

to suffer the consequences. Handling bodily functions is one (and Lawrence is of course well-known for her familiarity with the Roman sponge on a stick), but events move from the scatological to the ontological. The book handles themes of growing up (physically, emotionally, intellectually, in relationship terms), where to find courage, who a good mentor might be, mixing the pain of personal situations at an individual level with their global impact.

The writing remains as vivid as ever. She invokes all our senses, asking us to enter Athens with the child's curiosity and a teenager's disdain. Sights, smells, sounds and tastes are all brought out, along with the bodily sensations of bouncing in a chariot or even squelching through something unmentionable. Archaeological sites are brought to life and put to good use, with real and imagined episodes coinciding. The author's research is thorough, and is made exciting through the time travel conceit's ability to present us with 'as it happened' views of familiar people and events. The boys meet 'kid Plato' and get a lesson in life from a snotty-nosed geek. Alcibiades imposes his presence on Athens and on the boys, and we reel from seeing him as villain and hero in quick succession, much, one feels, like many of his contemporaries must have done. Short chapters hurry us along as a simple plot gains twists and turns. The adventure lasts only a few days, but they are full of excitement.

Real life impinges in such a way as to draw in Classicists across the world, as well as general readers (children and adults alike). The Latin teacher is one Miss Forte (minus the mouse), and alongside Professor Armand D'Angour (whose *Socrates in Love* clearly influences the book), the boundary between real and imagined characters is truly blurred. Lawrence plays with this when she sees echoes of her fictional ancient characters in the other academic in the final chapters, one Dr Fotini Charis. The involvement of big corporations and big governments in the story leaves clear space for a further adventure, if both the children and the author are brave enough to take it on!

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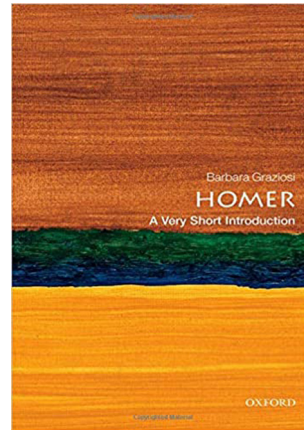
## Homer: A Very Short Introduction

Graziosi (B.). Pp. xviii + 122, ill. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019. Paper, £8.99, US\$11.95. ISBN: 978-0-19-958994-4

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I possess a relatively large number of this series of books; some are excellent and some I find rather more challenging; this one most definitely fell into the excellent category. Graziosi has a knack of speaking directly to readers and drawing them in with her passion (this is a word I generally discourage as it appears far too often in personal statements, but here it is correct). This book would be an invaluable addition to any school or department library. Beginning with a brief survey of the arguments surrounded the authorship of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, Graziosi carefully traces the academic work that has been done on oral poetry and clearly explains Milman Parry's work on oral poetry and metrical analysis as relating to epithets i.e. that 'if a Greek singer had two measures to fill, he would always say 'luminous Achilles' since there was no other formula that would fit'. Some might say that research



such as this tarnishes the beauty of the poetry and makes it seem over-formulaic, but that can be easily countered with the argument that it demonstrates the poet's skill in having the flexibility and tools to produce vast quantities of poetry in a particular style for live performance. The poetry itself is infinitely flexible and allows for insights into the human (or semi-divine in Achilles' case) condition as when Achilles finds himself unable to catch Apollo (*Il* 22 8-20) and bemoans his powerlessness against a god. From the *Odyssey* too she uses the example of Odysseus' dilemma when woken by Nausicaa and her slave-girls playing ball (*Odyssey* 6 119) and the internal dialogue about how he should proceed. Such insights into human character are what make these poems still relevant to us today. Moving from the linguistic to the material Graziosi explains how Schliemann's drive to prove the reality of Homer led him to Mycenae and Hissarlik. This is not the place to discuss Schliemann's rather questionable methods, but it is an important part of the after-life of the Homeric epics and any book on Homer needs to mention him. More interesting perhaps are the passages on Linear B and evidence directly from the text about agriculture and food as seen in the similes. Fishing for instance provide several striking similes – Scylla grabbing Odysseus' men off their ship (*Od* 12 251-255) or the suitors lying like fish pulled out of the sea by fisherman to lie on the sand (*Od* 22 384-388) – but eating fish is never done in the *Iliad* and only once in the *Odyssey* (*Od* 12 331) and the technology used to fish effectively is well described as are building processes whether divine or mortal (*Od* 7 81-94) and the descriptions of drinking vessels that are scattered throughout both poems. The skill of ordinary people is contrasted implicitly by the comparison of heroes with wild animals – lions, boar – that threaten the settled farmer. Such subtleties are commonplace within this rich poetry. There is discussion of the poet's voice and the way that he can focus in on the minutiae but then pan out to take a panorama of the battlefield, or perhaps an aside to a specific character as he does on two occasions to Eumaeus in the *Odyssey*. Graziosi's account of Homer's description of the shield of Achilles is an excellent survey and gives us a beautiful and varied account of agricultural work, dancing and city life as in people shouting at each other in a court case – all told in an almost cinematic way. There are wonderful touches too, and my personal favourites are the two occasions where eyebrows are used to signal – Odysseus tries to order his men to set him free as the Sirens work their musical magic on him, and again in book 16 when Athene summons Odysseus from Eumaeus' hut by gesturing with her eyebrows – and the meeting with Argus the dog in Book 17 which never fails to bring a tear to the eye even of the most hardened 6<sup>th</sup> formers. Homer, whoever he (or they) was certainly knew how to touch a nerve. It is only once the more general topics have been covered that Graziosi moves on to the two most famous works of Homer, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, and each has three chapters devoted to it. These chapters pick out key scenes to illustrate the topic of the chapter e.g. the wrath of Achilles discusses Achilles' behaviour following the initial quarrel with Agamemnon and how that wrath becomes less like that of a god and more like that of a mortal since Achilles can die, continuing the representation of the human condition. There is also a typically well-argued discussion of the role of Hector and his part in the narrative as the major protagonist on the Trojan side. Odysseus, 'the man of many turns' is shown to be described

by a 'wider range of animals than any other hero'; there is the lion when he meets Nausicaa, the octopus when he is clinging to a rock before he makes landfall at Scherie and a bat when he is clinging to the fig tree in book 12; of these the lion is a relatively common comparator, but the latter two are most inventive and typical of the Homeric poet. Understandably the journey to the Underworld (*nekya*) is a chosen theme to explore and explain Odysseus' character and motivation to return home to Ithaca and to cheat death in the process. Overall, this is an excellent resource and accessible to students, though the sections on the epics themselves would be best read after the text has been studied.

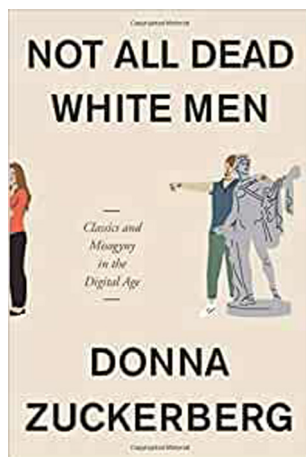
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## Not all Dead White Men. Classics and Misogyny in the Digital Age.

Zuckerberg (D.). Pp.270. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018. Cased, £22.99, US\$27.95, €25 (Paper, £13.95, US\$16.95, €15.15). ISBN: 978-0-674-97555-2.

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I found this quite a difficult book to read; not because of its complexity, though in a way it was, but because of the sometimes difficult subject matter. It is an interesting book and very apt for its time, coming, as it does, in the age of Trump, *The Handmaid's Tale* and Black Lives Matter, but there are so many acronyms to cope with and an overwhelming feeling of the desperate inadequacy felt by the major players in the 'manosphere'. While I was reading it, the Republican National Conference was being reported from the States, 'Mrs

America' was being advertised on UK television and there were reports of women calling for one-vote households where the man of the house had the final say, 'if it were a godly household'. The premise of the book is that the Alt-Right, the TRP (The Red Pill, named for the choice between red and blue pills in *The Matrix*) and sundry other groups that seem to be united by a resentment against women, people of colour and the liberal élite, have hijacked (and misrepresented in part) classical literature to give a *gravitas* to their ideas. The author, Donna Zuckerberg, younger sister of Facebook founder, Mark Zuckerberg, is a classicist and well-read in the literature that she discusses. She is also not blind to the societal norms of the ancient world that kept women more closeted than is the case for western societies these days; but it is a USA-centric approach (that is not to say that there are not elements of it in other western societies but it seems to be less desperate). The alacrity with which these groups focus on classical texts, particularly Stoic philosophy and Greek tragedies such as *Hippolytus*, is understandable

in some respects; but it is also typical of a society which was heavily based on classical constructs – see their political architecture, the naming of the Senate and the *latifundia* plantations of 100 years ago that were tended by slaves (though other western societies were not blameless in this respect). Zuckerberg explains how Stoicism in particular reinforces the belief that men are guided by rationality and women by emotion which means that women should be ruled by men. She also explains how a reading that stops at this point is missing the point that women too could aspire to true virtue though with the gendered language of the ancient world (*virilis*, ἀνδρεία). Whilst the chapter on Stoicism was interesting, it would be the chapter on Ovid that, I think, would draw in more people. This chapter focuses on the use by the 'manosphere' of Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* as a handbook not only on seduction but on how to treat women generally. Whilst there are parts of this work which are not very savoury (and indeed there are elements of the *Amores* (the behaviour of the narrator in III.2 perhaps?) too with which we might take issue), Zuckerberg does acknowledge that this is a work of literary fiction and probably not to be taken literally; and the resentment of the members of the 'manosphere' is apparent particularly in the section on Danish women who, it seems are immune to Ovidian seduction techniques as they have 'no idea what it feels like to not have medical care or free access to university education. They have no fear of becoming homeless or permanently jobless. The government's soothing hand will catch everyone as they fall'. So, it seems that women are only prey when they are likely to be vulnerable, which rather reinforces the idea that many of those in these groups are inadequate. Sadly, the use and abuse of Classics is not restricted to The Alt-Right and the The Red Pill group: there are numerous examples amongst some UK politicians of Latin (and Greek) tags and references being dropped into speeches or interviews, perhaps to advertise an élite education and to sound clever. This does Classics no good and is unfair on those who work so hard to bring it to a wide range of people, especially those who are encouraged to exert their critical faculties on it, as should be done with all subjects. No civilisation can be perfect, but the faults and beauties should be seen for what they are and not hijacked for political or societally sinister motives. This is an interesting book, but one which I cannot see being widely read in schools. In times of financial probity, it might be a luxury. I am glad I read it, though there are some views that I would hope never to encounter. Still, forewarned is forearmed, and a knowledge of how some of these groups work is a useful tool.

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## Aristotle: Poetics

Zerba (M.), Gorman (D.) (edd., revised trans.). Pp. xxxviii + 209. New York & London: W. W Norton and Company, 2018. Paper, £7.95. ISBN: 978-0-393-93886-9.

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Aristotle's *Poetics* is perhaps the most influential work of literary theory. As such, it enjoys a wider audience than some of Aristotle's other works. This edition, with its introduction, glossary, notes on