

The Laws of Peace: The Representation of Gendered Antagonism in Vergil and Propertius

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>1. The traditional division between masculine and feminine worlds...actually does not see sexual difference as difference, but as a question of belonging to two separate worlds, which are "different" from a neutral bird's-eye description, but otherwise coexist as integral parts in the hierarchy of a higher cosmic order, the wholeness and unity of which is in no way threatened by this "difference." These are parts that "know their place." And feminism (as a political movement) puts in question, and breaks, precisely this unity of the world, based on massive suppression, subordination, and exclusion.... This exclusion—and this point is absolutely crucial—is not simply the exclusion of the other side, or half, but above all the exclusion ("repression") and <i>the split</i> (social antagonism) <i>as such</i>; it is the erasing of a social antagonism. Its reappearance (in the form of feminist struggle) is the appearance of the social division in the pure state, and this is what makes it political, and politically explosive.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Alenka Zupančič. 2017. <i>What is Sex?</i> Boston: MIT. 36-37; italics original.</p> | |
| <p>2. Why do we not rather strive for eternal peace and agreed upon marriages? (All translations are my own.)</p> | <p><i>quin potius pacem aeternam pactosque hymenaeos exercemus?</i> (Aen. 4.99-100)</p> |
| <p>3. Nor may [Aeneas] enjoy kingship or his desired life, while he has given himself to undertake laws of an unjust peace.</p> | <p><i>nec, cum se sub leges pacis iniquae tradiderit, regno aut optata luce fruatur</i> (4.618-19)</p> |
| <p>4. [Aeneas] commands his men to bring sure responses to King Latinus and declare the laws of peace.</p> | <p><i>regique iubet responsa Latino certa referre uiros et pacis dicere leges</i> (12.111-12)</p> |
| <p>5. Dido's silencing in the <i>Aeneid</i>:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Antagonism erupts. (Book 4) ↓ Dido is silent and reunited with her husband in the underworld. (Book 6) ↓ The silent and subservient Livia replaces the antagonistic Dido. (Book 12)</p> | |
| <p>6. No peace satisfies me in [my love for] you.</p> | <p><i>in te pax mihi nulla placet</i> (Prop., 3.8.34)</p> |
| <p>7. I will not pursue you with hostile speech, although you deserve it, Propertius. My reign in your books has been long. I swear by the strain of the Fates which none can revoke, and in this way may the three-headed dog bark sweetly for me. If I lie, let vipers hiss at my grave and lie above my bones.</p> | <p><i>non tamen insector, quamvis mereare, Properti: longa mea in libris regna fuere tuis. iuro ego Fatorum nulli revolubile carmen, tergeminusque canis sic mihi molle sonet, me servasse fidem. si fallo, vipera nostris sibilet in tumulis et super ossa cubet</i> (4.7.49-54)</p> |
| <p>8. In this way we cure love affairs of life with the tears of death. I keep secret the many crimes of your unfaithfulness.</p> | <p><i>sic mortis lacrimis uitae sanamus amores: celo ego perfidiae crimina multa tuae</i> (4.7.69-50)</p> |

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>9. Let other women possess you. Soon I alone will hold you. You will be with me, and I will wear down your bones mixed with mine.</p> | <p><i>nunc te possideant aliae: mox sola tenebo: mecum eris, et mixtis ossibus ossa teram.</i> (4.7.93-94)</p> |
| <p>10. Then with supplicating hands I finally came to an agreement, although she scarcely allowed her feet to be touched and said, "If you want me to forget your confessed guilt, accept what the terms of our lawful agreement will be. You will not walk about in Pompeian shades looking fancy, nor when the sand of the lascivious Forum is strewn. Do not turn your neck to the back of the theater or give yourself to your delay by an open litter. But first, let Lygdamus be sold, who is the cause of all my complaining, and bind double-chains on his feet." She spoke the law. I responded, "I will obey the laws." And she, having become proud in the given power, laughed and purified whatever place the foreign girls touched. She cleansed the threshold with pure water, commanded me to change all the lights again, and three times touched my head with the fire of sulfur. And when the bed had been changed, even every single sheet, I vowed again, and we released our weapons of war on the whole bed.</p> | <p><i>supplicibus palmis tum demum ad foedera veni[t], cum uix tangendos praebuit illa pedes, atque ait: 'Admissae si uis me ignoscere culpae, accipe, quae nostrae formula <u>legis</u> erit. tu neque Pompeia spatiabere cultus in umbra, 75 nec cum lasciuum sternet harena Forum. colla caue inflectas ad summum obliqua theatrum aut lectica tuae se det aperta morae. Lygdamus in primis, omnis mihi causa querelae, ueneat et pedibus uincula bina trahat.' 80 indixit <u>leges</u>: respondi ego: '<u>legibus</u> utar.' riserat <u>imperio</u> facta superba <u>dato</u>. dein, quemcumque locum externae tetigere puellae, suffiit, ac pura limina tergit aqua, imperat et totas iterum mutare lucernas, 85 terque meum tetigit sulphuris igne caput. atque ita mutato per singula pallia lecto respondi, et toto soluimus arma toro (4.8.71-88)</i></p> |
| <p>11. I never offered the torches of marriage or came to this agreement.</p> | <p><i>...nec coniugis umquam praetendi taedas aut haec in foedera veni (Aen., 4.338-39)</i></p> |
| <p>12. ...[whatever gods care about] lovers in an unequal agreement.</p> | <p><i>non aequo foedera amantis (4.520)</i></p> |