

ACTA UNIVERSITATIS UPSALIENSIS

Studia Graeca Upsaliensia

22

THE TROJAN WARS
AND THE MAKING OF
THE MODERN WORLD

edited by

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UPPSALA
UNIVERSITET

ISSN: 0562-2743

ISBN: 978-91-554-9322-6

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Distributed by Uppsala University Library,
Box 510, 751 20 Uppsala, Sweden, acta@ub.uu.se

Acknowledgements

THIS VOLUME HAS its origins at a conference held at Uppsala University 13–16 June 2013, under the title “The Trojan Wars and the Making of the Modern World: Classical Reception Since Antiquity.” The conference was organized under the auspices of the Department of Linguistics and Philology and generously funded through a grant from the Marcus Wallenberg Foundation. The aim of the conference was to explore the global tradition of artistic representations of the Trojan War by examining versions from a variety of periods, places, languages, and media, with particular interest in more obscure, unexamined, and non-canonical accounts. We sought to understand how each of these works drew from the preceding tradition, and yet was also the unique product of its artistic, political, cultural, and aesthetic context and the vision of its creator (or creators).

Not all papers that were presented at the conference are included in the present volume, though all of the contributors were in attendance. The first acknowledgement, therefore, goes to those who participated in the conference: the speakers, moderators, and the members of the academic community and general public who contributed to the fruitful discussions at the panels and during the course of the weekend.

During the editing of the volume, a number of colleagues offered to act as anonymous peer reviewers, and each of the chapters and the volume as a whole are much better for it. Emilee Ruhland at North Dakota State University also deserves thanks for undertaking the time consuming process of formatting, proof reading, and copy editing each of the contributions. I would also like to thank the foundations covering the printing costs: the Marcus Wallenberg Foundation and Kungliga Humanistiska Vetenskaps-Samfundet i Uppsala. Above all, special thanks goes to my former colleagues at Uppsala University: Ingela Nilsson, Professor of Greek and Byzantine Greek and the series editor for *Studia Graeca Upsalensia*, and the assistant editor Eric Cullhed, who was finishing his Ph.D. at the time. In addition to creating the wonderful environment at Uppsala and for providing much guidance and friendship during my time there and since, both were indispensable at every stage of this project, from drafting the original call for papers to overseeing the publication of the volume.

Adam J. Goldwyn
Fargo, North Dakota
August 2015

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INTRODUCTION

“That men to come shall know of it”

Theorizing aesthetic innovation, heroic ideology, and political legitimacy in Trojan War reception

ADAM J. GOLDWYN



IN THE CLIMACTIC moment of *The Iliad*, Hector perceives the inevitability of his death and, drawing his sword, makes one final charge at Achilles, that in his last moments he might, as he says to himself, do “some great deed, that men to come shall know of it.”¹ Nearly 3,000 years after the earliest accounts of his fatal charge, Hector would no doubt be amazed to learn that not only do his imagined “men to come” still know of it, it has become one of the most widely depicted deeds in world literature. This volume examines some of the many forms Hector’s last stand and the other events of the Trojan War have taken since Homer’s epics were reintroduced to the West in the Renaissance and replaced (for the most part) the pseudo-chronicles of Dares the Phrygian and Dictys of Crete, both Late Antique forgeries which claimed their authors were eye-witnesses to the Trojan War and, as such, had been the source of most medieval accounts.² Whether on the Elizabethan stage, in Modern Greek surrealist poetry or post-Soviet Ukrainian animated films, the Trojan War has endured as an extremely fruitful source of artistic production. Indeed, more accounts of the Trojan War are being produced today, and in more different genres, than at any time in history.³ Nor is the Trojan War simply a literary phenomenon: along with the literary, a parallel (and

¹ Homer *Iliad* 22.305: μέγα ῥέξας τι καὶ ἔσσομένοισι πυθέσθαι.

² In 1287, the Sicilian judge Guido delle Colonne expressed the common medieval antipathy towards Homer in his *Historia Destructionis Troiae*: “Homer, of greatest authority among the Greeks in his day, turned the pure and simple truth of his story into deceiving paths, inventing many things which did not happen.” (Guido Pro.21, 32). Guido then contrasts this with “the true accounts of the reliable writers” Dictys the Greek and Dares the Phrygian, “who were at the time of the Trojan War continually present in their armies and were the most trustworthy reporters of those things which they saw” (Guido Pro.36, 41). Some three-hundred years later, the great English Renaissance writer Sir Philip Sidney came up with a different solution in his *Defense of Poesy*: “If the question be, for your own use and learning, whether it be better to have it set down as it should be, or as it was? then, certainly is more doctrinable [...] the feigned Aeneas in Virgil, than the right Aeneas in Dares Phrygius” (Sidney 119).

³ This is true of original adaptations based on Trojan War themes and of translations as well. For a history of Homeric translations, see Young 1998, esp. 149ff. for the second half of the 20th century.

often interdiscursive) tradition appeared in the visual and plastic arts as well as music and, more recently, cinema.

These works are all part of a long tradition of Trojan War artistic production that began in Classical Greece⁴ and, over the course of millennia, spread across the rest of the world. In his study of Homer in Imperial Greek literature, Lawrence Kim writes: “Throughout antiquity, the influence of Homer upon Greek literature and the authority he exercised over Greek culture were tremendous, so much so that his sheer ubiquity has discouraged any large-scale attempt to chart his ancient reception.”⁵ This sentiment is echoed by Barbara Graziosi and Emily Greenwood in their introduction to *Homer in the Twentieth Century*, who write that “[l]eaving aside the rich cultural and linguistic diversity of Homeric receptions in any given century, even within a single language and cultural tradition it is impossible to write a total, truly representative history of Homer.”⁶ If this is the case for Greek antiquity and the twentieth century, it is no doubt even more true for the Trojan War in the post-medieval period, when the Trojan War as an artistic topos went global. This volume, then, seeks to present a selection of post-medieval representations of the Trojan War comprising both canonical and more obscure works to show the broad diversity of periods, places and genres in which such work was produced and the equally wide variation in literary and artistic interpretation. Indeed, as the title of the volume suggests, it is for this reason that it is perhaps more accurate to speak of the “Trojan Wars” in plural rather than the “Trojan War” in singular, as every new artist working in this tradition cannot but simultaneously draw from and revise the essential elements of the narrative to suit his or, increasingly often in recent decades, her, own aesthetics and ideological positions.

Simply identifying Homeric retellings and listing the ways in which Homer was appropriated by post-medieval writers, however, is but a first (if obviously necessary) step. The second more important step is to understand how and why these authors chose to re-tell Homer: what problems of authority and aesthetics, what political or

⁴ Some scholars suggest that the earliest written references to the Trojan War may be found in pre-Homeric Hittite sources. According to this view, the earliest written account is the *Annals* of the Hittite King Tudhaliya I/II. The *Annals* mentions the place names Wilusiya and Tariusu, possibly cognate with Ilion and Troy. In the thirteenth century BCE, certain diplomatic letters also note a treaty between a Wilusian king named Alaksandu as well as an invasion of Wilusa by the Ahhiyawans, who in Homer become the Achaians. For further historical details on Wilusa and the Hittite Troy, see Bryce (2006), and for the written sources, particularly 107–12. For a summary of the validity of the Hittite sources as referring to the Homeric Trojan War and their influence on scholarly attitudes towards its historicity, see Raaflaub 1998, esp. 39off.

⁵ Kim 2010, 5.

⁶ Graziosi & Greenwood 2007, 6.

cultural conditions, turned a diverse set of authors to the same source material? Despite the distances of time, geography, and language which separate the works considered in this volume—both from one another and from the original culture in which these stories were produced—certain shared concerns run through their treatment of the material. The most prominent of these is the use of the past as a guide for present behavior;⁷ indeed, the heroes of the Homeric epics themselves initiated this tradition by, in some sense, being the first audiences of epic, even within epic itself.

The Homeric heroes frequently tell each other stories about the past, including about the Trojan War, most famously when the singer Demodokos entertains Odysseus and the Phaeacians at the court of the Alkinoös with an epic in miniature about the fall of Troy, but also simply as part of their natural manner of speaking. Nestor, for instance, often offers as examples of honorable behavior the great deeds of the heroes he knew when he was young.⁸ Similarly, when the Greeks send the embassy to Achilles in Book 9, they find him in his tent playing his lyre and “singing of men’s fame” while Patroclus listens; the ambassadors then try to convince him to rejoin the Greeks by offering the life of Meleager as a cautionary tale about heroes who refuse to help until it is too late. The histories they tell, furthermore, are not even always true: when the great liar Odysseus encounters his swineherd Eumaeus, Odysseus recounts his experience of the Trojan War in the guise of a Cretan soldier.¹⁰ These references to the past often have a didactic function: the past serves as a set of morality tales describing proper or improper behavior which is thus meant to serve as a guide to behavior in the present.

⁷ This line of analysis places these works within the larger theoretical framework of the *speculum principum*, the mirror for princes genre, which used historical examples as models for contemporary rulers. In the Classical period, for instance, Xenophon’s *Cyropaedia* used the life of Cyrus as a model for later rulers. In the Medieval and Renaissance West, examples include Niccolò Machiavelli’s *The Prince*, Bede’s *Ecclesiastical History*, and Erasmus’ *The Education of a Christian Prince*.

⁸ Pedrick, for example, describes Nestor’s speech to Patroclus in Book 11 as “a paradigmatic exhortation, offering an example from the past to bolster its argument that Achilles should give up his anger. The old man’s words contain a warning for Achilles not to waste his valor while his friends die and they teach this less with the paradigm of Nestor’s own deeds on behalf of his people” (Pedrick 1983, 55); for other analyses of the scene, see Pedrick 1983, 55, n.1 and n.2. For a summary and analysis of the scholarship on Nestor as advisor, see Roisman 2005:17ff. Austin argues that they “offer a challenge to the younger men to live up to the heroic ideal as embodied in his person” (Austin 1966, 301). Alden 2000 devotes a whole section to Nestor and his use of paradigms (74–111). Dean Hammer (2007, 20) further suggests that “Nestor’s role throughout the *Iliad* is that of an elder who advice invariably involves the voice of experience or an appeal to an earlier age. [...] [Nestor’s] age brings him deference and his arguments are grounded in a time that predates the memory of others”.

⁹ *Iliad* 9.189

¹⁰ *Odyssey* 14.462

In “Mythological Paradeigma in the *Iliad*,” Malcolm Willcock calls such moments “paradigms,” which he defines as “myth[s] introduced for exhortation or consolation. ‘You must do this, because X, who was in more or less the same position as you, and a more significant person, did it.’”¹¹ The analogous relationship between events in the past and present circumstances is the source of the past’s unique authority, not only in Homeric accounts of the Trojan War, but in the ensuing tradition of Trojan War literature as well. The past provides models for behavior to be emulated or avoided, and these models reflect the constantly evolving cultural construction of what a hero is and how he behaves. The *Iliad* and subsequent literature about the Trojan War are the stories of heroes: larger than life characters from the past who offer those in the present a model of heroic behavior. As a result, the importance of Willcock’s notion of the paradigm is not only that its power is seen as coming from its use of the past, but that past heroes were, in some sense, “more significant” than those for whom the past is being cited as a model. Norman Austin sees a similar function in the frequent mythic digressions which appear in the epics: “whether drawn from distant myths or from the beginning of the Trojan War, [the mythic digressions] are securely anchored to the present by their pragmatic intent. They reflect a pervasive need to justify an action in the present by an appeal to a past precedent. [...] The past intrudes into the present only when it can serve as a paradigm.”¹² As the Greeks and Trojans look to their own past for paradigms, so too would later generations of Greeks, Romans, medieval Europeans and, eventually, a modern global audience, look to the Trojan past for similar paradigmatic justification.

As the past was a powerful source modeling and molding behavior, so too did the heroes’ and gods’ projections about their own legacy—the *kleos aphthiton* or immortal glory which was the driving force of their lives—influence their behavior. This type of projection into the future is equally pronounced with regards to the Trojan War heroes’ self-conscious acknowledgment of their own role as paradigms. Perhaps because they relied so heavily on past heroes to guide their own behavior, the heroes of the Trojan War were well aware that their actions would serve as paradigms for future generations; Odysseus himself, when he fears he is about to drown when his raft is destroyed after his departure from Calypso’s island, does not lament that he will never

¹¹ Willcock 1964, 142. For a response to Willcock, see chapter 4, “Myth as Exemplum in Homer” in Nagy 1996. Nagy’s primary disagreement is with Willcock’s notion that the poet invented these mythological excurses as necessary rather than drawing from a stock of oral formulaic mythemes. Nagy, however, does not dispute Willcock’s central premise, useful to us here, that the mythological excurses have a didactic function.

¹² Austin 1966, 303.

see his wife, son and native land again, as might be expected in a poem in which such a return is the protagonist's primary objective. Rather, he says:

As I wish I too had died at that time and met my destiny
on the day when the greatest number of Trojans threw their bronze-headed
weapons upon me, over the body of perished Achilles,
and I would have had my rites and the Achaians given me glory.
Now it is by dismal death that I must be taken.¹³

Instead of concern about not returning to his family, Odysseus' concern is with his legacy, his *kleos*. His lament focuses on a single moment, what he considers his *aristeia*, when he fought off the Trojans around Achilles' body. To have died then would have left him as a paradigm of the much sought-after glorious death, the *kalos thanatos*.¹⁴ Instead, he will die anonymous and unremembered—and thus have an unparadigmatic death which cannot be emulated by subsequent generations.¹⁵

The aspiration for the glory that comes from a noble death also inspires Hector's decision to turn and fight Achilles rather than continue to run away in fear and shame in the passage with which this introduction opened. Hector knows his life and, above all, his death, will have paradigmatic value for future generations. Recognizing the inevitability of his own death, he has but one choice: to leave a legacy as a laudable paradigm by achieving a glorious death in battle or a contemptible paradigm by dying while fleeing from his enemy. The heroes who fought at Troy looked to the heroes of previous generations to understand their place in the world and how to act in it, yet, as Hector's words show, they were also well aware that their own deeds might serve as paradigms for future generations.¹⁶

Indeed, Hector's decision to stand and face his own certain death rather than flee in shame is echoed in one of the most famous moments in Greek letters; in Plato's *Apology*, Socrates defends himself during his trial on the capital crime of corrupting the youth by drawing on a Trojan War paradigm, suggesting that one who considers life or death rather than justice or injustice when they act would be mistaken, concluding that

¹³ *Odyssey* 5.308–12: ὡς δὴ ἐγὼ γ' ὄφελον θανέειν καὶ πότμον ἐπισπεῖν | ἤματι τῷ ὅτε μοι πλείστοι
χαλκῆρεα δούρα | Τρῶες ἐπέρριψαν περὶ Πηλεΐωνι θανόντι. | τῷ κ' ἔλαχον κτερέων, καὶ μευ κλέος ἦγον
Ἀχαιοί· | νῦν δὲ λευγαλέω θανάτῳ εἴμαρτο ἀλῶναι.

¹⁴ Similarly, Herodotus' Solon offers the glorious deaths of Tellus the Athenian and Cleobis and Biton as paradigms for explaining human happiness to Croesus.

¹⁵ Cf. *Iliad* 21.279, where Achilles, thinking he will drown in the Skamander, wishes he had been killed by Hector in battle. The impersonal and anonymous nature of drowning precludes *kleos*.

¹⁶ See also *Iliad* 7.89 for another example of Hector's awareness of what men in the future will say about them. Telemachos shows a similar concern for Odysseus' fame at *Odyssey* 3.203; Alkinōos refers to the epic's role as preserving the fame of "men to come" (*Odyssey* 8.578).

“according to you, the demigods who died at Troy would be foolish, and among them Achilles, who thought nothing of danger when the alternative was disgrace.”¹⁷ Socrates argues that his situation is analogous to Achilles: he willingly faces an honorable death rather than avoid it and live in shame.

Socrates also compares himself to a hero of the Trojan War in Xenophon’s *Apology*. After again declaring his innocence, Socrates says: “My spirit need not be less exalted because I am to be executed unjustly; for the ignominy of that attaches not to me but to those who condemned me. And I get comfort from the case of Palamedes, also, who died in circumstances similar to mine; for even yet he affords us far more noble themes for song than does Odysseus, the man who unjustly put him to death.”¹⁸ As in Plato’s *Apology*, Socrates compares himself to a Trojan War hero in order to explain and glorify his behavior. Xenophon’s Socrates, however, goes further than Plato’s, evincing an understanding that he himself, like the heroes of the Trojan War, will be a paradigm to future generations: “And I know that time to come as well as time past will attest that I, too, far from ever doing any man a wrong or rendering him more wicked, have rather profited those who conserved with me.”¹⁹ Socrates acknowledges that future generations will look back to him and see in his life the means of instruction in virtue, the very thing he saw in the lives of the Trojan War heroes he sought to emulate.

Nor was this use of the Trojan War as a paradigm confined to antiquity. In the Middle Ages, the English poet John Lydgate, wrote his *Troy Book* (1412–1420) at the bidding of the future King Henry V,

Whiche hath desire, sothly for to seyn,
Of verray knyghthood, to remember ageyn
The worthynes, yif I schall nat lye,
And the prowesse of olde chivalrie
By cause he hath joye and gret deynté
To rede in bokys of antiquité,
To fyn only vertu for to swe
Be example of hem and also for to eschewe
The cursyd vice of slouth and ydelnesse.²⁰

¹⁷ Plato *Apol.* 28c: φαῦλοι γὰρ ἂν τῷ γε σῶ λόγῳ εἶεν τῶν ἡμιθέων ὅσοι ἐν Τροίᾳ τετελευτήκασιν οἱ τε ἄλλοι καὶ ὁ τῆς Θετιδος υἱός, ὃς τοσοῦτον τοῦ κινδύνου κατεφρόνησεν παρὰ τὸ αἰσχρὸν τι ὑπομείναι.

¹⁸ Xenophon *Apol.* 26: ἀλλ’ οὐδὲ μέντοι ὅτι ἀδίκως ἀποθνήσκω, διὰ τοῦτο μείον φρονητέον: οὐ γὰρ ἐμοὶ ἀλλὰ τοῖς καταγνοῦσι τοῦτο αἰσχρὸν [γάρ] ἐστι. παραμυθεῖται δ’ ἔτι με καὶ Παλαμῆδης ὁ παραπλησίως ἐμοὶ τελευτήσας: ἔτι γὰρ καὶ νῦν πολὺ καλλίους ὕμνους παρέχεται Ὀδυσσέως τοῦ ἀδίκως ἀποκτείναντος αὐτόν.

¹⁹ Xenophon *Apol.* 26.

²⁰ Lydgate pro. 75–83

Lydgate's explicit purpose in writing his *Troy Book* was nothing less than to use it as a store of paradigmatic heroes and actions for the education of the future king: to show him examples of virtue to emulate and vice to eschew.

Only slightly later, Lydgate offers a second reason for retelling the Trojan War: he wishes that

The noble story openly wer knowe
 In our tonge, aboute in every age,
 And ywriten as wel in our langage
 As in Latyn and in Frensche it is,
 That of the story the trouthe we nat mys
 No more than doth eche other nacioun.²¹

Lydgate uses the Trojan War as a means of attaining the cultural prestige that comes with having the story translated into one's own language. Lydgate's great mentor, Geoffrey Chaucer, had proven in the *Canterbury Tales* that English could be a literary language; Chaucer's work, however, was a new story about contemporary English society. Lydgate takes Chaucer one step further to prove not just that English can serve as a literary language, but that it has an epic register just as powerful as French or Latin for telling the canonical stories of the western world. Thus, Lydgate ties paradigms of heroic behavior with national aims both aesthetic (the development of an epic register) and ideological (English as a language, and thus as a nation, of equivalent worth as Classical Greece and Rome as well as their rivals across the channel, the French). This is in some sense what Virgil attempted in the *Aeneid*: proving that Rome was as great as Greece, that Latin was as great as Greek, that Aeneas was as great as Achilles.

Lydgate's text thus serves as a late medieval example of the major themes of the present volume: in his work as in the in the following chapters, the aesthetic and linguistic innovation which spurred writing about the Trojan War was often tied to emergent nationalism, to changing political and cultural mores and to the praise of the individual heroes who embodied these ideals. As previous scholars writing about the history of Homer and the Trojan War note, it is impossible to address virtually any aspect of the Trojan War in a comprehensive way. This volume, then, examines that small piece of the large web of works where aesthetics, politics and ideology intersect, that is to say, post-medieval narratives in which Greeks and Trojans serve as nationalist models for idealized heroism, in which Homer and the Homeric epics serve as models of literary glory and aesthetic innovation, and in which the Trojan War as a narrative topos serves as a model against which to compare contemporary political events and cultural ideals.

²¹ Lydgate pro. 112–17.

The volume begins with Valentina Prosperi's "*Iliads* without Homer: The Renaissance aftermath of the Trojan legend in Italian poetry (ca 1400–1600)", which focuses on how early Italian humanists dealt with the rediscovery of the Homeric epics themselves and sought to understand their place in light of previous reliance on the Second Sophistic pseudo-chronicles of Dares the Phrygian and Dictys the Cretan. In the Middle Ages, these works replaced the lost Homer as the most authoritative sources of the Trojan War. Prosperi explores how Italian dynasties, which relied in part on Trojan genealogies for their political legitimacy, commissioned various works which forced the Dares-Dictys account to compete against the Homeric account of the Trojan War for aesthetic and historical supremacy.

Derek Pearsall's "Chaucer's *Criseyde* and Shakespeare's *Cressida*: Transformations in the reception history of the Troy story" addresses similar concerns, describing how the translation of the Homeric epics into English shaped the work of William Shakespeare against writers of previous generations, particularly Geoffrey Chaucer. Pearsall locates his discussion of the competition between the Homeric tradition and Dares-Dictys tradition of Trojan War narratives through a comparative approach to Chaucer and Shakespeare's depiction of the character of *Cressida*/*Criseyde*. Comparison between these two writers is inevitable because of their elevated status at the foundations of the English canon and interesting because they have diametrically opposed conceptions of *Cressida*/*Criseyde*'s character and role. Pearsall argues that Shakespeare's *Cressida* is an active agent in a world of men at war, and her whole being is invested in her powers of seduction as a means of making her way successfully through the precarious circumstances of such a life. Her "betrayal" of *Troilus* is a necessary switch, neither cynical nor painless to her, enforced by a change in her circumstances. For Chaucer, however, the question is one of motive, self-knowledge and interior consciousness. Thus, the character of *Cressida*/*Criseyde* becomes a figure on whom ideas of proper femininity and a social critique against patriarchal control of women's bodies and agencies is played out.

In "*Tristis Orestes?* The ecstasy of reception, revenge, and redemption in the Early Modern English *Orestes* plays," Maura Giles-Watson discusses the aesthetic and political issues surrounding the theatrical repurposing and representation of the *Orestes* myth in two vernacular English Renaissance plays: John Pikerlyng's Elizabethan *Horestes* (1567) and Thomas Goffe's *Tragedy of Orestes* (1613). Giles-Watson argues that the audiences of these plays, both of which sought to redeem the archetypal avenger, were aesthetically and ethically sympathetic to *Orestes*, his actions, and his intimate friendship with *Pylades*, due in large part to social, cultural and political anxiety caused by the succession of female rulers in the mid-16th century. Indeed, Giles-Watson argues

that Pikeryng, both as Speaker of the House of Commons and as Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal in Elizabeth's government, was a leading opponent of Mary Queen of Scots, who, like Clytemnestra, had murdered her husband. Orestes thus becomes a paradigm for critiquing female power and for determining the justice of deposing female rulers.

In "The Trojan origins of Polish tragedy," Janek Kucharski examines the ways in which early modern Polish nobility used the Trojan War to support their political legitimacy by staging a play on a Trojan theme at a 1578 marriage joining two of Poland's most prominent political families. *The Dismissal of the Greek Envoys* (*Odprawa posłów greckich*) by Jan Kochanowski, the most eminent poet of the Polish Renaissance, dramatizes an episode reported in *Iliad* 3: the failed embassy of Odysseus and Menelaus to reclaim Helen from the Trojans and thus avert the impending conflict. The story is presented from the Trojan point of view and closes with the beginning of war, which follows the eponymous dismissal. In its form the play relies on ancient sources (Euripides) and on contemporary classicizing poetics (Scaliger) to a hitherto unparalleled extent, thus offering another kind of marriage: aesthetic innovation with political ideology. That Poland's most prominent writer selected a scene from the Trojan War to dramatize at the wedding of two of Poland's most important political families is testimony to the significance of this tradition in the making of modern Polish culture.

Anastasiya Andrianova's "Aeneas among the Cossacks: *Eneïda* in modern Ukraine" looks at the implications of the paradigmatic use of the Aeneas figure, refashioned as a Ukrainian Cossack, as a mock-heroic model for modern Ukrainian nationalism. Andrianova analyzes Ivan Kotliarevs'kyi's *Eneïda* (1798, 1842), a travesty of Virgil's *Aeneid*, and its two contemporary adaptations released in the immediate aftermath of the breakup of the Soviet Union—Serhiy Bedusenko's rock opera and Volodymyr Dakhno's animation film of the same title—to demonstrate how these three works localize the Roman epic both by translating Virgil's Latin into Ukrainian and by transforming the *Aeneid* into a recognizably Ukrainian literary artifact. Kotliarevs'kyi also becomes a sort of Ukrainian Homer; his imaginative appropriation of the myth introduced Ukrainian vernacular as a literary language through stylistic, linguistic, and generic mixing that is at once original and grounded in an established tradition of classical reception, thus making the *Eneïda* at once "national" and "European."

Rui Carlos Fonseca's "The Pindaric poetry of Cruz e Silva and the neoclassical revival among Lusitanian national heroes" also examines how Trojan War heroes were used as paradigms for contemporary nationalism and how classical genres were re-imagined in a more modern context by looking at the Pindaric odes of António Dinis da Cruz e Silva (1731–1799). Cruz e Silva, fashioning himself a new Pindar, imitates the triadic form and the mythological structure of Classical encomiastic poetry to cel-

celebrate the deeds of reputed Portuguese historical figures, such as navigators, politicians and even the king himself. Among his forty-four Pindaric odes, eighteen rewrite the myth of the Trojan War, (re)telling, in a neoclassical style, the main scenes and themes of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Building on the paradigmatic nature of these allusions, Achilles' wrath and Hector's death are topics repeatedly brought up in Cruz e Silva's Pindaric poetry as models of courage and patriotism for national heroes.

Barbara Witucki's "Victor Hugo's Trojan War" similarly examines the intersection of the Trojan War with nationalism and stylistic innovation. Hugo constructs the popular uprisings he describes, such as the siege of the Marquis de Lantenac at La Tourgue by the revolutionary army in *Quatrevingt-Treize*, the riot of June 1832 in *Les Misérables* and Esmerelda's rescue in *Notre Dame de Paris* as new Trojan Wars. In each of these novels, Hugo creates national myths which celebrate the political will of the people and their power to engender change. The Trojan War, and particularly its representation in the *Iliad*, serves as a touchstone in Hugo's construction of this myth. Thus, the Trojan past becomes a heroic paradigm for the political struggles of the French present, and his own sprawling novels become the new Homeric epics, thus also positioning their author as a new Homer.

Johanna Akujärvi's "An Epic Battle: Aesthetic and Political Struggles over the Swedish *Iliads*" moves us from the early modern to the modern period through an analysis of the creation of an epic literary register in Swedish—and thus a new model for Swedishness itself. At the turn of the 19th century, Swedish translators of the classics began to question the old conventions governing translation. In this process, the *Iliad* became a locus of aesthetic contestation. The appearance of the first complete translation of the *Iliad* (Wallenberg 1814–1815) did not put an end to other complete or partial translations: three were published before Erland Lagerlöf's canonical translation in 1912, and four new versions have appeared since then, each laying claim to a different aesthetic justification for the rendering of epic into Swedish.

Vasiliki Dimoula's "Gender and nationalism in the Mediterranean avant-garde: The Trojan Wars of the Modernist Painter-Poets Giorgio de Chirico and Nikos Engonopoulos" places the Trojan War in a firmly modernist context. Dimoula argues that in both authors' poetry and paintings, Homer's traces are to be found on the afflicted body of a woman who turns out to have a distinctive relation to the Trojan Wars. Specifically, she suggests that Engonopoulos' "Hector and Andromache" (1969), modelled on de Chirico's 1917 poem of the same name, turns de Chirico's experimental poetics of hybridity and androgyny into an over-emphatic portrayal of sexual difference. Dimoula also connects these ideas to modern notions of a national poetics; both artists use the Trojan Wars as an opportunity to analyze a transgressive gender and sexual politics

which is inextricably linked with their different responses to the constructed national notions of Italianicity and Greekness.

The Trojan War as commentary and criticism on contemporary issues of political and cultural concern continues in Jennifer E. Michael's "The Trojan War as a Warning for Her Time: Christa Wolf's Depiction of Feminism and the Cold War in her *Cassandra* project." Specifically, Michaels analyzes how the East German novelist Christa Wolf's *Kassandra* (1983) and the accompanying lectures she gave in Frankfurt describing its genesis became influential texts for feminists and for the peace movement in Europe. Wolf, the most prominent writer in the former German Democratic Republic, reinterprets the Trojan War from a feminist perspective to challenge previous heroic versions—written almost exclusively by men—beginning with Homer. Thus, Wolf eschews the epic, which she views as a patriarchal genre, in favor of a different aesthetics based on stream of conscious narration. In contrast to the masculine gaze which had dominated the tradition, she depicts the Trojan War through Cassandra, whose struggle for self-actualization in a patriarchal world was a principal concern of feminists in Wolf's time. She also engaged with broader geo-political issues by using the Trojan War as a paradigm for exploring how conflicts escalate and how propaganda is used to inflame sentiments, disguise the truth, and create delusion. While Wolf clearly draws parallels to the STASI, the East German state security force, her insights can be applied to any totalitarian police state. In her version, therefore, the past becomes a warning for the present and future.

Johan Callens' "The Volatile Value of Suffering: Jan Ritsema's *Philoktetes Variations*" continues the volume's focus on the Trojan War on stage as a site for representing current cultural concerns by focusing on the theatrical history and cultural context of Jan Ritsema's *Philoktetes Variations* (1994). As a deeply modern example of the paradigmatic value of the past, the actor who played Philoktetes, Ron Vawter, a founding member of the New York-based avant-garde company, the Wooster Group, was himself publicly suffering from AIDS. Philoktetes' wound and subsequent quarantine on a deserted island away from the Greeks thus fuses the mythical past with real cultural, social and political concerns of the present. The production thereby overtly inscribed the more recent text into the open-ended, recursive intertextual process which has guaranteed the inexhaustibility of the Trojan War's reception and adaptability to evolving historical circumstances, in this case the shift of gay identity politics from radical activism to mainstream legalism.

The volume concludes with another example of the paradigmatic use of the past as oblique criticism of the present. Adam J. Goldwyn's "Achaean, Athenians and Americans in the Post-9/11 Era: Comparing Empires in *The New York Times*" looks at

opinion pieces in an important American (and international) newspaper which use the Trojan War as a lens for describing American attitudes towards the NATO War in Iraq and the global War on Terror more generally. In the decade after 9/11, columnists variously compared the Americans to the Greeks and the Iraqis to the Trojans—or vice versa. He further argues that ideas about the moral of *The Iliad* as either pro- or anti-war depended on the authors' own political affiliations. Thus, *The Iliad* did not in and of itself have a message; rather, the authors used the epics in a paradigmatic way to support their own preconceived political ideology.

As a way of concluding the volume, this article also demonstrates a central tenet of the volume as a whole: the Trojan War and its depiction in various epic and lyric poems, tragedies, novels, films, paintings, sculptures and newspaper editorials is essentially protean, with each author and culture recreating the war to suit his or her own political, ideological and aesthetic purpose. It is this protean quality which no doubt attracted ancient Greek revisionists like Thucydides and Euripides to the Trojan War and which also motivated the artists discussed in this volume. That the Trojan War is a global possession, not the property of any single culture, genre, political ideology, national state or time period has allowed it to become one of the most democratic narratives, belonging as much to established New York journalists as to avant-garde New York theater companies, as much to Pindar's Portuguese neoclassical imitators as to the Theban poet, as much to Ukrainian writers of mock-epic as to Homer himself. Thus, we hope to prove that there is no Trojan War, only Trojan Wars, and that this eternal renewability, enriched by the symbolic weight of past tradition, will no doubt result in its continued use as a source of inspiration for aesthetic innovation and celebration and critique of contemporary individuals and society at large for millennia to come.

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Iliads without Homer

The Renaissance aftermath of the Trojan legend in Italian poetry
(ca 1400–1600)

VALENTINA PROSPERI



IT IS A well-kept secret that Homer did not enjoy any proper Renaissance in Europe. From the moment of his rediscovery and for at least two more centuries, leading humanists from all over Europe and learned readers in general showed a palpable reluctance—self-consciously hidden behind perfunctory words of praise—in addressing the poetry of the recovered Homer.

The phenomenon has not failed to raise scholarly attention, especially for what concerns the failure on the part of Italian humanists to address the *Iliad*.¹ But the gap between the expected and the actual reaction of the humanistic community in the wake of the rediscovery of Homer is even greater than we are yet prepared to accept, due to our centuries-long habit of revering Homer as head of the western literary canon. Homer was perhaps never more highly spoken of than in the centuries of his disappearance and, later, of his early, tentative resurrection. The longing to know the voice of the father of poetry, of Virgil's model and master, had set expectations so high that exalted praise of Homer's multifarious virtues—from poetical prowess, to philosophical, medical and juridical mastery²—remained commonplace even in the face of the remarkable disappointment provoked by Homer's actual poetry. When, thanks to the endeavors of Petrarch and Boccaccio, the Homeric poems were translated into Latin by Leontius Pilatus³ after centuries of oblivion, the results were such as to discourage most

¹ See Sowerby 1996, 1997–1998.

² Thus wrote for instance an early admirer of Homer, the humanist Antonio Urceo Codro of Bologna (1446–1500): “ab Homero Rhetoricam, ab Homero Medicinam, ab Homero Astrologiam, ab Homero Fabulas, ab Homero Historias, ab Homero mores, ab Homero Philosophorum dogmata, ab Homero Artem militarem, ab Homero coquinariam, ab Homero Architecturam, ab Homero regendarum urbium modum percipies, et in summa quicquid boni quicquid honesti animus hominis discendi cupidus optare potest, in Homero facile poteris invenire [...]” (Urceo 1540: “Sermo in laudem Liberalium artium”, 250); on Codro: Raimondi 1950; Wilson 2000, 155–56; the introduction by L. Chines in Urceo 2013.

³ On Leontius' Homeric translations: Weiss 1977, 150–65: “Notes on Petrarch and Homer”; 166–92: “Petrarca e il mondo greco”; Pertusi 1964; Di Benedetto 1969, 53–112; Pilato 2003; De Nohac

humanists from a more thorough confrontation with the ancient master.⁴ This is not the place to reappraise the early diffusion of Homer in Italy: but the simple fact that such an important topic is still awaiting due systematic scholarly attention⁵ is a demonstration that the question is more fraught than we might tend to think. As for what has been dubbed the failure of the *Iliad* among Italian humanists, I suggest an explanation for it in the presence, in Italy as in Europe, of a pre-existent, competing artistic tradition about the Trojan War. This tradition had several advantages over Homer's *Iliad*, which I shall briefly point out.

By the time of Homer's recovery in Italy, other ancient texts had already achieved universal recognition as trustworthy, detailed, and historically sound reports of the Trojan War, an event which loomed large in many European peoples' historical self-awareness and in the construction of their national identity.⁶ These were *De excidio belli Troiani* by Dares the Phrygian and *Ephemeris belli Troiani* by Dictys the Cretan. Hellenistic texts originally belonging to the Second Sophistic (first to second century CE), these texts claimed to be eye-witness accounts of the Trojan War, nothing less than war journals from the front.⁷ The two anonymous authors took on the *personae* respec-

1965; Pade 2001, 2002, 2008, 2011. Fera 2002–2003, Pontani 2002–2003, Hankins 2002–2003.

⁴ Prospero 2013, ch. 3 “Omero sconfitto. Una proposta per la ricezione dell’Iliade in Italia tra Quattro e Cinquecento”.

⁵ The definitive word on the question should come from Georg Knauer, who has been working on it for the *Catalogus Translationum et Commentariorum* for the last forty years or so. For a clear, brief introduction to the topic and further bibliography: Della Schiava 2011. Important contributions on selected areas of Homer's humanistic fortune are: Pontani 2007, 375n for further bibliography; Botley 2010, 80–85: “Homer”; the editor's Preface to Poliziano 2010; the introduction in Megna 2009. For a comprehensive bibliography on humanistic translations from Greek: Berti 2007: 3–4, n. 2. Three valuable collections of essays on aspects of Homer's relevance in the Renaissance in different European areas are: Shepard & Powell (eds) 2004; Zimmermann (ed.) 2006; Capodiecici & Ford (eds) 2011.

⁶ The myth of Trojan origins before and after the end of the Roman Empire in Europe is too vast a topic to give here more than a few references; a good introduction is Giardina 1998. How the myth of Trojan origins was wielded by the Franks to claim their superiority over the Byzantine Empire is the subject of Ricciardi 2013. On the spreading of Trojan genealogies in the European Middle Ages (Italy is left out entirely): Shepard & Powell 2004; a general treatment in Görlich 2006. A fascinating account of the Trojan origins myth in the Hapsburgs' self-representation is Tanner 1993.

⁷ On Dictys and Dares there has been a recent surge of scholarly interest, after decades of neglect. The critical editions are still those by Eisenhut and Meister (Dictys Cretensis 1958, Dares Phrygius 1873). New papyri fragments of the Greek Dictys have been retrieved and published: for a thorough discussion Gainsford 2012, 67–68; cfr. Hatzilambrou & Obbink 2009. Essential reading on Dictys for the last hundred years includes: Fürst 1901 and 1902; Griffin 1907; Merkle 1989; Merkle 1994 and 1996 have started the recent discussion on the question of genre relating to Dictys and Dares; on the Greek Dictys and his diffusion in the Byzantine world: Gainsford 2012. On Dares: Beschoner 1992

tively of a Trojan and of a Greek warrior: Dares the Phrygian, and Dictys the Cretan. As regards the authors' motives, suffice it to say that their narratives are completely consistent with the rest of Second Sophistic literary production: from the anti-Homeric pose to the self-validating strategies of authentication.

Translated from Greek into Latin at some stage (Dictys in around the second century, Dares about two or three centuries later), the *Ephemeris Belli Troiani* and the *De excidio Troiae* simply became *the* accepted versions of the Trojan myth in medieval times and, what is more striking, the early modern West. This happened for a number of reasons. First of all, ancient Greek was no longer understood, hence the disappearance of Homeric poems. Secondly, all surviving Latin texts dealing with the Trojan War shared the same and fatal flaw in the eyes of their medieval readers: their accounts were patchy or incomplete at best. Medieval readers could still count on masterpieces of Latin poetry such as Virgil's *Aeneid*, Ovid's *Heroides* and *Metamorphoses*, and Statius' *Achilleid* for treatments of the Trojan myth. Why then did they decide in favor of the dry narratives of Dictys and Dares? The simple answer is that none of the 'high' texts provided what the lowly Dictys-Dares narratives did: a comprehensive beginning to end account of what had happened at Troy, from the first attack on the city of Troy by the Argonauts, to the Greek heroes' *nostoi*. All the Latin classical texts shared the same dialogical relationship with Homer: they were conceived as a kind of expansion *on* the text of Homer. Once Homer disappeared, Virgil, Ovid, and Statius became like the mutilated, floating fragments of a massive shipwreck.

Yet if truth be told, not even the survival of Homer would have quenched the mediaeval thirst for 'the whole story' of the Trojan War: the proof is that something like a Latin Homer was in fact extant: this was the so-called *Ilias Latina*, two books of Latin hexameters summarizing the plot of the *Iliad* in drastically reduced form.⁸ The *Ilias Latina* had already met with great success among those readers of late antiquity who had little or no familiarity with Greek, success which continued into the Middle Ages and beyond; in 1488, the year of the *princeps* of Homer,⁹ the *Ilias Latina* was still

provides excellent commentary and discussion of relevant points; on Dares' manuscript diffusion between the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age: Faivre D'Arcier 2006. Besides the old English translation by Frazer 1966, new French and Italian translations are now available: Fry 1988, Dictys Cretensis 2011, Lelli 2015. Chapters on Dictys and Dares in relation to Homer in: Clarke 1981: ch. 1 "Homer Romanticized"; Prosperi 2013: ch. 3 "Omero sconfitto. Una proposta per la ricezione dell'*Iliade* in Italia tra Quattro e Cinquecento".

⁸ The author has been identified by Scaffai with one Baebius Italicus, but the text, from the Neonian age, circulated for centuries under the name of "Pyndarus Thebanus": Baebius Italicus 1982.

⁹ Homerus, *Opera*, (ed. D. Chalcondylas), per Bernardo e Nerio Nerli e Demetrio Damilas. On Homer's *princeps*: Ridolfi 1954.

printed in Parma under the name of Homer. However, the *Ilias Latina* had two major disadvantages compared to Dictys and Dares. The first, as I have already mentioned, was the ‘incompleteness’ of the *fabula*, (Achilles’ wrath and no more). Perhaps more important, however, the *Ilias Latina*, like the other classical texts mentioned, plainly manifested its genre as fiction; Dictys and Dares, by contrast, presented their texts not just as history, but as journals, *Ephemerides*, *Acta diurna*.

From a very general perspective, the main difference between these versions of the Trojan events and the Homeric narrative is the practice of rationalizing the events that verges on paradoxical, with a generalized belittling of the main characters. Thus we have Agamemnon slighting Achilles by not having him for dinner; Achilles acting in turn like a besotted lover, coward, and traitor; Hector berating his wife; Priam acting like a mean and myopic tyrant; Aeneas betraying his country and so on; what’s more, there is no trace of divine intervention and the few supernatural events often have a perfectly rational explanation.¹⁰ This narrative strategy was carefully planned as a systematic reversal of the Homeric narrative aimed at a sort of deadpan humor, in line with the Second Sophistic vogue for Homer-centered literary play.¹¹ But, for later readers who had lost all familiarity with Homer and who distrusted poetry as a means of transmitting historical data, all such humor was lost, and Dictys and Dares just came across as trustworthy and accurate. Such was their success as historiographers that they replaced Herodotus as ‘pater historiae’ for centuries¹²: indeed, their narratives were read as genuine, and printed as such, or reworked into general accounts of *historia universalis* well into the sixteenth century, with some still using them as legitimate historical sources even in the nineteenth century.¹³

Anthony Grafton once wrote that the new philological approach of the Humanism conjures up the image of “a train in which Greeks and Latins, spurious and genuine authorities sit side by side until they reach a stop marked Renaissance. Then grim-faced humanists climb aboard, check tickets, and expel fakes in hordes through doors and windows alike [...] Only [...] genuine classics will remain on board to wind up as part of the canon.”¹⁴ Well, Dictys and Dares managed to stay on the train apparently, despite their poor imitation of a ticket. To wrap up this glance at the historical side of Dictys’

¹⁰ On the carefully planned, ‘comic’ reversal of Homeric events in Dictys: Timpanaro 1987.

¹¹ The best recent treatment of Second Sophistic literature and its obsessive, multifaceted relationship with Homer is Kim 2010.

¹² On this topic, essential reading is Momigliano 1960. Dares’ generic transition from fiction to historiography has been recently examined by Clark 2010 and 2011.

¹³ See Prosperi 2011.

¹⁴ Grafton 1990, 102–3.

and Dares' fortunes, it is important to stress that their historiographical relevance was also a key factor for the fictional development of their narratives over the centuries: to put it simply, there would have been no (such) poetic reception or fictional development of their narratives if they had not been regarded as historical in the first place. On the other hand, it was the very fictions sprung from the Dictys-Dares narratives that enhanced their value as historical sources in a mirror-like relationship that was particularly active in Renaissance Italy at a time when local dynasties were at pains to ground their expansionistic ambitions by means of fantastic genealogies linking them to the Trojan dynasty.¹⁵ Such is the case, for example, with the Estense family between fifteenth and sixteenth centuries as we shall see. But first, we need to take a step back and try to identify the strands of Trojan-themed poetry that developed in Italy from the root of the Dictys Dares narratives.

The single literary work with the biggest impact on Dictys' and Dares' reception was undoubtedly the *Roman de Troie* (1155–1160) by Benoît de Sainte Maure.¹⁶ This imposing *roman* of more than thirty thousand lines reworks Dares' dry account, integrating it at times with Dictys' narrative. This practice of combining the two, relying mainly on Dares, was adopted from Benoît by most subsequent authors. Dares was simpler, having lost all stylistic appearance through the awkward Latin translation¹⁷ and was also more appealing because of his pro-Trojan stance. Benoît's *Roman de Troie* met with extraordinary success: it was the single most copied and widely spread *roman* in Italy and in France for two centuries. It also had an enormous influence on Dictys' and Dares' subsequent reception.

The first essential fact to consider is that the *Roman de Troie* sanctioned the relationship between the two Latin texts, which at the time still had separate manuscript circulations. The number of manuscripts increased for both texts and the relatively less popular Dictys quickly caught up with Dares.¹⁸ Secondly, of the countless expansions

¹⁵ On made-up genealogies of Italian Renaissance ruling families: Bizzocchi 1995; see Brusciagli 2004 on the genealogical device within Renaissance epic poem.

¹⁶ Benoît de Sainte-Maure 1904–1912 provides the only complete modern edition; Benoît de Sainte-Maure 1987 provides an ample anthology and translation in modern French. On the historical and cultural circumstances that led to the three “Romans d’antiquité” (*Troie*, *Thèbes*, *Enéas*), see Jeffreys 1980; D’Agostino (ed.) 2013 for the representation of the classical past in the three *romans*. On Benoît's *Roman* and its place within Italian romance epic, see Everson 2001, 42–43 for a clear, succinct account, with n. 23 for relevant bibliography.

¹⁷ I share Beschorner's view that Dares' text also had a (lost) Greek original: Beschorner 1992, 218–24; a comprehensive discussion of the scholarship on this question in Garbugino's Introduction to Dictys Cretensis 2011, 6–14.

¹⁸ On Dares' manuscript diffusion: Faivre D’Arcier 2006; for an insightful account of Dares' medieval diffusion based on manuscript tradition: Punzi 1997. On Dictys' manuscript diffusion: Franc-

added by Benoît to Dares' plot, one was particularly noticeable both in itself and for the massive number of imitations it led to later¹⁹: this was the Troilus and Cressida episode. The tragic tale of love and betrayal that would inspire Shakespeare five centuries later was in fact Benoît's original and complete fabrication and was identified as such by his readers.²⁰

Benoît's enticing mixture of history and fiction could not fail to raise the reactions of those convinced of Dictys' and Dares' documentary value: most memorable in this respect is Guido delle Colonne's *Historia destructionis Troiae*, a text expressly written to reverse Benoît's poem on all levels and to set the record straight about the historicity of the Trojan War. Guido's work is in prose, whereas Benoît's had been in verse; it is written in Latin and not in the vernacular, and it is shorn of all the embellishments added in the *Roman*,²¹ which is not even once named. Guido's reaction is testimony to the will of resisting the fictionalization of Trojan events and as such met with a notable success: treated as a historical source in itself, it spurred several reworkings of the ever-favored topic of the Trojan War.

The fictionalization of Trojan events was however an irreversible process that in the Italian literary landscape had its decisive episode in the fourteenth century, with Boccaccio's early work *Filostrato*, in which he singled out Benoît's account of the Troilus story, expanding it to the proportions of a veritable romance epic where Troilo's unhappy love is framed and mirrored by the narrator's own. Boccaccio's work is crucial to our analysis; first of all, the *Filostrato* shows how the portrayal of Troy matter—as it had sprung from Dictys' and Dares' accounts—acquired ever more fictional enrichments without yet losing its historical flavor. In other words, Boccaccio consciously singled out the one fictional episode of Troilus from what he perceived as a historically sound work, keeping his faith in Dictys and Dares as historians intact. Secondly, although the *Filostrato* predates Boccaccio's encounter with Homer's works, it is important to point out that Boccaccio's faith in either the accounts of Dictys and Dares or in their historical veracity were not shaken by what he read in Leonzio's translation of

eschini 1937–1938; on Dictys' scanty manuscript tradition (six complete witnesses before the XII century): Munk Olsen 1982, 379–82. On the diffusion of the ϵ strand of Dictys' tradition: Petoletti 1999, 474 and footnote for the bibliography.

¹⁹ See Boitani 1989.

²⁰ On the invention of the Briseida's story: Kelly 1995.

²¹ The text's edition is Guido De Columnis 1936. On Guido: Beretta Spampinato 1990; Bruni 1990a; Dionisotti 1965. On the influence of the *Historia*: Carlesso 1980.

the *Iliad*: proof is what he writes on the subject in his later works, *Genealogie deorum gentilium* and *Sposizioni sopra la Comedia*.²²

Boccaccio's Trojan poem did not come into existence, as it were, in a vacuum: there was in Italy at the time a rich layering of oral poetry devoted to themes spanning the classical past to Arthurian romances: the so-called *cantari*. Among the *cantari*, Troy-related topics had real prominence,²³ and although manuscripts recording these texts date from the 14th century or later, many of them clearly rely on much earlier production. On the wide and now almost ignored popularity of the Trojan *cantari*, it is worth recalling the episode described by Poggio Bracciolini in his *Facezie*, about the simple man who paid the reciter out of his pocket so that he would delay "Hector's death," the subject of one of the most famous *cantari*.²⁴ This anecdote shows that the *cantari* were popular entertainment.

From the Trojan *cantari* developed one of the most popular early epic romances, the *Troiano a stampa*,²⁵ an anonymous poem in twenty cantos of *ottave* dealing with the Trojan legend as it had been transmitted by the Dictys-Dares narrative through the Middle Ages. Its *editio princeps* dates from 1483, and there are no extant manuscripts. The composition can, however, be dated to several decades earlier, its terminus

²² Boccaccio's direct knowledge of Dictys and Dares is attested by several explicit references in his *Genealogie deorum gentilium*: Dictys is an authority on the genealogy of Danaos and Tros; Dares is source—with Dictys and Homer—on the rape of Helen, Menelaus' family and Agamemnon's death. On Boccaccio's reliance on Homer in the *Genealogie*, see Pade 2011; for a discussion of the presence of classical and mediaeval Trojan sources in Boccaccio's works: Bruni 1990b.

²³ See Everson 2001, 41–51, esp. 41–42: "Much more significant [than medieval historical epic in Latin], in terms of preparing the ground for the experiments of Boccaccio and Petrarch, is the sheer bulk of compositions, in both prose and verse form, on classical subjects, both mythological and historical. These texts include tales of Troy, reworkings of the *Aeneid*, and accounts of the life of Caesar and the fall of the Roman republic and include versions in Latin as well as Italian. The majority of these texts, in the surviving manuscripts, can be dated to the early fourteenth century, to the period immediately preceding the first compositions of Boccaccio, and indeed in some cases are contemporary with those. Nevertheless, it is clear the texts themselves were clearly composed earlier or derive from earlier examples." On *cantari* in general, but with no reference to classics—or Trojan—themed ones: Villoresi 2005; on classics-themed *cantari*, a still valuable comprehensive treatment is Ugolini 1933. A new, commented edition of one of the main Trojan *cantari* is now Mantovani 2013. On Trojan-themed literature, oral and written, in the Italian Middle Ages: Gorra 1887 is still the starting point.

²⁴ Bracciolini 1995, 90: "De cantore qui praedixit *Mortem Hectoris* recitaturum".

²⁵ The conventional title is now *Troiano a stampa*; the traditional title, with slight variations in the different printings is generally *Libro chiamato il Troiano*. Questions of authorship have been discussed to no avail by Rajna 1878 and Parodi 1889. Mantovani 2013, 15–16 provides a valuable discussion of the Trojan *cantari*'s influence on the *Troiano a stampa*.

post quem being Petrarch's *Triumphus Cupidinis*, alluded to in the *Troiano*'s proem.²⁶ Furthermore, several elements reveal it closely related with the Trojan *cantari* of the previous age: numerous textual borrowings²⁷ and the presence of oral-derived techniques²⁸ reveal it as closely related with the Trojan *cantari* of the previous age. As for its narrative outline, the *Troiano* lines up all the available sources—both classical and medieval—to give as complete an account as possible of the Trojan myth. It starts with the Argonauts, as Dares had done; it ends with the *nostoi* as recounted by Dictys. It even adds other episodes (Medea, Achilles in Scyros and others) that were missing from the Dictys-Dares narrative.²⁹

Although it is certainly true then that the *Troiano* picks up the threads of the *cantari*, it is also very different from them, as it is completely different in its intentions and artistic quality from the *Filostrato*. Unlike the humble *cantari*, the *Troiano* is a self-conscious, ambitious work of poetry; unlike the *Filostrato*, its aim is to set a new, 'higher,' as it were, poetic manner, one that refutes the *chanson de geste* and the *romance* as appropriate models for poetry on the grounds that high, ambitious poetry should only draw on history.

Historical soundness was essential for the task that the *Troiano* set itself: establishing a genealogical link between the Trojan refugees *other than Aeneas* and the Italian dynasties, so that they acquire as much prestige and legitimacy as Rome. Historical accuracy is the author's priority, as he clearly states in the proem, where he claims to write according to Dictys and Dares, who were eyewitnesses of the events:

We shall sing
of Trojans and Greeks [...] according to
Dictys the Greek and Dares the Trojan,
that, based on what they saw, wrote about them.³⁰

²⁶ Dionisotti 2003, 148–49.

²⁷ Mantovani 2013, 15–16.

²⁸ Such as direct addresses to the audience, frequent repetitions, appeals to an authoritative (fictive) external source; on the *cantari*'s narrative strategies: Cabani 1988, chap. IV, "La regia della narrazione."

²⁹ On the "historical line" of Dictys and Dares as reason for their future success: Everson 2003, 92–95; 95 "[Dictys and Dares] aim [...] to narrate the whole of a momentous event, not just episodes of it, the whole siege of Troy, not just part of the final year and without the conclusion, to bring out the epic dimension of both characters and events by concentrating on the real climax and by developing the emotions of the principal players to make them believable, fallible, human beings, tested by events and overcoming them."

³⁰ "Insieme de Troiani, e de gli Greci | cantarem quel che [...] | ne derive, | de Diris Greco, e Daretre Troiano, | che vedendo ne scrisse di sua mano" (*Troiano* I.3).

In its closing *canti*, the *Troiano* explicitly links Hector's lineage (namely Andronico, one of Hector's surviving sons) with the foundation of Italian dynasties, thus setting and influential example for courtier poets to follow. This is the first direct link with Hector's lineage as opposed to Aeneas.

Despite our present unawareness of the *Troiano*'s existence in the Renaissance literary landscape, we should bear in mind that the poem was reprinted thirteen times since the first in 1483, the last as late as 1671, so it was clearly widely read and influential.³¹

The *Troiano* was crucial in setting the example for later—and better—poets eager to sing their patron's praises. To find the most consistent construction of a Trojan descent for political purposes we need to look at none other than the Estense dynasty and its poets: Boiardo, Ariosto, Tasso. Already between 1460 and 1505, Boiardo's uncle, Tito Vespasiano Strozzi, had composed the *Borsias*,³² a Latin poem in praise of Borso d'Este in which the Este family was linked to an otherwise unknown son of Hector who, in this telling, landed on the shores of Este. Strozzi's initiative was consistent with the previous tradition of active construction of a mythical genealogy, pursued by the Este family through the fostering of official historiography. Already the medieval chronicles of Riccobaldo da Ferrara and the likes had traced a lineage that linked the Este family with Trojan refugees who had landed on the shores of Italy.³³ The official accounts of court historians Pellegrino Prisciani (*Historiae Ferrariae* 1488) and Giambattista Pigna (*Historia de i Principi di Este* 1570), gave the Trojan lineage its ultimate historiographical consecration in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Meanwhile, influential court members and poets like Strozzi and his nephew, Matteo Maria Boiardo, gave the construction new flair and status by including it in their encomiastic poems.³⁴ Boiardo, whose knowledge of the *Troiano* is reflected in his own poem,³⁵ has the hero Ruggiero, founder of the Este dynasty, listing in fine detail his ancestors all the way back to Hector in his *Innamoramento di Orlando*:

³¹ Mantovani 2013, 15. On the popularity of *cantari* and romance epics in spite of official culture in Italian Humanism: Everson 2003, 112–13.

³² Modern commented edition of the *Borsias*: Strozzi 1977.

³³ References to Ferrarese mediaeval chronicles in Rajna 1876, 115–16; a general treatment in Chiappini 1970, chap. I: "Le storie di Casa d'Este", 5–14; on Estense official historiography and its peculiarities: Tristano 2012.

³⁴ Boiardo had alluded to the Trojan origins of the Estense family already in his latin poem of 1463–1464, *De laudibus Estensium carmina*, linking it to Aeneas, Romulus, Caesar and Charles Magne: Honnacker 1997.

³⁵ Tissoni Benvenuti 1998 and 1996. The popularity of the *Troiano a stampa* at the Este court in the same span of time is proved by its being copied twice by Leonello's copyist, Biagio Bosoni: Ever-

And to quickly answer your question,
I am Ruggiero; my descent is from Troy.³⁶

When Ariosto set out to ‘continue’ the task of Boiardo, he was able to take for granted that his readers knew Boiardo’s Trojan concoction: all he had to do was complete the Estense family tree from Ruggiero down to the present rulers Alfonso and Hippolytus. This he promptly did in the third canto of the *Furioso*, where the whole genealogy culminates in a celebration of Ariosto’s patron, the “divine cardinal” Hyppolitus.

The noble blood derived from ancient Troy,
Mingling in thee its two most glorious streams,
Shall be the ornament, and flower and joy
Of every lineage on which Phoebus beams,
Where genial stars lend warmth, or cold annoy,
Where Indus, Tagus, Nile, or Danube gleams;
And in thy progeny and long drawn line
Shall marquises, counts, dukes and Caesars shine.³⁷

Since its first appearance, the *Furioso*’s third canto has attracted much criticism for its inflated rhetoric and its unabashed eulogizing of Hippolytus. However, to be fair to Ariosto and to fully understand his panegyric of Hippolytus, we need to look at another passage of the *Furioso*. In Canto 35, the paladin Astolfo ends up in the realm of the Moon, where he meets St. John the Evangelist. Being an author himself, St. John proceeds to enlighten Astolfo on how all authors from all ages bow to necessity and praise their masters to heaven, no matter what their actual merits. Significantly, as an illustration of this courtly practice, St. John refers to Troy-related examples, claiming that in order to know the truth, readers should refute and reverse even the most familiar trivia about that famous war:

Aeneas not so pious, nor of arm
So strong Achilles, Hector not so bold,
Was, as ‘tis famed; and mid the nameless swarm,
Thousands and thousands higher rank might hold:
But gift of palace and of plenteous farm,

son 2003, 39. Furthermore, inventories of the Este libraries register the presence of the Dictys and Dares chronicles (Everson 2003, 40–41).

³⁶ “E, per sadisfar tosto a tua richiesta, /Rugier sono io; da Troia è la mia gesta.” (Boiardo, *Innamoramento de Orlando* III.5, 37).

³⁷ Ariosto 1963, III.17, 47: L’antiquo sangue che venne da Troia, | per li duo miglior rivi in te commisto, | produrrà l’ornamento, il fior, la gioia | d’ogni lignaggio ch’abbi il sol mai visto | tra l’Indo e ‘l Tago e ‘l Nilo e la Danoia, | tra quanto è ‘n mezzo Antartico e Calisto. | Ne la progenie tua con sommi onori | saran marchesi, duci e imperatori.

Bestowed by heirs of them, whose deeds they told,
 Have moved the poet with his honoured hand
 To place them upon Glory's highest stand
 [...]
 Homer a conqueror Agamemnon shows,
 And makes the Trojans seem of coward vein,
 And from the suitors, faithful to her vows,
 Penelope a thousand wrongs sustain:
 Yet – would'st thus I the secret should expose? –
 By contraries throughout the tale explain:
 That from the Trojan bands the Grecian ran;
 And deem Penelope a courtesan.³⁸

Challenging and reversing the notion of the Trojan heroes' worth was a claim that was bound to strike a chord and possibly raise a smile for the Ferrarese audience of the time, long accustomed to hearing poets and historians from the court rant about the Trojan descent of the Este family. And, in truth, the legend of the Trojan origins of Italian rulers was headed for two more centuries of historiographical relevance, even in Ferrara, but Ariosto's disruptive irony certainly gave a fatal blow to any pretense to historical reality that the Estense Trojan descent might have had. Thus, for instance, Torquato Tasso, when facing the same genealogical task in his *Gerusalemme Liberata*, was careful to quickly gloss over the Trojan ancestors.³⁹

Planting Trojan genealogies within romance epics was not the only way the Trojan matter was put to use in the Italian Renaissance. The fictional additions and expansions brought on the Dictys-Dares core by Benoît de Sainte-Maure and Boccaccio also found new adherents. Thus a whole line of "Iliads without Homer" can be retraced between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Italy: that is, works of self-evident fiction, completely indifferent to Homer, playing on the borders of what still at the time circulated as *the* shared historical truth on the Trojan matter, that is, Dictys' and Dares' accounts.

What is most striking is that in Italy all of these Trojan romance epics developed at an unexpectedly late stage: well into the Renaissance, the earliest being Angelo Leonico's poem of 1553. This was at a time when Homer's *Iliad* had made its comeback in

³⁸ Ariosto 1828, XXXV. 25–27: "Non sì pietoso Enea, né forte Achille | fu, come è fama, né sì fiero
 Ettorre; | e ne son stati e mille e mille e mille | che lor si puon con verità anteporre: | ma i donati
 palazzi e le gran ville | dai descendentì lor gli han fatto porre | in questi senza fin sublimi onori
 da l'onorate man degli scrittori. [...] | Omero Agamennòn vittorioso, | e fe' i Troian parer vili et inertì;
 e che Penelopea fida al suo sposo | dai Prochi mille oltraggi avea sofferti. | E se tu vuoi che 'l ver
 non ti sia ascoso, | tutta al contrario l'istoria converti: | che i Greci rotti, e che Troia vittrice, | e che
 Penelopea fu meretrice."

³⁹ *Gerusalemme Liberata* XVII, 66–67.

Europe and could be read in Greek, in Latin, and in the vernacular. What was it then that kept authors from referring directly to the Homeric narrative instead of relentlessly drawing from the stale Dictys-Dares source? Two centuries of Humanism had not quite yet succeeded in filling the gap that the disappearance of Greek and the competition by the much more accessible and ‘reliable’ combined forces of Dictys and Dares had dug into Homer’s fortunes. To rephrase Petrarch’s famous words, it wasn’t Homer who was mute to his audience anymore, as much as the audience that had remained deaf to him.⁴⁰

In fact, in the Italian Renaissance Dictys and Dares were still very much listened to, highly regarded as historians and widely printed and read as such. To cite but one of the many possible instances of this success, it fell to Dictys and Dares to inaugurate one of the most successful editorial enterprises of the sixteenth century, that *Collana Historica* by Giolito de’ Ferrari which has since then become byword for “book series” (“*collana*”) in Italian.⁴¹

In early and not so early printings of Homer, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were often preceded by the text of Dares and/or Dictys so as to give the reader the complete picture, the ‘real’ picture, as it were, of Troy: both the historical truth and the fictional poetry Homer had supposedly derived from it many centuries later.⁴² In short, as Italy proceeded from the Middle Ages into the Renaissance, Dictys and Dares suffered no decline in their reputation as historians of the Trojan War; all the while, the slow and difficult circulation of Homer’s *Iliad* never posed a serious threat to their primacy.

⁴⁰ I have discussed this aspect in Prosperi 2013, chap. 3.

⁴¹ This is the title for the *Collana*’s first volume: *Ditte candiotto e Darete frigio della guerra Troiana, tradotti per Thomaso Porcacchi da Castiglione Arretino: Il quale v’ha aggiunto l’ordine che s’ha da tener nella Concatenation dell’historie, et le Vite di tutti quelli historici antichi Greci, de’ quali è formata la sua Collana. Et questo, secondo l’ordine da lui posto, è il primo Anello d’essa Collana historica*. In Vinegia, appresso Gabriel Giolito Di Ferrari, 1570. The initiative of the *Collana historica* was due to the Aretine author Tomaso Porcacchi; on the publishing partnership between Giolito and Porcacchi: Nuovo & Coppens 2005, 460; on the originality of the *Collana* as editorial product: Favaliere 2012.

⁴² Sometimes, indeed, the name of one of the two forgers preceded Homer’s on the frontispiece, as in the Bâle print of 1541: *Daretis Phrygii poetarum et Historicorum omnium primi, de bello Troiano, in quo ipse militavit, Libri (quibus multis seculis caruimus) sex, à Cornelio Nepote, Latino carmine Heroico donati, et Crispo Sallustio dedicati, nunc primum in lucem aediti. Item, Pindari Thebani Homericae Iliados Epitome, suavissimis numeris exarata. Ad haec, Homeri Poetarum Principis Ilias, quatenus à Nicolao Valla, & V. Obsopoeo carmine reddita*. Basileae mense Martio 1541. At times, Homer had to share the title of “pre-eminent writer on the Trojan War” with the questionable duo, as in the Bâle print of 1573: *Belli Troiani scriptores praecipui, Dictys Cretensis, Dares Phrygius et Homerus, Omnes iam pridem latio iure donati, nunc vero a mendis expurgati, et in unum volumen digesti*. Basileae, Per Petrum Pernam 1573.

To go back now to the *Filostrato* and its poetic legacy, its most direct Italian descendant,⁴³ or perhaps imitator, can be identified in one semi-obscure poem of 1535: Angelo Leonico's *L'amore di Trolio, et Griseida, ove si tratta in buona parte la guerra di Troia*.⁴⁴ It is a poem in ten cantos that openly draws its subject and many stanzas⁴⁵ from Boccaccio's poem but nevertheless switches mid-way from the well-known plot of love and betrayal between Cressida, Troilus, and Diomedes to a complicated romance epic fashioned not so much on the *Orlando Furioso* as on the anonymous *Troiano*.

If we look at the *Troiano*'s narrative outline, we shall recognize many elements present in Leonico's poem. Among others, we can list the weaving of one of Ovid's *Heroides* into the main narrative (Oenone in the *Troiano*, Hero and Leander in Leonico's poem), the representation of Achilles as the treacherous and cowardly murderer of Hector. More importantly, Leonico takes from the *Troiano* its main *raison d'être*, albeit in peculiar fashion: the linking of the Trojan War with the foundation of a ruling dynasty in Italy. Trojan history had already served the dynastic ambitions of European rulers for a number of centuries, starting with Augustus and his claims to Aeneadic descent. In the Middle Ages and Early Modern period, the dynastic link to this or that Trojan refugee was again claimed by rulers great and small all across Europe.⁴⁶ Just as the *Troiano*'s author had done, Leonico brazenly bends his source material to praise the Genoese ruling family, the Fregoso; as he states in the proem:

I sing of Trolio the excellent worth
 The fierce desire, the betrayed faithfulness
 And the wavering love of Griseida,
 quick to accommodate others' desires
 [...]
 And I also sing of Janus, who was the first
 Founder of Genoa, and of his
 illustrious, dignified offspring, that I revere
 as much as any other shone upon by the Sun.⁴⁷

⁴³ For the European influence of the *Filostrato*, namely in Chaucer, Shakespeare, Dryden: Boitani 1989.

⁴⁴ Leonico, 1535 *L'amore di Trolio, et Griseida, ove si tratta in buona parte la guerra di Troia*. Di Angelo Leonico. In Venetia, Per Pavolo Gerardo MDLIII. On Leonico: Cosentino 2005.

⁴⁵ See the old but only study on Leonico's poem: Marletta 1911, 15–16.

⁴⁶ For a complete outline of the Trojan legend in France, for instance: Jung 1996.

⁴⁷ Angelo Leonico, *L'amore di Trolio, et Griseida*, Canto I, 1–2, c. 11: Canto di Trolio, il grande alto valore, | il focoso desio, la falsa fede, | E di Griseida l'instabile amore, | Presta a voltare ad altrui voglia il piede, | [...] | *E Giano canto insieme*, che fù il primo | Di Genoa fondatore, e la sua prole | Illustre, e degna, e per me la sublimo | Quanto altra stirpe oggi sia sotto il Sole.

This abrupt change of subject is handled by Leonico with a good deal of humor. Thus we find in the poem a veritable mash-up of scenes, with, for instance, the Trojan heroes suddenly transported to the shores of Italy to help the Genoese (bravely assisted so far by none other than the Italic hero Turnus!) against the Spanish king Alonso.⁴⁸ Leonico comments on his poem's unexpected turn of events, making it clear that it was never his intention to challenge Homer, nor to measure up against him. Instead, he says, he was careful to choose an episode left out from the *Iliad*:

I shall say this as a way of apology,
That the poem written by Homer
Has nothing to do with this book of mine.
No meaning or word that he says
Is even remotely related with my feeble Muse.
I pick up where others have dropped
The story, and with ingenuity and artistry
Write down the neglected facts.⁴⁹

After the victory over Alonso, Trolio rushes back to Troy, in time to be treacherously killed by Cressida.⁵⁰ The poem has a double ending: in Troy Pandar dispatches Cressida; in Genoa the legitimate king kills the Spanish champion in a duel that is openly reminiscent both of Aeneas killing Turnus and of its most recent Renaissance reimagining: Ruggiero killing Rodomonte in the *Orlando Furioso*.

Leonico's poem has been forgotten; after all, even its author confessed to its flaws.⁵¹ Nonetheless, a whole century later, two new Trojan poems cropped up in Italy: Scipione Errico's *Della Guerra Troiana* (Messina 1640)⁵²; and Barbera Tigliamochi's *L'Ascanio errante* (Firenze 1640).⁵³ Different in many respects, both of these works, just

⁴⁸ *L'amore di Trolio, et Griseida*, Canto VII, c. 4or.

⁴⁹ *L'amore di Trolio e Griseida*, Canto VII 1-5, c. 35r: Ben dirò questo per mia picciola scusa, | Che l'opera da Omero già discritta | Non è con questo mio libero inclusa, | Né senso, né parola ch'ello ditta, | Tien parentella con mia picciola musa; | Io piglio quel, dove altri derelitta | Hanno l'istoria, e con ingegno, et arte, | I fatti occulti vò scrivendo in carte.

⁵⁰ Of her many literary incarnations, Leonico's Cressida is certainly the most morally despicable: a slave to her passion for Diomedes, she seduces a naive physician and thus obtains the poison to kill Troilus, in canto IX.

⁵¹ In the *Letter to the Readers*, Leonico explains that he had to hastily print the poem lest it was commercialized by others in incorrect form (*L'amore di Trolio e Griseida*, c.57r).

⁵² Errico 1640. On Errico: Contarino 1993. Circumstances of the poem are discussed in the Introduction to Errico 2004, Leone 2007. The poem was accused of excessive eroticism and in 1661 Errico published it in revised form with the new title *L'Iliade overo l'Achille innamorato* (in Roma, per Francesco Moneta).

⁵³ Barbera degli Albizi Tigliamochi, *Ascanio errante Poema della Barbera Tigliamochi degl'Albizi Gentildonna Fiorentina. Alla serenissima Vittoria della Rovere Principessa d'Urbino, e Granduchessa di*

like Leonico's, weave the Trojan matter into a setting that is for all intents and purposes typical of the Renaissance *poema cavalleresco*; thus we have the classical heroes in Arthurian disguise. We find Achilles, Troilus and Aeneas pining away for love, pursuing fantastic quests, fighting sorcerers, and even joining this or that Italian army in defense of the "ancestors" of the poet's patrons.

It must not be assumed that choosing the Trojan matter as subject implied a sort of voluntary refusal of a "higher" more successful genre of poetry on the part of those who embraced it. On the contrary, Scipione Errico deliberately chose to sing the loves of Achilles as the subject of what he thought of as his most ambitious work, one that in his hopes was going to compete with Giambattista Marino's *Adone*, the most celebrated poem of its day.⁵⁴ Artistic results were however a different question.

To conclude, while the historicity of the Trojan narratives of Dictys and Dares remained unchallenged, between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the Trojan matter in Italy became the province of amateur (like Tigliamochi) or ambitious but inept (like Leonico and Errico) poets, thus condemning it to artistic irrelevance. It remains to be seen, however, if this was just a casual outcome or the inevitable result of the Italians' stubborn refusal to engage directly with Homer's *Iliad*.

Toscana. In *Fiorenza nella Stamperia de' Landini MDCXXXX*. Indications on the very little known Tigliamochi and her poem in Cox 2008, *ad voc.*

⁵⁴ Witness to the hopes Errico set on his poem are his letters. See, for instance, his letter to Angelico Aprosio of 1630, in which he declares his poem "*cosa nuova, e mai più pensata nella nostra età*" (Aprosio 1673, 90.)

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Chaucer's Criseyde and Shakespeare's Cressida

Transformations in the reception history of the Troy story

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THIS ESSAY EXAMINES the medieval and early modern reception of the story of Troy in the person of one of its characters and in the work of the two great English writers of the period, Chaucer and Shakespeare. It does not attempt a continuous history of Criseyde as a literary character, but inevitably some outline of context is necessary.¹ Criseyde does not appear, or only shadowily, in the earlier history of Troy: all of her literary importance derives from Chaucer and his immediate predecessors, Benoît de Sainte-Maure and Boccaccio, and all her importance in the story derives from her attachment to Troilus. Chaucer's is a poem of romantic love, set against the background of the Trojan War, which is prominent only in the framing matter of prologue and conclusion and in the episode of the exchange of prisoners, which sends Criseyde unhappily back to her father, Calchas, in the Greek camp, in exchange for Antenor. Most of the great actors in the drama appear somewhere in Chaucer's poem—Achilles, Hector, Ulysses, Paris, Helen—but only in domestic and political roles, for instance the parliament that debates the exchange of prisoners. The exception is Diomedes, who takes up with Criseyde after her return to her father. The love of Troilus and Criseyde, along with the enthusiastic ministrations of Pandarus (Criseyde's uncle), their go-between, is so much the concentration of interest that the story of Troy becomes a backdrop, important only in supplying the tragic dénouement of the love story. The medieval development of the history of Arthur and his wars into a general background for the adventures of his knights and their ladies is strikingly similar.²

Chaucer's poem marks the beginning of an era in English writing in which the individualized portrayal of character becomes the indispensable identifying feature of

¹ A concise outline of the history of Criseyde up to Chaucer is given by Barney 1987 in Chaucer 1987, 471–72, 1020–22. See also Mieszkowski 1971; Benson 1980. For the later period, from Chaucer on, see Rollins 1917.

² Chaucer rarely mentions Arthur and, strikingly, makes no mention in *Troilus* of the historical role played by the Troy story in medieval Britain, in which Troy was the doomed city from which Brutus, the eponymous founder of Britain, sailed to London, "the New Troy". The legend was often alluded to in contemporary alliterative poetry. See Tatlock 1950.

what is thought to constitute literature. Patterson describes it, with a characteristic historicist inflexion, as a “socially undetermined subjectivity [...] that stands apart from all forms of class-consciousness”, and is “crucial to Chaucer’s subsequent dominance of our literary tradition [...] as the great champion of the individual”. Speaking specifically of *Troilus and Criseyde*, he describes its main concern as “the nature of the subjectivity that at once produces and is produced by the historical world,” and that “is described with a particularity and intensity that frustrate appropriation by any essentializing interpretive scheme, whether medieval or modern”.³ Chaucer’s success in giving to the Troy story an interpretation which is wholly alien to its original purposes gives his poem a place in reception history oddly comparable to Shakespeare’s *Troilus and Cressida*. For Shakespeare likewise ignores or rejects the traditional significance of the story and makes of it a cynical mockery of heroic values, as well as of the romantic values with which Chaucer had invested it. His Cressida, a slighter figure than Chaucer’s, is yet memorable, in her own way, as a brilliant puppet.

Some remarks on the early history of Criseyde are necessary. She began as a mistake, in confusion. Chryseis and Briseis were two Trojan girls taken captive by Achilles. Briseis was to be important in the story because Agamemnon forced Achilles to give her up to him as his prerogative, and the epic sulk, or wrath, of Achilles that followed is Homer’s theme. The girls’ names were carried down through the late classical epitomes of the *Iliad* by Dictys Cretensis and Dares Phrygius. They do not tell of the love of Troilus for Briseis, but they do provide formal portraits of the two of them, along with Diomedes, and it may have been this juxtaposition that prompted Benoît de Sainte-Maure, in his romance reworking of the story in his *Roman de Troie* (c. 1160), to invent a completely new love story. Since he had already told the story of Homer’s two girls under the different names, Ypodamia and Astynome, that had been assigned to them by post-Homeric commentators, he now had two spare girls’ names, and he chose Briseide as the one to allocate to Troilus, since in this new era of romance every hero had to have a beloved. She now becomes briefly instrumental in the plot as the daughter of the Trojan soothsayer Calchas, who has defected to the Greeks. Calchas begs the Greeks to restore his daughter to him (though she is perfectly happy in Troy) by exchanging her for Antenor, a Trojan captive in the Greek camp. This exchange is her first appearance in the poem, and the first mention of Troilus’s love for her. Benoît tells of their bitter grief at the news of the exchange, of their parting, and of the fairly swift decline of Briseide into the arms of Diomedes once she is in the Greek camp. Troilus

³ Patterson 1991, 246, 138.

tries to discharge his grief by pursuing and killing Diomedes on the battlefield, but he is unsuccessful, and is soon killed by Achilles.

Benoît is the creative genius of the medieval Troy story, the one who transported it into a different world and prepared the way for Chaucer. The whole poem was translated into Latin prose in the *Historia destructionis Troiae* by Guido delle Colonne (1287), which expanded the French poem with a mass of supporting detail concerning the events leading up to the siege, the ten years of battles around Troy's walls, and the fortunes of the Greek heroes on their way home, since now the whole story was to be told, not just Homer's episode. His encyclopaedic manner was much to the taste of the later Middle Ages and of course the translation into Latin made it available to every educated reader. Boccaccio, in his *Filostrato* (1338), in Italian verse, went back to Benoît, extracted the story of the lovers from the general matter of Troy, making it the main subject, with the siege as mere background. He also balanced the account of the departure from Troy of Criseida (the new name was his idea) with a warm and detailed description of the passionate beginnings of the love-affair, and he gave to the whole an urbane and sophisticated modern coloring such as would appeal to fashionable Neapolitan society.

It was Boccaccio's *Filostrato* that was the inspiration for Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* (1381–1386). It must have been a revelation to Chaucer when he first read it in the 1370s. It was a revelation of what a "modern" story of love might be—unrestrained in its depiction of sexual love, with a frank acceptance of woman's sensuality and desires, and of the role of the go-between, Pandarus (whom Boccaccio invented). It was thoroughly contemporary in tone, with a Troy of familiar streets, houses, palaces, gardens—few sounds of battle—and devoid of moralizing and attitudinizing. Whatever adjustments Chaucer made to the tone of Boccaccio's poem, it remained a story of the urgencies, miseries, glories, pains and absurdities of sexual passion. Yet his changes are considerable. He added to the seriousness of the story by renewed attention to the epic background, and by constant allusion to the destinal patterning of events. He gave the poem a greater literary elevation by adding elaborate proems to four of the five books, by amplifying the narrative through all the devices of high-style rhetoric, and by the embedding in the narrative of songs, complaints, epistles and soliloquys in the manner of the fashionable French *dits*. He also modified the sensuality of Boccaccio's poem, giving Criseyde a role much more like that of the revered courtly mistress of French tradition. She has a "palace", her own household of women, and is in every way a suitable lover for a Trojan prince. Where Boccaccio's Criseida falls in eagerly with Pandarus's plan that she should take a lover, Criseyde is infinitely and genuinely hesitant, hard to win, more worth winning. The elevation of Criseyde's social status is Chaucer's single most important innovation. All the characters give expression to the refined and ide-

alized sentiments of the ritual of “courtly love” as formalized in the *Roman de la Rose*. This is what C.S. Lewis was referring to when he described Chaucer as having “medievalized” the *Filostrato*.⁴

Chaucer follows the general outline of Boccaccio’s narrative quite closely in Book I, but in Books II and III he introduces much new material of his own. These are the books in which Chaucer develops with an infinite and loving care that characterization of Criseyde which most readers recognize to be the irresistible core of the poem’s attraction. From the start of the long scene with Pandarus, II. 78–595, almost all of which is dialogue and soliloquy, she takes over the poem. It is here that Chaucer first responds to and engages fully with the barely imaginable possibility of a fully realized female subjectivity, a woman with self-awareness, with the elusive and enigmatic self-communing, the moral and emotional self-consciousness, that it was customary to deny to the sex. Chaucer called his poem “The Book of Troilus” in his Retraction at the end of the *Canterbury Tales*, assenting to the conventional privileging of the male lover; it came to be called “Troilus and Criseyde” in the fifteenth century because of the perceived weighting of their roles; but it should really be called “The Book of Criseyde”.

Chaucer creates a character who cannot be easily condemned nor uncritically admired.⁵ He recognizes both the real vulnerability of her situation in Troy and her shrewd and practical management of it. She is always a “woman in society”, as David Aers explains. Chaucer’s achievement, he says, is to explore in her

the ways in which individual action, consciousness and sexuality, the most intimate areas of being, are fundamentally related to the specific social and ideological structures within which an individual becomes an identifiable human being [...] The treatment of Criseyde shows concern for the social group for which he wrote—the expectations they cherished, the manipulative pressures they had to accept and use, the contradictory self-images and realities with which they were presented.⁶

On a larger canvas yet, that of fortune and freewill, Chaucer portrays Criseyde as neither a prisoner nor a victim of circumstance. In a whole series of reported self-ques-

⁴ Lewis 1932, 56. See also the important series of essays by James I. Wimsatt: Wimsatt 1976, 1977, 1979 and 1985. The Italian *Filostrato* is printed parallel to Chaucer’s poem in Chaucer 1984. There is a translation in Boccaccio 1989, 19–102.

⁵ Nevertheless, she has often been the object of sentimental attachment, especially among older male critics, as well as anguished exhortation. How *could* she? is the cry. Donaldson, following his usual strategy, displaces the responsibility for sentimentalising Criseyde on to the narrator, who is ‘head over heels in love with her’ (1985, 80).

⁶ Aers 1980, 118. This argument is extended in a more specifically feminist direction, with emphasis on the role of women in patriarchal society as an exchange commodity, by Dinshaw 1989, 28–64. This is currently the dominant reading of Criseyde.

tionings and self-communings, Chaucer uncovers for us the process by which the will, seeking its own ends but unwilling to accept the charge of responsibility for the actions that bring about those ends, disguises the process of decision-making in a multitude of external and irresistible causes. She thus confines her will to a sphere of small and manageable operations from which least discomfort and inconvenience will arise. She tries to live a small life and survive. But Chaucer recognises too the larger and more generous operation of her freewill, when she responds to her lover's conventional claim to have "caught" her and his demand that she "yield":

Ne hadde I er now, my swete herte deere,
Ben yolde, ywis, I were now nought here!⁷

As has been well said, this is the speech that we most like Criseyde for having made, not because it shows her to be a really nice person, but because it confirms, in the most particular way, the belief that human beings are free to choose, even if the freedom confirmed is, as here, the freedom to choose one's own constraints.⁸

In a series of passages, Chaucer shows us the action of Criseyde's will and consciousness as she navigates the straits and shoals of a woman's life alone in Troy. When Pandarus, having introduced the subject of Troilus's love for her, urges her to return love for love, she is thrown into an agony of fear:

Criseyde, which that wel neigh starf for feere,
So as she was the ferfulleste wight
That myghte be, and herd eek with hire ere,
And saugh the sorwful ernest of the knyght,
And in his preier ek saugh noon unryght,
And for the harm that myghte ek fallen moore,
She gan to rewe and dredde hire wonder soore[...] (II. 449–55)

The verbs *herde*, *saugh*, *saugh*, seem to parallel *starf*, and to indicate gathering equanimity as she reflects on what Pandarus has said. But the last two lines are not clearly related, and mark a fresh wave of apprehension as she thinks for real that Pandarus will kill himself and Troilus will die if she fails to act. The subject "Criseyde" remains hanging in the air, without clear predicate, and the whole process of thought is blurred. Blurring is in fact the effect Chaucer (and Criseyde) are after, as one reason slides into

⁷ *Troilus and Criseyde*, III. 1210–11. Quotation of Chaucer's poem throughout this essay is from Chaucer 1987.

⁸ Lambert, M. 1979, 119. The contrast with Shakespeare's *Cressida*, at the corresponding point in her career, needs no remark. For development of the idea of 'free choice' in Criseyde, upon which some of the analyses that follow draw, see Pearsall 1987.

another, and *and*, the most non-committal of conjunctions, makes the links between them almost imperceptible, like a series of conveniently placed ice floes that melt away as soon as Criseyde has skipped over them to the conclusion she wants. The succession of *and*'s also creates a kind of tumbling earnestness, which could be seen as the narrator trying to defend Criseyde from accusations of over-compliance (as he does elsewhere) but which can be better seen as a syntactical mimicry of Criseyde's process of "deciding" what to do. To say that the narrator is not telling the truth, or that Criseyde is pretending, would be to coarsen the texture of the writing. What is being enacted is the process by which Criseyde exercises her will, makes a choice, without acknowledging to herself that she is doing anything of the sort, and meanwhile preserving the image of herself as the more or less passive instrument of greater forces. What she "decides" to do is—to wait and see what happens: "It nedeth me ful sleightly for to pleie[...]" (II. 462). There is a touchingly naïve quality about her plan to be very cunning. Another moment when we are privileged to trespass upon Criseyde's inner consciousness is when she sees Troilus riding back from the day's fighting, receiving the plaudits of the crowd with a becoming modesty:

Criseyda gan al his chere asprien,
 And leet it so softe in hire herte synke,
 That to hireself she seyde, "Who yaf me drynke?"
 For of hire owen thought she wex al reed[...]" (II. 649–52)

The blush is a sign from Chaucer that what he tells us of what she says to herself is what he intends us to understand her really to have thought. Her recognition of the imperceptible inclination of desire, which is subsequently surrounded with a great deal of casting and rolling up and down, rational analysis, calculation of possible danger, fussy intrusion from the narrator, is done with exquisite intimacy. But the principal impression we have is of how Criseyde, obeying some "prime directive" of damage limitation, instinctively distances herself as a sentient center of will from the activity of desire, associating its motion with the administering of a love-potion and granting to herself therefore the same freedom from responsibility as Tristan and Isolde. She presents what is happening to her as something over which she has no control and therefore something for which she has no responsibility.

Pandarus knows exactly the conspiracies into which Criseyde wishes to enter with herself in order to escape pain. When she asks him if Troilus is going to the dinner party he has organized, Pandarus knows perfectly well (his plan is specifically that Troilus *will* be there and will meet Criseyde properly for the first time) that the answer must be, "Absolutely not!"

Nought list myn auctour fully to declare
 What that she thoughte whan he seyde so,
 That Troilus was out of towne yfare,
 As if he seyde therof soth or no;
 But that, withowten await, with hym to go,
 She graunted hym, sith he hire that bisoughte,
 And, as his nece, obeyed as hire oughte. (III. 575–81)

It is as certain as anything can be that if Pandarus had answered yes to her question Criseyde would have said no the invitation. Otherwise she would have been entering upon a commitment, and been seen to accept it, where she would have borne responsibility for that act of will, that choice and decision. The narrator evades responsibility in the same way when he refers to his *auctour*. Criseyde can now leave everything to Pandarus, as indeed she “ought” to, given that he is her uncle and quasi-guardian. *Oughte* is a beautiful illustration of the summoning of moral obligation as a means of explaining to the self the unavoidableness of a choice freely entered into. We commonly use words like “decide” to talk about the process: Chaucer makes us realize what an inadequate word that is to describe the complexities of relationship between the will and what is perceived or constructed as limiting circumstance.

The tumble of *and*'s that was described earlier as a syntactical mimicry of Criseyde's thought process makes another appearance when she has to decide whether to admit Troilus to her bed so that he can apologise for his bad behaviour (in believing that she had taken a lover, Horaste, another of Pandarus's cunning fandangoes).

This accident so pitous was to here,
 And ek so like a sooth at prime face,
 And Troilus hire knyght to hir so deere,
 His prive comyng, and the siker place,
 That though that she did hym as thanne a grace,
 Considered alle thynges as they stoode,
 No wonder is, syn she did al for goode. (III. 918–24)

It is a ridiculous situation, really, but not laughable. The *and*'s thrown together in such sincere disorder give us a glimpse of the tangle of emotion and calculation that constitute the supposedly rational process of choosing and deciding. The blurry syntax is a kind of bridge thrown over objections that a scrupulous sense of personal integrity (or even an instinct for survival) might postulate.

Another such passage, in the scene with the lovers in bed vowing faithful love before their final parting (a stark contrast with Shakespeare's treatment of the episode), introduces a significant change:

And treweliche, as writen wel I fynde,
 That al this thyng was seyde of good entente,
 And that hire herte trewe was and kynde
 Towardes hym, and spak right as she mente,
 And that she starf for wo neigh whan she wente,
 And was in purpos evere to be trewe:
 Thus writen they that of hire werkes knewe.⁹

The subtle influence of Criseyde's characteristically unstructured syntax to persuade the sympathetic reader of her "sincerity" has now to be enclosed within invocations of authority, as if it were tainted, at last, with suspicion.

The last passage I shall discuss reveals Criseyde on the verge of "deciding" to stay in the Greek camp under Diomedes's protection. It follows a lovely astronomical arabesque, with a suggestive allegory of the movement of Criseyde's mind in its allusion to the passing of the day when she promised to return (IV. 1590–96).¹⁰ The stanza following has an unusually ambiguous syntactical construction, with the series of weighty considerations recommending betrayal attached to Criseyde through the participle "Retornnyng" but also oddly detached because of the incomplete syntactical connection:

Retornnyng in hire soule ay up and down
 The wordes of this sodeyn Diomede,
 His grete estat, and perel of the town,
 And that she was allone and hadde nede
 Of frendes help; and thus bygan to brede
 The cause whi, the sothe for to telle,
 That she took fully purpos for to dwelle. (V. 1023–29)

David Aers gives a subtle and perceptive analysis of the syntax of this stanza:

The first line begins with the word "Retornnyng", a present participle which helps convey the circular processes within the lonely woman's mind, a continuous present that seems to dissolve any possibility of an initiating, controlling act of self-determination. The next three-and-a-half lines mime the fragmented and undirected way imposed circumstances are mediated in her receptive consciousness, beautifully showing us how she experiences events in this stage of her overwhelming isolation and unhappiness. Chaucer then leaves the original present participle ("Retornnyng") in a strikingly incomplete form for he does not give it the subject noun or pronoun (Criseyde or she) we expect. Instead he begins a new sentence, "and thus bygan." This

⁹ IV. 1415–21. There is a valuable analysis of this stanza in Gordon 1970, 104.

¹⁰ 'And Cynthea hire char-hors over-raughte/To whirle out of the Leoun, if she myghte' (V. 1018–19). Criseyde had promised, in IV. 1590–96, to return before the moon passed out of Leo.

also enacts the elimination of anything we could readily define as volitional powers at this stage of her life.¹¹

Her unspoken words begin to have an independent existence outside Criseyde's consciousness, as if they were imperatives that gave her no choice—the impression that Criseyde's inspection of the processes of decision-making, as I have suggested, is frequently designed to produce on the reader.

John Lydgate, Chaucer's immediate disciple, characteristically went back to Guido for his enormously long translation, the *Troy Book* (1412–1420), further amplified in every way and larded out with allusions to Chaucer's poem. Despite the presence of Chaucer's poem before him, Lydgate nevertheless falls into the conventional medieval anti-feminist postures, with many sarcastic jibes at Criseyde's expense. It is as if Chaucer had never written about Criseyde. There continued to be many retellings of the story from various sources and points of view, though Criseyde was never again the beneficiary of the sympathetic understanding that Chaucer had given her. In fact, she began to be portrayed more explicitly as a whore. Robert Henryson, in his *Testament of Cresseid* (c. 1490), portrays her as a "comoun" woman of the court (that is, promiscuous) and as subsequently afflicted with leprosy, which was often associated with venereal disease. The leprosy is Henryson's invention, but it is not wanton misogyny: his aim is to reduce her to nothing, to such misery that she is made to confess to herself her disloyalty to Troilus and so, in some measure, to be "redeemed", or at least to achieve some self-recognition. Henryson's *Testament* appears without attribution in the Collected Works of Chaucer that Shakespeare used, probably that of William Thynne (1532). It is presented as a sequel immediately following *Troilus and Criseyde*, so that it is the more likely that Shakespeare knew it. If so, he used it hardly at all, except to absorb the horror of Henryson's poem into the preoccupation with venereal disease that contaminates Pandarus and the last scenes of the play of *Troilus and Cressida* (1602). Otherwise, his sources are the straightforward prose of Caxton's translation from French, based on Guido, called the *Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye* (1474), and from time to time Lydgate's *Troy-Book*. That Shakespeare made so little use of Chaucer's poem is a view not widely held, but the evidence is always ambiguous. Critics often seem to expect that one great poet will make use of another—but poets' resistance to such open acknowledgment of indebtedness is well-known.

Troilus and Cressida is an extraordinary play, unique in the Shakespeare canon. It is uneasily placed in the First Folio between the Histories and the Tragedies, but it is in fact a comedy. The tone is brilliant, brittle, sophisticated and cynical, as the great

¹¹ Acers 1980, 136.

epic story of antiquity is parodied to the point of absurdity, especially in the portraits of Agamemnon and Ajax. Chaucer's great love-story is likewise reduced to a hectic one-night stand. There is no character with whom we feel the ground of reality beneath our feet, or with whom we share an emotional bond such as we usually expect in the theatre. Ulysses comes off best, but only as a cool and shrewd political calculator. The difference of tone from other plays is so marked that the hypothesis that the play was first designed for performance before an audience at the Inns of Court is very appealing.¹² Precocious young lawyers might be expected to enjoy a clever send-up of the Homeric story, some fairly cynical reflections on the hot passions of youth, and also some sophisticated and skeptical political philosophizing.

The extraordinariness of *Troilus and Cressida* is most evident in the distance it creates between the play and the audience. Playwrights enjoy momentary distancing of this kind, most obviously in plays-within-plays, a familiar dramatic device, whether in *Hamlet* or *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. More startling are those moments when the actors strip themselves of their masks, and are suddenly revealed as mere actors:

How many ages hence
Shall this our lofty scene be acted over,
In states unborn, and accents yet unknown!¹³

So says Cassius in another of Shakespeare's plays, as the conspirators stoop to bathe their hands in Caesar's blood. The hard-won suspension of disbelief is shattered, and we are left face to face with the empty reality of a mirror. It is not "alienation", as such techniques came later to be called, since no political or other purpose is served. Sometimes the illusion-shattering allusion is to the more specific reality of Shakespeare's own theater. In *Antony and Cleopatra*, the heroine imagines how she will be presented in some future Roman triumph:

ANTONY
Shall be brought drunken forth, and I shall see
Some squeaking Cleopatra boy my greatness
I' the posture of a whore.¹⁴

A similar charade is acted out in *Troilus and Cressida* itself, where the principals look to a future time when their names will become a byword for truth or falseness. So Troilus:

¹² The theory was first put forward in Alexander 1928–1929.

¹³ *Julius and Caesar*, III. i. 111–13.

¹⁴ *Antony and Cleopatra*, V. ii. 217–20. Some have seen in Prospero's prophecy of the dissolution of all things, including 'the great globe itself' (*The Tempest*, IV. i. 153) a similar allusion to Shakespeare's theatre.

True swains in love shall, in the world to come,
Approve their truth by Troilus.¹⁵

Cressida prophesies that, if she is false, those in after ages, “to stick the heart of falsehood”, will say “As false as Cressid”.¹⁶ And Pandarus chimes in too. Interestingly, Chaucer's Troilus has a self-alienating moment when, thinking of the torments to which love has put him, he says to himself, “Men myght a book make of it, like a storie”.¹⁷ But this is private musing, entirely in character, and has no important “alienating” effect.

Other ways of drawing attention to the “staginess” of the play and the “actorliness” of the actors enhance the sense of artificiality, the distraction from the reality supposed by the audience, fondly, to be represented. *Troilus and Cressida* is rich in such moments. One of the funniest scenes in the play is when Ulysses reports to Agamemnon and his council the play-acting with which Patroclus keeps Achilles amused, describing in particular Agamemnon himself,

like a strutting player, whose conceit
Lies in his hamstring and doth think it rich
To hear the wooden dialogue and sound
'Twixt his stretch'd footing and the scaffoldage. (I. iii. 153–56)

Here we have an actor playing a part and at the same time playing the part of another actor playing the part of another actor present, who is compared to “a strutting player”. The description of Nestor, acted by Patroclus “with a palsy fumbling on his gorget” (I. iii. 174) as he dresses for a night-alarm, is cruelly exact. Ulysses also orchestrates another bit of play-acting at the expense of Ajax. He is described as he would appear if he were proud (II. ii. 235–39), so that he spends a good part of the play-acting being not proud:

Why should a man be proud? How doth pride grow? I know not what pride is.
(II. iii. 153–54)

He would be more serious, given the play's preoccupation with identity, if we said that he is trying to find out who he is: “Ajax goes up and down the field asking for himself” (III. iii. 243–44). But Thersites is speaking, and the joke (Ajax = “a jakes”) is pretty obvious. It is Thersites too who predicts, “You shall see the pageant of Ajax” (III. iii. 270–71), that is, the putting on of a big show.

The confusion of appearance and reality, or rather the bewildered recognition that they are one, is closely related to the themes of value and honor as they are discussed

¹⁵ *Troilus and Cressida*, III. ii. 171–72. The edition used throughout is the Arden edition, edited by Palmer 1982.

¹⁶ *Troilus and Cressida*, III. ii. 193–94.

¹⁷ Chaucer, *Troilus and Criseyde*, V. 585.

in the play. In the Trojan council scene, Hector argues, on the basis of reason, that Helen should be given back to the Greeks: "She is not worth what she doth cost the keeping" (II. ii. 52). Troilus immediately retorts with a question: "What's ought but as 'tis valued?" (II.ii.53), initiating a debate in which he makes a powerful speech to the effect that the way we choose to act imposes value. The installation of desire as the ruling principle of behavior, and the denial of essentiality to all else, is of a piece with the relativity of judgment that we see in the play as a whole. The discussion of honor, specifically of the honor which Achilles has won but will lose if he does not act to preserve it, has the same emphasis on relativity, on appearances. Achilles recognizes this as it applies in all cases but his own: he is secure (III. iii. 87–90). But Ulysses shows him to be wrong. With honor, as with all possessions, a man

Cannot make boast to have that which he hath,
Nor feels not what he owes, but by reflection. (III. iii. 98–99)

He argues further

That no man is the lord of anything,
Though in and of him there be much consisting,
Till he communicates his parts to others. (III. iii. 115–17)

One feels that if Ulysses had found it politic to argue the opposite case he would have done so just as convincingly. But Achilles needs to be roused.

In turning now to Cressida, it seems likely that she will supply the prize example of play-acting and of reality confounded in appearance. But in fact Cressida is different from everyone else: she is play-acting for real. Her whole life and livelihood depends on her success as an actress. She is clear to herself about her object in life: to secure a powerful male protector, preferably young and personable, to secure her precarious life in this place of death. Understanding Cressida's position in the society portrayed in the play, and the pressures to which she is subject, ought to discourage the indulgence that critics often allow themselves in berating her for her shallow "sluttishness".¹⁸

From her first meeting with Troilus, she vamps him with irresistible charm, reticence, seductiveness, simple honest "sincerity". "O Cressid", says Troilus, "how often have I wished me thus". "Wished, my lord?" says Cressid, "The gods grant—O my lord—" (III. ii. 61–62). Troilus is delighted by her quick understanding and her "pretty abruption", which we, unlike Troilus, understand to be not a form of behavior but a

¹⁸ See Donaldson 1985, 86. Donaldson has a wickedly long note (149–51) in which he lines up the critics *pro* and *contra*.

form of self-representation, and they continue with a teasing arm's-length dialogue, Cressid inviting Troilus to "walk in"—for a second time—when he threatens to go on vapouring for too long. Now she makes a new move, and the passage to "sincerity" is marked by the sudden switch to verse, as if that offered some kind of guarantee of honesty and truth:

Boldness comes to me now and brings me heart:
Prince Troilus, I have lov'd you night and day
For many weary months. (III. ii. 112–14)

This is news to us, but not to Troilus, it seems:

Why was my Cressid then so hard to win? (III. ii. 115)

The "winning" has taken all of seventy-six lines, but Criseyde is prepared to go along with a version of the Petrarchan conceit of the aloof lady:

Hard to seem won; but I was won, my lord,
With the first glance that ever—Pardon me:
If I confess much you will play the tyrant[...] (III. ii. 116–18)

She reproaches herself with being so frank, and begs him, "Stop my mouth", and when Troilus obliges tells him that she didn't purpose to beg a kiss. We can only echo Pandarus's "Pretty, I'faith", as the voice of a connoisseur of seduction. Cressid grows more daring when she speaks of her "self" as divided—"I have a kind of self resides with you" (III. ii. 146), and cries, "Where is my wit? I know not what I speak" (III. ii. 149). Her pretense of confusion speaks to Troilus of sincerity, or may be a moment of self-knowledge—insofar as her "self" consists in being totally invested in professional success (or is it a moment when she genuinely feels she is losing control of events in giving way to love?). She continues with a similarly ambiguous confession of what she might have been about—

Perchance, my lord, I show more craft than love,
And fell so roundly to a large confession
To angle for your thoughts. (III. ii. 151–53)

Troilus is hooked, line and sinker, and the scene ends with the trio's prophecies and the heroically empty exchange of simile-comparisons. The scene as a whole offers counter-movements of sympathy, charm and admiration, but, all in all, it is a consummate demonstration of seduction, all the more effective because Cressida's behavior, her

“performance” of her self, is as much designed to convince herself of her sincerity and loving nature as to convince Troilus.

Cressida’s play-acting, it is clear, is for the benefit of Troilus—and for anyone of similar rank, as we shall find. With Pandarus she is herself, as in the wonderful early scene where the heroes of Troy pass solemnly by, on the way to battle, like a theatrical parade, one by one ridiculed by Cressida, as Pandarus tries to whet her appetite for Troilus. She knows exactly what he is up to, and thwarts and deflates him delightfully with wickedly witty comments and rejoinders. “What sneaking fellow comes yonder?” she asks, pretending it is Troilus that she refers to, though she has already sized up Troilus as a likely lover. Later scenes with Pandarus show her equally at her ease, at one point allowing him to encourage her as if he were grooming an inexperienced beginner and preparing her for her part in a play (III. ii. 39–50), while at another point she herself behaves like an actress planning how to play a part—

I’ll go in and weep—
Tear my bright hair, and scratch my praised cheeks,
Crack my clear voice with sobs, and break my heart
With sounding “Troilus”. (IV. ii. 108–112)

“Do, do,” says Pandarus, approvingly. With Pandarus, too, she exploits double entendre with more freedom than when Troilus is present.

The cold morning scene has Cressida blaming herself for being too quickly won (potentially a bad business miscalculation), but more immediately thinking ahead to the annoyance of Pandarus’s teasing. She is soon berating her uncle, and re-seducing Troilus in a more explicitly sexual (but never crude) allusive language than before:

My lord, come you again into my chamber. —
You smile and mock me, as if I meant naughtily. (IV. ii. 37–38)

Arnold Stein notes perceptively that Cressida “has a trick [...] of slyly provoking indecent jokes at which she can be embarrassed”, her purpose being to whet the lover’s appetite with a pretense of *naïveté*.¹⁹ Troilus merely laughs (“Ha, ha!”), rather coarsely: soon he will receive news of the impending exchange, and be newly tormented by the fear that Cressida will not be faithful to him. Her rhetoric grows shrill, but, arrived at the Greek camp, she responds with lively spirit to the soldiers’ raillery. Ulysses unhesitatingly identifies her as a “daughter of the game”, but he is wrong: she is not a prostitute. She needs now to find a male protector in the Greek camp, her priorities

¹⁹ Stein 1969, 149. Cited in Donaldson 1985, 94.

being those of the mistresses of later ages, or “kept women”, or *femmes du demi-monde* (Swann's Odette is a not-too-distant cousin). In her last scene, with Diomedes (Troilus looking on), her familiar wiles are again displayed, with the addition as the scene closes of a fetching regret for Troilus:

Troilus, farewell! One eye yet looks on thee,
But with my heart the other eye doth see. (V. ii. 106–7)

She sees herself clearly and divides herself up neatly in order to cope with any internal conflict. Troilus is left to grapple with the impossibility of what has happened, and how Cressida can be two persons, against all reason: “This is, and is not, Cressid” (V. ii. 145). The default stratagems available to Cressida are unimaginable to him—to divide himself in two so that he can understand how she can be so double—and all he can do is vow vengeance on Diomedes. Troilus throughout is the extreme opposite of Cressida: she plans, negotiates, compromises, where in him desire spears ineluctably to its fulfillment, and to death.

There are many moments in the play, and in its depiction of Cressida, when one feels compelled to call into play the comparison with Shakespeare: the role of Pandarus, a dirty old man barely recognizable behind the smooth courtly platitudes of Chaucer's character; the terrific speed of the movement in and out of love, of the whole action, in Shakespeare, beside the luxurious leisureliness of Chaucer; the dramatic differentiation of characters' speech in Shakespeare beside the degrees of rhetorical elaborateness within a prevailing style in Chaucer; the brisk organising spirit of Cressida compared with Criseyde's infinitely prolonged self-communings. The more one compares the treatment of these two characters, the more they draw apart: if Shakespeare knew Chaucer's poem, which is probable, he did all he could to get it out of his head. Yet, paradoxically, in respect of reception history, their approach is strikingly similar. Neither is interested in the epic significance of the Troy story, Chaucer relegating it to a backdrop, and Shakespeare subjecting it to withering scorn. With Criseyde, Chaucer draws inward to the springs of action, analyzing and revealing motive at levels of understanding that lie deep in the conscious and unconscious mind. Shakespeare, by contrast, draws outward from her story, isolating it in a world that has only a play-acting existence, a stage set in a void of meaning.

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Tristis Orestes?

The ecstasy of reception, revenge, and redemption in the Early
Modern English Orestes plays

MAURA GILES-WATSON



ENGLISH RENAISSANCE HUMANISTS valorized the emulation of Greek and Roman literary and dramatic texts and the tropes, themes, and genres those works contain. Well into the seventeenth century the belief that the English had descended from heroic Trojan Diaspora and that Britain was named for its purported founder—Aeneas’ supposed descendant Brutus—still held purchase.¹ As a result, the Matter of Troy was a popular and privileged topos in English historiography. This foundation myth also inspired significant literary and dramatic appropriations and adaptations throughout the Middle Ages, a period from which the Renaissance sought to distinguish itself not least in the central place it gave to ancient authors in the New Learning and in its professed efforts to restore the putative authenticity of classical texts by rescuing them from supposed medieval neglect or misreading. Yet, despite the Renaissance humanists’ claims to classical revival and fidelity, as readers and re-interpreters they were heavily indebted not only to the ancient texts they sought to emulate, but also to intervening medieval interpretations and to immediate social and political conditions. This creates a particularly complex hermeneutic situation.

As Charles Martindale points out, readings of classical texts are inevitably “enmeshed in previous readings by previous reading communities”, and such readings at-

* With profound gratitude for his kindness and generosity, I dedicate this essay to Paul Olson. Morgan Moore, Derek Pearsall, Abraham Stoll, and the anonymous readers for *Studia Graeca Upsalensia* offered very helpful critiques of this essay, for which I thank them.

¹ The ultimate transformation in this conception of British history occurred during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, with early doubts expressed by John Rastell in his English history, *The Pastyme of People* (1529). John Milton’s work reflects the transition as well; in *Epitaphium Damonis* (1639), Milton announces his intention to write a history of Britain all the way back to the Trojan founders (ll. 162–68), but in his *History of Britain* (1670) he rejects “Brutus, and the whole Trojan pretence” as an “invention” (Book 1, preface). Benson 1980 analyzes the medieval English treatments of Troy and the Trojan-British foundation myth; Ferguson 1993 surveys the Renaissance historiographers (100–5).

test to “much wider agreements and disagreements than merely here and now”.² Yet historicist fidelity criticism regards the remains and results of such accumulations as effective violations—misreadings and misinterpretations—of classical works. An antidote to this originalist doctrine may be located in Walter Benjamin’s concept of the *Jetztzeit*—a standstill moment of ‘now-time’ in which creativity and revolutionary potential are revealed or released by art.³ *Jetztzeit* is a more capacious concept than the temporally constricted but certainly related notion of a here-and-now. Where textual reception is concerned, the *Jetztzeit* constitutes both an interruption of and an intervention in hermeneutic operations. Benjamin’s concept is thus particularly useful for illuminating the reception transaction’s receiving end, where conditions of a new *Jetztzeit* interact with prior interpretations and contemporary representational exigencies to create a new aesthetic force that adapts the products and representations of the earlier culture—or, in this case, accretion of cultures. The early modern English *Jetztzeit* may thus be seen to combine prior readings with the Renaissance humanist cult of emulation to provoke political and religious reworkings not only of the Orestes myth, which is the concern of this essay, but also of tragedy itself, a crucial generic vector of classical transmission to early modern England.⁴

Two dramatic representations of the Orestes myth survive from this period: John Pikerlyng’s Elizabethan drama *Horestes* (1567), which is more musical comedy than tragedy, and Thomas Goffe’s Jacobean play *The Tragedy of Orestes* (1613), an erudite academic drama from Oxford. Sadly, a third Orestes play from the period has not survived, namely, *Orestes’ Furies*, which was written by Thomas Dekker and Henry Chettle in 1599. We know of the existence of this third play solely because Philip Henslowe—owner of London’s Rose Theatre—made a journal entry indicating a payment to Dekker “in earnest” for a play entitled *Orestes’ Furies*.⁵ Intriguingly, between 1596 and 1599 Henslowe paid Dekker and Chettle for five plays on Trojan War themes.⁶ The texts of all of these Rose Theatre plays are now lost, but their titles, which also appear in Henslowe’s Diary, include *Troy’s Revenge*, *Troilus and Cressida*, and *Agamemnon*, with the latter most likely based upon John Studley’s 1566 English translation of Seneca’s *Agamemnon*. The very fact that Henslowe commissioned these plays highlights the great public interest in dramatic treatments of Trojan War topics among late sixteenth- and

² Martindale 1993, 5.

³ Benjamin 1968, 261; for analysis of Benjamin’s concept of time, see Lindroos 2006.

⁴ For the early modern English use of tragedy to foreground and critique political power and its exercise see Dollimore’s *Radical Tragedy* (1984, 3rd ed. 2004).

⁵ Henslowe 2001, 119.

⁶ Henslowe 2001, 73–120.

early seventeenth-century London theatre audiences. Henslowe was above all a businessman, and as such he would not have paid for the writing of plays that might flop with the play-going public. He thus commissioned Dekker and Chettle's *Orestes' Furies* for performance at the Rose by the Admiral's Men—the main rival to the Lord Chamberlain's Men, Shakespeare's acting troupe that performed at the then newly-built Globe Theatre.⁷

The performance settings for all three of these known English Renaissance Orestes plays differed significantly, and these differences shaped the dramatic representations of this myth in ways that would satisfy the expectations of audiences, whether they were popular, academic, or aristocratic, or indeed some mixture of two or more of these categories. While the Admiral's Men would have performed the lost *Orestes' Furies* on the public commercial stage, John Pikerlyng's *Horestes* was a household play performed privately by a troupe of seven players for an aristocratic audience in the great hall of a noble house or the court of Elizabeth I. By further contrast, Goffe's *Tragedy of Orestes* was an academic play written by an Oxford student and performed by Oxford students for an audience made up of fellow students and faculty, all of whom would have been educated males. The audiences in the public theatres and the household great halls, however, were mixed with regard to both gender and social class. The settings and spectators for these plays varied in each situation, but the performers had one crucial feature in common: they were all male, including those playing female parts. Thus in each case the roles of Clytemnestra, Electra, and Hermione would have been played by males, as were of course Orestes and Pylades. Arguably, all-male theatrical performance in the academic setting constitutes yet another Renaissance humanist fidelity gesture emulative of putative classical practice.⁸

The peculiar representations of Orestes in the two surviving English Renaissance plays—those by Pikerlyng and Goffe—combine seemingly incompatible representational drives. Pikerlyng's *Horestes* merges humour and the desire to entertain with the redemption motif of late medieval morality play and early modern English drama's then incipient preoccupation with the complexities of revenge. Goffe's *Tragedy of Orestes* is preoccupied with revenge as well, but the vital friendship of Pylades and Orestes is the location of the joy and redemption in this play. These syncretic *Jetztzeit* impulses further combine humor and the desire to entertain with the tragic drive behind antiquity's

⁷ In 1599 alone, new productions at the newly built Globe Theatre included Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, *As You Like It*, and *Henry V*. In the London theatre world of the day competition for spectators was fierce.

⁸ For a discussion of the all-male London stage in relation to wider Renaissance humanist practices, see Giles-Watson 2014.

theatrical treatments of this myth. The resulting bricolage might at first be thought to indicate a radical misunderstanding—even a corruption—of the myth’s variants and its generic models. However, the adaptations and appropriations that characterize the reception process must be allowed to elbow out purists’ anxieties about misprision. Linda Hutcheon theorizes adaptation “from the perspective of its *process of reception* [as] a form of intertextuality: we experience adaptations (*as adaptations*) as palimpsests through our memory of other works that resonate through repetition with variation.”⁹ Reception is thus contingent upon *resonance*, a readerly and spectatorial phenomenon that is bound by time, place, and culture. For this reason, texts that fail to resonate typically have limited transmission beyond their original contexts, but texts that resonate will be subject to revisions of their meanings again and again across both time and space. As Wai Chi Dimock points out, resonance links textual “endurance not to the persistent integrity of a text but to its persistent unraveling, not to a text’s timeless strength but to [...] its *timeful* unwieldiness.”¹⁰ Dimock’s “long view [...] allows texts to be seen as objects that do a lot of traveling [...] [and] as they travel, they run into [...] new ways of imputing meaning” in new places and cultures and at new times.¹¹

Pikeryng’s and Goffe’s *Orestes* plays respond energetically to Dimock’s phenomenology of the traveling text that is unraveled on its journeys. The process of reweaving these unraveled texts is one of adaptation. Effectively, these *Orestes* versions are adaptations that enact complete repurposings of key elements of the myth. Although there are numerous variants and the plays differ in their details and approaches, the basic story is consistent: *Orestes*’ mother Clytemnestra and her lover Aegisthus murder *Orestes*’ father, Agamemnon, in an act of revenge for Agamemnon’s sacrifice of their daughter Iphigenia at the beginning of the Trojan War; *Orestes* avenges his father’s killing by killing his mother, who then curses her son just before she dies; the Furies, whose task it is to avenge kin-murder, then implement Clytemnestra’s curse by driving *Orestes* mad. The English Renaissance’s surviving dramatic treatments of this myth combine the tragic and comic in ways that are both narratively and generically disruptive, so the early modern *Orestes* cannot be rendered a stock figure of revenge—nor even of its more positive counterweight, justice. Under the auspices of emulation, the *Orestes* myth allows the English playwrights to explore the problem of revenge along with other contemporary controversies, such as the nature of ideal male friendship and the way to redemption—the latter a particularly grave concern of the English Reformation.

⁹ Hutcheon 2013, 8.

¹⁰ Dimock 1997, 1061.

¹¹ Dimock 1997, 1061.

In his critique of the sequential and teleological conceptions of history, Walter Benjamin asserts that “reflection shows us that our image of happiness is thoroughly colored by the time to which the course of our own existence has assigned us”, and this image “is indissolubly bound up with the image of redemption [*Erlösung*]”.¹² According to Benjamin, “history is the subject of a structure whose site is not homogenous empty time, but time filled with the presence of the now [*Jetztzeit*]”.¹³ In this enriched conception of time, redemption is not a process or a goal to be achieved by progress. Rather, redemption occurs as rupture in defiance of the ideology of linear time. This sort of redemption opens up the opportunity for the recovery and repurposing of “elements that have been excluded from [a] continuous idea of history”,¹⁴ thus putting them to use yet again but in a newly adapted form. The Renaissance reception of the Orestes myth, and indeed of Trojan War itself, constitutes just such a narrative of redemption.¹⁵

Yet another aspect of Orestes’ early modern appeal was that he represented resistance to female tyranny. Aversion to female influence and power—whether maternal or sexual—was a constituent part of the early modern understanding of ideal male friendship. In this schema, women were regarded as inferiors and as potentially disruptive intruders to be “transcended or renounced in order to purify masculinity and establish bonds among men”.¹⁶ In Pikeryng’s *History of Horestes*, Horestes’ resistance to Clytemnestra is certainly gendered in this way, but it also resonates politically with contemporary English anxieties about female rulers and rulership. Mid-sixteenth-century England saw three female monarchs in quick succession—the Protestant ‘Nine Day’s Queen’ Jane Grey (1553), the Catholic Mary I (1553–1558), and the Protestant Elizabeth I (1558–1603)—and Mary Queen of Scots was an important political actor as well. Early in 1567, the same year as the printing of Pikeryng’s *Horestes*, Mary Queen of Scots was implicated in the murder of her own spouse, Lord Darnley. A month after Darnley’s violent death, she married the suspected assassin, the Earl of Bothwell, who had just been tried for and acquitted of the crime. Amidst this scandal and with her support among the nobles waning, Mary abdicated in favor of her infant son who then became James VI of Scotland (later James I of England as well).

¹² Benjamin 1968, 254.

¹³ Benjamin 1968, 261.

¹⁴ Lindroos 2006, 120.

¹⁵ Note that in his groundbreaking reception study, *Redeeming the Text: Latin Poetry and the Hermeneutics of Reception* (1993), Martindale works with the concept of textual redemption in a non-Benjaminian sense.

¹⁶ Breitenberg 1996, 137.

Serving as both as Speaker of the House of Commons and as Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal in Elizabeth's government, Pikeryng participated in the political controversies surrounding these events. Indeed, despite his high positions Pikeryng's political reputation depends almost entirely upon his activities as an opponent of Mary Queen of Scots, whose abdication and imprisonment he welcomed with enthusiasm. For Pikeryng, Orestes' story seems to have offered the opportunity for oblique critique of the purported sexual and ethical corruption of this powerful woman while simultaneously inviting examination of the conditions under which a ruler might be justly deposed,¹⁷ or even killed.

Despite the seriousness of this political question, *Horestes* is not a tragic hero and *Horestes* is not a tragedy. Instead, this play evinces what Marie Axton describes as "a sunny cheerfulness about political solutions that is positively Brechtian."¹⁸ Brecht is an intriguing comparison, but Pikeryng's *Horestes* is more medieval than mid-century modern—or even early modern. Certainly, the plot is only very loosely classical. As Kovacs notes, "to most modern readers, a tragedy with a happy ending is a contradiction in terms";¹⁹ however, classical and early modern playwrights and audiences were not so fastidious. Although Pikeryng plagiarizes Seneca's *Phoenissae* in places, and his play's happy ending resembles that of Euripides' *Orestes*, Pikeryng retells the Orestes story almost exactly as it appears in Book 5 of John Lydgate's *Troye Book* (c. 1420), although Pikeryng omits Lydgate's gory amplification in which Orestes chops his mother up into little pieces and scatters her remains to be eaten by dogs.²⁰ In both Lydgate and Pikeryng, Orestes' revenge is divinely sanctioned because he is deemed to be the rightful heir to the throne his mother and her lover usurped by murdering his father. Each of these writers demonstrates sympathy for Orestes and a desire to rehabilitate him as the archetypal revenger by justifying his actions. Pikeryng's *Horestes*, however, introduces comic tropes to the Orestes tradition in order to achieve this. In so doing, the playwright revises Lydgate's vividly disturbing narrative version of the story and repurposes the hero's exploits in the form of a comic moral interlude play in which Orestes

¹⁷ Mimura 2000, 168–69; for a contrary view, see Knapp 1973, 212–14.

¹⁸ Axton 1982, 24.

¹⁹ Kovacs 1999.146.

²⁰ Merritt 1972, 255–66. Lydgate may have picked up this detail from John Gower, whose Orestes justifies the matricide as Clytemnestra's punishment for the unnatural act of murdering her spouse: "Unkindely for thou hast wroght, / Unkindeliche it schal be boght," he tells her (*Confessio Amantis* 3.2065–66). Gower's Orestes also fantasizes tearing off his mother's breasts and tossing them in the road. Merritt notes too that contemporary reprintings of both Lydgate's *Troye Book* (1555 [1420]) and Caxton's *Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye* (1553 [c. 1475]) were available to Pikeryng.

embodies both justice and resistance to injustice, albeit in the form of revenge, and experiences redemption.

The moral interlude is a late-medieval English dramatic genre in which the hero—in this case Horestes—falls under the influence of an allegorical ‘Vice’ figure. In *Horestes*, the Vice is a personification named ‘Revenge’. The interlude genre’s Vice character is typically a comic mischief-maker who leads the interlude’s hero astray; the hero then gets into serious moral trouble and undergoes a crisis that is followed by his redemption and reintegration into society by the end of the play. The Vice figure is so critical to the genre, and to this play in particular, that he is included in the long title of the play in its 1567 printing: “A NEWE Enterlude of Vice Conteyninge the Historye of Horestes with the cruell revengment of his Fathers death, upon his one naturall Mother” (see figure 1, below). In this way, the playbook announces the play’s genre before even declaring its subject matter.

In *Horestes*, however, the Vice/Revenge is less a mischief-maker than he is a perverse and comic representation of Orestes’ obsessed state of mind.²¹ Indeed, once Horestes’ desire for revenge is satisfied, he banishes the Vice/Revenge who has by then become superfluous. In this way, the very revenge that had provoked the Furies to drive Orestes mad has cured Horestes instead. Perhaps surprisingly, most moral interlude plays contain a good deal of comedy, particularly during the Vice’s corruption of the hero; Pikeryng’s *Horestes* is no exception. From a generic perspective, it is noteworthy that by 1567 Pikeryng’s decision to stage a late-medieval version of the Orestes story in a late-medieval dramatic mode is a deliberate archaism. Yet Pikeryng did innovate in one important way: *Horestes* is the first English revenge drama, a genre that grows in popularity over the next fifty years as it becomes increasingly tragic. In addition to examples like Kyd’s *Spanish Tragedy* and Middleton’s *Revenger’s Tragedy*, numerous early modern English tragic plays—including *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Richard III*, *King Lear*—embed revenge plots. Arguably, *Horestes* launched them one and all.

But Pikeryng’s *Horestes* is not a tragedy. In fact, it does not even qualify as tragic-comedy. It is instead a fully comic reinterpretation of the myth. Where *Horestes* is at its most comic, or most Brechtian, is in Pikeryng’s use of gleeful songs to interrupt the play’s action and comment upon it in a choric manner. There is, however, nothing like a Greek chorus in the *Horestes*; instead, individual dramatic characters sing the songs, including a humorously creepy duet in which the ill-fated Clytemnestra and Aegisthus declare their eternal love for one another. The Vice/Revenge sings two songs.

²¹ By contrast, Staines 2009 performs a Foucauldian reading of the Vice/Revenge as the “embodiment of the king’s power to punish criminals” (72).

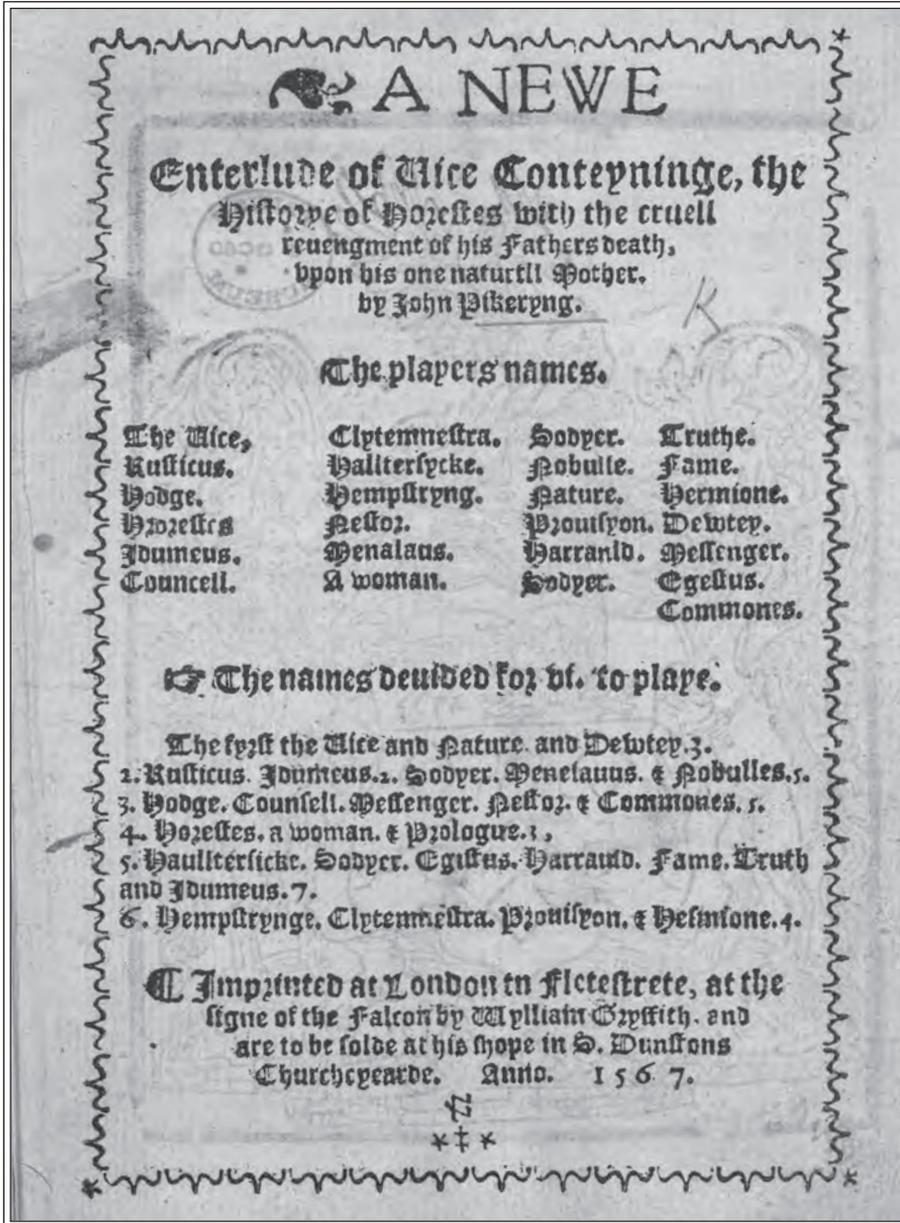


FIGURE 1: *The History of Horestes*, title page. Printed in London by William Griffith, 1567.

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In one, ‘Stand back you Jacks’ he brags about his own wickedness and admonishes the audience to “be ruled by me”²² in order to avoid “cousin cutpurse” and the inevitable gallows. In the Vice’s other song he sings a cheerful tune announcing that he must find a new master now that Clytemnestra has been murdered:

A newe master, a newe!
no lenger I maye
A byde by this day
Horestes now doth rew

A new master a newe!
And was it not yll
His mother to kylle?
I pray you, how saye you? (849–56)

In typical interlude performance practice, the Vice draws the great-hall audience into the moral dilemma by addressing the spectators in his song and asking their opinion of the action: ‘I pray you, how say you?’ Although a large part of the Vice’s corruption of the hero involved his persuading a reluctant Horestes that Clytemnestra had to be killed, at the end of the play it is unclear who actually committed the murder. Amidst this uncertainty the Vice/Revenge is blamed and banished. The play then ends happily with the wedding of Hermione and Horestes and the Commons’ affirmation of Horestes as their rightful new king. Within the morality play genre, the hero’s redemption is now complete. The Vice returns briefly as the play concludes, by which point he is a beggar with no status in the new social and political order. A sententious extradramatic epilogue, also of Pikeryng’s invention, follows. Epilogues of this sort were conventional in household interlude plays, particularly those that were written for performance at the Henrician court.²³ In this epilogue, the allegorical figures Dewty and Truth express the hope that England will always be free of such “stryfe and dysssention [...] / Cankred mallyse, pryde and debate” (1172–73) as the audience has just witnessed. They then offer praise for Queen Elizabeth and prayers for the Lord Mayor and a number of government officials, some or all of whom were in all likelihood sitting in the audience for the play’s first performance. By such spectatorial participation, Horestes’ actions were sanctioned by the state.

²² Intriguingly, in Shakespeare’s *Othello*, Iago—a figure with strong connections to the dramatic Vice tradition—uses this very phrase to lead Rodrigo further astray (*Othello* 2.1.263).

²³ Notable examples of such epilogues include two c1525 court plays from the Thomas More circle, *Witty and Witless* by John Heywood and *Gentylnes and Nobylte* by John Heywood and John Rastell. *Witty and Witless* contains instructions for a portion of the epilogue to be omitted “in the kyngs absens” (f. 119 *sd*).

Thomas Goffe's *Tragedy of Orestes* was also sanctioned, albeit by the academic authorities acting in the service of the state. Unlike most neoclassical Oxford plays from the early seventeenth century, Goffe's *Orestes* is in vernacular English rather than Neo-Latin; nevertheless, this play may be counted among the "quasi-curricular" Oxford plays of the time that "reflected the humanist conception of the practical value that drama was thought to have in the training of young men for public life, either in the church or the state."²⁴ Goffe was a student at Oxford himself, and he wrote several plays for performance by and edification of his fellow students. His *Tragedy of Orestes* is a dense academic play loaded with often irrelevant classical references that seem designed to do little more than show off the playwright's erudition.

Goffe's play departs from Pikeryng's by focusing on different elements of the myth and by announcing itself generically as a tragedy. Unsurprisingly for a humanist academic drama, Goffe's play depends more directly than Pikeryng's upon classical models for both the Orestes story and dramatic form, for which Horace's *Ars poetica* served as the authoritative work. Indeed, it was Horace far more than Aristotle who had provided much of the basis for Sir Philip Sidney's influential *Apology for Poetry* (1579). Academic playwrights like Goffe were especially careful to emulate classical models and tropes as they understood them, and in so doing they tended to treat Horace's work as a set of regulations to be obeyed to the letter. Already by the late sixteenth century, for instance, academic playwrights adhered more faithfully to the Horatian five-act structure than did household and public theatre playwrights, and academic playwrights had almost entirely abandoned the miraculous *deus ex machina* endings to which Horace had so strongly objected.

But Horace's relationship to early modern drama becomes problematic in the area of characterization, or personation. In his discussion of dramatic personation in the *Ars Poetica*, Horace takes a conservative approach and asserts that playwrights must either adhere to tradition or be constrained by the necessity of consistency:

Either follow tradition or invent something self consistent. If perhaps when you write you bring back to the stage the honoring of Achilles, let him be impatient, prone to anger, stubborn, fierce, let him deny that laws apply to him, let him ever claim the right to arms.²⁵

Horace then hammers away with additional examples and instructions:

²⁴ Elliott 1995, 180.

²⁵ aut famam sequere aut sibi convenientia finge.
 scriptor honoratum si forte reponis Achillem
 impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis, acer,
 iura neget sibi nata, nihil non arroget armis. (3.119–22)

Let Medea be fierce and resolute, I no tearful, Ixion treacherous, Io a wanderer, Orestes mourning [*tristis Orestes*].²⁶ If it is an unfamiliar theme you bring to the stage, and if you venture to shape a new character, let him continue to the end just as he came forth at the start, and be unchanging in himself.²⁷

By 1613 adherence to the notion of maintaining static character consistency was impossible and the best writers of both public and academic plays appear to have ignored these precepts. They and their audiences had wearied of the predictable biblical figures and type characters of earlier English drama—characters like the Vice himself. Already for twenty years, tragic playwrights had been breaking these rules by inventing and representing dramatic characters who were fully human beings capable of being transformed by experiences that involved love, loss, betrayal, jealousy, or some other sort of psychological pain. This more dynamic mode of personation stands in direct contravention to Horace's static prescription.

Goffe indeed tosses aside Horace's specific dictum that Orestes must be consistently mournful. Goffe's Orestes is enraged before and during the killing of his mother, and is then ecstatic afterwards: "Now am I satisfied, now hath revenge perfection!" he exclaims (4.8.145). He is also delighted to think that his "brave" revenge will later become the subject of plays redounding to his glory (5.1.56–61). Orestes' greatest joy, however, is his close friendship with Pylades. Taken together, these cheerful elements particularly offend against Sidney, who had complained that most English plays of the time were, as he put it, "neither right tragedies, nor right comedies"; according to Sidney, genre-mixing degraded the drama of the time and resulted in "mongrel tragi-comedy."²⁸ Echoing Horace, Sidney insists that poetry and drama must 'instruct and delight,' then Sidney holds up the works of Chaucer, Spenser, and Sackville as models to be followed. Sackville's work certainly instructs. Along with the Puritan polemicist Thomas Norton, Sackville wrote the *Tragedy of Gorboduc*, which was performed before Elizabeth I in 1561/2. *Gorboduc* is an advice-to-princes play—a cautionary drama loaded with forebodings of the civil strife that will occur should Elizabeth fail to fulfill her responsibility to marry and produce an heir. Sidney singles out *Gorboduc* for praise on both aesthetic and moral grounds:

²⁶ Elizabeth I herself translates Horace's phrase 'tristis Orestes' as 'Orestes mourning' (50).

²⁷ sit Medea ferox invictaque, flebilis Ino,
perfidus Ixion, Io vaga, tristis Orestes.
si quid inexpertum scaenae committis et audes
personam formare novam, servetur ad imum,
qualis ab incepto processerit, et sibi constet. (3.123–27)

²⁸ Sidney 2002, 112.

Our tragedies and comedies (not without cause cried out against), observing rules neither of honest civility nor of skillful poetry, excepting *Gorboduc* (again, I say, of those that I have seen), which notwithstanding as it is full of stately speeches and well-sounding phrases and [...] full of notable morality, which it doth most delightfully teach, and so obtain the very end of Poesy.²⁹

Following Sidney, the playwright and critic Thomas Heywood weighs in on the moral purpose of tragedy while he defends theatre against its Puritan detractors:

if we present a tragedy, we include the fatal and abortive ends of such as commit notorious murders, which is aggravated and acted with all the art that may be, to terrify men from the abhorred practices. If we present [...] the lives of Romans, Grecians or others, either the virtues of our countrymen [must be] extolled or their vices reprov'd.³⁰

Thomas Heywood thus perceives the edification of the spectators to be the primary purpose not only of tragedy but also of the repurposing of classical stories by English playwrights.

Goffe's *Orestes* is certainly a tragic representation of revenge and its discontents, but the play's perversely upbeat moments undercut Orestes' tragic heroism and render him rather more the vengeful murderer than the personification of rightful resistance to tyranny. The prolonged and gruesome enactment of Agamemnon's murder now serves to justify Orestes's even more gruesome killing of his mother. Goffe represents Clytemnestra and Aegisthus working together and stabbing away at Agamemnon with comic relish, while the dying king, in an apparent parody of formal academic rhetoric, argues for his life for another fifty lines.

Goffe's connoisseurship of gore certainly reflects the influence of Seneca, whose impact on early modern French and English tragedy has been ably demonstrated.³¹ But such 'mongrel tragi-comedy' is not characteristic of Seneca. This mixed mode is, however, arguably characteristic of Euripides, who was a staple in the classical curriculum by Goffe's Oxford days. As Bernard Knox has noted, "it was Euripides, not Aeschylus or Sophocles, whose tragic muse presided over the rebirth of tragedy in Renaissance Europe".³² All three Greek tragedians wrote plays connected to Orestes, but as Francis Dunn observes, only the Euripidean *Orestes* is tragicomic.³³ What is more, Euripides alone kitted-out Orestes with a psychological complexity that appealed to the early

²⁹ Sidney 2002, 110.

³⁰ In Vickers 1999, 494–95.

³¹ Most recently by Woodbridge 2010.

³² Knox 1985, 339.

³³ See Dunn 1996, especially chapter 10.

modern playwrights' interest in the representation of human consciousness. We see this particularly in Euripides' realization of Orestes' post-matricidal madness, which, although induced by the Furies, is treated more like a creation of Orestes' own mind than a divine plague. In Goffe, Orestes has two brief episodes of mental derangement. The first is brought on by Orestes' Hamlet-like vision of his father's ghost with gaping, gushing wounds. In this condition, Goffe's Agamemnon convinces his son to murder Clytemnestra and tells him exactly how to do it. Orestes then delectates comically as he plans to kill both Clytemnestra and Aegisthus as well as their infant son, whose blood he forces Aegisthus to drink. Agamemnon goads Orestes, telling him to "think on me, and revenge"; after the murders, Goffe's Orestes is disturbed by a guilty conscience only briefly and his mental derangement takes the form of "witches" whom he learnedly calls by the Furies' Greek names (5.4). Pylades then arrives and sings Orestes an enchanting song about the Argonauts; the song restores the hero's sanity, yet he does fail to gain the crown in this play.

Throughout Goffe's play, Orestes finds his greatest pleasure in his friendship with Pylades, and many of the play's ecstatic moments are located within that same-sex relationship.³⁴ If "masculinities are configurations of practice that are accomplished in social action and [that] differ according to gender relations in a particular social setting,"³⁵ then Goffe's configuration of masculinity-in-practice sanctions masculine love and loyalty in a manner that would certainly have resonated meaningfully within the *Jetztzeit* of early seventeenth-century Oxford—a community bound by homosocial academic and performative relations. This community of men was also bound by their having read all of the same classical texts. Even as boys in grammar school,³⁶ Goffe and his fellow students would have read Cicero's *De amicitia* in Latin. John Harington's English translation of the work—*The Booke of Freendship of Marcus Tullie Cicero*—was printed in London in 1550 then reprinted in 1562, which suggests broad public interest in the text. In the Ciceronian view, as the Renaissance received it, genuine male friendship could only thrive where each party to the friendship admired the other's *virtus*—honor and goodness understood in their gendered forms as characteristics of manliness. As an exemplum of male friendship and the virtue of self-sacrifice, Cicero invokes Orestes and Pylades and describes Pylades' actions as they were represented in

³⁴ MacFaul 2007 and Hutson 1994 offer exhaustive analysis of the culture and ideology of male friendship in the Renaissance.

³⁵ Connell & Messerschmidt 2005, 836.

³⁶ The grammar schools of early modern England emphasized the learning of Latin grammar, not English grammar. Students learned their Latin first by the use of primers with selected textual excerpts then through the reading of classical texts.

a play by Cicero's old friend, Marcus Pacuvius. Harington's English translation of *De amicitia* contains a marginal annotation at this point in the text. The note refers to the "tragedy *Amitee of Orestes and Pylades*"³⁷ but Pacuvius' play seems to have followed the plotline of Euripides' *Iphigenia in Tauris*:

the kynge [Thoas], not knowing whether of the two was Orestes, Pylades answered, that he it was, that was Orestes, because he woulde have been put to death for him: and Orestes again, that was so in deede, avowed stiffely, that he it was that was Orestes. The herers that stode aboute, preised it with clapping their handes.³⁸

According to Cicero's report, the spectators' enthusiastic response to Pylades' actions indicated their judgement that Pylades actions were "well dooen" although Cicero goes on to express his doubts that the audience members would have been willing to make such a generous sacrifice themselves.³⁹

The love between of Pylades and Orestes is as fully actualized in Goffe's play as it is in Euripides' treatments of the myth, but Goffe privileges the men's relationship even further by omitting both the wedding of Orestes and Hermione and the engagement of Pylades and Electra. Instead, Goffe couples Pylades and Orestes—albeit in death. In this case, the exclusion of women from the academic performance setting migrates into the drama itself and becomes fully realized through the eroticized performance by the male actors.

At the end of the play, Orestes and Pylades pledge their eternal love and loyalty, then form a suicide pact and run on each other's swords, which are rather obvious phallic substitutes. As this is happening, Pylades declares that they will meet in heaven where "our winged soules shall mount and sit/ More glorious than the Concubines of Jove".

PYLADES

Breath, breath, sweet vapour of two trusty hearts,
And let our breaths ascend to heaven before
To make a roome hard by the frozen pole,
Where that our winged soules shall mount and sit
More glorious than the Concubines of Jove[...]

ORESTES

O graspe me then, our names like Gemini
Shall make new starres for to adorne the skie. (5.7)

³⁷ Cicero 1971, 151.

³⁸ Cicero 1971, 151.

³⁹ Cicero 1971, 151.

Earlier in Goffe's play, Orestes had already hinted at homoeroticism when he informed Pylades of his desire to "fetch young Ganymed from the armes of Jove" (4.2). So, the tragicomedy ends in a double suicide, but the two male friends, or lovers, now find redemption in their mutual apotheosis. Thus, as in Pikeryng's *Horestes*, the "image of redemption"⁴⁰ with which Goffe intervenes in the Orestes tradition also achieves a happy ending, of a sort.

⁴⁰ Benjamin 1968, 254.

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The Trojan origins of Polish tragedy

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OUR STORY BEGINS with a wedding.¹ Not the wedding of Peleus and Thetis, nor that of Menelaus and Helen, nor Helen and Paris. A much more modest one, to be sure, and with consequences not nearly as momentous, though in its time and on its own scale—that of reality—considered a major event nonetheless. It is the wedding of Jan Zamoyski and Krystyna Radziwiłłówna. She came from the most powerful noble family of Lithuania (constitutionally unified with Poland in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth)² and he, in spite of his young age (33) already vice-chancellor of Poland,³ was a rising star in contemporary politics.

The marriage itself proved to be—unfortunately—short-lived: Krystyna died childless two months after their second anniversary. Their wedding, however, turned out to be an event of major importance, though perhaps not necessarily due to the political weight attached to it by contemporaries. The ceremony itself took place on the 29th of December 1577 and was followed by over three weeks of celebrations and festivities. One of these festive days, the 12th of January 1578, saw the production of what was to be the first modern Polish tragedy: the *Dismissal of the Greek Envoys*,⁴ written by

¹ Research for this paper was made possible by a grant from the Polish National Science Centre (N N103 429640).

² After almost two centuries of union based on personal and dynastic ties (beginning with the 1385 marriage of the Polish Queen Jadwiga and the Grand Duke of Lithuania Jagiello, followed by the latter's ascent to the Polish throne and the founding of the Jagiellonian dynasty), the two states were formally joined into one political organism, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, at the Union of Lublin in 1569.

³ Poland was referred to as the Crown and comprised the territories of both present-day Poland and Ukraine; strictly speaking, therefore, Zamoyski was vice-chancellor of the Crown.

⁴ English translations of the *Dismissal of the Greek Envoys* include that of R.E. Merrill (in Noyes, Prall Radin et al. 1928) and M. Mikos (in Mikos 1995); A. Mary's French rendering may be found in Kochanowski 1931; the most reliable Polish editions of the play are that of Sinko (Sinko 1922) and Ulewicz (Ulewicz 1962); the most important treatments of the play available to the Polish-less reader are: Backvis 1951; Miłosz 1983, 68–75; Welsh 1974, 57–78; Pelc 1986, 68–74.

Jan Kochanowski,⁵ by then already an established poet and later to be considered the most eminent one not only in the Polish Renaissance but in the entire pre-Romantic period in Poland. The author himself was not present at the spectacle: he had only sent Zamoyski the text of the play, which arrived no earlier than the 23rd of December, as evident from the date on Kochanowski's letter which accompanied the tragedy.⁶ This left only about three weeks for the actors and the producers to prepare the spectacle; at least the play, with only 605 lines, was not too long. It was most likely staged in the palace of Queen Anna Jagiellonka in Ujazdów, near Warsaw, and therefore was, quite unsurprisingly, honored with the presence of her majesty, along with her husband, King Stephen. Zamoyski, the groom, was obviously keen on investing his wedding with a great deal of political significance, not least since the festivities were taking place on the eve of the General Sejm,⁷ which began on the 20th of January, and in the end resolved to go to war against Ivan the Terrible.

THE STORY AND ITS TRADITIONS

The play takes as its subject an event first recounted in the *Iliad* (3.203–24): the failed embassy of Odysseus and Menelaus to recover Helen before the opening of hostilities. The plot is rather brief and uncomplicated, throwing the reader and the spectator in medias res: the ambassadors, Ulysses (the play, unsurprisingly, uses the Latin form of the name) and Menelaus, have already arrived and the Trojans are preparing for a debate on their demands. In the meantime, Paris attempts to solicit support for his case

⁵ Perhaps some time earlier, as we may judge from Kochanowski's letter to Zamoyski which accompanied the text of the play; Ulewicz (1985, 17) suggests the years 1565–1566 (the letter is translated into English in Miłosz 1983, 68); for a biography of Kochanowski see Welsh 1974, 8–33; Pelc 1986, 21–34.

⁶ Zamoyski's next wedding in 1583 was also honored by Kochanowski with two other poems, as was his sister's in 1580; their friendship may have dated back to the 1550s and (perhaps) times spent together abroad; see Kowalczyk 1984, 264; on Zamoyski as a patron of arts and artists cf. Kowalczyk 1980, 7–40.

⁷ Convoked (since mid-sixteenth century) every other year in Warsaw (even before the city became capital, due to its central geographical location) the General Sejm (Sejm Walny) was the supreme legislative body; its three constituents were the king, the senate and the house of representatives; apart from legislation its prerogatives also encompassed the election of kings, decisions on war and peace, levying of taxes and auditing of magistrates as well as certain judicial powers; along with the ordinary convocations taking place every other year, urgent matters required extraordinary sessions; the elective session (election of king) took place in Kraków; more on the structure and functions of the Great Sejm see Reddaway et al. 1950, 1.429–30; Davies 2005, 1.253–54; cf. also Bardoch et al. 1998, 219–22.

from his fellow citizens, including Antenor,⁸ the model statesman whose sole concern is the well-being of his country, and who also happens to entertain the envoys in his own house. The debate yields predictable results, and in the meantime we are treated to a domestic scene between Helen, full of anxiety and remorse, and her old Nurse,⁹ who attempts to console her with a handful of truisms about human nature. The Greek ambassadors depart, swearing revenge and threatening Troy with destruction. The Trojans, among them Antenor, model statesman that he is, begin preparations for war amid Cassandra's prophecies of their city's impending doom. In the play's conclusion, reports of first clashes are brought on stage along with a captured enemy soldier who gives details of the Greek mustering at Aulis.

This particular episode of the Trojan war did enjoy some popularity throughout antiquity, both in pictorial art and in the literary tradition. In Homer, apart from *Iliad* 3, we find it also mentioned briefly in Book 11 (136–42), whereas Book 7 (344–78) presents a debate in the Trojan assembly about the return of Helen, which, though contemporary with the main timeline of the poem, may actually be a recollection of the deliberation which followed the demands of the Greek ambassadors. The embassy as such was recounted in the cyclic *Cypria* (sixth century BCE), mentioned in Proclus' summary.¹⁰ In the same period, the motif appears on (black figure) vase paintings.¹¹ The fifth century BCE saw the production of Bacchylides' dithyramb,¹² of which only fragments survive, taking the Greek embassy as its main subject. Later on Sophocles dramatized the theme in his lost tragedy *Demanding the Return of Helen* (*Helenes apaitesis*).¹³ A revealing testimony to its dissemination throughout the classical period of Greek culture are also two passing remarks found in Herodotus.¹⁴

In later antiquity we find it mentioned—predictably—in learned collections of myths, such as Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (recounted by Odysseus in the context of his

⁸ Antenor, sometimes considered the protagonist of this play (see below) is, of course, a very traditional figure, already in Homer presented as leading figure in Troy; for more on this character and his traditions see Braccisi 1984; cf. also Danek 2006.

⁹ In which echoes of Ovid's XVII *Heroid* (Helen to Paris) have been seen (e.g. Kallenbach 1883, 7).

¹⁰ *Cypria*, Argumentum PEG I 42.55–57 Bernabé (= Proclus, *Chrestomathia* 152–54 Severyns).

¹¹ The so-called Astarita crater, a late Corinthian vase (around 560 BC) depicting the ambassadors (Odysseus, Menelaus and Talthybius) approached by Theano, Antenor's wife; see Danek 2005, 11–20 for its relationship with Bacchylides 15 (below) and the *Iliad*.

¹² Bacchylides 15 (I dithyramb); see Danek 2005, 10–11; Maehler 2004, 158–59.

¹³ Sophocles F. 176–80a R; on these fragments see Pearson 1917, 1.121–26.

¹⁴ Herodotus 1.3; 2.118 (the latter being part of the Egyptian logos, where it is claimed that Helen never made it to Troy, but was seized from Paris for safe-keeping in Egypt).

quarrel with Ajax over the arms of Achilles) and the *Epitome* of Pseudo-Apollodorus.¹⁵ Quintus' of Smyrna in his *Posthomerica* refers to it as he explains the kindness Antenor experienced from the Greeks during the sack of Troy.¹⁶ A more elaborate treatment of this story comes from the fourth century CE rhetor Libanius, who included among his many invented orations on historical and mythological subjects (*Declamations*) one delivered by Menelaus and another by Odysseus during their mission in Troy. The ancient tradition of this episode was also briefly summarized by the scholiasts commenting on the relevant passage of Book III of the *Iliad*.¹⁷

However, the most substantial account of the Greek embassy is to be found on the threshold of a later, medieval tradition, in the prose works of "Dictys Cretensis" and "Dares the Phrygian."¹⁸ Both are Latin renderings of purported Greek originals,¹⁹ spanning the entire period of the Trojan War, along with its causes (Dares), and reaching further even to the death of Odysseus at the hands of his son, Telegonus (Dictys). Both enjoyed considerable popularity throughout the Middle Ages, with a discernible privileging of the much shorter account of Dares, due, perhaps to the fact that his story is told from the point of view of the Trojans, from whom the medieval nobility frequently traced their descent.²⁰

Small wonder therefore that the Greek embassy is given an equally elaborate treatment in the most important medieval heirs to Dictys and Dares: Benoît de Saint-Maure's *Roman de Troie*²¹ (twelfth century), written in Old French, and the Latin *His-*

¹⁵ Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 13.196–204; [Apollodorus], *Epitome* 3.28 (Frazer).

¹⁶ Quintus Smyrnaeus 1913, 13.291–99.

¹⁷ Scholia (bT, D) to *Iliad* 3.206; the bT scholia (preserved in an eleventh-century MS 'T', and descendants from the sixth-century MS 'b'), though perhaps reaching back to Alexandrian scholarship, derive directly from a late antique commentary and are heavily indebted to Porphyry's *Homeric questions* (third century CE) and Heraclitus' *Homeric problems* (first/second century CE); the D scholia (named misleadingly after Didymus; preserved in a ninth-century MS 'Z' and an eleventh-century one, 'Q') are equally ancient; their lexicographical definitions may even reach back to traditions predating the Alexandrian scholarship, while their mythological explanations, though perhaps not so old, are paralleled in the ancient papyri; see Dickey 2007, 19–20.

¹⁸ *Ephemeris belli Troiani* and *Actadiurna belli Troiani* respectively (for the titles see Merkle 1996); tentatively dated to the fourth and fifth century CE respectively (see BNP s.v. Dictys Cretensis and Dares 3).

¹⁹ A fragment of the Greek original of Dictys has been discovered in 1907 (P.Tebt. 2.268) with a supplementary piece added in 1966 (P.Oxy. 31.2539); see Eisenhut 1973, vi–viii (and p. 134–40 for the texts themselves); it may be only assumed that a similar Greek original existed for the text of Dares (Merkle 1996, 564, 572).

²⁰ See Goldwyn 2010, 112–38.

²¹ *Roman de Troie* 6001–510; an equally extensive account of this episode is found in the thirteenth-century prose version of Benoît's oeuvre (83–87).

toria destructionis Troiae by Guido delle Colonne (thirteenth century). Both were the basis of the story's further dissemination into vernacular languages of Early Modern Europe, among which is to be counted the Polish *Historya trojańska* (*The Trojan Story*) written in the middle of the sixteenth century (published in 1561) by an anonymous author.²² Quite predictably, the embassy episode is given extensive treatment (indebted to Dictys) in this latter work.

A RENAISSANCE TRAGEDY I: AD FONTES

Many of these sources were, of course, unknown to Kochanowski and some of them were simply unavailable in his time.²³ However, like many of his learned contemporaries, he enjoyed the privilege of reading ancient Greek originals (testimony to which may be his translations of *Iliad* 3 and of the beginning of Euripides' *Alcestis*), of which, true to the spirit of the Renaissance, he made extensive use.²⁴ His debt to the classical Greek sources rather than the Latin tradition of the Middle Ages is clearly discernible on every step.²⁵

First, the ambassadors themselves: in Kochanowski, we meet the classical duo, Menelaus and Ulysses, the same as in the *Iliad* and in all other ancient sources which mention them by name.²⁶ By contrast, in the medieval tradition springing from Dares and Dictys, Menelaus is either replaced by Diomedes²⁷ or the ambassadors are three, with Diomedes or Palamedes added to accompany the classical duo. The latter divergence is due to the fact that in Dictys (for the first time) we are told a story of two embassies, sent at different stages of the war: the first dispatched before the mustering

²² Edited by S. Adalberg in 1896 (Kraków); that this work was known to Kochanowski is (most likely) evident from one of his epigrams *On the Trojan story* (*Na historyją trojańską*; 2.74), which may have been written on the occasion of its publication (Pelc 2001, 276).

²³ Bacchylides 15 and [Apollodorus'] *Epitome* were recovered in the end of the nineteenth century; *editions principes*: 1897 (OCT; Kenyon) and 1894 (Teubner; Wagner) respectively (on the discovery of Apollodorus' *Epitome* see Frazer 1921, xxv–xxvi); Libanius' 4th Declamation (Odysseus' Embassy Speech) was published much earlier (1606), but still years after Kochanowski's death.

²⁴ On Kochanowski's acquaintance with ancient Greek poetry see (briefly) Pelc 1985, 98; Ulewicz 1985, 16; Łanowski 1984; for an overview of Kochanowski's debt to antiquity in general see Cytowska 1989.

²⁵ A detailed analysis of classical influences in the *Dismissal* is given by Kallenbach 1883, 3–29.

²⁶ Herodotus 2.118 mentions only Menelaus by name.

²⁷ Odysseus and Diomedes are a traditional pair: they are sent together to spy on the Trojan camp (*Iliad* 10), to fetch Philoctetes from Lemnos (Euripides, *Philoctetes*, F 787 Kn; Dio Chrysostomus, Or. 59; Quintus Smyrnaeus 9.333–442; cf. Sophocles, *Philoctetes* 572, 592–94), and to steal the Palladion from Troy (Virgil, *Aeneid* 2.162–70).

of the army (Ulysses, Menelaus, Palamedes; 1.4), and the second—after the arrival of the Greeks in Asia and the first battles there (Ulysses, Menelaus, Diomedes; 2.20).

Dictys' account is most likely an attempt to reconcile the two versions of the episode known already in antiquity, a variance noted by Libanius.²⁸ According to some sources the envoys were sent as the fleet gathered at Aulis, whereas in others only after the Greeks have landed in Troy or, slightly before that, after the sacking of Tenedos, an Aegean island in the vicinity of the Troad.²⁹ The Tenedos-variant is found in Dares, who goes back to the simple one-embassy version, and was subsequently picked up by Benoît and Guido, though not without problems with classical geography, as Tenedos (mismixed into Thenedon) becomes in their accounts a Trojan stronghold. Curiously enough, the author of the Polish *Trojan Story*, usually considered a loose adaptation of Guido's *Historia*, follows closely the two-embassy account of Dictys.³⁰

Like his classical sources, Kochanowski has only one embassy, however, like Dictys, he does apparently struggle to reconcile the two versions of the story, which also leads him to a geographical conundrum. As the envoys depart empty-handed, we are told of the "frontier prefects" of Troy (!) who report that the Greek army is mustering at Aulis. A little later the fleet is already gathered, waiting for ambassadors and the news of their negotiations.³¹ And yet, as if paying homage to the other variant of the story, he has the fighting begin almost directly after the envoys' departure. To this end, he invents a story where an avant-garde of the Greek fleet, consisting of five ships, raids the Troad, thus giving in advance a taste of what was to come when the full force arrives.

²⁸ "It should be known that as to the story we make use not only of Homer, but also of Herodotus, taking according to convenience some things from the former and some from the latter. If therefore it will seem that the Greeks have first landed on the Trojan ground and then send their envoys, this is the version from Herodotus" (ιστέον δὲ ὅτι κατὰ τὴν ἱστορίαν οὐχ Ὀμήρωι μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ Ἡροδότῳ προσχρώμεθα τὰ μὲν παρ' ἐκείνου, τὰ δὲ παρὰ τούτου πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον λαμβάνοντες. εἰ δὲ φαίνοντο οἱ Ἕλληνας ἀποβάντες εἰς τὴν χώραν τῶν Τρώων, εἴτα πρεσβεύμενοι, παρὰ Ἡροδότου τοῦτο γεγέννηται; Libanius *Declamationes* 3.1.3); in fact it is never explicitly said in Homer that the embassy was sent before the arrival of the Greek army in Troy, whereas Herodotus seems to mention both versions of the story (see below).

²⁹ "When Menelaus and others were sent on an embassy from Tenedos, Antenor, son of Hicetaon, received them, and when they were about to be treacherously slain, he saved them" (ὅτε ἐκ Τενέδου ἐπρεσβεύοντο οἱ περὶ Μενέλαον, τότε Ἀντήνωρ ὁ Ἴκετάωνος ὑπεδέξατο αὐτούς, καὶ δολοφονεῖσθαι μέλλοντας ἔσωσεν; Schol. bT *Iliad* 205).

³⁰ On his debt to Dictys see Krzyżanowski 1926, 105–7.

³¹ "A thousand ships stay anchored in Aulis, in all readiness awaiting the envoys" ("Tysiąc galer na kotwicach pogotowiu stoi | W Aulidzie, którzy tylko na posły czekają;" 589–90).

The dramatic framework of Kochanowski's play thus betrays a close affinity with classical sources (despite some stretching of the imagination required by his cavalier approach to classical geography). The details of the plot, however, necessarily rely much more on Dares' and Dictys' tradition, since these in earlier literature are given infrequently and piecemeal. Among them the most important is the debate among the Trojans about the Greek demands. Though going back to Homer³²—who also gives its surrogate form in the altercation between Paris and Antenor in Book 7—among the classical sources it is mentioned only in Libanius (4.2.1). Not until Dictys do we find an extended account of it—in the context of the second Greek embassy (2.23–24):³³ the opposing speakers are Antenor and Antimachus and the passions are stirred up to the level of blows;³⁴ in the end, the final decision is entrusted to Hector, who refuses to return Helen, though does generously offer one of his sisters in exchange. By contrast Dares, and those who follow his account (Benoît and Guido) omit the Trojan debate altogether: the decision is Priam's only.

The Trojan debate in Kochanowski is much more elaborate than in any of his sources.³⁵ There are altogether three speeches quoted *in extenso*—two against the Greek demands (Alexander, Hicetaon) and one for (Antenor)—while five other opinions are briefly reported (304–5).³⁶ The deliberation is introduced by the king's exhortation (298–308) and followed by a vote in which, predictably, an overwhelming majority sides with Alexander's case. Interestingly enough, no traditional embellishments are added to accompany the debate. There is no brawl among the councilors, as

³² *Iliad* 7.345–79 (on the relationship of this debate with the myth of the embassy see Danek 2006, 13–14); cf. 11.139–40.

³³ During the first embassy, the council of the elders (*concilium*) is broken up by Priam's sons, while the subsequent assembly (*contio*) has nothing to say and the final decision rests on Helen's choice to stay with Paris: "Priamus [...] optionem Helenae [...] offert, si ei videretur domum ad suos regredi" (1.10).

³⁴ "Certamen eorum ad manus processerat" (2.24); the Polish author of the *Historia trojańska* dispenses with this detail.

³⁵ Mańkowski (1997, 162–63) traces it to yet another source: the debate in the Carthaginian assembly on the Roman complaints against Hannibal, as recounted in Livy 21.10–11.

³⁶ These are: Aeneas, Pantes (i.e. Panthus), Thyemetes, Lampon, Ucalegon; all these persons are of course traditional (mentioned in *Iliad* 3.146; see Danek 2006, 7–8 for a "prosopography" of this passage); it is interesting, however, to note a radical change in the character of Aeneas, who in Kochanowski sides with Antenor's peace-party, whereas the romances (Dictys 2.26; Benoit 6424–40; Guido 12. f 59r (108–9 Griffin); *Historia trojańska* 58) make him a vocal (and aggressive) war-monger.

in Dictys, nor is the life of the envoys themselves ever threatened in word or in deed, as in numerous accounts of the story, beginning with Homer.³⁷

A RENAISSANCE TRAGEDY II: THE FORM

In its form Kochanowski's play was quite a novelty. In fact, as far as contemporary production was concerned, *The Dismissal* may very well have been like nothing seen or read before in Poland.³⁸ Until then, the only experience of theatre in Poland were religious mystery plays on the one hand, and specimens of the so-called humanist drama, cultivated at the Jagiellonian University and occasionally performed at the royal court on the other.³⁹ Two such court performances were recorded in the sixteenth century (during the reign of Sigismund the I). Both were Latin plays and both—incidentally—took as their subject myths related to the Trojan war. Little do we know about “Ulysses’ Sound Judgment in Adversities” (*Ulyssis prudentia in adversis*), penned by an anonymous author and published in 1516. The play has perished, though it was still seen in the nineteenth century. More fortunate was the “Judgment of Paris” (*Iudicium Paridis*), a work of the German humanist Jakob Locher, published in Poland in 1522 and produced at the royal court not long before.⁴⁰ Testimony to its popularity is its Polish translation (a very loose one; perhaps better considered an adaptation) which appeared in print two decades later (1542).⁴¹

Although frequently labeled a “humanist drama,” *The Judgment of Paris* is still firmly rooted in the tradition of morality plays.⁴² Though written in classical Latin and based on a concrete mythological subject (rather than being set in an a historical milieu), it pays little attention to the illusion of place and time (contracting the story from Peleus’ wedding to the beginning of the war into four acts), offers little formal variety with an almost unaltered elegiac distich, occasionally giving way to hexameter,

³⁷ *Iliad* 11.138–42 (Antimachus’ proposal to kill the envoys); Schol. bT *Iliad* 205 (δολοφονείσθαι μέλλοντας); Schol. D *Iliad* 206 (οὗς τῶν ἄλλων αὐτοὺς μεθ’ ὕβρεως διωξάντων); Apollodorus, *Epitome* 3.28 (καὶ τούτους κτείνειν ἦθελον); Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 13.202–203 (Paris et fratres [...] vix tenuere manus); Libanius 4.2.1 (διαρρήδην εἰπόντας ὅτι προσήκεν ἡμᾶς ἀποκτείνειν λαβόντας); Dictys 1.11 (a plot to kidnap—*circumveniant*—the envoys of the first embassy).

³⁸ Pelc 1985, 99–100; 2001, 335.

³⁹ The very first permanent institution (the National Theatre) was founded two hundred years later, in 1765; the last decades of the sixteenth century, however, saw the development of theatre in Jesuit colleges in many Polish cities; cf. Miłosz 1983, 106–7.

⁴⁰ Dietl 2005, 275–76; Ulewicz 1974, viii–x; the play was first published in 1502 in Augsburg; see Dietl 2005, 461–62 and 243–76.

⁴¹ For which see Miłosz 1983, 98; Ulewicz 1974, xii–xiii.

⁴² A useful and brief description of the genre may be found in King 1994, 240–43; see also Miłosz 1983, 104–6.

and two brief choreographic interludes,⁴³ and, most importantly, in the eponymous judgment it provides an explicit allegory of the three ways of human life: contemplative (Athena), active (Juno) and sensual (Venus).⁴⁴ Paris, of course, chooses the last one—and he chooses poorly.⁴⁵

Against this backdrop, Kochanowski's *Dismissal* emerges as a fully-fledged Renaissance tragedy, heavily indebted to the classicizing poetics of the Italian cinque-cento.⁴⁶ In its form it closely follows—and, of course, emulates—the ancient models (Kochanowski himself stated this quite explicitly in his letter to Zamoyski, which accompanied the text of the play).⁴⁷ In particular his remark concerns the third “chorus” or stasimon, which indeed turned out to be over two hundred years ahead of its time, as it is the first—and until the advent of Romanticism, the last specimen—of syllabotonic versification.⁴⁸ Here the natural accents of the words are used in sequences imitating (emulating, perhaps, would again be the better word here) the patterns of the Greek and Latin metre.⁴⁹ The spoken ‘parts’ are also boldly untraditional, as they mark the introduction of the blank, syllabic verse into Polish poetry.

⁴³ The play is conveniently edited in the work of Dietl (2005, 464–91); hexameter: 21–32; 75–82; 377–80; interludia: *duo Gladiatores certant pro sermo Veneris* (“Two gladiators fight for Venus’ crown”; post 274); *fit chorea et fistulatio* (“Dances and pipes”; post 364).

⁴⁴ *Vita contemplativa* (cf. 505–534), *vita activa* (cf. 473–504), and *vita voluptaria* (cf. 447–72) respectively.

⁴⁵ Unambiguously suggested by Fulgentius’ *Fabula de Paradisi iudicio stolido*, which bore a considerable influence on Locher; see Dietl 2005, 246–52; on the allegorical reading of Paris’ judgment in the medieval tradition see Ehrhart 1987, 75–121.

⁴⁶ See Miłosz 1983, 69; Kochanowski himself studied in Padua in the years 1552–1555, and after that visited Italy (including Padua) twice, cf. Welsh 1963, 180; Ulewicz 1985, 8–10; Barycz 1985; Rossetti 1985; it has been argued that the *Dismissal* was heavily influenced by Trissino’s *Sofonisba* (Pelc 1985, 99; Ulewicz 1974, xxiii–xxvi; see also Welsh 1963, 180–81); on Poland’s intellectual exchanges with Italy during the Renaissance see Backvis 1958–1960 (esp. 201–8).

⁴⁷ “Among other things there are three choruses, and the third emulates the Greek choruses to some extent, as they [the Greeks] have a specific form for this; I do not know, how will it sound in Polish” (Inter caetera trzy są chory, a trzeci jakoby greckim chorom przygania, bo oni już osobny charakter do tego mają; nie wiem, jako to w polskim języku brzmieć będzie).

⁴⁸ In syllabotonic systems poetic rhythm is obtained not only with a fixed number of syllables, but also with a fixed position of those which are accentuated (the natural accent of words must fall in these precise positions).

⁴⁹ A quotation of two verses perhaps will give the idea of the whole problem (syllables in bold type are those where the natural stress falls): O białoskrzydła, morska pławaczko! | Wychowanico Idy wysokiej (O White-winged sea-farer, raised on high Ida!; 424–25); the pattern thus obtained is iambic with a distinct choriambic element (◡ – ◡ – ◡ – ◡ – ◡ – ◡) which brings to mind the Aeolic metres of antiquity; in its content the passage betrays influence of Euripides’ *Hippolytus* 752–56.

In accordance with the Horatian formula, the play falls into five acts, but these are frequently labeled as ‘episodes’ (*epeisodia*), in recognition of the Classical Greek model as they are divided by choral interludes—which in turn are, consequently, referred to as *stasima*. The first episodion comprises a brief, expository monologue by Antenor, followed by his dialogue with Paris; the stage is thus set. The second brings a uniquely human touch into the play with Helen voicing her anxieties first in a short soliloquy and then in conversation with the Nurse. There follows the third and longest episodion in which the Messenger gives Helen a lengthy account of the debate in the Trojan council. This is the central episode of the play and marks its turning point. In the fourth the Greek envoys Ulysses and Menelaus depart empty-handed with threats.⁵⁰ The final and most elaborate episodion is also the most densely packed with action: Antenor’s conversation with Priam concerning the preparations for war is first interrupted by Cassandra’s entrance with her prophecy of Troy’s imminent doom and subsequently with the introduction of a Greek captive by a Trojan captain, who bring news of the first clashes with a small Greek detachment and of the mustering of the full force in Aulis.

The *stasima* (Kochanowski himself uses the term “chorus”) are altogether three, with no distinct *parodos*, as the chorus is present on stage from the beginning: their number falls short of the expected four since the “chorus” dividing the third (Helen and Messenger) and fourth episodion (Ulysses and Menelaus) is very brief and has no particular poetic form; hence it is usually not taken considered as such.⁵¹ Apart from these interludes the chorus takes almost no part in the development of the action: it does not speak in the *epeisodia*,⁵² while the *stasima*, though essentially linked to the basic idea of the play, are not in any way inherently bound with the events presented on-stage.

Kochanowski’s play therefore parades its classical heritage in its structure, even if it may give the impression of incompleteness. Even more revealing are the details of the form. The emulation of Greek choral lyric in the third *stasimon* has already been mentioned. As early as the first episodion the spectator is treated to another classical feature: a *stichomythic* dialogue between Antenor and Paris. In the next comes a domestic touch in the *domina-nutrix* scene between Helen and the Nurse, a motif as early

⁵⁰ According to some critics (e.g. Weintraub 1977, 280) the envoys’ speeches, with no formal addressee, disturb the scenic illusion.

⁵¹ Kochanowski himself (see above, n. 175) mentions only three choruses and speaks of the (technically) fourth *stasimon*, which separates the fourth and the fifth episodion, as the “third chorus”.

⁵² With the exception of 557–58, where it escorts Cassandra off-stage.

as Euripides.⁵³ The third episode brings a *tour de force* in the craft of messenger speech, following again the best traditions of Euripides (and unmistakably reminiscent of the latter's *Orestes*). Last but not least, the final epeisodion—once again—rings of Euripidean dramaturgy in what may seem to correspond to an actor's monody: the prophetic speech of Cassandra.

As far as the stage-economy is concerned, however, the *Dismissal* flagrantly violates the revered three-actor rule: while through most of the action there are no more than two persons speaking on-stage, its final scene has four of them (Antenor, Priam, Captain and Captive). Whatever its "deficiencies" there, the play makes up for it with a strict observance of the then emerging doctrine of the three unities, most notably the unity of time. The Trojans, according to Antenor, are to expect the Greek attack on the very same day as the envoys depart empty-handed. This would, of course, elegantly fit with the version of the myth, according to which the ambassadors are dispatched upon the Greeks' arrival in the Troad. Kochanowski, however, for some reason relies on the other variant and has Ulysses and Menelaus arrive at Troy while the army is still mustering in Aulis. Nevertheless, the play makes good on this promise, and this thanks to a bold intervention in the body of the myth: the introduction of the avant-garde of the Greek fleet, five ships which happen to be nearby, and open hostilities as the play's "day" is drawing to an end.

WHY TROY?

It has been suggested that Kochanowski's first choice for the wedding spectacle was Euripides' *Alcestis*, of which he did translate the prologue and part of the *parodos*: a pro-satyrical play with a happy end and yet devoid of obscenity may very well have seemed suitable material; however, the death of the eponymous heroine (despite her eventual return to the world of the living), a model wife, might have in the end proven the play a poor choice for a merry celebration of marital union.⁵⁴

Whatever the case with the *Alcestis*, the choice of Troy as the subject matter is perfectly intelligible. The three main sources for classical tragedy of the Renaissance (and later) were: ancient myth, ancient history and the Old Testament. And among that first group the Trojan myths were by far the best known and most widely disseminated in Early Modern Europe. This was due not only to the exceptional popularity of the medieval prose and verse romances, such as Benoît and Guido, but also to the closely

⁵³ In *Hippolytus* 176–361; cf. Weintraub 1977, 322–31 for both stichomythia in epeisodion I and the *domina-nutrix* scene, which, however, he assigns to the Senecan tradition.

⁵⁴ The translation comprised the first 84 verses and was published posthumously (1590); the suggestion that it may have been considered for the wedding is given by Sinko (1922, xii).

related fact that the nobility of many kingdoms traced their descent back to Troy. To a limited extent this was also true of Poland. Already in Kochanowski's times Polish origins (that is, of Polish nobility) were traced back to the ancient Sarmatians—which was to become the dominant cultural narrative in the next century (Sarmatism)⁵⁵—but a curious elaboration of this myth linked them through the ancient Venetians to Trojan refugees (in most traditions led by none other than Antenor).⁵⁶

Troy also occupied a privileged place in the modest experience of drama in Renaissance Poland, testimony to which are the two court-productions prior to Kochanowski—*Ulyssis prudentia in adversis* and Locher's *Judicium Paridis*—but also the subsequent editions (three altogether) of the latter play as well as its Polish translation, loose enough perhaps to merit the term paraphrase (Kraków 1542): “The Judgement of Paris, Prince of Troy” (*Sąd Parysa, krowowica trojańskiego*). To this we should add the editions of Latin translations—by Erasmus himself—of two Euripidean plays related to the Trojan cycle (*Hecuba* and *Iphigenia Aulidensis*), and an edition of Seneca's *Troades* (1513), which near the end of the century (1589) was translated into Polish.

As for Homer, before the sixteenth century, he was in Poland little more than a *nomen inane*, an empty name. Even in the opening decades of the century, he was read mainly in (modern) Latin translations; the same period brought about an interest in its ancient rendering from Greek, the *Ilias Latina*. Beginning with the 1520s, however, more and more evidence testifies to its growing readership in the Greek original: privately owned editions of the epics become more numerous, while the Jagiellonian University incorporates Homer into its teaching curriculum.⁵⁷

Quite obviously, acquaintance with the Trojan myths largely preceded any knowledge of the Homeric epics. In the sixteenth century, probably the most important source was Virgil's *Aeneid*, a canonical text with which many noble youths were familiarized in their educational curriculum.⁵⁸ The more inquisitive would have already had Dictys and Dares (along with Guido), who still were considered reliable historical

⁵⁵ Testimony to which is also Kochanowski's *Orpheus Sarmaticus*, the recitation of which followed directly the play's production; see Kowalczyk 1980, 53–54; on Sarmatism see Axer & Tomaszuk 2007, 139–40.

⁵⁶ E.g. in S. Sarnicki's *Annales, sive de origine et rebus gestis Polonorum et Lithuanorum libri VIII* (1587), book I 27–28.

⁵⁷ Mańkowski 318–19; Homer was known in Cracow from the beginning of the sixteenth century, however, read in Greek by few, known chiefly from Latin translations such as that of Lorenzo Valla (Mańkowski 252–53).

⁵⁸ “Forse nessun altro poeta antico ha esercitato un'azione così continua e così profonda nella cultura polacca” (Biliński 1986, 3–4; cf. *ibid.* 1986, 22–25).

sources, at their disposal.⁵⁹ By then, however, the myth had already been appropriated into native literary production. Already in the first decades of the sixteenth century we hear of a piece entitled (most likely) “The Trojan Battles” (*Walki trojańskie*), which, unfortunately, perished. From 1551 onwards, several editions, “The Chronicle of the World” by Marcin Bielski, a work ambitious in its scope, had been published. In this work, the “historical” accounts of Dares and Dictys were incorporated into the gradually expanded chapter describing the Trojan War.⁶⁰ The year 1567 saw the publication of a brief Latin epic written in hexameters by Jeremi Wojnowski, “The Account of the Siege of Troy” (*Descriptio Troianae Oppugnationis*), an equally ambitious attempt to take on a less known part of the myth: the first sack of Troy by Herakles.⁶¹

So much for the educated elites of Renaissance Poland. There is, moreover, good reason to believe that by the sixteenth century the Trojan War myth was already disseminated far beyond the erudite circles. The Polish *Trojan Story*, written in the vernacular and modestly edited (which made it fairly cheap), was most likely targeted at a much more inclusive audience.⁶² Even more revealing testimony to the wide dissemination of the myth is a passing mention of a lost song on Troy’s destruction. It comes from a 1567 psalter and the lost piece is given there as an example of the melody to which a religious hymn ought to be performed. Given that the musical notation is also provided, the Trojan song was most likely meant to serve as guidance for the less knowledgeable who could not read notes.⁶³ A century earlier, in the mid-fifteenth century, yet another musical piece was composed, the so-called “Song from Sandomierz” (*Pieśń Sandomierzanina*), which is the first (extant) vernacular text mentioning Troy. Along with Rome and Jerusalem, Priam’s city is given here as an example of God’s wrath, which therefore seems to lay particular stress on its destruction—and perhaps fall from prosperity.⁶⁴

⁵⁹ Judging from the extant manuscripts and mentions of the lost ones, Guido’s work was known already in the second half of the fourteenth century; Dares and Dictys on the other hand were brought to Poland no earlier than the mid-fifteenth century (Mańkowski 1962, 141–42); it has been suggested (Miłosz 1983, 69) that Erasmus’ translation of Libanius’ 3rd Declamation (Menelaus’ Embassy Speech), completed in 1503 and published in 1519 (Rummel 1985, 21–22), also contributed to the popularity of the Trojan myth in Poland.

⁶⁰ 1 ed.: Kraków 1551; see Mańkowski 1962, 355–60.

⁶¹ “The work, counting 331 lines altogether, is preserved in only one copy (Mańkowski 1962, 369–73).

⁶² Mańkowski 1962, 368.

⁶³ It is mentioned in an epigram on the title page of a Polish translation of Pseudo-Bonaventura *Meditationes vitae Christi*, published in 1522; one of the first books printed in Poland (see Mańkowski 1962, 351–53).

⁶⁴ “Jerusalem, Rome and Troy | Do remember it you all | There much blood has been shed | Sixteen kings were slain | For Helen, the accursed tramp” (“Jeruzalem | Rzym i Troję | Mieście na pamięć-

The very same pattern of appreciating the Trojan myth can be traced in Poland back to the twelfth century, to the Latin chronicle of Gallus Anonymus.⁶⁵ Perhaps, therefore, this was the most widely experienced understanding of the Trojan myth before Kochanowski: not necessarily Achilles' epic wrath or Paris' sinful lust, but of the terrible fall of a once-great state, and its utter destruction.

THE CATASTROPHE

And the fall of Troy is precisely what Kochanowski's tragedy is about. The eponymous dismissal of the envoys is, as we have already seen in the formal analysis of the play, its turning point, literally its catastrophe (taking into account the Greek etymology), after which the city's fate is sealed. Though of course the siege still looms in the distant future as the play concludes and the initial hostilities opened by the Greek avant-garde give but a taste of what is to come when the full force arrives from Aulis, Troy's fall marks its strong presence in the brief time-span of the tragedy's stage action.

Numerous are the ominous forebodings, scattered throughout the text of the *Dismissal*, which contribute to the growing impression of impending disaster. "Misruled kingdom, destined to doom"—we hear in Ulysses' invective, which is in and of itself nothing but an angry threat, unmistakably evokes the knowledge of the events to come.⁶⁶ Near the end, even Hecuba's prophetic dream of giving birth to a torch which

ci wszyscy ją. | Tam krew rozlano obfitą | Szesnaście krolow zabito | O Helenę, fryjerkę przeklętą"); cf. Mańkowski 1962, 143.

⁶⁵ Maxima quoque Troia, quamvis destructa iacet et deserta, eterne tamen memoire poetarum titulis est inserta. Muri coequati, turres destructae iacent, loca spaciosa et amena habitatore carent, in palatiis regum et principum lustra ferarum et cubilia secreta latent (Also the mightiest Troy, though destroyed and desolate, was however committed to everlasting memory in the works of poets. Walls are leveled to the ground and towers lie destroyed, places pleasant and spacious lack inhabitants, the palaces of kings and princes concealing now dens and lairs of beasts); the Latin *Chronica Polonorum*, written by an unknown author, most likely of foreign origin, perhaps Frankish (hence Gallus Anonymus) was completed early in the twelfth century.

⁶⁶ "O nierządne królestwo i zgnienia bliskie" (383) cf. the words of Antenor during the council: "Now I must fear lest it be some divine plan for us to suffer vengeance from the Greeks for injustice" ("Dziś lękać się muszę, | Aby to sąd tajemny jakiś boży nie był, | Nam prze niesprawiedliwość zawždy pomstę odnieść | Od Greków;" 297–99) or the Chorus' lyric premonition: "Strife and discord were the beginnings of your marriage, O Priamid. And I dare not expect evil, I dare not, but I fear that such will also be its conclusion" ("Swar był początkiem i niezgoda | Twego małżeństwa Pryamicze; | Nie śmiem złe tuszyć, nie śmiem, ale | Ledwie nie taki koniec będzie;" 447–48); and yet again Antenor's remark: "it would have been better [for Paris to die exposed] than for us all to perish" ("A lepiej było, niżli nam przeń wszystkim zginąć;" 577).

sets the whole city to flames is recalled,⁶⁷ and that with a somewhat abrupt shift in Priam's attitude towards Paris, then a beloved son, now an evil child and even a "sin."⁶⁸ The most powerful and moving statement of Troy's fate, however, comes from Cassandra. The unfortunate prophetess is brought on stage in the last epeisodion, and her words vividly paint the visions of Hector's death, of the Trojan horse, of the mayhem of Troy's razing and the suffering of those bereaved of their loved ones: "mother, you will not lament your children, but howl instead."⁶⁹

Neither the doom nor the catastrophe, however, concerns an individual hero. The play obstinately resists all attempts to pinpoint the tragic protagonist. Some of Kochanowski's contemporaries apparently thought it may have been Paris.⁷⁰ Many later critics gave in to the temptation to find him in Antenor. Indeed it is Antenor who seems to dominate the action of the play; yet in terms of his presence on stage he comes only second—after Helen. Indeed, he is the model statesman (contrary to the tradition rooted in antiquity which made him into a traitor),⁷¹ one always ready to support his

⁶⁷ "She [Cassandra] made me somewhat afraid, especially that I recall now the dream my wife had: for when she was pregnant with this evil son, Alexander, shortly before her time she dreamt in the small hours that instead of a child, she gave birth to a torch" ("Postraszyła mię nieco, zwłaszcza, że mi przyszedł | Sen na pamięć żony mej: bo gdy z tym złym synem | Aleksandrem chodziła, mało przed złączeniem, | Śniło się jej już na dniu, że miasto dziecięcia | Pochodźnią urodziła;" 566–69); the motif itself is of ancient pedigree, mentioned for the first time in extant literature by Pindar (fr. 52i(A) 19–21; with Finglass 2005); see also Cicero *De divinatione* 1.42; Hyginus, *Fabula* 91; [Apollodorus] 3.12.5; Schol. *Iliad* 3.325; Dictys 3.26; it was most likely part of the exposition of the lost *Alexandros* of Euripides (F 41a–63 Kn; along with the argumentum in P.Oxy 3650) it is also alluded to in Seneca's *Troades* (36–40), perhaps in Euripides' homonymous play (919–20) and in Virgil's *Aeneid* (7.319–20, 10.704–5); though mentioned also by Dictys, it is absent in later treatments of the myth in medieval and later tradition.

⁶⁸ "You recollect it well, but I too gave orders not to nurture this sin [i.e. Paris]" ("Dobrze to pomnisz, ale i jam był rozkazał | Grzechu tego nie żywić;" 574–76); an allusion to the exposure of Paris (as in [Apollodorus] 3.148–50; Hyginus, *Fabula* 91; and Euripides' *Alexandros* (see above); on Priam's curious way of referring to Paris in the quoted passage see Mańkowski 1997, 167.

⁶⁹ Matko, ty dziatek | Swoich płakać nie będziesz, ale—wyc będziesz (555–56); the speech of Cassandra rings of echoes from Lycophron's *Alexandra* (the eponymous Alexandra being a cultic name given to Cassandra), in particular the striking term "trupokupiec" (corpse-seller; in Lycophron 246: νεκροπέρινας) applied to Achilles (cf. Kallenbach 1883, 18); on the significance of Cassandra's speech, bringing Troy's tragic fall into the action of the play cf. Szmydtowa 1947, 32, 34.

⁷⁰ "[T]um Paris a celebre et docto imprimis Poeta Joanne Kochanovio vernaculo sermone scripta Tragedia" (Reinhold Heidenstein, *De vita Ioannis Zamoscii liber II*, in: A.T. Działyński (ed.), *Collectanea vitam resque gestas Joannis Zamojscii illustrantia*, Posnan 1861, 41)

⁷¹ See Lycophron, *Alexandra* 341: ἀπεμπολητής τῆς φυλαμίας χθονός; cf. Dictys 4.22; Antenor was to betray Troy either by opening the gates to the Greeks (Servius, *Commentary on the Aeneid* 2.15: porta quam eis Antenor aperuit) or by helping Odysseus and Diomedes steal the Palladion (Dictys 5.8); for more on this tradition see Braccesi 1984, 123–46.

country even in times of crisis provoked against his own better judgment. Yet the crisis does not affect him personally to the extent it does affect others: unlike Priam, he is never mentioned in Cassandra's prophecy of doom, and that not without a reason, as according to tradition, he was to escape Troy's destruction and found new cities in the west, most notably Padua, where, incidentally, Kochanowski conducted his studies.⁷²

The tragic fall—and tragic flaw—is that of Troy itself. For the true protagonist of the play is the state: Kochanowski's *Dismissal* is a tragedy *de re publica*.⁷³ And this republic will fall, indeed must fall, as a result of its own fateful decision. This is why the deliberation in the Trojan council occupies so privileged a place in the dramatic framework of the play.⁷⁴ It is the true turning point, as it brings about the tragic fall. As in the ancient Euripidean (and, to some extent, Senecan) tradition, this climactic moment is reported through a messenger.⁷⁵ And quite *unlike* in the medieval (and, perhaps, ancient too) tradition of the Trojan War, this debate actually matters. Not only is it extended and elaborate, it also carries political weight never before attributed to it. And most importantly, the final decision is voted on collectively, by the entire council (an overwhelming majority siding with Paris against only a handful of dissidents around Antenor). Its authority is furthermore explicitly underlined by Priam in his opening speech before the debate:

I never used to do anything without your counsel. And even if I had (of which I have no memory), in this matter particularly, which concerns my son, I wouldn't want my fatherly affection to get the better of me: for blood is thicker than water, as the saying

⁷² The earliest instances of this tradition are found in Servius' commentary to the *Aeneid* (on 1.242, 247) and the *Scholia Veronensia* to the same work (on 1.247); it may have gone back to the late-Augustan poet Largus, whose work is now lost (Braccesi 1984, 164–67) or perhaps even to Sophocles' lost play *Antenoridae* (F 137–39 R; cf. Leigh 1998); on Kochanowski's stay in Padua see above, n. 187.

⁷³ “[T]he true hero is a collective one: the Trojan state” (Miłosz 1983, 69; cf. Głombiowska 1979, 197–98; Pelc 2001, 337).

⁷⁴ “Ainsi, en définitive, toute l'« action » se réduit à cette délibération de la Diète troyenne : les scènes qui en précèdent le récit nous en dévoilent la portée, celles qui la suivent la commentent” (Backvis 1951, 34).

⁷⁵ As the battle with Eurystheus in the *Heraclidae* or that with the Thebans in (Euripides') *Supplices* (*Hcl*d 799–866; *Supp.* 650–751); the death of Creon and his daughter in the *Medea* (1136–230); the slaughter of Heracles' family and the attempt to poison Ion in the respective eponymous tragedies (*HF* 922–1015; *Ion* 1107–214); the battle over Thebes and Polynices' duel with Eteocles in the *Phoenissae* (1090–99; 1217–63); and, perhaps most importantly, the debate in the Argive assembly in the *Orestes* (866–959); cf. de Jong 1991, 123–31; on Senecan messengers: Harrison 2013, 609–11; on Kochanowski's debt to Senecan drama cf. Welsh 1963, 181; Sinko 1922, iv–vi; Strzelecki 1959–60; on the similarities between the debates in Kochanowski and Euripides' *Orestes* cf. Mańkowski 1997, 161; Szmydtowa 1947, 31–32.

goes. But my allegiance is to the republic. And thus, whatever you see fit, that I too will approve.⁷⁶

The responsibility therefore lies here not with a reckless youth or his weak father, but rests firmly on the shoulders of the entire community, of the “republic.”⁷⁷ It is no longer the case of the many paying for the misdeeds or folly of the few—as the both the medieval and classical (most notably tragic) tradition had it. It is the entire community, represented by the council, who is the true sovereign here. This is why Paris is seen to solicit the votes of the councilors at the beginning of the play. This is, perhaps, why the play dispenses with the otherwise dramatically apt embellishments such as the threats and plots against the envoys, which, again, would shift the burden of the misdeed from the community to a bunch irresponsible thugs.

THE HISTORICAL MOMENT

In Kochanowski’s play, Troy emerges as a quasi-constitutional monarchy, one in which the king’s prerogatives are considerably circumscribed and the supreme authority is vested in a representative body of which the ruler himself appears to be but one element. The resemblance with contemporary Poland, which by the sixteenth century had developed a peculiar constitution usually referred to as Noblemen’s Republic (*Rzeczpospolita szlachecka*), is therefore unmistakable. Though formally a monarchy, it saw a gradual distribution of power and authority among the nobility, which, at least until the seventeenth century, included also the lesser nobility and not just a narrow oligarchy of the magnates. The true sovereign of Poland (and after 1569, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth) was, in fact, the community of the nobles, considered by definition equal and free, irrespective of their economical status.⁷⁸ It was not the monarch: *rex regnat et non gubernat* (the king reigns but does not govern) was the apt observation of no-one else but Jan Zamoyski himself, by then already Chancellor of the Crown, during one his speeches at the seym (1605).⁷⁹ In fact, with the demise of the Jagiello-

⁷⁶ Niezwykłem nic nigdy | Bez rady waszej czynić: a bych też zwykł kiedy, | (Czego w pamięci nie mam), w tej sprawie koniecznie | Syna swego bych nie chciał, aby mię ojcowska | Miłość przeciw synowi jako nie uwiodła. | Bo aczci to podobno nie darmo rzeczono: | Krew nie woda! lecz u mnie pospolitej rzeczy | Powinowactwo więtsze. A tak, co się kol wiek | Wam wszystkim będzie zdało, to i ja pochwałę. (197–205).

⁷⁷ “The fateful decision is actually taken in the council, and therefore is lawful, in accordance with the will of the majority” (Właściwa, fatalna decyzja zapada przecież na radzie, a dzieje się to w sposób praworządny, zgodnie z wolą większości; Abramska 1974, 44).

⁷⁸ For the economical stratification of the Polish and Lithuanian nobility see Davies 2005, 1.170–80.

⁷⁹ After Kieniewicz 2000, 44n79; cf. Backvis 1954–57, 334–35.

nian dynasty in 1572, the kings were elected by the nobles. The power to make—and unmake—them as well as the supreme authority on matters of state lay in the hands of the General Sejm, convoked once every two years in Warsaw,⁸⁰ and comprising the Senate, the Representatives of the nobility from all corners of the Commonwealth, and the king himself. That is, sixteenth-century Poland—and Kochanowski's Troy—were monarchies in name only.

Presenting an ancient myth in contemporary trappings is, of course, nothing particularly odd. Already the ancient Greek playwrights were quite familiar with more or less deliberate anachronisms. Benoît de Saint-Maure turned the heroes of the Trojan War into feudal knights, and even the author of the Polish *Historia trojańska* seasons his adaptation of Guido with local flavors.⁸¹ Quite like Kochanowski. Agamemnon is described as 'hetman' of the Greek forces, with the term denoting the highest military office in sixteenth-century Poland (one, incidentally, also held by Zamoyski since 1581);⁸² the Trojans are equipped with sabers, the Polish weapon par excellence and an attribute of nobility (see below); the speakers of the council are referred to with the technical term of the contemporary senate (*marszałkowie*), and are said to strike the ground with ceremonial staffs which, again, unmistakably recalls the standard props and gestures of the Polish parliament.⁸³ Even more importantly, their debate every now and then betrays the features of contemporary political discourse: the characters speak of Troy as a "republic" (*Rzeczpospolita*);⁸⁴ the members of the council refer to themselves with the honorific *pan*, roughly equivalent to 'sir' or 'lord' (nowadays common, but in sixteenth-century Poland reserved for nobility);⁸⁵ even more revealingly they are

⁸⁰ The royal residence (and hence the status of capital) was transferred from Cracow to Warsaw only in 1596 by Sigismund the III; however due to its convenient geographical location it became the place to which the General Sejm was convoked much earlier (1529).

⁸¹ E.g. Agamemnon is said to be elected Grand Hetman in the church of Juno; *Historia Trojańska* 35; see also note below.

⁸² "Is Agamemnon the hetman?" ("Hetmanem Agamemnon?"; 595); in fact there were four military offices with this name in the Commonwealth; the Grand Hetman of the Crown and that of Lithuania, both having their respective deputies, the Field Hetman of the Crown and that of Lithuania; in 1581 Zamoyski was made Grand Hetman of the Crown; cf. note above.

⁸³ "The speakers repeatedly striking the ground with their staffs" (*Marszałkowie, laskami w ziemię co raz bijąc*; 355); on the marshals see Davies 2005, 1.253, 255.

⁸⁴ The term *Rzeczpospolita* (republic) was incorporated into the Polish political discourse in the beginning of the sixteenth century and rapidly gained popularity; see Backvis 1954–1957, 314–21.

⁸⁵ "Once the lords took their places on the council" ("skoro więc w radzie zasiedli panowie;" 196); "which you have received from these sires" ("któres wziął od tych panów;" 248); the use of the vocative "gentlemen" (*panowie*; 314, 356, 579); on the honorifics used by Polish nobility see Davies 2005, 1.184.

keen to assert their equality with their Hellenic counterparts, and are fiercely protective of their own freedom and independence: “the sharp saber at side, she is the lord (pan), and she will decide who shall bow to whom. Until then we must be equal.”⁸⁶ This is a more than palpable allusion to the then-emerging ideals of “Golden Liberty” (*aurea libertas*) and its basic tenets: the freedom and the equality of all nobles (distinguished by their sabers!).⁸⁷ Perhaps some of these anachronisms may be simply considered as means of bringing the distant myth closer to the contemporary experience, making it more intelligible, and easier to digest. But the parallels seem too frequent, too complex and too gratuitous to simply explain them away along these lines.⁸⁸

It must be said that, despite the praises frequently heaped on it in modern criticism, Kochanowski’s play has little to offer as a dramatic masterpiece. Its characters are barely sketched out,⁸⁹ it has none of the thrills offered by the contemporary Italian production (to which it arguably owes a great deal), let alone in the works of Shakespeare’s immediate predecessors in England, while its slow-paced, lengthy exposition of proper (and improper) statesmanship obviously invites one to approach it more as a dramatized political pamphlet than a brilliant piece of theatre.⁹⁰ And it is precisely this politicization where an explanation of the “anachronisms” permeating this play is to be sought.

The dubious allegorical readings, inspired by the apparent similarities between some dramatis personae and historical figures—e.g. Priam in his indecisiveness resembling the old Sigismund the First, whereas his effeminate womanizer of a son, Sigismund Augustus, the last of the Jagiellonian dynasty, reflected in Paris⁹¹—were long

⁸⁶ Szabla ostra przy boku, to pan; ta rozstrzygnie, | Kto komu człoem bić ma. Do tego tam czasu | Równi sobie być musim (325–27).

⁸⁷ On “Golden Liberty” (or “Golden Freedom”) cf: Reddaway et al. 1950, 281, 427; Davies 2005, 1.166, Filonik forthcoming; see also Davies’ apt remark on the nobles’ “mania for equality among themselves” (2005, 1.184).

⁸⁸ Weintraub (1984, 33) calls it a “bold innovation brought into the traditional saga”, all the while calling for moderation in seeking out anachronisms in the play (1984, 33–34); Abramska (1974, 47) notes that “it is difficult to tell which anachronism is artistic and which accidental” (“trudno rozstrzygnąć, co jest anachronizmem naiwnym, a co zamierzonym”); see also Backvis 1951, 39–44; Kallenbach 1883, 29–33; Pelc 2001, 317.

⁸⁹ “We can hardly say that his characters are heroes” (Miłosz 1983, 69; cf. Pelc 2001, 336); an attempt to breathe some life in them has been made by Szmydtowa (1947, 33–37).

⁹⁰ Cf. in particular the most explicit moralistic statement in the II stasimon, addressed to none else, but rulers and authorities and “Leaders of the republic and dispensers of human justice [...]” (“Wy, którzy Pospolitą Rzeczą władacie, | A ludzką sprawiedliwość w rękę trzymacie [...]” 161–62); cf. Rytel 1989, 418.

⁹¹ Hicetaon (who turns the debate in Paris’ favor)—to a well-known demagogue, of the age by the name Samuel Zborowski; cf. the criticism of such approach in Weintraub 1984, 33.

ago put to well-deserved rest. Other critics sought an understanding of the play in its immediate context: the highly politicized wedding ceremonies, followed directly by the meeting of the General Sejm. Though essentially much more promising, this approach has been too frequently bogged down in sterile debates on whether the overall “message” of the play is “pro-war” or “anti-war”⁹²—for, as we recall, the sejm convoked in 1578 voted to go to war against Ivan’s Russia. Ironically enough, the *protos heuertes* of such reading is one of Kochanowski’s contemporaries, Reinhold Heidenstein, secretary of the royal office, according to whom the play was staged “to stir up the spirit of the youth to war.”⁹³ Such a reading admirably explains the tone of the play’s closure, the very last three lines attributed to Antenor:⁹⁴ “For every year they tell us to take counsel on defense. But let us also deliberate on war, defense is not all. Take counsel on how to fight the enemy instead of awaiting him.”⁹⁵ Second thoughts come only when one stops to look closer at the dramatic context of this exhortation. After all, the war in question, as presented in the play, turns out to be neither just, nor expedient—at least to the Trojans, to whom the exhortation is addressed. To direct Antenor’s call to the Polish audience as well may therefore invite all sorts of unwelcome implications.⁹⁶

Whatever the case here, war as such in the *Dismissal* is not a moral problem, let alone *the* moral problem. The Trojans do not debate the justice of going to war against the Greeks, but the justice of giving Helen up. And only incidentally is it mentioned that giving her up will indeed avert the impending war. Antenor’s closing admonitions, on the other hand, do not concern morality but strategy: now that we are in the fight (which I didn’t want), let us do our best to win it. As such, they have an equally valid application to both just and unjust wars; both to the war that Troy should have avoided in the first place, and to the war that, perhaps, Poland ought to conduct.

In the end, it is the doom of Troy that turns this play into a tragedy. And that doom certainly had a “moral,” though not necessarily one with an immediate refer-

⁹² E.g. Miłosz 1983, 74 (“Basically, the play was pacifist”); for a (critical) overview of which see Kultuniakowa 1963, 20–22; cf. Abramska 1974, 47.

⁹³ “[E]xcitandorum maxime animorum iuventutis ad bellum causa” (Heidenstein; cf. n. 203).

⁹⁴ According to Weintraub (1984, 35) Antenor’s exhortation is out of character; it is difficult to agree with this opinion: as a model statesman, he is always ready to offer his services to the state, even in times of crises, into which it plunged itself through its own folly.

⁹⁵ “Na każdy rok nam każą radzić o obronie: | Ba, radźmy też o wojnie, nie wszystko się brońmy. | Radźmy, jako kogo bić: lepiej niż go czekać” (603–5).

⁹⁶ Another plausible explanation would be that Heidenstein simply confused, conflated perhaps would be the better word, the play itself with what followed it directly: the melorecitation of the Latin *Orpheus Sarmaticus*; to call it a war elegy in the best ancient traditions would not miss the mark, save for the poem’s form: it is purely hexametric (see Miłosz 1983, 74).

ence.⁹⁷ The moral is, quite unsurprisingly, concerned with the state. Sixteenth-century Poland was a place brewing with political ideas, freely expressed in various pamphlets, the most well-known of which is Frycz Modrzewski's *De Republica emendanda*.⁹⁸ And the motif of the state's impending ruin runs frequently through these writings, though with one important proviso: it is conditional. We shall perish if we do not mend our ways.⁹⁹ In Kochanowski's Troy, however, the damage is already done. The state has failed, and now its doom is sealed. The city of Priam thus emerges from this play as an anti-Poland,¹⁰⁰ a sort of a negative template, an exemplum of what happens to a state like ours if morality fails it.¹⁰¹ Ironically enough, history itself proved the *Dismissal* even more true to its historical moment: the Polish Renaissance, an age of prosperity, ideas, debates and—most importantly—lost opportunities.

EPILOGUE

Neither tragedy nor Troy enjoyed a particularly eventful career in Polish culture after their fortuitous union in the hands of Kochanowski. The play itself had to wait over three centuries for its first revival in 1884.¹⁰² Troy and its myths were revisited by the tragic Muse some forty years later in the Latin *Pentesilea* of Simonides (published 1518), an acclaimed poet (*Pindarus Polonus*) from the last generation of the Polish Renaissance.¹⁰³ Classical, “humanist” tragedy, however, did not take roots in Polish cul-

⁹⁷ See Abramska 1974, 46–8; Pelc 2001, 315–16.

⁹⁸ Published in 1551; it consists of five books (only three of which were originally published), the first one “On mores” (*De moribus*; esp. 1.5–6, 1.8 on the mores and education of the youth) displaying notable affinities with advices and criticisms voiced out in the *Dismissal* (esp. 68–79, 391–409).

⁹⁹ Most vividly expounded in Kochanowski's other politically engaged pieces such as *Zgoda* (*Concord*; 1563), *Satyr* (*Satire*; 1564), *Wróżki* (*Fairies*; 1570); and the *Lament on the Plundering of Podolia* (*Pieśń o spustoszeniu Podola*; 1575) see Backvis 1951, 35–36; Weintraub 1984, 13–29; Pelc 2001, 315; cf also Graciotti 1985, 26–29; on the attitudes voiced out in these works cf. Backvis 1958; Morawski 1980; Kallenbach 1883, 33–35.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Zeitlin 1990 for a similar approach to the representation of Thebes and Argos in ancient Greek tragedy.

¹⁰¹ “We know that Troy has fallen, but this need not be the case of Poland” (Wiadomo, że Troja upadła, ale Polska upaść nie musi; Abramska 1974, 55); “The *Dismissal* is therefore a tragedy about a state which failed to accomplish these demands” (“Odprawa jest dramatem o państwie, które właśnie nie zrealizowało postulatów tej teorii;” Głombiowska 1979, 204); cf. Backvis 1951, 52–54.

¹⁰² Górski 1989, 307 with a useful synopsis of the play's critical reception in the early nineteenth century.

¹⁰³ On *Pentesilea* cf. recently Gärtner 2010; Pindarus Polonus was a nickname given to Simonides (Szymon Szymonowic; 1558–1629) by the eighteenth-century editor of his works, Angelo Maria Durini; he also wrote another classical tragedy in Latin, *Castus Joseph* (Josephus the Chaste) which,

ture.¹⁰⁴ The bold exploration of this newly discovered form turned out to be a dead end; in the seventeenth century the popularity of drama in general waned, while its renaissance in the last decades of the Commonwealth, the so-called Stanislavian period (1764–1795), was an age of comedy, grafted anew—this time from France.¹⁰⁵

though dealing with a biblical theme, is in fact a variation on Seneca's *Phaedra* and Euripides' *Hippolytus*.

¹⁰⁴ Miłosz 1983, 70–71; cf. Backvis 1951, 57–58.

¹⁰⁵ The most representative poets being Franciszek Zabłocki (1752–1821), Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz (1757–1841), and Wojciech Bogusławski (1757–1829); cf. Miłosz 1983, 169–76.

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Aeneas among the Cossacks

Eneïda in modern Ukraine

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IN 2001, SERHIY BEDUSENKO'S *Eneïda*, the first Ukrainian rock opera, was released on compact disc.¹ This was, in fact, a re-issue of an audiocassette recording featuring the stars of contemporary Ukrainian rock and popular music produced ten years earlier, in 1991, the year Ukraine's Parliament (Verkhovna Rada) adopted the Act of Declaration of Independence of Ukraine. Volodymyr Dakhno's full-length animated film of the same title was released in 1991, as well. Both are adaptations of Ivan Kotliarevs'kyi's *Eneïda* (1798, 1842), a travesty of Virgil's *Aeneid*, in which the eponymous hero is recast as the leader of the Ukrainian Cossacks.

Kotliarevs'kyi's *Eneïda* has inspired countless low- and high-brow imitations, thus fueling local artistic production.² An analysis of this poem and two of its contemporary popular-culture adaptations reveals that these works localize the Roman epic not only by translating Virgil's Latin into Ukrainian, but also by transforming the *Aeneid* into a recognizably Ukrainian literary artifact with distinctively Ukrainian ethnographic elements: folklore, mores, diet, and humor. This imaginative appropriation is done through stylistic, linguistic, and generic mixing that is both original and grounded in an established tradition of classical reception in the vernacular. Equally important, the works draw on and thus perpetuate the mythology of the Ukrainian Cossacks, linked to the recent reawakening of Ukraine's national consciousness and cultural identity.

It is no coincidence that Bedusenko's and Dakhno's adaptations were released at the time of the inauguration of the new independent Ukrainian state; nor that the two contemporary artists turned to Kotliarevs'kyi's poem. It was "the first literary work published in the vernacular Ukrainian,"³ that is, "in pure vernacular, such as was then

¹ The Library of Congress transliteration of Ukrainian and Russian (without breves and ligature marks) is used throughout, except inside quotations or in proper names with established English spelling (Cossack Mamay). Of the diacritical marks, the dieresis is used to reflect Ukrainian rather than Russian spelling (*Eneïda*, Kyïv). Unless otherwise indicated, all translations from Russian and Ukrainian are the author's own.

² Pavlyshyn 2010, 189.

³ Pavlyshyn 2009, 181.

spoken in the Poltava region,”⁴ and hence “mark[ed] the beginning of the development of the Modern Ukrainian literary language.”⁵ By hearkening to a common literary and cultural past, these artists joined a broader cultural movement, “a gravitation” associated by many, including Ukraine’s former President Viktor Yushchenko (2005–2010), with the word *povernennia*, “a return to Ukraine’s true identity, a return to enlightened Europe and Ukraine’s European roots,” a process which had been “stimulated by the Ukrainian literary and cultural underground of the mid-to-late 1980s.”⁶ In recent years, moreover, following the “Orange Revolution” of 2004–2005 and the escalation of hostilities between Ukraine and Russia—including the contested annexation of the Crimea by the Russian President Vladimir Putin in March 2014, which precipitated a major geopolitical crisis of Cold War proportions⁷—the nation’s orientation towards

⁴ Zyla 1972, 192, 194.

⁵ Bilaniuk 2005, 107.

⁶ Naydan 2009, 187. Bedusenko’s opera was first performed in 1986.

⁷ For a historical account leading up to the current crisis in Ukraine, see the 2015 Report of the EU Sub-Committee on External Affairs, 53–78. The immediate origins of the current crisis could be traced to 2007 and EU’s negotiations regarding the Association Agreement (AA) with Ukraine. In August 2013, Russia initiated a policy of coercive economic diplomacy with the goal of dissuading Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich from signing the AA, which resulted in his decision to suspend the signature in November 2013. (While EU Member States had committed to lend \$15 billion on the condition that Ukraine implement reforms, Russia offered an equivalent loan, without specific conditions and with the promise of lifting trade restrictions and lowering gas prices.) Following the failure to sign, in the winter of 2013–2014, a series of protests broke out in the center of Ukraine’s capital, Kyiv; known as the “Euromaidan” (“Euro-square”), protestors challenged the pro-Russian government. On the night of 21 February 2014, after the protests had turned violent, claiming the lives of many Ukrainians, President Yanukovich lost a vote of no confidence in the Ukrainian Parliament and fled Ukraine. A series of decisions by the Verkhovna Rada in the ensuing weeks was perceived by Russia as antagonistic and hostile to Russian-speaking Ukrainians: motions to repeal the 2012 language law allowing Ukrainian regions to make Russian a second official language, and to reinstate the goal of joining NATO as a Ukrainian national strategy, added to the fear of renouncing the 2010 Kharkiv Agreements, which had extended the Russian Navy’s lease of strategic naval bases in the Crimea, a predominantly Russian-speaking autonomous republic then part of the Ukrainian state. On 16 March 2014, the Crimea voted to secede in a disputed referendum; despite the Member States’ unified support of the territorial integrity of Ukraine, the Crimean peninsula was formally absorbed into the Russian Federation two days later. (Former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton compared Russian President Vladimir Putin’s justification for annexing the Crimea, appealing to the plight of ethnic Russians residing there, to what Hitler did back in the 1930s.) The crisis was exacerbated by Russia’s alleged intervention in the downing of the Malaysian airliner MH17, on 17 July 2014, either directly or indirectly by arming pro-Russian separatists in the Donbas region (Donetsk and Luhansk) of eastern Ukraine. To put an end to hostility, on 5 September 2014, the Minsk Protocol was signed between Ukraine, Russia, and the representatives of the self-proclaimed “People’s Republic of Donetsk” and the “People’s Republic of Luhansk,” laying down the terms of a

Europe has become not only a matter of cultural identity, but also one of national and international security.

Ukraine's history, admittedly, raises difficult questions about nationhood and national identity. The Ukrainian historians' critique of Russia's absorption of Ukraine notwithstanding, says one American historian, "it is hard to see how an independent Ukraine could have survived, sandwiched as it would have been between Turkey, Poland, and Russia."⁸ The claim to the teleological linearity and continuity of the state's "nationalized history" might seem dubious when applied to a nation whose history is fragmented and whose territory has been continually redefined from its origins in Kievan Rus' in the tenth century to the Cossack era declining in the eighteenth; prior to 1991, critics point out, western Ukraine was independent for only a brief period following World War I. Ukrainian historian Georgiy Kasianov argues that rather than the telos of a "thousand-year history," the year 1991 should be construed as the moment when the "non-historic" nation finally turns into a 'historical' one and history is activated in reverse—the existence of a state in the present begins to call for something similar in the past."⁹ Theorizing Ukraine's colonial experience (under Russia, Poland, Austria-Hungary, and later the Soviet Union), George Grabowicz, on the other hand, does not find the absence of a "unitary" political and cultural existence in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, or the cultural "polycentrism" resulting from the growth of the Ukrainian Diaspora after the Second World War, to be an impediment to Ukraine's nationhood. Ukraine's uncertain status as a "historical nation" is, indeed, "a paradigmatic post-colonial issue." "Nationhood," he concludes, "is ultimately a matter of identity and self-perception."¹⁰

Some critics, moreover, question the notion of *povernennia*, pointing to its association with state-sanctioned attempts at creating a nationalized history, such as Yushchenko's claim that Ukraine's "choice to return to Europe" confirms its status as a European democracy. Kasianov has reservations about the claim to legitimacy based on Ukraine's historical ties to the ancient Trypilian culture, the so-called "'Trypilian syndrome' of nationalized history" also popularized by Yushchenko; according to this

ceasefire; after this treaty had been violated by the separatists within days of its signing, negotiations were once again conducted, and a new immediate and full bilateral ceasefire was agreed upon to take effect on 15 February 2015. The geopolitical crisis led to tremendous devaluation of both Russian and Ukrainian currencies, subsequent to a global fall in oil prices. The situation remains volatile, as the West moves to offer monetary support to Ukraine on the condition that reforms be implemented and corruption curtailed.

⁸ Thompson 2009, 103.

⁹ Kasianov 2009, 18.

¹⁰ Grabowicz 1995, 675, 678.

view, Ukraine's territory was first inhabited by autochthonous tribes thus making it one of the world's most ancient peoples.¹¹ Such claims are not unique to Ukraine, of course: "As a term, [nation] refers both to the modern nation-state and to something more ancient and nebulous—the '*natio*'—a local community, domicile, family, condition of belonging," Timothy Brennan explains, adding that "[t]he distinction is often obscured by nationalists who seek to place their own country in an 'immemorial past' where [its] arbitrariness cannot be questioned." Raymond Williams urges us to distinguish between these two meanings: "Nation' as a term is radically connected with 'native.' We are *born* into relationships which are typically settled in a place. This form of primary and 'placeable' bonding is of quite fundamental human and natural importance. Yet the jump from that to anything like the modern nation-state is entirely artificial."¹² Yushchenko's efforts to forge such "immemorial past" for Ukraine is an instance of this phenomenon, and is also supported by the nation's—rather, the *natio*'s—complicated history, with the current nation-state created by stitching together territories previously under foreign control.

While the above may be significant considerations for historiographers, our purpose here is to study the artistic expression of Ukraine's national identity perceived as such, an identity which has been defined not in opposition to, but as part of a larger European cultural history. Larissa M.L. Zaleska Onyshkevych and Maria G. Rewakowicz write that, for the Ukrainian people, "Europe becomes a powerful point of reference, a measure against which the situation in post-independence Ukraine is gauged and debated," as well as "a framework [that] allows for a better understanding of the complexities deeply ingrained in the social fabric of Ukrainian society, and enhances the case for strengthening democratic reforms as well as understanding the choices that the government makes." "Ukrainians are not looking for a 'roadmap to Europe' since they feel that they have always been there," the editors assert. "Ukrainians feel that they share a common culture and common values with the rest of Europe."¹³ As Marko Pavlyshyn argues, "the evolution of a national literature [in Ukraine] was also a process of engagement with Europe. Participants in the Ukrainian literary system oriented themselves to the norms of 'core' Europe, whether by deliberate choice or through spontaneous assimilation to the European cultural environment."¹⁴ Ukrainian literature was both "'national' in its potential to unite the language of the people with that of a high culture, and it was also deemed so by the tsarist authorities that tried to

¹¹ Kasianov 2009, 23, n9.

¹² Brennan 1990, 45.

¹³ Onyshkevych & Rewakowicz 2009, xiii–xiv.

¹⁴ Pavlyshyn 2009, 184.

stifle it,” and, at the same time, “European’ because it drew on folk traditions” and “became a vehicle of nation-building and nation[al] self-expression.”¹⁵ Indeed, in the cultural imagination, it was “the Ukrainians’ historical ties to Europe [that] distinguished them from the Russians,” and this “became an article of faith in Ukrainian national ideology.”¹⁶

Seen in this light, Kotliarevs’kyi’s *Eneïda* and its two popular adaptations produced two centuries later combine Ukrainian elements with those of the West to forge a literature and culture that are both “national” and “European.” All three draw on the mythology of Cossackdom, the institution associated with the Ukrainians’ struggle for liberation. In the *Eneïda*, Enei (Aeneas) is not simply dressed in Cossack clothes; the hero and his fellow Trojans look like Cossacks, talk like Cossacks, fight like Cossacks, and party like them, with both gods and mortals indulging in local vodka and Ukrainian dumplings (*varenyky*). What is more, they do this in the vernacular thereby, simultaneously, inventing the modern Ukrainian literary language. After contextualizing Kotliarevs’kyi’s poem and examining its generic aspects, we will examine how Kotliarevs’kyi’s use of *surzhyk*, a humorous and often incongruous combination of languages, is paralleled in the melding of musical styles and visual images in Bedusenko’s rock opera and Dakhno’s animated film.



Ivan Kotliarevs’kyi (1769–1838) was a poet and playwright known primarily for his *Eneïda* and the play *Natalka Poltavka* (*Natalka from Poltava*, 1819), which has also been adapted to opera and film. In 1808, four years after retiring from military service and settling in his native Poltava, he organized and led a Cossack cavalry regiment to fight Napoleon, who was “said to have taken [*Eneïda*] with him on his retreat from Moscow as the outstanding Ukrainian literary achievement [of the time].”¹⁷ Kotliarevs’kyi began writing the *Eneïda* in 1794, and the earliest edition of the poem consisting of the first three parts was published in Petersburg in the “Little Russian” (*malorosiiskii*) language, used in the Russian Empire to designate the Ukrainian; appended to the text was an ethnographic glossary of 972 words. In the following years, more editions of the poem, with added parts and a longer glossary, were printed.¹⁸ By 1827, Kotliarevs’kyi

¹⁵ Pavlyshyn 2009, 190.

¹⁶ Szporluk 2009, 11.

¹⁷ “Kotliarevsky” 1942.

¹⁸ The first edition of the poem was evidently published without the knowledge or permission of the author at the expense of Ukrainian public figure and patron of the arts Maksym Parpura. In 1809,

had finished six parts and expanded the glossary to 1547 words. The first full edition was published posthumously in Kharkiv in 1842. Finally, in 1909, the language on the title page was changed from “Little Russian” to “Ukrainian.”¹⁹ The change coincided with a period of leniency (1905–1914) toward the public use of the Ukrainian language in the Russian Empire.²⁰

Though not the first of its kind, the Ukrainian *Aeneid* is a curious instance of an artist paying homage to Virgil’s European classic by “dress[ing]” it up “to appear ridiculous” (“travesty,” from mid-seventeenth century French *travesti*, “disguised”).²¹ In literature, travesty refers to a work that treats a noble and dignified subject in a trivial manner, employing incongruous language and style. Because *Eneida* is one, it is composed in iambic tetrameter rather than the dactylic hexameter appropriate for the high epic genre. The Cossacks are not only mythic but also burlesque, portrayed using the techniques of the carnivalesque: “excessive eating, drinking and carousal.”²² Kotliarevs’kyi “took at face value classicism’s restriction of the thematic material of ‘ordinary people’ to the ‘lower genres’ of the generic hierarchy.”²³ Yet, while staying within the confines of classicism, he was also revolutionary: he followed the precept “that ‘low genres’ admit the use of ‘low style’ in order to introduce—for the first time—vernacular Ukrainian as a language of literature,” thus distinguishing it from the “old baroque literature” composed in “a scholarly language not used in any natural speech.” In effect, he “projected a new audience for his work, co-extensive with the speakers of his language, and not including those all-imperial readers unversed in Ukrainian”; the success of the poem “stood as evidence of the participation of both the educated descendant of the Cossack elite and the untutored, but linguistically adept, peasant in a single cultural community: the nation.”²⁴ By helping to create a modern Ukrainian literary language, Kotliarevs’kyi therefore contributed not only to the evolution of Ukrainian literature but also to the preservation of the nation’s cultural heritage.²⁵

following its second 1808 edition, the third edition of the poem, now in four parts, was released; the latter had been corrected by the author and the glossary expanded to include another 153 words. Part V was written in 1821, and by 1827, Part VI was finished.

¹⁹ Stavyts’kyi 1968/1986; Andrusyshen & Kirkconnell (tr) 1963, 2.

²⁰ Luckyj 1956, 25.

²¹ For a discussion of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century travesties of the *Aeneid* (in Italian, French, German, and Russian), see Zyla 1972, 193–4; for Virgilian parody and burlesque, see Hardie 2014, 173–88.

²² Pavlyshyn 2009 187–88.

²³ Pavlyshyn, 2009, 187–88.

²⁴ Pavlyshyn 2009, 188.

²⁵ Chernetsky 2007, xiv, 269n, describes as “literature-centrism” this attribute of Ukrainian and other Eastern European national cultures, which had no official nation-state in the past two centuries

For an illustration of Kotliarevs'kyi's style, let us analyze the poem's opening lines in C.H. Andrusyshen and Watson Kirkconnell's translation:²⁶

Aeneas was a lively fellow,
Lusty as any Cossack blade,
In every kind of mischief mellow,
The staunchest tramp to ply his trade.
But when the Greeks, with all their trouble,
Had burned down Troy and left it rubble,
Taking a knapsack, off he wheels,
Together with some reckless puffins—
Singed lads, who looked like ragamuffins—
And to old Troy he showed his heels.

He built in haste a [f]ew big dories
And launched them on the dark blue sea.
Filled to the brim with Trojan tories,
And sailed off blind and hastily.
But wicked Juno, spiteful hussy,
Came cackling like a pullet fussy:
Dark hatred smouldered in her mind!
For some time now her wish most evil
Had been to send him to the devil
Till not a smell was left behind. (1.1–2)²⁷

In contrast to Virgil's towering *Arma virumque* ("of Arms and the Man"), Kotliarevs'kyi describes the eponymous hero as a "parubok" and its near synonym, "khlopetz"; An-

and to whose national literatures we can consequently turn for a record of national consciousness. Given how prominently language and identity figure in discussions in and outside of academia, an explanation of this pairing's significance seems almost unnecessary. According to Ashcroft et al. (eds) 1994, 283: "Language is a fundamental site of struggle for post-colonial discourse because the colonial process itself begins in language[...] Its system of values—its suppositions, its geography, its concept of history, of difference, its myriad of distinction—becomes the system upon which social and political discourses are grounded."

²⁶ Andrusyshen & Kirkconnell (tr) 1963, 2–3. For a complete English translation, see: *Aeneid*, tr. V. Melnyk (2004); for German: *Aeneida*, ed. L. Rudnytzky & U. Schweier, tr. I. Katschaniuk-Spiech (2003); for Polish: *Eneida*, tr. P. Kupryś (2008); for Russian: *Eneida*, tr. V. Potapova (1970), tr. I. Brazhnin (1953).

²⁷ Еней був парубок моторний | І хлопець хоть куди козак, | Удавсь на всеє зле проворний, | Завзятийший од всіх бурлак. | Но греки, як спаливши Трою, | Зробили з неї скирту гною, | Він взявши торбу тягу дав; | Забравши деяких троянців, | Осмалених, як гиря, ланців, | П'ятами з Трої наживав. | | Він, швидко поробивши човни, | На синє море попускав, | Троянців насаджавши повні, | І куди очі почухрав. | Но зла Юнона, суча дочка, | Розкудкудакалась, як квочка, | Енея не любила—страх; | Давно вона уже хотіла, | Щоб його душка полетіла | К чортам і щоб і дух не пах.

drusyshen and Kirkconnell translate the former as “fellow,” a noun that has a range of meanings in Ukrainian (boy, youngster, lad, chap, guy) and the latter, in line 2, with an idiomatic “[l]usty [...] blade,” whereas W. Semenyna translates the second line more literally: “And quite a Kozak for a lad.”²⁸ Although neither does justice to the original, both sufficiently convey the playful mockery: these are not the nouns we would associate with Aeneas, who might be a “fellow,” and even a young one, but is hardly a boy. The way he is described in the following two lines, as “[t]he staunchiest tramp” (literally “the fiercest boatman”) known for his “mischief” is, moreover, a far cry from Virgil’s *pious* or *pater Aeneas*. The one is Aeneas’ definitive epithet used twenty-one times in the epic to designate the notion of *pietas* (righteousness, or duty and obligation to others); the other is used seventeen times to highlight Aeneas’ role as the forefather of the Roman people.²⁹

It is known in translation studies how difficult it is to convey the spirit of the original accurately, staying faithful to the meaning without confusing or alienating the target audience. Percy Bysshe Shelley would say that, in the case of poetry, this is not just difficult but impossible; he describes the “vanity of translation” as “the burden of the curse of Babel,” and compares it “to cast[ing] a violet into a crucible that you might discover the formal principle of its colour and odour.”³⁰ In Kotliarev’skyi’s case, this is further complicated by the use of regional dialect, slang, neologisms, and colloquialisms, which may call for occasional coarse language.³¹ For example, Andrusyshen and

²⁸ “Kotlyarevsky” 1942.

²⁹ Ball 1991, 22.

³⁰ Shelley 1845, 3.

³¹ On the challenges of translating the poem, due to the broad spectrum of nationally specific lexicon employed, see Zymomria & Havryliuk 2013. The two Ukrainian researchers focus on the interpretive choices for various drinks in the English, German, Russian, and Polish translations of the *Eneida*, and demonstrate the tension between ethnographic accuracy and the practical needs of the target audience, as well as the translator’s individual aesthetics, complicated by the poem’s now archaic vocabulary; denotative nuances, such as designating the drinker’s social status through the purity of the alcohol; and more complex connotative meaning of lexical units when part of idiomatic expressions. While the linguistic proximity of Slavic languages allows for near equivalency less obtainable in Germanic rendering, a case by case analysis reveals the difficulty of preserving Kotliarev’skyi’s distinctive “color.” For example, Zymomria & Havryliuk 2013, 15: the common term for vodka, *horilka* (used 21 times), is translated into English as whisky, booze, gin, brandy (Melnik 2004), into German as *der Schnaps, Branntwein, Wodka* (Katschaniuk-Spiech 2003); into Polish—*gorzalka, zwyczajna wodka* (Kupryś 2008), and into Russian—*gorelka* (Potapova 1970) and *gorilka, gorilochka, gorilka prosta, vodka* (Brazhnin 1953). For idiomatic translation, consider the following partial equivalency: “pylas’ horilka, iak voda” (literally, “*horilka* was drunk like water”) is translated into German as “So wie das Wasser, floß der Schnaps”; into Russian: “lilas’ gorilka, kak voda” (Brazhnin); and into Polish: “*gorzałkę niczym wodę chlali*.” But it is the following interpretations,

Kirkconnell's "rubble" into which the Greeks "[h]ad burned down Troy" is literally "a heap of manure" (Semenyna's somewhat tamer "heap of litter"), and their "wicked Juno" is not merely a "spiteful hussy" (Semenyna's "cackling Juno, dog-gone daughter"), but a "bitch's daughter." Later in the poem, when Enei meets Sivilla (the Sybil), we find a woman who resembles Virgil's learned prophetess only when brewing up the history of Rome in a cauldron with regional herbs (3.136); she is described as a "stara suka" and a "sucha baba," that is, an "old bitch" and "bitchy woman" (4.4–5), epithets which recall those of Iunona (Juno) more so than her Virgilian counterpart, who would not, moreover, invent an artificial language to confuse Aeneas and procure more money, as Kotliarevs'kyi's Sybil does (4.1–2).

Many other examples can be found throughout the work. Dido's ominous curse (*Aen.* 4.584–629) becomes Didona's comical threat to break Enei's nose when the two meet in hell (3.102–104); Lavinia (Lavysia) is compared to Greek sausage and *pervak* (a popular form of moonshine), but, thankfully, judged to be superior to both (4.22). The poet is equally unsparing of female divinities: in his invocation of the Muse, he calls the goddess "a querulous old hag," then ostensibly apologizes, explaining that he must have mistakenly invoked a spinster, and summons another who is "joyful, beautiful, and young," adding that Pegasus should kick the old goddesses to the curb (5.117–8).³² The poet even kicks the author of the *Aeneid* to the curb: he mentions Virgil, "a mighty clever man, let him rest in peace," only to challenge the epic description of hell because things have changed since ancient times (3.42).³³ Yet, referring to the Roman later in the poem, the poet of the *Eneida* also admits his superiority in describing human tragedy (6.89).

Just as Enei is transformed into a Cossack, the Sybil assumes the attributes of Baba Yaga, the archetypal witch in Slavic fairytales who usually lives in a cottage poised on chicken legs. The closing line refers to an idea found in such tales: wondering whether one can smell a hero's spirit (*dukh*) and preparing to eat him for dinner, the witch for-

write Zymomria & Havryliuk 2013, 16, that best convey stylistic coloration: "the booze was drunk like Adam's ale" (Melnyk) and "Сивуху, пенник и настойки / Лакали наравне с водой," in Potarova's "Ukrainization" of the Russian.

³² Гей, музо, панночко цнотлива, | Ходи до мене погостить! [...] | Ти, кажуть, дівка не бриклава, | Але од старості сварлива; | Прости! я, може, досадив. І в самій речі проступився — | Старою дівчину назвав, | Ніхто з якою не любився, | Ні женихавсь, ні жартовав. [...] | Я музу кличу не такую: | Веселу, гарну, молодую; | Старих нехай брика Пегас.

³³ Вергілій же, нехай царствує, | Розумненький був чоловік, | Нехай не вадить, як не чує, | Та в давній дуже жив він вік. | Не так тепер і в пеклі стало, | Як в старину колись бувало | І як покійник написав; | Я, може, що-небудь прибавлю; | Переміню і що оставлю, | Писну—як од старих чував.

mulaically states, “I smell Russian flesh. Who’s there?” Among other notable references to Eastern Slavic and Ukrainian folklore, we find the poet comparing Turnus to “a devil in a marsh” (6.39); giving Zeus an entourage of *mavki* (in Slavic mythology, female water spirits or forest fairies believed to be the souls of those who died unnatural, tragic, or premature deaths) (6.34); and including folktale villains Koschei, the archetypal male antagonist, and Baba Iaga in the ekphrasis of Enei’s shield (5.45). When Iunona agrees to stop the war provided the Latin race and language be preserved, Zeus whistles a folk tune, “Metelytsia” (“Blizzard”) (6.162). Thus, through his use of regional dialect and folkloric material, Kotliarevs’kyi forged a language more alive and accessible than that of the “old baroque literature”; by appropriating the authoritative account of the founding of Rome, he also helped to secure the position of Ukrainian language and literature in the European literary canon.

Another important way in which Kotliarevs’kyi combined the national with the European was by mixing the Ukrainian language with the Latin. In the seventeenth century, Ukrainian cultural elite was generally multilingual, speaking up to four languages, one of which was Latin; the latter was used widely in academia, and even students in village schools were exposed to some Greek and Latin.³⁴ Kotliarevs’kyi’s readers would, in other words, appreciate his humorous linguistic innovation. Laada Bilaniuk calls his Ukrainian-Latin *surzhyk*,³⁵ a term that, in contemporary usage, refers to a mixed language consisting of Ukrainian elements in conjunction with the Russian (usually the vocabulary is taken from Russian and the grammar from Ukrainian), and marks a speaker’s lack of linguistic proficiency. Consider the following example of the way Kotliarevs’kyi’s mimicking of natural speech is brought to the literary level, in Bilaniuk’s translation: “Eneus noster magnus lordus, and glorious Trojanorum prince [Virgil’s “dux Troianorum”], you have zig-zagged the seas like a gypsyus, adte o rex, he has nunc sent us” (4.46).³⁶ “Prince” is somewhat misleading here as the original noun is *kniaz’*, a typical Slavic title referring to nobility which, once again, serves to appropriate and localize the Trojan hero; the counterpart to *kniaz’* appears at the end of line 1 and is translated by Bilaniuk as “lordus”; in the original it is “panus,” *pan* being the Ukrainian (also Polish) term for lord, mister, gentleman, or sir to which the suffix –us has been added to make the distinctively Slavic word sound Latin (the same is done to “gypsy,” one iteration of Enei’s plight as a wanderer and exile). Another striking use of this pseudo-language, which seems especially incongruous when spelled out in Cyrillic

³⁴ Pachlovska 1998, 102–3.

³⁵ Bilaniuk 2005, 107.

³⁶ Енеус ностер магнус панус | І славний троянорум князь, | Шмигляв по морю як циганус, | Ад те, о рекс! прислав нунк нас.

letters, is found in the next stanza, wherein the opening line is repeated, but with a difference: “Eneus is a lively princeps / Formosus, handsome and agile” (4.47).³⁷ By means of linguistic jumble, the “lively” and “agile” local hero is thus inscribed into Virgil’s formidable tradition, with ironic distance achieved through stylistic mockery.

Turning now to the plot of the mock epic, it essentially follows that of *The Aeneid*, starting with Aeneas’ flight from Troy to what would become Rome, and ending with his victory over Turnus for the hand of Lavinia. Or, rather, the plot of the *Eneïda* starts with Enei’s flight from the Trojan Sich to what would become the Roman Sich, and ends with his victory over Turnus for the hand of Lavysia, Lavinia’s Slavicized diminutive name. The poem is, in fact, firmly grounded in Ukrainian history; it is not just a travesty, but an “extensive organic transformatio[n]” of Virgil’s material, which, arguably, thus surpasses its western forerunners.³⁸ Throughout Kotliarevs’kyi’s poem, there are countless references to the Sich, or the Cossack host, the administrative and military center comprised of encampments and fortifications, and presided over by the Sich Council; and to the Hetman state (Hetmanshchina), the autonomous administration of the left bank of the Dnieper River, which included Poltava and Kyïv, and was led by a formally elected hetman. For example, he mentions “our Hetmanshchina”, as Latium, is preparing for war with Turnus (4.101), referencing “the glorious Cossack regiments,” from Kotliarevs’kyi’s native Poltava and the nearby town of Lubny, and comparing their hats to “poppies in bloom” (“V shapkah bylo iak mak, tsvitut”), an image which more readily evokes the flower common to Ukrainian landscape and folklore than it does Virgil’s famous simile of the poppy that droops its head after a plough has cut it.³⁹ In another instance (4.123), he compares Turnus’ fierce Etruscan ally Mezentius to the Lubny regiment leader (*polkovnyk*), who, in the Battle of Poltava (1709), led his troops to Poltava in time to assist Peter the Great of Russia in defeating the Swedish forces under Carl Gustav Rehnskiöld. After summoning Mezentius’ epic prowess and role as ally to a prince, rather than his reputation,⁴⁰ the poet then draws a parallel between the “bulwarks” (*valy*), where the Swedes had fallen decades earlier, and the present-day “boulevards” (*bulevary*) left “for us to tread upon”—thus forging a connection with the legendary battle through the shared, though notably altered,

³⁷ Енеус принцепс есть моторний, | Формозус, гарний і проворний.

³⁸ Zyla 1972, 194.

³⁹ *Purpureus veluti cum flos succisus aratro* (*Aen.* 9.435). For another interpretation of Virgil’s “purple flower,” see McGill 2005, 113.

⁴⁰ In the *Aeneid*, Mezentius is described as a “fierce” (*turbidus*, 10.763) atheist or “despiser of gods” (*contemptor divum*, 7.648), with “savage forces” (*saevis tenuit Mezentius armis*, 8.482).

physical space.⁴¹ By the time Kotliarevs'kyi began writing the *Eneïda*, the Zaporozhian Sich—the domain of the Zaporozhian Cossacks whom he re-imagines as the Trojans headed by Aeneas—had been disbanded by Catherine the Great. The Poltava fortress, once a locus of Cossack pride, had by then become the property of the Russian tsarina. The end of the Sich undoubtedly influenced the poet's choice of these now effectively homeless Ukrainian warriors—hence the parallel to Aeneas, whom Virgil describes, in the opening lines of the epic, as an involuntary “fugitive” (*profugus*).⁴²

By giving his Ukrainian readers a Cossack Aeneas, Kotliarevs'kyi was responding to the colonization of Ukrainian lands by the Russian Empire. Catherine's 1775 decree to disband the Sich, followed by the abolition of the Hetman state in 1785, ended historic Cossackdom; some Cossacks were turned into peasants and tied to the land through the extension of the Russian serfdom system in 1783, while others were absorbed into the imperial army; Cossack elites loyal to the state were, however, granted the same rights as Russian nobility.⁴³ This was part of the broader systematic suppression of Ukrainian culture in the second half of the eighteenth century. Ukraine's “baroque high religious culture” was affected by the tsars' abolition of important religious institutions, while its local cultural production was thwarted due to “the generalization throughout the empire of the cultural norms and practices of the capital.”⁴⁴ This has led scholars to describe Ukraine's experience as fitting two models at once: “the colonial” and “the provincial”: “a semi-autonomous or vassal country” and “a somnolent province of Russia” (which is what the Hetman State had been turned into at the end of the eighteenth century).⁴⁵

A short historical overview may clarify Kotliarevs'kyi's reasons for transforming Aeneas into a Cossack. The Cossacks were known for their democratic self-governance, independence, and resistance to oppression; some participated in anti-imperialist uprisings. The risk of warfare and threats to the Cossacks' autonomy often resulted in complex political alliances with other states, as well as in conflicts within. Throughout their fraught history, the Cossacks were entangled with the Tsardom of Moscow/Russia, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the Crimean Khanate, the Ottoman Empire, and other non-Orthodox minorities, primarily the Catholics and the Jews. In

⁴¹ Пропади Шведи тут прочвари, | Пропаві вал—а булевари | Досталось нам тепер топтати. (4.123) There is, moreover, an etymological connection between “bulwarks” and “boulevards,” since the term *boulevard* had, in mid-eighteenth century French, meant “a rampart,” and only later came to designate “a promenade on the site of one” (*OED*).

⁴² *Aen.* 1.2.

⁴³ Zyla 1972, 195–6; Kubicek 2008, 50.

⁴⁴ Pavlyshyn 2009, 187.

⁴⁵ Grabowicz 1995, 678–79.

the mid-1600s, the Cossack state was itself divided, with Right-Bank Cossacks allying themselves with the Poles to fight against the Left-Bank Cossacks, who sided with the Moscovites, during the period that came to be known as “the Ruin.”⁴⁶ In the aforementioned Battle of Poltava, the Cossack forces were divided, as well, with several thousands joining the Swedish monarch Charles XII and the majority supporting Peter the Great.⁴⁷ Interestingly, the very same people who would come to symbolize an independent Ukraine were originally not even Slavs: “The term ‘Cossack’ means freeman, guard, and freebooter in the Turkic languages of the area, and the first Cossacks were of Turkic rather than Slavic stock. These were nomadic warriors engaged in acts of steppe piracy on their own initiative, not on orders of their superiors.” They were “the steppe riff-raff” that “came from all states and nations and were under no one’s jurisdiction.”⁴⁸ Unlike their historic counterparts, the mythic Cossacks were, on the other hand, quintessential Ukrainian heroes and thus a perfect vehicle for Kotliarevs’kyi’s message. 1785, the year the autonomous Ukrainian Hetmanate was abolished in the Russian Empire, also witnessed “the beginning of a Ukrainian cultural and literary revival there.”⁴⁹ It is the so-called “awakeners,” who “successfully established [the Cossack narrative] as the founding myth of the modern Ukrainian nation.”⁵⁰ The Cossacks were national heroes with whom the reader could identify, and because “now defunct,” they also inspired “nostalgia for a lost liberty and vitality.”⁵¹ The image of the Cossack continued to evolve throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, reflecting individual authors’ national and populist beliefs. Ukraine’s eminent historian Mykhailo Drahomanov (1841–1895), for example, “thought of Cossackdom as characterized by adherence to democratic institutions and practices, which linked Ukraine with Europe and distinguished it from authoritarian Russia.”⁵² The Cossack as fighter against Russian autocracy figured prominently in Ukraine’s brief existence as an independent state: in 1918, Hetman Pavlo Skoropadsky “was elected by a congress of Ukrainian landowners, [and] used Cossack symbols and traditions to legitimize his rule over Ukraine.”⁵³ Following the Russian Revolution, the Bolsheviks also tried to capitalize on the Cossack appeal

⁴⁶ Plokhy 2012, 40.

⁴⁷ Thompson 2009, 113.

⁴⁸ Plokhy 2012, 31–32.

⁴⁹ Szporluk 2009, 4–5.

⁵⁰ Plokhy 2012, 65.

⁵¹ Pavlyshyn 2009, 188.

⁵² Plokhy 2012, 365. One notable exception was Nikolai Gogol who, in *Taras Bulba* (1835), presented the Cossacks as “true Russians,” the defenders of Eastern Orthodoxy and Rus’ against the Catholic Poles.

⁵³ Plokhy 2012, 365.

and created detachments of Red Cossacks. In the Soviet authorities, however, the Cossacks did not inspire much trust since they were associated with “the well-to-do Russian peasantry that resisted Stalin’s collectivization of agriculture and, in the Ukrainian case, [with] symbols of Ukrainian nationalism”; therefore, research on Cossackdom was practically outlawed in the 1970s, and a high-flying party boss was even removed “on allegations of national deviation and idealization of the Cossack past.” This was reversed in 1990, “with pro-independence marches commemorating five hundred years of Ukrainian Cossackdom.”⁵⁴



Bedusenko’s and Dakhno’s contemporary adaptations of the *Eneïda* are, arguably, part of this evolving Cossack mythology. Like Kotliarevs’kyi, who wanted to carve out a legitimate space for the vernacular in the new Ukrainian literary culture, Bedusenko took Ukrainian traditional melodies and aligned them with new Ukrainian popular music. Although grounded in the neoclassical tradition that had also produced its operatic predecessor,⁵⁵ Bedusenko’s work simultaneously gravitates towards modernity. His version of Kotliarevs’kyi’s Latin-Ukrainian *surzhyk* takes the form of mixed musical genres, both high and low. In the words of artist Anatolii Matviychuk, Bedusenko “succeeded in uniting the Ukrainian burlesque traditions and the Italian *seria* and *buffa* operas with the traditions of the international rock and pop music within the scope of a single musical composition. Taken as the basis, the Ukrainian song folklore [harmoniously] co-exists with the elements of art and jazz rock, reggae, blues and even rap.”⁵⁶ Besides Matviychuk, performers on this recording include Bohdan Stupka, actor and former minister of culture; actress Natalia Sumska; and singer, actress, and former parliamentarian Taisia Povaliy, among other household names. As well as a celebration of its contemporary talent, the rock opera can be seen as an example of *povernennia*, a nostalgic return to Ukraine’s European roots. The record was, in fact, described by one of the founders of the Ukrainian rock scene as “a retrospective project.”⁵⁷

⁵⁴ Plokyh 2012, 365–66.

⁵⁵ Ukrainian composer and ethnomusicologist Mykola Lysenko (1842–1912) wrote a neoclassical opera based on Kotliarevs’kyi’s poem in 1910. For more on Ukrainian modernist music, see Makaryk & Tkacz (eds) 2010.

⁵⁶ This quotation appears in Ukrainian on the insert to the CD.

⁵⁷ Zelinsky 2002. Petrynenko was, incidentally, once a member of a music group called *Enei*.

A brief analysis of the generic and stylistic elements of Bedusenko's *Eneïda* will make this evident. The "Introduction" begins appropriately with a fusion of the high/classical/operatic and the low/popular/rock genres: the string section introduces the dominant theme, and the woodwinds join in with the theme's second iteration; both are arranged in neoclassical style, the twentieth-century's harking back to classical models of constraint, order, and balance. A touch of blues is, however, present in the cadence: the phrase closes with the fifth—minor seventh—tonic movement of the minor pentatonic (in the key of C, this would be G-B \flat -C). The opening exposition leads to a violin tremolo that provides an ominous backdrop to the reading of the first ten lines of Kotliarevs'kyi's poem followed, in turn, by highly reverberated shouts of "Pozhar!" ("Fire!"), introducing the section on the conflagration of Troy ("Pozhar Troï"). The latter opens with the strings, as well, and is a variation on the opening theme; yet now the instrumentation is synthesized (using imitative synthesis of acoustic instruments), and accompanied by electronic percussion with recognizably folk elements, a nod to contemporary Ukrainian popular music.

The opening theme is, moreover, evoked and reinterpreted throughout the work serving not only as its unifying feature but also, and perhaps more important, as an expression of its stylistic fusion, from classical instrumentation to synthesized strings and jazz piano (the latter in the section set at Latyn's [Latinus'] Palace). In the section entitled "Hopak-sirtaki," the opening melody is recast using synthesized instrumentation, combining classical, folk, and contemporary popular motifs: namely, the traditional Ukrainian folk dance *hopak* (*gopak* or Cossack dance) with the Greek *sirtaki* (*syrtaki*).⁵⁸ His fateful alliance with Pallas' father Evander notwithstanding, Aeneas is, of course, Trojan, not Greek, but we cannot fault Bedusenko for selecting a recognizably Mediterranean tune, as the strength of his rock opera lies not in erudite fidelity, but in its appeal to the general public. Following Juno's lead in Book XII, and perhaps also in the spirit of travesty, he further blurs the distinction between Trojans and Romans: we could interpret the pictures of the composer included in the CD booklet—one, in front of a green screen featuring the Roman Coliseum, another in front of a series of boats at sea—as part of the larger joke. The opening theme reappears in the "Interlude" leading to the opera's finale, which is performed by a duet of virtuoso jazz singers; this culmination, again, exemplifies the work's synthesis of local Ukrainian motifs and western models. In one final evocation of the opening two lines of Kotliarevs'kyi's poem ("Enei buv parubok motornyi / i khlopetz' hot' kudy kozak"), the past

⁵⁸ This dance is famously featured in Michael Cacoyannis' film *Zorba the Greek* (1964).

and present are further ensconced: the first word—Enei—points back to Virgil's Troy, the last—kozak—to the Ukrainian Sich.

Equally illuminating is the visual mixing of the two traditions on the front cover of the CD. Enclosed in a black frame with the authors' names and the title in white lettering, there appears a stylized modern image of Cossack Mamay, a staple of folk iconography typically portrayed with a *kobza*, a lute-like Ukrainian folk instrument, sitting next to or atop a horse.⁵⁹ In this case, the legendary figure is depicted as a centaur, dressed in a red jacket with a black rim and holding an electric guitar, a white Fender Stratocaster with a black pick guard. One of the centaur's front legs is raised giving the composition a sense of movement, and this is reinforced by the choice of rich, vibrant colors (red, white, blue, and black with a touch of gold); forceful strokes extending from the bottom left to the top right, finally, direct the eye toward a luminous star. The choice of iconography is clearly deliberate: as in Kotliarevs'kyi's travesty, Enei is dressed in ludicrous garb and made relevant and appealing to contemporary Ukrainians through Cossack mythology and, specifically, the figure of Cossack Mamay, with his horse and *kobza* updated accordingly.

Dakhno's animated film, a loose adaptation of Kotliarevs'kyi's poem, is similar in spirit to Bedusenko's rock opera as it melds the Ukrainian with the Roman. The setting, as the opening caption announces, is "Trojan Sich," an imaginary localization that identifies Virgil's subject with the Ukrainian host; what follows is a series of quintessentially Ukrainian scenes depicting the sewing, reaping, and threshing of wheat, no doubt a reference to Ukraine's proverbial status as "the breadbasket of Europe." Once the chaff is removed and the flour ready, women and men dressed in regional clothes are shown preparing, boiling, and serving dumplings (*varenyky*). Only after about a minute, we catch a glimpse of Enei feasting at a rich dinner table, yet the focus immediately shifts to the encroaching Greeks whom Enei and his troops, despite their own visible intoxication, manage to stall by pouring vodka and hurling pickles from the high walls of the Trojan citadel. While Enei tries to comprehend the divine message from Zeus, sent by means of a lightning arrow turned telegram, the Greeks (who look like Greek soldiers, not Eastern Slavs) refashion a traditional wooden cottage (*khata*) into a Trojan horse; by the time the horse arrives, however, the Trojans have already

⁵⁹ A famous bronze sculpture of Cossack Mamay was among a series of monuments erected on Kyiv's main Independence Square (Maidan Nezalezhnosti, the seat of the Maidan movement), to commemorate the tenth anniversary of Ukraine's sovereignty in 2001: Kyi, Shchek, Khoryv, and their sister Lybid', the city's legendary founders; Archangel Michael, its patron saint; and a 200-foot (61-meter) tall Protectress (*Berehynia*), a female divinity in traditional Ukrainian garb with a branch of *viburnum* (guelder rose).

left, having hoisted the contents of their citadel on to a few hyperbolically overflowing boats. All that is left for the Greeks to seize is Troy's wall-less city gate. In this version, although his father and fellow Trojans are dead (the hero visits their graves prior to departure), the Trojans do not lose to the Greeks; rather, they outsmart them first with the drinking stratagem, then with a swift flight. Once Enei is at sea, the opening lines to Kotliarevs'kyi's poem are narrated, and the film follows the epic's basic plot. The soundtrack by Ihor Poklad draws on recognizably Ukrainian folk melodies, with predominantly synthesized instrumentation; the dialogue is conducted mostly through captions, often verbalizing the characters' incoherent mumbling, while the main action is narrated in a clear voice-over (by A. Podubyns'kyi).

The humor is lighthearted, with both gods and humans subjected to mockery; at times, however, it is also troubling. The film is rife with ethnic stereotypes and examples of Orientalism (essentializing and distorted depictions of Middle-Eastern, Asian, and African cultures).⁶⁰ For example, in the scene where Eol (Aeolus) summons the four winds, the southern Not (Notus) is depicted as a Papuan aboriginal, with red skin, freakishly large protruding lips, large hoop earrings, headdress, and hand drum; the eastern Evr (Eurus), by a belligerent samurai, who twirls around uncontrollably cutting the air with his martial arts gestures. The West is ridiculed, as well: the northern wind Borei (Boreas) resembles an overweight Viking, like Obélix in the French *Asterix* comic book series, though clad for colder weather; the westward wind Zephir (Zephyrus), by a lanky Spaniard with a stiff long black mustache, flowing black hair, and a guitar, who is summoned from Venus' bedchamber to the accompaniment of pronouncedly flagrant Spanish music. Eol, on the other hand, appears in peasant clothes, with a loose-fitting belted shirt, pipe, and wide-rimmed farmer's hat one might identify with Ukrainian peasantry; yet, he too is not spared ridicule: in an earlier scene, he is shown salivating at the sight of an attractive young woman with shapely hips and engorged nipples wearing nothing but a black bowtie hair pin.

Biases cross both ethnic and gender lines. Women in this film are reduced to erotic objects. One recent version of the DVD cover ("Klassik-Video," 2008) features Enei in full Cossack regalia leering at a miniature naked woman suspended in the clouds, whose small size contrasts her gigantic breasts. In Dakhno's animated film, Didona's body is the focus of a series of scenes which also fetishize her breasts, hips, and buttocks, which are only partly covered by light harem pants; like the south wind, she has red skin. As she notices Enei's titillation upon seeing her female attendants, three identical dark-skinned dancers with grossly enlarged hips, the jealous Didona puts her own

⁶⁰ Said 1979, 363.

hips to use and performs for him the dance of the seven veils. The Carthaginian queen serves here not only as a distraction from his mission to found Rome, but also as someone eager to erase Enei's Cossack identity: the hero has by now donned eastern dress and a huge turban. Dakhno's *Eneïda* brings the poem to life and exemplifies visually the kind of fusion we hear in Bedusenko's rock opera and read in Kotliarev'skyi's *surzhyk*. Its crude portrayal of the Other notwithstanding, the film testifies to the ongoing relevance of the Ukrainian *Aeneid* and its Cossack heroes to the Ukrainian public. On the eighty-first anniversary of Dakhno's birth (7 March 2013), his animated series "Kazaki" (The Cossacks) was commemorated in a Google "doodle" (the logotype at the top of the search engine's home page).



To conclude, a contextualized analysis of the stylistic, linguistic, and generic melding in Kotliarev'skyi's *Eneïda* and in its two contemporary adaptations reveals the cultural potential of Ukraine's claimed European heritage and also the importance of the liberal ideology expressed in the myth of the free Cossacks, who appear time and again in Ukrainian iconography and become emblematic of Ukrainian people at large. By couching his oblique criticism in the language of the Trojan War, Kotliarev'skyi was able to challenge the legitimacy of those in power while also offering the possibility of hope: "the striking contrast [...] between the wretched conditions under the Russian Tsarist yoke and the inspiring past of the Kozaks—drawn cleverly enough not to offend the censor—caused many of those who read it to become conscious of their national plight," according to a 1942 edition of *Ukrainian Weekly*. As Virgil's is both an epic of national loss and regeneration, so is Kotliarev'skyi's travesty, which opens, similarly, among the ruins of the Sich and posits a future free from oppression. In effect, the poem "started not only the Ukrainian literary renaissance but also the Ukrainian national renaissance, with its goal of a free and independent and democratic Ukraine."⁶¹ Although published during the Nazi occupation of Ukraine seventy years ago, this summoning of "the father of Ukrainian literature" seems urgent given the current crisis in Ukraine, enabling Aeneas, along with his Ukrainian Cossacks, to gain new cultural valence.

⁶¹ *Ukrainian Weekly*, "Kotlyarevsky" 1942. For examples of oblique criticism in other vernacular literatures, see Smith 1997, 203–12, for Elizabethan and Jacobean England; Shields 2004, for America (chapters on Hawthorne and Melville).

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The Pindaric poetry of Cruz e Silva and the Neoclassical revival among Lusitanian national heroes

RUI CARLOS FONSECA



IN 1755 LISBON was struck by a violent earthquake: many private houses and public buildings collapsed, fires broke out, and the river swallowed much of the downtown area. The king's secretary at the time, better known as Marquês de Pombal,¹ took effective short-term measures to contain the damage and planned long-term arrangements to rebuild the city. Thanks to him, Lisbon acquired a new and more modern architectural appearance, a well-defined geometrical layout, and an impressive ornamental square. This tragic event had important consequences not only for Portuguese society and politics, but also for poetry. The renewal of social life was accompanied by a literary revival.

In the year immediately after the earthquake, a group of enlightened scholars and poets established a literary society called *Arcádia Lusitana*² with the intention of reforming the language and poetry of the time. Towards this end, its members advocated the imitation of Greek and Latin models.³ The Arcadian poets argued that although imitation does not restrain the process of creation, the safest path is to follow the one already taken by ancient authors.⁴ Inspired by the classical tradition, these and other eighteenth-century poets adopted innovative poetic forms.

¹ His birth name was Sebastião José de Carvalho e Melo. He worked twenty-seven years as Secretary of State (1750–1777), received the honorary title of “Marquês de Pombal” by royal decree (1770), and became “one of the greatest actors of Portuguese history” (Serrão 1996, 19). In fact, due to his innovative program for the city and to his quite known political despotism, he remained a controversial historical figure. Even today, the most influential man in the political scenario of the eighteenth century is remembered both as an exceptional ruler and a brutal tyrant. See Serrão 1987 and Serrão 1996, 11–83.

² Also known as *Arcádia Ulissiponense*, this literary society lasted twenty years (1756–1776) and was originally founded by three young poets: António Dinis da Cruz e Silva (1731–1799), Manuel Nicolau Esteves Negrão (?–1824), and Teotónio Gomes de Carvalho (1728?–1800). In the following years, many other reputed poets of the time joined them.

³ Gonçalves 1999, 344.

⁴ Cidade 1984, 257.

The theorization regarding Arcadian aesthetics and literature is based not only on contemporary French and Italian models (such as Boileau, Voltaire, Muratori, and others), but also on Greek and Latin authorities (mainly Aristotle, Longinus, Horace and Quintilian). In fact, neoclassical poets take much of the literary theories they learn from Horace's *Ars Poetica* and Aristotle's *Poetics*. Arcadian poetry is intended to be selective, the most suitable and best qualified, balanced in its style, without the rhetorical excess of Baroque's artistic formalities. It has moral and social purposes, being closely connected with contemporary events: this poetry imitates reality by praising the royal family and other conspicuous members from political life. One may find in Arcadian poetry philosophical influences (Locke and Descartes are frequently paraphrased) along with quotations of classical poets (those from epics, lyrics and drama). Mythology is one of the main aspects of Arcadian aesthetics: the wide range of mythological characters and their stories serves as poetic ornament and is always used with allegorical meaning. Moreover, the presence of mythical elements aims to dignify the life of the Arcadian bourgeois poet and the deeds of great Portuguese men, and at the same time to make them timeless.⁵

António Dinis da Cruz e Silva was one of the founding members of Arcádia and one of the most famous neoclassical poets. He left a very extensive and diversified set of lyric works: in addition to conventional poetic compositions, such as the sonnet (more than three hundred), he also reshaped Greek and Latin material (he wrote twenty-five idylls, nine dithyrambs, eight odes, forty-one anacreontic odes, four hymns, fifty-seven epigrams, two elegies, twelve metamorphoses, a mock-heroic poem, and also a dissertation on the eclogue style).⁶ In fact, Cruz e Silva was the first among the neoclassical Portuguese poets of the eighteenth century to write Pindaric odes, poems which imitate Pindar in structure and theme both directly and indirectly.⁷

Forty-five odes written by the Boeotian poet come down to us. They deal with the fame of athletic winners, have a standard triadic structure, and are characterized by a strong mythological component. Taking this example, Cruz e Silva wrote forty-four Pindaric odes in order to praise the deeds of Portuguese national heroes, such as sailors, captains, soldiers, and ministers. Each of these Portuguese odes follows the same tri-

⁵ On the Arcadian aesthetics see Saraiva & Lopes 2005, 596–603.

⁶ The complete work of Cruz e Silva is edited in four volumes, three of them by Urbano (2000, 2001, 2003), the last one (containing the mock-heroic poem in eight books) by García Martín & Serra (2006).

⁷ In addition to the primary Greek source, Cruz e Silva also follows Italian and French models, namely Gabriello Chiabrera's (1552–1638) and Pierre de Ronsard's (1524–1585) Pindaric poetry.

adic pattern (strophe, antistrophe and epode) and develops mythological content.⁸ Of Cruz e Silva's forty-four Pindaric compositions, eighteen retell the myth of the Trojan War, from its beginnings with Eris to its outcome with the imperishable fame of the most conspicuous Homeric fighters.

Cruz e Silva then adjusted both the content and the rhythmic sequences of Pindaric poetry to national requirements and to the poetic conventions of his time.⁹ As the Portuguese scholar Adelina Júlia Serpa has already noted, the Portuguese neoclassicist wanted to be like the ancient lyric poet, the interpreter of the greatest past achievements and the interpreter of national traditions symbolized in a vast gallery of heroes.¹⁰ This reliance on the Pindaric model and the connection between Poetry and History are the two main topics discussed at the beginning of Cruz e Silva's first ode:

Clio, celestial guide of the Argive songs gentle Alpheus was listening to, when the swan of the river Asopus, releasing his voice, raised the victorious Athlete to the Heavens: you inspire today into the Lusitanian lyre the high sounds which he, by flying into the clouds, has spread.¹¹

The poet opens his first Pindaric text invoking Clio, the Muse of History, who spreads the memory of men's most famous deeds and who guides them in their political affairs.¹² The Muse who helped the ancient Greek poet glorify the winners of athletic games is now evoked to inspire "high sounds" into the "Lusitanian lyre." This invocation to the Muse is followed first by a reference to Pindar, identified as "the swan of the river Asopus," and second by an allusion to his poetry in the periphrastic phrase "he raised the victorious Athlete to the Heavens."

Only in Ode XXXVI (str.1) is Pindar referred to by his name ("I play the great lyre that Pindar pulsed with golden plectrum"). All the other times, the Portuguese poet mentions his prime model by his great talent as a musician or his local provenance: "the Dircean swan" (II, ep.5), "the shining archer from Dirce" (III, ant.2), "the great

⁸ On the regularity of the ancient lyric poetry, see for instance "A Discourse on the Pindarique Ode" by Congreve. On the structure and content of a Pindaric ode, see for instance Freeman 1939, 145.

⁹ Rebelo 1979, 748.

¹⁰ Serpa 1939, 47.

¹¹ Clio, celeste guia | Das Argivas Canções, que o Alfeu brando | Suspenso um tempo ouvia, | Quando do Asopo o cisne a voz soltando, | O triunfante Atleta aos Céus alçava: | Hoje na Lusa lira | Os altos sons inspira, | Que ele, voando às nuvens, derramava. (Ode I, str.1) All English translations of Cruz e Silva's poetry are my own.

¹² Clio is evoked again in other nine Pindaric odes: V (str.1), XVI (ant.5), XIX (ant.3), XXI (str.1), XXII (ep.1), XXV (ep.3), XXXII (str.1), XLI (str.1), XLIII (ep.3). This Muse appears once in Pindar's epidictic poetry: *N. III*, ep.4.

Theban swan" (VII, str.1; IX, ant.1; XVIII, str.1), "the great Theban" (XIV, ant.4), "the glorious singer" (X, ant.2), "the immortal archer" (XII, ep.4), "the singer from the river Ismenus" (XVII, ep.2), "the swan of the river Ismenus" (XXX, str.1).

Pindar "is constantly speaking of his song, and he clothes it in innumerable metaphors,"¹³ many of which are repeated and rewritten by Cruz e Silva. The most frequent metaphors he uses for poetry in his Pindaric odes are the ones regarding the race-horse or chariot,¹⁴ the ship,¹⁵ metallurgical tools,¹⁶ farming tools,¹⁷ the flower,¹⁸ the arrow,¹⁹ and music.²⁰

Cruz e Silva's first ode, recited in 1758 on the occasion of the royal birthday celebration, pays tribute to King José the First as the rebuildler of Lisbon after the earthquake ("He came promptly to the aid of the royal city in horror because of the great danger, and rescued it from the wrathful Fortune," ant.7). Moreover, the poet describes the peaceful and flourishing times that had prevailed in Europe since the Aix-la-Chapelle treaty, signed in 1748. The peace was broken with the Seven Years' War that spread throughout many of the European domains between 1756 and 1763.²¹ The political reasons for this international conflict (mainly the control over colonial trade) poetically converge in Eris, the goddess Discord.

When breaking the chains, infested Eris leaves the depths and brings with her the arduous days of the fateful season. She travels the wealthy Kingdoms in her bloody and ripped clothing, and causes anger and resentment all around and all over the people.²²

¹³ Freeman 1939, 151.

¹⁴ "Argive car" (IV, ant.1), "Dircean car" (XIV, ant.4).

¹⁵ "Argive ship" (V, ep.5), "golden sails" (XL, str.1), "powerful ship" (XLIV, ep.1).

¹⁶ "Dircean incus" (X, ant.2), "Theban burin" (XXIV, ant.1), "Theban incus" (XXVI, ant.1), "Argive burin" (XXXII, ep.4).

¹⁷ "nourisher hymns" (IX, str.1; XXII, ep.1), "Muses' Delphic plow" (XXXIV, str.1).

¹⁸ "flourishing and pilgrim flowers from Dirce" (XXIII, str.1), "golden flowers from Ismenus" (XXXIX, str.2).

¹⁹ "golden arrows" (XXVI, ant.1; XXXV, str.2), "melodious arrows" (XXVIII, str.6), "shinning arrows" (XXX, ant.1), "I do not make arrows vibrate in vain to the wind" (XXXII, ant.3).

²⁰ "Dircean hymns" (IV, ep.1; V, ep.4; VII, ep.5; IX, str.1), "Argive songs" (XXX, str.2), "Theban hymns" (XIX, str.1), "Theban lyre" (V, str.1), "Theban music" (XXIII, ep.4), "Theban harmony" (X, ep.1), "eternal hymns" (XLIII, ant.1), "eternal harmony" (XXX, str.1).

²¹ The Seven Years War involved two main European powers: Great Britain (supported by Prussia) and France (supported by Spain and Russia). Although Portugal was an old British ally, it maintained a relatively neutral position in this conflict.

²² Quando os grilhões rompendo | Sai dos abismos a Discórdia infesta, | Atrás de si trazendo | Dos férreos dias a estação funesta. | Banhada em sangue a rasgada roupa, | Florentes Reinos corre; | E por onde discorre, | Ira acende e rancor em quanto topa. (Ode I, str.4)

This reference to Eris as troublemaker suggests a close relationship with the Trojan War, which also began due to the wrathful actions of the same goddess, since she was the only one of all the Olympian gods who was not invited to Thetis and Peleus' wedding. Both wars assumed continent-spanning proportions (they escalated into a European war and spread to all ancient Greek territory) and lasted for very long periods (seven years in one case, ten years in the other). And, most important in Cruz e Silva's mythological reading, both were caused by Eris.

The process of connecting Eris to the Homeric context of the Trojan War is reinforced by the portrait drawn in the second ode (str.2). This portrait of the goddess walking the earth and raising her head to heaven is taken and reshaped from *Iliad's* fourth book:

Already brutal Eris, by printing on earth the shape of her hideous feet, raises her irascible mood to Heavens, three times the head she shakes, and frantically the poisonous hydras she makes to move off.²³

These were urged on by Ares, and the Greeks by flashing-eyed Athene, and Terror, and Rout, and Discord that rageth incessantly, sister and comrade of man-slaying Ares; she at the first rears her crest but little, yet thereafter planteth her head in heaven, while her feet tread on earth. She it was that now cast evil strife into their midst as she fared through the throng, making the groanings of men to wax.²⁴

Cruz e Silva summarizes the Trojan War in ode VIII, recalling the founding of the city of Vila Real de Santo António in 1773 by Marquês de Pombal. The unstable Fortune (the lightly voluble Fortune, the irascible changing Fate, according to ep.1 and ant.2) is the main subject of this new text: the poet contrasts the doom of Troy with the auspicious fate of the Portuguese city. Troy is presented as moving from greatness to ruin, while by contrast, Vila Real de Santo António is presented as a nameless city which becomes famous. Cruz e Silva briefly tells the story of the ancient war from its beginnings until the fall of the Trojan walls: we are told about Priam's mighty power over the entire Hellenic world (str.2), the abduction of Helen by the Trojan prince (ant.2), the departure of the Greek army from Aulis (ep.2), the combat between Achilles and the river-god Xanthos (ep.2), the death of Hector (str.3), and finally the war's end with the destruction of Troy (ant.3), with Cruz e Silva concluding: "Of the arrogant city and

²³ Já brutal Discórdia, que imprimindo | Na terra a horrenda planta, | A torva catadura aos Céus levanta, | Três vezes a cabeça sacudindo, | As hidras venenosas | Frenética esparzia. (Ode II, str.2)

²⁴ Tr. Murray 1965: ὤρσε δὲ τοὺς μὲν Ἄρης, τοὺς δὲ γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη | Δεῖμός τ' ἠδὲ Φόβος καὶ Ἔρις ἄμοτον μεμαυῖα, | Ἄρεος ἀνδροφόνοιο κασιγνήτη ἑτάρη τε, | ἦ τ' ὀλίγη μὲν πρῶτα κορούσεται, αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα | οὐρανῶ ἑστήριξε κάρη καὶ ἐπὶ χθονὶ βαίνει' | ἦ σφιν καὶ τότε νεῖκος ὁμοῖον ἐμβαλε μέσσω | ἐρχομένη καθ' ὄμιλον, ὀφέλλουσα στόνον ἀνδρῶν. (*Iliad* 4.439–445)

its amazing glory across entire Asia, nothing remains except for fields and memory” (ant.3). The massive decline of the ancient empire finds its opposite in the sumptuous foundation of the eighteenth-century Portuguese city: not so long ago it was a vile and despised field of poor fishermen, but by the eighteenth century, Vila Real de Santo António had become a fortunate city, crowned with superb buildings that proudly touch the stars (ep.3).

The third strophe interweaves two major episodes of the Trojan War with Achilles’ *aristeia* and Hector’s death. Cruz e Silva highlights the vain bravery of Hector (“Priam’s falling hope”), first as a dismayed warrior fighting in the field and then as a corpse dragged through the same field by Peleus’ son (“fury of war”) who, despite being victorious, is overwhelmed by his cruel wrath. The mighty empire of Troy falls apart with the killing of Priam’s heir; a single wrathful action from the enemy thus causes the destruction of an entire kingdom. The heroic behaviors of Hector and Achilles at war are in fact frequently reshaped in Cruz e Silva’s Pindaric poetry.

The glory of Hector as the best of the Trojan warriors is developed in ode XXIV. The poet wrote it in order to sing the remarkable heroic deeds of the Portuguese soldier called Heitor da Silveira (?–1531)²⁵, a sixteenth-century nobleman, who distinguished himself fighting in North Africa (Morocco) and India on behalf of the Portuguese crown. As captain in the East, he defeated the Turks occupying the seaport city of Aden, a strategic place on the sea route between India and Europe. This fearless soldier lost his life fighting in Indian territory against the Turks (attack on Berte’s island in 1531). Heitor da Silveira became a reputed Portuguese hero among those who fought in India. Cruz e Silva preserves Heitor da Silveira’s memory by telling his military victories against the Moors (ode XXIV, str.6) and the Turks in Aden, Khambhat (ant.5), Diu (ep.5), and Berte (ant.6).

The similarity of the names (Hector/Heitor) gave the poet an opportunity to tell the warlike prowess of the *Iliad*’s Trojan hero. Heitor da Silveira is referred to as the “Lusitanian Hector” (ant.1) and compared with his homonymous Homeric warrior. The Portuguese soldier distinguished himself fighting the Moors and the Turks in the sixteenth century and, because of his prowess in battle, became a national hero. These two warriors, the Portuguese and the Trojan Hector, not only share the same name: they both died fighting for their countries.²⁶ The mythological excursus of Cruz e Sil-

²⁵ See “Silveira (Heitor da)”, in *Grande Enciclopédia Portuguesa e Brasileira*, vol. 28, 911–12.

²⁶ Hector, along with Meleager and Amphiarus, is praised in *Ist.* VII as example of patriotic behavior. By singing the victory of Strepisades of Thebes at the pancratium, Pindar recalls the martial death of the victor’s uncle (also called Strepisades) and adds the names of mythical heroes who died fighting for their cities. This epinicion may seem surprising to the reader/listener, since it tells about

va's text recalls the actions of the Homeric hero in the war, mostly the ones against the Greek army, such as the fire attack against the enemy ships and the victorious combat against Patroclus (ant.2–ep.3). From these military achievements the poet goes on to recall Hector's tragic fate. He captured the moment by saying: "For a long time, he sustained the walls of Troy, but then he yielded to the higher forces of his dark fate" (str.4). Nevertheless, the exceptional merit of the Lusitanian Hector precedes the glorification of Hector at the Trojan War. As the first antistrophe shows, the poet, following the pattern laid out by Pindar, intends to praise the glory of the Lusitanian Hector. Thus, the river Tagus flows more proudly than the river Xanthos to honor its hero.

Today I intend to praise with Theban chisel the glory of the Lusitanian Hector by providing him with a place in immortal memory; he is a hero for whom the river Tagus flows more proudly than the river Xanthos honoring the Trojan Hector.²⁷

Achilles' presence in the Trojan War is the mythological topic most frequently used in Cruz e Silva's Pindaric odes. His story, as told by the Portuguese poet, covers the period from his parents' wedding to the last years of the war. Three odes deal with Achilles' story before he came to Troy. Ode X praises the fame of Oeiras' city, where the wedding of Henrique José de Carvalho e Melo, the son of the king's Secretary, took place (1764). The poet emphasizes the "richness of this sublime union" (str.3), which is compared to Thetis and Peleus' wedding. These two celebrations are worthy of collective recognition by the Portuguese people and the Olympian gods. Oeiras' city even makes us forget "the cruel damage of Time" (str.4). This means that the city and the royal event consigned to oblivion the earthquake's catastrophic effects. By contrast, the mythological wedding, to which Eris was not invited, will cause a violent disaster over the entire Hellenistic world.²⁸

Cruz e Silva devotes ode XI to the fame of João da Saldanha D'Oliveira (1684–1732) by contrasting him with young Achilles, student of the centaur Chiron. Thanks

an athletic victory praising warriors defeated in battle (Várzeas 2006, 213). Nevertheless, as the Boeotian poet states, "honour is laid up in recompense for the brave" (ant.2), for he who defends his land "is causing the greatest glory to grow for the race of his fellow-townsmen,—both while he liveth and when he is dead" (ep.2). Tr. Sandys 1968. Rather than praising an athletic victory, the epinician poetry also praises the excellence, the *arete*, an ideal of physical and moral superiority (Várzeas 2006, 223).

²⁷ Que hoje me entregues não em vão pretendo, | Pois na imortal memória | Com Tebano buril lavar emprendo | Do Luso Heitor a glória; | Herói por quem o Tejo corre ufano, | Mais do que o Xanto pelo Heitor Troiano. (Ode XXIV, ant.1)

²⁸ The marriage of Peleus and Thetis is also mentioned in *P.* III, ep.4 and *N.* IV, str.9. Fitch (1924, 62) comments this episode in relation to both the ancient Greek epic and lyric poetry.

to the centaur's lessons, Achilles was able to kill his great opponent, "the brave Hector," metaphorically identified as "the strongest wall of Troy" (ant.1). This phrase is an adaptation of a sentence from Pindar: "He laid low Hektor, Troy's / invincible pillar of strength."²⁹ Unlike the young son of Peleus and Thetis, João da Saldanha did not need the teachings of a famous master to become famous: "you didn't need wise Chiron to print your glorious steps along the roadway of fame" (ep.1). He and everyone belonging to the same noble house impress by the mightiness of the name, and this name is forever known and praised by the neoclassical Portuguese poets, since many of their meetings were held at João da Saldanha D'Oliveira's house:³⁰ "the door of your golden Palace that you have opened to the maiden daughters of Zeus" (str.3).³¹

The hero of ode XXV is Diogo da Silveira (sixteenth century, his dates of birth and death are unknown), a Portuguese nobleman named chief-captain of the Indian fleet. As chief-captain, Diogo da Silveira became famous for his relentlessness against the enemies of the Portuguese crown. He was responsible for the destruction of many territories and populations in the East, mainly in India, such as Calicut, Khambhat (1532), Vasai, and Gujarat (Cruz e Silva mentions those victories in the third triad of ode XXV—str.3, ant.3, ep.3). Despite his reputation as a merciless captain, history also tells us about one single merciful action from him: crossing the seacoast of Aden (near the Red Sea), Diogo da Silveira intercepted an Arab ship, and was advised to seize it by no other reason but greed and easy profit and to take its large treasure. Considering the wickedness of the recommended plan, unworthy of an honorable Portuguese captain, he gave safe passage to the Arab ship and caused no harm to it. Cruz e Silva alludes to this episode at the end of ode XXV (ant.5) by saying that this Lusitanian hero followed a very different road by not wanting to steal a treasure through despicable means. For that reason, Diogo da Silveira's fame was not dishonored by an unworthy, if potentially prosperous, triumph.³²

Like Achilles, Diogo da Silveira was also taken by a "tempestuous wrath" and "rushed into the East in order to cause great damage" (ant.2). However, the story of the Greek hero does not begin with his deadly wrath. The poet recalls him hidden in Lycomedes' court, and that he did not want to fight at Troy (ant.1). Only after taking off his female clothing does Achilles go to war. His mother Thetis gets worried, since she knows that both glory and a short life await him at Troy ("the best of heroes runs

²⁹ "ὄς Ἐκτορα σφάλε, Τροίας / ἄμαχον ἀστραβὴ κίονα" (*Ol.* II, str.5). Tr. Race 1997.

³⁰ Cf. Urbano (ed) 2003, 155.

³¹ Pindar also tells of Chiron's education and training of young Achilles in *N.* III, str.3–ep.3.

³² See "Silveira (Diogo da)", in *Grande Enciclopédia Portuguesa e Brasileira*, vol. 28, 906.

happily towards his death”, ep.1).³³ Cruz e Silva draws the following parallel between these two warriors: recalling the gleaming face of imperishable glory, Achilles impatiently takes off his female clothing (ant.1) and goes to fight in war and accomplishes a thousand wonders in Trojan fields (str.2), whereas Diogo da Silveira, also impatient and idle, quickly sets sail to attack the East (ant.2), thus gaining eternal glory and immortal memory (ep.3).

Achilles’ famous wrath, immortalized by Homer, is also an object of comparison in ode XVI, which narrates the heroic deeds of João Rodrigues de Sá (?–1390), one of the bravest Portuguese soldiers of the Middle Ages fighting for national independence. In the fourteenth century, until the Battle of Aljubarrota (1385), Lisbon was under siege by the Spanish.³⁴ During one of the attacks by the Spanish enemies, Rodrigues de Sá courageously defended the Portuguese ships with the help of only one of his squires. He was wounded fifteen times, but managed to overcome all his opponents. Thanks to this heroic behavior, he came to be known as “Sá das Galés” (Sá of the Galleys). Recalling this monumental episode in Portuguese history, Cruz e Silva writes that the river Tagus saw this Portuguese warrior steal the glory of Achilles against the Trojan soldiers for his courageous action in war.

Tagus, bent with the heavy weight of the Spanish ships, groaned in anger, and in the hideous battle was amazed by seeing him [Rodrigues de Sá], covered in blood, making Achilles’ glorious wrath less famous.³⁵

Called a “wrathful knight” (ant.4)—an epithet which brings him even closer to the wrathful Achilles when killing the Trojans—Rodrigues de Sá is praised for not leaving his beloved country defenseless, despite the danger in which he found himself (ant.1).

³³ Nagy (2013, 98–102) focuses on Achilles as the subject of lament both in lyric and epic traditions, discussing the passage from the *Iliad* (18.54–64) where Thetis mourns her son when he is still alive. For the concept of Achilles as both epic and lyric hero, see Nagy’s chapter 4, “Achilles as Lyric Hero in the Songs of Sappho and Pindar” (2013, 90–108).

³⁴ The Battle of Aljubarrota was fought between the Portuguese and the Spanish crowns. With the help of the British allies, King João I of Portugal defeated the Spanish invaders, put an end to the national crisis of 1383–1385 (a succession crisis known as “Interregno” [Interregnum]), and reinforced his power as king, starting a new dynasty, the House of Avis. This Portuguese victory was much due to the king’s prime commander, Nuno Álvares Pereira (1360–1431), and to his genius military tactics against a larger army. Before the battle, in 1384, João Rodrigues de Sá played an important role defending the city and the Portuguese ships from the Spanish enemies. On the Battle of Aljubarrota, see Serrão 1990, 294–313.

³⁵ O Tejo, que acurvado | Dos Hispanos baixéis c’o grave peso, | Gemia em raiva aceso, | Na horrenda batalha o viu, pasmado, | Fazer menos famoso, | Tinto de sangue, e de grande ira armado, | Do Hermónio Aquiles o furor glorioso. (Ode XVI, ep.1)

In fact, his deed protecting the ships was so remarkable that Cruz e Silva claims him a superior warrior than the Cyclops (str.2), Greater Ajax (ant.2), and Aeneas (ep.2, str.3, ant.3). Ode XVI ends with the acknowledgement of his reputation beyond national borders: "Rome saw him glorious" (ep.5).³⁶

Cruz e Silva's Pindaric odes also focus on the return of Achilles after losing Patroclus (odes XII, XXII, XXVIII, XXXIII). Pedro Jacques de Magalhães' military achievements in the Restoration War in the seventeenth century have darkened the fame of Aeacus' progeny, namely the fame of Achilles (as one can read in ode XII, ant.1). Pedro Jacques de Magalhães (1620–1688) was a nobleman from the Royal House, a Viscount, war counselor of King Pedro II, and the General who defeated the Dutch army that kept the Brazilian fortress of Recife, in Pernambuco, under siege (1653).³⁷ He distinguished himself fighting in the Restoration War: a set of military conflicts fought against Spain between 1640 and 1668, which put an end to the Spanish Philippine dynasty in Portugal and led Portugal to full independence.

Magalhães is raised to the status of national hero by the parallel drawn with the ancient Greek hero, who faced the god-river Xanthos (ode XII, ep.3), killed the son of King Priam, and slaughtered the Trojan army (str.4). Achilles' actions against Troy are said to be less heroic than those of Magalhães, who is sung as "a star that shines in the temple of Glory" (ant.1). In fact, this Lusitanian warrior collected countless victories by facing "great dangers" when fighting in the battles for national independence, specifically those of Linhas de Elvas in 1659 (ant.2), Canal in 1663 (str.2), Castelo Rodrigo in 1664 (ant.4), and Montes Claros in 1665 (ant.2).³⁸ The resemblance between some words and phrases underlines the military experience of these two reputed heroes: Achilles left Xanthos "scared" (ep.3), subdued Hector with his "tremendous arm" (str.4), and "disrupted the Trojan battalions" (str.4); Magalhães also "rushed" himself over Spain causing much death (ant.5); defeated Ossuna, the leader of the Spanish army in the Battle of Castelo Rodrigo, with his "wrathful arm" (ep.5); and left the Spanish mothers "scared" (str.6). Greater than the wrathful Greek hero, Magalhães even caused all of Spain to mourn and the entire city of Madrid to tremble (str.6).

Achilles' *aristeia* along the Xanthos River is again a topic of interest in two other passages of Cruz e Silva's Pindaric poetry. In ode XXII (ant.4), Achilles is called the "horror of the brave Xanthos" when the poet is praising Henrique de Macedo's sea victory in India against the Moorish fleet (1528). And it is said in ode XXXIII (ep.2)

³⁶ After the Battle of Aljubarrota, Rodrigues de Sá led an embassy to Pope Boniface IX on behalf of King João I with the purpose of discussing matters related to the crown.

³⁷ See Ode XII, str.3.

³⁸ On the Restoration War, see Serrão 1982, 11–58.

that, at the sight of the Greek hero, “frightened Xanthos flows back.” This statement has as its parallel in Portuguese history the conquest of the fortified Asian city of Jor (located in the Singapore Strait). The man responsible for this victory was the Portuguese commander D. Paulo de Lima, who is now acclaimed as “a new Achilles” (ant.3) for the thousand deaths he caused among the Asian enemies.³⁹

Achilles and Hector are the two highly praised heroes on each side of the Trojan War. Yet they are not the only ones to have fought at Troy. Other ancient warriors equally famous appear immortalized in Cruz e Silva’s Pindaric poetry, such as Odysseus, Ajax, and the two brothers Agamemnon and Menelaus. In Ode VII, Odysseus is the first character mentioned among other famous captains and sailors from Portuguese history. Cruz e Silva even describes the mythological foundation of Lisbon by Odysseus: crossing the seas in a fragile piece of wood and fleeing from Poseidon’s wrath, the cunning hero reached Lusitanian territory and raised its capital to the stars (ant.1).

Testimonies on Odysseus’ arrival on the Iberian shore are ancient but uncertain. Strabo was one of the first ancient authors who referred to the legend that the city of Lisbon was founded by Odysseus.⁴⁰ In fact, Odysseus is taken as the archetype of the cunning and battle-tested navigator for Portuguese sailors of the sixteenth century. Despite the uncertainty of the legend that assigns an odyssean origin to Lisbon (and it is worth noting that the mythical name of the city is Olissipo, directly derived from Odysseus’ name), the association with this Greek hero grew strong in Portuguese literature and culture and was spread as an indisputable truth.⁴¹

The military expeditions of Odysseus at Troy (Dolon’s death, the wooden horse,⁴² and the theft of the Paladium) and his adventures at sea on his return home are episodes from Greek epics told in the mythological excursus of Ode XXVII (ant.1, ep.1, str.2), where the *πολύτροπος ἀνὴρ* is related to Lopo de Sousa Coutinho, a Portuguese soldier and writer who lived in the sixteenth century (1515–1577). At the age of eighteen, he departed from Portugal to the East, and accomplished outstanding heroic deeds in the siege of Diu. He had a unique military talent for repelling large numbers of enemies

³⁹ Although Achilles is not directly mentioned by name, his presence is implied in Ode XXVIII when we are told about Memnon’s death (ant.2).

⁴⁰ See, for instance, *Geography* 1.2.11, 3.2.13, 3.4.3–5.

⁴¹ On the legend and its presence in Portuguese culture, see Fernandes 1985, 139–61 and Prieto 2009, 173–76. Two Portuguese epics from the seventeenth century tell Odysseus’ journeys towards Lusitanian seashore and his foundation of a city named after him: Gabriel Pereira de Castro’s *Ulisseia ou Lisboa Edificada* (1636) and António de Sousa de Macedo’s *Ulissipo* (1640).

⁴² The wooden horse is mentioned again in Ode IX as an “arrogant machine” that gave birth to many heroes in Troy (ant.4).

with a small group of men.⁴³ Both the historical Portuguese and ancient Greek mythological characters were sailors, both were victors in war, and both returned to their countries many years after they left (Odysseus is twenty years absent from Ithaca, and Lopo de Sousa twelve from Portugal, departing in 1533 and not returning until 1545). Cruz e Silva presents Odysseus both as the destroyer of Troy and an expert sailor:

But in Phrygia, full of unmeasured fury, he shed blood, terror and cries, and then mastered the great wrath of the Sea.

[...]

His butcher sword had no rest in battle until he managed to make the fierce city of Ilios fall! He wandered through the fields of Thetis; and after blinding the atrocious Cyclops, he victoriously reached Ithaca, despite Poseidon!⁴⁴

The neoclassical portrait of Sousa Coutinho is also intended to recall the bipartite structure of the story of Odysseus, since the poet reports the hero's victories both at war and at sea: when protecting the fortress of Diu, he "runs over the bloody fields of Mars" (ant.2), victoriously fighting with his "ferocious arm against the savage enemies" (str.3). While travelling, he meets "the revolting folks of the angry winds" and a "thousand hot thunderbolts break out" (ep.2), but he manages to "leave the stormy sea, turning the prow towards peaceful land" (ep.3).

The great Ajax, son of Telamon, was the second best Greek soldier during the Trojan War, just after Achilles. His military prowess made him worthy of being sung about in Ode XXXIV (str.2, ant.2, ep.2). The moment chosen, however, is his defeat in the quarrel with Odysseus for Achilles' divine armor.⁴⁵ In this poem, the author, "by enhancing patterns of immortal glory," as he states, "will record the great history of Ribeiro" (ant.1), the conqueror of the Asian kingdom of Pegu. Salvador Ribeiro de Sousa (?-1603) was a Portuguese captain who successfully defended the Portuguese and the

⁴³ As a scholar, who was much fond of ancient literature, Sousa Coutinho wrote books on the Portuguese presence in the East (his included), and translated Lucan's *Civil War* and some of Seneca's works. See "Sousa Coutinho (Lopo)", in *Grande Enciclopédia Portuguesa e Brasileira*, vol. 29, 856-57.

⁴⁴ Mas em Frígia, de imensa fúria cheio, | Sangue, terror, e pranto derramando, | E a grão sanha do Mar depois domando. (Ode XXVII, ant.1, 8-10) | [...] | Como a talhante espada não sossega | Na bárbara campanha, | Té que o fero Ílion prostra por terra! | Como de Tétis pelos campos erra; | E em Ítaca, cegando o atroz gigante, | De Neptuno apesar entrou triunfante! (Ode XXVII, str.2, 5-10)

⁴⁵ Ajax's death and claim of Achilles' armor are mentioned by Pindar in *N. VII* (str. 2, ant.2) and *N. VIII* (ant.2, ep.2). It is striking how Cruz e Silva's words resemble, at a thematic level, Pindar's lines when telling of Ajax's defeat by the cunning Odysseus: "μέγιστον δ' αἰόλω ψεύδει γέρας ἀντέταται" (*N. VIII*, ant.2) ["while the greatest prize hath been forth to cunning falsehood", tr. Sandys 1968]; "Porém logo que a astúcia ornada / Da coroa por seu valor ganhada" (ode XXXIV, ep.2) ["However, he sees the ornate cunning winning the prize"].

indigenous fortresses of Pegu from Moorish attacks. Many local chiefs and indigenous warriors placed themselves under his command because Ribeiro de Sousa had secured the entire state of Burma. The Asian populations elected him king of Pegu for his brave actions protecting the land. Despite his hard-earned glory, however, the Portuguese captain refused the crown for himself and handed it over to his superiors.⁴⁶

Like the Greek hero, the Portuguese commander's military merit goes unrecognized by those he led: "An avaricious, unfortunate star decreed for Ribeiro the same destiny [as Ajax]" (str.3). He handed over the entire fortune he had acquired in the East to the Portuguese king's emissaries. According to Urbano, in her commentary to ode XXXIV, "This was in fact one of the most sublime actions of loyalty and greatness of mind in Portuguese history."⁴⁷ The attitude did not please the inhabitants though. Because of his loyalty to his country and king, Ribeiro de Sousa perished without the prize he deserved, without any riches in Portugal.

Cruz e Silva evokes Clio at the beginning of ode XXI in order to praise the military triumphs of António Correia (c. 1487/88–1566), a nobleman who distinguished himself fighting in the East. When he was twelve years old, he managed to escape from the Moors' attack in India (Calicut), where he returned to years later, around 1519, as captain of a small crew. His great accomplishment, the one that made him famous, was the successful military expedition against the Asian island of Baharem in 1521. By that time, Correia had already led the Portuguese fleet as its chief captain. His expedition was intended to help the Persian king of Ormus and deal with the rebellion led by the king of Baharem. Correia succeeded in stopping the insurrection, killing the rebellious ruler, and establishing the sovereignty of Portugal in this Asian island.⁴⁸ The poet explains the subject of ode XXI by claiming that the sons of Atreus are not the only honorable men participating in the fury of war (str.1). Thus, this Lusitanian captain deserves to be immortalized in poetry because he conquered the Asian island of Baharem on behalf of the Portuguese crown (1521), just like Agamemnon and Menelaus had conquered Troy.

⁴⁶ See "Ribeiro de Sousa (Salvador)", in *Grande Enciclopédia Portuguesa e Brasileira*, vol. 25, 619–20. See also Danvers' Chapter VI (1894, vol. 2, 122–28).

⁴⁷ Urbano (ed.) 2003, 362.

⁴⁸ As a reward for his victory, King João III allowed António Correia, by royal decree of 1540, to join the name Baharem to his own (since then he became known as António Correia Baharem), and to incorporate the memory of the triumph into his family's coat of arms. See "Baharém (António Correia)", in *Grande Enciclopédia Portuguesa e Brasileira*, vol. 3, 1025–26. Cruz e Silva mentions Correia's "glorious name" that his own deeds provided him with (ode XXI, ep.4) and the splendor of his family's remodeled arms ("in memory of his deeds, the great splendor of high victory shines in his shield", str.3).

Finally, Ode XLII pays tribute to João Fernandes Vieira (1602–1681), a Portuguese soldier who fought bravely against the Dutch army and has become the hero of the Brazilian city of Pernambuco in its Restitution War (1654). He took part in the discussions of and preparations for the rise of Brazil against the Dutch army and won his first victory at the Battle of Tabocas Mountain (1645). It was such a success that he freed 50 of his slaves, who later became soldiers. He won again at the Battles of Guararapes (the first one in 1648, the second in 1649). Vieira distinguished himself in the battlefield for risking his life many times. He suffered so many wounds, endured so many attacks all alone, and put himself in danger so many times that the news of his death even spread among the enemy forces. After these victories, he besieged the Dutch fortresses in Brazil, forcing them first to surrender and then expelling them from all of Brazil.⁴⁹

Vieira was born in Madeira Island, in Portugal. Cruz e Silva compares the glory of Madeira, which gave birth to a national hero, with the glory of Aegina, a Greek island which was the birthplace of many heroes who fought at Troy. Many of Aeacus' progeny came from Aegina, such as Achilles (ode XLII, ep.1) and Ajax (str.2).⁵⁰ Their prowess fighting in the Trojan War is said to be meaningless against Vieira's "astonishing deeds" (ant.1), which eventually took away the fame of Aeacus' sons (ant.2). In fact, the Lusitanian warrior ferociously overwhelms the Netherlands (ep.3) with a "courageous heart" (str.4), a "great wrath" and a "stormy arm" (ant.4): he gets countless victories from propitious Mars in a way that made the entire Dutch army fall in a "mortal fainting" (ep.4, ant.7).

Ode XLII is among the last of Cruz e Silva's Pindaric odes, but it goes back to the Trojan War's first years. As we can read in strophe 2, Telamon made the first attack against Troy. Apart from Aeacus' family, the poet also mentions "other great men"

⁴⁹ Vieira's deeds were written by at least three authors of his time: Manuel Calado, Diogo Lopes Santiago, and Rafael de Jesus. On the man, see "Vieira (João Fernandes)", in *Grande Enciclopédia Portuguesa e Brasileira*, vol. 35, 242–45; on the Brazilian Restoration from the Dutch invaders, see Serrão 1982, 106–23.

⁵⁰ Achilles: son of Peleus, son of Aeacus; Ajax: son of Telamon, son of Aeacus. Cruz e Silva's Ode XLII can be construed as the Aeginean Pindaric odes' counterpart. See, for instance, *Ist.* VI, ep.1 and str.2: "And, as for you, ye sons of Aeacus with your golden chariots, I deem it my clearest law, to shower praises on you, when'er I set foot on this isle. For countless roads are cleft for your noble deeds, roads with their hundred feet of continuous breadth, extending even beyond the springs of the Nile, and through the land beyond the North wind. Nor is there any city so rude in speech, so strange in tongue, that it knoweth not the fame of the hero Pêleus, that happy husband of a deity, nor of Aias, nor of Telamon, his sire" (tr. Sandys 1968). On the so-called Aeginean odes, see Burnett 2005.

(str.2). Thus, Ode XLII sings the imperishable fame of many heroes who fought in the Trojan War.

Pindar makes use of heroes from the Greek mythology to praise the winners of athletic competitions. Likewise, Cruz e Silva immortalizes characters from Portuguese history: “they ascend the throne of triumphant memory” (Ode XLII, ant.2), for just as Pindar praises his own patrons’ deeds as being greater than those of the Trojan heroes, so too are those done by Cruz e Silva’s subjects. These heroes from legendary times are set as models known to the enlightened scholars of the eighteenth century to make Portuguese historical characters seem remarkable. Achilles, Hector and other reputed Greek fighters are taken as literary references only because they are the best, and depicting them as less than Lusitanian heroes is the neoclassical way of showing that national rulers are the best of the best. Cruz e Silva sings the glories of men (*klea andrōn*), thus turning epic material into lyric poetry, as Pindar did before him.⁵¹

Based “on reverence for the classical world,” Neoclassicism recovers Greek and Roman themes, “attributing them authority in understanding the modern world.”⁵² Its main tenets include an interwoven network of many kinds of contacts, from comparisons and similarities to differences and paradoxes. From the historical to the literary domain, Neoclassicism increases the fame and stresses the deeds accomplished by mortal men by turning them into heroes of imperishable glory in victory odes.⁵³ For that purpose, the Trojan War provides Cruz e Silva with many examples of warlike excellence, courage and patriotism, which the poet recovers and transfers to Lusitanian heroes, thus attempting to glorify them. Cruz e Silva’s Pindaric poetry is a set of heroic songs, a work of patriotic worship, a lyric piece with historical content.⁵⁴ National heroes become indisputable guides for modern generations,⁵⁵ but only through imitation of the ancient heroic models.

⁵¹ On the *klea andrōn* both in ancient epic and lyric poetry, see Nagy 1990, 146–214; 2013, 90–108. See also Currie’s *Pindar and the Cult of Heroes* (2005) on the process of hero-making in Homeric epic and Pindaric epinicians.

⁵² Lyne 2007, 123, 136.

⁵³ “The reason is evident, for the design of the ode (I mean upon great occasions) is, like that of heroic poetry, to move the reader, and cause him admiration. Now, by heroic poetry the reader’s mind is exalted gradually, with a more sedate and composed majesty; but the ode, by reason of the shortness of its compass, is obliged to fly into transport at first, and to make use immediately of all its fury, and its most violent efforts, or else it would want time to work its effect” (John Dennis *apud* Simon 1971, 164).

⁵⁴ Cidade 1984, 289.

⁵⁵ Correia 2005, 28.

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Victor Hugo's Trojan War

BARBARA WITUCKI



VICTOR HUGO'S LIFE (1802–1885) spanned virtually the entire nineteenth century. His influence in both literature and politics was equally far reaching. Hugo played a prominent role in the political upheavals of time. He was a royalist, a Bonapartist, and a republican in turn. He was made a peer of France by King Louis-Philippe in 1845; following the overthrow of the King in February 1848, he was elected Paris representative for the National Assembly in June; he went into exile after the *coup d'état* of Louis-Napoleon in 1851; following his return to France in 1870, he was elected to the National Assembly, and then, in 1875, senator.¹ Hugo likewise dominated the literary landscape: “By the time he fled [France] in 1851, Hugo was the most famous living writer in the world.”² The poet Stéphane Mallarmé “divided all French literature into two epochs—before and after Hugo.”³

Hugo's political and literary pursuits were not separated. He interweaves contemporary events into the narratives of many of his novels. Influenced by the historical novels of Walter Scott, Hugo too desired to write a historical novel, a dramatic prose epic that would speak of modern dilemmas.⁴ He envisioned a novel that was “simultaneously drama and epic, picturesque but poetic, real but ideal, true but grand, which [would] enshrine Walter Scott in Homer.”⁵ According to Hugo, “The epic [...] gave birth to Homer, and Homer [...] dominates ancient society.”⁶ Hugo, who dominates

¹ Lodeman 1895.

² Robb 1997, xiii.

³ Robb 1997, 538.

⁴ In the words of Brombert 1984, “At the age of twenty-one, reviewing a novel by Walter Scott, [Hugo] called for a new type of fiction that would give epic scope to the moral and social consciousness of his period.” In July 1823, in an article about Scott, Hugo “called for epic novels [...] to suit the needs of the modern age” (1–2 and 98–9).

⁵ Quoted in Robert 1976, 31, “Il restera un autre roman à créer, plus beau et plus complet encore selon nous. C'est le roman, à la fois drame et épopée, pittoresque, mais poétique, réel, mais idéal, vrai, mais grande, qui enchâssera Walter Scott dans Homère.” Quoted and discussed by Grossman 1986, 198.

⁶ *Essential VH* 2009, 19.

nineteenth-century society, wanted to create, or rather recreate Homer through the epic novel.

Hugo describes the importance of Homer on subsequent literature by saying, “All the ancient tragedians took their material from Homer. The same myths, the same catastrophes, the same heroes. They all drew from the Homeric river. Everything was the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Like Achilles dragging the body of Hector, tragedy kept circling around Troy. [...] Rome copied Greece, Virgil imitated Homer.”⁷ Hugo joins those drawing from the Homeric river by incorporating images, stories, and words from the Homeric works and their derivatives. This study focuses on three novels, *Notre-Dame de Paris* (1831), *Les Misérables* (1862), and *Quatrevingt-treize* (1874), and a single shared motif, the Trojan War. All three novels share a pattern of references to the Trojan War drawn primarily from Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Virgil’s *Aeneid*, and Aeschylus’s *Oresteia* (*Agamemnon*, *Choephoroi*, *Eumenides*).⁸ *Notre-Dame de Paris* draws on the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid* for character types and battle scenes. *Les Misérables* is above all a book of travel, and a searching for home and peace, so that it resembles the *Odyssey*, the *Aeneid*, and the *Oresteia*. *Quatrevingt-Treize* is a book of war, albeit civil war, but also of homecoming;⁹ thus, it is an amalgamation of all the classical works mentioned.¹⁰ Taken together, the three novels form the work of a new Homer, one that incorporates the old but stretches and embroiders it for a new context necessitated by changes in the nature of man and by contemporary events.

In his “Preface” to *Cromwell*, Hugo describes a shift in the world from materialistic, external paganism to Christianity, “a spiritual religion,” which “taught man that he has two lives: one transient, the other eternal; one earthly, the other heavenly. It

⁷ *Essential VH* 2009, 20.

⁸ Hugo has long been noted for repeating motifs from work to work. See Grant 1968. For Hugo’s classical education, which is crucial to this paper, see Venzac 1955 particularly Part Two, Chapters Five and Six, “Disciple de Virgile” and “Des ‘Muses’ aux ‘Temps paniques’, ou d’Homère à Eschyle.” Venzac 1955 concludes, “Victor Hugo savait son latin” (387). Hugo’s Greek, however, was limited to about two years of study, “pas assez pour savoir la langue” (401). See also Hugo 1864, t.I.194 and 275–76. Robb 1997 describes how, while a child, Hugo began the practice of memorizing thirty lines of Latin at night before going to sleep and translating them in to French couplets the following morning as well as undertaking a youthful translation of the *Aeneid*, 60 and 70. See also Guiard 1910, *Virgile et Victor Hugo*. Hugo was also profoundly influenced by the works of Chateaubriand, an author whose works draw heavily from Homer and other classical authors.

⁹ Hart 1928, 2–3, notes that there were “two Homers” in French culture of the seventeenth and eighteenth century that passed into the early nineteenth century: “the truly epic and martial Homer” and “the patriarchal and at times almost bucolic Homer.”

¹⁰ This approach to reading Hugo vis à vis Homeric influences was inspired by Laforgue 2001 who suggests that *Les Travailleurs de la mer* is a reworking of the *Odyssey* 19–20.

showed him that he, like his destiny, is twofold; within him there are an animal and a mind, a soul and a body.” Hugo described the pagan hero as a giant and almost a god while between the Christian and God there is an immense gulf.¹¹ Modern man is prey to emotions not known to the pagan. Hugo cites drama as the proper genre to express these rather than epic, which suited the pagan. He creates an amalgamation of both genres and ensconces it in the novel.

Notre-Dame de Paris, *Les Misérables*, and *Quatrevingt-treize* are based in French history through both their historic settings and the political upheavals taking place in France during Hugo's lifetime. In *Notre-Dame de Paris*, Hugo ostensibly writes an historical novel set in Paris, 1482. However, the July Revolution of 1830 during which Charles X was overthrown and Louis-Philippe, duc d'Orléans ascended throne, an event that occurred while Hugo was working on the novel, is reflected in the uprising of the *truands* and their attack on Notre-Dame. Likewise, *Les Misérables* includes the Battle of Waterloo, the July Revolution of 1830, and the June revolution of 1848. *Quatrevingt-treize*, in turn, describes the conflict between the royalists in the Vendée and the republicans in Paris during the Terror, and is, to some extent, colored by the 1870 defeat of France in the Franco-Prussian War, and the 1871 attack on the Communards by the National Guard.¹²

Hugo as the “father” of the epic poetic historical novel stands at the forefront of a new literary style just as Homer stood at the forefront of the ancient. Among the many contemporaries who praised and venerated him, Dostoevsky compared Hugo to Homer.¹³ In 1879, Louis Bonnat painted Hugo sitting next to a table with his left elbow resting on a book. The name, Homer, can be read on the spine.¹⁴ André Maurois titled his 1954 biography of Hugo, *Olympio ou la Vie de Victor Hugo*. All of these attest to Hugo's Homeric and Olympian status. Hugo, unlike Homer, had a well-known literary past to accommodate. His ability to integrate and assimilate the past while simultaneously innovating signals his turn to the future.

NOTRE-DAME DE PARIS

Images drawn from myths of Trojan War begin and end *Notre-Dame de Paris*.¹⁵ Throughout Book I, a morality play loosely based on the contest between Aphrodite,

¹¹ *Essential VH* 2009, 20–1.

¹² For a brief overview of the historic events of this period, see Horne 2006, 185–288.

¹³ Brombert 1984, “Introduction.”

¹⁴ Robb 1997, 512.

¹⁵ Simaïka 1962, 61 notes that the romanticism of Hugo is nourished by antiquity, legends, and epics. He lists elements borrowed from the *Iliad* and Dante in *Notre-Dame de Paris* in footnote 50.

Athena, and Hera for the golden apple labeled “For the Fairest” is performed to honor the betrothal of Marguerite of Flanders to the dauphin of France on the 6th of January 1482. Two allegorical couples travel the world looking for the most beautiful woman to award her the golden dolphin (the dauphin of France). Venus appears easily identified by line from Virgil’s *Aeneid*, “The true goddess was revealed by her step.”¹⁶ When she claims the prize intended for Marguerite, the allegorical couples decide that the Virgin Mary must choose who deserves the dolphin. Unfortunately, the performance breaks off before Jupiter can summon her, leaving the question of who will receive the golden dolphin unresolved.

Gringoire, the author of the play, watches helplessly as his audience finds greater interest in the individuals around them than in his characters. Boredom with the play and a call for the election of the Pope of Fools causes the greater part of the audience to shift their attention to this different competition. The first two books of the *Iliad* provide the template for both the audience and the competitors.¹⁷ Just as the gods laugh at lame Haephaestus as he serves wine to the gods on Olympus,¹⁸ so the audience reacts to the ugliness of the first competitor.¹⁹ Thersites, “the ugliest man who came beneath Ilion,”²⁰ provides the model for Quasimodo, who, by right of his innate ugliness, is unanimously voted the Pope of Fools. Besides their ugliness, Quasimodo and Thersites are hunchbacked and bandy-legged.²¹ Both are beaten while the bystanders laugh at them: Thersites by Odysseus and Quasimodo by an official on the public pillory in the

¹⁶ Virgil 1969, I.405.

¹⁷ Given Hugo’s background, all quotations to Virgil will be given in Latin. Quotations from Homer and Aeschylus will be given in French. Although Venzac says that Hugo used the French *Iliad* of J.-P. Bitaubé (404) originally published in 1764, I have used the perhaps more well-known 18th century French translation of Madame Dacier without regularizing or modernizing the language. Dacier’s was the standard French translation used throughout the century. See Itti 2012, Chapter XII. Hugo’s friend, Sainte-Beuve discusses Mme Dacier in his *Causeries du lundi*, lundi 6 mars 1854 and lundi 13 mars 1854. Hugo himself mentions Mme Dacier in *Les Misérables* calling the ancestor of Mother Innocent, prioress of Petit-Picpus, “The Dacier of the Order” (2008, 414).

¹⁸ *L’Iliade* 1756, t.I.i, 47: “Il s’éleva entre les bienheureux Immortels un rire, qui ne finissoit point, de voir Vulcain s’empreser à les server.”

¹⁹ *HND* 1965, 49; *NDP* 1988, 115 “La première figure [...] fit éclater un rire tellement inextinguible qu’Homère eût pris tous ces manants pour des dieux.”

²⁰ *L’Iliade* 1756, t.I.ii, 117–18: “[...] c’étoit le plus laid de tous ceux qui étoient venus à Ilion.” Quasimodo is also linked to the Cyclops, another notoriously ugly character in Homer, *NDP* (1988) 119 & 230, and Polyphemus, 121.

²¹ *NDP* 1988, 119 & 120: “[...] entre les deux épaules une bosse énorme dont le contre-coup se faisait sentir par-devant; un système de cuisses et de jambes si étrangement fourvoyées qu’elles ne pouvaient se toucher que par les genoux,” and, “Quasimodo, le bossu de Notre-Dame.” *L’Iliade* 1756, t. I.ii, 118: “il étoit [...] boiteux; il avoit les épaules courbées & ramassées sur la poitrine [...]”

Place de Grève. Both weep, Thersites in physical pain, and Quasimodo in thanks for Esmeralda's gift of a drink of water.²² Quasimodo's tears at Esmeralda's kindness recall Hugo's statement that modern man is body and soul.²³ Thersites is all body; he cries when his body hurts. Quasimodo is stoic in the face of pain and mockery, but he cries at kindness.

Once Quasimodo is crowned Pope of Fools and appropriately attired, a procession made up of all the thieves and vagabonds in Paris carries him through the streets of Paris:

First came Egypt, the Duke of Egypt headed it on horseback, with his counts on foot.... The male and female Egyptians behind them, male and female Egyptians pell-mell.... Then came the kingdom of Argot, that is to say all the thieves of France, arranged according to the order of their dignity, [...] Their ranks included shoplifters, pilgrims, horsebreakers, sham epileptics, goldbrickers, drunks, sham cripples, card-sharks, arsonists, hawkers, pickpockets, arch-thieves, master-thieves, dotards, and infirm derelicts—a list long enough to weary Homer himself.²⁴

Hugo not only references Homer's catalogue of ships from *Iliad*, Book II, but he parodies it including the lowest level of society in what had originally been a list of kings. He replaces ancient heroes who were almost gods with modern heroes who are merely men. Although the opposing armies meet in combat following Homer's catalogue, it is not until Book X, the penultimate book of the novel, that the battle of the *truands* occurs. In *Notre-Dame de Paris*, conflict between and within the characters replaces the battle scenes of the *Iliad*. Hugo is here following the structure of the *Iliad*. The catalogue of warriors appears in Book II.²⁵ In book three of both works, the narrative moves inside the "fortress" that will ultimately be attacked. The old men on the ramparts of Troy look out over the Achaian army. Hugo, the narrator, moves from the interior of Notre-Dame cathedral to look out over Paris from the top of the towers. As Priam points out various warriors in the Greek army, so Hugo points out the different divisions and landmarks of the city. Similarly, the final books in each are devoted to death and funeral rites: Achilles builds the funeral pyre and holds the funeral games for Patroclus in Book XXIII; in the final book of the *Iliad* (XXIV), the Trojans hold similar rites for Hektor. In the last book of *Notre-Dame de Paris*, Esmeralda is hung and

²² NDP 1988, 354: "on vit rouler une grosse larme qui tomba lentement le long de ce visage difforme." *L'Iliade* 1756, t.I.ii, 122: "Thersite plia sous le coup & se mit à pleurer."

²³ *Essential VH* 2009, 20–21.

²⁴ NDP 1988, 141; *L'Iliade* 1756, t.I.ii, 139–57. See Simaïka 1962 for a thorough discussion of the elements in the novel.

²⁵ Throughout, I am referring to the *Iliad* by the traditional books used in modern editions.

her body consigned into the hollow beneath Montfaucon where Quasimodo “marries” her in death.

Esmeralda, who will ultimately serve as the impetus for the *truands*' attack on the cathedral, shares the attribute of beauty with Helen of Troy. She entered the story in direct competition with Gringoire's morality play. It was the call, “La Esmeralda,” that seduced those few remaining in Gringoire's audience to leave.²⁶ In an early scene, surrounded by the beauty of a young noblewoman, Fleur-de-Lys, and her friends, Esmeralda's beauty is described as “so rare that the moment she appeared on the threshold of the apartment she seemed to diffuse a kind of light all her own.”²⁷ She marries Gringoire according to the customs of the *truands* to save his life, yet she refuses to consummate the marriage. Though “married,” she is desired, if not loved, by Dom Frolo, Phoebus de Châteaupers the captain of the archers, and Quasimodo. She relives the story of Helen of Troy to some extent. Though “married” to Gringoire, Esmeralda falls in love with Captain Phoebus when he rescues her from kidnapping and worse in the dark night streets of Paris.²⁸ Her consequent trust led her to agree not only to a night rendezvous, but also to whatever he desires. Though married to Menelaus, Helen went with Paris to Troy. Whether she went willingly is not known. Hugo resolves that question: Esmeralda willingly leaves her “husband,” Gringoire, goes with Captain Phoebus, and yields to him.

In addition to drawing on the myth of Helen, Hugo also recreates a scene from the *Iliad* when Phoebus and Esmeralda meet: “Monsieur Phoebus was obviously approaching one of those moments when Jupiter himself behaves so foolishly that good old Homer is obliged to draw a cloud over the scene.”²⁹ In the *Iliad*, Hera had made herself as beautiful as possible in order to seduce Zeus. She succeeds so well, that Zeus desires her and gathers a golden cloud to hide them from the eyes of all.³⁰ Hugo follows the same technique of parody he had used in his “catalogue of ships” by comparing Hera knowingly seducing her husband for an ulterior purpose to an innocent girl

²⁶ *HND* 1967, 55; *NDP* 1988, 123: “Ce mot produisit un effet magique. Tout ce qui restait dans la salle se précipita aux fenêtres, grimpant aux murailles pour voir et répétant : *la Esmeralda ! la Esmeralda !*”

²⁷ *HDP* 1965, 242; *NDP* 1988, 367: “Elle était d'une beauté si rare que, au moment où elle parut à l'entrée de l'appartement, il sembla qu'elle y répandait une sorte de lumière qui lui était propre.”

²⁸ *NDP* 1988, Livre II.iv “Les inconvénients de suivre une jolie femme le soir dans les rues.”

²⁹ *NDP* 1988, 434: “[...] et tout annonçait que monsieur Phoebus touchait évidemment à l'un de ces moments où Jupiter lui-même fait tant de sottises que le bon Homère est obligé d'appeler un nuage à son secours.”

³⁰ *L'Iliade* 1756, t.III.xiv, 295–96: “je vous environnerai d'un nuage d'or, que le Soleil même, quelque perçants que soient ses yeux, ne pourra pénétrer.”

blindly yielding in trust and love. Once more he shows the gods of antiquity as nothing but body, in this instance, sexual urge, but the modern human faced with the conflict between body and soul. Esmeralda defines love to Gringoire as “to be two and yet one,” a definition that can be read in both a corporeal and a spiritual way. Esmeralda completed her definition by saying, “as into an angel,”³¹ suggesting the transcendence from the human to the sublime. Nonetheless, she is caught between giving in to the earthly desire of Phoebus or remaining true to her heavenly ideal.

After having been condemned to death for murder and sorcery, in another version of the “abduction” of Helen, Quasimodo snatches Esmeralda from the entrance to Notre Dame and conveys her within the cathedral, a designated place of sanctuary. Like Menelaus, Gringoire devises a plan to rescue his wife that includes persuading the other kings, here the kings of the *truands*, to mount an attack. Jehan Frolo du Moulin, who had threatened to join the *truands* if his brother, Dom Frolo, would not give him any more money, and who had “assumed the stance of an Ajax” as he made this threat,³² lives up to this threat. He joins the *truands* and becomes an Ajax in fact when he fits himself out in armor for the attack and rescue. The *truands* put on arms like the Achaians strapping on their greaves and corselets, slinging on their swords, and picking up their shields and spears.³³ Like the Achaian men who “went silently, breathing valour, / stubbornly minded each in his heart to stand by the others,”³⁴ the *truands* formed “a long black procession of silent men who were marching [...]” When they reached the square in front of the cathedral, they maintained their discipline, and executed their orders “in silence and with admirable precision.”³⁵

This attack on Notre-Dame not only echoes a Homeric battle scene, it also echoes recent past history, the storming of the Bastille: “The collective event is like a general rehearsal for July 14, complete with pillage of weapons, mob anger, a procession of frightening physiognomies, and chaotic exploits, while the tocsin lends the event a fierce solemnity.”³⁶ Since the novel takes place in 1482, the Bastille is still standing, and Hugo restores a potent symbol of the *Ancien Regime* and the Revolution. In the midst

³¹ HND 1967, 95; NDP 1988, 181: “C’est être deux et n’être qu’un. Un home et une femme qui se fondent en un ange.”

³² NDP 1988, 553: “En prononçant ce mot monstrueux, il prit une mine d’Ajax [...]”

³³ For example, the description of Achilles arming at the end of *Iliad* xix (1756, t.IV.xix, 114–15).

³⁴ *L’Iliade* 1756, t.I.iii, 220: “Mais les Grecs, pleins d’une fureur martiale, marchaient dans un profond silence, résolus de se soutenir les uns les autres, & de combattre sans lâcher le pied.”

³⁵ HND 1965, 403 & 408; NDP 1988, 564 & 570: “[...] une longue procession d’hommes noirs et silencieux qui descendait [...]” and “[...] et nous devons dire, à l’honneur de la discipline truande, que les ordres de Clopin furent exécutés en silence et avec une admirable précision [...]”

³⁶ Brombert 1984, 69.

of the *truands*' attack on Notre Dame, the narrative shifts to the King, who is in Paris.³⁷ Once he realizes that the cathedral is under attack, and that this represents an attack against himself since it is under his protection, he orders the guard to exterminate the attackers.³⁸ The events described then become a mix of the storming of the Bastille (1789) and the July Revolution of 1830 written in the terminology of a Homeric battle, while the narrative takes place in 1482.³⁹

Once the *truands* attacked, Quasimodo, in an effort to defend the cathedral, dropped a beam of wood on them that "rebounded upon the pavement like a serpent rising and striking."⁴⁰ When the *truands* failed to gain entry with a battering ram, Jehan led the men climbing a ladder up the wall of the cathedral, and, as he looked down on the wounded and dead, he reflected, "Alas, here is a heap of bodies worthy of the fifth book of the *Iliad*."⁴¹ Hugo redeploys snake imagery to describe the sight of the men climbing the ladder: "To see that line of mailed backs thus rise undulating in the semidarkness, one might have imagined it a serpent with steely scales, readying itself to strike [...]"⁴² The serpent images echo Book II of the *Aeneid*: the two serpents that swim from Tenedos and kill Laocoön and his two sons, and Pyrrhus rearing up like a snake outside the gate of Priam's palace.⁴³

Unfortunately for Quasimodo, who tried to protect Esmeralda, Gringoire and Dom Frollo spirit her and her tame goat, Djali, out of the cathedral while the battle rages. As they make their escape, Gringoire realizes that he cannot save both Esmeralda and Djali: "A violent battle was going on in his mind, wherein, like Jupiter of the *Iliad*, he placed in the balance alternately the gypsy girl and the goat."⁴⁴ In the Homeric

³⁷ Brombert 1984, 68–72.

³⁸ NDP 1988, 621–22.

³⁹ See Grossman 1986, 161.

⁴⁰ HND 1965, 413; NDP 1988, 576: "Enfin elle toucha le sol, [...] en rebondissant sur le pavé, ressemblait à un serpent qui saute."

⁴¹ HND 1965, 420; NDP 1988, 583: "—Hélas ! dit-il, voilà un monceau de cadavres digne du cinquième chant de l'*Iliade* !"

⁴² HND 1965, 420; NDP 1988, 583: "À voir s'élever en ondulant dans l'ombre cette ligne de dos cuirassés, on eût dit un serpent à écailles d'acier qui se dressait contre l'église."

⁴³ Virgil *Aeneid*, II.469–75 and 204–19: [...] *Pyrrhus* | *exsultat* [...] *qualis* [...] *coluber* [...] *lubrica convolvit sublato pectore terga*; and [...] *immensis orbibus angues* | [...] *pectora quorum inter fluctus arrepta iubaeque* | *sanguineae superant undas* [...] and [...] *immensis orbibus angues* | *incumbent pelage pariterque ad litora tendunt*: | [...] *pars cetera pontem* | *pone legit sinuatque immense volumine terga*. | [...] *et primum parva duorum* | *corpora natorum serpens amplexus uterque* | *implicat* [...] *post ipsum* [...] | *corripiunt spirisque ligant ingentibu: et iam* | *bis medium amplexi, bis collo squamea circum* | *terga dati, superant capite at cervicibus altis*.

⁴⁴ HND 1965, 464; NDP 1988, 637: "Il se livrait entre ses pensées un violent combat, dans lequel, comme le Jupiter de l'*Iliade*; il pesait tour à tour l'égyptienne et la chèvre [...]"

scene, Zeus weighs the fates of the Achaians and the Trojans in his golden scales, and that of the Achaians sinks.⁴⁵ The Homeric weighing results in a period of catastrophic loss for the Achaians. Gringoire decides to save Djali, which is a death sentence for Esmeralda since she remains at the mercy of Dom Frolo. Given the choice of yielding to Dom Frolo or death, Esmeralda chooses death.

Gringoire, in a parody of justice, chose to save the goat over the woman who had saved him from death in the *Cour des Miracles*. Early in the novel, when Gringoire followed Esmeralda and Djali through the streets, he “[thought] them both goats because of their lightness, agility, and grace.”⁴⁶ His inability to differentiate between the girl and the goat reflects Gringoire’s status as a poet. A poet makes hybrids; he weaves together fact and fiction. Gringoire claims the status of poet not only to girls in the audience of the morality play, but to the *truands* when on trial for his life, and to Louis XI when his life is again in the balance. From the outset, he has not been just any poet. He has allied himself with Homer. After he lost his audience for the morality play and, thus, his payment for it, Gringoire consoles himself with the thought, “Homer begged his way through the Greek towns.”⁴⁷ Later, in the *Cour des Miracles*, Gringoire asks to join the *truands* with the remark, “I don’t see why [...] poets are not classed as truands. Aesop was a vagabond, Homer was a beggar, Mercury was a thief.”⁴⁸ Gringoire as the self-proclaimed poet takes over from Homer.⁴⁹ His morality play is left incomplete when he loses his audience. He gains, however, the readers of the novel. In what may be an act of poetic justice, Esmeralda, whose arrival caused the morality play to be left hanging, is hung. This suggests some future completion of the play. In a similar way, “The French Revolution [...] is a matter of the past, yet remains to be accomplished in

⁴⁵ *L'Iliade* 1756, t.II.viii, 278–79: “[...] le Père des Dieux & des hommes prend ses balances d’or, met dans les deux bassins les sorts de la mort des Grecs & de celle des Troyens ; il les éleve de sa main puissante, et les pese attentivement. Le sort des Grecs, emporte la balance, & se précipitant vers la terre, il fait monter aux ciel le sort des Troyens.”

⁴⁶ *HND* 1965, 73; *NDP* 1988, 148: “deux fines, délicates et charmantes créatures, dont il admirait les petits pieds, les jolies formes, les gracieuses manières, les confondant presque dans sa contemplation ; pour l’intelligence et la bonne amitié, les croyant toutes deux jeunes filles ; pour la légèreté, l’agilité, la dextérité de la marche, les trouvant chèvres toutes deux.”

⁴⁷ *HND* 1965, 56; *NDP* 1988, 124: “Il est vrai qu’Homerus a mendié par les bourgades grecques, [...]”

⁴⁸ *HND* 1965, 87; *NDP* 1988, 167: “Vagabond, Aesopus le fut ; mendiant, Homerus le fut ; voleur, Mercurius l’était [...]”

⁴⁹ Brombert 1984, 7, notes that Hugo’s novels are “closer to romance and myth than to the realist tradition, projecting linguistic and metaphoric structures that achieve what has been called the *roman poème*.”

the future.”⁵⁰ Only the first of the historic upheavals of the nineteenth century resulting from the Revolution has happened by the time Hugo finished *Notre-Dame de Paris*. Thus, his work must be completed in the future.⁵¹

The story of Troy is more than the story of the siege and battle. It is also the story of the causes, and of the repercussions and after-effects of the fighting. Homer dealt with the fighting itself (the *Iliad*) and its repercussions (the *Odyssey*). In addition to Homer, later poets, the tragedians in particular, based their work on the effects and repercussions of the war at home. Aeschylus’s *Oresteia*, in particular, considers the aftermath of the war.⁵² In the *Oresteia*, Aeschylus constructs a web of motifs, the most pronounced of which are weaving and serpents.⁵³ Hugo, who is drawing on tragedy as well as epic, echoes these motifs in *Notre-Dame de Paris*. The *Agamemnon* is full of images of nets and webs that trap and kill.⁵⁴ After he kills Clytemnestra and Aegisthus in the *Choéphoroi*, Orestes calls up the image of the net that trapped his father.⁵⁵ Like-

⁵⁰ Brombert 1984, 70.

⁵¹ *HND* 1965, 497; *NDP* 1988, 674: “Il obtint des succès en tragédie.” Seebacher notes the historic Gringoire never wrote tragedy, which was not present in France until 1553. He suggests that Hugo is being ironic here since tragedy was born after the life of Gringoire and it was dying in life of Hugo due to the evolution of romantic and historic drama (*NDP* 1988, 674 n. 3). Grossman 1986, 178, says, “Gringoire’s ridiculous survival to write wretched epics and tragedies while ignoring the suffering around him thus stresses the genuinely dynamic tensions and relationships that comprise the drama in which the other characters are involved. It is perhaps the ultimate ‘poetic justice’ of *Notre-Dame de Paris* that his works are doomed to be suspended right in the middle, to lack both continuity and closure. As the writer’s alter ego, Gringoire appears as a ‘parodie de lien entre des irréconciliables,’ suggesting through the very emptiness of his eclecticism the qualities of the real artist.”

⁵² Hugo 1864, t.II 46–53, records some encounters with his friend M. Soumet whose *Clytemnestre* was being performed at the Théâtre-Français. Their conversation includes subtle references not only to Clytemnestra’s actions but to Orestes’s return to Argos and revenge on his mother.

⁵³ See Fowler 2007, 302–15 for a brief discussion of the major image complexes.

⁵⁴ The inescapable net that the chorus says Zeus threw over the towers of Troy, *Ag* 1999, 185: “Zeus souverain ! Ô Nuit amie qui viens nous combler de trésors insignes ! Sur Troie et ses remparts, c’est toi qui as jeté un filet si serré que nul, jeune ou adulte, n’échappât à l’immense rets d’esclavage maudit [...]”; the net that Clytemnestra says Agamemnon would have become if he had been injured as often as it had been reported he was, *Ag* 1999, 199: “Si celui qui nous voyons avait reçu de blessures autant que les on-dit en canalisaient chez nous [...] cela fait autant de trous qu’il y en a dans un filet, si je puis dire”; the carpets Clytemnestra wants Agamemnon to walk on as he enters the palace, *Ag* 1999, 200: “Qu’attendez-vous, servantes ? Je vous avais confié la charge de joncher de tapis le sol où il va marcher”; the net of Hades that Cassandra sees, *Ag* 1999, 206: “C’est une nasse, aux mailles infernales ? [...] / Non : le piège; c’est elle [...]”; the net Clytemnestra says that she surrounded Agamemnon with as one does fish and then struck him twice, *Ag* 1999, 214: “Autour de lui, j’ai jeté, comme un épervier, un réseau inextricable, une somptuosité vestimentaire qui l’a perdu.”

⁵⁵ *Ch* 1999, 266: “J’ai le témoignage de ce tissu pour dire de quelles éclaboussures l’a marqué l’épée d’Égisthe ! [...] À présent, là-devant, j’ai de quoi m’applaudir—et me désoler tout à la fois. Invoquant

wise, the motif of a web that traps and kills appears throughout *Notre-Dame de Paris*: the spider's web.⁵⁶ Perhaps the most striking example occurs in Dom Frolo's cell high in the tower of Notre Dame. While visiting his brother, Dom Frolo, Jehan Frolo du Moulin sees the "circular web of a spider [...]. In the center of the snare, the insect builder remained motionless [...]"⁵⁷ Later, after refusing to lend his brother more money,⁵⁸ Dom Frolo finds himself staring at the same spider's web when "a giddy fly, looking for the March sun, flew into the net and was entangled."⁵⁹ He compares Esmeralda to the fly and himself to the spider, since he is planning her eventual arrest on charges of sorcery, but he realizes that he too is the fly caught by his unquenchable "love" for Esmeralda.⁶⁰ When Demodokos sings the story of Ares and Aphrodite in the *Odyssey*, he compares the net of Haephaestus (the cuckolded husband) to a spider's web and to a trap.⁶¹ Demodokos also sings about the events in Troy. Shortly thereafter, Odysseus picks up the thread of the story and tells of his own wanderings. Thus, the web in the *Odyssey* links the idea of spinning not just to a net but also to a story.⁶²

ce tissu qui m'a tué mon père, je pleure, et sur le crime, et sur son châtement, et sur toute ma race."

⁵⁶ The first image of the spider and the fly is that of Quasimodo waiting "for the huge bell to pass, as a spider waits for a fly, and then he would fling himself headlong on it" (*HND* 1967, 153; *NDP* 1988, 252: "Il attendait le bourdon au passage, comme l'araignée attend la mouche, [...]"

⁵⁷ *HND* 1965, 262–63; *NDP* 1988, 394: "Le rayon du jour qui pénétrait par cette ouverture traversait une ronde toile d'araignée, qui inscrivait avec goût sa rosace délicate [...] et au centre de laquelle l'insecte architecte se tenait immobile comme le moyeu de cette roue de dentelle."

⁵⁸ Note that Jehan "exclaimed some Greek word with an expression of despair" and explains that it "is an anapest of Aeschylus which perfectly expresses grief." *HND* 1965, 271; *NDP* 1988, 404: "[...] et s'écria avec une expression de désespoir : — Ο τωτωτωτωί ! [...] c'est du grec ! c'est un anapeste d'Eschyles qui exprime parfaitement la douleur."

⁵⁹ *HND* 1965, 276; *NDP* 1988, 411: "En ce moment, une mouche étourdie, qui cherchait le soleil de mars, vint se jeter à travers ce filet et s'y englua."

⁶⁰ The same image recurs when Esmeralda is about to be tortured into confessing to sorcery and murder. *HND* 1965, 310; *NDP* 1988, 453: "Si l'archidiacre eût été présent, certes, il se fût souvenu en ce moment de son symbole de l'araignée et de la mouche."

⁶¹ *L'Odyssee* 1741, t.II.viii,197: "C'étoient comme des toiles d'araignée [...] ce piège secret [...]" The image of the spider's web trapping suitors in one way or another may also have its origins the shroud that Penelope daily weaves and nightly unweaves to save herself from having to choose one of the suitor's as her new husband in Homer's *Odyssey*. *L'Odyssee* 1741, t.I.ii,119: "Elle s'est mise à travailler dans son appartement à une toile très-fine & d'une immense grandeur, & nous a dit à tous : [...] permettez que je ne pense à mes nocces qu'après que j'aurai achevé cette toile que j'ai commencée ; [...] je la prépare pour les funeraillles de Laërte." See Mueller 2010 for a discussion of other scenes of women's weaving in the *Odyssey*.

⁶² See Holmberg 2003 for a discussion of the connections between spiders and their webs, weaving, and narrative. Though this is based on ancient texts, there are a number of useful references to later narratives and to narrative theory.

The recluse of the Tour-Roland, too, is compared to the spider when she hears that Esmeralda, the gypsy girl, is to be hung: "With the alertness with which a spider pounces on a fly at the shaking of its web, she darted to the window."⁶³ The recluse links gypsies who steal and eat babies, like a spider snatching its prey, with vipers when she calls Esmeralda, "that young viper," not knowing that she speaks of her own long lost daughter. As she calls her own child a "viper," she echoes Clytemnestra in the *Choéphoroi* who dreams she has given birth to a serpent that bites her as she is nursing it.⁶⁴ The serpent does indeed represent her son Orestes who has returned to Argos to avenge his father's death by killing her, his father's murderer. Similarly, though in a kind of grotesque parody, the return and recognition of her daughter, Esmeralda, also causes the recluse to die. When she tries to protect Esmeralda, whom she has just recognized, from the soldiers, she is knocked to the floor, hits her head on a stone, and dies.

In *Notre-Dame de Paris*, the serpent is closely allied with Dom Frollo. He uses terminology appropriate to a serpent when he describes his search for knowledge: "I have [...] crawled [...] on my belly with my nails dug in the earth through all the innumerable windings of that dark cave [...] [and] I am still crawling, I am still bloodying my face and knees on the stones of that subterranean passage."⁶⁵ This image of Frollo as a serpent recurs when Esmeralda is described at the cathedral before her rescue by Quasimodo as "A twisted, heavy, gray knotted rope [...] wrapped around her slender neck like a worm twined around a flower" and "dragged after her like a trailing serpent" when she mounted the steps of the cathedral.⁶⁶ Frollo, the worm crawling through the earth, will cause Esmeralda's death as surely as if he were the rope around her neck. These images unite when Esmeralda is finally hung "swinging from the end of the rope" and Frollo watches "that frightful scene [...] the spider and the fly."⁶⁷

⁶³ *HND* 1965, 331; 1988, 478: "Avec le brusque soubresaut de cette araignée que nous avons vue se jeter sur une mouche au tremblement de sa toile, elle courut à sa lucarne [...]"

⁶⁴ *Ch* 1999, 252: "Il lui a semblé qu'elle mettait au monde un serpent [...] il lui a tiré un caillot de sang avec le lait."

⁶⁵ *HND* 1965, 169 & 171; *NDP* 1988, 273 & 276: "Je n'ai pas rampé si long-temps à plat-ventre et les ongles dans la terre à travers les innombrables embranchements de la caverne [...]" and, "Mais non, je rampe encore ; je m'écorche la face et les genoux aux cailloux de la voie souterraine."

⁶⁶ *HND* 1965, 340 & 343; *NDP* 1988, 489 & 492: "À travers cette ondoyante chevelure, plus luisante qu'un plumage de corbeau, on voyait se tordre et se nouer une grosse corde grise et rugueuse qui écorchait ses fragiles clavicules et se roulait autour du cou charmant de la pauvre fille comme un ver de terre sur une fleur" and, "La corde qu'elle avait au cou traînait derrière elle. On eût dit un serpent qui la suivait."

⁶⁷ *HND* 1965, 494; *NDP* 1988, 670-71: "[...] Quasimodo [...] vit se balancer au bout de la corde, [...] ce groupe épouvantable de l'homme et de la jeune fille, de l'araignée et de la mouche."

In sum, the structure of *Notre-Dame de Paris* is based loosely on scenes in the *Iliad*, so that the ancient epic serves as the foundation for the modern novel. In addition, by incorporating Virgil and Aeschylus, Hugo draws upon the “same myths, the same catastrophes, and the same heroes” as Homer, but he adapts them to the era of modern man. Hugo, then, not only draws from the “mighty river,” but he also sends forth his own “mighty river.” He is both Homer and Homer’s successors.

LES MISÉRABLES

Les Misérables follows the same structural pattern of scenes based on the Trojan War as *Notre-Dame de Paris*. It refers to the awarding of the golden apple early when the narrator describes four students and their girlfriends in Paris (I.iii). The idea of awarding a prize for female beauty is raised in the case of Fantine, the youngest and most innocent of the girls.⁶⁸ It is Favorite, another, more sophisticated girl, however, of whom it is said, “You are made to be handed the apple like Venus.”⁶⁹ Likewise, *Les Misérables* includes a battle fought near the end, the Revolution of 1830 (V.i). Unlike *Notre-Dame de Paris*, *Les Misérables* not only incorporates this battle close to the end, but it also includes a second battle, the Battle of Waterloo (II.i). These two battles, however, are woven into the fabric of the novel in different ways. The battle at the barricade of July 1830 takes place in the narrative present like the *truand* march on Notre-Dame. It is, however, described partly through comparison with the insurrection of 1848, which is outside the time frame of the novel.⁷⁰

Unlike the insurrection at the barricade, Hugo separates the Battle of Waterloo from narrative time by having a traveller from 1861 stop at the site of the battle. He steps through a door into 1815 and the battle itself. This technique echoes Aeneas’s recounting of the fall of Troy, which is already years in the past, to Dido and the Carthaginians in the *Aeneid* (II).⁷¹ Virgil manipulates narrative time even more by jux-

⁶⁸ *LM* 1967, t.I, 154 : “[...] la fameuse cour d’amour [...] eût peut-être donné le prix de la coquette-rie à ce canezou qui concourait pour la chasteté.”

⁶⁹ *LM* 2008, 116; 1967, t.I, 165: “Tu es faite pour recevoir la pomme comme Vénus.”

⁷⁰ Note that this is the same battle that interrupted Hugo’s writing of *Notre-Dame de Paris* and is represented in the attack of the *truands* on Notre Dame. Hugo introduces this revolution by a reference to the insurrection of 1848, which he calls, “la plus grande guerre des rues qu’ait vue l’histoire” (*LM* 1967, t.III, 196).

⁷¹ Note that Hugo connects his traveler with Virgil who “strolled, and looked, and listened, and dreamed [...] before the fatal plain of Philippi” (*LM* 2008, 291). “et si quelque voyageur s’y promène, s’il regarde, s’il écoute, s’il rêve comme Virgile dans les funestes plaines de Philippes, l’hallucination de la catastrophe le saisit” (*LM* 1967, t.I, 380). Through this reference to Virgil, he is also referring to the narrator of the story, the poet/author who is, perhaps, here taking over the role of Gringoire.

taping the legendary past, the narrative present, and the historic future (which is the author's present) when Aeneas steps through time and space to visit the ghost of his father, Anchises, in the underworld (VI). Anchises narrates Roman history from before the founding of the city to current events of Virgil's own time to Aeneas.⁷² Similarly, Hugo joins the past, the Battle of Waterloo, with the narrative present through Thénardier who stumbles upon Sergeant Pontmercy, the severely wounded father of Marius, a character still to come, while robbing corpses. Hugo begins his digression on Waterloo by stepping back in time, and ends it with two characters to provide a link to the future of the story. The traveler joins the real present of 1861 with the historic past and the narrative future (which is also in the historic past). Hugo also follows the technique of superimposing two battles, the one in the narrative and another when he says, "It is July 14, 1789 [the storming of the Bastille], attacked via March 20, 1815 [the day Napoleon returned to Paris from Elba], it is the pandemonium of the monarchies versus the indomitable French riot."⁷³

This digression on Waterloo functions like a set piece,⁷⁴ such as a messenger speech or a choral ode of Greek tragedy. The traveler first describes what a tourist in 1861 would see: "a sort of grassy knoll through the trees and on this grassy knoll something that, at that distance, looked like a lion,"⁷⁵ the battlefield memorial. Likewise, the herald who returns to Argos in advance of the victorious return of Agamemnon from Troy mentions the memorial that men in the future will see and, in seeing, remember those who fought.⁷⁶ Then, Hugo's traveler, like Aeneas speaking to Dido, recreates the events of the battle. This description relies on a chain of references to the Trojan War in general and the *Aeneid* in particular. The traveler describes how the 75th regiment of Highlanders died "thinking of Ben Lothian as the Greeks died remembering Argos."⁷⁷ He includes the snake imagery from Virgil's description of the fall of Troy to

⁷² *Aeneid* VI. 756–886. Jupiter gives a similar retelling of the history of Rome, which has not yet been founded in narrative time, as he unrolls the book of Fate in Book I lines 261–96.

⁷³ LM 2008, 292; 1967, t.I, 381, "c'est le 14 juillet 1789 attaqué à travers le 20 mars 1815, c'est le branle-bas des monarchies contre l'indomptable émeute française."

⁷⁴ The digression on Waterloo comprises Part II, Book I.

⁷⁵ LM 2008, 334; t.I, 1967, 334: "Il aperçut à l'horizon à travers les arbres une espèce de monticule et sur ce monticule quelque chose qui, de loin, ressemblait à un lion."

⁷⁶ Ag 1999, 191: "Ainsi nous pouvons bien glorifier à la face du soleil, et donner l'essor, par-dessus les terres et les mers à des accents comme ceux-ci : 'Troie fut conquise un jour par les troupes d'Argos pour les Dieux de la Grèce, elles ont dans les temples cloué, selon l'antique usage, ces dépouilles nimbées de gloire.' En entendant un tel témoignage, il faut qu'on bénira la grâce de Zeus, par laquelle cela fut accompli. Tu sais tout ; j'ai dit."

⁷⁷ LM 2008, 278; 1967, t.I, 363: "Ces écossais mouraient en pensant au Ben Lothian comme les grecs en se souvenant d'Argos."

describe the battle maneuvers saying that “the battle line wiggles and snakes around like a thread.”⁷⁸ He describes the two divisions of Wathier and Delord: “From a distance they looked like two immense steel snakes stretching out toward the crest of the plateau.”⁷⁹ Beyond these overt analogies, vocabulary related to snakes, such as “undulate” and “wind,” is used throughout the passage.⁸⁰

Hugo also turns to the *Aeneid* (II) and the actions of the defeated Trojans to characterize the French. After hearing that Troy was lost, Aeneas encouraged his men with the words: “Let us die, and let us rush into the middle of battle! The one hope of safety for the conquered is to hope for no safety.”⁸¹ In the same way, Maréchal Ney fights maniacally for what has become a hopeless cause: “Ney, in despair, grand with all the arrogance of acceptance of death, offered himself up to any and all blows in this torment.”⁸² Given the chance to surrender, a common French soldier, Cambronne, replies, “Shit!”—a response so sublime that Hugo deems it worthy of Aeschylean greatness.⁸³ Both Ney and Cambronne hark back to Diomedes in the *Iliad*. When Agamemnon, in despair at the Achaian losses, suggests that they return home, Diomedes refuses. He says that even if all the other Achaians return home, he, and Sthenelus, will stay and fight until they have sacked Troy.⁸⁴ Hugo applies this ancient paradigm of valor and patriotism to Waterloo but adds a modern twist. Though Maréchal Ney is clearly the

⁷⁸ *LM* 2008, 266; 1967, t.I, 347: “La ligne de bataille flotte et serpente come un fil.” This is reminiscent of the description of the rope snaking down Esmeralda’s back in *Notre-Dame de Paris*.

⁷⁹ *LM*, 2008, 275; 1967, t.I, 360: “On croyait voir de loin s’allonger vers la crête du plateau deux immenses couleuvres d’acier.” This echoes the description of the line of *truands* “snaking” their way up the ladder.

⁸⁰ Savy 2002, 107–8. The rest of the article treats other Greco-roman mythic antecedents dealing with serpent imagery and combat, such as the battle of Typhoeus and the Olympians.

⁸¹ *Aeneid* II.353–54: *moriatur et in media arma ruamus | una salus uictis nullam sperare salutem*.

⁸² *LM* 2008, 283; 1967, t.I, 369–70: “Ney, éperdu, grand de toute la hauteur de la mort acceptée, s’offrait à tous les coups dans cette tourmente. Il eut là son cinquième cheval tué sous lui. En sueur, la flamme aux yeux, l’écume aux lèvres, l’uniforme déboutonné, une de ses épauettes à demi coupée par le coup de sabre d’un horse-guard, sa plaque de grand-aigle bosselée par une balle, sanglant, fangeux, magnifique, une épée cassée à la main, il disait : Venez voir comment meurt un maréchal de France sur le champ de bataille.”

⁸³ *LM* 2008, 287; 1967, t.I; 373: “[...] un général anglais, Colville selon les uns, Maitland selon les autres, leur cria : Braves français, rendez-vous ! Cambronne répondit : Merde !”

⁸⁴ *L'Iliade* 1756, t.II.ix, 343: “Que si votre courage vous porte à regagner votre patrie, partez ; les chemins sont ouverts, & les nombreux vaisseaux, qui vous ont suivi de Mycenes, sont heureusement les plus près du rivage ; tous les autres Grecs demeureront ici jusqu’à ce que nous ayons saccagé Troye. Que s’ils veulent vous suivre, qu’ils s’enfuyent aussi sur leurs vaisseaux ; qui est-ce qui prétend les retenir ? mais pour Sthenelus & moi, nous combattons jusqu’à ce que nous ayons trouvé le jour fatal d’Ilion ; [...]”

equivalent in rank to the Achaian warriors, and thus close to the gods and worthy to be immortalized, Cambronne is merely human.

A different battle, that of a human soul, precedes the description of the Battle of Waterloo. The policeman, Javert, comes to apologize to Jean Valjean, who is living as M. Madeleine, a successful entrepreneur, the benefactor of the poor, and the mayor of Montreuil-sur-mer. He has notified the authorities of his suspicion that M. Madeleine is the runaway convict Jean Valjean. Though Javert had been convinced of Jean Valjean's identity, the arrest of the "real" Jean Valjean proved him wrong. Javert's apology causes M. Madeleine, who is the real Jean Valjean, to struggle with his conscience: should he turn himself in and save the man wrongly accused, though that man is a criminal in his own right, or should he remain in disguise and continue to benefit those he has helped since his arrival in Montreuil-sur-mer? Hugo references Homeric poetry to suggest the magnitude of this struggle: "There, beneath the outer silence, titanic struggles are taking place as in Homer."⁸⁵ He describes conscience as "the battlefield of passions."⁸⁶ In another grotesque parody, he employs the simile used to describe Aeneas's mental struggle in the face of Dido's grief and anger at his departure to describe Jean Valjean's struggle, "He bent low like an oak about to be battered by a storm, like a soldier about to be assailed."⁸⁷ Though Aeneas and Jean Valjean appear to face different battles of passion, both battles are about duty. Aeneas has the duty of establishing a new homeland, a heroic duty; Jean Valjean has the Christian duty of not allowing another man to be punished for his crimes. Hugo cloaks Jean Valjean's battle in the pagan imagery of the ancient authors, but he describes the modern conflict between body and soul. He suggests that these new psychological battles are as heroic as the battles of strength the ancients faced, and says, "To write the poem of the human conscience [...] would be to meld all epics into one superior epic; the epic to end all."⁸⁸ He juxtaposes psychological epic with the epic of Waterloo. Waterloo, however, is over; it is history. Hugo closes the

⁸⁵ *LM* 2008, 184; t.I, 1967, 248: "Il y a là ; sous le silence extérieur ; des combats de géants come dans Homère."

⁸⁶ *LM* t.I, 1967, 248: "C'est le champ de bataille des passions."

⁸⁷ *LM* 2008, 185; 1967, t.I, 249: "il se courba comme un chêne à l'approche d'un orage : comme un soldat à l'approche d'un assault." *Aeneid* IV.441-48 : *ac velut annoso validam cum robore quercum / Alpini Boreae nunc hinc nunc flatibus illinc / eruere inter se certant; it stridor, et altae / consternunt terram concusso stipite frondes; / [...] haud secus adsiduis hinc atque hinc vocibus heros / tunditur, et magno persentit pectore curas; [...]*

⁸⁸ *LM* 2008, 184; 1967, t.I, 248: "Faire le poème de la conscience humaine, ne fût-ce qu'à propos d'un seul homme, [...] ce serait fondre toutes les épopées dans une épopée supérieure et définitive."

door on it and opens the door to the new, spiritual conflict.⁸⁹ It will be Marius, the son of Sergeant Pontmercy, who will incite the greatest conflict in the soul of Jean Valjean. In his crisis of conscience, Jean Valjean echoes the anguish of Orestes in the *Choéphoroi*. The oracle of Apollo tells Orestes that if he doesn't avenge his father's death, he will suffer many evils including the wrath of hostile powers from the earth.⁹⁰ Unfortunately, by taking vengeance, Orestes arouses these same hostile powers. At the end of the *Choéphoroi* and throughout the *Eumenides*, Orestes sees "hideous women looking like Gorgons [...] wreathed with serpents."⁹¹ Clytemnestra calls upon these women, the Furies, to pursue him relentlessly. Had he not acted, he would have suffered, but, by acting, he suffers. Like Orestes, Jean Valjean faces perpetual torment. By first confessing and freeing the "false" Jean Valjean but then escaping, Valjean sets his own Fury on himself in the shape of Javert. Hugo compares Javert to "a bull mastiff" and "the heaven-sent mastiff guarding society."⁹² In the *Eumenides*, the Furies too had been likened to bloodhounds when Clytemnestra rouses them saying that they are dreaming of pursuit "like a hound who can never desist from thinking of blood."⁹³

The vast center of the novel, which stretches from the Battle of Waterloo to the battle at the barricade, is a tale of longing for home and travel through many perils toward that ideal. As soon as he is released from prison, Jean Valjean struggles to return to the home he had left nineteen years ago just as Odysseus journeys home to Ithaca after ten years in Troy, and Aeneas searches for his ancient homeland with Trojan survivors. Like Odysseus, Jean Valjean employs subtle trickery when necessary, and disguises himself in both name and appearance. His escape from the convent in a coffin, is akin to Odysseus's escape from Polyphemus's cave clinging to the underside of a ram. He hides the name of Jean Valjean under that of M. Madeleine, and then of M. Fauchelevent, just as Odysseus changes his name. Jean Valjean carries Marius, his future son-in-law, out of the fighting and flames of the barricade⁹⁴ in a reversal of Aeneas carrying his

⁸⁹ See Brombert 1984, 97–108.

⁹⁰ *Ch* 1999, 244: "Debout ! me disait-il à grands cris en formulant des malédictions à me glacer les entrailles, si je ne m'en prenais pas aux meurtriers de mon père comme ils s'en sont pris à lui. Il me disait de les tuer, d'un talion sans merci, d'un coup de cornes mortel. Sinon, je le paierais, déclarait-il, de ma propre vie avec mille tourments effroyables."

⁹¹ *Ch* 1999, 266: "Aah ! Qui est-ce là ? [...] Ces femmes [...] On dirait des gorgones [...] Noirtvêues... des serpents emmêlés autour d'elles... ils grouillent..."

⁹² *LM* 2008, 149 and 1086; 1967, t.I, 204 and t.III, 356: "un dogue" and "la providence-dogue de la société."

⁹³ *Eu* 1999, 282: "Dans ton rêve, tu pourchasses la bête, et tu jappes comme un chien que jamais ne quitte le souci de sa besogne." See Fowler 2007, 306 for the use of the image of the hound throughout the *Oresteia*.

⁹⁴ Grossman, 1994 138 n.17 makes note of this inversion.

father, Anchises, out of burning Troy. Aeneas travels with his child, Ascanius; Valjean travels with a surrogate child, Cosette. Both men always act for the future good of their child.

Like Aeneas, Jean Valjean journeys to the underworld, to the sewers of Paris. Both succeed in their journey and return to the light and life.⁹⁵ In this journey, Jean Valjean is not merely following Aeneas, but also Dom Frollo crawling through the bowels of the earth. Jean Valjean struggles through the slime carrying his burden, the unconscious Marius, hoping to save him to ensure Cosette's future happiness. Aeneas was faced with the decision of leaving the underworld through the gates of horn or the gates of ivory;⁹⁶ Jean Valjean faces a crossroads at which point he must choose which direction will lead out. His efforts seem fruitless when he reaches the locked grate at the exit: "The two were caught, the two of them, in the gloomy immense web of death."⁹⁷ Jean Valjean, however, succeeds in rejoining the living. To enter the underworld, Aeneas had to gain passage with the ferryman Charon; Jean Valjean has to pay to exit. Thénardier, who has the key to the locked grate, meets him there. Not recognizing Jean Valjean and thinking him a murderer, Thénardier offers to unlock the grate for a share of whatever money he thinks "the murderer" has stolen.

After Jean Valjean pays Thénardier and returns to the living, he faces a trap he thought he had escaped. Javert waits at the other side of the egress. This is the second time Javert has Jean Valjean cornered. The first time, Javert had pursued him "like a bloodhound putting his nose to the ground to pick up the right scent." He thought he had Valjean cornered in a dead-end street since "the mesh of his net was foolproof." Foolproof or not, when Javert "reached the center of the web, the fly was gone."⁹⁸ Though he has escaped Javert many times, like Orestes, Jean Valjean has never been able to rest free from anxiety because he faces constant pursuit by Javert. Always fearing discovery, he is compelled to move countless times. He is now truly caught, but Javert is also caught by the knowledge that Valjean has saved him and by the crisis of conscience this causes him.

⁹⁵ Grossman 1994, 158 makes this point though her discussion incorporates Lucifer, Christ, and Dante as well as Aeneas. Note that Odysseus, too, journeys to the Underworld and returns in *Odyssey* XI.

⁹⁶ *Aeneid* VI.893–96. See Grossman 1994, 277 for comments about Hugo's stress on doors.

⁹⁷ *LM* 2008, 1064; 1967, t.III, 328: "Ils étaient pris l'un et l'autre dans la sombre et immense toile de la mort, et Jean Valjean sentait courir sur ces fils noirs tressaillant dans les ténèbres l'épouvantable araignée." Note the image of the net that traps here.

⁹⁸ *LM* 2008, 394; 1967, t.I, 508–9: "[...] comme un limier qui met le nez à terre pour être juste à la voie. [...] Les mailles de son filet étaient solidement attachées. [...] Quand il arriva au centre de la toile, il n'y trouva plus la mouche."

The battle at the barricade is introduced through the story of Marius, who was raised by his grandfather (a royalist) and only learns about his father, Sergeant Pontmercy, who was wounded fighting for Napoleon at Waterloo, after his death.⁹⁹ Having abandoned his comfortable life with his grandfather, Marius becomes involved with the Friends of the ABC, and thus with the insurrection. Hugo describes the Friends using a mix of legendary and historic characters including some from the Trojan War. Enjolras, the leader of the revolutionaries is referred to as Orestes, and Grantaire is his Pylades. As the rioters wait behind the barricade for the attack they know is coming, a conflict breaks out among them when Combeferre states, "When you support your nearest and dearest through your labor, you no longer have the right to sacrifice yourself."¹⁰⁰ Like Diomedes, the revolutionaries are appalled at the thought of not fighting. Combeferre puts words to their thoughts, "We know very well that your souls are full of the joy and the glory of giving your lives for the great cause; we know very well that you feel you've been handpicked to die usefully and magnificently and that each of you is clinging to his part in the triumph. Well and good. But you are not alone in this world. There are other beings you have to think of. You must not be selfish."¹⁰¹ Though they want to fight, they are being told to stay safe so that they can care for their families. The modern man, the man of body and soul, must think first not of his own glory but of the welfare of others.

As the Friends of the ABC prepare for battle, one of them wonders, "O, who will say Homer's verse for me?"¹⁰² Once they are under attack behind their barricade, Hugo exclaims, "A fight worthy of a Trojan wall broke out."¹⁰³ Slightly later he describes the fighting as if it were a scene from the *Iliad*:

Homer says, "Then Diomed cut the throat of Axylus, son of Teuthranis, who lived in happy Arisbe; Euryalus, son of Mecisteus, wiped out Dresos and Opheltios, then turned and went for Aesepus and Pedasus, twins the naiad Abarbarea bore the lofty Bucolion; Ulysses overthrows Pidytes of Percote; Antilochus, Ablerus; Polypaetes,

⁹⁹ The family dynamic of a royalist grandfather and a Napoleonic father echoes that of the Hugo family. Hugo's father served as a general under Napoleon and his mother was a royalist.

¹⁰⁰ *LM* 2008, 210, 972; 1967 t.III.210: "Quand on soutient ses proches de son travail, on n'a plus le droit de se sacrifier."

¹⁰¹ *LM* 2008, 973-74; 1967, t.III, 212: "On sait bien ce que vous êtes ; on sait bien que vous êtes tous des braves, parbleu ! on sait bien que vous avez tous dans l'âme la joie et la gloire de donner votre vie pour la grande cause ; on sait bien que vous vous sentez élus pour mourir utilement et magnifiquement, et que chacun de vous tient à sa part du triomphe. A la bonne heure. Mais vous n'êtes pas seuls en ce monde. Il y a d'autres êtres auxquels il faut penser. Il ne faut pas être égoïstes."

¹⁰² *LM* 2008, 969; 1967, t.III, 206: "Oh ! qui me donnera de prononcer les vers d'Homère comme un grec de Laurium ou d'Edaptéon !"

¹⁰³ *LM* 2008, 1020; 1967, t.III, 272: "une lutte digne d'une muraille de Troie."

Astylus; Polydamas, Otus of Cyllend [...] Agamemnon, king of heroes, brings down Elatos, born in the high hill town bathed in the sound of the River Satnois.”¹⁰⁴

The use of a fictitious *Iliad* scene in the midst of this battle gives a sense of the purpose Homer and the Trojan War serve. According to Hugo, Homer’s Trojan War is pregnant with possibility; it is the river from which everything flows. Waterloo, though an equally great battle and one that happened within Hugo’s lifetime, does not have the same historical weight. Though it generates a tourist industry and a host of monuments and other types of memorial,¹⁰⁵ it does not have literary resonance. It is but one of the waves emanating from the Revolution which Hugo calls “the turning climacteric of humanity.”¹⁰⁶ It is a consequence, not a cause.

After the National Guard overcomes the rioters and searches for survivors, they find Enjolras and prepare to shoot him. One guardsman “lowered his weapon, saying, ‘I feel like I’m about to shoot a flower,’”¹⁰⁷ an echo of Homer’s simile of the stricken warrior Gorgythion falling like a poppy at the first blow of the North Wind.¹⁰⁸ Grantaire, who slept a drunken sleep through the battle awakens at the silence. Seeing Enjolras facing a firing squad, he runs out and demands to be shot too, as Nisus ran out to his death after Euryalus was killed in the *Aeneid*. In dying, Euryalus, like Gorgythion, is compared to a flower, this one cut down by the plow, or the head of a poppy weighed down by rain and sinking.¹⁰⁹ The pathos of the image speaks across the millennia.

¹⁰⁴ *LM* 2008, 1021; 1967, t.III, 273: “Homère dit : “Diomède égorge Axyle, fils de Teuthranis, qui habitait l’heureuse Arisba ; Euryale, fils de Mécistée, exterminé Dresos et Opheltios, Esèpe, et ce Pédasus que la naïade Abarbarée conçut de l’irréprochable Boucolion ; Ulysse renverse Pidyte de Percose ; Antiloque, Ablère ; Polypætes, Astyale ; Polidamas, Otos de Cyllène ; et Teucer Aretaon. Méganthios meurt sous les coups de pique d’Euripyle. Agamemnon, roi des héros, terrasse Elatos né dans la ville escarpée que baigne le sonore fleuve Satnois.” The passage continues mingling medieval epic references with the ancient.

¹⁰⁵ Semmel 2000.

¹⁰⁶ *Shakespeare* 1910, III.ii.1, 271; 1973, 303: “La Révolution, tournant climatérique de l’humanité.”

¹⁰⁷ *LM* 2008, 1025; 1967, t.III, 278: “Il me semble que je vais fusiller une fleur.”

¹⁰⁸ *L’Iliade*, 1756, t.II.viii, 297: “Comme un pavot, qu’on cultive dans un jardin, & que le Printems a nourri de sa plus tendre rosée, panche sa tête orgueilleuse sous le premier coup de l’aquilon, de même la tête du jeune Gorgythion appesantie par son casque, qu’elle ne peut plus soutenir, tombe sur son épaule.”

¹⁰⁹ *Aeneid* VIII.433–37: *volvitur Euryalus leto, pulchrosque per artus / it cruor inque umeros cervix conlapsa recumbit: / purpureus veluti cum flos succisus aratro / languescit moriens, lassove papavera collo / demisere caput pluvia cum forte gravantur. / at Nisus ruit [...]*. Both the Homeric and Virgilian similes are reflected in the description of Esmeralda approaching the doors to the cathedral for purification with a rope wrapped around her neck like a worm around the stem of a flower cited previously.

Les Misérables, though it mimics the structural trajectory of *Notre-Dame de Paris*, rests more profoundly on the *Aeneid*, a derivative work modeled on the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. Hugo, in turn, redeploys the images and motifs found in these works though in the context of his works, they do more than recall the past. They also weave the novels together into continuum of intermingled epic, tragedy, and history.

At the beginning of *Notre-Dame de Paris*, Gringoire was introduced as “one of those steady and elevated minds, calm and temperate [...] an admirable and uninterrupted race of philosophers, to whom wisdom, like another Ariadne, seems to have given a ball of thread which they have gone on unwinding from the beginning of the world through the whole labyrinth of human affairs.”¹¹⁰ Casting Gringoire as a poet unwinding the ball of thread evokes the beginning of Ovid’s epic *Metamorphoses*. There the poet says that he speaks of bodies changed into new forms, and will lead his poem down from the origin of the world to his own times.¹¹¹ Gringoire’s thread, the story told in *Notre-Dame de Paris*, which shifts from the morality play to the play of human affairs around him, is drawn from Homer. One repeating image following another reveals the presence of Gringoire’s thread in *Les Misérables*. It is no longer a single thread, but, as Hugo puts it, a rope, made “out of numerous strands. You take the rope, thread by thread, take separately all the decisive little motifs, and you break them one by one, and you say, ‘That’s all it is!’ Weave and twist them together and it is monumental.”¹¹²

QUATREVINGT-TREIZE

Gringoire’s thread, multitudes of which twisted together become a rope in *Les Misérables*, appears again in *Quatrevingt-treize*. Throughout the three novels, Hugo develops the long established classical image of the poet weaving his song.¹¹³ He writes three individual texts, and yet joins them into one by a shared texture.¹¹⁴ Though *Quatrevingt-treize* was originally planned as the third novel in an unwritten trilogy,

¹¹⁰ *HND* 1965, 33; *NDP* 1967, 94: “Gringoire était de ces esprits élevés et fermes, modérés et calmes, qui savent toujours se tenir au milieu de tout [...] Race précieuse et jamais interrompue de philosophes auxquels la sagesse, comme une autre Ariane, semble voir donné une pelote de fil qu’ils s’en vont dévidant depuis le commencement du monde à travers le labyrinthe des choses humaines.”

¹¹¹ Ovid 1996, I.1–4: *In nova fert animus mutatas dicere formas / corpora: di coeptis (nam vos mutastis et illa) / aspirate meis primaque ab origine mundi / ad mea perpetuum deducite tempora carmen.*

¹¹² *LM* 2008, 395; 1967, t.I, 510: “Les fortes sottises sont souvent faites, comme les grosses cordes, d’une multitude de brins. Prenez le câble fil à fil, prenez séparément tous les petits motifs déterminants, vous les cassez l’un après l’autre, et vous dites : ce n’est que cela ! Tressez-les et tordez-les ensemble, c’est une énormité.”

¹¹³ See Snyder 1981.

¹¹⁴ See Phillips 1999 for a discussion on the relationship between text and texture.

it forms a different kind of trilogy in conjunction with *Notre-Dame de Paris* and *Les Misérables*.¹¹⁵ The thread of the Trojan War is woven increasingly more tightly into the fabric of the three novels until it becomes a virtually unseen but essential presence in *Quatrevingt-treize*.

This novel, unlike the previous two, is set at a particular historic moment and place: 1793 and the republican attempt to squash the royalist insurrection in the Vendée region. Epic images and motifs fill the novel intermingled with tragedy. The first paragraph of Part I concludes, "It was a time of epic conflict."¹¹⁶ The second chapter of Part II states, "Nothing could be more tragic, Europe attacking France,¹¹⁷ and France attacking Paris. A drama which reaches the stature of an epic."¹¹⁸ Epic allusions follow one another. The password for the volunteers fighting for the Republic in the Vendée is: "No mercy; no quarter;" slightly later the Vendéans say, "This is a war without pity. The hour is to be bloodthirsty."¹¹⁹ Both sentiments echo those found in the *Iliad*. For example, in the midst of all out fighting, Menelaus captures Adrestos, who begs for his life. Although Menelaus pities him and is about to spare him, Agamemnon commands him not to spare any Trojan or let any escape, not even the unborn child in a mother's womb.¹²⁰ The actions taken by both the Vendéans and Republicans in *Quatrevingt-treize* live up to this prescription of pitilessness. One of the first orders Lantenac gives as commander of the Vendean troops is for them to kill all the locals who helped the Republicans. Unlike the Achaians, however, they do not kill the three children but take them hostage.

Like *Les Misérables*, *Quatrevingt-treize* begins with a journey home: the Marquis de Lantenac, in disguise as a peasant, returns from England to take command of the

¹¹⁵ Laforgue 2001, 212: "*L'Homme qui rit*, in effet, est présenté comme le premier roman d'une trilogie, où il occuperait la première place et symboliserait *L'Aristocratie*, les deux romans suivants s'intitulant *La Monarchie* et *Quatrevingt-Treize*."

¹¹⁶ *QVT* 1874, 7; 2002, 45: "Temps des luttes épiques."

¹¹⁷ This echoes the situation of the Franco-Prussian War when all of Europe united against France and defeated it in 1870.

¹¹⁸ *QVT* 1874, 98; 2002, 153: "Rien de plus tragique. l'Europe attaquant la France et la France attaquant Paris. Drame qui a la stature de l'épopée."

¹¹⁹ *QVT* 1874, 7 & 29; 2002, 46 & 72: "Point de grâce, point de quartier" and "Ceci est la guerre sans miséricorde. L'heure est aux sanguinaires."

¹²⁰ *L'Iliade* t.II.vi, 138: "À quoi pensez-vous donc, Ménélas, & quelle est cette compassion si déplacée ? Il est vrai, vos avez bien sujet de vous louer des Troyens, ils vous ont si bien traité ! N'épargnons point ces perfides, & qu'aucun d'eux n'échappe de nos mains, non pas même l'enfant qui est dans le sein de sa mère ; qu'ils périssent tous avec Iliou, & leur châtement soit pour l'univers effrayé une leçon éternelle."

Vendean peasants in their fight against the Republicans.¹²¹ An accident on board leaves the corvette conveying Lantenac to France at the mercy of eight French ships patrolling the coastal waters. The French ships circle the corvette on three sides; the fourth side is backed against a reef. Hugo uses one of many epic similes to describe the situation: "It was like a pack of hounds about a wild boar, not yet giving tongue, but showing their teeth."¹²² The sailors, though outnumbered eight to one, make the decision to stay and fight so their passenger can escape and make a run for France. Echoing Diomedes and Aeneas, and Maréchal Ney, they agree, "One resource remains to us—to die."¹²³ As Lantenac sneaks away, "[he] heard the last broadside of the sinking corvette as one hears the final roar of the lion whom the hunters are killing in the wood."¹²⁴ These few examples illustrate the epic verisimilitude used throughout Part I of the novel.¹²⁵

When Lantenac arrives in France, he meets an old man, a beggar, who informs him of recent events, takes him to his rustic home, and shares his food, much like the goat herder Eumaeus welcomed Odysseus as a stranger when he finally returned to Ithaca in disguise.¹²⁶ Though there has been a clear Homeric presence, unlike the previous two novels, there have been no direct references to Homer or Virgil, or to the Trojan War. Instead, it is as though the essence of the ancient authors has been re-substantiated by Hugo. This is not borrowing from the ancients or referencing them; it is reliving them.¹²⁷

The early scenes of fighting in the Vendée (Part I) are followed by a shift to Paris and the plotting of the three leaders of the Terror, Robespierre, Danton, and Marat

¹²¹ In many ways, *Quatrevingt-treize* is a double of *Les Misérables* with the main characters and conflicts paralleling those in the earlier novel. The novel is even suggested in *Les Misérables* when Marius' grandfather, who is in his nineties, says he would not like to see 93 (III.ii.4.497). Is he talking about 1793 or his 93rd year? As the year of the Terror in the Revolution, 1793 is part of Hugo's third pivotal gate in civilization. For a discussion of the significance of dates in Hugo and *Quatrevingt-treize* in particular, see White 2008. For the relationship between the two novels see also Leuilliot 1988.

¹²² *QVT* 1874, 46; 2002, 92: "C'était comme une meute autour d'un sanglier, ne donnant pas de voix, mais montrant les dents."

¹²³ *QVT* 1874, 47; 2002, 92: "Il nous reste une ressource, mourir." Simaïka 1962, 170, compares this sentiment to that of Leonidas at Thermopylae.

¹²⁴ *QVT* 1874, 56; 2002, 102: "Ils entendirent la suprême canonnade de la corvette foudroyée, comme on entend le dernier rugissement du lion que les chasseurs tuent dans les bois."

¹²⁵ Brombert 1984, 217–18 notes the "epic devices" used throughout the novel. His reading includes a discussion of how Hugo "subverts" the epic principle from the positive to the negative.

¹²⁶ Unlike Eumaeus, Tellemarch immediately recognized the Marquis.

¹²⁷ Simaïka 1962, 170 remarks that the *Iliad* and *Quatrevingt-treize* share the characteristic of having an event at the beginning that seems to be the genesis of all the drama though it is an episode of conventional importance: the kidnapping of Helen and the saving of the three children.

(Part II). Hugo labels the leaders respectively, Minos, Æacus, and Rhadamanthus, the judges of the dead, in the title of Part II.i. The following chapter (II.ii) bears the title “Magna Testantur Voce per Umbras,” quoted from *Aeneid* VI.619, the book in which Aeneas travels to the underworld. The conjunction of these references makes Part II a journey to the underworld. Since Robespierre, Danton, and Marat did not live to see the end of the Revolution, and the members of the Convention, too, are dead, Hugo is, indeed, traveling to the land of the dead. As in Part I, re-experience replaces epic allusion, reference, and quotation. Just as Anchises points out the characters of Roman legend and history to Aeneas in the underworld, so Hugo takes the reader to Paris of ’93 and describes the historic characters of the Convention who are now dead: “Therein swarmed, elbowed one another, provoked one another, threatened, struggled, and lived, all those combatants who are phantoms today. A convocation of Titans.”¹²⁸ Note the label of Titan given to these leaders of the Terror; they are the gods. Hugo includes a lengthy list of the representatives to the Convention adding appropriate characteristics to each, a kind of Homeric catalogue of ships. This catalogue, coming as it does near the conclusion of Part II, leads directly to Part III and the return to fighting in the Vendée. This time, though, the fighting takes the form of a siege and attack by the Republicans on La Tourgue, his ancestral castle in which Lantenac seeks safety. The shift back and forth between the scenes of fighting and scenes of the controlling “gods” (Robespierre, Danton, and Marat), plotting and strategizing in Paris is akin to the shifts Homer makes between the fighting of the Achaian and Trojan armies, and the gods on Olympus. In addition, a “messenger,” a Republican leader named Cimourdin, is sent from the “gods” in Paris to watch over and control events in the Republican army. In Homer, too, the gods frequently send a messenger to intervene in human affairs.¹²⁹

As suggested above, Part II is dependent on epic conventions, and it is here that Hugo refers to “tragedies knotted by giants,” and makes the statement, “Where tragedy entered, horror and pity remains.”¹³⁰ Thus, though seemingly writing with the conventions of epic, Hugo incorporates the goals of tragedy as stated by Aristotle. He mixes the genres within the form of the novel. In doing so, he sets up the possibility of injecting the psychological terror of Orestes into Achilles.

¹²⁸ *QVT* 1874, 137; 2002, 200: “Là fourmillaient, se coudoyaient, se provoquaient, se menaçaient, luttaient et vivaient tous ces combattants qui sont aujourd’hui des fantômes. Dénombrement titanique.”

¹²⁹ Simaïka 1962, 170.

¹³⁰ *QVT* 1874, 146; 2002, 210: “Où est entrée la tragédie, l’horreur et la pitié restent.”

The Vendée emerges as an Aeschylean web that traps, and the torment of Orestes looms over the Republican army:

The ancient castles, which were fortresses, the hamlets, which were camps, the farms, which were inclosures for ambushes and snares, traversed by ditches and palisaded by trees, were the meshes of the net in which the Republican armies were caught.¹³¹

Just as Hugo internalized epic rhetoric and imagery rather than insert images or specific references, so the entire Vendée has morphed into the web that traps. Likewise, the Vendean army becomes a pursuing fury. It is unpredictable; indeed, its very unpredictability makes it a constant source of terror to the Republican soldiers.

Invisible battalions lay there in wait. These untrackable armies wound along beneath the Republican troops; burst suddenly forth from the earth and sank into it again, sprang up in numberless force and vanished at will, gifted with a strange ubiquity and power of disappearance; an avalanche at one instant, gone like a cloud of dust the next; colossal, yet able to become pigmies at will; giants in battle, dwarfs in the ability to conceal themselves—jaguars with the habits of moles.¹³²

Regardless of this always-present terror, the Republican soldiers still had no alternative, since to turn back would be to desert and to be killed if caught. They are held in the Orestean conundrum of being tormented whichever action they take.

Gauvain, the commander of the Republican troops, appears as the new Achilles, the Achilles with a conscience. He is introduced in Part III as a great warrior and leader—and a poet. When Cimourdain arrives from Paris to oversee the Republicans, he sees Gauvain, who, many years before, had been his student, in the midst of battle. Cimourdain watches Gauvain fighting like “Chiron, who had watched Achilles fight.”¹³³ It is only in Part III that Hugo begins to make overt references such as this to the Trojan War myths. On the other hand, he takes on the mantle of Homer in his description of the events in the Vendée: “Hugo’s battle scenes are drawn with a surfeit of gory details. Nocturnal massacres, hand-to-hand combat in ravines, mutilations, dismemberments,

¹³¹ *QVT* 1874, 163; 2002, 232: “Les anciens châteaux qui étaient des forteresses, les hameaux qui étaient des camps, les fermes qui étaient des enclos faits d’embûches et de pièges, les métairies, ravinées de fossés et palissadées d’arbres, étaient les mailles de ce filet où se prirent les armées républicaines.”

¹³² *QVT* 1874, 163; 2002, 232: “Des bataillons invisibles guettaient. Ces armées ignorées serpentaient sous les armées républicaines, sortaient de terre tout à coup et y rentraient, bondissaient innombrables et s’évanouissaient, douées d’ubiquité et de dispersion, avalanche, puis poussière, colosses ayant le don du rapetissement, géants pour combattre, nains pour disparaître. Des jaguars ayant des mœurs de taupes.”

¹³³ *QVT* 1874, 198; 2002, 269.

broken jaws, eyes torn out of their sockets—Hugo spares the reader nothing.¹³⁴ Replace Hugo with Homer, and this is an accurate description of battle scenes in the *Iliad*. Hugo doesn't copy Homer; his text has become Homeric, but a new kind of Homeric. It is epic and tragedy joined.

In the course of the skirmishes, Lantenac seeks safety in his ancestral property, La Tourgue, with 18 men. Gauvain and an army of 4,500 surround them. When offered the chance to surrender, they refuse.¹³⁵ The Republican army creates an opening in the bottom of the tower, and they enter with well known imagery “like a snake twisting itself into its den.”¹³⁶ Finally, only seven Vendéans survive, barricaded in the upper room. Lantenac and all but one of the remaining soldiers escape through a secret door. The one makes real the boast Diomedes had made to Agamemnon in the *Iliad*: to remain and fight on his own even if anyone else leaves. When he is mortally wounded, he sets fire to a fuse going under the door into the locked library where the three hostages, the children, are sleeping. They are now condemned to be burned to death, since Lantenac has the only key to the locked door.

Just as he was stepping into freedom from the secret passage and about to disappear into the labyrinth of the Vendée, Lantenac heard the anguished cry of a woman, the mother of the children locked in the library, who has seen them silhouetted against the flames. Realizing that he has the only key, Lantenac returns without thinking. Here, he acts against his “duty” and the heroic code. Lantenac is the only one with the stature to lead the Vendean peasants. In going back to rescue the children, he faces certain death by fire or at the hands of the Republicans. Either outcome will mean the defeat of the Vendée by the Republicans. His initial act in the Vendée had been to kill all the peasants who had aided the Republicans, but to take the three children hostage. Now, again, he acted against his own motto of no pity. When Lantenac unlocks the door and enters the burning room to rescue the children, it is as though the past reaches through the door to save the future, the reverse of stepping through the door into the past of Waterloo. Even after the library was unlocked, the danger was still present since the room began to burn behind Lantenac. He lowers the ladder stored in the library down from the window and ferries the children one by one to the arms of the Republican

¹³⁴ Brombert 1984, 212.

¹³⁵ This is a repetition of the initial scene of the novel when the corvette is outnumbered by the French ships. Both scenes echo Agamemnon's words in *Iliad* II.120–33 when he comments on the shame of returning home without conquering Troy since they, the Achaians, so outnumber the Trojans. It also seems to be a comment on recent events: The Franco-Prussian War, the defeat of France in 1870, and the Commune of 1871. See Petrey 1980, Chapter 7: Those Parisians Storming Heaven, for a discussion of the historic events and Hugo's role in them.

¹³⁶ *QVT* 1874, 277; 2002, 353: “[...] comme une couleuvre qui entre dans son trou.”

soldiers and their mother. The burning castle and library recall the image of Troy burning in its defeat. A young child and a “father figure” silhouetted against the fire loosely mimics Ascanius and Aeneas leaving the burning city. The past is obliterated, and yet it lives anew. The burning of the library itself, in this suggested trilogy of novels, holds a symbolic meaning. Hugo mourned the overthrow of architecture by the book in *Notre-Dame de Paris*,¹³⁷ here the book is threatened. The only hope lies in the children.¹³⁸

Because of his action, Lantenac is captured, as he knew he would be, and condemned to death by Gauvain. His action creates a tragedy in so far as it poses a psychological dilemma for Gauvain, who now faces a battle of conscience like that faced by Jean Valjean. In his mind, he had just seen “the victory of humanity over the man. Humanity had conquered the inhuman.”¹³⁹ How can he follow the law and kill someone who has voluntarily given up his freedom to perform a superlative act of unquestionable humanity? Homeric Achilles returned the body of Hektor to Priam out of pity, but also out of the knowledge brought to him by his mother that the gods demanded it. Gauvain, the new Achilles, experiences a “moral earthquake.”¹⁴⁰ He recognizes the selfless heroism of Lantenac and at the same time he recognizes that “above the justice of revolutions is that of humanity.”¹⁴¹ He acts on his conscience and frees Lantenac. As a result, he takes Lantenac's place as a traitor at the guillotine. Both Lantenac and Gauvain were moved by compassion; both discovered their humanity. This is another instance in which Hugo weaves Homer into his own tale. In the *Iliad*, Achilles returns to the war to take revenge on Hektor for the death of Patroclus even though he knows that his own death will follow soon after. In freeing Lantenac, Gauvain acts though he too knows that his death will follow.¹⁴²

The juxtaposition of the Achilles of Homer and the Gauvain of Hugo points to a larger picture. Achilles raised the central conflict in the *Iliad*, which is not the same as the conflict behind the Trojan War. He refused to fight, putting his own desires ahead of those of the community gathered as a single army under Agamemnon. It was a standoff between Achilles (and his Myrmidons) and all the other Achaians. *Quatrevingt-treize* retells the same story with slightly different parameters. The Revolution is a conflict between *pays* and *patrie*, or “a war between the local spirit and the central.”¹⁴³

¹³⁷ HND 1965, 174; NDP 1988, 280.

¹³⁸ See Laforge 2001, 233–34.

¹³⁹ *QVT* 1874, 314; 2002, 393: “La victoire de l'humanité sur l'homme. L'humanité avait vaincu l'inhumain.”

¹⁴⁰ *QVT* 1874, 314; 2002, 392: “Il y a des tremblements d'âme.”

¹⁴¹ *QVT* 1874, 314; 2002, 392: “Au-dessus de l'absolu révolutionnaire, il y a l'absolu humain.”

¹⁴² One the basis of this action, Simaïka 1962, 171 calls Gauvain an epic figure.

¹⁴³ *QVT* 1874, 174; 2002, 244: “la guerre de l'esprit local contre l'esprit central.”

The Vendée does not want to yield to the Republicans, the representatives of the central government in Paris. The *Iliad* does not present the outcome of the Trojan War just as *Quatrevingt-Treize* leaves the outcome of the Revolution unwritten though the outcome of both are general knowledge.¹⁴⁴ The *Iliad*, however, does resolve the conflict between Agamemnon and Achilles just as *Quatrevingt-Treize* resolves the conflict between Lantenac and Gauvain. Mindless cruelty and barbarity yield to compassion in the case of Lantenac and Gauvain. Gauvain reflects on the metamorphosis Lantenac undergoes: “A hero sprang up from the monster; more than a hero—a man.”¹⁴⁵ The image of the young men in war being mowed down like flowers in a field is reversed in *Quatrevingt-treize* with the rescue of the children. Not incidentally, the novel takes place in the spring, during the last days of May.¹⁴⁶ It is the time of rebirth and blossoming that follows death.

Cimourdain, although in anguish at ordering Gauvain’s death, refuses to countermand his order. Instead, he commits suicide as soon as Gauvain dies. Hugo suggests some sort of Homeric resolution since “[their] two souls united still in that tragic death soared away together; the shadow of the one mingled with the radiance of the other.”¹⁴⁷ This image links *Quatrevingt-treize* back to *Notre-Dame de Paris*, and to the *Iliad*. After Esmeralda is hung, her body is thrown into the charnel house under Montfaucon. Some time later, two skeletons were found intertwined there, a male and a female. Their description reveals that it is Quasimodo embracing Esmeralda.¹⁴⁸ The “spirit” of Patroclus asked that after Achilles dies, their bones will be placed together and their ashes mingled in the same jar.¹⁴⁹ These conjoined physical bodies of the earlier works become the joined souls of the later. The hero has become the man. The body is gone but the soul remains.

¹⁴⁴ Later authors drinking from the river of Homer fill in the outcome of the Trojan War; Hugo filled in the outcome of the Terror and Revolution with his earlier *Les Misérables*.

¹⁴⁵ QVT 1874, 318; 2002, 397: “Un héros sortait du monstre ; plus qu’un héros, un homme.”

¹⁴⁶ See Petrey 1980 for the significance of the pastoral in the novel, particularly Chapter 3, “Pastoral and Historical Discourse.”

¹⁴⁷ QVT 1874, 356; 2002, 438: “Et ces deux âmes, sœurs tragiques, s’envolèrent ensemble, l’ombre de l’une mêlée à la lumière de l’autre.” Cimourdain’s suicide for having done his duty and killed the traitor is the reverse of Javert’s suicide for having failed at his duty when he finally caught Jean Valjean but let him escape.

¹⁴⁸ NDP 1988, 678.

¹⁴⁹ *Iliad* 1756, t.IV.xxiii, 343–48.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper has focused on the ways in which Hugo incorporates the Trojan War in three of his novels, *Notre-Dame de Paris*, *Les Misérables*, and *Quatrevingt-treize*. More important than set scenes, characters, or motifs, is the way in which Hugo has surreptitiously incorporated the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid* in *Notre-Dame de Paris* and *Les Misérables* respectively as he develops his new historic novel. In *Quatrevingt-treize*, incorporation becomes assimilation. Though he looked for a novel in which “Walter Scott would be enshrined in Homer,” he has created a novel in which Homer is enshrined in Hugo. He has untied the corpse of Hektor from the chariot of Achilles and driven off in a new direction. As shown in his juxtaposition of Jean Valjean’s epic battle of conscience with the Battle of Waterloo, for example, he has introduced modern man and the psychological battles he wages in place of the ancient war hero. His choice of Paris as the setting and his inclusion of French history establish him as a voice for modern France at a time when France was still trying to find resolution to the Revolution and its aftermath.

Quatrevingt-treize stands apart from the earlier novels insofar as it embodies the spirit of Homer without overt borrowing or imitation, except to a small degree. Homer and the Trojan War are so thoroughly intermeshed that they become an almost unnoticeable part of the texture of the novel. The first sentences of the novel establish the conflict between the old (the royalists) and the new (the republicans). The last sentence is not situated in time or space, and deals not with the conflicts of men but with the harmony of souls. *Notre-Dame de Paris* deals with the grotesque and ends with entwined bodies; *Quatrevingt-treize* shows the transition from the grotesque to the beautiful and the sublime, and ends with entwined souls.¹⁵⁰ As author, Hugo leaves behind the burned ancestral castle and innovates a new style of dramatic epic “which no longer sings the heroic exploit but the moral adventure of man.”¹⁵¹ Over the course of the three novels, Homer has ceased to embrace the body of the Homeric corpus and has embraced its soul in creating an epic for his own times in the shape of the poetic novel that encompasses epic, tragedy, and history. In this sense, these three novels embody Hugo’s aspiration “to be the Homer or Vergil of his age.”¹⁵²

¹⁵⁰ See Petrey 1980, 34. Chapter 2, “Children Belong with Their Mother,” is particularly relevant.

¹⁵¹ Brombert 1984, 7.

¹⁵² Grossman 2012, 159.

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An epic battle

Aesthetic and poetic struggles over the Swedish *Iliads*

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I

Ὦς ἄρα φωνήσας ἀπέβη κορυθαίολος Ἐκτωρ·
αἶψα δ' ἔπειθ' ἴκανε δόμους εὖ ναιετάοντας,
οὐδ' εὖρ' Ἄνδρομάχην λευκώλενον ἐν μεγάροισιν,
ἀλλ' ἦ γε ζῆν παιδί καὶ ἀμφιπόλῳ εὐπέπλῳ
πύργῳ ἐφειστήκει γοώσά τε μυρομένη τε.¹

THE FIRST VOLUME of Marcus Wallenberg's translation of the *Iliad*—which was going to be the first complete Swedish translation of the Homeric epics—appeared 1814, two hundred years ago.² The reviewer in *Stockholms Posten* began by exclaiming “A Swedish translation of Homer in metric verse!!”³ He argued that the translation was a major achievement for Swedish literature and noteworthy for two reasons. Firstly, because of the source text. He describes Homer as the oldest and greatest poet in Greece and the world but says that he suspects that readers would be surprised by this description. This indicates that Homer was moving towards the top of the epic genre hierarchy and was overtaking Virgil, but that his position there was not quite uncontested yet.⁴ Secondly, because of the method of translating. The reviewer commends Wallenberg for choosing to make a faithful translation and following the example of Gudmund Jöran Adlerbeth. Adlerbeth's 1804 translation of the *Aeneid* had made the idea acceptable to a wider public that neither the style or the meter of ancient poetry should be modernized in translating ancient literature if Swedish literature was to benefit from it.⁵ The reviewer's comment shows that the faithful method of translation

¹ *Iliad* 6.369–73: “So saying, Hector of the flashing helmet went away, and came quickly to his well-built house. But he found not white-armed Andromache in his halls; she with her child and a fair-robed handmaid had gone to stand on the wall,” in Murray's (1999, 301) translation.

² Wallenberg 1814–1815 and 1819–1821.

³ *StP* 1814:272 “Homerus öfwersatt på Svenska och på metrisk wers!!”; the review is continued in no. 276 and 278. The following abbreviations are used throughout: *Lyc* = *Lyceum*; *Phos* = *Phosphoros*; *StP* = *Stockholms Posten*; *SLT* = *Swensk Literatur-Tidning*; *SLFT* = *Swenska Litteratur-Förenings Tidning*.

⁴ Röhl 1997, 87–202 collects the evidence on Homer and Virgil in Sweden.

⁵ *StP* 1814:272 “fortidens Skalder hwarken till styl eller versslag böra moderniseras, om vår Litteratur skall draga någon fördel af deras öfwersättande.”

was beginning to change status from being tolerated owing to one translator's prestige (Adlerbeth was member of the Swedish Academy) to becoming the first option.⁶

This is a study of Swedish translations of the Homeric epics and their reception until circa 1850. Translation of the Homeric epics started late in Sweden compared to France, England, and Germany, just to mention the three European countries that influenced Swedish translation most and with which Swedish translators compared themselves. Swedish translators were aware of their lateness, and as they started translation projects they looked both on what their Swedish predecessors had done or not done, and on what had been done in Europe. As the translations discussed in this study show, Swedish translators of ancient literature sought models for their translation practice mainly in France and Germany. In addition to the complete translations of both epics by Wallenberg and Johan Fredrik Johansson,⁷ this study examines translations of excerpts published in journals, anthologies, and as monographs between the 1780s and 1820s. All these translations are literary, that is they are primarily aimed at making literature in Swedish based on the source text.⁸ Typically, translation was not the main occupation of the translators. Most were teachers in the upper secondary school or university, sometimes with a later career in the church of Sweden; the earliest translators of this study had a career in the government offices. The translations, their paratexts, and reviews of them bring to the fore issues such as literary prestige, what is the correct way to translate a piece of ancient poetry, how are correct Swedish hexameters formed, as well as the idea of Homer, of the Homeric epics, and of the epic genre.

II

Så snart Hector, den lysande hjälten med buskige hjälmen,
 Det hade sagt, utan rast han sökte sit rumrika hemvist.
 Dock Andromache der, den hvitlettarmade, fanns ej:
 Ty af sit kära barn och en finklädvd vårderska åtföljd,
 I skanstornet, suckande djupt och gråtande, stod hon.⁹

The earliest printed Swedish translations of the Homeric epics are part of Gustaf Regnér's series "Samples of Greek literature," printed 1786 in *Svenska Parnassen*, a journal edited by Regnér, who earned his livelihood in the Government Offices. The series was pioneering, as Regnér translated Greek literature for literary purposes and questioned the free method of translation, which at that time dominated the field of translation.

⁶ A similar thought is expressed in *StP* 1814:34, in a review of Boman 1813.

⁷ Johansson 1844–1845 and 1846.

⁸ Possible exceptions are Tranér 1807–1822 and Sjöström 1818–1827 and 1835–1842.

⁹ *Iliad* 6.369–73 in Regnér 1801, 44.

Just a few years earlier, in the same journal, Johan Henric Kellgren had made the best known declaration of the free method of translation proclaiming that a translator should write as Horace or Propertius would have written, if they had been his contemporaries.¹⁰ For Kellgren, free translation meant that the translator is at liberty to delete whatever offends and add what is needed in order to make the poem more striking, soften harsh transitions, adopt metaphors, and clothe turns of phrases that would upset decorum.

According to a note to the first sample, Regnér's intention was to create translations that retained the noble simplicity that, to his mind, characterized the Greek texts.¹¹ He maintained that ancient authors should not be presented in modern clothes, but translated as plainly as possible despite the risk that the text might appear plain and naked to readers. He hoped that translations of the sort that he was proposing might make the Swedish language develop the purity and nobility which, he thought, it was still lacking but which was necessary for translating ancient authors.

Regnér was experimenting. For the most part when translating poetry (Anacreon, Moschus, Theocritus, excerpts from the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*), he followed the prevalent mode of free translation by using modern meters and adapting the text to suit modern taste. But he also attempted to render the form, style, and content of the source text more faithfully. To demonstrate the different literary effects of the two modes of translation, Regnér presents two versions of one Anacreontic poem (no. 29).¹² The faithful translation reproduces the Anacreontic meter and translates the text nearly word for word and line for line, while the free translation expands the fourteen verses of the source text into thirty rhyming verses of Anacreontic meter with eight or seven syllables depending on whether the rhyme is masculine (seven) or feminine (eight). Regnér doubles the number of verses by using periphrases and amplifying sentiments present in the source text.¹³ Regarding the Homeric excerpts, Regnér explains that he has not

¹⁰ Kellgren 1784, 51 "skrifva såsom *Horatius* eller *Propertius* skulle skrifvit, om de lefvat på samma tid, i samma land, som han," which, apparently, echoes Dryden's statement in the dedication to his 1697 translation of the *Aeneid*, for which see Hayes 2009, 100–20.

¹¹ With the phrase "ädla enfald" Regnér (1786, 83) echoes, and transposes to literature, Johann Joachim Winckelmann's "edle Einfalt", which is used repeatedly in his 1755 *Gedanke über die Nachahmung der Griechischen Werke in der Mahlerey und Bildhauer-Kunst* together with "stille Grösse" to describe what Winckelmann identifies to be key characteristics of the masterpieces of Greek sculpture.

¹² Regnér 1786, 163 "Til den enkla öfversättningen utur Anacreon har jag lagt en annan, som skulle visa skilnaden imellan de gamle Auctororne i deras naturliga skick och i moderne öfversättningar."

¹³ Regnér 1786, 173–75. Compare, for example, *Anacreontea* 29.10–11 διὰ τοῦτον οὐκ ἀδελφός | διὰ τοῦτον οὐκ τοκῆς ("Thanks to it we lose brothers and parents," in Campbell's (1988, 199) translation) in Regnér's faithful translation—"Genom honom saknas bröder | Och föräldrars vördnad

tried to reproduce the simplicity of the original in the Swedish versions.¹⁴ Since the Swedish language lacks the harmony whereby the simplicity is supported in the Greek, his aim was merely to imitate that quality of the Homeric epics.¹⁵ He appears to have relied heavily on Pope's English and Rochefort's French translations, and tried to strike a middle road between the two. He says he found the former more vigorous and the latter more elegant than the source text, but that his assessment is not definite since his Homeric studies were insufficient, suggesting that he was not quite comfortable with the Homeric variant of Greek.¹⁶ Regnér's choice of blank verse and rhyming alexandrines is likely due to Pope's and Rochefort's choice of verse.

Regnér was cautious in *Svenska Parnassen*,¹⁷ but he did launch a plan to reform Swedish poetry on a genuinely classical foundation—under German rather than French influences, using classical and not classicistic models, introducing Greek and not Roman texts. He elaborated on this suggestion in his 1801 *Attempt at metrical translations*. It contains an important introductory essay in which he argued that the Swedish literary repertoire should be expanded by means of ancient models and that these should be introduced by means of translations so faithful that they make the character of the author, his language, meter, time, and place recognizable for the Swedish reader.¹⁸ The bulk of the introduction is devoted to setting out the basics of Swedish prosody and metrics based on the metrical schemes of ancient poetry. Translations of excerpts of Greek and Roman poets turn the translational and metrical theory into practice. The first excerpt is a translation of Hector's farewell to Andromache.¹⁹

Regnér's choice of episodes is significant. There was already a "free translation or imitation" into Swedish of this episode from *Iliad* 6 by Gustaf Fredrik Gyllenberg, a member of the Swedish Academy.²⁰ Regnér knew of this translation and reminded readers of it. It is likely that he chose to translate the same episode in order to give readers the opportunity to compare the results of the two methods of translation, as he

glömmes"—and in his free translation "Hvad för band som vi ej glömmes, | Se'n oss guldet fångslat har! | Bröder sällan mera finnas | Ja, vi vilje icke minnas, | Ömheden för mor och far."

¹⁴ *Odyssey* 8.266–366 (the affair of Ares and Aphrodite in blank verse), *Iliad* 1.1–129 (the beginning of the *Iliad* in rhymed alexandrines). The latter excerpt is also printed in *StP* 1787:30.

¹⁵ Regnér 1786, 345 "enfaldigheten i originalet."

¹⁶ Regnér 1786, 345–46.

¹⁷ Cf. Sylwan 1931, 84–85; Mogren 1963, 3–18.

¹⁸ Regnér 1801, 5 "hufvud författarens caracter [...] lynnet af hans språk, och så til sägandes af luftstrekret, af landet."

¹⁹ *Iliad* 6.369–502.

²⁰ Gyllenberg 1790 "Fri Öfwersättning eller Imitation [...] Upläst i Svenska Academien." Normally, the pieces published in *StP* were anonymous, as was another early translation from the *Iliad*: "Ur Homers Ilias. Början af 4:de Boken", *StP* 1787, 41.

had done in the *Svenska Parnassen* with the Anacreontic poem. Like Regnér's earlier attempts at translating Homer, Gyllenborg's translation was a good specimen of the free method of translation. Gyllenborg adapted the text according to the taste of the day both metrically (rhymed alexandrines) and stylistically, which in this case means that the formulas, epithets, and repetitions characteristic of the Homeric style have been edited out and replaced by a sentimental description that enhances the sentimentality of the emotionally charged meeting between man and wife. This episode has been translated often. John Dryden, better known for his translations of Roman poetry, rendered it into English,²¹ Charles Perrault, a *moderne*, into French,²² and, closer to Gyllenborg in time, two translators were awarded first prize by the French Academy for translating it.²³ One of these or some other translation may be Gyllenborg's source of inspiration.

In translating this text, Regnér found it problematic to reconcile the simplicity of the *Iliad* with what contemporary readers expected of an epic poem. Another reason for his choice of episode was thus the fact that this simple scene from everyday life answers better to the Homeric style.²⁴ According to Regnér, the Homeric epics are characterized by a narrative in which everything is related indiscriminately and by a large amount of direct speech in which the poet lets the characters say what the situation demands without embellishment or comment: "the grandeur of Homer is in the subject matter, not the style; you do not find an insignificant subject matter elevated by diction."²⁵ Hence, by choosing to translate an everyday scene Regnér is able all the more faithfully to reproduce the simplicity that he finds to be the most distinctive feature of the Homeric epics.²⁶ The contemporary notion that epic poetry was the very acme of the poetic genius originated not, according to Regnér, with Homer but with Virgil, who was the source of epic grandeur. A metrically and stylistically faithful translation of a scene from the main action would have given a text that would not have been in

²¹ Dryden 1811.

²² [Perrault] 1698. The translation is printed anonymously, as are most pieces in the *Recueil*, but s.v. "Andromaque, en Latin *Andromache*" in Bayle 1720 it is stated that the *Recueil* printed a translation of that episode by Perrault, but it gives another year.

²³ Gruet 1776; Murville 1776.

²⁴ Regnér 1801, 158–60. A similar evaluation of the episode is found s.v. "Andromaque, en Latin *Andromache*" in Bayle 1720, where it is cited as an example of a naivety that was thought to be "trop bourgeois, & bon seulement pour la Comédie."

²⁵ Regnér 1801, 159: "det höga är hos Homer i saken, icke i stilen; är saken obetydlig, så finner man den icke genom uttrycket förädlad."

²⁶ Regnér 1801, 158: "Jag har med flit [...] valt en af de enskilda scener, som icke ingå i den stora handlingen, för at med des mera trohet kunna framställa den enfald, som skiljer honom från alla ålderdomens skaldar."

accord with the conventional idea of a heroic poem, since Homeric style does not reach the heights of epic grandeur that contemporary norms demanded of the genre.²⁷ Regnér was not ready to break with that convention, too.

Finally, at the end of the note to the translation, Regnér cites the first fifteen verses of Johann Heinrich Voss' German translation (published in the 1790s) of the same episode. In Germany, this translation, he explains, is acclaimed as the best and most faithful one. The purpose is to demonstrate to readers who are likely to doubt that the simplicity of the translation, its style without elevation indeed belongs to the singer of immortal Achilles, and is not due to the translator's inadequacy.²⁸ In the translation Regnér does try to render the Homeric source text faithfully: the meter is hexametric, the target text follows the source text line for line, epithets are mostly not elided but translated either with (compound) adjectives or periphrases, and repetitions are retained.

Regnér remains cautious. In the introductory essay, he tries to give the impression that he is not innovating but merely following tradition and building on innovations of other, more reputable, authors, though there were hardly any predecessors in Sweden.²⁹ His concern for how the translation would be received was natural in light of the severe criticism that he had suffered for, among other things, the Homeric translations published in *Svenska Parnassen*.³⁰

Regnér's theory was better received than his practice both by reviewers³¹ and the Swedish Academy, which awarded the so called Lundbladiska priset to Regnér, more for the metrical essay than for the translations, according to Regnér himself who says that the Academy "demanded a more developed and practiced execution than was possible to achieve at the start of a project."³² When revising the translation, Regnér polished the language and meter but he did not change his approach to the task of translation. He continued to claim that Homer, being the oldest and most simple poet, was particularly difficult to translate faithfully because of the idea of epic grandeur that derives from Virgil. However, even in a faithful translation, something is lost, he regrets.³³

²⁷ Regnér 1801, 158: "det vanliga begreppet om en Hjeltedigt."

²⁸ Id. "denna enkelhet [...], denna så litet uphöjda styl, kan tilhöra den odödlige Achills Sångare."

²⁹ For more detail, see Akujärvi 2011.

³⁰ Cf. Sjöding 1931, 349–60.

³¹ *Journal för Svensk Litteratur* 1801, 477–95; *StP* 1802:4, 10 (according to Beskow (1862, 331–43) this is by C.G. af Leopold, the severest critic of Regnér's earlier work). See also Akujärvi 2011.

³² Regnér 1814, 72: "fordrade [...] en utveckling [...] jemte en öfning i utförandet, som ej gern kan åtfölja et företag i dess nyhet."

³³ Regnér 1814, 73: "Dervid måste han visserligen äfven något förlora, men likväl ej mer än nödvändigt följer med all omklädning af det vittra slaget." The reviewer in *SLT* (1815, 52, 817–25) (Loren-

III

Så sagdt, skyndade bort den hjälmuskvinkande Hektor.
 Snart ankom han derpå till det boningsbeqväma palatset;
 Dock han ej fann Andromache der, hvitarmiga makan,
 Ty med sitt barn och den skönommantlade tärnan bekymrad
 I skanstornet hon stod, utgjutande tårar af smärta.³⁴

During the first few decades of the nineteenth century several translators tried their hand at the Homeric epics. There appeared translations of excerpts from *Iliad* 1 (Achilles complaining to Thetis), 6 (Hector's and Andromache's farewell), and 14 (Hera's seduction of Zeus), and from *Odyssey* 9 (Odysseus and the Cyclops).³⁵ Translations of whole books appeared also: *Iliad* 1, 6, and 22.³⁶ All these translations are poetic. Some are free translations in modern verse-forms, but most are hexametric and faithful. The method of translation that Regnér had argued for thus dominated. Two translations in this list are particularly interesting. They are made by two littérateurs who both died young without having much impact on Swedish literature.

Georg Ingelgren's translation of Hector's and Andromache's farewell was printed in the first issue of *Phosphoros*, a journal published by the young romantics of the so-called new school. Apart from a quote from *Anthologia Graeca* (16.301) praising Homer, the translation has no paratexts, which indicates that it does not bring new ideas to the theory of translation and that a translator does not necessarily need to argue for this mode of translation, which in turn suggests that hexametric faithful translation was becoming more accepted.³⁷ Ingelgren's translation can be read as a supplement to Regnér's previous efforts. Using the principles of translation established by Regnér, Ingelgren offers another interpretation that, presumably, was to serve as a better example to future hexametrists. When it came to translation, the new school often referred to Regnér's pioneer work, especially as a verse theoretician, but when it came to composing hexametric poetry they and other hexametrists preferred the example of Adlerbeth, whose translation of Virgil's oeuvre was widely admired in nineteenth century Sweden.³⁸

zo Hammarsköld, according to Ljunggren 1952, 265) regrets that the revision has stripped the translation of its naivety and easy flow without making it more faithful.

³⁴ *Iliad* 6.369–73 in Ingelgren 1810, 203.

³⁵ Hammarsköld 1806, 15–30 (*Iliad* 1.366–413, 14.153–354); (Ingelgren) 1810 (*Iliad* 6.369–502); (Palmblad) 1813 (*Odyssey* 9.105–566).

³⁶ [Tranér] 1810 (*Iliad* 22); [Munck af Rosenschöld] 1813 (*Iliad* 6); [Wieselgren] 1824 (*Iliad* 1).

³⁷ At this time, hexameters were also used in free translations, cf. Gyllenborg 1804.

³⁸ Adlerbeth 1804 and 1807. See Akujärvi 2011.

Pehr Munck af Rosenschöld's free translation of the whole of *Iliad* 6 is notable for its diverging from the translational paradigm that was being established. It can be taken as a reaction against the growing number of hexametric translations. Whereas Regnér, Ingelgren, and other hexameter translators referred to Voss' German translation as their model, the main authority for Munck af Rosenschöld was Alexander Pope's English translation and commentary. He does not model the translation after Pope's, but the commentary shows that Pope's understanding of epic guides his appreciation of its literary qualities, as Munck af Rosenschöld's notes translate Pope's notes with many deletions and a few additions. With a motto taken from Horace, he declares on the title page that one has the right to try—*tentare fas est*. The meter is rhyming alexandrine. It is a free translation, which in this case primarily means that the text is augmented at supposedly appropriate places. Predictably, the review in the *Swensk Literatur-Tidning*, another journalistic project of the new school, was very critical.³⁹

At the universities in Uppsala and Turku/Helsinki, two rather ambitious translation projects were being carried out. Axel Gabriel Sjöström, who later became professor of Greek in Helsinki, translated the whole of the *Odyssey*,⁴⁰ while Johan Tranér settled for half of the *Iliad*.⁴¹ Both translators began their projects before Wallenberg's complete translations, but they had not got far before his complete *Iliad* and *Odyssey* appeared. Both translations were published piece by piece in long series of dissertations at the two universities over a long period of time.⁴² Both were hexametric and faithful translations, though with different results. Sjöström's general practice was to translate very literally, apparently with little concern for readability, a quality that made this translation useful as a crib among students in Finland.⁴³ Tranér's translation praxis verged on the literal, too, but, as reviewers note, his ambition was to bring forth the literary qualities of the *Iliad*.

Reviewers responded differently to different qualities in Tranér's translation.⁴⁴ In general, they spoke highly of his hexameters (they are precise and carefully construed) and of his language (it serves to enrich Swedish poetry by introducing new compounds and simplifications, and by adopting words that have fallen out of use undeservedly,

³⁹ *SLT* 1814:3, 42–44.

⁴⁰ Sjöström 1818–1827 and 1835–1842.

⁴¹ Tranér 1807–1822; the three first books revised in Tranér 1836.

⁴² On translation of ancient literature at Swedish and Finnish universities, see Akujärvi 2014a and 2014b.

⁴³ Cf. Söderhjelm 1895, 156–72.

⁴⁴ [Tranér] 1810 was reviewed in *Phos* 1810, 371–76 (by Atterbom and Palmblad); Tranér 1807–1822, part 3–6 (the last of *Iliad* 1) in *Phos* 1811, 75–79 (by von Schwerin); Tranér 1836 in *SLFT* 1837:2.6, 401–8. Sjöström's *Odyssey* appears to have been little known outside Finnish academic circles.

words that were useful in translating the Homeric epics).⁴⁵ However, there was also criticism of many particulars in the versification, constructions, and choices of words, particularly the occasional additions and free turns of phrase *metri gratia*. Reviewers censured such stylistic traits in Tranér's translations that are typical of the epic dialect—archaisms, dialectal words, artificial words, and using variants interchangeably (*Achilleus–Achill*)—since these mannerisms were considered to obscure the “ancient simplicity” of the epic.⁴⁶

IV

Talade Hektor och gick med fladdrande buske på hjälmen.
Men till sitt boningsbeqvåma palats då han kommit, så fann han
Ej Andromakä der, den mjällhvitarmade, hemma;
Ty med sin späda Son och den skönbeslöjade Amman
Stod hon i tornet på muren och grät och suckade bittert.⁴⁷

Marcus Wallenberg, lecturer in Greek in Linköping gymnasium and later bishop in the diocese of Linköping, was the author of the first complete Swedish translation of the *Iliad* (1814–1815) and the *Odyssey* (1819–1821). The preface to the first volume of the *Iliad* gives readers to understand that Wallenberg had been observing the translations of Homer with great interest. These, he says, had made him hope that it would appear soon in a complete Swedish hexametric translation, a translation so faithful that it would preserve the spirit of the original and reproduce the effect of the Greek verse.⁴⁸ When no Swedish *Iliad* appeared, he started working on a translation of that sort, even though he had no intention of publishing it.⁴⁹

Wallenberg's preface comprises topoi of modesty that are common to early translations.⁵⁰ He begins by explaining that he does not think that he is the right man for the job, but that he performs an important service to Swedish literature that no one else has seemed willing to undertake. Significantly, he also declares that the translation

⁴⁵ *SLFT* 1837:26, 405: “dels genom nya sammansättningar och förenklingar, dels genom upptagandet af ord, som kommit ur bruk utan att förtjena det, och som i synnerhet komma wäl till pass i en öfwersättning sådan som den närwarande.” For the language of Tranér, see Berg 1905.

⁴⁶ *SLFT* 1837:26, 407: “fornåldriga enkelhet.” Cf. also Palmblad 1849, 301.

⁴⁷ *Iliad* 6.369–73 in Wallenberg 1814–1815, 150.

⁴⁸ Wallenberg 1814–1815, preface (unnumbered p. 1) “hos mig väckt det fågnande hoppet, att se detta Homäriska mästerverk helt och hållet försvenskadt, med den trohet, som i möjligaste måtto förmådde bibehålla Originalets anda, och på det Versslag, som i rik och omväxlande harmoni kunde komma det samma närmast.”

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Cf. Akujärvi 2010.

is a pastime and that it had not been his intention to publish it. He proceeds, predictably, to state that he had consulted expert advice, just to clarify some unclear points in the versification and the interpretation of particularly obscure passages. Spurred on by them, he decided to publish the translation, Wallenberg explains. In conclusion, he hopes that critics will let consideration of the difficulty of the task mitigate the criticism and that the translation might inspire others to produce new and better translations.

Wallenberg devoted the bulk of the preface to matters of meter, particularly to describing his view on the accentuation of compounds of the type *slag-ur*, *en-vis*, and *till-taga*, which have a main stress on the first syllable and a secondary stress on the second syllable. At issue was how to deal with the secondary stress on the second syllable. Excepting only these compounds, Wallenberg adheres to the metric and prosodic rules set out by Adlerbeth, who builds on the foundation laid by Regnér.⁵¹ Adlerbeth had argued that the compounds retain the stress of their constituent parts, that is, words like *slagur* and *envis* should be stressed like spondees (– –) and *tilltaga* like an antibacchius (– – ∪), since that is the more elevated and dignified enunciation which should be used in poetry,⁵² while Wallenberg argued for pronouncing these compounds in a plain and prosaic manner, that is, stressing *slagur* and *envis* like trochees (– ∪) and *tilltaga* like a dactyl (– ∪ ∪). According to Wallenberg the second syllable was less stressed and was heard like a mean between a stressed and unstressed syllable and that it, if it was used as a stressed syllable, should be positioned so that the ictus does not fall on it. That would give the second syllable such a heavy stress that it would drown the stress of the first syllable and the word would acquire an almost iambic quality whereby the ear would be offended.⁵³

The first syllable is “long” (Sw. *lång*) in Adlerbeth’s and Wallenberg’s terminology, the quantity of the second one is in the middle between long and short (Sw. *medellång* in Wallenberg; henceforth “middle-long”). According to Wallenberg, middle-long syllables are long except (1) when the vowel is followed by one consonant (thus, *envis* is a trochee) and (2) when the vowel is followed by two consonants which are immediately followed by another vowel (in the phrase *fosterland åter*, *fosterland* is a dactyl). Furthermore, Wallenberg posits “middle-short” (Sw. *medelkorta*, a term not otherwise used in Swedish metrics) syllables, whose quantity lies in the middle between long and short,

⁵¹ Wallenberg 1814–1815, preface; Adlerbeth 1804, preface.

⁵² Adlerbeth 1804, preface (rule 4).

⁵³ Wallenberg 1814–1815, preface (unnumbered p. 2–5). One should thus not write: *Mullen är här upp|vräkt; slag|regn har fallit i nejden*, but *Mullen är uppvräkt | här; ty slagregn |fallit i nejden*. On the position of this type of words in Swedish verse, cf. Sandwall 1913.

but is more short than long, whereas the middle-long syllables, according to Wallenberg, are more long than short. Middle-short syllables are short except when the vowel is followed (1) by more than two consonants (thus, *framblixtra* is a antibacchius, whereas *rådgöra* is a dactyl, comparable to words like *blomstrande* or *drottningen*) or (2) by a cluster of consonants that are difficult to pronounce (*treskäftad* is a antibacchius).⁵⁴ Wallenberg thinks that Swedish metrics would benefit greatly if these few, simple modifications were accepted. The number of dactyls would increase and many words that do not fit into a hexameter would fit into it (e.g. *igentaga* (when scanned $\cup - \cup \cup$, according to Wallenberg's rules, and not $\cup - - \cup$)). In other words, as regards observing the secondary stress on the second syllable of compound words, Wallenberg argues for introducing rules similar to the rules of position of ancient prosody.

Metrics, Swedish prosody, and the correct form of the Swedish hexameter were central issues for translators and reviewers alike; the same focus on (hexa)metrics can be seen in Germany and England, too.⁵⁵ Successive translators built on the foundations laid by their predecessors. Adlerbeth's (1804) account for the principles of prosody and metrics developed, specified, and corrected the rules set out by Regnér (1801). Wallenberg (1814) considered most of Adlerbeth's rules to be indisputable and claimed to follow them all, excepting only the problematic compounds discussed above.⁵⁶ Adlerbeth remained an authority; he was still referred to by Johansson (1846), who bypassed Wallenberg when setting out matters prosody and (hexa)meter.⁵⁷

When the second volume of Wallenberg's *Iliad* appeared (1815), the whole *Iliad* was reviewed by Lorenzo Hammarsköld in *Swensk Literatur-Tidning*.⁵⁸ Hammarsköld began by welcoming the translation and detailing the difficulties facing a Swedish translator of the *Iliad*, the main one being lack of interest and understanding for the Homeric epics among the Swedish readership. What Swedes of his time knew of Homer was, according to Hammarsköld, not much more than that Homer was sublime, majestic, and bold beyond description, but at times prosaic and unpolished, and that he, since he did not know of literary societies, could fall so far below epic grandeur, that he likened a king to a bull and a charming prince to a fly.⁵⁹ Further, the Swedish public

⁵⁴ Wallenberg 1814–1815, preface (unnumbered p. 6–7).

⁵⁵ See, i.e., Häntzschel 1977, 31–38, 234–236; Prins 2005.

⁵⁶ Wallenberg 1814–1815, preface (unnumbered p. 2).

⁵⁷ Johansson 1846, VI–VII. For an outline of the debate and practice, see Sylwan 1898, 21–32; 1934, 113–37.

⁵⁸ Hammarsköld 1816a; the review is anonymous and has possibly been supplemented by Palmblad, see Ljunggren 1952, 272–73.

⁵⁹ Hammarsköld 1816a, 114: “obeskrifligen sublim, majestätisk, rik, förwånande och dristig, men äfwen—emedan wid hans tid inga bildade societeter funnos till—dessemellan till den grad platt, rå

lacked in the education needed to properly appreciate the Homeric narrative and the beauty of his unaffected and unsentimental style.⁶⁰

Therefore, Hammarsköld feared that “a translation in the genuine and grand style” would not be appreciated and that readers were likely to feel deceived, suspecting that a garrulous storyteller has been passed off as Homer and not know what to think of the translation at hand.⁶¹ Hammarsköld’s suspicion, that a faithful translation of Homer—for him the only acceptable mode of translation of the Homeric epics—would not match contemporary readers’ expectations of an epic poem, is reminiscent of Ragner’s worry about how readers would receive a translation that did not live up to epic grandeur, as discussed above. A similar remark in the *Stockholms Posten* indicates that readers without Greek were presumed to have their assumptions of the Homeric epics coloured by contemporary notions of the epic genre.⁶²

Contemporary readers can, according to Hammarsköld, make heavy demands on the fidelity of Swedish translations of the classics. In that respect, Wallenberg’s translation does not disappoint. On the whole Hammarsköld is favourable, but he finds fault with and corrects certain choices of words and phrases, the rendering of certain epithets, and passages where he thinks that the translation differs too much from the source text. Wallenberg’s language is thoroughly Swedish and not tinged with the Greek of the source text, which is good, but it is problematic, according to Hammarsköld, that he does not keep to one register and that he tends to use vocabulary that is unduly plain and everyday, crude and coarse even.⁶³

The last mentioned shortcoming is, according to Hammarsköld, due to the translator’s having the wrong idea of the naivety of Homer. The Homeric style is naive (simple, artless, and unaffected) since his work—these “sounds from the childhood of humanity” that have sprung up and developed almost spontaneously, like products of

och från epopeens höghet sunken, att han liknat en Kung wid en tjur och en ung, charmant Prins vid en fluga.” Cf. the thoughts on mixing high and low in the *Iliad* in [Skjöldebrand] 1768, 38.

⁶⁰ Id., 114–15 “Homeros’ lugna, spegelklara objektivitet, hans rena skönhet, utan all eftersträfwad effekt, hans stilla storhet utan prunk, och hans rent menskliga stämning, utan all smitta af förslappande sentimentalitet.”

⁶¹ Id., 115 “en öfwersättning i den äkta och stora stilen.” The reviewer of Adlerbeth 1804 had similar worries, cf. *StP* 1804:94, 100, 103.

⁶² *StP* 1814:278 “Till upplysning för dem, som ej kunna jemföra detta med originalet torde böra nämnas, att Homerus ej fordrar den upphöjning och städning i stilen som Virgilius, men mycken lätthet och ledighet; hwilket öfwerallt är iakttaget.”

⁶³ The assessment recurs in *SLFT* 1837:26, 407 and *Nordisk familjebok*, s.v. “Marcus Wallenberg” (<http://runeberg.org/nfck/0256.html>).

nature⁶⁴—must be naive, like a child is naive. The epics do not have that varnish of civilization that affects both the adult man and later works of poetry. The Homeric naivety cannot be mimicked since that would spoil any true and genuine naivety, it can only be recreated by a translator who opens up his heart to the splendiddness of his creations and renders them lovingly, without intent or artistic striving towards distinction.⁶⁵ Since Wallenberg does not know how to distinguish expressions that bear witness to pure innocence and natural vigour unfettered by societal conditions from those that signify a barbaric lack in honourable manners, his interpretation fails at times and the language becomes too plain and crude.⁶⁶

The main flaw, however, of the translation was the versification. Hammarsköld dealt with it briefly and dismissed Wallenberg's modifications to Adlerbeth's prosodic rules. The reviewer in *Stockholms Posten* was also reluctant to accept Wallenberg's innovations at first, but in the end he declared that the problematic words were not too frequent or disruptive to the rhythm.

Hammarsköld's review was the beginning of a long argument between him,⁶⁷ Wallenberg (whose contributions display an acrimonious reaction to the review and criticism),⁶⁸ and Vilhelm Fredrik Palmblad.⁶⁹ Space does not allow a detailed account of it. They were agreed that ancient literature was to be translated faithfully, that ancient meters could and should be used in Swedish verse, particularly for translating ancient poetry, and that the rhythm was to be created by alternating stressed and unstressed syllables. With consensus on the bigger issue came a focus on details and disagreement over how Swedish hexameters were to be construed. There was some dispute over certain choices of words and phrases, but Homer—the content, the text, the words of the epics—faded out of focus as the best way of rendering the form was debated. At the centre of the exchange was Swedish prosody and metrics. The main issues were which monosyllabic words were to be stressed and which were not, how certain types of compounds were to be stressed, how caesuras and diereses were to be used, and to

⁶⁴ Hammarsköld 1816a, 131: "ljud från mensklighetens barndom" and 115: "nästan som en naturprodukt, half medwetslöst."

⁶⁵ Id., 131–32 "i ett fromt, öppet, och utan förbehåll hängifwet hjerta uppfattar hans herrliga skapelser, och återgifwer dem kärleksfullt, utan afsigt, utan konstfullt sträfwande efter en eller annan förtjenst."

⁶⁶ Id., 133 "uttryck af frisk, naturlig kraft, som af mångahanda sällskapliga wilkor icke blifwit bunden och som bär den owanskligaste prägel af oskuld [...] från [...] barbarisk förskämning och brist på ädelhet i sederna."

⁶⁷ Hammarsköld 1816b.

⁶⁸ Wallenberg 1816a, 1816b, 1816c.

⁶⁹ Palmblad 1816a, 1816b, 1816c.

what extent it was acceptable to substitute dactyls and spondees with trochees in a hexametric verse. It was largely a question of who was to decide the criteria for judging verses correct and beautiful or incorrect and misshapen.

Metric and prosodic issues were disputed with particular fierceness. Wallenberg defended his metrical principle and the modification he had made to Adlerbeth's prosodic rules and maintained that he could not be incorrect when he had established a principle to which he adhered. There is a note of arrogant self-confidence in Wallenberg's arguments, which probably is due to the fact that the reviewer's critique of the hexameter was based on "Swedish metrics" by Palmblad, a member of the new school, and that he, despite his anonymity, could be assumed to belong to the new school.⁷⁰ The fact that he reviewed for *Swensk Literatur-Tidning*, a publication of the new school, indicated as much and the suspicion was supported by the reviewer's praise of the hexameters of the romantic Ingelgren and of Tranér, who inspired the young romantics.

When Palmblad interfered in the argument, he started by declaring that he respected Wallenberg's effort but not its result. He suggested that Wallenberg's bitter reaction to the review was due to wounded self-esteem.⁷¹ However, the debate did not concern feelings as much as it was a battle over position and precedence in the literary field.⁷² Translation, prosody, and metrics were only a few of the bones of contention.⁷³ Palmblad signed his contribution "The author of *Swedish metrics* in Phosphoros,"⁷⁴ which made his identity known amongst otherwise anonymous contributors and, additionally, announced that he was the author of the metrics that Wallenberg had rejected. In this debate Palmblad reused a strategy from an earlier polemic against literary adversaries.⁷⁵ He took the sting out of the criticism by taking cover behind the names of distinguished men, whom his adversary too recognized as authorities, and he formulated the defence of the metrics that he had presented in *Swedish metrics* not as a self-defence but as an attempt to uphold a metrics that had been established in Sweden owing to the translations of Adlerbeth. He claimed that his metrical theory merely systematized Adlerbeth's metrical practice and put it on a theoretical foundation laid by

⁷⁰ *Phos* 1811, 489–568.

⁷¹ Palmblad 1816a, 356; see also Hammarsköld 1816b, 75.

⁷² It is likely that the secure position Adlerbeth enjoyed on the Swedish Parnassus was the reason why he could tolerate criticism of his translations, as Hammarsköld (1816b, 80) recalls in the heat of the debate, referring to the review in *Lyc* 1810, 69–95, 1811, 34–57, and Adlerbeth's reply in *Lyc* 1811, 94–120.

⁷³ See e.g. Vinge 1978.

⁷⁴ "Författaren af Swensk Verslära i Phosphoros."

⁷⁵ See Akujärvi 2011.

German metricians such as Friedrich Gottlieb Klopstock the poet, Voss the translator, Gottfried Hermann the philologist, and August Wilhelm Schlegel the poet, translator etc. In private correspondence Palmblad voiced some criticism of Adlerbeth, which suggests that it was a tactical move to elevate him to an authority par excellence in the polemic.⁷⁶

The debate continued. Wallenberg appears to have been offended by the fact that a third party intervened in his dispute with the reviewer. Wallenberg considered Palmblad's interference to be unwarranted and his critique unwelcome since he had a literary reputation that was at best suspect in some circles.⁷⁷ Wallenberg rejected the criticism, and tried hard to show that, if he was to accept criticism as an "emergent talent,"⁷⁸ Palmblad was not the critic for him, since undoubtedly he lacked in both merits and authority to play that part credibly.⁷⁹ Had the reviewer not been protected by his anonymity, he, too, would have been open to equally severe attacks.

Whereas Wallenberg tried to score points off Palmblad by questioning his qualifications, by calling attention to his inexperience, and by showing that what little Palmblad had translated would not bear scrutiny, Palmblad maintained that Wallenberg's criticism—unlike his ad hominem attacks—did not touch him, that he was attacking "all Eumetrics," and that he in his capacity of the producer of a tasteless *Iliad* would not be able to upset a metric system that was accepted by men like Klopstock, Voss, Neubeck, A. W. Schlegel, Baggesen, and, in Sweden, Adlerbeth, Brinkman, and Tranér.⁸⁰

Palmblad suggested that the only reasonable explanation why Wallenberg persistently maintained his views were either that he did not understand an argument, did not know the theoretical literature, or that his organs were not receptive to declamation and euphony.⁸¹ The argument soon reached a deadlock on the points at issue; in what followed only the insults were renewed. When the *Odyssey* appeared (1819–1821),

⁷⁶ See Sylwan 1834, 124–26.

⁷⁷ The whole new school was regarded with suspicion, but as publisher and printer Palmblad was more exposed than the others. *SLT* came under fire often because of critical reviews of literature approved by the Swedish Academy. In 1815 Palmblad's business as printer for Uppsala university was threatened in order to avert criticism of Leopold, see Schück 1936, 342–404.

⁷⁸ Palmblad 1816a, 356 "börjande talang."

⁷⁹ Wallenberg 1816b, 91 "Hvilken har anförtrott åt Hr P. & Rec. denna litterära domsrätt [...]? Har denna Hr P. genom utgifna skrifter, lysande af snille, smak och kunskaper, bildat och gagnat Allmänheten och derigenom bevisat sina anspråk att föra andras talan?" and 93–94 "Hr P. borde ändtligen begripa, att man skall hafva dokumenterat egen duglighet, innan man företager sig, att vilja tuckta odugligheten eller uppmuntra talangen, och att Hr P. sjelf icke står tillräckligen jämnt och säkert, för att omkullstötta andra."

⁸⁰ Palmblad 1816b, 120–21 "all Eumetrik", "Öfversättare af en förplattad Ilias."

⁸¹ Palmblad 1816b, 116–17.

reviewers reminded readers of this debate; the reviewers in *Stockholms Posten* commended Wallenberg for standing firm against the critique,⁸² while those in *Swensk Literatur-Tidning* insisted that the critique had been justified, but admitted that the shortcomings—at least those in the *Odyssey*—had not been as grave as they had seemed in the heat of battle.⁸³

v

Sagdt; och bort sig begaf den hjälmbusksmyckade Hektor.
Snart derefter han kom till det boningsbeqväma palatset,
fann dock ej Andromache der, hvitarmiga makan;
ty med sin jollrande son och den fagermantlade tärnan
stod hon i tornet på muren, försänkt i sorg och i tårar.⁸⁴

The practice to strive to reproduce the content and form of the source text faithfully soon became so established that translators no longer needed to argue for that mode of translation, and reviewers noted approvingly that that is how an ancient text should be translated, and the debate among translators and reviewers was focused on Swedish prosody and metrics. However, the decision to translate faithfully does not render the task mechanical. Rather, it opens up a different set of problems related to how to achieve that goal. What type of vocabulary, what style, what syntactic habits in the target language should one use when translating the source text? Judging from the preface to his translation, Wallenberg had not considered such problems.

In time the demands of a faithful translation became more rigorous; verse translations acquired didactic purposes in addition to the earlier more purely literary ones. In the 1810s, Adlerbeth's translations had been praised for their faithfulness and they were recommended to translators as models of translation according to "the stricter method"⁸⁵ or "the grand style."⁸⁶ In the 1830s they were described as "remarkable imitations, which without a doubt have earned the high praise that they have received and continue to receive, excepting that their modernity has been carried too far."⁸⁷

Neither free nor faithful translation are absolute categories, but rather two opposite ends of a sliding scale of approaches to the task of translating. Both types of trans-

⁸² Anonymous in *StP* 1819:123, 125, 134, 137 and 1821:182, 185.

⁸³ V.F. Palmblad in *SLT* 1820:33, 513–28.

⁸⁴ *Iliad* 6.369–73 in Johansson 1846, 121.

⁸⁵ Hammarsköld 1816a, 144: "den strängare methoden."

⁸⁶ *Phos* 1810, 371: "the grand style."

⁸⁷ *SLFT* 1837:26, 402: "märkwärdiga efterbildningar, hwilka, i fall man bortser från deras kanske alltför högt drifna modernitet, utan twifwel fullt motswara de många och stora loford, de skördat och skörda." See also Akujärvi forthcoming.

lations bear the mark of the translator's interpretation of the source text. This is more obviously the case in free translation, since there the resources of modern poetics are at the translator's disposal to create a new text that appeals to the contemporary audience and that highlights those aspects of Homer that he considers the most dominant ones. Thus, Munck af Rosenschöld wanted to bring out the magnificent and majestic character of the *Iliad* by using alexandrines and elaborations,⁸⁸ while Wieselgren (1824) wanted to give an idea of the folksiness of the *Iliad* by translating what he labelled an Ionic folk-song into a Swedish one.⁸⁹ Faithful translations are harder to grasp. For the present-day reader it is less clear how to interpret the differences between faithful translations of earlier centuries if the translator has not explained his intentions in a paratext. Likewise, without reviews and other records documenting the contemporary reception of a translation, it is difficult to know how readers at that time perceived the new and old translations.

By the 1840's at the latest, when Johansson's Homer started appearing,⁹⁰ it was becoming evident to Swedish readers that a faithful translation is not a perfect mirror image of the source text and that two translators do not produce identical translations. That is, at least for readers who gave any thought to matters of translating. With reference to the first booklet of Johansson's sample translation, Palmblad observed that translators leave their mark in the target text even when they strive for faithful translations. Absolute similarity is unobtainable, so the translator must acquiesce in rendering those aspects that are most characteristic to his mind.⁹¹ Having discussed the translator's subjectivity, Palmblad discusses that of the reviewer next. A reviewer is likely to be a severe critic of a translation when he, by studying or translating, has formed an opinion of his own about the source text, if the translator's priorities has resulted in an interpretation that differed from the reviewer's idea of the source text.⁹²

In a brief translational retrospective, Palmblad notes that Voss's German Homer was heavy, pretentious, and mannered and that none of his three Swedish guises is quite satisfactory. In Wallenberg's translation, Homer had retained his natural, naive gentleness, but he was too rustic, in Tranér's he was a skilled artist, constantly carrying out language experiments with varying results,⁹³ whereas Johansson's translation was

⁸⁸ Munck af Rosenschöld 1813, 4.

⁸⁹ Cf. the title page. Οὔτις 1868 is a parody of the *Odyssey*.

⁹⁰ Johansson 1841–1842 (sample translation of *Odyssey* 1–8), 1844–1845, and 1846.

⁹¹ Review in *Frey* 1842, 171–73.

⁹² More on Palmblad's views on translation in Akujärvi forthcoming.

⁹³ Palmblad in *Frey* 1842, 171–72 “[Voss' Homer is clothed] i prakttalar, och talar (ställvis) ett braskande, tungt och konstlat språk; hos WALLENBERG har han pådragit en vadmalsrock, men har

not a golden mean between the two but brings out yet other qualities. Palmblad praises Johansson for the fidelity of his translation and the care that he has devoted to language and versification. However, since tastes differ, he says that the translator could be criticized for being too painstakingly careful with the diction and versification. Palmblad finds Johansson's Homer too correct, spotless, and elegant; he misses the pleasant artlessness, informality, negligence even, and the easy flow that he finds characteristic of Homer. With metaphors from the sphere of clothing, Palmblad describes Johansson's Homer as dressed in a costume that is ancient, to be sure, but he is too proper and tidy, and he has given too much thought to the dress.⁹⁴ In particular, Palmblad finds the hexameter too meticulous. At this time, to find a reviewer criticizing the meter for being too precise is exceptional, and Palmblad does emphasize that his critique is owing to the fact that the translation does not match his idea of the source text.

Another reviewer's assessment was that Johansson's translation was very correct, but marred by a too archaic vocabulary.⁹⁵ The reviewer held that, though it did not have poetic qualities to recommend it nor was it likely to be enjoyable for readers who had not read Homer in Greek, it had merits of another—philological—kind. Readers who had studied the Greek text, and those who could compare the translation to it, would, the translator predicted, always find Johansson's work useful and pleasurable.⁹⁶ Moreover, as the translation followed the source text more closely than other translations, he hoped that the translation would boost the Swedish study of Greek.

In the preface to the *Iliad*, Johansson replied to the criticism.⁹⁷ The two characteristics that, to his mind, are the most salient of the Homeric text have caused him problems. First, naivety, since it is not properly suited to Swedish. Second, archaism, since to render every archaism with an archaism creates a too strongly archaic text in Swedish. It had been his ambition to render every archaism, but in response to reviewers' criticism he has been more sparing with them in translating the *Iliad*. However, when it came to the hexameters, Johansson did not deviate from the original design despite the criticism. The greater part of the preface is devoted to defending the strict form of the hexameters.

bibehållit naturligheten af en viss naiv godartighet; hos TRANÉR är han en talangfull konstmakare, som gör oupphörliga än lyckliga än olyckliga språkexperimenter.”

⁹⁴ Palmblad 1842, 172.

⁹⁵ C.F.B. (= Karl Fredrik Bergstedt?) in *Frey* 1844, 454–57 (rev. of Johansson 1844–1845, I).

⁹⁶ Id., 456. See also C.F.B. in *Frey* 1845, 293 (rev. of Johansson 1844–1845, II).

⁹⁷ Johansson 1846, v–vii.

VI

En dödlig aning rår i Hectors höga själ,
 När han til Andromaque at ta et ömt farwål
 Sig hastar rum från rum, men får ej henne finna:
 Ur Slottet hans Gemål har, åtföljd af en qwinna
 Som hennes späda Son i sina armar bar,
 På Stadens wallar gått, der hon med bäfwan tar
 Den grymma strid i akt som öfwer fältet skallar;
 Hon der sin olyckslott i minnet återkallar,
 Och under fåfängt hopp, at i Trojaners Här
 Sin kära Hector se, i tårar badad är.⁹⁸

The turn towards German models in the field of translation reflects a general deprecation of French classicizing culture and growing German influence in Swedish culture, literature in particular, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Schematically described, the turn of the century in Sweden was a time when French models were being replaced by German ones and when the classicizing ideal in literature and translation was being abandoned for a literary romanticism and a translational focus on close adherence to the source text. This was also a time when the status of translation declined as it was considered an activity not of the active genius creating original work but of a passive one that is merely capable of appreciating and imitating great works of literature. As Voss' faithful hexametric translation was pivotal for the change in Swedish translation practice at the turn of the century, so the German example was important later in the nineteenth century as the principles of translation were reconsidered in France, and Voss' hexameters were not unknown to Matthew Arnold and others trying to perfect English hexameters.⁹⁹

By focusing on early translations of the Homeric epics only, this study has isolated a small, albeit significant, fragment from its context and continuum. Any general conclusions regarding (dis)continuities in Swedish translational practice and theory suggested by this study, cannot be drawn until the results of this study are related to studies of contemporary translations of other authors, other works, and other genres, both poetic and prosaic. However, some trends are discernible.

There is a general growing interest in archaic and classical Greek literature. There is a general obsession with metrics, and the debate is more and more reduced to fixing the metric values of certain types of words. There is a general shift from free translation or imitation to faithful translation. Moreover, the definition of "faithful" was

⁹⁸ *Iliad* 6.369–73 in Gyllenborg 1790.

⁹⁹ Weinmann 2012, 64–67; Prins 2005.

changing, as literal word for word translations were valued more and more. Adhering to the syntactic structure and the very wording of the source text was becoming more important than the readability or literary quality of the text. This trend can be seen when comparing Wallenberg's Homer to Johansson's, and it is even more marked in translations of Greek drama, a genre that was translated more extensively during the later part of the nineteenth century than the epics.¹⁰⁰

When the early translators, Wallenberg in particular, are compared to Johansson, the following may be observed. Regarding the principles of translation, the trend appears to have been that free translations are supplanted by faithful translations, and that more literal translations start to emerge. Concurrently it appears that the early translations were primarily intended as pieces of literature, whereas there is a hint that the last translation was made with a (secondary?) pedagogic purpose. The obsession with metrics can be explained both from a literary point of view (prosody and metrics for Swedish poetic usage) and from a learned/pedagogical one (prosody and metrics with a focus on creating an image of the ancient, with only a secondary concern from how they would function in the source language).

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Akujärvi forthcoming.

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Gender and nationalism in the Mediterranean Avant-Garde

The Trojan Wars of the Modernist painter-poets
Giorgio de Chirico and Nikos Engonopoulos

VASILIKI DIMOULA



BY THE END of the nineteenth century, the industrial revolution and groundbreaking technological progress had put the world in the orbit of an accelerating modernization. Contemporary avant-garde movements are largely a response to the altered sense of time wrought by changes conceived as both a promise and, especially in the aftermath of the First World War, a menace. The relation of the avant-garde to tradition bears the traces of this ambivalence, with memory assuming an indecisive character, as both a critique of modernity and, in the inter-war years, a conservative turn with alarmingly reactionary political overtones and alliances.¹ The problematic of memory and tradition in relation to the making of the modern takes on distinctive significance in the case of the Mediterranean avant-garde because of its privileged relation with Greco-Roman antiquity and its relevance to questions of nationhood. It is in this light that I will consider the work of Giorgio de Chirico (1888–1978) and Nikos Engonopoulos (1907–1985), paying special attention to role of the Trojan Wars in both artists' heretic surrealist poetics.

de Chirico was born to Italian parents in the Greek town of Volos in 1888, studied in the Higher School of Fine Arts in Athens and did not settle in Italy before 1908. Greco-Roman antiquity is essential to his eccentric take on the modernizing processes changing the physiognomy of the contemporary world. For de Chirico, as for other artists of the literary and artistic movement known as the “Metaphysical School” [*Pittura Metafisica*], which included such people as C. Carrà, G. Morandi, M. Sironi, F. de Pisis, memory becomes the means for an alternative perception and interpretation of

¹ For memory and nostalgia as a prominent discursive mode since the nineteenth century, see Radstone, who goes as far as to suggest that “in the Western world, at least, the long enduring age of confession” which Foucault aligned with the emergence of modernity in the seventeenth century, “may now be giving way to the era of memory” (Radstone 2007, 2).

modernity.² Through the determining influence of Nietzsche and Schopenhauer, de Chirico's metaphysical aesthetic evokes a world of enigma, mystery and vision—moments of “revelation” that resist decipherment by analytic intelligence and open up the phenomenal world to the dimension of the unseen.³ The same influences condition, in turn, the reception of antiquity. Homeric themes, which more immediately concern us here, are telling in this respect.

By its very title, the early painting “The Enigma of the Oracle” (1910) suggests the “contamination” of the past by de Chirico's metaphysical aesthetics. The dark, hooded figure gazing over the city in this painting alludes to Böcklin's “Odysseus and Calypso” (1883) and depicts Odysseus's yearning for home, his remoteness, his distance from the charms of the present. Yet, it also announces de Chirico's art of hybridity and multiplicity, to which we will return. This, because de Chirico also superimposes on Böcklin's iconography other characters, creates a figure of multiple identities. As the artist's own relevant writings suggest, another figure looming behind the “phantom” in this painting is the philosopher Heraclitus, who appears here as a soothsayer, recognizable from his chlamys.⁴ In addition, the painting depicts the Delphic oracle; the Homeric theme is thus amplified by an aura of prophetic revelation: the hooded figure condenses the qualities of a priest of Apollo and a homesick Odysseus, a coupling not without support in Nietzsche's claim in *The Birth of Tragedy* that the Homeric world was Apollonian.⁵

The evocation of antiquity as an indirect way of exposing the enigmatic, indecisive character of the contemporary world becomes prominent in the paintings de Chirico drew during the First World War when he lived in isolation in a military hospital near Ferrara. These drawings introduce in his work the figure of the *mannequin*, which is of fundamental importance to the machine and automaton poetics of the avant-garde at the beginning of the twentieth century. The mannequin is particularly prevalent during the years 1915–1917, in paintings that bring together Greek mythology and the cultural code of the industrial and technological era, a combination which highlights the role of antiquity in breaking open the certainties of the present. “The Seer” (1915), “The Disquieting Muses” (1917), and “Hector and Andromache” (first version in 1917)

² See Green 2011, 65 and Loizidi 1987, 102.

³ On Nietzsche and Schopenhauer, see Loizidi 1987, 77. On “revelation”, see Green 2011, 66. For a detailed account of the enigmatic quality of de Chirico's antiquity-inspired metaphysical paintings on the basis of both the influence of Nietzsche and early twentieth century primitivism, see Merjian 2010, 186–208.

⁴ Bohn 2002, 94–95.

⁵ Bohn 2002, 96.

are among the most representative of these works. The latter is the model of a painting of the same title by Engonopoulos, which will be discussed later in this paper.

The mannequins represented in de Chirico's "Hector and Andromache" have no distinct faces or features of sexual difference. If the thingness of the mannequin as a critique to the dehumanising, alienating patterns of labour in the industrial world and to modernity's deforming processes is now well established in scholarship, issues of gendering and sexuality are less often drawn into discussions about the Metaphysical School's critical edge. Jewell draws attention precisely to this aspect when discussing the androgyny of the mannequins in relation to a contemporary frame, where people become not only reified, but also unsexed. Yet, as she goes on to argue in her account of the theme of hybridity and androgyny in de Chirico and his brother Alberto Savinio, the sense that the viewer is to attribute to androgyny in the Metaphysical works, like, for instance, de Chirico's *Ermafrodito* (1921), is slippery.

Like the facelessness of the mannequins, unclear sexuation helps the de Chiricos build an argument about the monstrosity of the modern, but it also fuels the fire of enigma and thus allows the brothers to show the marvelous and the unexpected characteristics of modernity as well.⁶

Jewell locates the transgressive representation of gendering and sexuality by the Metaphysical School artists mainly in the undermining of accepted notions of masculinity, obvious in de Chirico's portrayal of male heroic figures devoid of their masculine credentials, of which "Hector and Andromache" is also an example.⁷ Arguably, the cultural politics of gender and sexuality in question here allow for a larger utopian potential, relevant to yet unknown notions of the sexual relationship and the human. In any case, Jewell confers gender and sexual transgression in the mannequin paintings a central position in the debates on nationhood and the avant-garde. The poetics of hybridity in the case of the androgyne are seen as a sustained "undoing" of the nation as monolith, which becomes explicit also in the theoretical writings of the de Chirico brothers.⁸

As for de Chirico, a turn to tradition seems to be for Engonopoulos essential to the understanding of modern identity. Alongside Andreas Embeirikos, Engonopoulos is considered one of the most prominent representatives of the surrealist movement in

⁶ Jewell 2010, 24.

⁷ Jewell 2010, 25.

⁸ Jewell 2010, 25 and see her Chapter 7 on Alberto Savinio's essay "L'ora ebraica" ("My Jewish Hour"). On the connection between clearly defined gender identity and the construction of the nation state, see also Mosse, to whose work Jewell herself alludes and who claims that: "Nationalism, a movement which began and evolved parallel to modern masculinity [...] adopted the masculine stereotype as one means of its self-representation" (Mosse 1996, 7).

Greece, in both poetry and painting. In the Athens School of Fine Arts, where he studied from 1932 to 1938, he was introduced to the work of Manet, Seurat, Cezanne, and Dominicos Theotokopoulos (El Greco), while he also studied Byzantine Art, which, together with surrealism, seals his paintings in a combination whose originality cannot be overemphasized. Engonopoulos's surrealism testifies to certain particularities, which are not irrelevant to his apprenticeship in the work of de Chirico, itself liminal to the surrealist movement proper.⁹ Although antiquity is far from exclusive or even dominant in Engonopoulos's turn to tradition, scholars have noted his distinctive interest for those works by de Chirico that are mostly dominated by themes drawn on antiquity and mythology, and more particularly de Chirico's period of "metaphysical art", as well as his more "classical" period which influenced the "return to tradition" movement in Italy after the First World War and cost the artist a break with André Breton in 1926.¹⁰

Turning to the Homeric legacy, Engonopoulos's painting "Homeric with a Hero" ["Ομηρικό με τον ήρωα" 1938] is among the first to combine elements of post-Byzantine art, Greek myth and surrealism. It follows de Chirico's strategy of assimilating myth in an anti-rational poetics, although there is a clear distance from the "melancholic hermeticism of de Chirico's mythologies."¹¹ In later years Engonopoulos explored Homeric themes further, focusing especially on Odysseus with his various lovers during his long *nostos* ("Odysseus and Kalypso" ["Οδυσσέας και Καλυψώ" 1956], "Nausika and Odysseus on the Land of the Phaeacians" ["Ναυσικά και Οδυσσέας στο νησί των Φαιάκων" 1982], as well as on Odysseus and Penelope after his return to Ithaca (a theme recurring in works dating from 1947, 1969, 1970, 1972).¹² As for the mythological cycle of Troy, Engonopoulos's relevant paintings include "Hector and Andromache" ["Εκτωρ και Ανδρομάχη" 1969], "The Apple of Strife" ["Το Μήλον της Έριδος" 1976], which depicted Paris with three half naked women, and "Thetis and Peleus" ["Θέτις και Πηλεΐς" 1976].¹³

Because the dates of these later paintings lead us rather far from de Chirico's creative period which was most influential for Engonopoulos, let us rather take a step back to Engonopoulos's poetic work during the inter-war years, more specifically his

⁹ The specific focus of this study does not allow for an extensive comparative discussion between the two artists. Niki Loizidi's account of Engonopoulos's painting as an exemplary case of surrealism in Modern Greek art is also a sustained illustration of his debt to de Chirico (Loizidi 1984).

¹⁰ Schmied 2010, 34.

¹¹ Loizidi 1984, 52.

¹² Georgiadou-Kountoura 2010, 88.

¹³ Georgiadou-Koutoura 2010, 87.

two first collections: *Do Not Disturb the Driver* [*Μην ομιλείτε εις τον οδηγόν*] from 1938 and *The Clavichords of Silence* [*Τὰ κλειδοκύμβαλα της σιωπής*] from 1939. This may seem a strange turn, not least because, if in later paintings Homeric themes are frequent, at first glance they are not really prominent in Engonopoulos's poetic work, especially compared to the work of earlier or contemporary Modern Greek poets.¹⁴ However, what starts as an uncertain search for fragments of epic allusion in Engonopoulos's lyric work soon uncovers traces of Homer, and these traces all circle around the body of a woman—more specifically a woman having suffered some sort of violence—abandonment, sacrifice, loss or murder.¹⁵ What is more, this woman has a more or less direct connection with the mythological cycle of the Trojan Wars, which thus proves more relevant to Engonopoulos's early poetry than the Homeric legacy more narrowly.

Incidentally, the connection of the Trojan War with violence and crime alludes to a much wider discussion on the eve of the Second World War. We may here refer to Simone Weil's famous essay "The *Iliad*, or the Poem of Force" (1939) or to Rachel Bepaloff's discussion in "On the *Iliad*" (1942), where the epic is seen through the lenses of the tragic existential dilemmas man is faced with in period of war.¹⁶ In a different comparative context, violence in Engonopoulos's early poetry offers an unexplored dimension for a reading of his work together with western European surrealism. As Jonathan Eburne demonstrates in a well-documented study, the writings of André Breton, Benjamin Péret, Philippe Soupault and George Bataille among others testify to the intense involvement of surrealism with crime, while contemporary cases of atrocious violence, such as those of Henri Landru, Marcel Pénisson and the Papin sisters, fascinated the surrealists because they uncovered the vein of criminality hidden beneath conservative bourgeois society.¹⁷ Interest in crime and its political stakes was consolidated by a long tradition, including the Marquis de Sade, the Comte de Lautréamont, Arthur Rimbaud, Alphonse Allais, Anne Radcliffe, and the German Romantics, in

¹⁴ On the presence of Homer in Modern Greek poetry, see Ricks 1989.

¹⁵ Compare Filokyrou's narratological reading of *Do Not Disturb the Driver* and her observation, in a different perspective, on the act of violence that introduces several poems in the collection (Filokyrou 1996, 32).

¹⁶ Inspired by the *Iliad*, Simone Weil's words may be read as a comment on the ambivalence of violence and the blurring of victim and victimizer, which we will see in Engonopoulos: "Thus violence obliterates anybody who feels its touch. It comes to seem as external to its employer as to its victim. And from this springs the idea of a destiny before which executioner and victim stand equally innocent, before which conquered and conqueror are brothers in the same distress" (Weil 1965, 17).

¹⁷ Eburne 2008, 53–54.

whose work crime often becomes a challenge to law, science, morality and speculative thought.¹⁸

Of special interest in this intellectual genealogy, the Comte de Lautréamont (1846–1870) is one of Engonopoulos's acknowledged major influences and parts of the *Chants de Maldoror* figure among the Greek poet's translations. The scenes of murder, torture and disfiguration that fill the pages of the *Chants* would shape the surrealists' revolutionary ethics, although initially the surrealists assimilated the raw violence of the *Chants* within more metaphorical notions of disruption, which expressed itself in the guise of "epistemological violence".¹⁹ This strategy is also followed by Engonopoulos. The phrasing of his poems often echoes the *Chants*, while the disturbing sadism of the relevant passages in Lautréamont is displaced to a violent relation to language, which has nevertheless preserved clear sexual overtones. This displacement has consequences that allow for a new perspective on issues of the reception of tradition by Engonopoulos, which are mostly discussed in scholarship in light of the tension between surrealist aesthetics and Greekness in the poet's work.

"Perhaps", the poem that introduces Homer in Engonopoulos's *Do Not Disturb the Driver* (1938), is telling about the involvement of violence in both his surrealist aesthetic and his relationship to his ancient predecessor. The name of Homer is first heard in the poet's answer to the question of a blind girl, who has a flower instead of a voice:

PERHAPS²⁰

It is raining [...] Yet it saddens me to tell: it was, well, it was a house, a big, enormous house. It was empty. There were no windows, only balconies and a big chimney. A girl was sitting there, eyeless, with a flower in place of her voice. She asked:

—Shay, what were you hammering today, all day?

—Oh, nothing [...] nothing. I was conversing with Homer.

—What, with Homer, the poet?

¹⁸ Eburne 2008, 2.

¹⁹ Eburne 2008, 65–69.

²⁰ The introductory expression "Yet it saddens me to tell..." in "Perhaps" contributes no real information to the poem, but arguably belongs to those phrasings, which recall similar ones in the *Chants de Maldoror*. More specifically, I am referring to the words in the first Chant, which announce the appearance of the "toad"—one of the animals which have replaced the young Dazet of the 1868 version of this first Chant—who will later blame Maldoror for his death: "Puisqu'il te plaît de venir à moi, comme attiré par un aimant, je ne m'y opposerai pas. Qu'il est beau! Ça me fait de la peine de le dire" (Chant 1.13) ["Since it pleases you to come to me as if drawn by a magnet, I shall not hinder you. How beautiful he is! It pains me to say this"].

—Yes, with Homer the poet, and with another Homer, the one from Voskopoje, who spent all his life on trees, like a bird, and yet was known as “the man of the bridge” in the neighbourhoods near the lake.²¹

Here voiceless and—in a suggestive allusion to Homer—blind, this girl, who will prove crucial in Engonopoulos’s “conversation” with Homer, elsewhere appears as a sacrificial victim or a dead woman. Apart from the deprivation of the girl from seeing and speaking, violence is manifest in “Perhaps” in the very way the “conversation” with Homer is conducted, as hammering alludes to the closing off of windows and the door of the house, but arguably also to the hammering of a coffin.²² If violence sheds a shadow on the relation of the ancient and modern poet, we are allowed to suppose this is also the case when it comes to the relation between the first and second Homer in our poem. The origin of this second Homer from Moschopolis interestingly alludes to the mediation of the reception of classical tradition by Engonopoulos’s interest in the Balkans (he was, it may be reminded, himself an Arvanites). As has been suggested, this other Homer, who spent all his life on trees, and was known as “the man of the bridge in the neighbourhoods near the lake”, alludes to the Turk Albanian poet Chatzi Sechretis, the author of the narrative poem *Alipasiada*, which evokes *Iliada*, the *Iliad*. Also, with Moschopolis we get a perspective, besides the Balkans, on Greek Enlightenment and the 18th century, when this town was an important commercial and cultural centre.²³ Combined cultural and historical references seem to support the dominant approach to Engonopoulos’s cultural politics in scholarship, that of a dialogue and synthesis between Greek and Other. However, the negation of the living circuit of communication in the figure of the blind and voiceless girl renders problematic the “conversation” between ancient and modern, Greek and Other, which the poem nevertheless announces. Obviously excluding any nationalistic reverential attitude to Greek tradition, the connotations of violence that set the reader in the traces of Homer in Engonopoulos’s

²¹ Stabakis 2008, 89. All English works taken from N. Stabakis 2008; Greek works taken from Engonopoulos 1999. “Ισως”: “Βρέχει [...] Κι όμως λυπούμαι να σας το πω: ήταν, να, ένα σπίτι, ένα μεγάλο θεόρατο σπίτι. Ήτανε έρημο. Δεν είχε κανένα παράθυρο, κι είχε όλο μπαλκόνια και μια μεγάλη καπνοδόχο. Εκεί καθόταν μια κοπέλα δίχως μάτια, που αντίς για φωνή είχε ένα λουλούδι. Με ρώτησε: —Μα τι είχατε και καρφώνατε, έτσι, σήμερα από το πρωί; —Α, τίποτες...τίποτες. Μιλούσα με τον Όμηρο. —Με τον Όμηρο, τον ποιητή; —Ναι, με τον Όμηρο τον ποιητή, και μ’ έναν άλλο Όμηρο απ’τη Μοσχόπολη αυτός, που έζησε όλη του τη ζωή πάνω στα δέντρα, σαν πουλί, κι όμως ήτανε γνωστός σαν “άνθρωπος του γιοφυριού” στις γειτονιές κοντά στη λίμνη” (Engonopoulos 1999, 49).

²² Valaoritis 1988, 83.

²³ On scholarly discussions about the other Homer, see Vlachodimos 2006, 58–72.

poetry, equally challenge the dialectic of cultural otherness that has too often been attributed to his work. Violence constitutes instead an alternative epistemology, which yields a uniquely peculiar notion of Greekness. The repetition of the name of Homer in our poem may give a hint of this notion: it brings to the fore a sign charged with particularly intense desire, the communicable trace for something that cannot be captured, defined and communicated (and is thus only repeated). And yet, something which blossoms flower-like in the absence of voice.

For the connection of the girl to the myth of the Trojan War even beyond Homer we should now turn to the poem “Polyxena”, also from *Do Not Disturb the Driver*. The youngest daughter of Priam and Hecuba, Polyxena is not in Homer’s *Iliad*, but appears in works by later poets, many of whom draw on the now lost epic cycle. Euripides’s *Hecuba* and *The Trojan Women* relate her sacrifice at Achilles’s grave. Disguised or in fragments, Polyxena’s sacrificed body emerges in a number of other poems by Engonopoulos.

POLYXENA

Clamoring vampires and ironbound breezes brought to me yesterday, around midnight, upon the zenith of the sun of justice, the message of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Isidore Ducasse and Panagis Koutalianos. My sorrow was great. Until then I believed in the prophetic visions of turners, I expected the oracles of frantic riders, I anticipated the metaphysical interventions of statues. I was calmed by the idea of my corpse. My only joy was the tresses of her hair. I used to bow and kiss reverently the tips of her fingers. Still a child, at sunset I ran madly, in haste, to steal, before nightfall, the forgotten scarecrows from the fields. Yet I lost her, out of my very arms.

I might say, as if she only ever were but a deceptive vision, but the commonest of hammers. In her place only a mirror was found. And when I leaned to look inside that mirror I saw nothing but two small pebbles. One was named Polyxena, the other, Polyxena also.²⁴

²⁴ Stabakis 2008, 89; “Πολυξένη”: Βρυκόλακες αλαλάζοντες και σιδηροπαγείς αύραι μού έφεραν χτες, περί το μεσονύκτιον, μεσουρανούντος του ηλίου της δικαιοσύνης, το μήνυμα του Ντάντε Γκαμπριέλ Ροσσέτι, του Isidore Ducasse και του Παναγή του Κουταλιανού. Η πίκρα μου στάθηκε μεγάλη ! Μέχρι της στιγμής εκείνης έπίστευα εις τα προφητικά οράματα των τορναδόρων, πρόσμενα τους χρησμούς των αλλοφρόνων ιππέων, προσδοκούσα τας μεταφυσικάς επεμβάσεις των αγαλμάτων. Με γαλήνευε η ιδέα του πτώματός μου. Η μόνη μου χαρά ήτανε οι πλόκαμοι των μαλλιών της. Έσκυβα ευλαβικά και φιλούσα την άκρια των δακτύλων της. Παιδί ακόμα, στην δύσιν του ηλίου, έτρεχα ωσάν τρελλός να προφτάσω να κλέψω, πριν νυχτώση, τα λησμονημένα σκιάχτρα μέσ’ απ’ τα χωράφια. Και όμως την έχασα, μπορώ να πω μέσ’ απ’ τα χέρια μου, ωσάν να μην ήταν ποτέσ παρά ένα απατηλόν όραμα, παρά ένα κοινότατο σφυρί. Στη θέση της βρέθηκε μονάχα ένας καθρέπτης. Κι’ όταν έσκυψα να δω μέσα σ’ αυτόν τον καθρέπτη, δεν ειδ’ άλλο τίποτες παρά μόνο δύο μικρά λιθάρια : το ένα ελέγετο Πολυξένη, και το άλλο, Πολυξένη επισης. (Engonopoulos 1999, 29).

The message of unjustly lost love in this poem is brought by the surrealist company of Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Isidore Ducasse and Panagis Koutalianos. A famous Greek wrestler, the latter alludes to physical violence, which is complicated by the more disturbing connotations surrounding the names of Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Isidore Ducasse (Lautréamont). The rumors about Dante Gabriel Rossetti's responsibility for the suicide of his wife Lizzie Siddal in 1862, as well as his decision to exhume her corpse in order to recover the manuscript with poems he had buried with her are arguably relevant here.²⁵ Also relevant is of course the omnipresence of violence, cruelty and murder in the *Chants de Maldoror*, which Maurice Blanchot saw as arising precisely out of the feeling of injustice suffered by humanity and being the other side of a passion for man.²⁶ More importantly, in the *Chants*, crime is committed not only against humanity in general, but also, more specifically, against the beloved. The first version of the first Chant (1868) names Georges Dazet, a comrade of Ducasse in the lycée de Tarbesq who died young, and ends with his words to the poet: "You have been the cause of my death", words that are repeated by the toad, one of the animals that have substituted Dazet in the final version of the Chant: "Farewell then! Hope not again to discover the toad on your journey. You have been the cause of my death. As for me, I am leaving for eternity that I may implore your forgiveness."²⁷

In Engonopoulos's poem we hear about Polyxena "Yet I lost her, out of my very arms", but the suggested intertext with the *Chants de Maldoror* implies a darker side of guilt in this statement, a guilt implied in the very notion of sacrifice connoted by Polyxena, in which the poet would be somehow involved, albeit more indirectly than Maldoror is involved in the sacrifice of Dazet. In both cases, certainly, sacrifice is also a self-sacrifice: "I was calmed by the idea of my corpse" we read in "Polyxena", while Ducasse "dies" together with the real life beloved Dazet, in order to become Maldoror in writing. While the female body eroticises Engonopoulos's attitude towards the cultural past, violence and mutual sacrifice complicate given notions of "relationship" in this amorous engagement. The last lines of the poem are symptomatic: "And when I leaned to look inside that mirror I saw nothing but two small pebbles. One was named Polyxena, the other, Polyxena also": the perverse function of the mirror excludes identification, while at the same time the allusion to reification and fragmentation (two small pebbles) problematizes any notion of dialectical assimilation of otherness. Engonopoulos's appropriation of the Homeric legacy may well be dominated by the femi-

²⁵ Matson 2010, 11–16.

²⁶ Blanchot 1963, 75.

²⁷ Chant 1.13; "Adieu donc; n'espère plus retrouver le crapaud sur ton passage. Tu as été la cause de ma mort. Moi, je pars pour l'éternité, afin d'implorer ton pardon!"

nine and Trojan Other, yet the hammering-like, passionate repetition of names (Homer and Homer, Polyxena and Polyxena) violently empties the Other of identifying features and reaffirms Sameness beyond any specific content.²⁸

The connection of writing and mutual violence is even more clear in “Steamrollers”:

STEAMROLLERS

My heart is an object made of solid rubber. It contains two painful worthless glass nails. I pick up this object and, as it resists me with both hands and feet, I just about manage to hide it inside the drawer, where I keep, secretly, words and stories from the village of bicycles. I am not afraid of the phallus-wearing maiden nor of the man with fur eyes walking up and down the dark staircase. Ever since my childhood I have known the mirror of flowers. I sing the glories of steamrollers, I say the chaste psalms of bottles, while the paper owl recites straight into my ear—with her funnel—the word “s t r a n g e r.”²⁹

The poem is dedicated to writing (“words and stories from the village of the bicycles”), which is embedded in the space defined by the symmetrical positioning of “my heart” and “stranger”. We can’t miss the echo here between the Greek word for “stranger” [ξένη], and [Πολυξένη], Polyxena. Here again, the relation between the poet’s heart and “stranger” is not defined in terms of specularity (the mirror has turned blind),³⁰ but is achieved through writing, which in turn appears as the result of mutual aggression (“I pick up this object and, as it resists me with both hands and feet, I just about manage to hide it inside the drawer”).

²⁸ Engonopoulos’s painting “The Divine Couple” (1940) is telling for the independence of the figures of myth from a content allowing identification. Although this work may be seen as an illustration of the last lines of “Polyxena”, nothing apart from the affinities across poetry and painting allows for the identification of the female figure as Polyxena in this painting.

²⁹ Stabakis 2008, 85; “Οδοστρωτήρες”: “Η καρδιά μου είναι ένα αντικείμενο από λάστιχο συμπαγές. Έχει μέσα δύο οδονηρά ανάξια γυάλινα καρφιά. Παίρνω αυτό τ’ αντικείμενο, κι ενώ μ’ αντιστέκεται με χέρια και πόδια, κατορθώνω, μόλις και με βία, ναν το κρύψω μέσα στο σερτάρι όπου φυλάω, κρυφά, λόγια κι ιστορίες απ’ το χωριό των ποδηλάτων. Δεν φοβούμαι ούτε τη φαλλοφόρο παρθένο ούτε τον άνθρωπο με τα γούνινα μάτια π’ ανεβοκατεβαίνει τη σκοτεινή σκάλα. Γνωρίζω από παιδί τον καθρέφτη των λουλουδιών. Τραγουδώ τις δόξες των οδοστρωτήρων, λέω τους αγνούς ψαλμούς των μπουκαλιών, ενώ η χάρτινη κουκουβάγια μου λέει ίσια μέσα στ’ αυτί—με το χουνί της—τη λέξη «ξένη»” (Engonopoulos 1999 35).

³⁰ On the problematisation of the mirror function through reference to “the man with fur eyes”, see Filokyrou 1996, 88. Filokyrou links this reference to the mirror in the poem “Lotus”, where we read: “or is it possible that a green mirror / —the simplest green velvet mirror— / is enough / to contain / the sobs / —the rhythmical and hollow sobs— / of the infernal / lamellas?”. Like the fur, velvet is a material that does not allow the mirror to reflect the light.

The word “funnel” [χουνί] is often in Engonopoulos a metonymy for poetic composition, and it is the same word that brings together again the poetic I and Polyxena in one of his most famous poems “Night Maria”, where the main victim is the poet himself.

NIGHT MARIA

On the very next day after my death, or rather my “being-put-to-death,” I bought and read all the papers, to learn as many details as possible concerning my execution. Apparently, I was led to the scaffold under a strict escort. I was wearing a yellow-colored overcoat, a netted necktie, and a helmet. My hair resembled a brush, that of a painter, or maybe of a pine-bender [...] And even though much was related with great secrecy concerning my whereabouts at the time, for some Maracaibo in South America, for others in Piraeus, at the Passa Limani, I was actually in Elbassan (of Albania) pure and simple. And the only thing worth its salt that I happened to read all those days, was an extensive letter from the Italian Guiglelmo Tsitzes, my intimate and only friend, whom I have never met and whose very existence I doubt. Put briefly, the entire content of his epistle was as follows: “You are,” he said, alluding of course to Polyxene, “you are an old phonograph with a bronze funnel under a black cloth.”³¹

In genuinely surrealist guise, the immediacy of “of course” that establishes the connection between “you” (the poet-“gramophone”) and Polyxena in the words of Guillaume Tsitzes, rules out conventional language and established categories as a possible realm where this connection may be defined. If the poet’s murder and the black cloth which covers the gramophone may convey Engonopoulos’s bitterness for the hostile

³¹ Stabakis 2008, 91. “Νυχτερινή Μαρία”: “Την επομένη ακριβώς του θανάτου μου, ή μάλλον της θανατώσεώς μου, πήρα να διαβάσω όλες τις εφημερίδες, για να μάθω όσο το δυνατόν περισσότερας λεπτομερείας ως προς τα της εκτελέσεώς μου. Φαίνεται ότι οδηγήθην εις το ικρίωμα υπό αυστηράς συνοδείας. Φορούσα, λείει, κιτρίνου χρώματος επενδύτην, δικτυωτόν λαιμοδέτην και περικεφαλαίαν. Τα μαλλιά μου ήτανε όμοια με βούρτσα, ίσως μογιατζή, ίσως πιτυοκάμπτη. Κατόπι πετάξανε το πτώμα μου μακρυνά, σ’ ένα βαλτοτόπι, όπου ήτανε άλλοτε λημέρι του γάλλου Καρτεσιού κι’ όπου βρισκόταν επίσης, χρόνια τώρα, βορά των ορνέων και μιας ιεροδούλου λεγομένης Ευτέρπης, το ένδοξο πτώμα του αιμνήστου Καραμανλάκη. Κι’ ενώ πολλά ελέγοντο ιεροκρυφίως, ότι κατά την εποχήν εκείνην ευρισκόμουνα, κατ’ άλλους μεν στο Μαρακαίμπο της Νοτίου Αμερικής, κατ’ άλλους δε στον Πειραιά, στο Πασσά Λιμάνι, εγώ βρισκόμουνα απλούστατα στο Ελμπασάν (της Αλβανίας). Και το μόνο πράμα της προκοπής, που έτυχε να διαβάσω εκείνες τις ημέρες, ήτανε μια μακροσκελέστατη επιστολή του Ιταλού Γουλιάμου Τσίτζη, του εγκαρδίου και μοναδικού μου φίλου, τον οποίον άλλωστε δεν γνώρισα ποτέ και για τον οποίον αμφιβάλλω ακόμα κι’ αν υπάρχη. Με λίγες λέξεις, όλο το περιεχόμενο της επιστολής του αυτής ήτανε το εξής: «Είσαι», έλεγε, υπονοών βέβαια την Πολυξένην, «είσαι ένα παλιό γραμμόφωνο με μπρούντζινο χουνί κάτω από ένα μαύρο πανί»” (Engonopoulos 1999, 62–63).

reception to his poetry in Greece,³² they also become the condition of his posthumous identity with Polyxena, established by the surrealist word.³³

This identity takes on the androgynous features we saw in de Chirico in the poem “Hydra”, where murder and crime are also involved. The poem opens with the assault on the poet, deemed dangerous for “law-abiding” citizens and closes with lines immediately relevant to our topic. In the last two stanzas, for instance, the poet names his heart “Hector horse-owning Hector” [Ἐκτωρ / αλογά Ἐκτωρ], a naming alluding to Hector’s attribute in the *Iliad*, the last line of which describes him as a tamer of horses. But again in the *Iliad*, we may think of Andromache evoking “sorrowfully” [θλιμμένα] her “heart” [την καρδιά μου] when she hears Hecuba’s lamentation and knows Hector is dead: “and in mine own breast my heart leapeth to my mouth, and beneath me my knees are numbed.”³⁴ The poetic I is both Hector *and* Andromache and by naming its heart Hector, and Hector again, it finds a name for this difference in oneness, a name for the Same which thus inscribes its trace within the text.

In the final stanza, “Hecuba” is the name of the “great shadow” [ἡ φοβερή σκιά] of the poet’s “brain” [εγκεφάλου]. In Euripides’s *Hecuba*, Hecuba awakens from a terrible dream, as in our poem, at dawn.³⁵ She refers to her daughter, none other than Polyxena, and it is not the first time that her shadow is cast on the poem “Hydra”.³⁶

³² For this reading of the “black cloth” covering up the gramophone with its bronze horn, see Filokyprou 2008, 255.

³³ In fact, the entire poem places the emphasis on writing rather than speech. The oral connotations of the reference to the “gramophone” are mitigated not only by the fact that the gramophone alludes to the *inscription* of voice (Chrysanthopoulos 1996, 37; Karavidas 2003, 242), but also by the insistence of the vocabulary on writing rather than speech: “note”, “read”, “letter”.

³⁴ Homer *Iliad* 22.452: “ἐν δ’ ἔμοι αὐτῆ / στήθεσι πάλλεται ἦτορ ἀνὰ στόμα, νέρθε δὲ γούνα | πῆγγυται.”

³⁵ For the reference to Hecuba’s dream in Euripides’s *Hecuba* from a different viewpoint, see Anthis 2008, 276.

³⁶ “χαράματα τον | έπιασαν| πισθάγκωνα τον έδεσαν| και τον επήγαν σηκωτό| σα λείψανο|σαν μια παρθένα λεπτή| λευκή| λεγομένη Μαρία| που έπλεκε | μιας σπάνιας εμορφιάς| νταντέλλα | —νταντέλλα σαν τη ζωγραφική μου— | στη σκιά του|δάσους | του βουνού | και του πράσινου | κήπου”. As striking similarities in the vocabulary suggest, violence in this passage is reminiscent, again, of the *Chants de Maldoror*, where the Hermaphrodite, a figure for the poet himself, receives an attack by people outraged (like Engonopoulos’s law-abiding citizens) by his difference. The intertext becomes more significant in light of the mixed gender problematic both passages share and which will be discussed in what follows: “On le prend généralement pour un fou. Un jour, quatre hommes masqués, qui avaient reçu des ordres, se jetèrent sur lui et le garrottèrent solidement, de manière qu’il ne pût remuer que les jambes. Le fouet abattit ses rudes lanières sur son dos, et ils lui dirent qu’il se dirigeât sans délai vers la route qui mène à Bicêtre” (Chant 2.7) [“People generally take him for a madman. One day, four masked men, acting under orders, threw themselves upon him and bound him firmly so that he

The sacrificial victim—Hector, the poet—is now compared with a slender virgin, whose relation to Hecuba is established through the vocabulary (“shade”, “shadow” is the same word in Greek: *σκιά*). Her name is Maria, which brings to mind “Night Maria”, where Polyxena plays a central role. The deeper identity between the poetic I and the “slender virgin” [*παρθένα λεπτή*] is established if we read “Hydra” together with the poems where not the poet but the virgin appears as the victim of a crime. What we have here is a version of the avant-garde androgynous vision and Engonopoulos draws on the myth of the Trojan War to inscribe in his poetic “dentelle” [*νταντέλλα*] the name of this impossible figure: Andromache, Hector, Hecuba, Polyxena.

As in de Chirico, therefore, although with the additional dimension of aggressive eroticism which is absent from de Chirico’s work, transgressive gender and sexual politics are in Engonopoulos inextricably linked with an unconventional appropriation of tradition. Nowhere is the feminization of the body of tradition and its dismemberment more suggestive than in the poem “Eleonora” [*“Ελεωνόρα”*], where references to the Old Testament, mythology, Byzantine and Cretan literature, as well as to the poet’s own painting, hold place of the parts of a woman, who, as the English motto of the poem suggests (“for hands she hath non, nor eyes, nor feet, nor golden Treasure of hair”), doesn’t exist: “her two breasts are | like my painting | her belly is | the story | of Belthandros and Chrysanza | the story | of Tobias | the story | of the | donkey | of the wolf and the fox | her sex | is | sharp whistles | in the calmness | of noon | her thighs are | the last | glimmers | of the modest joy | of steamrollers | her two knees | Agamemnon | her two adorable | little | feet are the green | telephone | with red | eyes”.³⁷ It is probably not accidental that, here again, the notion of supplication (“knees”), sacrifice and violence, which colors the creative act as a whole, is connoted by the reference to Agamemnon, whose name recalls Iphigenia, Polyxena’s counterpart in the Greek camp.

“Eleonora” concludes with a surrealist collage of the most disparate elements: “and ultimately | she is | a woman | half | hippocampus | and half | necklace | and even may | be | partly a pine | and partly an | elevator”.³⁸ The word “hippocampus” recurs in the

could not move a limb [...] with whips they raised great welts on his back and told him to set out at once along the road to Bicêtre”.

³⁷ Stabakis 2008, 85–88. “Ελεωνόρα”: “τα δυο της στήθη είναι | σαν τη ζωγραφική μου | η κοιλιά της είναι | η ιστορία | του Βέλθανδρου και της Χρυσάντζας | η ιστορία | του Τωβία | η ιστορία | του | γαιδάρου | του λύκου και της αλωπούς | το φύλο της | είναι | οξεία σφυρίγματα | μέσα στη γαλήνη | του μεσημεριού | οι μηροί της είναι | οι τελευταίες | αναλαμπές | της σεμνής χαράς | των οδοστρωτήρων | τα δυο της γόνατα | ο Αγαμέμνων | τα δυο της λατρευτά | μικρά | πόδια | είναι το πράσινο | τηλέφω— | νο με τα κόκκινα | μάτια” (Engonopoulos 1999, 41–44).

³⁸ Stabakis 2008, 86. “και τελικά | είναι | μια γυναίκα | μισή | ιπποκάμπη | και μισή | περιδέριο | ίσως ακόμη | να είναι | εν μέρει πεύκο | και εν μέρει | ανελκυστήρ” (Engonopoulos 1999 41–44).

poem “Alexivroxia” [“Αλεξιβρόχια”, *The Clavichords of Silence* 1939], again in connection to a dead girl [“νεκρή κοπέλα”] and what has remained of the past (“the dust of statues”: “κονιορτός των αγαλμάτων”). In the opening lines of this poem, the first person poetic voice announces how he is “tortured” and “deeply wounded” by a “word”, the word *μπαϊράκι*. The “hippocampus” singing the “dust of statues” and the “dead girl” is the poet’s final hypothesis regarding the source of his torment by the word. “Μπαϊράκι” means “flag”, “banner” and indeed it commemorates what has been lost, the past and a woman.

Thanks to the connotations of mutual sacrifice we explored in previous poems, the dismemberment of the feminized body of tradition in “Eleonora” implies no triumphant masculinity, whose equivalent would be a complacent appropriation of the past. Yet, it also discourages any logic of cultural synthesis and creative exchange. The epistemology of violence finally leads to a dead end, that of the mystery of an identity beyond identification and difference, for which the names of the Trojan family (to limit ourselves to those) stand as signs, which are, as the *μπαϊράκι* in “Αλεξιβρόχια”, both inevitable and arbitrary. In short, we may say that, contrary to what happens in de Chirico, in Engonopoulos, Greekness remains an enigma whose key is not multiplicity but sameness.

In the series of mythical pairs Engonopoulos drew at a later date (“Odysseus and Kalypso”, “Peleus and Thetis”, “Hector and Andromache”) in response to de Chirico’s “Hector and Andromache”, the enigma seems to let arbitrariness shine through. His “Hector and Andromache” (1969) inverts de Chirico’s strategy. Where de Chirico effaces sexual difference, Engonopoulos multiplies the signs of its symbolical investment, with both figures exhibiting an array of gender specific garments—insignia of gender distinction through a variety of eras—and Andromache’s provocatively exposed breasts claiming their due in this differential universe. The absence of distinction between the sexes in de Chirico reveals a Lacanian Real of sexual difference—the lack, that is, of sexual difference in the Real. As was previously suggested, this can also be read as the utopia of a yet unknown “love beyond sex”. Engonopoulos’s own painting presents the negative of this utopia in the overemphatic exposure of the symbolically dependent, constructed character of sexual difference. The exaggerated, surrealist appropriation of myth by Engonopoulos here is usually seen as a representation of “nameless subjects”, where “parody” contrasts with the visionary and dramatic character of de Chirico’s work.³⁹ However, if Hector and Andromache could be anyone, “nameless” they are not. Parody therefore does not necessarily amount to a humorous mitigation of Engo-

³⁹ Loizidi 2010, 45.

nopoulos's avowed love for Greekness in his famous poem "Bolivar" and elsewhere,⁴⁰ but is the dark side of the enigma we followed in the poet's lyrics: the enigma of a sign which has been emptied of identifying content and still passionately recurs, the enigma, that is, of a name, of the Greek as such a name.

In her aforementioned study of the de Chirico brothers, Jewell links the "spectacular hybrids" that abound in their work with their attempt to define Italianicity in the shifting historical and political contexts of their time, both before and after the Second World War. The poetics of multiplicity, mixture and hybridity suggests their resistance to the idea of "pure bodies, pure humanity, pure races, and pure sexes", which takes on special significance when considered against the background of the rise of modern nationalist ideologies and Mussolini's fascist recasting of Roman heritage in terms of national purity. By contrast, in the work of the de Chiricos Italianicity remains an ever elusive concept, where an abundance of traditions, old and new, are involved.⁴¹ The parallel with Engonopoulos is very interesting at this point. Through a variety of references not only to all periods of Greek tradition (ancient, Byzantine and modern), but also the Balkans and Turkey, the Mexican, the African and the primitive, Engonopoulos takes distance from the contemporary dictatorial regime of Ioannis Metaxas (1936–1941), which insisted on the purity of Greek identity.⁴² Yet, through the above emphasis on violence and the entanglement of sexual politics in classical reception, poetry, notwithstanding its cultural open-mindedness, is rather an erotics of Sameness. Far from any notion of purity, if Engonopoulos's Greekness, like de Chirico's Italianicity, remains enigmatic, this is because its hybridity tends to the unutterable of this Sameness, of which "Hector and Andromache" present the darkly humorous inverse side.

⁴⁰ See on this view Loizidi 2010 and on "surrealist humor" more generally Dialismas 1996.

⁴¹ See Jewell 2010, 9–11.

⁴² Tachopoulou makes this point with an emphasis on Engonopoulos's work as a case of "primitive modernism", to which her study is dedicated (2009, 260–61).

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The Trojan War as a warning for her time

Christa Wolf's depiction of feminism and the Cold War in her
Cassandra project

JENNIFER E. MICHAELS



Christa Wolf's story *Kassandra* (1983; *Cassandra*, 1984) and the accompanying lectures she gave in Frankfurt describing its genesis became influential texts for feminists and for the peace movement in Europe.¹ Wolf (1929–2011), the most prominent writer in the former German Democratic Republic, addresses here many urgent concerns of her time. This essay focuses on two central issues in her multi-faceted Cassandra project: how Wolf reinterprets the Trojan War to give it contemporary relevance in order to shed light on the situation of women through the ages and to serve as an allegory for her own world. Wolf challenges previous heroic versions of the Trojan War, written by men, beginning with Homer. In contrast, she imagines the Trojan War through a woman's eyes, Cassandra's, whose fellow citizens, considering her mad, refuse to believe her prophecies that Troy will fall. In Wolf's view, the Trojan War took place shortly after a matriarchal system was replaced by a patriarchal one, which made women voiceless and turned them into objects, and she depicts Cassandra's painful struggle for self-actualization, a theme that made her text particularly fascinating not only for feminists, but also for many other women at the time who were themselves seeking autonomy. Wolf wrote her story during an accelerating arms race, caused, she believed, by patriarchal modes of thinking, and increased European fears of nuclear war. In her depiction of the Trojan War she explores how conflicts escalate and how propaganda is used to inflame sentiments, disguise the truth, and create delusion. In her interpretation, the Trojan War, shaped by patriarchal militarism with its focus on honor and power, was fought not to rescue Helen, who was not even in Troy, but for economic reasons, for control of the Hellespont. Wolf also points to the threat to individual freedoms in the period leading up to and during the war. In her version, therefore, the Trojan War becomes a warning for her own time.

¹ Although Cassandra is often called a novel, Wolf prefers the term "Erzählung" (story or narrative).

In 1982 Wolf delivered five lectures on poetics at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main.² The first two are travel accounts of her journey to Greece with her husband Gerhard in 1980 and contain her reflections on modern-day Greece, Greek mythology, and Cassandra. The third is part of her work diary, the fourth is a letter, and the fifth is a short version of her story *Cassandra*, which she later expanded for publication. Her Cassandra project generated vigorous debate. In the GDR, each printing sold out quickly, and in the Federal Republic it was on “the best-seller list for more than a year.”³ The story, which became one of her most famous books, was widely translated into most European languages, including Icelandic and Catalan.⁴ Though the work can stand alone, reading it within the context of her lectures enriches it: in them, she describes the genesis of her Cassandra project, her thoughts about poetics and a female aesthetic, her reworking of the Trojan War, as well as her reflections on the arms race, concerns that inform her story. By using the past, Wolf evades the censorship in the GDR, a strategy that allows her to obliquely criticize her own society.⁵ In an interview Wolf herself emphasized that the lectures “are essential to the Cassandra novel.”⁶

In her first lecture, a travel report entitled “About the Accidental Surfacing and Gradual Fabrication of a Literary Personage,”⁷ Wolf explains how she tracked the figure

² This series of lectures on poetics is highly prestigious, and over the years has featured prominent German-language authors. The first writer to deliver the poetics lectures was the Austrian Ingeborg Bachmann in 1959–1960, whom Wolf greatly admired, as her letter demonstrates.

³ Resch 1997, 120.

⁴ Beebee & Weber 2001, 259.

⁵ Writers in the former GDR frequently used topics from ancient Greece and Rome. This was a strategy often employed to enable them to address problems about the present by disguising their works as dealing with the past. By so doing they evaded censorship. See Riedel 1994, 105.

⁶ Wolf 1988b, 134. The initial publishing history of the lectures and the story did not conform to Wolf’s original structure. In the Federal Republic, the story and the lectures were published separately. In the German Democratic Republic they were published as one volume, but parts of the work diary, which the GDR considered too politically sensitive, were censored (see Graves 1986, 944–56). The English translation puts the story first and the originally preceding lectures afterwards, turning them into an appendix. Wolf wanted her readers/listeners to first understand the genesis of her Cassandra project before reading the actual text. The English edition does not include the extensive bibliography of texts Wolf read for her project.

⁷ Wolf 1988a, 143. The English title does not emphasize the link between the story and its genesis, although later in the book the essays are referred to as “Conditions of a Narrative,” the English translation of the original title. The German “Voraussetzungen” actually means “preconditions” or “requirements” (see Beebee and Weber 2001, 260). “Ein Reisebericht über das zufällige Auftauchen und die allmähliche Verfertigung einer Gestalt.” All German references to the essays are from *Voraussetzungen einer Erzählung: Cassandra: Frankfurter Poetik-Vorlesungen*, published by dtv in Munich in 2000. Here p. 13.

of Cassandra for two years. Reading Aeschylus's *Oresteia*, she was fascinated by Cassandra, who seemed the only person in the play who knew herself: "She, the captive, took me captive; herself made an object by others, she took possession of me"⁸ and she later writes: "I cannot get rid of her, she is like a spell that has been put on me."⁹ In her letter, Wolf wonders: "Who was Cassandra before anyone wrote about her,"¹⁰ and in her work diary she observed that Cassandra is "one of the first women figures handed down to us whose fate prefigures what was to be the fate of women for three thousand years: to be turned into an object."¹¹ Wolf views Cassandra, Priam's favorite daughter, as a woman interested in politics and society who does not want to be confined to the house and married, but to learn a profession. She points out in her work diary that for a woman of rank "the only possible profession is that of priestess, seeress, which was practiced only by women in remote antiquity" when the earth goddess Gaea was the chief deity.¹² To help her understand Cassandra, Wolf immersed herself in Greek myth, history, art, and archaeology.¹³

Wolf begins her story with Cassandra, part of Agamemnon's spoils from the Trojan War, before the gates of Mycenae shortly before Clytemnestra kills both her husband and her, deaths Cassandra foresees. As Cassandra has predicted, Troy has fallen. In the few hours remaining to her, she reflects critically on her life, while also struggling with her fear of her coming death. Except for brief passages in the narrator's voice which frame the story at the beginning and the end,¹⁴ Wolf uses interior monologue, with its non-linear structure filled with fragments, silences, and gaps, to depict Cassandra's difficult struggle for autonomy and self-knowledge. Wolf originally began writing her story in the third person, but then changed to interior monologue, which she rightly believed gives a greater intensity and a stronger identification with Cassandra.¹⁵ This structure, with which Wolf privileges Cassandra's private thoughts and feelings,

⁸ Wolf 1988a, 144.

⁹ Wolf 1988a, 153–54. "Sie, die Gefangene, nahm mich gefangen, sie, selbst Objekt fremder Zwecke, besetzte mich" (14) and "Die werd ich nicht mehr los, sie ist mir angehext" (24).

¹⁰ Wolf 1988a, 273: "Wer war Kassandra, ehe irgendeiner über sie schrieb?" (147).

¹¹ Wolf 1988a, 227: "In Kassandra ist eine der ersten Frauengestalten überliefert, deren Schicksal vorformt, was dann, dreitausend Jahre lang, den Frauen geschehen soll: daß sie zum Objekt gemacht werden" (100–1).

¹² Wolf 1988a, 238: "Für eine Frau von Stand ist Priesterin, Seherin der einzig mögliche Beruf (den in grauer Vorzeit überhaupt nur Frauen ausgeübt haben)" (112).

¹³ See her extensive bibliography contained in Wolf 2000, 181–85.

¹⁴ The story opens with "It was here" (3; "Hier war es," 9), and in the concluding two lines the narrator switches to the present tense "Here is the place" (138; "Hier ist es," 157), a narrative strategy to highlight the connections between the past and the present.

¹⁵ See Reck et al. 1984, 108.

is, for her, an important aspect of a female aesthetic that counters the epic accounts of the Trojan War by men.

Early in the story Cassandra explains why she sought prophesy: “To speak with my voice: the ultimate. I did not want anything more, anything different.”¹⁶ She hoped to “exercise influence over people; how else could a woman hold a position of power?”¹⁷ In Wolf’s recreation Cassandra is neither the madwoman depicted in literature, nor is she the virgin of ancient tradition. Instead she is a complex human being, a woman with many roles as mother, daughter, lover, and sister, a woman who can change and grow, a priestess who loses faith in the gods, a woman who tells the truth and who, despite knowing that her insights will perish with her, nevertheless is determined to “continue a witness even if there is no longer one single human being left to demand my testimony.”¹⁸

Wolf carefully details Cassandra’s painful path to self-actualization from her naïve belief in her father and her loyalty to her family and her society to her radical questioning and rejection of his and Troy’s self-destructive policies that led to the war. By struggling to free herself from these ties she begins to gain autonomy and is able to assert “her individual voice” more forcefully, even though nobody listens to her.¹⁹ On her path to self-discovery, women such as Arisbe, the mother of Aisakos, Cassandra’s beloved half-brother, her maid and friend Marpessa, and the Amazon Myrine and others in the alternative community on Mount Ida are among her guides.²⁰ By becoming a priestess she hoped to achieve independence, but she did not grasp the close connection between religion and politics: that as priestess of Apollo she “would be required to adapt and conform to secular political demands at the expense of her inner calling.” Because she resisted acknowledging this insight “she ‘saw’ nothing; she was a blind seer.”²¹

Her body, not her mind, first expresses her growing estrangement from her society and from herself. When the second ship, having failed in its mission, returns from Greece, she experiences her first episode of madness after she is compelled to speak

¹⁶ Wolf 1988a, 4: “Mit meiner Stimme sprechen: das Äußerste. Mehr, andres hab ich nicht gewollt.” All German quotations from the story are from *Kassandra: Text und Kommentar*, 2011. Here p. 10.

¹⁷ Wolf 1988a, 26: “mein Wunsch, auf Menschen Einfluß auszuüben; wie anders sollte eine Frau noch herrschen können?” (35).

¹⁸ Wolf 1988a, 22: “Ich will Zeugin bleiben, auch wenn es keinen einzigen Menschen mehr geben wird, der mir mein Zeugnis abverlangt” (30).

¹⁹ Resch 1997, 128.

²⁰ Wilson 2000, 200.

²¹ Resch 1997, 130.

with “this strange voice which had stuck in my throat many times already in the past.”²² Her second episode of self-imposed insanity occurs when she foresees that the departure of the third ship for Greece will be used as an excuse for war, which will cause Troy’s destruction. Cassandra refuses to eat: “I did not want to feed this body. I wanted this criminal body, where the voice of death had its seat, to starve, to wither away.”²³ Her love for her family, especially for her father, a love that turns into resentment when she learns that they have all deceived her, for example about Paris’s birth and about Helen, conflicts with her need to tell the truth. This conflict alienates her from herself and nearly destroys her: “Two adversaries had chosen the dead landscape of my soul as their battlefield and were engaged in a life-and-death struggle. Only madness stood between me and the intolerable pain which these two would otherwise have inflicted on me, I thought. So I clung to the madness.”²⁴ Madness thus becomes for her a refuge from the overwhelming conflicts she experiences. Like her body, her mind is torn “on the one hand, by her feminine (and, later, feminist) consciousness and her attempts to subvert the dominant order and, on the other, by her overpowering identification with her father.”²⁵

With ruthless honesty Cassandra acknowledges her many mistakes on her path to autonomy. She reproaches herself for her blindness to see the obvious and for her self-deception. Wolf raises here the issue of complicity, at that time still a sensitive topic in both Germanys, especially in the Federal Republic, where people were struggling to confront the Nazi past. Cassandra recognizes that she has been complicit in the war because she has not spoken out. Instead of actively opposing the war, she has gone along.²⁶ She was, she realizes, a seeress owned by the palace, unaware that she was a captive “working under compulsion the way prisoners work.”²⁷ When, for example, she finally discovers that the war is being fought for an illusion, she does not tell the Trojan people, but instead promises her father to keep Helen’s absence from Troy a state secret.

²² Wolf 1988a, 39: “diese fremde Stimme, die mir oft schon in der Kehle gesteckt hatte” (49).

²³ Wolf 1988a, 60: “Ich wollte diesen Leib nicht füttern. Ich wollte diesen verbrecherischen Körper, in dem die Todesstimme ihren Sitz hatte, aushungern, ausdörren” (72).

²⁴ Wolf 1988a, 60: “Zwei Gegner auf Leben und Tod hatten sich die erstorbene Landschaft meiner Seele zum Kampfplatz gewählt. Nur der Wahnsinn schützte mich vor dem unerträglichen Schmerz, den die beiden mir sonst zugefügt hätten. So hielt ich am Wahnsinn fest” (73).

²⁵ Szalay 2000, 169.

²⁶ In her novel *Kindheitsmuster* (1976), translated both as *A Model Childhood* and *Patterns of Childhood*, Wolf addresses this topic at length, showing that although many ordinary citizens were not directly involved in Nazi crimes they were nevertheless through their silence, their looking on, and their lack of opposition complicit.

²⁷ Wolf 1988a, 100: “Daß ich arbeitete, wie Gefangene arbeiteten, gezwungen” (115).

She also feels remorse that in striving for independence she has harmed others, such as her sister Polyxena, who needed to be chosen priestess instead of Cassandra to protect herself not only from falling prey to men captivated by her beauty, but also from herself. Through her struggle for self-realization and independence, Cassandra becomes the target of suspicion, ridicule and persecution.²⁸ She feels homeless in her own home, an exile among her fellow citizens.

Wolf situates the Trojan War at the seam between a dying matriarchy and an upcoming patriarchy,²⁹ in her view a significant turning point in human history that has led to the present position of women and to violence and war. In her second travel report Wolf observes that the ancient Greeks gradually replaced matriarchal forms of society with patriarchal ones and either suppressed the ancient earth goddesses or appropriated them for their own pantheon, but in subordinate roles. Her bibliography of sources for her Cassandra project, contained at the end of *Voraussetzungen*, lists Johann Jakob Bachhofen's *Das Mutterrecht* (1861; *Mother Right*), in which he contends that the earliest forms of society were matriarchal ones, and Friedrich Engels' *Der Ursprung der Familie, des Privateigentums und des Staats* (1884; *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*), in which he argues that the first class oppression was that of women by men, a view that influenced Wolf. In her interpretation, in the now male-dominated Trojan society women are victimized, excluded from the public sphere, and subjected to increasing violence. They become commodities to be traded, as for example when Achilles demands Polyxena, who is later used to entice him to his death, and they suffer male aggression. Cassandra is raped by Ajax the Lesser, and her father forces her into a marriage with Eurypylos in exchange for his military support. Like the other women, she is silenced and turned into an object. When, for example, she refuses to keep silent about the plan, which she opposes, to use Polyxena as bait to kill Achilles, Priam imprisons her. When Troy is defeated she is treated as an object, the booty of Agamemnon, whom Wolf calls in her first travel report "the last in the series of men who have done her violence."³⁰ In her work diary Wolf wonders why someone who prophesies doom should be called a Cassandra, rather than a Laocoön, the Trojan priest of Apollo who like Cassandra issued dire warnings. She points out in her first travel report that male authors frequently treat women contemptuously. Aeschylus, for instance, portrays Cassandra and Clytemnestra as "vindictive, jealous, petty toward each other—as women can be when they are driven out of public life, chased back to

²⁸ Henderson 1994, 174.

²⁹ Herzmann 2005, 6.

³⁰ Wolf 1988a, 150: "der letzte in der Reihe der Männer, die ihr Gewalt antaten" (20).

home and hearth.”³¹ Wolf uses Hecuba as an example of a wise and talented woman who is excluded from the public sphere. For many years she was a trusted advisor, the equal of her husband Priam, but is then barred from the Trojan council, where women’s advice is no longer valued.

Wolf draws frequent parallels between her depictions of women in ancient Troy and their continuing objectification and marginalization through the ages. In her second travel report she asks: “Doesn’t this harking back to an irretrievable ancient past reveal more clearly than anything else the desperate plight in which women see themselves today?”³² Wolf sympathizes with women’s situation. She does not, however, agree with those feminists who sought in imagined matriarchal systems of the past solutions to problems encountered by women in the present. Such thinking, she believes, is regressive and idealizes and thus falsifies the past. In her work diary and letter, literary forms often considered minor and typically “feminine,” she addresses women’s writing and “the adverse conditions affecting female writers throughout history.”³³ She reflects about the nature of women’s writing:

To what extent is there really such a thing as ‘women’s writing’? To the extent that women, for historical and biological reasons, experience a different reality than men. Experience a different reality than men and express it. To the extent that women belong not to the rulers but to the ruled, and have done so for centuries.³⁴

Their marginalization as objects, she believes, gives them a different perspective, the view from the outside. At the end of her work diary she advocates not for epic works about heroes or antiheroes, but for works that seek to highlight areas of experience often neglected, in her view, by male writers, namely “the inconspicuous, the precious everyday, the concrete.”³⁵

³¹ Wolf 1988a, 179: “Haßvoll, eifersüchtig, kleinlich gegeneinander—wie Frauen werden können, wenn sie aus der Öffentlichkeit vertrieben, an Haus und Herd zurückgejagt werden” (51).

³² Wolf 1988a, 195: “Zeigt nicht vielleicht dieser Rückgriff in unwiederbringliche Früh-Zeiten mehr als alles andre die verzweifelte Lage, in der Frauen sich heute sehn?” (68). Wolf’s discussion of the situation of women was a sensitive topic in the former GDR, which prided itself on having instituted gender equality.

³³ Resch 1997, 119.

³⁴ Wolf 1988a, 259: “Inwieweit gibt es wirklich ‘weibliches’ Schreiben? Insoweit Frauen aus historischen und biologischen Gründen eine andre Wirklichkeit erleben als Männer. Wirklichkeit anders erleben als Männer und dies ausdrücken. Insoweit Frauen nicht zu den Herrschenden, sondern zu den Beherrschten gehören, jahrhundertlang” (133).

³⁵ Wolf 1988a, 270: “Unauffälliges zu benennen suchen, den kostbaren Alltag, konkret” (145).

Wolf believes that literature plays a significant if indirect role in giving readers a more sophisticated understanding and experience of their world and can transform their views.³⁶ In her first travel report she expresses her faith in storytelling: “Storytelling is humane and achieves humane effects, memory, sympathy, understanding.”³⁷ Through her lectures she explores an alternative way of writing which privileges subjective authenticity.³⁸ In her introduction she stresses that she will not offer her listeners a unified poetics, of which she is suspicious: “There is and there can be no poetics which prevents the living experience of countless perceiving subjects from being killed and buried in art objects,” and she senses keenly “the tension between the artistic forms within which we have agreed to abide and the living material, borne to me by my senses, my psychic apparatus, and my thought, which has resisted these forms.”³⁹ As the variety of genres—travel reports, work diary, letter and story—underscore, hers is a personal approach.⁴⁰ By exploring these different forms of subjective expression she affirms subjectivity and points the way to a female aesthetic. She hopes to make her audience/readers experience her creative process: her growing fascination with Cassandra, her attempts to master the material, and the fragments she tries to make sense of. Hers is not the linear structure that she associates with male writing. Instead she likens her texts to a fabric, but warns that the fabric is not tidy since motifs are not followed up, material is not always worked out to its conclusion, and threads become tangled. In her lectures, she emphasizes: “My overall concern is the sinister effects of alienation, in aesthetics, in art, as well as elsewhere.”⁴¹

Given her depiction of Cassandra’s path to self-actualization, her discussion of the transition from matriarchal to patriarchal forms of society, her references to the situation of women throughout the ages, and her “quest for a woman’s mode of writing,”⁴² it

³⁶ Wolf 1988b, 129.

³⁷ Wolf 1988a, 173: “Erzählen ist human und bewirkt Humanes, Gedächtnis, Anteilnahme, Verständnis” (45).

³⁸ Hilzinger 2011, 241.

³⁹ Wolf 1988a, 142: “Es gibt keine Poetik, und es kann keine geben, die verhindert, daß die lebendige Erfahrung ungezählter Subjekte in Kunst-Objekten ertötet und begraben wird”; “die Spannung zwischen den Formen, in denen wir uns verabredungsgemäß bewegen, und dem lebendigen Material, das meine Sinne, mein psychischer Apparat, mein Denken mir zuleitete und das sich diesen Formen nicht fügen wollte.” (10)

⁴⁰ Although travel literature, diaries and letters have a long tradition in German literature as vehicles to express theoretical statements (see Beebe and Weber 2001, 261), they were also often forms used by women and dismissed as being subjective.

⁴¹ Wolf 1988a, 142: “Meine übergreifende Frage richtet sich auf, genauer: gegen das unheimliche Wirken von Entfremdungserscheinungen auch in der Ästhetik, auch in der Kunst” (11).

⁴² McDonald 1990, 270.

is not surprising that her project aroused enthusiasm among feminists: "The Cassandra project was immediately appropriated by feminists as a poignant statement of female emancipation from patriarchal oppression and a manifesto for an alternate feminist way of life."⁴³ Wolf did not, however, define herself as a feminist and on occasions she distanced herself from feminism, although she drew on feminist ideas in her work. In a discussion in 1983 at the Ohio State University, Wolf expressed her skepticism of all "isms." Even when she was sympathetic to some, she could not fully identify with them since they defined only part of her.⁴⁴ Wolf "rejects both the attitude of passive suffering and the militant posture often associated with feminism."⁴⁵ Her suspicion of feminist militancy is evident in her depiction of the Amazon queen Penthesilea in her story. To resist male domination Penthesilea believes that her only option is to kill ever more men. Although Wolf sympathizes with what Penthesilea perceives as a lack of alternatives, she believes that her radical separatism is destructive and "allows for no dialogue."⁴⁶ She is similarly critical of Clytemnestra. In Wolf's opinion, Clytemnestra acts like a man when she kills her husband to retain her power as queen and to avenge his sacrifice of their daughter, Iphigenia. Cassandra, who reflects that in other times she and Clytemnestra could have been like sisters, notes that Clytemnestra would not want to share the throne "with this nonentity": "Most likely the weakling treated her vilely while he still controlled her, the way they all do."⁴⁷ By acting like men, Wolf believes, women become trapped "in a vicious cycle of endless aggression and counter-aggression."⁴⁸ Wolf explains in her work diary her suspicions of any militancy and sectarian thinking, revealing in the process her own growing disillusionment with the GDR version of Marxist ideology: "I know by experience the dead end into which sectarian thinking—thinking that rules out any points of view not sanctioned by one's own group—invariably leads."⁴⁹ She continues:

I feel a genuine horror at that critique of rationalism which itself ends in reckless irrationalism. It is not merely a dreadful, shameful, and scandalous fact for women that women were allowed to contribute virtually nothing to the culture we live in, officially and directly, for thousands of years. No, it is, strictly speaking, the weak point

⁴³ Resch 1997, 133.

⁴⁴ Reck et al. 1984, 111.

⁴⁵ Resch 1997, 136.

⁴⁶ Eysel 1993, 166.

⁴⁷ Wolf 1988a, 9: "mit diesem Nichts"; "Als er sie noch beherrschte, mag es der Schwächling, wie sie es alle tun, wüst genug mit ihr getrieben haben" (16).

⁴⁸ Eysel 1993, 167.

⁴⁹ Wolf 1988a, 260: "Nicht nur aus meiner Erfahrung, in welche Sackgasse sektiererisches, andere als die von der eignen Gruppe sanktionierten Gesichtspunkte ausschließendes Denken immer führt" (134).

of culture, which leads to its becoming self-destructive—namely, its inability to grow up. But it does not make it any easier to achieve maturity if a masculinity mania is replaced by a femininity mania, and if women throw over the achievements of rational thought simply because men produced them, in order to substitute an idealization of prerational stages in human history.⁵⁰

Given their recent history, Germans in particular, she warns, should be wary of such thinking. This quotation highlights Wolf's continuing belief in Enlightenment rationalism, which she does not blame for what she views as the simple-minded notions of progress of her time that perverted rationalist thought.⁵¹

In her *Cassandra* project, Wolf links the transition from a matriarchal to a patriarchal society to a change in values that led to the glorification of war and heroism, views that continue to shape her own world. She believes, for example, that aspects of authoritarian hierarchical patriarchal society have been at the root of all conflicts since ancient times.⁵² Through her depiction of the Trojan War she tries "to trace the roots of the contradictions in which our civilization is now trapped," making her *Cassandra* book "very much a product of its time."⁵³

Wolf demythologizes heroic myths of the Trojan War. She asks whether Homer and others, who wrote from the winners' perspective, suspected that they were concealing the reasons for the war, fought in her view for control of the Hellespont. In her first travel report she observes: "So Western literature begins with the glorification of a war of piracy."⁵⁴ In her version, Helen, the supposed cause of the war, is not even in Troy, but in Egypt. Noble sentiments such as beauty and honor are manufactured to disguise the war's real economic reasons. Wolf undermines the heroic ideal by calling, for example, Achilles a brute and Agamemnon an empty-headed ninny.⁵⁵ As she waits

⁵⁰ Wolf 1988a, 260: "vor allem empfinde ich einen wahren Horror vor jener Rationalismuskritik, die selbst in hemmungslosem Irrationalismus endet. Daß Frauen zu der Kultur, in der wir leben, über die Jahrtausende hin offiziell und direkt so gut wie nichts beitragen durften, ist nicht nur eine entsetzliche, beschämende und skandalöse Tatsache für Frauen—es ist, genau genommen, diejenige Schwachstelle der Kultur, aus der heraus sie selbsterstörerisch wird, nämlich ihre Unfähigkeit zur Reife. Jedoch bringt es der Fähigkeit zur Reife nicht näher, wenn an die Stelle des Männlichkeitswahns der Weiblichkeitswahn gesetzt wird und wenn die Errungenschaften vernünftigen Denkens, nur weil Männer sie hervorgebracht haben, von Frauen zugunsten einer Idealisierung vorrationaler Menschheitsetappen über Bord geworfen werden" (134).

⁵¹ Reck et al. 1984, 115.

⁵² Reck et al. 1984, 106.

⁵³ Wolf 1988b, 128.

⁵⁴ Wolf 1988a, 155: "So beginnt die Literatur des Abendlands mit der Verherrlichung eines Raubkrieges" (26).

⁵⁵ Wolf 1988a, 41: "Achill das Vieh" (51); "ein Hohlkopf" (52).

for death, Cassandra longs for a scribe or a young slave woman to record or memorize her thoughts and then pass them on to her own daughter who will tell them to her daughter and so on through the ages. Cassandra voices here Wolf's hope for a narrative that can undermine patriarchal glorification of war: "So that alongside the river of heroic songs this tiny rivulet, too, may reach those faraway, perhaps happier people who will live in times to come."⁵⁶

Wolf explores how those in power use lies, propaganda, and manipulate language to inflame public sentiments to prepare them for war. Here she obliquely addresses the perversion of language, characteristic, in her view, of all dictatorships and totalitarian states. Cassandra reflects: "You can tell when a war starts, but when does the prewar start?"⁵⁷ Wolf's version makes the Trojans, not the Greeks, into the initial aggressors, although the Trojans nevertheless perceive themselves as innocent victims. The three ships sent to Greece, for example, fail in their missions, but are used to manipulate public opinion against the Greeks: "Priam's royal propaganda machine transforms, however, each failure into a success in the eyes of the gullible Trojan citizens, and, thus, the war fever accelerates."⁵⁸ Before the war even starts, the Greeks are called the enemy, and ignoring the sacred obligations of hospitality the Trojans treat their guest Menelaus, the king of Sparta, as a spy.

The most egregious example of public manipulation is the phantom Helen. Cassandra witnesses the contrived and cynical pretext for the war, seeing how the palace, with the connivance of the temple priests and the council, manufactures a lie about Paris's abduction of Helen, a lie that appeals to patriotism and makes the Trojans cheer: "At the behest of our dear goddess Aphrodite, the Trojan hero Paris had abducted Helen, the most beautiful woman in Greece, from the boastful Greeks, and so had erased the humiliation once inflicted on our mighty King Priam by the theft of his sister."⁵⁹ When Cassandra tells her father that no war waged for a phantom can be won, he mouths platitudes about the honor of our house and the need for the army to have faith in the phantom. Trapped in such notions of honor, Priam is blind to reasons to prevent the war. When she begs him to negotiate with the Greeks, he ignores her ad-

⁵⁶ Wolf 1988a, 81: "So daß neben dem Strom der Heldenlieder dies winzge Rinnsal, mühsam, jene fernern, vielleicht glücklicheren Menschen, die einst leben werden, auch erreichte" (95).

⁵⁷ Wolf 1988a, 66: "Wann Krieg beginnt, das kann man wissen, aber wann beginnt der Vorkrieg?" (79).

⁵⁸ Resch 1997, 123.

⁵⁹ Wolf 1988a, 64: "Paris der Troerheld habe auf Geheiß unsrer lieben Göttin Aphrodite Helena, die schönste Frau Griechenlands, den großmäuligen Griechen entführt und so die Demütigung gelöscht, die unserm mächtigen König Priamos einst durch den Raub seiner Schwester angetan worden war" (77).

vice and continues on his self-destructive path. Language is increasingly manipulated. For example, the word “war” is banned and “surprise attack” substituted to make the Trojans think they are victims. Eumelos orchestrates this language war to prepare the Trojans for fighting.⁶⁰ Language is not only used to inflame the population, but also to disguise reality. As the war progresses badly, language becomes increasingly inflated. By being elevated from king, to mighty king to almighty king, Priam appears to be still powerful.

In Wolf’s retelling of the Trojan War, Eumelos, a figure who would be at home in any totalitarian regime, plays a central role in the prewar period and the conduct of the war itself. Originally head of the palace security, he gains increasing power over Priam, insulates the royal house from oppositional voices, and searches out the presumed enemies of Troy.⁶¹ He introduces such contemporary terms as security net, and in the name of security institutes repressive internal controls, has suspects followed and searched, and labels different opinions traitorous. Following Eumelos, Priam polarizes Trojan society by declaring: “Anyone who does not side with us now is working against us.”⁶²

Wolf views the Trojan War as a time when human society began to take a wrong turn, when it became male dominated and demeaned women. In her first travel report Wolf asks: “How quickly does lack of speech turn into lack of identity?”⁶³ She points out the erosion of all values in Troy. Such a society that adulated heroes, in Wolf’s opinion, led not only to women being degraded as pawns in war, but also subjected them increasingly to male aggression, not only from the Greeks, but also from their fellow citizens. As the war dragged on the women of Troy “came to fear their increasingly savage menfolk as much as the enemy.”⁶⁴

With her analogies to a totalitarian police state, the insights she gives into how wars begin and escalate, and the role of propaganda and the manipulation of language, the Trojan War becomes, in her depiction, an allegory for the twentieth century, and she uses it to analyze conflicts of her time. She stresses what she sees as obvious parallels between the self-destructive Trojan War and the self-destructive arms race, such as the isolation of leaders from the people they govern, the use of military rather than diplomatic means, the willingness of people to be deceived by war rhetoric, and the repres-

⁶⁰ Eysel 1993, 167.

⁶¹ See Henderson 1994, 176.

⁶² Wolf 1988a, 70: “Wer jetzt nicht zu uns hält, arbeitet gegen uns” (84).

⁶³ Wolf 1988a, 161: “Wie schnell wird Sprachlosigkeit zu Ichlosigkeit?” (32).

⁶⁴ Wolf 1988a, 17: “vor ihren verwilderten Männern genausoviel Angst hatten wie vor dem Feind” (25).

sion of freedoms that in her story Eumelos institutes. Eumelos, who believes in nothing and intends to survive at all costs and even be of use to the Greeks, is determined to force the Trojans to be like the enemy, to think in Greek antinomies such as victory or defeat, life or death. Through Eumelos Wolf clearly draws parallels with the STASI in the GDR, but her insights can be applied to the Gestapo, Stalin's regime or to any totalitarian regime. Peace campaigners in West Germany recognized her story's strong anti-war stance and its relevance to the then current fears of nuclear confrontation and it inspired some young readers to join the peace movement.⁶⁵ Wolf wrote at a time of increasing Cold War tensions, an accelerating arms race, made more threatening by President Reagan's intention of deploying neutron bombs in Europe. In 1981 the German writers association in both Germanys became involved in the peace movement. Wolf was among those who signed an appeal to stop the arms race, and she attended a number of peace conferences.⁶⁶

Wolf believes that myths continue to shape thinking in her time. In her work diary she notes: "An example of such a myth would be that we are living in a peace that has a future in it."⁶⁷ She worries about the escalating arms race and the decision to station missiles in Europe and fears the United States' belief that nuclear war is winnable: "We are well aware that if there were to be a military confrontation, nobody and nothing would remain of the areas in which rockets were stationed. I constantly ask myself whether our country, both German nations, even the whole of central Europe, would survive at all."⁶⁸ She discusses the devastating effects of the nuclear threat on personal lives, the constant anxiety, the feeling of helplessness, and concerns for children and grandchildren: "On a personal level I find it very oppressive and something which intrudes into my daily routine."⁶⁹ In her work diary she expresses the fears of many when she notes: "Europe cannot be defended against an atomic war."⁷⁰ She worries: "We cannot know whether we are in the darkest center of history or at its end"⁷¹ and she cites the Swiss writer Max Frisch, who said that the situation of contemporary authors is unique in that "they no longer count on having any posterity."⁷² As Brecht noted in

⁶⁵ Wolf 1988b, 129.

⁶⁶ Resch 1997, 122.

⁶⁷ Wolf 1988a, 248: "Ein solcher Mythos wäre: daß wir in einem zukunftssträchtigen Frieden leben" (121).

⁶⁸ Wolf 1988b, 128.

⁶⁹ Wolf 1988b, 128.

⁷⁰ Wolf 1988a, 229: "Europa ist gegen einen Atomkrieg nicht zu verteidigen" (102).

⁷¹ Wolf 1988a, 232: "Wir können nicht wissen, ob wir in der dunkelsten Mitte oder am Ende der Geschichte sind" (105).

⁷² Wolf 1988a, 270: "daß sie mit keiner Nachwelt mehr rechnen" (145).

the fifties: "If we do not arm ourselves, we will have peace. If we arm ourselves we will have war."⁷³ *Cassandra* thus "narrates one beginning of this destructive civilization, and Wolf, facing nuclear holocaust, fears that she is narrating the End."⁷⁴

Wolf sees in the story of Cassandra and the Trojan War a warning for her time. She is concerned about the reliance on technology, noting in her work diary that computers in the United States twice in one week mistakenly sounded the alarm that Soviet rockets were attacking the United States. War could thus occur because of a technological malfunction, a fatal flaw in thinking: "The delusion: to make security dependent on a machine."⁷⁵ Wolf defines what she means by delusion: "I mean the absurdity of the claim that the excessive atomic armament of both sides creates a 'balance of terror' that reduces the danger of war; that in the long run it even offers a minimum of security."⁷⁶

To rely on experts is a similar delusion, she believes, since they are the ones responsible for the present situation, revealing her deep distrust of scientists and inventors, who have perverted technology, and of politicians, who make the decisions. In her novel *Störfall* (1987; *Accident*, 1989), in which she focuses on the nuclear catastrophe in Chernobyl and its aftermath, she reflects on technology, describing the male scientists in such facilities as Livermore as inhuman, divorced from all human contact, fascinated only with the machine.⁷⁷ She points out in her work diary that politicians, like these scientists, are screened from normal life and "arrive at their decisions not on the grounds of personal observation and sensory experiences but in obedience to reports, charts, statistics, secret intelligence, films, consultations with men as isolated as themselves."⁷⁸ She is concerned that decisions about "the physical existence of us all depends

⁷³ Wolf 1988a, 268: "Wenn wir nicht aufrüsten, werden wir Frieden haben. Wenn wir aufrüsten, werden wir Krieg haben" (142).

⁷⁴ McDonald 1990, 270.

⁷⁵ Wolf 1988a, 228: "Der wahnhaftige Irrtum: Sicherheit von einer Maschine abhängig zu machen" (101).

⁷⁶ Wolf 1988a, 229: "Ich meine die Absurdität der Behauptung, eine exzessive atomare Aufrüstung beider Seiten mindere als 'Gleichgewicht des Schreckens' die Kriegsgefahr; biete auf die Dauer auch nur ein Minimum an Sicherheit" (102).

⁷⁷ Wolf is not against technology per se, only against its destructive uses. While she is critical of Chernobyl, at the same time her brother's life is, she hopes, being saved by an operation made possible by technology.

⁷⁸ Wolf 1988a, 256–57: "die ihre vernichtenden Entscheidungen nicht aufgrund eigener Beobachtungen, nicht aufgrund sinnlicher Erfahrungen treffen, sondern nach Berichten, Karten, Statistiken, Geheimdienstmeldungen, Filmen, Beratungen mit ähnlich Isolierten" (130).

on shifts in the delusional thinking of very small groups,”⁷⁹ by men “who do not know people, who deliver them to destruction.”⁸⁰

In her Cassandra project, Wolf explores whether there were turning points in human history when decisions that were not self-destructive could have been made. As she emphasizes, a crucial crossroad where human history took a wrong turn was the replacement of matriarchy by patriarchy. In her letter she argues that patriarchal thinking has resulted in a “one-track-minded route” in Western thought: “the route of segregation, of the renunciation of the manifoldness of phenomena, in favor of dualism and monism, in favor of closed systems and pictures of the world; of the renunciation of subjectivity in favor of a sealed ‘objectivity.’”⁸¹ Such thinking has led to the destructive technological civilization of her time. She sees a clear relationship between the arms race and patriarchal structures of thought and government that afflict both superpowers. In her second travel report she writes: “‘To learn through suffering’—this seems to be the law of the new gods, and likewise the way of masculine thought. This way does not seek to love Mother Nature but to fathom her secrets in order to dominate her, and to erect the astounding structure of a world of mind remote from nature, from which women are henceforth excluded.”⁸²

Wolf blames the United States in particular, but also the Soviet Union for the arms race and observes that both superpowers talk of defense while preparing for war. In her work diary Wolf suggests that the Soviet Union renounce a first-strike policy and begin unilateral disarmament: by choosing such a course “we place the other side under the moral pressure of the world public” and “render superfluous the U.S.S.R.’s

⁷⁹ Wolf 1988a, 226: “daß unser aller physische Existenz von den Verschiebungen im Wahndenken sehr kleiner Gruppen von Menschen abhängt” (98–99).

⁸⁰ Wolf 1988a, 257: “Die die Menschen nicht kennen, die sie da der Vernichtung preisgeben” (130).

⁸¹ Wolf 1988a, 287: “den Weg der Sonderung, der Analyse, des Verzichts auf die Mannigfaltigkeit der Erscheinungen zugunsten des Dualismus, des Monismus, zugunsten der Geschlossenheit von Weltbildern und Systemen, des Verzichts auf Subjektivität zugunsten gesicherter ‘Objektivität’” (161).

⁸² Wolf 1988a, 216: “‘Lernen durch das Leid’—dies scheint das Gesetz der neuen Götter zu sein, der Weg des männlichen Denkens auch, das die Mutter Natur nicht lieben, sondern durchschauen will, um sie zu beherrschen und das erstaunliche Gebäude einer naturfernen Geisteswelt zu errichten, aus der Frauen von nun an ausgeschlossen sind” (89). Her criticism of the patriarchal will to control nature is a frequent criticism of feminists. One such influential voice is that of the Indian ecofeminist Vandana Shiva, who argues that Western masculinist science and technology have devalued women’s knowledge about sustainable agriculture and are driven by the profit motive to control nature. Instead of living in harmony with nature, they view it as a resource to be exploited. See, for example, Mies and Shiva 1993, Shiva 2005, 2013.

extortionary policy of arming itself to death.”⁸³ She suspects, however, that like Cassandra nobody will listen to her: “This is wishful thinking, you say? So, is it completely misguided to want to think and to have a say about the life and death of many, perhaps all future generations?”⁸⁴ She also suggests that a kind of Hippocratic oath should be devised to prevent scientists collaborating on military research and wonders:

What if no one who works with weapons would lift a finger anymore? Then they would be all unemployed. So what? you think. Better unemployed than dead. But that is not how they think, for they fear certain societal death more than uncertain physical death. These are what I call false alternatives. Their number is increasing.⁸⁵

While waiting for their long delayed plane to Greece, Wolf and her husband see small boys in the airport lounge playing with toy weapons, fighting, and imitating gunfire, showing that the next generation is already being inculcated with militarism. In her first travel report she reflects on the barbarism of the modern age: “Was there, is there, an alternative to this barbarism?”⁸⁶ In her depiction of the Scamander community on Mount Ida she suggests that humanity could have taken a different course. Wolf uses myths of ancient matriarchal societies to show how a peaceful society could be structured.⁸⁷ The members of this diverse alternative community, which consists mostly of women but also of some men who all reject the “us versus them” mentality of the Trojans and the Greeks, come from all Trojan classes and include also Greek women and Amazons. It is a community of mutual support, openness, and tolerance with which Cassandra identifies, as her use of “we” indicates. Here, the earth goddess Cybele is still worshipped, emphasizing a continuing harmony with nature. Outwardly poor, the members live rich inner lives.⁸⁸ They talk to each other, sing, learn from each other and express solidarity with each other. As a young slave woman from the Greek camp says: “Between killing and dying there is a third alternative: living.”⁸⁹ In Wolf’s depiction,

⁸³ Wolf 1988a, 229–30: “damit die andere Seite unter den moralischen Druck der Weltöffentlichkeit zu stellen, die erpresserische Doktrin des ‘Totrüstens’ der UdSSR gegenstandslos machen” (103).

⁸⁴ Wolf 1988a, 230: “Dies sei Wunschdenken? So wäre der Wunsch, über Leben und Tod vieler, vielleicht aller künftiger Generationen mitzudenken, mitzureden, ganz abwegig?” (103).

⁸⁵ Wolf 1988a, 267: “Wenn keiner, der mit Waffen zu tun hat, mehr den Finger rührte? Dann würden sie alle arbeitslos. Na und? denkt man. Besser arbeitslos als tot. Aber so denken die nicht, denn sie fürchten mehr den sicheren gesellschaftlichen Tod als den unsicheren physischen. Dies lenne ich: falsche Alternativen. Ihre Zahl nimmt zu” (141).

⁸⁶ Wolf 1988a, 159: “Gab es, gibt es eine Alternative zu dieser Barbarei?” (30).

⁸⁷ Wilke 1988, 216.

⁸⁸ Pickle 1986, 43.

⁸⁹ Wolf 1988a, 118: “Zwischen Töten und Sterben ist ein Drittes: Leben” (135).

this community represents both a past matriarchal “Urkommunismus” and contains the seeds of a possible future communist utopia.⁹⁰

This utopian community is, however, fleeting. Even as its members joyfully live in solidarity with each other Cassandra reflects that they knew they were lost. They talked about future generations: “Whether they would still know who we were. Whether they would repair our omissions, rectify our mistakes.”⁹¹ To try to communicate with those to come they etched animals in the caves since they did not know how to write: “We did not see ourselves as an example. We were grateful that we were the ones granted the highest privilege there is: to slip a narrow strip of future into the grim present, which occupies all of time.”⁹²

Wolf’s use of the Trojan War as a model for the threatening destruction of her own civilization makes *Cassandra* very much a book of its time.⁹³ As its enthusiastic reception by feminists and the peace movement demonstrates, her “imagined reality of a long-distant past has personal and political meaning for contemporary readers.”⁹⁴ Although Wolf did not consider herself a feminist, feminists saw *Cassandra* as a powerful statement of female emancipation from patriarchal oppression. Particularly compelling was Wolf’s belief that patriarchal thinking was responsible for the destructive and self-destructive thinking of her time. In her letter Wolf asks: “Does it seem misguided to you to believe that if women had helped to think ‘thought’ over the last two thousand years, the life of thought would be different today?”⁹⁵ Her depiction of the Trojan War resonated with the European peace movement because of her many parallels with the nuclear threat of her time. Despite the glimpse she gives of a possible utopia, in her *Cassandra* project Wolf seems pessimistic about the future of her world. Since the Trojan War, wars have been endlessly repeated over the centuries, and weapons have become ever more destructive, a vicious cycle that suggests people’s inability or refusal to learn from history. The Scamander community is transitory, and in her work diary she stresses that in three thousand years little has changed: “But in Troy, I firmly believe,

⁹⁰ Viergutz and Holweg 2007, 45.

⁹¹ Wolf 1988a, 132: “Ob sie uns noch kennen. Ob sie, was wir versäumt, nachholen würden, was wir falsch gemacht, verbessern” (150).

⁹² Wolf 1988a, 134: “Wir sahn uns nicht als Beispiel. Wir waren dankbar, daß gerade wir das höchste Vorrecht, das es gibt, genießen durften, in die finstere Gegenwart, die alle Zeit besetzt hält, einen schmalen Streifen Zukunft vorzuschieben” (152).

⁹³ Hilzinger 2011, 229.

⁹⁴ Pickle 1986, 47.

⁹⁵ Wolf 1988a, 294: “Scheint es Dir abwegig zu glauben, daß ‘das Denken’, hätten Frauen seit über zweitausend Jahren an ihm mitgedacht, heut ein andres Leben führen würde?” (168).

the people were no different from us. Their gods are our gods, the false gods. Only our devices differ from theirs.”⁹⁶

⁹⁶ Wolf 1988a, 237: “In Troia aber, das glaube ich sicher, waren die Leute nicht anders, als wir es sind. Ihre Götter sind unsre Götter, die falschen. Nur sind unsre Mittel nicht ihre Mittel gewesen” (111).

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The volatile value of suffering

Jan Ritsema's *Philoktetes Variations*

JOHAN CALLENS

Our only health is the disease
 If we obey the dying nurse
 Whose constant care is not to please
 But to remind of our, and Adam's curse,
 And that, to be restored, our sickness must grow worse.¹

THE OCCASION

ON AUGUST 3, 2012 Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* (1601) premiered in Stratford-upon-Avon on the occasion of the World Shakespeare Festival.² This "revival" was directed by Elizabeth LeCompte of the New York avant-garde company the Wooster Group, and by Mark Ravenhill on behalf of the Royal Shakespeare Company. Interestingly, for the transatlantic *Troilus and Cressida* the American company played the Trojan parts, while the British played the Greek ones.³ That the collaboration thus solved the common enough identification problem⁴ was due less to any conspicuous differences in accents than to the decision to represent the Trojans as native Americans, with the corresponding New World fantasies of the German popular fiction writer Karl May (1842–1912) serving as an analogue for the prejudiced, occidentalist view of the noble savages held by the Elizabethans, as England was establishing itself as an imperial power. The initial rehearsals took place separately on both sides of the Atlantic, in the Wooster Group's case as early as January 2011, before the two teams got together in late June 2012 for the final weeks of synchronizing. That some synchronizing must have been required was to be expected of their radically different "aesthetics," dubbed by Deborah Shaw, director of the World Shakespeare Festival, "the actor-focused, text-

¹ Eliot, "East Coker"

² The research conducted for this article is part of the "Interuniversity Attraction Poles" programme financed by the Belgian government (BELSPO IAP7/01).

³ In the subsequent US "remake" all the parts are played by the Wooster Group but the Greek characters are being distinguished by uniformly colored masks.

⁴ Shirley 2005, 10.

based rigour of the RSC and the conceptual multi-media wizardry of the Wooster Group”.⁵

Seed Journal

Troilus and Cressida was not the first transatlantic collaboration of the Wooster Group. In 1983 the company already set up *North Atlantic* with Paul Vermeulen Windsant and Gerardjan Rijnders, co-directors of Zuidelijk Toneel Globe in Eindhoven, though, like *Troilus and Cressida* it was subsequently reworked in order to keep the production on its repertory. The script of *North Atlantic* was written by James Strahs, a former Vietnam draft dodger who passed away on October 1, 2011. Strahs’s five year roamings across the US, Canada, England, Spain, Turkey and India, as recorded in his at times surreal *Seed Journal* (1973), form a counternarrative to Odysseus’ and Aeneas’ classical journeys already mirroring each other by balancing the perspective of a winner with that of a loser. Whatever Strahs’s reasons for refusing to fight—less principled and heroic than conflicted, it would seem⁶— the refusal itself invites comparison with the temporary abdications of Philoktetes and Achilles, each time requiring the intervention of Ulysses’ cunning and rhetorical powers.⁷ In the story of Philoktetes these frequently become emblematic for the characters’ self-deception and, more generally, for the theatre’s play with reality and illusion. According to the tradition Philoktetes was abandoned on the island of Lemnos because of his demoralizing womanish lamentations over the festering and stinking wound he incurred when desecrating the shrine of Chryse and being bitten by a snake. Yet, in order to win the Trojan war the Greeks—Diomedes in the epic tradition, Odysseus in the tragic one—have to retrieve Herakles’ bow and arrows from Philoktetes’ guardianship, following predictions variously attributed to Cassandra and the imprisoned Trojan priest, Helenus.

Little is known about the 1961 Provincetown production of *Philoktetes* by the East End Players, directed by Richard Schechner, LeCompte’s predecessor at the helm of what was initially called the Performance Group. In her survey of Greek tragedy on the American stage, Karelisa Hartigan e.g. only discusses Schechner’s *Prometheus Project*:

⁵ Qtd in Shenton 2012, n.p.

⁶ Gottlieb 1973, n.p.

⁷ In what follows I will designate the Greek characters by the variant of their name in the adaptations discussed, since Shakespeare and Gide use “Ulysses,” whereas Sophocles, Müller and Jesurun “Odysseus.” Mandel and his translators invariably have Philoktetes, Jesurun Philoktetes, the spelling I will follow except in quotations and titles.

Four Movements and a Coda (1985).⁸ This loose adaptation of the mythical material found in Aeschylus' *Prometheus Unbound* ran in the Wooster Group's Performing Garage and updated Prometheus' offense and Io's double victimization, first by Zeus who turned his wife Hera's priestess into a heifer to avoid detection and then by Hera, who caused Io to be pursued by gadflies for dallying with her husband. The criticism, however, concerned less the update, in which the atomic bomb substituted for the divine fire and pornography for Zeus' adultery, than Schechner's apparent levelling of these "ills," thereby suggesting that the sexual exploitation of women was somehow comparable to the victimization by nuclear fallout.⁹ For all that, the homophobic movement of the 1980s and early 1990s frequently resorted to genocidal fantasies when presenting AIDS as a deserved punishment.¹⁰

Since Robert Torrance in 1961 finished his new translation of Sophocles' *Philoktetes*,¹¹ which was premiered in April that year by Harvard University's Adams House Drama Society, as directed by Anthony Keller, it may (or may not) have been conducive in generating Schechner's production later that summer. When Keller three years later took his production to New York it was staged outdoors, in the East River Park Amphitheatre.¹² Schechner went for a different setting, and for "environmental" rather than historical reasons, though his "6 Axioms for Environmental Theatre" would only appear in 1968, shortly after he founded the Performance Group. After finishing his MA in English at the University of Iowa and a two-year stint (1958–1960) in the army as Troop Information Specialist in Fort Polk, Louisiana, Schechner pursued a PhD at Tulane University in New Orleans, but during the summers he worked at Cape Cod, first as playwright, then as director of the East End Players, which he took over in 1958. Their *Philoktetes* "was staged in the round in the Town Hall but also given one performance out on a beach."¹³ According to Schechner, who dates the production back to 1960, this was in Truro, Massachusetts, and "The audience had to walk over a mile of sand dunes to reach the place where the performance took place. Philoctetes [sic] himself roamed the dunes; Neoptolemus and Odysseus arrived by boat (we had launched them about a half-mile further down the beach). The Truro dunes really conveyed the sense of desert island that the Sophocles play asks for."¹⁴

⁸ Hartigan 1995, 133–34.

⁹ Goodman 1985, n.p.

¹⁰ Corber 2003, 107.

¹¹ Mandel 1981, 52–94.

¹² Hartigan 1995, 136.

¹³ Harbeck 1998, 25.

¹⁴ Schechner 2003, 295.

Philoktetes Variations

To the uninformed, Schechner's *Philoktetes* might be misconstrued as a touristic outing, rather than an environmental production skirting naturalism. Neither applies to the controversial production of *Philoktetes Variations* (1994) which Dutch director Jan Ritsema and the American actor Ron Vawter set up in Kaaaitheater, Brussels, shortly after the first Gulf War (1990–1991). With live music by Henry Threadgill and a video design by Leslie Thornton, this production staged selections from André Gide's, Heiner Müller's and John Jesurun's adaptations back to back. For each of the variations Herman Sorgeloos, set designer of the Brussels dance company Rosas, built a different cage-like playing area, along which the performers moved in the course of the evening. First they worked their way through Jesurun's text on a bare platform with a monitor-encrusted table. Then they took on Müller, the actors wading through ankle-deep blood-drenched water, against a "campy" backdrop of projected skies, rising and setting suns.¹⁵ After the intermission Gide made for a photoshoot during which first two of the performers were symbolically laid out in an upright coffin, as directed by Vawter, whose text by now was recited by the others. Finally, he, too, stepped into the casket, a thin veil barely covering his naked body, marked by the lesions of Kaposi's sarcoma. In Jesurun's harsh words, "the cadaver directs the autopsy" (71).¹⁶ If the AIDS-infected actor thereby seemed to rehearse his own death, the pretense in the course of the evening progressively seemed to dwindle as the reality of his dying body asserted itself and undermined the emergence of a verbally presented reality. As a final *coup de théâtre*, however, he disappeared as a newborn baby into the cosmic darkness, a *mise-en-abîme* in Leslie Thornton's final film sequence.¹⁷ With hindsight, the futuristic potential of this finale, reminiscent of Stanley Kubrick's *Space Odyssey 2001* (1968), has been fully warranted by the Wooster Group's recycling of the mock funeral from Buñuel's *Belle de Jour* in *To You, The Birdie! (Phèdre)* (2000) and by the kimono outfit of the dying Nightingale (Scott Shepherd) in their *Vieux Carré* (2009), though the latter may also be a carry-over of Myra Torrance in Tennessee Williams's *Battle of Angels*, Spalding Gray's first professional production (dating from 1967).

When combining Gide, Müller and Jesurun, the Brussels team actually did one better than Stephen Porter in his 1959 New York production for the American National Theatre and Academy which paired the rather short Sophocles with Gide.¹⁸ Both

¹⁵ T'Jonck 1994, n.p.

¹⁶ Parenthetical pages refer to the original publication of John Jesurun's *Philoktetes* in *Theater* 25.2 (1994), 71–91.

¹⁷ Van Gansbeke 2010, 89.

¹⁸ Hartigan 1995, 135.

productions, however, featured the same performers, as if to recall the Sophoclean actorly constraint and its solution, the doubling and tripling of parts, in order to bring out its interpretative potential. In New York the three parts were played by Ellis Rabb (Philoctetes), Ray MacDonell (Odysseus) and Claude Woolman (Neoptolemus). In Brussels Dirk Roofthoof played the son of Achilles; Ron Vawter, the lead; and Vivianne De Muynck, his antagonist, a gender-crossed performance implying the character's duplicity, though Jesurun also seems to have considered all-female and color-blind casts.¹⁹

Obscene wounds

In Gide's version, originally subtitled "Traité de l'immonde blessure",²⁰ the relationship between Philoktetes and Neoptolemus is arguably informed by the author's own homosexuality, though he was married to his cousin Madeleine Rondeaux, a situation hardly different from that of Oscar Wilde, who was married to Constance Lloyd. For Yvette Louria, Gide's play is even an allegorical biodrama in which the vicissitudes of Philoktetes' career parallel those of Wilde, whom Gide wrote about and met in Paris, Algeria, and Berneval in the period covering his trials, imprisonment, and release (1895–97). The last encounter occurred in 1898, when Gide is said to have reproached Wilde for not having written the play he promised upon his liberation.²¹ With his *Philoctète*, Gide may well have taken this task upon himself in an urge to correct the self-image of the pitiful saint Wilde at the time projected. What Louria fails to mention is that Wilde's poetry and nonfiction is actually steeped in classical Greek culture.²² In the early "Phrenoidia" (1877) or "lamentation" he even provides his own translation of one of the imprisoned Trojan women's choral songs from Euripides' *Hecuba* (ll 444–83). The song in question follows the announcement that Achilles' ghost has claimed the Trojan queen's daughter Polyxena as a human sacrifice at his tomb. Hecuba's negotiations with Ulysses, whose life she nevertheless saved when she refused to turn him in after recognizing him during a spying mission into Troy, proved useless. Much as in Sophocles' *Philoctetes*, the heart loses out against the Greek warrior's reasons of state. From Talthybius' subsequent report of Polyxena's sacrifice, we learn moreover that it was Achilles' son, Neoptolemus a.k.a. Pyrrhus, who led her to the tomb and slashed her throat after a moment's hesitation, torn as he was between pity and duty (ll 523–24, 566–68), a scene Shakespeare made good use of in the Player's speech and prayer scene

¹⁹ Campbell 2010, 34n26.

²⁰ Pollard 1970, 368; Louria 1952, 348.

²¹ Ellman 1988, 530.

²² Ross 2013.

from *Hamlet* by way of Marlowe and Nashe's *Dido*, *Queen of Carthage*, where an even more brutal Pyrrhus has no second thoughts. Wilde's "Phrenoidia," then, indirectly introduces two of the protagonists the present article is concerned with, and the dilemma central to their drama.

Paul Valéry was one of the first to detect a latent homosexual content in Gide's *Philoctète*. As he told him in a letter from July 6, 1899, Valéry expected Neoptolemus, after reading his first speech, to be raped rather than killed. Still, Gide's play is a drama extolling the supreme virtue of self-fulfilment residing in a moral discipline rather than in sexual satisfaction or sensual abandonment, even if in his *Corydon* (1920) he would defend homosexuality, albeit on occasionally dubious grounds.²³ This ascetic ideal of self-possession is evident from the play's polar setting and Gide's reduction of Neoptolemus' age to that of a child, no matter how ephobic, so that his non-sexual initiation may be all the more credible. Pollard nevertheless grants that the touch of self-indulgence in the scenes between Philoktetes and Neoptolemus "may well have been influenced by [Gide's] conception of Greek homosexual love, where he saw the lover in the role of moral guide and teacher."²⁴ For the rest, the removal of all pathos from Sophocles' suffering hero in what is essentially an undramatic debate aligns Gide's play, by his own admission, with Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*.²⁵

Since the play's composition may have started as early as 1894,²⁶ Gide's editors, notably Richard Heyd in the *Théâtre Complet* (vol. 1) and Louis Martin-Chauffier in the *Oeuvres Complètes* (vol. 3), also see in Gide's Philoktetes echoes of Alfred Dreyfus. In 1894, the year before Wilde's trials, the Alsatian Jewish artillery officer was convicted of treason on the charge of passing military secrets to the Germans and as a result spent five years on the penal colony of Devil's Island in French Guyana. By this account Gide's polar island would then be an oxymoronic inversion, burning cold being just as punitive and purifying as the symbolic inferno of Devil's Island. Soon new evidence revealed that Major Ferdinand Walsin Esterhazy was guilty of the crime foisted on Dreyfus. When a military court on January 11, 1898 acquitted him and further incriminated Dreyfus on false grounds, Zola instantly protested the white-washing in his famous address to the then French President, Félix Faure, published on the front page of *L'Aurore*, January 13. Wilde knew Esterhazy and found him far more interesting than the innocent Dreyfus.²⁷ Gide, for his part, expressed his support for Zola but refused

²³ Pollard 1970: 375; Goodman 1985.

²⁴ Pollard 1970, 376–77.

²⁵ Pollard 1970, 377.

²⁶ Pollard 1970, 368.

²⁷ Ellman 1988, 529–30.

firmly to take sides either with the Catholic anti-Dreyfusards or the anti-clerical anti-Dreyfusards in a case that rallied intellectuals and artists around the national cause as well as the issue of due process and equality under the law.²⁸

The two “cases,” Gide’s homosexuality and Dreyfus’ political rights as a Jew, need not be mutually exclusive, since the latter may well function as a cover and transposition of the former. The tension between sexual identity (in whatever guise) and legal treatment is one that would still mark the gay movement a century after Gide published his play in the December 1898 issue of *La Revue Blanche*. However, that it was not meant to be performed certainly makes it a “closet” drama in more than one sense, as is perhaps hinted at by Gide’s original title. Granted that Zola used the adjective “immonde” to castigate the French press for exploiting the public’s hateful anti-semitism and the lingering anti-German sentiments following the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine in 1871, “immonde” can variously mean dirty, nauseous, obscene or scandalous and in conjunction with “pêché” invokes a doubly sinful fleshly desire.

Mutable mortal wounds

In the early 1990s, shortly before Ritsema’s *Philoktetes Variations*, Pollard and Jonathan Dollimore, among others, brought Gide’s homosexuality once more to the critics’ attention. However, already in 1961, Joe Davies staged a camp version of *Philoctète* at Caffè Cino that reintroduced Sophocles’ choir of sailors in the guise of scantily dressed heterosexual street hustlers pandering to the gaze of Caffè Cino’s gay in-crowd.²⁹ Jesurun’s *Philoktetes*, by contrast, makes any latent homophobia explicit. His *Philoktetes* demeaningly dubs Neoptolemus “fag” (77), “faggot” (82) and “unworthy catamite” “[a]s if his sweetness could seduce [Philoktetes], where [Odysseus’] logic failed” (84).³⁰ Neoptolemus returns the insult by calling his antagonist “the cripple creek fairy” (75), thereby illustrating the play’s rampant mimetic violence.

Since Vawter was already in the final stages of his AIDS infection while preparing for *Philoktetes*, he asked Jesurun to write the new version, something he himself had been looking forward to. In fact, Vawter’s condition was so bad that the Brussels run had to be aborted after the premiere on March 3, 1994. Six weeks later, on April 16, he passed away in the presence of his partner Greg Mehrten (Pandarus in the Wooster

²⁸ A new trial led to Dreyfus’s renewed conviction for another 10 years of exile, which was instantly commuted into a pardon, though it took until 1906 to exonerate him of all false charges and reinstate him as a major.

²⁹ Grace 2008, 60–65; Bottoms 2004, 45.

³⁰ Catamitus is the Latinized name of Ganymede, the Trojan whom Zeus forced to succeed Hebe as his cupbearer.

Group's *Troilus and Cressida*), while being flown from Milan to New York.³¹ The year before, Heiner Müller had contracted throat cancer, the illness that led to his equally untimely death on December 30, 1995.³² Reflecting on the imminent prospect in an interview, Müller equated dying with the theater, whose specificity would seem to lie in the frightening and consoling presence of mortal beings, actors and spectators alike sharing in the emotions:

the essential thing about theater is then—and here we are once again touching on Ovid—the essential thing is transformation, and the last transformation is death, dying. And the fear of this last transformation is universal, it's dependable, one can use it as a foundation, and it's also the fear of the actor and the fear of the spectator. And what's specific to the theater is not the presence of the living actor or of the living spectator, but rather the presence of the person who has the potential to die.³³

Perhaps it is this belief in the potential of transformation which led Müller earlier that year at the Berliner Ensemble to include the figure of Philoktetes in an evening of readings entitled *Antikenmaterial*, having dealt with him in a 1950 poem,³⁴ in the 1964 play Ritsema selected,³⁵ and in a short burlesque ballet scenario, *Philoktet* 1979, published in *Die Zeit* (Dec. 29, 1978). The latter is a “satyr play”³⁶ of sorts that supplements the earlier “tragic” treatment of the Greek material and presents language and libidinousness as liberation from a rigidly rational and dialectical Brechtian dramaturgy, which like tragedy, tends to be too conclusive.

Ritsema's *Philoktetes Variations* may, then, have been directly inspired by Müller's, or by Porter's 1959 staging of Gide and Sophocles, or by the Greek playwright's own play with the mythic material when he combined the legend with the Heracleian saga. Before Sophocles, variations on the *Iliad* were already played by the anonymous contributors to the posterior *Odyssey*,³⁷ which thus became an unwitting model for the Renaissance imitative tradition. And the epics themselves repeat formulaic phrases, thus facilitating the memorialization and oral transmission. Jesurun, too, has demonstrated a strong interest in recursive productions ever since his serial *Chang in a Void Moon*, begun in 1982, and still going strong: as recently as April 2014, after a nine-year lull and the series' apparent death, Episode 59 went into premiere at the Incubator Arts

³¹ Schechner 1994, 11–13.

³² Batz 1996, n.p.

³³ Müller qtd in Kluge 1995, n.p.

³⁴ Weber 2001, 10.

³⁵ Mandel 1981, 215–50.

³⁶ Barnett 2002, 52.

³⁷ West 1999, 364.

Project, New York, and two more episodes were in the offing. Here, too, works of art and human lives hardly end conclusively; death being only “a form of aging”³⁸ is an idea touchingly materialized in the classical figure of Tithonus, who bargained for eternal life in his love for Dawn, yet forgot to specify the need to stay young.

The Brussels selections from Müller, Gide and Jesurun were all played in the original languages, which was a carry-over from what Vawter had wanted to write. As he revealed in an interview,

For the long laments of Philoctetes [sic] I’m devising a language that begins in English but then passes over into other languages. I love the sort of confessional tone, with lots of prayers, lots of confessions, exaltations to deities in different languages, in English, German, and Spanish.³⁹

Jesurun composed twelve scenes of different length, each with its own subtitle, clearly following Vawter’s intentions in the “Prayer Fragment,” but also in the repetitive, associative and alliterative writing,⁴⁰ as liberating as Müller’s poetic idiom with regard to Brecht’s rationalist dramaturgy⁴¹ or Gide’s restrained presentation of Philoktetes’ ascetic virtue (which to Watson-Miller may nonetheless be parodistic⁴²). The original plan for the incorporation of Jesurun’s text into the Brussels run was to play a fixed set of five scenes and a selection from five more, though the script as published contains twelve in total. The five core sections were “Where have you been?,” “Philoktetes as Goddess,” “Sweetness,” “Moonstruck” and “Waiting for a boat.” The changing selection would have been made from “Listen to me,” “First Day,” “Inside Out,” “Philoktetes Dances,” and “Prayer Fragment.” The two extra sections from the printed version, “And Troy?” plus “Who Are You,” are not listed in the Brussels program.

This limitation of Jesurun’s performance text must have been a concession to Vawter’s poor health. By the same token, it confirms the wish to combine different plays rather than to take satisfaction with any single one. The scheme was perfectly feasible given the script’s modular structure and three different endings, betraying an anti-au-

³⁸ Qtd in Soloski 2014, n.p.

³⁹ Qtd in Schechner 1993, 40.

⁴⁰ Jesurun’s associative writing causes Philoktetes’ “leg” to slide into his “legacy” (86), “a virgin man” to be “on the verge of surrender” (88), and neologisms like “Indochimney” (74) or “Pantygon” (77) require some additional conceptual blending. The operational principle of Jesurun’s open-ended lamentation or “moaning lecture” (78) is the ritualistic textual variation of words and phrases, iterations of lines, like “What’s that dripping? [...] What’s that dripping? [...] What’s that moving?” (71) or “Who are you?” [...] What are you?” (72) This variation logic tended to be extended in the video design’s repetitive projections.

⁴¹ Barnett 2002, 49.

⁴² Pollard 1970, 368–69.

thoritative and non-teleological stance with regard to the classical material, just as the omission of Sophocles spells Ritsema's refusal to posit the Greek's extant version as originary. In the first ending, "Philoktetes Dances," the protagonist dreams up the consequences of rejoining the war effort in the blood-spitting soldiers and rotting corpses disfiguring Troy (81). In the second, "Waiting for a Boat," he joins the men sailing for the city but collapses on the beach and is relieved from his pain by being transfixed with an anchor (90). In the last, "Who are You?" (91) Philoktetes, or his ghost, like Gide's protagonist, is happy enough to stay on the island. The prolonged uncertainty about his identity compounds the variability and is emblematic of the character's intertextual transhistorical reinterpretation. "I don't even know who I am or ever was," says Philoktetes, "somehow I was transformed" (80–81). Odysseus' deceptiveness certainly made Philoktetes extra skeptical (71). Jesurun's protagonist either claims anonymity as the island's self-born Goddess bleeding in mooncycles, or he shape-shifts like Ovid's Proteus "lost in a sea of ventriloquy" (80) to evade his pursuers, if also to mark the schizophrenic effect of his isolation and putrefying body, thirsting for the elusiveness and purity of clear water (74, 81).

In support of Ritsema's operating scheme, the subtitle of Gide's *Philoctète* as published, *Le Traité des Trois Morales*, offers further variations, this time on virtue: Ulysses' patriotic devotion to the Greek nation or reasons of state, a social love of sorts; Neoptolemus' individual love and compassion; and Philoktetes' supreme self-love fortifying his seemingly egotistic and un-Greek resolve to stay on the island.⁴³ For Pollard it is important to distinguish Philoktetes' virtue from egotism since his self-assertion in the face of Ulysses' necessity and duty, on the one hand, and Neoptolemus' honesty, friendship and desire, on the other hand, amounts to a mystical or spiritual self-fulfilment resulting from self-denial.⁴⁴ After all he lacks any material and physical comfort on the island and strives for disinterested action, divested of ideological and ethical motives. The voluntary sacrifice of the bow and the sustenance it can provide is compensated by its spiritual rewards, happiness and regeneration.

By comparison, Müller's *Philoktetet* (1964) is a grim unpropagandistic and therefore somewhat unorthodox piece.⁴⁵ Ironically, it played an important role in the artist's personal rehabilitation seven years after his criticism of the authorities in the German Democratic Republic and refusal to revise his plays had led to a ban on productions and his exclusion from the Writer's Union. It was indeed on the occasion of Hans Lietzau's 1968 premiere of *Philoktetet* at the Munich Residenztheater, following Müller's in-

⁴³ Mandel 1981, 159–60; Wilson 1941, 288.

⁴⁴ Pollard 1970, 373–75.

⁴⁵ Mandel 1981, 220.

roduction to the West with the 1967 Bochum production of *Ödipus Tyrann* (*Oedipus Rex*), that Ruth Berghaus, then director of the Berliner Ensemble, began to intercede with the GDR authorities on behalf of the censored playwright.⁴⁶ It was as if Berghaus had been charged with the mission to retrieve another Philoktetes, since Müller had refused to leave the GDR and live in exile. Still, it was not until 1973 that the Berliner Ensemble was authorized to produce *Cement*, and until 1977 for *Philoktet* to receive its GDR premiere. These two verse plays are representative of the metaphorical and mythical mode Müller had come to rely on in order to address contemporary political issues.⁴⁷ However, in the 1979 ballet scenario Müller could poke fun at the GDR's collectivization with impunity. Philoktetes, Ulysses and Neoptolemus now unionize and give the audience a vote in the negotiations of better working conditions, faced as they are with the arduous task of sexually satisfying the women populating and controlling the island. Because the men can hardly forsake their job, Heinrich Schliemann, eager for archeological fame, has to plot the destruction of Troy with the neutron bomb he invented. In the 1950 poem the humiliated Philoktet has to be dragged aboard the Greek ship, vengeful as he is at having been marooned on what was still an empty island.⁴⁸ In the play, finally, Philoktet is an unheroic individualist who dies at the hands of Neoptolemus for betraying the communal cause, if also to compensate for the latter's initial weakness of returning the bow to its guardian. And so, once more the end excuses the means. With a cynical twist Müller thus revives the Homeric insight that "The good of the state is supreme."⁴⁹ By presenting the Greek, i.e. communist, cause as rightful yet dark and bitter, Müller inverts Sophocles' nobler tragic vision—whether focused on Philoktetes' heroic integrity as opposed to Odysseus' expediency (the traditional view) or on Neoptolemus' growing individual conscience.

The volatile value of suffering

At the end of Sophocles' play, Herakles intervenes to prevent Philoktetes and Neoptolemus from returning to Ithaca with the bow and arrow, and to regiment both into subservience to the Greek cause. In Edmund Wilson's reading, we, too, are admonished not to take the bow's mastery without the flawed Bowman, the art without the suffering artist. It is a reading not so far removed from Stephen Dedalus' psychobiography of Shakespeare in the Scylla and Charybdis chapter of Joyce's *Ulysses*, which

⁴⁶ Kalb 2001, xiv.

⁴⁷ Kalb 2001, 10.

⁴⁸ Weber 2001, 10.

⁴⁹ Mandel 1981, 220–21.

Strahs quotes from in his *Seed Journal*.⁵⁰ To Stephen, the wound of “conjugal mistrust” drove Shakespeare’s art following his “erotic betrayal” by Anne Hathaway, and the loss in life meant a gain in imagination.⁵¹ To the classically educated Wilson, who served as a hospital orderly during World War I, Sophocles’ *Philoktetes* equally exemplifies the costs and compensations of art. But despite his lingering leftist leanings after being disappointed in communism, the critic saw these costs and compensations less in the political terms of checks and balances than the Freudian ones of arduously sublimated neuroses. And going by Leon Edel, Wilson’s personal neurosis was fed by the trauma of his repressed homosexuality, though his biographer, Lewis Dabney, faults Wilson’s traumatizing relationship with his father, his formative early reading and a crippling nervous breakdown.⁵²

Jesurun’s text again foregrounds sexual identity and so did Vawter’s performance, but Odysseus’ wheeling and dealing (78) prevent us from forgetting the supplementary economic rationale of his politic military mission. In the first scene *Philoktetes* calls himself a “Molly Maguire” (71), after what historians deem to have been unionized Pennsylvania coalminers whose membership in a secret society offered the perfect excuse for the nineteenth century trusts to persecute them.⁵³ Actually, the very opening lines of Jesurun’s script programmatically zoom in on the value motif with *Philoktetes*’ framebreaking injunction to Neoptolemus and the spectators alike:

Listen to me, I’m telling you something.
So that you’ll learn the value of suffering
the joy of sacrifice and patience, murder and manslaughter. (71)

The paradoxical pleasure extracted from bloodshed warns against the perversion of any ethical value which tragic suffering may have. Jesurun’s “Prayer Fragment” ritually intones the tragic insight of the necessary durability of suffering as an educational and purificatory experience but “The First Day” section iterates that insight in economic terms

I thought I would die of it
but I discovered I wouldn’t die of it
until I had suffered completely the suffering
it required of me.
Till I had paid the bill
completely. (82)

⁵⁰ Strahs 1973, 19.

⁵¹ Henke 1978, 69–70, 72.

⁵² Edel 1982, 241–67.

⁵³ Kenny 1998.

The internecine creation story related in “Philoktetes as Goddess”—strongly reminiscent of Hesiod’s bloody *Theogony*⁵⁴—sensitizes the audience to the metatheatrical implications of Jesurun’s adaptation and its formulation of a creative theory, much like Wilson, Joyce and Strahs. Its argument is indeed prolonged in “The First Day” through the female bird’s suffering from her barrenness, which caused it to be abandoned by its husband and friends:

“I can create nothing, so I am nothing.
How will I endure” [...]

In reaction, Philoktetes first quotes Isaiah 54 (82), comforting the barren, like Sarah, Abraham’s wife, and as he might have comforted Strahs, who during his defection was beset by fears about his manhood and turning female. The solution to Abraham’s problem was to let him sleep with his wife’s female attendant, Hagar, so their eldest son Ishmael could secure the offspring that would found the nation of Ishmaelites or Israel (77),⁵⁵ a theme resonating with Aeneas’ founding of Rome. Philoktetes’ own answer to the barren bird’s lament seems to beg the question:

“Your value is not that you can create,
but that you were created” (82)

Value is indeed volatile, determined by a fickle market. The value of the bow, for instance, depends on the speaker’s position, permitting the concrete object to accrue all kinds of capital—ethical, religious, and economic. It can symbolize Philoktetes’ integrity but also Neoptolemus’ capacity for individual growth as well as material and ideological benefit to state and church (75). The religious orthodoxy that suffering is good (“Prayer Fragment”), not that different from what Strahs in *North Atlantic* calls the “college of hard knocks” (30), becomes an ideology abused by the state when recited as dirge over the bodies of dead soldiers (76). In the kind of double-speak typical of Jesurun’s play one and the same passage tempts us to see the bow as boon for truthfulness and a convenient instrument:

Can you see the bow?
You can only see it from one point on the island.
Who can see it? Whoever can see it can have it. (72)

⁵⁴ Campbell 2010, 33n25.

⁵⁵ Genesis 16:3.

In the age of AIDS, the metaphorical valency of Philoktetes' wound, however, risked being reduced to the divinely imposed price for homosexual license or casual sex, the common enough right-wing accusation against HIV-infected gays. Accordingly, Jesurun, despite his foregrounding of the homoeroticism, disconnects character and speech from action.⁵⁶ He thereby not only facilitates the free play of signification but also exculpates Philoktetes⁵⁷ and through the pop-cultural register—Jesurun often pillages pop culture references, in this case from Marvel Comics to David Bowie and Yes lyrics—implies more discursive causes for Philoktetes' ostracism than a superior *raison d'état*. To clarify the etiology, Jesurun inverts cause and effect: as the disease necessarily calls forth the offense for the prejudiced, any offense, whether the death of John Lennon or JFK, Judy Garland or Bessie Smith (85).

NEOPTOLEMUS

You must have done something that would have caused this foot to fester.

PHILOKTETES

It could have been any number of things/ Most of which you yourself have done.
(77)

In this play's underworld, "the night comes before the day. The wound before the bite" (83). The bitter invective which Neoptolemus and Philoktetes sling at each other in "Sweetness" should, then, not just be ascribed to the drugs taken or a conflicted homoerotic love/hatred, but also to a culture that projects its ills on scapegoats. In addition, the hallucinatory slanging match is a sickly creative contest in which the evoked mental images, from umbilically strangulated fetuses and smothered babies to screaming cadavers, are sufficiently oppressive for Odysseus to want to "Change the picture." (85)

Brotherly love vs perpetual wounds

The sixties' counter-culture provides an appropriate interpretative context for the drug scene in Jesurun's *Philoktetes*. But in the AIDS-infested nineties Ritsema's *Philoktetes Variations* risked being seen as a reflection on the romantic image of art produced at considerable personal expense, in keeping with the personal investment of several Wooster Group associates in their work (Vawter, as well as Strahs, but also Spalding Gray⁵⁸), no matter that LeCompte herself adamantly insists on remaining absent

⁵⁶ Kaaitheater program.

⁵⁷ Campbell 2010, 23.

⁵⁸ For an interpretation of Gray's 2004 suicide by drowning as the culmination of his autobiographical performance work in "an environmental staging of sorts," see the "Coda: Life/Art Undone" to Callens 2005. On the identity/politics of Gray's *Swimming to Cambodia* (1985), whose screen version Jonathan Demme directed in 1987, see Callens 2010. This monologue dealt with the

from hers. The abusive put-down of AIDS-inspired art led to a bitter climax in Arlene Croce's notorious December 1994 *New Yorker* "review" of the "unseen" *Still/Here* by the HIV-positive Bill T. Jones, criticized for showing video footage of "dying people" and therefore dubbed "victim art".⁵⁹ What complicates retrospective assessments of work made by AIDS-infected artists about their condition are the historical and cultural shifts in their political relation to the larger community, as can be illustrated by Jonathan Demme's *Philadelphia* (1993), made shortly before Ritsema's *Philoktetes Variations*. Demme insisted on casting Vawter as Bob Seidman, one of the partners of a fictional law firm that dismisses their top attorney Andrew Beckett when they discover he has AIDS. Ironically, this was the very discrimination TriStar's health insurance company was guilty of when it refused to cover the HIV-positive Vawter, whose character in *Philadelphia* is the only one of his law firm associates to show compassion and remorse. TriStar's maneuvers presumably explain why the following year Demme himself produced the small-budget activist documentary *One Foot on a Banana Peel, the Other Foot in the Grave* (1994), directed by his HIV-positive friend Juan Botas.

Be that as it may, big-budget movies like *Philadelphia* were indicative of the mainstreaming of AIDS awareness around that time, as the goals of the gay community were extended to legal issues like gay marriage and the right to serve in the military. This legal activism should be distinguished from the more militant, grass roots activism of organizations like the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power, founded in 1987 at the instigation of playwright Larry Kramer. Critics like Douglas Crimp and Robert Corber faulted both Kramer and Demme, the one for his "anti-liberation moralism," the other for de-homosexualizing or dequeering the character played by Tom Hanks, whether in his de-eroticized relationship with his Latino lover, Miguel (Antonio Banderas), or his normalized love of opera. The latter is showcased through "La Mamma Morta" from Umberto Giordano's *Andrea Chenier* (1896), an aria sung by Maria Callas, a diva commonly associated with gay fandom. Her performance here is nevertheless deprived of the opera queen's campy excess and irony, despite the movie's generic allegiance to domestic melodrama.⁶⁰

While Corber remarks upon the feminine sanctification of Andrew's martyrdom and the feminization involved in sentimentalizing his plight,⁶¹ he omits that even in the dequeered opera sequence, the dying Andrew equally tends to be categorized in

making of Roland Joffe's *The Killing Fields* (1984), a movie about the devastating takeover of the Khmer Rouge in the aftermath of French and American colonial involvement in South-East Asia.

⁵⁹ Croce 2000, 708–19; for rebuttals see Oates 1995, n.p. and Bhabha 1994, n.p.

⁶⁰ Crimp 2004, 22–23, 254–56; Corber 2003, 121–23.

⁶¹ Corber 2003, 117, 131n16–17.

a gender model through opera's all too common diseased and dying female victims.⁶² What is more, *Andrea Chenier* invites comparison between a mother's personal sacrifice for her daughter's survival and the revolutionaries' communal sacrifice for a better political future. Corber, however, focuses on the movie's inadequate racial model foregrounded in the opera sequence's sentimental education of Andrew's African American defense attorney, Joe Miller (Denzel Washington), which arguably converts his socially indoctrinated homophobia into identification with one of its pitiful victims. The movie's primary strategy in this regard is to emphasize the human pain and suffering of the disenfranchised. These victims' martyr-like status is most explicit during the court exposure of Andrew's lesions. Unfortunately these wounds reinforce the right-wing equation of homosexuality with disease, in the face of the movie's agenda of normalizing gays and promising them inclusion into an unmarked national body, "all men [being] created equal," at the expense of their minority sexual identity and Andrew's personal life.

Ron Athey's *Incorruptible Flesh* in this regard offers a telling contrast, a series initiated two years after Vawter passed away and reviving him in the third instalment, *Perpetual Wound* (2007). This new take on Sophocles' *Philoktetes*, co-created with the UK critic-artist Dominic Johnson at the Chelsea Theatre and the Fierce Festival in Birmingham, indeed used Vawter's final performance as one of the intertexts, together with James Bidgood's 1971 film *Pink Narcissus* and Wagner's 1882 opera *Parsifal*.⁶³ The most recent iteration of Athey's *Incorruptible Flesh*, *Messianic Remains*, could be seen in LA at Human Resources (2013). The second version, variously subtitled *Diminutive Sparkle* and *Dissociated Sparkle*,⁶⁴ was done in Glasgow and New York (2006). The very first version of what was then still subtitled *A Work in Progress* (1996) and had a crackly recording of Moreschi, the last surviving castrato, running beneath its text, was co-created with Lawrence Steger at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Glasgow (1996). At that point Athey had already been HIV positive for ten years, so that like *Four Seasons from a Harsh Life*,⁶⁵ the performance led to misguided accusations of him threatening audience members with infection by dripping blood. By analogy, the goodbye kiss Jesusur's Philoktetes extends lethally infects Neoptolemus, as if in retaliation for his lie. At the same time, the lethal kiss establishes a moment of true communication,⁶⁶ manifest in their shared dream of each other and the exact same speech to verbalize it: "I'm

⁶² Hutcheon 1999.

⁶³ Johnson 2008, 505; Wagley 2013, n.p.

⁶⁴ Wagley has *Diminutive Sparkle*, Doyle 2013, n.p. *Dissociated Sparkle*.

⁶⁵ Spackman 2000, 2014.

⁶⁶ Campbell 2010, 37.

asleep. I made you out of nothing and now you are nothing./ When I open my eyes we'll be inside out, with or without you." (90). Jesurun's Odysseus, however, has been infected even without any physical contact, since he starts to bleed as well (87).

Athey's *Perpetual Wound* can be interpreted as a masochistic alternative to the pity-inciting normalizing and nationalizing discourse of *Philadelphia*, though critics referencing Vawter's performance in the context of *Incorruptible Flesh* tend to obscure the larger framework of Ritsema's *Variations*.⁶⁷ Athey exploits the martyrous implications of his pain in an unsettling and provocative way yet does not jettison his gay identity. Rather, he ritually "embraces pain as a way to form bonds in opposition to homophobia, his work first coalescing around the post-modern plague of AIDS," much as "the mass penitential movements of the later Middle Ages arose in response to plague".⁶⁸ Since the 1980s, when he began performing, Athey has been "speaking for a sexual preference minority at a time when a great variety of queer voices were being allowed into mainstream discourse".⁶⁹ Vawter's performance in *Philoktetes Variations* may have taken place in a major venue like Kaaitheater but, like Athey's work, did not for that matter make any concessions to the general public. No efforts were made to hide his condition, if that had been possible at all, whereas in *Philadelphia* Andrew's acceptance by a homophobic society prevents him, when he is healthy, from acknowledging his gay identity (in court he is even accused of trying to pass as heterosexual), and forces him, once he is infected by AIDS, to hide his lesions, whether beneath a cap, layers of pancake, or a pristine white shirt.

Perhaps neither gain nor loss

The effect of Ritsema's *Philoktetes Variations* on the Brussels spectators was most unsettling, since it was hard to tell whether or when Ron Vawter's suffering was actual or acted, or both.

Vawter may not have wanted to reduce the interpretative range of the production to his AIDS, since holding on to his job as an actor was simply the best therapy he could think of. Still, readings in terms of Croce's disreputable "victim art" were tempting, Pieter T'Jonck coming close in his initial offense at Ritsema's apparently obscene exploitation of Vawter and his audience alike. A key to a better understanding of the production is nevertheless provided by the "confessio" from 'East Coker' V (1940), the third of T.S. Eliot's *Four Quartets* (1935–42), included in the Kaaitheater program.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Carlson 2010, 114.

⁶⁸ Carlson 2010, 105, 129.

⁶⁹ Carlson 2010, 115.

⁷⁰ Eliot 1973, 182, ll 1–18.

To begin, the “confessio” harks back to Vawter’s original plans for his own Philoktetes adaptation. Next, the *Quartets* provide a poetic model for Ritsema’s dramatic variations given their recursive form,⁷¹ doubling the Greeks’ need to return to Lemnos in order to forge ahead in Troy. More importantly, this overall recursive form should be seen as a self-imposed yet liberating constraint which enacts the poems’ theme of human limitation that can only be transcended by a full embrace of life’s experiences. These include positive as well as negative ones, since the gloom of some quartets, no matter it was determined by the onset of World War II, led E.M. Forster to consider them, and ‘Little Gidding’ in particular, an “homage to pain” and Eliot a “masochist”.⁷² The “confessio” from “East Coker,” finally, explains why Ritsema and Vawter insisted on ending with Gide. Though Jesurun’s delirious text equally revolves around the spiritual transformation through suffering on the edge of death,⁷³ Gide’s Philoktetes perhaps comes closest to defending an ascetic ideal similar to the one Eliot developed in his post-conversion *Quartets*.

Ironically, Eliot himself was “rewriting” Alfred Tennyson’s “Ulysses” (1833),⁷⁴ one of three classical poetic monologues on death, the other two being “Tithonus”⁷⁵ and “Tiresias,” composed after the loss of his beloved Arthur Henry Hallam in Tennyson’s self-acknowledged “need of going forward and braving the struggle of life”, good or bad.⁷⁶ If Eliot’s “Old men ought to be explorers,” Tennyson’s Ulysses “cannot rest from travel” but “will drink/ Life to the lees,” having “enjoyed greatly” and “suffered greatly,” “And drunk delight of battle [...] Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.” Tennyson possibly followed up Tiresias’ cryptic prediction of the Greek hero’s death at sea in book 11 of the *Odyssey*, since his Ulysses is an older man, rallying his mariners for a journey beyond the strait of Gibraltar, what was then considered the limit of the known world. For him as for Eliot the real challenge lies in the transcendence of human limitations, “Beyond the utmost bound of human thought,” since “all experience is an arch wherethrough \ Gleams that untravelled world, whose margin fades\ For ever and for ever when I move.” In Tennyson’s poem, as in Vawter’s terminal condition at the time, the prescience of a certain death looms large. But the fight “To strive, to seek, to find,

⁷¹ Lobb 1993, 33.

⁷² Lobb 1993, 35.

⁷³ Qtd in T’Jonck 2006, n.p.

⁷⁴ Lobb 1993, 36.

⁷⁵ In Elias Merhige’s *Shadow of the Vampire* (2000) Schreck, played by founding Wooster Group member Willem Dafoe, deploras his decrepit condition by quoting Tennyson’s “Tithonus.”

⁷⁶ Qtd in Markley 2004, 122. On the vexed question of Eliot’s and Tennyson’s homosexuality, see e.g. Churchill 2005 and Nunokawa 1991.

and not to yield” is kept up, despite the sense of failure and models impossible to emulate, Tennyson included.⁷⁷ To Eliot, “The rest is not our business.”

⁷⁷ Plasa 1998; Kolb 1998.

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Achaean, Athenians and Americans in the Post-9/11 Era

Comparing empires in *The New York Times*

ADAM J. GOLDWYN



ON SEPTEMBER 19, 2001, just a week and a day after the al-Qaeda strikes on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, *The New York Times* op-ed columnist Maureen Dowd began her column as follows:

The most famous story of the Western world, the proto-type of all tales of human conflict [...] is the Wooden Horse. Despite repeated warnings, the Trojans relaxed their guard and let their fortress be breached. After the Trojans feasted and fell asleep, the hidden Greeks emerged. “Mad with murder,” Homer writes, they wielded their swords and hacked men and women to “the last thrust.” [...] We are chilled as we learn more about how the Middle East terrorists mad with murder breached our walls.¹

Seeking to make sense of a situation without precedent in her own life, Dowd turns to the classical past for an analogous situation. In her column, the past serves as a paradigm through which contemporary issues and events can be understood and interpreted. Her comparison makes the Americans into the Trojans, and the terrorists into the Greeks in the Wooden Horse. Like the Trojans, the Americans had a huge wall—two oceans and a formidable military—which was their constant defense. And, also like the Trojans, their enemies penetrated this wall not through brute force and direct military confrontation, but, rather, through deception, sneaking inside and attacking from within.

Dowd, however, is not the first to have used the past in this paradigmatic way. In *The Founders and the Classics*, Carl Richard argues:

Ancient history provided the founders with important [...] models of personal behavior, social practice, and government form [...] The founders’ models of personal behavior included mythological figures, Athenians, and Romans.²

¹ Dowd 2000.

² Richard 1994, 53.

Thus, a contemporary eulogizer of George Washington in 1804 could write:

“Thou sleepest the sleep of Death, but we are not unmindful of thee, O! *Achilles*: in life and death thou art equally the object of our regard and veneration.” Thus sang the Grecian Bard, to sooth the shade of a Hero: with like affectionate reverence, with pious sensibilities, do we cherish thy memory, departed *Washington*.³

In this instance, the paradigm is used for praise rather than exhortation, favorably comparing the military glory of George Washington to that of the Achaean hero Achilles.

John Adams also used the past as paradigm to examine his own circumstances before, during and after the American Revolution. He compares himself, for example, to the Athenian orator, diplomat and leader Demosthenes. Dissatisfied with the temerity of American politicians pushing for military support from France during the American Revolution, Adams, on a diplomatic mission in Paris in 1774, wrote:

When Demosthenes (God forgive the Vanity of recollecting his Example) went [as] Ambassador from Athens to the other States of Greece, to excite a Confederacy against Philip [of Macedon], he did not go to propose a Non Importation or Non Consumption Agreement!⁴

Adams uses the Demosthenes example in a hortatory fashion, implicitly suggesting that the Americans follow the more aggressive Greek example.

Thus, when Dowd compares the September 11 terrorists to the Greeks in the Trojan Horse, and America and its government to the Trojans, she is, in fact, tapping into a tradition of paradigmatic use of Greek myth and history which has found and held an important place in American political discourse ever since the nation's inception. In the aftermath of the September 11 attacks and the beginning of American military involvement in Afghanistan and Iraq, comparisons between the American, Achaean and Athenian imperial ventures have become more poignant,⁵ and one locus for viewing this debate is the op-ed page of the *New York Times*. Given their historic importance in

³ Davis 1804, 6, italics in original. Nor was this simply a literary phenomenon: Garry Wills describes how the early 19th century American sculptor Horatio Greenough took for his model of George Washington ‘the greatest statue ever created, by the greatest sculptor who ever lived—the Elean *Zeus* of Phidias’ (1984, 420).

⁴ Richard 1994, 57

⁵ The contemporary stage has been another important locus for such critique: Hornby, who describes a 2004 staging of Euripides’ *Iphigenia* as about ‘three wars—Trojan, Peloponnesian, and Iraqi’ (2005, 651); Dué describes how the Royal Shakespeare Company’s 2005 *Hecuba* as well as American versions of *The Trojan Women* and *Persians* “sought to connect with its audience by adding an anti-Iraq War twist,” from which Dué concludes, as do the *NYT* columnists, “audiences of

American political discourse, the current use of classical paradigms is about more than simply explaining the present in terms of a past whose meaning is fixed and inviolable; it is, in fact, a means of persuasion, an attempt to reshape the past in light of the present political and social context. Thus, though the events of the past remain unchanged, that past is interpreted to suit the author's own motivations and ideologies. The past, then, on the opinion pages of *The New York Times*, becomes a contested locus where arguments about the present are couched in the mythology of the past. The dispute among the commentators, therefore, is also an argument over political authority, over who owns the past and who has the right to legitimize themselves and their positions through that ownership: anti-war columnists such as Dowd and Nicholas Kristof appropriate the past to rhetorically buttress their anti-war ideology, while for the conservative columnist David Brooks, the Classics demonstrate his own more interventionist ideology.

On March 18, 2003, a day and a half before the invasion of Iraq, Kristof wrote his column from the modern archaeological site of Troy:

Then there's a roar, and two fighter jets streak across the sky, creating a collage of one of the world's first battlegrounds and the next one, just southeast of here in Iraq. The instruments of war have changed mightily in 3,200 years, but people have not; that is why Homer's "Iliad," even when it may not be historically true, exudes a profound moral truth as the greatest war story ever told.⁶

As in Dowd's September 19 column, the Trojan War appears as a historical paradigm at a moment of profound modern historical import. But whereas Dowd was drawing a historical analogy to explain an unparalleled contemporary event, Kristof's use of the Trojan War on the eve of the Iraq war is illustrative of something more significant: at this crucial moment, when issues of war and peace rest in the balance, the single most persuasive piece of evidence Kristof can muster in his last anti-war pitch is a Trojan War paradigm. The paradigm has a didactic function: "So on the eve of a new war, the remarkably preserved citadel of Troy is an intriguing spot to seek lessons."⁷ The Trojan War paradigm is deployed to make a convincing case for a certain contemporary decision, that is, not to invade Iraq.

For Kristof, the Trojan War offers three lessons to the Iraq War.

First, even when one has a legitimate grievance, war is not always the best solution. The Greeks were initially divided about whether to attack Troy, with even heroes like

the twenty-first century are able to view Greek tragedy as relevant to current events." (2007, 244) Indeed, he later references Kristof 2003, discussed below.

⁶ Kristof 2003.

⁷ Kristof 2003.

Agamemnon and Odysseus reluctant. Yet the hawks won the day, in part by offering an early version of the Bush doctrine: if we let the Trojans get away with kidnapping Helen, then they'll steal women again; if we don't fight them now, we'll have to later, when they're stronger. Turns out the doves were right.⁸

Thus, the Trojan War is seen as a cautionary paradigm for war. He argues that, as in the Trojan War, the invading army has a legitimate grievance, but that, in fact, war is not the best way to vindicate the harm done.

Second, Kristof argues that the Trojan War also proves the necessity of maintaining allies, arguing that "Agamemnon was the Donald Rumsfeld of his day, needlessly angering his key allies—and outraging Achilles by swiping his concubine Briseis."⁹ In addition to offering a general critique of military policy, this paradigm also employs direct personal comparisons: Donald Rumsfeld as Agamemnon.

Lastly, Kristof suggests:

So, by Zeus, that third lesson from Troy is the paramount need to listen to skeptical voices. Virgil suggests that the Trojans rashly brought the wooden horse inside their city despite the alarm of two early pundits—Cassandra and Laocoön, who warned against Greeks bearing gifts. If the Trojans had just thought it over for a week, by which time the Greeks inside would have died of thirst, then the Trojan War might have ended differently.¹⁰

In the second lesson, Kristof made the explicit parallel between Donald Rumsfeld and Agamemnon; in the third lesson, too, he argues for a parallel between individual actors, though this time he does so implicitly: he is the skeptical voice, he is Laocoön and Cassandra. And, the lesson goes, since the Trojans were wrong not to listen to them, the American political elite is making the same mistake in ignoring him. Kristof concludes with a reiteration of the didactic purpose of the Trojan War and its paradigms, making explicit the connection between mythical past and lived present: "We Americans are the Greeks of our day, and as we now go to war, we should appreciate not only the beauty of the tale, but also the warnings within it."¹¹

Of course, Kristof's warnings were ignored, and the invasion occurred anyway. This did not, however, preclude the application of Trojan War paradigms to the Iraq War. At another significant moment in the Iraq War's progress, Trojan War paradigms appear again. Maureen Dowd begins her column of May 16, 2004, about two weeks after the revelations of prisoner abuse at Abu Ghraib:

⁸ Kristof 2003.

⁹ Kristof 2003.

¹⁰ Kristof 2003.

¹¹ Kristof 2003.

Oblivious of the consequences, the impetuous black sheep of a ruling family starts a war triggered by a personal grudge. The father, a respected veteran of his own wars, suppresses his unease and graciously supports his son, even though it will end up destroying his legacy and the world order he envisioned. The ferocious battle in the far-off sands spirals out of control, with many brave soldiers killed.[...] Aside from dishing up a gilded Brad Pitt with a leather miniskirt and a Heathrow duty-free accent[...] [the movie] ‘Troy’ also dishes up some gilded lessons on the Aeschylating cost of imperial ambitions and personal vendettas.¹²

Dowd’s paradigm in this column is in the same tradition as Kristof’s: the Trojan War paradigm reimaged to support an “antiwar message”. Like Kristof, too, Dowd makes explicit individual comparisons between historical and contemporary actors: in her reading, George H.W. Bush is Priam, George W Bush is Paris, and the far-off sands of Troy become the far-off sands of Iraq. And, on the didactic level, this paradigm, like the previous ones, is also used for moral political instruction: had the American political class learned the moral of the Trojan story, Dowd implies, they would not have made the same mistake as the Trojans. Dowd concludes the column with a hope that these lessons will be learned by the politicians in charge of the war: “Maybe the president and vice-president will catch ‘Troy’ on their planes as they jet around to fund-raisers. But the antiwar message will probably be lost, except on the official who is both a snubbed Cassandra and a sulking Achilles, Colin Powell.”¹³

Nor is it just the Trojan War which serves as a paradigm for contemporary American politics. In a column from December 11, 2004, Kristof warns of the consequences of American imperial arrogance before launching into a didactic paradigm drawn from the Peloponnesian War: “We might recall what happened to ancient Athens, perhaps the greatest flowering of civilization. In just three generations, one small city—by today’s standards anyway—nurtured democracy [and] became a superpower.”¹⁴ Here, of course, Kristof sets up a cautionary paradigm comparing American involvement in World War II and its results to Athenian involvement in the Persian War and her subsequent political and imperial ascendancy.

The column continues, and presses the paradigm further:

Yet Athens became too full of itself [...] it scoffed at the rising anti-Athenianism. To outsiders, it came to epitomize not democracy, but arrogance. The great humanists of the ancient world could be bafflingly inhumane abroad, as at Melos [...] Athens’ overweening military intervention abroad antagonized and alarmed its neighbors, eventually leading to its defeat in the Peloponnesian War. It’s not so much that Ath-

¹² Dowd 2011.

¹³ Dowd 2004.

¹⁴ Kristof 2004.

ens was defeated—it betrayed its own wonderful values, alienated its neighbors and destroyed itself.¹⁵

The reasons for the Athenian defeat in the Peloponnesian War are numerous and complex, and even today, there is no consensus as to what they are. Kristof, however, seems to have no qualms about asserting that “it’s not so much that Athens was defeated—it betrayed its own wonderful values, alienated its neighbors and destroyed itself.” One could well imagine that Lysander and the Spartans (or a different contemporary commentator) would tell a different story about how Athens was defeated. But again, what is important for the use of paradigms is less its fidelity to some idealized truth of the situation than the lesson which a slight alteration of the paradigm might make clearer. Kristof wants to tell a story about American arrogance; the Athenian situation is roughly, though not exactly, similar to the American situation, so he asserts a single (overly simplistic) narrative and selects only those details of the paradigmatic story which most closely correspond to the lesson he wants to teach about American imperial arrogance. Since American ascendancy appears to be following the trajectory of Athenian ascendancy, he worries that its decline will too. But the knowledge of what happened to the Athenians, he implies, can help America avoid the same downward spiral, and Kristof thinks the lesson might be getting through. He concludes: “Fortunately, I think Mr. Bush is beginning to get it”, a line which demonstrates the didactic and persuasive nature of the paradigm: if “Mr. Bush is beginning to get it,” then so too, by extension, should his readers.¹⁶

Other columns by Kristof make the didactic function of the Athens-America paradigm more explicit. In a televised address on January 10, 2007, President Bush announced a plan, which came to be known as “the surge,” authorizing the deployment of an additional 20,000 American soldiers to Iraq. Kristof begins “Stumbling Around the World”, his column of January 14, 2007, with a question:

With Iraq sliding off a cliff, and now tugging another 20,000 young Americans along as well, it’s well worth wrestling with a larger question: why are we so awful at foreign policy? [...] The first [reason] is that great powers always lumber about, stepping on toes, provoking resentments, and solving problems militarily simply because they have that capability. One of the great passages of Thucydides records how some 2,400 years ago Athens decided to wipe out the city of Melos because it could.¹⁷

¹⁵ Kristof 2004.

¹⁶ Kristof 2004.

¹⁷ Kristof 2007, ‘Stumbling.’

In Kristof's paradigms, Athenian imperial expansion becomes a series of mistakes which contemporary America is about to make again. Again, he implies, knowledge of Athenian history could help the American political class avoid these mistakes by drawing from a complex political and military conflict a few general, over-arching and universally applicable laws.

This didactic nature of the Athens-America paradigm leads inevitably to a discussion of how one is supposed to learn these lessons, and this in turn, leads to a discussion of the intersection of literature and education. Kristof begins his column of the very next week, January 23, 2007 by citing the connection between education, literature and the use of paradigms: "George W. Bush [...] has made the Classics powerfully resonant today. So for those schoolchildren and university students out there struggling through 'Moby-Dick' or the 'Aeneid,' take heart! They're not just about whales or Trojan wanderers—they're also about President Bush and Iraq."¹⁸ For Kristof, then, the works have a didactic function: students should analyze the paradigms they present to better understand their own societies.

In his next piece, "Under Bush's Pillow", Kristof writes that that column inspired over "400 comments from readers offering literary or historical parallels to the Bush administration and Iraq," demonstrating that the ancient past was but one of many sources of paradigmatic understanding of the past.¹⁹ In his column the next week, Kristof published some of his readers' suggestions for non-Greek paradigms (in which contemporary popular sources, such as the Harry Potter novels, rival older and more traditional examples like Shakespeare's *Henry V*, *Hamlet* and *Julius Caesar*). The column continues. "One of the most commonly cited was Xenophon's ancient warning, in 'Anabasis,' of how much easier it is to get into a Middle Eastern war than out. [...] Xenophon's subtext is how the slog of war corrodes soldiers and allows them to do terrible things. Xenophon is particularly pained when recounting a massacre that was the Haditha of its day."²⁰ Again, the past is present, molded to fit the author's ideologies: there was, of course, no 'Haditha of its day': every historical instance is, by its nature, unique and irreproducible, but Kristof draws the parallel nonetheless to draw attention to a particularly gruesome moment in the present.

¹⁸ For other contemporary approaches to the Trojan War as a paradigm to teach students morality, see Noddings (2004): 'One work that high school students often read, *The Iliad*, can be used to launch critical thinking about the ways in which warriors can lose their moral anchors' (493).

¹⁹ Kristof 2007, 'Under'.

²⁰ Kristof 2007, 'Under'. For a university professor's perspective on teaching courses about Alexander of Macedon in light of American military involvement in the region, see Romm (2007).

The rest of the column turns from paradigms to a more theoretical discussion of the role of paradigmatic literature:

Perhaps I'm cherry-picking from the Classics to support my own opposition to the "surge" in Iraq. In writing this column, I wondered what Classics Mr. Bush's supporters would cite to argue for his strategy. [...] Yet frankly, it is difficult to find great literature that encourages rulers to invade foreign lands, to escalate when battles go badly, to scorn critics, to be cocksure of themselves in the face of adversity. The Classics tend to be the opposite[...] The Classics have an overwhelmingly cautionary bias, operating as a check on any impulsive rush to war.²¹

Kristof is right to note that the anti-war bias he sees in literature may be related to his anti-war politics, for pro-war writers tend to read the Classics in exactly the opposite way. Indeed, in another column, Dowd points out how conservatives read as hortatory the very same works she and Kristof read as cautionary. In a column published on May 30, 2007, Dowd writes:

The odd thing is that conservatives wear pinstriped suits. They love the ancients so much that they really should be walking around in togas. But that doesn't stop conservatives,—especially the Straussians who pushed for going into Iraq—from being obsessed with ancient Greece, and from believing that they are the successors to Plato and Homer in terms of lofty ideals and nobility and character in American politics.²²

Dowd specifically refers to the competition between liberals and conservatives, between anti- and pro-war factions to legitimate their policy based on the co-option of the symbols of the past, from "believing that they are the successors to Plato and Homer," something which Kristof, through his anti-war interpretation of the Classics, also claims.

This same column discusses a speech by the neoconservative theorist Harvey Mansfield. Mansfield's speech uses a Homeric paradigm to condone the surge, the military strategy which Kristof had just used Thucydides to condemn. Dowd quotes Mansfield as saying: "What did Achilles do when his ruler Agamemnon stole his slave girl? He raised the stakes."²³ Thus, Mansfield's reading of the *Iliad* is at odds with Kristof's, for in Mansfield's reading, Achilles did, in fact (and in opposition to Kristof) "escalate when things went badly" and was "cocksure of himself in the face of adversity." Moreover, Mansfield praises Achilles for exemplifying the very attributes which Kristof uses

²¹ Kristof 2007, 'Under'.

²² Dowd 2007.

²³ Dowd 2007.

the same paradigm to condemn.²⁴ There are, then, Kristof notwithstanding, readers of Thucydides who come to the opposite conclusion about its paradigmatic use.

Dowd also writes about a phone call she had with the Yale historian Donald Kagan, whose sons Robert and Frederick Kagan are both neoconservative war supporters:

I called Professor [Donald] Kagan to ask him if Thucydides, the master at chronicling hubris and imperial overreaching, might provide the new war czar with any wisdom that can help America sort through the morass of Iraq. Very much his sons' father, the Classicist said he was disgusted that the White House[...] appoint[ed] General Lute, a chief skeptic of the surge. Professor Kagan said that one reason the Athenians ended up losing the war was because in the Battle of Mantinea in 418 BCE against the Spartans, they sent a very inferior force and had a general in command who was associated with the faction that was against the aggressive policy of the Spartans.²⁵

As with Kristof's previous example of the Athenian defeat by the Spartans, the reasons why one side wins a war is complex and, ultimately, if knowable at all, subject to a variety of equally compelling claims about the nature of historical causation. But for the purposes of persuasive rhetoric, that is, to convince Americans to support an increase in troops in Iraq, Kagan simplifies the complex conditions of a war fought two thousand years ago and finds in it a lesson for his contemporary audience, one which explicitly defies the "overwhelmingly cautionary bias, operating as a check on any impulsive rush to war" which Kristof finds in the Classics.²⁶ Indeed, Kagan and Mansfield see the Classics as validating their ideological dispositions.

One of the *Times*' conservative op-ed writers, David Brooks, has been both a champion of the classical education and the war in Iraq, and his columns suggest that a better knowledge of the classics, rather than discouraging war, as Kristof says they should, would simply make Americans better at it. Lamenting the state of the American intelligence community, he argues that "[w]hen you try to analyze human affairs using a process that is systematic, codified and bureaucratic as the C.I.A. does, you[...]

²⁴ Dowd continues with other pro-war readers of the Classics: 'The most recent example of the Hellenization of the Bush administration is the president's choice for war czar, Army Lt. Gen. Douglas Lute, who says he loves the Greek military historian Thucydides. Other Thucydides aficionados include Victor Davis Hanson, who was a war guru to Dick Cheney when the vice president went into the bunker after 9/11' (Dowd [2007]).

²⁵ Dowd 2007. See also Luban's indirect critique of Donald Kagan's Trojan War paradigms, mocking the Classicism of Donald's son Robert's Classicism, he compares Zeus to the atom bomb and Zeus' anger, which "awed and silen[ced] the other gods to Bush's shock and awe doctrine (Luban 240, esp. 238-40).

²⁶ Kristof 2007, 'Under'.

don't produce reason."²⁷ He argues that the C.I.A. needs to return to the study of the Classics: "I'll believe the intelligence community has really changed when I see analysts being sent to training academies where they study Thucydides [...] to get a broad understanding of the full range of human behavior."²⁸ Thus, a fundamental purpose of the Classics is to educate people to make better decisions in the present. Another column makes this connection even more explicit. Lamenting the state of the American education system this time, he writes: "students often graduate 'without the kind of core knowledge you'd expect from a good high school student.'"²⁹ Brooks advises that one should rectify this problem by taking courses on Plato and "a course on ancient Greece. For 2,500 years, educators knew that the core of their mission was to bring students into contact with heroes like Pericles, Socrates, and Leonidas."³⁰ All this education, he argues, is for the purpose of being able to apply the past as paradigm motif.

In another column, Brooks applauds a course offered at Yale entitled "Grand Strategy." He describes it as "a life-altering event" in which "students [...] were applying Thucydides [...] to modern foreign policy crises. They talked excitedly about seeing the connections between big ideas and big events."³¹ Learning the Classics, in this formulation, enables students to understand their own times in terms of historical events: it is, in essence, a way of thinking dependent on the use of (often, though not exclusively) classical paradigms. Thus, for the anti-war columnists, the classical legacy is a cautionary tale about imperial hubris, which should warn modern politicians against war. For the pro-war columnists and their intellectual kindred, however, the classical legacy amounts to a source of inspiration about the necessity of foreign wars to spread Western democratic values. For them, the classical legacy is not a warning to avoid all foreign war, but a source of mistakes made in previous attempts to accomplish an admirable ideal.

In new and uncertain situations, people look to the past for models of how to behave in the present. Thus Achilles, in a previously unimaginable situation—meeting with the father of the man he has just killed—looks to the past for how to behave and finds an answer in the example of Niobe. Similarly, when Socrates is facing his own death, he looks to the past and finds in Achilles and other Trojan heroes an example for how to face death bravely. The founders of the American republic, finding themselves in the new and unique situation of establishing a government, looked to the paradigms

²⁷ Brooks 2005.

²⁸ Brooks 2005.

²⁹ Brooks 2006.

³⁰ Brooks 2006.

³¹ Brooks 2004.

of Greece and Rome not only to determine what kind of government to set up, but also how to describe their own roles in that formation. In using Greece as a paradigm for a democratic state, they also looked to classical Greek models for how to behave.

It is fitting, therefore, that one of the war's profoundly symbolic end points, the killing Osama bin Laden on May 2, 2011, should have also been understood in terms of its classical precedent. As the debate in America turned from the killing and disposal of the body in the ocean, it became known that the United States government had photos of the body; opinion-shapers of all political stripes weighed in on whether to release the photos to the public. On May 5, 2011, the *Times* ran a series of letters to the editor debating the release. One such letter, by an otherwise unidentified Dominique Browning, read:

I applaud President Obama's decision not to release the photographs of Osama bin Laden's body. I keep thinking of the scene in the "Iliad" by Homer in which Achilles avenges the death of his beloved friend Patroclus by killing Hector. Then, fueled by his rage and bloodlust, Achilles publicly drags Hector's body through the dirt behind his chariot.³²

The writer sees in this Trojan War paradigm a model not to emulate but, rather, to avoid. Thus, the President's decision to have heeded the negative exemplum of the past and not do as the heroes of old did merits his praise. Browning sees the paradigm as an example of behavior "fueled by [...] rage and bloodlust" and thus unworthy of emulation. From this Homeric paradigm, Browning is able to draw a lesson about proper behavior in the modern era: "Americans do not need to see these photographs, the modern equivalent of dragging the enemy's body through the streets to sate public bloodlust."³³ This use of the paradigm, moreover, was not written by a professional writer (or at least he was not identified as such) but rather by an ordinary American citizen, thus showing the deep penetration of the classical paradigm into the consciousness of the ordinary citizen and not just its professional authorial and pundit class. This, then, serves as evidence that the rhetorical power of the paradigm is not the possession of the pundit class alone, but one with which ordinary Americans identify and which they can also manipulate themselves.

The September 11 attacks and the subsequent military operations in the Middle East presented Americans with a unique and new situation for which there was no obvious historical precedent. Commentators in *The New York Times*, therefore, looked to the past for paradigms of how to behave in such a situation. Though the writers on *The*

³² Browning 2011.

³³ Browning 2011.

Times' op-ed page wrote hundreds of op-eds during the course of the Iraq War and the War on Terror, and though classical paradigms comprise but a small portion of those, they appear with some regularity in the defining moments of the conflict: in the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, on the eve of the Iraq invasion, just after prison abuse revelations at Abu Ghraib, during the debate about the "Surge" and in the days following the death of Osama bin Laden. This demonstrates that both the Trojan War and the Peloponnesian War offered these writers and their audience important models for how to interpret and contextualize the events of their own lives. But, as Willcock understood, paradigms are fundamentally about persuasion: persuading someone to act in a certain way or believe a certain thing because some (greater or more ancient) person in the past believed that as well.

In *The New York Times*, anti-war commentators framed the events of these ancient wars in such a way as to persuade their readers that they, too, should oppose these wars. Pro-war commentators used the persuasive rhetoric of classical paradigms to achieve the opposite results. This demonstrates a final, important point about the usefulness of paradigms: they have no inherent meaning. The malleability of paradigms means that the same paradigm can be used to demonstrate to diametrically opposite views, in this case, both pro- and anti-war attitudes can be encompassed by the same paradigms. In this light, it is interesting to note that as the nature of the threats facing America change, the use of classical paradigms changes as well. As the events of September 11 recede in the American popular imagination and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan wind down, the issue of America's national debt and the rise and influence of China have entered the political discourse. As they have done so, the same paradigms which were used to explain the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are now being altered to suit this new reality. On July 23, 2011, David Sanger wrote an op-ed in *The New York Times* describing "The Thucydides Trap," defined as "that deadly combination of calculation and emotion that, over the years, can turn healthy rivalry into antagonism or worse. In this case, America is the Spartans, the reigning superpower, and China is the 'brash competitor.'"³⁴ Sanger quotes the line from Thucydides that "what made war inevitable was the growth of Athenian power and the fear which this caused in Sparta."³⁵ Though the situation has changed from actual war in the Middle East to economic rivalry in China, the paradigm, ever malleable, remains.

³⁴ Sanger 2011.

³⁵ Sanger 2011.

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