

# THE EPISTLE OF THE EXILE

by

CAITLYN WIRSZYLA

(Under the Direction of Andres Matlock)

## ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the manifestation of the exilic experience within the letters of Cicero, Ovid, and Seneca. My research identifies that there are similarities regarding how these authors depict themselves, what autonomy they gain through their readers, and how *fortuna* will affect the outcomes of their situation. I first assert that the textual self within the letter becomes pieces of the exile, namely, Cicero's *corpus*, Seneca's *mens*, and Ovid's *verbum*, and transports these pieces back to Rome. I then argue that, without agency, each exile must rely on their readers back in Rome to act on behalf of them and fulfil their requests. Finally, I assess the result of their requests and exiles, in conversation with their perspectives of *fortuna*. My argument proposes that letters provide a temporary way for exiled authors, and their writing, to engage with that which is absent from them: their addressees and Rome itself.

INDEX WORDS: Exilic Epistles, Cicero's *ad Familiares*, Ovid's *ex Ponto*, Seneca's *Consolatio ad Helviam*, Late Republic Literature, Early Empire Literature

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CAITLYN WIRSZYLA

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|                  |                    |
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| Major Professor: | Andres Matlock     |
| Committee:       | Erika Hermanowicz  |
|                  | Christine Albright |

Electronic Version Approved:

Ron Walcott  
Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Dean of the Graduate School  
The University of Georgia  
December 2024

## DEDICATION

*Salemini quam nomine Deliciarum aeterno  
est verum te multum diligo ego rananculum  
aeternali dilexi te diligam amore*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Oportet me incipientem hoc agere meas summas gratias sapientibus magistris quibus me dedi ut disciplinis sapientiae imbuerer. Primum, Universitate Georgiae, fundamenta grammaticae antiquae cum Kleine discere et libros Graece cum Conallide Plateroque ac Latine cum Albritta Hermanovictaque Matloccioque legere poteram. De tribus ultimis, si sub tutela eorum non scriptus esset, meus libellus non esset opus quod nunc est. Deinde, Collegii Carolopolitani, Pompeiis cum Sterretta-Kraude et lingua Graeca cum Floreo Alvineoque ac Latina cum Zeinero-Carmichaele Eoghanideque ac praecipue Lohmanne Gerrissaque notis, fundamenta liberalium studiorum condere potueram ut posterioribus studiis praestarem. Postremo, cum uno e primis magistris, Vagnero, optimo viro, meam dilectionem φιλολογίας reperire potueram. Ultra magistros, quoque in castra comitum confugi, scilicet Caropolitani Margarettidis et Georgiae Petri Elisabettidisque ac Olivae, qui semper amicitiae ius officiumque mihi praestant.

Nunc, oportet me agere multas gratias Asti, optimae contubernali, quae Athenis prima amica mihi erat. Ille annus, quo una habitaveramus, fuerat plenus milium noctium quibus fructae dulcibus caseis panibusque atque elegantibus sermonibus in maeniana sedimus. Casa nobis est non iam eadem; speremus tamen nos posteriores noctes similes illis habituras esse!

Nefas sit si gratiae quoque meae carissimae familiae, a qua mihi multae disciplinae doctae ac praesidia data sunt, non dentur. Vos enim, pater materque sororque, me hominem qui ego hodie sim fecistis. Vobis utinam aliquando gratiam referre possim. Tandem, agem maximas gratias Salemini, meae comiti felinae, quae omnino memet mutavit. Spero aliud posterius tempus quo iterum tecum ero venturum esse.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### Initial Intentions

This thesis originally began as a survey of exilic literature with an ultimate goal of understanding how exile shapes the language of the author. My interests within Classics primarily concern language and identity; thus, this topic seemed the best way to explore how an exile's identity manifests through their writing.<sup>1</sup> Up to the point of writing the prospectus, I had already spent a considerable amount of time examining the traces of the author within their language. That is to say: the thoughts they present, the perceptions they hold, the construction of their argument, the goal of their writing, and the reader they have in mind. However, over the years, I have become interested in considering not only what was present in their language but, even more than that: what was *absent*. Although there is much to be said regarding what authors give us, it would be reductive to ignore what authors *keep* from us. Both must be considered simultaneously in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the author.

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<sup>1</sup> My combination of 'their,' a plural pronoun, and 'identity,' a singular noun, is not erroneous but, rather, complimentary to the topic and subjects I shall address. The epistolary genre is, naturally, riddled with juxtaposition. The letter is produced by the absence of presence but the letter itself then becomes a reminder of this same absence through its presence. The correspondents connect through the letter but, because of its transit through time and space, the moment of connection has already ended for the writer before it has even begun for the reader. Thus, presence and absence, connection and isolation, and seclusion and inclusion all occur simultaneously within the epistolary exchange. As I will discuss later, these writers acknowledge their separation from their addressees while also disregarding it at the same time (cf. *vale mea Terentia; quam ego videre videor*, *Fam.* 14.3; *talem te cernere possim / caraque mutatis oscula ferre comis / amplectique meis corpus non pingue lacertis*, *Pont.* 1.4.49-51; *nihil tibi subdixi ex malis tuis sed omnia coaceruata ante te posui*, *Helv.* 3). Moreover, the writers themselves interchange singularity and plurality often, by means of the *pluralis auctoris* and *pluralis modestiae* which expressed "sociative and inclusive values" through the use of the plural first person (Molinelli 69). The *pluralis reverentiae* was a "complementary strategy" to these through the "symmetrical use" of plural second person (Molinelli 70). For an in-depth understanding of the usage of the *pl. auctoris* and *pl. modestiae*, especially in Cicero, see Molinelli 67-80. In order to best represent this ever-present dichotomy, then, my language throughout this thesis shall too be a mixture of singularity and plurality.

Beyond this, I wanted to understand how culture affected one's language and identity. In my undergraduate experience, I had explored the development of cultural identity within Pompeii through the city's graffiti and architectural landscape. What I found was an everchanging presence of various cultural ideals and motifs. No one culture was dominant. Rather, there was, from the origin of Pompeii until its destruction, a continuance of newly introduced cultures assimilating with the ones already established. There were no physical indications of separation between the various cultures present, nor were there any linguistic divisions. Scattered throughout the city was evidence of this infusion. The aesthetics and usage of public buildings could be traced to several distinct cultures within the Mediterranean.<sup>2</sup> Likewise, the linguistic and literary customs of various cultures could be seen in the script and content of the city's wall graffiti.<sup>3</sup> Truly, the city was a melting pot. And, similar to my experience with language and identity, I grew interested in exploring the development of identity *removed* from society.

For the Romans, it is clear that the *urbs* served as a place of intermingling. Just as the architectural cityscape of Pompeii was a patchworked by-product of several cultures converging, Roman literature likewise emerged from the exchanging and interactions of authors on-and-off the page. It was a process of development both on the small-scale, in which authors crafted, edited, and shared their work with their associates, and on the large-scale, in which authors participated in the literary tradition by borrowing from, referencing, and acknowledging the literature and authors who came before them. But the exiled author would have been deprived of such interactions and, thus, would have wanted a way back in not only for themselves but also

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<sup>2</sup> See Cooley 117-136; Goodman 319-323; Laurence 401-405; 414-415.

<sup>3</sup> See Cooley 7-8, 11-16, 101-112; Lomas 225-231; Milnor "Literary Literacy in Roman Pompeii" 291-301; Milnor *Graffiti and the Literacy Landscape* 97-135.

for their writing. As such, the letter becomes a necessity for the exiled author. And, even more than that, I have realised that these exiled authors can only exist through the letter.

### Research Methodology

My selection of authors was influenced by my interest in comparative studies, as I wanted to explore what the relationship between the exile and the letter *could* look like. As such, my thesis focuses on the exilic epistles of three authors: Cicero, Ovid, and Seneca. I selected these authors for several reasons. First, not all of these authors were fortunate enough to be allowed to go back to Rome. Although Cicero and Seneca eventually returned, Ovid died in exile never having returned to Rome. Second, there was variance in the timelines of their exile. For one, Seneca and Ovid, who spent about eight years and ten years abroad respectively, experienced considerably longer exiles than Cicero, who was only gone for about a year.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, they did not go into exile at the same time.<sup>5</sup> Third, each author spent their exile in a different place.<sup>6</sup> Finally, by studying this selection of authors, I will be able to explore how their style of writing, as well as who they are writing to, plays a role in their portrayal of exile.

In order to narrow the scope of my study, I decided to limit the number of letters I examined for each author. For Cicero, I analysed his letters to his wife (*Epistulae ad Familiares*

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<sup>4</sup> There is not much difference concerning how old each exile was when they went into exile. Seneca was about thirty-five when his eight years of exile began (Basore viii), Ovid was about fifty when his ten began (Wheeler xvii), and Cicero, likewise, was about fifty when his eighteen months began (Shackleton Bailey 8).

<sup>5</sup> Cicero goes into exile “at the end of March” 58 B.C. (Williams *Letters to His Friends* xvii); Ovid in A.D. 8 (Wheeler xvi) sometime after March 20<sup>th</sup> (Wheeler xxxiv), and Seneca in “mid-year, A.D. 41” (Ferrill 256n4). Although there is only about a century which lapses between the earliest and latest of these dates, each occurs at a different phase in Rome’s turn from republic to empire.

<sup>6</sup> Cicero’s exilic journey takes him to several places: Brindisi, Thessalonica, and Dyrrachium (Williams *Letters to His Friends* xviii-xix). In comparison, Ovid, save for the description of his journey which took about half of a year (See Wheeler xxv-xxvi), remains in Tomis and Seneca in Corsica (Ferrill 254).

14.1, 14.2, 14.3, and 14.4);<sup>7</sup> for Ovid, the letters to his wife (*Epistulae ex Ponto* 1.4 and 3.1);<sup>8</sup> and, for Seneca, the consolation to his mother (*Consolatio ad Helviam*).<sup>9</sup> I chose to only look at the letters which were addressed to female family members because I wanted to understand 1) how their femininity affected what the exiles requested and 2) how the added familial aspect impacted the correspondence.<sup>10</sup>

Already there has been much discussion concerning the autobiographical representation of exilic experiences in Rome literature. Previous scholarship has considered several aspects of the effects of exile on an author; namely, the disturbance to space,<sup>11</sup> censorship of authorial voice,<sup>12</sup> and otherness of self.<sup>13</sup> In addition, the primary exile of interest within this scholarship tends to be Ovid, especially concerning close reading and analysis, with some comparison to the exilic literature from Cicero and Seneca. My thesis builds on this previous research by exploring

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<sup>7</sup> All sent in 58 B.C.: mid-November, early October, late November, and late April respectively (Williams *Letters to His Friends* 67, 63, 71, 59).

<sup>8</sup> Each composed sometime in A.D. 12-13 (Wheeler xxxv). It is important to mention here that Ovid did write more letters to his wife than just *Pont.* 1.4 and 3.1 (i.e., *Tr.* 1.6, 4.3, 4.4, 5.2, 5.5, 5.11, and 5.14); however, although both are epistolary collections, I decided against focusing on the epistles from the *Tristia* because the “recipients of the *Tristia* are not addressed by name” while the recipients of the Pontic Epistles are (Wheeler xxxvii). Since both Cicero and Seneca name those whom they are writing to, I believed it would be best to engage primarily with the Pontic Epistles.

<sup>9</sup> There appears to be a general consensus amongst scholars that “the chronology of Seneca’s writings is in most cases doubtful” (Basore xi). Thus, it should be no surprise that the exact dating of *Helv.* is uncertain; nevertheless, “it is generally agreed that it was written before the *Ad Polybium*” in A.D. 43 (Ferrill 256n4). Ferrill offers up two solutions: either “near the end” of Seneca’s “first year” in exile or “sometime after mid-year A.D. 42” during his second year of exile; the latter of the two he appears to favour (Ferrill 254).

<sup>10</sup> Even though the focus of my thesis concerns these particular letters, additional examination of related texts, either from these authors or others, was necessary to provide a well-rounded analysis of the motifs, themes, and language used.

<sup>11</sup> Scholars have examined both the authors’ place-of-exile as well as their travels and migrations during exile in discussions regarding displacement. For common exilic tropes concerning exilic displacement see Gaertner 14, Harrison 148-149, and Ingleheart 290-291. For further reading regarding exilic displacement see Gartner 1-21, Fantham 173-192.

<sup>12</sup> The very act of exile removes, or at the very least greatly diminishes, the ability of an author to communicate with their audience which, thus, disturbs the relationship between the author and the reader. By censoring the author, they are rendered “powerless” (McGowan 28). For further understanding of the authority of the author, especially within exile, as well as the right to speak see McGowan 5-28, Miller 229-230, Gaertner 16-17.

<sup>13</sup> This otherness-of-self manifests within both the exilic literature and the post-exilic literature of these authors. Scholarship has been primarily focused on Ovid regarding this otherness of self (see Fulkerson 1-18, Gaertner 155-172) however some work has also been done on Cicero (see Gaertner 15, Harrison 109-129).

the connections regarding the manifestation of exile within these authors' language alongside in-depth textual analysis of all three authors' exilic epistles. To be clear, I am not looking at the autobiographical representation of these exiles, but instead focusing on the construction of identity as a textual object. As such, my analysis is not concerned with the manifestation of the autobiographical person and exilic experience but rather the production of the textual self, or author, and the textual exilic experience.

### The Focus of the Argument

The primary purpose for this thesis, then, is the exploration of the epistle and the epistolary identity. For exiled individuals, letters provided the only physical place in which they, as writers, could interact with their readers, and their writing could engage with the literature of the Roman *urbs*. But the letter, like the exile, is limited in its capacity; for each is not free to exist without constraints. They are changed by time and space, and they must also depend upon others. Thus, my analysis is focused on how the epistolary identities of the writer and reader, as well as the epistolary exilic experience, is manifested through this deficient nature of the letter. In chapter one, I address the exile themselves as a writer within an epistolary exchange. Through close reading and supplementary epistolary theory, I analyse how the epistolary exile appears within the text as pieces of themselves and how the text of the letter becomes these pieces of the self. In Chapter two, I then address the requests that they make. In the analysis that I present, I argue that these requests are based on the pieces that we discovered in chapter one. The textual self of the letter is, seemingly, all that remains of these exiles. As such, their requests, necessarily, pertain to these pieces and what the reader needs to do with them once they receive the letter. In chapter three, I then consider the outcomes of their request and how that relates to the *fortuna* of the exile. It is there that we are to consider what happens to the reader and the

exile after the letter. Finally, in my conclusion, I provide final thoughts of these exilic letters especially regarding theory of the *abject* and the *simulacrum*. The argument I present shall thus propose that letters provide a temporary way for exiled authors, and their writing, to engage with that which is absent from them, such as their addressees and Rome itself.

## CHAPTER 2

### PIECES OF THE EXILE

The letter is, at its core, a moment of connection. As Stanley discusses, it is a “material” presence found within an absence.<sup>14</sup> Customarily, the letter is viewed as just a way to facilitate communication between the reader and writer during this absence; it is a meeting point in which the moment of connection can occur. Of course, when this meeting takes place, it is not the people writing the letters who meet but rather their textual selves. These textual selves do “take on some of the qualities or characteristics of the writer.”<sup>15</sup> However, even more than that, they are epistolary productions which have their own aspects and, further, are limited just like the letter itself.<sup>16</sup> The textual self which appears in the letter is not a complete version of the writer but rather a *piece* of the writer that has been transformed within its temporal and spatial transit.<sup>17</sup> As such, the writer is effectively fragmented since only pieces of themselves appear in the epistolary text. Given that the writers that I am studying are exiles, this fragmentation process occurs even more so. And this piece is what they offer to their readers through their letters.

In this chapter, I examine the textual self of the exile, namely what piece of themselves predominately appears in their writing, through an exploration of 1) the portrayals of their textual

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<sup>14</sup> Liz Stanley, “The Epistolarium: On Theorising Letters and Correspondences,” 207, 209. Stanley defines the letter as “a material document of some kind” which “signals its epistolary purpose through its form or structure by being addressed to one person and signed by another” and, as such, “signals an ‘epistolary intent’” (Stanley “The Epistolarium” 207).

<sup>15</sup> Stanley, “The Epistolarium,” 209.

<sup>16</sup> For information regarding the aspects of letters see Stanley, “The Epistolarium,” 202-203, 211-218.

<sup>17</sup> Stanley notes that “the letter that was written is rather different from the one that arrives and is read” since it is “changed by its travel in time and space, from the there-and-then of writing to the here-and-now of reading” (“The Epistolarium” 208). Nevertheless, there is a “present tense” that the letter always preserves (“The Epistolarium” 208). For further discussion on the temporal and spatial qualities see Altman 122-134.

selves, 2) descriptions of their exilic experience, and 3) the topics they focus on. My analysis reveals that for Cicero, through repeated mention of his corporeal responses, physical travel, and business affairs, the *corpus* is the piece within the text; for Seneca, through application of Stoic philosophy and *exempla* to explain his situation, the *mens* is the piece within the text; and for Ovid, through use of mythological characterisation and narrative to describe his exile, the *verbum* is the piece within the text.

### The *Corpus* of Cicero

Beginning with Cicero, we can observe the most concrete piece of the textual self: the body.<sup>18</sup> Cicero's letters to Terentia are filled with discussion regarding the present-day events that are happening not only to him but also to his family. His letters are not lengthy nor are they filled with substantial digressions that stray from the circumstances at hand. There are a few instances of extended deliberation, and even lamentations, but all of these nevertheless pertain to the strategies and tactics needed to rectify his banishment. Although most of his writing is concerned with updates on 1) his whereabouts and travels, 2) progress made in accomplishing his goals, and 3) plans moving forward, there are instances in which Cicero gives descriptions of his emotional state. In these we can observe a Cicero who is gradually becoming destroyed, a process which, seemingly, begins to reflect onto the letter itself.

When Cicero speaks about his emotions, he does so in a way that focuses on the physical manifestation of said emotions.<sup>19</sup> In each of the letters, he describes the physical distress he

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<sup>18</sup> In regard to 'most concrete': this is the piece which is the most tangible to the letter itself as well as the physical body. Further, for the physical body, it is the most visible.

<sup>19</sup> Forselius states that the arrival of letters, and their departure, are often "described as experiences with bodily impact" and whatever this impact may be is reflective of "the narrative" (Forselius 129). Thus, for Cicero whose narrative is characterised by grief, the impact on the body becomes an onslaught of tears- one which nearly incapacitates him. Further, the writer's "corporeal status" can often be "emphasised" when the "writing" itself is "interrupted by bodily functions," such as weeping (Forselius 130). As such, it is easy to recognise why Cicero's grief prevented him from performing his letter writing duties, a point which I will explain more in depth later on.

experiences due to his separation from his family. Even during the introductions of *Fam.* 14.2, 14.3, and 14.4, the distress of Cicero is clear:

*noli putare me ad quemquam longiores epistulas scribere, nisi si quis ad me plura scripsit, cui puto rescribi oportere; nec enim habeo, quod scribam, nec hoc tempore quidquam difficilius facio. ad te vero et ad nostram Tulliolam non queo sine plurimis lacrimis scribere.*<sup>20</sup>

“Do not think that I am writing longer letters to anyone, unless there would be anyone who has written more to me, for I think it would be right to write back to such a person. Indeed, I do not have anything which I could describe, nor would I do anything more difficult in this time. In truth, I am not able to write to you and to our Tullia without a multitude of tears.”<sup>21</sup>

*accepi ab Aristocrito tres epistulas, quas ego lacrimis prope delevi; conficior enim maerore, mea Terentia, nec meae me miseriae magis excruciant quam tuae vestraeque, ego autem hoc miserior sum quam tu, quae es miserrima, quod ipsa calamitas communis est utriusque nostrum, sed culpa mea propria est.*<sup>22</sup>

“I received from Aristocritus three letters, which I nearly destroyed with tears. Indeed, I am worn out by grief, my Terentia, and my troubles do not torment me more than the those of you and you all; I, however, am more wretched in this matter than you, who is the most miserable, are, since the loss itself is shared by both of us, but the fault is my own.”

*Ego minus saepe do ad vos litteras, quam possum, propterea quod cum omnia mihi tempora sunt misera, tum vero, cum aut scribo ad vos aut vestras lego, conficior lacrimis sic, ut ferre non possim.*<sup>23</sup>

“I deliver letters to you less often than I am able to for the reason that when all of my time is filled with distress, and then even more, when either I write to you or I read your letters, I crumble with tears in such a way that I am not able to bear.”

In each of these openings, we can see that epistolary Cicero is nearly incapacitated by his distress. He is not simply filled with “tears” (*lacrimis*, 14.2, 14.3, 14.4), but actually overwhelmed and even “destroyed” (*conficior*, 14.3 and 14.4) by them. Further, his grief not only affects himself but also his letters. In both 14.2 and 14.4, he confesses that his letter writing

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<sup>20</sup> Cic. *Fam.* 14.2.

<sup>21</sup> All translations are my own.

<sup>22</sup> Cic. *Fam.* 14.3.

<sup>23</sup> Cic. *Fam.* 14.4.

capabilities have been diminished by the grief he feels. Not only does Cicero send letters less often to his family than he is able to (cf. *minus saepe do ad vos litteras quam possum*, 14.4) but he also finds nothing more difficult (cf. *nec hoc tempore quidquam difficilius*, 14.2) than writing the letters. Following both of these instances, he explains that his letter writing is accompanied by tears and physical distress.<sup>24</sup> It is not that Cicero is not without tears while writing, but that Cicero is physically unable to write without tears accompanying the writing process.<sup>25</sup>

Further, it is not only the act of writing the letters that causes such distress but even the act of reading them. In 14.4, Cicero remarks that it is both the act of “writing” (*scribo*) and the act of “reading” (*lego*) that causes his tears. It seems as well that there is not just an inability to restrain himself fully but even an inability to restrain himself from the initial point of reading the letters. In 14.3, he states that as soon as he received the letters from Aristocritus, he nearly destroyed them with his tears (cf. *accepi ab Aristocritus quas ego lacrimis prope deleui*). The intensity of his grief is emphasized by verbs like *deleui*, as his grief becomes so great that it “nearly” (*prope*) physically destroys the limited connection he is able to have with Terentia. In this way, he and the letter become one. While his body becomes distressed and nearly incapacitated by his grief, so does the epistolary exchange.

This inability to control his physical state does not only reflect in his descriptions of his emotional well-being but also in other matters which he discusses throughout the rest of the

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<sup>24</sup> We can see this motif of overwhelming grief in Cicero’s exilic letters to his brother Quintus as well. In *QFr.* 1.3, he cites the “unending force of weeping and grieving” (*infinita vis lacrimarum et dolorum*) as the reason as to why his couriers have gone to Quintus “without any letters” (*sine litteris*). Interestingly, in the same letter, Cicero almost closes the gap between the writer and the reader when he remarks that the grief he feels when writing the letters is the same one which Quintus feels when he will read the letters (cf. *haec ipsa me quo fletu putas scripsisse? eodem quo te legere certo scio*).

<sup>25</sup> Similar phrasings can be seen in 14.1, when Cicero states that he is “unable to write the rest” (*non queo reliqua scribere*) because the “abundance of his tears is so much and [he] does not want to move [Terentia] to the same amount of grief” (*tanta vis lacrimarum est; neque te in eundem fletum adducam*), as well as in 14.4, when Cicero mentions again that he is “unable to write more” (*non queo plura iam scribere*) on account of his grief (cf. *impedit maerore*).

letters. Cicero writes at length about his physical location. His descriptions of physical location can be categorized into two groups: 1) instances where he is stationary and 2) instances where he is in motion. When Cicero writes about being stationary, it is a voluntary decision. Further, the stasis of location is underscored by the implication of safety towards Cicero's well-being. However, when Cicero is in motion, this appears to be travel that has been decided or necessitated by others. Additionally, there is often underlying danger presence in these instances:

*Dyrrhachium veni, quod et libera civitas est et in me officiosa et proxima Italiae; sed si offendet me loci celebritas, alio me conferam, ad te scribam.*<sup>26</sup>

“I have come to Dyrrachium since it is a free state as well as it is both serviceable to me and close to Italy; but if crowds of this place distress me, I will take myself elsewhere and I will write to you.”

*nam ego eo nomine sum Dyrrhachii hoc tempore, ut quam celerrime, quid agatur, audiam, et sum tuto; civitas enim haec semper a me defensa est. cum inimici nostri venire dicentur, tum in Epirum ibo.*<sup>27</sup>

“For I am at this place by the name of Dyrrachium, at this time, so that I might hear what is being done as quickly as possible, and I am safe; Indeed, this city has always been supported by me. When our enemies are said to be on the approach, then I will go to Epirus.”

*nos Brundisii apud M. Laenium Flaccum dies XIII fuimus, virum optimum, qui periculum fortunarum et capitis sui prae mea salute neglexit neque legis improbissimae poena deductus est, quo minus hospitii et amicitiae ius officiumque praestaret.*<sup>28</sup>

“We were in Brindisi for thirteen days at the house of M. Laenius Flaccus, a serviceable man, who was indifferent to the risk of his own fortunes and head—on behalf of my safety—and provided the service and custom of friendship in no way less than any other host would, not being influenced by any punishment of even the most corrupt code of law.”

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<sup>26</sup> Cic. *Fam.* 14.1.

<sup>27</sup> Cic. *Fam.* 14.3.

<sup>28</sup> Cic. *Fam.* 14.4. My translation of *fortuna*, and its synonyms (e.g., *sors*, *fama*, *casus*), shall fluctuate throughout in order to best capture its polyvalent nature. *Fortuna* yields things, both good and bad; likewise, it is used to refer to events, both past and future. The meaning of *fortuna*, and similar words, is adaptable and thus the translation of such words must, likewise, be unfixed.

*quas ego exspectassem Brundisii, si esset licitum per nautas, qui tempestatem praetermittere noluerunt.*<sup>29</sup>

“Which [letters] I would have awaited in Brindisi, if it had been allowed by the sailors, who did not want to pass by the favourable weather.”

Just like his inability to prevent his tears, Cicero has little ability to control his own travels during exile. This should come as no surprise given that involuntary displacement is the exilic existence.<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, Cicero's displacement does not merely end once he has left Rome. Rather, the necessity to leave his current location continues to be a trend. In 14.3, Cicero states that he will only go into Epirus once his enemies are said to approach (cf. *cum inimici nostri venire dicentur tum in Epirum ibo*).<sup>31</sup> Similarly, in 14.4, he mentions that he only left Brindisi on account of the “sailors” (*nautas*) who were with him. Prior to both of these instances, Cicero remarks on the advantages he is received while staying where he was. In 14.1, his initial reason for going to Dyrrachium was because it would be “serviceable to [him]” (*in me officiosa*) and “very close to Italy” (*proxima Italiae*). Dyrrachium was indeed an ideal location since, as he remarks in 14.3, he was not only “safe” (*tuto*) but also able to receive letters regarding what is being done at a quick rate. In Brindisi, he was able to stay with M. Flaccus, a man he considers to be “serviceable” (*optimum*, 14.4) given his willingness to “provide the service and custom of friendship” (*amicitiae ius officiumque praestaret*, 14.4) while waiting for more letters from Terentia. In both instances of stasis, Cicero is able to experience, even if only temporarily, safety

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> For Cicero, the displacement from Rome was indirectly encouraged rather than directly ordered. As Paternus explains in section 45 of *Historiae Romanae*: “[Publius Clodius] passed a law in his tribuneship forbidding the aid of water or fire to those who had killed any untried Roman citizens” (*legem in tribunatu tulit qui civem Romanum in indemnatum interemisset, ei aqua et igni interdiceretur*). He continues on to say that although “Cicero was not mentioned in the wording of the law” (*cuius verbis esti non nominabatur Cicero*), he was “the only one” (*solus*) whom it applied to.

<sup>31</sup> The threat of enemies is constant throughout Cicero's exile. In *Att.* 3.8, a letter to Atticus, he mentions that the plans to go to Epirus were thwarted because of “daring enemies” (*audacissimorum inimicorum*) who were said to be in “nearby Achaia” (*Achaia prope*).

for his body as well as the benefit of easier and quicker communication. Thus, it would be unlikely for Cicero to voluntarily leave places in which he receives such advantages.<sup>32</sup> Even though he can dictate his wishes to others, it is ultimately not up to him whether or not he stays in a particular location.

In this way, Cicero becomes one with the letter. Although he emphasises the advantages of staying in such places, he has little control over where and for how long he is able to stay or even who will have his letters in the end. This lack of control extends beyond Cicero as well to the members of his household. In 14.4, when updating Terentia on those who are traveling with him, Cicero mentions that he had to “send back” (*remisi*) one of his freedmen, Claudius Philetaerus, a “trusted man” (*hominem fidelem*) because he had been “weakened by the health of his eyes” (*valetudine oculorum impediabatur*).<sup>33</sup> And, beyond those that were travelling with him, he also speaks on his reaction to Terentia’s treatment back in Rome:

*nam ad me P. Valerius, homo officiosus, scripsit, id quod ego maximo cum fletu legi, quemadmodum a Vestae ad tabulam Valeriam ducta esses. hem, mea lux, meum desiderium, unde omnes opem petere solebant! te nunc, mea Terentia, sic vexari, sic iacere in lacrimis et sordibus...*<sup>34</sup>

“For P. Valerius, a practised man, wrote to me, which I read with the most tears, how you had been dragged from the Vestal Virgins to the Valerian Tabula. Oh, my light, my

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<sup>32</sup> Interestingly, in 14.1, Cicero does express a great desire to leave his current place of stay even though he is with Plancius, a man whom he describes as being “most serviceable” (*officiosissimus*). It is evident from the double repetition of *adhuc retinet* that he has not remained voluntarily with Plancius. Although Plancius has, seemingly, provided some benefit to Cicero during his exile, his reason for keeping him is actually for personal gain (cf. *sperat posse fieri ut mecum in Italiam decedet*, “He hopes that the situation will be able to happen in such a way that he would depart into Italy with me). Moreover, it is clear that Cicero believes that there is a greater possibility of misfortune if he stays there since the place is quite populated (cf. *ego volebam loco magis deserto esse in Epiro*, “I kept wishing that I would be in a place more solitary while in Epirus) and, seemingly, easy for his enemies to reach (cf. *quo neque Piso veniret nec milites*, “[a place] where neither Piso nor any soldiers would appear).

<sup>33</sup> Mail security seemed to be an ongoing concern for Cicero, even outside of his time in exile. Nicholson cites at least twenty instances of Cicero making some mention towards the lack of security in the mail system. The majority of these instances pertain to the trust that Cicero has towards the courier himself, rather than a worry of the letters being intercepted by someone else. Thus, Cicero was accustomed to send “sensitive letters via his own *tabellarii* or men well known to him as trust worth” (Nicholson 40). The loss of one of Cicero’s *hominem fidelem*, suggests that Cicero’s ability to continue sending sensitive correspondence will be affected as well.

<sup>34</sup> Cic. *Fam.* 14.2.

desire, from whom everyone used to seek aid! Now you, my Terentia, are thus harassed, and thus thrown into grief and the dirt...”

It is not only Cicero’s movement that is being caused by others nor it is only his body which is being distressed by the present circumstances, for Terentia is experiencing it too. Like Cicero whose movement was dictated by others, Terentia “had been led” (*ducta esses*) from the Temple of the Vestal Virgins.<sup>35</sup> Additionally, once she had left the temple, she had been “thrown in tears and the dirt” (*iacere in lacrimis et sordibus*), mimicking the lack of corporeal safety that Cicero experiences while he is in exile. Thus, through their lack of control over travel, Terentia and Cicero are linked. Further, they are linked by the physical manifestation of their distress. When Terentia is being thrown on the ground, she is also thrown “into tears” (*in lacrimis*). Likewise, while Cicero is reading the account he too is overcome by “grievous weeping” (*maximo cum fletu*).<sup>36</sup> Finally, both Terentia and Cicero seem to experience a similar disconnection in sharing information through letters. Just like Terentia must rely on the letter couriers to give word of her husband’s whereabouts, safety, and status, Cicero too must rely on others to find out about Terentia’s well-being back in Rome.

Beyond this, Cicero’s mentality is reflective of the epistolary self. There is always urgency within letter writing since letters are always trying to close that spatial and temporal gap

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<sup>35</sup> Epstein states that Clodia “continued to harass Terentia even after Cicero’s exile” which necessitated her taking “refuge with the Vestal Virgins” (Epstein 235). Interestingly, the two seem to truly mirror each other in this way. For, just as Cicero could not stay within the limits of Rome for fear of his own safety, Terentia too had to leave her house and stay with the Vestal Virgins. Moreover, just as Cicero, outside of Rome, had to leave cities because of others, Terentia too, outside of her home, was forced to depart from the temple. Edwards notes that even when Cicero was not in exile, his letters “provide a graphic illustration of the ways in which the forum might be disturbing” (Edwards 185). Despite the apparent lack of safety or even peace within Rome, Cicero nevertheless “insistently [highlighted] the centrality of Rome, as a place, to his own identity” (Edwards 185).

<sup>36</sup> The use of tears here as a shared experience between Cicero and Terentia bears similarity to the use of tears in 14.1 (*non queo reliqua scribere, tanta vis lacrimarum est, neque te in eundem fletum adducam*). In the former, they are connected by the *presence* of mutual tears which accompany their travelling experiences; in the latter, they are connected by the *absence* of mutual tears which accompany their epistolary experiences as writer and reader. This dichotomy between presence and absence may reflect the limitations of the letter and the epistolary self.

which had necessitated them in the first place. Part of this urgency comes from the fact that all letters have the “desire to be reached.”<sup>37</sup> Likewise, there is “agitation” found within the epistolary genre, for letters are the most capable in being “lost.”<sup>38</sup> Just like Cicero’s travels, he has no control over and through his epistolary communication. Once his letters leave his hands, there is the possibility for them to be left undelivered, either intentionally or unintentionally. In the same way, once his requests leave his hands, it is no longer up to him for them to be fulfilled. Cicero is not merely separated from his agency, but he is separated by several degrees. For his agency must travel through at least the letter, the mail courier, and Terentia in order for it to be able to act. Cicero’s autonomy, thus, only exists through the actions, and even *bodies*, of others. Just like his travels, Cicero must rely on others for nearly everything.

### The *Mens* of Seneca

Moving to Seneca, we then observe another piece of the textual self: the mind.<sup>39</sup> For Seneca, the exilic experience is defined by the thought process. And, like Cicero, his experience bleeds into the epistolary self he presents to his mother. Unlike Cicero, however, Seneca is less concerned with himself. Cicero’s text focuses on personal accounts, which is to say, the experiences of himself or his family, quotes from his correspondents, and matters relating to his household. Seneca’s text, however, focuses on others. Although he references some of his own thoughts and experiences, these are all backed by those of others. Likewise, the primary focus of

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<sup>37</sup> As Hallett asserts, this “desire to be reached” concerns itself with not only the physical transmission of the letter but also the literary transmission of it (Hallett 108).

<sup>38</sup> Because letters “are of the moment,” there is a preserved temporal present that the writer *wants* the reader to experience (Hallett 108). Despite this, letters are unable to depart from the “continuous time schemes” in which they are transmitted (Hallett 109). For, there is “no amount of clever composition” that can overcome this “time-delay of transit” (Hallett 109). Thus, the epistle must necessarily be written with “approximation” kept in mind (Hallett 111). We see echoes of Stanley’s description of the temporal qualities of letters in these assertions (Stanley “The Epistolarium” 208).

<sup>39</sup> Between the three pieces that I will present within this chapter, this is the least concrete in that it is the least tangible between both the letter and the physical body. My analysis for Seneca that follows, along with comparison to Ovid and Cicero, will reveal how this affects the content of his letters.

the letter is his mother, not himself.<sup>40</sup> For Seneca's letter is not one concerned with agency towards his exilic status. Rather it is concerned with his mother's reaction to his exilic status.

As a Stoic, Seneca's mind is unchanged by his new circumstances, a matter which I will return to later. However, he recognises that his mother's mind is not the same and in order to grapple with and soothe her grief, he must teach her to think like a Stoic. Thus, he must present himself, as well as exile itself, as a case study which can be then analysed and understood through the *exempla* of others.

His letter to his mother is, in some ways, uncharacteristic to the standards of the epistle. Rather, it is modelled in the style of an educational doctrine. The introduction lacks a salutation and instead begins immediately with an overview of the task at hand. Likewise, there is no conclusion but rather a final lesson as to how his mother should think of him specifically. The document is singular and lengthy, for Seneca must be thorough in his approach to disproving the thought process of his mother. He breaks down her affliction into a series of symptoms and ailments which he states that he will try to set a "limit" (*modum*, §1) to. Seneca's use of *modum* here is important as Seneca is not attempting to rid his mother completely of her grief but rather to set limits to it, in order to prevent excessive grieving. Already, before Seneca begins his argument, the text is imbued with undertones of Stoic thought.

Seneca's language is direct and unadorned from the start of the letter where he explains what he will attempt to do, why he will attempt it, and even why he has delayed his attempt thus far. It is in this initial portion of the letter that Seneca admits that his delay was partially caused by a lack of mastery of the subject at hand. Not only did Seneca have no faith in his own

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<sup>40</sup> This is, of course, according to Seneca himself who begins the letter with an admission of his persistent desire to console his mother, even though he has often ignored it up to this point (cf. *saepe iam, mater optima, impetum cepi consolandi te, saepe continui*, §1).

*ingenium* (cf. *non fiducia ingenii*, §1) he also was unable to find any others who had undertaken this exact task of consoling their own relatives (cf. *non inueniebam exemplum eius qui consolatus suos esset, cum ipse ab illis comploraretur*, §1).<sup>41</sup> Although Seneca was unable to find exact *exempla* to apply in his teaching and offer as “remedies” (*remedia*, §1) for his mother; he, nevertheless, was able to take pieces of *exempla* to apply to the various components of his predicament. This combined patchwork of doctrine he is then able to present and teach to his mother, with the hope that she can apply his methodology and learn how to set limits to her own grief.

Seneca employs pieces of solutions because he himself understands that there is no ultimate cure for the situation at hand. Even if he is successful in his consolation of his mother, he will still be apart from her so long as he is in exile. Thus, through the doctrine of the letter alone will she be able to alleviate her ailments. While physical separation between the two remains, there is possibility for a mental reunification if his mother is able to be persuaded and taught by the methodology of Seneca. Beyond this, as Seneca claims later on, if one can withstand “any one piece of fate” (*unam quamlibet partem fortunae*, §13) then they can withstand “everything” (*omnis*, §13). As such, even if Seneca is unable to address and rectify all components of his mother’s grief, he will give her the knowledge she needs to withstand others.

Seneca’s argument begins with an acknowledgement of the physical separation caused by his exile with discussion of the ultimate physical separation: death. He presents his mother’s own

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<sup>41</sup> Seneca’s use of *ingenium* with *exemplum* here is noteworthy. Although *ingenium* commonly refers to one’s “temperament” (*OLD* s.v. “ingenium” def. 1) or “character” (*OLD* s.v. “ingenium” def. 2), it also could be used to describe one as “having (good) mental powers” (*OLD* s.v. “ingenium” def. 4b) or one who is “a man of literary abilities” (*OLD* s.v. “ingenium” def. 5b). This last definition is the most interesting because *ingenium* has connections to the style of one’s composition elsewhere in Latin literature (see Cic. *Fam.* 5.12). Thus, just as Seneca lacks the natural, and even *mental*, capabilities to teach his mother, his text lacks true *exempla* of the task at hand. Further, as Gazzarri argues, Seneca believes that “being a good writer” and being “a good master” thus “amounts to being able to furnish good representations, and to fundamentally didactic concern” (Gazzarri 108).

experiences as his first *exemplum* of the letter, cataloguing each of the people she has lost. He begins this list with her own mother:

*amisisti matrem statim nata, immo dum nasceris, et ad uitam quodam modo exposita es. Creuisti sub nouerca, quam tu quidem omni obsequio et pietate, quanta uel in filia conspici potest, matrem fieri coegisti.*<sup>42</sup>

“You lost your mother immediately after being born, no doubt while you were being born, and in this kind of way you were exposed to life. You grew up under a stepmother, whom you certainly encouraged to become a mother through all obedience and dutifulness as much as would even be able to be seen in her true daughter.”

During her own birth there were two physical separations. The first was the natural separation that occurs during birth: the baby leaving the womb of the mother. However, the second was unnatural, for it was the separation of her mother from life itself. Seneca argues that because she was born “in this kind of way” (*quodam modo*), she was born “exposed” (*exposita*). The physical separation here is emphasised by the same adverb, *statim*, which Cicero uses to describe his travelling letter-couriers in 14.3.

Following this, Seneca mentions the stepmother who then replaced the mother that Helvia had lost. He states that she was only made into a stepmother by Helvia herself. For it was through Helvia’s “obedience and dutifulness” (*obsequio et pietate*) that “[she] was compelled to become a mother” (*matrem fieri coegisti*). In this way, Seneca begins to lay the foundation for his own role for his mother within the letter. Although, very often, it is the parent who passes down teachings to the child, in both Seneca’s and his mother’s situations there has been a reversal of these roles.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Sen. *Helv.* 2.

<sup>43</sup> Seneca references this reversal of roles later when he states that if his mother had been educated in the school of thought like Seneca had been, then it would not have been him who presents them to her but rather she who presents them to him. Despite her lack of formal higher education, she, nevertheless, holds the “foundation needed for all intellectual pursuits,” (*disciplinarum omnium fundamenta*, §17); a foundation which Seneca recommends she return to (*ad illas revertere*, §17). For, through them “alone” (*sola*, §17) will she be able to endure the effects of “fate” (*fortunae*, §17).

After listing several other *exempla*, Seneca then lists himself as a loss through exile, which she had to hear about (cf. *raptum me audisti*, §2). Although he admits that she must now weep for the living (cf. *hoc adhuc defuerat tibi, lugere vivos*, §2), he nevertheless equates his exilic physical separation to the previous mortal separations in order to provide a reason to cure her of her sorrow. As he states, she is a veteran to physical loss (cf. *nullam tibi fortuna vacationem dedit a gravissimis luctibus*, §2). Unlike “new recruits who shudder more at the hands of doctors than at the hands of enemies” (*quemadmodum tirones leuiter saucii tamen uociferantur et manus medicorum magis quam ferrum horrent*, §3), veterans, instead, endure their treatment (cf. *ueterani quamuis confossi patienter*, §3).<sup>44</sup> As such, his mother should be more willing to submit to treatment and learn from the doctrine of her son than be unwilling to do so; just as recruits and veterans alike need to be tended to, so does his mother. He acknowledges that it is not enough to merely comfort her with empty consolations or even to ignore the situation (cf. *nihil tibi subduxi ex malis tuis, sed omnia coaceruata ante te posui*, §3) or trick her mind entirely (cf. *ideo melius est uincere illum quam fallere, nam qui delusus et uoluptatibus aut occupationibus abductus est resurgit et ipsa quiete impetum ad saeuendum colligit*, §17). Rather he must traverse the argument of sorrow head-on (cf. *ecquid uideor non timide tecum egisse? nihil tibi subduxi ex malis tuis, sed omnia coaceruata ante te posui*, §3) and reason with said argument (cf. *at quisquis rationi cessit, in perpetuum componitur*, §17).

Seneca's doctrine which follows is reliant upon a few core Stoic beliefs. First, the only things which can be stripped away are ones that a person is attached to. Without attention or reliance upon these things, no one can be deprived of anything. Further, these things are ones

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<sup>44</sup> Even in Seneca's literature outside of exile there were connections between medical healing and literary style. Gazzarri notes that Seneca often rejected of “a ticklish style, in favour of a ‘surgical one’” (Gazzarri 202) and that exile itself was described to be a “torture of disease” (Gazzarri 108). For a detailed overview on the links between medicine and style, see Gazzarri 90-122.

that did not belong to anyone in the first place. Thus, you cannot be deprived of anything you never had.

Second, the term *exilium* simply means “a change of place” (cf. *loci commutatio*, §6). By reducing the word down to this simple meaning, Seneca is able to explain how it is an event which most, if not all others, in the ancient world experience at least once in their lifetimes. He argues that the world itself is composed of a series of changes and that there is no place which lacks these changes. As such, the exilic experience is actually the same experience as everyone else. In fact, Seneca seemingly argues for the necessity of movement, since the body, when stagnant and sheltered, is cut off from the true thing it needs: *natura*.<sup>45</sup> This argument is strengthened with Seneca’s assertion that the “body” (*corpusculum*, §11) is the “confinement and restraint of the mind” (*custodia et vinculum animi*, §11). It is the focus on “terrestrial things” (*terrena*, §9) which cuts people off from “whatever is equally evident and abundant everywhere” (*quae ubique aequae apparent, ubique aequae splendent*, §9).<sup>46</sup>

This concept of wandering is not limited solely to mankind and the civilizations they inhabit but is actually a natural phenomenon found throughout the entire universe. As Seneca posits, mankind is no different since our souls are composed of the same seeds as the celestial bodies. Just as people move throughout their lives, so too do the planets and stars traverse

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<sup>45</sup> Seneca asserts this in two ways. First, in section nine, he addresses humanity’s excessive attempts in “shielding” (*abscondat*) themselves from the celestial sky (*caelum*): “How much longer they build out their porticos, how much taller they raise their turrets, how much wider they stretch out their neighbourhoods, how much deeper they dig ditches for summertime, how much heavier they put up fastigia for their dining rooms” (*quo longiores porticus expedierint, quo altius turres sustulerint, quo latius uicos porrexerint, quo depressius aestiuos specus foderint, quo maiori mole fastigia cenationum subdlexerint, hoc plus erit quod illis caelum abscondat*, §9). Second, when Seneca addresses the needs of the body, he emphasises repeatedly the trivialness of them all (*corporis exigua desideria sunt*, §10). Although the body “wants to remove the cold” (*frigus summoveri vult*, §10), it does not need to do so by elaborate or ornate clothing (*sed desiderat saturatam multo conchylio purpuram, intextam auro uariisque et coloribus distinctam et artibus*, §11).

<sup>46</sup> Throughout antiquity, there is a consistent connection between the cosmos and divinity and virtue (see Russell for more on the likenesses between the three). Thus, by cutting oneself off from the cosmos, the thing which links us to both divinity and to virtue, you cut yourself off from virtue itself.

celestial space and all of these corporal bodies are, naturally, in constant motion.<sup>47</sup> This experience extends beyond time, as well, as even the founder of Rome himself had been an exile.<sup>48</sup> It is in this *exemplum* that Seneca asserts “wherever the Roman conquers, he lives” (*ubicumque vicit Romanus, habitat*, §7). Thus, the plight of the exile—the change of location—is a universal and shared experience. However, it is clear that “to the learned man every place can be a fatherland” (*omnem locum sapienti viro patriam esse*, §9).

It is this claim which allows me to introduce Seneca’s final core belief: the physical world holds no limits on the mind. As a Stoic, Seneca wants himself, and Helvia, as his student, to focus on “the activities of the mind” because it is “what is under their control.”<sup>49</sup> Throughout the consolation, Seneca continues to reassert the necessity to focus on the mind since the “mind itself is sacred and eternal” (*animus quidem ipse sacer et aeternus est*, §11), and is thus unable to be touched (cf. *cui non possit iniri manus*, §11).<sup>50</sup> Truly, it is one of the two things which are “one’s own and unending” (*propria nobis et perpetua*, §8).<sup>51</sup> Further, it is what allows one to transcend

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<sup>47</sup> Not only do these celestial bodies move but their “motion” is within “orbits” and is “orderly and reconciled” (Russell 242). Indeed, even though we are “out of harmony when we start life,” as Russell asserts, “we stabilise the straying revolutions within ourselves by imitating the completely unstraying revolutions” of the universe (Russell 242-243). This imitation of the orderly cosmos, for the instruction of the unlearned person, alongside the connection between the cosmos, divinity, and virtue, is reflective of the relationship between the student and Stoic teacher. Thus, just as the soul must take after the wiser and more rational celestial bodies, Helvia too must imitate her son in his line of thought.

<sup>48</sup> In section seven, Seneca mentions several others as *exempla* for founders of civilisations being previously exiled from other civilisations. He lists Antenor, Evander, Diomedes, and acknowledges that beyond these, there are “others” (*aliosque*, §7) who were exiles turned founders. Moreover, he “observes that victors and vanquished alike were scattered throughout strange lands by the Trojan War” (Stephens 296). As such, there it is clear that there is nothing inherently bad, or good, about displacement. Rather, it is about “how he conducts himself in exile that is either good or bad, noble, or base, honourable or dishonourable” (Stephens 295).

<sup>49</sup> Holtz 182. This shared journey between the teacher and the student, the “proficiens” (Holtz 163) as Holtz states, is one that is seen throughout Seneca’s literature and is noted by many scholars. See Star on the parallels between Jupiter and the sage as well as Claassen and Russo on the mutual benefit of studies for dispelling grief.

<sup>50</sup> It is a “Stoic view” that “only the body can be banished” (Stephens 297). Indeed, although the exile’s body will experience a change of location” (*loci mutatio*, §6), there will be no change of mind (cf. *nec quicquam in animo eius mutavit loci mutatio*, §10) since the mind is what follows men into exile, into the harshest of solitudes (*hic in exilia sequitur et in solitudinibus asperrimis*, §11).

<sup>51</sup> The other of these is the natural world (cf. *mundus hic, quo nihil neque maius neque ornatius rerum natura genuit*, §8).

1) their present physical location, in order to reach every heaven (cf. *circa omne caelum it*, §11), and 2) their present temporal placement, in order to go beyond “every past and future time (*omne praeteritum futurumque tempus inmittitur*, §11). Thus, the mind is the singular way through which any person is able to ascend and prevail, for it will never stray. Without a strengthened mind which has been shaped by adversity, one will fail as soon as they falter. Likewise, without such a mind, anyone who believes that they are bound by the limits of the physical world is doomed to succumb and waste away.

The arguments which then follow these initial beliefs are composed of a series of claims, introduced either through direct quotations or experiences of another or through rhetorical questions from Seneca himself. When these claims are introduced as direct quotations, Seneca backs them and expands upon the ideas presented. However, when they are posed as rhetorical questions, Seneca instead counters and proposes more rational or sensible thinking. By introducing the claims in such a way, Seneca is able to create a foundation of trust towards the claims he provides citations for and doubt towards the ones which are left uncited.<sup>52</sup> This perhaps reflects a suggestion that Seneca offers during the introduction of the letter in which he supposes that his mother will be able to trust his consolations because it is Seneca himself who offers them.

In this way, Seneca lays the foundation for the presentation of his epistolary self. Rather than being one bound by the body and trapped by his physical separation, Seneca’s epistolary self is one that can become solely mind. Unlike Cicero, whose body becomes linked with the text and the letter itself, it is in fact the mind of Seneca which forms this link. Thus, without the

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<sup>52</sup> Further, when Seneca cites another, he often qualifies their abilities in order to emphasise the importance they hold to Seneca’s argument. Often, the abilities that are mentioned highlight the individual’s intellectualism.

limitation of the physical body, Seneca can then address the true task at hand: dispelling the grief of his mother. Seneca's text is not only reflective of the Stoic mind but, really, it is reflective of Seneca's *usage* of the Stoic mind as a teacher. Just as any person has no need for the body and should instead turn their focus to the mind, Seneca's text too focuses on the mind and limits its attention to the body.

### The *Verbum* of Ovid

Ovid's exilic epistles, then, bear the final piece of the textual self: the words. The Ovid that we meet is one whose story is all that remains of him. As such, his body and mind are exhausted and nearly absent from the page. He focuses on the exilic narrative in his letters and the format of the letters reflects this. Even though the content of Ovid's letters is similar to that of Cicero's, as he describes his travels, his emotional state, and his overall separation from Rome, his exilic state is much more stagnant. While Cicero's body and Seneca's mind are still able to travel beyond the limits of their exile, Ovid's body and mind are instead stuck in Tomis.

Although Ovid's body and mind cannot escape the bounds of exile, he asserts that his works, and therefore his words, will live on beyond him and will give him perpetual fame.<sup>53</sup> Through his words, then, Ovid is able to overcome his temporal and spatial limitations. Like Seneca, Ovid's text is supplemented by the experiences of others. However, unlike Seneca, who cites real people and gives them as teaching *exempla*, Ovid uses fictional, mythological characters to narrate his own exilic experiences. As such, Ovid's epistolary self becomes enmeshed with the text as a narratological character. Ovid's actions, and, thus, his words, are no

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<sup>53</sup> We see another instance of Ovid proclaiming the longevity of his words following his epitaph in *Tr.* 3.3. Ovid's epitaph is simple, only composed of four lines, for he asserts that his "books will be better and more long-lasting monuments" (*maiora libelli / et diuturna magis sunt monimenta*, ll. 77-78) for him. Further, through them, he will gain "esteem" (*nomen*, l. 80) and a "long lifetime" (*tempora longa*, l. 80). Indeed, although Ovid's body and mind have now died, his words themselves will continue to live on and, moreover, his books will provide both physical and temporal permanence.

longer his own but rather ones of a mythological character. His narrative itself becomes mythological, and, further, has the ability to take on fame. It is the fame of his myth that grants permanency to Ovid:

*Exposuit memet populo Fortuna uidendum  
et plus notitiae quam fuit ante dedit.  
Notior est factus Capaneus a fulminis ictu,  
notus humo mersis Amphiaraus equis.  
Si minus errasset, notus minus esset Vlixes,  
magna Philoctetae uulnere fama suo est.  
Si locus est aliquis tanta inter nomina paruis,  
nos quoque conspicuos nostra ruina facit.*<sup>54</sup>

“Fame has made me available to the public  
and she has given me more notoriety than there was before.  
Capaneus was made more well-known by the strike of lightning,  
Amphiaraus, known after his horses plunged into the ground.  
If he had wandered less, Ulysses would have been less known,  
the great fame of Philoctetes exists because of his wounding.  
If there’s any room for the insignificant among such names,  
my ruin too makes me visible.”

Indeed, it is through his “fame” (*fortuna*) that Ovid will become “visible” (*videndum*) again “to the public” (*populo*). Although Ovid is able to gain some agency through *fortuna*, Ovid nevertheless remains a character within the narrative. *Fortuna*, as the subject, is the one who has true agency over what will happen, not Ovid himself. Ovid’s mythological character’s lack of agency is emphasised through the listing of four others who gained fame for their narratives. Although the first three, Capaneus, Amphiaraus, and Ulysses, are subjects of their own clauses, they do not perform the verbs of their respective clauses. Rather, each is acted upon by a passive verb (cf. *est factus*; *notus [est]*; *errasset* and *notus...esset*), taking the agency out of their own hands.<sup>55</sup> One might argue that Ovid was granting agency towards these characters by making

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<sup>54</sup> Ov. *Pont.* 3.1.49-56.

<sup>55</sup> This idea of the character lacking overall agency in comparison to their myth is underscored by the word order, as the verbal agency of each line, i.e., the fame of their myth (cf. *notior*; *notus*; and *notus*), occurs at least one

them the subjects, since *fortuna* itself was also the subject of its own clause; however, given that *fortuna* governs an active verb and these characters govern passive verbs, it is more likely that Ovid was attempting to make a distinction between their fame, which has already been realised, and his own fame, which yet-to-be-realised. Unlike the first three, whose mythological narratives had already been widespread, Ovid's narrative, and thus his mythology, was still being written at the time of the letter. This reading of the text can be understood from the last two lines, in which Ovid compares the "meagreness" (*parvis*) of his own name to the "magnitude" (*tanta*) of their "names" (*nomina*).

Ovid's choice of these mythological characters is reflective of the fate that Ovid believes he has been given, and the fame he perhaps hopes to receive. He does not name characters who have been hailed as heroes, or even ones who have been renowned for their great deeds. Rather, Ovid uses ones who have been marked by their erring. Capaneus and Amphiarus, from Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes*, were both known for their attempts to transgress their own fates. Although Amphiarus does display hubris (cf. ἀνοσίοισι συμμιγείς / θρασυστόμοισιν ἀνδράσιν βία φρενῶν, l. 611-612), his primary transgression is his reluctance to yield to his own

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full foot before the name of the character. Additionally, by placing their resulting renown before giving their names, Ovid is perhaps asserting the inherent agency of fate itself. For, all of these characters could not escape their fates and had to instead face it head on.

fate.<sup>56</sup> For Ovid, Amphiarus represents the “vanity of flight.”<sup>57</sup> Like Amphiarus, Ovid is constrained by his own fate. Nevertheless, as DeVito asserts, “there is a margin” in which he can “make [a] decision” and choose how he responds, “to what fate offers.”<sup>58</sup> Thus, although Ovid cannot escape his exilic fate (cf. *nostra ruina*), he can instead choose to allow it the chance of offering him a place “among the names” (*inter nomina*) of other renowned mythological characters.

On the other hand, Capaneus’ transgression is seemingly more hubristic and antagonistic towards the divine will of the gods themselves, especially that of Zeus.<sup>59</sup> It is important to note that all of Capaneus’ hubristic actions are accompanied by equally hubristic speech, rather than pure action (cf. κόμπος, l. 425; ἀπειλεῖ, l. 426; φησιν, l. 428; προσήκασεν, l. 431). Further,

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<sup>56</sup> In many variations of *Seven Against Thebes*, Amphiarus is said to be initially hesitant in joining the battle because he was “faced with the prospect of certain death at Thebes’ walls” (DeVito 168) and then, because of his fate, to flee from the battle and die in flight. However, as DeVito notes, “Aeschylus neglects the mythological tradition that Amphiarus fled from Thebes and was swallowed up by the earth at Zeus’ command before receiving a spear in the back” (DeVito 168). Although Amphiarus does not flee in Aeschylus’ version, there is a singular reference to this tradition in ll. 615-617: “I think thus that he would not attack the gates, not because of a lack of courage nor because of a weakness of will, but he knew that it would be necessary for him to die in the fight, if the prophecy of Loxian Apollo would come for those to whom it is ordained” (δοκῶ μὲν οὖν σφε μὴδὲ προσβαλεῖν πύλαις / οὐχ ὥς ἄθυμος οὐδὲ λήματος κάκῃ / ἄλλ’ οἶδεν ὥς σφε χρὴ τελευτῆσαι μάχῃ / εἰ καρπὸς ἔσται θεσφάτοισι Λοξίου). Aeschylus’ syntax here emphasises the inherent imbalance in the relationship between the will of mankind and the will of fate. All that Amphiarus can do is “know” (οἶδεν) what is to come since he does not hold any true power over it. Additionally, Aeschylus’ use of χρὴ emphasises the intrinsic force of fate.

<sup>57</sup> Regarding the “vanity of flight,” DeVito states that there is a “paradoxical idea” of “futility” and “possibility of action” found in *Seven Against Thebes* (DeVito 170). Although Amphiarus initially tries to avoid fate, he nevertheless “resolves to act in compliance with fate” and “actively chooses to die in battle” (DeVito 168). DeVito argues that his decision “demonstrates that fate and the will of the gods, while binding and inescapable, do not determine a man’s response to what fate offers” (DeVito 168).

<sup>58</sup> DeVito, 168 and 170. Amphiarus’ decision is defined by his preoccupation with his “sense of honour” (DeVito 169). Since “it is vain to attempt to escape one’s fate,” Amphiarus instead must “meet what awaits him in the most honourable way possible” (DeVito 171).

<sup>59</sup> The messenger reports the following: “His boasting is not mindful of his own mortality, he threatens terrible things, which chance should not fulfil, against our city walls: for, he says that he will sack the city both with the gods willing it and without the gods willing it, and not even will he shy away from a strife, which would happen at his feet on the ground, with Zeus. He compared his lightning bolts and thunderous strikes to the heat at noon: His shield bears not only an unadorned, fire-bearing man but also the torch, readied in his hands, burning, and it even delivers the words ‘I will burn the city’ in gilded writing” (ὁ κόμπος δ’ οὐ κατ’ ἄνθρωπον φρονεῖ, / πύργοις δ’ ἀπειλεῖ δεινόν, ἃ μὴ κραίνουσι τύχῃ / θεοῦ τε γὰρ θέλοντος ἐκπέρσειν πόλιν / καὶ μὴ θέλοντός φησιν, οὐδὲ τὴν Διὸς / ἔριν πέδοι σκῆψασαν ἐμποδῶν σχεθεῖν. / τὰς δ’ ἀστραπάς τε καὶ κεραυνίους βολὰς / μεσημβρινοῖσι θάλπεσιν προσήκασεν: / ἔχει δὲ σῆμα γυμνὸν ἄνδρα τυρφόρον, / φλέγει δὲ λαμπὰς διὰ χειρῶν ὥπλισμένη: / χρυσοῖς δὲ φωνεῖ γράμμασιν ‘πρήσω πόλιν’, ll. 425-434).

Capaneus' shield too "utters" (φωνεῖ, l. 434) its "written inscription" (γράμμασιν, l. 434) and bears the image of a "naked, fire-bearing man" (γυμνὸν ἄνδρα πυρφόρον, l. 432), a common motif of mortal transgressions originating from the story of Prometheus.<sup>60</sup>

This strife between the boastful Capaneus and Zeus reflects the strained relationship between Ovid and Augustus. In the *Tristia*, we can see that it was indeed Ovid's words that caused his exile.<sup>61</sup> Ovid's actions, like Capaneus, are marked by repetitive reference to his words (*carmen; silenda; turpi carmine; arguor*). Further, like Capaneus' words, which transgress mortal bounds, Ovid's poem was "shameful" (*turpi*) because he was seen as a "teacher of obscene adultery" (*obsceni doctor adulterii*).<sup>62</sup> As such, just as the boasts of Capaneus directly attacked the power of Zeus (cf. τὰς δ' ἀστραπάς τε καὶ κεραυνίους βολὰς, 1.430), the words within Ovid's poem directly attacked the power of Augustus. Similarly, just as Zeus, who

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<sup>60</sup> Ceccarelli states that this kind of written inscription, one which "mark[s] the message" of its user, only appears on two other shields: those of Eteocles and Polynices (Ceccarelli 192). For each of the three, the shield's "the letters function in the same way as images" and "[transpose] the living aggressivity of the warriors...into [permanent graphic signs]" (Ceccarelli 192). Just like these shields, Ovid's letters transform his exilic narrative, and Ovid himself, into permanent graphic signs for his readers. Further, Ovid seemingly references this motif of audacity through fire-use, especially within the story of Prometheus, in *Tristia* 2, ll. 267-268: "What is more useful than fire? Still, if anyone would prepare to burn up buildings, they would furnish their bold hands with fire" (*igne quid utilius? siquis tamen urere tecta / comparat, audaces instruit igne manus*). His use of *instruit* is reminiscent of the instruction of fire-use from Prometheus onto humans.

<sup>61</sup> *Tr.* 2.207-212: "Since two faults have ruined me, a poem and a wrongdoing, the fault of the latter deed must be unspoken by me, for they are not so great, that I would tear open your wounds, Caesar, for whom its more than enough to be troubled at one time. The former fault, concerning which I was censured as a teacher of obscene adultery by a shameful poem, remains" (*perdiderint cum me duo crimina, carmen et error / alterius facti culpa silenda mihi / nam non sum tanti, renovem ut tua vulnera, Caesar, / quem nimio plus est indoluisse semel / altera pars superest, qua turpi carmine factus / arguor obsceni doctor adulterii*). Elsewhere in *Tristia* 2 we can observe continued references to the hubristic nature behind Ovid's poem (cf. *turbaque doctorum Nasonem novit et audet / non fastiditis adnumerare viris*, ll. 119-120; *et tamen ausus eram; sed detrectare videbar / quoque nefas damno viribus esse tuis*, ll. 337-338).

<sup>62</sup> Several laws were imposed during Augustus' reign, each designed to "curb" immoral acts in society (Frank, "Augustus' Legislation on Marriage and Children," 44; cf. Frank 43-48 for familial and marital laws). A few of the laws pertained to Roman marriages and families, such as the "*lex Iulia*" law which addressed "adultery" (Frank 44). Frank stresses the significance of these laws "[not being passed] by the Senate but rather by the Tribal Assembly" because it meant that "Augustus used his tribunician authority to have these laws enacted" (Frank 47-48). Interestingly, Ovid's "actions were not condemned by the decree of the senate" (*nec mea decreto damnasti facta senatus*, *Tr.* 2.131). Like the laws passed, Augustus himself took action (cf. *tristibus invecus verbis—ita principe dignum— / ultus es offensas, ut decet, ipse tuas*, *Tr.* 2.133-134).

avenges himself against Capaneus, Augustus too “avenges” (*ultus*) himself against Ovid. The connection between Augustus and divinity, especially that of Zeus, can be seen elsewhere in *Tristia*. In *Tr.* 2.37-40, Ovid draws comparison between Augustus who is “spoken of as the father and ruler of the fatherland” (*patriae rector dicare paterque*, ll. 39) and Zeus who is “called the begetter and ruler of the gods” (*genitorque deum rectorque vocatur*, ll. 37). Later, in *Tr.* 2.179-182, Ovid associates the two again when he asks Augustus (cf. *pater patriae*, ll. 181) twice to act mercifully.<sup>63</sup> Augustus’ weapons (cf. *fulmenque tuum fera tela*, ll. 179) match the weapons Zeus used to strike down Capaneus (cf. *Capaneus a fulminis ictu*, *Pont.* 3.1.55).<sup>64</sup> Further, there are echoes of Ovid’s hope in his letter to his wife (cf. *si locus est aliquis tanta inter nomiva parvis*, *Pont.* 3.1.55), in these lines of *Tristia* 2 (cf. *nec nominis inmemor huius / olim placandi spem mihi tolle tui*, ll. 181-182). Although Capaneus’ words were incredibly hubristic against the most powerful one of the gods, his name nevertheless lives on through time. Ovid too transgressed against the most powerful of the human race and desires the same long-standing fame for his own name. As such, Ovid’s mention of Capaneus here serves not to defend his own words but rather to provide evidence of why his own “ruin” (*ruina*) should grant his “meagre” (*parvis*) name a “place” (*locus*) with the rest of these mythological characters.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> His request: “I beg you, spare [me of] your lightning and fierce missiles, hide away those weapons known far too much to wretched me! Spare [me], father of the fatherland, forgetful of this name, do not remove my hope of pleasing you at some point” (*parce, precor, fulmenque tuum, fera tela, reconde, / heu nimium misero cognita tela mihi! / parce, pater patriae, nec nominis inmemor huius / olim placandi spem mihi tolle tui*, *Tr.* 2.179-182).

<sup>64</sup> They also match the weapons of Zeus in *Seven Against Thebes* (cf. τὰς δ’ ἀστράπας τε καὶ κεραυνίους βολὰς, l. 430). Elsewhere, we see similar language to describe the weapons of Zeus (cf. *sua fulmina mittat / Iuppiter*, *Tr.* 2.33; *quae fuerat saevi fulmine tacta Iovis*, *Tr.* 2.144). The comparison of Capaneus’s punishment (cf. *cecidit Capaneus subito temerarius ictu*, *Tr.* 4.3.63) to Ovid’s (cf. *saevis ego sum Iovis ignibus ictus*, *Tr.* 4.3.69) can be seen again in book four of the *Tristia*.

<sup>65</sup> It is evident, from the inclusion of Amphiarus and Capaneus, that Ovid’s hope cannot be fulfilled until after he has already died. Later in *Tristia* 2, Ovid argues that he is not the only poet who had written about love however he was the only one who had paid the price for his poetry (cf. *denique composui teneros non solus amores / composito poenas solus amore dedi*, ll. 361-362). While he follows this with a cataloguing of other poets who had done the same as he had (cf. ll. 363-465), these poets are already dead as he asserts that “integrity orders [him] to

The other two mythological characters are ones whose ‘erring’ was more literal than the previous two. While Capaneus’ and Amphiaraus’ fame was caused by their attempts to transgress the divinities and fate, Ulysses’ and Philoctetes’ fame came from their long-term physical separation from their societies. Further, it is the *death* of the former two which makes them famed whereas it is the *extended experience* of the latter two which grants them fame. Thus, for Ovid, these two represent his own exilic separation from Rome.

Although Ovid likens himself to several different mythological characters throughout his exilic literature, there is one character whom he uses for extended metaphors: Jason, the son of Aeson. In 1.4., he presents an overview of each of their journeys, focusing on the severity of his own experience in comparison to the experience of Jason.<sup>66</sup> He begins by describing where, and by whom, both of them have been sent:

*ille est in Pontum Pelia mittente profectus,  
qui vix Thessaliae fine timendus erat.  
Caesaris ira mihi nocuit, quem solis ab ortu  
solis ad occasus utraque terra tremit.*

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conceal excellent names of the living” (*quoniam praestantia candor / nomina vivorum dissimulare iubet*, ll. 467-468). Ovid may be attempting to appeal to Augustus, or he may be attempting to point out the hypocrisy in Augustus’ actions when he argues that they “have been put forth and made public by the favours of leaders” (*muneribusque ducum publica facta patent*, l. 420). Nevertheless, he makes a distinction between Fate and Augustus. Indeed, it is fate itself which grants “fame” (*notitiae*, *Pont.* 3.1.50) to poets, not Augustus nor any other leader. This is especially evident in *Tr.* 2. 463-466. In *Tr.* 2.213-218, Ovid casts doubt on Augustus’ power to influence beyond his time in comparison to the power of fate. Although the connection between Augustus and divinity is expressed throughout Ovid’s poetry, there are still reminders of Augustus’ mortality; namely, when Ovid professes that “[his] fate has granted the grounds for [Augustus to have] mercy” (*materiam veniae sors tibi nostra dedit*, *Tr.* 2.32). Here, we see another instance of DeVito’s argument that even though “fate” is “binding and inescapable,” it nevertheless does “not determine a man’s response to what fate offers” (DeVito 168). Thus, although fate has caused Ovid’s error, Augustus still has the chance to reconsider how he responds to this fate. Similarities in Ovid’s language between this assertion in *Tr.* 2.32 (cf. *sors*; *dedit*) and his letter to his wife (cf. *fortuna*, *Pont.* 3.1.49; *dedit*, 3.1.50) strengthen this idea. Ovid repeats his profession that his wrongdoing against Augustus was *fated* elsewhere in *Tristia* 2 (cf. *fortuna*, l. 107; *casus*, l. 108; *mea fata*, l. 341; *sors mea*, l. 552).

<sup>66</sup> Ovid’s emphasis is on the “praise” (*laudem*) that Jason “would gain” (*ferat*) at a “later time” (*sera posteritate*), even though his “toil” (*labor*) was “both lighter and lesser” (*leviorque minorque*) than Ovid’s. The continuance of Jason’s fame throughout the ages is highlighted by Ovid’s use of *sera posteritate*. Although *posteritas* defines the action as happening at some point in “the future” (*OLD* s.v. “posteritas” def. 1), the added *sera* reinforces the idea that this time would come “considerably after the point of reference” (*OLD* s.v. “sera” def. 3). In addition, *posteritas* can carry the implication of a *perpetual* future, or “immortality” (*OLD* s.v. “posteritas” def. 3), and can even be used to suggest “posthumous fame” (*OLD* s.v. “posteritas” def. 3). Thus, while Ovid’s experience was worse than Jason’s, his fame would not live as long as Jason’s.

*iunctior Haemonia est Ponto, quam Roma, Sinistro,  
et brevius, quam nos, ille peregit iter.*<sup>67</sup>

“That one set out, with Pelias sending him away, into Pontus,  
the same Pelias, who had hardly been feared in even the limits of Thessaly.  
The wrath of Caesar, whom earth, altogether,  
—from the dawning of the sun to the setting of the sun—shakes at, injured me.  
Thessaly is more adjoined to hostile Pontus than Rome is  
and he completed a shorter journey than I did.”

Already, the comparison between Ovid and Jason is easy to make because both travelled to the same region: “Pontus” (*Pontum*). Further, Jason’s journey began because he had also been “dispatched” (*mittente*) from his homeland by another. Like Ovid, who was exiled by Augustus, the ruler of Rome, Jason had been “sent by Pelias” (*Pelia mittente*), the ruler of Iolcus. However, Ovid’s journey differed from Jason’s in two ways. First, the actual voyage was “shorter” (*brevius*) for Jason than it was for Ovid, since “Thessaly is more connected than Rome is to Pontus” (*iunctior Haemonia est Ponto quam Roma*). Thus, from the beginning of his experience, even before he reached his place of exile, Ovid has had to put in more work than Jason. Second, although, in Pontus, Jason would be closer to Thessaly than Ovid was to Rome, Jason was better able to escape the reach of Pelias. While Pelias’ authority existed “hardly within the border[s] of Thessaly” (*vis Thessaliae fine*), “Augustus’ anger” (*Caesaris ira*) could be found, seemingly, everywhere since it spanned “from the rising of the sun to the setting of the sun” (*solis ab ortu solis ad occasus*). From this description, the range of Augustus’ domination does not seem to have any limits spatially or even temporally. Further, the degree of his power is highlighted here since his reign affects not only people but even “the earth altogether” (*utraq[ue] terra*). Even though Ovid was physically farther from Rome and Augustus, than Jason was from Thessaly and Pelias, he is still more incapable of escaping the influence of his banisher. Thus, Ovid is vexed

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<sup>67</sup> Ovid, *Pont.* 1.4.27-32.

not only by a more onerous voyage but even by a more noticeable perpetuation of the homeland's control.

In the rest of this extended metaphor there is a continued nonexistence of others. Unlike Cicero, who focuses on how his exilic travels are affected by the presence of others, Ovid instead focuses primarily on how his journey is affected by the absence of others, namely by those who did attend Jason in his journey:

*ille habuit comites primos telluris Achivae:  
at nostram cuncti destituere fugam.  
nos fragili ligno vastum sulcavimus aequor:  
quae tulit Aesoniden, densa carina fuit.  
nec mihi Tiphys erat rector, nec Agenore natus  
quas fugerem docuit quas sequererque vias.*<sup>68</sup>

“That one had prime companions from the Achaeian region:  
but all have abandoned my own banishment.  
I traversed the vast sea on fragile wood:  
The boat which bore the son of Aeson was strong.  
Tiphys was not my pilot, nor did the son born from Agenor  
teach which ways I should avoid and which ways I should seek.”

It appears that Ovid was completely alone in his travels since “all abandoned [his] own banishment” (*nostram cuncti destituere fugam*). Further, although Jason “had primed companions” (*habuit comites primos*) who could help him during the expedition, Ovid lacked any aid. The absence of support is emphasised by his use of *destituere*, since this verb implies an expectation of support that was then left unfulfilled.<sup>69</sup> Thus, not only did Ovid travel without assistance, but he also travelled deprived of the help that he expected to receive. This expectation could have originated from Ovid's own assumptions towards his personal relationships; but it is likely, given the extended metaphor, that the expectation arose from the epistolary Ovid's

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<sup>68</sup> Ov. *Pont.* 1.4.33-38.

<sup>69</sup> The Oxford Latin Dictionary provides the following definition for *destituo* in its tertiary meaning: “to deprive of support by one's absence, departure” (*OLD* s.v. “*distituo*” def. 3a) and “to deprive of expected help, support” (*OLD* s.v. “*distituo*” def. 3b).

knowledge of Jason's experience. Regardless, while Jason was able to rely on the skills and knowledge of his crew during the voyage, Ovid had to rely solely on his own.

There are two individuals, whom Ovid names, that favourably affected the journey of the Argonauts: Tiphys and Phineus, the son of Agenor. The former plays a direct role in the voyage since he was the first "pilot" (*rector*) of the ship.<sup>70</sup> In the *Argonautica*, Tiphys is depicted as being a very skilled navigator who can both anticipate the journey ahead and also act quickly when problems arise.<sup>71</sup> The latter, Phineus, plays a more indirect role since he does not actually join the Argonauts on their trip. As a seer, he provides "oracles" (*μαντοσύνης*) which caution the group on the rest of their voyage.<sup>72</sup> and instruct how they can avoid the dangers of the "Cyanean" rocks.

Without the help of a navigator like Tiphys or a seer like Phineus, Ovid's journey is already set at a disadvantage. On his own, Ovid must attempt to pilot his own ship and predict how to successfully traverse the sea. His lack of skill in these two areas may be the cause of his longer "journey" (*iter*) to Pontus. Interestingly enough, Ovid and Cicero both express grievances towards their crews, or lack thereof, in their accounts of sailing. While both individuals are negatively affected, it is for opposite reasons: The presence of crew knowledgeable enough to

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<sup>70</sup> Tiphys was "approved" (*αἰνέσαντες*) by all the Argonauts to be the captain of the ship because of his naval expertise (Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* 1.399-401).

<sup>71</sup> In the introduction to his character, Tiphys is described as being "good at predicting not only the swelling current of the vast sea but even the stirrings of the wind" (*ἔσθλός μὲν ὀρινόμενον προδαῖναι / κῆμ' ἄλλος εὐρείης, ἔσθλός δ' ἀνέμοιο θυέλλας*, *Argon.* 1.106-107) as well as being "good at determining an opportune route through the sun and stars" (*καὶ πλὸν ἡελίῳ τε καὶ ἀστέρι τεκμήρασθαι*, *Argon.* 1.108). It is clear that his skills would provide the Argonauts with a better voyage overall. Through his guidance, they would not only be able to avoid potential dangers that might arise while out on the ocean, but they would also be able to ascertain the course most opportune for the journey. We see proof of his skill at various points later in the story when Tiphys either directs the work of the crew (Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* 1.380-387, 1.522-523, 1.559-568, 1.955-958, 1.1273-1279, 2.556-559, 2.573-577) or acts himself (Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* 2.175-176, 2.583-587) in order that the ship continue to sail.

<sup>72</sup> Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* 2.180. Although Phineus's most important oracle for the Argonauts is advice on how they should sail so that they are able to safely get past the "Cyanean rocks" (*Κυανέας*, 2.318), he gives a lengthy breakdown on each step of their journey after they depart from him in 2.317-407.

capitalise on “favourable weather” (*tempestatem*) negatively affects Cicero due to his desire to be where he can quickly communicate with others; however, the absence of crew knowledgeable enough to “teach [Ovid] which ways [he] should seek and which ways [he] should avoid” (*quas fugerem docuit quas sequereturque vias*) negatively affects Ovid due to his desire for safety in travelling.

It is not only the help of companions who were absent from Ovid’s voyage but even the help of the gods themselves:

*illum tutata est cum Pallade regia Iuno:  
defendere meum numina nulla caput.  
illum furtivae iuvare Cupidinis artes;  
quas a me vellem non didicisset Amor.  
ille domum rediit, nos his moriemur in aruis,  
perstiterit laesi si grauis ira dei.*<sup>73</sup>

“Ruling Juno, with Pallas, was defending that one:  
no divine favours ever defended my own head.  
The stolen crafts of Cupid helped that one  
those which I wished Love had not learned from me.  
That one returned home, I shall die in these fields,  
if the harsh anger of the offended god persists.”

It becomes even more clear, from what Ovid focuses on in these lines, what sort of voyage he has been describing. Indeed, Ovid is crossing the sea on his journey to Pontus; thus, it is not surprising that he would want help from the gods. But, unlike Jason, who has been protected by two major goddesses (cf. *illum tutata est cum Pallade regia Iuno*), Ovid has received no help (cf. *defendere meum numina nulla caput*). Interestingly, the lack of assistance that he laments, does not concern anything related to his maritime travels. Rather, it is Ovid’s “head” (*caput*) which has been left unprotected by the gods. To understand this, we must remember that this journey is based in narrative, thus, so is his relationship to the gods. Ovid,

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<sup>73</sup> Ov. *Pont.* 1.4.39-44.

unlike Jason, has a *poetic* relationship with the gods. The narrative, that is, his words, does emerge from his maritime voyage but, the trip itself has also already emerged from his own words since it was his words which caused his exile (cf. *perdiderint cum me duo crimina carmen et error*, Tr. 2.207). There is similarity between his following explanation of his wrongdoing concerning the *carmen* (cf. *qua turpi carmine factus / arguor obsceni doctor adulterii*, Tr. 211-212) and his indication here that he once acted as a teacher to the god of love (cf. *quas a me vellem non didicisset Amor*). Thus, just as Ovid is without any divine assistance during his current voyage, he was likewise without any divine assistance when he embarked on his previous, poetic journey.

## CHAPTER 3

### REQUESTING HELP, REQUESTING THE READER

Out of the writer's hands, now, the letter can make its way to the reader. But what is the reader supposed to do with the letter, and to be more specific, what are they supposed to do with the pieces of the exiles? Naturally, they must fulfill their own role within the epistolary exchange. The reader is not only the reader but actually a "(writing) self in waiting."<sup>74</sup> The roles between the writer and reader, then, are "interchangeable" and this interchangeability begets reciprocity.<sup>75</sup> From this we can understand that the letter is a request, it is a bid for attention. It is the writer saying *Notice me—please! I have something to say!* And it is the hope that the addressee will respond *I see you! You've been away, haven't you? What do you want?*

The letter is, evidently, presumptuous. It carries "hope or expectation of a response" and, as such, calls upon the reader "to respond as a writer."<sup>76</sup> There is, necessarily, something which impels the writer to reach out, for absence alone is not enough to warrant a letter. There must be a "desire for exchange," a longing to address this absence and an attempt to undo it.<sup>77</sup> Even more than that, for addressees of exiles, there is the expectation of action. The exile is limited to the text but that is not the case for their reader. However, unable to convene in any other way, it is the text which the reader must meet. From there, the reader, who exists beyond the text, can become the way through which the writer, or rather the *pieces* of the writer, can escape the text.

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<sup>74</sup> Stanley, "The Epistolarium," 212.

<sup>75</sup> Stanley, "The Epistolarium," 209. For further discussion regarding the reciprocal nature of epistolary exchanges see Altman 87-89, 117-122.

<sup>76</sup> Stanley, "The Death of the Letter? Epistolary Intent, Letterness and the Many Ends of Letter-Writing," 242; Stanley, "The Epistolarium," 212; Altman 89.

<sup>77</sup> Altman 89.

As such, Ovid's wife must enter the narrative and emulate the behaviour as well as the actions of mythological wives; Helvia must submit to the lessons that Seneca has laid out and learn how to live without her exiled son; and Terentia must protect what remains of Cicero and take on the duties of managing the estate and tending to the family's well-being.

### Speak My Words: Pleading One's Case

Although Ovid is without the help of the gods, he does have the help of his wife. Her ability to help, however, is partially limited because she is not physically with him. While she can assist him concerning affairs back in Rome, she does not play any direct role in the narrative of Ovid as the mythological traveller. As such, she cannot affect his physical or mental well-being while he is in exile, but she can affect his words. Although she is absent from his travelling accounts, she is nevertheless present within the larger narrative and the composition of the letters reflects this.<sup>78</sup> Moreover, like Ovid, his wife becomes a character herself in his myth, represented through a series of mythological characters. As such, she too is limited in her role and agency, often only able to react to the narrative. We can see this limited agency in 3.1., when Ovid presents a series of *exempla* that his wife should emulate if the end of his life comes to fruition:

*Si mea mors redimenda tua, quod abominor, esset,  
Admeti coniunx quam sequeris erat.  
Aemula Penelopes fieres, si fraude pudica  
instantis uelles fallere nupta procos.  
Si comes extincti manes sequerere mariti,  
esset dux facti Laudamia tui.  
Iphias ante oculos tibi erat ponenda uolenti  
corpus in accensos mittere forte rogos.<sup>79</sup>*

“If my death would be redeemed by yours, which thing I would discourage,

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<sup>78</sup> Like the narratives, and perhaps even like her correspondence with Ovid, her presence is delayed. In both of the letters, she does not make an appearance until after Ovid's own extensive narrative. Although, she is briefly mentioned in 1.4.5, Ovid does not refer to her character at length until the end of the letter.

<sup>79</sup> Ov. *Pont.* 3.1.105-112.

the wife of Admetus would be the one whom you would follow.  
You should become an imitation of Penelope, if by virtuous deception  
you, the bride, would wish to deceive the impending suitors.  
If you, a companion, would follow the ghost of your dead husband,  
then let Laodamia be the guide of your deed.  
The daughter of Iphias, Evadne, must be placed before your eyes  
by you wishing to toss your body bravely onto the burning pyres.”

The structure of his language within these lines is important to note. For one, Ovid doubles the number of lines that he uses for these *exempla* versus the ones that he uses for his own. Each wife’s description is also more detailed. Ovid’s *exempla* only feature the character’s names and their famed deeds; however, his wife’s *exempla* feature the character’s 1) names or epithets, 2) the relation of their action to their husband’s fame, as well as, for most, 3) an added appositive for further characterisation. This perhaps reflects the increase in agency that the wives receive because of their husbands’ absence. Further, each wife, while reacting to the fates of their husbands, nevertheless is able to somewhat distinguish themselves from their husbands’ narratives. For Ovid and the other husbands, their names as well as their capacity to be remembered are inherently bound to their fates. However, for the wife of Ovid, along with the other wives, their fame is not bound in the same way. Unlike the husbands, the wives are not known solely through their fates but rather they have clear purpose beyond their fame. This distinction is evident through the difference in epithets and names used for the husbands and wives. The names of the husbands do indeed appear throughout all four *exempla*; however, they lack connection to anything but their fate. They have no epithet as indication of their role within their narratives. Moreover, no other names appear alongside them. They, like Ovid, must face fate alone.

Differently, for the wives, each receives at least one indication of their role to the narratives, their actual name, or their relationship to others. Regarding their roles, the wives are

not limited to their roles within only their husbands' narratives but instead play a role for Ovid's own wife. For Penelope, she not only plays the "bride" (*nupta*) of Ulysses but also the "likeness" (*aemula*) whom Ovid's wife should copy. Likewise, for Laodamia, she plays not only the "companion" (*comes*) of her "husband" (*mariti*) but also the "guide" (*dux*) for Ovid's wife to follow. Unlike the mythological husbands who are limited to their names and to their own narratives, the wives are able to transcend the narrative. Ovid's wife is featured in the same way. As Ovid's "wife" (*coniunx*), there are, obviously, expectations for her set by Ovid himself (cf. *magna tibi inposita est nostris persona libellis / coniungis exemplum diceris esse bonae*, ll. 43-44). It is clear that her role as his wife is one which is defined by his words, and, further, evident by his narrative (cf. *quicquid ages igitur, scena spectabere magna / et pia non paucis testibus uxor eris*, ll. 59-60). However, her role as his wife does not exist solely within his verses. In fact, there are also expectations set by societal conventions (cf. *exigit hoc socialis amor foedusque maritum*, l. 73). and her own customs (cf. *moribus hoc, coniunx, exigis ipsa tuis*, l. 74). Beyond this, she also exists outside of her relationship to Ovid. Just as she has an obligation to her husband, she also has an obligation to her own family (cf. *hoc domui debes de qua censeris uta illam / non magis officiis quam probitate colas*, ll. 75-76).<sup>80</sup> Although Ovid omits specificity in naming Alcestis and Evadne, he does label them through their relationship to others within the narrative. For Alcestis, he gives her relationship to her husband (cf. *Admeti coniunx*) and for Evadne, he gives her relationship to her father through patronymic (cf. *Iphias*).

Note the difference in the verbs' voices between the passage as well as the absence of language evocative of fate. I hesitate to assert that this reading of the text is complete. Ovid's

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<sup>80</sup> He also notes her obligation to "Marcia, Fabius' wife" whom she was close to (Wheeler xii): "Marcia will not be able to be considered respected by you, unless you become a praiseworthy wife" (*nisi eris laudabilis uxor / non poterit credi Marcia culta tibi*, ll. 77-78).

language here may also be indicative of the fact that each of the wives are, seemingly, bound to their husbands, and, thus, to their husbands' fates. However, his language here is primarily *not* evocative of any necessity towards the wives reacting in the way that they did. Further, there is a lack of obligation within his addresses to his wife during these lines. Although he does employ commanding language elsewhere in the letter, his repetitive usage of subjunctives (i.e., contrary-to-fact and optative) does not convey the same sense of obligation. Ovid's wife herself has additional agency, as well, because of her ability to choose whom to emulate.<sup>81</sup> While the characters who represent Ovid are known because of their own fates, the ones who represent his wife are famed because of their reactions to their husbands' fates. This distinction between the *exempla* of Ovid and the *exempla* of his wife is reflective of Ovid's assertion that follows his catalogue of his own mythological *exempla* earlier in the letter.<sup>82</sup>

Much like when Ovid gives his list of mythological characters to represent himself, the characters that he presents here also have inherent similarities to his wife and the overall narrative. Further, his specification of these four characters creates a direct parallel between the narrative of his own character and the narrative of his wife's character. Most obviously, all of the characters listed here are mythological wives whose husbands are either dead (i.e., Alcestis, Laodamia, and Evadne) or presumed to be dead (i.e., Penelope). Similarly, all of Ovid's

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<sup>81</sup> This idea is reminiscent of my previous discussion on Amphiaraus' decision to "face" his fate (DeVito 170). Although Ovid's wife is still bound by fate in the sense that she cannot "escape [her own] fate" (DeVito 171), she nevertheless has the ability to choose her "response" (DeVito 168). Further, she also has more options than Amphiaraus, or the other male mythological characters. For Amphiaraus, there were only two options for him to choose: to try to flee or to meet "what [awaited] him" head on (DeVito 171). For Ovid's wife, however, in these lines alone there are four possibilities.

<sup>82</sup> Just like his own name which will gain "a place" (*locus*, l. 55) among "the names" (*nomina*, l. 55) of famed mythological characters, Ovid's wife too will "have a name" (*nomen habes*, l. 58) in his "pages" (*pagina*, l. 57). In these lines, Ovid also presents "Bittis" (*Bittide*, l. 58), the wife of "Coaian Philitas" (*Coa*, l. 58), as another *exemplum* of who her character will compare to in his narrative. Throughout the letters, Ovid primarily focuses on mythological characters to represent himself and his wife; however, when he does supply real-life people as comparisons, they are always poets, for himself, or the wives of poets, for his own wife.

portrayals are famed because of their deaths (cf. *Capaneus*, l. 51; *Amphiaraus*, l. 52), or presumed deaths (cf. “Ulysses” *Vlixes*, l. 53; “Philoctetes” *Philoctetae*, l. 54). Additionally, although not all of the characters that he presents between the two passages are couples, he does give two couples (i.e., Evadne and Capaneus; Penelope and Ulysses).

His mention of Penelope and Ulysses between the two sections indicates how Ovid viewed his wife, namely her role in his narrative and her role in fulfilling his requests, while he was in exile. Like Ovid, Ulysses was absent from Penelope for ten years. Although, at the time of writing the letter, Ovid did not know that he would share in this duration, he had nevertheless been away from her for a considerable amount of time. Penelope also displayed the key qualities that Ovid needed his wife to have if his requests were to be fulfilled. For one, she needed to be dutiful and diligent towards his requests.<sup>83</sup>

Given the parallels between the two passages, it is clear that these requests only exist if, and when, Ovid’s “destruction” (*ruina*, l. 56) takes place. Ovid’s genuine requests, then, concern his potential homecoming or, if a homecoming cannot be sought, a relocation from Tomis.<sup>84</sup> In 3.1.43-44, Ovid asserts that her “character” (*persona*) is “spoken of” (*diceris*) as the “template of the good wife” (*coniugis exemplum... bonae*). And, as the good wife, she must represent

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<sup>83</sup> In l. 40 he asserts that “it is proper that she work during the day and the night on behalf of [him]” (*et niti pro me nocte dieque decet*).

<sup>84</sup> Ovid is rather insistent in his requests throughout 3.1. Even though there is narrative within the first twenty-eight lines of the letter, this all builds up to his obvious conclusion (cf. *igitur*, l. 29) that it should be “no surprise that, since Ovid is seeking an end to his troubles, another place would be requested by him” (cf. *non igitur mirum finem quaerentibus horum / altera si nobis usque rogatur humus*, ll. 29-30). Ovid’s wife is, seemingly, having difficulty in fulfilling his request as he expresses surprise (cf. *te magis est mirum non hoc evincere coniunx*, l. 31). Compare this to Cicero’s words to Terentia in 14.2: “I am not surprised that everything is being done most earnestly and most steadfastly by you” (*a te quidem omnia fieri fortissime et amantissime video, nec miror*). While both exiles appear to have a foundational trust in their wives’ abilities to perform on behalf of themselves, it is clear that Terentia is having an easier time living up to her husband’s expectations. Perhaps this is because Cicero continuously professes his guilt over the fact that she must act on behalf of him (cf. *sed maereo casum eiusmodi, ut tantis tuis miseriis meae miseriae subleventur*, 14.2). Comparatively, Ovid asserts that it is his wife’s obligation (cf. *exigit hoc socialis amor foedusque maritum*, l. 73) to fulfill the requests that he presents to her.

someone who can advocate on behalf of him. Just as Ovid's words grant him agency during his exile, his wife's agency also comes from her own words. We have already seen in chapter one that the character of Ovid is continuously affected by fate and the divinities. Because his wife is also a character, she too must grapple with these forces. Thus, if she wants to successfully plead Ovid's case, she must contend with the higher powers themselves. Just as we observed previously, these higher powers concern not only the mythological divinities but Augustus as well. It is not Augustus, however, that his Ovid's wife will need to plead to but rather the wife of Augustus (cf. *Caesaris est coniunx ore precanda tuo*, l. 114).<sup>85</sup>

### Learn This Lesson: Becoming a Stoic

Seneca's requests, then, pertain to philosophical learning. Seneca wants his mother to follow his instruction, which is to say, he wants her to learn how to think like a Stoic. Just as we observed in chapter one with the depiction of the epistolary self, the construction of Seneca's requests resembles Ovid's. Like Ovid, whose requests are missing during the introduction of his letters, Seneca's requests are likewise delayed. It is not until the end of the consolation that Seneca turns his attention fully to Helvia and presents the *exempla* she should apply to her own situation.<sup>86</sup> Although Seneca does include *exempla* of the loss within his mother's life at the beginning of the letter, these should not be understood as instructional *exempla*. For these only serve as evidence of Helvia's resilience towards adversity up to this point in her life. Though they provide proof of her fortitude, they do not provide her with any instruction on how to proceed moving forward. Moreover, while Seneca can prove that the state of something *exists*

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<sup>85</sup> The divinity of Augustus' wife is clear in 3.1.127-128: "The world considers nothing more famed in the lands from the rising of the sun to its setting than her, save for Augustus himself" (*qua nihil in terris ad finem solis ab ortu / clarius excepto Caesare mundus habet*). Note the similarity in verbiage to Ovid's description of the span of Augustus' reign in 1.4.29-30.

<sup>86</sup> Seneca holds off from giving *exempla* on how Helvia should behave moving forward until the final six sections.

using *exemplum* of itself, he cannot *change* the state of something without providing external *exempla* that demonstrate the desired state.<sup>87</sup> In order to change Helvia's understanding of the circumstances of Seneca's exile, he must move the focus of the exilic experience from his own to that of another. Likewise, in order to change Helvia's mindset towards her own grief, he must present *exempla* of others' experiences and behaviours.

The presentation of Seneca's argument regarding his mother's behaviour bears similarity to the presentation of his argument regarding his own circumstances. Just as was seen previously, Seneca's argument is built off of two types of claims: 1) direct quotations or experiences of another and 2) rhetorical questions. And these two types of claims are applied to his argument in a similar fashion as before. When the claims are introduced as direct quotations or experiences of specific individuals, Seneca often supports them; however, when they are posed as rhetorical questions, Seneca instead often provides counterarguments and proposes more rational and sensible thinking. The pattern is more inconsistent than what appeared in the preceding arguments regarding Seneca's own experiences. In addition, it is important to note that when Seneca includes his mother's own experiences and quotations, there is also more variability in how they are applied to his argument. This is especially true for the latter since Seneca seems to treat them as if they were rhetorical questions, rather than purely direct quotations. Perhaps this inconsistency in Seneca's treatment of *exempla* serves to represent her current status as a student. Although Seneca professes that he is not yet wise (cf. *sapientem esse me dico? Minime*, §5) his mind has already been well cultivated by the studies of Stoicism. His mother's mind, in

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<sup>87</sup> In this way too Seneca's requests bear more similarity to Ovid's than they do to Cicero's. Cicero's requests, as I will expand upon later in the chapter, pertain to conservation, that is to say, the conservation of his family. Differently, Ovid's and Seneca's requests both pertain to change. While Ovid primarily requests that his wife petition for a change of Ovid's place of exile, Seneca requests that his mother seek change regarding both her understanding and her state of emotion towards the exile of her son.

comparison, is considerably less learned. Nevertheless, Helvia's mind has good "foundations for all studies" (*disciplinarum omnium fundamenta*, §17) even if she is still a student. Holtz asserts that Helvia, like Seneca, is a "person progressing toward the goal of Stoic philosophy" and therefore "is in need of external guidance" (163). Thus, although Helvia has the capability to learn how to be a Stoic, and even is not completely ignorant to how Stoics behave, she must continue to study *exempla*. Moreover, there is a continuance in Seneca's usage of sourced material for his arguments. When Seneca is presenting a claim that he wishes to support, he will provide specific *exempla*; however, when presenting a claim that he wishes to counter, his *exempla* are generic and unspecified.

Seneca's Stoicism compels him to advocate for moderation, both for himself and for others. As such, the focus of his request to Helvia regards her "modesty" (*pudicitia*, §16), which he asserts is the "greatest distinction" (*maximum decus*, §16) that she has. Although Helvia is a woman, and thus would be allowed to grieve for extended periods, he states that "the excuse of being a woman" (*muliebris excusatio*, §16) should not "apply to her" (*contingere ei*, §16) since "all womanly vices have been absent" (*omnia muliebria uitia afuerunt*, §16) from her during her life. Indeed, it is her long-established "values" (*virtutes*, §16) of "modesty" (*pudicitia*, §16) which would not allow her to be excessive in her grief.<sup>88</sup> Much like her intelligence, Helvia seemingly has a good foundation for practising Stoicism because of her ingrained modesty.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Seneca does not forbid her grief entirely, but rather requests that she not *excessively* mourn: "[Roman men] would not prohibit grief but instead would put limits to it; for, it is a foolish indulgence to be affected by limitless grief, when you have lost someone of your most dear, it is also a inhumane rigidity to be affected by no grief: the best moderation between devotion and reasoning is to feel grief and to overcome it" (*non prohibuerunt luctus sed finierunt; nam et infinito dolore, cum aliquem ex carissimis amiseris, adfici stulta indulgentia est, et nullo inhumana duritia: optimum inter pietatem et rationem temperamentum est et sentire desiderium et opprimere*, §16).

<sup>89</sup> He notes that she has displayed moderation in a variety of ways: "Immodesty, the greatest evil of the world, has not persuaded you into the collective of the majority; neither have gems nor have pearls appeased you; wealth has not stood out to you as the greatest good of the human race; nor has dangerous imitation of the worse kind of people misdirect you, raised in an old and strict house (*non te maximum saeculi malum, inpudicitia, in*

Since Helvia has spent her life being greatly disinterested in womanly “vices” (*vitia*, §16) like “immodesty” (*inpudicitia*, §16), Seneca reasons that she “ought to be detached from womanly tears” (*debes a feminarum lacrimis abesse*, §16). The contrast between Helvia’s nature and the nature of other women is emphasised when Seneca asserts that other “women would certainly not allow [for her] to waste away from her wounding” (*ne feminae quidem te sinent intabescere uulneri tuo*, §16). Seneca’s repetitive insistence on Helvia’s character serves as foundational reasoning for why she should abide by his requests that follow. By separating Helvia’s behaviour from the behaviour of other women, Seneca effectively purges Helvia’s potential need to model herself after any *exempla* besides the ones he will present.<sup>90</sup>

Seneca then gives two figures as *exempla* for Helvia to emulate in her grief.<sup>91</sup> Just as he did for himself, Seneca uses *exempla* who not only have displayed the characteristics ideal to the practise of Stoicism but also have experienced the same circumstances as the student to whom he applies them. As such, the figures that Seneca presents are women who, like Helvia, are

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*numerum plurium adduxit; non gemmae te, non margaritae flexerunt; non tibi diuitiae uelut maximum generis humani bonum refulerunt; non te, bene in antiqua et seuera institutam domo, periculosa etiam probis peiorum detorsit imitatio; numquam te fecunditatis tuae, quasi exprobraret aetatem, puduit, numquam more aliarum, quibus omnis commendatio ex forma petitur, tumescentem uterum abscondisti quasi indecens onus, nec intra uiscera tua conceptas spes liberorum elisisti; non faciem coloribus ac lenociniis polluisti; numquam tibi placuit uestis quae nihil amplius nudaret cum poneretur, §16).*

<sup>90</sup> We see a similar concept, concerning the distinction between the actions of the majority and of the minority, one other time in the consolation following Seneca’s breakdown of what others believe exile to be: “Therefore, having been distinguished from the judgement of the majority, whom the first sight of things deceives whenever it is believed, let us consider what exile is” (*remoto ergo iudicio plurium, quos prima rerum species, utcumque credita est, aufert, uideamus quid sit exilium*, §6). In both instances, the mindset of the majority (cf. *in numerum plurium*, §16; *iudicio plurimum*, §6) is irrational and impulsive (cf. *maximum saeculi malum inpudicitia*, §16; *quos prima rerum species utcumque credita est aufert*, §6). Just as the intellectual pursuit of “what exile is” (*quid sit exilium*, §6) can only occur after “removing the judgement of the majority” (*remoto ergo iudicio plurium*, §6), Helvia’s own almost-Stoic sensibility only arises because “shamelessness” (*inpudicitia*, §16) was never able to “persuade” (*adduxit*, §16) her “into the collective of the majority” (*in numerum plurium*, §16). In a similar way, Seneca is able to assert what behaviours Helvia should abide by only after he enumerates the ones which were senseless.

<sup>91</sup> Following the *exempla*, he states: “I want you to group yourself with these women; you should devoutly follow the *exemplum* of these ones, whose life you have always imitated, in the sorrow that must be restrained and repressed” (*cum his te numerari feminis uolo; quarum uitam semper imitata es, earum in coercenda comprimendaque aegritudine optime sequeris exemplum*, §16).

distinguished from the rest of women. Further, they are both known as mothers to children, especially sons, who had been granted a bad fate. Moreover, he indicates that there is a good reason for Helvia to abide by his request since she has always imitated the lives of these women (cf. *uitam semper imitata es*). The introduction to these *exempla* is reminiscent to earlier in the consolation:

*...si modo illas intueri uoles feminas quas conspecta uirtus inter magnos uiros posuit.*<sup>92</sup>

“...If only you would want to consider those women that evident virtue has placed among great men.”

*interim primum illud intueri uolo, quid acerbi adferat ipsa loci commutatio.*<sup>93</sup>

“In the meantime, I wish to consider that idea first, what severity the changing itself of a place would impart.”

The parallel between the two sections is obvious. Seneca uses similar language (cf. *illas intueri uoles; illud intueri uolo*) in each. Additionally, both serve as an introduction to an extended examination of a particular concept. In the first, Seneca is about to present a series of *exempla* concerning the understanding of exile (*quid sit exilium*, §6).<sup>94</sup> In the second, Seneca is about to present two *exempla* concerning how his mother should behave. From the first line to the second Seneca grants his mother a new role: the Stoic student.<sup>95</sup> Just as Seneca himself needed *exempla* to better convey and understand his experience in exile, his mother too will need *exempla* in order to learn how to behave while Seneca is away in exile.<sup>96</sup> As students of

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<sup>92</sup> Sen. *ad Helv.* 16.

<sup>93</sup> Sen. *ad Helv.* 6.

<sup>94</sup> Do note that he has already provided a simple definition of exile immediately after posing the question: “Clearly [it is] a change in place” (*nempe loci commutatio*, §6)

<sup>95</sup> The change in first person *uolo* to second person *uoles* emphasises this role exchange.

<sup>96</sup> Holtz asserts that “just like Helvia, Seneca too is in need of external guidance. He must internalise the wisdom of the wise men to be able to pass it on to her. He expects her, in turn, to embark upon healing herself with the help of his guidance” (Holtz 163). Although Seneca is acting as teacher, and Helvia is a “[recipient] of his teaching,” Seneca is nevertheless “a person progressing toward the goal of Stoic philosophy” just like Helvia (Holtz 163).

Stoicism, Seneca and Helvia also share membership in the ‘minority’ and a distinction from the majority (cf. *in numerum plurium*, §16; *iudicio plurimum*, §6) which helps to further align the two passages.<sup>97</sup>

Seneca names Cornelia and Rutilia as the two whom Helvia should emulate in moderating her grief. Let us first address Cornelia:

*Corneliam ex duodecim liberis ad duos fortuna redegerat: si numerare funera Corneliae uelles, amiserat decem, si aestimare, amiserat Gracchos. flentibus tamen circa se et fatum eius execrantibus interdixit ne fortunam accusarent, quae sibi filios Gracchos dedisset. ex hac femina debuit nasci qui diceret in contione, 'tu matri meae male dicas quae me peperit?' multo mihi uox matris uidetur animosior: filius magno aestimauit Gracchorum natales, mater et funera.*<sup>98</sup>

“Fate had reduced Cornelia’s children from twelve to two; if you wished to enumerate the burials for Cornelia, she had lost ten, if you wished to value them, she had lost the Gracchi. Nevertheless, when those weeping around her were cursing her fate, she prohibited them from blaming fate, which at one time had given the Gracchian sons to her. From this woman ought to have been born the one who spoke in the assembly, ‘You would speak ill against my mother who had once bore me?’ To me, the voice of that mother seemed wiser than most: The son valued the births of the Gracchi at a higher price, and the mother their funerals.”

There are a number of clear similarities between the life of Cornelia and the life of Helvia. First, let us examine the experiences of each. Like Cornelia, Helvia too had lost an extensive number of close family members due to “fate” (*fortuna*). As Seneca notes in section two, Helvia had “lost” (*amisisti*) her “mother immediately” (*matrem statim*) after she was “born” (*nata*), her “uncle” (*auunculum*) and her “husband” (*carrissimum virum*) only “thirty [days]” (*tricesimum diem*) apart from each other, “three of [her] grandchildren” (*trium nepotum*), and Seneca’s “son” (*filium*) only “twenty [days]” (*vicesimum diem*) apart from when she “found out” (*audisti*) that Seneca had been “exiled” (*raptum*). Even though Seneca still lives, he nevertheless

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<sup>97</sup> See Footnote 90 for further analysis regarding separation from the majority.

<sup>98</sup> Sen. *ad Helv.* 16.

associates himself with the dead by adding himself to the end of the list. Although Cornelia's loss primarily concerned the death of her children, the amount of close family that Helvia lost is comparable nonetheless.<sup>99</sup>

Moreover, Seneca's language between the two sections is comparable, furthering the parallel between Helvia and Cornelia. He uses *fortuna* twice for each of the two, portraying *fortuna* once as a 'giver' (cf. *nullam tibi fortuna vacationem dedit*, §2; *ne fortunam accusarent, quae sibi filios Gracchos dedisset*, §16) and once as a 'diminisher' (cf. *ne saevitiam suam fortuna leviolem diducendo faceret*, §2; *Corneliam ex duodecim liberis ad duos fortuna redegeat*, §16). Further, perfect forms of *amitto* appear twice in each. For Helvia, Seneca uses *amitto* in reference to losses older than her (cf. *amisisti matrem*, §2; *avunculum...amisisti*, §2) whereas for Cornelia, he uses them for the losses of her children (cf. *amiserat decem*, §16; *amiserat Gracchos*, §16).

When we consider the portrayal of Cornelia beyond Seneca, the similarities between the two become even clearer. Cornelia was considered an emblem of dutiful motherhood, being largely memorialised as the "mother of the Gracchi"<sup>100</sup> throughout antiquity and "eulogised as the ideal mother who devoted her life to her children."<sup>101</sup> Seneca characterises Helvia in the same way (cf. *noui enim animum tuum nihil in suis praeter ipsos amantem*, §16).<sup>102</sup> The difference, then, is their responses to familial loss. Cornelia, seemingly, has reconciled with the reality of

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<sup>99</sup> Beyond her children, Cornelia also experienced the loss of her husband, as noted in Barnard 388, which further adds to the comparison between Helvia and Cornelia.

<sup>100</sup> Pomeroy 109.

<sup>101</sup> Barnard 387.

<sup>102</sup> It is clear that, throughout her life, Helvia has always displayed familial devotion. Seneca notes that she showed it to her stepmother (cf. *crevistis sub noverca quam tu quidem omni obsequio et pietate...matrem fieri coegisti*, §2), to her sons (cf. *adquiesce alterius filii dignitate alterius quiete utriusque pietate*, §18), to her grandchildren (cf. *tibi daturum pronepotes Novatillam...abstulit illi nuper fortuna matrem tua potest efficere pietas ut perdidisse se matrem doleat tantum*, §18), and still others. Further, the importance that it holds in her life is clear when Seneca cites it as a reason for him addressing the possibility of misfortune in his exile (cf. *hoc prius adgrediar quod pietas tua audire gestit nihil mihi mali esse*, §4).

*fortuna*, unable to curse it now that it has taken away her children because it was the one who originally gave them to her (cf. *interdixit ne fortunam accusarent, quae sibi filios Gracchos dedisset*). Further, unlike her son (*filius*), she views the “deaths” (*funera*) of her children in an “equal light” (*aestimavit*) to their “births” (*natales*). In this, we see a contrast between the relationship of Helvia and Seneca to Cornelia and her son. Like Seneca, Cornelia’s mindset and actions exhibit Stoic thought and can thus correct her son on his rationale.<sup>103</sup>

Let us now consider the *exemplum* of Rutilia:

*Rutilia Cottam filium secuta est in exilium et usque eo fuit indulgentia constricta ut mallet exilium pati quam desiderium, nec ante in patriam quam cum filio rediit. eundem iam reducem et in re publica florentem tam fortiter amisit quam secuta est, nec quisquam lacrimas eius post elatum filium notauit. in expulso uirtutem ostendit, in amisso prudentiam; nam et nihil illam a pietate deterruit et nihil in tristitia superuacua stultaque detinuit.*<sup>104</sup>

“Rutilia followed her son, Cotta, into exile and she was so compelled by her fondness of him that that she preferred to endure the exile rather than the loss, and she did not go back to the fatherland sooner than she did with her son. Now, after the same one had been led back and then blossomed in the republic, did she so much more bravely lose that one to death than had she accompanied him, and there was not anyone who noticed her tears after her son had been buried. She showed virtue in his exile and prudence in his death; For nothing detracted that woman from her piety nor did anything restrain her into excessive and foolish sadness.”

Like the *exemplum* of Cornelia, we can again see a number of similarities between the lives of Rutilia and Helvia. Like Seneca, Rutilia’s son had also been sent “into exile” (*in exilium*). Her response to this is to “follow” (*secuta*) him since she was “binded by [her] fondness for him” (*eo fuit indulgentia constricta*). Although Helvia does not physically follow

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<sup>103</sup> Earlier, Seneca states that he has “never believed fate, even when it seemed to create peace” (*numquam ego fortunae credidi, etiam cum videretur pacem agere*, §5) and thus imposed “distance between himself and it” (*intervallum inter illa et me*, §5). For what reason, *fortuna* was only ever able to “remove” (*abstulit*, §5) things from him, “not tear away” (*non avulsit*, §5) anything from him. He later goes on to assert that Helvia’s intellectual foundations are the only things which will offer her safety (cf. *disciplinarum omnium fundamentum: nunc ad illas revertere; tutam te praestabunt*, §17) and save her from *fortuna* (cf. *quae sola te fortunae eripere possint*, §17). Unlike Cornelia, who is characteristically “more sensible” (*animosior*, §16) than her son, Helvia must be instructed by Seneca on how to view and deal with *fortuna*.

<sup>104</sup> Sen. *Helv.* 16.

Seneca into exile, it is clear that Seneca wants her to mentally follow him, or, at the very least, his instruction (cf. *sequeris exemplum*, §16). By mentioning the reason for Rutilia joining her son in exile, Seneca appeals to Helvia's current state of mind.<sup>105</sup> One of Seneca's hypotheses to Helvia's "boundless grief" (*infinitas lacrimas*, §14) is her "inability to endure the absence itself by herself" (*desiderium ipsum per se pati non potes*, §14). The repetition of *desiderium* and *pati* create an obvious parallel between his language here to his description of Rutilia (*mallet exilium pati quam desiderium*).<sup>106</sup> However, at this point, he has already argued that Helvia should have resilience to this kind of absence since she has indeed experienced it (cf. *bene nos longinquitas locorum diuiserat, bene aliquot annorum absentia huic te malo praeparauerat*, §16). Moreover, Rutilia's decision to follow her son into exile was not produced from her inability to endure, such as seen in Seneca's supposition of his mother, but rather her preference to endure exile over the absence.

Although she yields to her own desires in this one instance, she is primarily characterised as one who exhibits Stoic behaviour. Like Cornelia, Rutilia checks her "mourning" (*lacrimas*).<sup>107</sup> Additionally, both show "sensitivity" (cf. *prudentiam; animosior*) after the deaths of their children. Even though, as I have already addressed, Seneca is not yet dead, there is a clear association he makes between himself and other familial losses that Helvia has endured. Nevertheless, the "foolishness" (*stulta*) of his mother's "grief" (*tristia*) is evident because of the fact that he is not actually dead yet. While Rutilia and Cornelia both have displayed great

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<sup>105</sup> When Seneca addresses the causes for Helvia's grief, he presents a list of all that Helvia is "deprived of" (*careo*, §15) now that he is in exile. Most of these items are, by nature, physical (cf. *complexu fili carissimi; conspectu eius; tristem vultum; occursus*, §15).

<sup>106</sup> Beyond this language parallel, we also see the same repetition of *amitto* between Rutilia (cf. *amisit* and *amisso*), Cornelia (*amiserat decem* and *amiserat Gracchos*, §16) and Helvia (*amisisti matrem* and *avunculum...amisisti*, §2).

<sup>107</sup> Interestingly, in both passages, the mourning of the mothers is associated with others (cf. *nec quisquam lacrimas eius post elatum filium notavit; flentibus tamen circa se et fatum eius execrantibus*, §16).

restraint in grieving during times that they had reason to grieve, Helvia has not displayed the same restraint in a time that she has no reason to grieve. A further reason for Helvia to follow in Rutilia's footsteps, and to moderate her grief, is clear from the last line. Like Helvia, Rutilia is never "deterred from her devotion" (*a pietate deterruit*). As such, Helvia should also not "restrain [herself] within excessive and foolish grief" (*in tristia supervacua stultaque detinuit*).

### Bear My Body: Protecting What Matters

Finally, Cicero's requests pertain to handling of the body and managing affairs through the letters.<sup>108</sup> Just as Seneca and Ovid, Cicero delays his requests until further on into the letters. Differently, however, Cicero does not group together all of his requests into one portion of each letter. Rather, his requests are brief and scattered throughout.<sup>109</sup> The two types of requests that Cicero makes each bear similarity to the ones which either Seneca or Ovid make. Like Seneca's requests which only concern the reader, his mother, Cicero requests that concern the handling of the body only involve his own readers, Terentia as well as the rest of his immediate family. Further, Seneca's requests pertain to how his mother should handle the grief that has afflicted her mental state in her son's absence. Similarly, Cicero's requests of the body regard how his wife should take care of the well-beings of herself and the family while Cicero is in exile. Differently, like Ovid's requests which ask his wife to take his words to Augustus and his wife, Cicero's requests that concern the management of the affairs through the correspondence involve the

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<sup>108</sup> Although Cicero does acknowledge that "a large part of that burden was supported by [Terentia] (*magnam partem istius oneris abs te sustineri*, 14.3), he nevertheless rarely requests Terentia to take any action other than informing him of how things are progressing. In fact, he mentions twice in 14.2 his regret towards Terentia having to do as much as she has (cf. *illud doleo, quae impensa facienda est, in eius partem te miseram et despoliatam venire; omnis labores te excipere video, timeo ut sustineas*).

<sup>109</sup> Most of what Cicero discusses bears similarity in composition, in that it is mentioned in brief increments several times throughout the letters. In the letters of Seneca and Ovid, we see a more harmonious structure because their content focuses on extended narratives or *exempla*. In Cicero's letters, however, we see a more disorganised structure as the several topics he discusses appear throughout each letter in condensed mentionings. There is little transition between each topic and, moreover, he will often revisit previous topics to add additional information. Because of this, the structure is rather chaotic when comparing to the content of Seneca and Ovid.

world beyond the household. Even though these affairs concern, primarily, the estate of their home, Terentia's actions go beyond just the bodies of her and the family. Just as Ovid, who lacked agency to affect anything back in Rome during exile, had to rely on his wife, Cicero too without agency required the help of Terentia.

It is evident throughout the letters that Terentia serves as an important link for Cicero to Rome. Cicero not only has zero power when managing the estate but even has no knowledge of its state unless Terentia writes about it in a letter.<sup>110</sup> As such, continued correspondence from Terentia becomes a source of information, and thus, a source of anxiety, for Cicero:

*fac valeas et ad me tabellarios mittas, ut sciam quid agatur et vos quid agatis. mihi omnino iam brevis exspectatio est...*<sup>111</sup>

“Make it so that you are well and that you send letter-couriers to me, so that I may know what must be done and what you must also do. To me, the wait-time is already brief in every way...”

*ego ad quos scribam nescio, nisi ad eos qui ad me scribunt, aut ad eos de quibus ad me vos aliquid scribitis. longius, quoniam ita vobis placet, non discedam; sed velim quam saepissime litteras mittatis, praesertim si quid est firmitus quod speremus.*<sup>112</sup>

“I do not know to whom I should write, unless it is to those who also write to me, or to those about whom you write to me. I will not go off any farther, since that is what you thus prefer; but I wish that you would send letters as often as possible, especially if there is anything better which we could await.”

*ex primis aut summum secundis litteris tuis constituere poterimus, quid nobis faciendum sit: tu modo ad me velim omnia diligentissime perscribas...*<sup>113</sup>

“We will be able to decide either from your first or, at most, your second letters whatever must be done by us—I only ask you to describe everything to me with the greatest attention to detail...”

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<sup>110</sup> Cicero laments in 14.4 about the fact that they lack help from others: “The men whom I myself have always served have not returned any kindness to us” (*neque homines, quibus ego semper servivi, nobis gratiam rettulerunt*).

<sup>111</sup> Cic. *Fam.* 14.1.

<sup>112</sup> Cic. *Fam.* 14.2.

<sup>113</sup> Cic. *Fam.* 14.3.

*ea re ad te statim Aristocritum misi, ut ad me continuo initia rerum et rationem totius negotii posses scribere, etsi Dexippo quoque ita imperavi, statim ut recurreret, et ad fratrem misi, ut crebro tabellarios mitteret.*<sup>114</sup>

“I sent Aristocritus straight away to you so that you would be able to describe the beginnings of things immediately and the reckoning of the entire matter, although I also thus ordered Dexippus to return right away, and I set him to my brother, so that he would send letter couriers frequently.”

Away from Rome, Cicero cannot directly witness or attend to any business; however, through Terentia, Cicero is able to know what must be done (cf. *quid agatur*, 14.1; *quid nobis faciendum sit*, 14.3) regarding the pressing matters.<sup>115</sup> It is this ability to gain agency that also, seemingly, causes anxiety towards how Terentia corresponds with Cicero since he does not simply want correspondence but frequent and detailed correspondence with Terentia. Confined to the letter, Cicero requests full accounts of what is being done.<sup>116</sup> It is not enough for Terentia to inform him of the state of things. Rather, she must write about the “beginning of things and the process of the entire matter” (*initia rerum et rationem totius negoti posses scribere*, 14.3). There is a necessity for Terentia to write “in detail” (*diligentissime*, 14.3) about “all of the matters” (*omnia*, 14.3). Regardless, although Cicero is able to gain some agency through the correspondence with Terentia, he does not imply any obligation.<sup>117</sup> Rather, his verbiage only requests her actions (cf. *velim*, 14.2; *posses*, 14.3; *perscribas*, 14.3).

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<sup>114</sup> Cic. *Fam.* 14.3.

<sup>115</sup> Alongside the conclusion to 14.1 (cf. *quid agatur*), the introduction to the same letter helps us understand why Cicero’s dependence on Terentia was, seemingly, so great. He states that it had been brought to his attention that her character and resilience was unparalleled, as well as the fact that she had not been exhausted by any labours of the mind or body (cf. *perfertur ad me incredibilem tuam virtutem et fortitudinem esse teque nec animi neque corporis laboribus defetigari*). Although Cicero first becomes aware of this through the letters and reports of others (cf. *et litteris multorum et sermone omnium*), it is likely that his preference for Terentia herself to keep him informed comes from his desire to stay as close to the action as possible. This is the second letter chronologically; thus, it is probable that Cicero’s stress, seen in the subsequent letters, towards Terentia’s correspondence and assistance stems from her initial involvement in the matter.

<sup>116</sup> Stanley remarks on characteristics of correspondences that are “confined to the epistolary” (Stanley “The Epistolarium” 208). As she notes, “everything that needs to be known is presented within such exchanges” and, as such, “textuality is all” (Stanley “The Epistolarium” 208).

<sup>117</sup> Cicero’s lack of agency is seen again in 14.4, when he states that Terentia must take up the approach since “the plan is absent” (*deest consilium*) from him.

The adverbs that Cicero uses in 14.3 reveal his attitude towards certain aspects of letter-writing. For one, both Aristocritus and Dexippus are sent out “at once” (*statim*) with the expectation of hasty returns. Likewise, Terentia is expected to write back “immediately” (*continuo*) once Aristocritus reaches her. All three adverbs highlight the fact that Cicero is expecting quick replies.<sup>118</sup> He is not only expecting promptness but is even unwilling to go without it. Indeed, he is only sending out these letter-couriers in order that those whom he is corresponding with can send replies “immediately” (*statim*).<sup>119</sup> Further, Cicero’s distinction between *statim* and *continuo* appear to emphasise his displacement from Rome. While both have similar denotations, *statim* is especially used in reference to travel.<sup>120</sup> Thus, in these lines, Cicero acknowledges the temporal and spatial distance which his letters will travel in place of him.

Secondly, Cicero is looking for frequency in letter-writing. In 14.2, Cicero requests Terentia to “send letters as often as possible especially if there is anything more assured” (*quam saepissime litteras mittatis praesterim si quid est firmitus*). Although he sends Aristocritus to Terentia for hastiness in communication, he sends Dexippus “to his brother” (*ad fratrem*, 14.3) for consistent communication.<sup>121</sup> Like Cicero’s need for quick mail service, he appears to be unwilling to deal with occasional responses and, as such, feels the need to send out his own letter-couriers so that replies may be brought back with more frequency.

His actions here are indicative of the exilic mentality. The exile, during his banishment, is unable to reach beyond himself through anything other than the letter. They must live through

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<sup>118</sup> A similar idea is evident in 14.1 as well when Cicero states that he will not have to wait long for Terentia’s letters (cf. *mihi omnino iam brevis expectatio est*).

<sup>119</sup> We can see that Cicero’s own travels are affected by his ability to quickly correspond. Later in 14.3, he states that his being in Dyrrachium is on account of his desire to know “what should be done as quickly as possible” (*ut quam celerrime quid agatur*).

<sup>120</sup> See *OLD* s.v. “statim” def. 5 and *OLD* s.v. “continuo” def. 1a.

<sup>121</sup> Although Cicero does not request frequency from Terentia here, in 14.2, he does ask that she send letters “as often as possible” (*quam saepissime*). This use of the superlative emphasises his point.

the letter. In this way, they become, again, one with the letter. Thus, without frequent or immediate correspondence, Cicero's lifeline diminishes. Further, the life of the exile is one defined by "unpredictability" because there is no certainty for the exile, only a certain kind of "radical uncertainty" which turns into "feelings of insecurity."<sup>122</sup> Because the letter is an extension of the writer, these motifs too extend to the letter. Thus, when there is "unpredictability" in mail "delivery," there is potential for the anxiety caused by separation to be "heightened."<sup>123</sup> We see Cicero's anxiety towards letter deliveries again in 14.4, when he questions both when he will receive new letters from Terentia but also who will give them to him (cf. *nunc miser quando tuas iam litteras accipiam? quis ad me perferet?*). In this we can see the impact of Cicero's anxiety towards potential communication disruptions from his specification of being "miserable" (*miser*).

Beyond mail delivery, Cicero also makes requests regarding handling of the body. In the first chapter, we have already explored how Cicero has become distressed by his exilic experience. The grief he feels overwhelms his body and, further, the safety of his travels and whereabouts is constantly threatened. We have already seen, as well, that this anguish he feels affects those around him.<sup>124</sup> Terentia too, even though far away in Rome, is afflicted by a similar sort of physical distress:

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<sup>122</sup> Horst and Crabska state that, within exile, there is a certain kind of "radical uncertainty" that is created from the "risk of dying and the unpredictability of the future" (Horst and Crabska 9).

<sup>123</sup> Summerfield writes that this anxiety can "either be [allayed] or [heightened]" by letters that have been "subject to unpredictable delays" (Summerfield 308). It is clear that the uncertainty surrounding Cicero's epistolary correspondence greatly increases his anxiety. This idea is found throughout all epistolary correspondences, since the genre, as Hallett asserts, is "characterised by its hiatus and the anticipatory pleasures, as well as agonies" (Hallett 111).

<sup>124</sup> Namely, Clodius Philhetaerus who had to be sent home because of the health of his eyes (cf. *Clodium Philhetaerum, quod valetudine oculorum impediabatur, hominem fidelem, remisi*, 14.4) and M. Laenius Flaccus, whose hospitality and kindness were given to Cicero without regard to his own estate and safety (cf. *qui periculum fortunarum et capitis sui prae mea salute neglexit neque legis improbissimae poena deductus est quo minus hospiti et amicitiae ius officiumque praestaret*, 14.4). But even Terentia herself who was forced to leave not only her own

*nam mi ante oculos dies noctesque versatur squalor vester et maeror et infirmitas valetudinis tuae, spes autem salutis pertenuis ostenditur.*<sup>125</sup>

“For your filthy clothing and mourning as well as the weakening of your health stays before my eyes, and, moreover, the hope of safety shows forth as very weak.”

*quid nunc rogem te ut venias, mulierem aegram et corpore et animo confectam.*<sup>126</sup>

“What now should I ask of you? Should I ask that you, a sick women weakened in both the mind and body?”

The language used to describe Terentia’s body is reminiscent of Cicero’s descriptions of his own body. Just like Cicero who is “undone” (cf. *conficior*, 14.3 and 14.4) by his tears, Terentia too has become “undone” (*confectum*, 14.4) in regard to both her “body and mind” (*corpore animo*, 14.4). His specification of both mind and body here for Terentia may reflect the fact that she has had to, in Cicero’s absence, take on more responsibility regarding the affairs back home. Beyond being distressed by the grief of the situation, Terentia’s body is also, seemingly, unwell. In both passages, Cicero indicates that her health has declined (cf. *squalor vester*, 14.3; *infirmitas valetudinis tuae*, 14.3; *aegram*, 14.4). Because of these comments, it should not be surprising the Cicero’s requests to Terentia often concern taking care of her health and well-being:

*obsecro te, mea vita, quod ad sumptum attinet, sine alios, qui possunt si modo volunt, sustinere et valetudinem istam infirmam, si me amas, noli vexare. nam mihi ante oculos dies noctesque versaris; omnis labores te excipere video, timeo ut sustineas. sed video in te esse omnia. quare, ut id quod speras et quod agis consequamur, servi valetudini.*<sup>127</sup>

“I beg you, my lifeline, if you love me, do not put up whatever pertains to the expense, without others, who are able to do so—if only they are wanting to do so, and, moreover, do not distress that weakened health of yours. For, to me, you stay before my eyes every day and every night; I see that every task is taken up by you; I fear that you won’t keep up. Nevertheless, I understand that everything lies in your hands. Wherefore, take care of

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house but also the temple of the Vestal Virgins (cf. *quem ad modum a Vestae ad tabulam Valeriam ducta esses*, 14.2).

<sup>125</sup> Cic. *Fam.* 14.3.

<sup>126</sup> Cic. *Fam.* 14.4.

<sup>127</sup> Cic. *Fam.* 14.2.

your health, so that we may obtain that which you hope for and that which you are carrying out.”

*cura ut valeas et ita tibi persuadeas, mihi te carius nihil esse nec umquam fuisse.*<sup>128</sup>

“Take care that you are well and tell yourself thus, that there is not anything nor any time that is dearer to me than you.”

*cura, quod potes, ut valeas et sic existimes, me vehementius tua miseria quam mea commoveri.*<sup>129</sup>

“Take care, as much as you are able to, that you are well and think thus, that I am more ardently distressed by your wretchedness than my own.”

Similar to his previous requests, all of these are absent from the beginning of his letters and are, instead, delayed until the letter is nearly over.<sup>130</sup> The first instance is quite emphatic because Cicero gives additional instruction to Terentia concerning how she should take care of herself, namely by allowing others to bear some of her responsibilities (*sine alios, qui possunt si modo volunt, sustinere...noli*). Although he tells her to let others help, it is clear that Cicero understands and, seemingly, even wants Terentia to bear much of the burden. He dreads what might happen to her if she keeps working (*omnes labores te excipere video, timeo ut sustineas*) yet he cannot help but continue to see her working as she is now (*video in te esse omnia*). Further, Cicero opts for language this is considerably more formal than what is found in the other two. The initial *obsecro* sets the tone as being highly reverential.<sup>131</sup> The following prohibition constructions (cf. *[noli] sustinere; noli vexare*) add to this.<sup>132</sup> This formal tone is perhaps

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<sup>128</sup> Cic. *Fam.* 14.3.

<sup>129</sup> Cic. *Fam.* 14.4.

<sup>130</sup> The conclusion to 14.1 also includes a delayed request for Terentia to take care of herself (cf. *fac valeas*). However, this is, obviously, much shorter than what is seen in the other three letters. Cicero’s brevity here may either stem from the fact that this is the first letter in their exilic correspondence or that Terentia has not yet shown any signs of fatigue (cf. *teque nec animi neque corporis laboribus defetigari*).

<sup>131</sup> See *OLD* s.v. “obsecro”

<sup>132</sup> Elmer notes that Cicero “preferred” to use *noli* with infinitives when “he wished to soften the tone of his address” since it was “far more deferential” (Elmer 147). Further, Allen and Greenough assert that it was “the most ceremonious” way to express a negative command (Allen and Greenough 285).

reflective of the significance of Cicero's request. It is clear that he understands the amount of work she has taken on as well as the importance of her role through his repeated use of *omnia*. Thus, he naturally has a special interest in her taking care of herself because, if she does not, then Cicero will not be able to "obtain" (*consequamur*) a release from exile. Moreover, his use of *servi* implies a sense of obligation for Terentia to have towards herself.<sup>133</sup> Comparatively, the latter two are noticeably shorter and less formal in which Cicero opts for more "colloquial" phrasing for his requests.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> We see three other uses of *servio* throughout Cicero's letters to Terentia, all within 14.4. In each of these instances, Cicero uses the verb to indicate familial obligation (cf. *sed quid Tulliola mea fiet? iam id vos videte: mihi deest consilium. Sed certe, quoquo modo se res habebit, illius misellae et matrimonio et famae serviendum est; sin ad nos pertineret, servirent praeterquam oppido pauci*) as well as mutual obligation (cf. *neque homines, quibus ego semper servivi, nobis gratiam rettulerunt*).

<sup>134</sup> Allen and Greenough 284.

## CHAPTER 4

### *FORTUNA PRESERVES AND PREVAILS*

What happens next? Where do we go after the letter and, perhaps more importantly, what is the outcome of the exile, and by extension, their addressee? To answer these questions, we must direct our attention to *fortuna*. *Fortuna* has had a long-standing history of being connected to chance and outcome.<sup>135</sup> Because there is a “considerable range” regarding her descriptions when she appears, there is, seemingly, no clear preference for her association with success or failure.<sup>136</sup> However, as Canter notes, the most widespread descriptions of *fortuna* pertain to 1) her fickleness, changeability, inconstancy, and capriciousness, 2) her incalculability in action, and 3) her allotment of destiny.<sup>137</sup> These key aspects of *fortuna* emphasise the fact that it is impossible to know what the *fortuna* will be until it actually happens. Although we know what is to come for these exiles, they themselves, whose *fortuna* had not yet been realised at the time of writing their letters, did not. Their hopes, fears, and attitudes towards their outcomes, however, are revealed by their application of *fortuna*.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Originally “τύχη” in Greek, it was the name of a goddess who “was given jurisdiction over the destinies and fates of men and nations” (Sorenson 26). However, overtime, and especially “in the works of Herodotus and Thucydides” (Sorenson 25), its more “common usage” was in reference to just “fortune” (Sorenson 24). After Herodotus and Thucydides, it is nearly impossible to separate “man’s fate” from “his own character flaws and subsequent actions” (Sorenson 27). The events that befall individuals are “decided by chance”; however, their “outcomes” are determined by the individuals themselves” (Sorenson 33-34, 36). Nevertheless, *fortuna* is still a “stronger” force than “man’s self-determination” (Sorenson 37). Further, *fortuna* is liable to change and, as such, “man has to prepare for her vagaries in order to succeed” (Sorenson 37). Sorenson notes that she is often accredited in “her ability to change the course of history and the fate of man” and that her “changes were seemingly on a whim” (Sorenson 24).

<sup>136</sup> Canter 72. Canter notes that “her character must be learned from context” as she can be “favourable or unfavourable” (Canter 72). See Canter 72-77 for an extensive overview of *Fortuna*’s various epithets in Roman poetry.

<sup>137</sup> Canter 75, 78, 81.

<sup>138</sup> Beyond the word *fortuna*, I also inquired into the authors’ uses of *fors*, *sors*, *fama*, and *casus*.

We begin with the despondency of Cicero whose ruinous *fortuna* has seemingly already undone himself and his family. We then move to the instruction of Seneca which grants Helvia the reassurance needed to exist without worrying about *fortuna*. Finally, we conclude with the end of Ovid who has yielded himself to *fortuna*, the same force which he believes will preserve his name onwards after his demise.

### Affectively Destroyed

*o me perditum, o adflictum!*<sup>139</sup>

“Oh ruined me! Oh afflicted me!”

These sorrowful exclamations define the outcome that Cicero already believes will come to pass. Throughout the exilic letters to Terentia, Cicero’s words show a person who is slowly deteriorating, and, further, gradually succumbing to his own destruction. We see Cicero’s doubts towards having hope for his situation. Moreover, we see his assumptions towards the matters already being finished, without any chance to change what has happened. Finally, we see repeated language throughout 14.4, evocative of this destruction, such as in the exclamations above.<sup>140</sup>

These exclamations lead into several deliberations over what Cicero should do. In these, we see continuance of Cicero’s despair:

*quid nunc rogem te ut venias, mulierem aegram et corpore et animo confectam? non rogem? sine te igitur sim? opinor, sic agam: si est spes nostri reditus, eam confirmes et rem adiuves; sin, ut ego metuo, transactum est, quoquo modo potes ad me fac venias. unum hoc scito: si te habebo, non mihi videbor plane perisse.*<sup>141</sup>

“What should I ask of you now? Do I ask that you, a sick women weakened both in body and in mind, come to me? Do I not ask? Am I able to exist without you? I think, and so I will say: If there is any hope of our return, make it known and help the matter; if not, as I

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<sup>139</sup> Cic. *Fam.* 14.4.

<sup>140</sup> His usage of perfect passive participles here not only emphasises his lack of agency towards the whole matter but also the fact that there is no more ability to do anything about the matter.

<sup>141</sup> Cic. *Fam.* 14.4.

fear, it is all over, as much as you are able to make it so that you can come to me. And know this one thing: if I shall have you, I will not seem to myself to perish.”

Cicero’s words here are devoid of hope. His despondency towards the outcome of the situation marks his instructions to Terentia. Rather than outright tell her to keep working on behalf of himself, Cicero instead proposes conditionals which demonstrate his doubt towards a favourable outcome.<sup>142</sup> He himself admits that he “fears the matter is already finished” (*ego metuo transactum est*).<sup>143</sup> Moreover, his admission to Terentia in the last line demonstrates that even with his wife by his side (*si te habebo*), he will still meet his demise (*perisse*). The language he uses as well is evocative of his already believed to be fate. Although he uses active voice for his verbs which pertain to what he wants from Terentia, without ability to change his future, Cicero’s opts for passive verbs when describing the demise.<sup>144</sup> Even though the situation is still unravelling in the world external to the letters; for Cicero, it has already concluded in the internal epistolary world. Further, the Cicero beyond the letter has yet to escape exile; thus, the Cicero within the letter, who lives in a forever present tense, cannot escape this exilic fate. Thus, the epistolary Cicero is one who is perpetually stuck within exile.

His words are also riddled with uncertainty. Following the exclamations, we are immediately faced with a series of questions over what he should do next.<sup>145</sup> These deliberative

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<sup>142</sup> Interestingly, although Cicero supplies a number of conditionals throughout his letters to Terentia, he uses these most often to represent the either two possible outcomes of *fortuna* or what Terentia’s, or others’, next actions should be. In fact, there are two instances in which Cicero employs a conditional with his own agency seen in the protasis. One is seen in this passage and the other in 14.3 (cf. *quod scribis te si velim ad me venturam*). Notably, both concern Terentia potentially joining Cicero abroad. Perhaps this reflects the limited agency that he is able to have while in exile. Even though the outcomes of all other things are, seemingly, completely outside of Cicero’s hands, he does have some ability to dictate if-and-when Terentia will leave Rome and join him.

<sup>143</sup> Note the use of language evocative of *negotium*.

<sup>144</sup> This is underscored by the perfect passive exclamations from the beginning.

<sup>145</sup> Beyond 14.4, Cicero repeats a similar exclamation twice in 14.1 (cf. *me miserum*), each of which he uses when discussing how his family and estate has been affected (cf. *me miserum! te ista virtute, fide, probitate, humanitate in tantas aerumnas propter me incidisse, Tulliolamque nostram, ex quo patre tantas voluptates capiebat, ex eo tantos percipere luctus! nam quid ego de Cicerone dicam? qui cum primum sapere coepit, acerbissimos dolores miseriasque percepit*), or will be affected (cf. *quod ad me, mea Terentia, scribis te vicum vendituram, quid, obsecro te, me miserum! quid futurum est? et si nos premet eadem fortuna, quid puero misero fiet*), by his exile.

subjunctives are, inherently, without answer.<sup>146</sup> Cicero does not want Terentia to answer; he cannot afford to do so since the situation, in Cicero's eyes, seems to be already reaching its own end. The rest of 14.4 is written in much the same way. Cicero gives two more series of rhetorical contemplations, both of which regard his family. In the first,<sup>147</sup> he questions what will happen with his children; and, in the second,<sup>148</sup> Cicero shows his anxiety towards the future of his epistolary correspondence with Terentia.<sup>149</sup> Further, the letter is filled with Cicero's declarations regarding what should happen following his demise. Although the specifics of these declarations are still unsettled, perhaps an acknowledgement from Cicero to the lack of agency he holds over the matters if he truly does succumb to his own fate, they nevertheless demonstrate the lack of hope that Cicero feels at the moment of writing.

While Cicero loses agency in the real world, his words too begin to fail. Though he continues to write to Terentia, he confesses that there is nothing (cf. *nec enim habeo quid scribam*, 14.2) to write about and even that there is "no need [for him] to write anything else (cf. *nihil opus est reliqua scribere*, 14.3).<sup>150</sup> It is important to understand, for the second quotation, that Cicero is speaking in reference to what would happen if it were not okay for him to return to Rome. In these lines, Cicero is quite literally writing away himself from the text under the

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<sup>146</sup> Usage of the deliberative subjunctive implies "doubt" and "indignation" or even "impossibility" towards something "being done" (Allen and Greenough 281).

<sup>147</sup> "But what's to come of my Tullia? Now you must see to that, for I have no plan. But really, in whatever way the matter will hold itself, the marriage and reputation of that unfortunate one must be helped. What? What will my Cicero do? Indeed, that one should always be in my lap and my embrace" (*sed quid Tulliola mea fiet? iam id vos videte; mihi deest consilium. sed certe, quoquo modo se res habebit, illius misellae et matrimonio et famae serviendum est. quid? Cicero meus quid aget? iste vero sit in sinu semper et complexu meo*).

<sup>148</sup> "Now when will poor me receive your letters? And who will bring them to me?" (*nunc miser quando tuas iam litteras accipiam? quis ad me perferet?*).

<sup>149</sup> Note similarities in language, especially concerning Cicero's deliberative subjunctives, between these two sections and the passage above.

<sup>150</sup> This line is especially evocative of Cicero's disappearance from both within and outside of the letter since it refers to what would happen if "Cicero is not permitted to come to [his family]" (*me ad vos venire oportet; sin autem*). Just as Cicero's body is unable to physically reach his family, his words are unable to do so as well.

assumption that Terentia is unsuccessful in her efforts. When the Cicero external to the letter is assumed to die, so does the epistolary Cicero.<sup>151</sup> The physical form of both Ciceros is deteriorating and, thus, beginning to perish.

The diminishment in Cicero's optimism towards the outcome of his exile is evident if we compare these lines to the first letter that he sends to Terentia:

*quod de domo scribis, hoc est de area, ego vero tum denique mihi videbor restitutus, si illa nobis erit restituta. verum haec non sunt in nostra manu; illud doleo, quae impensa facienda est, in eius partem te miseram et despoliatam venire. quod si conficitur negotium, omnia consequemur; sin eadem nos fortuna premet, etiamne reliquias tuas misera proicies?*<sup>152</sup>

“This matter which you write about, concerning the home and the land, I truly will seem to myself to have been finally restored at the time that those things shall be restored to us. Truthfully these things are not in our hands; I am upset at the fact that, whatever expenditures must be made, you, wretched and stripped, come into a piece of them. If the task is accomplished, we will obtain everything. Or if the same fate overwhelms us, will unfortunate you indeed renounce all that remains of you?”

In these lines, Cicero's attitude, though not completely optimistic, is still much more hopeful than what is found in 14.4. We see almost no deliberation in his words, save for the last sentence.<sup>153</sup> In fact, though Cicero acknowledges his lack of agency in the matter (cf. *verum haec non sunt in nostra manu*) and his lamentation toward Terentia having to act in his absence (cf. *illud doleo quae impensa facienda est in eius partem te miseram et despoliatam venire*), he does not show the same hopelessness or uncertainty that we saw before. Cicero does use another conditional to demonstrate the two potential outcomes in his situation; however, his choice of future indicative verbs here, as opposed to the present subjunctives earlier, imply more certainty

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<sup>151</sup> Forselius asserts that by “explicitly stating a lack of message content” the “state of emptiness” is equivalent to “the sender's bodily absence” (Forselius 129). Thus, through his own words, Cicero is able to depict his corporeal absence.

<sup>152</sup> Cic. *Fam.* 14.2.

<sup>153</sup> Even still, Cicero employs future indicative *proicies* for a question of simple fact (Allen and Greenough 205) rather than a deliberative subjunctive.

towards the results of the two outcomes he presents to Terentia.<sup>154</sup> Despite this, his use of future indicatives for both verbs in the latter of the two conditionals presented, regarding what will happen if their fate overwhelms them (cf. *sin eadem nos fortuna premet*), perhaps indicates that Cicero believes that outcome to have a greater chance than the other one.<sup>155</sup> Nevertheless, he abstains from any opinionated interjections regarding what he believes the outcome will be. In these lines, we can also observe a clear association between Cicero's own restoration and the restoration of the estate. Even if Cicero comes back from exile, he cannot consider himself "restored" (*restitutus*) if their "house" (*domo*) and "land" (*area*) have not likewise been "restored" (*restituta*). And, just as Cicero lacks agency while in exile, the ability to restore the house is also not in his hands (cf. *verum haec non sunt in nostra manu*). Thus, although Cicero is seemingly more hopeful towards the situation, his lack of control and agency is nevertheless apparent.

Even in the very next letter that he sends to Terentia, only about a month after 14.2, Cicero's hope already has begun to turn into despondency:

*quod ad me, mea Terentia, scribis te vicum vendituram, quid, obsecro te, me miserum! quid futurum est? et si nos premet eadem fortuna, quid puero misero fiet? non queo reliqua scribere; tanta vis lacrimarum est; neque te in eundem fletum adducam.*<sup>156</sup>

"The fact that you, my Terentia, write to me that you would sell the house. What, I implore you, —oh miserable me—what is our future? And if the same fate overwhelms us, what will happen to our miserable child? I am not able to write the rest; the abundance of my tears is so much and I does not want to move you to the same amount of grief."

In this, we see a similar connection between the condition of the estate and the condition of the family as we saw in 14.4. Just as Cicero will not consider himself restored if the estate is

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<sup>154</sup> Allen and Greenough 326.

<sup>155</sup> Cicero's words, namely his usage of *eadem* for *fortuna*, are more reflective of the Stoic mindset here than in 14.4, since the fate that might grant them success is the same fate that could also give them defeat.

<sup>156</sup> Cic. *Fam.* 14.1.

not restored (cf. *ego vero tum denique mihi videbor restitutus, si illa nobis erit restituta*, 14.4), he and his family will, likewise, not have any future if the estate does not have a future (cf. *quid futurum est? et si nos premet eadem fortuna, quid puero misero fiet*, 14.1). This continued association is strengthened by his repetition of similar wording within both passages (cf. *sin eadem nos fortuna premet*, 14.4; *si nos premet eadem fortuna*, 14.1).<sup>157</sup> Alongside this, Cicero's inability to continue writing when considering what is to come of his family (cf. *si nos premet eadem fortuna, quid puero misero fiet? non queo reliqua scribere*, 14.1) is reminiscent of his reluctance to continue writing when supposing what will happen if he is unable to return to Rome (cf. *si perficitis, quod agitis, me ad vos venire oportet. sin autem, sed nihil opus est reliqua scribere*, 14.3). In both instances, the epistolary self becomes even more restricted, reflecting the hypothetical future that Cicero and his family might face. They, lacking agency, are unable to continue existing; thus, Cicero's text, likewise, becomes unable to continue being written.

Elsewhere in the letters, we can observe his distress at how his exile has affected his family, such as this inability to perform his duties:

*sed omnia sunt mea culpa commissa, qui ab iis me amari putabam qui invidebant, eos non sequebar qui petebant. quod si nostris consiliis usi essemus neque apud nos, tantum valuisset sermo aut stultorum amicorum aut improborum, beatissimi viveremus.*<sup>158</sup>

“But all these things were caused by my own wrongdoing, since I kept thinking that I was esteemed by those who actually were envious of me and I was not going after anyone who actually was pursuing me. Since, if I had made use of my own plans, and the nagging of our foolish and wicked friends around us had not been so great, we would live most fortunately.”

*vos enim video esse miserrimas, quas ego beatissimas semper esse volui idque praestare debui et, nisi tam timidi fuissetus, praestitissem.*<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>157</sup> Further, both instances are used as the protases of future-more-vivid conditional clauses.

<sup>158</sup> Cic. *Fam.* 14.1.

<sup>159</sup> Cic. *Fam.* 14.2.

“Indeed, I see that you all are the most troubled, you whom I always wanted to be the most blessed; I ought to have provided for that, and I would have, if had not been so afraid.”

*idque fieri mea culpa, qui ceteros servavi, ut nos periremus!*<sup>160</sup>

“This fault of mine, happens to result in our ruin, us, who have served others!”

*ipsa calamitas communis est utriusque nostrum, sed culpa mea propria est. meum fuit officium vel legatione vitare periculum vel diligentia et copiis resistere vel cadere fortiter: hoc miserius, turpius, indignius nobis nihil fuit. quare cum dolore conficior, tum etiam pudore: pudet enim me uxori meae optimae, suavissimis liberis virtutem et diligentiam non praestitisse.*<sup>161</sup>

“The misfortune itself is shared by either of us, but the fault is my own. It was my duty to either avoid the legate or resist through carefulness and resources or to fall bravely: nothing beyond this is more wretched, shameful, or more undignified to me. For what reason I am stricken with grief, and even more so with shame. Indeed, it is shameful that I did not provide diligence and virtue to my most treasured children and to my most highly regarded wife.”

We see repeated language evocative of obligation in these instances. Within all, there is repetition of the first person, either through the verbs or possessive adjectives, which emphasises Cicero being the singular source for his exile—even though the effects have not affected him alone.<sup>162</sup> Additionally, though Cicero mentions that he “wanted” (*volui*, 14.2) his family to “always be blessed” (*beatissimas semper*, 14.2), this is only instance in which he asserts a *desire* to keep his family intact. In all other instances, Cicero’s focus is on his obligations and duties, and his inability to perform them adequately.

The cause of his inability ranges. Cicero not only admits to “serving others” (*ceteros servari*, 14.2) and listening to the advice of those around him (cf. *nostris consiliis uti essemus*

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<sup>160</sup> Cic. *Fam.* 14.2.

<sup>161</sup> Cic. *Fam.* 14.3.

<sup>162</sup> Do note that although Cicero is occasionally employing the plural first person, these are, primarily, instances of the *pl. modestiae* and *auctoris*. Cicero’s usage of the *pl. modestiae* and *auctoris* emphasises “his own participation and involvement” (Molinelli 71) in the matters and also includes “the addressee” into the end result (Molinelli 70). Although it was, indeed, Cicero’s own bidding which caused the downfall, his family nevertheless also feels the effects of it.

*neque apud nos*, 14.1) but even being “too afraid” (*tam timidi*, 14.2) to act in a way that would “benefit” (*praestitissim*, 14.2) his family. Cicero’s negligence towards his duties is emphasised in 14.3, where he mentions several routes that he could have taken in order to fulfil his duties. In this, he highlights that there was not a singular way in which he failed to do what he was supposed to do but rather multiple ways. His uses of *pudet* and *pudore* add to this. For Cicero, these words are employed solely when referring to someone’s actions being shameful in regard to their duties. Although Cicero precedes these with other terms relating to shame, such as *turpius* and *indignus*, these two truly emphasise that the lamentations here are caused by his negligence towards his duties.

In these lines, there is also emphasis regarding the fact that the effects of his exile befell not only himself but also the rest of his family.<sup>163</sup> Cicero states three times that the fault was his alone (cf. *mea culpa*, 14.1; *mea culpa*, 14.2; *culpa mea propria*, 14.3) but the resulting misfortune did not affect him alone but rather his entire family (cf. *vos enim video esse miserrimas*, 14.2; *ipsa calamitas communis est utriusque nostrum*, 14.3) in such a way that they all now suffer (*nos periremus*, 14.3).<sup>164</sup> He employs language in 14.3 that is reflective of language used to draw legal distinctions between the private citizen and the shared community. It is not just his but actually his own fault (cf. *culpa mea propria*, 14.3). Likewise, both do not just suffer a misfortune but really, they share the misfortune *itself* (cf. *ipsa calamitas*, 14.3). In this

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<sup>163</sup> Although, in 14.1, Cicero mentions that Terentia has tried to encourage him by telling him to consider the matter as being caused by chance (cf. *quae si, tu ut scribis, fato facta putarem, ferrem paulo facilius*), he nevertheless insists that it was his own fault that things turned out the way that they did (cf. *sed omnia sunt mea culpa commissa*).

<sup>164</sup> In the passages which began this chapter, we saw similar language regarding his situation and its outcome with which Cicero connected himself to his family (cf. *nostrum reditus*, 14.4; *illa nobis erit restituta*, 14.2; *nos fortuna premet*, 14.2; *nos premet eadem fortuna*, 14.1).

way, it is evident that Cicero sees his duties towards his family as not only familial but also as legal and official.

This link between the family and the business does not solely pertain to Cicero's fulfilment of his duties prior to exile. For, stuck in exile, Cicero is fundamentally incapable of performing most, if not all, of his previous duties. Thus, Terentia and others must act in place of him for any business in Rome that needs to be managed. In 14.2, Cicero acknowledges and laments the work that Terentia has had to take up on behalf of her husband's absence:

*a te quidem omnia fieri fortissime et amantissime video, nec miror, sed maereo casum eiusmodi, ut tantis tuis miseriis meae miseriae subleventur.*<sup>165</sup>

"I see everything being done most earnestly and steadfastly by you in fact, and I am not surprised, but I grieve that such a thing has happened that my grievances would be lightened by so many of yours."

*omnes labores te excipere video; timeo, ut sustineas. Sed video in te esse omnia.*<sup>166</sup>

"I see that you have taken up every task; I fear that you won't keep up. Nevertheless, I understand that everything lies in your hands."

Here, he emphasises the amount by repeatedly using *omnia*. It is not just that Terentia has had to fill in for Cicero in some ways but rather in all ways. Although he does mention others, such as Piso, who had given assistance towards Cicero himself and his family during his exile, Cicero's focus in these lines is on the unaccompanied Terentia who has had to play the roles of both wife and husband in Cicero's absence. Cicero has faith in Terentia's capabilities in tending to these matters, evident by his "lack of surprise" (*nec miror*) at "everything being done most earnestly and most steadfastly" (*omnia fieri fortissime et amantissime*), but he is nevertheless "worried" (*timeo*) that she will not be able to "keep up" (*sustineas*). Further, Cicero, although he

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<sup>165</sup> Cic. *Fam.* 14.2.

<sup>166</sup> Cic. *Fam.* 14.2.

understands that his power over matters in Rome is limited to almost nothing, is pained by Terentia having to take on additional work on behalf of him. Like the distress he feels towards the effects of his exile befalling not solely himself, he faces distress in knowing that some of his current misery (*meae miseriae*) is being lessened by the pains (*tantis tuis miseriis*) of Terentia's labour. In this portion of the letter, Cicero becomes the reader and then the writer again by responding to a previous letter from Terentia in which she has written about their home. Although Cicero does not want for her to take on such a role, tending to the household affairs, he understands that there is no choice for him in the matter. If Cicero wants the estate to prevail, he must relinquish his own role to Terentia and allow her to bear responsibility in his place.<sup>167</sup>

Cicero's reliance on the service of Terentia is again seen in 14.3:

*Quod scribis te, si velim, ad me venturam, ego vero, cum sciam magnam partem istius oneris abs te sustineri, te istic esse volo. Si perficitis, quod agitis, me ad vos venire oportet.*<sup>168</sup>

"You write that you will come to me if I desire, but in truth, although I know that a large part of this burden is carried by you, I wish for you to remain there. If you all accomplish what you are doing, it would be allowed for me to come to you."

Here it is clear that it is only through Terentia's labour that Cicero may have the chance to come back to Rome (cf. *si perficitis quod agitis me ad vos venire oportet*). Although Cicero is not unwilling to have Terentia join him in his exile, he is nevertheless reluctant to do so since he understands that "a great part of [this] burden is carried" (*magnam partem istius oneris abs te sustineri*) by her. Thus, Terentia must stay in Rome to act on behalf of Cicero if there is any hope for his return.

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<sup>167</sup> Cicero's reluctance towards Terentia bearing such a responsibility is also seen in 14.2: "I grieve the fact that, whatever expenditures must be made, you, wretched and stripped, come into a piece of them" (*illud doleo quae impensa facienda est in eius partem te miseram et despoliatam venire*).

<sup>168</sup> Cic. *Fam.* 14.3.

Terentia, and the rest of Cicero's family, certainly become a continued source of hope for Cicero in his exile. Indeed, we can see that the despair of Cicero towards his *fortuna* is lessened, even if slightly, by his family:

*nam mi ante oculos dies noctesque versatur squalor vester et maeror et infirmitas valetudinis tuae, spes autem salutis pertenuis ostenditur. inimici sunt multi, invidi paene omnes; eicere nos magnum fuit, excludere facile est. sed tamen quam diu vos eritis in spe, non deficiam, ne omnia mea culpa cecidisse videantur.*<sup>169</sup>

“For your filthy clothing and mourning as well as the weakening of your health stays before my eyes, and the hope of safety, however weak, shows forth. The enemies are many, nearly all are envious; it was difficult to throw us out, but to keep us out is easy. But, nevertheless, I will not perish for however long you will be hopeful, lest everything seem to fall because of my fault.”

Just as the demise of the exiled Cicero becomes connected to the destruction of his body and letters; his family, and their letters, too becomes associated with the ideas of hope and restoration. Cicero, completely bereft of all agency, must rely on his family to act in his place and, thus, all hope towards the situation depends on them. Therefore, there is necessity for them to update him frequently (cf. *quam saepissime litteras mittatis*, 14.2) as well as to keep themselves healthy and work towards accomplishing the tasks (cf. *ut id quod speras et quod agis consequamur*, 14.2). Otherwise, Cicero's hope will be diminished, effectively, to nothing. Cicero explicitly conveys this idea with his assertion that he “will not perish” (*non deficiam*) so long as his family remains “in hope” (*in spe*).<sup>170</sup> This assertion is concessive to Cicero's own assumptions of the outcome of his situation, since it is clear from his remark that “it is easy to

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<sup>169</sup> Cic. *Fam.* 14.3.

<sup>170</sup> Cicero's desire to continue living for his family is seen as well in other letters. In 14.1, although he is reluctant to stay with Plancius, Cicero nevertheless demonstrates his potential satisfaction if his travels with Plancius will lead to his reunification with his family (cf. *quem ego diem si videro et si in vestrum complexum venero ac si et vos et me ipsum recipiaro, satis magnum mihi fructum videbor percepisse et vestrae pietatis et meae*, “Which, if I will see that day, and if I will come into your embrace and if I will recover my own self as well as you all, I will seem to myself to have acquired a great enough satisfaction of both your own piety as well as my own”). Again, in 14.4, he states: “But if this, that is to say, us living, is better for our children, then let us bear the rest of everything, even if these things are unbearable” (*sed si hoc fuit liberis nostris gratius nos vivere, cetera, quamquam ferenda non sunt, feramus*).

keep him out” (*excludere facile est*) of Rome that Cicero is without much, if any, hope left towards coming back from exile. Interestingly, in regard to his assertion, it does not seem to matter to Cicero how much hope his family has, for he makes this promise even though the hope seemed “very slim” (*pertenuis*).

Even when Cicero embraces the potential outcome of his ruin, his family continues to be a source of comfort:

*quod si nos ad aliquam alicuius commodi aliquando recipiendi spem fortuna reservavit, minus est erratum a nobis; si haec mala fixa sunt, ego vero te quam primum, mea vita, cupio videre et in tuo complexu emori...*<sup>171</sup>

“The fact that if fate reserved a hope of recovering anything of any kind of advantage at any time, it would be less of a fault from us; if these awful things are fixed, I really wish to see you, my lifeline, most of all, and to be wrapped up in your embrace...”

The despair seen within this passage, taken from 14.4, matches the overall tone that Cicero uses in the rest of the letter. Although he poses two possible outcomes towards his *fortuna*, it is clear from his language how he views the likelihood of both outcomes. The repetition of indefinite pronouns and adverbs (cf. *aliquam*; *alicuius*; *aliquando*) conveys a heavy sense of doubt towards that likelihood of the former outcome occurring in comparison to the likelihood of the latter outcome occurring. We have already analysed a similar line of thinking in the same letter, in which Cicero notes his dread towards the matter already being settled (cf. *sin, ut ego metuo, transactum est*). In both instances, Cicero’s response to this outcome is the same. He does not attempt to flee his fate nor undo it but, rather, request to see and hold Terentia in person (cf. *cupio videre et in tuo complexu emori; si te habebo, non mihi videbor plane perisse*). As such, in these final requests, we can see his desire to give shelter to the last piece of him that remains: his body. Cicero’s final requests to Terentia should not be surprising because of the

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<sup>171</sup> Cic. *Fam.* 14.4.

terms of endearment he gives to her in the exilic letters. We see one instance here (cf. *mea vita*); however, there are several more in 14.2 (cf. *mea lux*; *meum desiderium*; *mea vita*). Cicero, however, is not using these only as terms of endearment. Even more than that, he is also professing what Terentia provides to him while he is in exile. The primary meanings of these words depict a wife who is not simply dear or caring to Cicero. Really, they portray a wife who is an embodiment of her exiled husband,<sup>172</sup> a necessity requested by her exiled husband,<sup>173</sup> and means of deliverance for her exiled husband.<sup>174</sup>

### When the Teacher Becomes the Student

It is the mind, and really the learned mind, that Seneca argues is what permits any person to endure the effects of *fortuna*. Indeed, the learned mind is a virtuous mind, and when virtue has strengthened the mind, the mind becomes impervious to all (cf. *cum semel animum uirtus indurauit, undique inuulnerabilem praestat*, §13). There are several aspects to this concept that we must address in order to understand Seneca's line of thought as well as his overall attitude towards *fortuna* and his exile.

First, let us consider how the mind becomes virtuous. To the Stoics, the mind is indeed already born "with reason and intelligence" and is only able to become virtuous when these innate qualities are "fully cultivated and perfect."<sup>175</sup> Thus, there is a necessity for all minds to be guided towards instruction. To cultivate the mind, then, we must learn how to regulate it. Just

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<sup>172</sup> See OLD s.v. "vita" def. 2. *Vita* also carries the definition "means of living," which strengthens the reading for *desiderium* (OLD s.v. "vita" def. 7b).

<sup>173</sup> See OLD s.v. "desiderium" def. 3 and def. 4. *Desiderium* inherently conveys a sense of "absence," which underscores the deprivation that Cicero feels while in exile (OLD s.v. "desiderium" def. 1a).

<sup>174</sup> See OLD s.v. "lux" def. 11. *Lux* can also refer to one's "eyesight" (OLD s.v. "lux" def. 8) and even "clarity" towards a problem (OLD s.v. "lux" def. 9b). Thus, Terentia also serves as a way for Cicero to 'see' what is happening in Rome, even while he is in exile.

<sup>175</sup> Stephens 266.

like the universe, as Russell asserts, “the human soul consists of different orbits.”<sup>176</sup> This should be no surprise since we are indeed, as Seneca asserts, composed of the same substance that makes up the universe (cf. *humanum animus ex isdem quibus diuina constant seminibus compositum*, §6). Differently, however, humans begin life “out of harmony.”<sup>177</sup> As we mature, it is the cultivation of our reasoning that allows the orbits within us to become ordered.<sup>178</sup> Reason learns “what proper order, proportion, and limit are” from the imitation of the universe itself since the orbits of the universe are “ordered and reconciled in their motion.”<sup>179</sup> As such, we must imitate them if we want to learn.

This “reconciliation of one’s inner motions by reason”<sup>180</sup> is virtuous behaviour because we are bringing “order and limit into the inchoate materials of ourselves”<sup>181</sup> and, therefore, acquiring “self-mastery.”<sup>182</sup> Alongside rationality and self-mastery, happiness and knowledge were also seen as likenesses to god.<sup>183</sup> Regarding the former, the Stoics viewed happiness as dependent upon the “goodness and rationality” of our use of the things in our lives.<sup>184</sup> Just as Seneca demonstrates, it is not the benefits themselves that make us happy but rather how we interact with them. Therefore, even in exile, he still retains his means (cf. *intellego me non opes*, §10).

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<sup>176</sup> Russell 242. I will be using ‘soul’ and ‘mind’ interchangeably throughout this section because of the wording within Plato’s *Timaeus*: “The cyclical pathways, imitating the body of the all, bound these, that is, the two divine orbits, to the body which we have now called the ‘head’” (τὰς μὲν δὴ θείας περιόδους δύο οὔσας, τὸ τοῦ παντὸς σχῆμα ἀπομιμησάμενοι περιφερὲς ὄν, εἰς σφαιροειδὲς σῶμα ἐνέδησαν, τοῦτο ὃ νῦν κεφαλὴν ἐπονομάζομεν, 44d).

<sup>177</sup> Russell 242.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

<sup>179</sup> Russell 242-243.

<sup>180</sup> Russell 242.

<sup>181</sup> Russell 247.

<sup>182</sup> Russell 242.

<sup>183</sup> Russell provides an in-depth overview as to how the ancients associated the cosmos, divinity, the human soul, and virtuous behaviours such as rationality, self-mastery, happiness, and knowledge.

<sup>184</sup> Russell 250.

The latter then leads us to the next aspect of consideration: what does the cultivated mind allow us to know. To answer this, we should first address what the mind can observe. Simply put, it can observe anything which the eyes can see. As such, Seneca is able to observe and, thus, know the various celestial phenomena in the sky (cf. *dum animus ad cognatarum rerum conspectum tendentem in sublimi semper habeam*, §8). More than that, however, it can reflect upon anything that it has observed. As such, Seneca, even though unable to actually see the true pathways of the heavenly bodies, he can nevertheless contemplate and gain an understanding of them (cf. *intueri; inhaerere; investigare; spectare*, §8). Further, we can understand from this that although Seneca's body cannot physically travel to the sky, his mind can. The mind, derived from the same seeds as the sky, is therefore *divine* and able to reside among the stars. Released from the chains of the body (cf. *corpusculum hoc, custodia et uinculum animi*, §6), it is free to touch any sky or time, past or present (cf. *nam cogitatio eius circa omne caelum it, in omne praeteritum futurumque tempus inmittitur*, §11).

It is this departure from the body that allows it to reach its "final destiny" which is the very place from which we came.<sup>185</sup> There, in the presence of the cosmos, we can observe the origins of ourselves and acquire the knowledge necessary to regulate our minds through imitation of the universe. Thus, the cultivated mind allows us to know ourselves. With an enriched mind, we are able to look within. We are able to return to ourselves, to the origins of our souls without the restrictions of the body (cf. *corporis exigua desideria sunt*, §10). There, within our own minds and souls, we are able to acquire whatever it is that we need since, as Seneca argues, "every person is able to make themselves happy" (*unusquisque facere se beatum potest*, §5). Thus, we are able to find security.

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<sup>185</sup> Russell 252.

We must acknowledge, however, that to look within does not indicate that one should simply be a student. Rather, to look within means to act as both the student and the teacher at the same time. Seneca himself appears to have taken on both roles in order to console his mother.<sup>186</sup> Just as he has had to inquire into *exempla* to illustrate his own circumstances in exile, he likewise presents *exempla* to Helvia so that she may also better understand what exile looks like for her son.<sup>187</sup> Near the beginning of the letter, when Seneca asserts that he is not a wise man (cf. *sapientem esse me dico? minime*, §5) but, differently, someone who has given himself to the wise men (cf. *sapientibus me uiris dedi*, §5), he states that he is not yet able to rely on his own strength (cf. *nondum in auxilium mei ualidus*, §5). Instead, he finds refuge with others (cf. *in aliena castra confugi, eorum scilicet qui facile se ac suos tuentur*, §5). Seneca's word choice here (cf. *confugi*; *tuentur*) can be seen elsewhere in the consolation. Such as in his assertion that the pursuit of honourable studies provides protection from the effects of *fortuna* (cf. *itaque illo te duco quo omnibus qui fortunam fugiunt confugiendum est, ad liberalia studia*, §17). Just as we previously saw, within the cultivated mind, we are able to be safe from *fortuna*. But, even more than that, we are able to nevertheless find refuge in the company of others who have already cultivated their minds. And we must find refuge in these people because we must learn how to keep ourselves secure and, thus, must imitate ones who have already done so. These learned ones not only protect those around them (*suos*, §5) but even themselves (*se*, §5). As such, they play both the role of the teacher and the role of the student.

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<sup>186</sup> There is implication in Seneca's words: "Therefore, I try, with my hand placed upon my own wound, to cover your wounds" (*itaque utcumque conabar manu super plagam meam inposita ad obliganda uulnera uestra reptare*, §1).

<sup>187</sup> Seneca confesses, at the beginning of the letter, that his delay in writing to his mother was from his inability to find anything similar to compare his situation to (cf. *non inueniebam exemplum eius qui consolatus suos esset, cum ipse ab illis comploraretur*, §8).

It is this concept, *security*, which defines what the cultivated mind provides for us. It provides a place of refuge, unable to be accessed by *fortuna*. For, as Seneca asserts, the mind is eternal and untouchable (cf. *animus quidem ipse sacer et aeternus est et cui non possit iniici manus*, §11) and, thus, our virtues are always our own (cf. *propria virtus*, §8), unable to be taken away at any time. Indeed, they follow us wherever we go, even into exile (*licet in exilium euntibus uirtutes suas secum ferre*, §8). As such, they prove to be a source of constant certainty in our lives.

Seneca associates the mind and security throughout the consolation by using forms of *tueor* and *tutus* alongside mentions of mental abilities.<sup>188</sup> We see it (cf. *intueri*, §8) when Seneca considers the various celestial bodies in the sky. Likewise, near the end of the letter, when he urges his mother to return to her foundations of discipline (cf. *iacta sunt disciplinarum omnium fundamenta: nunc ad illas reuertere*, §17), since these will grant her security (cf. *tutam te praestabunt*, §17).

It is important to note that Seneca does not limit this return to the learning of Stoic thought. As is in his advice to Helvia, his understanding of this internal return that is necessary for the mind concerns anything which was already innate at our conception. Moreover, it is anything which allows us to become regulated and whole again. As such, for Helvia, her return need not be to solely educational studies. Rather, it can also be to her *pietas*. Helvia's *pietas* is apparent throughout her entire life. Indeed, within the letter, Seneca first addresses how he is doing because of Helvia's familial *pietas* (cf. *hoc prius adgrediar quod pietas tua audire gestit, nihil mihi mali esse*, §4). At the end, he urges her, as well, to turn to those around her for

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<sup>188</sup> Beyond these words, there are other descriptions of disciplinary studies which denote refuge and safety from *fortuna* (cf. *haec quidem certissima praesidia sunt et quae sola te fortunae eripere possint*, §17; *dum in illum portum quem tibi studia promittunt peruenis*, §18).

“comfort” (*solacia*, §18) until she is able to reach the refuge within the cultivated mind (cf. *dum in illum portum quem tibi studia promittunt peruenis*, §18). He then instructs her to, seemingly, act as the teacher in her care for Novatilla, her granddaughter:

*Tene in gremio cito tibi daturam pronepotes Nouatillam, quam sic in me transtuleram, sic mihi adscripseram, ut possit uideri, quod me amisit, quamuis saluo patre pupilla; hanc et pro me dilige. Abstulit illi nuper fortuna matrem: tua potest efficere pietas ut perdidisse se matrem doleat tantum, non et sentiat. Nunc mores eius compone, nunc forma: altius praecepta descendunt quae teneris inprimuntur aetatibus. Tuis adsuescat sermonibus, ad tuum fingatur arbitrium: multum illi dabis, etiam si nihil dederis praeter exemplum. Hoc tibi tam sollemne officium pro remedio erit; non potest enim animum pie dolentem a sollicitudine auertere nisi aut ratio aut honesta occupatio.*<sup>189</sup>

“Hold in your lap your granddaughter Novatilla given to you in such haste. She whom I adopted thus to myself and transferred thus into myself, so that she would seem, since she has now lost me, just like an orphan even though her father is alive; love this one on behalf of me. Recently *fortuna* stole the mother from that one: your *pietas* is able to make it so that she would not feel that she herself has lost the mother whom she grieves over so much. Now construct her habits, and now shape them too: the teachings which are imprinted within the infantile years sink more deeply. She will become used to your lectures and she will be moulded to your judgement: You will give a lot to that one, even if you will have given nothing beyond *exemplum*. To you, this service, so solemn, will be that which is present beyond a true remedy; Indeed, nothing beyond rationality or honourable work is able to avert that the dutifully grieving mind from unrest.”

We again see an association between socialisation and security. Just as Seneca was once a student and put himself into the trust of learned men, in order to learn how to be secure within himself, Helvia too needed to become a student in order to learn moderation. Similarly, just as Seneca then took what he had been taught and bestowed upon others, Helvia must do the same. And, as Seneca implies, the continuous playing of these roles allows for consolation of the mind (cf. *hoc tibi tam sollemne officium pro remedio erit*). Moreover, Helvia’s own background becomes the experiences, or rather, the *exemplum*, needed to guide Novatilla who has also been bereft of a mother by *fortuna*’s doing (cf. *abstulit illi nuper fortuna matrem*). She is, therefore,

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<sup>189</sup> Sen. *Helv.* 18.

the perfect teacher for Novatilla to imitate because each share a common loss of their mother. Just as Seneca uses his philosophy to provide comfort to his mother and shape the way that she thinks, Helvia likewise must use her *pietas* to mould Novatilla's own understanding of the world (cf. *nunc mores eius compone, nunc forma*) according to her own (cf. *ad tuum fingatur arbitrium*).

Although both Seneca does not show hope towards a return from exile, he nevertheless demonstrates acceptance of his exilic *fortuna*. Unlike Cicero, who laments that he and his family have had to yield to *fortuna*, Seneca instead remains content. For, as a Stoic, he understands that the outcome of *fortuna* is not indicative of what his behaviour will be. Nor is it indicative of what his mother's behaviour will be. Indeed, both have shaped their minds, thus allowing them to become virtuous in their own regards. Now, as both student and teacher, Helvia can instil this kind of mindset into others like Novatilla.

### The Eulogy of the Exile

We have already formed an understanding of Ovid as *verbum*. Reduced to his words, Ovid cannot help but become a character within the narrative. Indeed, his narrative features all hallmarks of the *mythos*. As such, he himself becomes a mythological character, well-travelled because of and well-troubled by the gods. Although he himself lacks agency in his exile, and thus, in his narrative, he understands the importance that companions and associates hold over successful outcomes.

But we know that all narratives must end eventually and so too do we see the end of Ovid. The beginning of each letter begins with an extended description of his static present-day life. In 1.4., he depicts a self that has been considerably aged during the time in exile:

*iam mihi deterior canis aspergitur aetas  
iamque meos uultus ruga senilis arat,*

*iam vigor et quasso languent in corpore vires  
nec iuveni lusus qui placuere iuuant  
nec, si me subito uideas, agnoscere possis,  
aetatis facta est tanta ruina meae.*<sup>190</sup>

“Already the worse period of life is strewn upon me with whitened hair,  
and already the creasing of old age carves out my expressions:  
already strength and energy lay dormant in my broken body,  
neither do the pleasantries, which once pleased me as a young man, please me anymore  
nor, if you were to unexpectedly see me, would you be able to recognise me  
so much of my time was made into ruin.”

Like Cicero, Ovid too has felt the physical effects of his exile. However, the effects that exile has had on his body differ greatly from the effects that Cicero’s body endured. Most notably, Ovid experiences more permanent effects than Cicero did. While Cicero’s grief did accompany him throughout his exile, the physical manifestation of his grief primarily showed up during his epistolary duties. Indeed, his misery was exhausting, but his body was still capable of travel and movement otherwise. Ovid, on the other hand, appears to have already succumbed to the temporal effects of his exile. Not only had Ovid aged, but the extent of his aging had been great enough that he had lost his youth completely. The “energy” (*vigor*) and “strength” (*vires*) that once compelled Ovid’s body now instead “lay dormant” (*languent*) after all the years.<sup>191</sup> Similarly, the “pleasantries” (*lusus*) that he once participated in “as a youth” (*iuveni*) no longer “please” (*iuuant*) him. It is clear that the loss of his youthfulness was evident in both his body and his mind, as the defining characteristics of his youth are no longer present in his old age. Further, it is possible that, in these lines, Ovid is attempting to insert a subtle indication of his

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<sup>190</sup> Ov. Pont. 1.4.1-6.

<sup>191</sup> Ovid’s use of *vigor* and *vires* here might be considered a hendiadys since the two have nearly identical meanings. However, there is an important distinction in their usage. While *vigor* refers to a generally stative type of physical, or even mental, “vigour” (*OLD* s.v. “vigor” def. 1a), *vis* is used more for “exerted” (*OLD* s.v. “vis” def. 1a) or “active” (*OLD* s.v. “vis” def. 6b) vigour. Further, because it can refer to “influence” (*OLD* s.v. “vis” def. 25a), when used in the plural such as seen here, *vis* can also indicate autonomy. Thus, by using both, Ovid addresses the absence of energy needed for a working body and mind as well as the lack of power he has over his circumstances in exile.

current viewpoints regarding why he was exiled. Although he possesses traces of the corporeal features of his youth, since they still reside “in his body” (*in corpore*), he does not assert the same for the mental features.<sup>192</sup> As such, the present-day Ovid may be trying to separate himself from the Ovid who had been originally exiled, in order to appeal to Augustus.

Further, it seems that the only physical manifestation of Cicero’s grief was an onslaught of tears. Even though Cicero was greatly burdened by these tears, his physical appearance was not permanently changed by them. In this way as well, Ovid differs greatly. The changes that Ovid’s body has undergone are far more apparent since his aging had given him “white hair” (*canis*) and “wrinkles” (*ruga*) on his “face” (*vultus*). Indeed, the extent of his physical mutation is so great that “if [Ovid’s wife] were to unexpectedly see [him], then [she] would not be able to recognise [him]” (*nec, si me subito uideas, agnoscere possis*). Unlike Cicero, even if Ovid had been able to leave exile and come back to Rome, he would have still bore physical traces of his time there since it is impossible to undo the effects of aging. As such, a part of Ovid’s body will always be marked by his time in exile and, thus, a part of Ovid himself will remain static within a permanent exile.

What follows the opening is then an extended assertion of why Ovid’s appearance has changed so drastically and why he has lost, seemingly, all of his youthful qualities. Although Ovid would have naturally aged during the ten years of his exile, as seen when he “acknowledges” (*confiteor*) that “the passing of time has done this” (*facere hoc annos*), it is evident that the effects were far greater than what would be expected since he asserts that there is “actually another reason” (*et altera causa*) for the extent of his aging. He states it was, in fact,

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<sup>192</sup> Ovid states that he does not enjoy the “pleasantries” (*lusus*) which he used to. We see similar word choice of *luser* in Ovid’s epitaph in *Tr.* 3.3.73-76: *hic ego qui iaceo tenerorum luser amorum / ingenio perii Naso poeta meo*, “Here is I, the poet Naso, who lay as a banterer of delicate desires, undone by my own character.”

due to the “restlessness of the mind and endless toil” (*anxietas animi continuusque labor*) he had endured during exile. In his admission, Ovid specifies the kinds of hardships he has had to endure, that is to say, both physical and mental hardship. This again highlights the long-term deterioration of Ovid’s mind and body.

It is important to note that up to this point, Ovid has not given himself any verbal agency. Although the pieces of him, such as his “strength” (*vires*) and “energy” (*vigor*), have acted—Ovid himself has not. His use of *confiteor* in l. 7 is the only first-person transitive verb he uses until much later in the letter. Although he does employ *ero* in l. 10, this is a stative verb and thus does not carry the same verbal agency as a transitive verb. Additionally, Ovid uses *ero* as hyperbolic assertion in a conditional. Ovid’s declaration that he would be “older than Pylian Nestor” (*Pylis Nestore maior*) if all of his hardships “would be spread out through the years” (*digerat annos*) serves only to emphasise the magnitude of what he had experienced.<sup>193</sup> The conditional is formed from a future-less-vivid protasis and a future-more-vivid apodosis. Although the conditional is mixed, it is generally future and, as such, carries the implication that Ovid’s declaration is “unfulfilled.”<sup>194</sup> Further, while the future indicative *ero* supposes the “logical result,” the present subjunctive *digerat* makes this supposition “less distinct.”<sup>195</sup> It does not depict reality, but rather a hypothetical. Thus, *confiteor* becomes the only source of actual agency that Ovid exhibits for most of the duration of the letter. As his body and mind begin to slip from his hands, all that Ovid is left with—all that he is capable of doing—is the act of confession.

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<sup>193</sup> The age of Nestor far exceeded any natural mortal age. In the *Odyssey*, he is described to have “thrice” (τρίς, *Od.* 2.345) been the “ruler over the generations of men” (ἀνάξασθαι γένε’ ἀνδρῶν, *Od.* 2.345). Thus, if Ovid’s troubles had been spread out over a longer time, he would have had to live for at least three generations.

<sup>194</sup> Allen and Greenough 323.

<sup>195</sup> Allen and Greenough 326.

The excessiveness of his troubles is emphasised again later when he describes them as being a “prolonged sequence” (*series immensa*) and “unjustified” (*inmodicus*). Further, it is evident that Ovid’s old age has come prematurely when he professes that he was “forced to be an old man before he was ready” (*ante meum tempus cogit et esse senem*) because of the lack of “leisure” (*otia*) for his “body” (*corpus*) and “mind” (*animus*) during exile.<sup>196</sup> We can now understand why Ovid’s youthful characteristics had left him. It was not merely the natural process of aging but really the extended duration and number of hardships that exile had provided without any break.<sup>197</sup> The perpetual fatigue of his body and mind portrays an Ovid who is not just hampered by his exile but even stuck and unable to leave.

Further, Ovid’s aging does not stop at elderhood but seemingly continues until he is nearly in the process of actively dying.<sup>198</sup> As old age overcomes Ovid, so do the first signs of

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<sup>196</sup> Ovid’s use of *otia* here is interesting as, because it carried the meaning of being away “from work” (*OLD* s.v. “otium” def. 1), there was often an implication of being on holiday. For individuals like Cicero, this entailed actually travelling to a vacation home, in order to physically and mentally get away from work. However, for Ovid, although he is physically away from Rome, he still lacks any *otia*.

<sup>197</sup> In ll. 11-18, Ovid represents his own overexertion through a list of literary motifs for work which were common in antiquity: “the bull” (*bove*), “the ground” (*humus*), “the horse” (*equus*), and “the ship” (*navis*). He asserts that if these four “never” (*numquam*) are allowed to rest from being worked, then eventually they will “break” (*frangat*), “tire out” (*senescit*), “fall down” (*occidet*), and “weaken” (*solvetur*). His usage of the four is interesting as each does not just represent work, but rather different kinds of work. The first two, *bove* and *humus*, indicate the work needed for the cultivation of civilisations. The third, *equus*, indicates the effort individuals put in to gain societal honours. The final, *navis*, indicates the endeavours taken on by individuals who seek from beyond their own homeland. Each of these three coexist in a sort of hierarchy of needs. Without a properly established civilisation, individuals cannot strive for intra-societal gain, and, without that, individuals cannot venture to other lands for extra-societal gain.

<sup>198</sup> In the beginning of 1.4, when Ovid describes his elderly appearance, he evokes two primary death scenes within Lucretius’ *De Rerum Natura*. The first is Lucretius’ description regarding the process of dying in Book 3, ll. 449-452: *inde ubi robustis adolevit viribus aetas/ consilium quoque maius et auctior est animi vis/ post ubi iam validis quassatum est viribus aevi/ corpus et obtusis ceciderunt viribus artus*, “then when life with hardy strength has hit its peak / thought is made better and likewise so is the might of the mind / afterwards when the body is / now weakened by vigorous exertions of time / and the limbs have fallen with weakened activity Just as seen in Lucretius’ description, the process of Ovid’s death begins when his “life” (*aetas*) becomes “worse” (*deterior*) after it “has peaked” (*adolevit*). During the decline, Ovid’s “body” (*corpus*) becomes “broken” (*quassatum*) and, although the “energy” (*viribus*) remains, the “limbs” (*artus*) nevertheless become “weak” (*ceciderunt*) as well. The second is his description of the mass death scene in Book 6. Just like the plagued bodies “would not be able to recognise themselves” (*neque se possent cognoscere*), Ovid’s wife too would not “be able to recognise” (*agnoscere possis*) him.

deterioration. Already, his body and mind have been stripped of their youthful “virality” (*vigor*). Moreover, he is “weakened” (*debilitat*) by the “prolonged sequence of troubles” (*series immensa malorum*). In the introduction to 3.1., Ovid’s anxiety towards the possibility of his final resting place being in Tomis is evident:

*ecquod erit tempus quo uos ego Naso relinquam,  
in minus hostili iussus abesse loco?  
an mihi barbaria uiuendum semper in ista  
inque Tomitana condar oportet humo?*<sup>199</sup>

“Will there ever be a time when I, Naso, might leave you  
having been ordered to live, exiled, in a less hostile place?  
Or would it be just that I would be interred in Tomitian ground  
living forever in that barbaric place?”

Although Ovid has yet to perish, his mind is already focused on his eventual fate. Ovid does not only ask “when” (*ecquid*) he will “leave” (*relinquam*) Tomis but even if he will leave it at all, or if he will be forced to “live” (*vivendum*) there “forever” (*semper*). Even though Ovid poses his thoughts as questions, it seems that he is doubtful towards any hope for himself. Seemingly, he yields to being exiled for the rest of his life since, in his first question, he assumes that he would only leave if he were “ordered to live in a less hostile place” (*in minus hostili iussus abesse loco*). Ovid, at this point, has little faith in actually returning to Rome. Instead, his focus is on being allowed to go to someplace other than Tomis. When he poses his second question, there is an assumption, then, that his first question has already been denied. For, at the time of Ovid’s death, he will have “lived” (*vivendum*) in Tomis for “forever” (*semper*). Even beyond living, Ovid seemingly doubts the ability for his body to be buried in any place other than Tomis. Again, although he questions this, he only asks if “it would be just” (*oportet*) that he “be buried” (*condar*) there. Because of the way he poses his question, it is clear that Ovid

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<sup>199</sup> Ov. *Pont.* 3.1.3-3.1.6.

assumes that his body will succumb to this fate. Although the Ovid external to the letter is still living at that point, the Ovid within the letter cannot escape his current fate as an exile or the possibility that his body too will remain exiled even after death.

Even if his body remains exiled after his demise, there is hope of preservation through *fortuna*. Just like the other mythological characters, Ovid's ruin will be that which makes him known (cf. *conspicuos nostra ruina facit*, 3.1.56). Moreover, Ovid himself will be remembered through the effects of *fortuna* (cf. *exposuit memet populo Fortuna uidendum / et plus notitiae quam fuit ante dedit*, 3.1.49-50). Although Ovid cannot control the ultimate outcome of his own *fortuna*, he is a poet. As such, he belongs to the select few that are responsible for the *fama*, that is, the passed down narratives, of mythological characters and real-life people.<sup>200</sup> Ovid is powerless against Augustus, but he is also the means by which Augustus' *fama* will be known in both "life and after-life."<sup>201</sup> Let us consider, lastly, the ending of *Tristia* 3.3. in which we receive the epitaph of Ovid, a subject which I briefly touched on earlier. In this, he asserts that he has been undone by his own *ingenium* (cf. *ingenio perii Naso poeta meo*, l. 74). However, the same *ingenium* which had brought about his books, and thus led to his exile, had also given him *esteem* and *longevity* (cf. *etenim maiora libelli / et diuturna magis sunt monimenta mihi / quos ego confido quamvis nocuere daturos / nomen et auctori tempora longa suo*, ll. 77-80). For Ovid, his own *verba* have the power to destroy but also preserve. It is within these, then, that Ovid's name can prevail beyond the limits of his exile.

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<sup>200</sup> Scott states that "the verses of poets" were "the most potent vehicle of publicity for spreading throughout the empire belief in the deification of the monarch" (Scott 46). He even cites Ovid himself as evidence for the poets' role in *fama*. Just as "the fame and apotheosis of a ruler" (Scott 46) depends upon the poet, the "gods are created likewise by verse" (Scott 45).

<sup>201</sup> Williams, *Banished Voices*, 200. Further, as Herbert-Brown notes, Ovid himself declared "the importance of poetry in preserving the names of the great, including his own" in the *Ars Amatoria* (Herbert-Brown 53). The relationship between *fortuna*, notoriety, and poetry can also be seen in *Pont.* 3.1.49-50, as mentioned just before.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

#### A Brief Recap

When we picture the exile, we imagine the height of separation. Cast out from their country, they are severed from all the life that they formerly knew. No longer do they have the same identity. But, even still, they have not acquired a new identity. They live, then, *without*. They live as shadows of the person they once were, and we see this in these authors' letters when their epistolary selves become remnants of who they once were.

Cicero is a man defined by his role in Rome. As a *novus homo*, his life, in many ways, depends upon his placement in Rome. And so, ejected from the Roman city, he becomes obsessed with movement and state of health: all attention is on his safety. The text becomes a body in itself. It has the capacity to travel and be destroyed. Like Cicero, its movement and safety must depend on others. Cicero himself has little control over where it goes or if it even continues to exist. Once the letter leaves his hands, it is up to whoever is holding it to ensure that it *stays alive*.

Seneca is a student of Stoicism, and of disciplinary affairs in general. As a scholar, he necessarily must participate in the cycle of knowledge. It is not enough to be only a student or only a teacher. Rather, he must be both and, even, be both at the same time. As such, he must participate in the community of academics. However, in Corsica, he has been deprived of the chance to do so. Although his body is stuck in exile, his mind is free to go anywhere. Released from its corporeal prison it can fly into the sky and convene with that which it came from.

Moreover, his text can do the same to his mother back in Rome. Within the letter, his mind, as student, learns from *exempla* and, as teacher, presents *exempla* to his mother. Further, it instructs Helvia to do the same since it is not enough for her to learn. Rather, she must go on to teach others in the family just as Seneca has done for her.

And Ovid, the poet that he is, becomes the narratives that he once composed. Although his writing had, at one point, been a reason for his banishment; it now serves as way through which his textual self can emerge. His words focus on the character of Ovid. He is fictionalised, and, further, immortalised through his words. Even when his body and mind depart from the world, his words shall, nevertheless, continue to live on. However, he needs his words to speak for themselves since he cannot do it himself. And so, he needs his wife to become a microphone for his narrative, someone to speak his story to Augustus and ensure that the fame which he had worked for does not diminish and die out in his absence or death.

And these are, of course, quite optimistic readings of their exilic literature since they assume that the authors will separate themselves from their exile; both *literally*, as in being unbanished and returning to Rome, and *figuratively*, as in ridding themselves of the association to their exilic status. Their act of writing is certainly powerful since, even in exile, these authors are able to retain some of their vocal autonomy. However, it is also imperfect for it is full of contradiction.<sup>202</sup> At the same time that the letters grant temporary access to their readers, and to Rome, the moment of connection has already passed.<sup>203</sup> The letter preserves the present but only

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<sup>202</sup> Altman touches on the variety of contradiction within the epistolary genre. See Altman 42-43 for discussion on the “‘either-or,’ ‘neither-nor’ phenomenon” of epistolary contradiction; Altman 122-129 for the impossibility of the present; Altman 185-190 for a summary of the paradoxical aspects of the epistle.

<sup>203</sup> The presence of “time lags and absence” within the “epistolary situation” causes a sort of “temporal ambiguity whereby past is taken for present [and] the only possible present is the most immediate past” (Altman 132). There is, then, a preoccupation “with immediacy” and “with presence” within “epistolary language” because letters are “product[s] of absence” (Altman 135).

as far as production goes; it remembers the act of writing and attempts to deliver that memory to the reader.<sup>204</sup> And, in its delivery, then and there, appears the writer within the text.<sup>205</sup> But it is not actually the writer, of course; it is merely evidence of the writer.

### Simulation, the Same, or Something Else?

In this way, my idea of the textual self is related to idea of the epistolary *simulacrum* as presented by Stanley. The “qualities or characteristics of the writer” found within the letter create not the writer, nor even a copy of the writer, but “a *simulacrum* of presence” which then “conjure[s] up something of the *being* of the writer.”<sup>206</sup> But if we approach the *simulacrum* only through Stanley’s perspective, we will be limited in our understanding of these exilic texts. To be sure, there *are* remnants of the writers, and these *do* create *simulacra* of presence. However, this presence is distorted because the *simulacrum* itself, in Deleuze’s words, is “built on a dissimilitude.”<sup>207</sup> The memory of the exile’s presence only furthers the sense of their absence because this presence is illusive in nature and is, actually, the presence of *absence* itself. Thus, when the reader receives the letter, and is confronted with this presence of absence, all they can do is remember the absence of the writer and then remind others of this absence.<sup>208</sup>

It is this contradiction that begets a *simulacrum* rather than copy. Indeed, the copy is “authorised by [its] resemblance” to the model whereas the *simulacrum* implies “a perversion” and, further, a “turning away” from the model.<sup>209</sup> There is an internal “disparity” and

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<sup>204</sup> Stanley compares the “temporal” qualities to “flies in amber” (Stanley “The Epistolarium” 208). Altman notes that “memory” in combination with the “expectation” of response keeps the reader likewise “present to the imagination of the writer” (Altman 140).

<sup>205</sup> Stanley, “The Epistolarium,” 208.

<sup>206</sup> Stanley, “The Epistolarium,” 209.

<sup>207</sup> Deleuze 47. Notably, deception is inherent to the *simulacrum* and dissimulation, see Deleuze 46-47.

<sup>208</sup> Altman states that “memory is all one has left in absence. Memory, imagination, and hope make of past and future the only living present for the letter writer separated from the lover” (Altman 131).

<sup>209</sup> Deleuze 48.

“difference” found within the construction of the *simulacrum*.<sup>210</sup> The physicality of the letter, that is, its materiality and transit, causes this dissimilitude.<sup>211</sup> Thus, there is the inherent contradiction of absence found within the presence of the letter. This contradictory nature of the letter affects the memory as well. For, where there is memory, there is also oblivion. As the reader reads the letter, they forget the presence of the writer found within the letter in favour of remembering the absence of the writer outside of the letter. The present tense that the letter preserves thus destroys any chance for change.

Bound within the letter, the exile exchanges life for text. The exiles become associated to their own fragmentation, to their dissemblance. They require restoration; they need to be healed. But the exile cannot be restored and, thus, cannot be healed. The letter indeed reminds the reader of the writer, but it does so in a way that causes the reader to become increasingly connected to the writer’s inability to be healed. They are unable to leave the epistolary present tense and so they are unable to remove themselves from exile. Even beyond exile, once unbanished or dead, there is a piece of them that remains within that exilic state. Indeed, so long as the text survives, so do pieces of the writer, but only, seemingly, within exile. We are unable to ignore their exiles or resist the urge to connect these writers to their exiles. Their letters may travel far away from

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<sup>210</sup> Deleuze 49.

<sup>211</sup> The materiality of the letter fails to recreate the entirety of the writer. Likewise, the temporal and spatial distance limits the ability to convene properly. Here, I apply Holmes’ breakdown of the Lucretian definition of *simulacrum* (Holmes 329-338) to Stanley’s conception, within “The Epistolarium,” of what letters transmit (Stanley “The Epistolarium” 212-218) as well as how they travel (Stanley “The Epistolarium” 208-209). Holmes notes that the *simulacrum* is not a “copy” but rather a “re-production of the ‘model’” (Holmes 330). Similarly, as Stanley asserts, even though letters change because they travel through “time and space” they are, nonetheless, always representative of “the moment of their production” (Stanley “The Epistolarium” 208). Holmes goes on to say that “when we see” we do not see the *simulacrum*, but rather we see an “image” because of the simulacra (Holmes 332). It is not the “reality” of this image that we see but a “resemblance” (Holmes 334). In the same way, as Stanley states, epistolary correspondence should not be considered “an extension or echo of a face-to-face relationship” but rather as something that exists “in parallel with” the face-to-face relationship (Stanley “The Epistolarium” 210). Moreover, the relationship found within the text may not “necessarily mean that [the correspondents’] face-to-face encounters were like [that]” (Stanley “The Epistolarium” 212). The presence expected, or perhaps even wanted, from the materiality of the letter does not fail to remind the reader of the inherent absence that necessitates the letter.

their creators, but their creators remain stuck since their exile has brought severance which disallows them from returning.

We must recognise that there is abjection that comes from the insurmountable gap caused by this severance.<sup>212</sup> In their letters, there is proof of connection to Rome; in the same texts, however, there is revelation of rejection.<sup>213</sup> Indeed, the *simulacrum* cannot help but to remind the reader of the writer's exilic status. The space that the exile occupies cannot be the subject but, it likewise cannot be recognised as the object. The exile lives in liminality; they live unprotected.<sup>214</sup> And, likewise, the letters do too.<sup>215</sup> However, they do not exist as "nothing" but rather *something* which bears significance to the subject and the object.<sup>216</sup> Thus, they exist as the *abject*. Formed through disturbance of identities, systems, and order itself, the *abject* does not respect any "limits, places, or rules."<sup>217</sup> It, in fact, can exist *beyond* limits.<sup>218</sup> Similarly, the *simulacrum* lends itself to the "process of limitlessness" which is "a constant development" and "a gradual process of subversion of the depths."<sup>219</sup> The *simulacrum* is inherently perverse and so too is the *abject* "immoral, murky, devious, and suspect."<sup>220</sup> Defiantly, then, these exiles, and their letters, continue on.

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<sup>212</sup> The theory of the *abject* hails from Julia Kristeva. She proposes that the *abject* is the liminal space set "between" the subject and the object (Kristeva 127, 130).

<sup>213</sup> Kristeva notes that the "abject" is "something rejected from which one is not separated, from which one is not protected as is the case with an object" (Kristeva 127).

<sup>214</sup> Unlike the *abject*, the "object" is indeed protected (Kristeva 127).

<sup>215</sup> Kristeva asserts that "the one through whom the abject exists" is an "outcast who places (is placed), separates (is separated), situates (is situated), and therefore wanders" (Kristeva 130). Thus, it is possible to associate the abject with both the exile and their letters.

<sup>216</sup> Kristeva 126.

<sup>217</sup> Kristeva 127.

<sup>218</sup> See Kristeva 127 for her detailed approach to the "body" falling "beyond the limit."

<sup>219</sup> Deleuze 49.

<sup>220</sup> Deleuze 47; Kristeva 128. Necessarily, then, the nature of the *abject* bears resemblance to the contradictory nature of the letter and, by extension, *simulacrum*. See Kristeva 130-133 for a breakdown of the abject's contradiction regarding exile, memory, time, and consciousness.

Although they continue to exist, can they ever actually fit back in? Or are they marked by their exile, their *abjection*, without possibility of recovering their former connection to Rome? Is there a distinction, regarding the potential for reconnection, to be made between the writer and their letters? The answer is, unsurprisingly, complex.

### *Ex Illis Ad Urbem*

Indeed, their letters are sent back to Rome, able to travel where the exile themselves cannot. But the exiles' constant reminders of their inability to go back to Rome prevent us from separating the text from the exiled writer. On the other hand, as noted previously, the very act of writing these letters preserves the exile's authorial autonomy. However, we must address publication since these letters would not exist if not for someone collecting and publishing them.<sup>221</sup> We know that Ovid himself collected and published the first three books of *ex Ponto* as "a unit."<sup>222</sup> We have less information regarding the publication of *ad Helviam*<sup>223</sup> and *ad Familiares* 14.1-4<sup>224</sup> but it can be presumed from what evidence we do have that someone else

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<sup>221</sup> Thinking philologically about these texts, there also seems to be a connection between the titles and the collections. The letters of Cicero and Ovid are named in a similar way, each being given the generic title *Epistulae*. However, while the rest of the title for Cicero's letters (cf. *ad Familiares*) produces a sense of companionship and connection, the rest of the title for Ovid's letters (cf. *ex Ponto*) instead becomes a reminder of his place-of-exile. Ovid is, seemingly, no longer connected, even in the epistolary world, to those whom he is writing. Rather, he and his writing become permanently associated with his place-of-exile. Differently, the title of Seneca's letter, *Consolatio ad Helviam*, evokes more specificity, in both the purpose (cf. *Consolatio*) and the addressee (cf. *ad Helviam*) of the letter.

<sup>222</sup> Wheeler xxxvi. There is less certainty on the publication *Tristia* and Book 4 of *ex Ponto*, see Wheeler xxxiv-xxxvi. Regarding the latter, Wheeler states that "it is probably that Ovid did not himself collect these letters for publication in book form" because of the high number of new addressees as well as the lack of "proem" but also notes that since *Pont.* 4.16 had "the air of having been written as an epilogue" it is possible he was, in fact, "preparing to do so" (Wheeler xxxvi). An important note: it was customary for him to "send each letter separately to its recipient" and "to collect them" once enough had been "accumulated" in order to publish them in "book form" (Wheeler xxxvi).

<sup>223</sup> Although it was a personal consolation to Seneca's mother, Ferrill argues that "there can be no doubt that the *ad Helviam* was written for publication" (Ferrill 255) and Gloyne, seemingly, agrees with him (Gloyne 453). Even still, we have no indication as when the consolation was published or even who published it.

<sup>224</sup> We know that Cicero's correspondence consisted "almost entirely of private letters written without any idea of future publication" (Shackleton Bailey 1). Further, it was not Cicero himself who collected them but close associates, such as Tiro, his "secretary," who, most probably, was the sole "editor" for the *ad Familiares* (Shackleton Bailey 2). This collection was "arranged and published separately or in groups during the Augustan

published both. Interestingly, the one who would be the hardest to separate from their exile, Ovid, is the only one of the three who not only published the exilic literature while in exile but even compiled and arranged it for publication himself.<sup>225</sup>

Regardless, how much autonomy can we ascribe to these exiles if their authorship ended at the end of the page? This idea holds especially true for Cicero whose letters were not only compiled but also arranged by someone other than himself. The exilic epistles are the first four to appear in Book 14 and, following these, the very next letter, 14.5, is dated to 50 B.C.<sup>226</sup> The subsequent letters after the initial exilic letters are, for the most part, noticeably shorter. Moreover, they lack some of the characteristics seen in the first four; most notably, there are only three instances in which Cicero uses a term of endearment, only one of which is in reference to Terentia alone (cf. *mea suavissima et optissima*, 14.5), the other two in reference to Terentia and the children (cf. *vos meae carissimae*, 14.14; *vobis etiam animae meae*, 14.16). With an epistolary arrangement like this, it is difficult to separate, at the very least, Cicero and Terentia's marriage from his exile.

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period" but never under the name *ad Familiares*, which did not come to us until the "Renaissance" (Shackleton Bailey 2). Cicero refers to Tiro being a collector of his letters in a letter to Tiro himself: "I understand what you want to do; you want your letters to also be collected into volumes" (*video quid agas; tuas quoque epistulas vis referri in volumina*, *Fam.* 16.17).

<sup>225</sup> It is nearly impossible to ignore Ovid's exile for several reasons. For one, as stated previously, Ovid is the only one who does not eventually return to Rome. Moreover, within the exilic literature, each poem is riddled with reminders of his *relegatio*. His inclusion of multiple epitaphs (e.g., *Pont.* 4.16; *Tr.* 3.3), along with general references to his demise, further emphasises his conclusion in Tomis. His exilic end bleeds into his other work as well, making it hard to read texts like the *Metamorphoses* without drawing connections. Finally, one cannot, necessarily, avoid reading Ovid's exilic literature. Even if it does not cross your path at first, you must, eventually, meet exilic Naso.

<sup>226</sup> Williams, *Letters to His Friends*, 522. From 14.5 until the end of the book there are no less than eight years which separate the first four letters from the rest. Perhaps Cicero's return to Rome removed the necessity for epistolary correspondence between himself and Terentia. However, this conclusion seems unlikely to me. Are we really to believe that there was zero epistolary correspondence between the two for eight years? I would venture to say no but that leaves us with more questions than answers: Were the letters accidentally lost? Did Cicero, or even Terentia, purposefully destroy them? Did the editor take them out? It is unlikely we will ever have a satisfactory answer for these.

The topic of exile, and nods to it, appear frequently in Seneca's later works. Interestingly, our association of Seneca to his exile may, perhaps, become stronger *following* his exile since his attitude towards various aspects he addressed in *ad Helviam* noticeably shifts.<sup>227</sup> Moreover, "almost every evil and horror" found within Seneca's text was something which he himself had "lived through and witnessed, in his own person or in the persons of those near him."<sup>228</sup> Thus, there was a strong association between himself and the content of the text, even after exile.

It seems unlikely that these authors will ever be able to rid themselves of their exile. But, as one final question, does the exile *want* to be unexiled, and, moreover, do they *want* their exilic literature to be unexiled as well? As with my previous questions, there is difficulty in answering. To attempt an answer, however, let us consider the Roman *urbs* and its relationship to engaging in conversation. We know that Roman discourse exists within the *urbs*. There is chatter in the streets, there is oration in the forum, and there are graffiti along the walls. The Roman *urbs* cannot help but become a beacon for conversation. The people are engaging with each other, and with the city itself. They are speaking to *you*, and they want you to talk back. There is desire, then, to reciprocate and participate in the conversation. Why would the exile be any different? In fact, this urgency to engage would be heightened when cast outside of the Roman *urbs*. The exiles' ability to engage is limited to the letter, a rather restrictive form to hold conversation in since the page can only respond in so many ways. Thus, exilic text is naturally deficient because

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<sup>227</sup> Although in *ad Helviam*, Seneca asserted that "every place is a fatherland for the learned man" (*omnem locum sapienti viro patriam esse*, §9), in *de Vita Beata*, he confesses that any exile "may still prefer to be at home" (Edwards 173n1).

<sup>228</sup> Fitch xxvi. Specifically present were "exile, murder, incest, the threat of poverty and hideous death, and all the savagery of fortune" (Fitch xxvi). This ever-growing association for Seneca between exile and misfortune is also noted by Edwards who states that "exile appears frequently in lists of grave misfortunes the would-be philosopher should anticipate e.g., *Epistulae Morales* 24.3, 66.36, 91.8; cf. *de Providentia* 3.2" (Edwards 173n1). Unsurprisingly, *fortuna* continues to be a force of "adversity" which one has to strategise against, see Asmis, Bartsch, and Nussbaum xix. Among the common "disasters" which Seneca cites, there was "death (whether one's own or that of a loved one), exile, torture, and illness" (Asmis, Bartsch, and Nussbaum xix).

it is limited in ways that the discourse of the Roman *urbs* is not. Although, in the *urbs*, those engaging in conversation are free to use gestures, delivery, and, most notably, the voice; within the letter, conversation is reduced to the *corpus*, the materiality; the *mens*, the thoughts; and the *verbum*, the written word.

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