Cinema and Classical Texts: Apollo's New Light (review)

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In the conclusion, Scott uses the first-person voice of a poet in a rhetori-
cally interesting but limiting exposition to imagine "the thoughts that might
have occurred to the poet as he composed three tree similes" (176). Scott's
experiment, too restrictive in its predictions, need not be successful to illustrate
effectively that every simile in Homer is the result of a complex compositional
process. Scott closes by reaffirming that the use of the similes aptly represents
the relationship between the *Iliad* and the traditional material it draws upon.

The target audience for this book is unclear. The structure of the argu-
mentation is problematic—some ideas are repeated while others are unantici-
pated. Some embedded arguments require explanation for nonspecialists (e.g.,
Diomedes as a limited hero, 105), while other unexplored concepts (repeated
reference to the heroic code) will frustrate Homerists. Nevertheless, Scott's
book is a worthwhile read for anyone interested in the relationship between
innovation and tradition and, thanks to its treasure trove of readings of in-
dividual passages, for anyone interested in Homeric similes.

The University of Texas at San Antonio   JOEL P. CHRISTENSEN
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Martin M. Winkler. *Cinema and Classical Texts: Apollo's New Light*. Cambridge:
Cambridge University Press, 2009. Pp. xiii, 347. $99.00. ISBN 0-521-51860-4.

In this book Winkler aims to lay out a consistent and effective methodol-
ogy for bringing together the disciplines of Classics and Film Studies. His
target audience is both classicists and film theorists who may be interested
in writing on classics and cinema. Winkler's ultimate goal is to bring cinema
into the fold of classical reception studies. In order to do this, he wants
to arm his readers with a possible methodology and basic background in
film studies. Winkler is very thorough in his discussion of theories of film
and provides, as he aims to, a novice with the resources to begin scholarly
work on classical reception in film. Winkler offers the phrase "classical film
philology" as a possible way to think of what a classicist could bring to
film studies (13). As a result, the book in the end is better suited more for
classicists than film theorists, though there is much to offer a non-classicist
who may be working on one of the films under discussion.

Because of the survey nature of the book, there are times when Winkler
does not draw conclusions from his observations, especially in his shorter
discussions of films. A question that is sometimes addressed, and other
times not, is what does evaluating film in the context of classical culture
or literature do? This can be frustrating for the reader because Winkler's
proposed aim of demonstrating various methodologies and ways of applying
philological methods to film study and vice versa leads the reader to expect
conclusions and sustained analyses of films in order to have examples of how
this would play out. For example, his discussion of oracles in science fiction,
which comes directly after his discussion of the oracle in films related to
Greek tragedy, could have been linked to the theme of oracle as prehistori-
cal in those films to the post-historical (or pre-?) world of sci-fi and how
the oracles of sci-fi highlight the failure of technology to control destiny or
replace belief. Here, as well, a discussion or mention of the television series
Battlestar Galactica (2004–2009) would have been welcome.

Winkler is at his most successful when he engages in sustained analyses
of films, such as *Ulysses' Gaze* and Pasolini's *Oedipus Rex*, and when he
discusses "neo-mythology," such as his discussion of the *Star Trek* episode

"Who Mourns for Adonis" (1967), Disney's *Hercules*, and Alexander Hall's *Down to Earth*. In these instances Winkler persuasively argues for taking "neo-mythologizing" (Winkler's phrase) on its own terms. While I am not a fan of the phrase, Winkler does get his point across that modern adaptations of ancient myth should be treated with the same respect that classicists give to ancient variations of myths. Winkler argues that considering these films within the tradition of adaptation can guide the classicist away from criticizing perceived errors to considering what makes this myth appealing to a modern audience. As classicists, we need to forget about issues of "authenticity" and "accuracy," and embrace myth in cinema in all its multiform glory—adaptation is proof of classical myth's vitality and why this is the case should be the issue in question, not the "right" and "wrong" way of telling a story. The thing I like the best about this book is that it offers multiple ways into cinema, through straight reception—e.g., historical films, tragedies or myths in film, and through shared themes. I think the shared themes component is the most interesting and sophisticated part of the book because it offers the reader ways to think originally about how considering shared themes in ancient literature or visual culture and modern cinema can work to inform both.

Overall, this book is a significant and welcome contribution to scholarship on classics and cinema. Winkler leaves his reader with multiple points of entry into film studies from a classical viewpoint. For the most part, the book is extremely well documented, making it an excellent starting point for a classicist looking to teach a film course or write on film.

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Alex C. Purves. *Space and Time in Ancient Greek Narrative*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010. pp. xi, 273. $85.00. ISBN 978-0-521-19098-5.

Purves explores narrative perspectives of space and time from archaic epic to fourth-century prose. Contrary perspectives are already evident in Homer: the *Iliad* looks down upon human events synoptically from on high while in the *Odyssey* events tend to be viewed from a human, ground-level, perspective. The Iliadic bird's-eye orientation is exampled both in the Muses' comprehensive overview and in Zeus' summary narratives, and shared—for a brief time—by Achilles, as suggested by the composite vision of the world on Hephaistos' shield. The temporal and spatial dimensions of the Odyssean narrative, by contrast, are most evident in Odysseus' description of events as they unfold piecemeal and sequentially in books 9–12.

Purves applies this mode of analysis most effectively when describing Odysseus, carrying an oar, on his inward journey to appease Poseidon's wrath. From the Odyssean earthly perspective, the hero appears "lost," until he plants his oar in the ground, a turning point in the journey and in self-definition as he regains a sense of direction and heads homeward. Prior to that moment, Odysseus had become a "nobody" among people who know nothing of the sea—and thus nothing of epic either. Other Odyssean passages, however, fit Purves' schema less effectively, in my view. Aspects of Odysseus' narrative in books 9–12 suggest a Muse-like overview, as when the traveler-poet, like the Muse at *Od*. 1.10, asks himself what he should say first, what last (9.14), or when he juxtaposes one adventure with another (9.47–49, 12.200–204), a small-scale example of the Odyssean narrator doubling Odysseus' story with Agamemnon's.