Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Master of Arts
of
NEIL BARNEY
BA (University of British Columbia, 2012)

“Beyond the Speaker: the Audience in Seneca the Elder”

Department of Greek and Roman Studies

Friday, July 27th, 2018
10:00 A.M.
Clearihue Building
Room B415

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Gregory Rowe, Department of Greek and Roman Studies, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Cedric Littlewood, Department of Greek and Roman Studies, UVic (Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Michael Nowlin, Department of English, UVic

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Quentin Mackie, Department of Anthropology, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Abstract

Seneca the Elder’s *Controversiae* and *Suasoriae* (c. 39 CE) provide a window onto declamation (fictional forensic or deliberative oratory) during the reign of the Roman emperor Augustus (27 BCE–CE 14). Although widely practiced as a form of elite education and entertainment, declamation was maligned by contemporaries as detrimental to rhetorical development. Modern scholars, such as Bloomer, Gunderson and Imber, have demonstrated how declamation acted as a medium for learning and asserting elite cultural identity. Previous scholarship, however, has focused on only the speaker in declamation. In this thesis I examine the secondary voices present during declamation: other speakers and the audience.

In Chapter 1, I place Seneca the Elder and his work in context and examine how the format of his work allowed for the inclusion of voices beyond the speaker’s. In Chapter 2, I examine how declamation allowed its participants to assert a claim on Roman identity and lay out Seneca’s critical model, through which he validated or denied the identity-claims of the men in his work. In Chapter 3, I look at declamation as a multi-participant activity, examining speaker-to-speaker interactions in Seneca’s text and the way he constructs a community of shared speech, one which is tied to successful performance rather than a particular time or place, to support these interactions. In Chapter 4, I argue that Seneca uses the voice of the audience to assert and maintain the boundaries of the community and that he applies the label of *scholastici* (men who viewed declamation exclusively as entertainment) to audience members who fail to maintain the boundaries and, thus, rebuts the main complaint against declamation by relegating its unsuccessful participants to another genre of speech.