FORUM

CONIURATIO! ETHOPOEIA AND "REACTING TO THE PAST" IN THE LATIN CLASSROOM (AND BEYOND)[*]

Abstract: "Reacting to the Past" is a pedagogical method that uses immersive role-playing games set in discrete historical moments to motivate efficacious engagement with primary sources. Coniuratio, *a new "Reacting" game set during the Catilinarian crisis of 63* BCE, *provides a mechanism for students to learn about Roman history and culture, to practice the tenets of classical rhetoric, and to hone their skills in English (and possibly Latin) communication. The article concludes by outlining supplemental activities that may be used to introduce* Coniuratio *in language and civilization courses and by reviewing the roots of the Reacting method in the ancient educational practice of* ethopoeia.

"Practice in ethopoeia *is useful everywhere; for it does not contribute to only one species of rhetoric, but all."*—John of Sardis §200

In 1995 Mark Carnes, a professor of history at Barnard College, faced an all-too-familiar situation: a "failed" discussion of Plato's *Republic*, in which "occasional remarks showed intelligence and sophistication, yet every gesture and tone of voice conveyed boredom."[1] Conversations with students after the end of the semester revealed several uncomfortable truths. Students expressed anxiety about speaking before an expert professor and potentially judgmental peers. Their unease (disguised as indifference) inhibited discussion and stifled intellectual risk-taking. And, fatally for the aims of a "great books" course, students viewed classic texts as little more than "abstract mental games: intellectual hurdles to be cleared … before they could dash off to the courses whose relevance to their lives was obvious." Carnes, like so many educators, faced

[1] Carnes (2004) B7.

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the challenge not merely of guiding students to acquire a deeper understanding of difficult material, but of overcoming their profound sense of alienation from the essence of humanistic education.[2] Carnes resolved to experiment, seeking a transformative pedagogy that would foster a classroom environment in which students could slough off their anxieties about professorial and peer monitoring to become truly active learners, who could grapple with classic texts to debate fundamental questions.[3] Eventually he teamed with Josiah Ober of Stanford University to produce *Threshold of Democracy: Athens in 403 B.C.*, the first example of a new pedagogical method known as *Reacting to the Past*, which uses immersive role-playing games set in discrete historical moments to teach students about literature, history, and culture. Just over a decade later, dozens of *Reacting* games on a range of historical, cultural, and scientific topics have been published or are in development.[4] Faculty at more than 300 colleges and universities regularly incorporate these learning games into their courses. *Reacting* has become a bona fide educational phenomenon—and one of profound, and still largely untapped, utility for Classics. In what follows, I will briefly outline the potential benefits of the *Reacting* method for Classics courses and how *Reacting*—with its roots in the *progymnasmata*—allows Classicists to incorporate an ancient method of instruction into their contemporary classrooms. I will also introduce *Coniuratio*, a new *Reacting* game that is set during the Catilinarian crisis of 63 BCE. Designed to be played over only a few class sessions, *Coniuratio* (and other learning games like it) can motivate students to undertake purposeful research on ancient history and culture, while honing their skills in written and oral communication. I will also describe an optional research project and other supplemental activities that can be used to prepare students for the game in language courses and courses taught in translation.

In *Reacting to the Past*, students learn by assuming the role of a historical character. This character has discrete and historically plausible objectives to

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[2] On student alienation from learning and the role of creative play in promoting engagement, see Mann (2001).

[3] For a sample of recent and influential arguments about the need to foster active learning environments in colleges and universities, see Bok (2006) 82–145; Bain and Zimmerman (2009); Kuh (2010) 65–108, 193–206.

[4] Additional information about *Reacting to the Past*, a list of published games, materials for games in development, articles, reviews, and more are available at http://reacting.barnard.edu. The development of *Reacting to the Past* was supported by major grants from the *Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education*, the *Teagle Foundation*, and the *National Science Foundation*.

achieve during the game. I have been consistently amazed by how *Reacting* games draw students into a productive engagement with the rich complexities of the past, promote the discussion of big ideas, and cultivate valuable skills. By assuming the goals of an autonomous historical character, students become invested in the ideas and texts being debated. The intermediate goal of achieving success in the game promotes real and durable knowledge of the course's topics and texts. This ability to motivate superior achievement is rooted in three qualities that are common to all *Reacting* games: historical contingency, the imperative of persuasion, and liminality. Students in *Reacting* games are not re-enactors. They must shape and react to the events of the evolving historical circumstances in which they find themselves. That is, their arguments and behavior matter. Success is not gained through the rote recreation of history or by impressing the instructor. Students win by advancing towards personal and team goals through the effective persuasion of their classmates. Working with primary documents, they craft prepared speeches and participate in *ex tempore* debate, activities that foster strategic thinking, teamwork, and creativity. But it is the creation of a liminal classroom that distinguishes *Reacting* from most other classroom games and simulations. This liminal environment "shifts the student's frame of reference from the contemporary, quotidian world to that of the historical period of the game."[5] As Huizinga observes in his seminal account of the role of play in society, play has a transformative potential because it occurs in "temporary worlds within the ordinary world, dedicated to the performance of an act apart."[6] The "performance of an act apart" promotes what has been called the "lusory attitude" or the "stance of playfulness" among the participating students, "a cognitive attitude tied directly to the creative, improvisational, and subversive qualities of play."[7] It is for this reason that learning games, far from trivializing serious subjects, instead have a remarkable power to "transcend the immediate needs of life and impart meaning to action."[8] As Huizinga notes, the very disinterestedness of a game—the fact that is not "ordinary life" and so is "outside of the sphere of necessary or material utility"—invests the stakes of the game

[5] Powers et al. (2007) 5.
[6] Huizinga (1949) 12.
[7] Klopfer et al. (2009) 5.
[8] Huizinga (1949) 1.

with a shocking and tenacious importance.[9] The liminal classroom of a well-crafted game possesses the ability to take something that is important to the instructor (the topic of the lesson) and present it in a way that will have immediate and continuing relevance to the student.

Inaugurating a liminal classroom might sound like a tall order; but in practice our familiarity with games and our instinctual compulsion to play them makes this transformation easier than one might expect. For example, every session of *Threshold of Democracy* begins with a simple ritual: the classroom is consecrated as a meeting of the *ekklesia* on the Pnyx when a student playing the role of the Herald recites a hymn while sacrificing a "piglet"—an offering that I have seen range from the dignified distribution of pork rinds to the energetic smashing of a piñata. From that point, students are expected to conform to the social and political expectations of the historical moment. In establishing the illusive "order" of a game, the details of the rules are less important than that they are adhered to by all participants.[10] Students are, of course, not Athenian. They know this, even during the most intense moments of the game. But as long as everyone in the class is engaged in "being Athenian," the freedom and lusory significance generated by the game's liminal space is maintained. Students thus assume (metaphorical) masks, liberating personae that enable them to engage in vociferous debate over critical issues of identity, liberty, and social responsibility.[11] Their debates rest on informed opinions about the past generated through careful research in primary documents, which become immediately relevant to the *Reacting* students. Operating in this mode of alterity, students encounter the past's paradoxical strangeness and familiarity, a

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[9] Huizinga (1949) 9–11 and 132; on "meaningful play," cf. Huizinga (1949) 12: "But the feeling of being 'apart together' in an exceptional situation, of sharing something important, of mutually withdrawing from the rest of the world and rejecting the usual norms, retains its magic beyond the duration of the individual game." See also Salen and Zimmerman (2004) 31–7.

[10] As Huizinga (1949) observes, "play demands order absolute and supreme." The least deviation from it "spoils the game, robs it of its character and makes it worthless" (10). A game can tolerate a cheat but never a "spoil-sport" who shatters the illusion of the game (11).

[11] Carnes (2004) B7: "*Reacting* liberates students from the constraints of their own sense of self, while imposing the social and political rules of the past and binding students temporarily to particular ideological viewpoints. Students learn history by following the rules of the game, and they teach each other the ideological underpinnings of the past by working through its great intellectual contests."

confrontation that can, in Wineburg's formulation, "spur us to reconsider how we conceptualize ourselves as human beings."[12]

In addition to *Threshold of Democracy*, a second edition of which will be published in 2014, two other full-length *Reacting* games on Classical topics are in development and available to instructors: 1) *Constantine and the Council of Nicaea, 325 CE*; and 2) *Beware the Ides of March: Rome, 44 BCE*.[13] These full-length *Reacting* games are designed to take place over a month or more of class and are based on hundreds of pages of primary readings, detailed instructions, and intricate character biographies. But I have found that the principles of historical contingency, the imperative of persuasion, and liminality are adaptable to more abbreviated classroom settings. Such short or "chapter-length" *Reacting* games may only span a few class periods. These abbreviated games have great potential to contribute to many courses in the Classics curriculum. In particular, they provide a valuable complement for language courses, which are increasingly expected to provide extensive instruction about the cultural and historical context of our languages and texts.[14] Chapter-length games provide an ideal mechanism for contextualizing the texts we read in the original langauge, as well as introducing aspects of Greco-Roman history and culture in an integrated and compelling manner.

Coniuratio: The Crisis of Catiline, 63 BCE is a chapter-length game built on the principles of *Reacting* but tailored to the crowded syllabus of many a Classics course. In *Coniuratio* students assume the role of a senator debating how to resolve the political crisis that gripped Rome in 63 BCE. Students win *Coniuratio* by persuading the Senate to adopt a *sententia* or *consultum* consistent with the personal goals of their characters. They achieve this through the force of their arguments and politicking—perhaps aided by less scrupulous means. To deliver persuasive speeches, students must first determine the motivations of their characters and the audience to which they must appeal. They must cultivate an understanding of the life of a first-century Roman, including his family history and status, his relationships with other senators—and how these shape his political allegiances and behavior in (and outside of) the Senate, with an eye to how power politics functioned in late Republican Rome. Playing the game also

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[12] Wineburg (2001) 6.

[13] Anderson and Dix (2008).

[14] Lister (2011).

motivates students to delve into the gritty details and socio-historical context of the crisis through close reading of ancient texts. Crucially, as with all *Reacting* games, the goal of *Coniuratio* is not to recreate history as it happened. Catiline may remain in the Senate. In this Rome Caesar's ambitions may be thwarted by an early break from Crassus. Cicero could be rebuked (or worse).[15]

Becoming Roman

The core of *Reacting* is informed debate. Successful games therefore require active partisans on either side of the key interpretative issues that are raised by the texts, as well as characters who can be persuaded to support the interpretations and goals of either faction. At the beginning of the game, students are assigned a character from one of three groups: I) devoted CATILINARIANS, II) OPTIMATES who support Cicero (with greater or lesser degrees of enthusiasm), and III) a group of INDETERMINATES—in the lingo of *Reacting*—each of whom might be persuaded to support one of the factions, or might band together to forge a different solution.[16]

CATILINARIANS	OPTIMATES	INDETERMINATES
L. Sergius Catilina	M. Tullius Cicero	L. Aurelius Cotta
P. Corn. Lentulus Sura	M. Porcius Cato	G. Julius Caesar
G. Antonius Hybrida	L. Licinius Murena	M. Licinius Crassus
Serv. Cornelius Sulla	Q. Caec. Met. Pius Scipio Nasica	Q. Caec. Metellus Nepos
L. Cassius Longinus	D. Junius Silanus	P. Claudius Pulcher
L. Calpurnius Bestia	L. Julius Caesar	G. Helvius Cinna

[15] The potential for Cicero's move against Catiline to fail should not be underestimated (Price (1998) 106–12).

[16] *Coniuratio* can be adapted for play by between 7 and 24 students. In larger classes students can play non-senatorial characters. These students do not participate in the debate but influence it in other ways. For example a student playing Sallust could record the debate from the perspective of a particular faction; Posidonius or Lucretius might encourage students to incorporate Stoic and Epicurean principles into their speeches; or Catullus might compose poems satirizing the characters and proceedings.

Catilinarians	*Optimates*	*Indeterminates*
G. Cornelius Cethegus	Serv. Sulpicius Rufus	P. Vatinius
M. Porcius Laeca	P. Serv. Vatia Isauricus	Q. Caec. Metellus Celer
	L. Caecilius Rufus	T. Labienus
		P. Corn. Lentulus Spinther

An *indeterminate* may be a senator who has *popularis* leanings but harbors concerns about Catiline's leadership, his allies, or methods—or he may think his methods are just fine, but doubts Catiline will succeed. Or he may loathe Catiline and his depraved band of miscreant followers, but cannot abide seeing an upstart like Cicero cloaked in glory. For example, Caesar is told that he must see Cicero or Catiline driven from the city (lest Caesar's role in the conspiracy be revealed), while also mitigating the vast debt he accumulated in his successful bid to become *pontifex maximus*: contradictory goals that will require a crafty solution and a nimble speech. The poet Cinna, in contrast, has little interest in politics and little sympathy for Catiline and his ilk, but detests Cicero for publicly mocking an early draft of his epyllion, the *Zmyrna*, and he dreads the doggerel Cicero will compose to celebrate his victory. The ideal outcome for Cinna would see Catiline and his henchmen defeated, but only at great personal cost to Cicero. Partisan Catilinarians and *Optimates*, in contrast, assume the challenge of arguing passionately in support of their faction. For example, the character sketch for Decimus Junius Silanus, an *optimate*, begins:

"*Consul designatus* with Lucius Murena, you were (and may still be) a target of Catiline's assassins. For the good of the Republic (and your own neck) the threat of Catiline and his brood must be eliminated. If they can be brought to justice, all the better—but when the state veers towards the shoals, it requires a decisive hand to steer it to safety. You and Murena have been forced together by circumstance but you are not friends. He is a corrupt and venal man who needs money to pay off the debts he accumulated while bribing his way to the consulship. He must not be trusted. You have several ideas for reforming the business of the Senate to make it more responsive to the complaints of the *plebs* while still preserving the prerogatives of the Senate. But reform must be measured and guided by men from good families and of sound character. Revolution is unacceptable. Politics helps keep your mind off your increasingly tense marriage to the

enchanting Servilia. A few days ago your worst fears were confirmed when that sanctimonious prig Cato, thinking he had caught Caesar conspiring with the enemies of Rome, demanded that Caesar read a letter he had just received to the assembled senators: it was a love letter... from your wife! Cato will have to be tolerated, for now, as you need him to support your legitimate claim to the consulship. You might almost forgive Caesar, who is a greater threat to the husbands of Rome than to Rome herself. After all, who knows Servilia's charms better than you … ?"

Each character sketch is rounded out with information about the character's *Family* and *Biography, Goals, Responsibilities*, and *Relationships* (with the key issues, with the texts, and with other people), as well as strategic advice for how to obtain his objectives and guidance for readings that will be of specific relevance for the character.

The Speech

Ultimately, success and failure in the game hinges on the delivery of a persuasive speech that is true to a character's interests. Students are guided to compose speeches influenced by the canons of classical rhetoric and the historical practices of Roman oratory, including the Roman predilection to persuade through entertainment (supported by facts, if possible). Within the game, this has the happy benefit of allowing students to focus on broad political and ethical themes that are known to all students in the debate, rather than bickering over legal, historical, or evidentiary minutiae. Instructors might require students to "sound Roman" by incorporating rhetorical figures into their speeches (and annotating these in their submitted work). To make the use of rhetorical figures less daunting to novice rhetoricians, students can be instructed to deploy each figure once in a proscribed sequence, as was the practice in ancient schools.[17] Students may also be asked to integrate phrases or quotations from their primary readings, or to refer to the actions of either an esteemed ancestor or a notable figure from Roman history. They must avoid anachronism and contemporary slang, as well as allusions to pop culture and current events, all of which would disrupt the liminal environment of the game.[18]

[17] Woods (2002) 289.

[18] The avoidance of anachronism is one of the simplest and most powerful mechanisms through which a historical game compels its players to confront the lazy assumptions of their own presentism, which Wineburg (2001) has powerfully characterized as "our psychological condition at rest, a way of thinking that requires little effort and comes quite naturally" (19).

Flexibility and adaptability are essential features of *Coniuratio.* The nature and length of speeches can be modified depending on the number of students in the class and how many days are available for debate. Depending on the requirements and size of a given course, students might give two speeches of different lengths, or two speeches that support and oppose a proposal or conduct of two different characters.

The Setting of Coniuratio

Coniuratio is set during the murky socio-political crisis of 64–63 BCE, with the fates of Catiline, Cicero, and perhaps the Roman Republic laying in the balance. The Catilinarian crisis offers several advantages for the setting of a historical game. The basic outline of the crisis is simple and familiar: an entrenched faction denounces its opponents for attempting to overturn an election through violent means. But as in all conspiratorial moments, motives are conflicted, events open to interpretation, and allegiances frayed. The salient features of the historical setting and the major points of dispute are accessed through selections from contemporary and near contemporary texts.[19] There also exists an abundance of accessible secondary materials through which students can learn more about the crisis and its participants. The main protagonists in the crisis represent the crackling poles of Roman political culture in the waning decades of the Roman Republic. Catiline is that most seductive of characters: the capaciously talented rogue. A prideful scion of an old patrician family who champions the cause of the dispossessed, his superior physical and mental abilities are trumped only by the depravity of his vices—or so his enemies claim. His adversary, Cicero, is no less compelling: a brilliant orator and writer, who never quite overcame the insecurity of being a "new man," the first in his family to reach the consulship and the

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[19] Students can be adequately prepared for the game by reading the short fictional vignette in the game-booklet along with Cicero's *First Catilinarian* or the first 30 pages of Sallust's *The War of Catiline* (e.g. §1–32 and 36–37). In addition to the primary documentation offered by Cicero's *Catilinarians* and letters, other ancient sources on Catiline and the conspiracy include Plutarch's *Lives* (*Cic.*; *Caes.*; *Cat. Mi.*; *Crass.*; *Sull.*); Valerius Maximus; Appian; Dio Cassius; Suetonius' *Life of Caesar*; excerpts from Vergil and Lucan; and passing references in several speeches by Cicero and in Asconius' commentaries. Selected poems by Catullus offer a different perspective on Cicero, Caesar, and Clodius. The Ps-Sallustian *Invective against Cicero* provides a model of how anti-Ciceronians might vituperate the consul. (The *Coniuratio* game-booklet and instructor's manual contain these sources in translation, as well as a bibliography of modern scholarship on the conspiracy.)

pinnacle of Roman politics. Many of the major players in the subsequent political travails of the Republic are involved: e.g. Caesar, Crassus, Cato, and Clodius Pulcher. The crisis illustrates the kaleidoscopic nature of Roman factional politics and how family, circumstance, and personal ambition complicate simple notions of loyalty. Nonetheless the limited chronological and geographic scope of the crisis mitigates the confusion that the history of the late Republic can induce in the uninitiated. Finally, the crisis raises many questions of contemporary relevance: what are the rights and responsibilities of citizenship; can a person be declared an enemy of the state before they have committed a crime; what actions are permissible against person so designated; how should one adjudicate the competing claims of privilege vs. merit; character vs. behavior; and justice vs. political expediency?

The basic version of *Coniuratio* is set on November 9th, the day after Cicero delivered his *First Catilinarian*. But the slow unfolding of the crisis allows the game to be tailored to the topics and goals of different courses. Setting the game earlier – for example during the elections or before Cicero denounces Catiline – would allow for a more general debate on social, economic, or political reform. Setting the game after the incarceration of the conspirators would elicit more debate about justice and the shape of Roman governance in years to come (as Sallust realized). Or these scenarios could be run sequentially to illustrate the many facets of the crisis and how arguments, strategies, and alliances evolved as the crisis advanced.

Assessment

In a sense all students who participate in *Coniuratio* are winners, having gained a deeper knowledge and more nuanced appreciation of Roman culture and history; but in another, more accurate sense, some will be winners and others will be disgraced, exiled, or dead. As in all *Reacting* games, however, assessment is based less on victory than on whether a student's speech and behavior were consistent with the character's goals and the historical situation.[20] Participation in

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[20] Although some tangible reward might be given to students who achieve their goals, I avoid articulating a grade "bonus" for "winning." In part, this is because the goals of some students are more attainable than others; but also because a material benefit linked to the world outside of the game has the paradoxical effect of making the game matter *less*. Students default to their habitual mode of strategic learning in service of a better grade. Instead, let us emulate the Romans. Is it more enticing to scrap for five points tacked onto an exam or to strive for victory in "the desire to excel

extramural activities (contacting other Romans, meeting with them, plotting against them; coordinating speeches, etc.) should be encouraged and may be considered when evaluating student performance.

Optional Preliminary Research Project and Classroom Activities

Students in *Reacting* games usually receive extensive information about the biographies and goals of their characters at the start of the game. This permits students to jump into the historical situation and begin crafting their arguments based on the close reading of primary materials. Conversely, when a chapter-length *Reacting* game is embedded within a traditional course, students my be given the opportunity to develop their own characters and shape their own goals. For example, when I play *Coniuratio* at the conclusion of my elementary Latin course, the student who plays *Lucius Cassius Longinus,* a supporter of Catiline and inveterate anti-Ciceronian, receives this simple sketch of his character:

"Unsuccessful in last year's consular election, you are a close associate of Catiline, although your exact role in the conspiracy has yet to be revealed. You despise Cicero, who bested you in that election, and who takes special joy in mocking your weight—he says "Cassius' lard" (*Cassii adeps*) so often that other Romans are starting to use it proverbially! *Known Associates*: L. Sergius Catilina, P. Cornelius Lentulus Sura, G. Antonius Hybrida, Serv. Cornelius Sulla, L. Calpurnius Bestia."

Publius Claudius Pulcher, an indeterminate, is given this guidance:

"From one of the oldest families in Rome, you nevertheless fancy yourself a champion of the *plebs.* For this reason, you are attracted to Catiline and his calls for radical reform. Your most immediate concern, however, is staying in the good graces of your patron, the consul-elect for the coming year, L. Licinius Murena, whose protection you need against L. Licinius Lucullus. Lucullus was your brother-in-law and general until you fomented a mutiny against him, supposedly... . That, and some scandalous rumors about your relationship with his wife (your sister), prompted him to divorce her and drum you out of his army. To cross Murena without a powerful new patron would be unwise. *Known Associates*: G. Julius Caesar, L. Licinius Murena."

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others, to be the first and to be honoured for that," tasting "the fruits of victory … honour, esteem, and prestige" (Huizinga (1949) 50)?

These abbreviated biographical sketches provide a basic outline of the character and his interests, situate the character in one of the three groups, and identify his most important relationships. As students read a primary text or texts they also work to create their personae by researching the personalities and life experiences of their characters. Students begin their research by answering key questions about their Roman lives:

> How old are you?
> What important events have shaped your life?
> What is your family like?
> Do familial ties lead you to support or oppose other characters?
> Are you the patron or client of another character?

As students research the life and times of their characters, they begin to hone their positions on the central questions of the crisis:

> What experiences have you had?
> What do you think of Cicero and Catiline and their politics? Have you had past dealings with either?
> Are you inclined to be receptive to a *novus homo*, or to give a noble the benefit of the doubt?
> Do you think that senatorial prerogatives need to be maintained? Or do the people have legitimate grievances?

Students develop their characters privately in consultation with the instructor or a teaching assistant. As students research their characters, they gain familiarity with essential scholarly resources, such as the *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, the *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Ancient World*, or the English edition of the *New Pauly*, as well as more specialized works like Broughton's *Magistrates of the Roman Republic*, and articles and books on the crisis. The nature of this research varies by character. A student who plays Caesar or Crassus benefits from a wealth of primary material from which they must synthesize their identity; figures of lesser renown, such as Nasica, conduct more general research about Roman culture and history to construct a plausible persona that conforms to the age, family, and interests of the character. When the veil of secrecy is lifted a few days before the game begins, students are encouraged to discuss their ideas, concerns, fears, and/or plots with Romans from whom they were likely to find support (or

opposition). Students then submit in writing the action(s) for which they will advocate and why they have decided on this approach.

Preparatory readings and exercises throughout the semester can help students gain familiarity with relevant aspects of Roman culture and cultivate an ability to debate like a Roman. Many such assignments and lessons already appear in Latin courses or courses on Roman culture taught in translation. But when cast as preparation for the game, lessons on the *cursus honorum*, the Roman virtues, Roman education, and the topography and architecture of Rome assume added relevance. In keeping with the practices of the Roman system of education, students could deliver brief *suasoriae* throughout the semester. Topics for *suasoriae* might include:

> *Carthagone delenda est*?
> Whither Rome (after Tarquinius Superbus/Caesar/Augustus/etc.)?
> Should Fabius attack Hannibal or delay?
> Should a permanent theater be built in Rome?
> Should magistracies be opened to plebeians?
> Should sumptuary and other moral legislation be instituted or relaxed?

These *suasoriae* lack the full apparatus of a *Reacting* game. Students speak as generic Romans rather than an autonomous character in a multisession debate. Nevertheless *suasoriae* provide students opportunities to practice historically grounded, agonistic debate, while learning about important aspects of Roman culture.

Ethopoeia and Reacting

Reacting games are often entertaining, sometimes tense, and almost always effective. In my experience, the written and oral work produced by students in *Reacting* games is consistently better researched and more sophisticated than that produced for traditional assignments. This judgment is shared by the growing community of educators who have incorporated *Reacting* games into their courses.[21] As *Reacting* demonstrates its pedagogical effectiveness across the disciplines, we would do well to remember that *ethopoeia,* or the delivery of speeches appropriate to a character in a given situation, has deep roots in the pedagogical practice of Classical antiquity. *Ethopoeia* was one of the culminating

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[21] Higbee (2008); Stroessner et al. (2009).

exercises of the *progymnasmata*, the hierarchical system of education in rhetoric that was formalized during the Hellenistic period and that remained a fundamental component of elite education throughout the rest of Antiquity. Teachers of rhetoric often drew scenarios for their exercises in *ethopoeia* from myth and history—e.g. what Andromache might say over Hector's corpse or how Cicero might placate Anthony. *Ethopoeia* may also require impersonation of a more general character, such a farmer seeking to convince his son to study philosophy, or the reaction of a man when he first glimpses the sea.[22] Students in these exercises were encouraged to consider "what the personality of the speaker is like, and to whom the speech is addressed; the speaker's age, the occasion, the place, [and] the social status of the speaker."[23] These factors would influence how their characters would speak and comport themselves. As Quintilian reminds us, "a speech that is out of keeping with the man who delivers it is just as faulty as the speech which fails to suit the subject to which it should conform" (*Inst.* 3.8.51). In practicing *ethopoeia*, students were encouraged to fully immerse themselves in the feelings and circumstances of their character, with awards given to those who displayed the most convincing anger or who elicited the most sympathy from the audience.[24] The emphasis on eliciting sympathy likely explains why so many of these speeches required (male) students to impersonate the perspectives and experiences of non-Roman women.[25] A similar phenomenon occurs in *Reacting*. Liberated by the act of adopting a persona, modern students are able to delve into debates, arguing persuasively and assertively about topics or texts that they might otherwise feel are too alien, dated, complicated, or risky.

Classicists have long recognized the educational value of games as a complement to traditional pedagogical methods of lecture, discussion, and drill. Latin plays and the togate activities of "Classics Days" are annual fixtures on

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[22] As these examples show, *ethopoeia* is often conflated with *prosopopeia* in ancient and modern discussions. Technically, the latter involved impersonating fictional characters, while the former referred to real historical figures (Hermogenes §20 *apud* Kennedy (2003) 84). For an overview of the *progymnasmata* and its position in Greco-Roman culture, see Kennedy (1983) 52–73; and for its role in Roman education, see Bonner (1977) 250–87.

[23] Aelius Theon §115 *apud* Kennedy (2003) 47; see also Quint. *Inst.* 3.8.48–9: "Did he not rather bear in mind the fortune, rank and achievements of each single individual and represent the character of all to whom he gave a voice so that though they spoke better than they could by nature, they still might seem to speak in their own persons?" (Butler trans.).

[24] August. *Conf.* 1.17 and Bloomer (1997) 66.

[25] Woods (2002) and Kraus (2007).

many campuses throughout the land. In *Certamen* Classicists have been promoting learning through gameplay since the 1970s. Grammar and vocabulary drills were "gamified" long before that neologism was coined.[26] It would behoove Classicists to embrace *Reacting to the Past*, whose diverse learning games offer valuable instructional resources for a variety of courses. It is my sincere hope that instructors will consider adopting *Coniuratio* for their own language and culture courses and that more Classicists will experiment with *Reacting*, which is, after all, an eminently Classical method.

The game-booklet and instructor's manual for *Coniuratio* are available from the author or the *Reacting to the Past* website at http://reacting. barnard.edu/curriculum. The game-booklet for students contains:

A vignette that introduces the game's intellectual conflicts,

Guidance on developing a Roman persona and debating like a Roman,

Historical background about Rome, the *Senatus Consultum Ultimum*, and the Catilinarian Crisis,

The rules of the Senate,

Translations of Catiline's *First Catilinarian* and selections from Sallust's *War With Catiline*,

Introductions to the Roman virtues and to common rhetorical devices,

A detailed timeline of the crisis and other background materials.

The instructor's manual includes information about the *Reacting* method, suggested class schedules, advice on introducing, managing, and concluding the game, brief and full character biographies, a bibliography, supplemental exercises, and additional primary sources. Although *Coniuratio* is designed to be simple enough that an instructor can run it without previous experience with *Reacting*, the best way to learn about the method is to attend a *Reacting* conference or workshop, and thus experience playing a game with veteran instructors. The national *Reacting* conference is hosted every summer by Barnard College in New York City. Regional and local conferences and workshops are held throughout the year. Information about these conferences is available at http://reacting. barnard.edu/conferences-events.

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[26] Although the use of computer games and simulations in Classics lags behind that in the instruction of modern languages, it is gaining traction: e.g. *Operation LAPIS* by the Pericles Group (http://www.practomime.com); for a survey of the state of Latin gaming, see Reinhard (2012). Klopfer et al. (2009) has published an informative white paper on current trends and future directions in the field of educational gaming under the auspices of MIT's "The Education Arcade" (TEA).

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