They Keep It All Hid

Augustan Poetry, its Antecedents and Reception

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Studies in honor of Richard F. Thomas

DE Gruzter
Part of the art and pleasure of intertextuality lies in recognizing when the author of the work being read or heard is pointing toward other writers, reciters, or singers with single words—commonplace or exotic, with phrases, and even with word-placement, within prose or verse or song lyrics. These then awaken in informed readers or hearers the associations in the target passage (or model) at which the author is pointing. These can then infuse the author’s work with fuller and richer meanings.

This is not a mechanical process. It need not even be a conscious process on the part of the writer/speaker or the reader/listener. This is all the truer when a complex of ideas, feelings, beliefs, and emotional and intellectual responses is attached to a well-known and much-used articulation. Here, as one exemplum, I will be discussing Horace’s dulce et decorum est pro patria mori (Carm. 3.2.13), particularly because it is well-worn and time-worn and now part
of what we might call common or popular intellectual currency; and it has been made so by the likes of Wilfred Owen and Ezra Pound and Tim O'Brien— and Bertolt Brecht.

When Horace’s pronouncement is used, in whole or part, by these and other modern authors, even those of us who can trace the sentiments and thoughts triggered by the line back to Pindar or Tyrtaeus or Callinus or Homer or to popular Greek funerary epigrams do not flip through all the metaphorical files in our personal memory folders in order to extract the essence of what particular authors in particular contexts are trying to convey. Owen’s own non-elite social and educational background make it likely that for him Horace’s phrase (and the poem in which it was placed) was the end all and be all. Owen probably had smaller Latin and much lesser Greek than Ben Jonson attributed to Shakespeare. Still, when correctly assessed, Owen had something like Shakespeare’s “knowledge of the classics”: “substantially that of an extremely clever Elizabethan grammar-school boy...used to brilliant effect”. Moreover, they both viewed the ancient authors they knew as trustworthy mentors for advice on “how to live in the present”.

For the acutely class-conscious Owen, his asserted intertextual relationship to Horace gave him the courage and authority to declare and depict otherwise taboo truths about man’s inhumanity to man. His famous poem “Dulce Et Decorum Est” in its entirety ironically glosses the Horatian line—from the once able-bodied soldiers transformed into beggars and hags in the first two lines,

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,
Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,

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1 Palaima and Tritle 2013, 728–730, 733f.
2 Most 2013, 459.
3 Brown 2016, 276–278, 282–284. See generally Lindo 1971, although he argues for poems of Tyrtaeus as the hypotext for Horace.
4 Vandiver 2010, 393–404 discusses the use, in whole or part, of the Horatian tag line by Henry Newbolt and minor writers as “evocative of the entire ethos of service and sacrifice that was the background assumption of so much of the poetry” written in response to World War I and proposes (394f.) that Owen’s use of the Horatian line in original Latin “can be read as a direct response to the concluding Latin lines of [Newbolt’s] ‘Clifton Chapel’”.
5 Vandiver 2010, 114–118.
6 Burrow 2013, 20.
7 Burns 2014/15, 69.
to the eight-line closing sentence:

If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood
Come gurgling from the froth-corrupted lungs,
Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues,—
My friend, you would not tell with such high zest
To children ardent for some desperate glory,
The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est
Pro patria mori.

It gives voice to the realities of war as experienced by middle- and working-class soldiers who dutifully provided ample supplies of their own flesh and blood to the butchery of trench warfare and rarely spoke up for themselves. Owen's Horatian title historically heats up the ironies in what he calls "the old lie". The quantity of the senselessly made dead and the quality of the sheer evil of the experience of trench warfare, what Owen boils down to "War and the pity of War", are captured forever in an economical 28-line word photograph, in four fewer lines than Horace's original.

Owen's is a clear case of one-to-one quotation used ultra-explicitly, both truncated in his title and used entire in the closing line of his poem. By contrast, Pound in *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* IV (= Pound 1926, 190) might have been channeling Callinus to judge by his thinking that some of those who fought believed "the old lie" *pro domo*. The phrase *pro domo* adds the idea behind Callinus fr. 1.7 παίδων κοινομίας τ' ἀλόχου to Horace's *pro patria* and Callinus's own γῆς πέρι. Pound also manipulates the Horatian line as he spotlights its component parts—the two key adjectives by quotation marks—then negates them:

These fought, in any case, and some believing,
pro domo, in any case ...

... some in fear, learning love of slaughter;
Died some, pro patria,
non "dulce" non "et decor" ...

It has recently been proposed that Pound used Owen's poem, and not Horace's ode, as his model here. According to Rachel Potter (2012, 196):

In *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley*, [Pound] traces a recent history of poets ranging from Swinburne to Wilfred Owen. Through rhythmical and linguistic echoes and partial quotations the poem recreates the idioms of different writers. Owen's "Dulce et Decorum Est", for instance, is half quoted:
Died some, pro patria,
Non 'dulce' non 'et decor' ...

Pound is careful to preserve the life and tone of Owen's poetic voice so that Owen's words become the means with which the poem represents the language and suffering of war.

However, Pound's *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* was printed in June 1920 by the Ovid Press, London; and the first publication of “Dulce Et Decorum Est” was also in 1920 in Sassoon's edition of Owen's collected poems by Chatto & Windus. End-of-year reviews of the Sassoon edition (e.g., in *The Guardian*, 29 December 1920) make it most likely that Owen's “Dulce Et Decorum Est” appeared too late for Pound to have read it in published form before he wrote *Mauberley*, if he even would have been inclined to read it in this period of upheaval and at the time of his impending departure for France.

Pound's classical orientation and preoccupations also make Owen an unlikely model. Pound's clear interests in classical authors, including Roman elegiac poets, from 1914 through 1920, suggest he was using Horace as his model text. Pound's *Homage to Sextus Propertius* was finished in 1917, although not published until 1919; and Pound's *Mauberley* is structured so as to use Greek quotations and tags in Greek in the first part and in Greek transliterated into the Roman alphabet in the second part. Classical figures and allusions in the poem like Homer, Pindar, Sappho, Catullus, Capaneus, Penelope and the actual Greek words of the Sirens, reinforce how immersed Pound was in classical texts. There is no mention in standard studies of *Mauberley* or of Pound's years in London that Pound had any contact with, awareness of, or interest in Owen or Sassoon.

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8 Espey (1955, 88 f.) specifically links *Mauberley* IV with Horace 3.2.13 and also with a nod in the direction of Cicero's *De Domo Sua*. R.E. Thomas (1983) traces succinctly Pound's familiarity and preoccupation with Horace from his freshman year at University of Pennsylvania onward.

9 Nadel (2005, introduction).

10 Froula, 1983; Espey 1955; Wilhelm 1990. Vandiver (forthcoming) sums it up this way: “The title page of the first edition of *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley* gives the date as ‘June 1920’. A notice of the book appears in the *TLS* of 1 July 1920, p. 427. [Sassoon's edition of] Owen's *Poems* appears in the *TLS* list of ‘New Books and Reprints’ on 16 December 1920, p. 862, and is favorably reviewed in *TLS* of 6 January 1921, p. 6; thus it seems clear that Owen's *Poems* (including the first publication of ‘Dulce et Decorum Est’) was not published before late November or early December 1920".
provide definitive proof. The publisher received the first of the 300 bound copies of Sassoon’s edition of Owen’s poems on November 18, 1920.\textsuperscript{11}

An interesting intertextual detail is that Pound truncates Horace’s \textit{decorum} to a different Latin word, \textit{decor}. He does not opt for the more common noun and more culturally important Roman value term \textit{decus}. A simple reason may be the sound pattern that \textit{decor} creates with the bitterly damning lines soon to follow:

\begin{quote}
Daring as never before, wastage as never before.
Young blood and high blood, 
Fair cheeks, and fine bodies; 
fortitude as never before 
frankness as never before.\textsuperscript{12}
\end{quote}

O’Brien, who declares that what he calls Horace’s “do-or-die aphorism” is an “epitaph for the insane”, uses it, like Owen, as a title.\textsuperscript{13} Owen truncates. Pound recites and negates. O’Brien cuts it into pieces and strews its parts in the headings of chapters two, twelve and nineteen of his thoughtful first novel \textit{If I die in a combat zone, box me up and ship me home}. In pieces, they will have the most force in replacing “the old lie” with the truth. O’Brien’s intertextual strategy is simple and in line with Owen’s. He is telling readers: just be aware that an old Roman poet once used this line of Latin to brainwash young men into thinking they owe it to their families, their parents, and their country to get themselves slaughtered for at best no good reason.

By contrast with such straightforward cases of direct quotation or manipulation of an original passage in its original language, part of intertextual artistic virtuosity lies in making sure that the relationship between the passage at hand and the passage being pointed at (the model) is not pedantically 1:1, so that a-b-c-d in the passage being read does not equate with A-B-C-D in the target or model passage. Still, in order to appreciate what Richard Thomas calls “the

\textsuperscript{11} Danni Corfield (\textit{supra} p. 147, personal communication 09/01/17) confirms Vandiver’s reasoning (\textit{supra} n. 10) with information from the Chatto & Windus archives (CW B/2/6) stock book binding orders, 1916–1928, p. 349. The company received 300 bound copies of the book for distribution between November 18 and December 22, 1920, 266 of these between November 30 and December 3.

\textsuperscript{12} It is also possible that Pound read Latin words in \textit{echthlipis} as Latin schoolmasters of the period (Allen and Greenough 1903, 434, § 642; 411, § 612f) instructed. He most likely would have said, heard and remembered the first part of Horace’s line as \textit{dulce’ et decor’ est}.

\textsuperscript{13} Palaima 2000 (8–10), for this and the discussion here following.
art of reference”, a critic is called upon to indicate (pun intended) in some detail, as I have just done in brief, how the author’s passage interacts with and relates to the passage(s) to which the author is pointing. An expert critic nowadays may be the only person capable of identifying and explicating the target passages in ancient Greek and Latin authors and how they work across barriers of time, space, cultures and languages.

Intertextuality then is an art, not a science. It is an art that, when involving classical texts and writers, requires exegesis that is often so complex as to seem to call for the application of the principle of Occam’s razor. If a proposed allusion or reference requires so much explanation, can it possibly be true? The answer, of course, is yes. The amount of explication needed is a product of the imbalance between the ancients and ourselves. Ancient writers waded in the streams of Greek and Latin literary tradition from an early age, and swam in them throughout their lives. We artificially and now relatively late in our secondary education familiarize ourselves with selections of ancient texts and fragments. Imagine being able to think and respond to the world with Virgil’s or Horace’s brains and the stores of Greek literature they had in their heads when they were at the height of their powers. The process of doing this might well short-circuit our own minds.

Here in tribute to Richard Thomas and his interests in the “art of reference” in the works of Augustan poets and of Bob Dylan, I am taking up three examples, one from Virgil, one from Horace and one from Dylan, that will drive home what I consider the paramount achievement of Richard’s scholarship. We will see, to paraphrase Richard, that these three great song poets were not “playing” with their models, but sending their readers back to them, whether “through memory or physically”, so that they may bring back meaning and understanding from the model texts. These then enrich the response of readers to the realities of the human condition as these three master artists saw it and then represented it.

1 Virgil and Homer

The passage that I have selected from Virgil was taken up by Richard Thomas in his programmatic treatment of the origins in the period of Alexandrian poetry of what he calls “the art of reference” rather than allusion. It well illustrates “the sophistication and subtlety with which the art was practiced” and supports Thomas’s claim that we are seeing from the Alexandrians onward the effects on the
ars poetica of writers and poets becoming scholars as well. To look back here already—something the title of Pennebaker’s groundbreaking documentary film of Dylan’s 1965 tour of England suggests we not do—along a sliding scale from scholar-writer to popular writer, i.e., from authors more capable of meaningfully alluding to Greek and Latin texts to those who are less capable, we would list Pound, Owen and O’Brien in that order. Here my own sensibilities are those of a scholar, or perhaps a pedant or pedant or pedante, in arguing, in the literal sense, about the details that underscore the geniuses at work.

Thomas identifies a significant intertextual connection between Virgil’s *Georgics* 1.104–110 and Homer’s *Iliad* 21.257–262. Virgil links what appears to be “a very mundane and technical passage” of “a man in the act of irrigation” by means of a “long acknowledged close translation” to a simile of a farmer at work at irrigation used by Homer during the climactic combat between Achilles in full berserker mode and the river god Scamander:

> Quid dicam, iacto qui semine comminus arva
> insequitur cumulosque ruit male pinguis harenæ
deinde satis fluvium inducit rivosque sequentis
> et, cum exustus ager morientibus aestuat herbis,
> ecce supercilio clivosi tramitis undam
> elicit? illa cadens rauca per levia murmur
> saxa ciet, scatebrisquearentia temperat arva.

Why say anything about the man who, having flung his seed grain, closes quarters with his ploughed plots and tears down the built up low heaps of thick enemy sand and then leads in upon his crops a torrent and then streams as reinforcements and, when his land, consumed by drought, seethes with dying shoots, blades, stalks, look! along the ridge of the sloping footpath a wave of water he orders forward? As it cascades, that wave raises a hoarse murmur throughout the smooth rocks and it sates the parched fields as it surges.

> ως δ’ δ’ ἀνήρ  ὄχτηγος ἀπὸ κρήνης μελανύδρου
> ἀμ φυτα καὶ κήπωσι  ἰδατι ῥόνη ἡγεμονεύῃ
> χεροὶ μάκελλαι ἔχων, ἀμάρης ἐξ ἔχματα βάλλων
> τοῦ μὲν τε προρέοντος ὑπὸ ψηφιδέας ἰππασι
> ὀχλούνται· τὸ δὲ τ’ ὠκα κατεβόμενον κελαρύζει
> χώρῳ ἐνι προαλεῖ, φθάνει δὲ τε καὶ τὸν ἄγοντα

As when from a dark-water spring a man who knows the art of irrigation leads a current of water along a course through his plants and garden plots wielding a mattock in his hands, shoveling the small check dams out of his ditch; when the water flows forth freely, all the stones and pebbles along the bottom

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are swept along in a mass and, as it streams down quickly, the water murmurs on the steep terrain and overtakes even the irrigator.

What is ingenious here in the two passages is a kind of chiasmus. Virgil ramps up, as Thomas explains, through the rush of his initial word choice (\textit{iacto, insequitur, ruit} and especially \textit{comminus} in lines 104 and 105) the militarily aggressive aspects of a farmer’s fieldwork, describing him as joining “in hand to hand combat” (\textit{comminus}) with nature’s defense works. Homer inserts into the very crescendo of Achilles’ most energetic and violent use of his own perfected martial skills—his furious \textit{aristeia}, a merciless killing spree unmatched in Homer—a simile stripped almost literally of everything that could have military associations.\textsuperscript{16}

Thomas notices that Virgil leaves out the “mattock” (\textit{µάκελλαν}) that Homer’s \textit{όνηρ ὀχετηγός} (literally a “man in the act of conducting or drawing off water through piping or another kind of man-made conduit”, i.e., a man without any hint of even a metaphorical military association) uses in his work. If we carry forward from Homer the artistic effect of this intentional omission in Virgil’s passage, it is also fair to say that we carry back from Virgil’s passage a heightened realization of how stripped of warfare the \textit{Iliad} simile is. There is nothing in Homer’s simile to suggest the psychologically unhinged martial violence in the extended \textit{aristeia} that surrounds it. In other words, this is Virgilian intertextuality that even profits Homerists by enriching their understanding of the model text.

Thomas speaks of \textit{Georgics} 1.104–110 being a “close translation” of \textit{Iliad} 21.257–262 that makes the adaptation “noticeable and beyond dispute”.\textsuperscript{17} There is no disputing that “what Virgil expects of his reader is recollection of the context of the Homeric simile”, as Virgil’s opening cascade of military words makes clear. What we might improve upon is explaining just how Virgil makes sure our minds will go back to this Homeric passage. Virgil, however, is here adapting the source passage in the \textit{Iliad} to his own purposes. Noting differences between the two passages will help us appreciate the art of Virgil’s particular translation and exactly how the allusion to Homer is activated.

\textsuperscript{16} Only \textit{ξυματα} taken as the “buttressing support mound” for fortification towers (\textit{Ili} 12.260) or as itself a bulwark against attack (\textit{ἐπηλυσις}; \textit{h. Merc} 37) appears in a military context. But \textit{ξυματα} also can mean the heaped-up stones used as props for ships: \textit{Ili} 14.410 \textit{ξυματα νηων}. Its meaning is further softened by its other uses in natural settings, e.g., \textit{ξυματα γαιης}, of the earth which holds fast the roots of a tree, Ap. Rhod. 1.120.

\textsuperscript{17} Thomas 1986, 178.
For example, missing from Virgil’s passage is any overt reference to a particular human agent doing the irrigation work. There is no Latin equivalent to ὀνήρ ὀχετηγός (II. 21.257) at the opening of the corresponding simile in the Georgics and no equivalent to τὸν ἄγωντα at its close. There is only the unspecified antecedent of qui in line 104.

In making the case for the unmistakable intertextual connection, Thomas cites two pieces of evidence:

1. *supercilio clivosi tramitis* closely renders χώρφῳ ἐνι προσελί while
2. the noun *scatebris* matches the Homeric verb κελαρύζει in sense and in rarity.

To what degree are these claims true? Do they need to be modified? Would the pairings taken in isolation be considered true equivalents of one another? We proceed *hysteron proteron*.

If I had to put my own money down, I would wager that Virgil wrote *murmur* to close his penultimate line as a match for κελαρύζει, which likewise closes Homer’s penultimate line. κελαρύζει is a rare word. It is glossed by Hesychius: κελαρύζει: ἤχει ‘sounds, echoes’ and φωνεῖ ‘speaks loudly and clearly’; κελαρύ­ζεται (sic): μετὰ φωνῆς ἤχησει ‘will sound with a clear voice’; cf. κέλωρ· φωνή ‘voiced sound’. These glosses specify that the word conveys a “sound” effect.

Likewise κέλαρυζμα is used by Oppian to connote “murmuring” (Beekes 2010:1, 667 s. κελαρῦζω). *scatebris*, however, has to do with the “movement” of water (de Vaan 2008, 543 s. scato, ere). It means “to gush forth, swarm”. It has Indo-European cognates meaning “to jump”. A good semantic parallel is found in our English word “spring”. In its connotation of sudden and forceful movements of water, it matches the participial noun phrase τὸ δὲ τ’ ὥκα κατει­βόμενον in Homer, the verbal form here (κατείβομαι “I am flowing down, overflowing”) capturing in other uses a quick downward flowing of water, even an overflow. The emphasis of *scatebris* on the welcome “surgings forth”, rather than any sound effect, better suits Virgil’s use in his magnificent closing clause. Through the hard work of the unidentified farmer, nature now takes its man­made course: “that wave falling through smoothed rocks raises a murmuring (*murmur*) and sates the parched fields with its surges (*scatebris*)”.

Likewise, it is perhaps too strong a claim that *supercilio clivosi tramitis* “closely renders” χώρφῳ ἐνι προσελί. The Latin phrase specifies the locus from which the unnamed farmer will lure forth the water: the hilly ridge (metaphori­cally *supercilium*, the “eyebrow”) along which a walking path (*trames*) has long...

18 See also κελαρύζειν· ἰδίωμα ψόφου ‘a kind of soft noise’.
been worn. In Homer, the swiftly downward flowing stream murmurs on a landscape that itself literally "leaps forth" (προαλήσ, in likely relationship to the root of the verb ἄλλωμαι 'I leap, bound, spring', implying a steep decline). The rapid force of the flow overtakes even the irrigator, as the Scamander will overtake Achilles. Virgil's anonymous farmer by contrast sets up a consistent course of water flow that will deliver the nourishing water in periodic surges, gush after gush after gush.

The takeaway is that we are not dealing here with a direct, one-to-one correspondence, with elements in the same order. Virgil is sending us back to the Homeric hypotext in a way that allows us to apply our observations to both the simile in the Iliad and the derivative simile in the Georgics. Virgil does not closely translate Homer, because he has a different message to communicate. Moreover, he is already a mature poet, and, like Ezra Pound, a scholar poet.

2 Horace Odes 3.2. and Tyrtaeus and Callinus

Above, we considered an intertextuality where two specific passages are clearly related, though in very few straightforward one-to-one correspondences. They add meaning to one another through what they explicitly say and what they do not say. Now we move to a case where models are claimed, although none is fully satisfactory. Here we are dealing with the famous Horatian line (Carm. 3.2.13) from which we have already looked forward in time. Now we look back.

Nisbet and Rudd's commentary (2004, 26f.) on this line is a convenient starting point because it constitutes a kind of opinio communis:

13. dulce et decorum est pro patria mori: decorum in the sense of ‘noble’ or ‘glorious’ can be paralleled from all periods, OLD 3; in this heroic context it is enough to cite Tyrt. 10.1f. τεθνάμενι γάρ καλὸν ἐνί προμάχοισ πεσοντα / ἄνδρ’ ἄγαθον περὶ πατρίδι μαρνάμενον, Callinus 1.6ff. ... But here it has the additional sense of ‘right and proper’, OLD 4; in philosophy the pleasant and the honourable are sometimes opposed, but here they are compatible. In view of the patriotic commonplaces in 13 and 14, dulce might be expected to provide a conventional sentiment, perhaps echoing Simonides (14n.), yet no exact parallel is available that antedates Horace.

The exact flavor that dulce imparts to the Horatian line and the reception it received from the likes of Owen and Pound bothered Nisbet to such a degree that he "at one time considered [emending to] ‘dulci decorum est pro patria mori’" since "it would produce a more rational and nobler sentiment", citing as a parallel Acts of the Pagan Martyrs II.41ff. Musurillo: κλέος σοι ἐστιν ὑπὲρ γλυκυτάτης πατρίδος τελευτήσαι. And he had the integrity to admit later that
his proposed solution was unnecessary given that “the ethos of most societies, including our own, has often been different from the individualism that now prevails in the West”.

In discussing Pindar’s debt to Homer and to martial elegies together with commonplaces in the sentiments expressed in funerary epigrams that celebrate those who have died in battle for their polis, Christopher Brown makes the point that literary poems, including passages like Iliad 15.494–499 and Alcaeus (an Horatian favorite in Odes 1–3) fr. 400 Voigt,19 and inscribed song poems commemorating the dead “cluster around the idea of a noble death in battle, focusing on the τιμή and κλέος that will accrue to the fallen hero and his family.”20 When Pindar takes up a similar theme in his seventh Isthmian, he is then “not anchored to verbal parallels” but is likely “drawing on themes of the genre represented by fragments of Callinus and Tyrtaeus rather than echoing specific passages”. There was a common pool “of poems suitable for performance in any polis” that would be used at symposia and in composing or selecting funerary epigrams.

This sounds very much like what Bob Dylan probably felt and thought upon discovering the long and rich traditions of American, British, Scottish, and Irish folk songs and different regional and period varieties of American blues music. They have been for him ever since ample reservoirs from which he has drawn in large and small doses. In some cases, there is a specific inspiration or model in the mind of the author of a new work. In other cases, there is only a dipping into the deep pool of themes and images, phrases, and rhymes.

Can we determine which process is at work with dulce et decorum est pro patria mori? Let us keep in mind that scholars of this poem have always been concerned with death and patriotism, and thus with finding a source that says it is a fine or noble thing to die for your country.21 That is why Tyrtaeus has long been adduced as the principal model. For example, Paul Shorey’s 1900 students’ series edition of the Odes and Epodes, offers “the old lie” directly to young school boys by posing a rhetorical question:22

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21 While recognizing that Horace Odes 3.2.14 and 3.2.25f. can be traced back to fragments of Simonides and that “the idea in Odes 3.2.13” “certainly finds expression as far back as Homer” and “traces of it are found in Alcaeus and Callinus”, Lindo 1971 argues on the basis of other scattered allusions to Tyrtaeus that Horace in Odes 3.2.13 also is indebted to Tyrtaeus. Here we argue for specific consecutive lines of Callinus as the intertext for the specific, and now rightly famous, line of Horace.
22 Shorey 1900, 307.
Shorey compares in Greek only Tyrtaeus fragment 10. In Latin he points to Cicero, Phil. 14.31: *O fortunata mors, quae naturae debita pro patria est potissimum redditum*! School commentary and scholarly commentary then both are satisfied to find a parallel that speaks of dying for one's country. Perhaps we can look at this another way.

For starters, consider structural parallels. Horace's line has three components, here listed in the order in which scholars have sought them: (1) death/dying; (2) for the good of your country; and (3) a predicated description of the social significance of (1 + 2).

Horace, *Carm.* 3.2.13:

(3) *dulce* et *decorum* est (2) *pro patria* (1) *mori*

Tyrtaeus fr. 10.1f.:

(1) *πεθανόμεναι γὰρ* (3) *καλὸν* ἐνὶ προμάχοισι πεσόντα
ἀνδρὶ ἀγαθὸν (2) *περὶ ἡ πατρίδι* μαρνάμενον,

Callinus fr. 1.5–8:

καὶ τίς (1) *ἀποθηνίσκων οὐσίαν* ἀκοντιστάτω
(3) *τιμήν* τε γὰρ ἐστὶ καὶ ἀγλαὸν ἀνδρὶ μάχεσθαι
(2) γῆς πέρι καὶ παιδῶν κουρίδης τ᾽ ἀλόχου
dιαμενέσιν.

Tyrtaeus' two lines have the advantage of mentioning (1) dying, (2) on behalf of the *patria*, and (3) that it is *καλὸν* "beautiful, fine, noble". But Callinus has those elements, too; and Callinus is parallel to Horace in having a two-adjective phrase define (3) the social implications of the action of dying for one's country: his *τιμήν* τε γὰρ ἐστι καὶ ἀγλαὸν would seem to parallel Horace’s *dulce et decorum est*.

If we imagine that Horace has Callinus 1.5–8 or something like it even vaguely in mind, we then have to ask whether *decorum* would come close to conveying the social significance of *τιμήν*. *τιμήν* quite literally means "made up of *τιμή*". Semantically *τιμή* comes to mean something like 'honor', but etymologically it denotes the ‘payment’ by other members of society to an individual for
actions performed in service to their society. The Vorticist line-initial spotlight what every Greek male from Bronze Age epic verse onwards strives for: the public honor he acquires for publicly recognized actions that benefit the social groups in which he lives. This, or its Roman equivalent, seems to be what decorum in its longstanding meaning of “noble” or “glorious” would convey to Horace’s reader.

Decorum, with its connection to decet and decus, would be a fine word to capture some of the other social implications of τιμή (Callinus) and even of καλόν (Tyrtaeus). The word decus means originally “ornament, adornment” evolving to “dignity, propriety”. It has a sense like the related Greek adjective ἀριστείκτως, meaning something like “distinctive”. It conveys the same sense of “conspicuously and socially commendable” that Old and Middle Irish dech conveys: “the best, preeminent” (= decus), and that Latin dig-nus “ estimable, valued” (< *dec-nos) conveys, too. Compare the passage from the Old Irish wisdom-text Tecosca Cormaic (TC) or The Instructions of King Cormaic Mac Airt where we are instructed that it is best in royal social settings to treat poets with reverence and dignity:

'A húi Chuind, a Chormaic,' ol Carpre, 'cid as dech do rig?' 'Ni handsa', ol Cormac. 'Dech dó [...] armittu filed.'

"O grandson of Conn, O Cormac", said Cabre, "what is best for a king?"
"Not hard to tell", said Cormac. "Best for him [...] is honouring poets". (TC, § 1)

However, given (1) the developmental shift noted by Ernout and Meillet to decet with a meaning of “il convient” “it suits or befits” and equivalent to Greek πρέπει is “conspicuously fit, beseems, suits,” as decens is equivalent to πρέπων and εὐπρεπὴς, and (2) that “decorum traduit [translates] πρέπον Cicero, Or. 70”, decorum seems closer to another aspect of ἀγαλοῦ, the visual:

The meaning conveyed by ἀγαλοῦ is that something (a prize, arms, water, leaves on a tree) is “splendid, shining, gleaming, bright and beautiful” and thereby “gives delight”, that is, it appeals to feeling and to sight. In its sense of delighting, I associate ἀγαλοῦ in Callinus with dulce in Horace. Dulce

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23 The adjectival suffix is ‘material’ here and is felt to be so from our Linear B documentation, where the suffix -went is well attested, onwards into historical Greek.
24 Walde / Hofmann 1938, 330 f. s. decet.
25 Fogarty 2016, 222.
26 Ernout / Meillet 1939, 256 f. s. decet.
comes from the same Indo-European root as Greek γλυκός, although not unproblematically—some posit that dulcis and γλυκός come from a common loan word. Both convey that something is pleasing, gives pleasure. Szemerényi associated ἀγαλάος with ἀγάλλαμαι “I glory or take delight in” and ἀγαλμα, literally the end product of the act of “glorifying, delighting, honoring”.27

Still there is here no pedantic 1:1 correspondence between the two Latin and the two Greek adjectives. Decorum would seem to convey the sense of social propriety and due social recognition found in ἀγαλάον, but without its brilliance and forceful impact. Decorum has both an aesthetic sense (good in appearance) and a moral sense (conveying a somewhat weaker form of honor). Horace, in my view, has found a way of reducing the intensity of the combined force of τιμήν and ἀγαλάον and making them fit into the smaller field that is available for individual human action in the Roman culture of Horace’s time. dulce at root appeals to taste. I think Horace uses dulce because decorum cannot live up even to καλόν (Tryttaeus) in its force and social significance. It is really needed to make decorum work, if Callinus is the model text. And it also then produces the two-part description that is distinctive in Callinus.

Finally, we should add an observation made by Christopher Brown concerning the effects that Horace has achieved by transforming Callinus. Regardless of what pool of Greek ἄνηρ ἄγαθός poetry Horace drew it from, if any, “the expression dulce et decorum is”, as Brown observes, “unusual”: “the alliteration is likely significant, and might, in addition to adding trenchancy, evoke earlier Republican Latin, which would suit the Roman odes with their preoccupation with old time Roman values and paradigms of Republican virtue such as Regulus”.28

3 Bob Dylan and Songs of War and Other Things

When we turn here now to Bob Dylan, it is, I hope, with insights gained as to how our understanding of the scholarly sensibilities of song-poets and the inspirational resources they seek to acquire and place into their poetic and creative tool kits determine what kinds of poetic art they are likely to practice and what kinds of intertextual relationships we are likely to find. In the last stages of his career, with the critical scrutiny that has accompanied receiving major public honors like the Kennedy Center Honor (1997), the Academy Award for Best Orig-

27 Szemerényi 1964, 155.
28 Brown pers. communication 08/17/17 with reference to Leumann / Hofmann / Szantyr 1965, 2.701.
inal Song (2001), the Pulitzer Prize special citation (2008), the Presidential Medal of Freedom (2012) and the Nobel Prize in Literature (2016), Bob Dylan is now seen to be what he has always been, intellectually omnivorous and opportunistically creative. He is also constrained in ways that remind us of Pound and especially Owen, but also set him apart, not only from them, but I sincerely believe from any “poet” in the long Western tradition. He is sui generis.

Dylan’s relationship to his models and his use of them, conscious and unconscious, has been problematized in the last quarter century by the economically driven preoccupation with the personal ownership of ideas, including the words and images that express them. Imagine what we would now have of Virgil and Horace, or even of Pound and Owen, if intellectual property copyright lawyers had been acting on behalf of first the estates of Homer, Hesiod, Callinus, Tyrtaeus, Pindar, and Alcaeus and then the estates of Horace and Virgil. Given famous modern cases of plagiarism uncovered in the work of such notables writing about war and human beings in times of war as Doris Kearns Goodwin, Christopher Hedges, and Stephen E. Ambrose, it is perhaps inevitable that Dylan’s unabashed ways of “loving” his models and “stealing” from them have drawn similar “gotcha” attention.

In thinking through how to approach this contribution and then writing it, it has become clear to me what singular factors were at work in Dylan’s coming to be a major figure in American history and culture of the last six decades. Dylan has had the advantage of all the advances in travel and communication, in preservation through recording, in intensified research into all aspects of ethnomusicology, in computer applications to song production, dissemination, preservation and recovery, that have taken place in the post-WW II United States.

Dylan’s provincial world was changed, as he himself tells us, when he heard in Minneapolis in the winter of 1959, the Smithsonian recordings of Woody Guthrie. But three years later in December 1962, he flew to London and absorbed British and Scottish folk ballads directly from masters like Martin Carthy. Much later (May 3, 2006 to April 1, 2009) in the 101 hour-long broadcasts of his Theme Time Radio program, Dylan explored the Croesus-like treasure rooms of American popular music. His Croesus was producer Eddie Gorodetsky, whose music collection contains a true myriad of records and fourteen myriads of digital files.

These resources and possibilities would have been unavailable to Dylan during his gestational stage and later, if he had been born in a town like Duluth and

29 Dylan 2004, 244 f., recalls thinking after hearing the Guthrie songs, “‘So this is the game’. I could sing all these songs, every single one of them, and they were all I wanted to sing. It was like I had been in the dark and someone had turned on the main switch of a lightning conductor”.

raised in one like Hibbing even twenty-five years earlier. The challenge with understanding intertextuality in Dylan's song poems then is unlike the challenge that the poems of Owen or Pound, Virgil or Horace present to us. The volume of potential influences upon Dylan is staggering, almost immeasurable, and is matched now by the volume of documentation and hypothesizing about from where or whom Dylan got what. Richard Thomas's own book on Dylan, *Why Bob Dylan Matters*,\(^{30}\) concentrates, although not exclusively, on Dylan's love and theft of Virgil and Ovid and makes us aware of how similar Dylan is to Virgil in his ways of writing song poems and his disposition towards society. There Richard gives us a plain-spoken definition of intertextuality that makes sense of what Dylan is doing: "the process by which poets, songwriters, painters, composers or artists of any genre produce new meaning through the creative reuse of existing texts, images or sound".\(^{31}\)

Dylan is like Owen in not continuing his formal education much beyond what we call the secondary level. Owen aspired to learning Latin and hoped to master Greek, because mastery of those languages was key to the social status he wished to attain. Dylan, from a solidly comfortable middle-class background, never expressed anxieties about foregoing the economic and social prerogatives that a college degree brought with it in the late fifties and early sixties. Nor did he care for the approaches to learning adopted in university classrooms or feel he was missing out on much.

To me the quintessential *exemplum*, almost Plutarchian in having a small personal act speak for the nature of the man, of where Dylan stands in relationship to literary and song traditions, is offered to us in his Nobel Prize acceptance speech. There he tells the audience, arguably among the world's most culturally distinguished people, that when he received the "surprising news" of having been awarded the Nobel Prize in literature, "I began to think about William Shakespeare, the great literary figure". Who but someone whose passions for what he does are so all-absorbing would so ingenuously feel, and then act upon, the need to explain to the highly educated crowd assembled, and to all who he knew would read his words later, that William Shakespeare was "a great literary figure"?

Owen wanted desperately to be on the inside, and criticized those controlling the British military machine and the unquestioning multitude who lent their support to the whole endeavor with deep human feelings of compassion and exceptional capacities to "see" other human beings. Sassoon's mentorship

\(^{30}\) Thomas 2017.

\(^{31}\) Thomas 2017, 131.
gave Owen a validation that seemed to reassure him that some few persons of high cultural standing shared and perhaps even surpassed his own deep moral questioning of the senseless deaths and destruction of normal human lives.

Owen, however, truly did internalize the pity of War and expressed his strong emotions as ones he thought other human beings had capacities to share, once they were alerted to them. The Guardian’s reviewer of the Sassoon edition of Owen’s poems aptly characterizes his empathy: “Others have shown the disenchantment of war, have unlegended the roselight and romance of it, but none with such compassion for the disenchanted or such sternly just and justly stern judgment on the idyllisers”. It was not for Owen to realize how unmoved by human suffering all the targets of Sassoon’s white-heat anger and vitriolic contempt could be, even if forced to take notice of it. Owen’s stern justice and just sternness might derive from his belief that acceptance is the only option for those who live far down in the hierarchy of power.

Pound was masterful at facilitating and promoting those he respected and championed, although he remained ever an outsider, living as an expatriate in London and Paris and towns in Italy for thirty-seven years of his adult prime. The equivalent of folk singers like Woody Guthrie or Pete Seeger in his criticisms of the status quo, he truly lived small. He still means a lot to a very few cognoscenti, but there are too many terrorist bombs in his poetry for his works ever to become widely used school texts, like the writings of Horace, Owen or Tim O’Brien in various periods.

Dylan somehow has managed to find a pocket where he can be an outsider to whom people on the inside, at all levels of society and all measures of access to power and the resources that make for power, are willing to listen. When we are interpreting Virgil and Horace on war and on people of power, we need to keep in mind that the author and singer of songs about the insanities of war in our culture, about our racism, and about the effects of our merciless capitalism—songs like “John Brown”, “Masters of War”, “Ballad of Hollis Brown”, “George Jackson”, “Clean-Cut Kid”, “The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll”, “The Groom’s Still Waiting at the Altar”, and “Workingman’s Blues #2”—could be described by President Jimmy Carter in 2015 as someone whose words “are more precise... and permanent than anything said by a president of the United States”, who must sometimes have to stand naked. And President Barack Obama in 2010 welcomed Dylan’s firm outsider posture: “You want him to be a little skeptical about the whole enterprise”.

Part of Dylan’s secret might be his Owen-like capacity to see human beings and to write and sing true criticism in a way that can be heard and felt even by powerful people. While not as humorous as Clarence Darrow’s “I have never kil-
led anyone, but I have read some obituary notices with great satisfaction” and its many variants during Darrow’s career, Dylan gives us a clue as to how he can write in “Masters of War” in 1963 “And I hope that you die / and your death’ll come soon” and “I’ll stand o’er your grave / ’Til I’m sure you’re dead” and not be viewed as an extremist. It goes a long way to explaining also why his many insightful criticisms can be readily accepted. In the liner notes to The Freewheelin’ Bob Dylan, he writes about “Masters of War”: “I’ve never really written anything like that before. I don’t sing songs which hope people will die, but I couldn’t help it with this one. The song is a sort of striking out, a reaction to the last straw, a feeling of what can you do?” Notice here that Dylan palms the death wish off on the “song”, probably with some measure of truth given his own ambivalence about topical songs even while he was writing and singing them.

We should also emphasize that Dylan took on war, racism, and economic disparity when significant numbers of Americans were worried about these very problems and human injustices. “Masters of War” was written during the winter of 1962–1963 and recorded and released in April-May, 1963. President Eisenhower had warned the American people in his televised farewell speech on January 17, 1961 about the “military-industrial complex”. The Cuban Missile Crisis in October, 1962 had Americans and the rest of the world terrified. As Dylan himself explains,32 “[“Masters of War”] was an easy thing to do. There were thousands and thousands of people just wanting that song, so I wrote it up”. What Dylan came up with was what Oliver Trager concisely labels as “[a]n angry, stark, and vengeful piece of righteous and poetic vitriol”.

Dylan in “Masters of War”, like Owen in “Dulce et Decorum Est”, uses the title phrase strategically in making his point. Dylan uses the phrase only one time: in the very first line of his long song poem. By writing and singing “Come you masters of war”, Dylan avoids the hackneyed apostrophe, “O, you masters of war”. Instead, he issues the kind of invitation we find in hymns like “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel!” and “O, Come, All Ye Faithful” where people are summoned to bear witness. Dylan also uses this formulaic phrasing in true folk songs that he wrote himself or in others that he transformed and performed: “Come gather ’round people / Wherever you roam”; “Come around you rovin’ gamblers and a story I will tell”; “Come you ladies and you gentlemen, a-listen

32 Heylin 2009, 118.
33 Trager 2004, 418f. And it is non-topical enough to be applied to any and all wars, as Dylan used it (Corcoran 2002, 146–148) on national television at the height of the Gulf War in 1991.
to my song". He may have been inspired subliminally by the refrain in the Piedmont blues classic released on record by Sonny Terry in 1962, “Jump, Little Children”. Dylan would also have had readily accessible in his memory banks Robert Johnson’s sermon to a wayward woman: “You better come on in my kitchen / It’s goin’ to be rainin’ outdoors”. He could have even channeled Clarence Quick’s 1957 (written in 1956) hit doo-wop song “Come Go With Me”. Still the question remains how did Dylan come up with such an original phrase as “masters of war”?

Dalton Trumbo published his famous novel about World War I and its terrifying human costs, Johny Got His Gun, in 1939. As Trumbo explains in the preface to the second edition released in 1959, his book first came out on September 3, “ten days after the Nazi-Soviet Pact, two days after the start of World War II”. A bad case of bad timing. He wrote it in response to what enthusiasm for war at the start of World War I by “idyllisers” had wrought:

It was an August made palpitant and breathless by the pre-nuptial nights of young gentlemen-officers and the girls they left permanently behind them. One of the Highland regiments went over the top in its first battle behind forty kilted bagpipers, skirling away for all they were worth—at machine guns.

Nine million corpses later, when the bands stopped and the serenities started running, the wall of bagpipes would never again sound quite the same. It was the last of the wars; and Johny Got His Gun was probably the last American novel written about it before an entirely different affair called World War II got under way.

The reprint in 1959 was so popular that a mass paperback edition was released in 1959–1960 by Ace Star (title K-109) Books and selling for 50 cents. It proclaimed on its back cover that “a great pre-World War II (sic) best seller becomes a best-seller again” and on its front that it is “a book that can never be forgotten by anyone who ever reads it”.

Dylan gives us insight into his reading habits in radio interviews of the period. For example, he tells Studs Terkel in a WFMT radio interview April 26, 1963 that he read Robert Gover’s One Hundred Dollar Misunderstanding about


35 Trumbo 1959a, 1f.

36 Trumbo 1959b.

37 Terkel 2005, 204.
“this straight-A college kid, you know, fraternity guy, and a fourteen-year old Negro prostitute”. If we read what Michael Gray characterizes as Gover’s “cult bohemian novel”, we can trace the impact it had on Dylan's own sensibilities about race and social and economic barriers and hatreds, about capturing the phrasings and mannerisms of the characters with which he peoples his song poems, and even his ways of spelling the words he sings and writes down as lyrics.38

My point here is that Dylan was reading the ‘in’ popular literature of the time. He absorbed it and reused it creatively. Wilentz (2010, 81f.) emphasizes clear intertexts between Dylan’s “Desolation Row” and Jack Kerouac’s novel Desolation Angels, in specific phrases, not just the title of the song and the title of the book. For example, Kerouac describes a character David D’Angeli based on contemporary poet Philip Lamantia as “the perfect image of a priest”. Dylan in the seventh stanza of “Desolation Row” writes: “The Phantom of the Opera / In a perfect image of a priest”.

Several Dylanologists have drawn connections between Dylan’s work and Dalton Trumbo’s. Sean Wilentz rightly thinks that Dylan’s fictional anti-war song “John Brown” is “a ballad reminiscent of Dalton Trumbo’s anti-war novel of 1939, Johnny Got His Gun”.39 But Wilentz does not discuss the re-release of Johnny Got His Gun and its enormous popularity at around the time Dylan arrived and was establishing himself in New York, the period when he was reading the likes of Gover and was writing and singing ‘anti-war’ songs like “John Brown” and eventually “Masters of War”. Seth Rogovoy thinks that the reference to “picket[ing] the movie Exodus” in Dylan’s “Talkin’ John Birch Paranoid Blues” might be his “very knowing and sophisticated reference to the movie’s screenwriter, Dalton Trumbo”, who was blacklisted during the McCarthy period as one of the “infamous ‘Hollywood 10’”.40 These observations show that serious Dylanologists suspect that Trumbo was on the young movie-loving Dylan’s radar screen.41

The wildly popular second edition of Trumbo’s classic sorrow-of-war book, mass-circulated in paperback, I believe is Dylan’s model for the title and the ferociously angry energy—surprising even to Dylan himself—of his classic anti-war song, which, like Trumbo’s novel, can be applied to war after war after war.

38 See Gray (2006, 270 s. Gover, Robert) for Gover’s account of meeting and having dinner and drinking with Dylan and Dylan playing “Masters of War” for him.
39 Wilentz 2010, 152, n. 1. Entries for Trumbo and Johnny Got His Gun are missing from the index in Wilentz, 2010, 377–396.
40 Rogovoy 2009, 38.
41 Trumbo is not mentioned in Gray 2006.
Read the closing paragraphs of *Johnny Got His Gun* and take in the cascades of words. With his minimally punctuated flow of words and phrases, Trumbo matches Dylan’s catalogue of what terrible effects on normal human lives—and on our natural hopes for living humanly throughout our lives—the plans and directives of Eisenhower’s Military-Industrial-Complex leaders have. Dylan excoriates the “masters of war” in direct address with anaphoric “you” and de-personalized “you that”. Trumbo uses “you” and “you who” in the same intense way. I here underline significant intertextual phrases and themes. Take in Trumbo’s equivalent of Dylan’s angry, stark, righteous and poetic vitriol:42

If you make a war if there are guns to be aimed if there are bullets to be fired if there are men to be killed they will not be us. They will not be the guys who grow wheat and turn it into food the guys who make clothes and paper and houses and tiles the guys who build dams and power plants and string the long moaning high tension wires the guys who crack crude oil down into a dozen different parts who make light globes and sewing machines and shovels and automobiles and airplanes and tanks and guns oh no it will not be us who die. It will be you.

It will be you—you who urge us on to battle you who incite us against ourselves you who would have one cobbler kill another cobbler you who would have one man who works kill another man who works you who would have one human being who wants only to live kill another human being who wants only to live. Remember this. Remember this well you people who plan for war. Remember this you patriots you fierce ones you spawners of hate you inventors of slogans. Remember this as you have never remembered anything else in your lives.

We are men of peace we are men who work and we want no quarrel. But if you destroy our peace if you take away our work if you try to range us one against the other we will know what to do. If you tell us to make the world safe for democracy we will take you seriously and by god and by Christ we will make it so. We will use the guns you force upon us we will use them to defend our very lives and the menace to our lives does not lie on the other side of a nomansland that was set apart without our consent it lies within our own boundaries here and now we have seen it and we know it.

Put the guns into our hands and we will use them. Give us the slogans and we will turn them into realities. Sing the battle hymns and we will take them up where you left off. Not one not ten not ten thousand not a million not ten millions not a hundred millions but a billion two billions of us all the people of the world we will have the slogans and we will have the hymns and we will have the guns and we will use them and we will live. Make no mistake of it we will live. We will be alive and we will walk and talk and eat and sing and laugh and feel and love and bear our children in tranquility in security in decency in peace. You plan the wars you masters of men plan the wars and point the way and we will point the gun.

42 Trumbo 1959a, 308f.
Listen to “Masters of War”. Go back to *Johnny Got His Gun* as an intertext. Do what Richard Thomas says the art of reference invites us to do. Take in all its emotional and intellectual content. Listen to “Masters of War” in your head, particularly these lines:43

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Come you masters of war  
You that build all the guns  
You that build the death planes  
You that build the big bombs  
You put a gun in my hand  
And you hide from my eyes  
And you turn and run farther  
When the fast bullets fly  
You fasten the triggers  
For the others to fire  
Then you set back and watch  
When the death count gets higher
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Imagine like Dylan and like Trumbo, the satisfyingly “stern justice” the deaths of those masters of men “who fasten the triggers for others to fire” would bring. And you will rank Dylan among the accomplished masters of the “love and theft” of source texts.

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AE = L’Année Épigraphique.
CIL = Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum.
TLL = Thesaurus Linguae Latinae.

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