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Heracles and Hercules

Ancient models for ptsd in euripides and seneca

(pagine 231-246)

Abstract: This paper argues that the “madness” episodes suffered by Heracles and Hercules, as represented in the tragedies by Euripides and Seneca, respectively, correspond to the modern diagnostic criteria for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (ptsd) in returning war veterans. Although cases of ptsd seem to be far more common in modern western contexts than they were in antiquity, the experiences of Heracles and Hercules qualify as illustrations of what we would now call ptsd. At the same time, the way in which the suffering of the two heroes is articulated differs significantly from the Greek context, where it is a communal experience, to the Roman one where the focus is on the individual.

Keywords: Euripides, Heracles, Seneca, Hercules, ptsd, *melancholia*, *furor*.

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Mind, Metaphor, and Emotion in Euripides (*Hippolytus*) and Seneca (*Phaedra*)

(pagine 247-267)

Abstract: Metaphors drawn from our experience as embodied beings in the world – with a particular physiology, a particular physical orientation, beings who are at home in particular natural and social environments – are fundamental in making things that might otherwise be difficult to think and talk about (such as subjective psychological experience, including emotion) easier to think and talk about, by seeing them in terms of more basic, concrete, physical, and visible phenomena. This paper investigates emotion metaphor in Euripides’ *Hippolytus* and Seneca’s *Phaedra*, illustrating the continuity between the background conceptual metaphors of everyday life and the developed metaphors of poets and other literary artists, but also demonstrating that, this continuity notwithstanding, there remains considerable scope for thematic integration, artistic creativity, and singularity of vision in the selection and deployment of the imagery of mind and emotion.

Keywords: Emotion, Mind, Metaphor, Embodied cognition, Enactivism.

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The ambiguous *virtus* of Seneca’s *Medea*

(pagine 268-280)

Abstract: Even a superficial reading of Seneca’s *Medea* clearly shows that this tragedy is quite different from its Greek model, Euripides’s *Medea*, especially in the construction of the characters’ identity. In this paper, I argue that the Stoic background underlying Seneca’s play is key to understanding the ethos of the Senecan Medea, who murders her children also in order to strengthen her own virtue. As a matter of fact, her actions and words, especially in the final scenes of the play, allusively resemble those of two paradigmatic models of Stoic behaviour, Cato and Phaethon, discussed in Seneca’s treatise *De providentia*. Seneca’s Medea winds up, therefore, appropriating positive moral models with a view to bending them to her own ends, thus shedding an ambiguous light on the notion of virtue.

Keywords: Seneca, Medea, Cato, *virtus*, Stoicism.

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Pre-emotions and Reader Emotions in Seneca.

De ira and Epistulae morales

(pagine 281-296)

Abstract: As a skilled rhetorician with a serious interest in literary achievement *per se*, Seneca brings some professional expertise to the question of reader emotions; that is, of how the emotional or quasi-emotional responses experienced while reading are to be understood within the Stoic system. In *De ira*, he offers an answer in terms of the involuntary reactions sometimes called “pre-emotions” (*propatheiai*), arguing in essence that because responses to literary works are not based on assent, they cannot count as emotions and thus cannot effect any lasting change in the character of the reader. By the time of the *Epistulae morales*, however, his position appears to have changed. A series of detailed descriptions of reading events gives evidence that he has begun thinking of some kinds of reader reactions as involving real evaluative judgments, but not false judgments as in the ordinary *pathē*. Guided by his own intuitive sense of how a well-written text affects its readers, he proceeds on the assumption that reading the right material may sometimes evoke the sort of emotions that lead to moral progress.

Keywords: *De ira*, Emotion, *Epistulae morales*, Joy, *pathos*, *propatheia*, Seneca, Stoicism.

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Seneca’s tragic passions in context.

Transgeneric Argumentation in Cicero’s Tusculan Disputations

(pagine 297-311)

Abstract: In his prose works Seneca deals with passions central to tragedy, but he rarely quotes from tragedy and does therefore not provide a philosophical perspective on concrete examples of tragic passions. To shed light on the ways in which a philosopher may deal with tragic passions this paper turns to Cicero and examines the interplay between tragedy and philosophy in his discussion of grief in *Tusculanae disputationes* iii. Quotations from tragedy in book iii relate to the behaviour Cicero advocates in two different ways: either they express philosophical insights into dealing with grief or they evoke grief, sometimes effectively staging this passion. In using quotations from tragedy Cicero not only shows that grief is unreasonable and destructive, but also exploits powerful poetic representations of suffering to stress the intensity of this emotion in his polemic against Epicurus (*Tusc.* iii 32-51).

Keywords: Cicero, *Tusculanae disputationes*, Tragedy, Quotations, Grief, Epicurus.

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A passion for nature.

Seneca’s Natural Questions and Hippolytus in His Phaedra

(pagine 312-325)

Abstract: The goal of this paper is to make a limited proposal about Seneca’s treatment of nature in his *Phaedra* tragedy. The first part of the paper explores the tension in his prose writings between an enthused, “hot” and impassioned mode of Senecan writing about the natural world, as opposed to a cooler, more detached and systematic approach to nature elsewhere in ancient scientific discourse. This contrast is then applied to what is presented as a similar tension in the *Phaedra* tragedy, with important implications for Seneca’s characterization of Phaedra and Hippolytus in particular.

Keywords: Seneca, Tragedy, Passions, Nature, Sublimity, Cosmic sympathy.

Anton Bierl

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Passion in a Stoic's Satire directed against a dead Caesar?

Seneca's Apocolocyntosis as a Saturnalian Text Composed for Overcoming the Crisis

(pagine 326-349)

Abstract: Reviewing the rather ahistorical theory of Bakhtin's carnivalesque, I argue that Seneca used the *Saturnalia* as a concrete cultural and anthropological model from ritual daily life for his *Apocolocyntosis*. Despite the aggressive passions against the deceased Claudius, the emotions are to be seen in the liminal framework of the festival of reversal. Seneca does not aim at accurately portraying a foolish dead *princeps* or at taking posthumous revenge through a sarcastic invective, rather with this totally Saturnalian text he playfully helps come to terms with the severe crisis of the transition from Claudius to Nero. The *Saturnalia* inscribes itself in the text and playfully experiments with casting out the old *princeps*, stylized as a foolish, mock king and negative, dystopian monster of atavistic Cronian times, as well as enthusiastically embracing the new era, portrayed as the return of the Saturnian utopia. Under these circumstances it would be misleading to criticize Seneca, who as a Stoic pontificated against every engagement with emotion, for the passion, hate and bitterness harbored against Claudius. Similar to his tragedies, Seneca invents a Stoic scenario of the crazy world as a madhouse filled with intense affects in order to make the reader first experience the crisis and then render him resistant to emotional turbulence.

Keywords: Seneca, *Apocolocyntosis*, Bakhtin, *Saturnalia*, Carnival, Mythic-ritual poetics, Liminality, Passions.

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Tragic Tears.

Oedipus and Thyestes Weeping

(pagine 350-364)

Abstract: The paper analyses two passages from *Thyestes* and *Oedipus*, where the protagonists cry unexpectedly and involuntarily. In the first case, where Thyestes has a sort of metamorphoses in a werewolf, there is an exploration of all the semantic possibilities for this attitude: any of them is in part true. It is interesting to compare them with two Homeric passages, one where Odysseus manages to stop his tears, another where the unexpected crying is due to the goddess Athena. Oedipus cries after the revelation, when he represents the incarnation of rage. His attitude coincides perfectly with the one of the angry man, except for the tears which he turns into blood. This makes him look like the women in grief, who used to scratch their cheeks. Both in *Thyestes* and in *Oedipus*, tears have also a narrative and so cognitive function: it is due to their tears that they make the plot go on (Thyestes understands the *scelus*, Oedipus finds the fitting punishment): so these tears are in a way a sort of meditation.

Keywords: Seneca, Oedipus, Thyestes, Tears, Passions.

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The *Vanus Terror* of the Hunt in Seneca's *Phaedra*

(pagine 365-373)

Abstract: By examining the intratextual link created by the collocation *vanus terror* in both the opening monologue (*Phaedr.* 47) and the scene of Hippolytus' death (1066), this paper argues for foregrounding the imagery of fear and the pursuit as a means of understanding how love works in Seneca's *Phaedra*. The link between these two scenes allows us to see Hippolytus' death as the inevitable end of a hunting scene, where the sea-bull hunts Hippolytus in a manner not unlike he himself hunted wild beasts at the outset of the play. In addition, Phaedra herself becomes a hunter of sorts in the play as Seneca moves above and beyond the vague hunting language of Euripides' character, bringing in language of the amatory hunt from Latin love poetry and casting Hippolytus explicitly as a beast to be hunted (*Nu. ferus est. Ph. amore didicimus vinci feros, Phaedr.* 240). The fear detailed in the play's climactic scene of the bull and the chariot

recalls the fear and hunting imagery of the play's opening hunting vignette, the language of the amatory hunt, and Phaedra and her love as instigators of this hunt. Thus, fear not only establishes an intratextual link between the opening and climactic scenes, thereby allowing us to see Hippolytus' end as a hunting scene, but also at the same time creates death and brings about the conclusion of the story.

Keywords: Seneca, Tragedy, Amatory poetry, Elegy, Love, Fear, Hunting, Pursuit, *terror*.

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Produzione tragica e passioni femminili

(pagine 374-385)

Abstract : A vision of profound misogyny, according to the rhetorical directives of declamatory practice, animates Seneca's works: it seems that only the figures connoted by boldness and manly courage avoid this vision. This article offers an analysis of the emotional reactions that characterize this type of character with a particular reference to the two female protagonists of the *Phoenissae*, *Antigone* and *Jocasta*. The second part of this article offers an overview of some aspects of Seneca's tragic vocabulary related to the semantic field of piety, by analyzing word occurrence in the following authors: first Ovid but also Virgil, Horace, Catullus, going back to the lost Elvius Cinna's *Smyrna*.

Keywords: *Phoenissae*, Female passions, Rhetoric, amplification of the passions, Seneca's tragic vocabulary.

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Le traitement ambigu de la *superstitio* dans les *Lettres à Lucilius* de Sénèque

(pagine 386-400)

Abstract: Seneca knows that the stoic principle of *ajpavqeia* will be inefficient for ordinary persons; that's why he seeks to make use of the reader's religious fervour as promising developments in a course of spiritual therapy. Whereas he strongly condemns *δεισιδαιμονία* as the result of false judgment on gods, at the same time in *Letters* 95 and 108 he uses the latin polysemic notion of *superstitio* in order to promote philosophical life and inspire the veneration of stoic virtue.

Keywords: Seneca, Stoicism, *ἀπάθεια*, Passions, *deisidaimoniva*, *superstitio*, Religion.

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Emotion and Wordplay in Seneca's *Medea*

(pagine 401-404)

Abstract: In this paper I argue for the presence of striking and significant word play at the beginning of Seneca's *Medea*, suggesting also that the presence of similar word play at the opening of Euripides' play of the same name may have provided the direct model for the Latin poet.

Keywords: Seneca, Euripides, *Medea*, Word play, Emotions.