statement. Not only do all roads lead to Rome, but they also begin from Rome.

The classics play a continuing and significant role as a surface of cultural transcription upon which the identity of the West is inscribed. For example, anxieties about the future of the West as a homogenous white entity not only animate white revanchism but seep into popular culture. Whether in debates about the whiteness of the Roman empire,[3] in periodical alarums over an eternal conflict between the West and the Rest, from Thermopylae to Desert Storm, or in the ever reiterated defence of beleaguered Western values, it is possible to see how tropes from classical studies are mobilised and redeployed. Thus, any attempt to question classics is not simply an exercise in academic deliberations but is invested with broader cultural significance that turns on the essence of the West. In other words, with what the West is. What the West is, however, can only be known by drawing a contrast with what it is not. Extrapolating from Ferdinand de Saussure's insight that identity is contrastive and relational, it is only possible to assert the identity of any element by being able to say what it is not. Hence, Western identity is only possible by contrasting it with something non-Western. If classics is the origin story of the West, then it is also the origin story of the non-West. Classics is a field of study that

is also confronted with the Orient, for the origin story as construction of an identity requires a constitutive contrast. The articulation of the Orient in the shape of the Achaemenids becomes part of the origin story of the West. Classical studies imply, if not necessitate, Orientalism.

Both academic fields are formed by combinations of other disciplines. They are centred around literature and language (ancient Greek, Latin, Arabic, Farsi), and arranged around this textual core, one finds art, philosophy, history and archaeology.[4] There is a case to be made that both Oriental studies and classical studies share a common epistemology that accounts for the methodological convergence in how they produce knowledge about their respective subjects. Orientalism constructs the Orient as a means of shoring up the idea of the West. Orientalism is not simply captured by the academic field that it nominates but rather is constitutive of the construction of a world history centred on Europe that underwrites knowledge formations throughout the culture, whether it be the social sciences, the humanities or the natural sciences (Sayyid, 2019). The conceptualisation of the Orient was undertaken in philosophical and historical endeavours as well. Orientalism refers not only to a field of study and research but also describes cognitive and cultural comportments that insist upon a binary division between the West and the Orient, and a corporate enterprise for the myriad managing of relations with the Orient.[5] Classical studies most often have a temporal range of a thousand years from the beginning of the age of ancient Greece to the fall of the Roman Empire. The fall of the Roman Empire is conceptualised usually by the switch from Latin to Greek using elite in the East. This Greek using polity was designated by 15th century historians as the Byzantine Empire, thus breaking the link between Rome and Constantinople and in the process re-drawing the boundaries of what constitutes the West.[6] The world generated by classical studies continues to influence contemporary culture.[7]

Orientalism and classics share epistemologies and methodologies and are both involved in narrating the origins of the West. (Islamic studies as a branch of Orientalism appears as an excursus to the narrative line that begins with the classics.) Classical and Oriental studies are key pillars of a Eurocentric order of things. (It is not an accident that one of the fields outside the remit of the Orient which has been most receptive to the critique of Orientalism has been classical studies.) The critique of Eurocentrism has been accelerated in recent years by student mobilisations in advance of decolonising the curriculum.[8] This movement, inspired by the development of decolonial thought which itself has a complicated relationship with Orientalism and the postcolonial, has been instrumental in persuading institutions of higher learning to recognise the colonial legacy both in their institutional format and some of their pedagogic practices. A recognition of the colonial ignoble beginnings of the current curriculum and its marshalling of knowing along disciplinary lines encourages a post-disciplinarity welcome as a provisional place holder, as disciplines are reconfigured for the post-Western, that is, for a world in which white supremacy is denaturalised, which is to say, not assumed but rather contested.

Therefore, an engagement between critical ancient world studies and critical Muslim studies is not only natural but necessary if both these projects of

decolonisation are to meet their ambitions. For not only does the emergence of the Islamicate mark the conventional terminus of classical studies, but the entwining of the logics of both fields of study have been complicit in constructing Western identity as (temporally and spatially) self-contained and exceptional. If we are serious about decolonising as something more than a series of pedagogic injunctions, it is important to consider it as a philosophical undertaking. The deepening of decolonisation requires critical ancient world studies and critical Muslim studies working together to subvert the disciplinary boundaries that enframe the world. The challenge for such projects is how to find a way out of the conceptual vocabulary that Orientalism and classics have produced and perpetuated – a vocabulary that saturates our understanding both of the world around us and of ourselves.[9] In what follows, we will present our argument in a series of radical translations, that transverse epistemes and disciplinary and genre boundaries in the service of expanding the range of examples by which we can begin to imagine an epistemic order that aligns not with Eurocentrism but with a post-Western horizon.[10]

Example 1: Towards a Global Ancient History?

Recent years have seen various attempts to interrupt the sequence from Plato-to-NATO, ranging from John Keane's (2009) insertion of Sumerians and Muslims of Makkah into his history of democracy, to work of African heritage scholarship disputing claims of an autochthonous ancient Greece (Bernal, 1987, and related debates, Gordon, 2008, 2–3), to the contributions of Jack Goody (2010), Andre Gunder Frank (1998) and Janet Abu-Lughod (1989) towards displacing the Western roots of the modern world system, to calls for new periodisation of world history which interrupts the movement from classics to Renaissance and modernity (Blankinship, 1991), to work by historians of the ancient world rescuing the Achaemenids from the Orientalism of Hellenocentrism.[11] These attempts have helped to make possible the idea of ancient history which circumvents its enclosure in the classics, by emboldening classical scholarship to suggest a global (in opposition to Eurocentric) history.

   According to Stanford historians Ian Morris and Walter Scheidel, all societies have an ancient history.[12] Morris and Scheidel are classists, in that their primary focus is Greece and Rome, who master the classical canon but are also willing to use social sciences tools to render the past comprehensible.[13] The statement that all societies have an ancient history would seem to align with the decolonial thrust of the times, and the broadening of the remit of ancient history globally would seem to promise a history that challenges Eurocentrism. Indeed, Scheidel's recent work is based on a sustained comparison of the Roman Empire and the contemporaneous Chinese Empire, which seems to bear out the promise of an ancient history that transcends the scope and range of Western civilisation. This geographical expansion, moreover, also seems to be a broadening of the methodological approaches of classical studies, and it is possible to see the work of the Stanford historians as part of a lineage that has included histories of the classical heritage of the West approached by moving beyond textually determined accounts.[14] Escaping

Eurocentrism, however, is not so straightforward that it can be realised by expansion of the comparative method alone. This becomes clear from a reading of the work produced by Morris and Scheidel for a more popular audience: Ian Morris's *Why the West Rules – For Now: The Patterns of History and What they Reveal About the Future* (2011) and Walter Scheidel's *Escape from Rome: The Failure of Empire and the Road to Prosperity* (2019).

Morris's book designs a social development index to sustain a comparative study between the West and the East as to why the West rules and promising predictions for the future of great upheaval. There are four curiosities that emerge from Morris's account. First, there is the exclusion of large parts of the world. To some extent, this is justified by replacing Europe with Eurasia as a canvas of world history, but primarily this is a consequence of Morris's ahistorical formulation of "East" and "West" upon which to hang his comparative study.

The exclusion of South Asia and Africa, except Kemet, allows the argument for the multipolarity of the West against the unity of the East to be played out. So, for example, the West is represented by a range of national, cultural and linguistic formations and continuities whereas the East is confined to China and Japan. Then there are the problems with the social development index, especially the explanatory weight carried by the index's measurement of energy consumption per capita (almost 80–90% of index is derived from the measure of energy consumption), the nomadic anomaly (the historical impact of nomadic polities organised by nomads is not captured) and a materialist determinism that takes little account of the cultural/ideological transformations.[15]

Walter Scheidel offers another take on the most important question: why Europe? (A history of the emergence of this "important question" could not be separated from the way it arises in European consciousness.) The question is not exactly novel since it is a staple of the literature on the European miracle.[16] Scheidel (2019, 129) asks in a series of counterfactuals if any polity could have matched the Roman state's achievement of ruling four out of five Europeans.[17] The erudite compendium of counterfactuals includes various permutations and possibilities (an East Roman restoration under Justinian, the Arab (sic) conquests, Carolingian empire-building, the Mongol conquests, the Habsburg and Napoleonic attempts, etc.), all of which fail to re-establish the unity given to Europe by the Roman Empire. It is this failure to restore the Roman Empire that led to the road to prosperity, as "trajectories of state formation" in post-Roman Europe began to diverge from rest of the Old World (Scheidel, 2019, 337). It seems that the multipolarity inscribed in the landscape of Europe meant that the Roman Empire was an exception: no other political formation succeeded in controlling over 80% of Europe's populations (the benchmark that Scheidel establishes for measuring a restoration of the Roman empire), and this meant that the western peninsula of Eurasia remained multipolar, allowing persecuted thinkers, and innovators to move from one jurisdiction to another. Hardly a novel claim: the uniqueness of the European case is often reduced to a European multipolarity, which is contrasted with monolithic Oriental "empires". The trouble with this, is that it is not clear how multipolarity is the cause of innovation, which rather comes across as merely the monopoly of a

specific region throughout time. Nor is it ever made clear whether multipolarity is simply a matter of scale or what constitutes a pole within multipolarity. For example, was the "heptarchy" that ruled England a cause of its development or was it its eventual replacement by the relatively unified polity of the Norman Conquest? What about the Islamicate commonwealth that began to emerge 200 years after the hijra – was it not multipolar? Or was South Asia not also marked by multipolarity? Or was Africa, again, not marked by multipolarity? One can imagine the riposte to such queries would be that these are but moments of multipolarity, whereas in Europe it was hard-wired. But this only raises the questions of the relationship between time and causality and of what should be the appropriate unit of analysis which does not axiomatically privilege the nation-state.

Example 2: Beyond Methodological Nationalism: It's Nation Time

Critical Muslim studies and critical ancient world studies both confront the persistence of epistemological and methodological nationalism. Thus, one possible nexus from which to open a discussion of broader articulations between critical projects such as between the explorations towards a critical ancient world studies exemplified in this volume, as well as critical Muslim studies, is Amiri Baraka's *It's Nation Time*. Baraka was recognised by his critics as a controversial, highly influential figure who epitomised the attempts to overcome intellectual challenges presented by the successes and failures of the civil rights movement.[18] His various epithets ("the father of the Black Arts Movement", "the Malcolm X of literature", "the ever-dissenting dissenter") hint at his position and promise within a broadly conceived black radical tradition and particularly the epistemological possibilities of Black Power.[19] Our purpose, however, is not to discuss Amiri Baraka himself, but to briefly reference his work by way of expanding the range of examples that intersect with the concerns of both critical Muslim studies and critical ancient world studies.[20] In particular, we focus our discussion on the album *It's Nation Time* that he released in 1972 – itself drawing on an earlier poem/pamphlet of the same title (Baraka, 1970), significantly already recited by Baraka at the 1970 founding Congress of African People in Atlanta, Georgia, where "black self-determination and Pan-Africanism were central themes" (Woodard, 1999, 162; but see also Teague, 2015, 23).

   It's Nation Time allows us to pick out three points, which disrupt the normalisation of a nationalist methodology. First, the album cover, visually (and the back cover text in words), with its Afrocentric depiction of a pan-African, diasporic civilisational genealogy, displaces the historical narratives and foundation of white supremacy in the Western classical civilisation in favour of a broad Islamicate Afrocentrism.[21] Second, both as performance poetry and as cultural intervention, *It's Nation Time* embodies a moment in Baraka's evolving ideological journey of grappling with Black nationalism and Black cultural nationalism, nation time and nation place, pan-Africanism, Marxism and internationalism, in the development both of African American consciousness and self-determination. Third, the very polemics which accompanied him throughout his activist trajectory – over its

sexual and gender politics, religion, race and Blackness – specifically the place of whites in the struggle, the Black male, the question of antisemitism in the critique of capitalism and Black economic oppression, the question of the Black bourgeoisie and Uncle Toms foreground both the political nature, and the historical ontology of political subject formation, and the questions of power, context and relational positionality in critique beyond liberal criticism pertinent to both the meaning and the work of critique in our own, very different, conjuncture. *It's Nation Time* illustrates the raising of three key questions the attempts to answer which provide the impetus for critical ancient world studies and critical Muslim studies – namely, the question of displacing the classical heritage of Eurocentric narratives, the question of the relation between autonomy and the nation and the question of the political of political identities and their historical ontologies.

Example 3: Why Be So Critical?

It would be easy enough to conclude that the signifier "critical" announces the post-Western. There has been a proliferation of instances in which the prefix "critical" is attached to several academic endeavours: critical theory, critical race theory and critical legal theory. In academia, "critical" is ubiquitous (what field of academic studies could with legitimacy present itself as "uncritical"?), and there is great cultural capital in "critical" by way of positionality. It is important to note, however, that the absence of the prefix critical does not of course mean the absence of critique: consider, for example, cultural studies and Black and ethnic studies; both these fields emerged as insurgent knowledge formations. Why then "critical"? What work does this prefix do? This question becomes radicalised when we consider that proliferation takes place in the context of a naturalisation of a global neoliberal historic bloc and the reduction of alternative meta-narratives to fragments and margins. It is not by chance that critical race theory and critical theory are both hounded as ideological incursions in supposedly neutral and objective educational fields. What is common to critical race theory and critical theory is the focus on the structural and its constitutive role in the play of power (antisemitism in critical theory, [anti-Black] racism in critical race theory). The addition of critical Muslim studies to the family of what Foucault describes as a "proliferating criticizability of things, institutions, practices and discourses" (2003, 7), would make it just another instance of a localised critique and recovery of subjugated knowledges. In this case, critique would be no more than a means through a forensic scholarship to unconceal the hidden and forgotten existence of subjugated knowledges.[22] Such a version of critical Muslim studies does no more than apply these decolonial and critical insights in the form of extending critical race theory to embrace racialised Muslim subjects caught in the crosshairs of the machinery of surveillance, interrogation and apprehension established by the war on terror. Such a version does not question the philosophical enterprise of accounting for Muslims, but it eschews the ontology of Muslimness for the ontic mapping of Muslims in precarious situations in the West, in the process re-asserting methodological nationalism and denying the globality of Muslimness. It is clear that such deployment of the signifier "critical"

cannot deconstruct Europe and thus it cannot decolonise, and it cannot contribute to the imaginary of the post-Western. In contrast, the critical Muslim project associated with *ReOrient* makes the case for an ontological understanding of the Islamicate.[23] The relationship between being critical and critique of Eurocentrism is not axiomatic.

To clarify this point we want to turn to a survey by Ian Almond who enumerates five principal strategies by which one can critique the idea of Europe that sustains Eurocentrism. He describes what he is doing as an investigation into deconstructions of Europe, but is quick to add that his is a deconstruction without its Derridean trappings. Almond's deconstruction refers to "any approach which tries to radically dismantle the idea of Europe as a largely self-contained space" (Almond, 2014, 53). It is a deconstruction that can be recuperated into the category of critique. Almond's survey provides a useful summary of strategies of critique which operate within the rubric of critical studies. The five strategies are re-origination, re-configuration, internal Othering, de-universalisation or provincialisation, and strategies of commonality (Almond, 2014, 53–58). Re-origination is based on demonstrating the false character of Eurocentrism by finding alternative origins to the formation of Europe. Such endeavours have an especial relevance for classical studies given that it articulates the origin of the West. Re-configurations of Europe try to evade Eurocentrism by putting into question the idea of Europe as a self-contained geographical entity. This is done by conceiving of Europe as part of a Eurasian supercontinent or conceiving a distinct Mediterranean civilisation. The strategy of internal Othering relies upon the proposition that Eurocentrism is undermined by the existence of multiple others in Europe which prevent its ability to fully centre itself as it is haunted by its marginalised population. The provincialisation of Europe would aim to undermine the claims of Eurocentrism by either proposing that some of the key characteristics of European identity can be found in other non-Western historical-cultural formations (e.g. Cyrus the Great and the Achaemenid Empire are given the "credit" for introducing human rights), thus de-universalising Europe, or shifting the focus to the polycentric process of history making, thus provincialising, or "ontologically demoting", Europe as prime mover and disseminator. The final strategy is based on eroding Eurocentrism by making the claim for a commonality that transcends the frontier between the West and the non-West (Muslim organisations often find themselves in such inter-faith situations in which all religious communities and traditions are considered to be alike in their conception of the truth, good, etc.). Critical ancient world studies and critical Muslim studies would be able to ameliorate the Eurocentrism inherent in classical studies and Orientalism by applying one or more of these strategies to destabilise Europe, but would this truly fulfil their critical remit?

The post-Western cannot be reduced to the consequences of dismantling Europe as a largely self-contained space. The critical strategies that Almond has so helpfully outlined are predicated on the idea of Europe as a space. But Eurocentrism is built upon the notion that Europe is more than a space, it is more than just ethnocentrism (Sayyid, [1997] 2015). For the development of critical Muslim studies, the critique of Eurocentrism recognises the instability of "Europe" but sees this refracted

through the prevailing paradigms of the nation-state, epistemological nationalism and migration studies: the "nations" of the age of nationalism were empire nations, "Muslim powers" to boot, such that "Europe" is no stranger to "Islam", or "Islam" to "Europe". But just as the discontinuities of Agarenes, Ishmaelites, Saracens, Moors, Turks, Mahometans, and Musulmans tend to be glossed over in the smoothing retrospective shorthand of the contemporary "Muslim", so the discontinuities of "Muslim" in the contemporary, too, are readily – and contradictorily – erased. For while people have been proffering the shahada since the time of Revelation (and indeed since the time of Creation), "Muslim" as a contemporary identity, public subjectivity and way of being in the world is of arguably recent emergence – less of one when than of multiple whens and wheres. The genealogies we narrate for them, in turn, reflect and set out its conditions of possibility.

Beyond their routing and grounding in diverse located stories and contexts, four global knots can be suggestively set out. The first is the 19th-century "Age of Steam and Print" (Bayly, 2004; Gelvin and Green, 2014), with its reinforcing forces of movement and fixity, of migrations and standardisation, of concreteness and abstraction, of nation-states and empires and of invented identities and "religions" imagined as perennial and traditional. The second is the mid-20th-century passing of the moment of Islamic socialisms and of Bandung internationalism. The third is the Iranian Revolution of 1979. The fourth, as familiar and as ideologised as the latter, is the knot of '89: the Rushdie affair, the Fall of the Berlin Wall, the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan and the beginning of the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Bosnian War, the foulard affairs and the reinvention of laicism, the triumphalism of the End of History and the recasting of the geopolitical world order as a Clash of Civilisations naturalised by 9/11. Here the Rushdie affair may stand as a global marker of the making of the Muslim. The moment of reframing of "immigrants", ex-colonials and other "ethnics" into Muslims, of a shift from ethnic markers into markers of Muslimness, and of mobilisations and agency under the name Muslim. And not coincidentally, the moment of the retrenchment and conflation of whiteness, Europeanness and Westernness now reconfigured from racist exclusionism to a liberal disciplining of Muslimness.

But this, too, sutures important older continuities and discontinuities. For whether in terms of securitisation and the intelligence state, gendered Islamophobia and its white saviourism, fears of Muslim fanaticism and violent subversiveness, demographic panics, or racist nightmares of replacement and racial war, each and every strand has its precursor in both the contexts and logic of colonial rule and governmentality, and of the post–World War I collapse of empires and Spenglerian dissections of the passing of the European order. When missionaries and colonial administrators flagged the green peril of jihad in successive challenges to colonial rule, from the Scramble for Africa to the remaking of the Middle East (Habermas, 2014), when the global colour line buckled under fantasies of yellow peril and Islamic invasion in imagined future wars (Martín Rodríguez, 2018), and when white supremacists prophesised hand in hand the passing of the white race, the coming race war and the resurgence of Islam,[24] then, too, Islamophobia and the Muslim were co-constitutive.

Historical, methodological and epistemological nationalism, not to mention reasons and logics of state, nation-building and the designs of citizenship and empire, shaped the disciplines and their orders of knowledge and divides – for example, between anthropology and sociology, between classical and modern languages, and between History, and indeed almost all European disciplines (from politics and theology to philosophy and literature), and Orientalism (see also Wallerstein, 1991). The same methodological and epistemological nationalism and reasons of state and policy configure both the disclosure of Muslims and the fields and disciplines that study them. A quick sketch of the beginnings of critical Muslim studies reveals it as an epistemological intervention that seeks to create a space which both articulates and disrupts existing disciplines and their boundedness within the imaginary of the nation-state.

Critical Muslim studies begins with distancing from the idea of imposing a prefix of Islamic on liberation theology as a means of making it decolonial.[25] It turns the affair of prefixes into a series of interrogations between decoloniality and Muslimness, in the process rejecting the easy manner in which the decolonial imaginary was articulated by recruiting various subject positions made of the ranks of the contemporary wretched of the Earth. There was an underlying assumption within some precincts of decolonial thought that contemporary Muslims, that is, Muslims consumed by the logics of the war on terror could be reverse engineered to disclose their origins in Granada 1492. Granada signalled a doubly foundational conquest: of the Americas and the Islamicate. The formation of the New World was not only a geographical rupture but also historical: the conquest of Indigenous peoples of the Western Hemisphere was tied to the liberation of an autochthonous – that is, a Christian – Iberia, which was tied to the end of the premodern in Europe. Critical Muslim studies interrupts such decolonising narratives by questioning the Atlantic centrism of 1492. It complicates the picture of the play of power being unidirectional, it defers and disrupts the accounts of the "European Miracle" upon which much of decolonial writing still rests.[26] It is a reminder that one of the key factors in the subjugation and eventual explosion of Muslims (and Jews) from Iberia was the fear that Muslim armies from the south would come and restore Islamicate fortunes.

The Making of Muslimness and the Remaking of the (Ancient) World

Academic research and teaching on Muslims takes place against a contemporary hypervisibility of Muslims. At its simplest, this means either that research and public and policy discourse on Muslims is disproportionate to the number of Muslims in the populations or, in Islamicate contexts, that Muslimness is problematised in the horizon of Eurocentrism.[27] At its most insidious it meant that a convergence of politically framed securitarian and integration concerns generated a funding driven expansion of research which further disproportionately centres on Muslims. A correlative of this is the exceptionalisation of Muslims. Partly, such exceptionalisation merely reiterates racialising framings and moral panics familiar in the casting of

diverse minorities and "backward" people as both social problems and threats. But partly it additionally builds on more historically specific loaded tropes of Islam and Muslims which trade on historiographical narratives of Europeanness and modernity, Orientalist conceptions of textualist Islam and novel post-Orientalist culturalist framings of universal values, all of which cast out Muslims as premodern Others.

One way of describing the aim of critical Muslim studies will be to reorient a world history so that it allows the disclosure of Muslimness as part of the fundamental plurality of the planet. One can imagine a world in which the curriculum shifts from critical ancient world studies to critical Muslim studies as it maps out the journey that denaturalises our present and in doing so opens the path for the articulation of a future that is not simply the extrapolation of the present. Ancient history is critical for the formation of political societies since it is a story of their beginnings and rooted in cosmologies of civilisations. Critical ancient world studies is not simply a supplement to arcane academic disciplines but potentially a political cosmology of the post-Western future. The post-Western is not chronological but epistemological. Ancient history draws the threads that stitch together the project of Western civilisation beyond its nationalist framing. The whiteness of ancient history/classics is necessary to connect Western civilisation as transnational imaginary. In dusty bookshops in Buenos Aires, Bucharest and Berlin, in charts, and in storybooks and textbooks, ancient history, as imagined by Eurocentrism, holds sway. There is, however, an attempt to argue that while the inheritance of such historical reconstructions continues to circulate in the culture, critique of Eurocentrism has in fact become mainstream. As part of the historiographical revolution which expands the archive from classical texts, and archaeological remains to using interdisciplinary methodologies to make the past and the present speak to us. Critical ancient world studies and critical Muslim studies seem to promise a global history that displaces Eurocentrism.

Critical Muslim studies is based on problematising the assumptions around a *history* of Muslims *in* the world. Its focus is not already constituted Muslim subjects but rather Muslimness and the making of Muslims.[28] Its concerns are with issues of Muslim agency, autonomy, and Muslim worldmaking, and the coterminous and contradictory histories of the erasure and re-inscriptions of Muslims and Muslimness. In the vein of Ian Hacking's historical ontology of kinds of people, it approaches Muslim as a way of being in the world, attentive to its genealogy, its conditions of possibility and its historicity. The shift from Islam to Muslim to the making of Muslims, and from there to Muslimness, maps out the horizon of critical Muslim studies. Critical Muslim studies is a gesture towards a counter-history of Muslims told as the gnosis of Muslimness.

Notes

1 This chapter is based on the two presentations each of the authors made individually at the Critical Ancient World Studies Workshop, 7 September 2020, as well as a summary of work in progress for *Islamism as Philosophy* by one of the authors (Sayyid). We

would like to thank the organisers and participants for fostering the rich environment and discussion in which critical Muslim studies and critical ancient world studies could play off each other's attempts to escape the gravitational pull of Eurocentrism.

2 As Charles Hatfield et al. (2013, 13) note, "Almost all superheroes have an origin story: a bedrock account of the transformative events that set the protagonist apart from ordinary humanity. If not a prerequisite for the superhero genre, the origin . . . is certainly a prominent and popular trope that recurs so frequently as to offer clues to the nature of this narrative tradition. To read stories about destroyed worlds, murdered parents, genetic mutations, and mysterious power-giving wizards is to realize the degree to which the superhero genre is about transformation, about identity, about difference, and about the tension between psychological rigidity and a flexible and fluid sense of human nature".

3 See Philo (2017) for the debate generated by Mary Beard's defence of the depiction of "Black" Romans in a BBC educational cartoon for children.

4 Orientalism covers more than Muslimistan or Islamdom; it can include conceptions of the Orient that focus on non-Islamicate East Asia or non-Islamicate South Asia and even Kemet and Ethiopia, which, in a strictly geographical sense, would be considered under the label of Africa. For the purposes of this chapter, we will focus on Orientalism in a more restrictive sense.

5 This is how Edward Said defines Orientalism; see Said (1978, 2). Said's conceptualisation of Orientalism as it is presented in this chapter, owes much to the discussion in Sayyid (2015, 31–35).

6 The division between Roman and Byzantine Empires allowed Britain and France to present themselves as being direct and central descendants of Rome – in opposition to the peripheral and disavowed status of Constantinople. The inscription of "Oriental" boundaries within the field of classical studies demonstrates the constitutive relationship between Orientalism and the classics. See Kaldellis (2015) for how the historiographical split between Roman and Byzantine prevents us from recognising the continuity between Rome and Constantinople and reconfigures Byzantium as a type of "Oriental despotism". It also has the effect of excluding the Islamicate from the heritage of Rome. See Whittow (1996, 96–98) for a more conventional account that rejects that there is a significant and meaningful continuity even between the Roman Empire of 600 CE and the empire ruled from Constantinople from mid-seventh century onwards; thus, he insists upon the term "Byzantine".

7 For popular culture examples of the imaginary of the classics at work in contemporary extrapolations of the clash of civilisations, see Zac Snyder's *300* (2006), based on Frank Miller and Lyn Vardey's 1998 comic of the same title, and Oliver Stone's *Alexander* (2004).

8 The idea that Eurocentrism is not present in what are described as non-hermeneutical subjects is testimony more of the depth of their positivism rather than the particularity of their subject matter. See, for example, Joseph (1991) for a pioneering study about how Eurocentrism is manifested in mathematics.

9 Another point of inter-related critique intrinsic to both projects concerns the category of "religion". One of the premises of critical Muslim studies – drawing on the work of Talal Asad (both in *Genealogies of Religion*, 1993, and *Formations of the Secular*, 2003), alongside a wealth of critical scholarship on both the conceptual and historical construction of the categories of religion, world religion and comparative religions (e.g. Dressler and Mandair, 2011; Masuzawa, 2005) – lies not merely in deterring the slipperiness of the discussion of Muslim into "religious" and "theological" registers but on historicising and denaturalising the universality of the category of religion, and its mappings of faith, politics, the secular, the private and the public, and their divides. Not only have such critical histories benefited from the excavation of longer perspectives into Ancient texts (e.g. Nongbri, 2013), but more importantly, the same concerns

can now be found even in the very introductory texts in ancient world studies. Thus, it is that, for example, *An Introduction to Ancient Mesopotamian Religion* dedicates its opening pages to each of the six words of the title (Schneider, 2011); more significantly, an introductory textbook such as Quirke's volume on religion in ancient Egypt in the Blackwell *Ancient Religions* series (2015) invites the student to confront from the start the Eurocentric framings of the field (from words, with Edward Said as the very first reference of the book's Preface, to periodisation, textuality, and colonialism), to "apply critical theory to Egyptology", pursue interdisciplinarity with the social sciences, and envisage that "the better future [of the field] lies in the hands not of established Egyptologists but of a new generation of thinkers particularly in Africa, including Egyptian Egyptologists and extending broadly across reflective and creative worlds" (12).

10 This approach is stimulated by Wittgenstein's use of vaguely synonymous expressions and series of examples as means of explaining the use of a concept. For example, we understand what activities are games not by finding a property exclusively common to all games but simply by building a stock of examples of the application of the term to refer to specified actions. See Wittgenstein (2009, sections 69–73).

11 See, for example, Kuhrt and Sancisi-Weerdenburg (1988). This was part of a series of ten workshops on Achaemenid history which ran from 1981 to 1990, motivated by a desire to overcome the reduction of studies of the vast, disparate Achaemenid empire to Greek historiography. Building on these Achaemenid history workshops, Sherwin-White and Kuhrt (1993) translate the Seleucid Empire as having more continuities with the Achaemenids than colonial-racial inspired version of Hellenism as a precursor of European colonisation of the Orient. Briant (2002) presents Alexander as the last of the Achaemenids, disrupting Hellenocentric forms of Orientalism. Rezakhani's *Reorienting the Sassanians* (2018, 1–6) makes the plea for a new (global) history of Achaemenids and Sassanians that does not reproduce Orientalism. Hatoon Al-Fassi (2007, 3), in her research on women in Nabatea, explicitly rejects Hellenocentrism describing it as a historical perspective that regards the Greek world as the focal point of the civilisational development.

12 See John A Hall's anointment of Scheidel as world historian in the review of his *Escape from Rome*: "that is, the way in which he has moved past being a classical historian to a scholar of world empires in general. What matters is his immense methodological ability. By this I do not mean to emphasise his skills as an historical demographer, deeply impressive as they are. Rather what matters for him – and indeed in general – is the ability to think, to work out how any proposition can be properly assessed. His use of counterfactual reasoning is at the core of everything he does. One can see it in the conclusion to the book when he asks whether the outcome in Europe would have been different if Christianity has not served for a long period as, in Thomas Hobbes's words, a ghost empire – and whether the outcome of European history would have been different had there never been a Rome. But counterfactual reasoning is, in a sense, at the heart of this book. Why add another account of the fall of Rome, he asks on page 129, when analytical progress can best be made by comparative analysis leading to counterfactual conclusions? In other words, Scheidel has become a world historian – an outstanding achievement" (Hall, 2021, 540).

13 This is of course not a general statement, as there are many classical scholars who are willing to use social science methodologies to make sense of the Greek-Roman worlds. See the dispute between Keith Hopkins and Fergus Millar over Hopkins' (1978) review of Millar's *The Emperor in the Roman World*.

14 Such historical research has both Weberian and Marxian antecedents. For example, G. E. M. de Ste Croix's monumental study (1981) provides a historical-materialist account covering the entire period of classical studies. For another recent example of a study that self-consciously attempts to move beyond the traditional template of classical studies, see Kosmin (2014).

15 It is interesting to note that Morris' working papers on Athens as great power (an edited version of which can be found in Morris and Scheidel, 2009) do try and account for cultural effects of Athenian Empire in materialist terms, seeing it as an aspect of its geopolitical position rather than its democratic ideology.

16 See Jones (1981) and, on which, Blaut (2000).

17 It is not clear what is meant by European in the Roman Empire that included territories that contemporary cartography would include under the heading of Africa and Asia. See Umachandran in this volume.

18 Watts makes this point in his "highly critical" account of Baraka, that despite all the problems he identifies with the figure of Baraka, he acknowledges the pivotal role Baraka has played, which justifies Watt's polemical commentary on the "idea of Baraka" (2001, xii). On Baraka, Black nationalism and pan-Africanism, see especially Woodard (1999).

19 On Baraka's trajectory, politics and aesthetics of Black nationalism and pan-Africanism, see especially Woodard (1999, esp. ch. 5 "It's Nation Time"), Iton (2008, ch. 3 "Nation Time"), Moten (2003) and Smethurst (2020); for an analysis of Baraka's attempt to imagine a Black urban nation as counter-power to white supremacy, see Silosi (2019).

20 Watts (2001, 324) dismisses with disdain an attempt "to create Islam as a black African religion, free of the evil legacy of Christianity". Ironically, however, Islam had an equally valid claim to the mantle of "slave religion".

21 See the Afrocentric front and back cover art of Imamu Amiri Baraka *It's Nation Time: African Visionary Music*, Motown/Black Forum, 1972 at Discog: www.discogs.com/release/2595663-Imamu-Amiri-Baraka-Its-Nation-Time-African-Visionary-Music/image/SW1hZ2U6NDQ3MjE5Nw==. From the back cover text: "These are projections of (image/sound) which represent the new life-sense of African men and women here in the West. . . . These songs & chants are for praise of our Ancient African Fathers, whose traditional greatness and wisdomic understanding we move to restore to the world. . . . They are visions . . . meant to raze & put us in control of our lives . . . These strengths of vision . . . is the hard line of reality we need to keep us from flying off the pavement, xcited by dead European philosophy".

22 Despite the rather cavalier dismissal of Foucault by some decolonial thinkers, it is the case that versions of decoloniality have more than a passing resemblance to a project of counter-history. See Foucault (2003, 7–8).

23 See Sayyid et al. (2015) for the announcement of a project that inaugurates and theorises critical Muslim studies as arising from the interactions between three distinct epistemological orientations: post-foundationalism, post-Orientalism and postcolonialism/decoloniality.

24 Signally the eugenicist and race-war theorist Lothrop Stoddard, with *The Rising Tide of Color: The Threat against White World Supremacy* (1920), followed by *The New World of Islam* (1921).

25 Critical Muslim studies began four years before the publication of the first issue of *ReOrient: The Journal of Critical Muslim Studies*, with the establishment of a series of summer schools held in Granada on Critical Muslim Studies: Decolonial Struggles and Liberation Theologies, which ran between 2011 and 2019.

26 The historiography of the "European Miracle" (e.g. Baechler et al., 1988) argues that Europe's unique characteristics (such as commercialisation, domesticity and political agency) rather than a conjuncture in world history that was responsible for its socio-economic and technological transformation that gave birth to the modern. This view sees a sharp break between modernity and premodernity, with the latter characterised by minimalist and reactive governance (Ando, 2017, 116). Much of decolonial literature rests upon the sharpness of the break between modern and premodern, and the addition of coloniality as a supplement to modernity does not erode this distinction. See Sayyid for further details (forthcoming).

27 See the discussion of Kemalism in Sayyid (2015, 52–83). Kemalism as hegemonic political discourse is based on the articulation of Muslimness as anti-modern and the identification of modernisation with Westernisation. The manner and degree of such articulations vary due to circumstances and specific histories, but the logic of Kemalism continues to hold sway among powerful groups within the Islamosphere.
28 See, for example, the MA course titled *The Making of Muslims in Europe: Empire, Immigration, Citizenship*, created by one of the two present authors in the History department at King's College London. While this course, created within the then (2010) geographical constraints of the history teaching curriculum, problematises the possibility of a history of Muslims *in Europe*, much of its concerns has more general relevance through different local contexts to how Muslimness becomes present in the world.

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Critical Epistemologies

3   Reading for Diasporic Experience in the Delian Serapeia

Helen Wong

Introduction[1]

The multicultural character of Delos, especially during the Hellenistic and early Roman periods, is one of its defining features. Delos was one of the most heavily trafficked sites in the eastern Mediterranean throughout antiquity, especially after its transformation into a free trade port by the Romans in ca. 166 BCE. Its unique positionality as a major cult site, a free trade port and an island situated in the near-middle of the southern Aegean meant that religious, economic, and maritime travel networks intersected here in significant ways. In the Hellenistic and early Roman periods, Delos attracted large numbers of not only visitors but newcomers, arriving voluntarily or involuntarily, who made their lives there and who brought a marked cultural and ethnic diversity to the island. This is duly reflected in the archaeological record, in which several different ethnic/cultural enclaves, neighbourhoods and communities are clearly visible. The question of interpretation, however, is more complicated.

In the last decade or so, the term "diaspora" has appeared more and more frequently in ancient world studies.[2] And yet, its meaning and actual use in the scholarship tends to vary, in part because calling a group "diasporic" encompasses many facets of possible identity and experience. Diaspora studies has become its own field, but even within it, there is disagreement on what, exactly, a diaspora is – in Jonathan Grossman's words, it is an "essentially contested concept", subject to constant debate over whether a "diaspora" is an explicitly definable group or simply a social construct defined by a certain category of mobilising discourse.[3] Broadly speaking, when scholars use "diaspora" in ancient studies, they tend to be less concerned with interrogating the term itself and more interested in applying it. In that application, it seems apparent that there is a general understanding of "diaspora" as meaning any community or population living outside of their shared homeland/place of origin – for example, it has been used before to describe the cultural/ethnic communities on Delos, especially the *italikoi*, the Romans.[4] This usage in ancient studies provides an interesting methodological counterpoint to how diaspora as a concept is approached within diaspora studies, sociology, postcolonial studies, and other disciplines that work with modern materials. In these fields, which generally have the benefit of working with the richness of

modern data, it is possible to get very fine-grained details on what forms the experience of diaspora. Of course, modern experiences do not map directly onto ancient ones, but as a discipline, classics could benefit from using this abundant information as reference points to think with. Modern experiences of diaspora can fill in, a little, the missing data about emotion, identity and belonging that is difficult to reconstruct from the archaeological data alone. This chapter considers how modern experiences and analysis of diaspora might be used as a way to read for diasporic experience in a particular archaeological dataset from the classical world: the Delian serapeia.

Theoretical Background

Diaspora theory is very grounded in modern data and especially in modern notions of the nation-state. However, "diaspora" itself, as a term, is not; it is derived from διασπείρω, "to disperse or scatter", which first appears in the Septuagint in reference to the exiled Jews.[5] But this established meaning of "diaspora" changed during the 1960s in response to new patterns of mobility and emerging work in postcolonial theory.[6] Since then, as William Safran notes, the diasporic experience has taken on an association with displacement and an associated variety of metaphoric implications.[7] As Judith Shuval puts it, the word has taken on a "broad semantic domain" encompassing a huge variety of groups: political refugees, alien residents, guest workers, immigrants, expellees, ethnic and racial minorities, overseas communities and similar groups whose identities are tied to the experience of displacement.[8] Grossman, through conducting a data analysis of the most influential academic papers concerning diaspora since 1976, offers a cross-tabulated summary of what "diaspora" has generally come to be defined as follows: "Diaspora is a transnational community whose members (or their ancestors) emigrated or were dispersed from their original homeland but remain oriented to it and preserve a group identity".[9]

There have been many attempts to break down the concept of diaspora into its fundamental components so that the data can be sorted into different categories for analysis. In this chapter, I use Grossman's categories because they arise from relatively recent work (2019) and have been widely cited in diaspora studies. Grossman provides six "core attributes" of diaspora, whose descriptions I have summarised here:[10]

1. *Transnationalism*: maintaining ties across two or more nation-states. However, transnationality is not inherently diasporic. Rather, it is the other way around: a diasporic community must be transnational.
2. *Community*: a sense of belonging and cohesion within a group; can be social and/or organisational.
3. *Dispersal and immigration*: the former can mean any kind of movement across state lines, including that which is voluntary or involuntary. Immigration does not immediately become diasporic, however; the sense of community ties is necessary, and that can take time to develop.

4. *Being outside the homeland*: this is a locational component. Diasporas must be outside of what they believe or understand to be their common homeland or place of origin.
5. *Homeland orientation*: a group that both lives outside of its homeland and maintains material and symbolic ties with it. Examples of these ties include participation in homeland politics, economic/financial/commercial exchanges and cultural and religious exchanges.
6. *Group identity*: this varies extremely widely but generally has to do with the expression of identity as a collective. This can be done through common culture, language, religion, shared history of displacement, shared nostalgia for the homeland or similar actions. The key component is the expression of common identity among a group of people, and it does not even have to be among the entire diasporic community; a diaspora can hold many group identities.

These are relatively robust categories of analysis despite how none of them are truly "solid" categories, so to speak, because of their inherent nuance.[11] Other widely cited systems of categorisation, such as Safran's typological schema (1991) and Shuval's theoretical paradigm of diasporas (2000),[12] offer relevant alternative perspectives to Grossman's categories. It is possible to have detailed debates about how to build these categories because there is so much modern data available. Today, cultural or ethnic identities can be mapped with nation-state identities through documentation or attestation from living people. Nationhood has a profound impact on how we as scholars think about cultural identity because now it is almost impossible to experience one without the other. But in ancient contexts, there is no comparable institution to the modern nation-state. In order to apply diaspora theory to ancient material, the removal of the nation-state from the theory itself is necessary. Then the question becomes, is it still possible to identify ancient diasporas (aside from the original Jewish diaspora)? Can the various fundamental components of diasporic identity still be found, independent of the nation-state presence? In the following section, I explore these questions through examining the serapeia of Delos.

The Serapeia of Delos

It is generally understood that Serapis was a syncretised deity formed from both Egyptian and Greek influences. Although the exact origins of the cult are unclear, Serapis was closely tied to Ptolemaic rule and Graeco-Egyptian Alexandrian culture. There was no Serapis before the Ptolemies. The Ptolemies actively promoted his cult, and scholars have argued that Serapis' cult was part of the larger phenomenon of Hellenistic ruler cult rather than an independent syncretic entity.[13] It has even been suggested that the Ptolemies deliberately created Serapis as a means of better unifying the Egyptians and Greeks in Alexandria.[14]

Whether or not he was a deliberate creation is difficult to prove, but the evidence is suggestive of conscious interference from the Ptolemies, who promoted his cult alongside their own royal cults. The name "Serapis" is probably derived from a

combination of the names of the Egyptian gods Osiris and Apis. But, as many scholars have pointed out, the cult of Serapis is not particularly Egyptian at its core. The iconography, mythology and supposed origin myth of Serapis are recognisably Greek. The origin myth that was most circulated in antiquity comes from Plutarch and Tacitus (*De Iside et Osiride* 28; *Annales* IV, 83–84), who say that Ptolemy I first encountered Serapis in a dream and was commanded to bring his statue from Sinope to Alexandria. The statue was then identified as Serapis by both an Egyptian priest, Manetho, and Timotheus, an Athenian descended from the Eumolpidae family, who oversaw the Eleusinian Mysteries. Ptolemy I then established the cult of Serapis in Alexandria. This story unambiguously serves propagandic ends, especially with the introduction of Manetho and Timotheus to provide Egyptian and Greek validation of the new god who appears specifically to Ptolemy I. The dream-statue/item retrieval-deity identification format is also a familiar one from other Greek and Roman deity origin myths, comparable to the introduction of Magna Mater to Rome, for example. Whether or not Plutarch and Tacitus' accounts are true matters less than the fact that the story itself exists. It reflects the propaganda of Ptolemaic royal ideology: Serapis, tied to major Egyptian gods and yet comfortably Hellenistic in iconography and background, represented one way among many for the Ptolemies to advertise the legitimacy of their rule over Egypt.

It would be accurate to describe Serapis as a Hellenised version of existing Egyptian material and as a god made more for the Greeks than the Egyptians. His cult was especially popular in Alexandria, where other Graeco-Egyptian syncretic gods like Boubastis (Bastet/Artemis) and Hermanubis (Hermes/Anubis) were also worshipped. This distinctive Graeco-Egyptian religious culture that became one of Alexandria's defining features eventually became one of the exports that came out of Egypt's premier port city. The cult of Serapis became very popular outside of Egypt throughout the Hellenistic and Roman periods; he was often worshipped alongside Isis, who similarly gained a large following beyond Egypt. The case of Isis could be said to be a somewhat different phenomenon, as she was a popular Egyptian goddess from the start rather than a syncretised creation like Serapis, but her closeness to Serapis overseas was not a coincidence. One reason was Serapis' conflation with Osiris, her husband. Another was that overseas, Serapis seems to have been perceived as much more Egyptian than he ever had been at home in Egypt.[15] Outside of Egypt, Serapis's Egyptianness, so to speak, was apparently comparable to, or at least not necessarily much distinguished from, that of Isis.

Lindsey Mazurek's recent study of Isiac cult in Roman Greece has explored in depth the Egyptianising iconography and material culture that followed the cult of Isis beyond Egypt. One of the major conclusions of her work is that Egyptianising material "defined, displayed, and engaged devotees in a specific and shared version of Egyptian cult: Isis is universal, but that universality is mediated through Greek culture and materials; Isis is Egyptian, but her Egyptianness is represented through Greek style".[16] To take this a step further, it seems that what mattered with the use of Egyptianising material in Isiac cult overseas was that Isis was recognisably Egyptian to a generally Greek/Roman, non-Egyptian audience. Coding as Egyptian in sometimes exaggerated ways was necessary to express Egyptian identity in

a non-Egyptian environment. I suggest that this framework of interpretation has some explanatory power for how the worship of Serapis unfolded outside of Egypt.

In terms of what the Egyptianness of Serapis has to do with the question of diaspora, could it be said that the cult of Serapis outside of Egypt had diasporic characteristics? Within Judaic studies, "diaspora synagogues" are their own category of synagogue, distinguished by their location outside of the homeland and the communities who sustained them.[17] With the acknowledgement that the comparison is not exact for many reasons, there is still some value in asking whether the serapeia outside of Egypt could also be considered their own category of diasporic serapeia – somewhat in the same sense as the diaspora synagogues, but more so diasporic according to the categories outlined in the previous section. I do not mean to count the serapeia as a diasporic community in themselves – i.e. to equate the buildings to actual people, similar to the pots-as-people type of analysis – but I do aim to consider them as material that may be representative or reflective of diasporic identity.

There are three serapeia on Delos (Serapeiums A, B and C), all located in the same neighbourhood (the Quartier de L'Inopos, which is merged with the Terrasse des Dieux Étrangers). Serapeum A is likely the oldest of the three and dates to around the end of the third century BCE. It is small and relatively humble, with a courtyard measuring around 6 by 12 meters. It was lined by porticoes on the north and south sides, had a communal dining chamber, triclinium-type, along the western edge, and had a naos on the eastern end. The original excavator noted that the materials used in the building were generally mediocre in quality except for a set of marble benches which were donated by devotees.[18] The overall layout is very similar to the major serapeum in Alexandria and suggests that this structure was deliberately built to be that way, albeit with much fewer resources.

On a small column in the courtyard is inscribed a famous aretalogical inscription which details the founding of the sanctuary as told by a Serapeian priest, Apollonius.[19] It begins with a lineage declaration, stating that Apollonius is the descendant of five generations of priests and inherited the position from his father, a priest of Serapis from Memphis. Then, Apollonius tells the story of how he received a dream from Serapis commanding him to establish a private temple for him, as he could no longer live in "rented quarters" as before: εἶναι ἐν μισθωτοῖς καθὼς πρότερον (IG XI.4 1299 l. 15). Then, as the story progresses, Apollonius says that he bought a plot of land and had the serapeum built within six months. But during that process, a public lawsuit was made against him and the sanctuary by a group of men. In another dream, Serapis predicted they would fail, and the inscription ends with Apollonius celebrating his victory over them as a divine victory of the god. The phrasing of "rented" (μισθωτοῖς) quarters is particularly interesting, as the renting could be both metaphorical and literal. It could be alluding to the cult starting out in domestic spaces or rented property. It suggests that minority cults did not move out from shared/domestic spaces into institutional ones until their followings reached critical mass or a resource threshold.

Following this part of the inscription is a hymnal version of it by one Maiistos, a man with an Egyptian name. The hymn is structured in Homeric convention

and gives some more details: the grandfather of Apollonios was the first priest of Serapis to arrive on Delos and "unwillingly seated [the god] in his own house and appeased [the god] dearly with burnt offerings": ἔνδον εἰῶι δ' ἀέκων ἵδρυσε μελάθρωι καί σε φίλως θυέ<ε>σσιν ἀρέσσατο (IG XI.4 1299 l. 39–40). This explicit acknowledgement of the cult being first settled in Apollonius' own house strongly suggests that the cult at Serapeum A grew out of a domestic context first, suggesting once again the pattern of minority cults achieving public space only after a certain point of wealth or establishment. The subalternity of being a minority might perhaps also be read for in the type of action brought against Apollonius. Neither the prose nor the hymn version of the story give details about the lawsuit, but it was a type of public action brought by individuals on behalf of the community. It implies that the establishment of a serapeum might have been seen as problematic by the majority presence.[20] It has been suggested that perhaps the action was brought because the sanctuary diverted public water from the Inopos for its own use, which is evidenced in the archaeology.[21] The reason for this is likely associated with the Nilometer at the side of the serapeum, which was also customary at serapeia in Egypt. There may have been a need to access river water for ritual purposes. If that diversion of water from the Inopos was meant to serve as a stand-in for the Nile, it demonstrates an intent to create an Egyptian religious geography out of a non-Egyptian locale.

In terms of environment, all three serapeia are located in a neighbourhood known for housing sanctuaries to foreign deities, including ones for Phoenician and Syrian deities.[22] Although there were many foreign cults present, there were also standard Greek sanctuaries, like one for Hermes and another for Hera. Generally, the layout of this neighbourhood looks like a temple district, with an amphitheatre and substantially more public buildings and monuments than private houses. Serapeum A is directly on the banks of the Inopos, reflecting the relationship between Serapis and Nilotic ritual – a southern section of the building suggests a Nilometer like the one at the major serapeum in Alexandria. Serapeum B is similarly located on the Inopos but on a section more central to the district. Serapeum B is poorly preserved, but it seems to have been a larger complex situated on more desirable/less peripheral land. Dating is difficult, but it was certainly built after Serapeum A and indicates a rise in prosperity and strength of the cult. Serapeum C is much later and is part of a larger temple complex that also worshipped Isis and possibly other Egyptian gods as well.

Sanctuaries like these serapeia represented, as Mazurek puts it, "three-dimensional, imagined geographies of the Nile that could be contained in situ".[23] The serapeia represent in material form spoken or intangible aspects of Egyptian identity specifically in relation to the cult of Serapis, and with the Delian examples, it is possible to see over time how the cult grew in popularity and became an established part of the Delian landscape. To evaluate whether these Delian serapeia are representative of diasporic according to Grossman's categories, it is necessary to interrogate these buildings for relevant data. Working from an archaeological dataset introduces an extra step of interpretation: the extrapolation of abstract ideas

from material objects, which in this case, are architectural remnants. In the following, I provide a succinct, summary evaluation for each category:

1. *Transnationalism*. The serapeia are located on Delos but represent a distinctively Egyptian cult with an Egyptianness moderated through Greek material. Egypt was not a nation-state, nor was Greece, but both were identifiably localised places of origin. If transnationalism in the absence of the nation-state means maintaining ties across different localised places with different cultures, then the serapeia, in being built and maintained, could arguably represent that type of transnationalism.
2. *Community*. The simplest interpretation of this extremely broad category could be regarding the communities who worshipped Serapis, who were not necessarily Egyptian. However, it is not possible to say that these communities were consistent or firmly delineated. If a person chose to worship Serapis, that would not automatically make them diasporic so much as a participant in a diasporic phenomenon. However, perhaps it could be said that community of identity, to some extent, existed between serapeia outside of Egypt. It is possible to read the Delian serapeia as a community whose worshippers and priests knew each other.
3. *Dispersal and immigration*. Certainly, the Delian serapeia represent the movement of people. The aretalogical inscription from Serapeum A, citing Apollonius' grandfather as the first to migrate to Delos, is particularly relevant here.
4. *Being outside the homeland*. The Delian serapeia are outside of Egypt.
5. *Homeland orientation*. This one is especially difficult to evaluate. It is not really possible to tell whether the people who built, maintained and worshipped at the serapeia kept any kind of ongoing relationship with people in Egypt. Perhaps it could be said that this orientation existed on a more abstract level, in that the serapeia were built to look like the serapeia in Egypt with local adjustments (the Inopos) as necessary, but this seems like a stretch in the absence of actual data.
6. *Group identity*. The Delian serapeia are all identifiable as such, with distinctly Egyptian-style architectural and decorative elements.[24] From a material perspective, that is suggestive of group identity, especially when assessed alongside the social aspects of worshippers and priests probably knowing and interacting with each other. The architectural style among these serapeia could be interpreted as creating a deliberate Egyptian coding for a non-Egyptian audience, emphasising their relationship to each other as part of the same cult and culture.

Conclusion

From this brief exploration, it is possible to see that characteristics of diasporic experience as we understand it through modern data can be looked for in the serapeia of Delos. They represent a dataset that is not overly resistant to the categories of analysis, even in the absence of a nation-state, because it is possible to perceive ancient Egypt as a political and geographic entity with distinct cultural coding in

the context of religion. Following this framing, someone like Apollonius, and the cult spaces he oversaw and lived in, could conceivably be considered representative of an Egyptian religious diaspora.

This reading, however, does not imply that simply participating in Serapeian cult would have made a person part of that diaspora. The distinction between this hypothetical participant and Apollonius lies in how he signals himself to the community as distinctly Egyptian and representative of a well-known Egyptian cult. In a place like Delos, outside of Egypt, the serapeia and their priests were obviously existing away from their religious and cultural homeland. Being read as diasporic means that we acknowledge the possibility that the people who ran these sanctuaries experienced echoes of the experiences of diasporic people today: the effects of being a descendant of an immigrant community, a want to keep up ancestral religious traditions, the experience of being othered or made subaltern upon arrival in an unfamiliar community, or the need to signal (or even over-signal, ostentatiously) cultural difference in the context of a culturally diverse community. As a discipline, Classics does not always actively encourage reading for these kinds of experiences in the ancient data, in large part because doing so requires engagement with more modern fields and their approaches. And yet collaboration and discourse with those fields and their methods can be used as a catalyst to start critical interrogations of how classics has trained its scholars to generate knowledge of the past, often conceptualising the experiences of ancient peoples at a theoretical distance. In experimenting with reading for diasporic experience in this chapter, I see that it is possible to close that distance, at least a little. We can choose to afford to ancient people the same agency and depths of experience that are taken for granted in their modern counterparts.

Notes

2　This has been especially true in Roman studies. See the works of Lisa Eberle, Sailakshmi Ramgopal and Eric Gruen for some relatively recent examples.

3　Jonathan Grossman, "Toward a Definition of Diaspora," *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 42, no. 8 (2019, 11 June): 1264, https://doi.org/10.1080/01419870.2018.1550261.

4　Lisa Pilar Eberle, and Enora Le Quéré, "Landed Traders, Trading Agriculturalists? Land in the Economy of the Italian Diaspora in the Greek East," *The Journal of Roman Studies*, 107 (2017): 27–59.

5　Stéphane Dufoix, "The Loss and the Link: A Short History of the Long-Term Word 'Diaspora'," *Diasporas Reimagined Spaces, Practices and Belonging* (2015): 8–11.

6　Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (Pantheon Books, 1978). This work is often marked as the beginning point of postcolonial theory as it is used now.

7　William Safran, "Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return," *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*, 1, no. 1 (1991): 83–99, https://doi.org/10.1353/dsp.1991.0004.

8 Judith T. Shuval, "Diaspora Migration: Definitional Ambiguities and a Theoretical Paradigm," *International Migration*, 38, no. 5 (2000): 41.

9 Grossman, "Toward a Definition of Diaspora," 1267.

10 Ibid., 1269. However, it should be noted that for efficiency's sake, I have not included in my summaries the many authors which Grossman cited to form his descriptions of each of these categories. They may be found starting on page 1269.

11 I have not included here the extended discussions from Grossman about the nuances of each category, but they can be found in 1269–1275.

12 Safran, "Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return"; Shuval, "Diaspora Migration: Definitional Ambiguities and a Theoretical Paradigm."

13 Stefan Pfeiffer, "The God Serapis, His Cult and the Beginnings of the Rulercult in Ptolemaic Egypt," *Ptolemy II Philadelphus and His World* (2008): 388.

14 J.-Y. Empereur, *Alexandria Rediscovered* (G. Brazilier, 1998).

15 Ann M. Nicgorski, "The Fate of Serapis: A Paradigm for Transformations in the Culture and Art of Late Roman Egypt," in *Roman in the Provinces: Art on the Periphery of Empire* (University of Chicago Press, 2014), 153–166. I have cited this work here because it discusses the Egyptian iconography that followed Serapeian cult overseas, but perhaps the literary sources could weigh more strongly here – Serapis is always identified in literary sources beyond Egypt (e.g. Plutarch, Tacitus, Strabo) as an Egyptian deity.

16 Lindsey A. Mazurek, *Isis in a Global Empire: Greek Identity through Egyptian Religion in Roman Greece* (Cambridge University Press, 2022), 187, https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009032209.

17 Anders Runesson, Donald Binder, and Birger Olsson, *The Ancient Synagogue from Its Origins to 200 CE: A Source Book* (Brill, 2007).

18 Hélène Brun-Kyriakidis, "La Crypte Du Sarapieion A de Délos et Le Procès d'Apollônios," *Bulletin de Correspondance Hellénique*, 122, no. 2 (1998): 469–486.

19 See Ian S. Moyer, *Egypt and the Limits of Hellenism* (Cambridge University Press, 2011). Moyer provides a thorough discussion and reading of this inscription in Ch. 3, 142–207.

20 There is a debate about this; see Roussel 1915 for the suggestion that the lawsuit was brought by religious conservatives, and Moyer 2011 for discussion on whether it was brought by the other serapeia or individuals associated with them. Regardless, the winning of the lawsuit implies that Serapeum A, or at least Apollonius, had support within the community.

21 Ian S. Moyer, "Notes on Re-Reading the Delian Aretalogy of Sarapis ('IG' XI.4 1299)," *Zeitschrift Für Papyrologie Und Epigraphik*, 166 (2008): 103.

22 Philippe Bruneau, *Guide de Délos: refondue et mise à jour*, 4e éd. (Ecole française d'Athènes, 2005).

23 Mazurek, *Isis in a Global Empire*, 189.

24 This includes overall layout, architectural elements, statuary, sculpture and similar elements. I am intentional in using "Egyptian-style" here rather than calling them Egyptian because much of the material from the serapeia falls in the category of what has been called "Egyptianising" – not quite authentic, but a category of its own in the material culture. See Caitlín Barrett, *Egyptianizing Figurines from Delos: A Study in Hellenistic Religion* (Brill, 2011) for a thorough study and discussion of this category.

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4 Recentring Africa in the Study of Ancient Philosophy

The Legacy of Ancient Egyptian Philosophy

Nicholas Chukwudike Anakwue

Introduction: Tracing the Historical Beginnings of Philosophy[1]

As Plato (2000), in his *Theaetetus*, 155c–d (trans. by T. Griffith) points out that philosophy begins in wonder – and this is how the story of philosophy's origins is usually told. As such, it becomes easy to see the relationship, right from the time of the pre-Socratics, between myth and critical thinking.[2] Perplexity[3] births the quest for truth, and a puzzled mind follows unprejudiced paths leading away from the trap of ignorance. As Aristotle (Metaph. 982b, 11–19, transl. by A. E. Taylor) says,

> That philosophy is not a science of production is clear even from the history of the earliest philosophers. For it is owing to their wonder that men both now begin and at first began to philosophize . . . And a man who is puzzled and wonders thinks himself ignorant (whence even the lover of myth is in a sense a lover of wisdom, for the myth is composed of wonders).

For the purposes of our discussion, therefore, philosophy can be defined as the use of the *human reason* to interrogate the categories of being, and the perplexities of human experience, in order to find *meaning* to life, offer *direction* and provide viable *goals* for human activities. From these, it is easy to identify the formal and material objects of philosophy as human rationality, and the production of value, respectively (Anakwue, 2017). The philosopher applies the basic tools of human reasoning on the basic raw material of philosophy, which Okere calls *philosopheme*, to create value for their own (the philosopher's) personal and social life (Osuagwu, 2005).

Philosophy is generally applied to non-philosophy, which represents areas of experience outside of philosophy itself. Culture represents an aspect of this non-philosophy, serving as fodder for the development of philosophical thought. Culture is, according to Otite and Ogionwo (1979, 44), "the way of life of a people and the acquisition over time of knowledge of one's proximate world, either subjectively or objectively, intrinsically or extrinsically". Culture becomes the background, basis, preoccupation and inspiration of the mission of the philosopher (Osuagwu, 2005). Okere's concept of a *philosophy of non-philosophy*, consequently, comes to greater light, for "philosophy has an essential and positive relation to non-philosophy"

(Deleuze, 1990, 139–140) and it is through creative engagement with the latter that philosophy emerges and thrives (Osuagwu, 2005, 49). This is critical to understanding how philosophy emerges from Africa's rich cultural history. But it is from this basis that Eurocentric scholars had decidedly denied that Africa had any history or culture.

In Hegel's damning pronouncement, Africa was of "no historical part of the world", with "no movement or development to exhibit" (Hegel, 1956, 92): Africa was not to be credited with rationality, culture or philosophy. As Nkemjika Chimee (2018) argues, the periodisation of African history is markedly influenced by European timelines and periodisation scales, especially of colonial scholarship that held Africa as bereft of culture. This is reflective of the verdict on Africa, of the Oxford historian Hugh Trevor-Roper, who had declared to an audience on the BBC in 1965, "Perhaps in the future, there will be some African history to teach. But, at present, there is none: there is only the history of the Europeans in Africa. The rest is largely darkness . . . and darkness is not a subject for history". The striking pretentiousness of this declaration is easily evident in the fact that just a year prior, in 1964, the UNESCO had published its General History of Africa.

Contrary to these spurious assertions, Africa is – of course – home to a rich embodiment of cultures, and a remarkable cultural history – and it also has a huge and often unacknowledged role in the history of philosophy. This is so, in spite of the general unwritten preservation and transmission of African cultures, and the verdict on its authenticity because of a dearth of written records. African cultures celebrate a depth of appreciation of the human experience, and the use of proverbs, dance, folklore, etc. in expressing a profound understanding of reality. Through culture, *epistêmê* is harnessed and transformed into *technê*. One of these rich cultural histories in Africa is seen in Egypt. Egypt is home to a rich history and culture that dates back over thousands of years. However, it is the argument of this chapter that what existed in ancient Egypt was not simply *philosopheme*, or the cultural bases upon which philosophising took off, but profound systems of philosophy that many philosophical schools came to absorb. Ancient Egypt was the seat and cradle of deep cultural and philosophical traditions, with its elaborate mystery system. The mystery system represented a religious system and secret order, of which membership was by initiation and a pledge to secrecy. Its members were introduced to deep philosophical training, from which the Greeks adopted much of their philosophical tempers. As the ancient Greek rhetorician Isocrates attests to, in his *Busiris 11–22*, "Egyptians are the healthiest and most long of life among men; and then for the soul, they introduced philosophy's training, a pursuit which has the power, not only to establish laws, but also to investigate the nature of the universe".

It is, nonetheless, the case that the pedagogy and study of ancient philosophy has obdurately ignored the salient philosophical contributions of ancient Egypt in its own right, as well as the essential role of ancient Egyptian philosophy and culture in the emergence and sustenance of Greek philosophy. In lieu of this, Greek philosophy is credited with a "compulsive originality" (Copleston, 1962, 11) that denies the philosophical merit of the influence that individual ancient Greek philosophers drew from the mystery school of ancient Egypt. As Copleston goes one

to assert, quoting Burnet (11), "we [classicists] are far more likely to underrate the originality of the Greeks than to exaggerate it" (Copleston, 1962). These points show the early biases that philosophers like Copleston had towards the appreciation of Egyptian philosophy.

And so, with this denial of non-Greek philosophical influence, and ancient Egypt, the study of ancient philosophy has been restricted to early Greek philosophy, with a focus on the pre-Socratics, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, and the various ancient schools of philosophy whose texts are in Greek or Latin, such as the Epicureans, the Stoics, and the Neoplatonists. More recently, this study has broadened to an interrogation of philosophical currents in the Byzantine and Muslim worlds[4] but has no place for early Egyptian philosophy and, by extension, African philosophy in its pedagogical schema, as well as in its disciplinary orientations. As such, texts on the history of philosophy and the history of ancient philosophy are silent about the place of ancient Egypt in the development of the philosophic current. In fact, only Copleston (1962) and Russell (1946) seem to mention the place of ancient Egypt in the scheme of things – albeit they derogate its place – in their histories of philosophy. In more recent times, Grayling (2019) makes mention of the place of Egypt, but chooses to exclude it geographically as an African nation. He further disputes the appellation of "African philosophy" to the thoughts and positions of some contemporary Africans, such as Kwame Nkrumah and Julius Nyerere, who had undertaken study of philosophy in Western countries. He avers that their positions and ideas can rather be qualified as political thought rather than philosophy. He discredits the possibility that there was any form of systematic written philosophy in Africa and passes a verdict of no confidence on the little pieces of historic scholarship by 17th-century Ethiopian philosopher Zara Yacob.

Copleston (1962, 27) sums up this bias against Egyptian thought and Africa:

> We have represented early Greek philosophic thought as the ultimate product of the ancient Ionian civilization; but it must be remembered that Ionia forms, as it were, the meeting-place of West and East, so that the question may be raised whether or not Greek philosophy was due to Oriental influences, whether, for instance, it was borrowed from Babylon or Egypt. This view has been maintained, but has had to be abandoned. The Greek philosophers and writers know nothing of it – even Herodotus, who was so eager to run his pet theory as to the Egyptian origins of Greek religion and civilization – and the Oriental-origin theory is due mainly to Alexandrian writers, from who it was taken over by Christian apologists. The Egyptians of Hellenistic times, for instance, interpreted their myths according to the ideas of Greek philosophy, and then asserted that their myths were the origin of Greek philosophy. But this is simply an instance of allegorizing on the part of the Alexandrians: it has no more objective value than the Jewish notion that Plato drew his wisdom from the Old Testament. There would, of course, be difficulties in explaining *how* Egyptian thought could be transmitted to the Greeks (traders are not the sort of people we would expect to convey philosophic notions), but, as has been remarked by Burnet, it is practically waste of time to inquire

whether the philosophical ideas of this or that Eastern people could be communicated to the Greeks or not, unless we have first ascertained that the people in question really possessed a philosophy. That the Egyptians had a philosophy to communicate has never been shown, and it is out of the question to suppose that Greek philosophy came from India or from China.

From the aforesaid text, it is seen that the debate as to the place and contribution of Egyptian thought to Greek philosophy, and the origins of the philosophical enterprise has long existed. Consequently, Copleston attempts a dismissal of the debate on the basis of two counterarguments. Firstly, he makes the point of the *unwrittenness*[5] of ancient Egyptian philosophy, by stating that "Greek philosophers and writers know nothing of it" and that the argument that the Egyptians had "a philosophy to communicate has never been shown". Secondly, he argues that even if Egypt had anything to communicate, it had *no philosophic value*, as it was mere allegorising, and also, it would be unexpected of "traders" to transmit philosophic thought (this view is highly classist). In this regard, it is easy to identify the distinctions that Kenny (2004) makes between *historical* and *philosophical* reasons for the study of the history of philosophy. In the first respect, the history of philosophy may be seen as an aggregate of opinions of dead philosophers of the past, in a bid to understand their schools of thought and the prevalent intellectual currents of the time or, in the latter point, as a means to illuminate the persisting challenges of our present age. As such, Copleston seems to weigh the worth of influence of ancient Egypt on the growth of philosophy, from these two angles. While arguing that, on philosophical grounds, the Egyptians had no philosophy to communicate, he further maintains that on historical grounds, that even if they had, this would not have been communicated because of his assumption that traders would be incapable of communicating it.

In the course of this chapter, I will show that these views are mistaken, by tracing the historicity of ancient Egyptian thought systems, as well as examining the philosophical value of these cultural systems of ancient Egypt. We will then discuss various independent philosophers in ancient Egypt and the philosophies that they were known for, before advocating a new pedagogical framework for the study of ancient philosophy that takes into due cognizance, the contributions of African philosophy.

Ancient Egypt: Cradle of Culture and Civilisation in Africa

Egypt is located at the northern part of the continent of Africa. Because of the spread of Egypt across the Sinai strip, it is often argued that ancient Egypt was not part of Africa, though the concentration of Kemetic communities around the river Nile, which was situated in the African continent, shows that ancient Egypt was predominantly part of Africa (Amin, 2010).

Many Greeks came into Egypt for the purpose of enlightenment and in search of knowledge. One of such persons was Pythagoras, who, after receiving his training, left for Samos to establish his order. Thales, too, had long and protracted contacts

with Egypt, as well as the other Ionians, Anaximander and Anaximenes. Others of mention are Socrates, Xenophanes, Parmenides, Zeno and Melissus, who were all natives of Ionia (James, 1954). The teaching of the Egyptian mysteries had spread far and wide within all the neighbouring areas of Egypt. These mysteries discussed metaphysical and ethical themes through books and the thoughts of independent thinkers like Ptah-hotep, Duauf, Amenhotep, Amenemope, Amenemhat, Akhen-aten and a number of others (Asante, 2000).

This system encapsulated the wise teachings (*sebayit*) of the old sages. I had pointed in an earlier article on how the verb *rekh*, meaning "to know", is rep-resented by the image of a "mouth", "placenta" or "papyrus rolled up, tied and sealed", identified "a wise man" – a philosopher (Anakwue, 2017).

The word *rekhet* implies "knowledge" or "science" in the sense of "philoso-phy". *Seba*, meaning "to teach", implied a methodological process of imparting knowledge, and so, the wise man was said to teach (*seba*) in order to open the door (*seba*) to the mind of the pupil (*seba*) so as to bring light, as from a star (*seba*).[6] The wise man's quest, therefore, was to lead ultimately to truth (*ma'at*) (Obenga, 2004, 35–40). *Ma'at* occupied a pride of place in the Egyptian mystery system and philosophy, "as it expresses the embodiment of perfect virtue" (Anakwue, 2017).

Ma'at is the feminine of *maa*. It was the light of truth that illuminated the dark-ness of ignorance. *Ma'at* represented transcendence to the divine, to the sacred and the universal that was beyond the limitations of particularity and individuality. It was the Egyptian denotation for "measure, harmony, canon, justice and truth; shared by the gods and humans alike" (Udažvinys, 2004, 302), so as to maintain cosmic order. *Ma'at* was reflected in the principle of justice, because it was the light of rightness, as against error, and the warmth of unity, against dissension. The *ma'at* represented the highest moral and positive law for the ancient Egyptians. Their lives were governed by the illumination of the principles of right conduct. Every pharaoh, consequently, was not merely politically or morally distinguished; he stood as a true/real (*maa*) king, a divine leader and a spiritual king, using the divine principles of the *ma'at* to govern his empire (Obenga, 2004, 46–48). Philo-sophically, this is easily linked to Aristotle's four virtues – prudence, justice, tem-perance and fortitude – representing the cornerstone of moral philosophy (Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, Book II, Chapter 6).

The concept of existence in the Egyptian mystery system is also worthy of note. The verb "to exist" was designated by the term *wnn* ("unen"), written with the hieroglyph of the desert hare. This pictorial description of speed and agility, in the long-eared hare, characterises "being" as a capacity for movement.

Non-being, therefore, in Egyptian parlance, was static. As I have previously argued, therefore, this notion of "being" offers clarity to the concept of "existence", with the material sun (Re), at the centre, ordering all things (Anakwue, 2017). Life and existence were dependent on the sun god Amun-Re (Baker and Baker, 2001). Egyptian kings were seen as the earthly embodiment of the sun god. The dichotomy existing between the concepts of "chaos" and "cosmos" as extremely antithetical concepts is dispelled; for the Egyptian mind has no concept of chaos; in the beginning, *Re* emerges from the primordial waters, by his own energy, to

Figure 4.1 A hieroglyph showing a long-eared desert hare, used to represent the verb "to be".

Source: "Nice hare" by Karen Green (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Flickr_-_schmuela_-_nice_hare.jpg, CC BY-SA 2.0).

initiate the creation of the world (Obenga, 2004, 33–42). The Book of the Dead was a book of intellectual engagement with metaphysical realities, teaching the philosopher how to pass through the trials of initiation (Scott, 2016).

In ancient Egypt, as well, there was a visible respect for ethical values, using the principles of *ma'at* which ensured not merely cosmic order, but likewise, moral order. These principles were outlined in the 42 laws of *ma'at*, which are written as a parallel to the 42 negative confessions. An autobiography of an official by name, Nefer-seshem-re from the Fifth Dynasty, paints an image of this in the *negative confession* of the Papyrus of Ani (Budge, 1967, 121–129):

I have left my city, I have come down from my province,
Having done what is right (ma'at) for its lord, having satisfied him with that which he loves,
I spoke ma'at and I did ma'at, I spoke well and I reported well . . .
I rescued the weak from the hand of one stronger than he when I was able;
I gave bread to the hungry, clothing [to the naked], a landing for the boatless.
I buried him who had no son,

I made a boat for him who had no boat,
I respected my father, I pleased my mother,
I nurtured their children.

Isfet translated as "wrongdoing" was the most common opposite value of *ma'at*. Another was *grg*, which meant "lie" as against "truth". In chapter 126 of the Book of the Dead (transl. by E. A. Wallis Budge), the four apes who sit in the bows of the boat of Re are the ones "who make the right and truth (ma'at) of Neb-er-tcher to advance . . . who feed upon right and truth (ma'at), who are without falsehood (grg), and who abominate wickedness (isfet); [the deceased asks] Destroy ye the evil (dwt) which is in me, do away with mine iniquity (isfet)". By keeping to the divine principles of right and truth, therefore, the Egyptians believed that it was possible to live freely of sin (*isfet*). However, as the mystery system was a preparation for death, in the same way as a guide to living, the deceased were expected to use the coins of a good life here to pay for entry into the other life. Ptah-hotep of Memphis was a renowned ancient Egyptian thinker and moral philosopher. He taught that one need not be conceited about knowledge or learning because art had no limits and the artist never reaches perfection (Scott, 2016). In his oeuvre *The Maxims of Good Discourse*, Ptah-hotep discusses instructions on the moral duties of persons. Ptah-hotep delineates action in line with the principles of *ma'at*. In his instructions, Ptah-hotep points to the *ma'at* as the guiding principle for the universe.

> The practice of the principles of *Ma'at* was strengthened by the exercise of the virtues. The Egyptian mystery system teaches ten virtues of control of thought, control of action, steadfastness of purpose, identity with a spiritual life or the higher ideals, evidence of a mission in life, evidence of a call to spiritual orders, freedom from resentment when under the experience of persecution and wrong, confidence in the power of the master, confidence in one's own ability to learn and readiness or preparedness of the Ancient Mysteries of Egypt.
>
> (James, 1954).

Egypt also utilised systematic principles of logic, by developing a logical, inferential methodology of thought and analysis. They made use of logic as a tool of precision in constructing and developing their mathematics and presenting their thoughts (Obenga, 2004, 41). Gardiner (1937) emphasises the characteristics of passivity and logicality that the Egyptian language possessed, with the principle of diminishing progressions used in the hieroglyphs that were written.[7] Having proven the "facticity" and "writtenness" of the ancient Egyptian culture and thought systems, it becomes important to interrogate these alongside the disciplinary requirements of philosophy, following Copleston's verdicts against the influence and philosophical worth of ancient Egypt.

Valuing the Egyptian Mystery System as Philosophy

The discipline and practice of philosophy during the ancient times was not as defined and distinct as it is today. Pythagoras is generally credited with the origin

of the term *philosophia*, meaning "love of wisdom". Asante (2004) makes the argument that the origins of the composite parts of the word *philosophia* come from Medu Neter, the ancient Kemetic language of Egypt. He alleges that the word *seba*, meaning "the wise", which appeared on the tomb of Antef I, in 2052 BC, was an etymological root of the Greek suffix *onclu*. Philosophy, consequently, in modern times has separated itself from other disciplines and has achieved a significant structure of formality, with regards to its practice. In spite of this, the study of the history of philosophy tends to utilise the modern prisms of understanding of philosophy, in tracing the origins of philosophical thought and practice. This bias transposes a modern hermeneutic over an ancient historical period. This, in itself, constitutes an anachronistic fallacy. As S.H. Nasr opines, with respect to this:

> The perspective within which the origin of modern philosophy is conceived and the choice of which philosophers to include and which to exclude in the account of the history of philosophy all reflect a particular "ideology" and conception of philosophy and are related to modern man's view of himself.
>
> (Nasr, 1964, 185)

It becomes important, therefore, that in evaluating the philosophical worth of the mystery systems of ancient Egypt, and the independent thinkers of the time, proper attention is paid towards situating the argument within the right historical and hermeneutical contexts. In so doing, we can eliminate disparity in contexts from our consideration of issues. And so, on the first basis, to identify the distinct emergence of philosophy, as a paradigmatic movement from mythical thought systems (*mythos*) to rational thought (*logos*), in Ionia, Greece, is flawed. This is because, firstly, philosophy was not easily distinguishable from religion and cultural myth in the ancient world. In fact, Udažvinys (2004, 300) relevantly submits that historians and teachers of philosophy choose to ignore the true implications of the Greek word *logos* as "speech" (the demiurgic word of *Re*, made as operative wisdom by Thoth, in Egyptian theological lingo), in their bogus interpretation of *logos* as *dianoia* (discursive reasoning). This served as a springboard for the spurious argument of Thales' novel shift from myth to *logos*. On the contrary, philosophy, as Udažvinys (2004, 308) goes ahead to attest strongly,

> is a prolongation, modification, and "modernization" of the ancient Egyptian and Near Eastern sapiential ways of life; *philosophia* cannot be reduced to philosophical discourse; for Aristotle, metaphysics is *prote philosophia*, or *theologike*, but philosophy as *theoria* means dedication to the *bios theoretikos*, the life of contemplation – thus the philosophical life means participation in the divine and the actualization of the divine in the human through personal *askesis* and inner transformation; Plato defines philosophy as a training for death.

In fact, Broadie and Macdonald (1978) opine that Greek thinkers got the idea of *logos* from the writings of Philo, who in turn, adapted from the Egyptian concept of

ma'at. This refers to the mind of God, a subsidiary to God, who is the ultimate principle of life and, likewise, similar to Plato's world of forms in being immaterial. The term *logos*, therefore, is similar to *ma'at. Ma'at* was a "god-conceived" principle or power of cosmic order. *Ma'at* like Philo's *logos* was the principle through which God or the representative of the gods governed the cosmos.

As such, there exist strong similarities between the Egyptian mystery system and the notion of ancient Greek philosophy because philosophy, for the ancient Greeks, meant the combination of wisdom and love in some form of moral and intellectual purification to reach the "likeness of God", which was attainable through knowledge (*gnosis*) (Udažvinys, 2004). So when Plato and Aristotle trace the origin of philosophy to wonder, what they really imply is "the contemplation (*theoria*) of the manifested cosmic order, or of the truth and beauty of the divine principles" (Udažvinys, 2004, xvii). Following the formal and material object requirements of philosophy, as outlined at the start of our discussion, philosophy for the ancients entailed the application of reason, through the guidance of the divine principles (*ma'at* or *logos*) to the understanding of nature and the world around us. The ancient Egyptians were able to accomplish these through elaborate systems of thinking in metaphysics, ethics and logic. These fulfilled requirements help us to better identify the origins of philosophy with the marvel of Egyptian thought systems.

As James (1954) points out, the Ionians never made any attempt to claim the origins of philosophy, for they knew who the true authors were. As such, the Greeks persecuted the philosophers of ancient Greece, because these systems of thought were alien to them, and contained strange ideas of which they were unacquainted (James, 1954). This is evident in the martyrdom of Socrates, as is narrated by Plato in the *Phaedo*. It is only later that these philosophical systems are adopted and adapted to herald the Greek genius. As such, the Greeks knew that the Egyptians were philosophers, however, this had become subsequently misrepresented by modern European scholars under the bias of Greek (Eurocentric) superiority. The necessity, therefore, of giving due acknowledgement to ancient Egypt, and Africa, as pioneers of the philosophical enterprise, cannot be understated.

Justice Against African Epistemicide

The idea of an African origin for ancient culture has been suggested before but had been strongly opposed by white classicists who had a rather vested interest in the idea of Greek primacy. Martin Bernal had argued in *Black Athena* (published from 1987 onwards) for this in three volumes that address deeply how Greek philosophy could be rooted in Egyptian philosophical origins. He spars significantly in the culture wars between Eurocentric disregard and Afroasiatic originality, calling into question two of the most-established explanations of the origins of classical philosophy and civilisation – the Aryan model and the ancient model. In the Aryan model, there is the argument that Greek culture emerged due to conquest from the north by Indo-European speakers or Aryans, while the ancient model argues that civilisation came to Greece by Egyptian and Phoenician colonists. Bernal proposes

a different revised ancient model that suggests that classical philosophy instead has had its origins in Afroasiatic cultures.

Mary Lefkowitz (1996), in a scathing rebuttal of Martin Bernal's *Black Athena*, disregards this entire mission as mere Afrocentrism. In an opening paragraph in her book, *Not Out of Africa*, Lefkowitz, says accusatorily,

> In American universities today, not everyone knows what extreme Afrocentrists are doing in their classrooms. Or even if they do know, they choose not to ask questions. For many years, I had been as unwilling to get involved as anyone else. But then, when I learned what was going on in this special line of teaching, my questions about ancient history were not encouraged . . . ordinarily, if someone has a theory that involves a radical departure from what the experts have professed, he or she is expected to defend his or her position by providing evidence in its support. But no one seemed to think it was appropriate to ask for evidence from the instructors who claimed that the Greeks stole their philosophy from Egypt.

From this text, it is clear that Lefkowitz indicts the Afrocentrists of blind argumentation and lack of evidence to support outlandish claims. One must note that, in excess of zeal and emotivity, many proponents on both sides of the divide push forward prejudices and insecurities. As such, it is important that, in making one's case for the Africanity of Egypt, exaggeratory or hagiographical approaches should be avoided, as they are unscholarly and misleading. However, the attack of this entire claim, by prevailing Western scholars, majorly aims at ridicule without due consideration of the glaring evidence in its support. As Bernal (2001), in response to Lefkowitz and other Eurocentrists, says, the Afrocentrists are right in two regards: first, that seeing ancient Egypt as an African civilisation is useful to pedagogy and knowledge and, second, that Egypt played quite a central role in the development of ancient Greece. The ancient model, propounded by Bernal, however, that there was an Egyptian or Phoenician colonisation of Greece, remains to be proven true by archaeology and genetic studies. Consequently, many allude to factual and uncritical errors in Bernal's thesis. This, nonetheless, does not detract from the fact that ancient Egypt enjoys a cultural originality that is associated with Africa. Any attempt to ridicule this thesis would be epistemically unjust.

Fricker (2007) highlights two distinct forms of epistemic injustice, namely, testimonial injustice and hermeneutical injustice, of which, in our case, the latter form, which concerns our knowledge of the social world and history, is implicated.[8] By separating Egypt from its elaborate historical and cultural context, we become guilty of epistemicide. This is seen clearly in the attempt to reduce the philosophical value of philosophising in ancient Egypt based on modern canons of thought and choosing instead to characterise the historical beginnings of philosophising from the time of Greek civilisation.

Tshaka (2019) echoes this, along with Mudimbe's call for Africa to divest itself of the epistemological order of the West, by arguing relevantly for the Africanisation of curricula within our African citadels of learning, to eschew the injustices in existing knowledge of the history of Africa and the world. To better Africanise

the curricula, African universities and educational institutions should draw on the intellectual traditions, epistemologies and ways of knowing that are indigenous to Africa, rather than relying solely on Western paradigms, theories and methods. This approach involves incorporating African philosophies, languages and literatures into the curriculum, as well as engaging with local communities and learning from their experiences and knowledge systems. By foregrounding African perspectives and ways of knowing, the curricula would become more inclusive, diverse and relevant to the needs and aspirations of African societies.

This Africanisation of curricula would help to overcome the limitations of Western-centric education and enable African students to develop a deeper understanding of their own cultural heritage, as well as the global history and diversity of knowledge. This approach would also contribute to the decolonisation of the curriculum, which involves critically examining the historical and social conditions that have shaped existing knowledge systems and identifying the ways in which they have perpetuated inequalities and injustices. This requires acknowledging the contributions of marginalised groups, including women, LGBTQ+ individuals and people of colour, and recognising the value of their perspectives and experiences.

The call for the Africanisation of curricula reflects a broader movement within academia and beyond to challenge the hegemony of Western knowledge and promote more inclusive and diverse forms of education. By engaging with and drawing on the rich and varied intellectual traditions of Africa, educational institutions can help to create a more just, equitable and sustainable future for all (Tshaka, 2019).

Recommendations: In Defence of Afrocentrism

From our discussion, the importance and place of ancient Egypt, and Africa, in the philosophy of the ancients, comes to greater light and focus. Also, the travesty of excluding ancient Egypt from the pedagogy of ancient philosophy becomes even more obvious. This is because modern studies in ancient philosophy, both in universities and in research endeavours, particularly are solely biased towards studies in ancient Greek and Roman philosophies and, in broader contexts, the Byzantine and Muslim worlds (Daniels, 1998). This is particularly true in most departments of philosophy in universities on the African continent. Given that studies within these departments specifically utilise a great deal of the works of these Eurocentric scholars, these assumptions pass inadvertently, and these studies deny ancient Egypt, and Africa, of any philosophical worth of their ancient systems. Also, they invariably present a one-sided and insufficient study of ancient Greek and Roman systems, as these philosophical systems do not exist *in vacuo*, but are better seen and appreciated in the light of the mystery system of ancient Egypt. To avoid these problems, this chapter makes the following recommendations:

1. Recognition of the philosophical worth and influence of ancient Egypt, and Africa, should be infused into the pedagogy and study of ancient philosophy, discussing the *philosophemes* of ancient Egypt and their development into metaphysics, ethics and logic.

2. Courses in critical ancient philosophy can be developed to better enable the in-depth study of ancient African philosophy in universities and encourage curricula that critically investigate the various aspects of the ancient Egyptian mystery system, the *ma'at* and the various independent thinkers in ancient Egypt.

3. Greater research into these ancient philosophical systems in ancient Egypt should be funded and supported, to encourage scholarship around these interests and increase our knowledge about them.

4. Encyclopaedias of ancient philosophy should, likewise, reflect the place of ancient Egypt in the development and history of philosophy, or newer volumes of critical ancient philosophy should be developed, to address this pedagogical gap.

5. There should be appreciation and adoption of experiential knowledge from marginalised groups across the continent and beyond, and there should be focus on the development of thought, irrespective of social and cultural biases.

This chapter has investigated the philosophical worth of the mystery systems of ancient Egypt with a bid to establish the importance of ancient African philosophy in the study of ancient philosophy. Our investigations have proven that it is mistaken and limiting to deny the place of ancient Egypt in the development of philosophy and have tried to make recommendations as to a more improved curriculum for the pedagogy and study of ancient philosophy.

This chapter realises that with the renewed interest around Africa and the study of African thought systems, as well as the debate concerning reparations to Africa for the scandal of slave trade, it is important that Africa is re-enthroned as the cradle of philosophy, and the origin of the development of philosophical thinking. This would constitute a significant way of making amends for the Eurocentric biases and tropes that have been hurled at African originality, and the travesties that have stripped Africa of any modicum of rationality, culture and philosophy. Africa truly is the cradle of human civilisation, and, rightly so, the cradle of ancient philosophy. It is, therefore, the hope of this chapter that greater academic interest, scholarship and academic study around ancient Egyptian philosophy and ancient African philosophy emerge stronger and more defined around the world.

Notes

1 And thus, the beginnings of philosophy – according to this story – came from the human being's search for profound answers to some of the recurring perplexities of life. Not content with dogma and traditions, the mind of the philosopher is apparently constantly interrogating the elements of reality, in a determined pursuit of *epistêmê* and the accomplishment of *technê* so as to better master our world and experience.

2 Kathryn A. Morgan in her book, *Myth and Philosophy from the Presocratics to Plato*, discusses in detail how myth and philosophy are interrelated and how the relevance of philosophical thought emerged from the mythical stories of the time. Plato, in his *Meno 84c*, distinguishes "puzzlement" as the context of wonder for the philosopher from mere "curiosity".

3 Plato, in his *Meno 84c*, distinguishes "puzzlement" as the context of wonder for the philosopher from mere "curiosity".

4 Vryonis (1971), Arabatzis (2011).
5 African cultures were largely preserved and transmitted through oral traditions, art, songs and dance. However, in ancient Egypt, cultural forms were documented in hieroglyphic and hieratic language and symbols. In fact, writing was invented in Egypt and Mesopotamia, circa 4000 BC.
6 *Seba* is an old Egyptian symbol that represents the Duat, or realm of the dead. It is depicted as a five-point star, similar to a starfish. It is used to signify learning, gates and doorways, or the stars within a circle, representing afterlife (Rogador, 2021).
7 A good example of this is seen in the use of logical extensions of meaning, as is appropriately discussed by Fischer (1937) in his article *Further Evidence for the Logic of Ancient Egyptian: Diminishing Progression*. He demonstrates this using the term "be great" and "be small", both of which may, on occasion, refer not only to size,¥ but also to age or rank. Thus, *ld* can mean "be great in years" or "be old" and, hence, as a derived noun (presumably a participle), either "elder" or "potentate". Similarly, *nds* means "be young" and, as a derived noun, "lowly person" and "commoner".
8 See Lance in this book on Fricker.

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5 Epistemic Injustice in the Classics Classroom

Ashley Lance

In 2020, the Council of University Classics Departments (CUCD), a UK-based organisation, released a report on equality and diversity in classics. Summarising results from their survey, they ask whether there is evidence of a "leaky pipeline" in classics – a phrase that describes the field's inability to pump people from marginalised identities through the ranks of student to professor (Leonard and Lovatt, 2020, 12). For Black and minority ethnic (BAME) scholars in classics, they say, "The leaky pipeline cannot really be applied to BAME colleagues, since numbers overall are so small" (Leonard and Lovatt, 2020, 14). However, this language of "leaky pipelines" is still picked up and used with reference to BAME students throughout the report (Leonard and Lovatt, 2020, 13, 18, 24, 34).

But what does a leaky pipeline do to help us reconfigure classics, if the new image of classics is focused on notions of equality and diversity. What does it do for those of us already in the pipeline? As Dan-el Padilla Peralta writes, "scholars of color are repeatedly told that the pipeline is the problem, as if the pipeline were not an epiphenomenon of a species of disciplinarity that is designed to call their authority as knowledge producers routinely into question" (Padilla Peralta, 2021, 170).

How do we get out of this pipeline, and more importantly how do we reclaim our authority as knowers? This chapter sets out to answer these questions. I begin with a testimony about my time as an undergraduate. This testimony is then used as an example to consider the arguments made by Miranda Fricker in her book *Epistemic Injustice*. Here, I specifically consider the arguments she makes about what does and does not count as a testimonial injustice. I reject her claim that only credibility deficits count as a testimonial injustice. Instead, I argue that a person given an excess of knowledge is a form of testimonial injustice and that it is uniquely important to understand the types of epistemic excess given to scholars of colour in the name of diversity. This is not only because it helps us name the exact injustices we face but also because it encourages a form of what Jose Medina calls "epistemic resistance". From there, I consider the relevance of Berenstain's conception of "epistemic exploitation" – and how that might be taken as a description of credibility excess. Even further, I argue that the concepts of credibility excess plus epistemic exploitation side step issues of what Olufemi Taiwo deems as "deference

epistemology". Taken together, the study of the ancient world can be more than a formerly leaky pipeline. It can be more than just inclusive, it can be just.

A Testimony and an Injustice

Like most philosophical endeavours, theories and tools are made clearer with the use of examples. However, rather than an example, I would like to begin with my own testimony about injustices faced as an Indigenous person in classics. I am Yurok and Wiyot. I am a tribal member. I do not know how to speak Yurok or Wiyot, but I know how to dry bear grass and the best places to pick the ripest blackberries, and I even outfished one of our best fishermen on the mouth of Klamath river as a young girl. It is important for me to emphasise both that I know what it means to be Yurok and Wiyot, but also that there is a deep sense of joy and happiness to my identity and experiences.

The harder parts, the pain of experiencing, of knowing settler-colonial violence, are also part of what it means to be Yurok and Wiyot. In 1861, colonists massacred most of the members of my tribe, primarily the women and children. The massacre took place on a sacred site, Dolowat, which over 160 years later has finally been returned.[1] The Klamath river, which is a central lifeblood for my people, has only recently been undammed. Salmon are dying off at unprecedented levels.[2]

Part of my experience involves navigating these pains. However, these navigations do not often follow me into classics, which can sometimes seem relievingly far away from my experiences. But sometimes, like when reading the Melian dialogue, classics can feel really close.

The Melian dialogue, as it is accounted for in Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*, describes a debate between Athenians and Melians. Athens, at the peak of its power and imperial reach, is calling for the Melians to submit to the Delian league or face a slaughter. As the professor was discussing this "debate" in class, we were asked to consider which side of the debate we thought to be most convincing. Hearing classmates argue the Melians should have simply acquiesced to the Athenians demands, that they were warned and deserved the violence coming to them echoes the excuses used to justify the extermination of my own people.

Not so shockingly most of the students in class were white, as was the professor.[3] On that day, I did not speak up about why I thought it was gross to be defending the Athenians, especially as someone who is constantly experiencing the harms of settler colonialism. But what would happen if I had spoken up on that day?[4] Are people going to think I am speaking for all tribes? Do I need to give a really detailed account of what happened at the massacre to make my point clear? Are people going to think I am getting too upset over an event that occurred thousands of years ago? Will it be seen as an unhelpful disruption by the professor and my other classmates?

The immediacy of all of these thoughts, I think, speaks to the importance of having an understanding of testimonial injustice and an awareness of what epistemic

exploitation looks like, which is the topic of this chapter. At the time, I did not have a grounding in epistemic injustice. I did not have the words to pinpoint how I felt that day. What would I have been able to do if I did have those tools? What forms of resistance would have opened up to me?

Power Structures

These questions that concern what we know, how we know and our interactions with other knowers are all explored in the field of social epistemology. Within philosophy, the field of social epistemology positions itself in opposition to classical epistemology. Classical epistemology imagines an independent, generic and isolated knower.[5] The classical epistemologist derives theories of knowledge by careful meditation and thought, often using the objects around them to derive conclusions about what they can know (Haslanger, 2012; Fricker, 1998). In contrast social epistemologists state that knowers are situated and contextualised within power structures based on their social identity (Grasswick, 2018). As social epistemology has developed, a strong vein of feminist epistemology has emerged. In the broadest terms, feminist epistemologists have attempted to explain how gender intersects and informs knowledge (Anderson, 1995, 50). Marginalised groups when communicating with dominant groups are given less credibility in their testimony. In other words, the stand point or identity and power associations of the knower is important in assessing their claims to knowledge (Grasswick, 2018).[6]

Before explaining Fricker's conception of credibility, it is important to understand the backdrop of epistemic scenarios. These explanations will help create a clear picture of what Fricker calls "socially situated accounts of our epistemic practices" (Fricker, 2007, 3). By considering these differences, it will be easier to spot specific instances of epistemic injustice in the classics classroom because they allow us to see where the power is being held and what sorts of heuristics and stereotypes are being made.

In Plato's *Meno*, we get an example of the importance of identity in acquiring and assessing knowledge.[7] Socrates attempts to prove that it is possible to know things through recollection, or the soul's prior experience in the world of forms, even things one has not encountered (81e). In order to convince Meno this is the case, Socrates asks Meno to "call one of your own troop of attendants" and clarifies that the enslaved attendant chosen has learned Greek (82a). Socrates then begins to ask the enslaved attendant a series of questions about a square, with each question involving the use of geometric concepts to solve equations. Presumably, the attendant has never been exposed to mathematics, yet he is able to solve problems when presented (85e). Socrates argues this shows the attendant has recollected knowledge in himself.

While there is more context to the argument Socrates is attempting to make than just showing an isolated thinker, the argument does provide a good jumping off point to begin discussing Fricker's conception of power and how it interacts with testimonial injustice. It is important to note the way Socrates and the attendant interact, as well as all the assumptions Socrates makes about the attendants' specific

lack of knowledge. Socrates, before even clarifying with Meno, makes assumptions about what the slave knows simply based on the fact that he is enslaved. This form of power which is most relevant to discussing in relation to testimonial injustice is what she calls "identity power". Identity power is defined as "an operation of power that depends to some significant degree upon such shared imaginative conceptions of social identity, then identity power is at work" (Fricker, 2007, 14).

It is important to note that in this example, not only is social identity affecting Socrates' assumptions, but another layer is added with the enslaved status of the attendant. In general, things like race, class, gender, and so on can all contribute to identity power. For Fricker, identifying this power is important because "of the need for hearers to use social stereotypes as heuristics in spontaneous assessments of their interlocutor's credibility" (Fricker, 2007, 17). As I introduce examples in the coming paragraphs, the focus of analysis will be on assumptions and stereotypes made between the speaker and hearers in classroom discussions.

Credibility Excess and Deficits

Identity power provides the basis for understanding what excesses and deficits get credited to knowers. Fricker describes these two scenarios of what she calls "prejudicial dysfunction" or when "the speaker's receiving more credibility than she otherwise would have – a credibility excess or it results in her receiving less credibility than she otherwise would have – a credibility deficit" (Fricker, 2007, 17). In this case, the judgement of the speaker is misplaced or dysfunctional towards the knower. Importantly, it is solely credibility deficits that cause testimonial injustice in Fricker's model (Fricker, 2007, 19). Fricker gives multiple examples for defining and determining when credibility deficits create injustices. Credibility deficits can be individual instances that do not necessarily lead to an injustice. Credibility deficits become a form of testimonial injustice when the deficit is made on the basis of identity or other forms of power structures. In showing credibility deficit as an injustice Fricker uses the example of *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Fricker, 2007, 23). The white jurors refuse to take the testimony of Tom Robinson, a Black man, seriously. The injustice occurs the moment they use stereotypes of Black men, that they always lie and that they cheat, to devalue the testimony Robinson is giving (Fricker, 2007, 24).

Credibility deficits are given a nuanced treatment whereas Fricker's account of credibility excess is less than satisfactory. In comparing the two, she states: "On the whole, excess will tend to be advantageous, and deficit disadvantageous" (Fricker, 2007, 18). The exceptions she gives to credibility excess when it is not advantageous are generally not ones that she would also call a type of injustice. For instance, she imagines a doctor who is overburdened by the confidence his patients have in correctly diagnosing their illness. Similarly, she argues that a professor who asks a junior colleague to evaluate a paper might be at the disadvantageous end of a credibility excess. In this case, the junior colleague could be a fan of the professor and therefore be too lenient in evaluating the actual merits of the paper (Fricker, 2007, 18).

Both of these cases, she argues, show that the disadvantage is only to the individuals and does not seem to extend to harm to others in the same way that the jurors devaluing Tom's testimony does. A paper being leniently evaluated does not have the same impact as undervaluing the testimony of a Black man. A one-off over-evaluation does not entail, for instance, that every other paper from this professor will be over-evaluated. Or even further, that every paper from any professor is over-evaluated. The contrast between the jury's refusal to listen to Tom's testimony is that their refusal is then applied and accepted in every instance they hear testimony.

Fricker does, however, point to a scenario where credibility excess can seem to be an injustice. A credibility excess could represent an unfair "hoarding" of knowledge and resources, which Fricker calls a "cumulative injustice" rather than a testimonial injustice. Even further, she claims that a credibility excess does not imply a corresponding credibility deficit. While she appeals to economic language in a general sense, she does not imagine that credibility ratios are easy to calculate and compute. In this way, credibility excesses can only ever become a sort of cumulative injustice, as long as the excess has occurred enough times (Fricker, 2007, 21).

There are other instances that might make us sceptical of Fricker's claims. Consider a prominent public scholar in the field of classics, Mary Beard. Recently, Beard has come under fire on social media regarding transphobia and treatment of junior scholars in the field (Merkley, 2021). By her own judgement, "but I, there is no way . . . it would be completely blind of me, willful actually, to say that I'm in a systematically excluded group on Twitter" (Merkley, 2021). On the one hand, Beard imagines herself in a deficit on Twitter, feeling like "just somebody with a small, you know, a small group of followers tweeting what she thinks" (Merkley, 2021). On the other hand, she recognises the responsibility she has with a verified Twitter account and hundreds of thousands of followers that often give Beard an excess of credibility, to the point of taking up causes for her. In these social media interactions, Beard is often given an excess of credibility for her achievements in classics and that excess is granted even to areas where she has no expertise or experience. The junior scholars, who are often marginalised knowers in their own ways, are immediately given a credibility deficit despite making complaints that are about their own experiences.

How can we best describe all of the judgements that are going on in these moments? Jose Medina in "The Relevance of Credibility Excess" directly argues against these claims made by Fricker. He states that her conclusion that no harm can be found in a credibility excess shows "the short sightedness of an analysis that focuses exclusively on individual moments of testimonial exchanges" (Medina, 2011, 16). Instead, he argues that credibility judgements by their nature are interactive, comparative and contrastive (Medina, 2011, 18). In characterising exchanges in this way, he emphasises that credibility judgements interact not just between hearer and speaker but other groups present and other social dynamics associated with general groups (think on the basis of gender, sex, or class).[8] Credibility judgements are comparative and contrastive in that they implicitly and immediately imply a comparison between credible and less credible people.

The example that Medina is thinking of as he is making his claims is that of a speaker that has been given consistent credibility excesses (Medina, 2011, 19). Not only does the speaker have an inflated sense of credibility, but those that are around the speaker not only give the excess but might feel that they are at a credibility deficit. Medina argues that this prospect is especially true for marginalised people (Medina, 2011, 20). When a specific type of person is always at the receiving end of excesses, it invites a comparison against the identity of the marginalised knower. Now, the credibility excess is not just harmful to the speaker but those that are interacting with the speaker's credibility.

We can analyse my own testimony as an example of these concepts. In the moment the debate began, there was a contrast between the task the professor set and all of the reasons the other students might think there was nothing wrong with the example. After all, he was the professor, so he should know what types of exercises are appropriate for an undergraduate class. Here, the professor is given a credibility excess from myself and other students, on the basis that he should know more than all of us about what works in classroom pedagogy. Even further, when the aspect of race gets thrown into the mix, it became even harder to know when to speak. What does my mostly white class know about settler colonialism? How much will I have to explain? While I am not giving a credibility excess to anyone other than the professor, at that moment I felt inferior in the knowledge that my classmates will most likely discredit my arguments, because of who I am and not because of the knowledge I bring to the table.

The result of considering these criticisms from Medina is that we can more accurately name the impact of what is going on in and outside the classroom. Note the immediacy of all of the judgements going on at once: comparing myself and other students and our knowledge, contrasted to the professor and their assumptions about him. All of these reactions, either real or imagined on my part, add up as they interact with the knowers in the room, compounding each other. Under this conception, we can even explain how, like in this example where I do not provide testimony, a lack of testimony can result in a form of epistemic injustice.

However, we might also be interested in understanding what is going on in the case of my professor and fellow classmates. In other works, Medina provides a fuller set of epistemic vocabulary to understand what exactly is going on in examples like the one presented earlier and argues for so-called "epistemic vices", or problematic approaches to the world as a knower. These vices are as follows: arrogance, laziness and close-mindedness (Medina, 2013).[9] These vices ultimately build up to cultivate "active ignorance" in a person. For Medina, "actively ignorant subjects are those who can be blamed not just for lacking particular pieces of knowledge, but also for having epistemic attitudes and habits that contribute to create and maintain bodies of ignorance" (Medina, 2013, 39–40). Again, consider the concerns I had and what led me to not react. One cause of not objecting to the debate was because I had determined that what my professor and classmates knew was not going to be enough to effectively communicate my objection.

The question for the rest of the chapter becomes how we combat actively ignorant people in classroom spaces.[10] Here, Medina introduces the terms "epistemic

equilibrium" and "epistemic resistance" with a particular emphasis on the power of resistance (Medina, 2013, 51–52). The aim of social spaces should be a sort of equilibrium where space is given to different types of knowers and where the epistemic vices are effectively quashed. In order to achieve this, Medina calls for resistance against privileged epistemic states and especially against ignorant positions. The question will then be how do we create this resistance.

Epistemic Exploitation

However, the issue with the examples given is that at no point do they seem to imagine a scenario where a marginalised person is given credibility excess. Here, I will introduce the concept of epistemic exploitation, why this might be a form of credibility excess and thus a testimonial injustice, and how it can help us further work towards epistemic resistance.

Berenstain presents a concept of "epistemic exploitation". The demand of marginalised knowers to explain their experience at the hands of oppression to oppressors is a form of exploitation in both a real and emotional sense (Berenstain, 2016). By a real sense, Berenstain means that the time taken by the marginalised person to explain their sufferings is time that could be used to do other things. In this way, epistemic exploitation is analogous to labour exploitation. Here the risk is that every minute spent explaining oppression could be more productively spent on tasks that would benefit their own communities rather than those of the oppressor (Berenstain, 2016, 572).

Here is where the emotional aspect of economic exploitation comes in – not only does explaining specific instances of oppression represent a time trade-off, but it can also be emotionally damaging. Explaining a facet of oppression to someone who just does not and possibly cannot understand it is draining. Even an explanation request in earnest can bring up memories of oppression and requires a sort of empathy and emotional labour that is not asked of dominant knowers. For Berenstain the double bind of epistemic exploitation is as follows: either explain your experiences of oppression and hope the person is asking in earnest or refuse to explain and be faced with the consequences of being viewed as unhelpful and angry (Berenstain, 2016).

Again, let us apply my testimony as an example. One concern I had when considering when to speak was the fact that I would have to be deeply vulnerable with a group of people I see for a few hours a week, and even if I did that, I might be classed as someone who is needlessly angry. Often, in the face of a double bind like this, it is easy to decide to do nothing.

My example, while illustrating what it is like to be faced with an interactive, comparative and contrastive setting, per Medina, it does not fully capture why epistemic exploitation and credibility excess seem to go together. In the first part of the double bind, Berenstain seems to be describing credibility excess when talking about diversity in academic settings. In universities, diversity is often lip service, so rather than an actual diverse faculty, the few who are people of colour are often the tokens of the department (Berenstain, 2016).[11] Because of this tokenism, they

are often expected to not only perform the same duties as their white colleagues but are also expected to serve on diversity panels, sponsor student groups and serve as a mentor and outlet for the students of colour on campus (Berenstain, 2016).

Moving to the second part of the double bind: being seen as unhelpful and angry in the face of someone interested in learning how to be better. This speaks to the contrastive and comparative distinction, which Medina argues is implicit in credibility excesses. The moment a marginalised person is asked a question about their people's sufferings, they know both that they cannot be qualified to speak adequately on it and also that if they do not, anything else they offer will be seen as unhelpful. The immediate nature of these realisations helps to illustrate how epistemic exploitation can be a credibility excess.

This can be fully realised by the term "being-in-the-room privilege", which Olufemi Taiwo uses to describe the problems and limitations of what he calls "deferential stand point epistemology" (Taiwo, 2020a). Similar to my own example and the example presented by Berenstain, Taiwo was "passed the mic" by a white journalist who felt epistemically incapable of speaking to a specific aspect of the black experience in America. However, the type of knower that the reporter was seeking was not the type of knower that Taiwo is. Having grown up with a clear sense of Nigerian ancestry and parents who were economically stable, Taiwo has had no experience of what it is like to be a low-income Black American man (Taiwo, 2020a).

For him, this is precisely the problem with standpoint epistemology – especially as it gets used in academia. People of colour usually from specific backgrounds get funnelled through institutions, often coming out on top and no longer being representative of the people they have been tasked to speak on behalf of.[12] Like with the epistemic exploitation, Taiwo has found himself in the first part of the double bind, being asked in earnest to respond to something but facing the emotional challenges of confronting his own inability to adequately convey knowledge to the reporter. For Taiwo, his solution is a sort of rejection of standpoint epistemology (Taiwo, 2020a).

He ends the speech by reformulating standpoint epistemology as a type of "deference epistemology". Deference epistemology occurs when someone gives deference to the wrong person because of a misattribution of their own standpoint – in the case we have been following, simply asking Taiwo to comment on an article because he is a Black man. When standpoint epistemology becomes deference epistemology, the consequence is that it "asks us to be less than we are – and not even for our own benefit" (Taiwo, 2020a). What exactly is going on becomes clear when we can point to the credibility excess Taiwo has been given on the misassumptions of his identity.

For the first half of this chapter, I laid out different languages developed in the field of social epistemology. I argued that when considering credibility deficits and excesses, both should be viewed as testimonial injustices. Here, I have argued that if credibility excesses have the characteristics that Medina describes, that is, they are interactive, contrastive and comparative, they should be viewed as testimonial injustices. Looking at Berenstain's account of epistemic exploitation, it is easier to see the ways in which a marginalised person can experience injustice in the form

of a testimonial injustice. Taiwo's arguments against deference epistemology further solidifies the argument that credibility excesses should be seen as a testimonial injustice.

Towards Epistemic Resistance

Keeping a broad definition of testimonial injustice, including both credibility deficits and excesses is important to accurately pinpoint injustices. With a clear sketch of these concepts, it seems appropriate to analyse some very specific examples. In an article for *Eidolon*, Daniel Libatique published a paper called "Object-ifying Language". Libatique attempts to reconcile teaching Latin and Greek while also bringing in current events and social issues (Libatique, 2020). He describes the act of teaching the active and passive voice, i.e. why it is not just grammatically important but can provide deeper insights. The example he uses to make his argument for including more than just grammar in the classroom is an exercise from the textbook. The textbook gives a sentence for an ablative absolute – *onclu interfectō servus ab urbe cucurrit*: "with the enslaver having been killed, the enslaved person ran away from the city" (Libatique, 2020). He notes the ambiguity in the grammar, particularly with the passive participle and the presumed subject of who is doing the killing. He argues that by discussing the power dynamics as well as the grammar, a more fruitful discussion can happen in his classroom (Libatique, 2020).

What makes this a useful example for thinking about epistemic injustices? The fact that the professor, who is in a power relationship with the rest of the class, is taking the time to change the shared social assumptions of the room. In my experience, the assumptions by and backgrounds of my classmates were not questioned by the professor. Instead, students like me were left to decide on their own whether or not it was worth it to speak out or remain silent. In a more just classroom, a professor would be able to reshape expectations, not just by an introduction or a one-off "very special episode" day where minority issues are handled but by actively and consistently considering power dynamics, students backgrounds and relevant issues.

The examples here are not the only possible uses of epistemic injustice and credibility excess. There is the potential for a lot of fruitful applications in terms of ancient history. Questions like "How do we assign credibility to sources?" "Why do we prefer written over oral tradition?" "Why should we believe what Caesar has to say?" or even "How much should we privilege the knowledge production of certain people from certain places?" can give students an introduction to both historical methodology and through the lens of social epistemology might yield interesting insights.[13] In this way, it might become possible to implement Medina's epistemic equilibrium in the classroom and in the materials.

In the CUCD report, under "suggestions for improvement", the authors note a general call from their respondents for "challenging the dominance of white male privilege in Classics" (43). Specific recommendations for increasing racial diversity in classics include calls to widen the scope of what counts as research and "decolonize" the curriculum[14] "and that departments should appoint an equality and diversity champion – and listen to them" (44).

Left outside of these recommendations is again a clear path for what epistemic equilibrium looks like, a path which importantly aims to do justice to minority scholars and students already in the "leaky pipeline". Importantly, that last call to appoint diversity champions and listen to them is the hardest part. Will they actually be listened to? If this advocate is from a minority background, what sort of epistemic challenges will they face? It is frustrating to see continued calls for increased diversity over and over again without any clear consideration from dominant knowers, white classicists, about the depth and breadth of injustices minority students face when they step into the classroom. I would like for everyone who might be teaching a class currently, in the next few weeks, or even the coming years to consider the harm that their students might be facing daily, that goes beyond a student facing obvious violations like clear racism and discrimination.

One major issue facing my tribe is the damning of the Klamath river. Calls to undam the river, like the calls to cease the Dakota Access Pipeline, come from the hope that a return to the normal flow of the river will bring back life – the salmon spawning and our own ways of life.[15] It is possible to conceive of epistemic resistance as the same sort of process as calls for the undamming of the river. What does classics look like when it has nothing to dam it? No pipeline to pump knowledge through? Who might thrive in this environment? Addressing these questions requires active resistance to old ways of knowing, even of conceiving the self. However, through the use of the concepts laid out in this chapter, I think resistance becomes possible. In many ways, the works throughout this book represent answers to these questions. Critical ancient world studies, and my fellow contributors, seeks to begin resetting the equilibrium and undamming classics.

Notes

1 See Greenson (2019) for a rundown of the events that followed the return.
2 See Mais (2021) on juvenile salmon die-off.
3 UT Austin is a primarily white institution, with Black students making up only 4.9% of the student population, and Natives representing 0.1%. See the admissions website for more details www.utexas.edu/about/facts-and-figures.
4 Ironically, when I did speak up years later in my article for Eidolon (see Lance and Mansukhani, 2020), I was met with a very clear case of testimonial injustice based on a credibility deficit. I will leave the comment here (I am quoting one of the comments from the web version of the article and would recommend that people who are sensitive do not read this): "Partial and inaccurate. The behaviour of so-called first nations towards one another was so horrifying, even to Elizabethan sensibilities, that it affected political philosophy and its view of what humans were. Both Thomas Hobbes and Adam Smith (a century later) remarked on the bestial savagery explorers had encountered. When Hobbes was challenged on his 'nasty, brutish and short' state-of-nature claim he acknowledged that it had the virus of adolescent negativity that affects the privileged, pampered youth of the West. Anyone who thinks different can always travel. There are 57 Islamic states to visit, every single one a fascist shithole".
5 For instance, Descartes locked himself up in his room, deriving various epistemic facts while looking at a piece of wax.

6 For more on the development of feminist social epistemology, see Alcoff and Potter (1993). *Feminist epistemologies* and Grasswick and Webb (2002). Feminist epistemology as social epistemology.

7 Translation from W. R. M. Lamb (1967).

8 It is interesting because Fricker's concept of identity power should also lead to the same characterisations that Medina makes, yet her definitions preclude any of these.

9 Medina describes these vices in the following ways: epistemic arrogance occurs when a dominant knower never calls into question or has their knowledge called into question (2013, 32). The epistemically lazy person does not need to know things because of their status so they simply never learn them (33). Finally, epistemic close-mindedness "involves the lack of openness to a whole range (no matter how broad or narrow) of experiences and viewpoints that can destabilise (or create trouble for) one's own perspective" (35).

10 The use of epistemic ignorance here is narrow, merely Medina's definition. For a broader consideration of ignorance, see Sullivan and Tuana (2007).

11 See also Ahmed (2006) on "diversity fatigue" in academic settings.

12 See Taiwo (2020b) for a fuller break down of the consequences of what he dubs "elite capture".

13 While this work does not specifically reference epistemic injustice, consider Padilla Peralta's work on epistemicide in the Roman Empire as a further application of what I am developing here. See Padilla Peralta (2020). Epistemicide: the Roman Case.

14 As a reminder, see Tuck and Yang (2012) on the goals of decolonisation.

15 See Waraich (2022) on undamming the Klamath and current momentum.

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Critical Philologies

6   Comparative Philology and Critical Ancient World Studies

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Introduction[1]

The comparative philology of Indo-European languages (henceforth IE comparative philology) holds rather an odd spot in relation to the rest of the discipline commonly referred to as classics. On the one hand, it is central to it: at the historical core of IE comparative philology is the study of the Latin and ancient Greek languages. On the other hand, since the field branches out to languages far beyond the reaches of Greek and Roman antiquity, both in time and space, it is somehow removed from the rest of the discipline. In this context, I think it is fair to describe IE comparative philology as both *within* and *without* the field of classics.

This peculiar disciplinary position makes comparative philology a useful tool for critical self-reflection in classics. The view from *within* provides the impetus for comparative philology to be involved in critical discussion of classics, as well as to challenge its own colonial preconceptions and reliance on oppressive structures, while the view from *without* can provide some avenues we might take to decolonise classics as a field. Such are the aims of this chapter. I begin with a brief excursus on definitions, disciplinary history and comparative methodology: this is crucial to establishing precisely what is meant by the elusive term "philology" in this context. With these preliminaries established, the chapter is structured as follows:

1. In "Indo-European in the Past", I review the 19th-century origins of IE comparative philology, including its divergence from classics and its entanglement with colonialism and race science.
2. In "Indo-European in the Present", I discuss the way IE comparative philology operates today, including its growth as an independent field and the decentring of "classical" languages, while still relying on a classics-style education in Latin and ancient Greek.
3. In "Indo-European in the Future", I make the case for how the more promising aspects of IE comparative philology may be integrated into a paradigmatic disciplinary shift towards critical ancient world studies while improving upon its own current practices.

Some Definitions

To avoid any unnecessary confusion, there are two terms that require defining, as they are central to our discussion: *linguistics* and *philology*. I will start with the less troublesome of the two: linguistics. For the purposes of this chapter, we can stick with the textbook definition: linguistics is **the (scientific)**[2] **study of language** (Crystal, 2008, 283). As Crystal (2008, 284) notes, as an academic discipline linguistics is relatively young, gaining popularity only in the latter half of the 20th century. Linguistics has many subfields, each focusing on a different aspect of language. The discipline of *historical linguistics* is often grouped among these subfields. This is the study of the linguistic past: how languages used to be and how they change. This is a subfield we will return to.

More complicated to define is *philology*. Much ink – perhaps too much – has been spilt in attempting to define philology in its entirety.[3] The matter is not helped by the fact that there are (at least) two distinct uses of the term: a broader use, which I will designate as philology$_1$, and a narrower use, which I will call philology$_2$.

Philology$_1$ is the older use of the term,[4] and the one that causes the most difficulty when defining it. Scholars are rather fond of falling back on unhelpfully vague definitions, most famously Nietzsche's characterisation of philology$_1$ as the art of "slow reading".[5] A less poetic and more tangible definition may be that philology$_1$ is simply **the study of texts**. The purpose of that study – what we study the texts *for* – is absent from this definition. Often, the point of study is simply to understand the text better. The philologist considers questions such as the following: What does the author mean here? How should we read this manuscript? How can we use other texts to help shed light on some obscure passage? It is probably true, per Wilson et al. (2006), that philology$_1$ is "as old as literature itself". We know at the very least that a form of the discipline dates back to Greek and Roman antiquity, revisited and reborn through centuries from Alexandria in the third century BCE, to the Renaissance, to the modern day. It forms a central part of the discipline we recognise today as classics. As such, it is common to hear the term "classical philology$_1$" used to describe philology$_1$ that deals explicitly with Latin and ancient Greek texts. It is vital to note, however, that this discipline is one of many philological traditions found across the globe (see, for instance, Pollock, 2009). I highlight the Graeco-Roman tradition rather than philological traditions from around the ancient world, as it is the one that feeds most directly into the form of the discipline under discussion in this chapter.

On the other hand, the use of the term I will designate as philology$_2$ relies on some shared understanding as to why we study the texts: it is specifically the **study of the language of historical texts**. The reader will note that this is quite similar to the definition given for *linguistics* earlier. And indeed, in contemporary terms, we may rephrase the definition of philology$_2$ as simply **the branch of linguistics that deals with historical texts**, and part of the more general (sub) discipline of historical linguistics. Yet chronologically speaking, philology$_2$ – part of the larger whole of philology$_1$ – is in fact a precursor to the discipline we now know as Linguistics.[6]

Dickey (2001, 191) codifies the historical disciplinary overlap between linguistics and classics (via philology₁ and philology₂) in terms of a genealogical metaphor, dubbing classics the "long-suffering parent" and linguistics "the rebellious teenager". Dickey makes a convincing case study of the relationship between the *American Philological Association* and the *Linguistic Society of America*; while it is not clear that the parent-child relationship holds at a disciplinary level for much of contemporary linguistics elsewhere, it is nevertheless a reasonable characterisation of the connection between classics and philology₂. The latter "inherits" from the former an emphasis on instant-recall, textual-linguistic knowledge of (primarily) Latin and ancient Greek. While this has historically been considered central to classics and philology (both meanings), linguistics tends not to take this approach. Open almost any modern linguistics textbook and you will find examples and exercises from languages that are, by design, unknown to the student but with the appropriate support (glosses, paradigms, etc.) to help navigate them. Philology₂, on the other hand, has largely kept the classical idea that a student should generally "know" (or at least, be learning) a language in order to analyse it; albeit with some adjustment over the years as to just how much language training is enough for this purpose.[7] The shared regard for this kind of linguistic knowledge, specifically of Latin and ancient Greek, acts as a disciplinary anchor that keeps philology₂ in a close relationship with classics.

For the rest of this chapter, the reader may assume that, unless explicitly stated, by "philology" I mean the definition philology₂ (the study of the language of historical texts), and it is this meaning of the word that we find in comparative philology, the subject of this chapter.

Comparative Philology and the Comparative Method

Consider the word for "foot" in Spanish (*pie*), Portuguese (*pé*) and French (*pied*). Although there are differences, there are some striking similarities, including perhaps most obviously the initial /p/. Philologists explain these similarities by hypothesising that these languages are *related*, all ultimately descended from (a form of) Latin. The words for "foot" in these Romance languages form a *correspondence set*, and they can be traced back to the Latin word *pēs*, which, over the course of the centuries, has changed its phonological form in different ways in different languages. We know Latin exists; we know when and where it was spoken, and we understand fairly straightforwardly how its descendants came to be spoken across Southern Europe. We can see the form *pēs* attested in many hundreds, if not thousands, of texts, so we can posit it as the ancestor of *pie*, *pé* and *pied* with confidence.

But if we do the same exercise again, this time starting with Latin *pēs*, noticing the similarities with ancient Greek *poús* and Sanskrit *pā́da*, we may ask: what linguistic ancestor could possibly account for the similarity of these forms? The answer is that we have no direct evidence for any such language, but we hypothesise that it must have existed, and we call it **Proto-Indo-European (PIE)**. Since we have no record of this language, we cannot know for certain what the word for "foot" is.

Instead, we have to make a hypothesis based on the attested forms as to what we think the original sounded like (e.g. it probably began with the sound /p/): forming such hypotheses is called *reconstruction*. Languages which we presume to have existed but can only reach via reconstruction are referred to as *proto-languages*. The reconstruction of proto-languages in this fashion is **comparative philology**. IE comparative philology is the field that focuses on the reconstruction of PIE specifically. Aside from Latin, ancient Greek and Sanskrit, PIE is considered to be the ancestor of around 500 languages, both ancient and modern. But PIE is only one of a great number of hypothesised proto-languages: others include Proto-Semitic (the ancestor of languages such as Hebrew, Arabic, Aramaic and more), Proto-Japonic (the ancestor of Japanese and the Ryukyuan languages) and Proto-Sino-Tibetan (the ancestor of Chinese, Burmese, Tibetan and more), to name but three – all of which may be treated in the overarching discipline of comparative philology.

The central methodology of comparative philology is the *comparative method*, a maximally brief demonstration of which we saw earlier with the words for "foot". As the name suggests, the method entails empirical comparison of different words and/or structures hypothesised to be descended from the same source; according to principles of economy and other linguistic considerations, philologists "undo" the changes that are assumed to have taken place in different languages to uncover the form of the ancestor language.[8] The comparative method is not the only tool linguists use for reconstruction, but it is arguably the most important one, and its use is what defines comparative philology as such. The comparative method was first refined and applied to the IE languages over the 18th and 19th centuries, and that is where our critical discussion begins.

Indo-European in the Past

From its very foundation as a discipline, IE comparative philology was designed to be contingent on, and supportive of, colonialism. One can hardly mention the early days of comparative philology without speaking of William Jones, the man who is credited with popularising the view that there was a common linguistic ancestor to the Indo-European[9] languages. Having founded the Asiatick Society in Bengal in 1784, it was at its Third Anniversary Discourse in 1786 that Jones delivered the immortal words (34):

> The Sanscrit language, whatever be its antiquity, is of a wonderful structure; more perfect than the Greek, more copious than the Latin, and more exquisitely refined than either, yet bearing to both of them a stronger affinity, both in the roots of verbs and in the forms of grammar, than could possibly have been produced by accident; so strong indeed, that no philologer could examine them all three, without believing them to have sprung from some common source, which, perhaps, no longer exists.

It is often the case that Jones' contributions to the field are overstated, leading to his rather specious reputation as a "founder" of the discipline.[10] In fact his primary

concern was with ethnographic history (a branch of race science), based on biblical literalism. Like many in his time, Jones believed the world's populations were divided into Japhethites, Hamites and Semites; each "race" is descended from a different son of Noah, but all are ultimately traced back to Adam and Eve.[11] Jones believed the linguistic relatedness between Sanskrit, Greek and Latin suggested that its speakers all belonged to the same biblical ethnicity, namely, the Hamites. This challenged the earlier belief system, in which Northern (white) Europeans were generally considered to belong to a different ethnicity, the Japhethites (Lorenzen, 2019). The racial aspect of Jones' work is often forgotten: nevertheless, the words of the Third Anniversary Discourse are so emblazoned in the minds of present-day linguists that they have become a bit of a meme, quoted not only in introductory books on the topic but also showing up frequently across the surprisingly large number of social media pages dedicated to the subject.

This rather quaint passage, then, holds a special place in the popular linguistic imagination. But what was Jones doing in India, to have become so well-acquainted with the "Sanscrit" language?

Jones was appointed as a judge to the Supreme Court of Judicature at Fort William in 1783. The court itself had been founded in the previous decade by the Regulating Act of 1773, the first in a series of legal steps the British Parliament took to bring the management of the East India Company (EIC) under the control of the British government; this culminated in the EIC Act in 1784, a year into Jones' appointment. This act established a system of dual control in India, shared between the EIC and the British government, with the latter bearing ultimate authority. It was the consolidation of Britain's rule in the late 18th century, then, that brought Jones to India, and it was his own professional involvement in the legal subjugation of Indians that facilitated his dabblings with the Asiatick Society.

Within this political context, Jones saw himself as an Orientalist, as opposed to the Anglicists of his time. He emphasised the importance of Hindu and Muslim traditions and laws, where other colonialists saw them as inherently worthless.[12] He is memorialised in a frieze in his *alma mater*, University College, Oxford, where he is shown transcribing "Hindu and Mohammedan" laws from Indians (Figure 6.1).

Yet as the frieze – which still shows Jones in a position of superiority over those from whom he is supposedly learning – demonstrates, this sort of Orientalism was still underpinned by white supremacy. The question was not whether the British had the right to decide how Indians should live: the question was merely the precise legal means by which the British would rule over them.

Returning to Jones' philology, it is worth noting that his suggestion of a shared Indo-European ancestor language – what I will refer to as the *Indo-European hypothesis* – is now widely accepted, supported by a wealth of evidence far beyond the sources available to Jones. That he was in a position to make such an observation because of colonialism does not mean that the observation itself was merely a colonial fantasy. Nor indeed does our contemporary acceptance of the Indo-European hypothesis make us neocolonialists. More pertinent to a critical analysis of the field, therefore, is to understand the ideological repercussions of this (correct) hypothesis, given the colonial world in which it develops.

HE FORMED A DIGEST OF HINDU AND MOHAMMEDAN LAWS
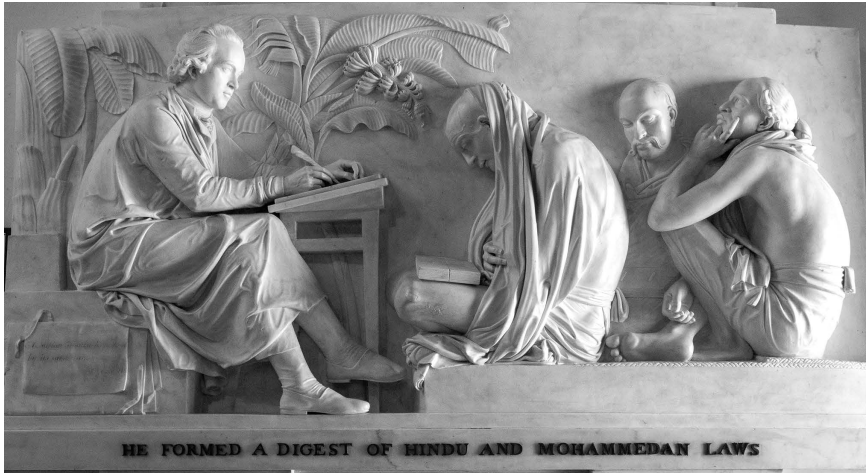
Figure 6.1 Frieze of William Jones in the chapel of University College, Oxford. The text reads, "He formed a digest of Hindu and Mohammedan laws".

As the Indo-European hypothesis gains dominance in the 19th century, supported increasingly by new, colonial linguistic evidence (confirmed by old, *classical* linguistic knowledge), philology sees itself undergo a sort of identity crisis. It begins to move away from being a *Geisteswissenschaft* ("spiritual knowledge", akin to the social sciences and humanities), towards seeing itself as a *Naturwissenschaft* ("natural knowledge", akin to physical sciences) (Campbell and Poser, 2008, 224). Perhaps the most famous advocate for this scientific approach – though he was far from alone – is August Schleicher, who writes (1861–1862, 1),

> [Linguistics] is part of the natural history of humankind. Its method is essentially that of natural science in general; it consists in precise observation of the object, and in drawing conclusions which are based on the observation.

"Method" here refers to the comparative method summarised earlier. To return to the metaphor of Dickey (2001), one might point to the percolation of this scientistic ideal, held by many to this day, as the beginning of the teenager's rebellion. Philology – or, more properly now, linguistics – is not simply part of knowing all things ancient but the scientific comparison of languages. And in separating itself from classics, incidentally distancing itself from a particular kind of cultural supremacism, linguistics finds itself in a dance with a different devil: biological racism, or *race science*.

In setting itself up as part of the "natural history of humankind", linguistics becomes embroiled in questions of ethnography. Like Jones, many 19th-century linguists sought to use comparative philology as a means of establishing the origins of "the races". In linguistics versus race science then, we are presented with two

competing ways of going about historical ethnography: comparing language, or comparing "stock". Just as race science cannot be separated from its overtly racist goals, the linguistics of the 19th century likewise cannot escape its broader racist context. In particular, it is worth noting the casual (but persistent) conflation of language(s) with race(s), as evidenced in passages such as the following (Lepsius, 1863, 24):

> From the relations of separate languages, or groups of languages, to one another, we may discover the original and more or less intimate affinity of the nations (*Völker*) themselves. We learn, for instance, by this means, that the Indians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Slavonians, and Germans form a catenarian series whose parts are far more intimately connected with one another than any link of the chain, which consists of the Babylonians, Hebrews, Phoenicians, Arabs, Abyssinians.

In this intellectual landscape then, what does it mean to talk of language(s) without talking of race(s)? Furthermore, even linguists who make explicit the mismatch between these two categories, such as W.D. Whitney, accept the shared goal of race science (here called "physical ethnology") and linguistics (1867, 371, emphasis mine):

> For neither linguistic nor physical ethnology is a science of classification merely; both claim to be historical also. Both are working toward **the same end**: namely, a tracing out of the actual connection and genealogical history of human **races**; and, though each must follow its own methods, without undue interference from without, they cannot labour independently, careless each of the other's results.

It is true that these two fields often found themselves at odds with one another. Perhaps the most outspoken critic of the race scientists in this connection was F. Max Müller, who rode a particular hobby horse about ethnographers misappropriating linguistic vocabulary, as evidenced in various personal correspondences (1887, 244–245):

> I have uttered the same warning again and again . . . I devoted a whole chapter to pointing out the necessity of keeping these two lines of research – the philological and the ethnological – completely separate, at least for the present . . . Ethnologists persist in writing of *Aryas* . . . &c. forgetting that these terms have nothing to do with blood, or bones, or hair, or facial angles, but simply and solely with language.

Yet in the very same letter, he claims that "In India . . . we have the dark aboriginal inhabitants and their more fair-skinned conquerors" (1887, 245). This is a thesis he arrived at, on the basis of *linguistic* evidence, 40 years prior; the "fair-skinned conquerors", in Müller's mind, are the Sanskrit-speaking Aryans (Indo-Europeans),

who supposedly invaded the subcontinent in the second millennium BCE.[13] It is, moreover, a thesis he had tied directly to contemporary British colonialism, casting the British as a second coming of the Aryans, returning "to accomplish the glorious work of civilization, which had been left unfinished by their Arian [sic] brethren" (Müller, 1848, 349). Despite his public disavowal of race science, then, Müller's science still operates with compatible ideas about the phenotype as a basis for cultural hierarchy. Thus, despite his reputation as "Public Enemy Number One"[14] of race science, Müller's understanding of the historical past is one that endorses it.

Beyond the academic sphere, there have been several Indo-Europeanists who were demonstrably, violently racist. In the early-mid 20th century, philologists such as Otto Höffler and Franz Altheim were part of the *Ahnenerbe* wing of the Nazi *Schutzstaffel* (SS), working to lend credence to the belief in an "Aryan" race. More recently, American philologist Revilo P. Oliver was a campaigning white nationalist, working for the Holocaust-denying Institute for Historical Review following his retirement in the late 1970s. The goal of this section, however, has not been simply to present a catalogue of villains. Rather, I would like to draw the connection between the race logic implicit in early philological research and the violent consequences of that logic. Though it may be tempting to dismiss Nazi philologists as a shocking aberration from a noble philological tradition, hijackers of legitimate methods, there is a sense in which they are a fairly unsurprising part of the history of this discipline: it is no accident that philology was a central building block in Nazi ideology (Hutton, 1999; Koerner, 2000), as indeed it was in British colonialism. While Höffler and Altheim generally do not make their way into reading lists or memes, Jones and Müller do. Their modern reception as "not-that-bad" makes them an apt locus for a more critical approach to the discipline. It is easy to dismiss certain terrible individuals as simply terrible and the fact that they were philologists as secondary. But what I have aimed to demonstrate here is that it is not simply a matter of identifying hate figures from the past and expunging them from our bibliographies; rather, we must come to terms with the way the discipline as a whole arose within and supported the racist and colonial discourse of the time.

To bring this section to an end, I will make a final point on the relationship between race science and philology. It is undoubtedly true that as philological evidence proliferated, earlier conceptions about whiteness, and the history of whiteness, were challenged. The Orientalism of Jones and Müller did present a new and alternative worldview, even if it ultimately served the same material function of justifying colonialism in some form or another. Yet these philologists never used their scientific findings to challenge the purpose of the race science project: indeed, as I have demonstrated, at its origin comparative philology is, ideologically, part of **the same project**. Müller takes no moral stance against racism: his quarrel is merely one of disciplinary boundaries. Race is accepted as one way of categorising humans, language, another. And, as Whitney puts it, "language is a tolerably sure indication of race" (1867, 373–374). Thus, we are locked in a cycle where as long as race science and racist science exist, Linguistics keeps its dancing shoes on.

Indo-European in the Present

The linguistic empiricism that emerged through the 19th century thus endorsed the race science of the time; though we may be inclined to believe this entanglement is a thing of the past, epistemological racism lives on in the contemporary discipline, buttressed by individual and institutional racism (Kubota, 2019; see also Hudley et al., 2020). On the classics side of things, arguments for the supremacy of Graeco-Roman civilisation have also proved extremely persistent; indeed, they seem to be gaining momentum in the 21st century, with a surging white-supremacist right on both sides of the Atlantic.

There is no clever philological cure for these dangerous ideologies; they must be confronted on their own terms and handled in the public and political sphere. Within the narrow purview of this chapter, however, it is worth examining how comparative philology may act as a conduit through which supremacist ideologies – especially those pertaining to ancient Greece and Rome – may be unseated in an academic context.

As explained earlier, the comparative method requires the researcher to form correspondence sets of linguistic items from different languages and, by comparison, establish the original forms from which the others are all descended. The historical nature of comparative philology naturally places an emphasis on older languages since they tend to have undergone less linguistic change than their descendants, keeping them closer to the original form. It is their age, then, that lends Latin and ancient Greek their importance to the comparative philologist, being two of only a handful of IE languages attested before 500 BCE. Crucially, however, the associations of a given language (literature, culture, architecture, etc.) and the nature of the text at hand are, broadly speaking, irrelevant.[15] That is to say, all the weight of "Western civilisation" cannot make us care more about Latin *pēs*, or ancient Greek *poús* than we do about Old Armenian *otn* or Tocharian A *pe*.[16] It is simply not enough to fixate on Latin and ancient Greek, to the exclusion of all else.

In this way, while these two languages are very important to IE reconstruction, the methodology does not treat them as "supreme" in any sense. As such, they need not be the compulsory starting point for studying PIE. It is unfortunate, then, that IE comparative philology very often remains structurally dependent on Latin and ancient Greek language training as the primary means of entering the field. This situation arises according (broadly) to the following reasoning:

1. PIE reconstruction relies on ancient languages.
2. Latin and ancient Greek are taught widely in Europe and North America because of the institutional privilege of classics; no other ancient IE language is afforded this level of privilege.
3. Conclusion: in these places, the main institutionally[17] viable entry point to IE comparative philology is classics.

It remains the case, therefore, that where comparative IE philology courses exist, they are very often supported by, adjacent to or even located within classics departments. So while on some level comparative philology has the potential to undermine

the notion of cultural hierarchy that plagues classics, it survives as a field under the very auspices of that hierarchy. Moreover, the dependence on language learning specifically puts comparative philology at the sharp end of classics' discriminatory practices. Over the last few decades, many universities have changed the language requirements in their classics (or classical studies) degrees, in particular to make their course maximally accessible to students who did not have the opportunity to study Latin or ancient Greek at school. Currently, for one to make the "conversion" from classics into comparative philology, the expectation is generally that you learn Latin and/or ancient Greek; from here you can work your way out to the other branches of IE languages. This means that even at universities and colleges where it is possible to start a degree without knowledge of Latin and ancient Greek, there is a risk that the students who turn up knowing these languages (usually those who are privately educated) are more empowered to take on, e.g. Sanskrit. I do not see philological language learning as inherently elitist, and I will return to this in the next section. As it stands, however, IE comparative philology remains more accessible to students from educationally privileged backgrounds, not uniquely within the field of classics but perhaps more so than some other areas.

Comparative philology, therefore, raises a complex set of disciplinary questions for classics. On the one hand, philology's deep historic closeness to race science and its ongoing issues hardly lend it the status of a "positive" example to follow; on the other hand, that key shift from *Geisteswissenschaft* to *Naturwissenschaft* turned linguistics away from a particular form of cultural hierarchicalism maintained in classics, opening the door to a less value-laden form of comparativism. Nevertheless, on a practical level, we are currently unable to challenge that hierarchy while comparative philology rests upon it. In the final section of this chapter, I will present a view of IE comparative philology for the future. If we were to view comparative philology not in a filial relationship with classics, but as a coequal member of an altogether different field – let us say, *critical ancient world studies* – what would it look like?

Indo-European in the Future

Sheldon Pollock, discussing the future of philology in the broadest sense (philology$_1$), has the following to say:

> Disciplines can no longer be merely particular forms of knowledge that pass as general under the mask of science; instead, they must emerge from a new **global**, and preferably **globally comparative**, episteme and seek **global**, and preferably **globally comparative**, knowledge.
>
> <div align="right">(2009, 948, emphasis mine)</div>

The focus of this chapter is specifically IE comparative philology; I have discussed how this forms a part of classics, while Sanskrit philology – Pollock's specialism – may be considered only "adjacent".[18] But I echo Pollock's call for "globally comparative" disciplinarity, a move that would see this discrepancy eradicated.

Critical ancient world studies (CAWS), as advanced by Umachandran and Ward (this volume), "investigates the ancient history of a world without accepting the *telos* of the West". For such an enterprise to be viable, any and all notions of cultural superiority must be eliminated. In my view, this is where comparative philology can contribute to the "critical" in CAWS.

Opponents to decentred approaches to antiquity often rely, implicitly or explicitly, on the unique *value* of ancient Rome and Greece, as opposed to other times and places in the history of humanity. This argument is made by Butterfield (2020), who attacks the "extreme and misleading claim that Greece and Rome possessed no special qualities, save the special status of having been so long misconceived as special". CAWS requires us to interrogate what we mean by "special" in this context. "Special" how? "Special" to whom? When we start to ask these questions, it transpires that claims of "specialness" are often underpinned by a deeply Eurocentric political ideology. Such an ideology must be categorically rejected if the discipline is to be integrated into a global episteme of the sort advocated by Pollock (2009). Yet when it comes to comparative philology, these questions are moot: nothing is "special" – exciting, useful, interesting and enticing, but not special. More than that, if anything were to be considered special in comparative terms, it could only be considered as so in conjunction with other members of its correspondence set. The Hittite word *haster-* ("star") is special, perhaps, because it suggests the existence of a laryngeal consonant at the beginning of the PIE root *$h_2stér$-* ("id."), but the primary reason we care so much about that is because it helps explain the discrepancy between the Greek *astḗr* ("id.") and Old Armenian *astł* ("id."), which begin with /a/, and forms from other languages such as Latin *stella* ("id."), Old English *steorra* ("id.") and Sanskrit *stṛ́* ("id."), which all begin with /s/. This is how I think comparative philology can set an example for classics. We do not need to justify our interest in any particular part of history because it is "special"; that is a concept we do not need. And once we have accepted that premise, our individual interests will lead us where we choose. In the first place, however, this flat ontology of interests will require us to acknowledge the constructions of cultural superiority by which Latin and ancient Greek have been *made to seem* "special".

But we are not there yet. In our reliance on the status quo in classics, we are not living up to the pluralism that should be inherent in our methodology. I have outlined why we are in this position, but how do we get out of it? This is where the future of philology and the future of classics fall together in CAWS. If we allow a (super-)discipline such as CAWS to exist, such that the disciplinary barriers between, say, Sanskrit and Latin philology are dissolved, we open up comparative philology to a whole new set of possibilities. We go from being a field with an entry point that is unequally accessible to a discipline that draws people from any number of different historical-geographical academic backgrounds and one that is much less socially exclusive.

There remains the question of how students of philology encounter the languages of study. For CAWS to be truly open to all, it is imperative that languages

are taught from scratch (*ab initio*). This discussion has been had for Latin and ancient Greek with classics, and I will not repeat it here.[19] The issues are multiplied when it comes to CAWS, where the linguistic focus will no longer be around Latin and ancient Greek. The nature of this *ab initio* learning, as well as how we should go about it, is therefore an issue in and of itself. One the one hand, there is the classics-style language learning, of unseen translations and analysing set-texts. On the other hand, there is the kind of language-learning more prevalent in linguistics, where a quick typological overview of the grammar is key, but one is not expected to encounter a text without reference materials. I think a blend of the two is best for a comparative philologist in CAWS. It is expedient to read-through texts quickly and engross oneself in a language; it is also helpful to gain a dexterity with languages one is not so familiar with and have a broad overview of the way a language works without trying to get one's head around prose composition in said language. In any case, were we to grant students the option of perhaps specialising in philology within a CAWS framework, I think it is absolutely reasonable that we could make language-teaching work at an undergraduate level without having to rely at all on school education.[20] We need further to ask ourselves these three central questions:

1. **Which** languages do we teach?
2. **Why** do we teach them?
3. **How** do we teach them?

The answers to these questions inform each other. If we choose a certain language, say, Sanskrit, and we want to teach it in order to read critical editions of canonical texts without reference materials, we will adopt a certain approach. If we choose another, say, ancient Greek, and our primary purpose is to use it for morphological comparison with a view towards PIE reconstruction, supported by glossed reference materials, our approach will be different. The upshot is that what we consider to be "knowledge" of a certain language varies with the domain in which we apply that knowledge. We are often happy to do away with certain aspects of language knowledge that in other contexts would be crucial. Perhaps the most obvious example of this is the widespread neglect of spoken Latin and ancient Greek, because it is not considered a necessary tool for reading texts, often a primary goal in ancient language training. Why should we not be equally critical in our approach to vocabulary memorisation and unseen translation? Being selective about which aspects of a language we focus on, according to our goals, is how we begin to address the task of making broad philological language training accessible to people without relying on traditional notions of linguistic expertise and the baggage that brings.

This discussion broaches a wider issue that our future philology must come to terms with, and it is the elephant in the room. **What about non-Indo-European languages?** There can only be one plausible response to this question, given my arguments: they have as much right to be part of CAWS as Indo-European languages, and so should be included. CAWS must care as much about the reconstruction of Proto-Semitic, Proto-Bantu and Proto-Uto-Aztecan as it does about

Proto-Indo-European. We cannot speak of decentring Latin and ancient Greek if we are not also ready to decentre PIE itself. At a theoretical level, we have made this leap already. Indo-Europeanists do not own the comparative method, and there are plenty of linguists working on the reconstruction of non-IE families. Such scholars are often found in either general linguistics departments separate from classics, or in various branches of area studies. For CAWS to work, these institutional disciplinary divides must be challenged. That is not to say, as Indo-Europeanists, that linguists who work on other historical language groups are mandated to be part of "our" CAWS project, but we must accept that the central motivating question for our research is but one of many that a truly global comparative philology encompasses. At the surface, this may seem to multiply the issue of language requirements. But we need only look back to the three questions, and ask them of ourselves again. As it is, there are too many IE languages for anyone to learn – or, to put it another way, for any institution to offer – in the classics-style way. We will already be making choices and justifying those choices; I am simply stating here that we should not limit ourselves to IE languages when we address these questions.

Concluding Questions

I have suggested that IE comparative philology, like classics, requires critical self-reflection on its past and present, in different ways. I have also put forward some positive steps we might take, together with classics, in the broader context of CAWS, that would shape the development of comparative philology in the future, integrating it into a more equitable intellectual framework. The speculative nature of this chapter is such that I cannot offer comprehensive conclusions on how we might go about this; rather, I end with a set of concluding questions that arise from what I have argued earlier.

I am acutely aware that the trajectory of my intellectual suggestion for the future of comparative philology points towards difficult institutional questions. I would argue that these questions apply more generally to CAWS. I have worked with the assumption that CAWS is not simply is an abstract approach to the past but aims to be manifest in tangible, institutional restructuring. The nature of this restructuring remains open: is CAWS supposed to operate as a new independent department/faculty? Or is this a matter of revisiting the relationships between current departments? Or, rather than operating independently at all, is CAWS to be a kind of loose collective of independent entities? These questions all tie into the broader question of who is ready to resource and fund a broadly decolonising programme and whether there will be sufficient critical commitment on the part of those who have functioned within conventional notions of, for example, "classics" to this programme.

That these questions are raised by what I have argued earlier implies the significance of the role that comparative philology can play in emerging CAWS. I have taken my lead from the CAWS 2020 conference and ensuing, speculative discussions. Beyond speculation on how change *might* occur, however, I take the

opportunity to conclude this chapter with a call that it *should*. I have argued for a critical approach to comparative philology, couched within the broader commitment to CAWS as a disciplinary ideal; this will only be achievable through concrete institutional action.

Notes

1 This chapter was presented in an earlier form online at the conference "The Case for Critical Ancient World Studies" (7 September 2020). I thank the attendees for their fruitful discussion and the editors of this volume for their extensive and valuable feedback, all of which has shaped the way I have revised this chapter subsequently.

2 In the interest of space, I do not problematise the use of "scientific" in this descriptor, though it is well worth revisiting, especially in light of the discussion in this chapter. I leave the term in brackets for the sceptic.

3 For instance, in 1988 there was in fact a whole conference entitled "What is Philology?", the proceedings of which filled a special issue of *Comparative Literature Studies* (see Ziolkowski, 1990).

4 Though not the oldest; here I discount the literal meaning of *philología* as "love of words", "love of reason" and thus "love of literature", which is, I think, too far-removed from contemporary usage to be of any help in this discussion (though see Wilson et al. (2006) for more on the role of philology in Graeco-Roman antiquity, and Güthenke (2021) on the role of emotional metaphor in the development of modern classical philology).

5 See further Billings (2020) on Nietzsche's conception of philology as a pedagogical practice.

6 For more detailed explanations of the development from philology$_2$ to linguistics, see *inter alia* Campbell (2003) and Benes (2008, ch. 4).

7 This is not to say that knowing/learning languages is not a valued skill in linguistics; of course it is. The relevant distinction is that the field is oriented toward *language* and not necessarily a specific linguistic variety. As such, though researchers may specialise, there is perhaps more of an emphasis on engaging with and critiquing work on languages with which one is totally unfamiliar.

8 Comprehensive introductions to the comparative method in all its complexity are given in textbooks such as Clackson (2007), Campbell (2013), Ringe and Eska (2013), *inter alia*.

9 Jones himself did not use this term, which together with its German equivalent *indogermanische* only became popular in the following century.

10 See Campbell and Poser (2008, ch. 3) for a comprehensive overview of Jones' achievements (and failings).

11 The basis for this narrative can be found in the first 12 books of Genesis.

12 The culmination of this attitude, some 40 years after Jones' death, was Macaulay's 1835 "Minute on Education" (Evans, 2002).

13 See Wiedemann (2017) for an overview of the term "Aryan" used in this way, and how it came to be used (via IE comparative philology) as a racist ethnonym.

14 As he is described by Trautmann (1997, 172).

15 A linguist may (rightly) object to this, as we care very much about the contextual and stylistic features of texts. But variations of register and genre occur both within and across languages and so do not make any particular variety "more valuable" than another.

16 All cognates for "foot", from PIE **pód-*.

17 "Institutional" is key here: many, perhaps most, IE linguists that I know have learnt a language (or several!) independently at some point, to varying levels of success. Almost all, however, received formal instruction in at least one of Latin or ancient Greek. It is

not impossible that one might learn these independently, but we cannot fix the inequalities in the field simply by proclaiming "linguist, teach thyself".

18 I have suggested previously that Sanskrit seems to be granted a seat at the hearth of classics only when it is compared to Latin and Greek (Ram-Prasad, 2019).

19 See *inter alia* Lloyd and Robson (2019, 103–104) for discussion in the context of the Open University, which requires no prior language qualifications of its students at admission.

20 Of course, more equal school education systems are something we should also strive for, but insofar as it is unlikely to be within the purview of *CAWS* to rewrite the political landscape, we must start by ensuring that, as far as possible, inequalities in pre-university education do not structure access to the discipline.

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7 Forging the Anti-Lexicon With Hephaestus

Hannah Silverblank

Introduction

This chapter combines a brief meditation on Greek-English lexicography with a proposal for a speculative pedagogical collaboration called the Anti-Lexicon. The essential aim of the Anti-Lexicon is to challenge and expand the range of meanings that make themselves available to 21st-century students and scholars of ancient Greek language and culture. The term Anti-Lexicon relies on the multiple meanings of the Greek prefix and preposition, ἀντί (*anti*): I am interested in how we can think of a document that might be "over against" the lexicon, "instead of" the lexicon, "in the place of" the lexicon, "as good as" the lexicon, "in return for" the lexicon, "compared with" the lexicon and "for the sake of" the lexicon. The Anti-Lexicon, therefore, aims to position itself not only in opposition to the lexicon but rather as a complement, supplement, alternative and partner in the scholarly pursuit of interpreting cross-linguistic meanings.

The proposals I offer in this essay are derived from my scholarly orientation as a scholar of literary studies and disability studies. I am therefore writing at lexicography from the outside of the specialty, with an optimistic gesture toward multi-disciplinary and post-disciplinary collaboration for new understandings of ancient Greek vocabulary. The ideas that follow also arise from my pedagogical orientation as a college-level teacher of ancient Greek. In that capacity, I am interested in expanding individual classroom experiences into a broader collective inquiry into the process of pondering and presenting meaning across languages and cultures. Furthermore, I want to see students at all levels situated as participants in the collective cultivation of cross-linguistic meaning making, at the thrilling but strange juncture of temporalities between ancient Greek pasts and ongoing presents.

The first section of this chapter, "Foundations: Thinking with the Greek-English Lexicon", will introduce some of the core lexicographical texts considered in this essay, in order to situate the work of the Anti-Lexicon within the particular cultural context of Oxford and Cambridge classics faculties.

The second section of this chapter, "Reforging Hephaestus' Epithet, Ἀμφιγυήεις (*Amphi-gu-ē-eis*)", demonstrates the urgency of rethinking how we teach and think about the meanings of ancient Greek words in critical ancient world studies (and by extension, non-Greek languages that we study and teach). Here I provide a

case study of my research into a specific Homeric epithet associated with the god Hephaestus, *Amphi-gu-ē-eis*, as it is defined in Greek-to-English lexica and in English translations of Homer's *Iliad*. As classicists bring this word into various meanings in English, they reveal how ableist assumptions of lexicographers have coded and distorted Greek representations of the god and his disability, with resonance that transcends the readership of the lexicon alone.

The concluding section, "The Anti-Lexicon: Toward a Speculative Exercise in Expanding Verbal Meaning", proposes a model for thinking about how undergraduate curricula and extracurricular communities might collaborate to form a complementary base of knowledge – the Anti-Lexicon – which will work alongside the lexicon to reshape disciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches to linguistic meaning. The goal is that individuals learn how to use various approaches, databases and resources in order to facilitate a critical awareness of the operations of specific and exclusionary ideologies that circulate through the myriad links in classical reception's tangled chains. Another goal of the Anti-Lexicon is to situate students in intellectual symbiosis with one another, based on varied skill sets and backgrounds, so as to create a flourishing network of verbal inquiry beyond what is achievable in traditional lexicographical scholarship. Readers of this chapter are invited to co-speculate as they read, to beget new ways for linguists to teach students to read against the grain of the lexicon and develop the tools to push linguistic meaning into new territory. This conclusion also poses a conceptual basis upon which language teachers might build vocabulary-based research projects to encourage their students to grapple with the relationships between diction and exclusionary social ideologies of all sorts (e.g. ableism, racism, white supremacy, misogyny, transphobia, queerphobia, classism, ageism and others).

What does it mean to forge an Anti-Lexicon, and why is Hephaestus our chief collaborator? I nominate Hephaestus as the patron deity of this project because of his role as the god of forgery. Like metalworking, word-working is a process of hard-wrought fabrication that relies on pressure, heat and repetition, to turn material into useful tools. Meaning, like metalwork, is forged, not neutral or natural. Language accrues meaning through how we wield it. Furthermore, the god Hephaestus is a figure to whom an epistemic disservice has been done by the lexicographical treatment of one of his frequent epithets. In Greek epic, Hephaestus is described with the epithet *Amphiguēeis*, whose meaning is ultimately uncertain and comprises the case study in this essay. I will demonstrate that the inadequately defined adjective *Amphiguēeis* may mean "skilled in multiple directions" or "able to move in multiple directions," not "lame" or "crooked in both feet", as posited in the lexicon. This chapter draws upon Hephaestus' multidirectional means of moving through the world as a means to working through the disciplinary and epistemic problem of establishing linguistic meaning across Greek and English languages.[1]

Foundations: Thinking with the Greek-English Lexicon

Let us begin with an orientation within some foundational tools for learning Greek word meanings. In English, the term "lexicon" is usually synonymous with

"dictionary" or "word-book", but because of its special application to languages like "Greek, Hebrew, Syriac, or Arabic",[2] a lexicon may have additional scholarly features that situate historical usages of certain words in particular contexts that condition various meanings. Lexicography, the process of putting together a lexicon and engaging in concomitant research, has recently been defined by Patrick James (who worked as assistant editor on the *Cambridge Greek Lexicon* from 2017) as follows:

> Lexicography involves the collection of evidence relating to the meaning and usage of words, the identification and arrangement of the distinct senses of those words, and the presentation in a lexicon or dictionary of a kind of biography for each word.[3]

Within the discipline of classics, the lexicon proverbially called "Liddell and Scott" (LSJ) has long been situated as the most foundational philological research tool to Hellenists, Greek philologists and students of Greek textual and cultural evidence. As such, LSJ will be the primary lexicon discussed in this chapter, along with the recently published *Cambridge Greek Lexicon* (henceforth CGL).

The acronym LSJ stands for certain editors' surnames: "L" stands for Henry George Liddell (1811–98), and "S" for Robert Scott (1811–87); these two Oxford classicists were early editors of the lexicon. "J" stands for Henry Stuart-Jones (1867–1939), who revised the lexicon with Robert MacKenzie. The body of work called the LSJ refers to the Greek-English lexicon, which has recently been described by Simon Goldhill as "part of every classicist's training, part of our furniture of the mind".[4] The lexicon, compiled in Oxford by British classicists, was first named *A Greek-English Lexicon based on the German Work of Francis Passow*,[5] and later retitled *A Greek-English Lexicon compiled by Henry Liddell and Robert Scott* in its fourth revision, after significant additions that separated the work from titular reference to Passow's *Handwörterbuch der griechischen Sprache*. In 1889, Liddell edited an abridged "intermediate version" (colloquially known as "Middle Liddell") targeted at students but never since revised. Supplements to the last version have been printed as recently as 1996.

Since then, the CGL is a project that was originally developed by the Linear B scholar John B. Chadwick, a Cambridge classicist who proposed in 1997 that a new lexicon be created as a revision to the LSJ. After the establishment of the Greek Lexicon Project in 1998 and Chadwick's death, the scope of the CGL changed from a proposed five-year revision to a 20-year project whose methodology and formatting differed from that of the LSJ. Ultimately, the CGL was produced and published in 2021, as a lexicon "of intermediate size and designed primarily to meet the needs of modern students", and as a resource which was "designed to be of interest to scholars, in so far as it would be based upon a fresh reading of the Greek texts, and on principles differing from those of LSJ".[6] The comprehensive nature and enormity of a project like this no doubt required certain lexicographical concepts to be taken for granted; the methodology is outlined in the preface, but little space is given to the political questions of linguistic meaning, register and

tone, topics which have recently been discussed in two BMCR reviews of Katz and Stray's 2019 edited volume on the LSJ.[7]

Despite the foundational and authoritative nature of the lexicon to ancient Greek language teaching, it is not customary or even particularly common for ancient Greek language instructors to centre the scholarly, historical and cultural circumstances surrounding the production of the lexicon and the individuals who inhabit the role of arbiters of meaning, nor to discuss the process of glossary-creation in foundational language textbooks.[8] With this in mind, I invite you, the reader, to consider the ways in which you have related to an ancient language lexicon (or dictionary, concordance, glossary, vocabulary list, flash cards or any other kind of word list) in your study and research. The following questions invite you to ponder what critical framework you apply in your use of Greek-English (or other) lexica and word lists of various kinds.

When, why and how do you use the lexicon? When, why and how do you teach your students to make use of it?

What forms of experiential and linguistic knowledge(s) are assumed or privileged in Greek-English lexica, and which are repressed or excluded?

How does the epistemological project of the lexicon relate to the kinds of meaning and interpretation that 21st century readers and scholars can derive from our investigations in critical ancient world studies?

How might we engage ourselves, our colleagues and our students in creative collaboration with our lexica and other traditional disciplinary tools?

This essay offers one set of responses to these questions, insofar as it demonstrates the philological and ideological consequences of uncritical uses of the lexicon, and proposes open, creative pedagogical solutions for addressing these consequences. My responses here seek not to answer the questions definitively but instead to invite a broader conversation with other scholars so that we might collectively address the social harms that circulate through ancient world studies as a result of uncritical engagement with lexicography and translation studies.

Reforging Hephaestus' Epithet, Ἀμφιγυήεις (*Amphi-gu-ē-eis*)[9]

These preliminary questions have accompanied me through my own research on the language of disability in Greek literature, as well as my teaching of Greek language to undergraduates in the liberal arts environment. The language of disability is notoriously fraught with ideological assumptions about the wide variety of human bodies, minds and ways of being.[10]

The core case study in this chapter is the adjective Ἀμφιγυήεις' (*Amphi-gu-ē-eis*), an epic epithet used of the disabled god Hephaestus. The word appears a total of eight times in Homer's *Iliad* and thrice in the *Odyssey*. What traits the word actually communicates have been a source of confusion to lexicographers, translators and readers of the Homeric epics. This semantic confusion spills over from these scholarly areas into representations of Hephaestus, particularly in terms of how his embodiment is portrayed. Lexicographical treatment of the word in LSJ is a primary source of the trouble. The ninth and most recent edition of LSJ, published

in 1996, prints a very brief entry for the epithet *Amphiguēeis*: "Ἀμφιγυήεις, ὁ, epith. of Hephaestus, *with both feet crooked, lame*, Il. 1.607, etc."[11] This entry is revised in the LSJ supplement, with the following: "Ἀμφιγυήεις, for pres. def. read '*with bent legs, bandy*'".[12] The term *Amphiguēeis* is of course not the only word used of Hephaestus' body; part of the way that the term tends to accrue meaning in English-language translations is by means of conceptual transference from some of Hephaestus' other descriptors of disability.

Elsewhere, the *Iliad* also uses the terms ἔρρων (*errōn*, "limping" or "moving slowly", *Il*. 18.421), ἠπεδανός (*ēpedanos*, "weak", "halting", *Il*. 8.104, *Od*. 8.311), κνῆμαι ἀραιαί (*knēmai araiai*, "thin shins", *Il*. 18.411, 20.38), κυλλοποδίων (*kullopodiōn*, "clubfoot", *Il*. 18.371, 20.270, 21.331), χωλός/χωλεύων (*chōlos/ chōleuōn*, "limping", *Il*. 18.397, 18.417, 20.38; *Od*. 8.308, 8.332), all of which stake out Hephaestus' physical difference from a pre-supposed normate body. Translators and scholars have generally understood *Amphiguēeis* as describing some aspect of Hephaestus' embodiment, which is likely a result of the fact that all of the Iliadic scholia suggest a meaning synonymous with χωλός (*chōlos*), "lame".[13] Hephaestus' epithets and their English translation history reveal the extent to which modern ideological understandings of physical disability have asserted themselves into the history of classical scholarship and translation, in ways that both obscure and draw attention to Homer's representation of Hephaestus as a disabled god.

Although the equivalence of *Amphiguēeis* with *chōlos* has been persistent in lexica and translations of *Amphiguēeis*, the philologist Louis Deroy argued against the semantic synonymity of *Amphiguēeis* with *chōlos* as early as 1956.[14] Deroy breaks down the word's meaning according to its components: (1) ἀμφι- (*amphi-*), "doubly" and "divergently", + (2) -γυη- (-*gu-ei-*), "direction", + (3) -εις (-*eis*), "endowed". The combination of these verbal components results in Deroy's conclusion that the adjective means "capable of moving in both directions". Deroy suggests the term references the fact that Hephaestus is endowed with a bidirectional kind of mobility, and contextualises this term within Marie Delcourt's reading of Hephaestus as a magical figure.[15] Deroy also points to the François Vase from the sixth century BCE, on which Hephaestus' feet are pointed in opposite directions,[16] and thus combines a philological exploration with Greek religious scholarship and art history, in order to posit a revision to the meaning of *Amphiguēeis*.

Deroy's gloss of *Amphiguēeis* also finds support in the work of disability studies scholar Jay Dolmage, who has written of Hephaestus: "Having feet that face away from one another does not necessarily entail 'impairment' – it means he can move from side to side more quickly".

Marcel Detienne and Jean-Pierre Vernant, in *Cunning Intelligence in Greek Culture and Society*, write that Hephaestus was symbolized by the crab and that his side-to-side movement had symbolic value.

He was seen as having a

power . . . emphasized by his distinctive character of being endowed with a double and divergent orientation . . . His "disability" was (and can again be) seen as that which allowed him to dominate shifting, fluid powers such as

fire and wind' in his work in the forge . . . Like a crab, Hephaestus' symbolic movement is not straightforward.[17]

Here we find an example of a scholar outside of the discipline of classics who makes use of the scholarly insights about Hephaestus, in a way that allows him to access the meanings of *Amphiguēeis* that have been so obscured by English translations of the term. Why are these insights overlooked by philologists and translators, who perpetuate uncritical and paradoxical uses of this term in their translations of Homer's *Iliad*?

Most English language translators offer a strange smattering of inconsistent English words that add both obscurity and varied stigmatisation to the representation of Hephaestus. Both within and beyond Homer's representations of the disabled god, Hephaestus' disability is shown to be essential to the complex expression of his particular divinity, as well as his social and political position within the cosmos,[18] and yet, there are urgent sites of confusion at play in the language used to describe Hephaestus' body to modern English-reading audiences.

English language translations of the *Iliad* from the 20th and 21st century convey a wide range of approaches to the slippery and inconsistent meanings of the term *Amphiguēeis* in these translations. Some particularly well-known translations feature particularly confusing word choices. A.T. Murray 1924, the translator of the most recent Loeb edition of the *Iliad*, translates the epithet as both "of the two lame legs" and "of the two strong arms" (Homer and Murray, 1924). Richmond Lattimore 1951 consistently renders *Amphiguēeis* as "strong-handed"/"strong-armed" (1.607, 18.383) and "of the (two) strong arms" (14.239, 18.393, 462, 587, 590, 614), while he also adds the word "smith" to five out of six of the uses of *Amphiguēeis* given in Book 18 (when Hephaestus constructs Achilles' armour for Thetis) (Homer and Lattimore, 1951). Robert Fagles 1990 imports the slur "crippled" and the word "smith" into his translations of *Amphiguēeis* (and oddly adds the word "burly" in 14.239, "the burly crippled Smith"). Lombardo's (Homer and Lombardo, 1997) translations of *Amphiguēeis* are perhaps the most erratic of all the twentieth and twenty-first century translators considered here: we find variants as wide-ranging as "burly blacksmith with the soul of an artist" (1.607); "strong-armed" (14.239), no translation given for the word's use at 18.383, "smith" (18.393, 462) and "the lame god" (18.587, 590, 614).

These semantic inconsistencies in the English translations of Hephaestus' physical features in Greek epic provide meaningful insights into the ways in which future studies of Homeric vocabulary can benefit from the work of disability studies scholars and activists, in order to attend to the ways in which linguistic and ideological assumptions merge in long histories of translation and reception.[19] If lexicographers and translators continue to invest Hephaestus' disability with the language of lack, or deficiency relative to an imagined normate body, then these impressions will continue to circulate within and beyond the scholarly conversation until we begin to make use of a more ideologically attuned critical philology.

Even more concerning than the circulation and impact of these individual translators' depictions of Hephaestus' disability only as a lack or a deficiency, are the

ways in which the foundational tools of our discipline (our lexica and dictionaries) have centred and perpetuated ableist misinterpretations of ancient evidence. It is time to commit ourselves to a critical philology that takes the theoretical and practical insights of disability studies – with its detailed attention to the historical, social and ideological nuances in languages of the body – into the field of classical philology. What new insights will we gain from an approach to philology and lexicography that is informed by a critical awareness of the ways in which the body's meanings are socially and historically constituted through language itself?

Despite the fact that Deroy's philological intervention was published in 1956, despite the fact that additional discussion of the word's ambiguities appeared in 1988 in Heubeck, West and Hainsworth's commentary on the *Odyssey*, and despite the collective efforts of both classicists and disability studies scholars to explore how Hephaestus' mobility interacts with his Homeric characterisation, the word *Amphiguēeis* still seems to present interpretive challenges in the recent history of English translations of the *Iliad*, probably as a consequence of the lexicon's consistently inadequate glosses of the term.

If our discipline insists, in its foundational resources, upon anachronistic and misleading glosses (such as "lame") for ancient Greek depictions of disabled figures, then we will need a new mode of lexicography that looks at the intersections between linguistic history and histories of embodiment and disability, in order to avoid the perpetuation of ableist assumptions about ancient texts. What is at stake is not so much the translation of a single word, *Amphiguēeis*, to indicate themes of disability and mobility – although the word's etymological roots seem not to imply a mobility impairment or disability, as Deroy has argued.[20] Instead, the more urgent concern lies with the ways in which ancient scholia, Victorian and 21st-century lexicographers and English-language translators have assumed that Hephaestus' disability is a socially stigmatised aspect of Hephaestus' Homeric identity expressed by *Amphiguēeis*.

The linguistic representation of Hephaestus and his disability offers a glimpse into the circulation of ableism that occurs via English language translations and Greek-English lexica – and many other students and teachers have observed that the English and Latin glosses, textual references, and informational organisation that LSJ offers are exclusionary not only in political ideology but also in terms of LSJ's accessibility as a toolkit. Amy Coker has written on the obscuring presence of Latin in LSJ entries that refer to content deemed "obscene" by the editors' Victorian sensibilities:

> In direct contrast with most earlier lexica of Greek, [LSJ] was from its conception a Greek-English work, and some 170 years ago it was the use of English which was stressed in particular in the original Preface . . . To find Latin here rather than English is a striking example of lexicographical prudery. This aspect of the Lexicon is well known to its users, and most will have encountered this phenomenon or similar examples of lexicographical chicanery (no doubt with their own choice examples), found when the editors deal with material they deem in some way inappropriate.[21]

My interest in pushing the limits of lexicography in our research and pedagogy comes from my own special interest in the language of disability in Homer, but the words I've discussed are not particularly common ones. There are many more common terms in the Greek lexica that are defined in ways that might seriously trouble the student who approaches the entries with a critical approach to philology and its concomitant ideologies; another example, *Aithiops*, is discussed in the conclusion of this essay.

The Anti-Lexicon: Towards a Speculative Exercise in Expanding Verbal Meaning

I conclude with an invitation to a collaborative process of thinking through an alternative model to the lexicon. Part of the problem I have identified with LSJ is the imperialist (colonialist, racist, misogynist, ableist) 19th-century thinking that Liddell, Scott, Jones and other editors brought to the process of creating their lexicon. Another part of the problem is the immense obscurity of the lexicon's formatting, word choice and assumed knowledge base to our students today. Yet another tricky aspect of our discipline's reliance on lexica results from the fact that these are enormously detailed and comprehensive projects for scholars to undertake.

As Tom Mackenzie has noted in his contribution to Stray's edited volume on the LSJ, the lexicon's method for a word entry is to "provide a diachronic history of the meanings of each lexeme by listing the attested usages from oldest to latest", a trait inherited from Passow's German model. Mackenzie adds that LSJ's method

> has not gone unchallenged over the past two centuries: words are not unanimously felt to have a discrete and finite set of meanings which are clearly distinguishable from one another. Theoretical and historical aspects of this problem are discussed in other chapters of this book.[22]

Indeed, classicists have done extensive thinking about the "theoretical and historical aspects" of the "problem" of semantic ambiguity. In the pursuit of forgetting classics and forging critical ancient world studies, I would like to see our discipline engage with the lexicon as a site of ideologically loaded, consequential and malleable knowledge. Toward this end, I invite readers of this essay to consider the following questions:

What might a model for a collaborative, ongoing, inclusive engagement with the lexicon look like in our own research and classrooms?

What kinds of student collaboration and research can be made possible via critical lexicography that is attentive to students' affective responses to the lexicon's implicit ideologies – responses which centre students' own identities and embodied knowledges? How do we create space not only for revision within "supplements" but collective pedagogical questioning of the idea of lexical definition itself?

How can we change the ways we relate to the lexicon and teach our students to navigate it as a meaningful tool, given its limitations and exclusive ideological features?

How can we use the lexicon, and a critical reassessment thereof, as teaching tools toward media literacy and rhetorical attunement?

What kinds of publications or online formats and editions could house revisions to the lexicon, created and disseminated *not* through traditional scholarly channels (e.g. supplements and notes)?

What reflexes of lexicography need creative reconsideration in a critical ancient world studies?

And finally, to quote Virginia Woolf – herself a lexicographer, who managed to get through only two words in her own 1938 "Supplement to the Dictionary of the English Language"[23] – "How can we combine the old words in new orders so that they survive, so they create beauty, so that they tell the truth? That is the question".[24]

In the Forge: From Exclusion to Collaboration

In Book 18 of the *Iliad*, when the goddess Thetis visits Hephaestus' forge, Hephaestus recounts to his wife, Charis, the story of the debt he owes to Thetis (Hom. *Il.* 18.394–407). Hephaestus recalls a time when he was expelled from Olympus, because his mother Hera wanted "to hide [him] for being lame" (396–397), and he credits Thetis as the one who fostered and nurtured him after his expulsion (along with Eurynome). Hephaestus says that Thetis and Eurynome provided an alternate space for him in his exile and that, by their side, he crafted fine pieces of jewelery and metalwork (400–402).

I imagine that the work of the Anti-Lexicon might start from a similar dynamic movement as that in Hephaestus' tale: from experiences of exclusion to opportunities for collaboration. We might, as teachers of ancient Greek (and other languages), invite students to observe, in their coursework, moments where they feel confused, stymied, or even excluded by the words they encounter, and we might then connect them with a network of other students and scholars who, together, could forge alternative lexical approaches to individual words.

To take a hypothetical example term that has been observed by multiple students in my classroom, LSJ's entry for the word Αἰθίοψ, -οπος, ὁ (*Aithiops, -opos*, masc.), is frequently encountered by students who are beginning to read Herodotus. Upon looking up *Aithiops* in LSJ, or other resources that draw their definitions from the LSJ, these students would find the first English gloss given as "properly, Burnt-face, i.e., Ethiopian, negro".[25] In addition to its outdated terminology, this entry uses racist language which is likely to have an exclusionary impact on students of colour, and in particular Black students, who interact with the lexicon. The racism is not isolated to the primary gloss but continues in the sample proverbial idiom used immediately afterward in the entry: a Lucianic phrase, Αἰθίοπα σμήχειν (Luc. Ind. 28), is translated as "to wash a blackamoor white". While the primary entry situates a parallelism between black skin and being "burnt", this "proverbial" usage of the term situates darkness of skin tone as a kind of filth.[26] To modern readers, this lexical entry conveys a grim colonialist whiteness at the core of the lexicon's social sensibilities. Against this tradition, philology and lexicography

need alternate spaces for lexical innovation beyond what has been accomplished in supplements to the LSJ.[27]

The Anti-Lexicon might therefore locate students within a collaborative network, out of the exclusionary realm of the lexicon, and into a new network of social meaning, akin to that which Hephaestus finds in the underwater caves of Thetis and Eurynome. Those who teach the ancient world have the option to empower our students to research language, provide alternatives and build research communities along the way, in scholarly collaboration. Students who encounter an entry like that of *Aithiops* should have recourse to intellectual empowerment through the process of collaborating with (for example) philologists, ancient historians who focus on race and ethnicity in ancient Greece, and researchers invested in critical race theory. Furthermore, those in teaching roles have the opportunity to assign research projects to their students that might deepen individual engagement with linguistic epistemology as well as the social forces at work in the collective establishment of semantics across ancient and modern languages. Projects like those I lay out as part of the Anti-Lexicon would also allow undergraduates to engage with their classmates, graduate students and professional researchers. This pursuit would not only contribute to our collective knowledge base but would also make the field a more accessible and inclusive one, through enhancing and supporting our foundational research tools where they have failed or expired for contemporary students and scholars, while also giving students insight into how knowledge production operates in philology and lexicography.

The Anti-Lexicon might most meaningfully function as a web-based network of scholars who are interested in contesting and expanding the meanings of Greek vocabulary from collaborative and interdisciplinary approaches. In colleges or small communities, local chapters might also form for live and local collaborative opportunities to pore over Greek-English lexica. In colleges, chapters of the Anti-Lexicon could form as clubs of undergraduates, who gather for love of the word and excitement about its expansion, to develop and critique the research skills upon which foundational disciplinary knowledge in classics is based, or collaborations on word-based research projects could be built into instructors' curricular design.[28] In combination with web-based networks, these kinds of exploratory research communities could generate creative artefacts that contest and expand the meanings of individual words, from a wide variety of perspectives and approaches, within and beyond the traditional classics classroom.

The pragmatics and scope of traditional lexicography pose limitations to the kinds of research practice involved: a standardized methodology, word limits, and formidable scope are all areas that an Anti-Lexicon could remediate and complement through slow, alternative approaches to those found in the LSJ, CGL, and other Greek-English lexica. Where a traditional lexicon is guided by a coherent and focused methodology, and must strive for a comprehensive scope, the Anti-Lexicon might best flourish as a rhizomatic hub of varied approaches that are called into being by the words themselves and the individuals who notice them. For example, we saw that supplementing the lexical biography of *Aithiops* would benefit from a team of ancient historians as well as researchers who specialise in ancient and

modern race and ethnicity, in addition to students and scholars with lived experiences of racialised exclusion. Our other case study, *Amphigueeis*, requires a team of philologists, disabled scholars, scholars of ancient/modern disability and ancient historians.

As a first step, we might begin to compile a list of words similarly in need of less traditional approaches to their "biographies". Critical ancient world studies students and faculty from around the world could contribute words that seem in need of adoption by a team of "anti-lexicographers", and thus, the project can be pollinated from an international community.[29] As individuals nominate words for inclusion in an Anti-Lexicon project, these nominators may also suggest the problems or obscurities at play in more traditional entries and the language skills needed for scholarly exploration, and they may therefore suggest areas of expertise that would help determine an effective editorial team of students and researchers. This would be advantageous insofar as it would provide a necessary contrast to the Oxford-Cambridge monopoly on present-day Greek-English lexicography, in LSJ and CGL. Furthermore, an international research team could provide a base of varied language skills that would facilitate a broader scholarly depth for these projects than would otherwise be possible in one particular geographical region.

Thus, I propose the Anti-Lexicon as a speculative collaboration and an invitation to both teachers and students of ancient Greek to reconceptualise the apparatuses of verbal meaning available to us. I do not mean to imply that we can solve all of the discipline's exclusionary practices through the speculative exercise of the Anti-Lexicon, nor do I mean to suggest that that which is offensive to readers must be omitted from the dictionary or softened, nor do I deny that the complex and theorised pragmatics of lexicography are considerable. Rather, the Anti-Lexicon is a call to imagine lexical research at the undergraduate, informal or grassroots level as a site for potential change in how the field presents itself and its materials to itself. The Anti-Lexicon is thus an opportunity designed to empower students of Greek to participate in, react to and do something about moments in the lexicon that chafe against their ethical, intellectual and situated sensibilities, as an educational process that works in multiple directions, like the smith god Hephaestus.

Notes

1 Weaving in the words of my co-thinker and editor Mathura Umachandran, I quote them: "I have an image of the seams of words becoming visible for the unpicking and re-thatching . . . thinking alongside this exposition of forging in into weaving and sewing".
2 OED (Simpson and Weiner, 1989), s.v. "lexicon".
3 James (2011). See also Stray (2019) on the LSJ's use of "biographies of words" (5), within LSJ's historical and academic context.
4 Goldhill (2020).
5 The first three editions of this work were a "translation" of Passow's Greek-German lexicon of 1819.
6 Diggle et al. (2021), CGL, Preface, vii.
7 See Goldhill (2020) and Thompson (2021). For a discussion of systemic racism and intersecting forms of oppression operative in Dutch dictionaries, see Hooft (1997).

8 For a recent mainstream discussion of English lexicography and race/racism, see McWhorter (2020). The historical and academic contexts of the lexicon's production – most notably edited by Henry Liddell, the eventual father of Alice Liddell, the supposed historical analogue for Lewis Carroll's "Alice" character – has been discussed at length in Stray (2019), especially Stray's introductory "A Note on the History of the Lexicon" and "Chapter 1: Liddell and Scott in Historical Context: Victorian Beginnings, Twentieth-Century Developments."

9 This part of the essay is adapted from Silverblank and Ward (2020), in a section called "Critical Philology". For a version of these ideas situated in a broader critical examination of the importance of disability studies to classical reception, see Silverblank and Ward (2020).

10 For a discussion of the related question of specifically medical vocabulary and terminology in the LSJ, see Craik (2019).

11 LSJ s.v. Ἀμφιγυήεις (*Amphiguēeis*).

12 LSJ (Supplement) s.v. Ἀμφιγυήεις (*Amphiguēeis*). CGL improves upon these entries in LSJ, primarily because it centres the uncertainty of the word's meaning and, secondarily, because, unlike the 1996 LSJ supplement, it seems to take into account more recent philological insights on the word's meaning. For Ἀμφιγυήεις (*Amphiguēeis*), CGL gives the following: "*masc. adj.* [reltd. γύης, γυῖα] (epith. of Hephaistos) perh., skilled with both hands, ambidextrous Hom. Hes. AR. [or perh. *lame in both legs* or *bow-legged*]". Although CGL reiterates some of LSJ's definitions against which Deroy has argued, I see the CGL entry as an improvement upon LSJ's, namely, because it twice features the abbreviation for "perhaps". Thus, the entry makes clear to the reader that the definition itself is tentative rather than authoritative, and it does so with recourse to possible etymological links, γύης and γυῖα (CGL, s.v. ἀμφιγυήεις [*Amphiguēeis*]).

13 See Snell and Mette (1955), s.v. ἀμφιγυήεις (*Amphiguēeis*). These glosses come from LSJ.

14 See Humbach (1969) on the relationship between ἀμφίγυος and ἀμφιγυήεις.

15 Deroy (1956, 134), Delcourt (1982).

16 Deroy (1956, 134, n. 2). See also Brennan (2016), for the more conventional reading of the meaning of *Amphiguēeis* as "with both feet crooked", and the representation of Hephaestus' feet and disability in vase painting, including the François vase.

17 Dolmage (2006, 120–121).

18 See Brockliss (2019).

19 See also Williamson (2019).

20 Deroy (1956).

21 Coker (2019, 61, 62).

22 Mackenzie (2019, 105).

23 Fowler (2002, 54).

24 Woolf (1937).

25 LSJ s.v. Αἰθίοψ. This word's entry was revised in the 1996 supplement but only in technical terms relating to the textual references and not to the content or semantics involved in the earlier entry.

26 To make matters worse, this idiom and the same translation of it are repeated in the entry for the verb σμήχω (smēchō, *I wash*).

27 The entry in CGL shows marked progress from LSJ's approach, giving instead "Aithiopian man". Nevertheless, its entry for a related adjective, αἴθός (*aithos*) reads "(of a foreigner) of a burnt colour, black or sooty".

28 One contemporary example of a successful small college research network can be found at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts. Faculty and students participate in weekly research meetings, with projects focused on the manuscripts of Homer, Jerome and Gregorian chants, as well as stone inscriptions. The club's website can be found at http://hcmid.github.io.

29 See Umachandran in this volume.

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8   Sappho's Body as Archive

Towards a Deep Lez Philology

Ella Haselswerdt

Introduction

In a series of letters to a friend written sometime at the end of the 19th century, Gilbert Murray, a scholar of ancient Greek literature whose editions have had a long and influential afterlife, wrote about his ongoing project to produce an *apparatus criticus* of the text of the playwright Euripides. After remarking that the enterprise is "rather fun; except correcting the spelling, which is work for Chinamen", he explains that "an apparatus criticus is a list of the MS. [manuscript] variations, with occasional remarks thereon. Only men of the highest moral character, religion, and social grace can produce one satisfactorily" (Fisher and de Madariaga, 1936, 36–37).

I will return to Murray's bigotry, but to expand on his definition, an *apparatus criticus* (literally translated as "critical apparatus", often abbreviated to *app. crit.*) is a condensed commentary that runs along the bottom of the page in modern scholarly editions of ancient Greek and Latin texts. Written in abbreviated Latin and rife with esoteric symbols, it is an academic construction accessible only to those who are highly trained in the field of philology. Much of the information embedded within one of these commentaries would seem trivial to the non-specialist, but they sometimes communicate variations between manuscripts of a text that can have a profound impact on interpretation. While an *app. crit.* can highlight the contingency of an ancient text, it is also used by the editor, the person who compiles it and adjudicates which version of the text is most likely genuine, to construct a window to their own version of antiquity. This is just one way that philologists serve as mediators between the texts of the ancient world and the readers of today.

The quote from Murray is often cited as a means of illustrating how far we have come. There are few mainstream philologists today who would openly endorse a sentiment so blatantly dripping with racist, sexist, religiously bigoted and classist biases as the one Murray espouses here. But the clarity of Murray's expression is helpful, and there are a couple of things he does get right: firstly, that an individual's particular embodied and socially conditioned perspective will inevitably have some bearing on the nature of the work that they produce, and secondly, that philology has ethical *stakes*. Of course, what Murray is really suggesting here is that his putative white, male, Christian, aristocratic scholar (i.e. of course Murray

himself) will create an edition of a text that steers readers towards interpretations that are more in keeping with an imagined "original" ancient work than a scholar who is, in his view, defective in one or more of these characteristics.

These days, a scholar's presumed ability to provide readers with proximity to antiquity is, at least discursively, divorced from their identity markers and social station. The ideal philologist will inhabit something akin to what Donna Haraway describes as an imagined "view from above, from nowhere" (Haraway, 1988, 589). As Patrice Rankine writes in a critique of the white supremacist groundings of the discipline, "Classics, and especially philology as its essence, pretends to be a neutral and disinvested test of intelligence" (Rankine, 2019, 352). That is, the quality of work a given philologist might attain is imputed not to their social positioning, as in Murray, but is instead contingent on their natural talent and the rigor of their training within the same disciplinary systems and methodological practices instituted and perfected by people like Murray.[1] But of course, following Haraway, the view from nowhere is a fantasy. A neutral perspective is always, in fact, a limited and partial perspective, but one that does not have the benefit of self-awareness about its own limitations and, therefore, unwittingly reinforces dominant ideology. Philology, like other knowledge practices, cannot so easily shrug off the biases of those who have crafted its methodologies; per Rankine once more, "everything we touch mixes with something else, and thus the pretense of pure philology, set apart from its legacies and associations is pernicious" (Rankine, 2019, 349). Furthermore, this supposed neutrality ultimately replicates Murray's conception of antiquity, namely, that with the right training and perspective an accurately reconstituted text is achievable and along with it an unclouded view of the distant past.

"Sappho", by which I mean both the corpus of fragmentary archaic Greek poetry and the variously reconstructed woman behind it, has always been not only one of contemporary philology's central subjects but a proving ground for the development of many of its practices. The highly fragmentary nature of her surviving poems, along with her outsized influence in antiquity and beyond, have rendered the text of her poems a site of extreme philological scrutiny. At the same time, and not unrelatedly, the first-person expressions of erotic passion for other women within the texts have led to attempts by many philologists to salvage a fantasy of a chaste or heterosexual Sappho, just as they have long invited queer women of modernity to identify with the poet.

In this chapter, I first provide a partial overview of the ways that bigoted preconceptions, largely of the misogynist and homophobic variety, have persisted among philological watchdogs and have damaged and limited our understanding of "Sappho". I will go on to offer some preliminary thoughts on how a situated, queer – or, as I will argue, "deep lez" – philology might work, one that makes no claims to neutrality but also does not give up on discovering some version of truth.[2] With Haraway, "I am arguing for the view from a body, always a complex, contradictory, structuring, and structured body" (Haraway, 1988, 589.) While some of this project will necessarily involve identifying and dismantling biases that have conditioned our approaches to ancient texts, at its core it requires undoing essentialising notions about what antiquity *is* and the ways we have of relating to it. The corollary of this has to do with

thinking through the ways that contemporary queer identities can also fall into essentialising traps, and trying to discern whether "Sappho" can offer us escape routes out and towards a more expansive conception of embodiment and queer kinship. A deep lez philological approach is aligned with the overarching project of CAWS in that it rejects the notion of a positivist reconstruction of antiquity that serves as the origin of a similarly imaginary modern Western ideology, and challenges the epistemological structures and practices that created such a narrative. Further, such a perspective frees antiquity to serve as a site of mutually and situationally constructed identities rather than as a rubric by which certain privileged identities are evaluated.

Sappho and Ideology

In 1816 Friedrich Welcker published a book entitled *Sappho von einem herrschenden Vorurtheil befreyt*, or "Sappho freed from a prevailing prejudice", and thus instituted an extremely influential, though now somewhat defunct, branch of philology called *Quellenforschung*, or source criticism.[3] *Quellenforschung* consists of using a genealogical approach to ancient testimonia about the denizens of antiquity in order to trace various accounts back to their supposed earliest origins, thereby determining their relative accuracy, a method that structurally parallels the way that textual critics organise and analyse manuscript variations.[4] Welcker's agenda in formalising this method and training his sights on the poet Sappho is made clear in his title: to gallantly rescue the Sappho who wrote beautiful, delicate poetry from allegations that she engaged in illicit sexual activity with the women about whom she wrote so tenderly.

Welcker constructs his methodology around achieving his desired outcome, ultimately arguing that there were in fact *two* different Sapphos – Sappho the sex worker and Sappho the poet – and that accounts of these two women at some point cross-contaminated. As Joan DeJean puts it,

> the logic behind Welcker's chastity argument is so convoluted as almost to defy reconstruction. Welcker admits that Sappho's poetry shows love for women, but he disclaims the existence of any "basely sensual", "punishable", or "reprehensible" element in that love. This claim, on which his entire theory rests, is based on no evidence more concrete than a personal conviction that "no educated Greek would have thought these were beautiful love poems if something monstrous and disgusting had been going on in them".
> (DeJean, 1989, 151)[5]

He proceeds to sift sources about one woman from sources about the imagined other, recovering simultaneously a pure, unsullied lineage of Sappho's biography and a pure, unsullied, virginal Sappho. Anything base could be siphoned off to Sappho's dark shadow, an abject, menial woman whom he could easily discard.

A consistent correlation emerges in the scholarly tradition between stripping Sappho's poems of their eroticism and stripping them of their imaginative capacities. Welcker's intervention was broadly accepted by his descendants, who,

understanding Sappho to have been successfully "freed", limited their engagement with her poetry to "perfunctory remarks about her candor and ingenuous frankness" (DeJean, 1989, 157). This conception of Sappho, as essentially a naïve diarist who writes directly and only to her own experience, incapable of subversive expression and metaphor, is no relic of the 19th century. One might trace a direct line between Welcker's fantasy of a chaste Sappho and a still-popular theory among classicists that Sappho was a schoolmistress, who may have expressed a tender fondness for her pupils, but was ultimately tasked with and fully dedicated to preparing them for the higher calling of marriage to men.[6] A recent elaboration on this well-worn theme underlies the self-proclaimed "positivistic" methodology of Kyriakos Tsantsano-glou's 2019 volume *Studies in Sappho and Alcaeus*, wherein the author defaults to what he describes as "natural" interpretations of the poems, premised on his devout belief in the Sappho-as-schoolmistress theory. According to Tsantsanoglou, every single one of the poems she composed in her life as a teacher was about "her girls", and if the extant text of a given poem does not in fact indicate their presence, he goes about emending it until they do appear. He grounds every poem firmly in the realm of quotidian observation, constructing a series of biographical scenarios to suit the diminished horizon of possibility in which he has imprisoned the fragments.[7]

Similarly, Franco Ferrari's influential book *Sappho's Gift* takes the ancient bio-graphical tradition around Sappho at face value.[8] His insistence on interpreting every poem within this framework results in readings that tend to diminish their figurative power. Consider for a moment Sappho 31, a poem that remains with us today because the literary critic Longinus recognised it as a paragon of sublimity:

He seems like a god to me that man,
whoever he is, who sits opposite you
and listens closely to you
speaking sweetly

and laughing lovely, the heart
in my chest is aflutter
for when *I* look at you
speech has left,

my tongue breaks, a slender
flame instantly races up under my skin,
in my eyes no sight,
thundering fills my ears

a cold sweat pours down, trembling
seizes all of me, I am greener than grass
and dead, or almost,
I seem to me.

But all must be dared, since even a pauper . . .[9]

Ferrari reads this as a clinical account of a panic attack, a "phobic anticipation of an event inscribed in the ordinary history of the group", that is, a fear of her schoolgirls eventually leaving the collective female environment to marry men (Ferrari, 2010, 185). Sappho's masterful account of the dissolution of her sensory and expressive capacities is reduced to a patient's report of a checklist of symptoms.

An article by Georges Devereux, published in *The Classical Quarterly* in 1970 under the inauspicious title "The Nature of Sappho's Seizure in Fr. 31 LP as Evidence of her Inversion", also takes a clinical approach to the poem. While Devereux does argue that the poem springs from homoerotic inclinations, characterising the narrator as a "masculine lesbian", his assessment is strictly pathologising, culminating in the assertion that

> few women are as obsessed with a (neurotic) feeling of anatomical "incompleteness" – with the clinically commonplace "female castration complex" – as the masculine lesbian. Moreover, the latter experiences her "defect" with violent and crushing intensity particularly when her girl-friend is taken away from her not by another lesbian, but by a *man*, who has what she does not have and which she would give her life to have.
>
> (Devereux, 1970, 22)

In a footnote, Devereux supports this claim with the comment, "Anyone with some experience of the world has probably witnessed such scenes". He repeats this gesture on the following page, arguing that "one need not be a clinical psychoanalyst – *one only needs some experience of the world* – to know that the masculine lesbian whom a male rival deprives of her partner will experience anxiety rather than ordinary jealousy" (Devereux, 1970, 23, my emphasis). This universalising appeal to common sense is an attempt to cast the scholar's perspective as detached and objective, one that literally *anyone* would readily produce, provided of course that they had "some experience of the world" – and do you dare dissociate yourself from that category? It is relevant to note here that Devereux's homophobic and misogynist analysis, cast as invulnerable to reasonable critique, is ultimately used to philological ends, as a way to shape the very text of the poem: "it is a well-nigh inescapable conclusion that, during her seizure, Sappho's tongue and mouth were extremely dry and that the little saliva that remained was viscous, causing her tongue to stick against her palate", leading him to support an emendation of the difficult Greek verb *eage* in line (the tongue "breaks") to *pepage* (the tongue "sticks") (Devereux, 1970, 23, 24).

Only a few years after the publication of Devereux's article, Foucault issued his seismic intervention in the history of sexuality, leading to extensive and vociferous debates within the field of classics about how to understand ancient erotic experience. The battle between those who aligned themselves with Foucault in arguing that sexuality as an identity marker is a strictly modern formulation and those who pushed back by arguing that some version of what we might call queer identities existed in antiquity was eventually termed "the sexuality wars".[10] This story has been told many times, and I will not recapitulate it here. Where it has left us, in

terms of questions about Sappho's identity, is not so much a consensus as a stalemate borne of fatigue, a resistance to read too much into what love and sex in the poetry might mean. The general attitude is well summed up by Anne Carson, in her typically laconic fashion: "Controversies about [Sappho's] personal ethics and way of life have taken up a lot of people's time throughout the history of Sapphic scholarship. It seems that she knew and loved women as deeply as she did music. Can we leave the matter there?" (Carson, 2002, x).

What all of these approaches have in common (apart from Carson's noncommittal one) is that they project the scholar's (necessarily) limited and partial perspective onto a putatively discoverable antiquity, shrinking the horizon of possibility in a manner that leads to a diminished portrait of both the text and the woman. Partial perspectives are unavoidable, but where they feign universality and nearly always originate from subjects conditioned by similar identity markers (e.g. white, male, heterosexual), a dangerously skewed consensus emerges.[11] At the same time, I believe the question continues to demand more than a Carsonian shrug from experts in ancient Greek literature. Popular interest in Sappho, at least in the young, online, Anglophone world, is on the rise. "Sapphic" as an identity marker has come back into fashion,[12] often preceded by a hashtag on social media, and the autonomous @Sapphobot on Twitter churns out scraps of Sappho's poetry to the masses, earning the most engagement with its homoerotic content. What, if anything, does philology have to offer those whose interest is piqued by a notion of a lower-case "lesbian" Sappho, that neither forecloses identification nor feeds into biographical fallacy, nor attempts to employ Sappho's relationalities into a teleological account of the development of Western sexuality?[13] This brief essay does not pretend to direct a new methodology that will perfectly thread this needle; rather, I aim to offer the beginnings of a sensibility that might help us move away from our essentialising instincts, guided by interventions in queer archives and queer contemporary art.

Sappho's Body as Archive

Philology in general and textual criticism are fundamentally archival projects, both literally, in that manuscripts and papyri reside in archives dispersed throughout the world, and those assembling texts based on these sources must directly access them via archive, and figuratively, in that the philologist aims to preserve, collate and interpret textual artefacts from antiquity for a broader audience. In order to begin to think through how a situated, queer philology might work, I turn now to recent queer archival practice for clues. Just as the "queer archive" described by Ann Czetkovich in her influential book *Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures*, has provided a means for archivists to think through the practice of preserving and the phenomenon of experiencing the material, embodied traces of queer pasts that continue to intrude on the present, so, too, a queer philology may provide some fruitful pathways towards thinking about the inter-implication of contemporary desire-based identity and antiquity. And just as Czetkovich begins with the Lesbian Herstory Archives (LHA) in Park Slope, Brooklyn, I, too, will

launch our excavation from there. Through this lens, the sensuous materiality of Sappho's poetry and its reception stands not in tension with the absences that emerge from both their poetic evocation of loss and their material fragmentation, but rather emphasises our inevitably partial knowledge of antiquity while also providing a means of non-hierarchical queer collaboration.

The Archives were founded in 1974 by Joan Nestle, Deborah Edel, Sahil Cavallo, Pamela Oline and Julia Penelope Stanley, a group of lesbian separatists and Marxists detached from the Gay Academic Union, with the agenda of "end[ing] the silence of patriarchal history about us – women who loved women" (Nestle, 1990, 87).[14] The LHA is currently situated in a brownstone, a residential structure that lends the place a homey, lived-in feeling. The site hosts a broad assortment of items: many shelves of books, photos, buttons, posters, magazines, love letters, all types of ephemera, many still in a jumble waiting to be sorted. Of the LHA's maximalist approach to acquisitions, Edel has said that "If it's done by a lesbian, we collect it. If it's thought about by a lesbian, we collect it. If it's written by a lesbian, if it's *touched* by a lesbian, we collect it" (PBS "In the Life", ep. 90, 12:49, 1999). While this is a joke, the comment channels the haptic and sensual experience of the place, the way that it has been enchanted by the presence and imprint of bodies and subjectivities. This enchantment is then amplified by the caring attention of volunteers and archivists, who work together to render the space something greater than the sum of its collection. Artist Anna Campbell reifies "both the queer labor and desire that is central to the survival of the place" with a permanent installation called *Archivist Fingers*, installed in 2014. According to the artist's website, the project "consists of a collection of bronze fingers cast from the archivists who built and sustained [the] institution". The sets of what appear to be middle and index fingers are affixed to the top of the library ladders and curled in an erotic crook over the track that runs along the top of the Archives' central bookshelves.

Sappho's presence is diffused throughout the Archives. She has lent her name to the titles of many of the books on the shelf, such as *My Name is Sappho* and *Sappho was a Right on Woman*. The LHA holds documentation and records of the Daughters of Bilitis, an organisation of lesbians founded in the 1950s, named after Sappho's lesbian lover in the poetry of Pierre Louÿs in his 1894 work "The Songs of Bilitis". One could chart the way that cryptic and coded references to the isle of Lesbos gave way to an out and proud reclamation of the name.[15] But this is not a study of Sappho and North American lesbian identity in the second half of the 20th century; rather, I want to suggest that the *idea* of the queer archive is a useful way of thinking about the corpus of Sappho's fragments themselves, and their affective excesses.

As noted earlier, the material scraps of papyri, collected by later editors, exist as a diffuse archive of materials, collected in various editions. But I am also interested here in the ways in which the poems themselves, Sappho's perspective and interests, constitute a sort of collection of ephemera. We might think of Sappho herself as an archivist, one who balances a rich material approach with an acknowledgement of how much has been lost, in life, in love, in time. She collects people (several have noted that, as far as we can tell from the small amount of evidence

we have, Sappho's poetry was particularly rich in personal pronouns, embodied energies and subjectivities), flowers, textiles, feelings and sensations.[16] Everything a capital-L-lesbian touches. The power of the object is palpable even in the most exiguous fragments; see fragment 125, "I used to weave crowns"; here the feminised, material labour of handicraft is imbued with a sense of nostalgia, heightened for the modern reader by the fact that the rest of the poem has been lost.

But it is not only fragmentation that evokes this constant tension between presence and absence. Sappho has a tendency to describe the way that the women she writes of inhabit space rather than describe them directly, as in fragment 96:

> Now she stands out among Lydian women like the rosy-fingered moon after sunset, surpassing all the stars, and its light spreads alike over the salt sea and the flowery fields; the dew is shed in beauty and roses bloom and tender chervil and flowery melilot.

She is beautiful not because of the way she attains a certain physical standard; she is beautiful because she is beheld, because of the way her physical embodiment holds space in the world.

Indeed, even poems like fragment 16, which remains nearly intact, vibrate with a longing and a sense of potentiality:

> Some say a host of cavalry, some a host of foot soldier, some a host of ships, is the most beautiful thing upon the black earth. But I say it is whatever one desires. It is entirely easy to make this intelligible to everyone. For she, Helen, surpassing everyone by far in respect to beauty leaving she went, sailing to Troy; not at all did she remember her child, nor her own parents, but [lacuna] led her off . . . lightly . . . now reminds me of Anaktoria, who is not here. I would prefer to see her lovely step and the sparkling light on her face than the armed forces of Lydia.

The poem is often considered to be a renunciation of martial aesthetics (and therefore, indirectly, Homeric poetics) and a celebration of intimate erotic love. But between the many lacunae and apparently more intentional obfuscations, the relationships between the various terms invoked are not always entirely clear. For instance, the poem would more neatly fit romantic interpretation if the term "whatever" were not neuter, that is, if it could be immediately attached to a person, and translated "whomever". But Sappho keeps it ambiguous. Once Helen is introduced, one initially assumes that, of course, she is "the most beautiful thing", she whose beauty rallied so many dark ships to retrieve her, and the poem seems to point in this direction with the invocation of her "surpassing beauty"; but instead, we soon learn that despite her superlative looks, she has been presented as the subject, rather than the object of desire. And what is it that Helen "loves most"? Paris, the Trojan prince, is the usual answer to this question; his beauty overwhelmed Helen to the extent that she does the unthinkable, abandoning her progenitors, her child, and, with the abandonment of her husband, any chance of a reproductive future.

And yet neither Paris nor his beauty are in fact mentioned, at least in the poem as it survives. What is, in fact, foregrounded and eroticised in the Helen exemplum is the moment of escape. The first word of the third stanza is *kallipois'* "deserting"; the first letters of the participle, *kall*- recall the *kall*- of *kallos*, "beauty".[17] Maybe what is "the most beautiful thing" to Helen is not Alexander, but *leaving*: movement, freedom from patriarchal family structures, from expectations of fealty and the tethers of hetero-reproductivity. In Helen's fragmented escape there is a lightness, a hopefulness.

Like Helen, Anaktoria is all lightness and movement; in just a few words, she is both present and achingly absent. Perhaps she too loves leaving. But here, it is clear that what we are concerned with is *Sappho's* desire. And structurally, Anaktoria is to Sappho as freedom and escape is to Helen: a line of flight. While for Helen there is freedom in forgetting, the possibility of Sappho's freedom lies in her remembering. It soon becomes clear that the poem's primary project, the thing that Sappho wants "to make understandable", is not so much the banal observation that people like what they like. Rather, it is an attempt to fashion (that is, *poiesai*, as she writes in line 5, a word that can refer to the crafting of material objects as well as the composition of poems), and to make understood to others, the feeling evoked by her lover's present absence. The parallel emphasises that Sappho's state is not simply one of tragic longing for an unobtainable past, but that it is struck through with a hazy, conditional, hopeful future. Anaktoria is gone now, but she may return, and in her return, Sappho may find the lightness and freedom that Helen enjoyed so long ago. The poem is a densely woven swirl of time, longing, lust, materiality and spectrality, an attempt to make understood a subversive type of desire, and in this heady stew, it seems to prefigure many of the dynamics of contemporary studies in queer time.

Sappho's return to Helen is reminiscent of our own turn to Sappho, an example of how, as queer theorist Elizabeth Freeman has argued, "nonsequential forms of time . . . can fold subjects into structures of belonging and duration that may be invisible to the historicist eye" (Freeman, 2010, xi). Helen's moment of choice is presented as important in and of itself as the mark of an individuated, desiring subject, figured apart from (and, in the idiom of this poem, more significant than) the historical worldwide cataclysm that her choice precipitates; Sappho turns to and finds solace in this model. And we, in turn, locate in Sappho an individuated, desiring subject, a figure that, on one level, gives us solace and allows us to locate ourselves in history's grand, roughshod sweep. At the same time, Sappho gestures forwards in time, to the hazy, conditional future; as José Esteban Muñoz wrote, "queerness exists for us as an ideality that can be distilled from the past and used to imagine a future. The future is queerness's domain" (Muñoz, 2019, 35).

We cannot ignore, of course, the fragmentation of the poem. One could easily object to the reading I offered earlier by arguing that, for example, Paris and his overwhelming beauty may be lurking somewhere in the fourth stanza's lacuna. But I take this hermeneutic liberty purposefully. Fragmentation is an opportunity, lending itself to non-hierarchical, queer modes of reception, work that is free from

a patriarchal anxiety of influence, a concern with honouring a monumental father. Rather, it invites a cooperative, collaborative mode, a feeling of potential and intimate immediacy.[18]

Furthermore, fragmentation emphasises the text's materiality. All ancient texts, even those transmitted intact through manuscripts, of course have a long and rich material history. But fragmentation, by means of its striking absences, brings the corporeality of what remains into clearer focus. And indeed, the lacunae in Sappho's poems have behaved like the empty shelves in an archive, enticing artists to fill them. The amalgam that results, consisting of the poems themselves along with the many accretions that have accumulated around them over the millennia, I think accords well with Ann Cvetkovich's description of the queer archive in her book *Archive of Feeling:* a collection "composed of material practices that challenge traditional conceptions of history and understand the quest for history as a psychic need rather than a science" (Cvetkovich, 2003, 268).

Following this Sapphic digression, I want to return briefly to the LHA, and note that one of the concerns of the founders of the archive was precisely regarding how to do justice to lesbians of the past. In this case, not those of antiquity, but of the generation before them, of the 1950s. The following is from an issue of the Archives newsletter first printed in 1981:

> If we ask decorous questions of history, we will get a genteel history. If we assume that because sex was a secret it did not exist, we will get a sexless history. If we assume that in periods of oppression, Lesbians lost their autonomy and acted as victims only, we destroy not only history but lives. For many years the psychologists told us we were both emotionally and physically deviant; they measured our nipples and clitorises to chart our queerness, they talked about how we wanted to be men and how our sexual styles were pathetic imitations of the real thing and all along under this barrage of hatred and fear, we loved. They told us that we should hate ourselves and sometimes we did, but we were also angry, resilient and creative. We were part of a community that took care of itself. And most of all we were Lesbian women, revolutionizing each of these terms. We create history as much as we discover it. What we call history becomes history and since this is a naming time, we must be on guard against our own class prejudices and discomforts. If close friends and devoted companions are to be part of Lesbian history, so must be also the Lesbians of the fifties who left no doubt about their sexuality and courage.
>
> (Nestle, 1990, 91)

Just as in its early days the LHA was concerning itself with how to relate to an earlier generation, with different ways of self-identifying and different codes of conduct, many queer people today are grappling with how to feel about the lesbianism of the second wave. On the one hand, nostalgia is high: artists have been reprinting T-shirts from the archives, to great demand; a queer dating app, modelled on the text-only personal ads that used to appear in the back of alt-weeklies seems to

be flourishing. And to be fair to the Archives and its administrators, the LHA has admirably sought to adapt to the changing times, to remain a fresh and vibrant institution; one that, for example, now is open to people of any gender identity, while its founding charter limited access to women only. But the Archives cannot entirely shake the fact that they are a relic of a certain era of lesbian feminism, one characterised by the mutually reinforcing ideals of separatism and essentialism – that is, a utopian fervour for a woman-only existence, wherein woman is narrowly defined as one who was identified as female at birth and lived their entire lives publicly as women. I should note that, of course, trans-exclusionary "feminism" is not just a relic of the past but an ongoing dangerous and reactionary response to the still partial effort to include – and protect the dignity, rights and safety of – trans* people.

Furthermore, it may be unsurprising to hear that, despite foundational contributions to first- and second-wave queer and feminist causes by women of colour, the movement regularly defaulted to a breezy white supremacism; examples are endless, but I will give two for illustrative purposes. The Daughters of Bilitis, mentioned earlier as one of the nods to Sappho in the Archives, though it had among its founders a Chicana and a Filipina woman, committed itself to a white middle-class respectability politics that often left women of colour marginalised in the organisation.[19] When women of colour decided to found their own lesbian separatist commune after feeling marginalised in majority-white collectives, two white lesbians insisted on their right to colonise the space until it was shut down.[20]

How do we negotiate our relationship with such a space? Or, to get to the heart of it, how do we negotiate our relationship with such a history? And do these imperfect, impure attempts to find kinship between feminism's and lesbianism's various waves have anything to tell us current and aspiring queer philologists about how we might turn our disciplinary tools inside-out in order to seek a non-positivist, non-essentialising relationship with Sappho? I will take some cues from a contemporary art piece that pays homage to the power and the beauty of this moment in queer history while eschewing simple identification or imitation that manages to be simultaneously reverent and irreverent; my hope is that the artist's attitude towards her source material, to the space, objects, energies, and methodologies of the LHA could inspire a similar sensibility as we summon our own conceptions of antiquity. *A Girl's Journey to the Well of Forbidden Knowledge*, by Canadian artist Allyson Mitchell, was installed at the Art Gallery of Toronto in 2010.[21] The walls of the gallery are covered with artistic renditions of the shelves of the LHA. Though she worked from photographs of the shelves, the lovingly detailed hand-drawn illustrations evoke the affective power of the place in a way that no photo could. Mitchell mirrors the acts of labour and desire described by Anne Campbell and her *Archivist Fingers*, while paying homage to the authors and radical book publishers who brought these works to life. The walls are covered in gold and silver, washed over with lavender, and graced with a pattern that could be interpreted as geological strata, wood grain or labia. Two figures stand in the middle of the gallery, one glowing silver and the other gold, hands clasped as they gaze at the shelves. A giant crocheted brain hovers above them, with cords connected to their crotches. One is burning Janson's *History of Art*; the other offers Cvetkovich's *Archive of Feelings*.

Towards a Deep Lez Philology

If we look towards *A Girl's Journey to the Well of Forbidden Knowledge* for methodological inspiration, it is relevant to know that Mitchell does not aim simply to reproduce but freely edits into the archive. As a Canadian, she interpolates lesbian Canadian literature onto the shelves. In a later homage to queer theorist Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, she adds a shelf of the theorist's books. The archive serves not as monument or monolith but as a living space. It is also important to note that everything in the display is larger than life – the statues, the bookshelves, all lending a sense of awe. Published alongside a survey of the exhibition is a document by Mitchell, titled "Deep Lez I Statement", from which the following text is excerpted:

> Deep Lez is an experiment, a process, an aesthetic, and a blend of theory and practice. Deep Lez is right this minute, and it is rooted in herstories and theories that came before. It is taking the most relevant and capable ideas and using them as tools to create new ways of thinking, while still clinging to more radical politics that have already happened but definitely aren't over yet. Part of the deep of Deep Lez is about commitment, staying power, and significance. Part of the deep of Deep Lez is about philosophies and theories, as in, "Wow man, that's deep". Deep Lez uses cafeteria-style mixings of craft, context, food, direct action, and human connections to maintain radical dyke politics and resistant strategies. Part quilting bee, part public relations campaign, and part Molotov cocktail, Deep Lez seeks to map out the connections between the second-wave feminisms that have sustained radical lesbian politics and the current third-wave (and now fourth-wave) feminisms that look to take apart the foundation on which those politics were built . . . Deep Lez is meant to be a macraméd conceptual tangle for people to work through how they integrate art into their politics, how they live their lives, and how they get fired up about ideas . . . Deep Lez is not meant to become its own dogma but to encourage thinking about new strategic positions. Every Deep Lez moment is different because it is contingent on the contributions and participations of many, and because it is accumulating and discarding as it goes.
>
> (Cvetkovich with Mitchell, 2011, 607–608)

That is, Mitchell's approach to the Lesbian Herstory Archives is in sympathy with the way she appropriates and reconsiders lesbian pasts more broadly speaking, in particular the good and the bad of second-wave feminism. She offers a way of relating to, elevating and celebrating kinship with a material past that is not overly essentialising or positivist, a lesbian identity that defines itself with rather than against trans* lesbians. This can help us think about how we relate to antiquity broadly speaking but also the way we think about Sappho-as-lesbian more particularly.

Bearing in mind the critique offered in the essay's opening section, and our dive into the queer archive via Sappho, I will offer some provisional thoughts

towards (to be distinguished from prescriptions *for*) what might characterise a deep lez philology (DLP), more a sensibility than a methodology, an approach that is informed by queer theorists and artists, and feminist readings of Sappho from eon to eon.[22]

First of all, while a DLP sensibility can inform what we might think of as more traditional philological practices, DLP also seeks to expand our ideas about what a practice deemed "the love of words" might entail, finding ways of responding to, representing or acknowledging a text's affective excesses, foregrounding the desires woven within it and the desires of the philologist in their encounter with it alike. Similarly, DLP makes an effort to reckon with and elevate the material realities of a text's formation and its current constitution while paying heed to the material realities constructed within a text's dramatic world. Like Haraway's situated feminism, DLP neither reinforces dominant ideology by insisting on a fantasy of maintaining a neutral perspective, nor abandons the possibility of describing a shared reality by wallowing in a relativistic nihilism. DLP is non-dogmatic and theoretically adventurous, an open and non-paranoid mode (as in Sedgwick's "Paranoid Reading") that will allow us new ways to conceptualise and share knowledge and feelings without allowing our sense of possibility to become calcified. As Haraway argues, "we need the power of modern critical theories of how meanings and bodies get made, not in order to deny meanings and bodies, but in order to build meanings and bodies that have a chance for life" (Haraway, 1988, 580). Following this assertion, DLP understands bodies as sites of sensing and feeling, loci of interpretation conditioned by individual experience, a means of connection with others and with history, characterised by meaningful differences, while resisting the faux-scientistism that tries to categorise them. DLP embraces maximalism, stacking interpretations like a cluttered archive shelf rather than parsing them into a single one. At the same time, it is not a precious mode of making meaning, and discards interpretations that have outlived their usefulness, while never obfuscating the fact of their history. DLP is ideally a product of collective labour: open, ethical and nonproprietary. This is in no small part because the participants of DLP are by necessity aware of the partialness and partiality of their own perspectives. Situated perspectives do little good when they exist in a vacuum; Haraway calls for "partial, locatable, critical knowledges sustaining the possibility of webs of connections called solidarity in politics and shared conversations in epistemology".[23]

To return to the chapter's opening anecdote, we might, for example, imagine something like an *apparatus criticus* of Sappho 31 (translated earlier, pg. xxx) that offers not only the emendations or speculative reconstructions of scholars, but that stacks on the same level irreverent, embodied lesbian readings like Marilyn Hacker's:

> Didn't Sappho say her guts clutched up like this
> before a face suddenly numinous,
> her eyes watered, knees melted. Did she lactate
> again, milk brought down by a girl's kiss? . . .

Or perhaps shift our perspective and imagine @Sapphobot's automated churn of fragments-in-translation and the attendant commentary and engagement as its own collaboratively and non-hierarchically collated critical edition of Sappho. Or we might take more seriously projects like j/j hastain's *Sapphopunk*, which builds a narrative around the fragments and testimonia, which serve as an anchor for its phantasmagoric, expansively gendered and deeply erotic depiction of Sappho's "school", told in text and represented via collage, understanding them as credible philological projects.[24]

It is important to note that not all of the nodes in these webs will necessarily be "lez", or not exclusively so. While this sensibility was conceived through and with self-identified lesbians, similar approaches are readily available to and have already been undertaken by other and intersecting marginalised subject positions,[25] and indeed the network cannot succeed without them. I will close with an example of an engagement with Sappho and her history that I understand as operating in conversation and in solidarity with the provisional program outlined here. While only "philological" in the broadest of terms, it offers a similar, though distinctly situated, provocation.

On her 80-page poem *Muse & Drudge*, first published in 1995, Harryette Mullen has written that

> there's the blues on the one hand and lyric poetry on the other hand, and where they intersect or overlap. Thinking of this poem as the place where Sappho meets the blues at the crossroads, I imagined Sappho becoming Sapphire and singing the blues.
>
> <div align="right">(Bedient, 1996, 654)</div>

The name "Sapphire" is a reference to a demeaning depiction of a "sassy" Black woman on the American television show *Amos n' Andy*. Mullen describes Sapphire as "an iconic black woman who refuses to be silenced". She is a "mule for hire or worse" singing "ruses of the lunatic muse" (Mullen, 2006, xi):

> Sapphire's lyre styles
> plucked eyebrows
> bow lips and legs
> whose lives are lonely too
>
> my last nerve's lucid music
> sure chewed up the juicy fruit
> you must don't like my peaches
> there's some left on the tree

These first two stanzas are dense with poetic allusion, weaving together Sappho's famous fragment about the "sweetapple abandoned – no, forgotten" at the top of the tree, and Bessie Smith's lines, "If you don't like my peaches, don't shake my tree", a variant of Ma Rainey's "If you don't like my ocean, don't fish in my sea, / Stay out of my valley, and let my mountain be" (Frost, 1998, 471). Reading

"plucked" and "bow" as verbs, Sapphire's body serves as the medium for the music rather than the lyre.

The title *Muse & Drudge* could be read as a sort of gloss on Welcker's approach to the ancient poet – a bifurcation between the Sappho of verse (famously called "the tenth muse" by Hellenistic poets) and Sappho as debased, menial sex worker; "drudge" also recalls the racialised menial labourer casually invoked by Murray at the opening of this essay. But here, rather than discarding the drudge into the rubbish heap, Mullen synthesises the two women via the defiant tradition of the blues in order to transcend the misogynoir that long sought to mock and demean Black women, creating "a text for collaborative reading and an occasion to unite audiences often divided by racial and cultural differences" (Mullen, 2006, xi). By approaching "Sappho" from a distinctly situated and embodied subject position, Mullen fashions an expansive way of reading and relating to antiquity. And by recognising such engagements as a part of a shared, collaborative project, with diverse perspectives, the horizon of possibility when it comes to what antiquity can do for us today will continue to expand.

Notes

1 There are, of course, exceptions to even this fiction, but it is one that North American classics has particularly favoured.
2 "Deep lez" is a formulation of the artist/academic Allyson Mitchell and will be explored in greater detail in the following.
3 See Most (2016) for a discussion of the history and methodology of *Quellenforschung*.
4 See Whitmarsh (2004, 26–29) for a critique of the normative, patriarchal politics that underlies genealogy as the controlling metaphor of textual criticism.
5 Ultimately, though, as Joan DeJean argues, this obsession with Sappho's chastity is borne more of misogyny than of homophobia per se. Welcker was concerned that if Sappho were thought to have had sexual relationships with other women, the noble institution of Greek pederasty – love between men – would be sullied. Women, Welcker argued, were capable only of base, sensual love; any hint that women could be involved in relationships akin to Greek pederasty would cheapen the whole affair and thus threaten the foundations of a burgeoning German nationalism.
6 Several scholars have indicated the vanishingly thin evidence on which such an assertion rests. See in particular Stehle (1996), who argues that the schoolmistress theory diminishes the artistry of the poetry.
7 I am indebted here to a review of the book by Stehle (2021), who provides an exacting and persuasive critique of Tsantsanaglou's volume on these very terms.
8 See e.g. Lefkowitz on the interpretive problems posed by ancient biographical testimonia.
9 Translations from Greek are mine.
10 Though she does not seem to have coined it, Skinner (1996) uses the phrase in the title of an essay that provides a helpful and accessible summary of the debate as it stood in the mid-nineties. See Blondell and Ormand (2015), who provide a somewhat updated overview, and Ormand (2023) for a first-person perspective on how the field has evolved over the last several decades.
11 To be clear, there have been numerous significant and trenchant feminist interventions in this tradition over the past several decades. See in particular duBois (1995), Skinner and Stehle (1996). What is different about my proposition here is that I seek to formulate an explicitly queer approach.

12 Hamou (2022).
13 There are other approaches in this vein that have been fruitful. Mueller (2020), for example, offers a sensitive and sensible solution, one that discovers an immanent queerness in Sappho's poetics while eschewing biographical speculation.
14 For a history of the Archives written by one of its founders, see Nestle (1990).
15 See Valentine (2009) for an analysis of the role of Sappho and Lesbos in the Daughters of Bilitis' periodical, *The Ladder*.
16 Yatromanalakis (2007), Mueller (2020).
17 duBois (1995) makes this observation.
18 See Gubar (1984).
19 See Thorpe (2001, 41–48).
20 See Paz (1980), as discussed in Archibald (2021).
21 For images and discussion of the exhibit see Cvetkovich with Mitchell (2011).
22 For a reading of Euripides' *Iphigenia at Aulis* with something like a DLP sensibility, see Haselswerdt (2022); for a reading of a fragment of Sappho that employs this sensibility see Haselswerdt (2023, 452–456).
23 There is some resonance between this approach and the idea of classics as an "open field" as described by Güthenke and Holmes (2018).
24 I discuss *Sapphopunk* in Haselswerdt (2023).
25 For other explicit critiques of philology from particular embodied perspectives, see Rankine (2019) and Silverblank and Ward (2020).

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Critical Time and Critical Space

9 Colonial Cartography and the Classical Imagination

Mapping Critique and Dreaming Ancient Worlds

Mathura Umachandran

Introduction

Donna Haraway's 1988 critique of the "god trick", or the "view from nowhere", points to an epistemological position that wipes away any traces of being particular to any time or place. The view from nowhere is, in its essence, a claim to objective knowledge. As Haraway argued, the god trick describes the founding principles of modern scientific knowledge-making in the West because, in contrast to knowledge-making from other cultures and historical moments, these practices are interested in (1) camouflaging the makers and their positions and (2) disguising the nature of the work that is required to position someone as a godlike viewer. Haraway writes, "Vision is *always* a question of the power to see – and perhaps of the violence implicit in our visualizing practices. With whose blood were my eyes crafted?"[1]

At the same time that Haraway was developing an analysis of the privilege and violence of claims to objectivity within epistemology of Western science, critical geographers were turning attention to maps. Thus, scholars who were trained as geographers re-appraised the technical and knowledge-making capacities of maps (Monmonier, 1985) or took up the tools of post-structuralism (Harley, 1989; Huggan, 1989) to develop "critical cartography". As John Crampton and Jeremy Krygier assert, "We define critical cartography as a one-two punch of new mapping practices and theoretical critique. Critical cartography challenges academic cartography by linking geographic knowledge with power, and thus is political".[2] We can with Crampton and Kygier think about map-making as not a merely neutral description of space but rather *a way of producing space* in order to meet certain ideological needs. Critical cartographers have also theorised strategies of resistance, such as counter-mapping, map inversion and autonomous cartography. Often these strategies require stepping beyond academic knowledge-making and into collaboration with practitioners of explicitly activist map making collectives (collectivity being another way of decomposing the single and singular vision of the cartographer), such as Hackitectura, Kollektiv OrangoTango, Counter-Cartographies and the Decolonial Atlas.

Drawing on these deep currents of critical thinking, this chapter resonates with the first and third critical steps away from the discipline of classics as observed by

the CAWS manifesto, namely, a refusal of Eurocentrism and positivism.[3] As a first step towards refusing to reproduce the epistemological hierarchies of the god trick, let me situate myself in time and place. I am writing from an in-between place, 30,000 feet up, somewhere over the Atlantic. I could flick on my screen and check the position of the plane in real time, how high above the ocean, the speed of the headwind, time to destination. What would such extra information afford me? Perhaps the illusion of maximum control precisely because I am so powerless, a sense that I could be a part of this journey rather than a passenger who would do well to stay in their seat and keep calm or quiet as the situation requires. Yet I am also aware that crossing this ocean has been an involuntary, and sometimes deadly journey for many people. I am aware of the environmental destruction of air travel, with its disproportionately disastrous impact on the Global South. If you asked me to draw a map of where I will call home for the next year, I would draw you the Finger Lakes, and point to the bottom of the westernmost one, and call it by its indigenous name: Gayogohó꞉nǫ' (Cayuga: "the people of the pipe"). I know about its waterfalls and gorges, its hiking trails and vineyards. I know that the institution that I am going to work in occupies stolen land. I know that I am part of a knowledge-making industry that has the tendency to wipe out ecologies of knowledge. I suspect that of all the places to come close to the god trick, my view from above is it.

<div align="center">***</div>

Geographer John Brian Harley made the following observation about Western scientific map making as he sought to deconstruct its premises:

> To catalogue the world is to appropriate it, so that all these technical processes represent acts of control over its image which extend beyond the professed uses of cartography. The world is disciplined. The world is normalized.[4]

The scientificity of Western map-making is not merely a way of describing the world; it is a way of shaping the world so that it can be better controlled. It is relatively easy to demonstrate this and therefore to indicate how the claims of this mode of map-making to accuracy are false. Perhaps the most commonly used map of the world in the modern era is the one drawn up by Flemish cartographer Gerardus Mercator in 1569 based on a cylindrical projection.[5] Known as the Mercator projection and made primarily for navigational purposes, it employs egregious distortions of sizes that have nothing to do with the issue of representing a sphere in two dimensions.[6] Thus, the Mercator projection represents Canada, the contiguous United States, Alaska, Greenland, Western Europe, Scandinavia, and Russia as significantly bigger than they are relative to other land masses.

This outsizing effectively renders the entire continent of Africa as much smaller than it really is, with the result that Greenland and continental Africa appear to be similar sizes. Such distortions are significant – not only does it make a mockery of the claim to accuracy but also tells us about relations of power. Representing Africa diminished is an Africa better controlled, handled, administered, and in all senses

kept small. Graphic designer Kai Krause demonstrated this in his 2010 thought experiment "The True Size of Africa", in which he overlaid several non-African countries and regions that the Mercator project has taught us to imagine as large, such as the United States and Western Europe within the outline of continental Africa.[7] Krause coined the term "immappancy" to describe "insufficient geographical knowledge" – his thought experiment was an effective way of highlighting how insufficient geographical knowledge is embedded in the ways of imagining the world. While Krause walked up to the line of calling the cartographic principles of the Mercator projection colonial, he did not explicitly name them as such. It takes further work to put the pieces of the puzzle together, contextualising Mercator's efforts as in tune with European colonial projects of ownership and extraction that were already in full swing. Sixty years prior to Mercator's map, Christopher Columbus had travelled across the Atlantic for the purposes of exploitation and conquest. Colonial mapping projects such as Mercator's took place in a moment when it was normal to contort the representation of the world for the purposes of exploiting it.

Cartography marks one of the key intersections in this phase of modern imperialist extraction. Mercator's navigable representation of the entire world was not mere disinterested research – it had and continues to have practical implications for our thinking about the world. What is new and significant about the coloniality of the European scientific revolution in the sixteenth century is that it went hand in glove with the project of empire building, extracting and stealing knowledge, land, resources and people. The whole world, and therefore not only Africa, could be arranged and represented with Europe at its centre. Moreover, a further effect of the Mercator projection's work to distort space is to bolster the notion that Africa is less historically developed than Europe. World maps are ideologically committed to visually representing a particular version of world history, namely, that there is a single historical timeline just as there is a single spatial plane of representing the world.[8] I thereby hope to reveal the ideological commitments of mapping the *classical* world in how one particular temporal and spatial snapshot of the past is fixed and valorised.

As Hannah Silverblank convincingly shows, disciplinary tools that claim to be neutral are especially deserving of the critical attention that "neutrality" deflects.[9] With Silverblank then, I have been arguing that the desire to see and represent the world all at once is a cornerstone of colonial epistemology since this is ultimately a desire for mastery through knowing and ordering.[10] Colonial mappings allow the viewer to place themselves (paradoxically) at the centre whilst also in no place at all. This is a particular kind of world-making, the world made according to a colonial programme.

I shift focus to examining one particular map and its production of space-time: *The Barrington Atlas of the Greek and Roman World* (2000, ed. Talbert, hereafter *The Barrington Atlas*).[11] Using insights that indigenous thinkers and scholars, critical cartography collectives, and the critical ancient world studies collective have put forward, we can assess critically the world-making of *The Barrington Atlas*. I am interested in questions such as: How is *the* world of the Greeks and Romans made into an object that is described in a map? What knowledge is left out, which

peoples have to be erased, which cultures and evidence discarded in order to give us a particular idea of the ancient world within a narrative of the historical progress of the West? Pivoting from Arnold, NeCamp and Sohan's observation at the head of this section, I gather my questions under one larger umbrella question: "what are the rhetorical moves of this map and its world-making practice?"[12] To put *The Barrington Atlas* into context of wider intellectual developments, at the same moment in which critical cartography was emerging (1980 onwards), in classics a comprehensive atlas of the world of the Greeks and Romans was perceived as an important desideratum.

Reading the Coloniality of *The Barrington World Atlas*

> Maps themselves are not the issue – maps have always been and will always be rhetorical instruments, and few mapmakers would deny such a claim. Rather, it is our interpretations of maps, our reluctance to acknowledge the rhetoricity of these spatial representations, which can inhibit our work.
>
> Arnold et al. (2015, 274)

The Barrington Atlas is made up of two volumes and a CD-ROM; the main map volume will be my concern here.[13] Ancient historian Richard Talbert served as its main editor, overseeing the Classical Atlas Project at University of North Carolina, Chapel, Hill for more than a decade (1988–2000). An international working collaboration between cartographers and classicist-compilers produced *The Barrington Atlas*.[14] A closer look at the process of making is revealing for the wider point of the present chapter – I will return to this shortly.

A simple description of *The Barrington Atlas* can demonstrate its ideology of space-time. For the 99 maps in the main volume, scales of either 1:1,000,000 or 1:500,000 are employed; we might consider this to be the standard scale of *The Barrington Atlas*. There are two telling exceptions: at one end of the spectrum, three additional maps depict in much greater detail the "environs of the three great centers Athens, Rome, Byzantium/Constantinople" (Talbert, 2000, xx), using a scale of 1:150, 000 (and a different set of base maps). By contrast, Talbert explains that

> even 1:1,000000 would be too generous a scale at which to show the extensive remoter regions where Greeks and Romans explored and traded rather than actually settled – in particular, the Baltic, Arabia, East Africa, India, and Sri Lanka. These are therefore limited to overviews of 1:5,000,000.
>
> (Talbert, 2000, xx–xxi).

This version of an ancient world is determined by and focuses on "settlement", that is, the extent to which the Greeks and Romans were successful in stamping their domination. Places of mere "exploration and trade", according to this logic, are literally made smaller because they are not part of this dominant worldview. Here, ancient empire and contemporary colonial epistemology coincide and reproduce

one another – the centres of power are rendered bigger than anything else on the map. Furthermore, with the exception of "the Baltic", the named areas deemed peripheral indicate places that were made subjects to the British Empire from the 18th century onwards. If fashioning relationships between the Roman Empire and the British Empire was a key strategy to bolster the legitimacy of colonial rule, as Vasunia (2013) has demonstrated, then rendering former British colonies as peripheral on the map helps to reinforce the mobilisation of Greece and Rome in the imperial imagining of world history.

"Invisible Dragons in the Margins": Problems of Time and Mapping as a Classicising Tool

Talbert (2003, 10) pre-emptively parries queries such as the one just raised about diachronic change as follows:

> My view was that the Barrington Atlas should endeavor to show the ancient landscape so far as possible, not the modern, and this attempt was undertaken. The fact is that a high proportion of identifiable manmade landscape changes postdate World War II, and are not so difficult to adjust for . . . . It is true that where extensive restoration of a familiar landscape has been possible, certain users of the atlas are liable to be disoriented by the result. Lovers of Venice have complained to me about its "disappearance" from Map 40, and Spaniards living north of Cadiz have taken me to task for rendering where they live today as open water on Map 26. Such upsets are to be regretted, but they can hardly justify abandonment of the attempt to set ancient cultural data as far as possible within the ancient physical landscape . . . . Time and again, after all, ancient writers' geographical references are meaningful only in relation to the ancient landscape, and if we seriously wish to engage with any past civilization we should strive to do so within their landscape, not ours, however unfamiliar it may appear.

Here the editor is clear about the priority of ancient evidence, using a broadly historicist justification for the selective criteria for representation. The "lovers of Venice" and the "Spaniards . . . living north of Cadiz" have clearly raised objections but these are subordinated to the more pressing aim to depict antiquity objectively. Talbert goes on to offer a further interpretative difficulty in representing diachronic change: attempts to track changes including conquests of empires, boundaries and borders of modern nation-states, contested toponyms would make a map so overly dense with information it would be unusable. As a concern for the reader or user, this seems like a reasonable way of justifying the selection criteria. Yet the tendency to simplify the representation of space also requires selectivity that is important to producing the space. We need to look at what effects these selections have and, so, what kind of world they make.

Each map in *The Barrington Atlas* depicts information drawn from five time periods, that is, from about 1000 BC (the period known as the early Iron Age) to

AD 640 (the end of the period known as late antiquity). The compilers were "instructed to *highlight with a distinctive color* [sic] activity confined to only one of the of the five periods into which the full time period is divided . . .: Archaic, Classical, Hellenistic, Roman, Late Antique". So each map does not represent the same space five times, nor do we get five different maps showing change over time. The temporality of given space in *The Barrington Atlas* is much more fragmentary and patchworked than the spatial continuities that are assumed. This patchworked-ness comes down to the editor's decision to include only things that were "significant"; things that were excluded from significance might be "findspots of coins, inscriptions, milestones, or pottery; battlefields, fords, kilns; movements of people; sea routes; shipwrecks" (Talbert, 2001, xxvi).

These supposedly less significant types of evidence are precisely those that allow archaeologists to track the material life of history from below, that is, displaced populations, the ordinariness of life lived thousands of years ago, political formations that did not receive extended treatment from high literary sources. Certain histories are suppressed in the narrative of space-time told by *The Barrington Atlas*' representation of space. "Significance" already predisposes the map to narrating the world of the ancient Greeks and Romans in distinction to what is insignificant – ephemeral, quotidian, low, marginal, mobile, circulating. The exclusion of the kinds of evidence that tell us about migratory populations and nomadic peoples reveals what relationships to land *The Barrington Atlas* prioritises, namely, relations of ownership and power that are constitutive of the thing termed by some as civilisation.

A broader problem about what the *The Barrington Atlas* does and does not show becomes apparent when we think about the drawbacks of criteria of selectivity. Despite committing to selectivity, *The Barrington Atlas* also expresses a desire for comprehensiveness in terms of representation of space and time. For instance, the Princeton University Press website states, "Since the 1870s, all attempts to map the classical world *comprehensively* have failed. The *Barrington Atlas* has finally achieved that elusive and challenging goal" (emphases mine).[15] The dust jacket of the physical book further extols its virtues of comprehensiveness:

> The resulting *Barrington Atlas* is a reference work of permanent value. It has an exceptionally broad appeal to everyone worldwide with an interest in the ancient Greeks and Romans, the lands they penetrated, and the peoples and cultures they encountered in Europe, North Africa, and Western Asia. Scholars and libraries should find it essential. It is also for students, travelers, lovers of fine cartography, and anyone eager to retrace Alexander's eastward marches, cross the Alps with Hannibal, traverse the Eastern Mediterranean with St. Paul, or ponder the roads, aqueducts, and defense works of the Roman Empire. For the new millennium the *Barrington Atlas* brings the ancient past back to life in an unforgettably vivid and inspiring way.

If the epistemological stance was not already clear from the description of Greeks and Romans "penetrating" space alongside the euphemism of their "encounters" with peoples designated Other (at what point could a conquered land be considered a natural part of imperial conquest?), this blurb sets aside temporal selectiveness

and instead presents *The Barrington Atlas* as timeless. Therefore, it emphasises the "permanence" of the *Atlas*'s value as well as the spatial breadth of its appeal ("exceptionally broad", "worldwide"). In noting the publication year as a kind of historical watershed ("the new millennium"), the final sentence seeks to reiterate and collapse the temporal distance between the ancient past and the contemporary map-user. The ultimate achievement of *The Barrington Atlas*, this blurb argues, is at once scientific, in the accuracy with which it represents space, as well as creative, in the vividness of its world-making. If we are invested in the world *The Barrington Atlas* claims to make, it can pull one version of the ancient past into the present, thereby collapsing temporal differences or change over time.

In the paradox of a spatio-temporally selective map with universalising tendencies, the idea of the classical thrives (see the introduction to this volume). A contemporary idea of the world of the Greeks and the Romans has been projected back onto the past, drawing the space as well as the time of the past in its own image. Furthermore, this paradox of selectivity and universality allows *The Barrington Atlas* to elevate itself to the status of "a classic", a tool that is not likely to be bettered, a definitive mapping of the ancient world. It is not coincidental then that *The Barrington Atlas* became a landmark work of reference for classicists and ancient historians – it serves the purposes of a discipline that has not reckoned the false universality of the Greeks and Romans as classics.[16]

It is striking then that *The Barrington Atlas* was recognised as definitive immediately upon publication. In their review, Alcock et al. comment (2001, 457; emphasis mine):[17]

> One feels in good hands; you believe in the dots on the maps of the Barrington Atlas, and so you should.
> Within the parameters set for it, the Atlas is a highly successful achievement . . . *Without question, the field of ancient history and classical studies owes the editor a great debt for this monumental labor* (sic) *of love*.

Though Alcock, Dey and Parker do not quibble with the world represented in *The Barrington Atlas* and enjoin us to feel comforted by its authoritative depiction ("one feels in good hands"), they go on to raise a number of issues about the cartographic principles of the project. They too raise the issue of "significance" as a criterion for representation – they cite as an example Messenia, a place which was annexed, exploited and stripped of its labour power over centuries from the Archaic period to the fourth century BC (Luraghi, 2009). The reviewers point to Messenia as a site because in *The Barrington Atlas*, it shows up as almost devoid of human activity, and therefore, it is "strikingly (and unnervingly) more or less a map of Pausanias' travels" (2001, 459). Alcock et al. have valid criticisms, noting the "strong bias towards the classical" (2001, 459) pointing out that the lack of representation of diachronic change is problematic, and pithily framing the issue of "significance" as "significant to whom?"

> any perusal of the Atlas leaves little room to doubt just who and what receives the lion's share of attention . . . as with the missing evidence of survey, that

relative absence should at least be more prominently recognized – and recognized as undesirable. Otherwise, and without this at all being the work's intention, the Atlas could feed a Eurocentric, colonialist view of the ancient world.

<div align="right">(Alcock et al., 2001, 460)</div>

Ultimately however, they pull their punch when it comes to determining the utility of *The Barrington Atlas* – they only go as far as expressing a worry that it could be misused by the under-informed or the uncritical reader: "the user has to meet the *Atlas* halfway and with caution – as, of course, he or she should approach all maps" (ibid). Compare this with the earlier comment: "there are hazards in unreflective uses of the Atlas – invisible dragons in its margins" (458)

I turn briefly to look at the administrative process of compiling the maps in *The Barrington Atlas* in order to show that, contra the reviewers, the onus of interpretation ought not to be on the user to bring a critical disposition to the *Atlas* that works hard to present itself as authoritative and as neutral description. The reviewers' suggestion misses the coloniality already baked into the process of making *The Barrington Atlas*, and not just in cases like Messenia where the criteria of significance seriously skews the understanding of what humans were doing in a particular space over a period of centuries because the evidence of their activity does not meet the criterion of significance.

Editor Richard Talbert describes the process as follows (2018, 119):

> For supervision of map compilation the classical world has been divided into ten segments, each assigned to an expert who is referred to for convenience by the Late Roman administrator's title of vicarius or "vicar". The vicar's role has been in the first instance to assist in settling the layout of maps for his region, and to recommend names of compilers for each. Subsequently vicars will assume the key roles of keeping in touch with "their" compilers, responding to the scholarly queries they are sure to raise, and scrutinizing their submissions . . . . Vicars were sought initially from North America and seven were found, several of them involved with the project from the beginning.

The term "vicar" can have altogether different meanings, depending on your set of cultural knowledges; for someone familiar with the Anglican Church, it could be a title referring to a priest; likewise, in the Catholic Church, it might carry the ring of the one of the official papal title *Vicarius Christi*. So if the idea that vicar means deputy for a figure or office of authority, what is it doing here in the compiling process of *The Barrington Atlas*?[18] Talbert indicates that the process he has in mind is the Roman Emperor Diocletian (244–311CE) and his slate of reforms which included how the imperial provinces were administered, in order to further consolidate the system of imperial control, exploitation and violence.[19] Diocletian's vicars were part of a much more elaborate system of administration than had previously existed, with the aim of separating military and civil authority in the imperial

provinces as well as making the chains of communication more efficient. Talbert's styling of the compiling process after Diocletian's administration discloses how the world *The Barrington Atlas* creates is supposed to be understood: highly centralised, yes, but above all, a work of an imperial bureaucracy, creating and stabilising order through clearly delineated structures of command and communication. Whilst Roman and early modern European imperialisms are not identical of course, comparison with and emulation of ancient Rome proved to be an enabling and justificatory fiction for later empires.[20] The coloniality of *The Barrington Atlas* is apparent not just in its representation of the world but also in its processes, in its willingness to take over administrative systems that appear already to be doing an efficient job of controlling land, people, information and resources.

We could think about this collapsing of temporal difference, in which modern colonial cartography adopts ancient Roman imperial bureaucratic structure, as a house of mirrors, terrifying and full of distortions. As we saw with the paradox of selectiveness and universality, however, contradictions of colonial world-making abound. Talbert also positions *The Barrington Atlas* within a tradition of knowledge-making since the early modern period, that is in the age of Western empire. When he writes, "To produce an atlas of the Greek and Roman world as a fundamental resource for the study of classical antiquity is a grand ambition first realized in the sixteenth century. It has remained a preoccupation of scholars ever since, as our knowledge and technology have continued to improve" (1), this assertion does not nullify the coloniality of the mirroring process that we have just looked at. *The Barrington Atlas* is supposed to be the culmination in a progress-shaped narrative about knowledge-making. And here we come full circle to the feminist historians and philosophers of science who point out that "progress" narratives of civilisation and knowledge-making are long-standing ways of telling history in order to justify the accumulation and hoarding of power. It is part of colonial thinking that every empire thinks it is both just like its predecessors and vastly superior to them; in the same way, *The Barrington Atlas* can position itself as just like its privileged object of study (the Roman empire) and in the tradition of European colonial cartography whilst being greater than both. That *The Barrington Atlas* now, some 20 years after its publication, is hailed as the shoulders upon which giants stand, does nothing to loosen these knotted contradictions.

Conclusion: More than Maps of Empire

> At some very basic level, imperialism means thinking about, settling, controlling land that you do not possess, that is distant, lived on, and owned by others . . . Just as none of us is outside or beyond geography, none of us is completely free from the struggle over geography. That struggle is complex and interesting because it is not only about soldiers and cannons but also about ideas, about forms, about images and imaginings.
> (Edward Said, 1993, *Culture and Imperialism*, 7)

In undertaking a certain "struggle with geography" in the form of the colonial cartography of ancient space-time, I have been thinking in this chapter about what

mapping the past means as a kind of world making in the present. Since *The Barrington Atlas* has been accepted into the discipline of classics, ancient history and beyond as a standard reference work, all of us who have taught and been taught with it, have touched it or use it on a daily basis bear responsibility for the acceptance of its authority. I mobilise Said's observations about the intimate connection between geography, representation and power here to make the point about the ongoing nature of colonial epistemology of imagining time and space together. Said, after all, is the highest profile Palestinian-American scholar in the West whose political commitments to a free and autonomous Palestine are all too often forgotten in a hurry to defer Orientalism temporally, rendering it a function of empires of the 18th and 19th centuries rather than part of the structuring conditions of the contemporary places us into thinking about relationships to land, as well as "imaginings".

Palestine offers us a revealing instance of how the coloniality of *The Barrington Atlas* coincides and colludes with ongoing contemporary injustice. As Jess Bier recounts (2017, 16) following swiftly on the heels of the 1948 Nakba (the Arabic name – lit. "disaster", given to the destruction of Palestinian towns and villages, and accompanying massacre and expulsion of Palestinians), the first prime minister of Israel David Ben-Gurion appointed a Governmental Names Committee tasked with finding or making Hebrew names in order to rename features of the natural landscape.[21] Thus, one piece of evidence of how Israel fashions and legitimates itself via state cartography is the non-existence of Palestine on Google Earth, one of the most comprehensive and widely available mapping tools available today. *The Barrington Atlas* reproduces this omission: the only indication that there is anything Palestinian about this land is the etymologically related Latin word for the Roman imperial province "Palestina". The name for one of the most mapped cities in the world is given as Jerusalem and Hierosolyma but not Al-Quds. At a very basic level, *The Barrington Atlas*' omissions have a compounding effect in the representation of space *and* in the representation of the time of Palestinian existence. If, as with all projects of settler-colonialism, there is a desire to render the land as empty (*terra nullius*), *The Barrington Atlas* co-signs the notion that between the end of Graeco-Roman antiquity and the beginning of the Israeli nation-state there was a vast nothing, waiting to be filled. As a historical snapshot with names and features chosen according to what has been determined to be significant to the classical scholar, *The Barrington Atlas* reinforces the colonial logic of the projects enacted on the land it represents.

It follows then that one way of undoing Eurocentric imaginings of the world would be to redraw the world map from the ground up and to take seriously how local knowledge-makers think about spatial relations. Jamaican writer Kei Miller structures his 2014 poetry collection, *The Cartographer Tries to Map a Way to Zion*, as a back-and-forth conversation between a Rastaman and a cartographer, interspersed with hymns, prayers, ghazals and meditations on Jamaican place names. While Miller tips his hat to Krause's critique of the Mercator projection ("And the ras says / *it's all a Babylon conspiracy / de . . . immappancy of dis world* / maps which throughout time have gripped like girdles / to make his people smaller than they were" [Miller, 2014, 21]), the movement of the collection as a whole is

towards more radical possibilities of imagining the world beyond nation-states. By the end of the collection, Miller's cartographer has to give way to the new set of relations as indicated by the Rastaman – there can be no objective mapping of the way to Zion (Miller, 2014, 62–63). But it is important to notice where Miller starts: he picks as the first epigraph of the collection a quotation from a poem called "Independance" (nonstandard spelling intentional), by Louise Bennett, written around Jamaica's independence from Britain in 1962:

> She hope dem caution worl-map
> Fi stop draw Jamaica small
> For de lickle speck cyan show
> We independantness at all!
>
> Moresomever we must tell map
> We don't like we position
> Please kindly tek we out a sea
> An draw we in de ocean

This invocation of Bennett tells us that one step towards a more capacious imagining of the world is righting the injustice wrought by colonial world-making. For Miller, Bennett is pointing to the wrongness of representing Jamaica's 10,991 square kilometres as a "lickle speck" and opening out the ways in which the Western scientific objective map can be rearranged, corrected, altered to respect the autonomy of Jamaican people's desires to be understood in the context of (Atlantic) ocean rather than (Caribbean) sea. Moving towards an oceanic understanding of mapping Jamaica would inscribe it in the history of the Black Atlantic or the intimacy of four continents, that is, as connected to a world historically imprinted by empire. Miller's Rastaman, however, is able to do much more: he is able to dream his way into a world not structured by the maps and borders of the nation-state.

When the representation of the "world of the Greeks and Romans" is positioned as neutral, complete and objective knowledge, what this tells us instead is about how this representation of space and time is related to power. In the end, then, we can point to the notion that there could even be a single atlas, one comprehensive point of geographical reference. *The Barrington Atlas*' claim to epistemological authority is evident in its use of definite article (*the* atlas rather than *an* atlas) – that such a demand and desire exists for a definitive map of the ancient world indexes colonial epistemology and colonial world-making in the discipline of classics and related fields.[22] As Ward and I have made recourse to Sayyid's notion of dreaming in the introduction to this volume, let me reprise it here to insist that the making of meaning from land must be an open-ended and plural project and one that is positioned within relations of power. It is time to dream of maps beyond those of empire, mappings (in the plural) of ancient worlds (in the plural), of deterritorialising and of generating complex chrono-relationships. My dreamy suggestion is to eschew the cartography of an ancient world, a project of fixing and fixity that thrives off colonial aspirations to make the world legible. What alternative

temporal and spatial relationships to ancient worlds could we imagine and depict instead? What are the maps that get us towards a decolonial horizon?

As Rose-Redwood et al. (2020, 153) point out, radically reimagining the map means making good on the erasures of traditional cartography. They write,

> Decolonial mapping refers to the spatial practices and cartographic techniques that centre on Indigenous relationships and responsibilities to land, including but not limited to spatial narratives, place ontologies, more-than-human relations, navigational guidance, and territorial demarcations.

The making of new, decolonial maps therefore allows us to get away from constantly having to work within the points of reference, epistemologies, and world-making forms that are given to us by the colonial imagination.

I want to close with one example of indigenous mapmaking that reveals the impoverished cartographic imagination of the classical through naming the world. Represented from here, the islands that make up Micronesia look small and so this is how they are named: *micros* and *nesos*, Greek for "small" and "island" – and too disparate to act in cooperation or to cohere as a nation-state and participate in modernity. It requires a particular wilful ignorance to formulate this name for Micronesia when the territory of Greece itself is constituted by some 600 islands that differ vastly in size and habitability. Beyond pointing out this contradictory logic, Micronesian navigators and indigenous mapmakers reveal far more effectively the shortcomings of representing space as Western scientific mapping does.

Their stick charts used materials like palm ribs, coconut fibre, and shells or coral pebbles. The curved palm ribs represented swells; shells or coral pebbles were used to represent islands. The connections between the sticks showed oceanic patterns such as the direction of swells, the way swells curved around islands, and how swells interacted with one another.[23] Where Western scientific mapping practices aim for exactly reproducible knowledge to anybody capable of interpreting it, Micronesian stick charts are made by particular people as a way of remembering journeys past in order to guide future journeys. And yet a stick chart does not simply reproduce the sum of one navigator's knowledge but needs practical and experiential knowing.[24] In a stint spent with Micronesian navigator Mau Piailug, Naiona Thompson recollects how Piailug's knowledge was personally specific:

> The hardest for me was to learn to read the ocean swells the way he can. Mau is able to tell so much from the swells-the direction we are traveling, the approach of an island. But this knowledge is hard to transmit. We don't sense things in exactly the same way as the next person does. To help me become sensitive to the movements of the ocean, Mau would steer different courses into the waves, and I would try to get the feel and remember the feel.[25]

At the level of the ocean-goer and through experiential knowledge that is transmitted in community, a different kind of spatial and experiential relationship to the world comes to the fore. More than just an alternative representation to the

cartographic gaze, through the Micronesian map, *a different world comes into being*. This intuition, perhaps, can be our guide as we eschew objective mapping and re-form relationships to space-time in more sensorily capacious and more just ways, namely, that we will not merely be engaged in an activity of world-describing but rather transformative world-making.

Notes

1 Haraway (1988, 585). For a critique of the sustained implied connection here between sight and knowledge, that is, the very objectivity of Western science at which Haraway takes aim, see Ward (2023).
2 Crampton and Krygier (2015, 11–33).
3 See the introduction to this volume.
4 Harley (1989, 13).
5 On the historical construction of the Mercator projection, see Leitão and Gaspar (2014, 180–195). Other projections have attempted to displace the Mercator projection, including the equal area six lobed Goode (1923), the non-equal area Robinson (1963) and the Peters equal area projection (1973).
6 Monmonier (2010) tracks the long transformation of the Mercator projection from the 16th century as (early modern colonial) navigation tool into the basis for military charts.
7 https://invisiblechildren.com/blog/2013/02/25/kai-krause-the-true-size-of-africa/#:~:text=Graphic%20Designer%20Kai%20Krause%20is,overlaid%20within%20the%20continent's%20borders, last accessed 18 March 2023.
8 See Ward in this volume.
9 See Silverblank in this volume.
10 Singh (2017).
11 Talbert (2018) narrates the history of mapping the ancient world prior to *The Barrington Atlas*, and the problems that were previously encountered such as running out of money or the unwieldiness of coordinating a large international project that he sought to overcome.
12 Cartledge (2001, 194) puts a slightly different complexion on my question by asking "what then are the meanings and claims, proper or not, of the present *Atlas*?" though he did not venture speculations of his own as to what particular meanings and claims the project might be making.
13 The Ancient World Mapping Center, based at University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, continues the work of the Classical Atlas Project that produced that paper edition of *The Barrington Atlas*. Since then, the Center's main tasks have been to move data to Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and produce further maps. In terms of digital accessibility, in 2013 *The Barrington Atlas* became available on software designed for the Apple iPad.
14 In 1980, the American Philological Association (now the Society for Classical Studies) had recommended that there was a need for "adequate maps of the ancient world" and approached Richard Talbert. Funded by private donations as well as major disciplinary bodies and institutions – the APA, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the University of Chapel Hill, North Carolina, where the Classical Atlas Project was housed – *The Barrington Atlas* is named after the foundation of the Massachusetts estate of Robert B. Strassler, a single private donor. The Princeton University Press website puts the overall cost of the project as $4.5 million.
15 https://press.princeton.edu/books/hardcover/9780691031699/barrington-atlas-of-the-greek-and-roman-world, last accessed 20 March 2023.
16 Anecdotal evidence I have collected in the writing of this chapter suggests that *The Barrington Atlas* is not as core a reference tool as the makers might have hoped, superseded by other maps and often digital ones. The physical Barrington Atlas remains a symbol (and a very visible one at that given its size) of status and wealth of a university

library or a particular professor, implying credentials of knowledge. For instance, whilst I could find *The Barrington Atlas* in my library's catalogue, it was neither in the graduate lounge, the study room, the library's oversized bookshelf or the dedicated map room, suggesting that it was not a commonly consulted book. I borrowed a copy from a friend who is an ancient historian; she used it to prop open her window and so did not mind lending it to me.

17 Compare Cartledge (2001, 195), who thinks its major contribution is precisely that it "re-establishes cartography" as a major sub-discipline.

18 One significant exception is worth mentioning: from the third century BC to the third century AD, a slave's *vicarius* referred not to someone who was a substitute but part of their property. See Lewis (2013).

19 Cameron (1993, 35) includes in these reforms that were designed to centralise power: "strengthen[ing] the frontiers, building forts, strengthening natural barriers and establishing military roads from Britain in the west to the so-called Start Diocletiana in the east, a road running from the Red Sea to Dura on the Euphrates". Cameron also outlines how Diocletian imposed a new taxation system in order to cope with having to pay troops on extended missions (37–38).

20 See, for example, Vasunia (2013, 118–155).

21 In resistance to these manoeuvres, Palestinian cartographers have formulated a host of counter-cartographic strategies that explores the effects of the 1948 Nakba, see Falah and Abu-Zahra (2014). Separately, counter-cartography has been an ongoing concern for critical theory, as in the notion of "deterritorialisation" in Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus* (1972). See Khellaf (2020, 1–40) for the unsettling and transformative implications of deterritorialisation for knowledge-making within classics.

22 By contrast, compare the critical disposition towards mono-visions of the worlds by the Lize Mogel and Alexis Bhagat, editors of *An Atlas of Radical Cartography* who explain their use of the indefinite article: "This Atlas is *an* atlas and not *the* atlas. Rather, it is one of many possible atlases, given the abundance of artists, architects, and others using maps and mapping in their work". www.an-atlas.com/contents.html, last accessed 22 August 2021.

23 https://manoa.hawaii.edu/exploringourfluidearth/node/34, last accessed 20 March 2023.

24 Craib (2017, 11–71).

25 https://archive.hokulea.com/2007voyage/2007micronesiamau.html, last accessed 21 March 2023.

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10 Away from "Civilisational" Heritage in the Eastern Mediterranean

Embracing Classical and Islamic Cultural Co-presences and Simultaneous Histories at the Parthenon and Ayasofya

Lylaah L. Bhalerao

"Refugees Welcome"[1]

On 9 May 2016, Syrian and Afghan child refugees living in Greece were taken to visit the Acropolis in Athens. It was Europe Day and a year since 1.3 million people arrived in Europe seeking asylum – the most in a single year since World War II (Barlai et al. 2017, 1). The children were given a tour of the site and the Acropolis Museum by none other than the Greek Minister of Culture at the time, Aristides Baltas (*Ekathimerini*, 2016). A year later, another group was taken to the Acropolis, this time on World Refugee Day, accompanied by the Greek actress Lydia Koniordou (*Keep Talking Greece*, 2017).

There was a clear effort to make these visits symbolic. The resonance of World Refugee Day is obvious but marking Europe Day at the Acropolis with Syrian and Afghan children, who had fled their countries, sent an even stronger message: the Acropolis represents European society, into which these refugees were being assimilated. Now, they must embrace the European values the Parthenon has come to stand for.

During his tour of the museum, Minister Baltas remarked, "[W]e want Europe to find again its founding principles of democracy, peace, tolerance and acceptance" (*China.org.cn*, 2016) and during her turn as host, Koniordou spoke to the teenagers about "the freedom and democra[tic] values this World Heritage represents" (*Keep Talking Greece*, 2017). On these occasions the Greek hosts highlighted classical Athens as the foundation of European values and expanded it to world heritage.

The Acropolis continued to be a potent symbol for refugees being welcomed (or assimilated) into European society. On 20 March 2019, to protest the migration agreement between the European Union (EU) and Turkey, Amnesty International projected the words "humanity first: refugees are welcome" onto the Acropolis (Smith, 2019). The agreement stipulated that migrants who had not undergone the formal asylum application process would be returned to Ankara, incentivised by a six-billion-euro payment to the Turkish government. An Amnesty spokesperson commented that the

crisis "is a lasting stain on the conscience of Europe by politicians who are simply professing to uphold the universal values embodied by the Acropolis" (Smith, 2019). Again, a connection between ancient Athenian and idealised European society was made and the "universal values" of classical Athens emphasised.

The symbolic value of the Acropolis in these three instances and the comments made by those involved demonstrate that the popular conception of modern western society is deeply entwined with classical Athens and the Parthenon. Amnesty drew its language from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Its World Heritage Centre division decides which sites make the world heritage list based on whether they are of "outstanding universal value". As it will become clear throughout this chapter, these "universal values" developed from Eurocentric imperial ideologies that idolised classical Athens. Through UNESCO, the notion of the Parthenon representing these values was institutionalised and continues to be promulgated.

The European imperial origins of "universal values" explain what is striking, and even unsettling, about the photographs of refugees from the Middle East at the Acropolis. Released by the Greek Secretariat General for Communication and Media and widely published in the Greek press, they show teenage girls in headscarves around the site: taking selfies with the hills in the background, standing with Caryatids in the distance, and walking past the Parthenon with its classical columns rising behind them. In the decade of burqa bans and European restrictions on women's attire associated with Islam, the photographs dichotomise what has been positioned as the symbol of repressive Islamic society in Europe – the headscarf – and that of democratic, liberal European society – the Parthenon. At the time of writing, the following European countries have completely banned the burqa: France (2010), Belgium (2011), Bulgaria (2015), Austria (2017), Denmark (2018), Switzerland (2021) and many others have restrictions on wearing headscarves in public places. The photographs' intended message is clear: these young women have fled a repressive Islamic regime and will now be liberated in Europe.

The images, and indeed the trips themselves, present Islamic and European societies as separate and irreconcilable – a misleading, albeit long-established, version of history.[2] Islam has, in fact, shaped European society and Islamic presences exist at many European cultural sites including the Parthenon, which will be the main focus of this chapter. I will argue that this Islamic history has been erased in favour of the classical (and Christian) history of sites in the eastern Mediterranean. I will demonstrate that the Islamic and the classical can co-exist at the Parthenon as cultural co-presences and what I call simultaneous histories. These histories are conceptually simultaneous; they co-exist in the current conception of these sites, their legacy and form. This, however, is not an "alternative" history of the Parthenon; we should not choose one part of history over another.

I will then argue that giving preference to classical history is a deliberate choice, characteristic of *civilisational* world heritage as practised and encouraged by UNESCO. To demonstrate this, I look across the Aegean to examine how this approach has manifested at Ayasofya in Istanbul in the controversy over its recent

reconversion into a functioning mosque. Ultimately, I will argue that we scholars, curators, archaeologists and heritage practitioners must work against UNESCO's civilisational approach and instead practice multiple heritage, which would constitute a radical, decolonial act.

The Parthenon *Was* a Mosque: A Simultaneous, Local History in Brief

When I first saw the images of these young women from the Middle East (some of whom are likely Muslim) visiting the Acropolis, ushered into Europeanness, I wondered, what would it mean to them to know that the Parthenon was once a mosque? That their culture was not distinct from but in fact a part of this heritage? Though the Parthenon looks like a classical temple today, it is still home to the legacy of multiple cultural co-presences and simultaneous histories that need to be uncovered and embraced. My focus is its Islamic history.

In brief, the classical Greek temple was constructed from 447 to 432 BCE. The structure was remodelled as a church to the Virgin Mary of Athens in the late fifth century CE and remained as such for around 1,000 years – that is, until the Ottomans invaded Athens in 1458, and the building was converted into a mosque. Despite the conversion, the structure remained the same for another 200 years. Then came the Venetian Bombardment in 1687: ahead of a Venetian attack on Athens, the Ottomans fortified the Acropolis with gunpowder. When the Venetians fired, there was an explosion that greatly damaged the structure (Fowden, 2018, 263). As a result, the Ottomans built what Elizabeth Fowden calls the second Parthenon mosque: a freestanding structure within the ruins of the classical temple oriented towards Mecca (Fowden, 2018, 273–274). This structure was the Parthenon mosque encountered by Western European travellers, informing the first Western accounts from that period of Athenian archaeology (e.g. Chandler, 1776; Stuart and Revett, 1762–1816).

Focusing on these western European sources and the basic chronology of the Parthenon, though, omits an important part of its story: the Ottomans' own interactions with the monument. Two important examples of this are found in the works of Evliya Çelebi and Mahmud Efendi.[3] Çelebi, a 17th-century traveller-writer from Constantinople, described the Parthenon as the most beautiful mosque in the world and connected it to King Sulayman (Greenberg and Hamilakis, 2022, 12). He also narrated a story from Athens of the night of the Prophet Muhammed's (upon whom be peace) birth: the Parthenon mosque's dome (which did not exist at the time) collapsed at the same time as the domes of Ayasofya and the cathedral of Thessaloniki (Fowden, 2019, 74). This is a distinctly Ottoman story, only found in Çelebi's account, but it adds to a tradition established in the Hadiths and Seerah of miracles surrounding the Prophet's birth, including the collapse of important structures. Connecting the Parthenon mosque to these other sites and traditions around the Prophet's birth conveys its importance as an Islamic monument to the Ottomans, whilst also demonstrating how the Athenian locals were actively engaging and reinterpreting the ancient heritage of their city by integrating it into their

own religious framework. The product is a historical, prophetic tradition that is Ottoman-Athenian, with a locality to it not found elsewhere.

This local Ottoman-Athenian tradition continued in the work of Efendi, an 18th-century scholar and an Athenian local, unlike Çelebi. In Efendi's account, the Parthenon was built by Pericles because the biblical Temple of Jerusalem was too far for Athenians to reach on a pilgrimage (Greenberg and Hamilakis, 2022, 15). Here, the monument and Pericles become part of the Abrahamic tradition. Efendi also narrates Pericles' speech to the Athenians, in which he justifies the construction of a new temple on the Acropolis. He promises to build one (the Parthenon) as great as Sulayman's in Jerusalem (Fowden, 2018, 268–269). This version, however, differs greatly from the one with which classicists are most familiar: Thucydides' account of Pericles' funeral oration (2.34–46). Efendi presents a different story to Thucydides – one that integrates Athens and the Parthenon into an Ottoman, Islamic tradition. Like Çelebi, he created a distinct version of history, an Ottoman-Athenian one, with its own locality.

It is easy to imagine, though, that were a classicist more opposed to reception or cross-cultural studies, in particular the inclusion of Islamic material, to learn of these Ottoman-Athenian narratives, they would trivialise or dismiss them as illegitimate accounts with no historical basis. Yet the historicity of Thucydides' funeral oration itself is still up for debate. We certainly see a dismissal of Çelebi's account of "the finest mosque in the world" (Beard, 2010) among the traditional classics academe. Mary Beard, in her volume on the Parthenon, says it is

> a reflection, at best, of some inventive local tradition attempting to tie the town into the grand sweep of biblical history, but more likely an implausible fantasy; unless perhaps, as some commentators have tried to rationalise it, in talking to his local informants Evliya misheard "Solomon" for "Solon", the great Athenian law-giver and founding father.
>
> (Beard, 2010, 72)

Çelebi's account, therefore, is either dismissed as being misheard or, as Beard claims, regarded "at best" as local tradition. By including "at best" she also trivialises and invalidates this idea. The binary that Beard constructs here supports Benjamin Anderson's argument that local, Ottoman interpretations have long been misconstrued (and Orientalised) in Western scholarship as folklore (Anderson, 2015, 450).

In response to those who dismiss the local Ottoman interpretations, I ask, does it matter for our understanding of Athens as an Islamic city whether these stories are true? Beard's commentary suggests that we must choose between the Solon or Sulayman version of Athenian history, between the Parthenon as a monument to victory over the Persians or a temple to rival that in Jerusalem. To this, I object: the city belonged to different cultures at different points in its chronology, each with its own timeline and construction of the past. It thus follows that multiple versions of history would exist as each culture sought to integrate the city into their traditions. These prophetic stories enhance our understanding of how that was done under

the Ottomans; it does not compromise the ancient Greek version of events. In fact, the two can and should co-exist in our study of Athenian history and be presented today as equal simultaneous histories and evidence of cultural co-presences at the Parthenon.

The Parthenon Mosque Erased: Early Approaches to Archaeology at the Athenian Acropolis

The Parthenon mosque is well-acknowledged by academics, but that is not the case outside of scholarship. It is barely mentioned in classics departments beyond an access talk or briefly in a lecture, along the lines of "Did you know the Parthenon was *also* a mosque?" The Parthenon mosque did not feature in my own education in classical archaeology, including on an academic tour of the archaeology and topography of Greece, even though the Islamic history of other Athenian monuments, e.g. the Little Metropolis, was mentioned. If I was barely exposed to the Islamic history of the most famous classical monument, what about the general public who visit the Acropolis? They would not find any trace of the mosque or any acknowledgement that it was once a mosque – the Parthenon mosque has been erased from the Acropolis archaeological site and the museum. Therefore, before we consider UNESCO's role and views, we first need to understand how and why the Parthenon mosque came to be erased.

The erasure of the Islamic history of the Acropolis was a result of Greek nationalism. Emerging from Ottoman imperial rule in the 1820s–1830s, the newly independent Greece wanted to extricate itself from any ties to their Ottoman conquerors. It was a cleansing that had to occur in tandem with the construction of a new nation, a "purification", as repeatedly referred to by Yannis Hamilakis (Hamilakis, 2007, 88; Greenberg and Hamilakis, 2022, 76, 97, 104). This process is exemplified by the work on the Acropolis in the early years of independence: the Bavarian – not Greek – architect Leo von Klenze was tasked with turning the Acropolis into an archaeological site. He focused on preserving the classical monuments, destroying everything else – Byzantine, Christian, Ottoman, Islamic (Costaki, 2021, 463–465; Hamilakis, 2007, 87–89). The Acropolis was thus cleansed of all things post-classical, becoming a purified national monument for an independent Greece.

The destruction of the Parthenon mosque in this context was as much about expelling Islam as it was about removing any trace of the Ottoman conquerors. As Hamilakis and Raphael Greenberg argue, the Greek War of Independence was "partly a religious war; it was fought by the Christians revolting against the infidels, the Muslims" (Greenberg and Hamilakis, 2022, 18. See also Bridges, 2021, 456). Therefore, Islamic heritage had to be erased once the Christians were victorious. It also explains why mosques were banned from being built in Athens for nearly 200 years until the first officially recognised post-Ottoman mosque was opened in the city in late 2020 (Greenberg and Hamilakis, 2022, 167).

The importance of eradicating traces of Islam, as well as the Ottomans, after independence brings me to my next point. The Greek nationalism at play in

erasing the Parthenon mosque was more than resistance to Ottoman imperial rule: it was born out of the idea of emulating European modernity. This could be achieved through reviving classicism and Christianity – hence the War of Independence was partly religious. Hamilakis argues that "Greece is at the same time a country and a *topos* in the western imagination, a reality and a myth, a national property and an (western) international claim" (Hamilakis, 2007, 58). I would build on his claim here to argue that *the classical ideal* of Greece was ideologically colonised by European imperial powers in the form of Western Hellenism (see Greenberg and Hamilakis, 2022, 11). Independent Greece strove to represent that ideal anew in developing itself as a modern nation-state recognised by other Christian, European nations, which had supported the war against the Muslim Ottomans. In order to gain recognition from these European powers, Greece also had to agree to the establishment of a Christian Bavarian monarchy under the protection of Britain, France and Russia. The imperial powers of the day, therefore, attempted to align the new Greek nation with their ideas and values, expecting it to simultaneously live up to their idealisation of classical Athens and their expectations of a Christian nation.

As such, Michael Herzfeld characterises Greece as a "crypto-colony" (Herzfeld, 2002): acquiring its independence by depending on other imperial nations and adopting an aggressive national culture that suited a foreign model. In trying to definitively put Ottoman rule in the past, Greece instead became tied to European imperialism materially and ideologically. The new nation thus secured its place in European modernity by asserting its Christianity and its ancient heritage, which had by this time been positioned as the foundations of Western Europe. Together, this meant the route to Europeanness was to erase the Islamic past. The Parthenon mosque was the material antithesis to both Christianity and the classical age, and it had to be erased.

Von Klenze's plans for the Acropolis signified another aspect of modernity: archaeology. He turned the Acropolis into an organised archaeological site, curating the ruins by deciding what would be preserved and removed (Hamilakis, 2008, 274). This shift is symptomatic of what Hamilakis identifies as a wider clash between colonialist-nationalist-modernist and local archaeologies, with the former replacing the latter in the 19th century (Hamilakis, 2008, 276). The colonist-nationalist-modernist archaeology of von Klenze did not leave room for the traces of heritage tied to local historical traditions, instead enforcing a singular Western European past onto the monuments of Athens. The Acropolis was thus transformed from a site of multiple, simultaneous histories and cultural co-presences to a monument commemorating the one version of history that would be celebrated in the new nation.

Through its monumentalisation, the Parthenon became a place of modern archaeology and "outstanding universal value", as recognised a century later by UNESCO. However, UNESCO also does not recognise the Parthenon mosque in its celebration of the monument, suggesting that its universal values rest on the same classical-Christian heritage postulated as the foundations of Western European society and emphasised by the new Greek nation in the 19th century. Now it

is time to examine UNESCO world heritage and its origins, asking why it does not recognise the simultaneous histories and cultural co-presences of the Parthenon in its determination of the Acropolis site's "universal value".

The Birth of UNESCO World Heritage: A *Civilisational* Agenda

UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) was founded in 1945, after World War II. With the United Nations and its other specialised agencies, its mission is to advance peace through education, science and cultural exchange.[4] However, couched in this narrative of peace and understanding, these new international bodies continued the work of empire. UNESCO was seen by its founders – including imperial powers sensing decolonisation on the horizon – as a means to continue exerting international influence and prolonging the civilising mission (Meskell, 2018, xvi, 9, 11). As Lynn Meskell argues, UNESCO began as a reconstruction programme for post-war Europe, but when these nations realised its potential for extending international influence, its aim became to "formulate and disseminate global standards" (Meskell, 2018, xvi).

Certainly, this was the case under Julian Huxley's directorship at UNESCO's foundation. Huxley, brother of *Brave New World* author, Aldous Huxley, was a noted British evolutionary biologist turned internationalist. He was also a vocal eugenicist, becoming the president of the British Eugenics Society in 1959. Although his term at UNESCO was short-lived, his work for the Colonial Office in East Africa and on the Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies since 1930 (Meskell, 2018, 14) clearly influenced how he shaped the organisation's administration and direction. He employed famous British archaeologists, who had worked across the empire, and British colonial administrators. As Meskell states, this group of individuals "believed in a European superiority that necessitated the 'improvement' of colonial lands and peoples" (Meskell, 2018, 14–15). He also directed UNESCO money towards British development programmes in the colonies. In its beginnings, therefore, UNESCO became an extension of the British Empire's faux-civilising mission.

Henceforth, in this chapter, I will characterise UNESCO world heritage as a *civilisational* agenda, a term taken from Françoise Vergès *A Decolonial Feminism* (Vergès, 2021) in which she identifies "civilisational feminism" as a force within Western (particularly French) Islamophobia and neocolonialism. I argue that the world heritage agenda operates within the same framework and is similarly civilisational in its approach to the eastern Mediterranean. Like Vergès with feminism, I aim to move away from the civilisational towards a different approach in subsequent sections.

Vergès characterises civilisational feminism as a force within liberal, nationalist-xenophobic ideologies (Vergès, 2021, 4) that claims that women's rights "has become one of the last trump cards played by the state and imperialism, one of neoliberalism's last recourses, and the spearhead of the civilizing mission of white, bourgeois feminism" and is "an ideology of assimilation and integration into the neoliberal order" (Vergès, 2021, 12). She argues that civilisational feminism in

the Western world says to Black and Muslim women, "You don't have freedom. You don't know your rights. We will help you reach the right level of development" (Vergès, 2021, 14), and relies on Orientalised and anti-Black preconceived ideas about African families, men and women (Vergès, 2021, 35). To summarise, in my words, civilisational feminism is an ideology that assumes Muslim and Black women are oppressed by their men and their societies, and can only be liberated with established Western methods of development. It resembles the faux-civilising mission of empires, which also crucially aimed to spread Christianity as a pillar of civilisation, hence the term *civilisational*. As a result, civilisational feminism undermines the agency of Muslim and Black women within their own societies and perpetuates racist and Orientalist ideas about Muslim and Black men, acting as a barrier to *their* liberation from racism.

The same civilisational framework can be applied to UNESCO world heritage in the eastern Mediterranean, where we can see local needs and traditions undermined and Orientalist perceptions about certain communities perpetuated. First, though, we must return to misconceptions about the Ottomans: despite being actively engaged with ancient monuments and integrating them into their own traditions, as we have established, Western European travellers and officials long characterised the Ottomans as indifferent towards antiquities (Anderson, 2015, 450; Eldem, 2011, 282). The view of indifference quickly becomes one that the Ottomans were harmful to antiquities *through* their indifference. The latter was given as justification by Western European officials, including Lord Elgin (Eldem, 2011, 282–284), for removing antiquities or raiding ancient sites (Anderson, 2015, 450–451; Eldem, 2011, 283–294); they were then criticised by external powers and Ottoman elites themselves for allowing it to happen, resulting in an increased concern for antiquities (Eldem, 2011). The perception of the indifferent Ottoman is therefore closely tied to that of the Turk harmful to antiquities.

Anderson claims, furthermore, that the premise of Ottoman indifference "continues to inform contemporary discussion of cultural patrimony in post-Ottoman nations" (Anderson, 2015, 450). As we turn to the case of Ayasofya in Istanbul – the former Ottoman and Roman capital – it will become clear that Western Europeans past and present are perceived as caring about and preserving ancient heritage, whereas those who live in post-Ottoman nations are still seen as indifferent or harmful towards it. Consequently, in civilisational world heritage, it is heritage sites that must be liberated from Muslim men, the misinformed impression of whom has been influenced by misconceptions about Ottoman approaches to antiquities and, more recently, images of the Taliban and so-called Islamic State (IS) destroying ancient sites and heritage.

In this way, civilisational causes, whether it be feminism or heritage, are heavily involved in the construction of the Other in Western popular consciousness. Vergès alludes to this in her language on Orientalism, racism, Islamophobia and colonialism, but she does not argue as such explicitly. In the civilisational framework, the "Muslim man" (in quotation marks to indicate that this figure *does not* represent Muslim men – it is a falsely constructed equivalency) is constructed as the Other, one that sits between the colonial processes of Othering described by Edward Said

(1978) and Sylvia Wynter (2003), respectively. He is Othered, per Said, by existing in the same location of mainly the Islamic Middle East and North Africa (for that is the community with which civilisational heritage is concerned), being used to create a false dichotomy between "east" and "west", and then misconceived and misrepresented by the "west" (Said, 1978).

Although Wynter is primarily concerned with the Othering of Indigenous, Black enslaved and Indian peoples, in the civilisational framework the "Muslim man" is still constructed as what she identifies as "the Human Other" (Wynter, 2003, 265). "The Human Other" is constructed in opposition to "the ostensibly normal human, Man" (Wynter, 2003, 265), who has initial roots in "Graeco-Christian", human-ist "laws of nature" (Wynter, 2003, 274, 277, 296, 299). Graeco-Christian values have already appeared in the formation of the new Greek nation and concurrent "purification" of the Acropolis, and at the foundation of UNESCO by imperial powers – here they emerge again at the heart of the Othering process inherent in civilisational heritage. Just as the Parthenon mosque represented the antithesis to a new Graeco-Christian nation, so too the "Muslim man" is the antithesis to "the ostensibly normal human, Man". The "Muslim man" has therefore been Othered by the civilisational causes, falsely constructed and presented as an opponent to feminism and to world heritage.

Civilisational world heritage, like civilisational feminism, is an ideology of assimilation and integration. This is in action, and on display, in the trips of refugees to the Acropolis, whereby they are assimilated into European society by visiting the seat of classical civilisation. Just as Black and Muslim women are expected to conform to Western standards, potentially abandoning their own cultural customs and clothing choices, and take instruction from white feminists to "reach the right level of development" (Vergès, 2021, 14), the Islamic and post-Ottoman nations must defer to UNESCO to become "developed" concerning heritage. What, then, constitutes a developed approach to heritage? It is, in many ways, the successor to von Klenze's modern archaeology: *scientific* archaeology of the 20th century. Huxley was committed to scientific excavation in ancient archaeology, discussed in his *From an Antique Land* (Huxley, 1966),[5] which conveys the importance of site conservation, site museums and the development of cultural tourism – all of which became central to UNESCO's world heritage programme. Let us not forget that in the 19th century, excavations and museums were also how Western powers asserted their cultural superiority over the indifferent Ottomans.

The archaeology developed by Huxley and disseminated by UNESCO's civi-lisational heritage was a colonial one. He institutionalised the clash between colonialist-nationalist-modernist (represented by UNESCO) and local archaeolo-gies identified by Hamilakis (Hamilakis, 2008, 276); the new programme left lit-tle room for living heritage and local modes of engagement. Instead, UNESCO created the false "universal". UNESCO set out, therefore, to civilise the world through heritage, disguising their civilising mission as a universalising one in the name of cultural understanding. As noted by Lynn Meskell in her critique, UNE-SCO's effectiveness is hindered by "the inability of today's World Heritage regime to incorporate the living aspects of heritage that necessitate rights of inclusion,

access, use and benefits" (Meskell, 2018, xviii). Here, too, we see the civilisational aspect: heritage sites must be preserved with western methodologies, presented by the World Heritage Centre as "universal". This heightens the need for a new approach: multiple heritage instead of universal heritage.

Civilisational Heritage in the Eastern Mediterranean: The Parthenon, Ayasofya and the Othering of Islam

The civilisational force of UNESCO's world heritage is, I argue, still present in its Islamophobic, Orientalist form in the eastern Mediterranean, perpetuating the construction of the "Muslim man" as the Other. In Athens, the false dichotomy between the Graeco-Christian "ostensibly normal human, Man" and the "Human Other", per Wynter's (Wynter, 2003, 265) formulation, is being challenged by the arrival en masse of refugees – many of whom are Muslim – who in popular Western mindsets represent this "Human Other". The civilisational response is to send the refugees to the Acropolis to be assimilated into Europeanness, instead of recognising their own stake in this heritage. Across the Aegean in Istanbul, the recent reconversion of Ayasofya into a mosque has exposed civilisational heritage and how UNESCO and some Western scholars and officials are still implicated in the construction of the "Muslim man" as the Other.

In both cases, it soon becomes clear that in the eastern Mediterranean, the civilisational world heritage agenda prioritises classical over Islamic heritage with, as we have established, the classical becoming emblematic of UNESCO's universal values. In fact, we need only look at the organisation's logo – the Parthenon. Designed by the Oxford classicist Alfred Zimmern (Meskell, 2018, 31; Toye and Toye, 2010, 315), the classical monument was chosen as the icon of civilisation and literally became the emblem for "universal values". Understandably, then, today the Parthenon occupies an exemplary position within UNESCO world heritage. In assessing the "outstanding universal value" of the monuments of the Athenian Acropolis, UNESCO celebrates them as singularly classical, stating: "The Acropolis of Athens and its monuments are universal symbols of the classical spirit and civilization and form the greatest architectural and artistic complex bequeathed by Greek Antiquity to the world" (UNESCO, n.d.a). The webpage also states that the "authenticity" and "structural integrity" of the site are well preserved – not of the Parthenon mosque or church. By choosing to locate the authenticity of the site in its classical moment, UNESCO is not only eradicating simultaneous histories but making a decision about which of those histories is the most important and best conveys their "universal values": the Acropolis is of "outstanding universal value" because it is a singularly classical site, cradle of Western civilisation – on the values of which UNESCO was founded – and it must remain as such.

It becomes clear how classicising and civilisational approaches co-exist in the eastern Mediterranean if we examine the discrepancies between how UNESCO and others treat the Acropolis monuments and Ayasofya. We might recall that the international world heritage community was alarmed at what they perceived as a move towards Ayasofya becoming a singularly *Islamic* monument when it was

announced on 10 July 2020 that the building was being reconverted into a mosque (McKernan, 2020), whereas they do not seem to be similarly alarmed about the *classical* singularity of the Parthenon. One might not immediately connect the dots between the two monuments based on how they are described by UNESCO and presented in situ. However, their histories are closely related, which is clear from Evliya Çelebi's story that the domes of both structures collapsed at the time of the Prophet's birth. The connection drawn here is only one example of how both monuments embody similar cultural co-presences and simultaneous histories – from antiquity to Christianity, Ottoman Islam and modern archaeology. The difference between the two today, however, is that those simultaneous histories and co-presences are on display only at Ayasofya.

Ayasofya was built by the Emperor Justinian between 532 and 537 CE as the cathedral of Constantinople and the state church of the Byzantine Empire. It remained the largest structure of its kind in the Byzantine Empire until the fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans on 29 May 1453. On that day, Sultan Mehmed (who would ascend the Acropolis five years later, inaugurating the Parthenon as a mosque) entered the city and read *salat al-jumu'ah* (the Friday prayer) and gave a *khutbah* (sermon) in Ayasofya (Cohen, 2011, 3). The Ottomans and the local community regarded this as the act of conversion into a mosque. It remained a mosque until 1935, when it was established as a museum by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, founder of the secular Republic of Turkey, who, like the Greeks a hundred years prior, was attempting to assimilate into Europe. He believed this was the route to modernisation and that secularism would more closely align Turkey with the Christian European nations (Cohen, 2011, 55). Converting Ayasofya into a museum was a symbolic act towards achieving this aim since it had long represented the conflict between East and West. It was also a move towards the modern, scientific archaeology that Huxley would propose not long after, once again emulating an European approach to heritage (see Katipoğlu and Caner-Yüksel, 2010). Ayasofya was thus a museum when the Historic Areas of Istanbul became an UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1985, remaining so until 2020.

Ayasofya and the Parthenon are therefore both home to similar cultural co-presences and simultaneous histories. However, whereas UNESCO focuses on the Acropolis monuments as classical, in its evaluation of "Historical Istanbul", it says "With its strategic location on the Bosphorus peninsula between the Balkans and Anatolia, the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, Istanbul has been associated with major political, religious and artistic events for more than 2,000 years" and "The Outstanding Universal Value of Istanbul resides in its unique integration of architectural masterpieces that reflect the meeting of Europe and Asia over many centuries, and in its incomparable skyline formed by the creative genius of Byzantine and Ottoman architects" (UNESCO, n.d.b). This latter statement could also be made about Athens, but it is not; to UNESCO, Athens' "universal value" lies in its classical history alone, whereas that of Istanbul depends on its full history and its multiplicity. It is also noticeable that in its statement on Istanbul's "universal value", UNESCO avoids referring to Islam or Ayasofya being a mosque (it focuses on the monument as a "Justinian Church" with its foundations in the sixth century).

In a city with a well-known Islamic heritage and a majority-Muslim population, UNESCO avoids using the words *Muslim*, *Islam* or *mosque*.

A close examination of the language used by UNESCO and others is a useful exercise for detecting civilisational world heritage at work. Nowhere is it clearer than in the reaction from UNESCO (UNESCO, 2020), and some in the Western scholarly community at large (Gall, 2020; McKernan, 2020), to the reconversion of Ayasofya.[6] UNESCO's statement read "UNESCO deeply regrets the decision of the Turkish authorities, made without prior discussion, and calls for the universal value of World Heritage to be preserved" and stressed that "Its status as a museum reflects the universal nature of its heritage, and makes it a powerful symbol for dialogue" (UNESCO, 2020). UNESCO's director-general Audrey Azoulay was also quoted in the statement, warning Turkey that the reconversion "raises the issue of the impact of this change of status on the property's universal value", suggesting that Ayasofya could be stripped of its world heritage status.

In the eyes of UNESCO, the reconversion has compromised Ayasofya's "universal value". As of now, the structure will remain the same and the art will remain intact, suggesting that "universal value" is not intrinsic to the structures of world heritage sites themselves. Instead, it is something intangible, in the hands of the World Heritage Committee to determine arbitrarily. What has happened in Istanbul is that the *essence* of Ayasofya has changed in the perception of UNESCO and heritage experts in the Western world, by being converted from an ostensibly secular (in their view, universal) space to a place of Muslim worship. UNESCO has decided that Muslim prayer compromises the "universal value" of the site. This exclusion from the category of "universal", however, does not hold true for all religions: Notre-Dame Cathedral was included in the World Heritage Site Paris, Banks of the Seine (UNESCO, n.d.c), whilst being open for worship. As we have seen, though, UNESCO was founded on the ideologies of European imperial powers, including the positioning of classical antiquity and Christianity as foundations of Western society. It is these foundations that have come to represent "universal values"; hence, churches can maintain theirs whilst being open for worship. Mosques, however, cannot, suggesting that Islam is still perceived as something *other* and that this Orientalist, Islamophobic view continues to permeate international institutions.

In the reactions of some Western commentators, we can also see the construction of the "Muslim man" as the Other, as the opponent to world heritage, at work. Art historians and conservationists voiced concern about whether access to the site would be restricted and whether the Byzantine mosaics would be destroyed (Gall, 2020). The announcement from the Turkish government came with assurances that the Byzantine mosaics will continue to be protected and access will be maintained outside prayer times. Arguably Ayasofya is more accessible now: there is now free entry, and it is open every day. Here we see the civilisational agenda at work: Ayasofya becomes a subject in need of protection from the "Muslim man". It is also clear that UNESCO's civilisational world heritage, like Vergès civilisational feminism, operates within ongoing Islamophobia in European society.

Away from Universal Towards Multiple Heritage

How do we counter civilisational world heritage and its universalising approach? Vergès counters with a decolonial feminism, presented as one possible example of a new framework. Decolonial thought can certainly help us in the heritage world since it seeks to untangle the production of knowledge from Eurocentric systemics and colonial ideologies – both of which were driving forces at UNESCO's foundation and are still present in world heritage discourse – and challenges universalism as a product of that knowledge system and a manifestation of Western superiority. However, if we are to argue that the heritage of the Ottomans, an imperial power and settler colonists in Greece, needs to be presented on an equal footing as classical heritage, we can hardly argue that this is a decolonising act.

Instead, I propose multiple heritage to counter civilisational, universal heritage. Multiple heritage can be a radical act, and it can be a decolonial act in countering universalism and decentring a Eurocentric, Graeco-Christian version of history, derived from colonial ideologies; in this context, however, it cannot be a *decolonising* act. Multiple heritage in the eastern Mediterranean would mean deprioritising and decentring the classical in order to break the association between classical and universal values. It would also involve actively promoting the classical and Islamic co-presences and histories that exist simultaneously in the legacy of sites today.[7]

Multiple heritage, furthermore, recognises that there is no one proper approach to heritage and actively challenges the dissemination of an official method by UNESCO. Here we return to Hamilakis' clash between local and colonialist-nationalist-modernist archaeologies (Hamilakis, 2008, 276), institutionalised into UNESCO in its early development by Huxley. Multiple heritage calls for a return to devolved, local practices and the abandonment of the authority of the colonist-nationalist-modernist framework. As Hamilakis argues, local interpretations can "re-enact and activate multiple times and evoke multiple identities" (Hamilakis, 2008, 280), which speaks to reviving and embracing multiple cultural co-presences and histories at heritage sites, as I have argued for in this chapter. Evoking multiple times and identities is exactly what multiple heritage aims for and what we should want visitors to Ayasofya and the Parthenon to experience.

If we are to recentre local practices and interpretations and move away from the framework promoted by UNESCO, the question arises of whether we need the organisation and, given all its problems, whether the answer is for it to be disbanded. Ultimately, this seems outside the scope of possibility, and so the question is to whom this work should fall instead. I am doubtful that national governments and organisations are ready to practise multiple heritage, given how political agendas in both Greece and Turkey (and around the world) impact how the past is activated. In this regard, civilisational heritage is simply the latest manifestation in a long history of heritage being appropriated for political purposes. If change is not going to come from the level of international or national organisations, who can push for multiple heritage? It will fall to the individual archaeologists, curators, scholars and community workers to take a multiple heritage approach in their own projects and work with local communities, including

them in the processes. Part of promoting this new approach means pushing against the old, and so we will need to actively work against the dissemination of official heritage from large organisations, as well as producing multiple heritage in our own excavations and displays.

Finally, the most harmful issue posed by civilisational heritage in the eastern Mediterranean today is its contribution to the political climate in Europe of increased Islamophobia and deliberate Othering of Muslim communities. How deeply Islamophobia is embedded in European society has perhaps become more obvious as many Muslim refugees have come into Greece. The archaeologist/curator/academic who commits to multiple heritage, therefore, needs to be comfortable with the fact that this is also an activist act, part of the movement against discrimination and exclusion in our society. If we commit to multiple heritage, we also commit to this movement.

When the child refugees were taken to the Acropolis, they were assimilated into the Graeco-Christian values of Europe by virtue of seeing the classical Parthenon; no mention of the city's multiple pasts was made. However, there can be a simultaneous version of history of our times: one where a local-based archaeologist who practises multiple heritage and fights for the inclusion of refugees in society leads a group around the many sites from different periods of Athens, their new home. On this route, they stop by the Acropolis, which is celebrated as a site of diverse cultural co-presences; the refugees are welcomed through a recognition that they are not Other, not culturally distinct, but part of the intertwined histories that shaped this city. And here they learn that the Parthenon was once a mosque.

Notes

1 I would like to thank the editors, Mathura Umachandran and Marchella Ward, for their enduring support of me and this chapter over the last few years and for their commitment to making classics a more inclusive, welcoming space for us all. Thanks also to the other contributors and the wider CAWS collective: this project unfolded over a critical period in my own studies as well as the COVID-19 pandemic, and I drew strength and inspiration from your presence and support at many points. Finally, I began working on this chapter in lockdown and I am thankful that, fittingly, I was able to finish it in Athens.
2 For a recent, critical treatment of this version of history, see Dabashi (2022).
3 Here I focus on what Çelebi and Efendi say about the Parthenon; for how the two authors integrate other Athenian monuments into the history of the Qur'anic prophets, see Fowden (2018, 2019).
4 The history of UNESCO world heritage is well documented; for a recent, critical take that informs my argument here, see Meskell (2018).
5 See also: Meskell (2018, 3), Toye and Toye (2010).
6 We should also be wary of Erdoğan's appropriation of Ayasofya and Turkey's Islamic heritage in promoting his nationalist agenda. His nationalism is a reaction to Atatürk and his followers, the Kemalists, more closely aligning Turkey with Europe and the concept of Western civilisation. His focus is not just founded in Islamic history but evoking Turkey's Ottoman, imperialist past (Ayoob, 2020). The politics of Erdoğan and his party are even referred to as neo-Ottomanism: they describe themselves as the "grandchildren"

of the Ottomans, bypassing and undermining the Kemalist generation (Mikhail, 2020). However, Erdoğan's motives do not diminish the civilisational approach conveyed in the shock and anger at the reconversion of Ayasofya from some scholars, officials and organisations in Europe and the United States (Gall, 2020; McKernan, 2020), including UNESCO.
7 I would like to recognise Penelope Papailias for pioneering the "anti-tour" in Greece, which does exactly this as a practical, decolonial methodology.

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11 Queer Time, Crip Time, Woman Time, Sick Time, Sleepy Time, Muslim Time . . . Remaking Temporality Beyond "the Classical"

Marchella Ward

In 1998, the Swiss watchmakers Swatch tried to do away with time zones altogether. Rather than being set to a specific time zone reflecting their owner's longitudinal coordinates relative to the Royal Observatory in Greenwich, London, their new line of Beat watches instead kept Swatch Internet Time (also known as .beat time), which was the same the world over. Swatch Internet Time divided the solar day into 1,000 parts – known as beats, each lasting 1 minute and 26.4 seconds in standard time – notated from midnight in three numbers. At 10:00 a.m. Greenwich Mean Time, it would be 4:00 a.m. in Missouri, 2:30 p.m. in Mumbai, 11:00 a.m. in Cairo and 7:00 p.m. in Canberra, but it would be @416 Swatch beats everywhere in the world. "No more time zones, it's @416 Swatch Beats everywhere!" chirps a cartoon character on the Swatch Internet Time advertisement.[1] Swatch's commitment to the abolition of time zones had all the hallmarks of late 1990s optimism for the possibilities of the internet: "if a New York web-supporter makes a date for a chat with a cyber friend in Rome", the advertising campaign read, "they can simply agree to meet at an '@ time' – because internet time is the same all over the world". But the abolition of time zones was not at all a new idea in 1998. And although Swatch's lively interest in .beat time likely resulted from a commitment to selling watches rather than to decolonising temporality, these Beat watches nonetheless invited their wearers to question the arbitrariness of how time is figured.

More recently than 1998, time's arbitrariness has been explicitly connected to its coloniality. "The goal of Western linear time is always", as Rasheedah Phillips wrote in *The Funambulist* magazine, "to lock Black bodies out of the Future and remove them from the timeline of civilization".[2] Phillips, whose interdisciplinary collective art practice Black Quantum Futurism engages explicitly with the coloniality of clock-time, was not referring to the exclusion of "Black bodies" in a metaphorical sense or as a synecdoche for anti-Blackness more generally.[3] Rather she was referring specifically to the 1884 International Prime Meridian Conference (IPMC) – the conference at which Greenwich was established as the Prime Meridian. Phillips continued,

> Though the U.S. Secretary of State's opening speech at the IPMC claimed
> that "most of the nations of the earth are represented", European and South

American countries dominated the conference, with only Japan as a named representative for Asia, and Liberia as the only African nation.[4]

The implication here is obvious: although the IPMC delegates positioned themselves as the creators of an international, universal and arbitrary pattern for time, their priorities were nonetheless political, with delegates from most African and Asian countries explicitly excluded from the conversation.

The case has already been repeatedly made by Barbara Adam (2004) as well as at greater length by Giordano Nanni (2012) – two authors Phillips frequently cites – that the clock was no less a tool of colonisation than the ship and that empire-building was predicated on a specific temporal structure. The work of Sarah Sharma has shown comprehensively that "temporality operates as a key relation of power" (Sharma terms this "power-chronography") and that "time is lived at the intersection of a range of social differences that includes class, gender, race, immigration status and labor".[5] This chapter will not, therefore, restate the argument of clock-time's coloniality or describe power-chronography in detail. Instead, I will examine Phillips' critique of the exclusionary nature of "Western *linear* time" specifically.[6] Opposition to linear time, and particularly to the ways in which linear time supports exploitative capitalism, as well as settler colonialism, is not at all a recent theoretical innovation.[7] The rejection of "chrononormativity" (to use Elizabeth Freeman's term) has long played a role in activist movements and in disciplines established by groups constituted by historical (and ongoing) injury, resulting in a variety of non-normative chronotypes and chronopolitical time structures: queer time, crip time, woman time, sick time and sleepy time, to name only a few.[8] It is in the light of these critiques of normative linear time that this chapter will offer one particular example of the chronopolitical effect of "the classical" as a pseudo-temporal category – the exclusion of Islam – and will set out some alternative temporal constellations for a critical ancient world studies (CAWS) committed to opposing both this disciplinary Islamophobia and the naturalising of Western linear time.

Against Linear Time

The discipline known as classics depends on linear time both for its constitution as a unit of study, as well as for its modes of investigation and its justification. Unpicking the ways in which time is constructed as linear makes clear the arbitrariness of any definition of "the classical", a designation famously lacking in clear boundaries, either geographical or chronological. Despite the fuzziness of classics' disciplinary boundaries, with both its beginning and its end point shrouded in argument and mystery, one thing remains clear: the timeline of classics, in most framings, ends *before* the coming of Islam.[9] This is not only a reflex of openly Islamophobic, classics-adjacent writing that deliberately excludes Islam from the paradigm of the classical so as inscribe it within a "clash of civilisations" narrative or otherwise to Orientalise it (infamous examples of writing in this category include Bernard Lewis' *Islam and the West* and Samuel P. Huntington's *Clash of*

Civilizations).[10] It is also a reflex of recent scholarship on the ancient world and even scholarship that positions its field of investigation as global: "Asia, Europe and Africa before Islam" reads the subtitle to Eivind Heldaas Seland's (2021) *A Global History of the Ancient World*. The two discourses – one, openly ideological, racist and Islamophobic and the other presenting Islam matter-of-factly as the temporal end point of the classical – are not separate from each other, and both are legitimated by the seeming arbitrariness of linear time. "Straight time is a self-naturalising temporality", writes the queer theorist José Esteban Muñoz, but this process of self-naturalisation deserves attention insofar as it contributes to the way in which ideology (in this case, Islamophobia) masquerades as arbitrary temporality.[11]

Naturalising linear time and assuming it to be a simple fact of the discipline of classics depoliticises the exclusion of Islam. Katherine McKittrick remarks that disciplines can have the effect of creating "fictive distances" in this way, in her 2021 book *Dear Science and Other Stories*:

> Disciplines stack and bifurcate seemingly disconnected categories and geographies; disciplines differentiate, split and create fictive distances between us. Discipline is empire.[12]

The effects of these "fictive distances" in the real world are multiple.[13] The false notion that Muslims are culturally distinct from Europeans is a remarkably pervasive tool, underlining hostile environment policies on immigration, for example, as well as widespread Islamophobic attitudes more broadly.[14] In his recent book *Minarets in the Mountains: A Journey Into Muslim Europe* (2021), Tharik Hussain details the refusal to engage with the idea of Muslim Europe, premised on a false notion of cultural difference, and the role of these fictive distances in heritage studies is addressed in Lylaah Bhalerao's chapter in this volume.[15]

But McKittrick's assessment of the coloniality of disciplines requires us to do more than simply correct misattributions of heritage sites and other factual errors created by these fictive distances, as if the exclusion of Islam were simply an accident of temporality. Writing of modern state borders and their ongoing neocolonial ordering of space, Meryem-Bahia Arfaoui remarks:

> Colonization draws spatial borders on geographical maps while totally ignoring existing social realities. In a similar way, colonization draws subjective temporal borders across the world that impose a rhythm and social formations that ignore pre-existing realities.[16]

Arfaoui's comment is no less true of narratives of history: if we see time's linear construction as a colonial construct, then it becomes readily apparent that the fictive distances it creates can only exist in total ignorance of "social realities" (to use Arfaoui's term). In reality, of course, Islam has never been other to Europe (as Tharik Hussain's book points out in great detail), a continent which after all holds within it multiple Muslim-majority countries and about 44 million Muslims. Time's supposed linearity provides an excuse for these fictive distances that the

discipline of classics enables, presenting as objectively true a segregation that in fact comes about narratively and discursively, reflecting ideological rather than historical biases.

It is often acknowledged outside of classics that temporalities are a discursive tool for naturalising ideology. In *Recalling the Caliphate: Decolonization and World Order* (2014), Salman Sayyid gives an example of how the narrative construction of democracy as a Western ideal could be undermined by a temporal shift, hinting at the way that reframing temporality might be key to CAWS:

> An alternative to the Eurocentric account of democracy that establishes a privileged relationship between the idea of the West and the democratic form is, of course, possible. Such a decolonial account challenges the hegemonic description of democracy through a series of displacements. A temporal displacement that refers to the existence of democracy prior to the Greeks. An etymological displacement would deny that democracy is a Greek word, by tracing the roots of demos to Mycenaean linear B and from there back to Sumerian DUMU which translates as "sons/children of the city" (Keane, 2009, 113). A spatial displacement would include the venture of Islam in the story of democracy as well as other cultural formations that are commonly designated as non-Western (for example contemporary India as an illustration of "monitory democracy"). A decolonial reading liberates the signifier Democracy from its signifieds in the West.[17]

CAWS, its manifesto provides, "refuses to inherit silently a field crafted so as to constitute a pre-history for an imagined 'West'". While other chapters in this volume have organised this refusal around rejection of the idea of "the West" or redefinition of what constitutes the classical, this chapter will deconstruct the chronopolitical structuring of this pre-history itself. Taking the exclusion of the Islamicate to be a key aspect of the ideological structuring of the classical, this chapter will unmask linear time as a tool of what Sayyid calls "Westernese" (the colonial narrative logic of the West). Having denaturalised the imperial temporality of the classical, I will then suggest some of the many possible ways of reimagining decolonial temporalities for CAWS.[18]

Islam as the End of the World

The idea that it is necessary to reconfigure the temporality of historical narratives so as to more meaningfully include Islam is not in itself a novel suggestion. Tamim Ansary (2009), Garth Fowden (2014) and Ahmed Paul Keeler (2019) – among others – have each in their own ways suggest that reshaping the way that history is periodised and its temporality imagined would mitigate against the exclusion of Islam as an interpretative category. But here my argument is not so much that renarrativising history would tell a *more true* story about Islamic history (though I have no doubt that that is the case). Rather I am interested in the ways in which the deconstruction of linear time itself (and its attributes: clock-time, the timeline,

periodisation, etc.) would allow the Islamicate to disrupt Westernese narratives that legitimate fictive differences. I use the term "Islamicate" here rather than referring to Islamic history or any notion of a singular Muslim intellectual (or other) tradition because I am not referring solely to an experience of faith – though even if I were, that experience would not be reducible to the singular, as it is in many of the far-right narratives that have now become mainstream. Like the editors of the *ReOrient* journal, my work here will be influenced by critical Muslim studies, where

> it is not a more critical analysis of the Muslim experience that constitutes Critical Muslim Studies, but rather a relationship to it which does not reproduce a hierarchy between the West and the Rest . . . In short, Critical Muslim Studies signals a shift from the ontic towards a more ontological inclined understanding of matters Islamicate.[19]

For those unacquainted with critical Muslim studies, and decolonising disciplines more broadly, a shift from the ontic to the ontological might all too easily read as a jargon-tastic leap out of the philosophical frying pan and into the critical theory fire. But this shift – from thinking about *how things actually are* to thinking about *how the way things are comes to be established* – is crucial to any decolonising work that sets itself against common-sense assertions of oppressive categories and exclusionary disciplines. A common thread of philosophies of the Left – however defanged in the neoliberal academy – has been the refusal of existing categories of interpretation, of positivism, and of the false claim to objectivity or view-from-nowhere accounts of historical inquiry.[20] Adopting such an ontological approach, then – as well as drawing on Ariella Aïsha Azoulay's scepticism of historical tools ("imperialism is reproduced through the propagation of tools") – I will show here that linear time is not a neutral concept "from nowhere", but an imperial tool that produces the Orient as a residual category divorced from, and subservient to the West, and reduces the Islamicate to its role in this Orient category.[21]

Orientalism cannot be divorced from a particular notion of temporality. The Orient is literally the place where the sun rises, and so, write the editors of the *ReOrient* journal: "the temporality of knowing was knowing anew, concomitant to the continual arising and appearance of the day, of the orient sun".[22] Although he had in 1976 written that "the roots of modern Orientalism as a discipline are philological and can be found in the late 18th century", Edward Said would in *Orientalism* (1978) describe those same roots as "positional" and would also indicate a different temporal extent, positioning "the demarcation between Orient and West" as already well established by the time of the *Iliad* and finding its clearest ancient expression in Aeschylus' *Persians*.[23] Much of what Said reports in "The Scope of Orientalism" about the ways Europe discursively constructed the coming of Islam as a dangerous – if exotic – rupture ("a radically new form of life", as Said puts it) is extremely well known, with Edward Gibbon's reading of "the lessons of Rome's decline in

the rise of Islam" perhaps the most famous example.[24] But less discussed is Said's focus on the temporal structure of Eurocentric history as an enabling factor for this Orientalist conception of the world. Without, of course, using McKittrick's terminology (which she would coin 40 years into *Orientalism*'s future), Said detailed in the methodological set up of his book the role of temporality in establishing "fictive distances":

> Much of what we associate with or even know about such periods as "long ago" or "in the beginning" or "at the end of time" is poetic – made up. For a historian of Middle Kingdom Egypt, "long ago" will have a very clear sort of meaning, but even this meaning does not totally dissipate the imaginative, quasi-fictional quality one senses lurking in a time very different and distant from our own. For there is no doubt that imaginative geography and history help the mind to intensify its own sense of itself by dramatizing the distance and difference between what is close to it and what is far away. . . . there is no use pretending that all we know about time and space, or rather history and geography, is more than anything else imaginary.[25]

The imaginary of time – like the imaginary of space – is a tool of the Orientalist framework of the West versus the Rest.[26]

For classics, Islam is not imagined as distant in space but as anachronistic in time, and this is very much still the case even in scholarship written in recent decades.[27] In the opening lines of their much-celebrated book *The Classical Tradition* (2010), the classicists Anthony Grafton, Glenn W. Most and Salvatore Settis set out to describe what they understood to be a linear tradition of "the classical":

> This book aims to provide a reliable and wide-ranging guide to the reception of classical Graeco-Roman antiquity in all its dimensions in later cultures. Understandings and misunderstandings of ancient Greek and Roman literature, philosophy, art, architecture, history, politics, religion, science and public and private life have shaped the cultures of medieval and modern Europe and of the nations that derived from them – and they have helped to shape other cultural traditions as well, Jewish, Islamic and Slavic, to name only these.[28]

Unlike Gibbon and others, Grafton, Settis and Most do not position Islam here as ushering in the end of the known (read: classical) world, but they do set it outside of the linear temporal narrative of the classical tradition. In so doing, they curate for Muslims what Benedict Anderson calls an "imagined community", separate from the classically inspired "imagined community" within which they confidently place "medieval and modern Europe" as well as "the nations that derived from them".[29] The Islamic – like the Jewish and the Slavic – is positioned as outside of the narrativising drive of the classical and its linear temporality. Reading Walter Benjamin's analysis of simultaneity, Anderson argues that consciousness of

national identity (and nationalism) is enabled by "the idea of a sociological organ-
ism moving calendrically through homogeneous, empty time" which is

> a precise analogue of the idea of the nation, which also is conceived as a solid
> community moving steadily down (or up) history. An American will never
> meet, or even know the names of more than a handful of his 240,000,000-odd
> fellow-Americans. He has no idea what they are up to at any one time. But he
> has complete confidence in their steady, anonymous, simultaneous activity.[30]

The temporality of the classical, then, constructs classical influence as a "solid
community moving steadily down" through history – attaching to it a pseudo-
nationalist identity that establishes a trans-historical "imagined community" from
which the Islamicate is explicitly excluded.

There are many examples of the Islamicate being presented as anachronistic to
narratives of linear time in order to position it as un-European.[31] The classical cre-
ates an origin myth for a European exceptionalism that is predicated on its fictive
difference from Islam – on a myth of progress through time in which Islam is left
behind. This is nowhere more apparent than in explicitly white supremacist writ-
ing, where the temporality of the classical is similarly relied upon to divorce the
Islamicate from the European and to racialise Muslims as "other" to Europe (and
its assumed whiteness). The white supremacist French-language writer Renaud
Camus is best known for his "Great Replacement" theory, elaborated in a number
of speeches and writings now collected in a self-published volume *Le Grand Rem-
placement* (2019). The premise of Camus' far-right ideology is well known – and
is reflected in anti-immigration policies across Europe and North America: Camus
is of the opinion that there is a global conspiracy to replace white people (whom
he incorrectly understands to be Europe's indigenous population) with non-white
people (whom he positions as late-arriving immigrants to the continent). Although
he occasionally attempts geographical specificity (with tangential tirades often
attacking migrants from Algeria or Turkey in particular), his most common target
are Muslims or, as he puts it repeatedly, in reference to the "clash of civilisations"
narrative popularised by Samuel P. Huntington, "l'islam conquérant" ("victorious
Islam").[32]

Much could be said about Camus' classicism, from his extensive passages on
Phoenician and Greek colonisation to the pretext that he finds in Plato's *Cratylus*
for his white genocide conspiracy theory.[33] But in "Le Changement de Peuple"
in particular (the first chapter of *Le Grand Remplacement*), Camus finds himself
clinging to a temporality that he sees as key to the preservation of white supremacy:

> *Il faut refuser de changer de **calendrier**, il faut refuser de changer de langue,
> il faut refuser de changer de costume, de visage, **d'horaires**, de nourriture,
> d'interdits, **d'histoire**, de **passé**, **d'avenir**, d'être, d'identité.*
>
> [We must refuse to change the **calendar**, we must refuse to change lan-
> guage, we must refuse to change our dress, face, **timetable**, food, laws, **his-
> tory**, **past**, **future**, being, identity.][34]

Europe is, for Camus, an "imagined community", to use Anderson's term, of white Christians descended ultimately from the Greeks and Romans. And it is a particular kind of temporality that safeguards, as he understands it, European supremacy.

Temporalities Beyond the Classical

The logic that Camus establishes here – that narrativising Europe according to imperial temporality will safeguard white supremacy – is equally legible to Ariella Aïsha Azoulay, who views non-linear temporalities as resistance to imperialism. Writing of archival narratives, she remarks,

> Whoever resisted being properly archivable along a linear timeline under established categories became a violator of the already accomplished past, and thus the present.[35]

From the point of view of Camus or of the imperial archive, the classical as temporality enlists the "accomplished past" in the service of preserving an unequal or oppressive present. The authors of the *Postclassicisms* volume raise this temporality as a technique of classicism when they write, "Classicism is founded thus on a narrative of time and, more specifically, on how we in the present are located in time".[36] But there have always been those who have resisted this "narrative of time", particularly in disciplines with activist beginnings, and activist movements populated by, as José Esteban Muñoz has it, those who "have been cast out of straight time's rhythm" and who "have made worlds in our temporal and spatial configurations".[37]

Queer time, coming out of queer studies, is perhaps the most well-known temporality of resistance, with Annamarie Jagose for instance describing it as

> a mode of inhabiting time that is attentive to the recursive eddies and back-to-the-future loops that often pass undetected or uncherished beneath the official narrations of the linear sequence that is taken to structure normative life.[38]

Temporalities of resistance set themselves against the idea that it is possible or desirable to subject bodies to chrononormativity; to stipulate what a body can accomplish in time – when something should happen or how long it should take (and it is for this reason that temporalities of resistance have often been articulated as critiques of capitalism).[39] Queer time and its cognate temporalities of resistance demand the rejection of chrononormativity (a demand that Phillips phrases as an imperative: "Organise Your Own Temporality"[40]), viewing it not only as an oppressive tool of capitalist exploitation that actively prevents the flourishing of those with non-normate bodies but as a construct that came about with the stated goal of imperial oppression and exploitation.

So much has been written on the rejection of chrononormative clock-time in disciplines that have activist or liberatory beginnings, but there is little evidence

that these temporalities of resistance have unsettled linear time within classics.[41] Classicists have frequently been interested in non-normative temporalities, or anachronisms within ancient texts, with Danielle S. Allen pointing out that Greek poetry (particularly Hesiod and Homer) gives abundant evidence of time expanding and collapsing, moving in multiple directions, denying accurate measurement and its experience being shaped by embodiment and positionality:

> The ancient Greeks, for instance, worried about gray-haired infants and rivers that ran backwards. They knew that the sun could disappear. Above all, they knew that human passions, especially anger, could vary the flow of time for each individual, making time always relative to personal experience.[42]

But neither Allen nor the authors of *Anachronism in Antiquity* (2020) make a connection between the varied experiences of temporalities evidenced in ancient texts and what we have called here temporalities of resistance.[43] Any classicist who has ever read the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey* knows full well that rosy-fingered dawn does not appear at equal intervals, either in the text or in the narrative, but this knowledge has not at all unsettled the normative timeline according to which the subject remains organised.

How CAWS might embrace these temporalities of resistance remains to be imagined. But in their explicit demand that we theorise time as an experience entangled with embodiment, temporalities of resistance offer not a single solution but a series of ethical commitments. Temporalities of resistance reject the "view from nowhere", demanding that those who establish a structuring of time in their work do so from a particular situated perspective.[44] They call for explicit acknowledgements not just that temporal perspective is always partial but that temporalities are organised in service of some and for the exploitation of others. They demand that the *cui bono* question (for whose benefit?) be asked of structurings of time. And although this question is not frequently asked of temporality in the study of the ancient world, academic work directed at the establishment of more just futures has much more often articulated this situatedness. CAWS could take its lead from futurisms, which have long made explicit the transformations in power structures that their imagined futures are driving at. Futurisms articulate their political motivations and have an explicit positionality; they have as their aim to transform the future so as to end the oppression of a particular group.[45]

Rasheedah Phillips' Black Quantum Futurism, for example, draws on Afrofuturism's imaginative possibilities to "collapse space-time into a desired future" that "allows for the ability of African-descended people to see into, choose or create the impending future".[46] As Kodwo Eshun puts it, writing of Afrofuturisms,

> By creating temporal complications and anachronistic episodes that disturb the linear time of progress, these futurisms adjust the temporal logics that condemned black subjects to prehistory.[47]

Muslim futurism is also beginning to be theorised in academic and academic-adjacent spaces; a conference on the subject is planned by the collective Alhamdu

for January 2022, drawing together themes that have long been present in the work of artists like Faig Ahmed and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (especially work made in collaboration with Luke Arroyo Mendoza, Maryam Rostami, Saba Taj and Laila Nur among others).[48] In CAWS, unlike in classics, it is acknowledged that linear time is not neutral or natural. Rather, as various futurisms have shown, the timeline organises the past so as to empower a particular community or communities. The linear timeline of the classical has allowed classics to function as a kind of European futurism, using the ancient past to legitimate Europe's supremacy. CAWS would need to acknowledge the futurist nature of the study of the ancient past – which could always be co-opted in service of a particular group – but need not naturalise a future where Europeanness is the default empowered category.

Towards an A-history of the World

For CAWS it will be necessary to understand temporality not as superstructural but as itself part of the "structures of domination" (to use Said's terms), that naturalise oppression.[49] As Jussi Parikka points out in his article on Arabfuturism, "reality creation (or what some would just call ideology) is fundamentally related to modalities of time".[50] CAWS will need to acknowledge the partiality of all constructions of temporality and set its sights explicitly on building decolonial futures – or, as Suhaiymah Manzoor-Khan puts it, "Where colonialism universalizes the future, we must not".[51] Manzoor-Khan is characteristically hopeful about the acknowledgement that temporalities are situated, partial and power-motivated constructions: "Anything man-made holds the possibility of being unmade, so the names we give not only reveal other nows, they make claims to other futures altogether".[52] This commitment to unmaking and remaking – and the vocabulary "man-made" – inscribes Manzoor-Khan's work within a community of those whose work denaturalises superstructures and demonstrates their role in "structures of domination", of which the most famous is Sylvia Wynter's denaturalising of the concept of "Man".[53] With time denaturalised, and properly sited within structures of domination, CAWS practitioners can be intentional in organising their own temporalities and crafting other futures. Aware of how temporality can play a role in naturalising oppression, they can ask future-focused questions in their study of the ancient past: what sorts of temporal relation might naturalise a more just and liberatory future?

We have seen that one possible decolonial approach to the tyranny of the classical as temporality would be for CAWS to adopt the intentionality of futurisms, laying bare the contingencies and beneficiaries of any narrative of time by which the study of the ancient past is organised. Azoulay (2019, 186) offers a different solution, querying the notion of the past altogether:

> And if there was no past? And if the past was the invention of the imperial archive? And if the keepers at its gate are guarding something else?[54]

For those whose lives are only mapped out in Western linear time, no doubt Azoulay's tricolon of questions here seems altogether absurd: but the idea that it is not just particular historical narratives that are ideologically motivated but the notion of pastness itself is beginning to become a frequent provocation of decolonial studies.[55] In setting out the critical stakes of CAWS earlier in this volume, Salman Sayyid and AbdoolKarim Vakil call for CAWS to provide the pretext to the stated goal of critical Muslim studies – establishing "a new history of the world without the *telos* of the West".[56] Following Azoulay, we might ask whether CAWS might in addition refuse the notion of teleological narrative altogether and instead offer an a-history of the world without a *telos* at all. An a-history would not need to be anti-historicist; defiance of what has in queer studies been called "the tyranny of historicism" has often taken the form of counter-histories, speculative futurisms, deliberate anachronisms and other imaginative practices that are entangled in complex ways with historicist disciplines.[57] But whereas classics naturalised linear time and justified its unequal structuring of the world, CAWS could find instead the potential for a more liberatory future in the possibility of its unmaking.

Notes

1 The explainer video is (or was, in August 2021) still available on an unlisted page of the Swatch website: www.swatch.com/en-en/internet-time.html.
2 Phillips (2021, 22). Her comment is influenced by Michelle M. Wright's work, establishing in *Physics of Blackness: Beyond the Middle Passage Epistemology* (2015) that the timeline restricts our understanding of Black history by moving "through geography chronologically, with enslavement taking place at the beginning, or the past, and the march towards freedom moving through the ages toward the far-right end of the line or arrow, which also represents the present," 57.
3 Phillips draws on – and often cites – Koselleck (1979), and Koselleck is also cited throughout Rood et al. (2020).
4 Phillips (2021, 21).
5 Sharma (2014, 138).
6 I will use Phillips' (2021, 22) term "Western linear time" repeatedly throughout this chapter, interchangeably with Freeman's (2010) "chrononormativity".
7 See Sharma (2014, 139) on clock-time and capitalism. On the relationship between disability justice, crip time and anti-capitalism, see also Rosenthal (2019), and Clifford (2020) on the UK context specifically.
8 Freeman (2010). Jameson (2003) gives a more canonical tradition to this querying of temporality (including Mann, Bakhtin, Derrida, etc.). On these specifically, see Kafer (2013), Samuels (2017) and Fazeli (2016). On temporality as a mode of protest, see Hedva (2016).
9 On "fuzziness" in classical reception, see Hardwick (2011).
10 Lewis (1993), Huntington (1996) – on these see Dabashi (2018), brilliantly subtitled "On Bernard Lewis and His Extraordinary Capacity for Getting Everything Wrong", Bottici and Challand (2010) and Adib-Moghaddam (2013). See also most recently Dabashi (2022). There is no shortage of openly Islamophobic framing within the field of classics either: Pormann (2009) in the *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* on classics and Islam carries the subtitle "From Homer to Al-Qāʾida".
11 Muñoz (2009, 25).

12 McKittrick (2021, 36).

13 I will use McKittrick's term throughout the rest of this chapter.

14 On this see Salama (2011), particularly on the way in which the "clash of civilisations" narrative brought about by the exclusion of Islam from mainstream historiography continues to shape public and political discourse in Europe and North America. That narratives – even those that concern pre-Islamic literature and artefacts – can negatively impact perceptions of real-life Muslims in the modern world is apparent to Arjana (2015).

15 Hussain (2021), especially 36–37 on the Stari Most bridge in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Hussain remarks on the "merry charade of denial" that European archaeologists clung to in their descriptions of the bridge, which although built under the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman (and inscribed with its date) was presumed for much of its history to be the earlier work of various Roman emperors and perceived by the 19th-century painter Charlotte de Lazen, among others, to be a "marvellous remnant of Latin civilisation" in the midst of "Turkish barbarity." On the false universalism of World Heritage, see Bhalerao, in this volume.

16 Arfaoui (2021, 26). Translated from the French by Chanelle Adams.

17 Sayyid (2014, 75). The term "Westernese" is used throughout Sayyid (2014).

18 On the concept of an "imperial temporality", see Azoulay (2019, 75–79), though she is not the only author to use this term.

19 From: www.criticalmuslimstudies.co.uk/manifesto/.

20 I am thinking here of the way that the New Materialisms and Speculative Realisms of, for instance Bruno Latour, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (among many others) committed politically to the remapping of ontology – see Sauvagnargues (2016). It should not be assumed from this list of names that this reflex is limited to white male French philosophers, although it is through these that New Materialism is best known in academia. Sylvia Wynter's essays, like many others in Black feminist philosophy and cultural theory have also taken aim at normative processes of categorisation – see, for instance, Wynter (2006) – and indigenous radical organising as well as migrants rights activists have also often taken a deconstructive approach to common-sense notions of state and power; see, for instance, Simpson (2017), Rifkin (2017) and Walia (2021).

21 Azoulay (2019, 297). I use the term "subservient" here deliberately, evoking the way in which the enslavement of people is related to an imperial temporality – an argument I do not have the space to make at length in this chapter, but which is in evidence throughout, for instance, Hartman (2006).

22 www.criticalmuslimstudies.co.uk/manifesto/.

23 Said (1976, 1978). On the *Persians* see Said (1978, 56). Said was of course not the first to theorise Orientalism, as the texts collected in Çelik (2021) show.

24 Said (1978, 59). For Said reading Gibbon, see Said (1978, 117) and elsewhere in *Orientalism*.

25 Said (1978, 55).

26 On the imaginary of space, see Umachandran in this volume.

27 In *actual* space, of course, the classical and the Islamic are not distant at all, occupying much of the same land mass as the contested heritage sites in Bhalerao's chapter in this volume show, and as is made readily apparent throughout Hussain (2021) among many other books.

28 Grafton et al. (2010, vii).

29 Anderson (2016), first published 1983.

30 Anderson (2016, 26). Nostalgia, rather than simultaneity, is at the core of British nationalism specifically according to the authors of *Empire's Endgame* (2021, 57–67), Gargi Bhattacharyya, Adam Elliot-Cooper, Sita Balani, Kerem Nişancıoğlu, Kojo Koram, Dalia Gebrial, Nadine El-Enany and Luke De Noronha.

31 See, for instance, former British Prime Minister Boris Johnson's "And Then Came the Muslims" chapter in his book on Rome (2007). It would be easy to take any individual example of this trope and position it merely as the product of individualised Islamophobic prejudice, but to do so would be to neglect the role that the classical plays in illustrating and legitimating this prejudice, as well as to ignore the huge body of work on Islamophobia's structural operation. On the latter see, for example, El-Tayeb (2016) and Sayyid (2010).

32 Camus (2019, 40), published for the first time in 2011. See also 114 especially. In "The Great Replacement", Camus sums up his greatest fear: "That my village would no longer be called *Colombey-les-Deux-Églises* (Colombey the Two Churches) but *Colombey-les-Deux-Mosquées*! (Colombey the Two Mosques)", 96.

33 Some of this material has been collected by the Pharos project, though much more remains to be said about the connection between classicism and Far Right, explicitly white supremacist conspiracy theories: https://pharos.vassarspaces.net/2019/10/07/greco-roman-antiquity-in-camus-great-replacement/. See Bond (2019) on some of the misreadings of ancient material that accompany the propagation of far-right conspiracy theories. I intend to say much more about this text and the absorption of its classicism in anti-migrant policies across Europe in a book project that I am currently working on.

34 Camus (2019, 82). (Emphasis mine.) My translation.

35 Azoulay (2019, 187).

36 The Postclassicisms Collective (2019, xx). Thumiger (2013) is also keen to consider "the backward stream that is also part of reception", 40.

37 Muñoz (2009, 182).

38 Jagose (2009, 158).

39 See Fazeli (2016) on an art installation tellingly entitled "Sick Time, Sleepy Time, Crip Time: Against Capitalism's Temporal Bullying". On Crip time especially, see Kafer (2013, 25ff).

40 Phillips (2017).

41 The fact that classics remains attached to timelines, periodisation and historicism is not for want of engagement, mostly on the part of early career academics and graduate students, with temporalities of resistance: the Queer and the Classical project is one such project that has sought to queer the timeline of classics.

42 Allen (2003, 62).

43 Though see Rood et al. (2020, 9), where the authors gesture briefly to the disrupting effect of queer theory on linear time.

44 I use the term "situated" here in deliberate echo of Donna Haraway's "situated knowledges", in Haraway (1988).

45 These futurisms re-appropriated the concept of futurism from Futurism, an art movement associated with fascism, and turned its imagining towards explicitly liberatory purposes.

46 Phillips (2017). On the possibilities for Afrofuturism see also Mbembe (2014). On the relationship between futurism and radical social change, see most famously Jameson (2005).

47 Eshun (2003, 297). Queer and crip futurisms have been no less readily imagined, see, for example, Muñoz (2009), Kafer (2013), Schalk (2018), and Milbern (2019). Speculative realism in philosophy is of course not unrelated to embodied futurisms; see, for instance, Deleuze (1997) on "future-people". See also Majali (2015) and Parikka (2018) on Arab and Gulf futurisms, D'Souza (2019) on Desi futurisms, and a growing body of analysis of Indigenous futurisms, e.g. Baudemann (2016). See Buali (2014) on the ways in which some futurisms (particularly Afrofuturisms and Palestinian futurisms) explicitly seek to redress the imbalance of history.

48 On these see Alhamdu's website, www.muslimfuturism.com/, and see also the 29th edition of the *Critical Muslim* journal, "Futures". Like other futurisms, Muslim futurism

finds its language in science fiction, with much of Muslim futurism being articulated specifically around to Frank Herbert's 1965 novel *Dune*, which models its desert planet (loosely) on the Islamicate – see, for instance, Caroll (2020).
49 Throughout Said (1978).
50 Parikka (2018, 44).
51 Manzoor-Khan (2021). The relationship between a renewed vision of the future and decolonial possibility is explained throughout Mignolo (2011), among other places.
52 Manzoor-Khan (2021).
53 Wynter (2003), see also Weheliye (2014) on this particular superstructure.
54 Azoulay (2019, 186).
55 See, for instance, Satia (2020).
56 Sayyid and Vakil in this volume, xx.
57 Nardizzi et al. (2009, 1). See Devun and Tortorici (2018) on some of these trends in trans studies specifically.

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Critical Approaches

12 *A Loss of Faith Brings Vertigo*

Icarus, Black and Queer Embodiment and the Failure of the West

Patrice Rankine

In an arresting passage from *The Postclassicisms Collective*, the authors of the treatise charting new directions in the classics raise the question of value. Although there are several challenges to its pretences and framework, some of which Johanna Hanink explored in her 2020 review essay, the Collective's discussion of value is apropos to the questions that critical ancient world studies (CAWS) raises:

> Value marks the investment that we, as moderns, make in the culture of the past: the reasons, that is, why we are drawn to it. These reasons may be intellectual, aesthetic, ethical, political, or affective in nature. They may be explicit or implicit. As classicists, we always turn to the past because we want something from it, even if we cannot articulate or do not know exactly what that is.
>
> (2020, 4)

The parsing is, to be sure, artificial, as if, for example, reasons intellectual or political could be separated, or ethical from affective.[1] It is true that for many classicists the motives for studying the past are complicated, not always discernible to oneself or others, which renders value a begged question. *The Postclassicisms Collective* leaves intact much of what we refer to as classical, even in its claim to posteriority. CAWS promisingly reframes the question of value.[2]

As a Black cisgender male whose affections lie more with George Floyd than with Johann Goethe,[3] I take the issue of value to heart. In this article I approach my own investments in the classics – what I want from the field – with a consciousness of how much damage the construct of Western civilisation has done to people of African descent, whether through the extraction of enslaved people from the continent, or in the colonising moves of dominance apart from the Transatlantic Slave Trade, e.g. the Berlin Conference of 1884–85.[4] Western history has failed Black people, in the collective. In this chapter, I meditate on this failure, the impasse between European modernity and what it wanted from antiquity, on the one side, and Black artistic and literary traditions and their ostensible pasts, on the other. If the Black Atlantic was a creative and productive trope within the West (Gilroy, 1993), this essay lingers on its limitations. That is, the value of the classics as we

know it, even for Black Atlantic receptions, is limited, outside of the field duplicating itself – establishing new monuments (real or imagined) to the West.[5]

I find for this journey companionship in the work of the queer Black artist Michael Richards because of his study of the Icarus myth,[6] a story that I want to hold as a quintessential trope of the failed relationship between Western civilisation and people of African descent. I side with Leonard Harris, a founder of Philosophy Born of Struggle (PBOS), in his claim that the suffering of Black people has been unnecessary, as opposed to the moral arc of Martin Luther King, Jr., wherein such suffering is a necessary step toward progress or the "beloved community". I add to these perspectives the queer theorisation of J. Halberstam, who takes failure as a theoretical tool. Halberstam offers further companionship in my embrace of the intertwined nature of Richards' Blackness and his queerness, as a corrective to the heteronormativity of the Black Atlantic thesis.[7] In addition, Halberstam helps queer my own affection for the classics as it is currently constituted, helping me to see the "dikes" that allowed the triumphant narrative of classical civilisation, as Aimé Césaire puts it in *Discourse on Colonialism*:

> Thus when Rome, in its alleged triumphal march toward a single civilization, had destroyed, one after the other, Carthage, Egypt, Greece, Judea, Persia, Dacia, and Cisalpine and Transalpine Gaul, it came to pass that it had itself swallowed up the dikes that protected it against the human ocean under which it was to perish.
>
> (Césaire, citing Edgar Quinet, 1972, 75)

In the end, I look to the failed enterprises of the Phoenicians, the Kushites and ancient West Africans, broadly, as potentially queering the study of the classics. I will first explain why Richards might be an exemplar within the value proposition I am raising.

Michael Richards and the Matter of Black Lives

A Loss of Faith Brings Vertigo is the title of a 1994 sculptural work of the artist Michael Richards, in which the centrepiece is a spinning bust fashioned after the artist himself, an African American man. Richards was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1963 and was of Jamaican descent, having been partially raised on the island, in Kingston (Francishine, 2021). He was a budding, Black American artist in the 1990s, exhibiting his work alongside Kara Walker and Kerry James Marshall (Barone, 2016). He was killed on 11 September 2001 when two planes were flown into NYC's Twin Towers, the World Trade Center, where he had his art studio and was working at the time. "A Loss of Faith" and other pieces among Richards' work began to draw renewed interest by the mid- to late 2010s, owing in part to its relevance to the Black Lives Matter movement that began after the 2012 murder of Trayvon Martin, the unarmed, Black teenage boy whose killer, George Zimmerman, was acquitted.[8] As a review of the 2019 retrospective at the Stanford Art

Gallery put it, in Richards' sculptures "the black male body is in a state of distress, psychologically and physically torn apart" (Edalatpour, 2019). Richards wanted to concretise the "pain and alienation", as he put it, of Black experiences in the Atlantic world. In the reviewer's words, Richards uses his own body as "the primary locus of experience, as a die from which to make casts" (Edalatpour, 2019).

Race and its attendant catastrophes, die cast as if determining fate, were inescapable entanglements in Richards' work, inspiring both the sculptural form and their enduring narratives. Despair (Richards' "loss of faith"), as an emotion that can accompany the tragic narratives that are sometimes part of being Black, describes well the potential pessimism of racial identity in the United States in the early 2020s, a period of some let-down after the purported post-racial flight that the 2008 election of Barack Obama as the first African American to the presidency was to have launched.[9] The significance of Richards' work, and in particular the five busts of *A Loss of Faith*, to the "racial reckoning" of the early 2020s was already captured prophetically in *The New York Times* review of the Arts Center at Governors Island 2016 show, "Michael Richards: Winged":

> Four white busts rest on a pedestal with plaques that say, "When I was young I wanted to be a policeman". They look as though they are wearing black masks; up close, it's clear that the masks are really photographs of police

Figure 12.1 Michael Richards, *A Loss of Faith Brings Vertigo*, 1994.

Source: Photograph by Oriol Tarridas. Photograph courtesy of the Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami, and the Michael Richards Estate.

brutality applied to the faces. A fifth bust, in the center, spins. A small image of Rodney King appears on its brow, like a target. This plaque is different: "A loss of faith brings vertigo".

(Barone, 2016)

The 1994 installation, its centrepiece the spinning bust with the target-like image of Rodney King, is a "direct response" to the 1991 beating of King at the hands of four police officers in Los Angeles, which was captured on videotape for the world to see, the event itself a precursor to the infinite repetitions of similar images and moving pictures caught on cellphone cameras.[10] These images reify and retell a brutality against Black bodies, the unbearable, feather-lightness of violence enacted upon the racialised, gendered person. Like racial brutality, the violence against queer bodies displaces agency onto the subject, as if on the part of the victim some choice of existence provokes it. As Black and queer, Richards embodied these traumas. He repeatedly refers to this brutality, e.g. the symbolic tarring and feathering of Black people (Edalatpour, 2019), most notable in *Tar Baby v. St. Sabastian* (1994), which we will see momentarily, and the feathers in *Fly Away Ol' Glory*. His use of media recalls representations of Black people dating as far back as the Zealy daguerreotypes and lynching photographs.[11]

Richards returns time and again in his work to what critics note to be the Icarus myth,[12] a story of flight and catastrophe, themes that would also be rendered prophetic considering the circumstances of Richards' death. The classical myth of Icarus might be an easy exemplar of Paul Gilroy's formulation of Black Atlantic routes, which includes the passage of Western cultural forms across African descendant communities (1993).[13] There are, however, uneasy associations within the Icarus motif. In Ovid's telling of the story (*Metamorphoses* 8.183–235), for example, Icarus begins to delight in his daring flight (*audaci coepit guadere volatu*, 8.223), departs from his father's advice and gaze, and is swept away in childlike play (*caelique cupidine tractus*, 8.224), which results in his fall and death. The Roman poet highlights heroic action or inaction, rather than chance, or broader, environmental realities, e.g. gravity necessitating vertiginous falls. Stories of heroism themselves cause a momentary illusion of triumph, and yet even in cases of meteoric success, such as those of European civilisation, falls are inevitable. As it pertains to Black and queer agency, Richards' work fixates on the gravitational inevitability of a fall, of violence. Richards' heroic success as an artist belies his entanglement with Rodney King, who is not a product of an inadvertent, accidental encounter with the police or the state but rather a recurrent practice of the degradation of Black people, useless suffering that has no teleological purpose. If Rodney King is unique, what do we do with Medgar Evers, Emmett Till, Trayvon Martin, Sandra Bland, Michael Brown and, by 2020, George Floyd?[14] In contrast to Ovid, Richards' work emblematises the inevitable, vertigo, perpetual freefall.

The theme of personal responsibility is an echo of Ovid's melancholic lament about Icarus' fall. Like the rejection of queer people within heteronormative frames, personal responsibility dismisses Black abjection as anything and everything
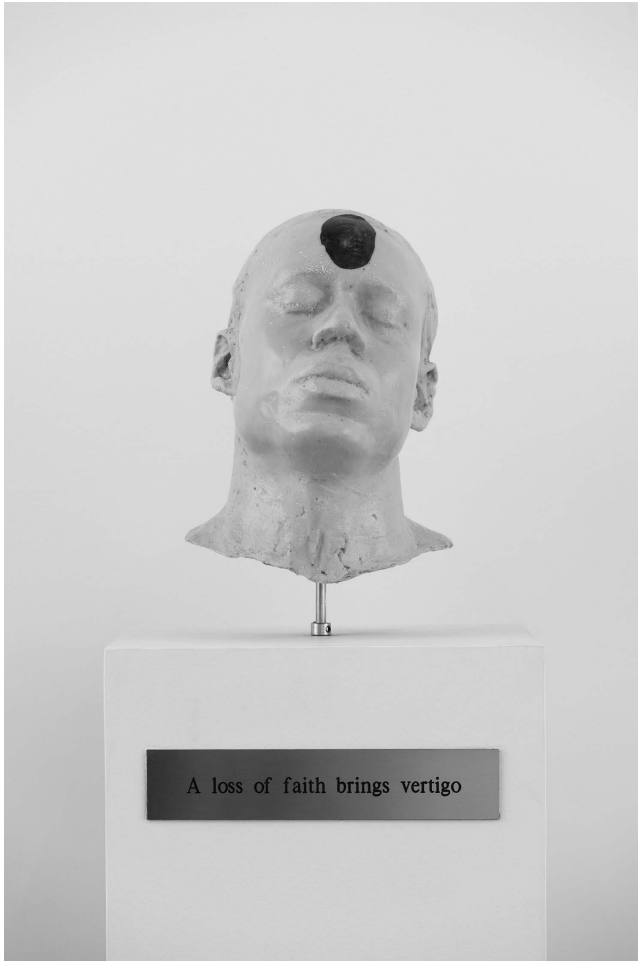
Figure 12.2 Michael Richards, *A Loss of Faith Brings Vertigo* (detail), 1994.

Source: Photograph by Oriol Tarridas. Photograph courtesy of the Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami, and the Michael Richards Estate.

except a perpetual Western practice. For these subjects, historical time does not reflect Hegelian progress but folds backwards from the civil rights movement to sharecropping and Jim Crow and the Transatlantic Slave Trade, in infinite regress. Icarian responsibility asks: What was Emmett Till doing whistling at a white woman in Mississippi in 1955?[15] Why was Trayvon hooded at night in a predominantly white suburb? Michael Brown should not have been selling loose cigarettes on that street corner, right? And wasn't George Floyd high on drugs and passing a

counterfeit $20? Character assassination is standard in these narratives, adding up to causation by individual criminality rather than needless suffering enacted upon mothers, daughters, fathers, sons and lovers. Dr Martin Luther King Jr. called riots the language of the unheard;[16] the indiscipline evident in the broken glass of shattered storefront windows, buildings burning to the ground, should call for deeper analysis than cursory dismissal.[17]

Richards' "loss of faith" problematises heroic notions, rendering the Icarus myth more than a clever accoutrement. His repeated offering of his mortal dark flesh as the substance for his eternal sculptures is akin to a haunting. It is as if Richards' asks, how *does* one reconcile Western civilisation's rationalism, anchored in classical humanism, with the brutal, repeated police murders of young Black people in the United States and elsewhere across the Black Atlantic?[18] Put bluntly, the Enlightenment as it played out in the United States was never friendly to the African presence. The ongoing violence against Black bodies should be no surprise; dehumanisation and Blackness are mutually constitutive.[19] This violence speaks to an ontology that increasingly seems unshakable with the passage of time, within which we cannot have faith but vertigo, if even the feathered flickering of the butterfly that could still shift the course of events. Within such an ontology, a pessimistic response is understandable, a kind of "common sense of things", once the evidence is brought to bear.[20] As Frank B. Wilderson III, an architect of Afropessimism, put it best in his autobiographical treatise, one "is pessimistic about the claims theories of liberation make when these theories try to explain Black suffering or when they analogize Black suffering with the suffering of other oppressed beings" (2020, 14).[21] Such suffering, as Leonard Harris argues, is not only incessant, but it is "unnecessary and irredeemable and without purpose" (Davidson, 2020).[22] The day in April 2021 on which Derek Chauvin, the ex-police officer who murdered Floyd, was convicted, another officer killed a 20-year-old young man, Duante Wright, who was stopped because an air freshener was improperly hanging from his window.[23] The accidental nature of the killing belies the indignity surrounding Black life, the realities that allow such a catastrophe to be incessantly repeatable across time and place. "Light as a feather, heavy as lead".[24]

The Medium and the Message

Richards' work exemplifies how we might embrace an Afropessimistic perspective, owing to the inescapable realities of Black life in the United States, indeed, across the Black Atlantic, while at the same time grappling with artistic form, whether the study of history, archaeology, philosophy, literary genres and their critique, or the various representational media and their histories. While deep, unyielding and irredeemable suffering motivates Richards' artistic corpus, "vertigo", stemming from the loss of hope, indicates perpetual motion, the reality of the butterfly, like the spinning head in the piece. The beautiful struggle is an iteration of this motion, beginning with the simple, existential reality that Black people – *we* – are still here.

This struggle, a counter to Western philosophy, corresponds with the contention of PBOS:

> I contend, as a normative claim, that genuine philosophy is *Philosophia nata ex conatu* (philosophy as, and sourced by, strife, tenaciousness, organisms striving), *ex intellectualis certamen cum sit* (the result of intellectual struggle with real corporal existence), always inclusive of under duress – it is sentient beings that can be afflicted, and thereby no concept of form, dialectic rationality, phenomenology, sagacious insight, confession, testimonial, or witnessing is warranted without the expressed inclusion of the afflicted seen as such.
>
> (Harris, 2020, 20)

Harris rejects many of the claims of Western philosophy, be they aesthetics, epistemology, ontology or ethics, because they do not adhere – do not *represent* or *belong* – to his experience.

In his article "Autonomy Under Duress", Harris argues that "there are limits for what we can expect a concept, even a theoretically rich concept, of autonomous persons to provide" (1992, 134). That is, all concepts are contingent, as is that of the autonomous "I" (*cogito ergo sum*). From the perspective of Black struggle, there can be no such formulation. Harris explores the example of a fictionalised Dr Dick, who castrated George Washington Carver, making him a eunuch so as to protect the Black man living through American reconstruction and segregation from the threat of lynching. In the same way, Dr Dick would perform abortions on white women whom black men had impregnated, so as to prevent mixed-raced offspring. In the dominant American discourses of the late-19th- and early-20th centuries, separation of the races was a positive good, a reality that the United States Supreme Court affirmed in the 1896 case *Plessy v. Ferguson*. Dr Dick's good acts are historically contingent. The need to contextualise these acts problematise Kant: there is no autonomous agent, no categorical imperative, only human subjects in contingent genealogies.

Harris demonstrates a way to bear witness to – confess to, give testimony about, offer insights on – what it means to struggle with these realities, to side with the afflicted, and what perspectives can emerge from the abyss. Richards' representational work captures this struggle – pessimistic but not in despair. As *The New York Times* review of the 2016 show puts it, "Michael complicates presence, identity and history. He exposes the ironies and contradictions of cultural-historical subjects" (Barone, 2016). His work is a means to "civic responsibility and community safety" (Francishine, 2021). Through his own words, also cited in the 2021 material accompanying the exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art in North Miami, we can begin to imagine how Richards sees the past and its mythologies:

> I think history has always been important to me because if you examine the past you can also read the symptoms of what is prevalent now in terms of

racial associations and the relationship of power present in society today. History is interesting in terms of how we mythologize it, how we accept history or interpretations of history as fact, and whose interpretation it is. In many ways, my history is so different from the official white versions.

In this statement, Richards offers a compelling argument for a different study of the past, indicating that the diagnosis of society's ills must be systemic. When we look at the "symptoms" in the present, we would do well, in the language of *The Postclassicisms Collective* (2019), to ask something of the past. But the diagnosis we have been given, the "history", is wrong. Anti-Black violence is existential, and as Wilderson puts it, "anti-black violence won't cooperate with narrative" (2020, 89).

There are at least two distinct layers to Richards' answer and diagnosis. The past shows the "symptoms of what is prevalent now", revealing the lineage between and among associations and relationships to power. In addition to this, the past allows analogues to the present.[25] Mythology functions along the lines of analogy, as an "interpretation" of history. We saw this in Richards' Icarus analogy, although the juxtaposition is disruptive. Mythology helps Richards to distance experience from reality or facts, revealing how powerfully interpretation shapes how we see. Lifting the veil, i.e. the racial divide to which W.E.B. Du Bois refers in *The Souls of Black Folk*, Richards can press through to "my history", in his own struggle with the material, a struggle that counters official versions of what has happened, i.e. history. His interrogation of history, myth and their interpretation has profound relevance to the construction of a critical ancient world studies. For example, the first critical step of CAWS is the "refus[al] to inherit silently a field crafted so as to constitute a mythical pre-history for an imagined 'West', in particular, by rejecting the 'universal' as synonym for the 'Western' or the 'European'". In his designation of "official white versions" of history, Richards also locates the problem of African erasure – what is worse, African denigration – in Western or European dominant narratives, himself refusing silently to inherit his artistic practice and chosen medium of expression. Reading the whitewashed past against the grain, Richards can see beyond the mythologisation of it. Note that he does not reject sculptural form as the medium for his message. Rather, the same medium of imperial self- and nation-fashioning, which glorified the Greek writer, Roman ruler and Confederate upstart, is a means by which Richards can self-reflect.[26]

Richards' understanding of mythology goes well beyond subversion as a mode of reception. To borrow again from CAWS, he "reject[s] the assumption of an axiomatic relationship between so-called 'Classics' and cultural value". For Richards, the Icarus story might well have held value because of its classical resonance, but there is much more to his appropriation. His deployment upsets previous usage, making failure something worth lingering over, building on Ovid's melancholy. Icarus now stands in for a relationship between a subaltern and its relationship to the West, wherein heroic narratives have to be questioned. Even more fundamentally,

by choosing the Icarus narrative Richards forefronts the essential misalignment between what CAWS calls "positivistic accounts of history", on the one side, and the reality of Black and queer flesh, on the other. Rather than progress, the fixity of the Icarus trope means that the relationship between the West and certain subjects will always result in apparent failure, the vertigo of a fall. Richards seems to ask whether these two epistemic centres – Black and queer experiences, on the one hand, and the West, including European classical discourse, its reception, and modernity, on the other – truly ever could be reconciled.

If George Floyd is an inappropriate hero, too sullied by his own weaknesses, in *Tar Baby vs. St. Sebastian* Richards reminds his audience of the perilous return of the Tuskegee Airmen, Black men who served heroically in World War II, took more risks than their white counterparts, and yet met cruel, harsh suffering upon their re-entry into the United States. In the main, they were not celebrated, like their white counterparts, but subjected to segregation and various other forms of institutional violence, such as police brutality. Richards renders the Renaissance motif of Saint Sebastian, the Christian martyr whom Diocletian ordered to be shot through with arrows, in sculptural form. The eyes of the figure's Black face are closed in pious contemplation, aviator ear gear repeating Richards' tried-and-true theme. Airplanes rather than arrows fly into the person's gold-plated body, a royal contrast to the reality of denigration. As the Harlem Renaissance sculptor Roland Barthé already imagined in his work, these men are Icarus, the promise of potentiality and transcendence characterised through flight met with the reality of material conditions, wax wings melting in the sun and the resulting downfall.[27] There is no salvific role for the classical symbol of Icarus in Richards' reception. In his sculptural representation of the myth, Richards calls into question the classics and classical reception as of any real value in themselves. His reception is not an expression of cultural value, but rather it makes material a particular failure of the "Western" or "European" history, one that highlights what "contingency" might mean for Black artists and writers. This is not to say that certain Black artists and writers fail to meet success at various points since the formation of a transatlantic traffic in enslaved Africans. Success, however, relies on a particular neoliberal, individualistic pathway that does little to alleviate widespread suffering.

As a queer artist, moreover, Richards leads viewers of his art to something akin to what J. Halberstam calls a "queer art of failure", which proposes an alternative to the kind of success stories that feature the "reproductive maturity combined with wealth accumulation" of neoliberalism, wherein success is dependent upon "a harsh insistence on personal responsibility" (Halberstam, 1994, 2, 3).[28] Halberstam advocates for a similarly "undisciplined" approach to that of Richards' queer art, a kind of "antidisciplinarity" that might not necessarily be productive but that is part of a "low theory" like the "detour in route to something else", which Halberstam attributes to Stuart Hall (1994, 15).

It is time to turn to the potentiality of the different history that Richards provokes. In the pages that follow, I will explore the alternative to the positivistic,

Figure 12.3 Michael Richards, *Tar Baby vs. St. Sebastian*, 1999.

Source: Photograph by Oriol Tarridas. Photograph courtesy of the Museum of Contemporary Art, North Miami, and the Michael Richards Estate.

hopeful narratives of success as it pertains to the study of the past. Taking Richards' "loss of faith" as a point of departure, my vertiginous, spinning head turns away from Greece and Rome and, searchingly, toward three other ancient cultures heretofore predominantly silenced in Europe's narrative of its own success. Some of these are subjects of Césaire's rebuttal to Western civilisation. The three geographic areas have been peripheral to the discipline(s) of the classics, but I look to these as detritus from history's dustbin. They are materially present, Icarian failures. They have been at the margins of the discipline of classics, but Halberstam puts it, "disciplines qualify and disqualify, legitimate and delegitimate, reward and

punish; most importantly, they statically reproduce themselves and inhibit dissent" (1994, 10). The three cultures failed, according to the historical narratives, and yet their presences disrupt the dikes that hold back the human ocean.

By rejecting discipline for the time being, in this case in terms of the existing parameters of the discipline of classical studies, I ask whether value might be invested elsewhere, outside of Greece and Rome, away from the West, if even momentarily. I focus on the propositions that Halberstam adds to Fred Moten and Stefano Harney's "The University and the Undercommons: Seven Theses". That is, if failure is Halberstam's first focal point, we might, secondly, consider these three cultures as unteachable. Because their cultural production was not literary, studying these cultures alongside – or in place of – Greece and Rome might be deemed nonsensical. For example, the study of Carthage, which I discuss further here, is stymied because of the lack of literary sources, not material evidence, which does exist (López-Ruiz, 2021). That said, my aim is to linger on what we lose in this literary unknowability. Thirdly, Halberstam asks the reader to "suspect memorialization". Halberstam "advocate[s] for certain forms of erasure over memory precisely because memorialization has a tendency to tidy up disorderly histories (of slavery, the Holocaust, wars, etc.)" (1994, 28).

I take, as historical analogues to Richards' sculptural meditation on Icarus, his attempt at shifting our gaze away from a certain mythologisation toward "the symptoms of what is prevalent now", Kush, Carthage and West Africa. Herein is not the revisionist Afrocentrism that presents a black Socrates or Cleopatra[29] but rather an epistemic shift away from centring Europe at all. Nor should Kush, Carthage and West Africa be swept up in analogical or genealogical narratives. That is, Kush, Carthage and West Africa were ancient powers, and for that reason they might well be part of a recentring of the discipline of classics that could draw interest from contemporary people who value something other than Europe. The object of this exercise, however, is not productivity, not immediately to propose pedagogical or disciplinary tools, but rather to linger. Lingering allows contemplation on what might have been and how the current situation could have been different: "The social worlds we inhabit, after all, as so many thinkers have reminded us, are not inevitable" (Halberstam, 1994, 8–9). Failure here does not reflect these cultures' lack of productivity, but rather it denotes the unviability of a constructive relationship between Europe and them. I propose along with Richards that there might be value in Icarus, something to behold in failure, but this is not the value that we might expect.

Carthago Delenda Est: The Return of the Repressed

Classicists know well Rome's wars against Carthage and the Punic Republic's demise in 146 BCE after the Third Punic War, and the Phoenicians are already a site of some academic interest among classicists.[30] The Carthaginians were Phoenicians, a "Northwest Semitic" people (Schmitz, 2019, 12). Although "Phoenician" is a Greek appellation, these Canaanite people are attested in the third and second millennium BCE (López-Ruiz and Doak, 2019). There are Greek and biblical

sources, but inscriptions in Phoenician and other ancient languages are also part of the material evidence. The Phoenicians legendarily enable literature through the alphabet, which the Greeks adopt. Without the kind of literary achievements that come to be indices of success, however, any contributions to "civilisation" come to be overshadowed by European achievement.[31]

There is already a curiosity regarding Carthage, in American foundations and in the professional field of classical studies. In the 18th and 19th centuries, European and American thinkers puzzled over Carthage as a model for the revolutionary Republic. In her 2016 book, *African Americans and the Classics: Antiquity, Abolition and Activism*, Margaret Malamud includes Carthage in the discussion of American positivistic discourse,[32] although Caroline Winterer's 2010 essay on Carthage focuses on the Republic as an *aporia*, a place where John Quincy Adams, James Madison and others were ultimately unable to extract the ideas and models they needed to craft their own political projects. This absence, this aporia, did not stop Charles Fourier, whose 1876 *Theory of Social Organization* highlights Carthage as a place of interest. For Fourier, it would be important to note that "the laboring classes of ancient Greece and Rome, of whose liberty we hear so much, were slaves" (1876, 122). That is, Carthage's fate was, at various points in history, one that early Europeans also faced. Although in Greece "human Reason" liberates itself from religious faith, Carthage is where trade supersedes agriculture (Fourier, 1876).[33] Carthage is an example of Fourier's desired balance between capitalism and cooperation.

Malamud's study is expressly interested in the impact of classical ideas on African Americans. She includes Rufus L. Perry's 1887 book, *The Cushites, or the Children of Ham as seen by the Ancient Historians and Poets*, as unabashed in how it projects modern racial fantasies onto the past. Perry writes that "in the early days of Carthage the north-western territory of Africa, embracing Carthage and generally known as Libya, was full of the distinguished Negroes or aboriginal Cushites who freely mingled with the Tyrian colonists" (148). The habit of imposing modern categories on the ancient material is one we will see again with Kush. Perry makes use of Aeneid 4, where the "African lords" Iarbas and Iopas are cited as suitors to Dido. Others, such as David Walker imagine a future Hannibal as a saviour of Black enslaved people. By 1865, Frederick Douglass would cite the "commercial and military prowess of Carthage" at the Inaugural of the Douglass Institute. What is clear in both Malamud's study and Winterer's is the extent to which Carthage was a productive model for Americans, in their desire to make and remake the nation. Winterer's essay makes two extremely helpful claims regarding Carthage as a kind of mirror of American society. The first is Carthage's role, as opposed to Rome, in the potential for a new kind of commercialism beyond political *imperium*. Winterer's second assertion, noticeable and sustainable even outside of the professional study of the past, is that Carthage itself was a space for a kind of "productive uncertainty" among the founders. Because there were even fewer artefacts from Carthage than from Greece and Rome, writers could speculate about a range of possibilities available in this non-European, imaginative space. In some

ways, these possibilities provided an even better canvas for Black intellectuals, a tabula rasa upon which their ancient greats might be projected.

The productive uncertainty that Winterer references might be expanded to interrogate some recurrent narratives. Heroic individualism, for example, is a repeated theme in the study of Carthage. This is true of historical figures from the distant past, such as Hannibal, and those closer to hand. Sabatino Moscati is the proverbial cult leader in Phoenician studies, his 1988 Venice exhibition the proverbial origin myth of the field. The idea that Moscati "invented the Phoenicians" as an area of modern study of the ancient world is one that Nicolas C. Vella warns his reader against (2016). Vella laments the factors that "bedevilled" Moscati's study of Carthage. He also points to the state of archaeological fieldwork, the uncertainty attending the tentative and "multi-period" nature of the remains, such that artefacts have not been definitively dated. Secondly, museum exhibitions like Moscati's in Venice dislocate artefacts from their cultural settings. As Vella puts it, "the practice of singling out objects for display in the exhibition and for publication in the catalogue implied an exercise of dislocation" (2016, 29). The "decontextualisation" of objects feeds the heroic narrative, Vella argues, the idea of one man inventing the Phoenicians.

There remains the question of how to see Carthage outside of Greece and Rome as frames of reference, as Carolina López-Ruiz attempts in *Phoenicians and the Making of the Mediterranean* (2021). Prior to recent work, Orientalism had impacted the 1988 exhibition, as was evident in *The New York Times* exhibition review:

> The roots of contemporary Western civilization are usually traced to the rational, classical societies of Athens and Rome, but this exhibition repeatedly presents a far more exotic vision of antiquity. Bes, a big-bellied god, looks out of display cases like a fun-house monster.
>
> (Suro, 1988)

Although the same "winged sphinx[es]" and "fantastic creatures" that grace Greek and Roman art, architecture and literary narrative are present in Carthage, the reviewer exposes the kinds of pitfalls we must avoid. It is worth lingering on the idea of the success of "Western civilisation", the "rational" versus the "exotic", the disciplined Greeks, evidenced in the athlete, compared to the "big-bellied" Bes. In contrast to this, López-Ruiz points to what she calls an "Orientalizing kit" (2021), the artistic and cultural influences that flowed from the Phoenicians to Greek city-states well before the classical period. Rather than any positivistic approaches, the study of Carthage can entail a "plunge outside of history" (Ellison, 1995, 377), the vertigo signalled in Michael Richards' visual response to the classics. As it pertains to the study of the past, a backward gaze to such ancient failure as Carthage offers an intervention in how modernity has received the past, and the possibility of something different, a study centred on "ancient Mediterranean politics" (Winterer, 2010), or a critical ancient world studies.

The Kingdom of Kush

Nubian people were nomadic, desert inhabitants.[34] The ancient region of Nubia contained a few empires. Three early centres south of Egypt include Kerma, Napata and Meroë. Kerma, which was dominant in the third and second millennium BCE, was Greek *Kus* or *Kusi*, from the Egyptian name Kush (Welsby, 1996). Kush remained a centre of power until the fourth century CE. Napata was a Kushite city in existence as early as the 15th century BCE. By the 1000 BCE, Napata was the centre of the Kingdom of Kush, the Napatan Period beginning in earnest in the 700s. Gaius Petronius, as governor of Roman Egypt, sacked Napata in 23 BCE. Meroë was the capital in 590 BCE until Kush's fall in the fourth century CE. The Kushites adapted Egyptian hieroglyphics, the system in which their indigenous language, Meroitic, was written down. Derek A. Welsby states that "a study of early Kushite names suggests that they are 'Meroitic' names" (1996, 190).

If national politics and the relative abundance of Greek and Roman governmental and legislative sources influenced the marginalisation of Carthage, academic institutions and practices have similarly impacted the study of Kush. As Vanessa Davies explores in her work, the region of the upper Nile south of Egypt, modern-day Sudan, commanded the attention well into the 20th century. Davies has written extensively about the relationship between the study of Nubia and the archaeological research of such mammoth centres as the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute (OI) (Davies, 2018). She traces a dialogue between archaeologist James Henry Breasted and his benefactor, Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, in which the interlocutors' excitement about new treasures and the prospect of advancing Christianity is palpable. Breasted relied on the biological approaches to race of the early 20th century, wherein discovering language "tinctured by negro speech" in the ancient Meroitic of Nubia would buttress the hypotheses of his time, the superiority of the European race.[35] As Davies put it with regard to OI, "the founding of an institute to collect evidence from and to study the ancient Near East was in many ways a project that stood at the intersection of science and the humanities, as the German word *Wissenschaft* implies" (5). The OI has begun to contend with the full impact of this scientific racism. By 2022, a name change was imminent, and new perspectives are emerging. For example, Solange Ashby's work (2020) sheds light on Nubian worshippers of Isis.

Prior to this juncture, Nubian voices were secondary to those of Egypt, Greece and Rome. The placement of Nubia within a genealogy of human progress, a civilisation prior to Egypt, the latter "firmly in the purview not just of Christianity, but also of white people" (Davies, 2018), corresponded well with ancient Egyptian depiction of the empires of the upper Nile. Nubia was a superpower, as Caroline M. Rocheleau has argued (2020), and negative depictions of the region come to posterity through their rival. Egypt came to dominate their neighbours to the south but also had Nubian rulers and assimilated the practices of these foreigners. It is to be noted that Egypt would indeed repress and misrepresent Nubia, given the latter's long-time domination of Egypt. This fantasy Nubia of the ancient Egyptian imagination was helpful to Breasted. Making his readership "complicit in his whiteness"

(Davies, 2018), he co-opted the ancients into modern racial and progressive discourse. The material evidence was called upon to serve Breasted's desired ends:

> [He] could not conceive of linguistic or cultural influence moving from the Meroitic people north to Egypt because such a movement of cultural influence would signal a "greatness" of the "Black Race" and would not fit with Breasted's historical model that positioned a white West at the pinnacle of "civilization".
>
> (Davies, 2018)

Fantasies become such that other possibilities are "not conceive[d]". The so-called "Black Race" could not be said in any way to have achieved "greatness", even if the modern category of race was a projection onto the past. Rather, the "white West" would always be where greatness, or civilisation itself, resides. The Black Race has no history, and thus, Nubia had come to be studied within the positivist framework of the West, in which race was both motive and proof of European dominance and cultural superiority. Under this light, Nubia is a failed state, a precursor to the superior Greeks and Romans.

Studied by Breasted as, in a way, a failure prior to European – read white – success, recentring Kush is an act of indiscipline that raises important issues in the formation of Western views of antiquity. Queering the study of Nubia in the way that Halberstam offers is worthwhile. Kush is certainly not as teachable as Greece and Rome. Archaeological sites remain largely unexcavated.[36] Although we are to "suspect memorialization" (Halberstam, 1994), Kush offers a speculative opportunity.[37] I wonder, for example, about the financial and intellectual resources spent to establish the Oriental Institute as a site of cultural replication. If approaches to race in Europe and the United States were otherwise, or perhaps if the discourse of race never was, I wonder what energy might have been given to Kush (Davies, 2018). What would we have learned from these excavated sites, if time, energy and resources had been put to these endeavours? Contemporary conditions of war and civil unrest are as identifiable as roadblocks to success as is lack of interest.

Classical West Africa

It is certainly imprudent to group the many peoples and cultures of West Africa into a single rubric or category, but doing so as a placeholder is a final gesture to give space and time to other antiquities. Like Carthage and Nubia, the region facing the Atlantic Ocean in Sub-Saharan Africa evaded domination of Europeans, or the West, from as early as Greece and Rome and well into early modernity. At the same time, West Africa remained a subject of fascination. For our purposes here, I am interested under West Africa particularly in the Ife legacy at the centre of modern-day Nigeria. This centre encompasses the Igbo and Yoruba people, but Igbo and Yoruba contact with other West Africans, such as the Akan, allows a small entry-point into their antiquity (Blier, 2017). The Igbo people are likely traceable to the

third millennium BCE, contemporaneous with Kushites, Egyptians and the Minoans of the early history of Greece. The Fulani are traceable to the fourth century CE. The Akan rose during the eighth century CE after the fall of Nubia, but their presence also dates back to the third millennium BCE. By the seventh century CE, the Oyo empire of Oduduwa was prominent.

These are only a sampling of an antiquity outside of Greece and Rome, whose ideas, customs and ways of life are retained, both on the continent and through the practices of Afro-descendent, enslaved people beginning in the 1500s. In the United States, folkways find their way to everyday practices such as cooking and eating.[38] Religious and spiritual practices of the Igbo, Fulani and Yoruba are present in Brazil, as a syncretic knot with innumerable interconnected threads. Jamaicans recognise in the practices of Obeah much of Akan storytelling, akin to the Voodoo of Haiti and the Santeria and Candomblé within Latin American contexts. These West African peoples and their practices, alive and well in the contemporary world, announce their own classical antiquity.

There is some evidence that the Greeks were aware of habitation in this region. According to Herodotus, the Phoenicians had circumnavigated "Libya", as did Sataspes on behalf of Xerxes. Cambyses had also tried to send an envoy. Herodotus attributes the use of the bow as a military weapon among the Persians to this voyage and the diplomatic exchange that ensued. Although some attention has been paid to how the early Europeans saw these people, focus on literature as a mark of civilisation greatly curtails knowledge of how they saw themselves. Legendary in the stories of Western contact with West Africa is Leo Frobenius' notion that he had found the lost city of Atlantis when he encountered Ife sculpture, which he took to corroborate early European penetration into the region (Blier, 2017). As with Breasted's desire to sweep Kush up in Western narratives of progress, Frobenius would see in these artefacts affirmation of a positivistic claim to antiquity. Scholars of West African history and art, such as Suzanne Preston Blier, have soundly refuted Frobenius' position while recognising his place in the modern study of the region (Blier, 2017).

While Frobenius' story points to a failure of European penetration, Blier argues for an interior (by which I mean West African) artistic process for the art of Ife, involving rooted precedent, risk-taking, and creativity. Ife busts are not evidence of the early presence of Poseidon on these southern Atlantic shores but rather more indigenous developments. Blier's work is critical to the theorisation of creativity, categorisation, and the intersections between ancient and modern practices in the development of these artistic works. In the absence of literary record, these artefacts speak volumes. Blier argues that danger – the failure of others to penetrate – is a trope by which the Yoruba and others protected their homeland. There is value to being unknown or unknowable:

> When I began to pursue more seriously my research on ancient Ife art and history, issues of risk also frequently came into play. I was warned about the risks of Nigeria, and even more tellingly about the difficulty of working

in the purportedly "closed" Ife world. These warnings, I soon realized, were little more than distancing tropes, part of a larger narrative of mystique that long has enveloped this center, serving in part to underscore its historical élan.

(2017, 2)

The "mystique" of Ife, Blier contends, has been an apotropaic device, a means by which its inhabitants deliberately warded off the voracious, Western quest for more. To outsiders, West Africa was to be unknowable, and here again we might apply Halberstam's language of indiscipline. How does one learn and teach that which is safeguarded against being known? At the same time, for the student of antiquity there is value in featuring the region as a centrepiece for reflection on what the classics could have been. A low-theory, intellectual circumnavigation around West Africa might not be productive in any traditional sense of the word, but the "detour" is certainly in keeping with Halberstam's provocation.

Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, I have been valuing Richards' deployment of the Icarus myth as a trope of cultural impasse, the failure of the West as Black subjects have often experienced it. This failure is concomitant with the modern construction of Europe, the West implicitly valuing whiteness as the positivistic telos of all historical narratives. This historical account has required the inscription of other ancient powers as protagonists, effacing Carthage, Kush and West Africa. As Césaire sees, however, the forgotten enterprise might also be what opens the West up to its own failure. The false positivism of the West and its anti-Blackness have led to my own loss of faith, my vertigo, my disorientation and tendency toward indiscipline. In keeping with the orientation of PBOS, the pessimistic viewpoint as it pertains to Black and brown people in our relationship to the West is not a sign of surrender. Rather, it is first an acknowledgement of the reality that I see around me, and secondly a revaluation, an articulation of a commitment to a different struggle.

By way of conclusion, it is worth repeating that the vertiginous spinning of this essay, offering that we linger on the existence of the Phoenicians, Kushites and West Africans in antiquity is not an insistence that these avenues would be productive to any new knowledge about Greece and Rome. I am uncertain that there are any viable pathways into these areas. I am perhaps lost, or at least at a loss. Such a confession, however, could be the beginning of a path out of the lies of the West. As it pertains to these ancient sites, the number of times that scholars in their discussions offer the areas as only modestly studied or insufficiently or poorly excavated archaeologically suggests that resources and attention could be paid to what partnerships between classicists and students of these non-European sites would yield. Whatever the case, I am contending that these areas are worthwhile sites for the final move in CAWS, namely, the "commitment to decolonising the gaze of and at antiquity". The colonial gaze was part and parcel of how each of these three

antiquities had been previously constructed. In the case of the Phoenicians, anti-Semitism is traceable in the commitments and disavowals of scholars of this culture. The colonising, positivistic approach to the Kushites is evident in Breasted's discussions of the area of study, and Frobenius and other European scholars and statesmen overdetermined West Africa. CAWS is an opportunity to imagine different pathways into these areas and their relationship to European classical antiquity. Although speculation is in itself enough, such imaginings could also provide opportunities to revise what we believe we know about the ancient Mediterranean.

Notes

1   The separation of aesthetic from political recalls the debate between Simon Goldhill and Charles Martindale in Hall and Harrop (2010), where Goldhill, a member of the Post-classicisms Collective, takes up the position that classical reception must be political, as well as grounded in several other lines of critique, although his main argument was that performance problematised Martindale's aesthetic approach to reception.

2   Put another way, Hanink (2020) asks astutely whether we should hold Nietzsche and Wilamowitz "ever in view".

3   My formulation is deliberately self-referential, although I am aware of the limitations of approaches to the world that rely on identity. In terms of values, we always start with the self in community. See Appiah (2018).

4   On the construct of the West, see Appiah (2016). Although a late (19th-century) term, what "the West" conjures is important to my argument here. I use the term "the West" with an awareness of its newness and artificiality in mind.

5   My argument is akin to but challenging beyond that of Goff and Simpson (2008), where the Oedipus cycle of myths open up a field of interrogation of the idea of civilisation.

6   See Gantz (1993). For Richards the Icarus myth itself is central, but other Black writers and artists take on the breadth of the Cretan cycle of myth.

7   On the idea of "how easily queerness percolates out of the condition of blackness", see Best (2018, 7) and Rao (2020). For "queer Atlantic" as a corrective, see Tinsley (2008).

8   On Martin's murder and the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement, see Cullors and Bandele (2018).

9   For an extended critique of this post-Blackness, see Baker and Simmons (2015).

10 For a compelling retelling imagined from King's perspective, see Lee (2017).

11 See Allen (2020). For recent discussion of the Zealy daguerreotypes, see Sehgal (2020).

12 See Barone (2016).

13 A longer project is underway, which will allow me to trace the Icarus myth in authors and visual artists as varied as Richmond Barthé, Toni Morrison, Malcolm X and Richards himself, to name only a few.

14 On George Floyd's significance within visual media, see Hill and Brewster (2022). Other studies of Floyd's life include *The Washington* Post Podcast, 30 April 2021. See www.washingtonpost.com/podcasts/post-reports/revisiting-the-life-of-george-floyd/. Samuels and Olorunnipa (2022) builds on this early reporting.

15 Tyson (2017).

16 For the 27 September 1966 interview with Mike Wallace, go to www.youtube.com/watch?v=_K0BWXjJv5s.

17 On "riots" as protest or uprisings, see Hinton (2021).

18 On the policing of black bodies and the response of rebellion, see Hinton (2021).

19 On the right to bear arms, protection of property and the Black body, see Anderson (2021). On dehumanisation and Blackness, especially as it pertains to gender, see Jackson (2020).

20 See Jared Sexton (2016).
21 See Wilderson (2020).
22 Where, for example, is "the historical load of responsibility" (Davidson, 2020)?
23 See Sanchez et al. (2021).
24 Lyrics to Bob Marley, "Misty Morning" (1978).
25 On the challenges to analogical reasoning, see Rao (2020). Rao prefers to think about entanglements between and among phenomena in the past and present to analogical reasoning.
26 For the discussion of classical memorialisation in the contemporary American context, see Platt (2020).
27 For Barthé's representation of the Tuskegee Airmen as Icarus, see Smalls (2018).
28 It is no accident that Obama, our post-racial hero, is himself eloquent in the language of neoliberal individualism. His 2020 post-presidency memoir, titled *A Promised Land* (in positivistic fashion), drawing from the biblical and messianic language of the civil rights icons after whom he fashions himself (e.g. King, Jr.), is replete with heroes of an American dream and the epithets revelatory of their attributes, such as Supreme Court Justice Sonya Sotomayor, who has a "kind of intelligence, grit, and adaptability required of someone of her background to get to where she was" (2020, 389). Of course, if Obama "had a son he would look like Trayvon [Martin]", but in keeping with the motif of an arc of justice and getting to the Promised Land, Martin's death only raises to consciousness examples of unfinished business, the additional work that need to be done. On the impact of Obama's kinship reference, see, for example, Tau (2012).
29 See, for example, Haley (1993), which was an important move in reimagining the classics.
30 See, for example, Giusti (2018).
31 In addition to this, the practice of child sacrifice has been noted as a reason for the rejection of Carthage within the discourse of civilisation (López-Ruiz and Doak, 2019).
32 The positivism is there for black and white authors alike. John Quincy Adams, for example, is interested in Carthage, but so are black authors.
33 Fourier (1876) also positions Carthage as a model for individual home ownership.
34 There is speculation about the etymological link between *Nubia* and *nomad*. See Welsby (1996).
35 "Civilization, in his view, equaled contemporary Western society, and it implied technological and societal advancement, positive progress, even enlightenment" (Davies, 2018, 5).
36 Welsby argues that "the presence of the numerous tombstones suggests that literacy was not the prerogative of the very few", but at the same time of what other language or languages they spoke when going about their everyday business we have no evidence (1996, 193).
37 Broadly, Welsby argues that "consideration of the Kushites alongside such giants of the ancient world as the Greeks, Romans and Egyptians is justified on account of the longevity of the kingdom and of its size, if for no other reason" (1996, 8–9).
38 See Harris (2011).

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13 Critical Reception Studies

The White Feminism of Feminist Reception Scholarship

Holly Ranger

I first read Virgil at the regional state school for girls I attended in Wolverhampton, in the West Midlands of the UK. The school had opted out of local authority control under the provision of the Education Reform Act 1988, which empowered it to set academic admissions criteria and freed it from adherence to the statutory national curriculum.[1] Consequently, I was taught a curriculum modelled on the British grammar school and designed to provide me with an education similar in kind to the training afforded to the middle-class and predominantly privately educated students with whom it was anticipated I would later socialise and compete at university. Latin was mandatory for all students for the first three years, as were elocution examinations; and these two things are not unrelated. The school's pedagogical strategy was effective: in 2009, 86% of its students entered higher education, many to Russell Group universities, in contrast to the total of 6% of Wolverhampton school-leavers who entered Russell Group institutions (Department for Education, 2012).[2] Over the course of my schooling I learned to invest in Latin as one of the educational characteristics that would enable me to leave Wolverhampton and to pass at an elite university, an investment significantly reinforced when I won a scholarship to study classics at the University of Cambridge; the proportion of Wolverhampton school-leavers who entered Oxford and Cambridge in 2009 was, statistically, 0% (Department for Education, 2012). It did not immediately concern my new peers that they had never heard of Wolverhampton, as my having Latin was the social signifier that reassured them I had attended a "good" school. But classics had not only facilitated my acculturation into middle-class educational life; it had also facilitated my acculturation into a particular kind of whiteness in which an assumed inherited ownership of Graeco-Roman antiquity and its study is leveraged to construct and maintain racialised, classed, and gendered hierarchies.[3]

Wolverhampton's most noted Cambridge classicist is the former conservative Member of Parliament (MP) for Wolverhampton South West, Enoch Powell, whose political career and legacy has been defined by his 1968 "Rivers of Blood" speech, in which he claimed: "In this country in fifteen or twenty years' time, the black man will have the whip hand over the white man . . . As I look ahead, I am filled with foreboding, like the Roman, I seem to see 'the River Tiber foaming with much blood'" (Powell, 1968, quoted in Hirsch, 2018, 1–2).[4] Powell's fusion of ventriloquised anti-immigrant "anecdotal imaginings" (Hirsch, 2018, 2) from the

"quite ordinary working man" of Wolverhampton (Powell, 1968, quoted in Hirsch, 2018, 1) with literary references to Virgil's epic poem lent "scholastic legitimacy" (Hirsch, 2018, 54) to his racist construction of the "working man" as white and his incitement to interracial violence.[5] Despite his invocation of Virgil in an explicitly racist context, biographies of Powell from both sides of the political spectrum have attempted to disentangle the man from his racist discourse by emphasising his classical training (Hirsch, 2018, 95). At the same time, classicists such as Edith Hall have attempted to disentangle classics from Powell, arguing that the MP "got Vergil wrong" (Hall, 2013). Hall's cursory dismissal precludes any analysis of a relational link between Virgil's racial fantasy, Powell's classical training at Trinity College, Cambridge, and the MP's racist rhetoric. Moreover, such philological quibbles have failed to deter the many politicians, historians and journalists who continue to invoke and reproduce Powell's Virgilianism as a racist dog whistle (Hirsch, 2018, 95).

I have started my chapter with this reflection on locality, class, race and classics because, as scholarship by marginalised writers often notes, understanding and iteratively reflecting upon our positionality as researchers – where we write from, and who we write for – is a prerequisite for comprehending and dismantling the power relations of knowledge in which we participate and which we replicate in our research.[6] My own journey with classics has been inextricably bound in with elitist educational pretensions and the neoliberal myth of social mobility, and it began in a post-industrial town through which a classicising discourse of racism still reverberates. Critically reflecting upon the anti-liberatory and (self-)alienating processes of acculturation to which I have been exposed – that is, the implantation of a particular aesthetic and affective attachment to "classics" – was the first step towards a more critical gaze at the discipline, its paradigms, its processes of valuation and canon formation, and the works of reception I study.[7] In this essay, I examine the political stakes involved when (white) women uncritically cultivate classicism.

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In 2017 Johanna Hanink identified critical classical reception as a mode of reception scholarship cognisant of the role of Graeco-Roman antiquity in the construction and maintenance of entrenched systems of oppression, including racism, colonialism, nationalism and patriarchy. "Reception 2.0", Hanink observes, is characterised by a strong personal voice and "an open activist agenda" (Hanink, 2017), citing Dan-el Padilla Peralta's elucidation of the classical poetics of hip-hop in *The Classics in/of Hip-Hop* (Padilla Peralta, 2015) and Helen Morales' takedown of classicising diet regimes in *Fat Classics* (Morales, 2015) as examples of this new activist critical classical reception studies.[8] Both of these articles, Hanink argues, not only analyse how an ancient text or motif has been received in modern culture, but engage "in open acts of calling out" – calling out the scholar peers who have neglected hip-hop's classical receptions or calling out "the diet industry, for invoking the authority of Hippocrates" (Hanink, 2017). Yet while Padilla Peralta

takes care to contextualise the ways in which Jay-Z's classicism 'cuts against the grain' of a tradition of socially conscious hip-hop in which classical allusions have typically functioned as a metonym for white hegemony, Morales appears to take as read the intrinsic "authority" of the ancient texts she cites, even if she argues for these authorities to be "selectively" chosen (Morales, 2020, 45). The fundamental difference between the two articles is the difference between Black classicism and its scholarship, and the bourgeois whiteness of much feminist classicism and its scholarship. That is, the difference between a reflexive reimagination of the discipline of classics and the will to power of white feminism expressed in the desire to claim Daddy's authority for oneself.[9] (I use "white feminism" here and throughout the paper not as an essentialising category – as in, the feminism of white women – but, following Sara Ahmed, to "summarise a relation *to*" the discipline, that is, to describe a feminism that is concerned with protecting the discipline's reputation and "not rocking the boat" [Ahmed, 2018, 340].)

An expanded version of *Fat Classics* is included in Morales' *Antigone Rising: The Subversive Power of the Ancient Myths* (2020). The book's subtitle explicitly invokes a scholarly paradigm predominant in one strand of this new "activist" reception scholarship, and with which this essay is concerned; namely, the narrative of the "subversive power" (Morales, 2020, 147) of Graeco-Roman literature to "empower" marginalised subjectivities historically excluded by classicising ideologies. Although the narrative of an appeal to the classical past as a revolutionary gesture has a genealogy parallel to the narrative of classicising conservatism, the 20th-century incarnation of the narrative of subversion has its roots in second-wave feminist literary criticism and its claim that women writers whose works engage with Graeco-Roman literature rewrite, revise, reclaim and resist the patriarchal literary canon (the touchstone essay is Adrienne Rich's "When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-Vision", 1972).[10] More recently, this narrative of subversion has been supplemented with a white feminist discourse of "empowerment". Mary Beard's *Women & Power: A Manifesto*, for example, calls upon women to "subvert . . . those foundational stories of power . . . and turn . . . them to our own advantage" (2018, 89); while *Antigone Rising* claims that "[p]art of being empowered . . . involves understanding these myths . . . and turning them to our own advantage" (Morales, 2020, xvii). I will return to this narrative of empowerment in the final section of the essay, but suffice it to say here that neither Beard nor Morales use "empowerment" in its original sense of conscientisation; in their texts, "empowerment" is used to denote women's individual ascendence within the neoliberal capitalist order ("to give women . . . their place inside the structures of power", Beard, 2018, 58).[11]

This scholarly paradigm of subversive empowerment has been widely assumed and adapted in 21st-century reception scholarship and not only for discussions of women's classical receptions. In Edith Hall and Henry Stead's *A People's History of Classics: Class and Greco-Roman Antiquity in Britain 1689–1939* (2020), for example, individual working-class engagements with ancient literature are similarly schematically framed as resisting and subverting culturally hegemonic texts, and "studying Classics is still largely presented as a means of transcending

one's [socio-economic] station" (D'Angelo, 2020).[12] The narrative of subversive empowerment has been so widely adopted in reception scholarship, in part, because of its utility to a discipline under pressure to demonstrate its relevance to contemporary revolutionary politics and thereby distance itself from its historical and ongoing associations with the disempowering and oppressive structures of conservatism, patriarchy and white supremacism. The narrative has also been institutionalised because it is, in effect, depoliticising, functioning as a "get out of jail free" card for a business-classics which continues at the institutional level fundamentally unchanged, with its epistemological and methodological frameworks – and its implication in wider societal oppressive structures – untroubled.[13] It is a reformist narrative, not an abolitionist one, and Luke Richardson has written powerfully about the ways in which classics' absorption of its own critique has rendered reception studies little more than the "propaganda wing" (Richardson, 2017) of the discipline.

I wish to clarify at this point that it is not my intention or purpose to invalidate readings of ancient texts which have rejected received interpretations or translations to recover the queer lives, trans lives or Black lives in the ancient world that have "not only been overlooked, but [rendered] nearly unimaginable" (Hartman, 2019, xvi). There is a key distinction to be made between the discipline of classics and its objects, and between radical re-readings of ancient texts and their co-optation by the discipline and its tenured protectors to maintain socio-cultural and economic power and privilege. I am concerned here with the ways in which the narrative of the subversive power of ancient texts is adopted and deployed as a defensive "move to innocence" (Tuck and Yang, 2012, 10), a strategy that attempts to evade accountability and maintain disciplinary or institutional power.[14] This move to innocence is repeatedly used to derail the conversations, most often begun by young scholars of colour, about the very real implication of the discipline in white supremacism and imperialism. We see the mechanism at work, for example, in the – now edited – Cambridge Faculty of Classics Race Equality Statement (Bhalerao, 2021), which was issued only after the grassroots agitation of students of colour and which could not admit to the discipline's implication in racism and imperialism without pointing to the ways in which classics "has at times been a force for great good (for example in relation to gay and civil rights movements)" (University of Cambridge Faculty of Classics, quoted in Bhalerao, 2021). As Lylaah Bhalerao identified, at the same historical moment as the American Civil Rights Movement to which the Statement appeals, Cambridge alumnus Enoch Powell was delivering his Virgilian "Rivers of Blood" speech; "[y]et no mention of the speech was made in the statement" (Bhalerao, 2021). This anti-revolutionary "counterproductive counternarrative" (Bostick, 2020) evades not only a sincere engagement with histories of racism, classism and sexism, but also a reflexive assessment of scholars' institutional and disciplinary complicity vis-à-vis classics.[15] The white feminist narrative of subversive empowerment is a similar deflection; in such scholarship, critical voices are even explicitly dismissed as belonging to "nihilis[tic]" "keyboard warriors" (Morales, 2020, 147) whose abolitionist calls, it is implied, display a "lack of sisterhood" (Morales, 2020, 146).

To understand in greater detail the ideological work of this narrative of subversive empowerment, and to expose the false premise upon which the narrative is built, I will re-examine the classicising poetry of the Pulitzer Prize–winning Sylvia Plath, a pre-eminent and early example of a poet whose "revisionary" use of the patriarchal classical literary canon is said to empower her expression of ("give voice to") a feminine lyric subjectivity.[16] I begin with an overview of Plath's educational and social introduction to classics. This is a recognisable trope of much reception scholarship, one that usually serves to demonstrate the philological credentials of its subject and in which the subject's educational encounter with classics is presented neutrally. Instead, taking a history of scholarship approach that pays attention to the literary, institutional, pedagogical and ideological contexts that framed Plath's encounter with Graeco-Roman literature, I will challenge the narrative paradigm of subversive empowerment that is applied to her poetry with an historicised narrative about value, canon (re)formation and acculturation in the late 1950s. As examples, I discuss Plath's series of Virgilian bee poems and draw out the elements of the sequence that a white bourgeois gaze must overlook to make its claim for the proto-feminist "subversive power" of Plath's classicising poetry. In the final section of the essay, I examine the persistence of this white bourgeois feminism and its occlusions in contemporary feminist public scholarship.

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In 1955 Sylvia Plath won a Fulbright Scholarship to read English at Newnham College, Cambridge. The English Tripos was introduced at Cambridge in 1917 as part of a wider University enterprise in the early 20th century to expand its bachelor's degree awards from mathematics, theology and classical philology, and it was intended to be taken after a Part I in classics (Collini, 1998). The 19th-century Cambridge syllabus had been shaped by the curricula of the elite public schools which supplied Cambridge with a stream of boys trained predominantly in ancient Greek and Latin; a university syllabus which simply required "more of the same" (Stray, 2001, 41) at degree-level ensured success for these students. The persistent influence of the public schools on the Cambridge syllabi of the 20th century is detected in the first principles of the two compulsory comparative elements of the modern two-part English Tripos instituted in 1926, which acclimatised the elite student to English: the Tragedy paper began with the ancient Greek dramatists Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides, and the English Moralists paper began with the ancient Greek philosophers Plato and Aristotle.[17] The ordinances of the new degree course held an explicit aim to situate English literature as an inheritance of the Graeco-Roman classics, and it was underpinned by a Eurocentric assumption of the existence of a transhistorical canon of works and genres.

The primacy of the Graeco-Roman classics in the new English Tripos was reinforced by the prominence of ancient Greek tragedy in the aesthetic theory of one of its first teachers, I.A. Richards, known for his development of practical criticism and early espousal of the New Criticism. When Plath arrived in Cambridge in 1955, the Tragedy and practical criticism ("Criticism and Composition") papers were associated

with Richards' contemporary and fellow proponent of the New Criticism, F.R. Leavis, whose lectures Plath attended. The New Critics, heavily influenced by the essays of T.S. Eliot, held a set of criteria for "classic" literature which relied on the acceptance of a shared canon of literature stretching back to ancient Greece and against which individual quality could be measured (Eliot, [1920] 1975). The subjective aesthetic value judgements of the New Critics were therefore expressed as an assessment of a text's placement in this purported tradition of texts objectively paradigmatic of "the human situation" (Richards, [1924] 2001, 63). Notwithstanding the individual modulations among the New Critics, they were united by an acute conservatism that reinforced the cultural hegemony of the classics. Their syllabi and pedagogy impressed upon the young Plath that classicising poetry was simply what poetry is.

Plath's letters home to the US from Cambridge in her first year as a Fulbright Scholar frequently express an anxiety about finding herself in a cultural and critical environment which assumed a shared knowledge and valuation of the classical canon. A few weeks into Michaelmas Term, Plath writes to a correspondent, "my enormous ignorances appal [*sic*] me . . . Grace is said solemnly in Latin, and everybody seems to have a classical background" (Plath, 2017, 975, 978) or to have "already 'picked up' Greek" (1093). Plath cringes at having "never read the classics" (1004) and "shockingly enough, never touched" (1085) the ancient dramatists Aeschylus, Sophocles or Euripides. Her main concern, she continues, is that she "must appear rather uneducated" (1004–1005) to her Director of Studies among Newnham's classically educated upper-middle-class grammar school girls. Plath's complaints draw our attention because she had read Aeschylus's *Agamemnon* in translation in high school and again at Smith College as an undergraduate for a paper on "Modern Tragedy in the Classical Tradition". While her anxieties may be located in a lack of grounding in the ancient languages, they suggest that Plath had perceived a particular discourse of classicism at Cambridge into which she had not been inducted. Her letters reveal a complicated nexus of desires – both to learn and to assimilate.

Plath read steadily and widely to "remedy" (Plath, 2017, 1005) the disparity between her American literary education – which she laments in her journal counts for nothing in Cambridge – and the knowledge required for the Tragedy paper. By the end of her first year, Plath had read her way through four lecture series in the history of tragic theory and the tragic genre from Aristotle to Eugene O'Neill, including all the extant plays of Aeschylus and a great proportion of Sophocles, Euripides, Plato and Aristotle. Plath also took the opportunity to see two performances of Greek tragedies, attending a production of Sophocles' *Philoctetes* and the 1956 Cambridge Greek Play, a performance of Euripides's *Bacchae* "[i]n Greek (!) . . . performed here every 3 years (even Oxford gave up plays in Greek in 1932!)" (1102), "complete with Cambridge students chanting Greek choruses, [and] modern original music" (1122–1123).[18] In contrast to these effusive letters written shortly after she had seen the Greek Play, only a few months later Plath is coolly alluding to the play to two American correspondents as a cultural highlight of her time so far in Cambridge ("Cultural life is better than NYC! . . . Euripides' 'Bacchae' in Greek . . .", 1150; 1152). After six months in Cambridge, Plath's anxious epistolary positioning as one lacking a classical background has transformed

– via an ingenuous enthusiasm – into a self-presentation as a casually sophisticated elite student, fully assimilated into its classicising culture.

In February 1956 Plath also met the man who became her husband only four months later, the future Poet Laureate Ted Hughes. Hughes had studied archaeology and anthropology at Pembroke College, Cambridge and was head of a circle of young Cambridge poets heavily influenced by the work of Robert Graves and James George Frazer. While Plath's education at Cambridge had focused on Greek texts, Hughes' early classicism was more Roman (he had studied Latin at school, his second poetry collection, published in 1960, would be titled *Lupercal*, and his first classical "adaption" in the late 1960s would be Seneca's *Oedipus*). Plath soon aligned herself with Hughes and the Cambridge poets. They felt dissatisfied with the contemporary post-war British poetry scene and positioned themselves in particular against the Oxford Movement poets Kingsley Amis, Thom Gunn and Philip Larkin. The distinction that Plath draws in her journals and letters between the poetry she and her husband were writing and that of the Movement poets centres explicitly on their respective uses of myth, for while the Movement poets had rejected myth, Hughes and his circle embraced myth, mysticism and anthropology (Plath, 2018, 94). Plath's classicising impulse was now additionally reinforced by a wish to assimilate to a Hughesian mythopoetics.

Plath's creative response to the Tripos and her immersion in Cambridge's classicising culture can be traced through poems written at Newnham such as "Conversation Among the Ruins" (Plath, 1981, 21), which responds to elements of Euripides's *Bacchae*, to later poems which explicitly adopt the personae of ancient Greek tragic heroines, such as "Aftermath" ("Mother Medea in a green smock / Moves humbly as any housewife through / Her ruined apartments", 113, ll. 9–11), "Electra on Azalea Path" (116) and "Purdah", in which a Clytemnestra threatens to "unloose – / . . . The lioness, / The shriek in the bath, / The cloak of holes" (242, ll. 52–57). Plath's poetic innovation in many of these poems is to temper the conservative impulse of the poems' modernist mythic parallels – impelled by her New Critical training in "classic" poetry – with an autobiographical lyric "I" that resists the subjective effacement and alienation that cultural hegemony – the legitimising "tradition" – effects. Plath's celebrated cycle of bee poems, to which I now turn, captures this essential tension in her classicising poems between a conservative classicising impulse and a burgeoning impulse towards subjective lyric expression. At the same time, they allow us to see clearly what must be ignored to maintain Plath's status both as a subversive resisting rewriter of myth and as a feminist literary foremother.

Written over five days in October 1962, a few months after the breakdown of her marriage, the bee poems are typically read as an autobiographical allegory. The sequence of five poems – "The Bee Meeting", "The Arrival of the Bee Box", "Stings", "The Swarm" and "Wintering" – ostensibly form a narrative which describes the speaker's initiation into beekeeping, her receipt of a hive, the bees' assault on a scapegoat, the flight of the queen bee in search of a new hive and the winter hibernation of the bees. Each of the poems corresponds to a section of Virgil's fourth *Georgic*, a didactic poem – part farming manual and part political allegory – that treats the management of bees. Plath's bee sequence holistically

reworks Virgil's use of the bee society as an allegorical figure for civil strife for an account of domestic crisis. Direct points of allusion include the repeated references to the Latin language, Rome, Romans and Caesar, and the description of the old queen and her attendants in "Stings" (214) which follows the Latin closely: "Her wings torn shawls, her long body / Rubbed of its plush" (ll. 17–18); the "Honey-drudgers" (l. 22) who "thought death was worth it" (l. 51).[19] But I am not as interested in the direct allusions to Virgil as I am in the discourse of classicism that runs throughout the poems and for which Virgil is a signifier.

The poems' allusive intratextuality works retrospectively as often as it functions to progress a theme through the sequence. In the opening poem, "The Bee Meeting" (211), for example, the speaker is handed a face covering by the village beekeepers: "a fashionable white straw Italian hat / And a black veil that molds to my face, they are making me one of them" (ll. 21–22). The scene is hallucinatory, suggestive of an initiation ceremony, and it seems as if the speaker is being assimilated, her individual identity effaced by her costume: a white hat to match the villagers' "white shop smock[s]" (l. 7), "white suit[s]" (l. 29) and beekeeper suits. As we read forward in the bee sequence, however, the colour black becomes exclusively associated with the bees, and so the black veil that moulds to her face in the opening poem is a mask which now retrospectively marks the speaker as a member of the hive; she is a cipher or scapegoat for the old queen who must die for the new queen to found a new colony. "Black" and "white" are key words in Plath's bee sequence, occurring 14 and 11 times, respectively, in 261 lines, alongside clusters of words evocative of or stereotypically associated with the two colours: for "black", variously, a "dark" cellar (217, l. 6) and hive (212, l. 12), a funeral veil, a black bat and "African hands" (212, l. 13), and for "white", read snow, ivory, the moon, lilies, milkweed silk, cheesecloth, cow parsley and hawthorn blossoms, asbestos, Meissen porcelain and Tate & Lyle sugar (I will return to these images).

Throughout "The Bee Meeting" the poetic speaker's subjectivity shuttles, as it does across the sequence as a whole, between an identification with the white-clad villagers (associated in the poems with Caesar, Napoleon and smaller figures of male authority, such as the "the butcher, the grocer, the postman", 211, l. 30) and the bees ("all women", 217, l. 38). At the same time, the speaker is explicitly racialised as white, and the bees as b/Black: "Black / Mind against all that white" (217, ll. 32–33). In the third poem of the sequence, "Stings" (214), the speaker's identification with the bees is at its strongest – "I stand in a column // Of winged, unmiraculous women" (ll. 20–21) – and her locus of identification with the bees is revealed to be in their shared domestic drudgery. As L.P. Wilkinson reminds us, the male poet's pastoral idyll in *Georgics* is "signalised by the astonishing absence of any reference to slavery" (Wilkinson, 1982, 320), and in "Stings", Plath implies that the male poet's idyll has come at the expense of the woman's cultural starvation and domestic labour. The images of enslavement throughout the sequence, then, are used to foreground the woman who, Plath implies, is the necessary yet unspoken condition of Virgil's (Hughes's) pastoral paradise. Given the bees' explicit association elsewhere in the sequence with blackness/Blackness, Plath's metapoetic identification with the figure of the enslaved here draws on a history of privileged

white women co-opting and downplaying racist oppression in their comparisons of women to slaves (Davis, 1981).[20] For at the moment in "Stings" at which the poetic speaker identifies explicitly with the bees, the word "black" – the word with which the bees are predominantly associated in the sequence – disappears, replaced with the word "women" (Plath, 1982, 214, l. 21). The speaker's alignment with the bees is, however, revealed to be only provisional by the imagery of the final lines of the poem in which the "lion-red" (l. 55) queen bee flies triumphantly like a "red <u>comet</u> / Over the engine that killed her – | The <u>mausoleum</u>, the wax house" (ll. 58–60, my emphases); the speaker-as-Caesar abandons the hive.[21]

The erasure of race in "Stings" to facilitate an identification with the bees contrasts directly with Plath's overdetermination of race in "The Arrival of the Bee Box" (212) to weaken the speaker's identification with the bees. In this poem, the white speaker is explicitly in control. Just as "black" disappeared from "Stings" to align the woman with the enslaved bees, in this poem the colour "white" disappears, aligning the speaker with an unmarked male power. At the same time, the black bees receive the sequence's most explicitly racist characterisation. Plath's use of "African hands" (l. 13) to describe the speaker's first sight of the bees may remind the reader of Virgil's own African bees, the Carthaginians, compared to bees building a new city for the queen bee, Dido, when Aeneas first catches sight of the new city at *Aeneid* 1.430–436. Like the speaker of Plath's poem, Aeneas stands marvelling at the great "din" (Plath, 1982, 212, l. 5; *Aen.* 1.422) emitted by the workers, uncertain whether he meets friends or enemies. But the "noise" (Plath, 1982, 212, l. 17) of the bees, a "Roman mob" (l. 19) whose protests are categorised as "unintelligible syllables" (l. 18), is a racist trope – reinforced by the use of a derogatory slang term. Although the beekeeping term "swarmy" (l. 31) is still used today to describe the propensity of different bee species to swarm, its use here as a 1950s racist slur is made unequivocal by its pairing with the phrase "African hands" and the accompanying allusion to the Middle Passage in the description of the bees in a "coffin" (l. 3), "Minute and shrunk for export / Black on black, angrily clambering" (ll. 14–15).[22] This is the hive-as-boat, an image retrospectively emphasised by the final poem's explicit references to Tate & Lyle sugar (217, ll. 27, 29) – a grim metonym for the sugar plantations towards which the enslaved bees/hands are shipped.

While the bee poems' use of black and white "evinces Plath as a poet both produced by the racial politics of the 1950s United States and superficially aware of a need to focus particular attention on racial politics" (Curry, 2000, 124; racial segregation in the US did not end country-wide in law until 1964, over a year after Plath's death), the speaker's construction of the negatively racialised other and consideration of her relationship with the negatively racialised other is only ever insofar as it comments on her self: her self-construction, her self-definition, her power, her whiteness.[23] In "The Arrival of the Bee Box" the power dynamics of race and gender are focalised in the line "I am not a Caesar" (212, l. 22), for at the moment the speaker seems closest to recognising her role in oppression, admitting that she is the owner of the bees, she points to the white male as the greater oppressor. She imagines instead her escape from the role of owner by transforming into Daphne, the ur-victim of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* ("If I just undid the locks and

stood back and turned into a tree", ll. 27–28; cf., in the same sequence, "I cannot run, I am rooted", 211, l. 31). This is a crucial moment in the poem that performs the white feminist insistence on victimhood and innocence when challenged to see white women's complicity in racism; that the speaker's imagined flight is Ovidian "only intensifies [her] unmistakable signs of whiteness and privilege" (Tunstall, 2015, 232). In Plath scholarship, the speaker's claim "I am not a Caesar" has been read literally, and yet the line seems heavily ironic, undercut as it is – once we understand the classicising imagery in these poems – by the speaker's Caesar-like assassination in the opening poem ("Pillar of white in a blackout of knives", 211, l. 52) and her Caesar-like apotheosis as a comet in "Stings". At the same time, the irony of the speaker's claim, "I am not a Caesar", and the poet's conscious alignment with the cultural conservatism and white male power that bolsters the racialised hierarchy between the speaker and the bees leaves room for a degree of self-awareness on the part of the poet about the corrupting quality of her classicising gesture that her feminist readers have lacked.

The cultural power that Plath has been taught the classical holds is gnomically personified across her poems in the dominating and volatile presences of Caesars. In the poem "Daddy", the Freudian father-figure appears as Caesar/Kaiser, the Colossus of Constantine ("Marble-heavy . . . Ghastly statue with one grey toe", 222, ll. 8–9) and "A man in black with a Meinkampf look" (l. 65). In this poem, the very recent history of classicism erupts – Plath was 13 when the Second World War ended – in the paired optics of classicism and Nazism. Plath's explicit play with classicising Fascism here speaks to my reading of her use of classical allusion as a power play and a knowing alignment with a classicising discourse of white power at the expense of negatively racialised others ("Every woman adores a Fascist", l. 48).[24] For all her recognition of the lethality of patriarchal oppression, and for all her ironising of her enthralled relationship to it in "Daddy", her use of Virgil's text to bring order to the chaos of a broken marriage and assert herself as a poet – in her place and time and with her educational history – ultimately aligns Plath with Daddy and white male cultural hegemony. This is not a "misappropriation" or "misreading" of the discourse of classicism Plath absorbed. The feminist reception scholar cannot square the claim for the bee poems as a proto-feminist revisionary poetic rebirth with the speaker's knowing intoxication with racialised power and her co-optation of the racist oppression of others in her attempt at self-representation.[25]

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I returned to the late 1950s to demonstrate how an understanding of the literary, institutional, pedagogical and ideological contexts that framed Plath's encounter with the classical reveals a confessional narrative of acculturation rather than one of subversive empowerment. My purpose was to expose both the unsound premise on which the contemporary scholarly paradigm of subversive empowerment has been built and some of the ways in which this bourgeois white feminist narrative fails to account for the structural oppressions of race and class as they intersect with gender – even in classicising poems such as Plath's which explicitly

foreground and weaponise racialised difference. Much feminist classical reception scholarship of the 2010s and early 2020s has continued to centre a white bourgeois feminine subjectivity that prioritises gender and white innocence while eliding race and class. I have selected *Women & Power* and *Antigone Rising* for my analysis, in part, because they are both works of public scholarship (Hanink was also explicitly concerned with the ways in which "professional classicists make interventions . . . in public debates about the ancient past" in her original formulation of critical classical reception, Hanink, 2017). As I will show, both books disseminate a particular hegemonic discourse of classicism that co-opts and depoliticises a radical critique to reproduce whiteness. As critical ancient world studies scholars, we should be concerned that two books so symptomatic of the broader problem of white feminism and its occlusions and deflections are the public face of the discipline.

In *Women & Power*, for example, Beard casts Sojourner Truth's 1851 speech "Ain't I a Woman?" as an example of "women's voices raised in support of women's causes" (Beard, 2018, 25), passing over the specific context in which Truth was speaking as a Black woman whom white women had debarred from addressing a women's suffrage meeting. Similarly, in an afterword to the second edition of *Women & Power*, written to update the text in a post-Obama political context (white supremacism is not explicitly mentioned), Beard reduces the particular character of the misogynoir directed towards Diane Abbott – the first Black woman elected to the UK Parliament and the longest-serving Black MP in the House of Commons – to merely another example of "the kind of abuse of women that I have been discussing" (Beard, 2018, 94).[26] While Beard concedes that the mainstream media and social media abuse of Abbott contains "more than a sprinkling of racism" (Beard, 2018, 95), the choice of phrasing here suggests that racism is merely the decorative topping on the primary problem of misogyny. The facile engagement with the compounding oppressive structure of racism for Black women throughout *Women & Power* can be read as what Brenna Bhandar has identified as the academic "insurance policy" (Bhandar and Ziadah, 2020, 27), that is, as a defensive rhetorical trope that functions to displace an intersectional analysis by briefly acknowledging race and class while continuing to universalise women's experiences from a white bourgeois perspective.

This academic insurance policy is similarly deployed in an expanded version of *Fat Classics* (Morales, 2015) published in *Antigone Rising*, *Dieting with Hippocrates*. In its framing of fatness and discourses of anti-fatness as a personal issue, one of low self-esteem (34) and over-eating (45), the chapter fails to account either for the systemic and structural factors that affect diet, such as food insecurity, food production, "food deserts", land theft and ecocide, among many others, or the ways in which the oppressions of race and class intersect locally and globally with those factors.[27] While the chapter concedes that the Hippocrates-citing "diet industry is built upon an ideology of racial, as well as gender, prejudice" (Morales, 2020, 41), the "trend" of anti-fatness as anti-Blackness is constructed as historical ("a trend in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries", ibid.) and features only as an aside. Elsewhere, Morales highlights the hyperbolic cultural rhetoric of anti-fatness without

commenting on its racialised language, which, via two carelessly chosen similes, seems to seep into the chapter's own analysis:

> fatness . . . is something to be feared. We are urged to "make war on" obesity as if fat bodies pose an equivalent threat to ISIS and to "tackle" obesity like one might a home invader.
>
> (Morales, 2020, 30)

As Da'Shaun Harrison reminds us, it is negatively racialised bodies who have been and continue to be the primary targets of the "wars" on obesity, terror and drugs (Harrison, 2021), and the text's uncritical invocation of this racialised image seems to troublingly precipitate the second image of the racialised "home invader" of the white imaginary.[28] The cumulative effect of the imagery here is to position the concocted threat of obesity against the "real" racialised threats of terrorism and home invasion.

Both *Women & Power* and *Antigone Rising* also explicitly employ a depoliticised white feminist discourse of "empowerment" that calls for women's individual mastery of ancient texts without an attendant analysis of the ways in which discourses of classicism continue to oppress the wider socio-demographic groups from which those individuals emerge. Morales' reading of Ovid's tale of Philomela as an empowering feminist revenge fantasy (Morales, 2020, 70), for example, underpins her call for "justice" for sexual assault survivors from "the modern gods – the police, the courts, and the media" (Morales, 2020, 97).[29] Such carceral feminism misunderstands who these gods are designed to protect and ignores the people of colour and working classes who will be the targets of increased punitive state power; it also reveals that Morales' presumed feminist subject is a bourgeois white one, unaffected by raced and classed state oppression.[30] It is a bitter irony that the appeal to the police state follows directly from a reference to the arrest and incarceration of Cyntoia Brown, whose imprisonment for an act of self-defence was a result of the state functioning exactly as intended for marginalised women of colour.[31] *Antigone Rising*'s treatment of the tale of Philomela illustrates white feminism's cisnormative and heteronormative alertness to sexualised threat over racism or classism and evidences a carceral feminist emphasis on shifting the dynamics of interpersonal power dynamics from men to women rather than dismantling systemic oppressions.[32] The book's "empowering" reading of Ovid passes over the fact that the only rapist punished in the *Metamorphoses* is explicitly and negatively racialised, and it fails to acknowledge that while the individual Tereus is punished, the epic poem remains structured by the gender norms of a patriarchal society in which the act of rape interpellates the feminine subject (Enterline, 2000, 158).[33]

The neoliberal desire for an individual sense of power over collective liberation (Sivanandan, 1985, 27; Gilroy, 1990) runs throughout *Women & Power* and *Antigone Rising*, with Beard calling for women to be given "their place inside of the structures of power" (Beard, 2018, 58) and Morales espousing a "lean in" mode of philology in which ancient texts are "selectively" (Morales, 2020, 45) chosen for their empowering potential.[34] The nature of this empowerment is most

often modelled as a "girl boss" feminism in which power is associated with status and the mastery of ancient elite male texts ("reading the original stories closely", Morales, 2020, 143).[35] The real ideological work of the narrative of subversive empowerment, then, is the reification of a stable, transhistorical, universalisable and inherited classical canon that contains intrinsic and unproblematised aesthetic and cultural authority/power which exists to be harnessed by the (white) feminist reader. The "activist" appeal to philological mastery is thus undermined by its own cultural conservatism, and it fails to be radical in its suggestion that the path to feminist empowerment is via an embrace of elite, white, cis, masculinist culture.[36] Neither text outlines exactly how women's control of cultural authority will be distinct from the ways in which patriarchy already oppressively wields cultural and discursive power. Moreover, the uncritical engagement with a hegemonic discourse of classicism that (white) women must adopt "to our own advantage" (Beard, 2017, 89; Morales, 2020, xvii), betrays a lack of awareness of the relational nature of power, and the ways in which – as we saw in Plath's poems – white women's inclusion within classicising discourses of power *necessitates* the exclusion and oppression of negatively racialised others.[37]

In addition to the ideological assumptions and effects of white feminist scholarship, its repetitive employment of a schematic narrative is methodologically flawed: the validity of the narrative is assumed and never demonstrated, and the paradigm predetermines the "empowering" conclusion of the argument before any textual analysis has taken place. By the same token, the purposive "selective" (Morales, 2020, 45) sampling conducted in the search for subversively empowering literary foremothers not only mistakes visual representation for political representation but leads to the celebration of white feminist revisionary texts better characterised by their "bad feminism" (Hinds, 2019) than a "re-vision" that is historically and politically aware (the mainstreaming of white feminist classical reception scholarship has therefore also worked to erase from scholarly discourse Shelley Haley's critical use of the term "reclaiming" [1993] in her argument that empowerment comes not from mastery of the master's tools, but from unlearning and relearning).[38] And in its celebration of the recent proliferation of revisionary texts on the market, white feminist reception scholarship has so far failed to account for the ways in which this publishing upsurge is one manifestation of global capitalism's relentless "commodification of difference" (hooks, 1992, 31) and its reconceptualisation of "minority readerships . . . as target publics" (Rosen, 2016, 33). In turn, trade books such as *Women & Power* and *Antigone Rising* profit from a far larger target audience than that of a university press monograph and generate higher royalties.[39] Any interrogation of the "value" of classics in the modern world – both to scholars and publics – must therefore also account for the ways in which the success of such trade books "evidence[s] that the symbolic capital of the canon is both healthy and fungible, convertible to economic capital" (Rosen, 2016, 33).

The instrumentalisation of selected works of reception to serve a positivist narrative about the enduring value and relevance of Graeco-Roman antiquity to contemporary politics has also led to the scholarly neglect of works of reception which

explicitly trouble the claimed universality of the classical. Sandeep Parmar's *Eidolon* (2015) is one such example, an emotionally ambivalent and politically complex creative modern version of the myth of Helen. In the afterword to her collection, Parmar recounts being "stunned" by an Indian poet friend's reaction to her work on Helen – that Greek texts were "*their* literature" – when, having been raised Sikh, "Hindu culture was as strange to me as Ancient Greece" (Parmar, 2015, 70). Later, on a research trip, Parmar happens across "a letter written by the infamous MP Enoch Powell . . . in 1935":

> I believe I gasped, and then marvelled at the beauty of [the letter's] surface, of the care this man – a man who would live like a red-eyed demon in my mother's nightmares as a child in Wolverhampton in the late 1960s – [had in] his exact script copied out the funeral speech from Aristotle . . . What happened between 1935 and 1968 when the man stood and imagined he saw the river Tiber foaming with much blood? Was that now famous image the unnatural endpoint of a devoted classical education?
>
> (Parmar, 2015, 71)

Parmar's reflection on "Western civilisation", "inheritance", and "ownership" and her unflinching critical and reflexive hyper-awareness regarding the real harms of the endpoints of the cultural hegemony with which she engages, and as it intersects with colonial, familial, educational and archival histories, bring the compromised stance of the white feminist reception scholar into focus. For, despite some concessions to the ways in which "the classics" have been retrospectively instantiated as the beginning of a purported "Western civilisation", white feminist reception scholarship uniformly fails to reflexively analyse the scholar's own acculturation into this iterative process of canon formation and her complicity in the reproduction of cultural and discursive power. The unspoken and necessary condition, while not sufficient, for many scholars' engagement with Graeco-Roman literature and culture is cultural hegemony, no matter our subsequent paths towards a more critical stance vis-à-vis the discipline or our ongoing unlearning of the processes of acculturation to which we have been exposed. The continued appeal, then, to the paradigm of subversive empowerment at a critical moment when "classics" is being problematised on all fronts is a defensive and self-justificatory move that works only to assuage the false consciousness or cognitive dissonance of the white feminist classicist, (sub)conscious of her presence in a discipline that continues to be implicated in white supremacism and misogyny. Hanink characterised critical classical reception studies as marked by "an open activist agenda" (Hanink, 2017), yet the "open" feminist criticality of a piece such as *Fat Classics* does not extend, as I have shown, to the authorial self.

A critical reception studies must begin from an analysis of the ways in which the disciplinary assumptions, foundations and narratives in which we have been trained reproduce structures of power and oppression; I have attempted to show here how a reception case study can be used to disrupt rather than reify classics by

exposing the hegemonic cultural values embedded in – and the ideological function of – even ostensibly "subversive" disciplinary paradigms. As reception scholars, we must recognise that discourses of classicism which construct and maintain racism and misogyny are not restricted to cultural texts on the political Far Right, and as feminists, we must critically reflect on the ways in which our feminist politics have been "strangled, stoppered, and hindered" (Eddo-Lodge, 2017, 168) by classics. To offer one definition, it can be said that the goal of activism is the transformation of power relations for collective material empowerment. It is imperative that feminists recognise that the white feminist narrative of empowerment relies on a hegemonic discourse of classicism as power that works only to increase women's individual proximity to whiteness while necessarily disempowering the socio-demographic groups (racialised, classed) from which those individuals emerge.[40] The critical reception scholar must commit to the long-term and ongoing work of unlearning white supremacism as it is embedded in dominant disciplinary discourses of classicism, reception and feminism. As Hanink recognises, we have not been trained to do this, and as Carol Azumah Dennis cautions us, "[i]t is possible that this might not feel empowering" (Azumah Dennis, 2018, 202).

Notes

1 "Grant maintained schools", such as mine, were state schools that received their funding directly from the central Department for Education; the statutory national curriculum must be taught in all state schools in England which receive their funding from local government. Grant maintained status was discontinued and replaced by foundation status in 2000.

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2 The Department for Education published school-leaver destination data for the first time in 2012; it was also the first time the DfE published the proportion of school-leavers attending Oxbridge or other Russell Group institutions. The statistics in the 2012 report, cited earlier, relate to school leavers who entered higher education in 2009. In total, 58% of Wolverhampton school-leavers entered higher education institutions in 2009; when I entered higher education in 2003, the statistics for my local authority area were likely even lower. Unfortunately, the report does not provide more granular data on school leaver destinations by gender, ethnicity or socio-economic background.

3 For personal and critical reflections on social discourses of ancient Greek and Latin, whiteness, and class, see Umachandran (2017), Wong (2019), D'Angelo (2020), and Agbamu (2021).

4 Powell quotes the Sybil's prophecy to Aeneas that "I foresee wars, terrible wars, and the Tiber foaming with much blood" at *Aeneid* 6.86–87.

5 Although, as Hirsch notes, a contemporary trade union leaflet from the International Socialists warns workers not to trust Powell, in part, because he "writes Greek verse"; Hirsch (2018, 50–51). "This mythological and racist construction of the working class as white to the exclusion of its racialised members, who are in fact disproportionately represented in this class both domestically and globally, persists to the present day", El-Enany (2020, 57).

6 On positionality, standpoint and reflexivity in research, see, for example, the key texts by Collins (1990) and Smith (1998).

7 On the need for scholars to (re)examine their affective and psycho-social attachments to classics, see Rankine (2019, 346) and Ranger (2023).

8 Personal voice scholarship has been defined in classical scholarship as an "explicitly autobiographical performance within the act of criticism", Nancy Miller quoted in Hallett and Van Nortwick (1997, 1).

9 Emily Greenwood has noted that white feminist theory's appeal to the Graeco-Roman classics (quintessentially androcentric and patriarchal) "raises important questions about the cultural identity of feminist thought" (Greenwood 2009, 101).

10 For a problematisation of genealogies and metaphors of reception, see Ward (2019).

11 On empowerment as originally conceptualised by the Indian feminist development activist Gita Sen, see Zakaria (2021, 48–56).

12 Lorna Hardwick and Luke Richardson have both voiced the suspicion that no matter how "democratic" classical reception is, "conservatism [is] never far from the surface"; Hardwick (2015, 36) and Richardson (2017).

13 See Mansukhani in this volume on the mobilisation of Marx as a defensive trope and as the discipline's paradigmatic "get out of jail free" card.

14 "Settler moves to innocence are those strategies or positionings that attempt to relieve the settler of feelings of guilt or responsibility without giving up land or power or privilege, without having to change much at all. In fact, settler scholars may gain professional kudos or a boost in their reputations for being so sensitive or self-aware. Yet settler moves to innocence are hollow, they only serve the settler"; Tuck and Yang (2012, 10).

15 Nadhira Hill has identified this deflection as whataboutism, "the technique or practice of responding to an accusation or difficult question by making a counter-accusation or raising a different issue" (Hill, 2020); Hill (2021) reflects on Beard's weaponisation of respectability politics to enforce disciplinary and social hierarchies.

16 The scholarship particularly emphasises Plath's perceived autobiographical identification with Electra, as Bakogianni (2009) exemplifies; Kroll (2007 [1976]) was the first extended treatment of Plath's "mythic system".

17 The comparative Tragedy paper remains a compulsory element of Part II; the Moralist paper was discontinued from the 2020 matriculation cohort.

18 Emphases Plath's own. Sophocles' *Philoctetes* was performed in English at the ADC Theatre on the 10 February 1956. The 1956 Cambridge Greek Play was performed 20–24 February.

19 "Often they even wear down their wings as they bumble against the hard rocks, and freely give their lives under the load: so great is their love of flowers and the glory in making honey", Virgil, *Georgics* 4.203–205.

20 When used by white women, the metaphor is typically stripped of specific features of enslavement, such as kidnap, rape, torture, death and racism. As Davis documents, this metaphor arose from the racism of the white women's suffrage movement in the US, which opposed the enfranchisement of Black men before white women; see also Vergès (2021, 28–31).

21 These lines are usually read as alluding to Clytemnestra and/or Medea, e.g. Van Dyne (1984).

22 Plath also uses an unambiguously racist slur in the poem "Ariel".

23 "Plath's primary subject matter is that of the white female self buckling in on itself", Curry (2000, 168).

24 "Daddy" also employs the same mechanism as "Stings" in the speaker's co-optation of Jewish identity to position herself vis-à-vis male power.

25 This is also true of Plath's other classicising poems, notably "Purdah", in which the speaker takes on the role of Clytemnestra-as-odalisque, *CP* 242.

26 Abbott was the target of ten times more abuse than any other MP and received almost half of all abusive tweets directed at women MPs in the six weeks prior to the 8 June 2017 U.K. general election (Dhrodia, 2017).

27 See e.g. Berlant (2007).
28 We recall that South African Paralympian Oscar Pistorius claimed, initially successfully, that he thought it was an intruder in the bathroom into which he fired the shots that killed Reeva Steenkamp; "what was largely unspoken was that . . . the person [was] – could only be – imagined as black [*sic*]", Rose (2015).
29 White women seek empowerment, paradoxically, by "*ceding control* to the punitive technologies of the state", Phipps (2020, 79) (emphases in original). In Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 6.424–674, Philomela is raped and mutilated by her brother-in-law Tereus, before taking infanticidal revenge against Tereus with her sister Procne.
30 It also fails to understand the ways in which, as Angela Davis reminds us, individual emotions are inscribed by the retributive impulse of the state and the white supremacist prison-industrial complex: "we replicate the structures of retributive punishment in our own relations to one another . . . even those of us who are conscious of that are still subject to that ideological influence on our emotional life. The retributive impulses of the state, the retributive impulses of state punishment, are inscribed in our very individual emotional responses"; Davis, quoted in (Kaba, 2021, xxiii–xxiv).
31 See Kaba (2019). Morales also cites at this point in the text (95–96) Andrea Dworkin, who would have used a case like Brown's to argue against the decriminalisation of sex work to protect vulnerable women.
32 Compare the claim in *Postclassicism*s that "[i]t would be a perverse set of values that could not distinguish between the worth of Homer and that of a stray pottery scatter in an archaeological survey – both of which have claims on our attention, but surely not equipollent ones" (The Postclassicisms Collective, 2020, 15), which betrays a failure to imagine the enslaved and working class lives of the ancient world whose traces are most often found only in material ephemera.
33 On the myth of the Black rapist and its employment in enforcing white supremacy, see Davis (1981, 155–181). "Thracian Tereus . . . his own passionate nature spurred him on, and besides, the men of his region are quick to lust: his own fire and his nation's burned in him", 6.424, 458–460.
34 Morales includes Sheryl Sandberg, author of *Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead* (Alfred A. Knopf, 2013) in her list of "ballsy and courageous" women (93). As Sivanandan (1985) and Gilroy (1990) explain, in making change and empowerment a personal responsibility, neoliberalism is a mechanism of power, divorcing racism and sexual violence from wider systemic forces, and individuals from collective struggle.
35 A move identified as a desire for "equal opportunity domination", Arruzza et al. (2019, 2); see also Lola Olufemi's critique of "girl boss" feminism, in which power is associated with financial gain, and/as in relation to Beyoncé, one of Morales' case studies, in Olufemi (2020, 4–6).
36 Despite a footnote directing us to Kwame Anthony Appiah's essay, "There Is No Such Thing as Western Civilisation" (108), *Antigone Rising* relies on appeals to "our culture" and "our aesthetic vocabulary" (100) and the myth of inheritance (5, 6, 67); this is also explicit in *Women & Power*: "Western culture" (xiii), "the tradition of Western literature" (3), "a tradition . . . to which we are still, directly or more often indirectly, the heirs" (20), "our classical inheritance" (21), etc.
37 It is, in part, for this reason that Disabled feminists and Black feminists often explicitly remove a desire for power from their demands for social justice; as disability activist Mia Mingus writes, "We don't want to simply join the ranks of the privileged; we want to dismantle those ranks and the systems that maintain them"(2011).
38 On the institutionalisation of Black feminist critique as a process of "whitening", see Bilge (2013).
39 In addition to the higher total sales of trade books, trade presses typically calculate royalties as a percentage of the higher list price, as opposed to a percentage of the net sales receipts, the latter typically used by university presses.

40 On non-performative scholarly "activism", cf. Olúfẹ́mi O. Táíwò on the Flint water crisis (2022, 106): "In that moment, what [Flint residents] needed was not for their oppression to be 'celebrated', 'centered' or narrated in the newest academic parlance. They didn't need outsiders to empathize over what it felt like to be poisoned . . . What Flint residents really needed, above all, was to get the lead out of their water".

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14 The Anti-radical Classicism of Karl Marx's Dissertation

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Introduction

Recently, classicists have started to acknowledge Karl Marx's dissertation *The Difference between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature* (1841) as a work of classical scholarship. These sparse references to the text, however, are noticeably brief and ideologically inconsistent. In their respective attempts to defend classics' continued relevance, Mary Beard and Simon Goldhill both mention Marx's work in passing.[1] Each refers to his dissertation to show that classics as a discipline is not fundamentally anti-progressive, leaning on the revolutionary's name to support their case. One of the few instances of scholarship on the dissertation in classics is Paul Cartledge and David Konstan's entry on "Marxism and Classical Antiquity" in the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*. The two point out the dissertation's existence to claim Marx "retained a lifelong interest in classical antiquity, spicing his writings with a wealth of allusions to ancient texts".[2] The rest of the entry then focuses on these allusions to ancient slavery and Marx's influence on the study of antiquity. In all these cases, Marx's classical training is assumed to have some degree of influence on his communist thought. Such proof of classics' revolutionary potential would be welcome news for anyone wishing to defend the discipline, especially from renewed inquiry into its imperialist and white supremacist origins. Though to outline the relationship between the dissertation as classical scholarship and Marx's revolutionary tendencies, further exegesis is needed than provided in these sources. It is still necessary to connect the dissertation to classics in the 19th century and map their influence on Marx's later communist thought.

This chapter provides a preliminary example of this type of inquiry by placing the work in its historical context, as opposed to evaluating the integrity of its philosophical arguments. It suggests that Marx inherited his Eurocentric tendencies from his classical education and scholarship, leaving his later body of work open to this critique.

First, the chapter situates Marx's classical education within 19th-century Germany. Marx received some of his earliest classical education in the German Gymnasium, which had been recently reformed by Wilhelm Von Humboldt. His later work on classical subjects was within a philosophy department, motivated by philosophical questions laid out by G.W.F. Hegel. Both of these theorists based their

work on a German ideal known as *Bildung*, translated as "education", "cultivation" or "culture".

Then, it identifies connections between the dissertation and these articulations of *Bildung* as they appeared in Humboldt's and Hegel's work, as well as within the curriculum of the Gymnasium. It argues that Marx's choice of Epicurean subject matter was influenced by the above. There was a shared dismissal of non-European societies and Hellenistic Greece from historical study, and Marx only protests against the exclusion of the Hellenistic age. He does not question the framework of *Bildung* which motivates this exclusion, instead attempting to show how Epicurean thought embraces *Bildung*. Marx makes his argument through his account of Epicurean atomism. He claims that Epicurus solves a traditional problem of Democritean atomism through its emphasis on the atom as an individual "self-consciousness" entity.[3] This language also echoes his predecessors' account of *Bildung*, which stated that the purpose of education was to shape self-conscious individuals. This model of the individual, however, was based on traditionally masculine, European features and the treatment of non-European societies as lacking historical importance. The prototype for this individual was thus the white, European man. Marx's emphasis on "redeeming" Epicurus through this language of individuality and self-consciousness displays an effort to assimilate Hellenistic philosophy into a Eurocentric paradigm.

This chapter concludes by considering the influence of the dissertation's Eurocentrism in the concept of historical materialism, as well as pushback against its traditional formulation from later non-Western and non-white Marxists. Though these later Marxists recognise Marx's Eurocentrism, they update Marx's revolutionary vision rather than abandon it entirely. While Marx's dissertation reproduces the field's Eurocentric epistemology, this alone does not deem Marx and Marxist thought outdated. Instead, the dissertation serves as a reminder to scholars of the classical world that individual scholars and bodies of thought can change radically over time through constant, pointed critique. No scholar is obligated to live in the shadows of previous epistemologies articulated by their predecessors, and new ways of knowing and existing can always be realised.

Situating Marx's Classicism

Karl Marx's classical education, shaped by the cultural forces of 19th-century Germany, would seem foreign to classicists today. Marx was born in 1818, soon after Wilhelm von Humboldt's (1767–1835) overhaul of the Prussian educational system from 1809–1810,[4] and wrote some of his earliest surviving work on antiquity as a student in the Gymnasium.[5] As is the case in modern day Germany, the Gymnasium was the most elite institution of secondary education in the 19th century and served as a precursor to a university education or public office.[6] Unlike Germany today, the only students admitted to the Gymnasium were boys from upper- and middle-class families,[7] and as such the curriculum had to reflect the values of this demographic. The primary purpose of classical education in the

Gymnasium was to showcase works which promoted those values relevant to their social class[8] rather than provide well-rounded exposure to classical antiquity.

Marx may have received training in classical languages at the secondary level, but it was not his primary focus at the tertiary and doctoral levels. While his dissertation was on ancient Greek subjects, it was towards a degree in philosophy, not philology.[9] It responds to a disciplinary question introduced by philosopher G.W.F. Hegel (1770–1831) in his lectures on the development of Greek philosophy.[10] Marx also incorporates work from early modern philosophers such as Pierre Bayle,[11] Pierre Gassendi[12] and Gottfried Leibniz[13] as credible sources for ancient philosophy. Unlike contemporary ancient philosophy scholars, Marx lacked important primary sources for pre-Socratic and Epicurean philosophy, such as the Diels-Kranz fragments, Usener's 1887 collection[14] and the Herculaneum papyri. While Marx interacts with his limited primary sources, he is motivated by philosophical questions as opposed to philological ones.

Thus, the dissertation *The Difference between the Democritean and Epicurean Philosophy of Nature* is also based on an understanding of classical antiquity that may be unfamiliar to the contemporary classicist. The surviving sections of the dissertation make a relatively uncontroversial claim: Epicurean atomism is markedly different from Democritean atomism. What is unusual is how Marx situates this argument within the history of philosophy and the language he uses to defend his argument. In Part One of the dissertation, Marx explicitly states that he will use Epicurean atomism to respond to his contemporaries' biases against Hellenistic philosophy. These anti-Hellenistic biases include the belief that Greek philosophy somehow "withered" after the death of Aristotle.[15] Hellenistic philosophy was considered an "almost improper addition"[16] to the history of philosophy, a view certainly not held today. In Part Two, Marx uses the atom and swerve to come to a bold conclusion about the historical importance of Epicurean thought. Epicurean atomism, for Marx, is ultimately "*the natural science of self-consciousness*. This self-consciousness under the form of abstract individuality is an absolute principle".[17] In other words, Epicurus affirms that notions such as "self-consciousness" and "individuality" are guaranteed fixtures in nature. In the dissertation, Marx responds to a widespread dismissal of Hellenistic thought. He feels the need to defend Epicurean atomism through its relationship to the supposedly innate principle of individuality, a notably Hegelian tendency.[18] As a result, the dissertation addresses the philosophical concerns of Marx's immediate predecessors through the language they use to describe Graeco-Roman antiquity and philosophy.

Bildung and a Eurocentric Narrative of Progress

This view of the Hellenistic age and the emphasis on individuality is borrowed from a German ideal known as *Bildung*, which shaped classical education and scholarship in the 19th century. Broadly speaking, *Bildung* was "understood both as a process of education, cultivation, and development, and as its result".[19] This process was the self-formation of the individual, and the result the full self-realisation of one's individuality.[20] Only through this self-realisation did theorists of

Bildung believe that humanity as a whole could realise its full potential.[21] Translated as "cultivation", "education"[22] or "culture",[23] *Bildung* was sometimes qualified with the adjectives "classical" or "humanistic",[24] demonstrating the depth of its relationship with classics. Humboldt and Hegel drew inspiration from classical antiquity while contemplating the terms of this self-realisation, then situated different eras of antiquity into this teleology of human development as they saw fit.[25] In doing so, they reduced the study of the ancient world to pure utility, as it pertained to their own vision of the fully realised individual. In this era, this individual was a white, European man.[26]

While Humboldt's influence on Marx is not as explicit as Hegel's, he shaped the curriculum under which Marx studied classical antiquity.[27] Humboldt's educational reforms were oriented around his own interpretation of *Bildung*.[28] For Humboldt, the goal of an individual's self-development "is the highest and most harmonious development of his powers to a complete and consistent whole".[29] One must learn how to unite differing capacities under a fully realised individual. This undertaking, however, cannot occur in isolation. The process of *Bildung* can only take place within a society that enables one to encounter a variety of experiences, so as to exercise their capacities and provide the freedom to pursue them.[30] Humboldt explicitly bases this idealised relationship between individual and society on classical antiquity,[31] especially classical Athens, which he believes decayed with the arrival of Philip and Alexander.[32] He reasons that "the ancient examples explained the necessity to connect, in the present, bourgeois involvement and patriotism with the ideal of individual autonomy".[33] Humboldt believed that classical Athens held knowledge critical for improving his contemporary society. He further cemented the necessity of this relationship by building an image of a modern German citizen that emulated the classical Athenian.[34] Humboldt's conception of the German citizen with Greek inheritance not only solidified the need to study classical antiquity, but also "reinforced the idea of being a citizen of a superior cultural nation".[35] Under Humboldt's description of *Bildung*, classical Athens was tied to a sense of German cultural superiority.

This German nationalist conception of *Bildung* was reflected in the classics curriculum of the newly reformed Gymnasium.[36] The Greek world of the Gymnasium only went up to "Philip and Alexander",[37] ignoring the Hellenistic world entirely. Ancient Greek was only taught because "the study of its grammar helped develop formal mental discipline, and literature presented the pupil with the best available examples of human culture in an original, unmixed form".[38] Mental discipline and the "best" examples of human culture were needed to help students undertake the process of *Bildung*,[39] and these were deemed best taught by classical literature. This cultural superiority was not uniformly recognised across ancient Greek literature. Humboldt himself preferred Attic Greek above all other dialects because of the abundance of these examples compared to other eras and regions of Greece.[40] Students only received enough language training necessary to be exposed to these handpicked examples of supposed human excellence, rather than gain the competency necessary for philological study.[41] Philologists also considered geographical and climatic factors when evaluating this cultural superiority in the ancient world,[42]

which resulted in several non-European societies being excluded from historical study. Due to the influence of *Bildung*, Marx's classical education was not concerned with providing a comprehensive overview of the Graeco-Roman world, but reinforcing Humboldt's conception of German cultural superiority through its supposedly Greek heritage.

Hegel holds a similar bias against the Hellenistic era, but unlike Humboldt justifies this with a systematisation of cultures and historical eras based on their ability to promote *Bildung*. Jennifer Herdt states that Hegel's "entire philosophical project is nothing less than a project of Bildung".[43] For Hegel, *Bildung* is not merely the self-realisation of the individual for the sake of humanity's collective yet secular development, but a process oriented towards a universal spirit.[44] According to Hegel, this process moves in stages manifested through different eras and individuals, and each era progresses towards an ultimate and full self-consciousness or a purity of thought.[45] This progress is not merely evaluated based on the schools of thought which came out of particular periods and regions, but physical markers of their environment such as the geography and climate.[46] For him, the area that could best support historical progress is "the temperate zone; or, rather, its northern half, because the earth there presents itself in a continental form".[47] In other words, history only truly occurs in Europe. He ranks different regions and eras based on their proximity to Europe and whiteness,[48] designating Black Africans as unable to achieve *Bildung*.[49]

Hegel's dismissal of the Hellenistic age is partially based on the expansion of the Greek world into Asia and Egypt.[50] Hegel also evaluates the historical importance of Epicurean thought based on its place in this teleology. In a series of lectures Hegel delivered on the atomist, he "had presented Democritus (and fellow atomist Leucippus) as part of the cycle of early Greek philosophy which traces a dialectic of 'pure thought'".[51] Hegel labels Democritean thought as an early stage in the development of history. Epicurus' return to atomism then indicates the lack of historical progress in the Hellenistic age.[52] His evaluation of Epicurean thought corresponds to his assessment of the era overall, that it failed to further promote Greek culture due to contact with Asia. For Hegel, *Bildung* is an explicitly racist process, striving towards a universal purity realised through the deliberate exclusion of non-white peoples from history.

Marx explicitly situates the dissertation within his predecessors' systematisation of historical progress in Part One. In this section, his goal is to assimilate Epicurus into this periodisation of antiquity rather than push back against it. The dissertation opens with a scathing assessment of Greek philosophy:

> Greek philosophy seems to have met with something with which a good tragedy is not supposed to meet, namely, a dull ending. The objective history of philosophy in Greece seems to come to an end with Aristotle, Greek philosophy's Alexander of Macedon, and even the manly-strong Stoics did not succeed in what the Spartans did accomplish in their temples, the chaining of Athena to Heracles so that she could not flee.[53]

Though this appears to be a general statement about Greek philosophy, it clearly refers to philosophy from Athens. First, there is the comparison of philosophy to tragedy, a genre also associated with Athens. Marx contrasts the Stoics, the philosophers of the *Stoa Poikile*, with Athens' traditional rival, Sparta. While Pausanias attests to this Spartan temple to Athena,[54] Marx speaks metaphorically in this passage. He mentions an "objective history of philosophy" where the history of thought Progresses linearly until it reaches Aristotle. Hellenistic philosophy, including its Stoic branch, was unable to continue this march forward. Here, Marx is invoking Hegel's systematisation of the history of philosophy and explicitly says so in his preparatory *Notebooks*.[55] This condescending view of Hellenistic thought also harkens back to Humboldt's curriculum for the Gymnasium, which similarly placed classical Athens on a pedestal. The dissertation revolves around this construction of classical Athens as the apex of human wisdom, made possible through a tradition of devaluing ancient societies outside of Europe.

While Marx perhaps exaggerates this view for the sake of mockery, he does not push back against this "objective history". Instead, he disagrees with his contemporaries' assessment of Hellenistic thought and wishes to rehabilitate Epicurus' image for them. He attempts to show that the progression of knowledge did take place within and through the Hellenistic schools, asking "[a]re they not the prototypes of the Roman mind, the shape in which Greece wandered to Rome?"[56] The purpose of defending Epicurean thought is to show its historical importance. By fixing Hegel's oversight, Marx can defend the integrity of older philosopher's teleology. Yet Marx does not wish to question this notion of progress past antiquity. Marx claims that his study of the Hellenistic schools is "not at all concerned with their significance for culture [*Bildung*] in general, but with their connection with the older Greek philosophy".[57]

Here, Marx acknowledges a contemporary cultural relationship between Hellenistic thought and *Bildung*. Marx could be alluding to multiple connotations of *Bildung*, all of which fall under the translator's choice of "culture". He was exposed to this relationship as early as the *Gymnasium* and in the dissertation actively engages with Hegel's articulation of it. Marx, however, does not question the necessity of this contemporary norm built on exclusion. Instead, the project of the dissertation is to promote the inclusion of one group of thought by revealing previously unacknowledged similarities with those traditionally included. Thus, the dissertation is situated against the backdrop of *Bildung*, a tradition that valued ancient Greek thought based on its relationship to an overtly racist, Eurocentric notion of historical progress.

Bildung and the Individual as European

Marx assimilates Epicurean thought to this notion of progress by articulating the relationship between individuality and the atom. He believes Epicurus's main contribution to atomic theory is the idea of the "swerve", which triggers a process that allows the atom to fully distinguish itself as unique and material.[58] The description

of this process of the atom's self-realisation incorporates terminology that Marx's predecessors associated with *Bildung*. This relationship to *Bildung* is strengthened by comparisons between the atom's individuality and human individuality.

It is important to note no existing Epicurean fragment contains this language of the "swerve".[59] The main source for this is the *clinamen* in Lucretius' *De rerum natura*,[60] written almost 200 years after Epicurus' death. Marx also uses Lucretius as his primary source for Epicurean thought, arguing his account of the swerve provides a solution to a philosophical issue articulated by Democritus. According to Marx, Democritean atomism cannot account for how imperceivable atoms could cause perceivable objects.[61] Both Democritus and Epicurus are materialist philosophers, meaning they believe only matter exists.[62] Underlying all matter, for both philosophers, are imperceivable objects called atoms and the space between them called void.[63] Democritus posits that while perceived reality is true,[64] it cannot show the imperceivable atoms and void.[65] In his frustration, Democritus turns to the empirical sciences to find an explanatory principle that governs the relationship between the atom and appearance.[66] Marx identifies Democritus' approach as a "universal" one – the older atomist turns to the physical world to solve philosophical problems.

In contrast, Epicurus' approach marks a "subjective" shift away from Democritus' "universal" approach to atomism, by turning to the nature of the individual atom itself. Marx's succeeding analysis shows the movement of the history of philosophy from the external to the internal, with the individual as the new centre of philosophical discourse.

The individual was similarly prioritised by Marx's predecessors, especially within accounts of *Bildung*. For Humboldt and Hegel, the model of the individual achieving self-realisation was the white, European man. Humboldt saw the development of the individual as the *telos* of *Bildung*.[67] To achieve this goal, a method and model was needed to encourage, "the full development of the individual and the full development of the community of mankind being interdependent".[68] The individual had to be educated in a manner that taught one how to exist as an independent yet social being. This required one to learn how to navigate different kinds of social interactions and incorporate them into one's sense of self. In the Gymnasium, this was realised through classical instruction. The Graeco-Roman world, as stated previously, was deemed to have the culture and history best able to promote *Bildung*. As a result, "Languages, and in particular Latin and Greek, were a main subject, and also considered the medium of *Bildung* because these languages in particular were seen to have a rich historical tradition and therefore to enable access to 'manifold worldviews'".[69] This meant ancient language instruction was the best method for developing this socially interactive sense of self. The model for this individual was taken from Humboldt's idealised antiquity, specifically the traditionally male Athenian citizen.[70] Such an individual was supposed to have "strength and independence"[71] while "[l]iving in the love of others is delightful but weak, effeminate".[72] The purpose of *Bildung* is to develop autonomy within society, with this autonomy being seen as a masculine trait and its opposite, codependence, seen as feminine. The preference for instruction via classical antiquity

and its modelling on classical Athens also demonstrates that this autonomous individual was modelled off the white, European male.

The notion of the individual developed through interaction is also present in Hegel's work. The individual's development is but part of the development of the whole universe, as a part of a "world spirit".[73] For Hegel, this development takes place through his account of the dialectic. He stages the dialectic as "a dramatic struggle arising from the encounter of two self-consciousnesses . . . nothing else but an account of *Bildung* of self-consciousness, which undergoes the formative development toward its 'in and for itself' existence".[74] Unlike a Platonic dialectic, which is based on an argument between two physical interlocutors, a Hegelian dialectic addresses a concept's self-definition as it exists in the world. The dialectic situates individual concepts against one another. Once a concept is met with its opposite, there is no choice but to clarify the definition of each.[75] Constantly bombarded with oppositions, the concept becomes more and more clearly defined as it has to continuously distinguish itself. Self-consciousness includes not only awareness of the self but how the individual contextualises this self-awareness. The dialectic is thus not limited to undercovering semantic definitions. This dialectical process of *Bildung* is "not a purely individual undertaking; it is a social enterprise that takes place in the historical and social world (the world of spirit) through various interactions with other individuals".[76] Like Humboldt, Hegel connects individual and social development. The process of achieving *Bildung* also contributes to the growth of one's society. Given that Hegel's ideal society is based in the "temperate" areas of Europe, it follows that the individual who can achieve *Bildung* is the white, European man.[77]

Marx identifies the atom with the process of *Bildung* by associating it with individuality, self-consciousness and social interaction. With the swerve, Marx argues that Epicurean thought is able to articulate the individual nature of the atom and its relationship to the physical world. The swerving atom becomes a "self-conscious" individual, realised through its interactions with other atoms.[78] Marx introduces the swerve by describing the relationship between the atom and different types of atomic motion. There are three types of motion: the atom's free fall through the void, the decline away from this straight path, and then repulsion (or collision) with other atoms.[79] When the atom falls in a straight line, it does not come into contact with other atoms.[80] As a result, it is unable to determine whether it is an existing individual.[81] Humboldt too warns that individuality cannot be realised through monotonous action,[82] and for Hegel, self-recognition cannot begin without an encounter with another existence.[83]

During the swerve, the atom first declines, acknowledging its independence from the set path of its fall.[84] Then, repulsion occurs.[85] Upon this encounter with other atoms, the individual atom can finally be confirmed as such. The atom's self-consciousness is ultimately realised through this context, the manifestation of its relationship to other atoms.[86] In other words, the singular atom recognises itself as distinct because it can confront and still exist separately from other atoms. Once atoms recognise themselves en masse through frequent collisions and encounters, they create observable material objects,[87] thereby solving the problem put forth by Democritus.

Marx's demonstration that the atom meets this requirement of self-consciousness defends Epicurus' position in Hegel's teleology of progress.[88] Nor does Marx stray far from his earlier classical education, meant to guide individuals through manifold social interactions towards self-realisation. He explains the importance of atomic repulsion through the process of human individuation, saying that "man ceases to be a product of nature only when the other being to which he relates himself is not a different existence but is itself an individual human being".[89] The individual atom cannot confirm its existence as such in its default state of merely falling through void, failing to interact with other atoms. Marx likens this to human cultivation, where the individual cannot move beyond their most basic instincts except when encountering other human beings. The atom's process of individuation can thus be seen as parallel to a person's self-realisation, aligning it with the process and *telos* of *Bildung*. By doing this, Marx assimilates the atom to a conception of individuality modelled on the white, European man.

Though Marx later criticises Epicurus' understanding of individuality, this was only to say that the philosopher had just fallen short of Hegel's own account.[90] For Epicurus' pre-Hegelian innovations, Marx champions him as "the greatest representative of Greek Enlightenment".[91] With this final description of Epicurus, Marx makes it clear that his interpretation of the individual atom is based on his predecessors' Eurocentric account of the individual.

Critiquing Marx's Classical Inheritance

Marx begins the dissertation by declaring his intention to expand on its subject matter in later work but was soon forced to discard the study of antiquity soon after submitting the piece in 1841.[92] His mentor, Bruno Bauer, was dismissed from the University of Bonn in 1842, which severed Marx's only connection to a university position and academic career.[93] A lack of prospects led Marx to abandon his academic pursuits and become a journalist at the *Rhineland News*.[94] His first exposure to communist thought took place during this period from 1842 to 1843, after finishing the dissertation.[95] Marx's eventual critiques of capitalism were strongly influenced by conditions of the working poor he reported on. He admits in his *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* that "as editor of the *Rheinische Zeitung*, I experienced for the first time the embarrassment of having to take part in discussions on so-called material interests".[96] After a lifetime of studying classics and philosophy, Marx did not think seriously about economics until he had to write on "material" issues, as opposed to theoretical, academic work.

There, Marx makes it clear that his musings on classical subjects themselves were not directly responsible for his conversion to the communist cause. Scholars such as Wilfried Nippel are perhaps correct to insist that references to antiquity in Marx's later work "have their proper place in footnotes".[97] According to Nippel, scattered mentions of antiquity, such as Roman class relations in the Manifesto,[98] were simply used as points of comparison to explain changes in class relations over time.[99] For Marx, ancient class relations belong to a distant past, providing little analytical insight into present conditions. The ancients themselves were not

the primary focus of Marx's anti-capitalist critiques, nor can one show a causal relationship between his study of classics and political radicalisation.

While Marx may not have been radicalised by studying classics, it is still possible to make the case that Marx's dissertation had some influence on his later work. In the dissertation, one may see the early workings of a key facet of Marxism known as historical materialism or the materialist conception of history.[100] There is considerable debate about how developed the materialist theory is in the dissertation versus Marx's later work, though some degree of influence is clear.[101] One description of historical materialism can be seen in "Wage Labour and Capital":

> *Thus* the social relations within which individuals produce, *the social relations of production, change, are transformed, with the change and development of the material means of production, the productive forces. The relations of production in their totality constitute what are called the social relations society and specifically a society as a definite stage of historical development*, a society with a peculiar, distinctive character.[102]

What makes this conception of history "materialist" is its basis in phenomena external to the individual, such as production of goods and the social relations required for the production and exchange of goods.[103] Different historical eras are defined by how these different facets of production and society interact. Marx's solution to the Epicurean issue takes a similar form – what distinguishes the unrealised atom from the realised is the shift in its relations, from the isolated fall to the different components of the swerve. Yet if historical materialism developed out of Marx's classical scholarship, this should be a cause for concern rather than a point of pride.

It is the "historical" aspect of historical materialism that is most heavily critiqued by Marx's critics, since his Eurocentric approach to history produces a similarly Eurocentric model of revolutionary thought.[104] The dissertation foreshadows this by self-consciously restricting itself to a particular notion of "classical" history. It attempts to insert Epicurus into this history by showing that his work meets criteria defined by an aggressively Eurocentric intellectual tradition. Marx bases historical materialism on a similar conception of history. He considers his contemporary Europe the apex of human development, categorising progressive stages of economic development as "Asiatic, ancient, feudal, and modern bourgeois modes of production".[105] The most backwards and undeveloped epoch, for Marx, is referred to as "Asiatic", implying 19th-century Asia was less developed than ancient Greece and Rome.[106] Due to this Eurocentric view of history, Marx also limits the membership of the revolutionary class. Marx and other European socialists developed the notion of the proletariat, the working class with revolutionary potential, from the working class of Industrial England and France.[107] Rural peasants and the unemployed were considered part of the *lumpenproletariat*, classes incapable of enacting revolution.[108] Marx, in the *Manifesto*, describes the proletarian struggle as "the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority".[109] Marx distinguishes the proletariat from these other social classes and from those outside of Europe by characterising it as an independent self-consciousness,

echoing his earlier description of the atom. Therefore, if Marx's economic theory develops out of his classically oriented dissertation, then it inherits its problems: a narrow Eurocentrism combined with a limited conception of the historical subject.

Marx's classicism thus makes him a liability to those attempting to use leftist thought to defend the continued relevance of the study of antiquity. This does not mean that the Marxist tradition has ceased to be relevant beyond the ivory tower. Marx was no prophet and could not predict the ever-shifting winds of history, especially when it did not conform to his Eurocentric expectations. Towards the end of his life, he was already struggling to grasp the anomalous rise of Japan as an industrial and imperial power on par with Europe.[110] Marx's model for the modes of production crumbled as soon as it appeared and was further desecrated by Marxist anti-colonial theorists. Marxist movements arose across Asia in response to both Western and Japanese colonialism, including in Korea, Indonesia and the Philippines.[111] These movements challenged their societies' supposed lack of historical development and redefined the role of the peasantry in revolutionary struggle.[112] Pan-African thinkers such as Amílcar Cabral and Kwame Nkrumah also critique the notion that African societies were frozen in a primitive state prior to contact with the West.[113] In the United States, increased automation and subsequent unemployment led thinkers like James Boggs to suggest that even the goal of revolution needs to change. No longer should the industrial workers aspire to control the means of production that they work with but have these newly automated means of production work for them.[114] To realise this would require a revolution that included those unemployed by automation,[115] a class Marx considered to be *lumpenproletariat*. Marx's initial articulation of the conditions for revolution, in light of these historical shifts, appears sorely outdated. Yet these theorists still recognised the power of Marx's vision of collective struggle and did not turn away from his thought. They sought to identify its oversights and update it for a modern age and, in doing so, envisioned a more just world. Refusing to leave this world in the abstract realm of ideas, they then strove to realise it by materially improving the conditions of the marginalised. Through education, activism and international solidarity that stretched past their comfortable national boundaries, these movements cultivated global citizens who recognised the humanity, individuality and potential of all human beings. Perhaps this is the lesson our field should learn from the Marxist tradition, regardless of Marx's relevance to the study of the ancient world.

Conclusion

Marx's dissertation therefore exemplifies how difficult it is for any scholar of the ancients to detach themselves from the ideological bases of their education. This chapter does not claim that the dissertation is intentionally racist but enclosed in an epistemology so Eurocentric that it produces structurally racist arguments. Rather than redeem the radicality of classics, it provides the discipline another means to reflect on its racist attitudes. Accepting the cultural and epistemological framework provided by his predecessors' work on *Bildung*, Marx's argument accepts Eurocentric norms as timeless universals, thereby operating within a mythical pre-history

of the West. He then applies this *telos* to the study of ancient philosophy, making even metaphysical arguments reproduce these cultural biases. Should scholars of the ancient world wish to move beyond such a mythos in critical ancient world studies, they must critique the cultural and intellectual milieus in which even the most philosophically abstract work was formed. The assumption of the abstract as objective and outside of the philosopher's social context only serves to reinforce the notion of the "universal". Similarly, the harmlessness of Marx's dissertation should not be assumed *a priori* based on its author's later work. The dissertation was a beginning, a snapshot of where the thinker began before his political radicalisation. It alone cannot account for where his work ended up and how far his influence continues to lead, well beyond his death. If classics wants to distance itself from its Eurocentric legacy and reform the field's image, perhaps it should forget trying to claim Karl Marx's dissertation.

Notes

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2 Paul Cartledge, and David Konstan, "Marxism and Classical Antiquity," in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* (Oxford University Press, 2005), https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199381135.013.3991.
3 Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Marx & Engels Collected Works*, vol. 1 (Lawrence & Wishart, 1975), http://muse.jhu.edu/book/31171, 72. For the English text of the dissertation, I will use the page numbers associated with this edition. Italicisations will be taken from the original text unless otherwise noted. The title of the dissertation will be abbreviated as "Difference".
4 David Sorkin, "Wilhelm Von Humboldt: The Theory and Practice of Self-Formation (Bildung), 1791–1810," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 44, no. 1 (1983): 55.
5 David McLellan, *Marx Before Marxism*, 2nd ed. (Macmillan, 1980), 34.
6 James C. Albisetti, *Secondary School Reform in Imperial Germany* (Princeton University Press, 1983), 16.
7 Ibid.
8 Anke Wischmann, "The Absence of 'Race' in German Discourses on *Bildung*: Rethinking *Bildung* with Critical Race Theory," *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 21, no. 4 (2018): 479.
9 McLellan, *Marx Before Marxism*, 68.
10 Martin McIvor, "The Young Marx and German Idealism: Revisiting the Doctoral Dissertation," *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 46, no. 3 (18 July 2008): 402.
11 Marx and Engels, *Marx & Engels Collected Works*, 50.
12 Ibid., 29.
13 Ibid., 37.

14 Cyril Bailey, "Karl Marx on Greek Atomism," *The Classical Quarterly*, 22, no. 3/4 (1928): 205.

15 Marx and Engels, *Marx & Engels Collected Works*, 35.

16 Ibid., 34.

17 Ibid., 73.

18 Elizabeth Asmis, "A Tribute to a Hero: Marx's Interpretation of Epicurus in His Dissertation," in *Approaches to Lucretius: Traditions and Innovations in Reading the De Rerum Natura*, ed. Donncha O'Rourke (Cambridge University Press, 2020), 249.

19 Jennifer A. Herdt, *Forming Humanity: Redeeming the German Bildung Tradition*, *Forming Humanity* (University of Chicago Press, 2019), 2.

20 Ibid.

21 Herdt, *Forming Humanity*, 1.

22 Albisetti, *Secondary School Reform in Imperial Germany*, 16.

23 Wischmann, "The Absence of 'Race' in German Discourses on *Bildung*," 479.

24 Albisetti, *Secondary School Reform in Imperial Germany*, 19.

25 See Stefan Rebenich, "The Making of a Bourgeois Antiquity: Wilhelm von Humboldt and Greek History," in *The Western Time of Ancient History: Historiographical Encounters with the Greek and Roman Pasts*, ed. Alexandra Lianeri (Cambridge University Press, 2011), 119–137; Marina F. Bykova, "Hegel's Philosophy of Bildung," in *The Palgrave Hegel Handbook: Palgrave Handbooks in German Idealism*, ed. Marina F. Bykova, and Kenneth R. Westphal (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 427.

26 Wischmann, "The Absence of 'Race' in German Discourses on *Bildung*," 477.

27 For more on Marx and Humboldt see: Franz-Michael Konrad, "Wilhelm von Humboldt's Contribution to a Theory of Bildung," in *Theories of Bildung and Growth: Connections and Controversies Between Continental Educational Thinking and American Pragmatism*, ed. Pauli Siljander, Ari Kivelä, and Ari Sutinen (Brill, 2012), 120–121.

28 David Sorkin, "Wilhelm von Humboldt: The Theory and Practice of Self-Formation (*Bildung*), 1791–1810," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 44, no. 1 (1983): 55.

29 Wilhelm Von Humboldt, *The Limits of State Action*, ed. J. W. Burrow (Cambridge University Press, 1969), 16.

30 Ibid.

31 Humboldt, *The Limits of State Action*, 19.

32 Wilhelm von Humboldt, *Gesammelte Schriften, Akademie der Wissenschaften*, ed. Königlich Preussische, vol. 3, 17 vols. (De Gruyter, 1968), 172.

33 Rebenich, "The Making of a Bourgeois Antiquity: Wilhelm von Humboldt and Greek History," 132.

34 Ibid., 135.

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid.

37 Constanze Güthenke, "'Enthusiasm Dwells Only in Specialization': Classical Philology and Disciplinarity in Nineteenth-Century Germany," in *World Philology*, ed. Sheldon Pollock, Benjamin A. Elman, and Ku-Ming Kevin Chang (Harvard University Press), 275.

38 Wischmann, "The Absence of 'Race' in German Discourses on *Bildung*," 479.

39 Rebenich, "The Making of a Bourgeois Antiquity: Wilhelm von Humboldt and Greek History," 122.

40 Ibid., 126.

41 Albisetti, *Secondary School Reform in Imperial Germany*, 20.

42 Ibid.

43 Herdt, *Forming Humanity*, 200.

44 Bykova, "Hegel's Philosophy of Bildung," 426.

45 Ibid., 433.

46 Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, ed. Charles Hegel, trans. J. Sibree (Batoche Books, 2001), 96.

47 Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 97.
48 Wischmann, "The Absence of 'Race' in German Discourses on *Bildung*," 479.
49 Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, 116.
50 Ibid., 293.
51 McIvor, "The Young Marx and German Idealism: Revisiting the Doctoral Dissertation," 402.
52 Ibid.
53 Marx and Engels, *Marx & Engels Collected Works*, 34.
54 Pausanias 3.15.6. Many thanks to Vanessa Stovall for finding this reference.
55 Laurence Baronovitch, "German Idealism, Greek Materialism, and the Young Karl Marx," *International Philosophical Quarterly*, 24, no. 3 (1984): 246, https://doi.org/10.5840/ipq198424332.
56 Marx and Engels, *Marx & Engels Collected Works*, 35.
57 Ibid. German text is taken from Karl Marx, "Differenz Der Demokritischen Und Epikureischen Naturphilosophie," *Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels Gesamtausgabe (MEGA)*, 1, no. 1 (1972): 22.
58 Asmis, "A Tribute to a Hero: Marx's Interpretation of Epicurus in His Dissertation," 249.
59 Daniel C. Russell, "Epicurus and Lucretius on Saving Agency," *Phoenix*, 54, no. 3/4 (2000): 226n1.
60 Lucretius, *De rerum natura* 2.225–50.
61 Ibid.
62 C. W. Taylor, "The Atomists," in *The Cambridge Companion to Early Greek Philosophy: Cambridge Companions to Philosophy*, ed. A. A. Long (Cambridge University Press, 1999), 181; Pierre-Marie Morel, "Epicurean Atomism," in *The Cambridge Companion to Epicureanism: Cambridge Companions to Philosophy*, ed. James Warren (Cambridge University Press, 2009), 66.
63 Morel, "Epicurean Atomism," 69.
64 Marx and Engels, *Marx & Engels Collected Works*, 40.
65 Ibid., 39.
66 Ibid., 40.
67 Herdt, *Forming Humanity*, 114.
68 McLellan, *Marx Before Marxism*, 36.
69 Wischmann, "The Absence of 'Race' in German Discourses on *Bildung*," 479.
70 Rebenich, "The Making of a Bourgeois Antiquity: Wilhelm von Humboldt and Greek History," 123.
71 Herdt, *Forming Humanity*, 123.
72 Ibid.
73 Bykova, "Hegel's Philosophy of Bildung," 433.
74 Ibid., 435.
75 Glenn Alexander Magee, *The Hegel Dictionary* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2011), 66.
76 Bykova, "Hegel's Philosophy of *Bildung*," 426.
77 Wischmann, "The Absence of 'Race' in German Discourses on *Bildung*," 479.
78 Marx and Engels, *Marx & Engels Collected Works*, 52.
79 Ibid., 46.
80 Ibid., 48.
81 Ibid.
82 Humboldt, *The Limits of State Action*, 16.
83 Bykova, "Hegel's Philosophy of Bildung," 435.
84 Marx and Engels, *Marx & Engels Collected Works*, 50.
85 Ibid., 51.
86 Ibid., 52.
87 Ibid.

88   McIvor, "The Young Marx and German Idealism: Revisiting the Doctoral Dissertation," 407; Peter Fenves, "Marx's Doctoral Thesis on Two Greek Atomists and the Post-Kantian Interpretations," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 47, no. 3 (1986): 434; Christoph Schuringa, "Thought and Reality in Marx's Early Writings on Ancient Philosophy," *European Journal of Philosophy* (2020): 11.

89   Marx and Engels, *Marx & Engels Collected Works*, 52.

90   Asmis, "A Tribute to a Hero: Marx's Interpretation of Epicurus in His Dissertation," 257.

91   Marx and Engels, *Marx & Engels Collected Works*, 73.

92   McLellan, *Marx Before Marxism*, 52.

93   Jonathan Sperber, *Karl Marx: A Nineteenth-Century Life* (Liveright Publishing Corp, 2013), 71.

94   Sperber, *Karl Marx: A Nineteenth-Century Life*, 78.

95   Ibid.

96   Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "Marx on the History of His Opinions (Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*)," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker, 2nd ed. (W. W. Norton & Company, 1978), 3.

97   Wilfried Nippel, "Marx and Antiquity," in *Marx and Antiquity*, ed. Danielle Allen, Paul Christesen, and Paul Millett (Oxford University Press, 2018), 203, https://www-oxford-scholarship-com.proxy.brynmawr.edu/view/10.1093/oso/9780190649890.001.0001/oso-9780190649890-chapter-8.

98   Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker, 2nd ed. (W. W. Norton & Company, 1978), 474.

99   Nippel, "Marx and Antiquity," 203.

100 Stanley, "The Marxism of Marx's Doctoral Dissertation," 138.

101 See Tony Burns, "Materialism in Ancient Greek Philosophy and in the Writings of the Young Marx," *Historical Materialism*, 7, no. 1 (June 2000): 3–39; Peter Fenves, "Marx's Doctoral Thesis on Two Greek Atomists and the Post-Kantian Interpretations," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 47, no. 3 (1986): 433–452; John Stanley, "The Marxism of Marx's Doctoral Dissertation," *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, 33, no. 1 (1995): 133–158; G. Teeple, "The Doctoral Dissertation of Karl Marx," *History of Political Thought*, 11, no. 1 (1990): 81–118.

102 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "Wage Labour and Capital," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker, 2nd ed. (W. W. Norton & Company, 1978), 207. Emphasis is from the original text.

103 Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*, 3rd ed. (The University of North Carolina Press, 2020), 52.

104 Samir Amin, *Eurocentrism*, 2nd ed. (Monthly Review Press, 2010), 191. Also see: Walter Rodney, "Marxism and African Liberation," in *Yes to Marxism!* (N.G.C.L., 1986).

105 Marx and Engels, "Marx on the History of His Opinions (Preface to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy)," 5.

106 There are other modes of production named in the *German Ideology* (cf. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, "The German Ideology," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert Charles Tucker, 2nd ed. (W. W. Norton & Company, 1978), 151–153). The theory of the five modes of production, primitive communism, slave society, feudalism, capitalism, and socialism, is considered a Stalinist interpretation of Marxist production (cf. Amin, *Eurocentrism*, 224).

107 Robinson, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*, 28.

108 Mark Cowling and James Martin, eds., *Marx's Eighteenth Brumaire: Postmodern Interpretations* (Pluto Press, 2002), 63, 106.

109 Marx and Engels, "Manifesto of the Communist Party," 482.

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111 Yong-ho Ch'oe, Peter H. Lee, and W. Theodore de Bary, eds., "Platform of Action of the Korean Communist Party," in *Sources of Korean Tradition Volume II: From the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Centuries* (Columbia University Press, 2000), 359–360; D. N. Aidit, *Problems of the Indonesian Revolution* (Demos, 1963); Jose Maria Sison, *Philippine Society and Revolution* (International Association of Filipino Patriots, 1979).
112 Ibid.
113 Amílcar Cabral, "The Weapon of Theory," *Transcript of speech delivered at the first Tricontinental Conference of the Peoples of Asia, Africa and Latin America, Havana, Cuba*, January 1966, www.marxists.org/subject/africa/cabral/1966/weapon-theory.htm; Kwame Nkrumah, *Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for De-Colonization and Development with Particular Reference to the African Revolution* (Monthly Review Press, 2009), 63.
114 James Boggs, *The American Revolution: Pages from a Negro Worker's Notebook: 1st Modern Reader Paperback* (Modern Reader Paperbacks, 1968), 41. For an introduction to this interpretation of Boggs see: Lillian Cicerchia, Owen Glyn-Williams, Gil Morejón, and William Paris hosts, "James Boggs and the Problem of Rights under Capitalism," *What's Left of Philosophy* (podcast), June 2022, accessed 1 July 2022, https://open.spotify.com/episode/0Dl5EZx2H9jymk4mu9UeEU?si=05e6f3940fa048c6.
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Afterword(s)

In the Jaws of CAWS

A Response

Dan-el Padilla Peralta

I begin with an invitation and with the serving of some shade. Sit with the following two excerpts from Hélène Monsacré's *avant-propos* to the Assyriologist Jean Bottéro's *Babylone et la Bible* (1994), and decide for yourself which is most evocative of the hagiographical tendencies that exemplify a *non*-critical ancient world studies.

> *Tôt, chaque matin, Jean Bottéro s'installe à sa table, avec, à portée de main, une machine à écrire presque aussi archaïque que les tablettes d'argile qu'il déchiffre et explique depuis cinquante ans.* [Early, every morning, Jean Bottéro sits down at his table, with a typewriter close at hand, almost as archaic as the clay tablets he has been deciphering and explaining for fifty years.]

> *Formé, dès son jeune âge, à la rigoureuse école de la philologique classique et de l'exégèse biblique, après s'être adonné en profondeur, de longues années, à la philosophie et à la théologie, spécialisé enfin dans la pratique de l'enquête historique, il figure aujourd'hui parmi le petit nombre des vrais humanistes.* [Formed, from an early age, in the rigorous school of classical philology and biblical exegesis, after having devoted himself in depth, for many years, to philosophy and theology, finally specializing in the practice of historical inquiry, he figures today among the small number of true humanists.]

> (1994, ix, xiii)

At first blush, the second passage seems more obviously implicated in that disciplinary praxis of sanctification that, fastening onto "the long parade of its worthies" (phrase: von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, [1921] 1982, 178), disregards any summons to engage in intellectual history beyond the confines of hagiography. Especially notable is the presumption that rigor attaches to classical philology and biblical exegesis; the emphasis on dedication in depth ("en profoundeur") as a baseline for legitimate scholarly standing and, perhaps most inadvertently damning of all, the vision of a cloistered inner circle of "vrais humanistes" to which Bottéro belongs. There is not a trace of irony here, and certainly not even the most

cursory sense that these criteria for the realisation and certification of Bottéro as an outstanding scholar might have something or anything to do with the historical or material parameters of ancient studies as discipline(s). But the first passage, with its admiring gaze at the internalised and routinised discipline of taking a seat at the desk each morning and banging away at the typewriter, exhibits a different but no less productive strategy of hallowing one contingent form of scholarly being-in-the-world. Bottéro's table is one around which a gendered body materialises, and only that gendered body: forget any prospect of a "feminist table" capable of accommodating a plurality of practices and of bodies in practice, that depart from the idealisation of the venerably aged ("depuis cinquante ans") male Assyriologist as expert decipherer and interpreter (cf. Ahmed, 2010 on tables, orientation and gender).

Although I have chosen an admittedly quirky lionisation of one French Assyriologist for my opening, several aspects of Monsacré's tableau hold broader relevance for the project of appraising the limits of ancient studies as currently constituted and of embarking on a critical ancient world studies that blasts past them. Let me now proceed to enumerate them, flagging along the way those contributions to this volume that devise the most effective and sustainable strategies for dumping the god-scholar in favour of the critically flexed community:

1. The space-time of "proper" scholarship, radiating outward from the activity of the solitary scholar industriously (mechanically, even) typing away at *his* desk. Critical ancient world studies speeds away from this paradigm, on two tracks.

   While the passages I quoted from Monsacré do not explicitly racialise Bottéro, they make use of protocols for characterising scholarly production, and specifically the types of production associated with the interpretation of the ancient world, that accrue their full meaning within a racial (and, as already noted, gendered) economy of signs. The CAWS collective mounts a challenge to that economy's hyperobject-like distribution across the Euro-Americas with its roster of contributors. To be taken up at greater length below is the relationship between identitarian/embodied knowledges and epistemic redress; the latter is a theme and objective of several chapters (Anakwue, Lance, Ram-Prasad). For now, I note simply that, in the words of the Haitian national motto, *l'union fait la force* ("Unity makes strength").

   The business of scholarly space-times is important for another reason. One spectacular downside to Bottéro-style self-archaism is that the distinguished and professionally secure scholar, by assimilating themselves to the antiquity of those objects at the heart of their interpretive labour, quietly but firmly shuts the door on anyone calling on the various subfields of premodern studies to acknowledge their winking collusions with those imperial violences whose ubiquity defy any hard distinction between past and present. Yet "the Empire never ended" (Willis, 2007), and what Umachandran's chapter channels so expertly is the synergy between colonial epistemologies of time and space and many of the seemingly objectivising procedures for recreating the ancient Mediterranean – such as cartography. In much the same spirit, Ward's contribution invites us

to the task of building decolonial futures that do not simply reinstate West-
ern chrono-hegemonies (compare in this regard Lianeri, 2011), while Bhalerao
extends an invitation to embrace the struggle for claiming and operationalising
multiple heritages as a decolonial counter to UNESCO-style civilisationism.

2. The prestige of the traditional humanities – marked, in the case of classical phi-
lology and biblical hermeneutics, with the imprimatur of rigor – and its catalysis
of the small band of *true* humanists. Again, CAWS builds momentum in two
directions at once.

   Classical philology and biblical exegesis shack up regularly together in histories
of classical scholarship without practically any acknowledgement of the elephant
in the room: race science, which crossed paths with and decisively imprinted upon
both fields during the 19th and early 20th centuries. While the exchanges between
biblical hermeneutics and biological racism receive coverage in an excellent
recent monograph (Lin, 2016), only with Ram-Prasad's chapter has a comparable
undertaking been initiated for comparative and classical philology.

   This evasion of race science's entanglement with and co-constitution along-
side ancient studies was made possible partly through a very concerted effort
at disembodying the practice of classical scholarship. The contributions by
Haselswerdt and Silverblank return embodiment to scholarship, by attending
to the generativity of bodies as sites for queer philology and crip lexicography.
However, it is of course necessary to reckon with the possibility of disruption
and even impasse in the effort to align theories and bodies: does the imperfect fit
of contemporary models of mobility and circulation with the ancient evidence
for diasporic movement and encounter tell us more about the ancient evidence,
contemporary models, or the brokerage between the two (Wong)? Equally sober-
ing, and in the opinion of this reader the honest-to-gods truth: given that classics
in its current form has so dismally failed Black people, the only honest means
of moving forward is to ditch hoary historical positivisms in favour of aporetic
dreaming – through the visual arts, through Afropessimism, through Afropes-
simistic visualisation of Black pasts that may yet become futures (Rankine).

3. The happy feet of disciplinary false consciousness and cognitive self-delusion.
For Bottéro, the fields specified by Monsacré are in fact the only humanistic
fields that *really* exist, with all other knowledge practices pertaining to the
ancient world subordinated or else forcibly incorporated into their mainframes;
theories and "autres fantaisies à la mode" are nothing but modern myths (1994,
287). Here, too, CAWS has set out two (intersecting) lines for future research.
One takes as its brief the overhaul of reception studies into a *critical* classi-
cal reception studies, capable of rising above the self-congratulatory pablum of
classicist efforts to reclaim radical modern and contemporary thinkers as their
own and thereby assert, with the brashness of a Lacan berating protesters in his
classroom, that nothing can ever exist outside the field of discourse of which
they are already masters (Ranger and Mansukhani; for the face-off in 1969 see
Lacan, 2006, 204–208). Another inquiry attends to the history and present-day
practices associated with the prefixing of "critical" in an effort to be as expan-
sive as possible in the contemplation of a genuinely decolonised history, while

also safeguarding against the attenuation and voiding of the label's substantive content (Sayyid and Vakil).

Who's afraid of criticality? Well, as it turns out, a deep-pocketed and exceptionally robust right-wing infrastructure, nourishing itself on grievance and craving the demolition of democratic safeguards in the Euro-Americas and beyond. Resistance to them will require nothing more than entirely new pedagogies, skilled above all in the identification of practices and spaces that can support the honest work of criticality (practices: Wiggan et al., 2022; spaces: Hines et al., 2023). Resistance will also require confrontation with and indictment of work in premodern studies that failed to build up critically oriented communities of inquiry: there must be a reckoning, and an accounting, of scholarship and scholarly practices that simply fell short (note Stefaniw, 2020 on feminist historiography; Hendricks, 2021 on premodern race studies). At the same time, world-building is sorely needed. This is where the volume you are reading brims with possibility.

On their face, the volume's contributions could in the aggregate be taken as an enhancement or improvement on globalising classics, which, in Jacques Bromberg's account, "implies the recognition of alternative antiquities and the amplification of voices from outside of the field's traditional spatial and temporal boundaries – and, importantly, from outside of the field's traditional centers of knowledge production" (2021, 97). In different yet complementary ways, individual chapters stretch ancient Mediterranean studies across a bigger canvas, in the quest for disciplinary futures that are not only more exciting but more *defensible* (cf. Chuh, 2019 on a "defensible humanities"). Counterstorying is undoubtedly part of the emancipatory equation (Young and Finn, 2022 for illustration in the context of a new "global medievalism"), as is a more visionary approach to citational genealogy (see Hendricks, 2021 for examples). But what are the specific payoffs of a *critical* ancient world studies?

For one, the blunting of well-ingrained and over-represented Eurocentrisms: this could well mean the "re-enthronement" of Africa as incubator of knowledges, as a significant move towards epistemic reparations (thus Anakwue in our volume). How to manoeuvre strategically towards the recentring of ancient Africa remains undertreated in contemporary discussions of both the theory and redistributive mechanics of reparations (on which now see Táíwò, 2022). Any such manoeuvre should at a minimum entail a sustained engagement with epistemic injustice; and on this subject Lance's contribution clears the way for a future ancient world studies that is far more exactingly attentive to epistemology than its contemporary vessel. But where this collection especially shines is in addressing the "structural problem of undone science", that felicitous phrase of William Jamal Richardson for bounding the Eurocentrism that relegates so many research undertakings to the margins. "Undone science," Richardson observes in a refinement of an idea first introduced by Frickel et al. (2010), "is understood to be a systematic occurrence that is embedded within relationships of power and influence within and around academia. . . . The concept of undone science allows scholars to speak about marginalization outside of a narrative of simply higher quality projects winning out over lower quality

projects and instead focus on the power relationships that determine what quality is and what scientific pursuits are important or not important (2018, 233). There are many narratives still to be told of "epistemic exclusion" in the field of ancient Mediterranean studies (the concept and its application to the history of sociology: Go, 2020) and of the impacts of such exclusions on the contemporary formation of classicists and classics-adjacent practitioners.

Attention to the "problem of undone science" is what much recent work ostensibly devoted to decolonisation actually accomplishes. Within ancient studies, the language and praxis of decolonisation are riddled with half-measures and imprecisions, in no small part because even scholars sympathetic in the abstract have an impoverished sense of what decolonial work seeks to achieve. Frederick Naerebout's recent characterisation of my summons to "decolonizing antiquity" as entailing "diverse perspectives on traditional subject matters" is one more instance of garbling the message (2022, 30, n. 62; cf. Ismard, 2022, 136). By decolonisation, I mean the labour of redistributing the material conditions of knowledge production, beginning with the land expropriated violently through settler-colonialism. Such redistribution necessarily requires the displacement of traditional subject material that has been long been over-represented as the *only* or most privileged avenue to classicism (see Padilla Peralta in progress).

To correct against such overrepresentation requires, at the very least, a departure from the at-times anguished back-and-forths over philology and its rehabilitation. While Paul Michael Kurtz may well be right that "Philology is a science that once terrified the world", the substance of that terror remains in need of contouring, and not only along the lines sketched in rose-tinted treatments of that science's fall from celebrity (Kurtz, 2021, 747; for one example of this treatment see Turner, 2014). As Kurtz explains, philology – much like its sometimes-fellow traveller "canon" – metastasised into *the* term of art for the disciplinarised assaying and evaluation of written texts in the 19th century. The roots of my ongoing wonder at this overrepresentation, whose contingent features are so expertly brought out in Kurtz, extend in several directions. They twirl around one recommendation from a generally uplifting editorial report on a published article (Eccleston and Padilla Peralta, 2022): the gentle encouragement to step away from the "conflation of whiteness and mastery of textual traditions" because "there are ancient traditions of education in parts of Africa . . . in China, Tibet, in South East Asia, and in universities in the Arab World, that rely on the philological mastery of corpora, reading lists, and exams based on these lists". I fuss over the globalising extension of "philological mastery" here, and its sequencing along the fault-lines and chronotopes of (post)colonial empire. I worry, too, about the multiplication of philologies around the globe, or about the project of World Philology: like Adam Gitner, "I have my doubts here" (Gitner, 2018 on Pollack et al., 2015), not only because *philology* is sometimes stretched to attenuation in the service of comparison but because the prospect of meaningfully provincialising philology – of locating it as one, *and only one*, historically contingent mode of engaging with texts – is thereby set aside. We can provincialise Europe, we can provincialise history (Chakrabarty, 2000a); we can provincialise the social sciences (Go, 2021); why not insist on the same for philology?

In the eyes of some of its most committed adherents, philology contains within itself universes and is therefore potentially universalisable. I am not persuaded by this claim, not least because the desire for universalism is (to parrot and slightly deform a proposition tested in Chakrabarty, 2000b) wedded to certain fantasies of belonging that originate in the enticements of liberal capitalism. Philology can be radical, but in order to be so its ambitions need paring down, either by explicit reference to the material conditions for its overrepresentation (note Emre, 2023, 175) or by confrontation with its past and present collusion with forms of epistemic violence. Efforts to swap out *philology* for its traveling companion-concepts and paradigms do not substantially improve outcomes. As with Pollockian world philology, so too with *canon* we see attempts at a globalising scheme, taking stock of different traditions of "canonical texts" and the practices associated with their handling and interpretation. One of the proffered justifications for this line of work is revealing: "There is every reason to assume that the practices devised by non-Western cultures are, in their own terms, powerful and rigorous – and that by comparing them to Western ones, we will be able to see both sides from a new vantage point" (Grafton and Most, 2016, 5). Canonisation as a supraregional and inter-/transcultural force for innovation already in premodernity is the focus of some new and excellent work (see the essays in Agut-Labordère and Versluys, 2022). But we can do more, and better. A critical ancient world studies that places philologies and canons in their place as contingent structures for the establishment of relationality with the past is exactly what is needed.

This volume's embrace of *critical* as a marker of ethical commitment will not be greeted with favour in all circles. The move to criticality has been faulted for supposedly smuggling in a species of crypto-normativity, or for denying the possibility of alternatives to criticality by privileging the cultivation of paranoia and suspicion to the exclusion of other humanistic dispositions (see e.g. Watts and Mosurinjohn, 2022, writing at times captiously on "critical religion", but note Hines et al., 2023, 79–80 on Rita Felski; for a sense of criticality's expansiveness, see the essays in Perez Sheldon et al., 2023). Instead of anticipating one-dimensional or bad-faith reactions to this collection's orientation towards criticality, I offer two last points for final reflection. The first bears on the critical productivity of identity as a resource for the contributors to this volume, while the second concerns the disciplinary affects that this collection engages and exemplifies.

On the subject of identity, it cannot be stressed enough that the contributions to this volume are grounded in the embodied knowledges of the individual authors. These knowledges are not paraded for tokening display, nor is the end-result of their dexterous handling within these pages another instalment of the brain-balkanisation that is routinely inflicted on minoritised scholars working in predominantly White humanistic fields. In a story twice-told but all too easy to forget, the minoritised scholar regularly becomes a mouthpiece for a field's reproduction of itself, their presence in that field repurposed to justify the type of containment that succeeds in corralling their distinctive epistemic prowess within the customary imperatives of Euro-American "affirmative actions

of power" (the phrase, with explanation: Ferguson, 2012; for his allied notion of "adaptive hegemony" note Eccleston and Padilla Peralta, 2022, 205). This ensemble of essays delivers, beautifully, on the promise of an embodied criticality for "producing work that is radically transparent as a production of all of oneself", by keeping the focus squarely on how the "experience of bodies as gendered and raced . . . affects how and why we think, write, and study historical objects of study" (Rajabzadeh, 2021, 5).

Among the benefits of such a criticality, one in particular stands out: the grant of epistemic authority to minoritised practitioners already hard at work in the transformation of premodern studies, instead of postponing that recognition to some ever-receding horizon of diversified possibility, rectifies a long-standing problem in the constitution of ancient studies (Orchard, 2022). It is better to move directly towards this rectification than to fantasise idly about what it might look like to bring or relay or transfer or mediate the classics for Black or Brown and/or migrant recipients (compare Bettini, 2017, 134–135 on "i nuovi italiani" with Padilla Peralta, 2017).

The second point has to do with the range of affective orientations on display in these pages. The turn to a critical ancient world studies is, ultimately, a call for calibrating and keeping respectful distance. Responding to the classicist Constanze Güthenke's recent invitation in *Feeling and Classical Philology* to practice "maintain[ing] distance" from what we study, the historian of science Lorraine Daston has planted her flag:

> But I am not sanguine about getting rid of the *eros* . . . To lavish attention on arcana, whether the poems of Pindar or the flight paths of bees, for hours and months and years on end, is to saturate these objects with value and with affective meaning.
>
> (2021, 66)

Without any wish to displace, from a position of newfound and hard-earned visibility, the practice of a queer philology (on which see now Butler, 2023), the eroticisation of disciplinary practice is rightly to be resisted, for two reasons. The first, and most obvious, though still imperfectly heeded, is that it is routinely implicated in the enabling and justification of the predatory behaviour that directly confronts women and people of other marginalised gender identities in the academy (Chae, 2018). The second, which follows from the first, is that it *objectifies* the site and subject of study – note the contrast between my formulation and Daston's – and in the process denies those with whom we engage their rights. It does not matter that the denizens of ancient worlds lived so very long ago. They have claims on us, among them the right to assert (and ask of us to respect) distance. Koritha Mitchell has lately written of the importance of reading and teaching queer literature to her growth in relationships, taking as her point of departure that unsettling moment in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* when Celie realises that her own love should not and cannot imprison her romantic partner: "Just cause I love her don't take away none of her rights" (Mitchell, 2021).

The Dastonians of the world would do well to digest that realisation, and soon. How actively agentic we can be in imagining a disciplinary future whose representations of the past do *not* reinstate that past simply as antecedent to a capitalist world order remains an open question (cf. Chakrabarty, 2000b). But there is no doubt, at least for this reader, that the journey to such a future commences with critical ancient world studies.

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Glossary

Afrocentrism an approach that centres Africa, African people and Blackness.

Afropessimism an approach that accounts for the enduring presence of anti-Black violence, racism and subjugation. See Wilderson III (2020).

anthropocene the name given to the period of time in which the activities of humans have profoundly impacted on the earth and its environments (often said to be the period in which we currently live).

aretalogy a narrative about the miraculous abilities, usually of a deity.

Black Lives Matter a movement against anti-Black racism that began in 2013 after George Michael Zimmerman was acquitted of the murder of Trayvon Martin. The movement returned to prominence recently in 2020 after the murder of George Floyd by Derek Chauvin.

Clash of Civilisations an erroneous thesis advanced by Samuel P. Huntington in a 1992 lecture (and subsequently in a book) that proposes civilisational (cultural) identity as the most important cause of conflict after the Cold War. The thesis has been contextualised within broader Islamophobic ideas and debunked see Dabashi (2022).

classics/classical studies names most commonly given to the academic discipline in which the ancient Mediterranean (and particularly the histories and cultures of the Greeks and Romans) are studied. In this volume, "classics" or "classical studies" refers to the existing discipline which "critical ancient world studies" offers an alternative to.

coloniality the principles, ideologies, systems, categories and practices of colonialism which endure even after formal decolonisation (related to neocoloniality).

counter-history a history written against the mainstream narrative of history.

critical theory any theoretical approach that has as its aim the critique of power structures.

cultural hegemony rule, domination or subjugation that is maintained through the manipulation of the culture of a society. Often used to describe the dominance of cultural norms belonging to a ruling class over a diverse society.

decoloniality work done to undermine Eurocentric ways of being and thinking and to restore/recover precolonial and justice-orientated ideas.

decolonisation the material undoing of colonialism, including but not limited to the restoration of land and rights and dismantling of colonial systems.

dehumanisation   the process of denying or depriving a person or group of their human qualities.

discourse   communication pertaining to a debate.

episteme   a particular way of knowing or system of understanding.

epistemicide   the eliminating, through killing, subjugating or devaluing, of a system of knowledge.

Eurocentrism   an attitude or approach that frames Europe as the primary agent in world history and as superior to non-European places, cultures and ideas.

gnosis   a Greek word meaning "knowledge" usually used in English to refer to knowledge that arises from experience or perception.

god trick   the mistaken belief that objectivity provides a totalising vision of all things. See Haraway (1988).

hermeneutics   the branch of knowledge concerned with what things mean and how they are interpreted.

historiography   the writing of history.

human exceptionalism   the belief that human beings are different from (and usually superior to) all other organisms.

imperialism   the extension of a territory's power via colonisation; also refers to the conditions of domination and subordination required by imperialism.

Kemetic   pertaining to the language, culture, religion and history of Egypt.

nation-state   a political unit combining a territorially bounded land and a community of people.

ontology   the study of being. The term "an ontology" usually denotes a particular way of organising a system or understanding existence.

Orientalism   the attitude that characterised the so-called West's presumption of its own superiority in comparison with the so-called East, theorised in Said (1978).

Rhodes Must Fall   a protest movement that began in 2015 at the University of Cape Town against a statue commemorating the coloniser Cecil Rhodes. The protest was echoed around the world especially directed at other statues celebrating Cecil Rhodes, such as the one that (at the time of writing) still stands on the frontage of Oriel College, University of Oxford.

scientificity   the quality or state of being (or being believed to be) scientific, that is, grounded in provable principles.

settler colonialism   a form of colonialism in which settlers foreign to a land move into it, displacing, subjugating and impoverishing its indigenous inhabitants.

shahadah   the testimony of faith in Allah by Muslims. It usually takes the form of an Arabic phrase, which can be translated as: *I testify that there is no God but Allah and that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah*.

supremacy   the state of or belief in being superior to all others or overpowering them.

telos   an ancient Greek word meaning "purpose" or "goal" that is also frequently used in English, and found in cognate words like *teleology* (an explanation based on goal, not cause).

universalism   the notion that certain ideas are applicable to everyone and everything ("universally"). See Ahmed (2015).

unmarked   not standing out, typical. In linguistics and social sciences especially, the term "unmarked" usually refers to the dominant party within a marked-unmarked comparison.

white feminism   feminism that posits gender as the primary site of identity and oppression, and which universalises from a cis, white, heteronormative, bourgeois perspective.

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