

“The Fragment and the Future”
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1) Page DuBois (1995: 53):

“The effect of reading these tiny remnants of ancient lyric is the realization that all texts are fragments, parts of some elusive whole, whether it is the absent corpus of all ancient lyric, the ‘social text,’ the biographical details of the poet’s life.”

2) Anne Carson (1992: 111-12); on Simonides (fr. 542) in Plato’s *Protagoras* (339a–346d):

“For this poem of Simonides does not exist in manuscript or citation earlier than Plato’s; and Plato has chosen to so intermingle the words of the poetic text with philosophic commentary that to this day no one can agree on the most basic questions of its boundaries or restoration. We do not know where the poem begins, where it ends, how many verses are [p112] missing, or what should be the order of the verses that are here.”

3) Josephine Balmer (2017: 22-23):

“And then, like the first flicker
of smoking fire, slow to take,
I found a tattered word: *Antelexa*:
My heart turned over. I knew it:
speak out. oppose. dissent.

Later there came confirmation
from the professors in Florence;
I had unearthed a precious sliver
of Aeschylus’ lost *Myrmidons* —

a new sigh from a long silence:
A stifled cry shuddering back:
*Enough is enough. No more slander,
no more slurs to crush the tongue.
Time now to protest, to dissent.*

A point of no return. The moment
all the lies might start to shatter”

4) Sasha Barish (2018):

“I realized that I loved reading ancient Roman literature around the time I realized was transgender, and I don’t think the timing was coincidental. I was trans and in high school, and I appreciated Latin poetry not only for its philological beauty but also because it came to me, unabashedly and without explanation, from a different time and from an alien culture. I watched two sets of social rules unfold in parallel. Gender roles existed in the ancient texts, but they were different from what I saw in the world around me. Men fell in love with men, and to some that was nobler than loving girls. Women weren’t supposed to fight in battle, but sometimes they did. Opposite-sex couples had once been individuals existing outside of the gender binary.”

“What’s more, I have been able to find a psychological connection between the poem and my own transgender experience—just not in the places I’d expected. The *Metamorphoses* actually contains some of my favorite pre-modern descriptions of what I’d call dysphoria — psychological, body dysphoria — only it’s never applied to gender.”

5a) Georg Simmel, *Sociology of the Senses* / “Soziologie der Sinne” (1907: 1026); via Frisby (2013: 55):

“On every day, at every hour, such threads are spun, are allowed to fall, are taken up again, replaced by others, intertwined with others. Here lie the interactions — only accessible through psychological microscopy — between the atoms of society which bear the whole tenacity and elasticity, the whole colourfulness and unity of this so evident and so puzzling life of society.”

5b) Georg Simmel, *Sociological Aesthetics* / “Soziologische Aesthetik” (1896: 206); via Frisby (2013: 57):

“To the adequately trained eye, the *total* beauty, the *total* meaning of the world as a whole radiates from every single point.”

6) Adrienne Rich, “Meditations for a Savage Child II” (1973: 58):

“these scars bear witness
but whether to repair
or to destruction
I no longer know”

7) Report of *The Commission on The Humanities* (1964: 1):

“The humanities may be regarded as a body of knowledge and insight, as modes of expression, as a program for education, as an underlying attitude toward life. The body of knowledge is usually taken to include the study of history, literature, the arts, religion, and philosophy. The fine and the performing arts are modes of expressing thoughts and feelings visually, verbally, and aurally. The method of education is one based on the liberal tradition we inherit from classical antiquity. The attitude toward life centers on concern for the human individual: for his emotional development, for his moral, religious, and aesthetic ideas, and for his goals — including in particular his growth as a rational being and a responsible member of his community.”

8a) Robert Needham Cust (1899: 17):

“...and when gradually, though not yet thirty years of age, I found myself helping to rule Millions in their hundreds of towns and thousands of villages, the lines of Virgil came back to me:

*‘Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento;
Hae tibi erunt artes; pacisque imponere morem,
Parcere subjectis, et debellare superbos.’* [=Aeneid 6.851-853]

8b) Phiroze Vasunia (2013: 240):

“Robert Needham Cust wrote in his autobiography that he was reminded of lines from Book Six of the Aeneid when he was sent to India as a young man and entrusted with the task of governing millions. And one finds references to Virgil and his works in articles written by Europeans (and some by Indians) for the learned journals of the Asiatic societies, in the official reports of colonial administrators, and in memoirs of army officers, civil servants, and the like.”

9) Edith Hall (2013):

“45 Years ago today, classical literature was put to its most shameful use in the history of British oratory, when Enoch Powell MP quoted lines from the *Aeneid* to incite racial hatred. At a Conservative Party meeting in Birmingham, he emotively described the alleged plight of the white working-class in the face of immigration, and said that it was bound to end in violence: ‘like the Roman, I seem to see ‘the River Tiber foaming with much blood: *bella, horrida bella / et Thybrim multo spumantem sanguine cerno*’ (6.86-7).”

10) Emily Greenwood (2011: 163):

“In the context of late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century America, the potential for the ideological conception of Classics along racial lines is evident in a notorious anecdote involving John Calhoun (1782–1850), vice-president of America from 1825 to 1832, and Senator for South Carolina from 1832 until his death. The source of the anecdote is a speech delivered by the Revd Dr Alexander Crummell (1819–98), the African-American preacher, missionary, and intellectual, who was one of the co-founders of the American Negro Academy in 1897. On 28 December of the same year, he delivered the Academy’s first annual address on the topic of ‘The Attitude of the American Mind Toward the Negro Intellect’. In the course of this lecture, in order to illustrate the phenomenon of ‘the denial of intellectuality in the Negro’, Crummell recalled how, as an errand boy in a New York office in 1833/4, he overheard two Boston lawyers talking about a conversation that they had had with John Calhoun (then Senator for South Carolina) on a recent trip to Washington. In the course of a discussion about Slavery, Calhoun had remarked that, ‘if he could find a Negro who knew the Greek syntax, he would then believe that the Negro was a human being and should be treated as a man’.”

11) Dani Bostick (2020: 284):

“While racialized barriers to Classics persist, segregation is euphemistically described as low enrollment; systemic cultural failures are blamed on poor marketing, external trends in education, and regressive pedagogy; and proposed solutions to deeper problems often ignore race, as if all students encountered the same barriers.”

Image credits

- Cornelia Parker (1991) “Cold Dark Matter: An Exploded View”: tate.org.uk
- PSI XIII 1300 (c. 200 BCE) containing Sappho fr. 2: [Sailko via Wikimedia](#) (CC BY 3.0)
- P. Oxy. 2288 (c. 200 CE) containing part of Sappho fr. 31: [Oxyrhynchus Online](#)
- Arundel 124 f89 (15th century Italy) containing Cicero’s *De Senectute*: [British Library](#)
- P. Oxy. 2256, fr. 55 (c. 300 CE) containing part of Aeschylus’ *Myrmidons*: [Oxyrhynchus Online](#)
- White ground, black figure *lekythos* (c. 500 BCE) in the Boston MFA ([99.526](#)); images detailing modern repairs [tweeted by the Boston MFA](#)

Works cited

[Report of The Commission on The Humanities](#) (1964)

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