later *Nutricia*) converted the rhetorical *enarratio* of his earlier *Oratio in expositione Homeri* not only into hexameters, but (largely) into narrative epic (it is now both available and affordable in Charles Fantazzi's elegant translation from Harvard's *I Tatti* series #14, 2004). Achilles is consoled for his coming death by the revelation that a poet will be born to immortalise him: young Homer in turn is so infatuated with Achilles that he is blinded by the vision of the dead hero vouchsafed to him, but inspired in compensation to compose the *Iliad*, represented in reported speech (not quite book by book as in the *Tabulae Iliacae*). He is further prompted to the *Odyssey* by the appearance of Ulysses, who asks to be celebrated, himself providing a selective account of his travels. Politian then blends the narrative elements with a didactic encomium of Homer's Ocean-like role as ultimate source of all kinds of knowledge, and frames the whole with a charming dedication to Lorenzo on behalf of Ambra the nymph of his villa at Caiano.

Philip Hardie explores the interferences between didactic and epic in the three books of Fracastoro's *Syphilis* as evidence for the presence of the other genre in both the didactic *Georgics* and epic *Aeneid*: in a poem full of Virgilian resonances, each book presents the disease as a punishment – to Fracastoro's Narcissus-like friend, to Ilceus who kills a stag sacred to Diana, and to Columbus's men on Hispaniola, punished with the sickness for slaying island parrots, while the natives whom they find celebrating a festival (like Evander) offer an *aition* for their own past suffering in the arrogance of King Alcithous and his shepherd Syphilus, afflicted for refusing to worship the sun. Hardie sees Fracastoro's main model as the Aristaeus epyllion, but notes the influence of the Harpy episode of *Aeneid* 3, as well as Aeneas' own experience as a colonist of the Italian New World in the pre-Rome of *Aeneid* 7.

Ceri Davies writes beautifully on 'The Aeneid and twentieth century Welsh Poetry', showing by examples from Euros Bowen (whose poems are presented in both English and Welsh to show their use of traditional forms), Gwenallt Jones and Saunders Lewis, how these poets have had their imagination and even their understanding of human life enriched by the *Aeneid.* I approached the paper reluctantly, but Davies is an eloquent advocate, and his scholar-poets are men of genuine feeling. Such sensitive studies of Virgilian reception (like those of Laird and Hardie) do much to enrich and revive our own responses to both the old poet and the new. In all this volume is as rewarding as it is varied.

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NATIONAL IDENTITY IN THE *AENEID*

SYED (Y.) *Vergil's* Aeneid *and the Roman Self. Subject and Nation in Literary Discourse*. Pp. x + 277. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005. Cased, US$65, £37. ISBN: 0-472-11432-8.
doi:10.1017/S0009840X05000557

In this engaging monograph, Syed proposes to consider the *Aeneid* as a poem which 'fuses an interest in the inner workings of the self with an articulation of the individual's place within the social structure' (p. 2). Her over-arching thesis – in so far as she has one – is that the epic seeks to shape the (male, Roman) reader's sense of a national identity by opposition to an 'other' figured as foreign, passionate and (mainly) female. This contention is not, perhaps, particularly novel or striking in

itself; but S.'s strength lies in her exploration of specifics (in the sense both of specific parts of the poem, and of the specific themes and issues dealt with in individual chapters) rather than in generalities.

The book is divided into three parts, 'The *Aeneid* and Roman Identity', 'The Reader's Subject Position' and 'Gender and Ethnicity'. Part I, which deals mainly with ancient theories of poetry as an educational tool and of the relationship between poetry and the emotions, is the least innovative of the three, though it is useful to have the ancient evidence assembled and discussed in clear and straightforward terms which should be easily accessible to students (quotations in Latin and Greek are translated throughout). These opening chapters are important in laying out some of the groundwork for Parts II and III, and it is therefore rather surprising to find Aristotle given such short shrift, particularly in view of the important role played in S.'s argument by the theory of *catharsis* (which receives only perfunctory treatment on pp. 37 and 49–50).

Part II is particularly concerned with the poem's visual aspect and with Aeneas as a viewer of spectacles. Pointing out that Virgil's hero repeatedly plays the role of spectator (of ecphrases, but also of other characters and their actions – Dido and her people building Carthage in Book 1, the destruction of Troy in Book 2), S. puts forward the appealing suggestion that he can be regarded as a kind of surrogate for the reader. Such an interpretation of the hero's role certainly helps to shed light on the curiously passive part played by Aeneas, especially in the first half of the epic, which is perceived by many readers as problematic. The spectacles he views usually serve a positive function in cheering Aeneas in his gloomier moments and inspiring him to action (but S. does not fully explore the implications of the hero's tendency to misread or fail to understand visual narratives, apparent in his reactions to the Trojan War scenes depicted on Dido's temple and the episodes from Roman history on Vulcan's shield: Aeneas does not always have access to the clarity of vision temporarily granted him by Venus in 2.604–31). Chapter 4 brings the theme of spectatorship together with the issue of gender, pointing out that female characters tend to receive much fuller visual descriptions than their male counterparts, and to be presented as objects of the male gaze, rather than as subjects in their own right. These spectacles of female passion often elicit the reader's sympathy and so provide a cathartic outlet for emotion; but we are not invited to assimilate our perspective to theirs, as we are in the case of Aeneas. S. is particularly good on the banquet at the end of Book 1 and the hunt scene in Book 4 as visual spectacles, and her argument is largely persuasive; but there is once again a tendency to flatten out some of the complexities of Virgil's text. The fact that Juno is presented as a spectator right at the poem's outset is inconvenient for S., and her attempt to explain away Juno's gaze as an 'alien' perspective which the Roman reader will therefore not share is not really satisfactory. It could be argued that the poet – by giving us our first glimpse of the Trojans through the eyes of a hostile, passionate, female subject – in fact invites or challenges the Roman reader to *question* his natural biases. These central chapters are also somewhat under-theorised, despite the obligatory nod to Mulvey and her successors; S. over-uses the terms 'empathize', 'sympathize' and 'identify with', without any real attempt to interrogate or even define them.

In part III, S. revisits some fairly well-trodden territory, but there is nevertheless much of value here, particularly the nuanced and insightful discussion of Dido as ethnic 'other' (Chapter 6, covering much of the same ground as Nicholas Horsfall in *PVS* 13 [1973–4], 1–13, but with considerably greater subtlety), and S.'s reflections in her final chapter on Virgil's destabilisation of ethnic stereotypes. Chapter 5, on the

gendering of passion as a female characteristic, includes some very interesting observations on Allecto's different strategies for dealing with Amata and with Turnus (though S. is too ready to assume that Turnus' *furor* is wholly attributable to Allecto's intervention: contrast Denis Feeney's more nuanced discussion of the Turnus scene in *The Gods in Epic* [Oxford, 1991], 168–73).

While perhaps not entirely successful in drawing together the separate threads of its argument (gender and emotion; gender and ethnicity; emotion, spectacle, and the effect of poetry on the reader), S.'s study has much to offer. Her style is always clear and accessible, if somewhat repetitive; and she ranges confidently and effectively between close reading of particular episodes and broader perspectives on the poem as a whole. This is a book which one could confidently recommend to students at any level, yet it also has new light to shed, even for the Virgilian specialist, on some of the poem's central episodes and characters.

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NOS NEQUIORES

NISBET (R.G.M.), RUDD (N.) *A Commentary on Horace:* Odes *Book III*. Pp. xxx + 389. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004. Cased, £70. ISBN: 0-19-926314-0.

doi:10.1017/S0009840X05000569

This monument almost stayed *im*perfect, after the dissolution of the NH partnership, which originated in the plan for a post- and propter-Fraenkelian commentary excogitated by Robin Nisbet during an afternoon's lull as External Examiner, at St Andrews, 1962 (with galacticos Freddy Wells, Gordon Williams, and Margaret Hubbard on the dream-team sheet). Every Latinist there is owes Niall Rudd a huge vote of thanks for helping the project home: no one else could have done the trick, and together with his fine Loeb edition of *Odes and Epodes* (2004) this collaboration completes a wonderful personal arc through Horatian lyric across half a century ('Professor Fraenkel's Horace', *Hermathena* 91 [1958], 43–54 now stands as mighty programmatic threshold for NR's unique encounter with *all* Horace's oeuvre). So RN has dared see his heroic enterprise through, and summoned up the nerve needed to pile this third mountain upon the other peaks. Such symmetry, that this last volume should coincide in press with David West's rollicking Oxford *editio minor* of Book III, *Dulce Periculum* (2002), just as Gordon Williams' revolutionary Oxford *editio minor* (1969: signed from St. Andrews) had coincided with production of NHI (1970). Once work in hand on *Odes* IV and *Carmen Saeculare* is completed, it will surely be the best time to study Horatian lyric *ever*.

Not much point in my producing the disclaimers that N. was my DPhil supervisor (and I one of his first professorial supervisees), R. my first 'boss' (and I one of his first challenges. Come to that, Margaret Hubbard gave me my first teaching assignment.). Any reviewer would be up to here in their influence, too. Indeed, however disagreeable this thought will be to the pair of them, readers of NRIII are bound to attend to the commentators before they can ever hope to focus on the Horace they deliver. Not just 'post-moderns', fervent or otherwise, but *Musarum sacerdotes*, *profani*, *uirgines puerique*, you name it. The point is, not just that none of the co-authors has ever strutted (to put it mildly), but the entire project of this 'commentary' was always