

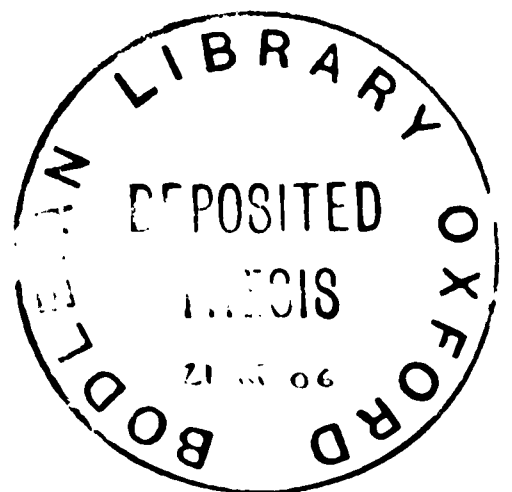
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

**EURIPIDES' *TROJAN WOMEN*:
A 20TH CENTURY WAR PLAY IN PERFORMANCE**

D.PHIL THESIS

AVERY T. WILLIS
BALLIOL COLLEGE

SUPERVISOR: PROF. OLIVER TAPLIN, MAGDALEN COLLEGE
TRINITY TERM, 2005



ABSTRACT

Euripides' *Trojan Women*: A 20th Century War Play in Performance

Avery T. Willis, Balliol College

Faculty of Classics, Sub-Faculty of Classical Languages and Literature

Submitted for Degree of Doctor of Philosophy, Trinity Term 2005

Supervisor: Professor Oliver Taplin, Magdalen College

In this dissertation, I approach the interpretation of a classical text in performance by examining the practical elements (directorial and design choices: set, costumes, lighting, music, etc.) and promotional materials (programmes, press releases, photographs, etc.) for a selection of significant test cases in order to determine how these production decisions engage with external factors of political, intellectual, and cultural import. *Trojan Women* is a particularly useful case study to explore within the parameters of this method because the dynamism and immediacy of the play is most powerfully articulated when production choices allow for it to be wielded as a weapon of protest or reaction against contemporary policy, especially the waging of war. Using a chronological approach, this analysis of *Trojan Women* as a text for performance provides a broad and in-depth discussion of the reception of the play in the twentieth century, the period in which the ancient text was most frequently performed. Through the investigation of several influential productions on the international stage, and through an examination of the roles of key players (particularly Gilbert Murray and Jean-Paul Sartre), *Trojan Women* emerges as a play that offers theatre artists a unique and effective forum for debating issues of human responsibility in times of war—a central theme in the play and a considerable preoccupation during a century of armed conflict. Chapter One discusses how the play was used to criticize imperial activity and promote ideological causes in the first half of the century. Chapters Two and Three draw attention to a major cluster of performances reflecting the spirit of international war protest in the 1960s and 1970s. Chapter Four addresses productions of the play affected by delayed responses to the Holocaust. Chapter Five features performances in the 1990s that respond to crises of civil conflict and genocide.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Acknowledgements	i
Introduction	1
One	
<i>The 'Living Art' of Theatre and the Two World Wars</i>	20
1. Harley Granville-Barker/Gilbert Murray, <i>Trojan Women</i> (London, Royal Court Theatre, 1905)	31
2. Harley Granville-Barker/Gilbert Murray, <i>Trojan Women</i> (American Tour, 1915)	37
3. Maurice Browne/Gilbert Murray, <i>Trojan Women</i> (Chicago Little Theatre/American Tour, 1913-1915)	49
4. Lewis Casson/Gilbert Murray, <i>Trojan Women</i> (London, various theatres, 1919)	63
5. Victor Barnowski/Franz Werfel, <i>Die Troerinnen</i> (Berlin, various theatres/European Tour, 1916)	74
6. Mary Hunter/Edith Hamilton, <i>Trojan Women</i> (New York, Master's Institute Theatre, 1938)	87
7. Hallie Flanagan/Phillip H. Davis, <i>Trojan Incident</i> (New York, St James Theatre, Federal Theatre Project, 1938)	90
8. Margaret Webster/Gilbert Murray, <i>Trojan Women</i> (New York, Cort Theater, 1941)	93
Two	
<i>A Weapon of Protest and Reaction: Productions by Michael Cacoyannis on stage and screen</i>	95
9. Michael Cacoyannis/Edith Hamilton, <i>Trojan Women</i> (New York, Circle-in-the-Square Theatre, 1963)	97
10. Michael Cacoyannis/Jean-Paul Sartre, <i>Les Troyennes</i>	111

(Paris, Théâtre National Populaire, 1965)

11. Michael Cacoyannis/Edith Hamilton, *Trojan Women* 122
(Major Motion Picture, 1971)

Three

Towards a More Sacred Text? 140
Avant-garde productions by Andrei Serban and Tadashi Suzuki

12. Andrei Serban, *Fragments of a Trilogy* 142
(New York/international tour, La MaMa ETC, 1974)

13. Tadashi Suzuki, *Trojan Women* 161
(Tokyo/international tour, Iwanami Hall, 1974)

Four

Agency and Actualität: 179
Responses to the Holocaust in 1980s Israel and Germany

14. George Tabori/Mattias Braun, *Die Troerinnen* 185
(Bremen Theater am Goetheplatz, 1976)

15. George Tabori/Walter Jens, *Der Untergang: Nach den Troerinnen des Euripides* 203
(Munich, München Kammerspiele, 1985)

16. Christoph Schroth/Hans Mayer (Jean-Paul Sartre), *Antike Entdeckungen 5* 215
(Schwerin, Mecklenburg Staatstheater, 1982)

17. Holk Freytag/Eli Malka, *Trojan Women* 227
(Tel Aviv, Habima National Theatre, 1983)

18. Hanoch Levin/Hanoch Levin, *The Hopeless Women of Troy* 244
(Tel Aviv, Cameri Theatre, 1984)

Five

A Question of Relevance: 256
Productions in the 1990s, an era of global reorganisation and instability

19. Katie Mitchell/Kenneth McLeish, *Women of Troy* 258
(London, Gate Theatre, 1991)

20. Lynne Parker/Brendan Kennelly, *Trojan Women* 264
(Dublin, Peacock Theatre, 1993)

21. Annie Castledine/ Kenneth McLeish, <i>Women of Troy</i> (London, Royal National Theatre, 1995)	272
22. Jane Montgomery/Euripides, <i>Trojan Women</i> (Cambridge, Cambridge Greek Play, 1998)	280
23. Joanne Akalaitis/Nicholas Rudall, <i>Trojan Women</i> (Washington D.C., Shakespeare Theatre, 1999)	285
24. David Freeman/Nigel Osborne, <i>Sarajevo: An Opera</i> (London, Queen Elizabeth Hall, 1994)	290
25. Charles Mee, <i>Trojan Women: A Love Story</i> USA, Various theatres, 1995	293
 Afterword <i>A brief discussion of productions post 11th September 2001</i>	 298
 Appendix I <i>Details of Featured Productions</i>	 306
 Bibliography	 329

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*

On 6 December 1938, Hallie Flanagan (Director of the Federal Theatre Project) appeared before the Senate House Committee of Un-American Activities to defend herself and the Project against the charge of Communism. Here follows an extract from her transcript.¹

Senator Starnes: I want to quote from your article "A Theater Is Born," on page 915 of the *Theatre Arts Monthly*, edition of November 1931: "Unlike any art form existing in America today, the workers' theaters intend to shape the life of this country, socially, politically, and industrially. They intend to remake a social structure without the help of money - and this ambition alone invests their undertaking with a certain Marlowesque madness." You are quoting from this Marlowe. Is he a Communist?

Mrs. Flanagan: I am very sorry. I was quoting from Christopher Marlowe.

Mr. Starnes: Tell us who Marlowe is, so we can get the proper reference, because that is all we want to do.

Mrs. Flanagan: Put in the record that he was the greatest dramatist in the period

immediately preceding Shakespeare.

Mr. Starnes:

Yes. Put that in the record because the charge has been made that this article of yours is entirely Communistic, and we want to help you. [...] Of course, we had what some people call Communists back in the days of the Greek theater.

Mrs. Flanagan:

Quite true.

Mr. Starnes:

And I believe Mr. Euripides was guilty of teaching class consciousness also, wasn't he?

Mrs. Flanagan:

I believe that was alleged against all of the Greek dramatists.

Mr. Starnes:

So we cannot say when it began.

*

Under interrogation, I can confidently say that this dissertation began with the discovery that Mr. Euripides also had a few things to teach us about war. The journey thereafter could not have been possible without the enduring support of my supervisor, Professor Oliver Taplin, who also helped me look after my other love, the Oxford Classical Drama Society. I would also like to acknowledge the essential and kind advice of the following people at various stages of the project: Dr Fiona Macintosh, Professor Edith Hall, Professor Marsh

¹ *Thirty Years of Treason: Excerpts from Hearings before the House Committee of Un-American Activities 1938-1968*

McCall, Dr Pantelis Michelakis, Professor Marianne McDonald, Professor Oswyn Murray, Dr Angus Bowie and Dr Laura Bradley. In addition, Dr Yoav Rinon, Theodore Mann, and Joey Stocks provided helpful source material for the Israeli and Circle-in-the-Square productions. I am indebted to Amanda Wrigley (and Chris Weaver) at the *Archive for the Performances of Greek and Roman Drama* in Oxford for regular access to the production material on which much of this dissertation is based. Thanks to both Amanda and Kathleen Riley for their staunch support on many fronts over the years, and especially for helping to sustain the *Dionysus Recast* series. I would also like to thank Shlomit Wallerstein, Gunther Martin, Céline Vacher, Monika Class, and Dominik Zaum for their generosity in providing translations and valuable advice on various source materials.

I acknowledge with deep gratitude the financial support of the following organisations and individuals during my time in Oxford: The Marshall Aid Commemoration Commission, the Andrew Mellon Foundation, Balliol College, and Peter Bing.

The support and encouragement of friends has made my Oxford experience enjoyable and bearable and meaningful. Thank you to Claire Greener and Clare Backhouse for conducting various rescue missions over the course of a decade of friendship; Heidi Stalla, Alice May Bugman, and John Bohannon for always reminding me of my creative potential; Jen Cotrill for listening to never-ending sagas and Céline Vacher for hosting much-needed Paris getaways; Phil Clark, Tom Murray-Rust, and James Hickling for always seeing the humorous side (particularly of Junior Dean fiascos); illustrious members of the Zebra and Insomnia Clubs (2000-2005) for providing proper distraction from academic work (especially Carrie Trowbridge, Aliette Carré, James Bickford-Smith, Karsten Plöger, Dom Zaum); and Len Epp.

I dedicate this thesis to my father, Professor John Willis, for providing substantial and continual guidance in the art of academic writing; to my mother, Anne, for never failing to believe it was all possible; to my brothers, Kingsley and Goreleigh, and my grandfather, Dr T.C. Jones, for their long-distance support; and to Toni, as always, for inspiration.

*

‘The Trojan Women is a theatrical tour-de-force.’
Playboy Magazine, 1971

INTRODUCTION & METHODOLOGY

Theatre is made for this moment, for right now. It works only in the present.
Andrei Serban (*Fragments of a Trilogy*, 1974)

Greek tragedy must be appraised as a text crafted expressly for performance. In the second half of the twentieth century, several important contributions towards establishing a *grammar of dramatic technique* emerged, resulting in fresh analyses of Greek drama.¹ While scholars working in this new field of inquiry explored the use of dramatic language and patterns of action of plays within their ancient context, few investigations attempted to consider how this technique might inform production decisions for revivals of these plays in a contemporary context. More recently, several classical scholars working within the general framework of Classical Reception² have sought to define a methodology for Performance Reception. One approach involves exploring ways of assessing the

¹ For extensive discussions of the 'grammar of dramatic technique' in ancient tragedy, see: Michael Halleran, *The Stagecraft of Euripides* (London: Croom & Helm, 1985), Donald Mastronarde, *Contact and Discontinuity: Some Conventions of Speech and Action on the Greek Tragic Stage*, University of California publications: Classical Studies, 21 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), Oliver Taplin, *The Stagecraft of Aeschylus: The Dramatic Use of Exits and Entrances in Greek Tragedy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), and Nicolaos Hourmouziades, *Production and Imagination in Euripides: Form and Function of the Scenic Space*, Greek Society for Humanistic Studies: Second Series, 5 (Athens, 1965).

² For reception theory (for an audience of readers, not spectators), see: Hans Robert Jauss, 'What is and for what purpose does one study Literary History?' (1967) in *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, trans. by T. Bahti (Brighton: Harvester, 1982) and Wolfgang Iser's works, especially, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (London: Routledge, 1978). Both scholars have influenced Charles Martindale's seminal book, *Redeeming the Text: Latin Poetry and the Hermeneutics of Reception* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). For performance reception, see: Edith Hall, 'Towards a Theory of Performance Reception', *Arion*, 12.1 (Spring/Summer 2004), 51-89, Lorna Hardwick, *Reception Studies, Greece & Rome: New Studies in the Classics*, 33 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), and in general: *Reception Studies: From Literary Theory to Cultural Studies*, ed. by James Machor and Philip Goldstein (London: Routledge, 2001). In a recent debate on reception at the Classical Association's 2005 conference, Charles Martindale and Christopher Rowe (modelled on an earlier debate on the subject between Peter Wiseman and Mary Beard at Exeter University) challenged each other over the place and value of post-classical re-assessments of ancient works. Performance reception was not considered in the debate.

performance history of a particular text within a chronological framework with special emphasis placed on the production within its social and political contexts.³ Even as these important new appraisals emerge, there are still several plays that have not yet been re-evaluated using either approach; Euripides' *Trojan Women* is one.

In contrast to the approaches of recent studies⁴ which tend to examine theatre productions from the 'outside', either by invoking theoretical models or seeking out external factors which might inform production choices, I examine performance from the 'inside', by unearthing evidence of the practical elements (directorial and design choices: set, costumes, lighting, music, etc.) and the promotional materials (programmes, press releases, photographs, interviews of the creative team, etc.). This method allows for the examination of how particular production decisions reflect, challenge, or engage with outside factors concerning contemporary political, intellectual, and cultural issues. *Trojan Women* is a particularly useful case study to explore within the parameters of this method because the dynamism and immediacy of the play are most powerfully articulated when

³ For useful discussions of revivals of ancient drama, see: Anton Bierl, *Die Orestie des Aischylos auf der modernen Bühne: theoretische Konzeptionen und ihre szenische Realisierung* (Stuttgart: M & P Verlag für Wissenschaft und Forschung, 1997), Karelisa Hartigan, *Greek Tragedy on the American Stage*, Contributions in Drama and Theatre Studies, 60 (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1995), Fiona Macintosh, *Dying Acts: Death in Ancient Greek and Modern Irish Tragic Drama* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1994), Marianthe Colakis, *The Classics in the American Theater of the 1960s and Early 1970s* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1993), Helmut Flashar, *Inszenierung der Antike: Das griechische Drama auf der Bühne der Neuzeit* (Munich: Beck, 1991), and J. Michael Walton, *Living Greek Theatre: A Handbook of Classical Performance and Modern Productions* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987).

⁴ See *Dionysus Since 69: Greek Tragedy at the Dawn of the Third Millennium*, ed. by Edith Hall, Fiona Macintosh, and Amanda Wrigley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) (hereafter D69), *Medea in Performance: 1500-2000*, ed. by Edith Hall, Fiona Macintosh and Oliver Taplin (Oxford: Legenda, 2000) (hereafter MP), and Peter Burian, 'Tragedy adapted for stages and screens: the Renaissance to the present' and Fiona Macintosh, 'Tragedy adapted for stages and screens: the Renaissance to the present', in *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy*, ed. by P.E. Easterling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) (hereafter CCGT). See also Herman Altena, 'The Theater of Innumerable Faces' in *The Blackwell Companion to Greek Tragedy*, ed. by Justina Gregory (Blackwell, forthcoming).

production choices allow for it to be wielded as a weapon of protest or reaction against contemporary policy, especially the waging of war. Since the twentieth century was characterised by widespread international and civil conflicts, it is not surprising that significant productions of *Trojan Women* cluster around periods of hostility.

Why does Euripides' *Trojan Women* boast such a rich and varied production record during the twentieth century, but a relatively scarce pre-twentieth-century performance history? This question is answered primarily by the fact that in the nineteenth century, *Trojan Women* was overshadowed by Hector Berlioz's *Les Troyens* (a dramatisation based in part on Book II of the *Aeneid* and composed in 1856-58), and suffered by association with *Hecuba*, considered then to be a particularly problematic text (in the Renaissance *Trojan Women* had been sidelined in favour of *Hecuba* in Erasmus' 1524 popular Latin translation). Further obscurity was ensured by early nineteenth-century criticism of the play for being episodic and without plot or action; for being a catalogue of lamentation; for lacking a hero; and generally for lacking the qualities of a tragedy worthy of Aristotelian praise. For example, A.W. von Schlegel, the leading German proponent of the so-called 'damnatio of Euripides',⁵ indicted *Trojan Women* for its disunity.⁶ Ten years before, his brother, Friedrich, in 'On female characters in Greek Poetry,' considered Euripides to be a 'woman-hater' who 'takes occasion when he can, to declaim in the harshest manner against

⁵ See Ernst Behler, 'A.W. Schlegel and the Nineteen-Century *Damnatio* of Euripides', *Greece, Rome, and Byzantine Studies*, 27.4 (1986), 335-67.

⁶ A.W. Schlegel, *A Course of Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature*, trans. by John Black, 2nd edn, 2 vols (London: J. Templeman, 1840), I, pp. 179.

the female sex.’⁷ Neither scholar considered (nor witnessed) the myriad ways in which the unity of *Trojan Women* could be expressed through live performance.

At the turn of the twentieth century, scholars, notably Gilbert Murray and A.W. Verrall in Britain, and Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff in Germany, along with theatre practitioners and members of the Fabian Society, rescued Euripides from the discard heap of the German *damnatio*. The liberation of *Trojan Women*, however, was achieved primarily because Professor Murray was the first to equate the Athenian and British empires, and to demonstrate, in both his scholarly work and political treatises, that this play could—in performance—be used not only to parallel, but also to critique, imperial behaviour in the colonies. Although no explicit parallels were suggested by actor-manager Harley Granville-Barker’s production design, Murray’s 1905 translation of *Trojan Women* was received by its Edwardian public as a play that exemplified his pro-Boer platform.⁸ Importantly for future revivals of the play, the efforts of Granville-Barker and his cast, composers, and designers, resulted in Euripides being elevated to the status of a ‘new dramatist’ and *Trojan Women*, along with the works of George Bernard Shaw, was shown to shed new light on contemporary social concerns.

In the second half of the century, the key figure is Jean-Paul Sartre, who, in performing an act of Derridean ‘treachery,’ took Murray’s objective one step further by deliberately ‘contaminating’ the ancient text to form a new work that explicitly transformed

⁷ *Kritische Friedrich Schlegel Ausgabe*, ed. by Ernst Behler, 32 vols (Paderborn: Thomas Verlag, 1958), I, p. 63f.

⁸ W.H. Salter, *Essays on Two Moderns: Euripides, Samuel Butler* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1911).

Trojan Women into a modern anti-colonial/anti-war *cri de coeur* (*Les Troyennes*, 1965).⁹

Sartre's modifications of the ancient text challenged those scholars and theatre practitioners who believed in preserving the sanctity of the ancient text, and as such, his work paved the way for a new era of avant-garde interpretations in Europe and the United States.

Although Murray and Sartre, as seminal figures in the production history of *Trojan Women* on the twentieth-century stage, undoubtedly influenced and encouraged several generations of rich and varied productions, the play continues to be largely underestimated, misunderstood and often sidelined in scholarly discussions of ancient drama. In part this is because *Trojan Women* has been examined as a literary text, not as a text for performance.¹⁰ Many scholars seem to ignore or be unaware of the extensive performance history of the tragedy, particularly in the twentieth century, which reveals the extent to which the play has endured and inspired. To provide this much needed perspective, the aim of this dissertation is to 'excavate the afterlife' (to use Edith Hall's phrase¹¹) of *Trojan Women* and examine the ways in which the play has inspired a wide range of artists working in the contexts of both mainstream and fringe commercial theatre (as well as amateur drama), including those writing for the theatre, to express their passionate opinions about the waging of war.

⁹ See Hall (*Arion*, 2004), 60.

¹⁰ Currently the only full-scale scholarly examination of the play is by N. T. Croally: *Euripidean Polemic: The Trojan Women and the Function of Tragedy*, Cambridge Classical Studies (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). The British performance group, The Actors of Dionysus, have recently published a book, *Essays on 'Trojan Women'* (2001), which includes essays written by various scholars on the themes of the play. For a brief production history of *Trojan Women*: Oliver Taplin, *Greek Fire* (London: Cape, 1989), Hartigan (1995), and Walton (1987) are primary sources.

¹¹ Hall (*Arion*, 2004), 54.

In order to evaluate the impact of the play within this time frame, I use both a diachronic and synchronic method to chart the ways in which approaches at producing *Trojan Women* (and the subsequent reception of those approaches) develop and change as it is reinterpreted in each era. As Edith Hall and Lorna Hardwick have recently suggested, the combination of these two models can produce a coherent study of the reception of an ancient text on the modern stage.¹² The diachronic method allows for comparisons of the ways in which different eras embrace certain classical plays in performance, while the synchronic method uncovers the creative development of a particular production at a particular time.¹³ Hardwick suggests in *Reception Studies* (2003) that there are two main aspects of reception studies: the reception itself—which is concerned with the artistic or intellectual processes involved in selecting the ancient works, the relationship between process and contexts, and the purpose or function for which the new work is made—and how the reception is described, analyzed, and evaluated.¹⁴ With regard to the reception of ancient texts on the stage, Hardwick argues, the dominant factors are a consideration of these stagings as live performances for live audiences and the relationship between the text and performance. Discussions must also take into account the ways in which texts are shaped by the demands of performance and external factors. Hall, in her recent article in *Arion*, consciously expands Hardwick's analytical and methodological framework to include discussion of theoretical models which can inform a reception-based analysis –

¹² Hall (*Arion*, 2004) and Hardwick (2003), especially pp. 51-71. See also Amy Green, *The Revisionist Stage*, Cambridge Studies in American Theatre and Drama (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), especially pp. 1-15.

¹³ Hardwick, p. 58.

¹⁴ Hardwick, p. 5.

formalism, feminism, post-structuralism, or cultural analysis, for example – and provides a longer examination of the ‘special nature of performance reception’, with emphasis on the aspect of ‘enactment’.

With these criteria in mind, while focusing on both the legacy of *Trojan Women* productions as a whole as well as the practical journey of a selection of significant productions from text, to performance text, to performance, I investigate, where possible, the series of mediating lenses through which the ancient play passes: those of the translator/adaptor, director/design team, actors, and audience/critics. Performance reception begins with the processes by which the writer or scholar engages with the ancient text in order to consciously produce a new text (translation or adaptation) written expressly for performance at a particular time. For each production, evidence permitting, I evaluate the result of a translator’s or adaptor’s engagement with Euripides’ play as well as the context and influences, including personal intentions, on the writing process.

The second stage of the journey requires an analysis of the extent to which (and to what end and effect) the raw material of the play is moulded and reshaped by the director, design team, and actors to become, by meeting the demands of performance, a performance text. I explore how the play is particularly challenging because the carefully constructed ambiguities and ironies within Euripides’ text present unavoidable directorial and production decisions that must be confronted, resolved, or ignored. For example, how does one present the gods Poseidon and Athene, if one opts to present them at all? How might the element of fire be represented in the case of Cassandra and/or in the destruction of the city at the play’s conclusion? To what extent will violence or incarceration be used to

imprison Helen? How does one go about clarifying the conclusion of the Helen Episode for a contemporary audience unfamiliar with the background mythology?

The final stage is a study of the performance itself. I investigate the ways in which the actor provides his or her own mediating lens, the effect of particular production decisions on the audience and critics, and any wider social, political, or cultural implications. This part of the discussion includes an exploration of the extent to which the relevance of the piece is made manifest through explicit contemporary references embedded in characterisation, costume, set, or sound design. Throughout, the discussion also includes an analysis of the personal, social, political, and cultural factors, including other texts or other performances, which influence an actor-manager/director to choose to produce a particular vision of *Trojan Women*. (This analysis also includes an examination of the circumstances during which rehearsals were conducted and those during which the play was performed.) Ultimately, I am interested in discovering how production decisions facilitate the particular vision of an actor-manager/director, whether they make theatrical sense and/or make a difference to a positive or negative artistic evaluation of the performance, and how these decisions might shed new light on the interpretation of the ancient material.

*

Trojan Women is the twentieth century war/anti-war play of choice because fundamentally it grapples with the question of human responsibility, a question which has challenged philosophers for centuries. The play's setting, scenario, and characters can effectively parallel a contemporary war situation and thus provide a forum to debate this

question of responsibility. Additionally, as an ancient play, it can act as a kind of distancing lens through which an audience can examine their own community; a value that few contemporary plays can provide. These resonances and parallels are most effectively revealed and appreciated in performance.

Confronting the question of human accountability lies at the core of any understanding of *Trojan Women* and explains, in part, the twentieth-century fascination with the play. Although many productions eliminate the Prologue,¹⁵ often retained is the underlying issue that Athene's anger is a result of the Greek failure to take responsibility and make amends for Ajax's act of defiling (ὕβρισθεῖσαν) her altar (κού δείν' Αἰακῶν ἔπαθεν οὐδ' ἤκουσ' ὕπο, 'And the Achaeans neither punished nor reproached him', 71). Equally important to retain is the fact that having agreed to help Athene punish the Greeks for their act of *hubris*, Poseidon sets the tone of the play by announcing the fate of those who do not accept liability for acts of defilement, especially in times of war: μῶρος δὲ θνητῶν ὅστις ἐκποθεὶ πόλεις/ναοὺς τε τύμβους θ' ἱερὰ τῶν κεκηκότων/ἐρημίαι δούς <σφ> αὐτὸς ὥλεθ' ὕστερον ('Any man who makes war against cities, temples, graves, and holy places, is a fool and his time as victim will come', 95f). Crucially, Poseidon does not advocate that all conquerors in war be punished, only those who behave with 'culpable stupidity' (as K.H. Lee defined μῶρος).¹⁶

The underlying principle of Poseidon's particular concern for the plight of the victims of this war, the Trojan women, is also often retained. This principle compels him to

¹⁵ For a scholarly discussion of the Prologue, see, for example, Eugene G. O'Neill, Jr., 'The Prologue of the Troades of Euripides', *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, 72 (1941), pp. 288-320.

demand a code of conduct in war not dissimilar to the (since deemed problematic) 1884 Berlin Conference during which European powers and the United States met to determine colonial behaviour in Africa.¹⁷ The issue of the conqueror/coloniser's responsibility towards the conquered/colonised, particularly relevant in the first half of the century, was overtaken, after World War Two by the struggle to navigate Western guilt for its slow intervention in the Holocaust. After the dropping of the atom bombs, the question of responsible behaviour with regard to weapons of mass destruction was paramount. In the 1990s, issues about the responsibility of Western states to intervene in order to prevent genocide and ethnic cleansing, for example in the Balkans or Rwanda, became more prevalent.

The play's emphasis on the plight of the Trojan women holds special resonance in an era in which concern for civilian victims of war and conflict is the public mandate of organisations such as The Red Cross (Geneva (1863); American Red Cross (1881); League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (1919)), Amnesty International (1961), Human Rights Watch (1978), and the multitude of international Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). This concern is also reflected in the multiple Geneva Conventions which established international rules for the treatment of war victims: the wounded and sick on land (1864) and sea (1906), prisoners of war (1929), and civilians (1949). In light of these emerging concerns, the image of Astyanax as the innocent victim of war becomes a symbolic focus for many productions early in the century. Later in the century, when the

¹⁶ K.H. Lee, *Troades* (London: Bristol Classical Press, 1976), p. 79.

plight of refugees becomes a political (and media) preoccupation, the Chorus of women becomes central: collectively and individually they represent a trans-historic body of victims.

The Prologue also highlights the role of the gods in determining the fate of man, as opposed to the force of human determination, another long-standing debate that has occupied thinkers, and a particular preoccupation in the twentieth century. The gods have determined the fate of the Greeks, and although this information is known to the audience, it is unknown to the Trojan women, especially to Hecuba. Hecuba believes that her misery is a result of being oppressed by βαρυδαίμονος ('a heavy fate', 112), and as her misery mounts, her belief in the gods as beneficial beings declines. For example, at 466ff, when Cassandra is torn from her, Hecuba falls to the ground, crying out: ὦ θεοί, κακούς μεν ἀνακαλῶ τοὺς συμμάχους/ ὅμως δ' ἔχει τι σχῆμα κικλήσκειν θεούς/ ὅταν τις ἡμῶν δυστυχῇ λάβῃ τύχην ('O gods! To be sure, I am calling on allies that are faithless, yet nonetheless it is proper to invoke them when we suffer misfortune').¹⁷ The act of invoking the gods is something Hecuba feels she must do, and yet, as the play progresses her invocations do not seem to have the desired effect in so far as they do not relieve the dire situation in which she and her fellow women find themselves. The Chorus echo this in the Second Stasimon, expressing the gods' abandonment of the city: τὰ θεῶν δὲ φίλτρα φροῦδα Τροίαι ('but the gods' love for Troy is fled and gone', 858f). The crucial crisis of

¹⁷ The Berlin Conference was also responsible for the speeding up of the 'Scramble for Africa': Within a few years, Africa was at least nominally divided up south of the Sahara. By 1914, all of Africa, with the exceptions of Liberia and Ethiopia, were under European rule.

¹⁸ Longer translations are by David Kovacs (*Euripides*, Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge Mass: Harvard University Press, 1999), unless otherwise noted.

belief occurs during the funereal lament when Hecuba pauses to say, ‘Oh, my dearest women!’ and then realises: ‘The Gods, as we now see, had nothing in view but my misery and their hatred of Troy beyond all other cities. Our sacrificing was for nothing.’ There, however, is arguably one redeeming factor to their suffering, that they will be remembered: ‘But if the divinity had not overturned things, putting what was above ground below, we would have been unknown and not have sung of, nor provided a theme for song to the Muses of men to come’ (1238-1245). This abandonment of the gods or the misunderstanding of the gods’ role in determining the fate of humans is particularly relevant to productions which address, often subtly, the Jewish crisis of belief in the Hebrew god for allowing the Holocaust, or is manifest in other ways, for example, in Tadashi Suzuki’s importation of the Japanese god Jizo, patron protector of children, who remains motionless and apathetic while Astyanax is murdered before his very eyes. Furthermore, when the Prologue is eliminated from a performance, the anxiety about the (in)actions of the gods is replaced with a call for human agency in a godless world; productions which engage with the conflict over the behaviour of Israel towards its Middle East neighbours provide one context in which this issue proves controversial.

Even in a world without gods, prophets remain necessary to warn humans of the consequences of *hubristic* acts. Murray saw *Trojan Women* generally as a warning to those who were about to embark on the fateful Sicilian expedition: the play was ‘something more than art...’ it was ‘a prophecy, a bearing of witness’.¹⁹ Whether or not the prologue is eliminated, it is the character of Cassandra who emerges as the voice of warning; for

example in Franz Werfel's German translation written before the outbreak of World War One, or Christoph Schroth's East German production influenced by the feminist writer Christa Wolf's new interpretation of Cassandra in 1982. Wolf marks the importance of Cassandra's prophecies for her era with a quote from compatriot Stefan Zweig's diary: 'The old Cassandra feelings have come alive again [...]. If this war is continued, it will turn into the most ghastly thing human beings have ever known, the total finishing off of Europe.'²⁰

Personal responsibility is equally a central issue in *Trojan Women*. The opposition exists between Andromache, on the one hand, who worries about her responsibility and fidelity towards her dead husband, and, on the other, Helen who refuses to be held personally accountable for causing the Trojan War and who transfers her responsibility to Aphrodite. The Helen Episode is especially captivating for twentieth-century theatre artists, and those writing for the stage, precisely because Helen is at the epicentre of the play's debate on human culpability in times of war. Due to the ways in which her character is presented, Helen can be represented variously as scapegoat for a nation's sins, as a purgative punching bag for the Trojan women who desperately wish to hold someone responsible for their miserable situation, as a woman who uses her sexual powers to exculpate herself, or as a loathsome character who escapes without taking personal responsibility for her actions.

¹⁹ Gilbert Murray, *The Trojan Women of Euripides*, Athenian Drama for English Readers (London: George Allen, 1905), p. 6.

²⁰ Christa Wolf, *Cassandra*, trans. by Jan Van Heurck (London: Virago, 1984), p. 251.

Whereas earlier in the century ancient art and archaeology were relied upon to provide visual inspiration for theatrical design and movement, due to advances in the media (especially television and the internet), the general public has far greater access to visual material as well as to perspectives of soldiers on both sides, and to details of military and civilian casualties on both sides. The universal oppositions of 'them' vs. 'us', or 'ally' vs. 'enemy', or 'victor' vs. 'victim' are not simple oppositions when considering a production of *Trojan Women* performed in response to a twentieth-century conflict. Often, it is the role of the intervening third, sometimes multi-national, party that distorts the possibility of invoking the one-to-one parallel found in Euripides' play. Despite these mitigating factors, the simple opposition of Greek soldiers versus Trojan women can be manoeuvred to parallel more complicated contemporary oppositions, though sometimes resulting in ineffective production decisions as in the case of Annie Castledine's production at the Royal National Theatre in London (1995) which opposed American soldiers (not perpetrators in the Balkan crisis of the moment) against a mixed-race Chorus of Bosnian, Indian and East Asian women. A slogan for a poster for a production directed by Lewis M. Ransford and sponsored by the Women's International League (1924) aptly expresses the topicality of these oppositions:

We, the children of 1914, cannot look on the agony of Hecuba, of Andromache, of Cassandra with the same eyes and hearts as the women who lived in what seemed a settled world before the World War. We meet Hecuba in a group of Smyrna refugees, Cassandra calls woe upon a world from a Turkish harem. German and Austrian mothers weep the untimely death of an Astyanax, victim of the cruel weapon of blockade.

FEATURED PRODUCTIONS

Although the themes and characters in *Trojan Women* have inspired literature, music, and numerous works of art, I shall focus my discussions on staged theatre, including significant adaptations. Other artistic interpretations, such as in film, opera or ballet, will be included for comparison. The test cases that I examine in this dissertation have been selected for their unique interpretation of Euripides' text, high production value (innovative set, costume, lighting design, music), evidence of a significant reaction (positive, negative, or controversial) from the public and/or critics, or because of the reputation of notable theatre artists involved. A range of interpretation—from those close to the text to the highly experimental—is represented in order to demonstrate the breadth and depth of the play's production history. While there exists, on the whole, a significant amount of available background material for these productions, inevitably there are some productions that will not receive as much attention as others.

In Chapter One, I examine how the play was used to promote ideological causes during the first half of the century, particularly during the two World Wars. Noted productions use Gilbert Murray's verse translation (1905) in part to advance the objectives of the League of Nations Union in Britain and the Women's Peace Party in the United States (1905-1945). By way of comparison, I also briefly discuss the poet Franz Werfel's adaptation, *Die Troerinnen*, which emerged as a powerful expression of anti-war, anti-military sentiment in Germany (1916).

Chapters Two and Three draw attention to the major cluster of performances in the mid-twentieth century. These productions suggest how the story embraces and reflects the spirit of demonstration against war, especially during the turbulent period of the 1960s and 1970s. In Chapter Two, I primarily chart the evolution of the directorial vision of Michael Cacoyannis during nearly a decade of producing stage and film versions of the play. In Chapter Three, I outline the development of two avant-garde adaptations, directed by Andrei Serban (1974) and Tadashi Suzuki (1974), as radical and innovative responses to counter-culture and the nuclear age.

Chapters Four and Five address the performance of the play during the conflicts of the last twenty years of the twentieth century, particularly responses to the Holocaust, the Arab-Israeli conflict, the conflicts in the Balkans and Rwanda, and Gulf War One. Highlighted performances include controversial productions in Israel (1982-84) and East and West Germany (1976-85); and in Chapter Five, British productions directed by Katie Mitchell (1991), Annie Castledine (1995), and Jane Montgomery (1998), and an American production directed by Joanne Akailaitis (1999). Significant adaptations towards the end of the 1990s are also noted.

SOURCES

The range of sources available for the performance history of *Trojan Women* is wide with varying degrees of availability and reliability.²¹ My sources for each production can be organised in the following categories:

Primary Evidence

- 1) Materials taken from production: videos, sounds recordings, still photographs
- 2) Evidence of translation/adaptation progress: translator's/adaptor's notes, unpublished or published work
- 3) Evidence of production process: director's notes, play-scripts, actors' rehearsal books
- 4) Published personal documents: unpublished memoirs, personal journals, letters, memorabilia of the writers and theatre artists involved
- 5) Archived personal documents: unpublished memoirs, personal journals, letters, memorabilia of the writers and theatre artists involved
- 6) Internet resources: online theatre archives, director or writer websites
- 7) Promotional material provided for audience: flyers, posters, programmes, programme notes
- 8) Promotional material provided for press: press releases, press packs with photographs, director's notes

Secondary Evidence

- 9) Reviews: newspapers, journals
- 10) Interviews: newspapers, journals, other publications

Since evidence for performances has been preserved and archived in various locations, it has not always been possible to locate material from all categories for each production. Videos and sound recordings of live productions are rarely available and when located are often of poor quality or limited in the scope of camera work (e.g. only wide shot). Still photographs are immensely helpful, but often do not cover every aspect of production.

²¹ See Appendix for production details and source materials available.

Primary evidence which records the translation/adaptation and production development, including director's notes and play-scripts, personal memoirs and memorabilia etc., can give useful indications of the processes of these vital stages in the life of the production, but sometimes do not reflect the decisions made in the finished product. Promotional material must be carefully assessed for the biases of the production company or financial sponsors and may or may not reflect the opinions or perspectives of the translator/adaptor, director or design team (a prime example is Gilbert Murray's special note regarding the Women's Peace Party's endorsement of the 1915 *Trojan Women* tour in America). Programme copy can provide an enlightening view of what the production team provided for its live audience and how they might have wanted to influence that audience. Likewise, material provided for the press may contain similar biases.

Secondary sources, such as reviews, are particularly problematic and difficult to use critically because as a secondary critique of a live production they are subject to a wide range of biases including: the biography (long-standing theatre critic, scholar, theatre practitioner), perspective, and knowledge (especially of the classical background) of the critic, the type and political persuasion of the publishing house (local or national newspaper, theatre, political, or scholarly journal; right, left, or centre wing biases), and its target readership.²² The content and angle of the review may vary: a larger proportion of the review may focus on one scene or one character or not mention design details. For some performances, especially when other evidence is scant, I have relied heavily on reviews to

²² For a study of the potential biases of the theatrical review, see Lorna Hardwick, 'The Theatrical Review as a Primary Source for the Modern Reception of Greek Drama: A Preliminary Evaluation', <<http://www2.open.ac.uk/ClassicalStudies/GreekPlays/essays/Reviews.html>> [last accessed 22 March 2005].

provide production details, and, where possible, I have tried to gather a wide selection of reviews in order to offer diverse opinions about the production in question. At times, I have also gathered source material from personal and printed interviews, which also carry particular biases. 'Journalistic interviews', as Alison Burke recently argued, are not a 'neutral method of data collection as the media interview process is circumscribed by a relationship of intent: a symbiotic relationship exists between the media and the theatre that is predicated on the basis of mutual promotion'.²³ I have tried to take into account the potential biases of each source and evaluated both the nature and the perspective that the evidence contributes to the production.

²³ See Alison Burke, 'Interviews in classical performance research: (1) journalistic interviews', <<http://www2.open.ac.uk/ClassicalStudies/GreekPlays/essays/burkeinterview.htm>> [last accessed 22 March 2005].

CHAPTER ONE

The 'Living Art' of Theatre and two World Wars

*The British are losing 1000 men a day
while Hecuba lamented the fall of an ancient city in modern New York
New York Times, 1 June 1915*

Championed by the Schlegel brothers the condemnation of Euripides by nineteenth-century German classical scholars became central to the progressive formation of a new literary theory of romanticism and informed the aesthetic principles guiding the rediscovery of Greek tragedy.¹ This so-called '*damnatio* of Euripides', further promoted by Friedrich Nietzsche, and Donaldson, Paley and Jebb in Victorian England, was not relieved until later in the century largely due to the efforts of Gilbert Murray, Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, and A.W. Verrall. Partly as a result of the negative evaluations of the Schlegel brothers, the plays of Euripides (*Trojan Women*, in particular) did not enjoy a performance history in the nineteenth century.

Although the issue of the Euripides' depiction of *Leidenschaft* ('passion' or 'suffering') was central to Friedrich Schlegel's arguments against the poet, the German critic attempted to maintain a balanced evaluation of his works. For example, in his essay, 'Über die weiblichen Charaktere in den Griechischen Dichtern' ('On Female Characters in Greek Poetry', 1794), he argued, on the one hand, that 'Euripides ist ein Weiberfeind, und nimmt, wo er kann, Gelegenheit, gegen das weibliche Geschlecht auf die härteste Weise zu deklamieren' ('Euripides was a woman-hater and takes occasion when he can, to declaim in the harshest manner against the female sex'), and on the

¹ See Behler, 335-67.

other, that 'sein eigentliches Gebiet ist Leidenschaft, deren Tiefen er ganz kannte' ('his proper terrain was *Leidenschaft*, whose depths he knew fully') and 'Es kann kein reicheres und erschütternderes Gemälde des weiblichen Schmerzes geben, als die *Trojanerinnen*' ('there is no richer or more moving picture of female pain than in the *Troades*').²

A.W. Schlegel upheld his brother's views on Euripides, but developed an almost entirely negative evaluation.³ In his fifth Berlin lecture on aesthetics (1801-04), he also praised *Trojan Women* for its 'picture of universal sorrow, of the fall of flourishing families, and states from the greatest glory to the lowest necessity, and even to entire annihilation'. He believed the conclusion to be 'grand indeed'. But, with regard to 'other respects', he criticised the play for having very little unified action: 'It is a series of situations and incidents, which have no other connection other than that they are all derived from the conquest of Troy, but they have in no respect a common aim.' Ultimately, he indicted the play for its overwrought emotional quality: 'The accumulation of helpless suffering, without even an opposition of sentiment, at last wearies us, and exhausts our compassion.' For example, the lamentation of Andromache for her 'living son', he contended, was 'more heart-rending' than that of Hecuba for her dead grandson, but 'the pathos is not duly economised, and gradually heightened'. Helen's trial is 'an idle altercation, which ends in nothing'. Furthermore, 'it was not enough for Euripides to have represented Hecuba throughout the whole piece in sackcloth and ashes, and pouring out her lamentations', Schlegel wrote

² F. Schlegel, p. 63f. See also Behler, 351.

³ Behler, 354.

derisively, 'he has still introduced her as the principal figure in another tragedy, which bears her name'.⁴

Even A.W. Schlegel's experience with the production of his *Jon*, an original tragedy based on Euripides' *Ion*, staged by Goethe at the Weimar Court Theatre on 2 January 1802, and by Iffland at the Berlin Theatre in May 1802, did not redeem his scholarly opinion of the tragedian or suggest that a new understanding and appreciation of the text could emerge from performance. His *Ion* was not intended to be an adaptation as such, but a new creative work like Goethe's *Iphigenia*, based on an ancient work.⁵ The debate over the relationship of his work to Euripides that erupted following the performance, steered Schlegel to further broadcast his negative criticisms of the *Ion*, and the poet in general.⁶ Schlegel's *damnatio* of Euripides was to have a far-reaching influence on classical scholarship: his Berlin and Vienna lectures were published in four editions (1809, 1816, 1845, 1846), translated into almost every European language, and in 1815, translated into English by John Black and circulated in the United Kingdom and the United States.

Richard Jenkyns argues that it was Schlegel's lectures which 'brought Englishmen to realize the greatness of Greek Tragedy'.⁷ This might have been true of the plays of Aeschylus and Sophocles, but not of Euripides, who continued to suffer under the disparaging German campaign. In Britain, the poet Thomas Macaulay judged

⁴ *Hecuba*, of course, was produced first, around 423 BC. A. W. Schlegel, pp. 179-181. Quotations are taken from the 1840 edition, which provides a translation of Schlegel's 'Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature' delivered in Vienna in 1808; sections from the earlier Berlin lectures on the Greek tragedians were integrated into the Vienna lectures.

⁵ Behler, 355.

⁶ Behler, 356.

⁷ Quoted in Richard Jenkyns, *The Victorians and Ancient Greece* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 87.

Euripides to be ‘the vilest poet that ever put pen to paper’.⁸ Swinburne felt personal enmity for the Greek tragedian, calling him a ‘botcher’ and detestable *bête noir*.⁹ In contrast, the Brownings discovered in Euripides a subject for poetic endeavour. Robert Browning, who greatly appreciated the function of Euripides’ speeches and debates, incorporated translations of *Alcestis* and *Heracles* into *Balaustion’s Adventure* (1888-90) (a project which would later catch the critical eye of scholar A.W. Verrall) and *Aristophanes’ Apology* (1875). Elizabeth Barrett Browning found Euripides to be a poet who elevated ‘things common’. In ‘The Wine of Cyprus’ (1844), she praised each tragedian for his individual qualities:

Our Aeschylus, the thunderous [...]
Oh, our Sophocles, the royal [...]
Our Euripides, the human,
With his droppings of warm tears,
And his touches of things common
Till they rose to touch the spheres!

Swinburne scathingly ridiculed her use of the word ‘droppings’ claiming that ‘Euripides had been troubled with a dysentery of poetic imagination and a diarrhoea of rhetorical sophistry.’¹⁰

At the end of the century, A.S. Way, in his introduction to *The Tragedies of Euripides in English Verse* (1894-98), declared that ‘nothing is more certain than that the old fashion of disparaging his genius (in which Schlegel led the way [...]), is now utterly discredited’.¹¹ In Britain, the discrediting of the *damnatio* began with A.W.

⁸ *The letters of Thomas Babington Macaulay*, ed. by T. Pinney, 6 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), I, p. 77-78 (May 1816). See also, 83, 87, 88, 89. By 1835, he has softened his opinion: ‘I could not bear Euripides at college. I now read my recantation. [...] His extraordinary talent for declamation and debate and perhaps the taste of the public accustomed to a war of tongues [...]. But what a poet! – The *Medea* – the *Alcestis* – the *Troades* – the *Bacchae* – are alone sufficient to place him in the very first rank’ (vol. 3, p. 130).

⁹ Jenkyns, p. 107.

¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹ Arthur S. Way, *The Tragedies of Euripides in English Verse*, 3 vols (London: Macmillan, 1896), I, p.

Verrall's work, *Euripides the Rationalist* (1895). In this work, he proposed to explain 'the great and surprising difference of opinion between ancient readers and modern respecting the position and merits of Euripides'.¹² He argued that 'the right view of Euripides, the capacity of understanding him, is a thing which we moderns have yet to *recover*; [...] recognizing that somewhere in our notions about the poet there must be something fundamentally wrong'.¹³ Verrall's main argument, however, centred on the idea that in Euripides' works, rationalism, or the existence of the gods, was fiction, and the orthodoxy, the *deus ex machina*, was 'pretended fiction' or a 'theatrical trick'. In order to determine the true meaning of the poet's work, he claimed, 'the reader had simply to reject the pretended solution, the superfluous "divine" machinery, and interpret the significance of the facts in themselves'.¹⁴

At one point in the work, Verrall draws a comparison between the English stage, from which the subject of religion is excluded (though, he notes, it 'may be discussed everywhere [else] and almost without limit') and the Athenian stage. He describes the latter as 'essentially the vehicle, not of pleasure, though this was part of its purpose and one of its necessary instruments, but of instruction and controversy on the most exciting themes of the day'.¹⁵ Verrall's theories, though often discredited, sparked a new scholarly debate about the place of Euripides in the classical canon.¹⁶

However, with regard to the rehabilitation of *Trojan Women*, it was the work of the Liberal, classical scholar and poet/dramatist Gilbert Murray (1866-1957), and his

vii. 'Daughters of Troy' appears in vol. 2.

¹² A.W. Verrall, *Euripides, The Rationalist: A Study in the History of Arts and Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1895), p. vii.

¹³ *ibid.*, pp. 1f.

¹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 232.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 78-9. For the role of theatre, see Croally (1994) and Justina Gregory, *Euripides and the Instruction of the Athenians* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997).

¹⁶ Most significantly: E.R. Dodds, *Euripides, the Irrationalist*, *Classical Review*, 43 (1929) 97-104.

public opposition to the Boer War which first revived Euripides' play as one of the ideal war/anti-war plays for the Edwardian stage (and beyond). In 1899, after resigning his post at Glasgow and before taking up a position at New College, Oxford, Murray became so passionately pro-Boer that rumours were heard that the Liberal Imperial Council wanted to have him expelled from the party.¹⁷ In a letter to his wife, Mary, Murray expressed concern about the ramifications of imperial hegemony:

As I read the cries of 'Rule Britannia' in answer to every appeal to reason and fairness, it seemed to me like the real cry of the nation in its madness; the people shouting seemed to express the one thing Jingoism care for—to go on conquering, ruling more and more till the crash comes and the world will not tolerate such a nation any more.¹⁸

Publicly, he expressed his ideas about the duties of Empire, particularly the humanitarian issues in the Transvaal and the responsibility of the British towards colonised South Africa, by drawing an explicit parallel to the attitude at the end of the Peloponnesian War of the Athenian Empire towards its 'colonials'. For example, in 1900, he published 'The Exploitation of Inferior Races in Ancient and Modern Times: An Imperial Labour Question with a Historical Parallel' in a treatise of book form, *Liberalism and Empire*.¹⁹ Thucydides (3.82.8) was used as the epigraph: Πάντων δ' αὐτῶν αἴτιον Ἀρχὴν ἢ διὰ πλεονεξίαν καὶ φιλοτίμιαν and translated: 'The cause of the whole catastrophe was Empire pursued for covetousness and ambition.' Fittingly, ἀρχή was translated as 'Empire' as opposed to 'term of office',²⁰ or the translation

¹⁷ Concerns expressed in a letter to his wife. Gilbert Murray Papers, Bodleian Library: 220 182, 17 September 1899. Cited in Duncan Wilson, *Gilbert Murray, OM, 1866-1957* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 71.

¹⁸ Gilbert Murray Papers, Bodleian Library: 476 185, 17 September 1899.

¹⁹ Gilbert Murray, *Liberalism and Empire*, (London: Johnson, 1900), pp. 118-57. The book also included essays by Francis W. Hirst ('Imperialism and Finance') and J.L. Hammond ('Colonial and Foreign Policy').

²⁰ The second definition of ἀρχή cited in 7th edition of Liddell and Scott (first edition, 1899): 'sovereignty, empire, realm' (Thucydides) and third definition: a magistracy, office, term of office (Thucydides).

more often used, 'lust for power'. Using this translation of ἀρχή and capitalising the 'α' was a deliberate suggestion of a modern parallel. Furthermore, this quotation was taken from Thucydides' lengthy description of the civil war in Corcyra (Corfu) and did not directly relate to Athenian imperial activity. Thucydides used ἀρχή to refer to the actions of the Corcyraeans, who, in one week, massacred each other, killing anyone whom they believed to be enemies by virtue of personal hatred, greed, or indebtedness.²¹ Reflections of Murray's private fears for the future of the Empire, and the appropriation of both definitions of ἀρχή, were made apparent in the prefatory statement of purpose:

The present writers believe that for many years past the aggressive and vainglorious instincts of Great Britain have been unduly stimulated; that adventure, conquest, mastery, and race-pride, strangely wedded with speculative finance and culminating in the *fatal lust for Empire* have been so long held up to the worship of the populace by men whose position and antecedents should have rendered them capable of higher, or at least saner, ideals [...].²²

Using Thucydides' quote in such a way reinforced Murray's subsequent comparison of the Athenian and British Empires. Although his essay focused primarily on comparative discussion of the 'Imperial labour problem' (the 'kinds of criticisms raised in antiquity against the institution of slave labour' and whether there existed a 'tendency to use inferior alien labour in at all the same spirit and for the same purposes as the ancients used their hosts of imported slaves'²³), Murray was consciously not anti-Empire, but concerned with codes of behaviour. Citing a recent appeal made by the Aborigines Protection Society to the Colonial Secretary (11 May 1900), he asked: 'Let us insist on

²¹ 'There was death in every shape and form [...]. There were fathers who killed their sons; men were dragged from the temples or butchered on the very altars; some were actually walled up in the temple of Dionysus and died there' (3.81). Translation by Rex Warner (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1954). Thucydides does, of course, use ἀρχή to mean 'Empire' in other parts of the *History*.

²² Thucydides, xvi; emphasis is mine.

²³ Murray (1900), pp. 119, 134.

ving the [protective] codes administered, as far as possible, by Imperial Officers, who [...] will be free from the disastrous bias of the colonists themselves.’²⁴ In a 1901 essay in the *International Journal of Ethics*, Murray was more frank in his condemnation of ‘naïve patriotism’, arguing that the ‘characteristic feature of the world is the lack of social and moral forces to restrain the highest units of society’.²⁵ His Pro-Boer position became more explicit in his essay, ‘Intransigence’, published in *The Positivist Review* in February 1901, which further reflected the bitterness of a radical minority within the Liberal party. These political convictions led him to make significant personal donations to the South African Conciliation Committee which had been established to alleviate the distress among Boer women and children caused by scorched earth policies and special holding camps.²⁶

Murray’s commitment to finding comparable strategies within the Athenian and British Empires and to expressing his radical Pro-Boer stance was not confined to his political treatises though he was consciously subtler in his scholarly work. In his preface to the first series of translations of Euripides (*Bacchae*, *Hippolytus*, *The Frogs*, 1902), Murray concerned himself with the task of ‘build(ing) up something as like the original [...] in form and in what one calls “spirit”’.²⁷ In his introductory essay entitled, ‘*The Bacchae* in relation to certain currents of thought in the Fifth Century’, however, he employed a clever paralipsis which allowed him to draw a parallel, without being too overt, between the Athenian war demagogue Cleon and British Conservative leaders: ‘It could not be just, though to many it will be tempting, to draw immediate and

Murray (1900), p. 155.

Wilson, p. 72.

Wilson, pp. 73f. This cause, as a result of Emily Hobhouse’s reports from the Transvaal, was supported by the Women’s Liberal Federation, headed by Lady Carlisle, Murray’s mother-in-law.

Murray (1902), p. vii.

unqualified conclusions about contemporary English politics.’ The comparison was completed by his citation of Cleon’s speech debating about the punishment of the rebel city Mitylene (Thucydides 3.37): ‘I have remarked again and again that a Democracy cannot govern an empire [...]. You must remember that your empire is a Despotism exercised over unwilling subjects who are always conspiring against you.’²⁸ He used Thucydides 3.82.8 once again to prove his point, translating ἀρχή in this context more conventionally: ‘The cause of all these evils was the *lust of empire*, originating in avarice and ambition [...].’²⁹ One of Murray’s correspondents, John Buchanan, who participated in the reconstruction of South Africa, privately commended this restraint. ‘I cannot help seeing in modern England what certainly existed in Athens’, Murray replied to Buchanan’s letter. ‘A dangerous extension of this’, he concluded, was the ‘argument that because Englishmen are superior creatures [...] therefore they should be allowed a little extra latitude. This last is very dangerous.’³⁰

Given the context and content of Murray’s other comments, his focus here on an example of a successful democratic opposition to an imperialist agenda, which ultimately, and most importantly, saved the entire adult male population in Mytilene from massacre and the women and children from enslavement, was clearly deliberate. Although his express intention was to analyse historical passages in order to illuminate the ‘cloudy’ atmosphere in which Euripides’ tragedies were composed and performed, Murray had to be careful in identifying a direct counterpart in contemporary English politics. He soon found the champion for his *cause célèbre* in *Trojan Women*.

²⁸ Murray (1902), p. xl.

²⁹ Murray (1902), p. xlii. Murray had already commented that the ‘Athenian League, that great instrument of freedom, had grown into an Empire or Arche’ (p. xxviii).

³⁰ Gilbert Murray Papers, Bodleian Library: 126 51, Buchanan/GM, 30 January 1903 and 126 65, GM/Buchanan, 25 April 1903. Cited in Wilson, p. 77.

In the Introduction to the 1905 translation of *Trojan Women*, Murray wrote that the Athenian city-state with regard to Melos was ‘engaged in an enterprise which, though on military grounds defensible, was bitterly resented by the more humane minority’.³¹ By appropriating the tone and word choice of his essay, ‘National Ideas, conscious and unconscious’ (1901), discussed above, he directly related the reactions against the Melian massacre in the autumn of 416 BC to the feelings of his own Pro-Boer minority. The appropriateness of the parallel was extended further in 1921 when the 1901 essay was included in a selection of Murray’s scholarly and political essays. He wrote that ‘its expression of the feelings of the Liberal minority during the Boer War afforded an interesting parallel to the feelings of the same minority twenty years later, at the close of the Great War’.³² Thus, in his contributions to both the scholarly and political arena, Murray attempted to create a historical line of comparison from Troy to Melos to Edwardian England (and the Great War era), and to invite his readers to learn from the ancient precedents.

Prior to the first performances of his new translation, Murray carefully avoided making a direct parallel: ‘Not, of course, that we have in the *Troades* a case of political allusion. Far from it. Euripides did not mean Melos when he says Troy, nor mean Alcibiades’ fleet when he speaks of Agamemnon’s.’³³ He conceded only that Euripides wrote ‘under the influence’ of a year that had been ‘full of indignant pity and of dire

³¹ Murray (1905), p. 6.

³² *International Journal of Ethics* (1901). Reprinted in Gilbert Murray, *Essays and Addresses* (Oxford: George Allen, 1921), p. 8.

³³ The influence of the Melian incident on Euripides has been rigorously debated. For example, K.H. Lee in his 1976 commentary on the play agreed with Murray: ‘The anti-war message of the play is important and clear, but it is not the whole play, and we are too easily satisfied if we regard the Melos incident as the play’s central theme’. He rejects this as ‘oversimplification’, but does not deny the relation (p. xxxi, n. 13). On the other hand, scholar G. Norwood disagreed: ‘No spectator could doubt that “Troy” is Melos, “the Greek” “Athens”, *Greek Tragedy* (London: Methuen, 1920), p. 244.

foreboding'.³⁴ He drew attention to the possible effect of the play on the audience, but only subtly judged those reactions:

And while the gods of the prologue were prophesying destruction at sea for the sackers of Troy, the fleet of the sackers of Melos, flushed with conquest and *marked by a slight but unforgettable taint of sacrilege*, was actually preparing to set sail for its *fatal* enterprise against Sicily.³⁵

By mentioning the 'fatal enterprise against Sicily', Murray emphasised the political allusion—'the sackers of Troy' = 'the sackers of Melos'—and suggested that the prologue was a direct warning to those members of the Athenian audience who were about to embark on a venture that would turn out to be 'fatal' for the Athenian empire. He did not go so far as to suggest that the warning could extend to Edwardian England. On the other hand, this political allusion, which he had contended above did not exist, clearly influenced him to declare what would soon become the basis for the battle cry of the play's enduring legacy:

This tragedy is perhaps, in European literature, the first great expression of the spirit of pity for mankind exalted into a moving principle; a principle which has made the most precious, and possibly the most destructive, elements of innumerable rebellions, revolutions, and martyrdoms, and of at least two great religions. [...] It is the Kingdom of Heaven within us fighting against the brute powers of the world.³⁶

³⁴ Murray (1905), p. 6f. E.M. Blaiklock claimed that 'on the historical setting of this play there is general agreement. The dreadful Melian affair had shocked the tragedian into something like hatred of the conflict which had once stirred his patriotism' (*Male Characters in Euripides* (Wellington: University of New Zealand, 1952), p. 80). More recently, scholars have attempted to argue that there is little relation between *Trojan Women* and the sack of Melos. A. Maria van Erp Taalman Kip has argued convincingly in response to Scodel (p.139) that due to timing it was not possible for Euripides to compose the 'trilogy' and gain a chorus in time for a Spring 415 performance; therefore the sack of Melos could not have been the direct impetus for the play ('Euripides and Melos', *Mnemosyne*, 40.3-4 (1987), 414-418). Peter Green has more substantially argued that the modern interpretation of the play as an anti-war play (an opinion which could only be reached with some knowledge of the performance history of the play) cannot be sustained ('War and Morality in Fifth-Century Athens: The Case of Euripides' *Trojan Women*', *Ancient History Bulletin*, 13.3 (1999), 97-110). While these arguments are useful when engaging with Murray's conjectures, for the purposes of this discussion, the important point remains that Murray's mere mention of a connection between *Trojan Women* and Melos was enough to encourage critics and theatre practitioners to embrace (and exploit) that connection for decades.

³⁵ Murray (1905), p. 6; emphases mine.

³⁶ *ibid.*, p. 7.

Instead of discussing this legacy further, Murray cited the common criticisms and condemnations of the play – that it is ‘far from a perfect play; it is scarcely even a good play. It is an intense study of one great situation, with little plot, little construction, little or no relief or variety,’ and is ‘too harrowing [...] scene after scene passes beyond the due limits of tragic art’.³⁷ However, he proclaimed it worthy of redeeming because ‘like many of the greatest works of art, the *Troades* is something more than art. It is also prophecy, a bearing of witness’.³⁸ This prophecy could surely apply to the sackers of Melos or the sackers of the Transvaal.

1. Harley Granville-Barker/Gilbert Murray
Trojan Women
Royal Court Theatre
London
1905

Murray’s introduction and translation of *Trojan Women* had a significant effect on the many who read the play and/or witnessed its performance. A month before Harley Granville-Barker’s production opened at the Royal Court in Sloane Square, T.R. Glover, a classicist at St John’s College, Cambridge wrote in a private letter to Murray that he was pleasantly surprised to receive copy of his new translation of *Trojan Women*. He read it that very day and recalled the play’s special resonance. ‘It appeals to me very much’, he wrote, ‘for I do not forget the effect of the play upon my mind when I read it for the first time after the [Boer] war was over.’³⁹ Leonard Hobhouse, an old Oxford friend and fellow Liberal, wrote to tell Murray that he had ‘read the *Troades* with appreciation’, but ‘could not go to see it because it revived troubles which lie too near. If Odysseus had been a modern he would have been denounced as a murderous

³⁷ *ibid.*, p. 5.

³⁸ *ibid.*, p. 6.

³⁹ Gilbert Murray Papers, Bodleian Library: 11 27, TRG/GM, 7 March 1905.

barbarian [...]'.⁴⁰ These two letters demonstrated the extent to which even private readings of the play, in Murray's modern verse translation, struck a chord that had not been touched before the Boer War. The resonance was especially painful for Hobhouse, whose sister Emily had reported with such horror the British mistreatment of the Boer civilians, that Hobhouse felt he could not bear to attend a live performance.⁴¹ The theatre critic for the *Illustrated London News* echoed this sentiment: 'Last week's notable Court revival of *The Trojan Women* suggested that the interest of this Euripidean tragedy was mainly one of character based on a situation almost too painful for us moderns.'⁴²

Since no photographs or drawings remain from the production, the designs (costumes, set, lighting), as far as can be deduced, did not present any direct references to the Boer War.⁴³ Actor-Manager Harley Granville-Barker (1877-1946), whose first encounter with Murray had been in 1899 when he performed in his *Carlyon Sahib* and with his Greek plays through directing *Hippolytus* at the Court (18 October 1904; also the previous May at the New Century Theatre), brought to fruition some of the stage descriptions Murray had provided in his text. According to one reviewer, the set consisted of a painted back-cloth representing 'a great gateway (seen under varying lights) in the ruined city' with 'white towers of Troy standing out against the blue sky'

⁴⁰ Gilbert Murray Papers, Bodleian Library: 11 68 Hobhouse/GM, 5 May 1905.

⁴¹ Letter cited in Wilson, p. 106 and n.15. See also Edith Hall and Fiona Macintosh, *Greek Tragedy and the British Theatre 1660-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), Chapter 17.

⁴² *Illustrated London News*, 22 April 1905. Likewise, *Carlyon Sahib*, Murray's first original play, produced by Mrs Patrick Campbell at the Kennington Theatre (18 June 1899) was regarded as an attack on British imperial policy. During the summer of 1899, when negotiations over the Transvaal were in progress, many newspapers condemned the play. See Wilson, pp. 82-83.

⁴³ There does exist a sketch of the messenger speech in Barker's 1904 production of Murray's *Hippolytus* (by A. Boyd), which shows a *skene* backdrop and a raised stage with a set of shallow steps. The chorus are dressed in full-length classical-style robes, some with scarves and veils, and the men also dressed in the classical style with a Greek-key pattern on the hems of their togas. It is possible that *Trojan Women* the following year was similar in style.

and in the distance, 'blue waters'.⁴⁴ The architectural feature of the gate seems to be the only solid stage fixture. Special lighting created the effect of the passing of one day, which Murray had also emphasised.⁴⁵ Considerable evidence does exist in the Murray Papers (Bodleian Library, University of Oxford) regarding the laborious process of casting, which was debated in communications between Murray, Granville-Barker, and their close mutual friend, George Bernard Shaw; however, very little information about production or performance elements can be culled from reviews.⁴⁶ Max Beerbohm complained that he was subject to an 'afternoon of wailings', a criticism which may have attested to Granville-Barker's self-confessed trouble over controlling Marie Brema, a Wagnerian mezzo-soprano, in the role of Hecuba.⁴⁷ Another disgruntled critic complained about the Chorus apparel: 'Might there not have been some lighter colours in their dresses? The deep reds and browns only accentuated the monotony which is the main quality of the play.'⁴⁸ By contrast, Gertrude Kingston (Helen) wore 'pink garments with a modern air, as if it were a new fashioned opera cloak'.⁴⁹

The lasting impact of the production of *Trojan Women* at the Court, which was not financially successful, was not only that it was a timely political allusion, but that it ushered in a revival of interest in Euripides and contributed to the idea of the 'modern'

⁴⁴ *The Stage*, 13 April 1905. Murray's scenic directions: 'The scene represents a battlefield, a few days after the battle. At the back are the walls of Troy, partially ruined. In front of them [...] are some huts.' (1905), p. 11. It is rare to find actual στέγη ('hut' or 'tent', 32) represented on the modern stage. G. Salvini's production at the Teatro Greco in Syracuse (1952) featured a camp of tall, cone-shaped tents decorated with the Greek key motif from which the chorus appeared (See *Thespis: Bulletin of the Greek Center of the International Theatre Institute*, 4-5 (June 1966), p. 149).

⁴⁵ 'It is the dusk of early dawn, before sunrise' (*The Stage*, 13 April 1905).

⁴⁶ See sections on communications between Granville-Barker, George Bernard Shaw and Gilbert Murray in E. Salmon, *Granville Barker and his Correspondents: A Selection of Letters by Him and to Him* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1986). See also *Bernard Shaw's Letters to Granville Barker*, ed. by C.B. Purdom (London: Phoenix House, 1956).

⁴⁷ *Saturday Review*, 22 April 1905, p. 521. Noel Thomas, 'Harley Granville-Barker and the Greek Drama', *Educational Theatre Journal*, 7 (1955), 294-300 (p. 297).

⁴⁸ *The Daily Telegraph*, 12 April 1905.

⁴⁹ *Daily News*, 12 April 1905, p. 4.

element of his works. This was a personal goal of Granville-Barker's that developed from a vibrant exchange of ideas about the nature and place of drama in modern society with other members of the influential Fabian Society, including George Bernard Shaw, Gilbert Murray and William Archer. Shaw's plays formed the majority of the Granville-Barker and John Vedrenne (his financial partner) repertory seasons at the Royal Court from 1904 to 1907; the next most performed playwright was Euripides in the new translations by Murray, followed by Ibsen and other contemporary European dramatists.⁵⁰ As a result, audiences witnessed on a regular basis both Murray's influence on the structure and content of Shaw's plays, and the effect on Murray's translations of Shaw's radical moral and social philosophy.⁵¹ Sharing the same stage as Shaw, in Murray's uniquely modern and performable translations, Euripides was revived as a 'New Dramatist'.

Shaw, in particular, highlighted Murray's contribution to the rehabilitation of Euripides as a modern playwright in tune with socialist goals. From 1907 to 1910, he, Granville-Barker, Murray, and Archer, were occupied with a vigorous campaign against theatre censorship, centring on the application to produce *Oedipus Rex*. Greek tragedy had not been immune to the mark of the 'blue pencil' of the censor. The Theatre Regulation Act of 1843 gave the Lord Chamberlain the power to ban any play (old or new). Under Section 14 of the Act, the Lord Chamberlain had the power to stop a performance in the interest of 'good manners, decorum or the public peace'.⁵² The Lord

⁵⁰ From 1904 to 1907, eleven plays by Shaw were produced (701 out of 988 performances) and three plays by Euripides.

⁵¹ See Fiona Macintosh, 'The Shavian Murray and the Euripidean Shaw: *Major Barbara* and the *Bacchae*', *Classics Ireland*, 5 (1998), 64-84.

⁵² See Macintosh, 'Under the Blue Pencil: Greek tragedy and the British censor', *Dialogus* 2 (1995). Barker was no stranger to censorship as his play *Waste* was banned in 1907 because of its depiction of abortion. On 1843 Act, see Frank Fowell and Frank Palmer, *Censorship in England* (London, 1913), p.

Chamberlain's office had allowed Granville-Barker to produce *Hippolytus* (1904), which featured infidelity and suicide, and *Trojan Women* (1905), despite the depiction, albeit off-stage, of the murder of a child, but other Greek tragedy such as Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* had been denied rights because of the subject of incest. During the campaign to gain permission to produce *Oedipus Rex*, Shaw wrote to Murray urging him 'to shew that some of the masterpieces of Greek drama were censored in their time, and that they are actually being censored again now when after many centuries we are at last rising again to the point of being able to enjoy them'.⁵³ He also asked him to emphasise 'at the same time what a power [Greek tragedy] must have been in raising Greece from the Homeric level to the Euripidean'. He felt that Murray's 'talent for making an essay on Greek civilisation a vivid piece of contemporary social criticism', would aid their cause.⁵⁴ After a long campaign, they were ultimately successful when the Lord Chamberlain granted them permission to produce *Oedipus* in 1912.⁵⁵

It was the effect of these mitigating filters—Murray the scholar, Murray the poet, and Granville-Barker the theatre practitioner—that made *Trojan Women* a successful project, and one which marked the beginning of a concerted effort to restore Euripides as a great tragedian.⁵⁶ Those who agreed with the critics, like William Archer,

373. For discussions of stage censorship in Britain, see Richard Findlater, *Banned! A review of theatrical censorship in Britain* (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1967); J. Johnston, *The Lord Chamberlain's Blue Pencil*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1990); and Nicholas de Jongh, *Politics, Prudery and Perversions: the Censoring of the English stage, 1901-1968* (London: Methuen, 2000).

⁵³ Shaw to Murray, 17 July 1909. *George Bernard Shaw: Collected Letters (1898-1910)*, ed. by Dan Laurence (London: Max Reinhardt, 1972), p. 851. Murray's reputation, made primarily from the performances of *Hippolytus* and *Trojan Women*, had a significant impact as the campaign was ultimately successful. In 1910, it was Murray's translation of *Oedipus Rex* that was the first to be granted performance permission in Britain since the eighteenth century. See Fiona Macintosh, 'Tragedy in Performance: 19th and 20th Century Productions' in *CCGT*, pp. 284-323 (pp. 294-301).

⁵⁴ *ibid.*

⁵⁵ *ibid.*

⁵⁶ Even T.S. Eliot, who heavily criticised Murray's translations, agreed, with regard to his *Medea* (1919), that it was the performance of Sybil Thorndike that redeemed the text: 'Whether the success was due to Euripides is uncertain; whether it was due to Professor Murray is not proved; but that it was in

who considered it to contain 'too great monotony of sorrow to be effective on the stage', found themselves in the theatre, 'to their astonishment, almost unendurably moved'.⁵⁷ Six years after the Court performances of *Trojan Women*, W.H. Salter, scholar at Trinity College, Cambridge, articulated the influence of Murray's particular view of Euripides:

That Euripides is a 'modern' requires no proof. Does he not, with Prof. Gilbert Murray for interpreter, find his natural place on our stage by the side of our newest and brainiest dramatists? Is he not familiar to all Fleet Street as the 'Greek Ibsen', the 'Attic Shaw'? Are not his plays an inexhaustible mine of tags for the Feminist and other workers for Great Causes?

'The reason for this modernism, which is hardly less distinctive of Aristophanes and Thucydides than of Euripides, is to be found in the extraordinary and unique parallelism between Greece at the end of the Fifth Century B.C. and the civilized world at the present day.'⁵⁸

He also reinforced the influence of Murray's particularisation of the contemporary political resonance of *Trojan Women*: 'If we say that Euripides was Pro-Boer and an anti-clerical, we have fairly defined his main outlook on life.'⁵⁹

There is no doubt that Murray's participation in the production process of Granville-Barker's *Trojan Women*, and the impact of the production itself, significantly affected his opinion of the play and the playwright. In his subsequent publication, *Euripides and his Age* (1913), written for a popular readership and reprinted multiple times (his *Trojan Women* translation had sold over 39,000 copies at the time of the 1945

considerable measure due to Miss Thorndike there is no doubt. [She] employed all the conventions, the theatricalities, of the modern stage; yet her personality triumphed over not only Professor Murray's verse but her own training', 'Euripides and Professor Murray' (1920) reprinted in *Selected Essays* (London: Faber, 1932), p. 59. Robert Ackerman responds to this essay in an article of the same title in *CJ* 81 (1985).

⁵⁷ MacCarthy, p. 9. William Archer wrote privately to Murray: *Troades* is 'one of the noblest and most moving things I know [...]. But don't let Barker seduce you into putting it on the stage [...]. The play, he contended, was 'not a complete and independent work like the *Hippolytus*, but an epilogue to an epic'. Cited in C.B. Purdom, *Harley Granville Barker: Man of the Theatre, Dramatist, and Scholar* (London: Rockliff, 1955), p. 35.

⁵⁸ Salter, p. 9.

⁵⁹ *ibid.*

reprinting), Murray devoted considerable space to discussing the role of Melos in the composition and reception of *Trojan Women*.⁶⁰ Thucydides focused on Melos, Murray suggested, because the island had no military power, and as such, the ‘moral issue involved and the naked clarity of the crime’ was exactly the ‘type of sin leading to punishment – that sin of “Hubris” or Pride which according to Greek ideas was associated with some heaven-sent blindness and pointed straight to a fall’.⁶¹ To Thucydides and Euripides, wrote Murray, this act against Melos was exactly the kind of ‘sin’ that Athene, in the prologue of *Trojan Women*, suggests is worthy of severe punishment.⁶² With full knowledge of the reactions of his Edwardian audience to the 1905 production, Murray questioned: ‘Were the consciences of the sackers of Melos quite easy during that prologue?’⁶³ More directly, he linked Euripides with his own readership:

The Victorian Age had, amid enormous differences, a certain similarity with the Periclean in its lack of self-examination [...].

Euripides, *like ourselves*, comes in an age of criticism following upon an age of movement and action. [...] He accepts the Athenian ideals of free thought, free speech, democracy, ‘virtue’, and patriotism. He arraigns his country because she is false to them.⁶⁴

2. Harley Granville-Barker/Gilbert Murray *Trojan Women* American Tour 1915⁶⁵

I do wish we could do the *Trojan Women*, but perhaps it is an end of the War play, not a middle War. I have my eye on it for America, whither we shall

⁶⁰ Gilbert Murray, *Euripides and his Age*, The Home University Library of Modern Knowledge (London: Williams and Norgate, 1913).

⁶¹ Murray (1913), p. 81.

⁶² *ibid.*, p. 83.

⁶³ *ibid.*, p. 84.

⁶⁴ *ibid.*, p. 7; emphasis mine.

⁶⁵ For production details, see Appendix. See also Dennis Kennedy, *Granville Barker and the Dream of Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

have to dispatch all theatre things we have, I fear, sooner or later if they are to be kept alive.⁶⁶

Four months after Britain declared war on Germany, Granville-Barker voiced the above sentiments in a letter to Murray; the timing of *Trojan Women* was a pressing issue for his choice to produce the play. Murray, in his introduction to the 1905 text, had advocated the value of *Trojan Women* as a pre-war play, and Euripides as a prophet 'bound to deliver his message'.⁶⁷ Could the consciences of those involved in the waging of the Great War be touched by the play? And if so, what effect would an anti-war play have when war had already begun? The fact remained that 1915 *was* the middle of the war and if *Trojan Women* was to be produced at all, it could not be done in Britain, as Granville-Barker suggested, for safety and economic considerations. To keep his theatre alive, Granville-Barker moved his company to America.⁶⁸

During this period, in a country that had not yet lost a single citizen in the war, *Trojan Women* became an iconic peace (as opposed to anti-colonial) play. Murray's text was to be sold at the American performances, and in an effort to emphasis the play's message of peace, President Woodrow Wilson was asked to write a special preface to the published version. He declined, writing that he had to detach himself from anything which seemed an attempt to make opinion even in the interest of peace. There was little agreement at this time, especially in America, that peace with Germany at any price was the solution to the conflict. Wilson's cautious response was similar to Murray's own when the Women's Peace Party (WPP) decided to sponsor a tour of his translation,

⁶⁶ Britain declared war on Germany 4 August 1914. Letter (9 November 1914) cited in Salmon, p. 287.

⁶⁷ Murray (1905), p. 6.

⁶⁸ Barker was invited first by the Stage Society of New York to produce several productions in the city. Barker produced *Androcles and the Lion*, *The Man who Married a Dumb Wife*, *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, and *The Doctor's Dilemma* at the Wallack's Theatre in January and February 1915. Accepting the invitation also insured that Barker would not be enlisted as a soldier. See Purdom, pp. 170-71.

managed by Maurice Browne and the Chicago Little Theatre company (1915, see below); he hoped that the British would ‘scrutinize earnestly, [...] the proposed terms of Peace.’⁶⁹ The endorsement of the President was not crucial: Granville-Barker’s revival (performed in repertory with *Iphigenia in Tauris*) made a substantial impact on its American audience because of the middle-war timing and the effective use of the massive stadia provided by the various universities (mostly football stadia), which, much like the ancient theatres in Athens or Epidauros, allowed thousands of people to witness the play in one sitting. These stadia presented the team with a unique opportunity to proclaim a message of peace for contemporary times through the recreation of the civic and religious experience enjoyed by ancient Athenians attending outdoor performances at the Theatre of Dionysus in the fifth century.⁷⁰

The set and costume designs for the tour were based primarily on the designs for Granville-Barker’s acclaimed production of *Iphigenia in Tauris* at the Kingsway Theatre, London, starring Lillah McCarthy (1912). These designs, in contrast to a previous concentration on the art of the classical period, reflected a new interest in pre-classical archaic sculpture and art. This new trend became popular, for example, with William Poel’s production of the *Bacchae* (1908, starring McCarthy as Dionysus),⁷¹ and with the London premiere of *Elektra* (Hugo von Hofmannsthal and Richard Strauss)

⁶⁹ Sybil Thorndike, ‘The Theatre and Gilbert Murray’, in *Gilbert Murray: The Unfinished Autobiography*, ed. by Jean Smith and Arnold Toynbee (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1960), p. 163, n.1.

⁷⁰ In a letter to George Bernard Shaw, Granville-Barker suggested that this was the way Greek tragedy ought to be done: for large crowds on a ‘whacking big scale’; cited in Salmon, p. 141.

⁷¹ Poel was Granville-Barker’s mentor and was best known for his revivals of Shakespeare (with the Elizabethan Stage Society, 1894-1905). For the *Bacchae*, he drastically reduced choral odes which were performed by four women in static poses, moving only four times throughout the play. The Chorus ‘muttered, moaned, chanted’ and occasionally spoke, a method which was heavily criticised by Shaw in a letter to Granville-Barker and by Shaw’s successor at the *Saturday Review*, Max Beerbohm (14 November 1908). For a discussion of Poel’s Greek productions, see Robert Speaight, *William Poel and the Elizabethan Revival*, Annual publication (Society for Theatre Research) 1951-52 (London: Heinemann, 1954), especially pp. 168-78.

conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham at the Grand Opera (Covent Garden, 1910), these designs were inspired by Arthur Evans's discoveries at Knossos beginning in 1900.⁷² In the case of the *Bacchae*, it was McCarthy, who, at Granville-Barker's suggestion, spent considerable time studying the ancient sculptures and statues in the British Museum, particularly the archaic *kouroi*.⁷³ Granville-Barker had also previously experimented with the idea of archaeological accuracy with *Hippolytus* (translation by Murray) at the Lyric Theatre (1904), which featured a set structure of four classical columns and a main door, and costumes resembling Greek vase figures. These production decisions were undoubtedly further influenced by a trip to Munich in 1910 where Granville-Barker attended the Nietzschean-inspired production of *Oedipus Rex* by the celebrated Austrian director, Max Reinhardt (featuring a massive *skene* and archaic costuming).⁷⁴

This aim towards archaeological accuracy in the presentation of Greek tragedy was not a new phenomenon; it was very much the style of the day. Historical accuracy formed one branch of a new artistic movement encompassing the concept of realism or naturalism in the theatre, identified with the drama of Zola, Ibsen, early Strindberg, Hauptmann, Chekhov, and Gorky. In a revolt against the romanticism and melodrama of the nineteenth century, and in sympathy with the work of their contemporaries, including Balzac and Henry James, realist dramatists endeavoured to produce plays that presented a faithful picture of contemporary life and society; set, costumes and props were designed after close observations of every day life. Antiquarianism, a different

⁷² *The Daily Express*, 17 February 1910, featured a full page spread of costumes designed for *Elektra* (19 February, Grand Opera, Covent Garden), comparing the designs with their Mycenaean models. For photographs and discussion, see Simon Goldhill, *Who Needs Greek? Contests in the Cultural History of Hellenism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p.135.

⁷³ Granville-Barker and McCarthy met while playing in Ben Greet's company and were married in 1906.

⁷⁴ Murray wrote in the *Times* (23 January 1912): 'Professor Reinhardt was frankly pre-Hellenic, partly Cretan and Mycenaean, partly Oriental [...].'

branch of this realist enterprise, primarily promoted by producers of Shakespearean drama—most prominently Charles Kean (1811-68), with his fashionable productions at the Princess's Theatre in London (1850-59)⁷⁵ and Duke Georg II of Meiningen whose productions travelled extensively in Europe (1874-1890)⁷⁶—aimed at presenting historically accurate *mise-en-scene* and also contributed to a wider movement to preserve historical objects and documents.

This attention to historical accuracy in the production of Shakespeare also gave new life to the presentation and understanding of the work of the Greek tragedians.⁷⁷ There were very few productions of Greek drama before 1845, or indeed before 1880, when Balliol College, Oxford, provided the site for the first major production of a tragedy in ancient Greek in modern times (*Agamemnon*).⁷⁸ However, it was the Cambridge Greek Play (established 1882) which inaugurated the trend of using an archaeologically correct classicism as the basis for costume and set design choices, thereby creating an exciting experience for a captive audience. 'That the dresses were as far as possible archaeologically correct may be judged from the fact that they were

⁷⁵ Kean was one of the first theatre artists to insist on accuracy in every detail of production. His approach was heavily influenced by his predecessor, John Phillip Kemble (1757-1823), who created elaborate historically accurate scenes at Covent Garden in the early 1800s. See Richard Schoch, *Shakespeare's Victorian Stage: performing history in the theatre of Charles Kean* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

⁷⁶ Duke Georg's keen interest in archaeology and ancient art was reflected in designs that attempted to accurately recreate the real life locations depicted in his productions. For example, he made an extended visit to Domrémy in order to accurately reproduce the town for his production of Schiller's *The Maid of Orleans*.

⁷⁷ One of the first attempts at replicating the ancient Greek theatre experience, Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy's *Antigone*, first performed at the Hoftheater, Neuen Palais, in Potsdam, 28 October 1841 and in Covent Garden in 1845, featured an 'authenticity of the staging and the costumes, together with the use of speech' that 'captured audience's imagination'. See Macintosh (1997), p. 286f.

⁷⁸ Harvard put on its first play in ancient Greek (also *Agamemnon*) shortly thereafter. See H. Carter, *OUDES: A Centenary History of the Oxford University Drama Society 1885-1985* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985) and G. C. Moore Smith, *College Plays Performed in the University of Cambridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1923).

passed by a committee at the head of which was Professor Jebb,' wrote a critic for the *Daily News* (14 May 1890).⁷⁹

Norman Wilkinson's set for Granville-Barker's 1915 productions of *Trojan Women* and *Iphigenia in Tauris* reflected a close examination of the structure of the ancient Greek *skene* and amphitheatres recently published by the German archaeologist, Wilhelm Dörpfeld (a one-time assistant of Heinrich Schliemann's), whose work at the end of the nineteenth century (1896) sparked a new excitement for ancient theatre archaeology. The Vitruvian model of the ancient theatre, a popular reconstruction on the nineteenth-century stage, was soon replaced by Dörpfeld's model of the Theatre of Dionysus as a theatrical space with tiered seating for seventeen thousand people and a circular orchestra of eighty-seven feet with a *thymele* in the centre.⁸⁰ The scene building (constructed during the Lycurgan period, 338-326 BC), Dörpfeld argued, consisted of a stone structure, not more than one storey in height, three main doorways, two *paraskenai* connected by a marbled colonnade, and wings for dressing rooms and prop storage. Wilkinson's stage was a remarkable replica of Dörpfeld's model:

The Stage facing one end of the Stadium, behind it a cluster of tents for dressing rooms, in front a great circular ground cloth, 100 feet in diameter, with the conventional altar at the centre. The background of the stage was of canvas, 100 feet wide and 40 feet high, with three doors.⁸¹

Every effort was made to create a design that could serve the dramatic needs of both *Iphigenia in Tauris* and *Trojan Women*.⁸² The presence of the Greek key design along

⁷⁹ Quoted in Goldhill, p. 111.

⁸⁰ Vitruvius wrote his famous *De Architectura*, an architectural treatise in 10 books (especially Book 5 which deals with Greek and Roman theatre design), in first century BC. E.W. Godwin's Hengler's Circus, Argyll Street, London, where John Todhunter's *Helena in Troas*, arguably one of the most important productions of a play inspired by Greek tragedy (1886), was performed, was an example of a theatre based on the Vitruvian model. See Macintosh (1997), p. 294.

⁸¹ Described in McCarthy, p. 309.

⁸² The set was made in sections so it would be portable for travelling and was designed to suit the playing fields of the football stadiums ranging from capacities for about twenty thousand (CCNY) to seventy

the perimeter of the *skene*, and across the heavily decorated central door, with two smaller entrances on either side, created a sense of depth in the monumental structure. In New York, the set was perceived by one critic as a ‘a massive symbol of old Athens’ with ‘chastely molded lines’ that stood out against the beautiful college buildings behind it.⁸³

The pictorial evidence from rehearsals and performances illustrates Wilkinson’s attention to detail and coordination of all the elements of the design, including the costumes and props.⁸⁴ Just as the Greek key motif on the stage buildings provided perspective, so too did the bold geometric patterns of the robed costumes of the main characters. The edges of the costumes were bordered with thick black stripes not unlike the border lines on Greek pottery, and prevented the actors from being dwarfed by the space. Lillah McCarthy, as Hecuba, wore a tall, decorated, cone-shaped crown and carried a long hooked sceptre. Her costume was multi-layered and brightly coloured, each layer patterned differently. By its sheer size and volume, the costume gave Lillah McCarthy royal stature; Granville-Barker described her to Murray as looking like the ‘Queen of the Belgians’, a timely allusion.⁸⁵ When she was not wearing her crown, her long thick white braids were wrapped around her head in the style of an archaic *koure*. Helen (Gladys Hanson) wore high-heeled gilt shoes and her robed dress (of ‘warm reds’) was decidedly more intricate and decorative than the others with its multiple criss-cross patterns, and large jewellery adornments. Her full figure, and hair flowing in

thousand (Yale Bowl), and it could be modified to accommodate the significantly smaller venue at the University of Pennsylvania.

⁸³ Oscar Meriden, *The Theatre*, XXI (June 1915), 312.

⁸⁴ In general, see Appendix for sources. See Harrison Smith, ‘The Revival of Greek Tragedy in America’, *The Bookman*, 41 (1915), 409-16 and Montrose Moses, ‘Greek Drama in Beautiful Settings’, *The Theatre*, XXII (July 1915), 12-13 for photographs and a full description.

⁸⁵ Cited in Kennedy, p. 181.

curls from a tall cloth headdress, completed a picture of voluptuousness and indicated a character worthy of Hecuba's scathing comments at 1022ff. Andromache's demure character (Edith Wynne Matthison) was conveyed with a plainer dark robe with an outer robe and headscarf that modestly covered her head. A brightly patterned cap, easily seen from afar, added a special touch to Astyanax's otherwise plain tunic. Cassandra (Chrystal Hyrne) appeared both youthful and virginal in her predominantly white costume with its subtle patterns and thin lined borders. Her black hair was left long, and loosely curled, adorned by a wreath of flowers. The Chorus wore grey caps and simple grey robes and over-cloaks, which distinguished them from the other women. They each carried staffs representing the flames of Troy. The six Greek soldiers, similar to Reinhardt's designs, were exact replicas of ancient vase depictions of warriors, dressed in heavy armour, outer robes, patterned short tunics and sandals with stylised helmets. They carried thin arrow-headed spears and round shields decorated with geometric designs. Menelaus and Talthybius donned a similar costume with the exception of an over-cape that distinguished them from the other men.

According to the *Iphigenia* prompt-book, Granville-Barker's choral movement (accompanied by the Georgian music of Stanley Smith, a Yale Professor) featured 'vigorous [...], formal, ceremonial patterns' which could be seen from a distance by crowds of up to thirty thousand people.⁸⁶ Characters who, in the text, arrived from a distance (Talthybius, Andromache, Menelaus) appeared by means of a set of stairs that encircled the outermost part of the stage. The final burning of Troy was marked by the lighting of large cauldrons. The sight, smell, and sound of the fire crackling and the thick black smoke billowing in the enormous space, wrote one critic, 'spread like a pall

⁸⁶ Kennedy, p. 183.

over the group of huddled women and deepened the gray of the gathering twilight'; a production choice which emphasised the finality of the action.⁸⁷ The passing of the day naturally occurred and no artificial light was used. The choice to present Poseidon and Athene as wooden images raised above the *skene* marked an unusual interpretation of the *deus-ex-machina*; their speeches were spoken through an opening in the *skene*. Given these designs, it is clear that Granville-Barker and Wilkinson did not intend to recreate a modern setting, or reproduce the city of Troy, or the palace of Hecuba and Priam. Instead, they sought to recreate the *skene* structure that the ancient Athenians themselves would have seen in the Theatre of Dionysos in 415 BC (according to the view of scholars and archaeologists at the time).

Granville-Barker and Wilkinson's pursuit of archaeological accuracy was enthusiastically supported by a committee of classical scholars and other academics which helped to produce their tour of five American universities. The influence of this committee on production decisions highlighted the ongoing debate that affected the reception of classical drama by early twentieth-century audiences in America. As was the case in Britain, where scholarly purism was considered to be another legacy of the Victorian age, many Americans viewed the Classics as a wholly scholarly enterprise, an exercise in analysing text and language, associated with professors and schoolboys. When it came to the performance of the dramatic texts, archaeological authenticity in design was preferable because the choice offered, as Peter Burian suggests, a 'distancing filter' which allowed the ancient stories to continue to hold meaning for a modern audience.⁸⁸ The distance between modern reality and an ancient mythical world

⁸⁷ Meriden, 312.

⁸⁸ Burian, p. 253.

was made all the more poignant in the open-air theatre. For example, in New York, one critic described the theatrical experience of witnessing an ancient play in an environment bustling with modern life:

You see the roofs of apartment houses beyond the stadium wall, you hear the noise of passing trolleys and motor cars, of factory whistles and bells and distant river craft. Fainter than the singing of the chorus but more continuous the progress of the play is accompanied by the hum of New York at work.⁸⁹

The critic also valued his exposure to the ancient context: ‘Even for an audience of here and now, it gives special meaning to the play to know something of the circumstances under which it was written, circumstances that have significance quite aside from their interest to the sedulously archaeological.’⁹⁰ Ultimately, it was the theatricality of the production and the delivery of the verse, rather than ‘niceties of archaeology’ which captured the interest of some critics. In the case of the *Iphigenia*, it was the ‘beauty of the verse and the tremendous thrill of the great recognition scene’ that offered special meaning, rather than ‘all the professorial footnotes ever penned or all the momentous evidence ever excavated patiently from Attic soil’.⁹¹

Lillah McCarthy claimed that the ‘the acoustics were so perfect that there was no need to shout or strain the voice’,⁹² although several critics pointed out that in some places in the stadium the lines could not be heard. In any case, copies of Murray’s text were made available for audience members who wanted to follow along or could not hear the lines. The intimate scene of the Helen Episode, for example, was not conveyed as powerfully as some of the other scenes, because, as one critic noted, Helen appeared to be ‘hampered by the dismaying spaces of the amphitheatre’; she was ‘beautiful but

⁸⁹ ‘“Trojan Women” Beautifully Given’, *New York Times*, 30 May 1915, p. 10.

⁹⁰ *ibid.*

⁹¹ ‘Euripides played in the Yale Bowl’, *New York Times*, 16 June 1915, p. 10.

⁹² McCarthy, p. 309. Alternatively, for comments on unfavourable acoustics, see author unknown (S.W.), ‘The Trojan Women’, *The Nation*, 3 June 1915, p. 633.

insignificant'.⁹³ Her performance figured in stark contrast to the 1905 Court production, in which Gertrude Kingston was greatly praised and remembered for the intimacy of her performance.⁹⁴ In this production, it was Cassandra (about whom the *New York Times* critic remarked that the 'haunting loveliness of her voice has an unearthly quality that serves admirably the lines Gilbert Murray wrote') who was praised for overcoming the acoustic challenges of the space.⁹⁵

In addition to becoming one of the first critically acclaimed professional productions of Greek drama on the American stage, *Trojan Women* also provided a rare vehicle for female actors to gain recognition for their art. 'The living drama for Euripides lay in the conquered women', wrote Murray in 1905, 'it is from them that he has named his play and built up his scheme of parts: four figures clearly lit and heroic, and the others in varying grades of characterisation, nameless and barely articulate, mere half-heard voices of an eternal sorrow.'⁹⁶ Unlike any other tragedy (Shakespearean or otherwise) *Trojan Women* featured four substantial female roles, each representing a different kind of female persona, each with their distinct challenges and nuances of character. The 1915 production of *Trojan Women* promoted the talents of both Lillah McCarthy and Edith Wynne Matthison (Andromache) as paramount tragediennes.⁹⁷

⁹³ *ibid.*

⁹⁴ 'Kingston embodied Helen as a beautiful 'serpent of old Nile brought up to date', with a 'sweetness suggesting hardness', as Granville-Barker described her in a letter to Murray. Cited in Purdom, p. 34.

⁹⁵ *New York Times*, 30 May 1915. An interesting anecdote: in 1923, Alice Chapin and the Punch and Judy Theatre put on a single performance of *Trojan Women* (with Chapin as Hecuba) which was compared favourably to Granville-Barker's productions and the 'central acting' was described as having 'gained by the greater intimacy of the occasion'; quoted in Walton (1987), p. 358f.

⁹⁶ Murray (1905), p. 5.

⁹⁷ McCarthy acquired her style of emotive acting from the leading theatre artists at the time, Granville-Barker, William Poel and Reinhardt. In addition to playing Dionsyus in Poel's *The Bacchae*, in January 1912, she played Jocasta in Reinhardt's production of Murray's *Oedipus Rex* at Covent Garden. Through this experience of Greek tragedy, McCarthy had become a devotee of 'living drama'. Edith Wynne

For McCarthy, the experience of playing Hecuba was deeply personal and her reception of the play offers a unique perspective to the discussion of audience and critical reactions. In her autobiography, *Myself and My Friends*, she discussed her experiences rehearsing and performing in America while her own country was at war.⁹⁸ Being away from home while London was being bombed daily affected McCarthy considerably, but she found that she could channel her personal grief through the role of Hecuba:

Hecuba [...] is the most tragic part I have ever played. Everything conspired to heighten the tragedy. I, like Ruth, stood sick for home 'amid the alien corn'. The rehearsals themselves were all shivers, in an armoury, barn-like, in New York, cold and damp. I had no need to announce grief and anguish.

McCarthy's work to create Hecuba helped her to realise how 'Hecuba's sorrows became my own, and out of my own gloom I was able to portray the darkness of life. How touched therefore I was to know that out of all these sorrows something more than sorrow comes.' Her experience with *Trojan Women* gave her new understanding of the power of drama to shed light on the human condition: 'To come at last to understand that sorrowing for others and with others is the noblest attribute of man, noble because it ennobles, and because it stirs and brings to life and to expression emotions which laughter can never touch.'⁹⁹ These thoughts probe deeply into her understanding of Hecuba as a living character, and demonstrate that she did not, on the whole, simplify the part into the embodiment of a pacifist.

The combination of the visual impact of archaeologically correct scenography and the effect of modern realistic acting in the 1915 production aided the pursuit of a

Matthison was greatly praised for her acting: 'in the heartrending scene in which her child is torn from her to be hurled by the victors over the walls of Troy, she attained a high level of tragic frenzy' (*Morning Post*, 12 April 1905). For her 'high level of tragic frenzy,' another critic placed her 'in the fore-front of English actresses' (*The Daily Mail*, 12 April 1905).

⁹⁸ This autobiography was heavily censored and edited as a result of her divorce from Barker in 1918.

⁹⁹ All quotes from McCarthy, pp. 310-11.

long term and much broader goal established in Granville-Barker's days of management at the Royal Court: the creation of new audience sympathetic to intellectual drama.¹⁰⁰ Granville-Barker's revivals of *Trojan Women* in both London and America testified that the play was not only modern, but timely; a powerful after-war *and* middle-war declaration of peace. The modern audience, wrote an American critic for *The Nation*, should 'recognize that no man of our time has portrayed for us the horrors of ruthless conquest with the poignancy of the Athenian dramatist'.¹⁰¹ The critic for the *New Republic* celebrated the way in which Murray 'in spite of tradition has sought to give [Greek tragedy] a living form'. It was, he argued, almost solely because of Murray that Greek tragedy was made possible on the American contemporary stage.¹⁰²

3. Maurice Browne/Gilbert Murray *Trojan Women* Chicago Little Theatre/American Tour 1912-15

In early May 1915, the main New York newspapers carried an advertisement from the German Embassy in Washington, D.C. reminding travellers embarking on transatlantic voyages that there was a state of war between Germany and Britain and her allies. As the war-zone included waters adjacent to the British Isles, those travelling on passenger ships sailed at their own risk. On 7 May, a German submarine torpedo sank the *Lusitania*, a British Cunard Liner bound for Liverpool from New York, off the coast of Ireland killing 1,195 passengers, including 128 Americans.¹⁰³ One of the lost passengers was Charles Frohman (1860-1915), an American theatre producer who had

¹⁰⁰ Jan McDonald, *The 'New Drama' 1900-1914: Harley Granville Barker, John Galsworthy, St John Hankin, John Masefield*, Macmillan Modern Dramatists (London: Macmillan, 1986), p. 12.

¹⁰¹ S.W., 'The Trojan Women', *The Nation*, 3 June 1915, p. 634.

¹⁰² Francis Hackett, 'An Everlasting Music', *The New Republic*, 5 June 1915, p. 127.

¹⁰³ The loss of the *Lusitania* provoked great outrage in the United States and helped create the climate of public opinion that would later allow America to join the war.

recently created a repertory season at the Duke of York's Theatre, London. Frohman, a great promoter of Anglo-American theatre exchange, was responsible not only for the cross fertilisation of creative ideas, especially with regard to a move towards subsidised repertory theatre, but also for significantly advancing the careers of such legendary British actors as Harley Granville-Barker and Sybil Thorndike (1882-1976).¹⁰⁴ Since Frohman had been previously unable to produce Murray's *Trojan Women*,¹⁰⁵ it was a fitting tribute to his life and work that the play was performed on that day, in Washington, D.C., by the Chicago Little Theatre under the auspices of the Women's Peace Party. Instead of his usual pre-curtain speech, Maurice Browne, the company's actor-manager, simply held up the newspaper headline with the 'monstrous headline' proclaiming the sinking of the *Lusitania* and announced, "This play is about a deed like that."¹⁰⁶ The *Trojan Women* tours could not have been more timely. Francis Hovey Stoddard, a Professor at New York University wrote in the City College of New York (CCNY) programme: 'Never surely can a great tragedy seem more real to us or purge our souls more truly of the unreality of our thoughts and feelings concerning vital issues than can *The Trojan Women* at this moment of the history of the world.'¹⁰⁷ Browne's production of *Trojan Women* appeared to reflect the growing uneasiness amongst the American public about the nation's neutral position in what was known then as the European War.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ Barker was one of the main directors of Frohman's repertory plays at the Duke of York in 1909-10. Thorndike spent an early part of her acting career with Frohman's Duke of York season.

¹⁰⁵ *Iphigenia in Tauris* was contracted to be produced by Frohman, *Trojan Women* was suggested in 1910, but neither was produced. See Purdom, pp. 108, 113.

¹⁰⁶ Maurice Browne, *Too Late to Lament An Autobiography* (London: Gollancz, 1955), p. 181.

¹⁰⁷ Foreword to the City College of New York programme.

¹⁰⁸ The United States maintained neutrality until 6 April 1917, when, by a vote of 82 to 6 in the Senate and 373 to 50 in the House of Representatives, the United States declared war on Germany.

Browne also believed in the importance of reviving intellectual drama, but unlike Granville-Barker whose main technique was to infuse his ritualistic dramas with Ibsenite naturalism, Browne employed the experiments of the 'New Stagecraft' movement—subsequently defined as revolt against realist scenography led in Europe by Adolphe Appia (1862-1924) and Edward Gordon Craig (1872-1966), and in Russia by Sergei Diaghilev (1872-1929)—to revive ritualistic drama for a receptive American public. In 1910, after active duty in the Boer War and in India, Browne, a poetry and English literature graduate from Cambridge University, pursued the American actress, Ellen van Volkenburg (stage name: Nellie Van) to her native Chicago. At a time when American theatre, especially outside of New York City, was reluctant to even attempt productions by such authors as Ibsen, Strindberg, and Shaw, both Browne and Van were 'afire' to see plays that the commercial theatre did not offer, including the Greek plays.¹⁰⁹ Unwilling to join other theatre organisations in Chicago, they took the initiative to form their own production company, gathering a small group of actors and securing a small studio belonging to a sculptress friend as a rehearsal space. It seems unlikely that Browne would have seen Granville-Barker's productions of *Hippolytus* or *Trojan Women* in London as he was on active duty overseas during those years, but reports of the two productions must have reached him, for, in September 1912, he wrote to Murray to obtain the rights to *Trojan Women*, as well as his other translations of *Medea*, *Bacchae*, and *Hippolytus*.¹¹⁰ Murray agreed.¹¹¹ Since the company consisted of mainly women, *Trojan Women* was a natural first play to tackle. Unlike other companies who were forced to have short rehearsal periods for economic reasons, the

¹⁰⁹ Browne, p. 111.

¹¹⁰ Gilbert Murray Papers, Bodleian Library: 20 138 MB/GM, no date.

¹¹¹ Gilbert Murray Papers, Bodleian Library: 20 141 GM/MB, 23 July 1912.

Browne-Van company rehearsed for eleven months, nine hours a day, seven days a week, barring short periods when Browne and Van took time off to give lectures to keep the company financially solvent. On one occasion, they were married. During this rehearsal period, all of the actors were unpaid volunteers.

Even in the humble early stages of his company, Browne was strong in his convictions and aims to re-create poetic drama for the American stage and emphasised the important role producing Greek tragedy would play in the process. In a letter to Murray, he wrote:

I personally believe that if ever a genuine poetic drama comes into being in America – which now that I have lived here for two years, does not seem to me nearly so remote a possibility as it did when I was in England – it will have its rise in Chicago and will largely be conditioned by a revival of Greek Drama here.¹¹²

For Browne, the revival of Greek drama was dependent on the presentation of the Chorus: ‘We knew that the road-map lay concealed somewhere in the Greek Chorus: a choreographic map based on the beat of verse; a map of perfectly synchronized mood, movement and speech; a “dance”, with words.’ The training process for the actors consisted of learning the text so that ‘gradually the head, the arm, the torso, the leg, the foot [...], began to move, of their own accord [...], synchronously with the speech’.¹¹³ ‘Suiting the action to the word’ was a technique that approximated the practice of eurhythmics developed by the Swiss music-pedagogue, Emile Jacques-Dalcroze, whose experiments would later develop into one of the foundations for modern dance. Eurhythmics consisted of experiments with a system of rhythmic exercises and body movement that aimed for a coordination of the mental picture of movement and the actual control of the body. From 1910, at his school in Hellerau, near Dresden, Dalcroze

¹¹² Gilbert Murray Papers, Bodleian Library: 20 195-96 MB/GM, 5 September 1912.

¹¹³ Browne, pp. 118-19.

held classes in which students were asked to create three-dimensional exercises instead of a mere moving tableaux. These exercises in physical training made the actor sensitive to the dimension and space of the stage. The synchronisation of movement and speech was the basis for Browne's style, and represented an important variation on attempts at presenting a historically authentic picture of Greek tragedy on the stage embodied in the singing, dancing, and acting Chorus. In Browne's *Trojan Women*, the Chorus was played by five women (due to expense and the space limitations of most venues) who created 'symbolic pictures rather than reveal[ing] individuality'.¹¹⁴ They moved as a unit, transitioning easily into poses that were distinctly sculptural.¹¹⁵ These moving sculptural tableaux (in essence a fusion of Dalcroze's method and the pursuit of archaeological realism)—for example when the Chorus grouped around Hecuba, with the two front Chorus members outstretched in front of her in a triangular silhouette—clearly imitated choral or dancing satyr figures found on ancient vase paintings.¹¹⁶ One critic described the choral movement as if 'the figures of the Parthenon frieze [were] coming to life and speaking and acting with a tragic grandeur'.¹¹⁷ This delicate balance between statuesque formations and enthusiastic movement, known in Europe as 'plastic' or 'rhythmic' drama, reflected the new styles of dance introduced at the beginning of the century by Isadora Duncan and Maud Allan, both of whom significantly contributed to the revival of ancient Greek performance. Under these influences, Browne created a Chorus of stylised dancers who not only attempted to

¹¹⁴ Kendra Chopcian, 'An analysis of Maurice Browne's directing themes and practices with the Chicago Little Theatre' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Michigan, 1989), p. 103.

¹¹⁵ Cloyd Head, 'The Chicago Little Theatre', *Theatre Arts Magazine*, 1.3 (May 1917), 110-16.

¹¹⁶ See Oliver Taplin, 'The Pictorial Record', in *CCGT*, pp. 69-90. See also *Performance Culture and Athenian Democracy*, ed. by Simon Goldhill and Robin Osborne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) and *Art and Text in Ancient Greek Culture*, ed. by Simon Goldhill and Robin Osborne (1999).

¹¹⁷ Redfern Mason, *San Francisco Examiner*; cited in Donald Tingley, 'Ellen Van Volkenburg, Maurice Browne, and the Chicago Little Theatre', *Illinois Historical Journal* (Autumn 1997), 143.

authentically represent the choruses of the ancient productions, but also appeared to be modern, reflecting the latest trends in dance.

With the aid of the technical innovations, designs and theories of the 'New Stagecraft' movement, Browne was able to bring to life Murray's specific vision of the play. In the introduction to the 1905 published edition of *Trojan Women*, Murray reinterpreted a common criticism, based on Aristotelian criteria, that the play had a 'loose plot' by suggesting that the 'movement' of the play was expressed through the 'gradual extinguishing of all the familiar lights of human life'. These 'lights' were both metaphorical, representing an ever-illusory hope, to say nothing of the spirits of the conquered women, and real. The men, the conquerors, were but 'sinister and disappointed phantoms', while the women were alive, 'clearly lit and heroic'. Embedding stage directions into the body of the text, Murray identified the process by which the metaphorical 'gradual extinguishing of all the familiar lights' became real light, the progress of the day from dawn to dusk.¹¹⁸ For example, Murray's gods appeared in near darkness, then, after the Prologue, 'the day slowly dawns: Hecuba awakes'.¹¹⁹ He resolved the problem of how to show Cassandra's πεύκης inside the tents (Euripides, v.298) with lighting: 'light is seen shining through the crevices' of a hut.¹²⁰ During the funeral of Astyanax, 'flames of fire and dim forms are seen among the ruins of the city'.¹²¹ The cycle of the day is completed as Talthybius watches the burning city, 'the dusk deepens', and finally, 'the Women go out in the darkness'.¹²²

¹¹⁸ Murray (1905), p. 5.

¹¹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 16.

¹²⁰ *ibid.*, p. 27.

¹²¹ *ibid.*, p. 73.

¹²² *ibid.*, pp. 75, 79.

From the beginning, Browne was explicit about the techniques he aimed to use, writing to Murray in 1912: 'We are trying to produce Gordon Craig effects.'¹²³ As a result, the lighting design for *Trojan Women* was one of the first American attempts at using light to create contrasting areas of illumination and shadow, an essential element of Craig's philosophy explored in his book, *The Art of Theatre* (1905).¹²⁴ This technique also reflected the work of Craig's contemporary, the Swiss designer, Adolphe Appia, considered by many to be the 'father' of modern theatre, who stressed in his *Die Musik und die Inszenierung* (1899) that 'all powerful Light' could be used to express the 'animated life' of the drama. His theories on the relation between music, light, and the body, set a foundation for a 'New Art' in the theatre. For Appia, the human body represented the 'living art' of theatre as it responded to its scenic and musical environment.¹²⁵ The American scenic artist, Robert Jones (who, incidentally, designed Granville-Barker's revivals of *The Man who Married the Dumb Wife* at the Wallack's Theatre in New York preceding the Greek tour) expressed the impact of these new experiments on the theatre world:

The theatre today is alive. It is full of a new spirit in which there is ever present the desire for the fullest, widest expression of the author's thought. The modern producer uses every means in his power to convey the message as completely as possible to the sensibilities of his audience. [...] Perfect rhythmic presentation is the keynote of modern play-producing.¹²⁶

¹²³ Gilbert Murray Papers, Bodleian Library: 20 195-96 MB/GM, 5 September 1912.

¹²⁴ Craig was, in a sense, a promoter of the Classical ideal for staging. He wrote: 'I see a great building to seat many thousands of people. At one end rises a platform of heroic size on which figures of a heroic mould shall move [...]. The movements [...] shall be noble and great: all shall be illuminated by a light such as the spheres give us, not such as the footlights give us, but such as we dream of;' 'that we shall invent it to-morrow (sic) will be nothing new; it is what the men of the theatre began thousands of years ago. We shall not be repeating—we shall only resume', *Art of Theatre*, (London: T.N. Foulis, 1905), pp. 14-15, 16. For general discussion, see Dennis Bablet, *Edward Gordon Craig* (London: Heinemann, 1966) and Edward Craig, *Gordon Craig: the story of his life* (London: Gollancz, 1968).

¹²⁵ See Adolphe Appia, *Essays, Scenarios, and Designs*, translated by W. Volbach, vol. 57, *Theatre and Dramatic Studies* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1989). For context, see Richard Beacham, *Adolphe Appia: Theatre Artist* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) and W. Volbach, *Adolphe Appia, Prophet of the Modern Theatre* (Middletown, Conn: Wesleyan University Press, 1968).

¹²⁶ Ruth Gottholdt, 'The New Scenic Art of the Theatre', *The Theatre Magazine* (May 1920), 248.

Jones's apprenticeship in Europe with Reinhardt, Appia, and Dalcroze convinced him of the merits of the new movement: 'There is a wonderful synthesis of movement, sound, color, light, to wrap the spectator round and carry him away on a tremendous emotional wave.'¹²⁷

It was this Wagnerian synthesis of all the creative elements of the production that Browne sought to convey. The following description of the opening scene of *Trojan Women* (courtesy of James O'Donnell Bennett in the *Record Herald*) illustrates Browne's use of this new technique:

In the darkness you hear the voice of a woman [...] slowly the darkness around her is shot with faint shafts of light. Sometimes the light seems to be suffusing the scene; at the other times it is only a ray that falls across her or is reflected on her white arm as she crouches in the desolate fields outside the battlement of Troy [...].

The antiphonal of war grows faint. The stage is left empty save two women who stand in the gap in the wall. The sky grows red with the light of the blazing city. With crashing words the poet marks its fall. Then there is silence, then a trumpet calling faintly from the ships, and silence and darkness.¹²⁸

The primary use of light, as opposed to the reliance on realistic scenery or an artistic backdrop to visually enhance the words and action, was to create a new poetry of movement—an intensified atmosphere—in which the audience attending a play, especially one such as *Trojan Women*, was guided with the help of visual markers through the emotional highs and lows of the piece. The lighting design was also practical for the small venues on the Browne-Van tour. In small spaces, the minimal set was symbolic instead of archaeologically accurate: 'You catch the outline of a section

¹²⁷ Gottholdt, 250.

¹²⁸ *Record Herald*, 2 January 1913.

of the Trojan wall, where a great gap has been made by the victorious engines. Through the jagged gap you see dark sky—purplish, ominous, vast.’¹²⁹

Browne’s experimentation and ensemble work quickly became the talk of the Chicago elite, and with public encouragement he was able to negotiate with Charles Curtiss, the manager of the Fine Arts building, to rent a ‘fourth-floor back’ room as the new home for his company. *Trojan Women* opened in the ninety-one seat Chicago Little Theatre in November 1912. Browne’s initial staging of *Trojan Women* ran for many months and was revived multiple times. For the first time, Browne publicly expressed his aim to start a renaissance of poetic drama. In a *Harper’s Weekly* magazine interview, he stated:

We have tried to prove that these people are wrong who say that the time for poetic drama is past. [...]. We have found that by using the right methods, poetic drama can be made as *interesting* as any other kind of drama. [...] Moreover, we have brought before our audiences some of the best work of the men who are recreating the drama of the modern world.¹³⁰

He ended by proclaiming that ‘best of all we are making Euripides a contemporary’, a comment which allied him closely with his British counterparts, Murray, Granville-Barker, and McCarthy.¹³¹

In 1914, Browne and Van travelled to Europe to study various theatrical and puppetry techniques, and when they returned to America they found themselves in a Chicago whose citizens ‘thought ill of war’.¹³² Browne’s English friends, the poet

¹²⁹ *ibid.* Annie Horniman’s 1911 Manchester production of *Trojan Women* had a similar set design: ‘Hugh Fremantle’s simple set, depicting the walls of Troy with a sear through it and the Greek ships beyond, was generally approved’, Rex Pogson, *Miss Horniman and the Gaiety Theatre* (London: Rockliff, 1952), p. 101. The ‘sear’ appears to be influenced by Murray’s own description: ‘at the back are the walls of Troy, partially ruined’ (p.11).

¹³⁰ Floyd Bell, ‘The Littlest Theatre’, *Harper’s Weekly*, 29 November 1913, 22-24 (p.24).

¹³¹ *ibid.*

¹³² Browne, p. 178.

Rupert Brooke, in particular, urged him to volunteer for the army, but, with 'South Africa still a vivid memory', he found that his duty was elsewhere:

Henry Ford was sending his Peace Ship to Europe; Jane Addams had organized the Women's Peace Party; the Carnegie Peace Foundation was financing pacifist activities. The Chicago Little Theatre must play its part. How better than by touring *The Trojan Women*? It was not merely the play which we loved most; in the city of the World's Largest Bookstore it was the World's Greatest Peace Play.¹³³

As Granville-Barker was also launching a US tour with a revival of his 1905 production, in negotiation with Murray, the two divided the country. Browne would tour Washington, D.C. and all the states west of it and Granville-Barker took his production to the eastern states. Jane Addams, an old friend of Browne and Van, and President and founder of the Women's Peace Party (WPP), offered to sponsor the US tour. The publicity material for the Little Theatre tour promoted *Trojan Women* not as 'an archaic curiosity', but as a 'direct message, inspiration and appeal here and now to the men and women of America'. This direct message of peace caused Murray some discomfort. In a 1914 pamphlet 'How can war ever be right?' he had proclaimed publicly (in a non-scholarly context) that *Trojan Women* was the 'first great denunciation of war in European literature'.¹³⁴ Murray wrote that 'there is none of my own work into which I have put more intense feeling than into my translation of Euripides' *Trojan Women*', and expressed how the play represented his own pacifism:

I have all my life been an advocate of Peace. I hate war, not merely for its own cruelty and folly, but because it is the enemy of all the causes that I care for most, of social progress and good government and all friendliness and gentleness of life, as well as of art and learning and literature.¹³⁵

¹³³ *ibid.*

¹³⁴ Gilbert Murray, *How Can War Ever be Right?* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1914), p. 1 His pacifism was expressed overtly: 'I opposed the policy of war in South Africa with all my energies, and have been either outspokenly hostile or inwardly unsympathetic towards almost every war that Great Britain has waged in my lifetime' (p. 1).

¹³⁵ *ibid.*

Despite these strong feelings against war, Murray believed that in this case it was right to declare war on Germany and to 'have remained neutral in that crisis would have been a failure of public duty'.¹³⁶ To clarify his own position, he insisted that a special 'Note by Translator' be included in the WPP programme, which read:

While I am heart and soul with the Women's Peace Party in their abomination of War [...], I do not wish my co-operation in this National Tour to be interpreted as meaning that I am in favour of making peace with Germany on whatever terms the German government may propose.¹³⁷

This was an important distinction for Murray who would soon become more active in politics and instrumental in the formation of the League of Nations Union. Murray's note, however, did not deter the WPP from using *Trojan Women* to express their pacifist sentiment, nor did it deter the audience and critics from viewing the play as a peace-play. Through the WPP promotional material, the message of *Trojan Women* was adapted to express the Party's unequivocal anti-war platform. Slogans were printed such as '*Trojan Women*: the most poignant and the most beautiful illustration of war's utter futility and unmitigated evil'. Accompanied by material about how war affects women and children, the publicity encouraged the audience to interpret the play not only as a lens with which to view their own personal experience of the war but also as one which highlighted the horror that faced women and children on the other side of the trenches:

There are Hecubas in Belgium, Cassandras in Poland, Andromaches in Germany and countless thousands of Astyanaxes in France and Russia and England and Italy, too – little tots who will never know a father's protection again.¹³⁸

In this production, unlike Granville-Barker's monumental archaeologically correct staging, there was no longer a gap between the ancient and modern experience. The

¹³⁶ *ibid.*

¹³⁷ Murray Papers, Bodleian Library.

¹³⁸ Walter Anthony, cited in Tingley, p. 143.

stories of Hecuba and Cassandra and Andromache were embraced as stories to provide strength and understanding for the women living in 1914 and to 'prove that war isn't any different today than it was when Christian civilization was just dawning'.¹³⁹ Most importantly, *Trojan Women* was promoted in order to compel action from the members of the audience in the form of protest against the war and support of the WPP's aims.

However, the abundance of promotional material accompanying the performances had little direct effect on the staging and interpretation of Euripides' play. There were no visual indications of Belgian Hecubas or Polish Cassandras on the stage. For Browne, the figure of Astyanax was the link between the ancient and modern experience: 'The child, a silent figure, is the pivot of the play, exactly as children are the pivot of tragedy in our barbaric age.'¹⁴⁰ Ironically, it was the use of a child on tour that ultimately created ill will between the Chicago Little Theatre and the WPP. At the opening of the tour at the Blackstone Theatre (Chicago's leading playhouse), Jane Addams gave a rousing speech championing peace. After the performance, she was shocked and proclaimed, "You used a *child*! [...] But our Party is inflexibly opposed to child-labour." Browne replied, "But this is a play, not labour."¹⁴¹ Addams and Browne argued over the artistic and ethical integrity of the issue (a contract including the child had been agreed previously). Finally, Browne agreed to use a doll instead of a child in performances in those states on the tour whose laws prohibited child labour.¹⁴² For someone who believed that the living breathing Astyanax embodied the 'aims and aspirations of the Little Theatre as a whole', this was a difficult concession to make.

¹³⁹ Gardner Mack, *Washington Times*, cited in Tingley, p. 143.

¹⁴⁰ Browne, p. 178.

¹⁴¹ Browne, p. 179.

¹⁴² For a discussion of the legal debate over child labour with regard to theatre hiring, see Ben B. Lindsey, 'The Stage Child and the Law', *The Theatre* (October 1916), 192.

Browne described how Astyanax, played by a little girl, like the other players, felt the play 'in all its intensity and lives her part' and when she was asked 'how she would feel [...], putting herself in the same place of the little prince, she evoked her interpretation spontaneously'. It was this spontaneous performance by all the players that was praised by the critics as a 'natural artistic and realistic portrayal, not a stilted one'.¹⁴³

The spontaneity of the performance was also due to the communal approach to rehearsing that Browne instilled in the company from the very beginning. In the early days, there was little money and the actors were unpaid. By the time of the national tour, the reputation of the company for producing high quality poetic theatre was growing, and Nellie Van became one of the star actresses of the Chicago theatre scene. Nevertheless, Browne insisted that all the players remain unnamed in the programme and there was no curtain call. There was even a special note in the programme asking that there be no applause after the show ended. Browne claimed this was to preserve the ensemble feeling and keep focus on the art itself, not on the actors. As a result, the actors subsumed their own personalities allowing only the characters of *Trojan Women* to exist, thus universalising the themes of the play. 'One left the theatre with mingled emotions of pleasure, perhaps as a result of the exquisite colors, and pain, because of these unnamed players had brought the tribulation of a stricken race so terribly near,' commented one critic.¹⁴⁴ John Cowper Powys, the eminent English novelist, in the souvenir programme essay, acknowledged the unique nature of the ensemble as a prime reason for the 'renaissance' of the genre; 'every member of the company is touched and attuned and compelled and transfigured to the same ultimate pity.' Other critics

¹⁴³ Browne quoted in *The Times Star*, Cincinnati, 14 May 1915.

¹⁴⁴ *Columbus Citizen*, 11 May 1915.

interpreted this insistence on anonymity more negatively; the fact that no company member drew a salary was seen as 'purely in the interest of peace propaganda'.¹⁴⁵

Although the ultimate aim for the Chicago Little Theatre company was to express through the techniques of ensemble work and the 'new stagecraft' that poetry could shorten the physical distance between the ancient and modern experience, they also found receptive audiences because they 'attempted to preserve the real spirit of the ancient classical drama', with 'color, flowering of draperies, statuesque figures, and gliding movements, rhythmic intonations'.¹⁴⁶ One critic was so moved that he argued effusively that the production was the 'most effective representation of Greek tragedy that has been made in our generation'.¹⁴⁷ Despite popular success, financially, the tour was a disaster. Browne had under budgeted the costs and often did not collect grant money from his sponsors.¹⁴⁸ Nevertheless, the *Trojan Women* tour substantially promoted both the platform of the WPP and Browne's own theatrical intentions. According to Nellie Van's calculations, on the tour, in fifteen weeks, thirty-three thousand people viewed forty-two performances in thirty-one cities.¹⁴⁹ *Trojan Women* made a national reputation for the Chicago Little Theatre, travelling across the country from the mid-West to the South to the north-West, playing in such varied venues as the cathedral-like Oberlin College Chapel, women's clubs in small towns in Michigan, and even the Festival Hall at the Panama-Pacific International Exposition (six thousand seats). Browne made significant progress towards proposing that poetic drama could be vital and relevant to a twentieth-century audience and made a considerable contribution

¹⁴⁵ Gardner Mack, *Washington Times*, cited in Tingley, p. 143.

¹⁴⁶ Dell, 22.

¹⁴⁷ Head, 111.

¹⁴⁸ The company earned \$10,000, spent \$21,000 (\$7000 of the debt covered, \$4000 never recovered), see Chopcian, p. 140 and Browne, p. 188.

¹⁴⁹ Browne, p. 188.

towards the revitalization of Greek drama at a time when the texts were considered primarily for study and not for performance. Thus, between the Granville-Barker and Browne tours, up to an estimated one hundred and thirty thousand people attended performances of *Trojan Women*, an accomplishment that firmly set the play among the highest ranks of modern performance.¹⁵⁰

4. Lewis Casson/Gilbert Murray
Trojan Women
London
1919

In 1895, A.W. Verrall wrote that, in his time, theatre was not of ‘general importance as an organ of public opinion or public instruction’.¹⁵¹ Granville-Barker and Browne’s revivals of *Trojan Women* proved to a great extent that Greek tragedy, especially when used to promote political agendas, could effectively become ‘organs’ to influence public opinion. This was to be made more explicit in the aftermath of the Great War. As *Trojan Women* was used as promotion for organisations seeking to end the ongoing war, one of the play’s future producers, Lewis Casson (1875-1969), was serving as a member of the British Army Service Corps.¹⁵² As a protégé of Ben Greet, William Poel, and Harley Granville-Barker, earlier productions of Greek tragedy, particularly of *Trojan Women*, would have greatly influenced Casson’s own view of producing ancient drama.¹⁵³ His experience with *Trojan Women* began in 1911, when he played the role of Poseidon in Annie Horniman’s production (also Murray’s

¹⁵⁰ The reviewer in *Vogue* (July 1915), 52-53 estimated that 100,000 people attended Granville-Barker’s productions.

¹⁵¹ Verrall, p. 78.

¹⁵² He served through the duration of the war, sustained a shrapnel wound in 1917, and returned to Britain in November 1918.

¹⁵³ Casson toured with Ben Greet’s company, acted in Barker’s *Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *Hippolytus* (1904) and *Medea* (1906) and trained with Poel early in his career.

translation) at the Gaiety Theatre in Manchester, a theatre company that was one catalyst for the development of a regional theatre movement in Britain.¹⁵⁴ Granville-Barker, himself, had been instrumental in arranging for Horniman to produce the play.¹⁵⁵ Fortunately, at the Gaiety, Casson met Sybil Thorndike, a fellow actor, and they soon married, forming a personal and theatrical partnership of the likes of Granville-Barker and McCarthy and Browne and Van (unfortunately the relationships of the latter two did not endure). While Casson was serving at the front, Thorndike learned her craft by playing nearly every female part (and several male parts as well) written by Shakespeare at the Old Vic Theatre (1917). On the night Waterloo station was bombed, she was playing the role of the Fool to her brother Russell's *King Lear* at the Old Vic (she would return in 1919 with *Trojan Women*):

Russell played the storm scene against the thunderous raging of the air raid [...], to a huge round of applause as he shook his hands towards the guns [...]. Clapping had hardly died away, and the guns had started up again when Sybil capped this with "Here's a night that pities neither wise men nor fool."¹⁵⁶

After witnessing first hand the profound effect of real circumstances on a theatre performance during this extraordinary experience, Thorndike felt the urge to 'tackle the Greeks' again and to tell the story of the European war through the *Trojan Women* of Euripides.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁴ The first production took place at the Birmingham Classical Association (9 October 1908), but little is known about the production. The play, in Gilbert Murray's translation, was first performed in 1911 for The Birmingham Greek Play Committee, and next at the Gaiety in Manchester (13-14 March).

¹⁵⁵ Irene Rooke, star of the Gaiety, who had also been considered for Granville-Barker's own production, played Hecuba; Penelope Wheeler, a Chorus member in the 1905 production, played Andromache. For a variety of reasons, it was deemed 'a miraculous production played to miraculously empty houses'. Critics praised both women for their 'fine carriage and dignity, and classical simplicity of method' (F. Sladen-Smith cited in Pogson, p. 101).

¹⁵⁶ Diana Devlin, *A Speaking Part: Lewis Casson and the Theatre of his Time* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1982), p. 116. Thorndike's first encounter with Greek drama was as Artemis in Murray's *Hippolytus* performed at the Gaiety in 1908.

¹⁵⁷ Quoted in Devlin, p. 116.

An opportunity to ‘tackle the Greeks’ came in 1919 when Gilbert Murray, then the Vice-Chairman of the League of Nations Union (LNU) executive committee, invited Lewis Casson to produce *Trojan Women* as part of a ‘No More War’ pacifist symposium in Oxford to benefit the newly formed LNU (the LNU was created to ‘encourage and educate public opinion in the support of the League’, to send out speakers in favour of the LN to the provinces, and was dependent on voluntary contributions of time and money).¹⁵⁸ The Oxford production, according to Thorndike’s account, ‘caught the mood of the after-war emotion of the time and made quite a sensation’. It was seen as a dramatic requiem for the war and the victims of the war, and, in its concluding scene which showed the Trojan women bravely facing a new life, audiences and reviewers alike found a symbol of hope for a post-war era. Thorndike observed that those attending the performance felt strongly that ‘the passionate heart-cry of the great tragedy and deeply moving music of Murray’s verse seemed to say something that everyone wanted to say’.¹⁵⁹ The use of *Trojan Women* as a promotional tool for the LNU during this time demonstrated how the themes of the play could be reinterpreted to support specific political purposes.

Trojan Women was soon to emerge as a provocative after-war play. The play was performed for the first time for a general theatre public in a series of matinees at the Old Vic in October 1919; the production also marked the first time Sybil Thorndike appeared in the role of Hecuba. After one of the performances, some audience members expressed to Thorndike the relevance of the play’s emphasis on the experience of

¹⁵⁸ Cowley Road Cinema, 5 September 1919. Gilbert Murray, *The League and its Guarantees* (London: League of Nations Union, 1921), p. 7. For a brief account of the production, see Sheridan Morley, *Sybil Thorndike: A Life in Theatre* (London: Weidenfeld, 1977), p. 59.

¹⁵⁹ Thorndike (1960), p. 164.

women after war. Thorndike had given some seats to some ‘tough old harridans of the back court’ who thanked her at the end of the performance. One said to her:

“Well, dearie, me and my pals went to see you performing at the Old Vic about those Trojan Women. We had a good cry, then a nice walk over the Bridge, and I got them some shrimps for tea. As I see it, that play is just us—haven’t we been through the bleeding war? Haven’t we lost our bleeding sons and husbands?”¹⁶⁰

The play spoke directly to these women as if their own experiences were mirrored on the stage and they took solace from the presentation. The woman continued: “Yes—I should say we haven’t half gone through what them Trojans did—but it done us good to hear ‘em all crying and moaning and having to get on with it like us.”¹⁶¹ At the other end of the social spectrum, those intimately involved in both the waging of war and the making of the peace, eminent people in politics and members of the royal family attended a special gala benefit for the LNU in London (Alhambra Theatre, 18 November 1919), at which time *Trojan Women* was revived again. Thorndike recalled the spirit and mood of the event: ‘The performance itself was one of the most moving I can remember. [...] All the misery and awfulness of the 1914 war was symbolised in that play.’¹⁶²

Norwood argued at the time (*Greek Tragedy*, 1920) that Euripides was so appalled by the ‘cold ferocity of which his fellows showed themselves every year more capable’ that he ‘impeaches one definite nation, his own’—however criticism of government war policy was not the aim of Casson’s productions in support of the LN.¹⁶³ In order to promote the ideologies of the League which was the brainchild of

¹⁶⁰ Devlin, p. 126. Thorndike recalled: ‘Gilbert Murray was delighted when I told him this [...]. He felt it was another score for Euripides’ (quoted in Sprigge, p. 129).

¹⁶¹ *ibid.*

¹⁶² Thorndike, p. 166.

¹⁶³ Norwood, p. 244.

American president Woodrow Wilson and established at the Peace Conference on the occasion of the Treaty of Versailles (28 June 1919) marking the end of the Great War—the message of *Trojan Women* that victors will inevitably suffer as victims in an ongoing cycle of war was deliberately avoided in the promotional material. Instead, the material focused on the depiction of the Trojan women as survivors and sufferers of war, and parallels were drawn with the League's work on women's rights and the protection of female refugees and children. This new focus was made explicit by other organisations as well. Reminiscent of the Women's Peace Party promotional material for Browne's tour during the war, a poster for a Women's International League sponsored production (1924) featured a very young Anne Casson as Astyanax, lying 'dead' (and, surprisingly, naked) in the arms of Hecuba (Sybil Thorndike),¹⁶⁴ who was looking tearfully upwards as if asking God for answers. The caption for the picture read:

We, the children of 1914, cannot look on the agony of Hecuba, of Andromache, of Cassandra with the same eyes and hearts as the women who lived in what seemed a settled world before the World War.

The caption identified modern reincarnations of Euripides' characters: 'We meet Hecuba in a group of Smyrna refugees, Cassandra calls woe upon a world from a Turkish harem'. These sentiments were meant to encourage women to express their own grief, but also to feel sympathy for the mothers of the enemy who had experienced similar losses. Interestingly, a further parallel blurred the standard oppositions of Greeks vs. Trojans or Allies vs. Germans: 'German and Austrian mothers weep the untimely death of an Astyanax, victim of the cruel weapon of blockade.' Furthermore, the poster expressed a deep sense that this loss was due to human fault, no deity had a

¹⁶⁴ The photograph was taken in performance at the Holborn Empire, December 1919.

part in the war-destruction: 'We know now that there are no Gods who make us mad, but that the doom comes upon us as the natural consequence of our own fears, our own idleness of thought, our own unpreparedness.' This provocative message ended with a campaign call to women to prevent war from occurring in the future: 'It will be a doom of horror surpassed unless women combine to oppose their courage and faith to the forces which are organized so powerfully for War.' Aimed to promote the ideology of the organisation, this statement reinterpreted the message of Poseidon and Athena in Euripides' prologue to suggest that human will could prevent the cycle of war and simply ignored the warning that victors, especially those who commit crimes of war, will in turn become victims. In a manner not dissimilar to Browne's production, these statements did not reflect design choices; there was no indication that the Trojan women were identifiable as Turkish or Smyrnian refugees.

Unfortunately, there remains little evidence to suggest the design aspects and production decisions of these revivals. The photograph above demonstrates that Hecuba's costume was plain, un-patterned, dark and multi-layered. Her head covering appears to be floor-length. Photographs from Casson's *Medea* and *Hippolytus* indicate a similar simple style.¹⁶⁵ It was clear, however, that Casson and Thorndike agreed with their predecessors in believing that the Greek plays were never 'mere archaeological studies', but instead 'living, burning thoughts, giving us inspiration and guidance for our own times'.¹⁶⁶ This was made manifest mostly in the music, composed by John Foulds, and featuring the trumpet: twelve thrilling trumpet chords opened the play. The highland singer, Rita Thom, who played Cassandra, arranged the music for the Chorus,

¹⁶⁵ For photographs from various performances, see J. C. Trewin, *Sybil Thorndike, Theatre World Monograph*, 4 (London: Rockliff, 1955). Trewin was a staunch admirer and friend of the Cassons for many years.

¹⁶⁶ Thorndike, p. 172.

reproducing the sound of the ‘hwyl of old Welsh Preachers’: when the emotion became unbearable, the Chorus ‘broke into song and formal traditional chant, working up to successive climaxes’. This was an early example of the use of traditional folk music, in contrast, for example, as Browne had done, with using an unaccompanied intoned voice reciting the verse¹⁶⁷ (Murray didn’t approve).

By far the most memorable feature of the production for most critics and audience members was Sybil Thorndike’s portrayal of Hecuba, a portrayal which would launch her as one of the premiere actresses of her time and prepare her for later roles such as Joan of Arc in Shaw’s famous play, *Saint Joan* (revived 1924-1932). Her Hecuba was a powerful figure who expressed her suffering through astonishing gestures and movement. The *Observer* reviewer described Thorndike as ‘afraid of nothing. She rolled in her gait; she mopped and mowed; she clawed and clutched; she howled; she grimaced’.¹⁶⁸ As the first to portray the Trojan queen as an emotional *mater dolorosa*, she was more successful than either Lillah McCarthy or Nellie Van in creating a character who was a dynamic and compelling heroine. She was daring in her acting choices and demonstrated the ‘grief that attained grandeur through means directly opposed to what we are (or used to be) taught to respect as Greek impassivity and statuesque nobility’.¹⁶⁹ Her portrayal was psychologically rich and more akin to the German characterisations of Greek heroines, including von Hofmannsthal’s *Elektra* and Werfel’s *Hecuba* (discussed below).

¹⁶⁷ Thorndike, pp. 158f.

¹⁶⁸ ‘The Trojan Women’, *Observer*, 19 October 1919, p. 8.

¹⁶⁹ *ibid.*

As was the case with Browne's production, the role of Astyanax was crucial to capturing the sympathies of the audience.¹⁷⁰ One reviewer of the 1919 Old Vic production described the 'fortuitous touch of pathos' added by 'the little boy who, as Hector's son, was clad for a warmer clime and sat unhappy shivering through his mother's frenzied lament'.¹⁷¹ Diana Devlin described the deeply personal effect the funeral scene must have had on Casson (her grandfather) who played Talthybius:

For Lewis, listening to Sybil as she lamented over the body of seven-year-old Christopher as Astyanax, and pictured in her dirge for Troy the downfall of a civilisation, all his hopes, fears, joys and griefs must have crystallised in the true catharsis of tragedy.¹⁷²

Thorndike recalled that 'the audience and actors alike were caught up and united in spirit and intention'.¹⁷³ This spirit was epitomised by Beatrice Wilson's 'rending horror of the parting with her child Astyanax', a scene which Thorndike reported, 'no one in Murray's opinion ever achieved the beauty and poignancy of her playing of the part'.¹⁷⁴

A high Anglican with a deep commitment to socialism, Thorndike was deeply involved in and sympathetic to the Suffragette movement, as was Murray to a certain extent, from the late 1880s. However, despite its predominantly female cast and its emphasis on the female condition in adverse circumstances, *Trojan Women* was strangely never adopted by the movement. It was Thorndike's portrayal, not of Hecuba,

¹⁷⁰ For a discussion of the role of Astyanax, see Elaine Fantham, 'Andromache's Child in Euripides and Seneca' in 'Greek Tragedy and its Legacy: Essays presented to D.J. Conacher' ed. by Martin Cropp, Elaine Fantham, and S.E. Scully (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1986), pp. 267-80.

¹⁷¹ G.M., 'Euripides at the Old Vic', *Daily Mail*, 15 October 1919. This comment is reminiscent of the image of Menelcas Duncan, the son of Raymond Duncan (Isadora's brother) who was hauled off by the Gerry Society for the prevention of cruelty to children, because he was scantily clothed in a thin tunic. His father regained custody after telling the police that the dress was traditionally worn by ancient Greeks for health reasons. See Goldhill, p. 119.

¹⁷² Devlin, p. 126. The Cassons did not face the same issues as Browne did over child labour laws in America. Perhaps, this was because they used their own children in the production. Christopher (mentioned above) was the second eldest son and his youngest sister, Ann, was also featured as Astyanax and later, as Cassandra.

¹⁷³ Thorndike, p. 166.

¹⁷⁴ *ibid.*

but of *Medea*, which became a promotional vehicle for the Suffragettes.¹⁷⁵ Thorndike's *Medea* was phenomenal: at one performance the audience was so enthusiastic that traffic was stopped outside the theatre.¹⁷⁶ The main theme of *Medea*, pitched as the revenge of a forsaken woman against a faithless man (rather than the actions of a inhuman child-killer), suited the movement in ways that *Trojan Women* could not. Through the popularity of Murray's translation and Thorndike's performances over the next forty years, Euripides' *Medea* gained recognition as a 'paradigmatic feminist play'.¹⁷⁷ Euripides' *Alcestis*, on a more limited basis, was also used to promote the female cause. The Queen's College production (1886) was considered to be 'the first representation in London of a Greek play by lady students', and remained through the early twentieth century a suitable play to be performed in all-female institutions.¹⁷⁸ Unlike *Medea* or *Alcestis*, the women of Troy were essentially passive and could do little to struggle against their fate. This passivity, however, which could be interpreted as internal strength and endurance, expressed with *logos*—'an alternative to action, as defense against chaos, as a means of guiding the self and influencing others'¹⁷⁹—did not represent the fervour of reform that the Suffragettes demanded. Instead of being a showpiece for the Suffragettes (it was popularly revived for such organisations as The Appeal fund for Oxford Women's Colleges in 1923-24), the Casson/Thorndike revivals of *Trojan Women* gained wider appeal as the 'paradigmatic peace play', used primarily for the promotion of the agendas of post-war political bodies such as the LN/LNU.

¹⁷⁵ In Murray's new translation, directed by Lewis Casson at the Holborn Empire, in repertory with *Trojan Women* (1919).

¹⁷⁶ Fiona Macintosh, 'Introduction' in *MP*, pp. 1-31 (p. 19). The season also included a production of Shaw's *Candida*.

¹⁷⁷ Murray's translation of *Medea*, starring Edyth Olive, was directed first by Harley Granville Barker at the Savoy Theatre (1907) and presented with a series of suffragette plays.

¹⁷⁸ Fiona Macintosh, 'Alcestis on the British Stage', *Cahiers du Gita* (2002), 14.

¹⁷⁹ See Gregory, pp. 158-79 (p.160).

How did *Trojan Women* become the paradigmatic peace play? The text espouses a specific kind of pacifism: a warning against the waging, not of all wars, but of unjustified wars and unjustified behavior during war—attacks on consecrated ground, holy temples and shrines, the rape of innocent women. Such irresponsible behavior, Poseidon warns in the prologue, could only bring horrific consequences to the victims and inevitably to the aggressors. The assassination of Archduke Ferdinand in 1914, the spark that soon set Europe aflame with war was one such unjust act. The ensuing war demonstrated how complex and horrific the practice of warfare had become. In just four years, over fourteen million people died (eight million soldiers, six million civilians) and twenty-one million soldiers injured, ten times the number who died in twenty years of the Napoleonic wars.¹⁸⁰ Technological advances, including the machine gun, smokeless powders, high explosives, quick firing artillery, the combustion engine, as well as the telephone and radio to facilitate communication, contributed to a scale of death and injury on all sides that was hard to explain and difficult to comprehend. During the course of the war, *Trojan Women* represented a prophecy of what could result from conflict, but after the war, the messages of the play were interpreted as inspiration for a peace process. The maintaining of peace required a new world order based on treaties, alliances, balance of power, and trust between nations—a task embraced by the new League of Nations.

Their own productions of *Trojan Women*, as Thorndike herself admitted, would also continue the work of Granville-Barker in the ‘task of making manifest in the

¹⁸⁰ Peter Browning, *The Changing Nature of Warfare: The Development of Land Warfare from 1792-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 96. See also Carl von Clausewitz, *On War* (1832) (London: Routledge, 1956), Arthur Marwick, *The Deluge: British Society and the First World War* (1965) and John Keegan, *The Face of Battle* (London: Cape, 1976).

English theatre the living power of Greek tragedy',¹⁸¹ but in the post-war period, it was still best known as a League of Nations Union show-piece. In 1937, shortly before the outbreak of World War Two, Murray asked Lewis to do another LNU matinee as he was 'anxious to give it some boost at a time when the League's power and influence were ebbing frighteningly away'.¹⁸² Thorndike had also written to Murray in August of 1937 wanting to help teach 'folk what the LNU really means' and offered *Trojan Women* as a means to do this. She added that it would be an interesting experiment since the play had been instrumental as propaganda at the beginning of the LNU, perhaps it could play that role again. In the letter, she also suggested that she and Lewis wanted their daughter Ann to play Cassandra.¹⁸³ Murray replied enthusiastically to both suggestions.¹⁸⁴ After the performance, Murray was overwhelmed. He wrote to Casson about their 'magnificent performance', and sentimentally acknowledged the debt to him and Sybil for 'interpreting Euripides to the modern world during these thirty years'. His parting comment revealed his personal realisation concerning the power of the production and observations about the reactions of the LNU audience: 'I myself felt the terrible majesty of the thing and some of the LNU's hard boiled money raisers seemed quite astonished to find that they had been moved and interested when they only expected to be bored.'¹⁸⁵

¹⁸¹ Thorndike, pp. 171f.

¹⁸² Devlin, p. 188.

¹⁸³ Murray Papers, Bodleian Library: 127 62 ST/GM, 27 August 1937.

¹⁸⁴ Murray Papers, Bodleian Library: 127 63 GM/ST 28 August 1937.

¹⁸⁵ Murray Papers, Bodleian Library: 127 68 GM/LC, 8 December 1937. Thorndike also participated in a radio version of the play in 1946.

5. Victor Barnowski/Franz Werfel
Die Troerinnen
Berlin/European tour
1916

While *Trojan Women* was produced in England and America as an ‘Allies play’ promoting the causes of pacifist or pro-League agendas, across Germany, revivals of *Die Troerinnen*, in a new translation by a young poet, Franz Werfel, came to signify the need for spiritual cleansing and marked the blossoming of Expressionism as a new movement in art, literature, and theatre.¹⁸⁶ Huntly Carter, a British theatre historian writing after the Great War, poignantly contrasted the role of post-war theatre on both side of the trenches:

Looking at England and France we saw two countries making merry over victory, and leaving their spiritual institutions, including their theatre, to look after themselves. In Germany we saw a vanquished nation, stricken to the heart, using the theatre as a powerful instrument of refinement, and an unerring guide to the way out of the terrible chaos.¹⁸⁷

German theatre before the war had been the source of numerous innovations, both technical and stylistic. German stage equipment was the most advanced in Europe, beginning with the unveiling of the first electrics for the stage in 1881 at the Munich Electro-technical Exhibition and advanced by Max Reinhardt’s use of the revolving stage. Berlin theatres in particular were impressive stage buildings, subsidised by subscriptions and the Weimar government. The celebration of theatre on a larger scale was pioneered by Germans and Austrians through several significant Festivals including Wagner’s Bayreuth Festival, the Salzburg Festival, and Dalcroze’s productions at

¹⁸⁶ For general discussion of Werfel’s life and works (in English), see Peter Jungk, *A Life Torn by History* (London: Weidenfeld, 1990) and Jennifer Michaels, *Franz Werfel and the Critics* (Columbia, S.C.: Camden Press, 1994) and for bibliography, see Lore B. Foltin, *Franz Werfel* (Stuttgart: Metzlersche, 1972).

¹⁸⁷ Huntly Carter, *The New Spirit in the European Theatre 1914-1924* (London: Ernst Benn, 1925), p. 164; quoted in John Willett, *Theatre of the Weimar* (New York: Homes & Meier, 1988), p. 53.

Hellerau. Although new artistic movements such as Naturalism and Symbolism were on the whole initiated outside of Germany, Berlin was home to Ibsen for a time and productions of his new realistic plays frequently caused riots and were banned by the censor.¹⁸⁸ Ibsen certainly had a profound influence on the productions of theatre director Otto Brahm (1856-1912), director of the Lessing-Theatre (where Werfel's *Die Troerinnen* received its premiere in 1916) in Berlin from 1905-13. Brahm applied the theories of Naturalism to productions of the classics; however, he also turned his back on the theatrical trend towards historical accuracy so prevalent on the English stages. For his revival of Mendelssohn's *Antigone*, for example, in contrast to the setting for the 1845 production in Covent Garden, he did not use a proscenium stage or recreate an ancient *skene*, but instead in an Appia-inspired decision constructed two a-symmetrical wings that divided the playing space in two with steps leading to spaces upstage and downstage. The successor to Brahm's style of naturalism was a short-lived Impressionism, a realism turned towards the psychological—feelings, dreams, sensations—as defined by Hugo von Hofmannsthal's early Freudian-influenced plays, including his version of *Elektra* which made a significant impact on the critics and theatre-going public during the period of *Die Troerinnen* revivals.¹⁸⁹

Unfortunately, the Great War disrupted the technological and ideological progress of German theatre. Impressionism was soon obsolete and replaced by a more widespread movement called Expressionism, which began in Central Europe and quickly developed. Lasting from approximately 1912 to 1921, the movement was led by a group of young men disillusioned by the possibility of war and later, by the horrors of

¹⁸⁸ *Ghosts*, for example, was banned in Berlin, although a matinee performance was recorded in 1887.

¹⁸⁹ See Roy Pascal, *From Naturalism to Expressionism: German Literature and Society 1880-1918* (London: Weidenfeld, 1973).

the war itself, who made their mark on modern German theatre infused with the passion of political revolutionaries. Walter Hasenclever's version of *Antigone* (1917) epitomized the Expressionist attitude to war in its opposition of the authoritarian warlord, Creon, against Antigone, the pacifist who appeals to common man. Antigone's voice from the grave cries out for prayer and atonement instead of retribution. Although Hasenclever modeled Creon on the Kaiser, surprisingly the play escaped the eye of the censor and Reinhardt received critical praise when he produced it in 1920 at the Grosses Schauspielhaus in Berlin. Other early Expressionist plays, including Hasenclever's *Der Sohn* (1913), articulated a heightened emotionalism, (often resulting from a character's complete break from society and family) and introduced a 'new man' who was better able to cope with the effects of war. The birth of this 'new man' was also a celebrated subject for wartime poems, especially those published in Kurt Pinthus's anthology, *Menschheitsdämmerung* (1920).¹⁹⁰

One of the poets featured in this anthology was Franz Werfel, a young writer from Prague whose childhood friends included Hasenclever, Franz Kafka and Max Brod. During the war, Werfel's 'highly charged' rhetorical poetry captured the new spirit of protest and political repudiation of war and its purposes, especially as it was perceived among the younger generation of central Europe who served and died at the various fronts.¹⁹¹ However, significantly for this discussion, before the war had begun, in the autumn of 1913, Werfel first turned to playwriting after a formative experience attending a summer performance of *L'annonce fait à Marie* (by Paul Claudel) at Dalcroze's Hellerau Festival near Dresden. At Hellerau, he met Jakob Hegner, the

¹⁹⁰ Pascal, p. 120.

¹⁹¹ Willett, p. 55.

organiser of the Festival and translator of Claudel's work. During one conversation, Hegner suggested (like Browning) that 'he regarded Euripides as the early forerunner of Christianity' and urged Werfel to do a new adaptation of *Trojan Women* since 'there had been no truly stage-worthy German version of the tragedy since Schiller's antiquated translation'.¹⁹² In addition, Hegner encouraged Werfel to take on a Greek tragedy because it would give him an opportunity to 'deal intensely with questions of dramatic structure, and also introduce his own ecstatic and hymnodic language to the German stage'.¹⁹³ Encouraged by Hegner's advice, he began to write a new lyrical translation of the play.¹⁹⁴

As a fellow Jew, Hegner's unusual interest in Christian topics (although he had no interest in conversion) ultimately encouraged Werfel's own affinity for Christianity, which he would develop over the course of his writing career.¹⁹⁵ This influence was reflected in Werfel's unique interpretation of *Trojan Women* expressed in his introduction to the published text (composed in March 1914): 'Und so sehen wir den verrufenen Atheisten Euripides als Vorboten, Verkünder, als frühe Taube des Christentums' ('and thus we see the notorious atheist Euripides as a harbinger, a prophet, an early dove of Christianity').¹⁹⁶ Using this thematic thread, he recreated Hecuba as a figure 'tried by suffering, an anticipation of the passion of Jesus Christ'

¹⁹² Jungk, p. 35f. There is no documented performance record for Wilamowitz's 1906 version of the play. See Flashar, pp. 400-01.

¹⁹³ Jungk, p. 36.

¹⁹⁴ In a letter to fellow Czech poet, Rainer Maria Rilke, Werfel included a postscript about his new project: 'Den Euripides, den mir Hegner in Hellerau empfahl, habe ich übersetzt. Es ist ein unerhörtes Theaterstück.' ('I have translated the Euripides that Hegner sent me in Hellerau. It is a shocking play.') (February 1914). Letter located at the University of Pennsylvania, Rare Books and Manuscripts Library, Alma Mahler and Franz Werfel Archives.

¹⁹⁵ His Hollywood career blossomed with his book, 'The Song of Bernadette', about the miracle of Bernadette Soubirous of Lourdes who claimed to see a vision of the Virgin Mary. The book was later turned into a film which was awarded five academy awards (1942).

¹⁹⁶ Translation by Jungk, p. 36.

who behaves and argues like an early Christian.¹⁹⁷ Hecuba's 'moral victory over calamity', in Werfel's version, represents a 'preliminary to the re-awakening of religious faith'.¹⁹⁸ Christian religious imagery abounds. For example, instead of invoking the ship imagery of Hecuba's opening *monody*, Werfel presents her physical suffering as a Christ-like pose: 'Ach Gott, meine Schläfen! Wie spür ich mein Kreuz!' (Alas, God, my temple! How I feel my cross!).¹⁹⁹ Early Expressionists believed that the salvation of human society was to be found through the spiritual life of man, and, in Werfel's version, as a victim of war, the spiritual nature of Hecuba's suffering and ultimate survival boldly embodied these beliefs.²⁰⁰

Given the timing of the play (it was written before the war, but published and performed during the war), Werfel's version was seen as a prophetic statement against war.²⁰¹ Although he seemed to adhere remarkably closely to Euripides' text, many critics believed that he had created an entirely new work, whose language underscored the horrors of war.²⁰² For example, the members of the chorus (split into two sections) keen lyrically over the body of Astyanax: 'Du zerschlägst, du zerschlägst/Mir das Herz, mir das Herz ('you shatter, you shatter, this heart, this heart of mine').²⁰³ Indeed, like Murray, he too saw the connections between his own age and the age of Euripides: 'daß unser Zeitalter gegenwärtig das Zeitalter des Euripides berühre' ('our age would touch

¹⁹⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁹⁸ C.E. Williams, *The Broken Eagle: The Politics of Austrian Literature from Empire to Anschluss* (London: Paul Elek, 1974), p. 61.

¹⁹⁹ Werfel, p. 9. 'Kreuz' can also mean 'back-ache' which is closer to the meaning of the Greek: νῶτ' ἐν στεροῦς λέκτροισι ταθεῖσ' ('my back stretched out on its hard bed', 114).

²⁰⁰ For an extended discussion of the effect of the Great War on theatre in Europe, especially with regard to Expressionism, see Thomas Dickson, *The Theatre in a Changing Europe* (London: Putnam, 1942).

²⁰¹ Richard Specht, *Franz Werfel, Versuch einer Zeitspiegelung* (Berlin: Paul Zsolnay, 1926), pp. 132-33.

²⁰² See Anna Jacobson, 'Franz Werfel: Eine Würdigung', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 26 (1927), 337-49 (346).

²⁰³ Werfel, p. 55.

presently the age of Euripides').²⁰⁴ However, in contrast to earlier translations (Opitz's for example, which was 'marked by Christian melancholy'), Werfel's translation was energetic, and hopeful.²⁰⁵ Hecuba's last words were not of lament but of determination to bravely face the future: 'so nehme ich/Mein Leben an die Brust und trag's zu Ende!/Nun zu den Schiffen!' ('Then I take my life to my breast and tragedies to the end!/ Let's go to the ships!').²⁰⁶ Despite this underlying optimism, even before the war began, Werfel conceived of the fall of Troy as metaphor for his age because he witnessed how his world was suffering from a period of upheaval and a crisis in values.²⁰⁷ He expressed this in his 1914 introduction: 'Even in our souls, faith has lost its form and we have to regard that as a portent of the upheaval that is in the making.'²⁰⁸ Like many of his fellow young artists, he was 'sustained by the hope of impending spiritual revolution': *Die Troerinnen* represented a 'prophecy of [...] catastrophe and anti-war protest', but his 'real purpose lay in a symbolic picture of cruelty, irrationality and absurdity of life in general'.²⁰⁹

Although Troy symbolised his own destroyed world, Werfel's stage directions did not identify any explicit references to contemporary places. Instead, he offered specific directions that the scene be set not in the city of Troy itself but in a 'Zeltlager der Kriegsgefangenen' ('prisoner camp') built on a lower stage as close to the audience as possible. The rest of the set, he suggested, would be divided into two floors

²⁰⁴ Werfel, p. 10.

²⁰⁵ Phillippe Invernel, 'L'abstraction et l'inflation tragiques dans le théâtre expressionniste allemand', *L'Expressionnisme dans le Théâtre Européen*, ed. by Denis Bablet and Jean Jacquot (Paris: Editions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1971), 77-91 (p. 85).

²⁰⁶ Werfel, p. 61. See Anne Marie von Puttkamer, *Franz Werfel: Wort und Antwort* (Würzburg: Verbund, 1952), p. 10.

²⁰⁷ Michaels, p. 32.

²⁰⁸ Werfel, introduction.

²⁰⁹ C.E. Williams, p. 60. This approach was also explored by director George Tabori in his experiments with the play in the 1970s and 80s (see Chapter Four).

representing 'Tal' ('valley') and 'Gipfel' ('summit'), connected by an 'Abhang, schiefe Fläche, Treppen' ('slope, sloping area, stairs'). For the prologue, the upper stage would reveal the 'Burg' ('castle') of Troy in the near distance. Poseidon and Athene, 'unmäßig riesenhaft' ('excessively gigantic'), appeared on the upper stage overlooking the prisoner camp. These descriptions (differing greatly from, for example, Murray's stage directions) reflected the clear influence of Appia's simple, geometric, multi-level designs for the Hellerau productions. While he did not insist on an archaeologically accurate *skene*, Werfel adopted in principle the theory that the gods in ancient theatre appeared *deus ex machina*, larger than life, high above the playing space below. Unusually, instead of charting the course of one day with lighting, Werfel's stage directions specified that the time of day would stay as 'ewige Dämmerung' ('eternal twilight') until the final scenes of the play when the light was 'nur durch die fürchterliche Morgenröte des brennenden Troja unterbrochen wird' ('interrupted only by the terrible morning-red of burning Troy'), thus creating a sense of suspended time.

While the prominent Leipzig publisher, Kurt Wolff, Werfel's literary agent, attempted to negotiate a production of *Die Troerinnen* with the directors of the Deutsches Theater in Berlin,²¹⁰ Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated, and by the end of July 1914, the Austro-Hungarian Empire declared war on Russia. As a volunteer reservist, Werfel was called up for military service. Despite continuous efforts to avoid active duty (feigning illness, etc), he returned to Prague and served in the army as a private on the Italian front. Even before his years of active duty, Werfel was vehemently anti-militaristic and 'disillusioned with the rampant materialism of the age, hypocrisy,

²¹⁰ From 1911, Werfel was employed at the Kurt Wolff Verlag in Leipzig. Wolff published his first volume of poetry and most of his works thereafter, including *Die Troerinnen* (1915).

complacency, and corruption'. At the same time, like other early Expressionists, he was also 'unmoved by the assassination' and did not 'join the chorus of acclaim for the war'. In his mind 'war was something evil and infernal whose ultimate goal was power from which no good could come'. These sentiments were expressed not only in his poetry at the time (for example, 'Der Krieg' (1914) and 'Ein Ulan' (1920)), but also, and perhaps more emphatically, in his treatment of *Die Troerinnen*.²¹¹ His participation in the war had a great impact on his later writing, but could not, by virtue of timing, have had any impact on his translation of *Trojan Women*. Werfel could not even attend any of the first productions: in the middle of his military duty, Wolff wrote to congratulate him on the successful first night (22 April 1916) of *Die Troerinnen* at the Lessing-Theater in Berlin.²¹²

Despite the popular success and extended schedule (more than fifty performances) of the Berlin production, directed by Viktor Barnowski (the new director of the Lessing-Theater, following Brahm) it was perhaps too early for the theatre critics to accept the platforms of the Expressionist movement as interpreted by Werfel in *Die Troerinnen*. Some critics felt that Werfel had gone too far in refashioning the ancient text into a modern one. One critic wrote,

There is not too much left of the old greatness of the Attic tragedian. Just like Hofmannsthal, Werfel has acted in a too arrogant way: he has watered down some passages, less important ones he has emphasised and highlighted. He did not do this just to the form, but also regarding the spirit - he transformed Euripides into a modern person who is familiar with the most modern trends of contemporary literature.²¹³

²¹¹ C. E. Williams, pp. 60, 66. In 1920, Werfel would attempt to dissociate himself from radical artistic Expressionism writing at the opening of *Die Troerinnen* at the Vienna Burgtheater, claiming that he was 'consciously opposed to dramatic expressionism' (quoted in Jungk, p. 85).

²¹² Negotiations eventually broke down with the Deutsches Theater.

²¹³ *Deutsche Tageszeitung*, 23 April 1916. All English translations, unless otherwise noted, by Günther Martin.

Making Euripides contemporary, as English and American theatre artists aimed to do in the same period, was distasteful to many German critics. In this case, the negative assessment of Werfel's style was primarily due to this critic's association of his work with that of the Austrian playwright von Hofmannsthal: 'Franz Werfel has simply remodelled Euripides, whom Aristotle had called the most tragic of all poets; he was thus following the footsteps of Hofmannsthal.'²¹⁴

Conceived in 1902 and commissioned by Max Reinhardt, von Hofmannsthal's *Elektra* provoked outrage and scandal.²¹⁵ This version of Sophocles' play was infused with psychological verisimilitude, depicting 'a new reading of the black business of Clytemnestra's heart'²¹⁶ and presenting Elektra, raging about in a plain grey tattered costume and dishevelled hair, as a case study for Freud himself.²¹⁷ Reinhardt's production of *Elektra* was played against a dark, heavy, and gloomy archaic setting—a stark contrast to the 'calm purity of the white robes and columns of a Goethian tradition of classicism'.²¹⁸ The characterisation of Elektra (Gertrud Eysoldt) as a woman suffering from hysteria (the female malady of the day) shocked the Berlin critics, who were deeply uncomfortable with this psychological reading of an ancient text. Especially contentious was Elektra's final wild 'dance of death', a fusion of Bacchic frenzy and modern female neurosis.

This emphasis on dance as a means to convey emotion and character, something first realised in Isadora Duncan's solo performances in Vienna, 1903, may have made an impression on the young writer, Werfel, and the director, Victor Barnowsky. In

²¹⁴ *ibid.*

²¹⁵ See Goldhill, p. 140ff, for full discussion of the reception of *Elektra* in Britain and in German-speaking countries.

²¹⁶ *The Nation*, 26 March 1910; quoted in Goldhill, p. 152.

²¹⁷ Elektra's costume and manner as described in the Berlin production.

²¹⁸ Goldhill, p. 153.

Werfel's version, Cassandra reached an almost divine stature through her emotional monologue in which she describes the ecstasy of the marriage dance and the 'dionysische' dance itself; Werfel's stage directions read: Cassandra enters 'zwei Fackeln über dem Haupte schwingend' ('swinging two lighted torches above her head', p. 17). In performance, Hecuba also internalised the psychological affect of the war in an Elektra-like manner, expressing her angst in 'a blend of almost animalistic sorrow and defiance'.²¹⁹ Andromache, an emotive character in even the most historically accurate productions, was singled out as another highlight of the Berlin production.²²⁰ These characterisations, for other critics, made relevant this 'staggering piece by our contemporary Euripides' which 'resounded like a horrible requiem into an aroused, quivering present-day world, which is dying or giving birth'.²²¹ The impact of making Euripides 'our contemporary' was apparent at the end of one performance when the audience called out for the author: Werfel, the 'young German interpreter/translator instead of the old/ancient dead Greek'.²²²

The Expressionist movement in theatre lasted for little over a decade, with the plays of the favoured new playwrights, Georg Kaiser (1878-1945) and Ernst Toller (1893-1939), dominating the scene. Werfel's *Die Troerinnen*, though it did not achieve mainstream recognition, was his first great theatrical success and was viewed as a serious and significant anti-war drama and revived with an emotional four-year tour

²¹⁹ Helmut Flashar, *Inszenierung der Antike: das griechische Drama auf der Bühne der Neuzeit: 1585-1990* (Munich: Beck 1991), p. 131.

²²⁰ *Deutsche Tageszeitung*, 23 April 1916.

²²¹ *ibid.*

²²² *ibid.* Sybil Thorndike described a similar incident after one of the Alhambra performances: 'There were shouts at the end for 'Author!' louder than I have ever heard, and Gilbert Murray came up on to the stage. "The Author is not here," he said. "He has been dead for many centuries but I am sure he will be gratified by your reception of his great tragedy"', Thorndike quoted in Sprigge, p. 128.

through Germany, Switzerland, and Austria.²²³ In the coming months and years, the play premiered in more than twenty other regional theatres in Germany, most prominently in Düsseldorf (May 1917). In January 1918, while Werfel was given leave from the army to give twelve lectures in Switzerland on varied subjects including drama, psychology, and poetry, *Die Troerinnen* opened at the Zurich Stadttheater.²²⁴ Despite high praise in the daily press and long articles on his lecture series, Werfel's translation was once again associated with, and overshadowed by, von Hofmannsthal's *Elektra* (though in Zurich, the association was positive): 'From such an example one can see and assess to what extent that ancient drama has become the work of the Austrian poet of our times and the times of the Austrian Hofmannsthal's *Elektra*.'²²⁵ Later, when he settled down in Austria as a member of the military press, the Vienna Burgtheater also premiered the play (opened May 1920 and ran to great acclaim for many months). The initial response to Werfel's *Die Troerinnen* was to celebrate the play's topicality and strong anti-war stance. With its emphasis on the universal human problems raised by Euripides—why the innocent suffer, why justice turns into injustice—the play served as a remarkable realization of the early Expressionist movement.²²⁶ Although there is little photographic evidence for the design choices of the various revivals,²²⁷ the explosive themes and Werfel's unique treatment of the

²²³ Hans Wagener, *Understanding Franz Werfel* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina, 1993), p. 46.

²²⁴ See Jungk, p. 54 and p. 255, n. 54 for a description of Werfel's lecture tour to Switzerland which accompanied performances of *Die Troerinnen*.

²²⁵ *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 23 January 1918.

²²⁶ Paul Wimmer, *Franz Werfels dramatische Sendung* (Vienna: Bergland, 1973), pp. 42-43.

²²⁷ A photograph of Lina Lossen (Andromache in 1916 production) with Astyanax shows her wearing a dark robed dress with a patterned sash and a full-length headdress which she uses to protect her son. The design is not unlike the trend in producing Greek tragic costumes at the time. A close-up of three characters from the Hamburg production (1947) was reproduced in *Thespis: Bulletin of the Greek Center of the International Theatre Institute*, 4-5 (June 1966), p. 149. The women wear close-knit caps, but other details of their costumes are not visible.

material emphasised its relevance and modernity, making it an important theatrical event of the time period.²²⁸

Trojan Women during the inter-bellum years and World War Two

Between the two World Wars, with the exception of revivals of translations by Murray and Werfel, very few other productions of *Trojan Women* have been recorded. This could be for a variety of reasons including the outmoded style of the verse translations,²²⁹ the lack of new translations, or because the subject matter of the play did not fulfil the same functions during the period of disillusionment and economic depression in Europe and America as it had in a pre-war, mid-war, or immediately post-war context. Though productions of *Trojan Women* decreased significantly, the revival of Greek tragedy continued in England through Terence Gray's Festival Theatre in Cambridge (1926-33),²³⁰ featuring set and lighting design heavily influenced by Gordon Craig, and the use of masks and stylised sets. Gray also promoted the interest in archaeological correctness, especially in the use of space; his Festival Theatre was the first indoor theatre to be based on the ancient Greek model.²³¹ Ancient drama was kept alive in Europe through Reinhardt's tours, the Festival of ancient drama at Syracuse, Sicily (established in 1914), and the Festivals inaugurated by the husband-wife team of Angelos Sikelianos and Eva Palmer at Delphi (1927, 1930). These outdoor productions, *Prometheus Bound* (1927), in particular, stood out as innovative examples of the

²²⁸ J.M. Ritchie, *German Expressionist Drama* (Boston: Twayne, 1976), p. 145. Werfel's translation was produced multiple times in the coming decades (most successfully following World War Two), and remained the translation of choice (with the exception of Sartre's version post 1965).

²²⁹ For example, Yeats' 'eminently speakable' translation of *Oedipus Rex*, superseded Murray's version as a more popular option in 1926. See Macintosh (1997), p. 304.

²³⁰ See Walton (1987), pp. 340-42. Also, Richard Cave, *Terence Gray and the Cambridge Festival Theatre* (Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey, 1980).

²³¹ Gray produced *Oresteia* (1926), five other tragedies, including the first English production of Aeschylus' *Suppliant Women* (1933) and two Aristophanic comedies. See Macintosh (1997), p. 305.

effectiveness of merging the traditions of archaic correctness in design with choral movement based on the modern dance principles of Eva Palmer's teacher, Isadora Duncan.²³² In the 1920s and 1930s, the French avant-garde movement had begun to embrace Greek tragedy with the premieres of new adaptations by Jean Cocteau, André Gide, and Jean Giraudoux's *La Guerre de Troie n'aura pas Lieu* (1935), inspired by the legend of the Trojan war.

Due primarily to the socio-economic conditions of the Great Depression and Second World War, no significant revival of Greek drama produced by American directors or producers can be charted on the American stage in the period from 1920 to 1945.²³³ However, there are three productions of *Trojan Women* in America during this period which are worthy of brief discussion since they provide an important bridge between the productions of the Murray and Werfel translations and the experiments of the 1960s and 1970s which I will examine in Chapters Two and Three. These productions include: Mary Hunter's premiere of Edith Hamilton's new translation (1938), Hallie Flanagan's dance adaptation as part of the Federal Theatre Project's programme (1938), and Margaret Webster's controversial production during WWII (1941).

²³² Archaic correctness was limited to costumes and formations and gestures. The set of *Prometheus* did not feature a *skene* design. See Macintosh (1997), p. 305.

²³³ Examples of British productions: *Electra* (1908) starring Mrs Patrick Campbell and Herbert Beerbohm Tree in an English translation of Hofmannsthal's version; and the Old Vic's production of *Oedipus Rex* (1945) in Yeats' translation. Examples of American productions, primarily performed in New York City: *Electra*, Coburn Players, 1910; *Electra* and *Medea* starring Margaret Anglin, 1918 (tour to California); *Medea*, Maurice Browne, Chicago Little Theatre, 1920; *Electra*, starring Blanche Yurka, 1931 (Boston, Ann Arbor, etc); John Gielgud in *Medea*, new Robinson Jeffers translation, 1947.

6. Mary Hunter/Edith Hamilton

Trojan Women

Master's Institute Theatre

New York

1938

In 1937, the long-time Head Mistress of the Bryn Mawr School for Girls, Edith Hamilton published the first new English translation of *Trojan Women* since Gilbert Murray's 1905 translation.²³⁴ In her introductory note, 'On Translating', Hamilton criticised the poets who had attempted to translate Greek tragedy, including Browning and Fitzgerald, advocating that the ideal translator would be 'a great poet and a Greek scholar combined'.²³⁵ Though she praised Gilbert Murray for his poetic gift and for having 'resurrected Greek tragedy lying dead on the scholars' bookshelves', she felt there was also some merit to translators who were not poets. She identified herself and her translations somewhere in between the poet and the scholar, her translations would be more accurate than readable. Her mission was supported by her belief that 'until the perfect, the final, translator comes, the plays should be perpetually retranslated for each generation'. This belief certainly sustained the business of producing Greek drama on the modern stage.²³⁶ Hamilton translated first the plays that she considered finest in the canon: Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound* and *Agamemnon*, and Euripides' *Trojan Women* ('the most modern in feeling of all the Greek tragedies').²³⁷

In her introduction to *Trojan Women*, entitled 'A Pacifist in Periclean Athens', Hamilton emphasised the play's place in the history of literature:

²³⁴ Included in *Three Greek Plays: Prometheus Bound, Agamemnon, Trojan Women* (New York: Norton, 1937). Hamilton, a graduate of Bryn Mawr (1894), did graduate work in Greek and Latin at University of Munich and at age 63, began her writing career with *The Greek Way* (1930). Her textbook on Greek mythology (*Mythology*) was first published in 1942.

²³⁵ Hamilton, p. 10.

²³⁶ *ibid.*, p. 15f.

²³⁷ *ibid.*, p. 16.

The greatest piece of anti-war literature there is in the world was written 2350 years ago. This is a statement worth a thought or two. Nothing since, no description or denunciation of war's terrors or futilities, ranks with *The Trojan Women*.²³⁸

For Hamilton, 'in our Western world, Euripides stands alone'.²³⁹ Euripides, she believed, was a man of great vision, one who 'saw with perfect clarity what war was, and wrote what he saw in a play of surpassing power' but, sadly for history, did not have a dedicated following of disciples willing to preach his anti-war message to the world and prevent future conflict. With the Great War still fresh in memory, the struggles in Europe mounting with the rapid rise of Hitler and Mussolini and the movements of the Japanese against China, the prologue of *Trojan Women* once again appeared to be prophecy. Hamilton expressed this in exaggerated (and not particularly historically accurate) terms by paralleling the world of Euripides with her own: 'In those faraway times, long before history began, it would seem that some men had learned what our world hardly yet perceives, that inevitably victors and vanquished must in the end suffer together.'²⁴⁰ She also believed that the ancient Athenian society at war, one in which the decisions of government and the military were unquestioned and opposition was considered traitorous, was similar to that of Nazi Germany in 1937. For her, Euripides was the hero who constantly challenged his city-state's involvement in war with plays that showed the 'hideousness of cruelty and the pitifulness of human weakness and human pain'.²⁴¹ Like other scholars, Hamilton believed that there was no plot or action in *Trojan Women*, but advocated instead that it was a character-driven play in which the situation was witnessed from different points of view. In her

²³⁸ Hamilton, p. 19.

²³⁹ *ibid.*, p. 21.

²⁴⁰ *ibid.*, p. 27.

²⁴¹ *ibid.*, p. 24.

interpretation, many of the subtleties of Euripides' characterisations and embedded stage directions were lost. For example, according to Hamilton, Andromache arrives on a chariot (not a ὄχος or 'wagon', 568). Talthybius, is portrayed instead as a victorious soldier, who is 'determined' not to tell Hecuba that Polyxena is dead and is 'surprised and irritated to find himself moved to pity them, but he shrugs his shoulders and says, "Well – that's war"'. Helen's arguments with Hecuba are ultimately unsuccessful and she is led away to die. Hamilton believed that there was no hope in the ending of the play: 'not one gleam of light anywhere'.²⁴² Ultimately, Hamilton invoked Aristotle's praise of Euripides as the 'poet of the world's grief': *Trojan Women* was the play about war with which the poet 'sounded the deepest depths of that grief'.

Hamilton's *Trojan Women*, after a year of preparation by the newly formed American Actor's Company, opened at the Master's Institute Theatre, off-Broadway in New York (24 January 1938). Unfortunately, very little material exists regarding the production details of this premiere. However, a programme indicates that the premiere of Hamilton's translation was directed by Mary Hunter (one of the first female directors of the tragedy) and starred Mildred Dunnock as Hecuba, who went on to famously play Mrs Loman in the theatre and film premieres of Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, 1951, and would also play Hecuba again in Michael Cacoyannis' 1963 New York production of *Trojan Women*.

²⁴² Hamilton described her character as Murray did: 'very gentle and undisturbed' 'sweet, uninjured dignity, not angry at all' (pp. 66, 70).

7. Hallie Flanagan/Phillip H. Davis
Trojan Incident
St James Theatre (Federal Theatre Project)
New York
1938

In April 1938, a dance drama, entitled *Trojan Incident*, was produced by the Federal Theatre Project. In 1935, Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Emergency Relief Appropriation Act, part of his New Deal plan to rescue the American economy from the Great Depression, became law. One of the first programmes to be established was the Federal Theatre Project (FTP),²⁴³ which would be responsible for the nationwide production of classic and newly commissioned plays and the employment of thousands of out-of-work actors, directors, stage and costume designers and theatre technicians.²⁴⁴ Hallie Flanagan, Professor of Drama and the Director of the Experimental Theatre at Vassar College (she had already successfully produced a Craig-influenced *Hippolytus* in Murray's translation for Vassar in 1931), was appointed director of the FTP in August 1935 and immediately set about establishing a national network of theatre programmes. The Project was divided into nearly thirty units or sub-projects including Classical theatre, Vaudeville and Circus, Dance, Puppet and Marionette, Negro theatre, and Living Newspaper, to name a few. A National Play Policy Board was also set up to monitor contracts and royalties, and to approve all plays produced.

Pamphlets, such as 'Classics Can be Interesting!', were sent to schools to encourage them to 'take the classics from between the dull pages of text-books and make them a real part of the lives of New York's high school students'. The Classics programme proved to be extensive: in the school year 1938-39, FTP plays were

²⁴³ The FTP was one of four (later five) arts-related projects included in the Federal Theatre Project Number One and part of the Works Progress Administration (WPA), established in Roosevelt's first term.

²⁴⁴ To date, the FTP represents the only government initiative directly responsible for large-scale theatre production in the United States.

produced for over 68,000 students in 84 performances. The ancient plays available included: *The Wasps*, *The Knights*, *Peace*, and *Clouds* by Aristophanes and *Iphigenia at Aulis*, *Iphigenia at Tauris*, and *Alcestis* by Euripides.²⁴⁵ These were the only ancient plays available for school tours; a majority of the plays were by Shakespeare, Sheridan, Goldsmith and Marlowe. The only other ancient classic available was a dance drama, *Trojan Incident*, based on *Trojan Women*.²⁴⁶

According to the Library of Congress material, the only production of *Trojan Incident* opened on 21 April 1938 at the St James Theatre (44th Street, 8th Avenue) in New York City and ran for 26 performances within one month.²⁴⁷ The text for this play was adapted from Euripides' *Trojan Women* and Homer's *Iliad* by Philip H. Davis, a Professor of Classical Languages and Literature at Vassar College.²⁴⁸ The FTP's literature promoted the play as 'experimental': 'The New Deal's theatre has conjured a version of *The Trojan Women* legend that stirs up acting, dancing, choral and orchestral music into a thick stew.' This experiment focussed on Cassandra, played by Tamiris, the principal choreographer for the FTP from 1937-39 and one of the founders of modern dance in the 1920s and 1930s,²⁴⁹ as the primary conduit of the play's message. Dissatisfied with traditional ballet technique, she had studied briefly at the Isadora

²⁴⁵ Three new plays on Greek themes were also offered: '*X=O, or A night of the Trojan War*, by John Drinkwater, a drama about the experience at young soldiers Troy, *Pygmalion and Galatea*, by W.S. Gilbert, a dramatisation of the Greek myth, and *Phidias and the Whispering Statue*, by Virginia Olcott, a play about the Greek sculptor who dreams that his statue of Athene comes alive.

²⁴⁶ Classical plays were generally not successful. In addition to *The Trojan Incident*, the following plays were produced: *The Birds*, adapted by Whitney Oates, Eugene O'Neill, Jr (Roslyn, NY, 8-22 Oct 1938), *Miles Gloriosus*, Plautus (Florida tour, 23 Oct 1937-16 Nov 1937), and *Lysistrata*, Negro group (tour 17 Sept 1937).

²⁴⁷ <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/fedtp/ftthome.html>.

²⁴⁸ As Professor Davis was Hallie Flanagan's husband, she was greatly criticized for trying to promote his work. See Joanne Bentley, *Hallie Flanagan: A Life in the American Theatre* (New York: Knopf, 1988), p. 299.

²⁴⁹ Tamiris was a stage name she adopted after her stint with the Metropolitan Opera Ballet Company; her real name was Helen Becker.

Duncan School in New York City, but disliked its emphasis on purely personal expression and lyrical movement. She began to develop her own approach and in 1927 made her solo debut. Many of the approximately 135 dances she choreographed between 1930 and 1945 reflected her concern for social and political problems (her best-known piece, *How Long Brethren*, which premiered a year before *Trojan Incident*, depicted the despair of unemployed Southern blacks and was danced to Lawrence Gellert's 'Negro Songs of Protest', sung by an all black chorus).

Tamiris's *Kassandra*, not unlike Werfel's ecstatic prophetess, embodied the fall of Troy and the effect of slavery on the women. She performed a 'macabre nuptial dance' and moved among 'a sheaf of group abstractions like mad notes of music spinning across a page'.²⁵⁰ Her 'sharply accented dance interpolations' puzzled reviewers primarily because the movements did not appear to bring any new interpretation to the themes of the play or were difficult to read in terms of meaning. The group dancing was also considered 'unintelligible' with little dramatic or thematic significance. Brooks Atkinson, the *New York Times* critic, found some symbolic meaning in 'the speed, precision and boldness of the dance imagery' that appeared to evoke 'fugacious impressions of fright and resignation'. The dancing was accompanied by Wallingford Reigger's modern music, played by a WPA orchestra and sung by two WPA choruses sitting in opposite boxes on the stage.

Atkinson, seemingly unaware of the play's extensive production history, described the play as 'a work much admired in anti-militaristic circles, but seldom produced because it is not actable in the modern theatre'. The memory of the Granville-Barker and Browne tours of *Trojan Women*, which had proved beyond a doubt the

²⁵⁰ Brooks Atkinson, *New York Times*, 22 April 1938.

actability of the play in the modern theatre, seem to be forgotten by 1938. Instead, Atkinson implied that this production was the result of an unusual new socialist experiment: 'The Federal Theatre's litterateurs, laboring in the service of democratic art, have translated Euripides into an intelligible chronicle of the bleak horrors of war with a sound warning for modern ears.'²⁵¹ Like many other critics, Atkinson strongly felt that the FTP worked to accomplish a socialist agenda, an agenda that would ultimately prompt investigations (and subsequent cancellation of the programme) by the House Committee on Un-American Activities. His analysis of the symbolism of the Trojan women dancers reinforced this opinion:

They are impressions of bondage, however, like cogs in a machine, the dancers are driving by some ruthless force outside their existence. They are captives who have lost all power to think for themselves or have human emotions. In short, they behave more like workers of the world-unite than the Trojan women who are pretty angry about the marauding Greeks.²⁵²

8. Margaret Webster/Gilbert Murray
Trojan Women
Cort Theater
New York
1941

As the Nazis advanced on the Balkans and the Greeks were resisting at Salonika on the southern front, Margaret Webster's *Trojan Women* was premiered at the Cort Theater in New York City (8 April 1941). Born into a British acting family and having debuted at a young age in John Barrymore's *Hamlet* (1922), Webster was one of the outstanding Shakespearean directors and actresses of her time.²⁵³ Her first experience with *Trojan Women* was as a member of the Chorus in Casson and Thorndike's 1924

²⁵¹ *ibid.*

²⁵² *ibid.*

²⁵³ George Jean Nathan named Margaret Webster the Best Director of the Year in 1939. Brooks Atkinson, long time theatre reviewer for the *New York Times* called her the 'finest director of Shakespeare that this town has had' (Webster publicity, University of Iowa Collection).

production (New Theatre).²⁵⁴ The play was the inaugural production of the Experimental Theatre, a new company formed by Actors Equity and the Dramatist Guild. Two performances were given to benefit Stage Relief and the Actors fund (13 and 20 April 1941). Webster's production is worth mentioning because although she used Gilbert Murray's translation, she replaced the prologue with a piece written by Robert Turney, describing the agony of refugees from modern warfare. Furthermore, the new text linked the destruction of Troy by the Greek army with that of the recent invasion of Rotterdam by the Germans. This was the first instance in the play's production history that a director had, by altering the text itself, made explicit connections to the contemporary war situation. In addition, the play began with an air raid siren, and with a group of refugees fleeing the stage. Although the women of the chorus wore classical-style dress, Astyanax (played by a little girl) wore modern dress and carried a stuffed toy, and the conquering Greek soldiers appeared on stage in Nazi uniforms. Perhaps inevitably several critics voiced concerns about the production's blatant topicality; however, Brooks Atkinson, reviewing for the *New York Times*, wrote that the play had an immediate significance 'as it did when Euripides wrote it after the violent conquest of the neutral Melos'.²⁵⁵

²⁵⁴ She also played various parts with the Casson company and understudied Sybil Thorndike's Joan on the tour of Shaw's *Saint Joan*. Webster was not only a professional colleague of the Cassons, but also long-time personal acquaintance. In 1925, she tutored their daughters in French and arithmetic. See Elizabeth Sprigge, *Sybil Thorndike Casson* (London: Gollancz, 1971), p. 174. For Webster's life and career, see Margaret Webster, *The Same Only Different* (London: Gollancz, 1969).

²⁵⁵ Brooks Atkinson, 'Experimental Theatre begins career with modernized version of Euripides's *The Trojan Women*', 9 April 1941, p. 32.

CHAPTER TWO

A Weapon of Protest and Reaction Productions directed by Michael Cacoyannis on stage and screen

La guerre, nous savons aujourd'hui ce que cela signifie: une guerre atomique ne laissera ni vainqueurs ni vaincus.

Jean-Paul Sartre (Introduction to *Les Troyennes*, 1965)

During the military junta in Greece (1967-1974), *Trojan Women* was included in a list of over a thousand other titles deemed offensive to the regime. Given its anti-military and anti-war themes, it is not surprising that a dictatorship might consider that a production of the play might 'disturb public order', 'propagate subversive theories', or 'undermine the healthy social condition of the Greek people and their ancestral habits and customs'—all grounds for censorship according to an order (not unlike the Theatre Regulation Act of 1843 in Britain) concerning 'preventive control'. Decreed in May 1967 by the Committee for the Control of Theatrical Works and supervised by Colonel Georgios Papadopoulos, any performance, publication or sale of these titles was punished with imprisonment.¹ This order resurrected the legislation passed by fascist dictator General Ioannis Metaxas during the Nazi occupation of Greece. There were other considerations for censorship as well: for example, that year, productions of *Prometheus Bound* (Helleniki Skini), *Phoenician Women* and the *Suppliants* (National Theatre) were closed down by the Committee because Mikis Theodorakis, the

¹ Other ancient plays included *Lysistrata*, *Antigone*, and *Philoctetes*. Gonda A. H. Van Steen, *Venom in Verse: Aristophanes in Modern Greece* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), p. 249, n. 22. See also Gonda A. H. Van Steen, 'Playing the censors' rules? Classical drama revived under the Greek junta (1967-1974)', *Journal of Hellenic Diaspora*, 27. 1-2 (2001), 133-94 and Karen Van Dyck, *Cassandra and the Censors: Greek Poetry since 1967* (Ithaca, NY & London: Cornell University Press, 1998).

communist composer and activist, had provided the music.² While a few underground productions, particularly of Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*, escaped the censor, it was only in exile that theatre practitioners could use their art, especially Greek tragedy, to raise a cry against the dictatorship and lobby the international community against the colonels.³

The Greek Cypriot director, Michael Cacoyannis (1922-), like many of his fellow artists, chose self-exile and expressed his aversion to 'textual authoritarianism' through a new examination of Greek tragedy.⁴ For seven years his films were banned in Greece, thus, although his first film based on an ancient play, *Electra* (1961), was produced in Greece in modern Greek, his *Trojan Women* film of 1971 was produced abroad and in English.⁵ Cacoyannis's creative decisions for this cinematic interpretation of *Trojan Women* are best considered in the context of two other productions of the play which he directed in New York at the Circle-in-the-Square Theatre (1963) and in Paris at the Théâtre National Populaire in Jean-Paul Sartre's newly commissioned adaptation, *Les Troyennes* (1965). These definitive experiences, especially the impression made by Sartre's use of the play as an overt attack on his own government, compelled Cacoyannis to consider new ways in which he could use the play to articulate an opinion of contemporary Greek politics.

² Theodorakis's music had been banned on Greek radio since 1961 because of his left-wing sympathies (Van Steen, p. 129; Van Dyck, pp. 15, 21). After being imprisoned for his underground activities against the military junta, he was subsequently banished from Greece.

³ Karlos Koun's *Lysistrata*, for example, was produced in 1969. Through it he and Marxist poet Kostas Varnales were able express fury over the junta's censorship; the play reflected 'the immediacy of present-day reality under cover of a thinly disguised past' (Van Steen, p. 205). Edith Hall uses the example [an APGRD programme] of an event in 1970 sponsored in London by the Greek Committee against Dictatorship featuring excerpts of proscribed ancient plays; 'Aeschylus, Race, Class, and War', in *D69*, pp. 169-97 (p. 173, n. 5).

⁴ Van Dyck, p. 13. For example, instead of going through the degrading process of facing the censor, there was an unspoken agreement among the most established writers not to publish (p. 21).

⁵ All films featuring famed actress Melina Mercouri were also forbidden.

9. Michael Cacoyannis/Edith Hamilton
Trojan Women
Circle-in-the-Square
New York City
1963

On 22 November 1963, the American President, John F. Kennedy, was fatally shot in Dallas, Texas. That day Michael Cacoyannis and his cast of *Trojan Women* began rehearsals at the Circle-in-the-Square Theatre in New York City.⁶ Producer Theodore Mann recalled the moment when he interrupted the rehearsal with news of the President's assassination. Some of the actors burst into tears, others fainted. When asked whether they wished to continue rehearsals, Cacoyannis and the actors passionately agreed that it was their duty to bring *Trojan Women* to life because President Kennedy had been devoted to the anti-war cause.⁷

Over the course of its long run, the collective grief of the audience and actors was transferred, expressed, shared and filtered through the medium of the play. 'A sob and not a sob; rather, a small gasp that could not be contained', noted the critic, Norman Nadel, 'it was then that I realized the woman behind me was crying, bitterly.' He described how the Chorus women, in particular, mirrored the grief of the audience: 'Their faces [...] suddenly young, and soft with grief. Disciplined eyes never blinked or wavered, but undisciplined tears brightened these eyes.'⁸ These 'undisciplined tears' indicated the difficult separation of actor from her part; her personal pain could not be

⁶ In the summer of 1963, Cacoyannis presented a last minute, semi-improvised stage production at the Spoleto Festival in Italy that 'rocked audiences with its dramatic impact'; Fred Robbins, 'Director Michael Cacoyannis and his Trojan Women', *Show*, 2.8 (October 1971), p. 30. As a result of his success in Italy, later that year, he was invited to stage a full production at the Circle-in-the-Square, an Off-Broadway theatre established in 1950 by Theodore Mann and Jose Quintero.

⁷ Personal interview with Theodore Mann (7 August 2002).

⁸ Norman Nadel, 'Miss Ebert is Magnificent in her Towering Tragedy', *New York World Telegraph on Sunday*, 24 December 1963.

differentiated from the emotion she wished to convey as a Trojan woman. This phenomenon was akin to Stanislavski's 'technique of affective memory' in which the actor draws on personal experience in order to create a psychological basis for a character. Using this method, the actor becomes integral to the performance of the text (not just a transmitter) and, like the audience, also a receiver of the experience.⁹ For Stanislavski, 'creativity and art' was defined by the way in which the 'material becomes part of us, spiritually, and even physically'.¹⁰ This includes the audience members since they also enter into a 'creative partnership with the creative event' (this relationship with the audience was a central tenet of the avant-garde movement and will be discussed further in Chapter Three).¹¹ Aristotelian *katharsis* (purgation and purification) was the ultimate aim of this method, one that Stanislavski advocated, as well as other contemporary theatre theoreticians and practitioners, including Lessing, Brecht, Artaud and Grotowski, as the end goal of drama in general.

In this version of *Trojan Women*, however, the actor was not drawing upon her personal experience as a prisoner of war or as a soldier, as Stanislavski's affective memory method would require, but upon an external 'tragic' incident shared with fellow actors and audience members: the assassination of the president. Kennedy had embodied the anti-war stance because he made a concerted effort to prevent significant American involvement in the conflict in Vietnam. In an election campaign speech, three years earlier, Kennedy promised:

Should I become President [...] I will not risk American lives [...] by permitting any other nation to drag us into the wrong war at the wrong place

⁹ Timothy J. Wiles, *The Theatre Event*, Modern Theories of Performance (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 21.

¹⁰ Stanislavski, *An Actor Prepares*, p. 49, cited in Wiles, p. 17.

¹¹ Wiles, p. 19.

at the wrong time through an unwise commitment that is unwise militarily, unnecessary to our security and unsupported by our allies.¹²

His assassination brought fears of the possibility of a period of prolonged warfare. Indeed, during the first months of the run of the play, the new President, Lyndon B. Johnson, hesitantly raised the number of military personnel in Vietnam and, in August 1964, the House of Representatives passed a resolution giving him the authority to commit active US forces to aid South Vietnam against Communist insurgents in North Vietnam. In 1965, as *Trojan Women* was continually revived and toured to universities on the East coast, American bombers regularly raided North Vietnam and both China and the United States had tested nuclear bombs. Howard Taubman of the *New York Times* sensed that even the warnings of Poseidon could have little effect on present circumstances: 'Our day has invented the mightiest preacher. What the words of man from Euripides onward could not accomplish, the H-bomb may. For at long, long last, war is potentially too horrible to contemplate.'¹³ Over the course of the play's extended run, the emotive exchange between the actors and audience transitioned from a state of mourning over the death of a President into an expression of communal anxiety over the possibility of a third World War, the threat of nuclear annihilation, and significantly, the impossibility of a peaceful future (theatrical reactions to the Holocaust are discussed in Chapter Four).

This shared experience validated Cacoyannis's success at using *Trojan Women* to touch his audience emotionally. At the 'International Symposium on Ancient Theatre' in Delphi in 1981, he claimed that in order to achieve this shared emotional experience, it was necessary to perform tragedy 'dead centre'. By presenting the

¹² *New York Times*, 13 October 1960.

¹³ Howard Taubman, 'Pacifist in Athens: Euripides had a Word or Two for War'. *New York Times*, 9 February 1964.

tragedy ‘dead centre’, argued Cacoyannis, ‘you are not in danger of being dated, of having to reach back to some past experience, [...] and move it up into the present or predict the future and move it back into the present.’ He explained that his technique or method of presenting a tragedy was to ‘present any tragedy as though it were for the first time. [...] It is the contact with the audience that matters, and every audience is a new audience’. His aim, therefore, was not to weigh the audience down with images of the past, as was the case of the archaic curiosities produced in the early twentieth century discussed in Chapter One. He did not attempt to be clever in an ‘anachronistic sense, [...] or to superimpose all kinds of intellectual, psychological theories’.¹⁴

To this end, the set and costume designs for the production were uncomplicated and ‘timeless’ in character. The stage consisted of wide, steep steps—not unlike Reinhardt’s grand steps leading up to the palace of Oedipus, but without the ornamental *skene* behind—leading up to a flat playing area. At the back wall, a luminous white backdrop was hung. Throughout the play the colours of the sun moving through the course of one day were projected there. The silhouetted figures created an impression of larger than life characters. Uncluttered by props or set objects which might suggest a location or specific time period, the bare stage effectively focused the audience on the acting itself. ‘This heightening of every emotion, balanced against a basic simplicity in the staging’, according to critic Gene Palatsky, ‘results in a thunderbolt theatricality.’¹⁵ This minimalist design allowed space for the Chorus of Trojan women to move about and express a full range of emotion from their lower quieter registers (‘the whisper of

¹⁴ All quotes from Michael Cacoyannis, ‘Discussion: “Ancient Drama and the Film”’ in *International Symposium on Ancient Theatre in Delphi* (Athens: European Cultural Center of Delphi, 1984), pp. 211-28 (p.212). Published proceedings of symposium held in Delphi 18-22 August 1981. Hereafter *Delphi*.

¹⁵ Gene Palatsky, ‘Triumph in Troy’, *Newark Evening News*, 24 December 1963.

tenderness') to their higher pitched registers ('the outpouring of volcanic fury').¹⁶ Cacoyannis directed the choral odes to begin with one or two voices and then rise to a unified protest, a technique which varied the presentation of the odes and helped to maintain the attention of the audience. Critic John Simon described this somewhat unconventional choral activity in the unusual rectangular stage (first used by the Circle-in-the-Square): 'Up and down a set of stairs or slithering, intertwining, crawling across the flat of the stage, the nine women of the Chorus assume every grouping that geometry—within the limits of its poor, old three dimensions—can be made to cough up.'¹⁷ The play was performed in 'three-quarters round' (arena), providing the audience with an intimate space which heightened the expression of grief. In addition, Jules Fisher created a subtle lighting design that kept the stage actively lit: 'never for a moment bare or the effect monotonous'.¹⁸ The score for the tragedy (composed by Jean Prodromides) conveyed the various shifts in mood; the music 'softly insinuates itself into speech or raucously blares for the arrival of some new terror.' Prodromides's use of percussion and strings 'of a barbaric, faintly Oriental sort' heightened the ominous mood and was 'at once ancient and modern, it emerges superbly timeless'.¹⁹ The bareness of the set, as well as the non-specific location, lighting and sound design suggested an environment existing universally in time and history, re-emphasising the endless cycle of war.

The costume design by Theoni Aldredge complemented the set in its simplicity. The floor length, pleated, flowing and dark robes and plain head-scarves of the Chorus

¹⁶ Whitney Bolton, 'Trojan Women Not to be Missed', *Morning Telegraph* (NY), 25 December 1963.

¹⁷ John Simon, *Uneasy Stages: A Chronicle of the New York Theatre, 1963-1973* (New York: Random House, 1976), p. 35.

¹⁸ George Oppenheimer, 'Mildred Dunnock Stars in *The Trojan Women*', *Newsday*, 24 December 1963.

¹⁹ Simon, p. 36.

women, starkly reminiscent of the costumes of the Chorus in Cacoyannis's film *Electra* (1961), were based on an essentially traditional modern Greek style of dress. The simplicity of the design drew focus to the female form, the faces, with their heavy black eye make-up also of the modern Greek style, contrasted the pale arms and bare feet. The movement of the cloth was especially effective during the choreographed choral odes. The main characters were also dressed in plain dark robes. Cassandra's costume showed her as an unadorned priestess; a 'temple image rather than a domestic one'.²⁰ Andromache's dress was used to comfort Astyanax who plays at the drape of his mother's garment as she asks Talthybius about their future in Greece—a striking visualization of Andromache's speech at 750: τί μου δέδραξαι χερσὶ κἀντέχηι πέπλων ('Why do you grasp me in your arms and hold fast to my clothing?'). A few moments later, Andromache (Joyce Ebert) used her cloak to prevent Astyanax from being taken away by Talthybius. She begins to move backwards and forwards, simulating a birthing rhythm while the child remains hidden beneath her cloak. The moment Astyanax's death is proclaimed, the rhythm is escalated to the point where the child is forcefully expelled from under her cloak towards his eventual death.²¹ Helen also used her silky dress as a seduction device, lifting her veiled head to persuade Menelaus to spare her life. Talthybius and the two soldiers are dressed in ancient military-style garb with plated armour; Menelaus wore a dark pleated robe over his

²⁰ Walter Kerr, 'The Trojan Women', *The New York Herald Tribune*, 24 December 1963.

²¹ Joyce Ebert won a coveted Obie Award as well as a Clarence Derwent Award for her performance as Andromache. The production was the first off-Broadway production to win the New York Drama Critics Circle Award for 'Outstanding Production', and the Outer Circle Critics Award for 'Outstanding Revival'. Cacoyannis won the Lola D'Annunzio Award for 'Most Outstanding Contribution to Off-Broadway' (Press Release). Theodor Mann claimed it was the longest consecutive running Greek play in history.

armour to differentiate himself from the other men (similar in fact to the soldiers' costumes in Harley Granville-Barker's production).

This nuanced design significantly challenged the tradition of presenting ancient tragedy in modern Greece. Although he received an English undergraduate degree and theatre training at the Old Vic, Cacoyannis has argued that he is more Greek than the Greeks when it comes to the production of Greek tragedy.²² 'In England they call me the Greek-born British director', he said. 'England imposed a certain discipline—but that only helped to clarify my Greekness for me.'²³ After the creation of an independent Greek state in the nineteenth century, the performance of ancient tragedy developed slowly out of the need to form a national identity based on the continuity between the past and the present.²⁴ Theatre artists set out to define this new identity as drama became a viable way of expressing this quest, whereas previously poetry and prose had been the dominant genres.²⁵ Ironically, although contemporary playwrights sought to exorcize the ghosts of their great ancestors so that they could inhabit that haunted space, in this effort to establish a national identity, productions of ancient tragedy appeared to be more effective than new plays by contemporary Greek playwrights. This was primarily because these productions served to express the important claim for the Greek people that they were the natural heirs of ancient Greek civilization.²⁶ Productions of

²² Cacoyannis was born Cyprus in 1923. His father was the most successful criminal lawyer in Cyprus, and wanted him to be a lawyer. He studied law first, at age 17, at Gray's Inn in London and then went on to work in the BBC's Greek program and as stage actor (1945-50) in the West End. In 1953, after working in Britain for 13 years and receiving training in stage direction at the Old Vic, he returned to Greece.

²³ Walter Ross, 'Greek Bearing Film Gifts', *New York Times*, 24 January 1965.

²⁴ For a discussion of the development of a Greek identity in relation to theatre production, see *(Dis) Placing Classical Greek Theatre*, ed. by Savas Patsalidis and Elizabeth Sakellaridou, (Thessaloniki: University Studio Press, 1999).

²⁵ Aliko Bacopoulou-Halls, *Modern Greek Theater: Roots and Blossoms* (Athens: Diogens, 1982), p. 7.

²⁶ Ioanna Roilou, 'Performances of Ancient Greek Tragedy on the Greek Stage of the Twentieth Century', in Patsalidis and Sakellaridou, pp. 194-95.

Greek tragedy made up the majority of plays in the repertoire of the Ἐθνικὸ Θέατρο (Greek National Theatre, founded in 1932). Subsequently, other organisations such as the State Theatre of Northern Greece, the Karolos Koun Art Theatre, Theatrical Organization of Cyprus, and Amphitheatro, also committed their resources to the production of ancient tragedy. The goal of these productions was not only to transcend the limits of the historical period, but also to form a bridge from the past to the present. Each production was used to promote Greek heritage and to represent an act of transposing the ancient text from its original socio-cultural environment to a contemporary Greek socio-cultural context.²⁷

In general, this act of transposition did not involve producing Greek tragedy in contemporary setting or with modern costume, but instead was manifest in an attempt to reproduce ancient structures in an ancient theatre space, one of the few cultural products remaining from ancient civilisation which was recognised outside of Greece. In general, with the founding of Arts Festivals, above all the Epidauros summer festival, and the addition of state subsidies, the Greeks were committed to preserving this cultural product. And, although the National Theatre was given exclusive rights to perform at the Epidauros Festival until 1975, other Greek companies garnered accolades by touring their productions to international festivals in northern Europe, Spoleto, Syracuse, and beyond. In this way, the Greeks created their own tradition of producing ancient tragedy, which when shared internationally, ‘gave primarily the impression to Greeks that the new Greek state could occupy a respected position within the capitalist world, due to the respect held universally for Ancient Greece’.²⁸

²⁷ Roilou, p. 191.

²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 195.

While Cacoyannis showed a devoted interest in promoting his own cultural product, he also aimed to challenge the archaism of modern Greek productions. He explained that the production would not be done as a 'costume drama with pseudo-archaic gestures taken from Greek vases, not with pillars or other accoutrements that suggest the old Greek theatre', but at the same time, he was very careful to emphasise that he did not intend to present a 'modernized version' either. 'The players will wear Greek costumes', he explained, but 'we must remember that this play was given by a playwright with burning convictions for a living audience and we want to present it to another living audience today.'²⁹

This willingness to seek alternative ways to stage Greek tragedy is evident also in his underlying approach towards classical scholarship and scholarly involvement in the creative process. At the 1981 Delphi conference, Oliver Taplin addressed the director suggesting that 'we scholars believe that we are in a position to collaborate and help practical interpreters'. Cacoyannis responded, citing the difficulties scholarly contributions posed for theatre artists:

What I am saying is that if the scholars try to preserve Greek tragedy as it was performed at the time when the tragedies were written, should that be the principal preoccupation of the scholars, that is one way in which they kill the eternal, renewable aspect of the works.

[...] Every time I produce a tragedy, I really try to 'cover' myself and cancel out huge areas of ignorance by reading a great deal of material written about tragedy. And I am often horrified by the arbitrary ideas I come across, and by the belief that unless one approaches a play fortified with historical, literary, sociological knowledge, then one cannot properly appreciate the work. [...] The scholars should, as you say, and I agree completely, elucidate the plays to help them come alive, but at the same time they should never forget that they were not written to be read. [...] They were written to be performed.³⁰

²⁹ Thomas Lask, 'Greek to Greek: Director Michael Cacoyannis talks about 'The Trojan Women'', *New York Times*, 22 December 1963.

³⁰ *Delphi*, p. 221.

As someone trained in the ancient texts in a Greek gymnasium and as a director who does his 'homework' on each play, the text was a sacred object for Cacoyannis. However, this background knowledge, he believed, also gave him the freedom to alter or add to the text for dramatic affect. For example, in the midst of the general 'cry of agony' of the play, Cacoyannis's Helen (Jane White) was described as having a 'fine arrogant spirit'.³¹ This arrogance was represented visually in the way she appeared, in a full length, pleated silky white dress with bright flowers adorning her long dark hair. Although the style of her dress was similar, the colour of her costume set her apart from the Trojan women (including Hecuba) who were dressed in identical dark pleated robes with dark sashes/veils. Her choice of dress deservedly draws Hecuba's criticisms during the *agon* (1022-28). Her arrogant spirit was expressed further through her stage movement. According to the script (based on Edith Hamilton's translation): 'Helen enters from the hut. The soldiers do not touch her. She is gentle and undisturbed and her words are spoken with sweet, injured dignity. Not angry at all'.³² Throughout the *agon*, White played Helen as a clever woman with an arsenal of shrewd phrases and actions used to save her own life. She was in constant contact with Menelaus, touching his arm or putting her cheek against his shoulder. During the moment of supplication, she flung herself to the ground, clinging to him. She wielded her sexual power with sultry looks as she lifted her veiled head to persuade Menelaus to spare her life. One critic described her as a 'woman ripe with pleasure [...], not cowering but scornful, flashing her wanton smiles and her knowledge of men [...], sensuous and scheming'.³³

³¹ Richard Watts Jr., 'Classic Greek Tragedy That Lives', *New York Post*, 24 December 1963.

³² Hamilton, p. 70.

³³ Eric Lloyd, 'Occasion for Applause', 27 December 1963 (newspaper unknown).

The surprising element in this scene was not how Cacoyannis dealt with the ambiguities in the text regarding Helen's stage actions, nor White's portrayal of her as a woman whose uses her sexual prowess to exculpate herself and escape punishment, the surprise was that during this time period, at the height of the Civil Rights movement in America, not one theatre critic mentioned that this stunning woman in white was African-American.³⁴ This is particularly odd because White was the daughter of the controversial public figure, Walter White, the long-serving Executive Secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP).³⁵ Though light-skinned like her father, White had struggled for years to break the racial barrier that kept many African-American actors from playing non-racialised roles or roles that were not stereotypically black.³⁶ While no theatre critic noted her skin-colour, *Ebony*, a popular African-American magazine, celebrated her role in *Trojan Women* as an commendable example of interracial casting.³⁷

The fact that critics ignored Helen's race was even more fascinating in light of the abrupt rise in the number of black actors employed on and off Broadway that season.³⁸ This rise was partly to do with the campaigns of the Civil Rights movement

³⁴ *Trojan Women* premiered four months after 125,000 African-Americans marched on Washington, D.C. in the historical 'Walk for Freedom' (on 28 August 1963).

³⁵ Walter White, who could have passed for a white man, chose instead to identify with his black ancestry, and ultimately became the most ardent protagonist in the fight to stamp out lynching in America. White caused a stir in the African-American community in 1949 when he divorced his wife of 27 years (Jane's mother) and married a white woman, Miss Poppy Cannon, a food expert and an editor of *Mademoiselle* magazine.

³⁶ For an exposé of Jane White's career and struggles as a black actress see Charles L. Sanders, 'Jane White: Out of the Shadow', *Ebony*, February 1978, pp. 114-26. In 1948 the New York Theatre Guild refused to let her play Joan of Arc, but eventually she broke the racial barrier with her celebrated roles on Broadway, Off-Broadway, and for the American Shakespeare Festival. She was also a Board member of The American Negro Theatre, and co-founder of Torchlight Productions Inc. which promoted interracial casting. Her success as Helen was followed with a role in Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* for which she won a prestigious Obie Award (1965). She married an Italian restaurant owner Alfredo Viazzi in 1963 and lived in New York for many years before moving to Los Angeles where she now resides.

³⁷ Author unknown, 'The Negro on Broadway', *Ebony*, April 1964, p. 191.

³⁸ A prominent television actor, Frederick Douglass O'Neal, who later became the first black President of

and partly to do with the popularity of *The Blacks* by French playwright Jean Genet. A few years before, Genet had premiered his play about the African-American revolution and the recent liberation of the Algerians from the French. The play shocked and outraged the public, both in America and subsequently in France where it incited riots and drew accusations of racism. Despite this publicity, or perhaps as a result of it, the play was performed to packed houses in New York for over fourteen hundred performances in four years.³⁹

In contrast to Genet's play, which overtly trumpeted the idea of a racial revolution, Cacoyannis appeared to make no political statements in his use of a black actress to represent Helen. For instance, she might have represented the black 'prize' of a white man, a historic reference to the frequent rape of slave women by white masters, or an exotic savage captured for the amusement of a white man (Andrei Serban would venture to make this connection with his African-American Cassandra and Hecuba in his 1974 La MaMa production of *Trojan Women*—see Chapter Three). Furthermore, Cacoyannis did not present production decisions which would suggest an updated version of the play in which the women represented Africans enslaved by European society.⁴⁰ These adaptations might have made a strong statement about how the setting and environment of *Trojan Women* could be manipulated to reflect the nature of racial or sexual politics at the time. Perhaps because Cacoyannis originally conceived the play with a European cast in Italy where racial conflicts were not current issues, his Helen

the Actor's Equity, campaigned vigorously for non-racial and interracial casting on the New York stage. Through his influence and others, the numbers of employed black actors rose from 15 to more than 150 in the space of one season ('The Negro on Broadway').

³⁹ *Theatre World*, edited by Daniel Blum (1964-65), 179. Interestingly, *The Blacks* was the only play to run longer than Cacoyannis' *Trojan Women* on or off-Broadway in the 1960s. It ran for over six hundred performances.

⁴⁰ Nobel Laureate Wole Soyinka made a similar statement in his version of *The Bacchae* commissioned by the National Theatre at the Old Vic, London and performed in August 1973.

was not explicitly a black Helen, but a universal Helen (in any case it was actually producer Theodore Mann who recommended White for the role).⁴¹ The fact that the critics ignored this potentially controversial casting was a tribute both to White's portrayal of the character and to Cacoyannis's vision of the play as a responsive piece of theatre that could speak to any society that suffers from the misery of war or enslavement.

The Circle-in-the-Square production of *Trojan Women* was also successful because its design and concept was so different from what was being produced on Broadway and, yet, at the same time, it was also commercially viable. In the 1940s and 1950s, directors on Broadway, the nucleus of the American theatre community, had turned to the production of musicals, popular money-making ventures. In reaction to this commercialism, focus shifted away from Broadway to Off-Broadway. The Circle-in-the-Square theatre (started in a defunct nightclub in Greenwich Village) was one of the first to make a successful name for itself as place of high quality experimental theatre. The Off-Broadway theatres soon became known as producers of serious drama, including the classics, as Broadway had been for decades. Though some companies, inspired by the experiments of the European theatres such as the Théâtre Libre and the Freie Bühne, as well as the Moscow Art Theatre, were committed to supporting experimental directors like Richard Schechner and Victor Turner, and later associated themselves with playwrights of the 'theatre of the absurd' movement such as Edward Albee, Off-Broadway depended on operating in small theatres at a low cost. Although the plays of Pinter, Beckett, Genet and Ionesco continued to dominate these stages, it became apparent that Off-Broadway was rapidly reaching the appalling economic state

⁴¹ Personal interview with Theodore Mann (7 August 2002).

of Broadway. Fewer and more expensive plays were being produced, and even though the quality of the plays remained high, increasingly there was an reluctance to gamble on new writing. As a result, the focus moved from Off-Broadway to Off-Off Broadway where plays were being produced in alternate spaces like coffee-houses, lofts, church halls, and a regional theatre tradition was revived. This counter-movement, it is has been argued by historians of avant-garde theatre, necessitated the rejection of the tradition of Western theatre, including the classics. As will be discussed in the next chapter, what is rejected is not the classical texts themselves, but the idea that the text is sacred and could not (and should not) be tampered with or violated in any way.

This production, due to timing and Cacoyannis's willingness to challenge the traditional ways of producing ancient drama, ushered in a new era of revival of this play and of Greek tragedy in general. Edith Hall recently suggested that Richard Schechner's *Dionysus in 69* heralded a renewed interest in Greek drama, but I would argue that it was the unprecedented commercial success of Cacoyannis's hybrid production of *Trojan Women* that paved the way for an American revival of Greek tragedy.⁴² The production occurred on the cusp of the Off-Broadway movement and the avant-garde, and the commercial success of the play, the long run of over two years, and the dedicated audiences continued to attend performances because the play mirrored their own fears about life during wartime and also offered them a chance for emotional catharsis that could not be found elsewhere.

⁴² Edith Hall, 'Introduction: Why Greek Tragedy in the Late Twentieth Century?' in *D69*, p. 1.

10. Michael Cacoyannis/Jean Paul Sartre
Les Troyennes
Théâtre du Palais de Chaillot (Théâtre National Populaire)
Paris
1965

While Gilbert Murray had suggested a contemporary parallel in the British colonial activity in South Africa in his scholarship and political treatises, Jean-Paul Sartre's 1965 adaptation, *Les Troyennes* (commissioned by Georges Wilson for the Théâtre National Populaire in Paris), was the first example of a deliberate reworking of the ancient text for explicit political (and philosophical) ends. Though he had complete artistic control over his own consciously a-political production, Cacoyannis could not avoid or downplay Sartre's adaptation that was teeming with protest against French colonialism; and he also could not avoid the implications of the production within an environment of growing civil unrest over the Vietnam War. Sartre not only altered the text itself, but also the spirit and meaning of the text. These alterations contributed fire to the rigorous argument over the sanctity of ancient texts between academics and theatre artists, especially avant-garde directors such as Tadashi Suzuki and Andrei Serban, who would create unique versions of *Trojan Women* in the following decade. Most significantly, the enormous and wide-ranging impact of Sartre's adaptation marked a major shift in the presentation of *Trojan Women*, particularly in Europe: after 1965, the universal became specific, for example, the Trojan women were identifiable as Algerian women or Balkan women, the soldiers as American military or Israeli Defence Forces onstage.

Sartre's alterations to the text were directly informed by his life of active protest. A month after he completed the *Les Troyennes* script, he refused the Nobel Prize in

Literature. He explained in several polemical articles, published internationally, that he never accepted official honours and, as a writer, he did not wish to become an institution.⁴³ He said also claimed that he would have considered accepting the prize if it had been awarded during the Algerian War, because, as a signatory on the 'Manifesto of the 121', it would have honoured not him, but freedom for the people for which he was fighting.⁴⁴

To proclaim these strong sentiments, Sartre refashioned Euripides' representation of the Greek invasion of Troy to parallel the French colonial situation in Africa; Troy became representative of the plight of a third world nation. 'Il était une condamnation de la guerre en général, et des expéditions coloniales en particulier' ('It was a condemnation of war in general and the expeditions of the colonialists in particular'), he explained to Bernard Pingaud, who published excerpts of this interview in *Bref*, the Théâtre National Populaire magazine, a month prior to opening night.⁴⁵ Sartre had vocalised anti-colonial sentiments as early as 1924 and actively protested against the French involvement in Indochina after World War Two.⁴⁶ After the Algerian War of Independence erupted in November 1954, he published treatises, such as 'Le Colonialisme est un système' (1956), in which he blamed the political and economic exploitation of the Algeria on *les colons* ('the colonisers') and strongly advocated the

⁴³ 'L'Ecrivain doit refuser de se laisser transformer en institution' ('The Writer should refuse to let himself be turned into an institution') published in *Le Monde* (24 October), 'I Always Refuse Distinctions', *The Times* (London, 23 October), and 'Sartre on the Nobel Prize', *New York Review of Books* (17 December).

⁴⁴ Kenneth Thompson and Margaret Thompson, *Sartre: Life and Works*, Facts on File Chronology Series (New York; Bicester, England: Facts on File, 1984), p. 145.

⁴⁵ *Bref*, 58 (February 1965), reprinted as the introduction to the published text, *Les Troyennes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1965), p. 6. NB. English translations of these quotations taken from *Sartre on Theater*, ed. by Michel Contat and Michel Rybalka, trans. by Frank Jellinek (London: Quartet Books. 1976), pp. 309-15. Sartre was also interviewed by Gisele Halimi about the play in *Nin*, a Belgrade journal (28 March), but I have not been able to locate it.

⁴⁶ David Drake, 'Sartre, Camus and the Algerian War', *Sartre Studies International*, 5.1 (1999), 16-32 (p. 16).

complete dissolution of the colonial system that subjugated the Algerian people.⁴⁷ As his warnings and attempts to urge his countrymen to protest against the war fell on deaf ears, his position on Algeria became more radical; he was no longer 'simply France's conscience denouncing colonialism and the brutal actions of the French army in Algeria, he was expressing his support for French army deserters and the FLN [Front de Libération Nationale]'.⁴⁸

Although he claimed that he did not believe in the power of literature to change people ('Literature does not really seem to incite people to action', he said once in an interview⁴⁹), Sartre continued to provoke, particularly through his dramatic works.⁵⁰ While he was actively protesting against his government with manifestos, depositions at trials and participation in rallies, Sartre wrote *Les Sequestres d'Altona* (1957). The play focused on impotence, power and torture in Nazi Germany, but he openly confessed that the play he had wanted to write was a direct response to French torture of prisoners in Algeria. This play, he admitted, would have been too topical and no theatre in Paris would have produced it.⁵¹ In 1944, following the politically charged premieres of Giraudoux's *La Guerre de Troie* and Jean Anouilh's *Antigone* which asserted a French cultural aesthetic over a German one, Sartre had conveyed a similar desire for creating an overtly political drama: 'The real drama, the drama I should have liked to write, was that of the terrorist who by ambushing Germans becomes the instrument for the

⁴⁷ Text of a speech given at the Salle Wagram in Paris, 27 January 1956. Published in *Les Temps Modernes*, 123 (March-April 1956) and reprinted in Jean-Paul Sartre, *Situations V* (Paris: Gallimard, 1964), pp. 25-48.

⁴⁸ Sartre, *Situations V*, p. 25.

⁴⁹ Oreste Pucciani, 'An Interview with Jean-Paul Sartre', *The Tulane Drama Review*, 5 (March 1961), 12-18 (p. 13).

⁵⁰ Sartre's practical experience developed as a result of his long-term friendship with Charles Dullin. In 1932, he met Dullin (who produced *Les Mouches* at the Théâtre Bernhardt in 1943) and, with de Beauvoir, frequently observed his productions from backstage. He later gave some lectures on his experience at the Dullin's School of Dramatic Art (1942-43). See Contat and Rybalka, pp. x-xi.

⁵¹ *ibid.*, p. 14.

execution of fifty hostages.’ Instead, he wrote *Les Mouches* (*The Flies*), a version of the *Eumenides*, and his first foray into Greek tragedy. ‘Why stage declamatory Greeks’, he questioned in an interview, ‘unless to disguise what one was thinking under a fascist regime?’⁵² *Les Mouches*, in its 1943 premiere at the Théâtre Sarah-Bernhardt in Paris (directed by Charles Dullin), was received in France primarily as an optimistic attempt to revive the French people out of a state of remorse over the country’s military collapse and instil hope for a future without Nazi control. When the play was revived in 1947 at the Compagnie des Dix (directed by Claude Martin, French Occupation Zone, Germany) and at the Hebbel Theater in Berlin in 1947 (directed by Jürgen Fehling) it had the opposite effect as an expression of despair and guilt.⁵³

In 1961, Sartre attended a production of *Trojan Women*, directed by Jacqueline Moatti, put on for the benefit of an audience sympathetic to negotiation with the FLN. Experiencing first-hand how the play provoked its audience to protest deeply convinced Sartre that he could express his own anti-war, anti-colonial messages by adapting this classical text.⁵⁴ 1961 was a year of personal struggle for Sartre, the war in Algeria raged on and, after several death threats, a bomb had exploded in the entrance to Sartre’s apartment (no-one was injured). Several months later, he participated in various demonstrations, including a silent protest against the violent repression of a recent demonstration of Algerians. It was with these experiences in mind, four years later, that he created his own version of *Trojan Women*.

⁵² Both quotations from interview in *Carrefour*, 9 September 1944, and cited in Contat and Rybalka, p.188.

⁵³ Contat and Rybalka, p.195.

⁵⁴ Moatti’s play was performed in 1961 and published that year by *L’Arche*, ‘Répertoire pour un théâtre populaire’ series (no. 34).

In order to emphasise his anti-colonial sentiments, Sartre made significant changes to the language of some of the speeches, for example, in Andromaque's speech: instead of a tirade against Helen blaming her for the death of her son, as in Euripides (766f.), she delivers an anti-colonial attack:

Hommes de l'Europe,
 Vous méprisez l'Afrique et l'Asie
 Et vous nous appelez barbares, je crois,
 Mais quand le gloriole et la cupidité
 vous jettent chez nous,
 Vous pillez, vous torturez, vous massacrez.⁵⁵

('Men of Europe, you despise Africa and Asia and call us barbarians, I believe, but when vainglory and avarice throw you upon us, you pillage, you torture, you massacre.')

The choice of Sartre's language here and the accusation against his fellow European citizens for their attitude towards Africa and Asia gives new meaning to Andromaque's questioning how the Greeks can consider the Trojans barbarians when they themselves are child-killers, tearing an innocent child from his mother's arms and killing him.⁵⁶ Another example occurs in the Cassandra Episode: Cassandre's speech in favour of the Trojan's privileged position to bury their own dead becomes a cry against the invaders: 'Gloire aux défenseurs de la patrie./Mais les autres, les conquérants,/Ceux qui font une sale guerre et qui meurent,/leur mort est plus bête encore que leur vie' ('Glory to those who defend the country./But the others, the conquerors,/Those who fight a dirty war and die,/their death is even more foolish than their life').⁵⁷ To a lesser extent, the mood of Hecuba's tender funeral speech over the body of Astyanax is also compromised by her

⁵⁵ Sartre, p. 47. Ronald Duncan, who produced an English translation/adaptation of Sartre's text (*Trojan Women* (London: Hamilton, 1967)), avoids the anti-colonial tirade by completely eliminating the speech and replacing it with a description of Andromeda (sic) saying a long goodbye to Astyanax.

⁵⁶ Andromaque's invocation of the challenges of womanhood has been argued to be influenced by Sartre's attachment to Simone de Beauvoir.

⁵⁷ Sartre, p. 29.

anti-colonialist diatribe against the Greeks.⁵⁸ These changes to the Euripides' text were made in order to comment on contemporary issues, and Sartre made those connections by (unwittingly) invoking Murray's claim that the ancient contrast between Greeks and barbarians could parallel a modern colonial situation: 'les établissements d'Asie Mineure où l'imperialisme colonial d'Athènes s'exerçait avec une férocité qu'Euripide dénonce sans ménagement ('Athenian colonial imperialism in Asia Minor was being carried through with a savagery that Euripides bluntly denounces').⁵⁹ Through Sartre's mediation, Troy came to symbolize an exploited Third World.

Sartre's adaptation also reflected the ways in which the threat of worldwide nuclear war had bred an atmosphere of hopeless desolation. He reminded his audience that there would be no victors or victims in atomic war: 'La guerre, nous savons aujourd'hui ce que cela signifie: une guerre atomique ne laissera ni vainqueurs ni vaincus' ('War, today we know what it means: an atomic war leaves no victors and no victims').⁶⁰ He believed that the play ended in 'le nihilisme total' ('total nihilism'),⁶¹ and this affected most his interpretation of Euripides' play, resulting in textual alterations that highlighted the fury of the Greeks and the brutal face of war. The ending of the play, which many scholars and theatre practitioners consider hopeless (see Chapter Four), is utterly bleak in Sartre's adaptation. Instead of retaining the original text in which the Chorus have the last word,⁶² which could be interpreted as their

⁵⁸ 'Nous avons tenu dix ans contre la Grèce entière/et ses lâches alliés d'Asie,/et nous mourons, vaincus par une ignoble ruse' (Sartre, p. 74). Duncan eliminated 'ses lâches allies d'Asie' from his translation.

⁵⁹ Sartre, p. 7 (trans. from *Bref*, in Contat and Rybalka, p. 314).

⁶⁰ Sartre, p. 6 (trans. from *Bref*, in Contat and Rybalka, p. 313).

⁶¹ Sartre, p. 8, (trans. from *Bref*, in Contat and Rybalka, p. 314).

⁶² ἰὼ τάλαινα πόλις, ὅμως/δὲ πρόφερε πόδα σὸν ἐπὶ πλάτας Ἀχαιῶν ('Alas, unhappy city!/ Yet go forward now to the ships of the Achaeans', 1331-32).

resilient attitude towards a future of slavery, Sartre used Poseidon's warning against war (from Euripides' Prologue):

A présent vous allez payer.
Faites la guerre, mortels imbéciles,
ravagez les champs et les villes,
violez les temples, les tombes,
et torturez les vaincus
Vous en créverez
Tous.⁶³

(‘You will all pay now. Make war, stupid mortals, ravage the fields and the towns, violate the temples, the graves and torture the defeated: it will be the death of you, all of you.’)

The use of ‘tous’, in a line by itself, stresses that not one single human being will escape the affects of a nuclear attack; there is no hope of survival, even innocent people will die. By the pen of Sartre, *Trojan Women* had become the ultimate nihilist play.

Through the use of colloquial phrases and references to great works of western culture, Sartre was able to emphasise these political and philosophical ends.⁶⁴ Speeches and choral *stasima* were divided up, becoming embittered exchanges of dialogue, for example, between Andromaque and Hécube in the Andromache Episode. Sartre confessed that some of his characters had been influenced by popular portrayals in other works. For example, he claimed that the audience's view of Hélène had become the ‘cause d’Offenbach’.⁶⁵ This nineteenth-century Parisian ‘can-can’ characterization of Hélène as a comic character seemed to have inspired Sartre to present Hélène as a

⁶³ Sartre, p. 78. F. Dunn (*Tragedy's End: Closure and Innovation in Euripidean Drama* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp.101-14) argues that the expected closing gestures of Athenian drama are ‘reversed’ in *Trojan Women*. Sartre makes this literally true.

⁶⁴ Including Pascal, Brecht, Mozart and Shakespeare. See Nicole Loraux, *The Mourning Voice: An Essay on Greek Tragedy*, trans. by Elizabeth Trapnell Rawlings, Cornell Studies in Classical Philology, 58 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002), p.6, n.10.

⁶⁵ Sartre, p. 5 (trans. from *Bref*, in Contat and Rybalka, p. 312). According to de Beauvoir, while attending the École Normale, Sartre ‘se taillait de vifs succès en interprétant *La Belle Hélène* et des romances 1900’ (‘[He] scored great successes in *La Belle Hélène* and the romantic operettas of the 1900s’); Simone de Beauvoir, *Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter*, trans. by James Kirkup (London: Penguin, 1963), p. 335.

woman who provided some relief from the gloomy, hopeless picture of life in the camp. To heighten the anticipation and impact of Hélène's entrance and to set a certain tone for the scene, Sartre extended Euripides' dialogue between Hecuba and Menelaus. For instance, in his version, Ménélas admitted that he has not seen his wife in ten years and desires to see how she has aged. Hécube responded bitterly by describing Hélène as a special 'type' of woman who maintains her beauty without aging (a unique example of the κηλήματα to which Hecuba refers at 893):

Elle n'a pas vieilli,
Et tu le sais bien.
Ces femmes-là vieillissent tard et d'un seul coup.
Pour ses beaux yeux de mort
les hommes n'ont pas fini de s'entretuer
Ni les villes de brûler.⁶⁶

('She hasn't aged and you know that well. Such women age late and in a single blow. For her beautiful eyes of death, men will keep killing each other and towns will keep burning.')

Sartre's Hélène entered with an escort, but without violence. When Ménélas sees her, he ignores Hécube's warnings to leave without looking at her and orders the soldiers to let her go, 'Lâchez-la' ('release her'). This textual addition suggested that Hélène immediately wins him over with her appearance. Her first words indicate that this Helen is an unworried flirt, not someone genuinely fearful of rough treatment. She starts her coquettish campaign by addressing him as 'o roi, mon époux' ('O King, my husband') and saying, 'Je t'avais vu, j'accourais' ('I saw you and I ran to you'). As the scene continues, the two behave like a bickering married couple until Hécube interrupts them.⁶⁷ This behaviour develops in the *agon* in the form of a cantankerous personal interview rather than a formal trial or debate. For instance, at one point, she is

⁶⁶ Sartre, p. 55.

⁶⁷ *ibid.* Jean-Pierre Lenoir comments that 'a scene between Menelaus and Helen begins on the fringe of humor and shades into a domestic squabble' ('"The Trojan Women" presented in Paris', *New York Times*, 18 March 1965).

interrupted by Ménélas who asks her why she left him (as opposed to Helen asking herself the question in Euripides' version). Her retort, 'Mais c'est toi qui es parti, mon chéri!' ('But it was you who left, my love!'), only prolongs the bickering. Ménélas curses her, 'Femme indigne', ('Disgraceful woman') and she responds in kind, 'O le plus inconscient des maris' ('O most foolish of husbands').⁶⁸

This bickering dissolves dramatically at the moment of Hélène's supplication. In a slight adaptation of the Euripidean moment, Ménélas announces that he agrees with Hécube: the army will stone his wife for dishonouring him. Héléne's supplication appears to be less of a dramatic life-saving action and more of a plea for absolution. She uses affectionate names for him and repeatedly asks to be forgiven: 'Je t'en supplie,/Ménélas, mon cher époux, mon roi,/Pardonne moi./Je n'ai rien fait./Si, je sais, mon chéri, je t'ai fait mal' ('I beg you, Menelaus, my dear husband, my king. Forgive me. I did nothing. No, I know, my darling, I hurt you').⁶⁹ In Ménélas' reaction to her supplication, Sartre left no ambiguity. In this text, he clearly changes his mind from having her stoned in Troy to taking her back to Sparta; he even admits this, but agrees that Héléne should not go on his boat. The scene ends with his proclamation that she will be made an example for all unchaste women (as he does in Euripides' text).

It seems that Héléne will die, but the first conversation between Hécube and Le Choeur in the next scene (also an addition by Sartre) clarifies the situation. When asked whether Ménélas will kill Héléne, Hécube responds that there is an even chance that she will live or die. In the very next line Le Choeur proclaim the outcome, cursing the general as a 'liar' ('le menteur') and a 'coward' ('le lâche') because they have just seen

⁶⁸ Sartre, p. 58.

⁶⁹ *ibid.*, p. 64.

Hélène board his ship. Sartre allows Hécube a poignant vision of ghosts watching ‘la belle Hélène’ attain her freedom: ‘L’amertume de nos morts/ne sera pas adoucie./Ils se pressent sur la plage, invisibles./Ils voient s’embarquer, triomphante,/Hélène, la peste rouge/et savent, à présent, qu’ils sont morts pour rien’ (‘The bitterness of our dead will not be eased. Invisible, they gather on the beach to watch the triumphant Helen, that red plague, embark that ship, knowing then that they died for nothing’). This vision, supported by the bitter refrain of Le Choeur, ‘Le crime paie!’ (‘Crime-pays!’), plunges the mood of the play into utter hopelessness.⁷⁰

In his textual adaptations of this scene, Sartre was explicit with his resolution of Euripides’ ambiguities. Euripides’ scene explored the impact of not knowing whether Helen will be punished, but Sartre capitalized on the unpleasant truth known to the Athenian audience, that although Hélène was irresponsible, she was ultimately reconciled with her husband. One reviewer commented on the juxtaposition of Sartre’s ‘salty’ language and the Helen Episode: ‘To the flippant Helen in her reconciliation scene with her *cocu magnifique*, the cuckolded Menelaus, [Sartre] gives rather faded gag lines, such as “I am all alone in the world. Nobody understands me,” which make the TNP gallery guffaw with joy.’⁷¹ Hélène appeared ridiculous and light-hearted in the midst of this great tragedy, made bleaker by Sartre’s many alterations.

As a result of Sartre’s alterations, angry tirades replaced ritual mourning and the subtle character differences between the main characters were replaced by uniform angry reactions. There was no place for mourning or cleansing ritual in this version, there was nothing to live for or hope for. Instead, Hecuba was a rebel and a militant and

⁷⁰ Sartre, pp. 66-67.

⁷¹ Author unknown, *The New Yorker*, 17 April 1965.

the Trojan women represented modern day protesters, instead of mourners. Euripides' use of frequent cries of ἤ ἔ (1302) or ὀτοτοτοτοῖ (1287) were replaced with 'Hélas! Hélas!' ('alas! alas!'), an archaic form of lamentation which Cacoyannis, as director, confessed was a point of contention between himself and Sartre.⁷² He explained his frustration at the fact that Sartre cut all the ritual at the end (when the women pound on the earth to say goodbye to their buried loved ones, 1305ff), 'because he couldn't understand it, or because he thought it was too emotional'. He told Sartre in rehearsal: 'I know how to direct ritual, calling out, striking the ground and invoking the dead, but I do not know how to direct "helas".'⁷³ After a brief 'struggle', Cacoyannis managed to convince him that the original text should be restored (though it was never restored in the published version of the adaptation). His interactions with Sartre probably contributed to Cacoyannis' feeling about the pitfalls of collaborating with academics, or in this case, an adaptor of a play that was close to the director's heart: 'The responsibility of the director', he said, 'should not be ignored by the scholars.'⁷⁴ Thus, the lament aspect of the play, which drew a sympathetic reaction from the New York audience, was entirely lost.⁷⁵ This was a disservice to the spirit of the original, as Nicole Loraux argued, because the play can be presented as both a political play and an oratorio.⁷⁶ The dramatic and emotive power of the play lay in the balance between the

⁷² Sartre had been suffering from influenza and was only able to attend rehearsals a few days before opening night. He was unhappy with the way the music made the words inaudible and the choruses, he believed, were badly choreographed. However, it was too late to make any radical changes. See Ronald Hayman, *Writing Against: Biography of Sartre* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1986), p. 374.

⁷³ *Delphi*, p. 227.

⁷⁴ *ibid.*

⁷⁵ For a discussion of lament, see Nicole Loraux, *Mothers in Mourning*, trans. Corinne Pache (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998) and Margaret Alexiou, *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974). Hecuba's opening *threnody* (98-152), for example, demonstrates both the physical effect of her grief and the emotive power of her *logos*; both sign-posts of a traditional lament (Alexiou, p. 161 and Gregory, p. 160).

⁷⁶ Loraux, p. 13.

political aspects and the personal lament. Since Sartre refused to believe that ‘grief can be a weapon of war’, the balance was tipped to serve his own purposes.⁷⁷

Although the text itself was dramatically altered, photographs printed at the back of the published play-text indicate that the costume and set design (Yannis Tsarouchis⁷⁸) reproduced those of Cacoyannis’s New York production. The women of *Le Choeur* were dressed in similar dark robes with lighter coloured headdresses in the traditional modern Greek style; Andromaque was endowed with a large cloak which she used to envelop Astyanax; Hélène wore a white silky gown and ornate jewellery; Talthylus and Ménélas were dressed in simple, short military tunics with heavy robes. In one photograph, the solemn *Le Choeur* can be seen traversing a choreographed formation over a wide high flight of steps. As Jean Prodromides was listed as the composer, it would be safe to assume that the music was also the same. This seemingly archaic design combined with the modernised text must have been disconcerting for the Parisian audience; certainly reproductions of Sartre’s text thereafter fully embraced Sartre’s polemic in their design choices, for example, Holk Freytag’s 1983 production in Tel Aviv with its depiction of a ‘Palestinian’ Chorus (see Chapter Four).

11. Michael Cacoyannis/Edith Hamilton
Trojan Women
Major Motion Picture, international release
1971

Whether consciously or not, both his experience of directing the play at the height of the Civil Rights Movement or in bringing to life Sartre’s new interpretation,

⁷⁷ *ibid.*

⁷⁸ Giannis Tsarouchis (b. 1910, Piraeus), a well-known Greek designer who worked with Karolos Koun and designed for many theatre and film productions, including Koun’s landmark 1959 *Birds*, studied fine art and painting at the Athens School of Fine Arts and also in Paris.

Cacoyannis's view of *Trojan Women* had developed by the time he returned to the play for his 1971 colour film version. Perhaps because the crisis in Greece was closer to his heart than those crises in America and France, his film version focused on the theme of dictatorial oppression, instead of the text's perceived anti-war message. In an interview with Marianne McDonald and Martin Winkler in 1988, Cacoyannis claimed that all of his films based on ancient tragedy were against 'any form of political oppression'.⁷⁹ Furthermore, he chose Euripides as his main source of inspiration for these films because the 'psychological make up of his characters [was] more multifaceted than the other playwrights' and because the 'women in Euripides are always raising their voices against oppression'.⁸⁰ His message was made explicit by the dedication at the end of the film which read: 'We who have made this film dedicate it to all those who fearlessly oppose the oppression of man by man.' Ironically though this dedication for a film about women made no mention of women at all, the implications of this message were further intensified by the cinematic medium Cacoyannis used to express this third interpretation of the ancient text. In his quest to translate the classic text into a realist medium, he made necessary additions and changes that address and resolve the ambiguities of the original, but also reduce much of the power of the nuanced characters Euripides had created.

In the Director's Notes accompanying the film, he explained his reasons for approaching the material again:

I became convinced that, through the sheer emotional impact, Euripides is as challenging to contemporary conscience as any author living today. This conviction, and my growing horror at the massive crimes being committed in

⁷⁹ *Classics and Cinema*, ed. by Martin Winkler (Lewisburg: Associated University Presses, 1991), p. 167.

⁸⁰ Winkler, pp. 160, 162.

the name of a political cause culminated in my decision to transpose *Trojan Women* to the screen.⁸¹

Cacoyannis began his film with a title card that explicitly stated that the Melian massacre drove Euripides to write *Trojan Women* as a 'timeless indictment of the horror and futility of all wars'. However, it was soon clear that oppression was his main theme. 'The need, stronger now than it had ever been before, the cry against oppression in any shape, place, or form, found its release, once again, through the words of my favourite author', Cacoyannis commented in the promotional literature.⁸² This emphasis was further signified by his choice to eliminate the presence of the Gods from the prologue (as was the case in the Circle-in-the-Square production) and replace them with an omnipresent voice-over.⁸³ Kenneth Mackinnon describes the voice as one of 'quiet authority, akin to God's in Hollywood epics'.⁸⁴ While the voice-over provided the necessary background information, the absence of the charged encounter between Poseidon and Athene and their final prediction that the Greeks will suffer for their hubris against the gods was significant.

Cacoyannis's commitment to exploring the effects of oppression was expressed through several additional scenes that redefined the focus on the play's anti-war theme. After the first card and voice-over, an eerie chant-like music composed by Mikis Theodorakis set the tone for the piece and recurs as its theme music.⁸⁵ Through a thick haze of smoke, the Greek soldiers are seen leading the *Trojan women* through the ruins. Suddenly, they brutally separate the children from their mothers and load some of them

⁸¹ Director's Notes, promotional brochure for the film (Paris, May 1971).

⁸² *ibid.*

⁸³ Rod Steiger also provided the voice-over for the Circle-in-the-Square production.

⁸⁴ Kenneth Mackinnon, *Greek Tragedy into Film* (London: Croom Helm, 1986), p. 84.

⁸⁵ Theodorakis also composed the music for Jules Dassin's *Phaedra* (1962) and Cacoyannis's award-winning *Zorba the Greek* (1965). His music for various productions is recorded on CD.

into a wooden cart. The women desperately scream after their lost children. One child is left behind crying as other children are led past him. One of the advantages of the film medium was that Cacoyannis could capture the sense of a war camp with many inhabitants, as opposed to a stage production limited by space and budget. Using a large number of women and children also made the clash with the soldiers all the more harrowing as the viewer witnesses a few soldiers pushing around a significantly larger crowd of helpless unarmed women. He was also able to incorporate a pre-prologue corresponding to the details spoken of in Euripides' text (288f.) which show some women being taken away, and other women left behind, including those in Hecuba's group. He also chose to foreshadow the Helen episode in this pre-prologue: her caged cart rolls through the dust and the women scream at her, an early indication of the attitude of the Chorus towards her.

Another clash of wills occurs when Talthybius (Brian Blessed) tells Hecuba (Katharine Hepburn) that she will be a slave to Odysseus. Violently reacting to the news, she attempts to enlist the help of the women around her who in her defence shout at the guards and advance towards them in a mob-like fashion. In defence, the guards advance towards the women with long threatening spears and corral them like animals into submission. Further brutality is witnessed when Talthybius sends the guards to fetch Cassandra (Genevieve Bujold) and the other women are harshly pushed aside and later taken away. The most effective added scene is a prologue to the Helen Episode; the impact of this scene is discussed in detail below.

In Euripides' text there are few references to the maltreatment of the Trojan women by the Greek soldiers or indications that the women resist their captors in a spirit of protest or in a riotous manner. Two exceptions occur: when Helen is brought

out of her tent by the soldiers at 880f., and when Hecuba attempts to run into the burning city at 1282f. In both cases, the text is ambiguous as to the extent to which violence is used to handle them. In the film, not only did Cacoyannis highlight the brutish behaviour of the soldiers towards their female prisoners, but he also showed that the fighting spirit of the women who are willing to risk their lives to vent their anger.⁸⁶ As Nicole Loraux argued with regard to Sartre's adaptation, it was deemed undesirable that the ritualistic, lyrical nature of Euripides' Chorus was compromised and replaced by a screaming mob. However, this was a deliberate choice. In an interview, Cacoyannis explained that he wanted these scenes to remind his audience of the spirit of the student riots of 1968: 'Chicago, Paris, I mean you can take your choice', he said, 'so when you see them riding in force, and they start hitting the women [...] the film is shifted out of its time perspective, and you think, My God, there they go again.'⁸⁷

These references to recent political events also highlight one of Cacoyannis's many attempts to find a balance between modernising the story so that contemporary audiences could benefit from those resonances and filming a piece that was expressly written for the stage in a semi-realistic mode. The problems of translating theatre, and specifically an ancient play, into a filmic medium have been discussed in depth by Kenneth Mackinnon, Martin Winkler, Marianne McDonald,⁸⁸ and, most recently, by Pantelis Michelakis.⁸⁹ Mackinnon argued that for a film version of a tragedy to be successful or accepted, the idea of fidelity to the original texts must be abandoned so that 'faithfulness to a source is viewed as of little consequence within a realist

⁸⁶ Although some of the women are actually imprisoned in an enclosure, most, including Hecuba and her friends, are left to wander about the large open space in front of the city walls which is somewhat inconsistent with his theme.

⁸⁷ Cacoyannis quoted in Robbins, p. 32.

⁸⁸ Marianne McDonald, *Euripides in Cinema: The Heart Made Visible* (Philadelphia: Centrum, 1983).

⁸⁹ Pantelis Michelakis, 'Greek Tragedy in Cinema: Theatre, Politics, History' in *D69*, pp.199-217.

framework'.⁹⁰ However, both Mackinnon and McDonald failed to acknowledge that it was precisely the techniques of filmmaking that offer the director greater freedom to tackle the ambiguities of the original text. Alternatively, Michelakis argues for the usefulness of an analysis of the interaction between politics and aesthetics and a full examination of the context of each film, exploring issues of 'genre, spectatorship, intertextuality, heritage and history, and authorship', in order to 'recover the meanings that Greek tragedy has acquired'.⁹¹ Evaluating the impact of the socio-political context of Cacoyannis's *Trojan Women* is particularly useful in the assessment of its success as a cinematic project.

In Cacoyannis's *Trojan Women*, Troy was created from a dusty, stony ruin (actually located in Atienza, Spain). He did not attempt to create an authentic classical setting, as films of staged plays have done, or a manufactured studio setting, but instead sets the tragedy in a natural location. This decision had its advantages and disadvantages. The city itself was represented by a huge flight of stone steps (not unlike the set for his New York and Paris productions) a few ruined marble columns, and a mammoth disintegrating wall. The women were always kept outside this wall, and the viewer never sees the remains of Troy within.⁹² The modes of transportation used were rudimentary carts and horses. The space was essentially archaic looking with little colour apart from the dark costumes of the women and the harsh orange sands. The pan across the landscape to Hecuba, covered over with her dark rags, lying in the rocky dirt was a particularly stunning cinematic moment to mark where Euripides begins his play (post-prologue). Timelessness remained a concern for Cacoyannis who explained that

⁹⁰ Mackinnon, p. 168.

⁹¹ Michelakis, p. 201.

⁹² There were some wooden elements inside as the soldiers tossed lighted torches at the end of the play and a huge blaze is seen over the stone walls.

Atienza was ideal because the 'location could not be pinned down to any definite age'. The walls were constructed on rocks, completely deserted, without a tree in sight. 'All we had to do was just char the ground and build certain elements that gave the impression of a ruined city within the walls', explained Cacoyannis. 'We had no interference from cars, airplanes.'⁹³ Problematically, Cacoyannis essentially recreated a 'stage space', as the film critic Pauline Kael pointed out, because the camera focuses just on the space outside the ruins of Troy.⁹⁴ There are no shots of the Greek camp where Talthybius and Menelaus (Patrick Magee) come from or where Andromache (Vanessa Redgrave) is kept, just a long road leading into the ruins. The cave where Cassandra is kept, as well as Helen's enclosure, is visually disconnected from the other places the women inhabit (an aerial shot is used as the soldiers search for Cassandra) and there are no additional visuals to provide a continuity of space that one expects in film. Visually detached also are the brief scenes in which the viewer sees Helen sailing on Menelaus's ship and Andromache in close-up against a sail. The result of these detached spaces is a mixture of styles that, as a *New York Times* critic commented, 'falls midway between the literal realism of the film's exterior landscapes and the poetic realism of the play's language'.⁹⁵

Though the set appears timeless, the designs recreate both ancient and modern Greek dress. Talthybius, Menelaus, and the Greek soldiers wore 'authentic' ancient military garb: short belted tunics, robed outer garments with a traditional key pattern, metal chest and leg armour, bronze helmets with nose guards and strapped sandals—rather similar to the earlier production designs. The guards carried long pointed spears

⁹³ Cacoyannis quoted in Robbins, p. 30.

⁹⁴ Pauline Kael, *New Yorker*, 16 October 1971.

⁹⁵ Vincent Canby, 'Screen: *Trojan Women*', *New York Times*, 28 September 1971.

or clubs. Of the noble women, Cassandra appeared to be the most modern, with wildly dishevelled hair, wearing a light coloured, thin, cape-like, multi-layered dress of rags. Andromache was also without head-wear and was dressed in a simple long, dark, fully sleeved slightly ragged dress with a high rope belt. Hecuba, much like the Chorus women, had her head covered in a traditional Greek way, common to many Greek productions of ancient drama. In addition to the headscarf, her rather cumbersome dress was made of multilayered, thick flowing material which emphasised her face, but hid the shape of her body. The Chorus of nearly one hundred women and girls wore headscarves and ragged long robes, but appeared much more like modern Greek widows than the other women. Helen wore her hair in a high bun and, as Euripides specified, was costumed differently from the others wearing in an ornate, back-less form-less white and grey tunic with heavy patterned jewellery on the front. The costume design, though eclectic in terms of style, complemented the bleak dusty setting.

Mikis Theodorakis's composition also contributed to the confusion of time and place, but also added a new dimension to the film which made it unique in its attempt to bridge the gap between ancient and modern. The four chords that signalled the theme music of the film, also signalled the three parts of the story. They resound at the very beginning when the soldiers are seen taking away the spoils of Troy, in the middle of the film when the Chorus describes the fall of Troy, and at the end when the soldiers burn the remainder of the city and take the women to slavery. This music periodically reminds the audience of the reality of the situation—that Troy is no more. For the Cassandra Episode, Theodorakis composed a drum and timpani accompaniment that added lyrical punctuation to Cassandra's speech and marriage song as she wildly waves her torch about the cave. There were also some instances where the music supplied a

link with the present or the past. For example, as Cassandra was being taken away from Troy, a nationalistic song, popular at the time of the junta, was sung a cappella by the women who are taken away with her. During her final speech, delivered from a cart as she is carried away, a Byzantine chant is heard in the background. This same chant, with the addition of some string instruments, was heard as Hecuba performed the last rites over the body of Astyanax, signifying the loss of innocence and youth. Other examples include the first recited Choral ode (relating to the second ode in Euripides), during which drums marked the verses and created an ominous urgent tone. As the recitation climaxed (a technique that Cacoyannis employed in the Circle-in-the-Square production) the drums also built in intensity. Drumbeats stressed the actions of the soldiers as they club the women into submission after Helen uses the much-coveted water to bathe in. As the soldiers ride towards the citadel with blazing torches, again quick drums were heard. One of the few sound effects occurs as the crash of Troy was heard; this provoked the women to start their last farewell ritual. The final trumpet sounds signalled for the women to be taken away (1326, prepared for in 1266-8), followed by the thematic four chords, and the cycle is complete. The music essentially created and maintained the ominous atmosphere and emphasised the cyclical nature of the 'oppression' theme. At the same time, the music was also a distancing feature as the viewer was ever conscious that these were not sounds natural to the action, no musicians are seen performing, and therefore the scenario was not 'real'. There were no light moments in film, adding to the hopelessness of the women's protest. Though Euripides' text was intensely mournful and ritualistic, in the film, it is only the music which provided this feeling: with the exception of the burial scene, there was little expression of ritualistic grief.

Cacoyannis was especially concerned with how to 'integrate the text into the visual reality of cinema in the most economical and emotionally effective way possible'.⁹⁶ Euripides was ideal for film because, as he says, because 'I really consider him to be the most flexible, [...] the most imperfect, in a certain sense, but by all means the most human, most profoundly human, the most progressive, the most honest, the most provocative of writers.'⁹⁷ To achieve this goal, he used the advantages of the filmic mode, namely visual effects, camera angles and movement, perspective and using the camera as an additional character. He remained remarkably true to the arrangement of Euripidean episodes as his interpolations and additions simply filled in the background visual information lacking in the original. For example, in the ancient text, it is unclear how Talthybius is able to see fire coming from inside the tents. He calls out: ἔα, τί πύκνης ἔνδον αἴθεται σέλας; ('Ah! What is that burst of torch flame inside?', 298). To remedy this ambiguity, Cacoyannis effectively set the Cassandra Episode in a huge cavernous space. Cassandra is seen in the dim darkness running about the cave lighting the walls on fire with her torch. As she runs up higher into the cave, the camera takes on her dizzying perspective until she sees the vision of Apollo in the bright sun shining through the opening of the cave. The viewer soon realises that this figure is actually a guard who has come to take her away. The camera's *trompe d'oeil* allows the viewer to experience first-hand the delusional state of the priestess. This directorial decision could only be possible using cinematic technique. Her final speech is calmly recited as she leans her head backwards away from the camera, bracing herself by holding on to the sides of the wagon carrying her away from Troy. The

⁹⁶ Director's Notes, Film programme, p. 3.

⁹⁷ *Delphi*, p. 215.

camera shakes as the wagon bumps over the rocky road. Again, the viewer is drawn in more closely to the action as a result of the camera showing a personal perspective. Another similarly effective addition to the original text is a scene in which Astyanax is seen at the top of the walls of Troy (in an earlier episode, Andromache saw this image in her mind's eye, and the camera shot foreshadows the scene). He turns around, looks tearfully up at the soldier, and grabs his arm. The guard ignores his silent plea and pushes him over the edge. Instead of showing the boy falling, the camera itself took his perspective plunging towards the rocks below. This was a unique way of adhering to the technique in ancient drama of reporting, but not showing, violent acts.⁹⁸

Perhaps the most interesting example of how Cacoyannis transformed the ambiguities in Euripides' text into effective vignettes of action occurs in the treatment of the characters in the Helen Episode. Cacoyannis's Helen is an aggressive, arrogant woman, poised to overwhelm a war-weakened Menelaus. The first sight of Helen was a close-up of her dark prowling eyes, isolated from the rest of her body, so as to allow the camera to capture visually the alluring quality that Andromache has just cursed in the scene before. As she peers through the slats of her stone and wood enclosure like an animal pacing the confines of her cage, it is immediately apparent that Helen is imprisoned, kept apart from the other women who wander in a group around the camp. The viewer senses immediately that the separation that creates a tension between the women is likely to erupt at any moment.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Lesches describes in *Little Iliad* Neoptolemus taking Astyanax by the foot and throwing him off the towers of Troy. See *Euripides' Andromache*, ed. by P.T. Stevens (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), p.1, and Elaine Fantham, *Seneca's Troades* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 51-52. See also, William Allan, *The Andromache and Euripidean Tragedy*, Oxford Classical Monographs (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

⁹⁹ Later it becomes apparent that she is imprisoned to be protected from the other women.

As the ambiguity in Euripides' text as to where Helen is kept was clarified by this series of shots, Cacoyannis added a small scene to hint at Helen's personality and heighten the anticipation of her entrance. After this window onto her personal world, the camera switches suddenly to the desert-like setting sweltering with excessive heat. We see Helen's eyes moving slowly through the slats, shots of the guards wiping their brows, and the Trojan women assembling like angry bees, brusquely pushed aside. Helen's voice is heard softly asking for water, while the other women fixate upon the guard who shifts a pan of water through the lowest slat. She does not drink the water, but instead undresses herself and bathes, her nude body visible through the slats. Shocked, the women shriek and cast dirt and stones at her hut, while the reactions of the Chorus physically and visually demonstrate contempt for Helen's behaviour.¹⁰⁰ With this addition, Cacoyannis was able to create a haughty and determined Helen, exalting in her own beauty, incurring the wrath of those who besiege her. It is a scene that foreshadows the entrance of Menelaus, and leaves no doubt as to the manner in which she intends to receive him.

In Cacoyannis' interpretation, the serene composure of Helen as she enters is contrasted with the frantic scene of Trojan women seeking her death. And, as Menelaus rides into camp, the chaos only increases as the mounted guards corral the women, beating them brutally from their horses.¹⁰¹ Helen is called for by Menelaus, and appears on the precipice, but in an act of independence, shrugs off the guards who try to restrain

¹⁰⁰ The stoning of Helen here alludes to Menelaus' suggestion at the end of Euripides' scene. The expression of this communal act before the *agon* has begun stresses the extent to which the Trojan women find Helen guilty. This also echoes Papas' role as the widow who is stoned to death in Cacoyannis' film *Zorba the Greek*.

¹⁰¹ Cacoyannis 'shows the Greeks treating the Chorus like cattle throughout, herding them together, locking them in cattle enclosures, carrying them in cattle carts and in general brutalizing them, beating them without sensitivity when they become aggressive [...]. Cacoyannis is very clear on how the Greeks and their treatment of prisoners should be viewed' (McDonald, p. 244).

her. Thus, with the vantage of the sun behind her, Helen commences her long, confident descent (wide long shot) as the other women fiercely call for her condemnation. As she walks towards him, her robe and necklace glittering in the wind, her attitude and the costume choices make Helen appear almost like a goddess (Kassandra calls her τὴν Διός at 398).¹⁰² Although Jane White, with her dark sultry sexual power, in many ways personified Cacoyannis's image of Helen, it was Irene Papas who embodied his ideal:

From the very beginning I wanted Irene because of what I think Helen of Troy is. I don't think she is a fluffy flighty blond [...]. She is a woman whose main strength is her sense of independence [...]. I wanted a strong woman, a beautiful one, which I think Irene is, and a woman who is dangerous.¹⁰³

Helen's attitude is further explored as the *agon* develops into a kind of intricate choreographed dance, the to and fro of which reflects her changing moods. This sensuous, seductive Helen undulates between Hecuba and Menelaus, at opportune moments, and instead of revealing the expected and cliché cleavage, she shows him the nakedness of her bare back, circling him closely, talking softly in his ear. Menelaus, breathy and nervous in her presence, falls captive to her spell. Helen's speech soon becomes a full theatrical production and an interactive affair. Sometimes rougher with her voice, sometimes confident, her tone is constantly changing. When she claims that Aphrodite is her 'absolution', the Trojan women yell their displeasure until Hecuba commands: 'Let her finish.' Towards the end of her speech, breathy and in a state of apparent helplessness, Helen draws close to Menelaus, crying into his neck. Her performance ends with a swoon as she whispers, 'I wish like a painter I could wipe out the beauty from my face and have an uglier one'.

¹⁰² Pauline Kael describes her as 'a force of nature—a greedy woman who wants what she wants and means to live. She has the vitality of a natural aggressor' (*New Yorker*, 16 October 1971).

¹⁰³ Cacoyannis quoted in Film programme. Gorgias would have approved; he exculpates Helen while still considering that love could be a 'god, with divine power' or a 'human disease' (*Encomium of Helen*).

Cacoyannis orchestrated the outcome of the supplication scene by adding some visual layers to the text: as Helen approaches Menelaus, falling at his feet, she weeps softly, holding his hand. Then, testing his resolve, she grabs swiftly a soldier's sword, half-heartedly attempting to stab herself. By seizing it from her and preventing her from killing herself, Menelaus betrays his intentions—he does not want her to die. Thus, Cacoyannis ensured that Helen prevails, if not through her words, then most decisively through her final action; Helen will make it home alive. After a long look into Helen's eyes, Menelaus confirms this view and proclaims, 'Her death in Troy is not the way': she will be killed in Greece. He then exits on horseback with his soldiers. The verdict is final and clear. There is no protest from Hecuba (about sailing in separate ships), there are no jokes about Helen's inflated weight (itself a rare joke in ancient drama). Instead, attention was focused on her exit. She leaves with a triumphant smirk and prevents the soldiers from escorting her. The Trojan women try to block her exit, but the soldiers clear her path. Thus, with the same confident walk that Helen commenced her entrance, she exits in triumph. As the Chorus curses the ship of Menelaus, shots of Astyanax being pushed towards the walls are interchanged with images of Helen, her head turning slowly towards a husband who stares at her from the other side of the ship.

In this film, as in many other modern revivals of the play, Helen's dramatic defense provided a relief from the intense mourning of the previous scenes. In this case, the *agon* was a performance of competing personalities rather than a trial. The antics of Helen were pitted against the bitter revelations of Hecuba and the protests of the lynch-mob of Trojan women who support their Queen. It was not a comic relief as witnessed in Sartre's adaptation, but instead, through her unusual beauty and fierce independence,

the audience was able to grasp why men went to war and died for Helen. This Helen, in her final moment, was presented as an arrogant woman capable of seducing and arguing with rhetorical expertise, changing her tone and disposition to achieve her goals.¹⁰⁴ Ultimately, through Cacoyannis's innovations in this scene little doubt remained as to the outcome of Helen's fate: she is not held responsible for her actions. As she goes free, the Trojan women are left in a hot and windy desert with only abusive Greeks and a life of slavery in their futures. Similar to the ending of Sartre's version, the sense of desolation is almost unbearable.

There is no doubt as to Cacoyannis's intentions for this cinematic adaptation of *Trojan Women* for he has given compelling reasons in interviews and promotional material as to why he chose to adapt this particular ancient text, as well as the objectives of his alterations and additions. Many critics agreed that the film made a significant contribution to the small pool of films based on Greek tragedy: 'Any Euripides on film is better than none.'¹⁰⁵ Eugene Ionesco, writing for the *Figaro Littéraire* in Paris, understood his intentions and praised him for them:

[Cacoyannis] makes us understand that in reviving Euripides he is bringing us face to face with the real tragedy of humanity, whose terrible destiny is to kill and be killed, the ever-present reality, true of the past and permanently true. The film is simple, harsh, honest. That our existence should be tragic, that the killing of man by man should be our destiny, but that this undying tragic work should be so great, is the paradoxical reassurance that we draw from this film.¹⁰⁶

Critical assessments of the film were, on the whole, negative. *Trojan Women*, as discussed in Chapter One, was an exceptional vehicle for the careers of such actresses as Sybil Thorndike, Nellie Van and Lillah McCarthy, but unfortunately, in the case of

¹⁰⁴ 'She preserves her life with guile and beauty' (author unknown, 'The Trojan Women', *Variety*, 2 June 1971).

¹⁰⁵ Vincent Canby, 'Screen: 'Trojan Women'', *New York Times*, 28 September 1971.

¹⁰⁶ Quoted in Film programme.

Cacoyannis's film, star power was a negative aspect. One critic claimed that the stars had different accents and acting styles which Cacoyannis failed to integrate: 'All of these women are good actresses, but their manners and methods are so different from one another that the effect of the drama which should be that of one long, carefully orchestrated moan, is squeaky and Babel-like.'¹⁰⁷ The same critic felt that the director's inability to integrate the acting styles was further compounded by his invasive directorial interventions, camera perspective and stills, which made the piece seem like 'a kind of moving fresco, or frieze', rather than a film.¹⁰⁸ Others took exception to the unusual casting of Vanessa Redgrave as Andromache and Irene Papas as Helen. Papas herself originally wanted the role of Andromache, admitting in an interview that 'I wanted Andromache because she has that terrific scene with the boy. For an actress, that is a gift'. However, she agreed in retrospect that Cacoyannis had made the right casting choice because 'that part [Helen] needs more acting [...]. Andromache by nature takes your heart away. As Helen you really need to sweat'.¹⁰⁹ The choice of Papas as Helen was praised by some critics as a refreshing new portrayal of a much clichéd character: Papas 'creates the ultimate sloe-eyed seductress, her self confidence in proclaiming her innocence achieving a regal eroticism that shows the silliness of the more usual sex-kitten concept of that lady.'¹¹⁰

The film was considered by some as an unsuccessful transfer of a dramatic work written for the living stage to the screen, as one reviewer commented: 'The very process

¹⁰⁷ Vincent Canby, 'Screen: 'Trojan Women'', *New York Times*, 28 September 1971.

¹⁰⁸ *ibid.* Molly Haskell of the *Village Voice* comments that Cacoyannis 'takes Euripides' policy of character individualization to the point of eccentricity' which is 'further fragmented by technique' ('Why are we in Troy?', 7 October 1971).

¹⁰⁹ Winkler, p. 180.

¹¹⁰ Judith Crist, *New York*, 27 September 1971.

of transformation exerts its own influence and not always for the better.’¹¹¹ A London reviewer was equally harsh, writing that Cacoyannis’s *The Trojan Women* ‘tries honourably but finally fails to overcome the problem of how to turn the essentially static and formalised idiom of Greek theatre into the fluid naturalistic medium of film’.¹¹² Several critics who had seen either the Circle-in-the-Square or the Paris production felt that his talents were better served by the theatrical medium than the cinematic one.¹¹³ The clear focus on oppression, as opposed to an anti-war stance, also drew criticism. The reviewer for *Variety* argued that the film was ‘not completely successful in distilling the pity and terror from this classic tragedy that makes its pacifistic point’.¹¹⁴ Another critic suggested that ‘less emphasis on propaganda and greater emphasis on Euripides’ philosophy and poetic magnificence might have succeeded in turning this into a brilliant, rather than into a merely adequate, motion picture’.¹¹⁵ Equally, his effort to create a timeless setting met with resistance: ‘Cacoyannis has tried to strike a compromise between classical Greek tragedy and contemporary naturalism, and it comes off as an unsatisfying hodge-podge of both.’¹¹⁶ Despite some of its innovations and political themes, the film was not even considered part of the ‘new wave’ of films made by Greek directors (1970 to 1974), which were

¹¹¹ Leo Mishkin, *Morning Telegraph*, 29 September 1971.

¹¹² George Melly, *Observer* (London), 23 January 1972.

¹¹³ Leo Mishkin wrote that ‘[the Circle-in-the-Square production was] almost universally acclaimed for its stark, spare power, its resonant rhythms, and perhaps more than anything else, for the director’s profound sensitivity and feeling for the ancient tragedy’. John Russell Taylor, writing for *The Times* (London) commented: ‘Odd that [the film] should stem from a very controlled and successful Paris stage production of the same text, for in leaving the theatre, and apart from the principle players, professional actors behind Cacoyannis seems to have lost altogether the coherence of his original conception’ (21 January 1972).

¹¹⁴ *Variety*, 2 June 1971.

¹¹⁵ ‘The Trojan Women’, *Films in Review*, November 1971.

¹¹⁶ Gail Rock, *Women’s Wear Daily*, 28 September 1971.

each characterised by personal reactions to the censorship programme of the junta.¹¹⁷ Nor was there significant enough experimentation with the original text or myth or the film to be categorised with films by Pier Paolo Pasolini or Jules Dassin, or even earlier silent films of Greek tragedy which provoked debate about censorship or the extent to which elements of the original texts could or should be shown on the screen.¹¹⁸ The consensus of opinion seemed to be that, although the film was of contemporary relevance and in essence appealed to twentieth-century sensibilities, ultimately it appeared to be half theatre/half cinema and could not satisfy as a completely unified, artistic work.

When asked whether art can influence politics, Cacoyannis replied, 'I wish I could say it does. If it were so, after *Trojan Women*, there should have been no more wars. But the greatness of art is that it goes on raising its voice regardless, to quote Edith Hamilton.'¹¹⁹ Whether or not the viewer of the film believes that Cacoyannis was successful with his objectives, or even if his objectives suggest the right direction in which cinematic interpretations of Greek tragedy should go, his major motion picture raised issues regarding the merits of living theatre versus cinema, and ultimately brought the story of Euripides' *Trojan Women* to a wide international audience.¹²⁰

¹¹⁷ For films of the 'new wave movement', see Mel Schuster, *The Contemporary Greek Cinema* (London: Scarecrow Press, 1979). Schuster writes about some of Cacoyannis's films, but, strangely, makes no discussion of *Trojan Women*.

¹¹⁸ 'Between 1908 and 1934 numerous Greek plays were adapted for the screen, including Aeschylus' *Persians* and *Oresteia*, Sophocles' *Antigone*, *Ajax* and *Electra*, Euripides' *Hippolytus*, *Medea* and *Hecuba*, and Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*. The two plays which have been most popular with silent cinema are *Oedipus Tyrannus*, of which we now know of four adaptations, and *Prometheus* of which we know of five'. I am grateful to Dr. Pantelis Michelakis for the use of material from his unpublished talk entitled, 'Silent Dramas: Early Film Adaptations of Greek Tragedy', presented on 26 November 2003 for the *Archive of Performances of Greek and Roman Drama*, Oxford.

¹¹⁹ Winkler, p. 168.

¹²⁰ Cacoyannis would go on to revive the play again in September 1995, this time in Greece. Several pictures indicate that the costume design was similar to his earlier productions (APGRD file).

CHAPTER THREE

Towards a More Sacred Text?
Avant-garde productions of Trojan Women
By Andrei Serban and Tadashi Suzuki

Nothing less than a reinvention of theater.
 Mel Gussow, *New York Times*, 31 December 1975

By the early 1960s, the tradition of presenting ancient drama using the method of archaeological accuracy (as discussed in Chapter One) had long since been abandoned in the professional theatre. The rejection of Richard Wagner's nineteenth-century ideal, the *Gesamtkunstwerk* (a work signified by its unity and harmony of art forms), had contributed to the 'dethroning' of the text and inspired critical re-evaluations of existing works.¹ This separation of artistic components was central, for example, to Bertolt Brecht's concept of 'epic theatre': 'Words, music, and setting must become more independent of each other.'² Lee Strasberg, the co-founder of the Group Theatre and later director of the Actors Studio in New York City, defined the avant-garde approach to a theatrical text as 'the word transfigured from its purely logical and literary meaning on a page by the living presence of the actor whose creation of the moment the event, the situation, brought out or added dramatic meaning to the word'.³ This transfiguration signified a new interpretation of the defining role of the text, not as an artefact to be preserved, but as a starting point for experimentation. Shakespeare and Greek tragedy provided particularly fertile ground for this kind of experimentation. Influenced by the

¹ Theatre, according to Julian Beck of the Living Theatre Company, was meant 'to increase conscious awareness, to stress the sacredness of life, to break down the walls'; quoted in P. Biner, *The Living Theatre* (New York: Horizon, 1972), p. 72.

² *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic*, ed. by J. Willett, (London: Methuen, 1964), p. 38.

³ *Famous American Plays of the 1950s*, ed. by Lee Strasberg (New York: Dell, 1962), pp. 15-16.

theories of Antonin Artaud and anthropologist Victor Turner, theatre practitioners created entirely new performance texts with view to unearthing the power of primitive culture and ritual; the sanctity of the ancient text as a unit was no longer preserved.

Aristotle had advocated that unity of plot was the essential element of drama, and this theory prevailed as the foundation for Western theatre practice. After two World Wars and the socio-political upheavals of 1968, naturalistic or realistic approaches to dramatic texts were no longer adequate, either aesthetically or morally, for coping with post-war disillusionment. Strasberg described how the generation of theatre artists after World War One 'felt itself to be part of a new dream which they hoped would lead to a new theatre'.⁴ This new theatre tradition, the avant-garde, was intentionally provocative because by definition it amounted to an attack on the established practices of mainstream culture and society.

The historical beginnings of the avant-garde movement developed in artistic and theatrical circles in Europe after the emergence of Symbolism in the 1880s, but it took almost seventy years for the movement to take hold in the United States. Alternative theatre existed as early as the 1930s, and included political projects such as agitprop, Federal Theatre Project's Living Newspapers and Theatre Union, but by the 1950s, the focus had shifted away from commercial productions on Broadway to innovative projects in alternative venues on off-Broadway and off-off Broadway.⁵ The driving force behind this rejection of the status quo was the influence of theorists and the effort

⁴ Strasberg, p. 15.

⁵ For a full discussion of the history of the avant-garde movement in America, see A. Aronson, *American Avant-garde Theatre: A History* (London: Routledge, 2000). See also C. Innes, *Avant-garde Theatre 1892-1992* (London: Routledge, 1993); *The Drama Review: Thirty Years of Commentary on the Avant-Garde*, ed. by B. McNamara and J. Dolan (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Research Press, 1986); J.A. Henderson, *The First Avant-Garde (1887-1894)* (London: Harap, 1971); and H.M. Sayre, *The Object of Performance: The American Avant-Garde Since 1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

of leading theatre artists, including Peter Brook in Paris and Jerzy Grotowski in Poland, to bring new meaning from traditional texts by eliminating textual clarity; using physical theatre, improvisation, visual and aural imagery; and crucially, by removing the barrier between performer and audience member.

By the seventies, namely among the avant-garde of the Off-Broadway movement in New York, the work of a translator (and indeed much of the work on the texts by scholars) became obsolete and unnecessary to the avant-garde process. In this environment, the director and his ensemble created an entirely new performance text through the process of long rehearsal periods filled with devising time, voice and movement training. Two significant avant-garde directors, Andrei Serban (1943-) and Tadashi Suzuki (1939-) emerged from within this tradition. By investigating *Trojan Women* and other Greek plays using avant-garde techniques, they each steered the movement in distinctly different directions. Serban sought to transubstantiate words into living images, sounds, and ritualistic action, and Suzuki aimed to deify the ancient text using a trans-historical, intra- and intercultural collage technique.

12. Andrei Serban

Fragments of a Trilogy (Electra, Medea, and Trojan Women)

Café La MaMa: La MaMa Annex

New York/International Tour

1974

Andrei Serban's *Fragments of a Greek Trilogy* was one of the most successful projects to demonstrate the practical applications of Artaudian theory. Through the ensemble's broad assimilation of his theory (and others), a new aesthetic and political

meaning was drawn out of the tragedies.⁶ In *Theatre and its Double* (1938), Antonin Artaud (1896-1948) sought to promote a style that he believed to be ‘pure theatre’ and an elevation of *mise en scène* over text, a model based on the Balinese theatre he encountered at the Colonial Exhibition in Paris (1931).⁷ Influenced by the theories of the Symbolists, Expressionists and Surrealists, Artaud’s ‘Theatre of Cruelty’ essay—a manifesto that inspired avant-garde productions for several decades—called for a rejection of Western theatrical structures, including conventional stages and auditorium spaces, and eschewed the traditional reliance on language and literary text. He challenged practitioners to focus on the subconscious and the spiritual and to re-establish direct communication between the actor, the spectator and the spectacle without the mediation of language. ‘I propose to treat the spectators like the snakecharmer’s subjects’, he wrote, ‘and conduct them by means of their organisms to an apprehension of the subtlest notions.’⁸ With *Fragments*, Serban sought to create this kind of sacred space in which he and his ensemble could explore ways to communicate a narrative text to the audience without the conventional means of language.

Peter Brook’s theatre techniques at the International Centre for Theatre Research (CIRT) in Paris provided a practical model for *Fragments*. Serban spent 1971 with Brook observing the workshop rehearsal period for *Orghast*, an experimental piece based on the myth of Prometheus, which featured an invented phonetic language

⁶ Romanian born, Serban came to the United States in 1969 after completing acting and directing degrees at the Theatre and Film Institute in Bucharest. While a student he won numerous awards and directed professionally at the Lucia Sturdza Bulandra Theatre, Romania’s leading theatre (Livui Ciulei, Artistic Director). Ellen Stewart, Director of Café La MaMa, was impressed by his production, *I am Not the Eiffel Tower*, at the Student World Theatre in Zagreb, former Yugoslavia, but did not meet him until three years later when she invited him to work with her at La MaMa (1968).

⁷ Antonin Artaud, *The Theatre and its Double*, trans. By M.C. Richards (New York: Grove Press, 1958), pp. 81, 53.

⁸ Artaud, pp. 81, 96.

devised by Ted Hughes (called 'orghast').⁹ With the CIRT company, he studied the verbal language of sound, particularly the 'perception of inner listening, a perception of the meaning of what is hidden which its sound cannot really explain'.¹⁰ The premises of this training were acknowledged in the *Fragments* programme notes (actually a reproduction of Brook's notes for *Orghast*): 'What is the relation between the verbal and the non-verbal theatre? What happens when gesture and sound turn into word? What is the exact place of the word in theatrical expression? Is any evidence buried in the sound structure of certain ancient languages?' *Orghast*—a production which one critic described as forcing the spectator to 'listen to the work as they listen to music, and to watch the action as if it were a religious experience'—was a clear influence on the creation of Serban's own performance text and his rehearsal method.¹¹ For example, the text of *Trojan Women* consisted not only of a mixture of Greek and Latin texts, but also fragments of African, Romanian, Aztec, and pre-Columbian languages. 'I slowly discovered that the feelings and tensions which can be produced by this type of approach have no parallel in the usages of living languages,' he explained in a programme note.¹² Meaning was not to be found in the words alone, but 'in the sound an actor can make when he does not understand a literal language'.¹³ These language

⁹ For discussions of Brook's life and works, see: Michael Kustow, *Peter Brook: A Biography* (London: Bloomsbury, 2005), Albert Hunt and Geoffrey Reeves, *Peter Brook, Cambridge Directors in Perspective* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge, 1995), and T. C. Trewin, *Peter Brook: A Biography* (London: Macdonald, 1971). For an extensive discussion of many of Brook's productions, see Peter Brook, *The Shifting Point; Forty Years of Theatrical Exploration* (London: Methuen, 1987) and *Peter Brook: A Theatrical Casebook*, ed. by David Williams (London: Methuen, 1992).

¹⁰ Quoted in Arthur Bartow, *The Director's Voice: Twenty-one Interviews* (New York: Theatre Communications Group, 1988), p. 293.

¹¹ Margaret Croyden, 'Peter Brook learns to speak Orghast', *New York Times*, 3 October 1971, Sec 2, p. 3. See also her 'In the Hills of Iran: *Orghast*' chapter in *Conversations with Peter Brook: 1970-2000* (pp. 43-65)

¹² Programme note, 1974. Greek and Latin texts were also used in the production of *Medea*, the first in the trilogy to be created.

¹³ Programme note, 1974.

fragments, combined with grunts and guttural sounds, formed a special aural score that accompanied composer Elizabeth Swados' multi-tonal music: 'Drum beats, the whole instrumentation [...] become our words, fusing with the animal-like bursts of anger and pain that come from the actors' throats.'¹⁴ This approach was particularly evocative in the case of *Trojan Women*, subtitled 'An Epic Opera'.¹⁵

Serban's approach was in marked contrast to, for example, the experiments of Igor Stravinsky and Jean Cocteau in the creation of their opera-oratorio, *Oedipus Rex* (1927), considered by some to be a prime example of musical neoclassicism. Cocteau's original libretto was translated into basic Latin, a language deliberately chosen because of the stylised, impersonal quality. Stravinsky aimed for the kind of fusion of theatrical elements which Wagner advocated and explained his approach in Nietzschean influenced terms:

What is important for the lucid ordering of the work [...] is that all the Dionysian elements which set the imagination of the artist in motion and make the life-sap rise must be properly subjugated before they intoxicate us, and must finally be made to submit to the law: Apollo demands it.¹⁶

Stravinsky and Cocteau integrated art forms by using masks to transform the actors into statuary relics singing a language unknown to its audience, thus creating an impersonal antiquated effect;¹⁷ however, Serban used the fact that the audience members also did

¹⁴ Quoted in Walter Kerr, 'Fragments of a Trilogy', *New York Times*, 25 January 1976. Swados also composed scores for Peter Brook's company in Paris.

¹⁵ For a discussion of operas based on Greek tragedy, see Peter Brown, 'Greek Tragedy in the Opera House and Concert Hall', in *D69*, pp. 285-309. According to Brown, operas (since the 1960s) based on *Trojan Women* include: Margaret Garwood's *Trojan Women* (USA, 1967/1979, one-act), Joanna Bruzdowicz's *Les Troyennes* (Paris, 1973), Aribert Reimann's *Troades* (Berlin, 1986, based on Franz Werfel's German translation), part one of Nigel Osborne's *Sarajevo* (1994, see Chapter Five for brief discussion), Dimitri Terzakis's *Der Hölle Nacklang II* ('The Echo of Hell II', 1992-3) and most recently, Jani Sivén's *Trojan Women* (Helsinki, 2002).

¹⁶ From his Norton Lectures at Harvard (1939-40), reprinted in Igor Stravinsky, *The Poetics of Music in the Form of Six Lessons*, trans. by Arthur Knodel and Ingolf Dahl (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1947), p. 80. See Peter Burian, 'Tragedy adapted for stages and screens: the Renaissance to the present', in *CCGT*, pp. 228-83 (p. 268).

¹⁷ David Wiles, 'The Use of Masks in Modern Performances of Greek Drama' in *D69*, pp. 245-63 (p.

not understand the languages used in the production to create a special bond of understanding between performer and spectator. The audience became an active, though not interactive, participant in the experience. This breaking down of the so-called fourth-wall reflected Marcel Duchamp's idea that, in essence, 'the creative act is not performed by the artist alone; the spectator brings the work into contact with the external world by deciphering and interpreting its inner qualifications and thus adds his contribution to the creative act'.¹⁸ Prior to *Fragments*, similar experiments had been conducted by Julian Beck and Judith Malina's Living Theater (1947), Joseph Chaikin's Open Theater (1963), and most importantly, by Grotowski's Poor Theater (1959).¹⁹ However, it was improvisation and spontaneity that defined these performances, demonstrating various ways in which the performer could commune with the audience. Aware of these precedents, Serban assimilated the technique of the landmark *Dionysus in 69*, a Performance Group production, which began with a ritualistic initiation of the audience whereby the spectators were led one by one into the theatre space.²⁰ Those attending the *Fragments* were led personally by the actors from the La MaMa Annex lobby to their seats with a trumpet player leading the way.²¹ During the course of the production (the three plays usually were played on alternate nights), the audience, guided by the actors, followed the action by moving to different parts of the venue, and

250).

¹⁸ *Writings of Marcel Duchamp* ed. by M. Sanouillet and E. Peterson (New York: Da Capo Press, 1989), p. 140.

¹⁹ Grotowski visited the United States in 1968 and attended a performance of *Dionysus in 69*. See Froma Zeitlin, 'Dionysus in 69' in *D69*, pp. 49-75 (p. 52, n.11).

²⁰ For a recent discussion of the production (and an account from someone who witnessed the performance), see Zeitlin, pp. 49-75, and for a full account of the first performances in 1969, see Richard Schechner, *Performance Group: Dionysus in 69* (New York, 1970). There is also a black and white filmed version of the play, directed in part by Brian de Palma, which is difficult to obtain (see Zeitlin, p. 50, n. 3). A filmed version of the play is located in the APGRD.

²¹ For extensive discussion of Serban's production and rehearsal processes, see Ed Menta, *Behind the Magic Curtain: Andrei Serban in the American Theatre* (New York: Lang, 1995).

only at some points were they allowed to sit down. In *Trojan Women*, audience movement was marked by the transition between episodes. For example, the mood changed after the Helen Episode and the audience was allowed to move to seats facing each other. When all three plays were performed on opening night (Friday, 18 October 1974), the experience lasted almost five hours. Though his audience was asked to endure long periods of standing and being moved around by actors, Serban distinguished himself from others who advocated audience participation: he did not consider the spectators as participants in the action of the plays, but instead as active engaged *witnesses*.²²

Artaud's influence was also present in the use of the La MaMa Annex as a sacred space into which the audience was invited to engage in the live theatrical experience. The Annex, located in the East Village, was a television studio transformed by Artistic Director Ellen Stewart into a multi-purpose unconventional theatrical space. In its bare form there was a proscenium stage at one end of the space, thirty-foot high ceilings, and two tiered wooden galleries. The design was similar to what are now termed 'environmental' theatre spaces of the late 1960s and 1970s; including, for example, Jerry Rojo's design for the Performing Garage which housed Richard Schechner's Performance Group. For *Fragments*, Jun Maeda (set designer) created a space for musicians to play live at the left of the proscenium and a steel ramp leading to a high platform above the entrance. This design materialised Artaud's argument for the elimination of the conventional stage in favour of the 'single site, without partition, or

²² Audience participation could also be problematic. For example, during the Performance Group's performances of *Dionysus in 69* (particularly in the section 'Total Caress') and *Commune* (1970), there was often trouble controlling some spectators who took advantage of the audience participation element to fondle female performers (Aronson, p. 100f). See also Zeitlin, p. 55f.

barrier of any kind'.²³ This open space plan provided Serban freedom to stage scenes in multiple locations and at multiple levels, thus creating an unusual surround-experience for the audience; a technique used to great effect, for example, by Luca Ronconi in *Orlando Furioso* (1970).²⁴

For the presentation of *Trojan Women* this design allowed for profoundly political associations: the barrage of images and sounds and emotions bombarded an audience who were themselves confined in a prison camp of scaffolding, towers, and bright searchlights. They were physically in the midst of the destruction of Troy and no longer simply spectators viewing from a respectable distance and avoiding personal involvement in the various rituals and acts of violence on stage. As Richard Eder observed in the *New York Times*, the audience developed the 'emotional state of the crowd in the streets at any historical event too big to be grasped.' 'At La MaMa', he continued, the audience 'clutched pocketbooks and coats just as people will keep hold of a shopping bag or parcel in the midst of an air raid.' Serban described to Eder how this was evocative of the 'eruption of Russian tanks into Prague and the great mass that is neither attacker nor direct casualty lurches about in a confused and helpless testimony'.²⁵ John Barber of the *Daily Telegraph* wrote that Serban was 'using the audience itself as an instrument. We, his unpaid "extras," help to suggest pandemonium'.²⁶ Walter Kerr described 'the sensation of genuine participation' as the audience act as 'bystanders who watch Troy's women and children being driven from

²³ Artaud, p. 96.

²⁴ Ronconi produced *Orlando Furioso* in a large tent in Bryant Park behind the New York Public Library. The precedent for using non-traditional arena stages was set by Max Reinhardt's productions, *Oedipus the King* at the Zircus Schumann (Berlin, 1910) which was an immediate influence, for example, on Firmin Gémier's *Oedipe, roi de Thèbes* at the Cirque d'Hiver (Paris, 1919). Recent experimentation with circus space has been explored by Sean O'Brien's adaptation of *Birds* for the Royal National Theatre (London, 2002).

²⁵ Richard Eder, 'A Fiery Stage Troupe Moving to Paris', *New York Times*, 24 March 1976.

²⁶ John Barber, 'U.S. Troupe excels in *The Trojan Women*', *Daily Telegraph*, 27 August 1976.

their ruined towers to tumbrils on the beachhead, there to be murdered, raped or claimed as permanent prizes'.²⁷ Neil Alan Marks, a critic for the local paper, *The Villager*, directly compared Serban's work with Cacoyannis's production at the Circle-in-the-Square, remarking that 'unlike traditional productions such as the Circles', one here becomes part of a final movement: the destruction of the lives of the women of Troy'.²⁸ Evoking also the spirit of the recent political protests against the Vietnam War, Serban created a kind of communal rite that was remarkably similar in effect, though different in execution, to the socio-political experience of ancient Athenians attending plays during the Great Dionysia Festival.

The main aim of this kind of audience participation was to appeal to primitive emotions instead of intellect, which in the case of *Fragments* had the effect for one critic of 'shattering the notion that classical drama can be nothing more than intellectually satisfying to modern audiences'.²⁹ In order to achieve this phenomenon Serban reduced the plays to their bare outlines and created basic emotional states punctuated by the use of arresting visuals and rituals; fundamental elements of avant-garde experiments. The theoretical precedents for this enterprise in ritual can be found in the works of anthropologist Victor Turner who encouraged interrelationships between ritual, theatre, and 'performance', defined as a dramatisation of 'the relationship between the personal body of the performer and the symbolic arrangements

²⁷ Walter Kerr, 'Fragments of a Trilogy', *New York Times*, 25 January 1976.

²⁸ Neil Alan Marks, 'Trojan Women Appraised as its Run is Extended', *Villager*, 19 December 1974.

²⁹ Len Borger, 'Fragments of a Trilogy', *Backstage*, 13 May 1977, p. 33. Barbara MacKay ('Fragments of a Trilogy', *Saturday Review*, 8 February 1975, p. 41) wrote: 'In many ways Serban is Artaud's perfect *metteur en scène*: He is interested in the mythic aspect of drama, he knows how to realize the theater's physical potential, he talks of appealing to the 'intelligence of emotion' rather than to the intellect, and he has created a new language capable of expressing feeling rather than thought.'

of the social body'.³⁰ Ritual, for Turner, was an elemental and fundamental way of guaranteeing authenticity and the primacy of the physical body. Richard Schechner, one of Turner's disciples, attempted in his works to 'rediscover the efficacy of performance as a ritual experience'.³¹ He challenged the assertions of the early twentieth-century Cambridge Ritualists (primarily Francis Cornford, Jane Ellen Harrison, and Gilbert Murray), who proposed that the dithyramb and ancient Greek drama derived from primal ritual. He claimed that the theories, besides being unproven by later scholarship, were too universalist and excluded all drama that did not derive from ancient Western works. At the same time, he also admitted that their theories had been embraced by theatre practitioners, and even applied to his own *Dionysus in 69* production.³²

Using a Turner-inspired tradition, Serban presented ritual as a viable way of expressing a political aesthetic. In the case of *Trojan Women*, ritualistic action was expressed through a series of ceremonies focussing on grief, anger, sacrifice, and ultimately, triumph.³³ Serban reconstituted Euripides' text (which reveals the suffering of the Trojan women through dialogue and ritual (e.g. Astyanax's funeral)) into a series of visual and aural episodes containing executions and sacrifices. With this technique he was able to highlight both individual and communal suffering within a politically charged atmosphere. Emotions are 'vividly, almost barbarously projected' in most

³⁰ *Drama, Theatre, Performance*, ed. by Simon Shepherd and Mack Wallis (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004), p.120.

³¹ William Hunter Shephard (actor), *The Dionysus Group*, American University Studies, Series 26, *Theatre Arts*, vol. 5 (New York: Lang, 1991), p. xv; cited in Zeitlin, p. 57.

³² See the 'Approaches' chapter in Richard Schechner's *Performance Theory* (London: Routledge, 1988) for his discussion of the relationship between theatre and ritual. Brook and Grotowski were also fundamentally interested in the primal rituals of drama. Victor Turner, the eminent anthropologist, admitted that Schechner's work with the Performance Group had a profound influence on his theories.

³³ In *The Empty Space*, Brook had lamented over the loss of ritual and ceremony in modern life ('all forms of sacred art have certainly been destroyed by bourgeois values') and called for a 'holy theatre' which would labour 'like the plague, by intoxication, by infection, by analogy, by magic; a theatre in which the play, the event itself, stands in place of a text' (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1968), pp. 48-49).

scenes demonstrating the ways in which Serban isolated the 'primal ritual' or essence of each Euripidean episode.³⁴ For example, he includes an extended scene showing Astianax (sic) (Diane Lane) being ceremonially dressed in princely clothes by his mother. Afterwards, the other women process solemnly past him (arms raised high, hands crossed), individually bowing and their respects. Soldiers interrupt the farewell rite and strip him of his royal garb, thus soiling the rite. There is for a few moments almost a freeze-frame on the rest of the action as Andromaca (sic) (Pricilla Smith) rinses her hands three times and bathes Astianax with water, emitting her grief in elongated, breathy, heart-broken cries rather than in language.³⁵ The moment her child is removed and thrust into a wooden cage, the other women (led by Hecuba) begin to cry and mob the cage as the soldiers carry it away. Andromaca follows the cage, climbs the stairs, takes off her crown, and finally with a stabbing motion makes a suicide jump off the upper level. On the lower level, the women lift Hecuba ('Hecuba, the Root Mother'), carrying her long thick shepherd's staff, and bear her horizontally around the space, chanting and crying.³⁶ The primitiveness of the event is signified by the use of animal cages as well as verbalisation of grief without comprehensible words. In Euripides' text Andromache must not only bear life without her son but also begin a new relationship with an enemy; however, in Serban's interpretation, Andromaca is empowered to action by ending her life. This was an effective stage action primarily because the daring jump signalled her desperation and shocked the audience (many of whom could not see her land in the arms of some of the actors on the other side).

³⁴ B.A. Young, 'Trojan Women', *Financial Times*, 24 August 1976.

³⁵ Smith also acted in Schechner's *Dionysus in 69* and played the roles of Medea and Electra in the other plays of Serban's trilogy. Diane Lane (Astyanax) also played one of Medea's children.

³⁶ Description based on video of scene selections from the performance (see Appendix).

Cassandra's bare-breasted dance of death on the other hand, was more explicitly primitive and politically charged. Played by an African-American actress (Valois Mickens), she was presented as a compelling shaman-like character, waving two lit torches and dancing only to the sound of live drums, a hangman's noose hung around her neck. Her dance ended with an ecstatic collapse. She was then led away by the hangman's rope to the higher platform by a soldier. She and the soldier pulled back and forth on the rope which overtly recalled in its horrifying style the brutal lynching of African slaves an issue central to the protests of the Civil Rights movement. She collapses again and was led away up the stairs, singing a quiet, sorrowful, a cappella lament.³⁷ The portrayal was testament to Cassandra's innocence and the brutality of her imminent death, which of course was only alluded to in the ancient text. Interestingly, as in the case of Jane White's Helen, the ethnicity and portrayal of Serban's Cassandra did not cause outrage or even draw criticism. This was perhaps because the eclectic nature of the production as a whole (the spectacle, sounds, and ritual aspects) overshadowed what would in other naturalistic or realistic productions have been a controversial casting choice.³⁸

At the end of the play, the dead Astianax was brought in, feet and hands tied to a pole like a carcass brought back from a hunt. A new rite of stylised protest began. The women individually ran up the ramp attempting to get away or resist the soldiers; they were then thwarted violently and pushed back down the ramp. Finally, they all rushed up the ramp together in an attempt to attack the soldiers. They were unsuccessful as the soldiers surround them and chain them together. Hecuba then led a chanting lament as

³⁷ The end of the scene is not shown in the video, but description can be found in Menta, p. 24.

³⁸ Natalie Gray (Hecuba, Nurse in *Medea*, Clytemnestra in *Electra*) was also African-American. In general, the cast was multi-racial, but this was not explicitly discussed in the press.

the women rest on each other's shoulders calling for their children and reaching their hands out in supplication to the soldiers. Every movement was controlled and stylised, and through their actions feelings of hopelessness as well as a sense of male brutality were amplified.

Serban's interpretation of the Helen Episode was the most evocative (and disturbing) use of spectacle and ritual for veiled political purposes. For this scene, Serban eliminated the conversation between Hecuba and Menelaos that preceded the *agon*. Instead, an old man (identified in the programme as 'Menelaus, Helen's last choice') dragged Helen ('Helen, the one who brings destruction') (Joanna Peled), chained inside a tall open-topped wooden cage, through the audience to the centre of the space.³⁹ Enacting Menelaos' final judgement of Helen (1039ff), the Trojan women threw stones and other objects at her, hissing and spitting like animals.⁴⁰ One woman ripped off Helen's black wig, revealing a shorn head beneath, while several others stripped her naked and scrubbed her, smearing her with mud and other dark substances. A man in an enormous bear costume ('The Violator') was led into the cage to sexually abuse and rape her. After her violation, she was tied to a pole in a crucifix image and interrogated in garbled speech by Hecuba. Finally, several soldiers axed her to death and she was removed from the stage. The audience, though not active participants in Helen's humiliation, found themselves physically confronted with the issue of human responsibility: in the midst of this horrific ceremony at times they had to 'scramble to get out of the way'.⁴¹

³⁹ Although Serban never directed the play itself, the cage imagery is reminiscent also of Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* in which Tamburlaine keeps the defeated Bajazeth in a cage, feeding him scraps of food from his own table.

⁴⁰ In the Edinburgh Festival production (August 1976), Helen was pelted with straw.

⁴¹ Aronson, p. 105. After this scene, the actors guided the audience to seats along the side of the

In this interpretation, Serban completely eliminated the rhetorical arguments of the *agon*, along with Helen's excuses, Hecuba's accusations and the ambiguity of what happens to her when she leaves the stage.⁴² He dismantled the *agon* and replaced the arguments with the bold images of her punishment. Here, the communal act of stoning, a suggestion in Euripides's text, is enacted as a purgative ritual for the Trojan women. Serban indulged in the violence, unafraid to exploit the graphic nature of Helen's punishment. Serban's Helen was not Sartre's comic tart nor the sexually powerful woman represented in Cacoyannis' film. His Helen represented all immoral women but was also treated as a victim, as a scapegoat who must be eliminated in order for the community to heal itself. She was punished in the presence of everyone, stage characters and audience, so that there would be no question of her guilt and no question that she will pay for her crimes. With this scene, Serban suggested the need to hold someone responsible for the state of his world: for poverty, the threat of nuclear annihilation, political assassinations, and for Vietnam.

Not all critics found this elemental ritualising of the ancient text preferable. Walter Kerr, writing for the *New York Times*, clearly aware of the unadulterated text (which might not have been the case for many of the audience members) advocated reasons for preferring the ancient text:

Suddenly we remember that Euripides did not kill this god-driven wanton or even penalize her very much for the dishonor she brought on her husband or the destruction she'd visited upon Troy. Instead, in a brilliantly conceived and sinuously persuasive scene, he'd transformed her humiliation before her wrathful husband into a new conquest of that foolish man. [...] Which is better, you ask yourself: a scene of words in which two psyches do battle with the

performance space where they stayed for the rest of the play.

⁴² For discussion of the *agon* (including in *Trojan Women*), see Donald J. Mastronarde, 'The Optimistic Rationalist in Euripides' in 'Greek Tragedy and its Legacy: Essays presented to D.J. Conacher' ed. by Martin Cropp, Elaine Fantham, and S.E. Scully (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1986), pp. 201-11 and M. Lloyd, 'The Helen Scene in Euripides' *Trojan Women*, 34, *Classical Quarterly* (1984), 303-13.

loser subtly turning into the winner or the heft of the ax? Dramatically speaking, I think one must still choose Euripides and intelligible words.⁴³

As Kerr suggested, the prime disadvantages to Serban's interpretation were the loss of Hecuba's rhetorical power and the impact of the confrontation between two very different characters with two opposing views of the same incident. Although *logos* is sacrificed in the piece, in Serban's production, there is no doubt about the fate of Helen. In addition, the ceremonial rite, performed with the immediacy and emotive power of physical theatre, re-presented the Euripidean episode as a communal purgation in which the contemporary audience had no choice but to be included; Helen is sacrificed for their sakes as well.

The emotive power of this scene, as well as the other episodes briefly mentioned, was achieved not only through Serban's innovative *mise en scène*—but also through the intense voice, speech and movement training of the actors, another distinguishing element of the avant-garde approach to creating theatre. Traditional western training was no longer sufficient for what Serban wanted to accomplish with his performance text. His method of training his actors required intense concentration, dedication, and a willingness to reject the American version of Stanislavsky's technique of 'affective memory', called 'Method' acting. Serban, interviewed by Arthur Bartow, explained:

A contemporary actor [...] has to forget about mind analysis, and even the logical understanding of language, and has to jump into a territory of the unknown with his imagination.⁴⁴

In preparation for *Medea*, the first play of the trilogy to be developed, which began in 1971, Serban led his actors through a four-month training process using exercises

⁴³ Walter Kerr, 'Fragments of a Trilogy', *New York Times*, 25 January 1976.

⁴⁴ Serban quoted in Bartow, p. 290.

primarily learned during his time at CIRT. The training was substantially a physical exercise, as opposed to an intellectual one. Learning their lines of ancient Greek, Latin and other languages phonetically, the actors often did not understand what they were saying and their understanding of the meaning of the text was not a priority for Serban. His aim was to encourage the company to commit to ‘experiencing the sound of the ancient texts in their bodies’.⁴⁵ The training also included the practice of non-Western physical training traditions including *noh*, *kabuki*, and Indian *Kathakali*. For example, they spent hours with the famed *noh* actor, Katsurhiro Oida (who had also trained actors in Brook’s company) learning to walk in a controlled manner (much in the way that Suzuki trained his actors for his production of *Trojan Women*).⁴⁶ The physicality of the training translated directly into the performance itself. The stunning, and often shocking, images required the utmost control of the body; for example, in *Trojan Women*, the phenomenal slide of the corpse of the young virgin down a ramp in slow motion (choreographed and performed by Neal Harris in role of ‘Weaver’). As a result, the actors communicated with physical gestures and organic sounds more than just with outward characteristics—they expressed their ‘mythic essence’.

Rehearsals for *Trojan Women*, which constituted the third contribution to the *Fragments* after *Electra* (first premiered 1973 at the Theatre Festival in Bordeaux, France), began at the Sao Paulo Festival in Brazil (1974). This too was a politically charged environment. Serban recalled how the Brazilian context influenced the ritual

⁴⁵ For their sound production training, the actors listened to water boiling and then tried to recreate the sound or passed sounds around a circle creating multiple ‘conversations of abstract sound’ (Menta, p. 16). For a description of Serban’s rehearsal method, see Ana Maria Narti, ‘*Medea*: Andrei Serban’s Work on Tragic Acting’ (unpublished thesis, Institute of Theatre and Film, Stockholm University, 1974). Narti was Serban’s Romanian dramaturg and personal friend.

⁴⁶ In early 1973, Serban traveled to villages in Bali and Japan for three months studying cultural and theatrical rituals (Menta, p. 21).

element of his work on *Trojan Women*: 'What we did was very close to the traditional South American sensitivity, to their understanding of ceremony.'⁴⁷

Although Serban experimented with an essential abandonment of the text and creation of ceremonial action, he did not graft any identifiable cultural tradition on to his *mise en scène*. His references to contemporary political or social events were fairly subtle. Instead, he aimed to develop a unique, primitive, almost holy experience for his audience. However, in his attempt to shift emphasis towards a predominantly communal experience the specificity of character was lost. The main characters of Euripides' play were submerged into the chorus and only emerged to embody individual suffering, as opposed to the spectacular entrances and exits and episodic appearances, with essentially peripheral choral response and stand alone choral odes, in Euripides' text. Hecuba, in particular, was not afforded the substantive role she plays in the ancient text. The Greek soldiers act as aggressors, but they also participated in the rituals and joined the choruses, providing additional vocal and physical power.

Given these experimental approaches, it would be fair to assume that when the popular obsession with the anthropology of cultures, primitive and otherwise, had passed, the production could no longer maintain its theatrical and social currency; Serban's directing initiatives would become obsolete. Serban himself felt that his production could only exist while the avant-garde trend was popular, and in 1987, was reluctant to revive *Fragments* because he believed: 'Theatre is made for the moment, for right now. It works only in the present. [...] What is called the definitive production of a play is nonsense, because it's definitive only so long as the fashion lasts.'⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Quoted in Robb Baker, 'The Intelligence of Emotion,' *The Soho Weekly News*, 17 October 1974, p. 19.

⁴⁸ Quoted in Bartow, p. 291.

Furthermore, Brook had taught him that ‘no production of a play can stay alive unchanged longer than five years’.⁴⁹ Thus, Serban admitted in an interview: ‘I was interested to see if this format, which I considered old-fashioned avant-garde was just an experiment of the time or if it had something of value that could surpass stylishness.’⁵⁰ However, the project was never repeated using the same form or design. Multiple reincarnations over the intervening decade undoubtedly proved that *Fragments* was not simply a one-off experiment that could only be effective in the time period in which it was conceived. Certain enduring qualities ensured its performability and ultimate success over time. At the time, Serban’s techniques were innovative even in relation to other avant-garde projects. One critic commented to this effect: ‘We see so much that is fake-experimental or shoddy-experimental Off Broadway that it is a pleasure to report on an experiment that is genuine.’⁵¹ None of his production choices seemed to exist just for ‘effect’ or for the sake of experiment. Though his performance text seemed furthest away from the ancient material, and least faithful to them in contrast to productions earlier in the century, Serban’s unique approach allowed him to unleash the raw emotive power and ‘a more elemental, archetypal reality’ at the core of Greek tragedy in a way which naturalistic or realistic drama could not.⁵²

While most American critics praised Serban for daring to create a unique performance text of his own, a few—mostly in Britain—challenged the sole use of incomprehensible languages. Irving Wardle, reviewing the Edinburgh production for the *Times* in 1976, believed the production, as was the case with *Orghast*, failed ‘to prove the theory that dead languages possess an inherent expressive power irrespective

⁴⁹ *ibid.*

⁵⁰ *ibid.*

⁵¹ Edith Oliver, *New Yorker*, 15 July 1974.

⁵² Barbara MacKay, ‘*Fragments of a Trilogy*’, *Saturday Review*, 8 February 1975, p.41.

of literal meaning'.⁵³ He also criticised the way in which the music and sound design completely replaced literal texts:

Total theatre of this kind gets reduced to its musical elements and these are not professional musicians. What they express is a generalized contrast between pathos and brutality, powerful to begin with but paying smaller and smaller dividends as the language has no means of conveying anything more specific.⁵⁴

Michael Billington, a long-time British critic felt that the production brought up 'important questions about the nature of the theatrical language', but ultimately lacked 'the shades and subtleties that the particularity of an understood language conveys'.⁵⁵ His review of *Fragments* was, of course, coloured by his general definition of successful theatre. 'Great theatre for me', he wrote, 'is almost always an alliance between word and image; but in this production my senses were stunned and my understanding starved. [...] The fact remains that comprehensible language is the most expressive tool we have.'⁵⁶

Despite these criticisms, *Fragments* became one of the landmark productions in the history of New York avant-garde theatre. This is in part because of the impact of its political aesthetic, the experimental and awe-inspiring *mise en scène*, the energy and commitment of the actors, and the flexibility of the stage space. It was toured to Europe and the Middle East the following summer and, throughout the 70s, the plays were performed to great critical acclaim at over forty festivals in fifteen different countries.⁵⁷ In terms of political impact, the Middle East tour highlighted the myriad ways in which the plays could provoke discussion about the legacy of the classics in Islamic countries:

⁵³ Irving Wardle, 'Prison Themes', *Times*, 26 August 1976, p. 15.

⁵⁴ *ibid.*

⁵⁵ Michael Billington, 'Trojan Women', *Guardian*, 27 August 1976.

⁵⁶ *ibid.*

⁵⁷ See Appendix for details.

in Shiraz, Iran it was performed beginning at the gates of Persepolis, once the capital of the Persian empire, winding through the ruins of the city, and concluding at the ancient tomb of Ataxerxes;⁵⁸ in Lebanon, *Medea* was performed in the ruins of a temple in Baalbeck. Most meaningfully for the director, following the overthrow of the Ceausescu regime, Serban revived *Fragments* as his homecoming production for the opening of the new Romanian National Theatre (1990), almost twenty years after *Medea* was first rehearsed. The political resonances of his staging of *Trojan Women* were fully realised when the Bucharest audience experienced the shock of participating in the representation of a city suffering under civil conflict. Just a few weeks before, miners had attacked the city (encouraged supposedly by the government) and had burned books, destroyed buildings, and assaulted student demonstrators in University Square, right outside the theatre. Further shockwaves were dealt as the audience witnessed the staging of the murder of Clytemnestra (in *Electra*) in the box seats that recently had been occupied by the deposed Ceausescu's family.⁵⁹ The Romanian company went on to tour further in Romania, Europe and South America. The production was revived with critical success in 1987 to mark the 25th anniversary of La MaMa, and again in 1999 for the 35th anniversary, proving itself to be the La MaMa's most popular and commercially successful production in its history. Each revival proved the sustainability of what was, at first, considered to be an experimental approach.

⁵⁸ *Fragments* followed approximately the same journey from the tomb to ruins as Peter Brook's *Orghast* in 1971.

⁵⁹ Described by Serban and Pricilla Smith in James Leverett, 'Serban in the Mad Forest', *Performing Arts* (Fall, 1992), pp. 1-6.

13. Tadashi Suzuki
Toroio no Onna (Trojan Women)
Iwanami Hall
Tokyo/International tour
1974

Exposed to the many of the same European avant-garde experiments as Andrei Serban, and using a similar approach to the creation of a performance text, the transformation of language into ritual action, and the vigorous training of the mind and body of the actor, Tadashi Suzuki developed a unique way of filtering Western classics through the lens of the Eastern theatrical tradition.⁶⁰ For the first time in the performance history of *Trojan Women*, directorial and design choices reflected an overt and unified representation of the trials of a specific group of people in a contemporary post-war environment: the Japanese people in the aftermath of World War Two.

The spirit of protest and experimentation that dominated European and American theatre during the 1960s and 1970s was embraced worldwide, especially in the fringe-theatre society in Japan. The Japanese, similar to Germans in the aftermath of the Holocaust (see Chapter Four), took several decades to come to terms with the communal guilt and humiliation of defeat after World War Two, and to cope with the devastating loss of human life after the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In 1960, as Suzuki was completing his degree in Political Science and Economics at Waseda University in Tokyo, riots and demonstrations broke out against the possibility of a renewal of US-Japanese Mutual Security Treaty (AMPO). These protests magnified the struggle among young Japanese, especially artists and writers, to recover a national identity and redefine what it meant to be Japanese. By protesting the renewal of the

⁶⁰ For general discussion of Suzuki's works, see Marianne McDonald, *Ancient Sun, Modern Light: Greek Drama on the Modern Stage* (New York: Columbia University Press), especially pp. 21-44.

treaty, these left-wing groups advocated the further democratization of Japan and independence from the United States. The protests brought widespread disruption to campus life on a scale similar to anti-Vietnam protests in America. The AMPO treaty was renewed. The loss of the left wing's cause created a crisis of confidence and a wave of apathy and disillusion. Suzuki later reflected on his own disaffection with the political struggle:

The one thing that I learned from the activities of my student days is that no matter how you may struggle to make it otherwise, nothing can ever happen beyond a human scale [...]. The only way you can achieve anything at all is by constantly confronting yourself with a sense of poverty and wretchedness. I suppose that my initial impetus to enter theatre came from a struggle with the problem of how to maintain this sense of wretchedness.⁶¹

Although Suzuki claimed to be apolitical, rarely speaking publicly of specific socio-political problems, the messages of social responsibility in his productions, *Trojan Women*, in particular, reflected his upbringing in this volatile and unstable environment.

Corresponding with the riots against the AMPO treaty and the young people's struggle to achieve social awareness and rescue a sense of Japanese identity, Japanese fringe theatre desperately attempted to depart from the *shingeki* ('new theatre') movement that not only rejected the forms of *noh* and *kabuki*, but also ignored new plays about contemporary Japanese social issues. *Shingeki* had developed as a reaction against the long established pre-modern dramatic traditions. When the Meiji restoration of 1876 opened Japan's doors to the West, the first wave of travellers in the theatre initiated a slow exchange between Japan and Europe (as well as Moscow and Poland) of ideas about dramatic style, technique, and training. In the early twentieth century, many writers, including W. B. Yeats and Benjamin Britten, enthusiastically incorporated the

⁶¹ Quoted in Akhiko Senda, 'The wider world of for Japanese theatre: the art of Tadashi Suzuki', in Suzuki Company of Toga (hereafter SCOT) programme, pp. 58-9.

previously unknown traditions of *noh* and *kabuki* into their own works. Simultaneously, in Japan, *shingeki* directors abandoned altogether the Japanese aesthetics of spirituality and the supernatural in favour of performing the newly discovered plays of Shakespeare and Chekhov, as well as the realist works of contemporary playwrights such as Ibsen and Shaw, which were introduced in Japan shortly after their premieres in Europe and America.

The results of many years of cross-pollination between Eastern and Western dramatic and cultural traditions began to appear in Japan under the banner of the 'Theatre of the Absurd'. As the underground movement attempted to revive interest in rediscovering their cultural roots, the plays of Samuel Beckett (themselves heavily influenced by *noh* and *kabuki*) became immensely popular. The young directors and writers of this movement soon recognized that the absurd worlds and the minimalist settings of Beckett's dramas provided more leeway for experimentation than the plays of Ibsen and Shaw had previously. Engaging with these absurdist works, the *angura* ('underground') theatre movement began to re-discover the power of interpreting contemporary scenarios within the symbolic framework provided by their own traditions of *noh* and *kabuki*.

Suzuki found himself in the centre of this movement. In 1967, he and his leftist leaning student drama group set up a professional company *Jiyu Butai* ('Free Stage'), which primarily produced the absurdist works of the young Japanese playwright Minoru Betsuyaku. During his time with the *Jiyu Butai*, Suzuki attempted to shift the focus from the political issues that polarized the nation towards artistic solutions that might revive, restructure and rejuvenate Japanese theatre. Under the influences of various renowned Western philosophers, especially Sartre and Merleau-Ponty, and theatre

practitioners such as Grotowski, who advocated a laboratory approach to directing and rigorous physical training, Suzuki began to make the actor's role more central, developing his now internationally renowned training method. This focus gave him a closer relationship with his performers and more creative freedom to guide the evolution of the performance. This resulted in a preference for the ensemble experience over collaboration with the writer; a move which eventually led to a break between Suzuki and Betsuyaku.

This parting of ways also marked a shift in directing style and choice of plays for Suzuki. Like other *shingeki* directors, he abandoned new writing, but unlike his predecessors, as he turned to the Western texts, he also rediscovered his own roots in *noh* and *kabuki*. In this process of discovery, he developed into a writer-director-choreographer. In his first experiment, *On Dramatic Passions* (1969), Suzuki created a performance text that represented an extraordinary collage of sounds, rhythms, and texts gathered from various traditions that were unified and expressed through the trained movement of the actor's body. This shift away from conventional interpretation of the text was also influenced by the experiments of Jean-Louis Barrault in Paris, Grotowski at the Polish Laboratory Theatre and of Eugenio Barba at the Odin Teatret in Oslo. This is not surprising since by this time the developments in European and Russian theatre reached Japan quickly. According to Suzuki, Barrault was a 'god among directors' in the Japanese theatrical world.⁶² News of Suzuki's collage experiments soon reached the European theatre centres, drawing the attention of Barrault himself, who invited him to perform *On Dramatic Passions* at his International Festival in Paris in 1972.⁶³ The

⁶² Tadashi Suzuki, *The Way of Acting: The Theatre Writings of Tadashi Suzuki*, trans. by J. Thomas Rimer (New York: Theatre Communications Group, 1985), p. 69.

⁶³ Suzuki describes his experiences in France: *The Way of Acting*, pp. 69-76.

success of these performances also led to an invitation by Grotowski to perform in the Théâtre des Nations in Warsaw (1975). These experiences further exposed Suzuki to the experimental trends in Paris and Warsaw, which at the time welcomed international companies, and he began an interaction with the international theatre community that he still maintains today. In addition, this early encouragement from Western practitioners helped him to explore how the new collage technique could be applied within the parameters his own cultural context, inspiring him to see alternative ways in which traditional *noh* and *kabuki* styles (which formerly he had criticised and felt to be ‘hollow forms’) could be fused with other non-Japanese theatrical styles to create a wholly unique theatre experience.⁶⁴

On Dramatic Passions was also a pivotal production because it marked the debut of the formidable Kayoko Shiraishi, who would become Suzuki’s leading lady for over two decades. Unlike Yukio Ninagawa (a contemporary who has also presented Greek tragedy through the lens of Japanese theatrical traditions) Suzuki rarely used an *onnagata*—a male actor who, traditional to the *kabuki* art form, played female roles.⁶⁵ Shiraishi’s performance in *On Dramatic Passions* as the madwoman who could metamorphose herself into a variety of characters formed the basis of the central character in Suzuki’s next project, *Trojan Women*.

Suzuki’s close knowledge of Sartre’s works may have influenced his choice of tragedies. Having directed *Les Mouches*, Sartre’s adaptation of the *Choephorei* and

⁶⁴ For example, Suzuki was greatly influenced by a traditional *noh* performance of *Dojoji Temple* performed on a European stage which made no attempt to recreate the *noh* stage requirements. See Yukihiro Goto, ‘The Theatrical Fusion of Suzuki Tadashi’, *Asian Theatre Journal*, 6.2 (1989), 103-23 (p.104f.).

⁶⁵ In 1978, Tokusaburo Arashi won an Obie award for his performance of Medea in Ninagawa’s production. See Mae Smethurst, ‘The Japanese Presence in Ninagawa’s Medea’ in *MP*, pp. 191-216 (p. 191).

Eumenides, in 1961, Suzuki was probably aware of the 1965 Paris premiere of *Les Troyennes*. Suzuki's aims were similar to Sartre's, with a different setting: he set the play in a bombed Japanese cemetery shortly after World War Two. Despite this overtly political design choice, he made his intentions clear that he chose the play not just because of its potential significance within his own cultural context, but also for more universal reasons: 'To express the disastrous fate of women caused by war, which was initiated by men, and the complete powerlessness of religion to aid the women or the war itself.'⁶⁶ Given his nationality, these intentions were heavily criticized, for example, from the Korean perspective as a 'poor and irresponsible excuse for Japanese aggression and imperialism'; Rhie Sang-il, reviewing a 1986 revival in Korea, complained:

Suzuki's production only depicts the tragic state of the women after their country's defeat; the cause of the war which lead to Japan's defeat is wholly glossed over. In portraying Japan as the victim of the nuclear bomb, the play appeals to spectators to sympathize with the suffering of the women. Yet they are not victims; they are the very people who started the war. Japan's true role in World War II is switched in this production.⁶⁷

The bias here is clear and understandable. However, the women of Suzuki's production were civilians and would not have been involved in any military activity. Suzuki, conscious of this, explained to Kenneth Rea of the *Guardian*:

Euripides' play depicts the fate of women who have suffered in war. It is a typical situation. [...] What I am trying to show is that the situation hasn't really changed. It was the same in Japan during World War Two, and in the Middle East where there are still wars going on today.⁶⁸

On the whole, this was not a Western criticism, with the exception of the critic for the *Sunday Times* who wrote: 'It was the Japanese who started the Pacific War, and they

⁶⁶ SCOT programme.

⁶⁷ Rhie Sang-il, 'Kabuki in Korea', trans. by Han Sang-chul *Asian Theatre Journal*, 7. 1 (Spring, 1990), 105-07.

⁶⁸ Kenneth Rea, 'A Woman at War', *Guardian*, 10 April 1985.

committed unspeakable atrocities. [...] Having said that, I must testify that the Suzuki Company's performance is a theatrical experience of the highest order.'⁶⁹

Through his *Trojan Women*, Suzuki aimed to remind both his Japanese and international audience that 'war is still a fresh memory for us, and a reality that we're threatened with today'.⁷⁰ Using a process of distillation similar to Serban's technique, Suzuki created a special performance text for his production of *Trojan Women*. In an interview, he explained the process:

When I decided to stage the *Trojan Women*, my first step was to eliminate from the text all terms that require special knowledge and leave only just enough for a modern audience to understand the basic situation [...]. In a sense, what is left are only the fragments in which the characters lay bare their real feelings.⁷¹

Suzuki supplemented this distilled text with contemporary Japanese poetry by Makoto Ooka,⁷² and popular songs. Using nuanced interpretations of traditional elements of *noh* and *kabuki* theatre, he created a collage of images, language and sounds. This remoulding of the ancient Greek text with images from Ooka's poems distinctly connected the themes of the ancient text with that of the modern, presenting a dramatic amalgam of the past and present, of West and East. This deliberate fusion expressed what Suzuki described as an effort to find a 'rational ground common to both traditional and modern theatrical forms...and without such experiments, the conditions will remain unchanged forever'.⁷³ Suzuki defined his collage technique as a dramatic form of *honkadori* (literally 'the making of a foundation poem'⁷⁴) because 'by using some

⁶⁹ *Sunday Times*, 14 April 1985.

⁷⁰ Suzuki quoted in MacDonald (1992), p. 29.

⁷¹ Quoted in Goto, 110.

⁷² Ooka also rewrote sections of *Kassandra's* speeches, the conflict with Hecuba and Menelaos, and contributed pieces of his own poems to replace dialogue in other sections (quoted in Goto, 110).

⁷³ Quoted in Goto, 107.

⁷⁴ A standard compositional technique used in classical Japanese poetry forms. Goto also argues that Suzuki uses the *sekai* technique, an element of *kabuki* theatre in which playwrights 'compose a new play

familiar materials, I aim to destroy their known values and at the same time create totally original ones'.⁷⁵ The ultimate goal of the collage method, Suzuki explained, was to demonstrate that 'what takes place before the audience's eyes passes beyond time and place [...] it is both reality and fiction [...] each of these elements is inter-linked, each reverberated against the other'.⁷⁶

Trojan Women presented an ideal text for this kind of experimentation because the story of Hecuba and the women of Troy aptly paralleled the personal experiences of women, and indeed Japanese society as a whole, in the years following World War Two. Suzuki's first experiment with *Trojan Women*, produced in Tokyo in 1974, featured the story of an Old Man, played by renowned *noh* actor Hisao Kanze (he also played Menelaus), who seeks purgation through a fantasy experience of the legend at Troy.⁷⁷ A combination of acting styles and traditions, the production also featured *shingeki* actress Etsuko Ichihara in the roles of Cassandra and Andromache, and Shiraishi as Hecuba. The second version, produced in 1977 at Barrault's Theatre D'Orsay in Paris and toured internationally for over two decades, centred instead on the experiences of a displaced Old Woman who periodically calls up the spirit of Hecuba (and in one scene, Cassandra as well) to help her cope with the loss of her home and family. Focusing on a female protagonist, instead of a male one, enabled Suzuki to more fully realize his intention to express the disastrous fate of women caused by war. Through the dramatisation of her experiences and the seamless and continual transitioning between the ancient and modern world, the story of *Trojan Women* came

by bringing together disparate known worlds into a new situation.' (Goto, 108, 109, 112). The collage method, in the Western theatrical context, is based loosely on Surrealist technique of *dépaysement*.

⁷⁵ Quoted in Goto, 109.

⁷⁶ Frank Hoff, 'Suzuki Tadashi directs *The Trojan Women*', *Theatre*, 11.3 (1980), p. 44.

⁷⁷ For a full discussion of the first version of the play, see Patricia Marton, 'The *Trojan Women* in Japan', *Drama Review*, 19.1 (March 1975).

to express the concerns of a conflicted Japanese nation struggling with their own sense of guilt and responsibility for World War Two, and caught between their own traditions and those of the Western world.

Similar to Serban's method, Suzuki used Euripides' text only as a starting point. Because of his vast knowledge of many theatrical and cultural traditions both within his own country and internationally and his awareness that the traditional European theatrical style privileged the conceptual aspects of the text without much attention to physicality and otherworldly sensibility (Japanese preoccupations), he was able to create new visual and aural meaning out of the ancient text. While Serban blended his main characters into the chorus, Suzuki followed more closely the Euripidean individualisation of the main characters, but replaced a few of them with intraculturally specific ones, i.e. stock characters from the Japanese theatrical canon. For example, the characters of Andromache, Astyanax, and Menelaus were retained, but the character of the Old Woman replaced Hecuba and Cassandra; the Buddhist god, Jizo (the patron god of children) appears instead of Olympian gods; and Samurai replaced the Greek soldiers. The changes in the *dramatis personae* were not only additions of identifiable Japanese versions of ancient Greek characters for the sake of a Japanese audience, but also facilitated the new themes Suzuki wanted to emphasise. For example, the indifferent behaviour of Jizo, who stood motionless centre stage for the duration of the play, made an effective comment on the place of religion in contemporary Japanese society and expressed Suzuki's intention of showing 'the complete powerlessness of religion to aid the women or the war itself'. In addition, three men in black lingered mysteriously in the background throughout, also uninvolved in the action of the play, representing 'the fear of death' (as the programme notes defined them).

The dramatisation of the experiences of the Old Woman, akin to those of Hecuba, were central to the piece. With the use of a *noh* trope in which the central character (often an older person deranged by bereavement) could traverse a multi-temporal existence, the Old Woman, lingering among the spirits of the war dead in the cemetery, called on the spirit of Euripides' Hecuba to possess her. This possession allowed her to come to terms with her own pain through Hecuba's experiences in *Trojan Women*.⁷⁸ In a spectacular transformation in a later scene, the Old Woman, who had been consumed by the spirit of Hecuba, sheds her black kimono cloak like a snake, revealing beneath a young white-clad Cassandra. Here Suzuki used a traditional *kabuki* costuming device to facilitate the metamorphosis of one character into another. A change in the pitch of her voice from the deep shaky growl of the old woman ('a voice that scrapes, roars and scorches like a human blow-torch'⁷⁹) to the high trill of a girl also accompanies her physical transformation. Shiraishi's characterisation of the mad Cassandra was manifested visually in the rolling of her eyes, the curling of her fingers, her contorted body position, and side-stepping dance-like movements. With every utterance and every movement, Shiraishi created what many critics have identified (and praised) as 'an emotional tempest', capturing in a most arresting manner the plight of one woman stripped of her home and family by the events of war.

These acts of metamorphosis brought a new sense of the supernatural to the ancient play and also provided a device to resolve some of the ambiguities in Euripides' text concerning the characterisation of Hecuba. To what extent is Hecuba mad? To what extent is she able to control her behaviour and feelings? To what extent is she able to

⁷⁸ Goto points out that Suzuki uses a similar doubling in later productions, including in *Bacchae*, which is set in the ancient world of Dionysos and a world of totalitarian dictatorship, and in *Clytemnestra* which 'draws a parallel between the Orestes legend and the modern breakdown of the family' (112).

⁷⁹ John Barber, 'A Japanese Hecuba', *Daily Telegraph*, 11 April 1985.

maintain the focus of attention within the episodic structure? In Suzuki's version, the Old Woman acted as a facilitator, a shaman, through which the story of the Trojan women could be expressed. The tale of the ancient survivors provided her with understanding and emotional support, yet through the metamorphoses, she also experienced firsthand the lives of those who 'lived' in another era. The time frame is at once ancient and contemporary, and ultimately represented an unusual expression of the cycles of war and post-war experience so central to Euripides' play.

The design of the set—a cemetery in Hiroshima ruined by an atom bomb—also helped to create an environment in which these supernatural experiences could be realised. The design itself was flexible and could be modified for subsequent revivals depending on whether the performance was indoors or outdoors. For indoor performances, the space suggested a cemetery with mosquito nets draped like spider webs across the ceiling. With the exception of the props that the Old Woman and the members of the Chorus carried with them, there was no stage machinery. The stage remained relatively bare, allowing for a full focus on the emotive performances of the actors. By setting the piece in the one instance during the aftermath of World War Two, Suzuki avoided the risks of being too relevant, yet recalled a period in the near past which remained for many audience members, Japanese or foreign, a painful memory.

Similar to Sartre, Suzuki wanted to show the desolation and brutality of war, but instead of using colloquial language or making direct references to contemporary issues as Sartre did, he explored these themes with onstage ceremonial violence.⁸⁰ The evocative power of the uniquely female experiences after war was illuminated in

⁸⁰ Francis King: 'What Euripides' tragedy and this potent reworking chiefly have in common is a detestation of war and an anguished sense of its futility' (*Sunday Telegraph*, 14 April 1985, reviewing the Riverside Studio production 10-14 April 1985). Michael Billington writes, 'The barbaric quality of war is thus evoked without a single drop of stage blood' (*Guardian*, 11 April 1985).

Suzuki's version by the brutalization of Andromache, who entered clutching her child (a rag-doll with exaggerated long limbs, fingers and toes). While Euripides presented Andromache as a strong virtuous wife, Suzuki chose to show her as a helpless victim of soldiers. After a long interchange with Hecuba, the Samurai bandits (characters from the pre-modern Japanese world) suddenly jumped up and surrounded Andromache. As she clutched the child, the men grabbed her, dragged her to the ground, unwinding the sash of her kimono and savagely stripping away her clothing; they then rape her. The violence, performed in a choreographed manner with slow controlled movements was made more horrible by the shrill protesting voice of Andromache and the hideous laughter of the Samurai. By applying the Japanese technique of stylized violence, Suzuki was able to force his audience to see and feel something they probably would rather avoid, indeed an event which they would not have witnessed while watching the ancient version (the rape of Cassandra at the altar of Athene is only mentioned, for example). As a result, the scene painfully conveyed atrocities which are trans-historical: events which could take place during some far distant war-time or in a dark alley of any modern-day city. Alternatively, by using a rag-doll instead of a real child, Suzuki could on the one hand, enact real violence without hurting anyone, and on the other hand, also diffuse the 'heavily charged, emotional burden' of witnessing child murder; Ninagawa achieved a similar result when he used dolls to represent the corpses of Medea's children.⁸¹

Immediately after the rape of Andromache, a Samurai ripped the boy from its mother, stepped over the hunched line of chorus members, and cruelly flung the body on the floor. A woman from the chorus picks up the doll, taking over the role of the

⁸¹ Smethurst, p. 209.

protector mother from the incapacitated Andromache; unlike the chorus of Ninagawa's *Medea* (a group of sixteen male performers playing *Tsugaru shamisen* stringed instruments who do not participate in the action of the play), in Suzuki's production, the chorus were emotionally involved.⁸² As the Chorus woman slowly shuffled away, trying to escape with the baby, another Samurai stabs her in the leg and cuts off the arm of the child. The chorus reacted with loud cries, stamping their feet in a rhythmic dance, and the Samurai, laughing their hideous mocking laugh, jumped around low to the floor. This scene was moving and disturbing, but the most striking image was the god Jizo, stone-still, standing tall above everyone else who does not even flinch at the murder of Astyanax, a child he should be protecting. Unlike Poseidon or Athena in Euripides' text, Jizo does not predict the downfall of the aggressors, but instead stands silently as crimes are committed and go unpunished. Using the stylized movement techniques from *noh* and *kabuki* in these scenes, Suzuki was able to traverse the ancient Greek codes which eschewed the onstage portrayal of violence and, at the same time, subject his audience directly to the brutal victimization of women.

After this scene, a *Toryanse* (a contemporary children's song) was played in the background as the Old Woman, now living in her own present day, prays for the lost children. Jizo continued to observe the scene impassively. In the manner of a traditional *katari* or narrative performer, Shiraishi crouched facing forward, performing the content of Hecuba's lament, exercising the full range of her voice from low whimpers of grief to sharp angry declamation. As one critic described her: 'With Medusa-like hair and a

⁸² Ninagawa's chorus is itself an alteration of the traditional kabuki chorus which did not play instruments but 'engage[d] in a kind of dialogue, including the practice of *watarizerifu*, passing on from one member to another the words of a long speech and then concluding it in unison' (Smethurst, p. 194).

voice that can surge from zephyr to cyclone, she is a bonding of natural elements.’⁸³ As she bound the boy’s severed arm to the rest of his body using the sash from her own robe (a poignant interpretation of the corresponding funeral scene in Euripides’ text) the discordant, now familiar, sound of the Samurai laughing invaded her lament.

Suzuki’s intra/intercultural approach to the ancient text can be further illustrated, for example, in his radical re-interpretation of the ‘Helen Episode’. In order to maintain a balanced alternation of lament and violence, Suzuki rearranged the order of Euripides’ scenes. In Scene 6, Hecuba and Andromache weep over their misfortune. Three Samurai enter the stage announcing the death of Astyanax, they force him from Andromache, rape her, and ritually kill the child. Next, the Old Woman laments over the body of the slaughtered Astyanax. Following these scenes, a dialogue occurs between Hecuba and Menelaus. Suzuki used selected phrases from Hecuba’s speech to express the essence of her feelings about Helen’s behaviour.⁸⁴ Helen never appears on the stage to defend herself and no *agon* follows. Instead, Menelaus reacted to the mere mentioning of Helen’s name with savage vindictiveness, embarking on a violent rampage and killing everyone onstage, including the Chorus of old men and women. Abruptly, a bamboo flute is heard signalling a change in time, the dead rise up and leave the stage along with the Samurai and the three men in black (representing ‘the fear of death’) who have been lingering on the outskirts of the scene. By eliminating the character of Helen, Suzuki reinforced his main theme that war is the sole responsibility

⁸³ Mel Gussow, ‘In Search of Adventure Off-Broadway’, *New York Times*, 21 May 1982.

⁸⁴ The synopsis in English sets scene: ‘The conqueror Menelaus enters with his servants to take back his spouse. The old woman reproaches her inconstancy and says: “Kill your wife, Menelaus, and I will bless your name. But keep your eyes away from Helen. Desire will win. She looks enchantment, and where she looks, homes are set on fire; she captures cities as she captures the eyes of men. We have had experience, you and I. We know the truth”’ (Programme, *Los Angeles Olympic Arts Festival production*, June 1984), p. 2.

of men. His choices suggested that while men may no longer go to war for the sake of beautiful women, wars continue to be fought for less than noble reasons. In this desolate world, conjecture and argument have no place and no impact. As a result, the audience was denied the intricacies, subtleties and irony of Euripides' *agon*, but gained an unforgettable experience of the often arbitrary atrocities of war.

The play ended as Andromache returned to the stage holding flowers for her son's funeral, but instead of placing them on the makeshift grave, she turns sharply to Jizo and throws the flowers at him. In a shocking moment, Jizo moves for the first time in almost ninety minutes; painstakingly slowly, he doubles over with an elongated grimace. As the audience focused on this spectacular controlled movement, a contemporary love song was played. Although some critics found this song to be distasteful, in many ways, this was a fitting, simple end to multi-layered production. The song, sung in Japanese and English, could not be ignored and brought the audience back into the present day.⁸⁵ The intrusion of the English language into a primarily Japanese environment represented a kind of final protest against the spoiling of the aesthetics of Japanese culture by the invasion of Western, particularly American, culture.

In order to support his effort to create an effective multi-temporal and multi-stylistic adaptation of Euripides' text, Suzuki was deeply dependent on the ability of his actors to facilitate these transitions. Like Serban, and indeed other avant-garde artists, most notably Brook and Barba, the success of his experiments was dependent and ultimately guaranteed by a rigorous training regime. This regime is well documented

⁸⁵ Ninagawa also used a modern song - 'the guitar music in the mode of modern pop folk, [...] it belongs to the Pepsi/Coke generation of Japan' - to begin his 1993 revival of *Medea* (Smethurst, p. 193).

elsewhere, in particular Suzuki's own work, *The Way of Acting: The Theatre Writings of Tadashi Suzuki* (1986) and *The Art of Stillness: The Theatre Practice of Tadashi Suzuki* by Paul Allain, but there are a few elements which are worthy of brief discussion in light of the other approaches to training discussed here. Serban's training primarily focused on teaching the actors to explore their full vocal ranges, enabling them to convey a foreign text (foreign even to themselves) through emotive sounds and energies. Training them physically was also important in order to maintain the active and varied energy of the production. Serban subscribed to the Brook method of bringing in experts in non-Western traditions to hold master-classes. Suzuki was also concerned with conveying meaning and emotion through a foreign text (foreign not to the actors, but to vast majority of audiences), however, his primary focus was to create a training programme to express his eclectic directing style.⁸⁶ Shiraishi's performance as the Old Woman not only demonstrated effective ways in which an actor could control and convey changes in time and character, but also sound and movement. She was capable of moments of surprising explosiveness and, seconds later, of complete stillness. Suzuki's emphasis on the training of the feet (an important element of *noh* and *kabuki* training lost in the attempt in Japanese theatre to imitate Western naturalism) was another example of how he culled his own cultural background for methods, abandoned by others, and adopted and adapted them for his own purposes.⁸⁷ In training, Suzuki used various exercises such as walking pigeon-toed, shuffling or stamping the feet,

⁸⁶ Barba, by contrast to Suzuki, was devoted to the process of discovering gesture and physical movement that could be commonly applied across cultures, essentially to abstract the body from a specific culture. He termed this 'theatre anthropology,' not in the sense of cultural anthropology or the anthropology of performance, but a 'new field of study applied to the human being in an organized performance situation'. For further discussion, see *Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology: The Secret Art of the Performer*, ed. by Eugenio Barba and Nicola Saverese (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 7.

⁸⁷ This training exercise is discussed at length in Suzuki's chapter 'The Grammar of Feet' in *The Way of Acting*, pp. 3-24.

walking on the inside of the feet or bowlegged or on the tips of the toes to create variation in the movement of characters dependent on their purpose in the piece. For example, Jizo's entrance walk was significant to his purpose as an aggravatingly immovable force in the play. Likewise, the chorus entered with a low duck walk, sliding their feet, and remain in a low crouching position for much of the play.⁸⁸ They moved 'sideways like crabs', creating striking tableaux and maintaining a contrast to the Old Woman's often upright stances.⁸⁹ In contrast to the star system or actor-manager tradition in early twentieth-century Western practice, these unique training practices and the effects in production, highlighted the myriad ways in which the director could exercise complete control over the ensemble experience and the production decisions.

The audiences who attended productions of Suzuki's *Trojan Women* performed around the world were privileged to witness in one sitting both a unique performance of a Greek tragedy and a play set in contemporary Japan. For the first time, the tragedy of Troy was personalised. To a Japanese audience member or a Westerner well educated in the traditional Japanese art forms, the complexity of Suzuki's 'collage' technique was challenging and exciting to follow. To a Westerner, unfamiliar with the Japanese language and unable to distinguish which elements were culled from *noh*, *kabuki* or other traditions, the set, costumes, music and acting styles of Suzuki's production appeared to be wholly Japanese. This unusual amalgamation of styles appealed to audiences, especially in Europe and America, who were growing accustomed to and increasingly welcoming of new cultural perspectives. The production was appreciated, as a Japanese cultural translation of a Western drama. Whether received by a Japanese

⁸⁸ Senda discusses Suzuki's use of this 'vulgar position' and argues that the technique is the 'very basis of his conception of the play' (pp. 49-52).

⁸⁹ Paul Allain, *The Art of Stillness: The Theatre Practice of Tadashi Suzuki* (London: Methuen, 2002), p.158.

or Western audience, it was the emotive power of the performers and the discipline with which they embodied their characters that conveyed Suzuki's strong universal message about the effect of war on the human, especially, the female spirit.

Although Suzuki appeared to stray far from the ancient version of *Trojan Women*, particularly by adding otherworldly elements such as the shamanistic Old Woman, and eliminating the character of Helen, he was able to bring a new sense of sacredness to the text: the characters of Euripides' story were received as deities to be called upon in times of trouble. In the words of one New York critic, Shiraishi's embodiment of Hecuba also called upon the spirit of the ancient Sybil: Her voice is 'harsh and guttural, not from her throat or chest but from caves that crawl with demons—a Delphic oracle who does not speak but is spoken through.'⁹⁰

⁹⁰ Roderick Mason Faber, 'From the Tornado's Eye', *Village Voice*, 4 June 1979.

CHAPTER FOUR

Agency and Aktualität Responses to the Holocaust in 1980s Israel and Germany

Das Vergangene ist nicht tot; es ist nicht einmal vergangen. [...] Wer die Schrecken verdrängt und leugnet, will sich einreden, daß es so schlimm nicht wieder kommen kann.
Christa Wolf (Programme Notes, *Die Troerinnen*, Munich, 1986)

Classical scholars in the twentieth century, on the whole, have interpreted the conclusion of *Trojan Women* as utterly without hope. This is the case, in part, because the scholar himself, like the theatre artist, is also prone to a conscious or unconscious feeling of hopelessness during or after war. For example, Gilbert Murray, as discussed in Chapter One, writing his commentary after the Boer War, argued that the ‘movement’ of the play was expressed through the ‘gradual extinguishing of all the familiar lights of human life’.¹ These ‘lights’ were metaphorical, representing the spirits of the conquered women and an ever-illusory hope that the city could be rebuilt and prosper again. In 1941, at the height of World War Two, classicist G.M.A. Grube was convinced that the future of the Trojan women was foretold from the beginning: ‘The play ends without any lightening of the gloom, without any relief to the horrors of war, without any promise of a better day.’² In 1976, with the threat of nuclear annihilation always looming, K.H. Lee, who produced a commentary on the play, suggested (as Sartre did in 1965) that the play has a ‘particular significance for our time with its memories of two wars and fears of a third, still more

¹ Murray (1905), p. 5.

² G.M. A. Grube, *The Drama of Euripides* (London: Methuen, 1941), p. 296.

terrible'.³ Adrian Poole, in the same year, proclaimed that the play was not only about 'the end of a world [...], but written *out of* a consciousness of final disintegration'.⁴ He ends his article with 'the recognition that what war involves is exactly the *real possibility* of the sort of total obliteration invoked by *onoma de gas aphanes eisin*, the name of the land will vanish. Right now, for instance'.⁵ These bleak and fearful Cold War sentiments were expressed powerfully by Lysistrata in the poet Tony Harrison's *The Common Chorus*, who, along with other like-minded women, protests the storage of American cruise missiles at Greenham Common: 'In the Third World War we'll destroy/not only modern cities but the memory of Troy,/stories that shaped the spirit of our race/are held in the balance in this missile base.'⁶

Another scholar, D. L. Conacher, writing in 1967, provided one of the few exceptions to the scholarly consensus. In arguing for the play's role as the last of a 'trilogy',⁷ he suggested that the 'tragic idea' (as H.D.F. Kitto had termed it in 1939) of the play was dependent on a certain rhythm, a continual cycle of rising hope and desolation, which informs and provides unity to the structure of the episodes.⁸ He acknowledges a 'sombre conclusion' to the play, yet a 'tragic understanding, which is wiser than hope and despair, is reached' at the end; ultimately, the reader/audience 'gains an impression of

³ K. H. Lee, *Troades*, 2nd edn (London: Bristol Classical Texts, 1997), Preface.

⁴ Adrian Poole, 'Total Disaster: Euripides' *The Trojan Women*', *Arion*, n.s. 3 (1976), p. 258 (author's italics and Greek quotation).

⁵ *ibid.*, p. 285 (his italics).

⁶ Tony Harrison, *Plays 4: The Oresteia, The Common Chorus (Parts I and II)*, p. 242. Neither Part I (*Lysistrata*) nor Part II (*Trojan Women*) have been professionally performed, see pp. 185-98.

⁷ D. J. Conacher, *Euripidean Drama: Myth, Theme and Structure* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), p.138f. The publication of the *Palamedes* fragments in 1966 may have influenced or encouraged the renewed discussion of the place of *Trojan Women* in the trilogy. See below for further discussion of the debate.

⁸ *ibid.*, p. 139.

human triumph over suffering and evil'.⁹ Conacher reminds us that an enduring theme of the play is one of remembrance: 'Yet even here there is something more than mere desolation: Troy's greatness.'¹⁰ In the final scene, the Trojan women are not wholly concerned with the end of all life, or even the new lives before them, but instead worry for the loved ones they will have to leave behind and for the fate of their city: who will remember the name of Troy, how will Troy live on in history? At 1242f, Hecuba realises that despite recent events, the experiences of her fellow women and the story of the fall of Troy will provide material for many songs to come. She laments over the body of Astyanax, the last hope of rebuilding Troy:

εἰ δὲ μὴ θεὸς
ἔστρεψε τάνω περιβαλὼν κάτω χθονός
ἀφανεῖς ἂν ὄντες οὐκ ἂν ὑμνήθημεν ἂν
μοῦσαις ἀοιδὰς δόντες ὑστέρων Βροτῶν.

[But if the divinity had not overturned things, putting what was above ground below, we would have been unknown and not have been sung of, nor provided a theme for song to the Muses of men to come.]

As she returns to the distraught and prostrate state of her opening *threnody*, the women of the Chorus display their devotion to their loved ones and their city. Unlike Hecuba, the Chorus have lamented that the gods have forsaken the city (1071-80)¹¹ and the name of Troy will be forever forgotten (1291-92, 1319). At 1298, they despair that Troy, 'like smoke upon a following breeze/ our land, fallen to the spear, wastes away'; the *ὄνομα* of Troy will be lost forever: *ὄνομα δὲ γὰρ ἀφανὲς εἶσιν ἄλλαι δ' ἄλλο φρουῶν, οὐδ'*

⁹ *ibid.*, p. 19.

¹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 145. Earlier in the play, Cassandra proclaims that the name and reputation of Hector will endure because of the Greek attack on Troy (394f.).

¹¹ For discussion of this ode, see Anne P. Burnett, 'Trojan Women and the Ganymede Ode', *Yale Classical Studies*, 25 (1997), 291-316.

ἔτ' ἔστιν ἅ τάλαινα Τροία ('The land's name shall be wiped out! In one place/one thing, in another another vanishes away,/and poor Troy is no more!', 1322). Fortunately for us, Euripides does his part to immortalise the story of the Trojan war; not to mention the good fortune that the play itself survived through the ages.¹² Each time the play is performed, the *ὄνομα* of Troy and her women is remembered and celebrated.

The issue of remembrance in relation to the experience of war survivors is inextricably linked to the effort to rebuild broken lives, to revive or recreate identities and to reconcile the psychological effects of being a victim. These are personal struggles to which Euripides refers, in Andromache's speech (660-83), for example. Some of the most complex and distressing examples of the struggle to come to terms with the effects of war, and with the rebuilding of personal lives as well as entire states, can be identified within the context of the worldwide response to the Holocaust. The Holocaust and the conclusion of World War Two reinforced countless oppositional relationships. In the aftermath of the war, there were not simply victors and victims (both civilian and military) in battle, but also perpetrators of heinous crimes, their victims, and their rescuers, and those who became aggressors of a different kind by dropping the atom bomb. Reactions to the Holocaust have divided nations and highlighted the disjunction between personal experience and governmental policies. Whole communities struggled to understand the atrocities of the Third Reich so that it could never happen again, to the Jews or any one, to reconstruct or rewrite history with respect to a particular country's involvement or participation in the event, and ultimately, to make amends for the mass murders of

¹² For manuscript tradition, see Gunther Zuntz, *An Inquiry into the Transmission of the Plays of Euripides*

European Jewry. The issue of human responsibility dominated these community discussions.

In the 1920s and 30s the collective consciousness of Europe and America was publicly preoccupied with the carnage of Passchendaele and the Somme. In contrast, the Holocaust was too shocking and painful to remember; thus any processing of the event was generally repressed during the late 1940s and 50s. For instance Primo Levi's memoirs *Se questo è un uomo* and Robert Antelme's *L'espèce humaine* (both published in small editions in 1947) came to be seen as creating a new literary genre only after reissues in 1957 and 1958 respectively. As discussed in relation to Tadashi Suzuki's production in Chapter Three, a similar delayed reaction occurred with respect to the after-shock of the atom bomb in Japan. Forty years after the event, many, including theatre artists, started to confront the facts of Hitler's 'Final Solution'. In Israel, West and East Germany, countries most directly affected and conflicted by the legacy of the Holocaust, significant productions of *Trojan Women* emerge only in the 1980s. Since the political and social responses to the atrocities in the concentration camps affected each country differently and these countries were obliged in some form to interact with and confront each other over the issue, the story of *Trojan Women* provided a unique forum in which to engage with these complex and controversial responses. To understand the ways in which *Trojan Women* shed new light on the Holocaust experience, it is necessary to explore the extent to which personal responses (of the director, creative team, critics and audience), informed either by actual personal experience of the Holocaust or in reaction to political or social approaches to processing the

aftermath of the atrocity, affected the production decisions of each revival of the ancient play. Five influential productions—directed by George Tabori (West Germany: 1976 and 1985), Christoph Schroth (East Germany: 1982 to 1984), Holk Freytag (Israel: 1983), and Hanoch Levin (Israel: 1984)—will serve as models for discussion.

During the years following the liberation of Auschwitz in 1945, remembering the Holocaust was an enterprise complicated by contradictions, propaganda and conflicting views exchanged through the public, religious groups, and international governments.¹³ For survivors, remembering their experiences was essential to keeping alive the spirit of their loved ones who had been murdered by the Nazis, but forgiveness or reconciliation would never be possible. In an Afterword for a book about the legacy of the Holocaust, the writer, Eli Wiesel declared, ‘Forty years after the Holocaust, I can speak about memory. But not about Versöhnung, or reconciliation.’ Wiesel held a strong conviction that the ‘task given to the Jewish people’ was to be the ‘gatekeepers of memory’. ‘We remember the past for the sake of the future,’ he wrote, because the ‘future brings thoughts of fear: the world has not been punished for what it has done to the Jewish people, and to itself, for there is no punishment.’ Claiming that the world could never escape the guilt of its slow intervention, he offered this solution: ‘The only conceivable punishment, I believe, would be the destruction of the planet, which naturally we would hope to prevent.’¹⁴ Indeed, in America, where many Holocaust survivors fled, issues over Soviet testing of nuclear and

¹³ For a comprehensive analysis of Nazi destruction of the European Jews, see Raul Hilberg, *The Politics of Memory: The Journey of a Holocaust Historian* (Chicago: Dee, 1996).

¹⁴ All quotes from Elie Wiesel, ‘Afterword: On Memory and Reconciliation’ in *The Jewish Legacy and the German Conscience: Essays in Memory of Rabbi Joseph Asher*, ed. by Moses Ruschin and Raphael Asher (Berkeley: Judah L. Magnes Museum, 1991), p. 327-31.

thermonuclear weapons, bomb-shelter mania, the Cuban missile crisis and general fear of nuclear proliferation, often overshadowed any discussion of the atrocities of the concentration camps.¹⁵ In addition, the assassinations of the Kennedy brothers and Martin Luther King, and the Civil Rights Movement, combined with the conflicts in Vietnam and the Cold War, continually shifted the focus away from any considerable response to the murder of the European Jews. These complex issues prevailed for many years after the war was concluded with the effect that the Holocaust became symbolic of an era that had just ended, and the nuclear threat represented a more immediate concern, the present and the future.

14. George Tabori/Mattias Braun
Die Troerinnen
Theater am Goetheplatz
Bremen (Federal German Republic)
1976

The issue of national identity and its effect on the response to remembering or downplaying the Holocaust was deeply ingrained in the post-war environment of a divided Germany. It took nearly 40 years for the Germans to begin to tackle the issue of the Holocaust, which was for Jews and non-Jews alike, a taboo subject. Individuals sought to create distance between themselves and the Nazi regimes, while at the same time struggling with the guilt imposed by Israel. Individuals who had not suffered the Holocaust also had to cope as survivors of a war in which family members were killed or captured and a high proportion of civilians lost their lives or their homes; many Germans 'identified themselves

¹⁵ For a discussion of the responses to the Holocaust in America, see Peter Novick, *The Holocaust and*

as, or associated themselves with, historical victims'.¹⁶ One of the turning points in the response to the Holocaust in West Germany occurred in January 1979 following the premiere of *Holocaust*, an American film for television. The film, which was subsequently made compulsory in schools, sparked a public 'sort of awakening; it illuminated retrospectively the character and extent of post-war denial, of how much had been repressed physically [...].'¹⁷ The piece stirred up feelings of both horror and shame, and focused on the question of whether many Germans had known about the Holocaust and other Nazi crimes against humanity during the war. Most Germans found it difficult to accept the idea of collective guilt or complicity in these crimes, and this guilt was inseparable from the search for a new German national identity and a demand for a revision of German history. The traumatic experience of the collapse of the National Socialist system, military defeat, and large scale atrocities committed by the regime caused people to retreat into silence.¹⁸

The West German government (Federal Republic) struggled to make reparations, to implement a widespread denazification programme, to oust former Nazis from official positions, and to bring perpetrators to justice in their courts (a difficult task as many had fled or significant evidence was not available because their victims were dead). Up until

Collective Memory (London: Bloomsbury, 1999).

¹⁶ Moishe Postone, 'After the Holocaust: History and Identity in West Germany' in *Coping with the Past: Germany and Austria after 1945*, ed. by Kathy Harms, Lutz R. Reuter, and Volker Dürr (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), pp. 233-51 (p. 234).

¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 237.

¹⁸ Wolfgang Mommsen, 'The Germans and Their Past: History and Political Consciousness in the Federal Republic of Germany' in *Coping with the Past: Germany and Austria after 1945*, ed. by Kathy Harms, Lutz R. Reuter, and Volker Dürr (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), pp. 252-69 (p. 253).

then, the goal after war was ‘normalcy at all costs [...] without dealing with the past’.¹⁹ These efforts were often overshadowed by the fact that the international role of West Germany, rebuilding rapidly from its devastating defeat, switched quickly from enemy to ally in the Cold War against the Soviet Union. During the 1950s and 1960s, the emphasis shifted away from German national guilt for Nazi crimes towards the new totalitarian threat from the Soviet bloc. The Nazis and the Communist regimes were often compared. One historian, Ernst Nolte even argued that Hitler’s policy was a defensive one: ‘Hitler was impelled by knowledge of the atrocities purportedly committed by the Bolsheviks beginning in 1917, and by the fear that they were planning an “asiatic deed”—ie. extermination—against the Germans. Therefore, he exterminated the Jews’.²⁰ Thus, in many ways, it has been argued, the Cold War was a continuation of World War Two: ‘A struggle against a transcendent enemy, totalitarianism, first in its Nazi, then its Soviet version.’²¹ Stalin had replaced Hitler as the perpetrator of war crimes. Seeking to create distance between its Nazi past and its future with Western allies, the Federal Republic’s foreign policy aimed for neutrality towards Israel during the Middle East conflicts of the 1960s and 70s, and at the same time as attempting to repair relations with the Arab countries, provided arms to Israel and admitted responsibility for Nazi atrocities by paying retributions to concentration camp survivors.

In terms of literary responses to the Holocaust, the victorious allied nations brought forth novels, plays and films celebrating the military prowess of their heroes and also

¹⁹ Postone, p. 238.

²⁰ Ernst Nolte in ‘Vergangenheit, die nicht vergehen will’, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 6 June 1986, cited in Postone, p. 241.

depicted them as rescuers of the Jews. By contrast, in the two Germanys, writers and artists and, those writing for the West German theatre in particular, attempted to understand the roots of Fascism, to wrestle with the horrors of the war, and to express sorrow over the suffering of all of Europe. Many playwrights, including Hochwälder and Dürrenmatt, were unable to represent the horrors within the structure of a conventional theatre piece and looked to the mythological past for parables; the result was often an expression of grotesque depictions of the world around them. Others, including Rolf Hochhuth, used morality plays as a medium in which to ask challenging questions about individual responsibility in an atomic age. The alternative was a kind of documentary drama (for example by Peter Weiss) that dealt with the question of guilt and displayed a deep scepticism about the power of art to change anything.

Theatre practitioners also returned to the ancient classics, making a concerted effort to rescue them from National Socialism which had tainted them. Rainer Schlösser, the Reichsdramaturg, wrote in 1934: 'Is there *any* historic material which would not be given a totally new face when advanced into the light of our natural and legitimate myth of blood and honour?'²² For example, *The Oresteia* was produced as Nazi self-promotion when the 11th Olympic Games were held in Berlin in August 1936. Sophocles' plays proved popular in the 1940-41 season in Italo-German occupied Greece.²³ *Antigone*, a staple of pre-war repertory, was admired on 'Aryanized' stages in Nazi Germany. The Jewish theatre,

²¹ Novick, p. 86.

²² Rainer Schlösser, 'Vom Kommenden Volksschauspiel: der Reichsdramaturg über Grundlagen und Umriss des Dramas im neuen Staat', *Völkischer Beobachter*, 26 January 1934 (his emphasis), quoted in Glen Gadberry, 'The History Plays of the Third Reich' in *Theatre under the Nazis*, ed. by John London (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 96-135 (p. 97).

²³ John London, 'Non-German drama in the Third Reich' in *Theatre under the Nazis*, ed. by John London

although they were forbidden to produce contemporary plays, were given the freedom to perform ancient texts; Nazi censorship often considerably altered the production scripts used for performance.²⁴ During and after the end of the war, *Trojan Women* (*Die Troerinnen*) in translations and adaptations by Franz Werfel (Kassel: 1946, Hamburg: 1947, München: 1986), Mattias Braun (Berlin: 1958, Bremen: 1976), Sartre (Göttingen: 1968, Schwerin: 1982), and Walter Jens (Hamburg: 1983, München: 1985), was the most performed Euripidean play and one of the most performed of all Greek tragedies, ranking closely behind Sophocles' *Antigone* and *König Oedipus*, and Aeschylus' *Orestie*.²⁵

In his introduction to a series of essays entitled *Staging the Holocaust* (1998), Claude Schumacher discusses some parameters for playwrights who attempt to respond to the Holocaust:

I shall venture to argue that the successful Shoah drama or performance is one that disturbs, offers no comfort, advances no solution; it is a play that leaves the reader or spectator perplexed, wanting to know more although convinced that no knowledge can ever cure him of this perplexity. It must be a play that generates stunned silence.²⁶

The production history of Shoah plays reveal that most productions that have attempted to respond directly to the horrors of the Holocaust, and even those in which the subject matter has been re-examined and filtered through another text such as *Trojan Women*, have been

(Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 222-261 (p. 233).

²⁴ For example, substantial cuts were made in Haemon-Creon dialogue. In the Kulturbund script, the 'lines were reworded to keep the original meaning and crossed out. Lines unfavourable to the king were cut altogether'. See Rebecca Rovit, 'Jewish Theatre: Repertory and Censorship in the Jüdischer Kulturbund, Berlin' in *Theatre under the Nazis*, ed. by John London (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 187-221 (p. 208f).

²⁵ For a discussion of classical plays on the German stage, see Helmut Flashar, *Inszenierung der Antike : das griechische Drama auf der Bühne der Neuzeit 1585-1990* (Munich: Beck, 1991). For a full production list, see p. 395ff.

²⁶ *Staging the Holocaust: The Shoah in Drama and Performance*, ed. by Claude Schumacher (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 8 (Shoah is the Hebrew word for Holocaust).

received with outrage. This outrage is often dictated by the audience member's personal opinions about or experiences of the Holocaust, which are triggered by specific production decisions.

In the Federal Republic, the issue of national guilt compelled many Jewish theatre artists to continually remind German audiences of their responsibilities. There were a few theatre practitioners who aimed for a different response: for example, György Tábóri (George Tabori, b. 1914-), a Jewish Hungarian-born director, who committed himself to making the theatrical experience a form of remembering.²⁷ In *Staging the Holocaust*, Schumacher questions whether the theatre can 'provide the artefact that will help the spectator towards a better "grasp" of the Holocaust' and asserts that the Holocaust was a 'event of such magnitude that no play text or theatrical performance can hope to get anywhere near the truth'.²⁸ Through his two experimental productions of *Die Troerinnen* (1976, 1985), which re-enact disturbing scenes of Holocaust horror and which many Germans, and Jews (especially survivors), could not bear to witness, Tabori proved that there was great merit to helping the spectator find a 'better grasp' of the Holocaust and to bring new understanding about the strength of the human spirit coping with adversity, an element central to Euripides' text.

Tabori began his career as an international journalist based in London, spent a majority of his career working in Hollywood as a screenwriter, and relocated to Germany in

²⁷ See Anat Feinberg, *Embodied Memory: The Theatre of George Tabori* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1999). See also Anat Feinberg, 'George Tabori's mourning work in Jubilaeum', in *Staging the Holocaust: The Shoah in Drama and Performance*, ed. by Claude Schumacher (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 267-80, and Anat Feinberg, *George Tabori*, DTV Portrait Series (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbach, 2003).

²⁸ Schumacher, pp. 3-4.

1969. He was one of the few directors to introduce to West Germany experimental theatre of the kind which had been celebrated for nearly a decade elsewhere. Based on his first-hand experience and training at Lee Strasberg's Actors Studio in New York,²⁹ Tabori went against the trend in Germany of the *Regie-Theater* ('director's theatre') by attempting to promote a *Schauspieler-Theater* ('actor's theatre'). To this end, he founded the ensemble, Theaterlabor, at the Theater der Freien Hansestadt in Bremen (1976). Peter von Becker called him one of the most original directors in Germany,³⁰ but his directorial and rehearsal method was essentially culled and adapted from various European and American theatrical models in order to express his proclivity towards nightmarish renderings of the classics. His directorial projects, as described by one of his biographers, Anat Feinberg, generally consisted of a 'deliberately provocative examination of the complex relationship between victim and victimizer' and an 'imaginative, nuanced probing of human conduct in extreme situations (*Grenzsituationen*)'.³¹

Tabori premiered his first production of *Die Troerinnen*, one of his earliest experimental productions with the Theaterlabor ensemble, on 14 April 1976.³² Adapting a style similar to some of the avant-garde productions discussed in Chapter Three, he avoided use of any visual references to ancient world or hints of the ancient *skene*. Instead, the environment was stark, bright and clinical, and distinctly similar to the set for Klaus

²⁹ Tabori observed the production of theatre while his second wife, Swedish actress Viveca Lindfors, was training there in 1953 (Feinberg, p. 31).

³⁰ Peter von Becker, *Theatre Heute*, (June 1978), 15.

³¹ Feinberg, p. 95. For example, his interpretation of *Hamlet* (1978) was set in a vast isolated snow-scape with a lone telephone booth in the middle in which Hamlet could only receive calls, not make them, and he was not able to open the door from the inside.

³² Although this first production falls outside the parameters of this chapter's time period, I include it here because Tabori's directorial choices for this production significantly influence his second production in 1985.

Micheal Grüber's *Bacchae* (Berlin Schaubühne 1974), in which Dionysos was pushed onto a bare stage lying on a hospital trolley and wearing only a g-string.³³ The stage of the Theater am Goetheplatz (designed by Veronika Dorn) was transformed into a post-modern waiting room: the walls were painted green, the floor was covered in fabric and varnished white, and at the back of the stage could be seen a wash basin, mirror, lamp, and towel. The ceiling had a low roof of frosted glass and the stage was strewn with garbage cans.

The play began with a text-less twenty-minute prelude in which the women of Troy were brutally handled by soldiers dressed in the camouflage uniforms of German paratroopers.³⁴ At first, a group of women are revealed to be handcuffed to the wall, wearing only bloodied combat uniforms. Their heads are shorn, their eyes bandaged, and their bodies turned away from the centre of the space. Through an open door, soldiers drag in another woman, who actively resists them; she is also blindfolded with a black bandage. The men rip off her mourning dress and undergarments leaving her helplessly naked. They then force her into a blood-splattered coat of a dead soldier and her hair is shorn over a garbage bin. The bandages of the other women are removed and their clothing, high heeled shoes and shorn hair are placed in the centre of the stage. In the midst of these molested and injured women emerges a red haired Helena wearing a heavily embroidered dress with golden sandals. While the last Trojan woman is subjected to a head shearing, Helena sits silently before a mirror vainly combing her 'Feuermähne' (flaming-mane) and fixing her

³³ See Erika Fischer-Lichte, 'Thinking about the Origins of Theatre in the 1970s', in *D69*, pp. 329-60.

³⁴ Descriptions of stage action in this paragraph taken from Rolf Michaelis's detailed account of the production choices, unless otherwise noted: *Theater Heute* (June 1976), 33-38.

make-up.³⁵ This additional prologue, similar to the effect of Michael Cacoyannis's cinematic prologue, contrasts in tone with the Euripidean prologue in which Poseidon and Athene decide that the hubristic actions of the Greek victors will be punished. Although Tabori clearly sought to re-present *Trojan Women* as an exploration of contemporary victimisation and suffering,³⁶ the specific activity of this wordless prologue also undeniably recalls a Holocaust scene: the head-shaving, for example, or when the soldiers jam open the mouths of their victims to look for gold fillings. These images provoked and baffled the German audience in Bremen to such an extent that a good number of them left the theatre during the prologue terrified and disgusted.³⁷

Since Tabori lost most of his family, including his father, in Auschwitz, it is not surprising that, as a survivor (though he personally never lived in a concentration camp), he was attracted to *Die Troerinnen* and found in it raw material (in Mattias Braun's considerably adapted version, 1957³⁸) which could enable him to come to grips with his own feelings about the Holocaust. From the production evidence, it is clear that his aim with *Die Troerinnen* was to present an extreme situation of human cruelty and human suffering similar to that of the Holocaust. Tabori's personal response to the atrocities of the Holocaust is also complicated by his engagement with the Jewish faith, 'one of the most

³⁵ This is a poignant visualisation of the image of Helen indulging herself in front of a golden mirror imagined by the Chorus at 1107-09. See Ra'anana Meridor, 'Plot and Myth in Euripides' *Hecuba* and *Troades*', *Phoenix*, 38 (1984), 205-15 (p. 211) for discussion of significance of the mirror to her escape from punishment.

³⁶ Michaelis discusses the context of Sartre's adaptation and comments that these women could be seen as Russian or German immigrant workers, or Vietnamese, Algerian, or Angolan women (p. 34).

³⁷ These reactions of outrage were symptomatic of Tabori's work in Bremen. See Feinberg, p. 98.

³⁸ Braun is a seminal figure in the modern adaptation of Greek drama, particularly politically charged adaptations. For example, he inserted explicit contemporary politics into the texts of several Greek tragedies, including *Medea* and *The Persians* (1960). In the latter, for example, he represented Xerxes as a Hitler figure

complex, unresolved aspects of his personality', according to Feinberg.³⁹ Born in Budapest a month before Archduke Ferdinand was assassinated in Sarajevo, Tabori grew up with a Catholic mother and a lapsed Jewish father who, as a journalist, had accompanied the Archduke on the day he was killed. Both he and his brother were baptized, never celebrated a Bar Mitzvah, attended Protestant schools, and generally remained indifferent to Jewish life and the Zionist agenda. "One doesn't gradually become a Jew", he said in an interview for *Jüdische Portraits*, "one is reminded by the others that one is a Jew. [...] But Fascism in Germany and in Hungary prodded me to realize that I am a Jew. [...] This is my most important experience".⁴⁰ His attitude towards Israel is inconsistent. For example, in 1940, he concealed his Hungarian Jewish origins so that he could work under the alias George Turner for BBC radio in Jerusalem. Two years later, he married his first wife, Hannah Freund, a German Zionist working for the British Secret Service, living in Palestine. During the Six Day War in 1967, he celebrated when the Israelis took Jerusalem, yet later openly criticised Israeli aggression in the region: "Auschwitz was in a way the last Judaic gesture. Salvation through suffering", he said, "the alternative is what Israel is doing now."⁴¹ It is this engagement with the debate over the role of Israelis as both victims and aggressors that informs Tabori's interpretation of *Die Troerinnen*.

Tabori's concept of *Die Troerinnen* was also, in part, influenced by one of his early original plays, *The Cannibals*,⁴² a play about inmates of a concentration camp who are

and Susa as the capital of the Third Reich. See Flashar, p. 206.

³⁹ Feinberg, p. 13.

⁴⁰ Quoted in Feinberg, p. 14.

⁴¹ *ibid.*, p. 15. See her introductory chapter for a fuller discussion of Tabori's engagement with the Jewish faith.

⁴² *The Cannibals* premiered in New York in 1968, produced by the American Place Company and

faced with the choice between eating their dead friend, Puffi, starving to death, or dying in the gas chamber.⁴³ The New York production received mostly lukewarm reviews by the American press, with the exception of Walter Kerr of the *New York Times*, who described Tabori's Holocaust play as 'so single-minded, so relentless, so hysterically eager to hurt'.⁴⁴ Ironically, for a man whose wife claimed he would not set foot on German soil or buy German products (a conviction many American Jews advocated), *The Cannibals* was more of a success in Berlin than in America and was Tabori's first real success as a playwright. Unlike any Holocaust-themed play before, the play focused on the moral and ethical dilemma of the victims: 'these victims were depicted neither as saints nor faultless martyrs'. The play also inaugurated Tabori's experimentations with 'theatre as a locus for remembrance (*Gedächtnisort*), where the past can be 'evoked, retrieved, relived, reflected upon' in the present.⁴⁵ Like many survivors, Tabori could not bring himself to talk to anyone about the war or about family members who had died, but he was able to express himself through his own original works and the plays he directed; *The Cannibals* represented his feelings of frustration and loss. 'What matters', Tabori wrote about the cannibals, 'is the manner of their dying. Their resistance, the affirmation of their humanity, was, I believe, wholly efficacious'.⁴⁶ This theme was reinforced seven years later, in *Die Troerinnen*, when he tackled the idea of the moral and ethical dilemma of the Holocaust perpetrators; his sympathy, however, still lies with the victims.

subsequently performed at St Clemens Church, and in Berlin, December 1969 at the Schiller-Theater, Werkstatt.

⁴³ See Flashar, p. 249f.

⁴⁴ Feinberg, p. 197.

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, p. 200.

⁴⁶ Quoted in Feinberg, p. 200.

Tabori's approach to visualising the horrors of the Holocaust event through an artistic lens, particularly by using violence and re-enacting murder Nazi style on stage, deliberately challenged the parameters or taboos created by critics and historians of the Holocaust. His method was in direct contrast with the theories of critics, especially Theodor Adorno (1903-1969) who argued:

By being neutralized and processed, traditional culture in its entirety becomes insignificant [...]. Cultural criticism exists in confrontation with the final level of the dialectic of culture and barbarism: to write a poem after Auschwitz is barbaric, and that also gnaws at the knowledge which states why it has become impossible to write poems today.⁴⁷

Many critics have since reduced Adorno's thoughts on the subject to the famous aphorism, 'to write a poem after Auschwitz is barbaric'. Certainly, the application of this idea to all arts, including theatre, if it had been adhered to, would have severely limited the creative freedom of playwrights and directors. According to Adorno's principle, critics suggested that the Holocaust was a unique un-representable event which should not 'logically lend itself to conventional dramatic representation'.⁴⁸ Friedrich Dürrenmatt, for example, contended that the conventional theatrical modes of tragedy and melodrama were now insufficient for representing the horrors of the twentieth century; an idea which inspired many of the avant-garde experiments (as discussed in Chapter Three). In response to Holocaust theatre, however, Dürrenmatt refuses to 'relinquish the didactic and social function of theatre, but concedes that audiences would never tolerate productions that present the violence and horrors of this century in an illusionistic manner', he suggests that

⁴⁷ Theodor Adorno, *Kulturkritik und Gesellschaft I: Prismen. Ohne Leitbild* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1955), pp. 11-30 (p. 30), quoted in *Yale Companion to Jewish Writing and Thought in German Culture 1096-1996*, ed. by Sander Gilman and Jack Zipes (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), p. 691.

⁴⁸ Edward Isser, *Stages of Annihilation: Theatrical Representations of the Holocaust* (Madison: Associated

comedies should be produced instead.⁴⁹ Robert Skloot, a Holocaust scholar, has suggested even more limiting parameters for authors who wanted to write about Hitler's 'Final Solution'. He advocated that playwrights should be committed to honouring the victims, teaching history to the audiences, evoking emotional responses, discussing ethical issues, and suggesting solutions to universal, contemporary problems'.⁵⁰ He rejects the 'notion of universality in Holocaust representation' and insists that 'authors must present the suffering of the Jews as a unique historical (and theological, political and social) event and not merely as an extraordinary occurrence because that may rob the event of a significance and meaning which most survivors and many artists have claimed for it'.⁵¹ Many playwrights have rejected the notion that the Holocaust was somehow a unique occurrence in Western history. However these parameters had an effect on some playwrights who gingerly tackled the subject of the Holocaust by sanitising the event, transforming the horror into something sublime, portraying the Jews as innocent sacrificial victims or as long-suffering tragic figures. Alternatively, as suggested by Arthur Miller's *Incident at Vichy*, playwrights attempted to exonerate the guilt of their audience by portraying onstage the heroism of 'righteous gentiles' who sacrificed themselves for Jewish people.⁵² Tabori, on the other hand, refused to be limited by these arguments and claimed that 'there are taboos that must be broken or they will continue to choke us'.⁵³ He was committed to showing the resilience

University Press, 1997) p. 13.

⁴⁹ Cited in Isser, p. 17.

⁵⁰ Robert Skloot, *The Darkness We Carry: The Drama of the Holocaust* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), p. 10.

⁵¹ *ibid.*

⁵² Isser, p. 14.

⁵³ Quoted in Feinberg, p. 265.

of humanity placed in an extreme state; *Trojan Women* served as an effective forum for this purpose.

Like many avant-garde directors, the text was secondary for Tabori, though not unimportant, and served to inspire his directorial vision. For example, in his *Die Troerinnen*, Tabori transposes a textual detail—Poseidon’s confirmation of the defilement of Cassandra at the temple of Athene (οἶδ’ ἤνικ’ Αἴας εἶλκε Κασσάνδραν βίαι, ‘Yes: it was when Ajax dragged Cassandra off by force’, 70)—into an image of a raped princess with blood running down her bare legs under an over-large white shirt. Other reinterpretations of Euripides’ text include his interpretation of the character of Helen, described by the critic Rolf Michaelis as ‘die Schöne als die Stumme (Dumme)’ (‘the beautiful one as the mute one (stupid one)’)⁵⁴—played in Bremen by the Parisian dancer, Alpheia. According to Michaelis, amongst the shorn heads of the downtrodden Trojans, Tabori’s Helena stands out like a ‘geschmücktes Altarbild’ (‘A decorated picture on the altar’), justifiably warranting Hecuba’s charge at 1022. However, unlike in Euripides’ text, there is no *agon* in which both Helen and Hecuba can debate Helen’s culpability. *Logos* is denied to Helena; she remains completely speechless. Instead, and with the cruellest irony since he will soon be killed by the Greeks, the young Astyanax (played by a mature female actress, Ursula Höpfner—also Tabori’s third wife), seated at the feet of Hekuba (Ingeborg Engelmann), speaks Helena’s defence, meanwhile she stood mutely bored in the background cradling her mirror. This transference of the defence speech from a woman, who in Euripides’ text uses her *logos* to persuade her husband to spare her life, to a young

⁵⁴ Michaelis, p. 36.

child, who is mute in the original play, has the effect of enhancing Helena's haughty beauty and magnifying the horrifying victimisation of the boy later in the play.

Tabori does not simply reduce Helena in a decorative character, she is also a victim. At one point during the 'Abschieds-Dinner' ('Farewell Dinner'), Menelaos (Horst Fassel) tears the white cloth off the table, and puts the wine stained cloth 'wie einen Hochzeitsschleier' ('like a wedding veil') close over Helen's head, strangling her as she struggles. This action disturbingly foreshadows the method used to kill Astyanax later in the play. The onstage death of Astyanax is a terrifying and vivid portrayal of a sterile murder of the kind, perhaps, which might have taken place in a Nazi death camp. Two neat well dressed officials enter the stage, wash their hands in the sink at the back of the stage with sterile precision like doctors about to perform surgery, drying their hands calmly and ceremonially.⁵⁵ They approach Astyanax from behind on tiptoe, then rapidly tie a table cloth over his head, strangling him. As he struggles, one of the men holds him down by the neck. In this way, Menelaos demonstrates his power and his willingness to use extreme violence. He is a visibly war-torn version of the ancient character: an older man in modern, embroidered military dress, decorated excessively with medals, his left hand is crippled and kept rigid and out of sight in a black glove, and his face is disfigured by gruesome burns. When he enters the stage he thoroughly examines the 'spoils' he has acquired, though they cannot see him as their eyes are bandaged. At the table, he strokes one woman on the head, another he feeds tiny bites of food, treating his enemies 'mit einer durch Beiläufigkeit geschärften Brutalität' ('with brutality exacerbated by its casualness'). He force-feeds

⁵⁵ A similar chilling scene occurs between Laurence Olivier's Nazi dentist, 'Dr Christian Szell' (a.k.a. the

Kassandra (Brigitte Kahn) a large handful of meat and noodles (she throws them up in an act of defiance) and violently presses the head of Andromache (Evelyn Hamann) into her plate full of food, cruelly holding her there.⁵⁶

The addition of the ‘Abscheids-Dinner’ is significant as the act of communal dining is an important feature of Jewish living, and the reference to Christ’s Last Supper was obvious. The meal is arranged by Talthybios who is portrayed as a civil administrator in a pin-striped business suit. To a much greater extent than Euripides’ portrayal of the conflicted Talthybios, Tabori’s ‘Herold’ attempts to assuage his own guilt for the terrible messages he must deliver by trying to make the lives of the Trojans as pleasant as possible given the circumstances. He invites the captured women, still wearing only their oversized soiled Gestapo-like trench coats and still blindfolded, to sit at a long table set with bottles of red wine and silver trays full of meat. Despite Talthybios’ apparent kindness, the dinner is in fact an unusual kind of torture. It is a shocking scene primarily because of the implications of the final meal: there is no future ahead for these women, and given how they were treated at the very beginning of the play, there is little indication that what comes next will not be simple servitude. Menelaos’ behaviour goes further to emphasise the ‘antimilitarische’ theme: he reasserts military power and negates, indeed insults, whatever small positive gesture Talthybios had made.

Unlike other Holocaust plays—for example Peter Weiss’s documentary play, *Die Ermittlung* (*The Investigation*, 1965) in which, controversially, the victims remain

‘white angel’) and Dustin Hoffman’s character ‘Babe’ in John Schlesinger’s film *Marathon Man* (1976).

⁵⁶ All quotes Michaelis, p. 36. The refusal of food was a common device in Tabori’s stagecraft for showing acts of resistance. For this central motif in his other works see: *25th Hour*, *Mein Kampf*, *The Ballad of a*

unnamed, but the perpetrators are given names and distinct personalities—Tabori names the Chorus members: Hermione, Oinone, Kalypso⁵⁷ and Hekuba, Kassandra, Andromache and Astyanax are not separated from the others, creating a unique community which does not exist in the original. The nine soldiers, however, remain anonymous.⁵⁸ As a result, the main characters, especially Hekuba, do not fulfill the same primary roles as in Euripides' text, instead, the group is united because they suffer together. However, although they bear a common pain, they also each endure different abuses and react differently to their circumstances, for example, in the mourning of Astyanax; Tabori rarely has the Chorus speak in unison. This decision underscores the essential theme of individual agency and individual 'aktualität'. This also speaks to a greater goal for the production to be 'centred on the psychic repercussions of war'. In a sense, it becomes a direct plea to the audience not to be put off by the shocking scenes, but to ponder them as 'questions of individual responsibility in times of collective barbarism'.⁵⁹

Tabori concludes the play with a poignant moment that expresses much of the same power as the act of Suzuki's Old Woman calling upon the spirit of the ancient Hecuba for wisdom and strength. In Tabori's version, Hekuba becomes possessed and speaks a monologue of the ghost of a woman who has lost four sons in war and then discovers the youngest has been murdered (cf. *Hecuba*). Michaelis describes Hekuba's final touching

Wiener Schnitzel, and *Fasting-Artists*.

⁵⁷ Hermione was the only daughter of Helen and Menelaos. Oinone (also Oenone), a nymph child of the river God Kebren, who was rejected by Paris at the time of the Judgement of the Goddesses. According to legend, she was given the gift of herbal medicine by Apollo and made Paris promise if he were wounded to return to her. When he was wounded by Philoctetes' arrows, he returned to her but she, upset at being abandoned, refused to help and he died. She killed herself with regret. Calypso was the sea-nymph daughter of Oceanus who tempts Odysseus in the *Odyssey*.

⁵⁸ Two additional male characters are called 'Erster Herr' ('first man') and 'Zweiter Herr' ('second man').

moment: “‘Die Frau versteh ich’ – und dann, nach langer Pause – ‘jetzt’” (‘ “that woman I understand” – and then, after a long pause – “now”’).⁶⁰ This is a unique example (though remarkably similar to Suzuki’s approach to the play) of a way in which those from the past can inspire and facilitate *Gedächtnisort* (‘remembrance’).

For his contribution to German theatre, Tabori has been described by supporters as an ‘animator who awakens and revitalizes, suggests and inspires’.⁶¹ Against the advice of scholars such as Schumacher and Skloot, and the imperatives of critics such as Adorno, he uses Brechtian techniques to alienate and shock his audience into ‘a serious and genuine (re-)consideration of the past’, thus remaking *Die Troerinnen* into a Holocaust play.⁶² He uses the ancient text as a filter for his own personal responses to the Holocaust and, by making explicit and shocking references to those atrocities, he not only perpetuates the memory of his own family who died in Auschwitz, he also confronts the history of Jewish suffering and the systematic murder of the European Jewry during World War Two in a way that is ‘both daring and highly original’. Feinberg’s ultimate assessment of his other Holocaust plays can also best describe his *Die Troerinnen*:

Tabori seeks to free our confrontation with the past from the conventions and taboos which burden and strain, distort and falsify it, from sentimental pity, sanctimonious judgment, and the hypocritical philo-Semitism which is in many cases the reverse side of anti-Semitism. There is no place for a mystical reverence for the victims, for tears or solemn self-incrimination, such as have pervaded officially staged commemorations and many stage-plays or productions.⁶³

⁵⁹ Feinberg, p. 97.

⁶⁰ Michaelis’s addition: ‘und dann, nach langer Pause’ (p. 38).

⁶¹ Feinberg, p. 91.

⁶² *ibid.*, p. 201.

⁶³ Feinberg, p. 266.

15. George Tabori/Walter Jens
Der Untergang: Nach den Troerinnen des Euripides
München Kammerspiele
Munich (Federal Republic of Germany)
1985

As discussed above, the Bremen Theaterlabor had represented the building-ground for George Tabori's style, approach and concept of producing theatre. Working with an ensemble devoted to works-in-progress, Tabori was able to develop his own experimental theatre unique to the German scene. Although the 1980s was a fruitful period in which Tabori directed at numerous German language theatres, including the Schaubühne in Berlin, and wrote three controversial plays (*Jubilee* (1983) being the most successful),⁶⁴ his subsequent directing projects 'lacked the framework, the conditions, and the cohesive team' of the Bremen group, which disbanded in 1978.⁶⁵ This was evident when, nine years after his first production of *Die Troerinnen*, he attempted the classics once again. His first production of the 1985 season at the München Kammerspiele (Munich) was entitled *M* (an adaptation of Euripides' *Medea*, from a translation by Ernst Buschor, combined with *Nachricht vom Grottenolm* by Peter Radtke).⁶⁶ This production, signifying in many ways Tabori's preoccupation with victimisation and the effects of physical limitations on the

⁶⁴ 1987 marked the beginning of Tabori's rapid rise to becoming one of the most frequently produced playwrights on the German-speaking stages. In 1991, his plays were ranked seventh in Germany behind Goethe and Schiller (Feinberg, p. 44).

⁶⁵ The Freudian inspired post-Holocaust 'mourning-work', *Hamlet* (1978), was the last official production of the Theaterlabor group. Arno Wüstenhöfer, the successor to Peter Stoltzenberg as director of the Theater der Freien Hansestadt Bremen, along with the Bremen senator for cultural affairs, refused to support the theatre lab's work and the group disbanded (Feinberg, p. 84).

⁶⁶ *M* premiered 3 January 1985 and then travelled to the Vienna Festwochen (25-26 May 1985) and later the Theater der Stadt Heidelberg (8 May 1986).

mind, featured Radkte, himself a severely disabled dwarf in a wheelchair, as the child victim of Medea.⁶⁷ Later in the year, Tabori revived *Die Troerinnen*, also at the München Kammerspiele, using the adaptation written by German professor of Rhetoric and Classical Philology at Tübingen, Walter Jens (1923-).⁶⁸ Perhaps because his first version of the play was so controversial and offended a West German sensibility wracked with feelings of guilt over the Holocaust, this three-hour production was significantly less shocking. For this production, he embedded images and references to the Holocaust into a more universal framework that reflected other contemporary concerns including reactions to Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The most immediate change, in this more abstract symbolic reading of the play, was a shift in emphasis from the soldier's abuse to the proactive nature of the women who ultimately choose to take their lives into their own hands.

Jens's title, *Der Untergang: Nach den Troerinnen des Euripides*, reflected to a great extent his own re-interpretation, a version ('nach'), of the ancient play. 'Der Untergang' ('The Downfall') suggests that Jens wished to parallel the fall of Troy with the potential downfall of modern society due to nuclear annihilation. Tabori's production represented this 'Untergang' as a continuum of ancient to modern with an abstract setting. The set design contained a multitude of historical references. Designed by Marietta Eggmann, who had previously worked with Tabori in Bremen, the set presented a conflation of time and space. Although it was clearly a modern space, and not explicitly a prison or a

⁶⁷ Peter Radkte also played the part of Willie in Tabori's *Happy Days*, a controversial production of Beckett's masterpiece.

⁶⁸ Jens's text was originally premiered at the Hamburg Kammerspiele (6 January 1983), directed by Jan Aust and starring Ida Ehre as Hecuba. Jens became a renowned literary figure as a scholar, playwright, theatre and television critic. He was also President (until 1989) of the PEN Centre of the Federal Republic of Germany, and President of the Akademie der Künste in Berlin.

concentration camp as was the case with his 1976 production, Eggmann included symbolic references to the ancient setting. For example, a model of ancient Troy (including houses, a temple, broken columns) built out of children's building blocks and a toy horse was spread across the foreground of the stage. This model became symbolic of the fate of the city itself; during the course of the performance it was knocked down by the Greeks (soldier and Talthybios) and subsequently rebuilt by the child, Astyanax, whom, in the ancient text, the women hope will rebuild Troy and be its avenger (700ff). In the background could be seen two grand rectangular doorways, one of which contained a smaller human-size door through which the men of the play entered, and the other, which later closes, revealed a monumental statue of a skeletal wooden Trojan horse. Eggmann's giant horse reminds the audience of the spectre of the Trojan mistake (described by the chorus, 511-567). Its presence also offers a different nuance to the victim/victor parallel: it was the Trojan hubris of accepting the gift of the Greeks despite the protests of the Trojan Prince Laocoön, which ultimately led to their downfall. Of course, the women had little to do with this decision thus it is an added misfortune that they must be reminded of the mistakes of their men who are now dead.

The majority of the monumental stage space, akin to an enclosed giant warehouse with high ceilings, was empty except for a few scattered school chairs, to which the women of Troy are tied, and stumps of carbonized trees of varying heights, stripped of their leaves, planted into a floor covered over with white tiles. The chairs added a modern element which was supported by the costume design. The women and Astyanax are dressed in torn white dresses, which are quickly muddied by the black ash, Talthybios appeared in a white

three-piece suit, and Menelaos wore a white trench coat and suit. Only the god Poseidon, who enters at the end, wears dark clothing, a black suit. The idea for the stripped trees was taken from a World War One picture of a destroyed battlefield (reproduced in the programme, entry number 20). The trees, barren and displaced (planted indoors) stood for the Trojan women who had been removed from their city and rooted, tied to chairs and unaware of their fate. The play began with the glare of a blinding floodlight as one of the monumental doors slides shut. In the darkness, a thunderous noise is heard, after which a gigantic cloud of black ash (confetti), falls from above covering the women. This process of releasing the black confetti, including the white flash and disconcerting noise, recreated the effect of the falling atom bomb, and was also a telling recreation of the sound Hitler's gas ovens firing up. The confetti symbolized both the nuclear rainfall and the ashes of the incinerated European Jewry.

The programme notes solidify these associations and go further to emphasise the universal appeal of the production. It is not surprising that the East German novelist and activist Christa Wolf contributes the first entry (see Schroth discussion below) which offers a kind of prologue that establishes the continuum of war from ancient to modern:

Das Vergangene ist nicht tot; es ist nicht einmal vergangen. *Die Troerinnen* erzählen von einem großen Krieg in ferner Zeit. Ein großer Krieg soll heute nicht mehr möglich sein, denn, wie aus Genf verlautet: 'Ein Atomkrieg kann nicht gewonnen und darf nicht geführt werden.

Die Texte in diesem Heft erinnern an große Kriege der nahen Vergangenheit und daran, was sie im Alltag der Menschen bewirkten. Wer die Schrecken verdrängt und leugnet, will sich einreden, daß es so schlimm nicht wieder kommen kann. Die Folgen des unmöglichen Krieges, wenn er doch stattfindet, werden 'unvorstellbar' genannt.⁶⁹

⁶⁹ Programme, *Die Troerinnen*, (Münchner Kammerspiele, 1985/6), p. 1.

(‘The past is not dead, it has not even passed. *Die Troerinnen* tells of a great war in a distant age. A great war is no longer supposed to be possible, for, as we have been told from Geneva: A nuclear war cannot be won, and, therefore, must not be conducted.

The texts in this book remind us of the great wars of the near past, and of the way they affected the everyday life of people. Those who repress and deny the horrors try to tell themselves that it can never be that bad again. The consequences of the impossible war, if it happens, are said to be ‘unimaginable’.)

Wolf emphasises the continuing cycle of history and the importance of *Die Troerinnen* to this cycle. She equates the magnitude of the Trojan War (‘einem großen Krieg’) with that of ‘an große Kriege’ of the twentieth century. Wolf also warns that while the consequences of the first two World Wars were horrendous, the consequences of a nuclear war are ‘unvorstellbar’ (‘unimaginable’), just as the elimination of European Jewry was considered ‘unvorstellbar’. Most importantly, she claims that a war of a similar nature could be avoided given successful diplomatic talks at the Geneva Summit (November 1985). This was the first summit during which American President Ronald Reagan and the Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, met to discuss accelerating arms talks, working towards the abolition of chemical weapons, committing to human rights, and ultimately, to make a peaceful end to the Cold War. The Geneva Summit ended in optimism, although there had been no agreement on Reagan’s ‘Star Wars’ space defense system; it would require several more summits before Gorbachev capitulated, and further accords in 1991, 1993 and 2002, to reduce the numbers of nuclear warheads. The fear of nuclear warfare (also discussed below in relation to Schroth’s production) was perhaps the most compelling issue of the day, especially for Europe, which many Germans feared would be the first site of a nuclear battle. The Geneva Summit, and those which followed, captured everyone’s attention and

certainly would have been on the minds of those watching Tabori's production.

The '*Texte in diesem Heft*', a series of over twenty entries, to which Wolf refers in the programme include: 'Briefe aus dem Felde' ('Letters from the field') from both World Wars (nos 2, 8, 9, 11), testimonies of women arrested and tortured by the Gestapo (no 2), descriptions of civilians escaping the bombing of Berlin in 1944 (no 3), the story of Frau X, a municipal secretary in a Hessian province who endured the brutality of Polish soldiers who invaded her town (no 5), an account of life of a young woman from Hamburg, Katharina Jacob, who survived the concentration camp Ravensbrück (no 6), the exchange of letters between a painter and sculptress during World War One, letters from separated loved ones (nos 12, 13, 14, 15). The last, and for Tabori's production, perhaps the most inspiring and compelling entry, is an account of the moment that the atom bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, written by a Japanese man, Tamiki Hara, who survived the bombing (he committed suicide in 1951) (nos 16-19). Hara's description of the morning of 6 August 1945, a actual 'Untergang', is vivid and dramatic: 'Als ob ich mitten auf der Bühne eines schweren Unglücks stünde' ('as if I stood in the centre of the stage of a major disaster', 16). The thick clouds of black dust overwhelm him, a blue light is seen on the horizon, and his sister yells to him to wash his eyes because they are bleeding. It is this moment of impact with which Tabori begins so powerfully his version of *Die Troerinnen*. Hara also describes the devastation outside his window: 'Alle Bäume und Straeucher zitterten, manche wurden in die Luft gerissen. Fliegende Bäume stürzten wie Pfeile in das dunkle Chaos hinab. Ich glaubte, alles sei vom grünen Schimmer einer grauenhaften Hoellenbilderrolle umflutet. ('All the trees and shrubs trembled, many were thrown into the

air. Flying trees tumbled like arrows down into the dark chaos. I thought that everything was surrounded by the green glow of a horrible picture of hell', 16). This image is remarkably similar to Tabori's displaced charred trees (although they are not knocked over but planted in the floor). Later in the account, Hara tells of his lost nephew who finds his way back home after seeing a 'sharp light' and witnesses the explosion in a school classroom whose ceiling quickly collapsed, leaving him and his schoolmates trapped under some desks. All the children died, except for a few whom the little boy helped to escape through a gap in the rubble. This story possibly inspired the use of the school chairs in the scenic design.

Whether or not connections between the testimonials included in the programme and the design concept were intended, each account added another layer to the historical context of the production. The 'Briefe' from the front gave a personal perspective of the life of a soldier that could be applied to the experience of Talthybios or Menelaos in the play. The experiences of Tamiki Hara and his family as the atom bomb destroyed their lives and permanently maimed them (Hara describes the gruesome injuries of many of the wounded he encountered as he fled for shelter) serve as modern-day comparisons with the experiences of the Trojan women. Likewise, by including in the series accounts of Nazi brutality, especially against women, Tabori places these atrocities within a broader context of the oppression of man against man, and man against woman; a continuum is drawn from the Trojans to present-day victims of war and oppression.

Due to the timing of the production (the Geneva Summit occurred exactly one month to the day before the opening of the play), Tabori's *Die Troerinnen* appeared as part

of a peace appeal that contributed to a sense of hope (though fleeting) that nuclear war could be avoided, and as such, the play could be received, as it had been so many times before, as a compelling example for why war should be avoided. However, it was only the timing which gave this impression. Jens had changed Euripides' ending to emphasise the futility of the situation, and to highlight the inner strength of the captive women who defy their captors and take their own lives. In the 1983 production (the premiere of this translation) at the Hamburg Kammerspiele, directed by Ian Aust, Andromache committed suicide rather than go to the ship of Neoptolemus. The Trojan Women, lead by Hecuba, and including Astyanax, rushed into the flames of burning Troy at the end of the play, preventing the Greeks from taking them home as booty. Tabori honoured Jens' alteration, but chose a more visceral image of suicide than Aust: Andromache commits suicide and plunges into her son's building blocks. At the end, Hekabe and the other women douse themselves with gasoline and light themselves on fire.⁷⁰ In contrast to Euripides' text in which the women demonstrate their internal strength through *logos* (eg. the agon against Helen), lament, and ritual mourning (the final farewell to the dead, for example at 1305ff), Jens tries to show the possibility of female resistance in order to demonstrate 'not as it was, but as it is'.⁷¹ This significant alteration to the text attempts to make it more modern by taking on board the feminist agenda of giving women agency and, in addition to the shocking opening, appears to be the most memorable aspect of this particular production.

⁷⁰ See Evelyn Roll, 'Aktueller Friedensappell aus der Antike', *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 19 December 1985, Ingrid Seidenfaden, 'Der Mensch zerstört sich selbst', *Abendzeitung*, 19 December 1985, and Flashar, p. 367f., n. 7.

⁷¹ Ute Fischbach, 'Ein moderner Denkansatz', *Münchner Merkur*, 19 December 1985.

Instead of simply showing the women in mourning, the mood fluctuates between sorrow and rebellion.⁷²

In terms of characterisation, only Talthybios, Cassandra and Poseidon seem to given particularly unusual interpretations. Hecuba (Doris Schade⁷³), with the exception of her shock white hair, did not particularly stand out from the other women as a leader. Several critics call her a modern 'Denkansatz' ('intellectual'),⁷⁴ but she only emerges with any intellectual force during the altercation with Helen (in a fairly true version of the Euripidean play). The four chorus women, likewise, have little individual personality, except when they are swearing at Helen during the *agon*. However, they are, similar to their counterparts in 1976, given names after Oceanids, nymphs and characters from Greek myths (Kallirhoe, Myrrhine, Peirithoa, and Melinoe). Talthybios (Edgar Selge) appears on crutches in a full white suit and is not as sympathetic to the plight of the women as he is in the ancient text. One of his first actions is to cruelly stamp out the model of Troy that the 'Das Kind Astyanax' (Felix Dieterich/Oliver Engl) had spent most of the play rebuilding after its initial destruction in the first scene by the soldier. As the critic for *Theatre Heute* points out, Talthybios is the most 'contradictory, most real figure of the evening' and controls the stage.⁷⁵ He is a complex character who roughly binds up Andromache (Sibylle Canonica) with a mixture of compassion and aggression and with a self-righteous attitude delivers banal statements such as: 'instruction is instruction'. Ursula Höpfner (who had

⁷² Hans Krieger, 'Die Ästhetik des Grauens,' *Metropol-Gesellschaft*, 23 December 1985.

⁷³ Doris Schade also played the part of Andromache in the first German language production of Sartre's adaptation directed by Günther Fleckenstein (28 September 1968, Gottingen); Therese Giehse played Hecuba. See Flashar, p. 370, n. 35.

⁷⁴ Gert Gliewe, 'Schwarzes Konfetti auf die Besiegten', *Abendzeitung*, 21 December 1985 and Hans Krieger, 'Die Ästhetik des Grauens', *Metropol-Gesellschaft*, 23 December 1985.

played Astyanax in the 1976 production) and was a dancer by training, portrayed Cassandra as a kind of epileptic, enraptured by her prophetic calling and physically arresting movement, a portrayal much in line with other German characterisations, such as that of Werfel.

Perhaps the most nuanced interpretation of character was that of Poseidon (Ignaz Kirchner), who in Jens's text is clearly based on Sartre's *Les Troyennes* rather than Euripides' original, because, as is the case with Sartre's adaptation, the prologue and the character of Athene have been cut and Poseidon appears only in the end to render a final judgement. Some critics described Kirchner's Poseidon as a 'Pfarramts candidate', a kind of wandering vicar looking for a parish in which to preach.⁷⁶ Ignaz Kirchner, on the other hand, revealed to critic Gundula Ohngemach in an interview that he and Tabori had experimented with several ways of playing the character ranging from a teacher to a man in a wheel chair.⁷⁷ They finally settled on the god of Franz Kafka's short story 'Poseidon' as inspiration for Kirchner's character. As Kafka was a major source of inspiration for Tabori, it is not surprising that this short story provided engaging source material for his production.⁷⁸ Kafka's Poseidon was a bored administrator in charge of the 'Wasserwerk' ('water-works', ie. the seas), who never travels through his domains because he relegates

⁷⁵ Eckhard Franke, 'Mal Psycho-workshop, mal Lemuren-Litanei', *Theater Heute* (February 1986), 46-47.

⁷⁶ Armin Eichholz, 'Troja explodiert beim großen Lamento gegen Götter, Sieger und andere Feinde', *Münchner Merkur*, 21 December 1985.

⁷⁷ Interview with Ignaz Kirchner reproduced in Gundula Ohngemach, *Regie im Theater: George Tabori* (Frankfurt: Fischer Taschenbuch, 1989), p. 117-24.

⁷⁸ Kafka died when Tabori was 10 years old (1924). He felt a genuine affinity for the Czech Jewish writer whose sisters died in Auschwitz and other concentration camps, and revered him, along with Beckett, as an 'unquestionable prophet of our times' (See Feinberg, p. 111). In 1977, Tabori produced two plays based on Kafka stories, *Verwandlungen* (*Metamorphosis*) and *Die Hungerkünstler* (*Hunger Artists*) which were considered by many as some of Tabori's finest experimental works.

himself to his desk incessantly going over the accounting books. Poseidon says that he ‘was postponing this [sailing over his waters] until the end of the world, for then there might come a quiet moment when, just before the end and having gone through the last account, he could still make a quick little tour’.⁷⁹ Ironically, in light of the timing and stylistic themes of Tabori’s production, at the moment of the fall of the atom bomb, ‘the end of the world’, Poseidon has pulled himself away from his accounts into an intertextual journey where he appears in *Die Troerinnen* to chastise the world. To add another element to his characterisation, Ohngemach, perhaps unknowingly, titles her interview with Kirchner, ‘Ein Großer Schweiger’ (‘the great middleman’),⁸⁰ which brings to mind Sartre’s conception, not of Poseidon, but of Talthybius as the ‘brave soldat Schweik, l’homme moyen dépassé par les événements’ (‘the Good Soldier Schweik, the average man helpless to cope with what is in store for him’).⁸¹ Kirchner’s embodiment of the Olympic god seems to encompass all of these interpretations. Dressed in a plain black suit and wearing glasses, he repeats stubbornly, ‘I am Poseidon!’⁸² At the end of the play, he repeats the warning, invoking a slogan of the German ‘Physicians against the Atom Bomb’: ‘Leb wohl Stadt: Du bist tot, und doch beneidenswert für jene, die am Leben sind’ (‘Farewell, city: you are dead, yet the envy of those who are still alive’). He prophesies the ‘apocalyptic vision of the downfall of the victors’ and proclaims in a tone of mourning: ‘Aufgedunsen, halb verwest, entstellt. So sehn, wenn Krieg ist, Sieger aus!’ (‘Bloated, half-rotten, disfigured. So look, when war is, victors out!’)

⁷⁹ Franz Kafka, *Poseidon* in *The Complete Short Stories* (Minerva: London, 1982), trans. by Tania and James Stern, pp. 434–435. The story was not published during Kafka’s lifetime and first published in *Beschreibung eines Kampfes* (Schocken Edition Av, Bv, 1917–23).

⁸⁰ Ohngemach, p. 117.

⁸¹ Sartre, *Les Troyennes*, p. 5 (trans. from Sartre, *Bref*, in Contat and Rybalka, p. 312).

⁸² All quotes from Eckhard Franke, ‘Mal Psycho-workshop, mal Lemuren-Litanei’, *Theater Heute*, February

dismembered: that is how the victors look in a war!'). The little boy, who previously played Astyanax, repeats the last phrase over and over and then finally, with a great breath, screams to make the horror complete and ends the play.⁸³

In this second version of *Die Troerinnen*, Tabori, once known as a daredevil director, demonstrated a new maturity (he was 71 years old at the time of production). Instead of imposing images of the horror of the Holocaust on to the text and shocking his audience straight out of the theatre, he chose to re-present the play using a more trans-historical, universal approach. This approach was less effective than his experiments in 1976, perhaps in part because the first production occurred at a time when the audience was less willing to confront their own guilt over the Holocaust and the second production was a product of the general preoccupation with the gripping fear of a potential World War Three. However, despite these criticisms, in the context of other productions of *Die Troerinnen* in Germany at the time, his directorial approach was more welcomed than the more traditional productions including Aribert Reimann's opera version of Werfel's translation,⁸⁴ and productions in Essen⁸⁵ and Cologne⁸⁶ later in the decade.

1986, 46-47.

⁸³ Gert Gliewe, 'Schwarzes Konfetti auf die Besiegten', *Abendzeitung*, 21 December 1985 and Franke, pp. 46-47.

⁸⁴ *Troades* directed by Jean-Pierre Ponnelle, Nationaltheater, Bayerische Staatsoper, München, opened 7 July 1986. See Flashar, pp. 132, 279f.

⁸⁵ Translated by Ernst Buschor and directed by Hansgünther Heyme (16 March 1986). See Flashar, p. 281.

⁸⁶ Translated by Alfred S. Kessler and directed by Dimiter Gotscheff, (March 1989, Schauspiel Köln and Landestheater Neuss).

16. Christoph Schroth/ Hans Mayer (Jean-Paul Sartre)
Antike Entdeckungen 5
Mecklenburg Staatstheater
Schwerin (GDR)
1982

Responses to the Holocaust in East Germany (GDR), compared to the Federal Republic, were equally, if not more, complex. Quickly annexed into the Communist Soviet Bloc, the GDR recovered less swiftly from the aftermath of the war, and struggled slowly to cope with the common German legacy: the German responsibility for the Holocaust.⁸⁷ Association with the Russian, as opposed to Western, allies affected the ways in which East Germans and their government approached the Holocaust. GDR reactions to the Holocaust were also overshadowed quickly by the development of the Cold War, but more importantly, the government was focused on navigating conflicts with the Federal Republic who refused to acknowledge the division or recognise the Communist state. It was not until the civil demonstrations of 1989 and the dismantling of the Berlin Wall (constructed in 1962) that an East-West détente was to be possible.

One of the central issues of the conflict was GDR policy towards Israel. It was not until April 1990 that the newly organised East German Parliament issued a statement to this effect admitted responsibility:

We ask the Jews of the World to forgive us. We ask the people of Israel to forgive us for the hypocrisy and hostility of official East German policies toward Israel and for the persecution and degradation of Jewish citizens also after 1945 in our country.⁸⁸

⁸⁷ Harms and others, Preface.

⁸⁸ 'Excerpts from East Berlin Statement of Apology' cited in *World reacts to the Holocaust*, ed. by David Wyman (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), p. 447.

As a member of the Soviet Bloc, the GDR had been obliged to agree with the USSR in support of Arab states against Israel in the various Middle East wars. The GDR was often used as a pawn by the USSR or Arab states to leverage power over the West German Federal Republic,⁸⁹ and actively canvassed the world for support in its conflict with West Germany and recognition, finding it mainly from Third World countries. With regard to Israel, the GDR publicly claimed that Israel acted aggressively, funded and supplied with arms by America and West Germany. During the 1973 Yom Kippur War, the Soviet Bloc supported the Arabs with arms and propaganda and the GDR condemned Israel as an aggressor and the Federal Republic and the US as accomplices. This condemnation came at a time when the GDR and the Federal Republic had reached a tentative agreement to improve relations, the first 'de facto' recognition since the war.⁹⁰ Israel was outraged and condemned the East Germans for anti-Semitism and for being in collusion with Stalin, whose goal, they believed, had been the 'liquidation of remnants left by Hitler'.⁹¹ 'One of the consequences of placing Israel's situation in a Holocaust framework', the historian Peter Novick argues, was to 'invest the tangled Middle East conflict with the moral clarity of the Nazi period.'⁹² For East German self-identity, this appropriation was problematic. Not only did Israel accuse them of not making appropriate monetary and supportive gestures towards them, but their government policies appeared to ignore the Holocaust altogether and support a Communist totalitarian regime and terrorist groups bent on Israel's destruction.

⁸⁹ George Lavy, *Germany and Israel: Moral Debt and National Interest* (London: Cass, 1996), p. 97.

⁹⁰ Lavy, p. 178.

⁹¹ Novick, p. 99.

Literary and theatrical circles were embroiled by the political issues of the time. Most famously in 1989, what was to be known as the '4th November demonstration', 500,000 jubilant citizens were coaxed into the streets of the Alexanderplatz in East Berlin by the Verband bildender Künstler (VBK), the official artists union, to join in protesting the partition of Germany.⁹³ This was one of the crowning events in East Germany's Revolution of 1989, which was ultimately overshadowed by the fall of the Berlin wall five days later. One participant in this famous demonstration was the novelist and feminist Christa Wolf. Wolf's work and in particular, her novel, *Cassandra* (1983), was a significant influence on the ways in which *Trojan Women* would be used as a forum to respond to the horrors of the Holocaust and/or fears of potential nuclear annihilation in East Germany.

Christa Wolf gave a public reading of *Cassandra* on the opening day of Christoph Schroth's production, *Antike Entdeckungen 5 (Discoveries of Antiquity 5)* at the Mecklenburg Staatstheater in Schwerin (December 1982).⁹⁴ Wolf wrote the first draft of the novel as the fifth part of a series of lectures given at University of Frankfurt am Main in 1982. The lectures as a whole follow her journey through Greece in 1980 with her husband and her engagement with the literary life of the character of Cassandra in the *Oresteia* and the Homeric epics, particularly the *Iliad*. In the Introduction to her lecture series, she states that her 'overall concern is the sinister effects of alienation, in aesthetics, in art, as well as elsewhere', particularly with regard to the alienation of the female writer.⁹⁵ In light of this,

⁹² Novick, p. 165.

⁹³ See David Bathrick, *The Powers of Speech: The Politics of Culture in the GDR* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), p. 1.

⁹⁴ From the mid-1970s, Wolf was part of a group of East German writers who spent summers together engaging in intellectual debate and writing projects in an isolated village in Mecklenburg.

⁹⁵ Christa Wolf, *Cassandra*, trans. by Jan Van Heurck (London: Virago, 1984), pp. 142, 153.

she was captivated by the personal life story of Cassandra and asked probing questions about her as a character: 'Why did she choose a man's profession when she trained to be a seer? What race does Cassandra belong to? What is her mother tongue? How old was she when she died?'⁹⁶ It is Cassandra's struggle to express herself, to have a voice, which drives Wolf's narrative. The internal struggles of the prophetess who is cursed by a god so that no one believes her prophecies, becomes emblematic of the female writer's struggle to find her voice and place in the masculine world. Wolf writes in Lecture Three, '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'.⁹⁷ She reflects on her reading of German writer, Marie-Luise Fleisser's short story collection, *Avant-Garde* (1963): 'For women, writing is a medium which they place between themselves and the world of men.'⁹⁸ She consciously wrestles with the place of the female characters in Homer, tragedy and Greek myth and the legacy of those characters: 'An act of violence inflicted on a woman [Europa] founds, in Greek myth, the history of Europe [...]. The world of women shines through only in the gaps between the descriptions of battle.'⁹⁹

Her attempt in *Cassandra* to 'transform the woman-made-myth, and thereby object, into an autonomous subject with a voice'¹⁰⁰ marked the height of Wolf's feminist phase and remains one of the few explicitly feminist readings of a character in *Trojan Women* (with the exception of Brendan Kennelly's Irish *Trojan Women*, 1993; see Chapter Five).

⁹⁶ Wolf, p. 153.

⁹⁷ Wolf, p. 227.

⁹⁸ Wolf, p. 232.

⁹⁹ Wolf, p. 232-33.

¹⁰⁰ Wolf quoted in Julia Hell, *Post-Fascist Fantasies: Psychoanalysis, History, and the Literature of East Germany* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), p. 220.

However, for someone so devoted to one literary figure, it is odd that Wolf never mentions *Trojan Women* in her published writings, especially as she is clearly aware of her character as explored in other Greek literature, including Aeschylus and Homer. Her conception of Cassandra as a heroine and a catalyst for a narrative of remembrance sheds new light on the legacy of the Trojan women themselves and the *Trojan Women*, as a literary work. The experiences of the Trojans as Euripides portrayed them would surely inform her call for a new aesthetic based on and rooted in the world of women. Fortunately, Wolf's association with and influence on Christoph Schroth's 1982 production allows for explicit links to be made between her novel and Euripides' play, even if she herself does not. Her live reading of *Cassandra* set the stage and tone for the *Discoveries*, a five-hour presentation of Schiller's *Iphigenie in Aulis*, Hans Mayer's translation of Sartre's adaptation *Les Troyennes*, *Agamemnon* (translated by G. Kelling) and, Aristophanes' *Acharnians* in K Bartsch's translation. *Discoveries* was the fifth in a series of projects started in 1972 by Schroth. The project was described, as the programme explained, as 'the discovering of new forms of encounter with the spectator, of acting potentials, unusual artistic solutions, the discovering of exciting present-day material and of the present-day appeal of classical plays'.¹⁰¹ The format of the project allowed Schroth to explore the material from multiple angles and to create for his audience a comprehensive experience of the ancient world through the production of both tragedy and comedy. Other art forms also expressed the overall theme. Giant wooden statuary, including a mammoth wooden horse, created by

¹⁰¹ Programme in English found in *Trojan Women* file at APGRD (Delphi 1985). Of the series, three had been dedicated to exploring the works of Brecht, which were so influential on the German, especially East German, theatre.

stage designer, Lothar Scharsich, were displayed throughout halls of the venue and an extensive exhibition was mounted in the monumental foyer of the Staatstheater. In addition, there was a lecture series that accompanied the production which featured local academics speaking on the subject of the fall of Troy. This approach served Schroth's intention 'to be a great political forum of art, which made social questions of our days the centre of dialogue between stage and audience'.¹⁰² There was also an emphasis on educational outreach as a large percentage of the audience were school children.¹⁰³ The plays began at five and ended at eleven in the evening, and during the intervals, goulash stew and soup was served to satiate the appetite of the audience between productions, and also, theoretically, also allowed time for discussion and debate; wine and cheese was served at the conclusion of the performance.¹⁰⁴ The four plays were chosen specifically because they explored in their own way the 'preparation and results of a war which went down in history and literature as the first colonial war: The Trojan war'.¹⁰⁵

In essence, Schroth and his team recreated an ancient Greek theatre festival in which the audience sat through multiple plays and participated in civic discourse and rituals. Precedents for these kind of events, which focused on the re-discovery of the origins of theatre and the pursuit of new forms of political theatre, had already been set by

¹⁰² Programme.

¹⁰³ 'So wirkten sie jedenfalls in der Aktualisierung der Bühne auf das vorwiegend jugendliche Publikum, das – so war zu erfahren- in großen Scharen nach Schwerin reiste und auf Zeltplätzen campierte, um das "Theaterfest zum Lobe des Friedens" zu erleben' ('The actualisation on stage at least made an impression on the young people, a majority of the audience. The spectators had, as we were informed, travelled in large crowds to Schwerin and camped out in tents (on the camping site) in order to experience "The Theatre event for the praise of peace"'), Flashar, p. 274.

¹⁰⁴ Ariane Mnouchkine's company, Theatre du Soleil, in Paris has developed this idea further by creating a 'total theatre' experience in which the audience is invited to participate all aspects of the chosen cultural design of the play, including food and music, wall decoration etc.

Klaus Michael Grüber and Peter Stein with their 'Antiquity Projects' of 1974 and 1980 at the Berlin Schaubühne.¹⁰⁶ Given the common subject matter of the plays, Schroth essentially also created the effect of an ancient tetralogy. *Trojan Women*, though this is still the subject of scholarly debate, was the third play of a rare (as far as we know) Euripidean tetralogy that included *Alexandros* and *Palamedes*, and *Sisyphus*.¹⁰⁷ Some scholars argue that as *Trojan Women* was not originally a stand-alone play, many of the criticisms of the play—for example, that it is a series of unconnected scenes or that it is simply a catalogue of emotional lament—might have been resolved to a certain extent within the context of the other two plays. Within that context, *Trojan Women* emerges as the conclusion to an examination of the downfall of both Greeks and Trojans. For example, the heavy emphasis on female lament might then have been balanced by soldierly machinations on the battlefield and the prediction of the Greek downfall as arranged by Poseidon and Athene would have carried more weight when the audience has witnessed first hand the hubristic acts of Odysseus and his fellow Greeks in *Palamedes*.

¹⁰⁵ Production programme.

¹⁰⁶ See Erika Fischer-Lichte's discussion of these projects in *D69*. This trend continued with Klaus Michael Grüber's *Prometheus Bound* in Salzburg (1986) and Einar Schleef's *The Mothers* at the Frankfurt Schauspielhaus (1986), which included a four-hour performance of *Suppliant Women* and *Seven Against Thebes*. Schroth produced another 'Antiquity Project' in 2000 with *Ajas*, *Hekabe*, *Helena* and *Kyklop* produced for the theatre in Cottbus.

¹⁰⁷ See Ruth Scodel, 'The Trojan Trilogy of Euripides,' *Hypomnemata*, Heft 60 (Göttingen; Vandenhöck and Ruprecht, 1980) and Lee, p. x-xiv. On the uniqueness of the Euripidean trilogy, see A. Lesky, *Die tragische Dichtung der Hellenen*, 3.381. For a discussion and/or reconstruction of the fragments of the *Alexandros*, see B. Snell, 'Euripides *Alexandros*', *Hermes*, Einzelschriften, V (1937), 1-68, J.O. de G. Hanson, 'Reconstruction of Euripides' *Alexandros*', *Hermes*, 92 (1964), 171-81, T. B. L. Webster, *The Tragedies of Euripides* (London: Methuen, 1967), and R. Coles, 'A New Oxyrhynchus Papyrus: The Hypothesis of Euripides' *Alexandros*', *BICS Supplement*, 32 (1974). See also discussions of the issue in Shirley Barlow's commentary, *Euripides' Trojan Women* (London: Aris & Phillips, 1986). G.L Koniaris generally disagrees, but makes some useful points, 'Alexander, Palamedes, Troades, Sisyphus: A Connected tetralogy? A Connected trilogy?', *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, 77 (1973), 85-124.

Schroth's tetralogy makes a similar statement, but with different plays. The *Antike Entdeckungen 5*, as a whole, focuses on the preparation for the war against Troy as perceived in *Iphigenia in Aulis*, which Schroth called the 'prologue', and the consequences of that war, the death of all Trojan men and the enslavement of the women as explored in *Trojan Women*, and as an additional comment on the effects of war, the conclusion of Cassandra's prediction for the fall of the House of Atreus (359ff): the *Agamemnon*.¹⁰⁸ The comedy, *Acharnians*, in place of a Satyr play (described in the programme as 'the little man buys himself a kind of private peace') provided a more light-hearted perspective on the war theme. Thus, the Trojan War was used as a starting point for discussions of contemporary import, armament, nuclear testing, and the longing for peace, issues which pervade, for example, Christa Wolf's interpretation of the legend. For Wolf, *Cassandra* held significance greater than a feminist reworking: 'The Troy I have in mind is not a description of bygone days but a model for a kind of utopia.'¹⁰⁹ The story of the fall of Troy, for her, becomes a parable for the fate of Europe, especially East Germany. Like many of her fellow East Germans, her engagement with contemporary politics is complicated by her strong reaction to the atrocities of the Holocaust, images of which were re-appearing in the papers and on the television. For example, on 30 April 1981, Wolf writes the following impressions in her diary (later published as Lecture Four):

Yesterday, the pictures the Americans took when they liberated Dachau concentration camp. Piles of bones, piles of corpses. Germans from Dachau energetically throwing the corpses onto the farm wagons that are taking them away to be buried. The faces of well-nourished Americans underneath their

¹⁰⁸ Oddly, *Agamemnon* was played at the same time as *Trojan Women*; this meant the potential impact of a connected tetralogy idea was contradicted.

¹⁰⁹ Wolf, p. 224.

helmets—figures from another world. This constellation—conquerors and conquered, the humiliated and the triumphant—is a basic constellation in human history. The conquest of Troy is one of the first cases we know of, and was itself an artist's composite of the conquests of dozens of cities which took place in those times.¹¹⁰

In this passage, Wolf identifies the direct parallel between a modern war scenario and the Trojan War, highlighting the cyclical nature of war. This comparison is not a simple one. The comparison with the Germans and the Greeks works only in so far as the Germans also killed members of the opposing army in combat and, though on a different scale, similar to the Greek murders of Iphigenia, Polyxena, and Astyanax, killed innocent people who were not directly engaged in war. They were active murderers of innocent people (whom they are 'energetically' getting rid of to erase the evidence of their crimes) and deserve to lose the war as a result of their hubristic acts. The Dachau prisoners, by virtue of being victims, stripped of their humanity and reduced to corpses and bones, are meant to parallel the experience of Trojan women, yet the Trojan women were not tortured or murdered en masse. The American soldiers, healthy and victorious 'figures of another world', play a role that has no comparison in the story of the Trojan War. They are military victors over the Germans, and at the same time liberators of the concentration camp survivors, yet they cannot be paralleled with the Greeks because they commit no acts of hubris that would warrant punishment. This parallel breaks down, of course, when one considers the counter-effect of the heroic Americans dropping the atom bomb—a weapon which potentially could make victims of all human beings—on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945. In light of this analysis, the effect of Wolf's parallel is essentially to demonstrate her claim that the

¹¹⁰ Wolf, p. 258.

atrocities of the Holocaust is a singular event: 'No doubt it has happened only once that the victors came across stigmas like Auschwitz, like Dachau.'¹¹¹ The atrocities dramatised in *Trojan Women* pale in the comparison.

By reinforcing the thematic connections between the Trojan War, the Holocaust, and the nuclear arms race ('we are told that if Europe does not begin to alter its policies completely, it has only three or four years left'¹¹²), Wolf also re-invigorates the character of Cassandra with a powerful influential voice. She quotes from the writer, Stefan Zweig's diary: 'The old Cassandra feelings have come alive again. If this war is continued, it will turn into the most ghastly thing human beings have ever known, the total finishing off of Europe.'¹¹³ This is an idea about which classical scholars have also commented. For example, Grube writes with regard to Euripides' text that Cassandra's speech 'may well have been meant to contain a warning to the contemporary audience'.¹¹⁴ Schroth invokes this connection in the programme: 'Cassandra is crying: "War is avoided by those who are sensible"'. The characterisation of Cassandra in his version of *Trojan Women* is clearly influenced by Wolf's novella, and the multiple references to the power and influence of Cassandra's prophecies expressed in the programme is also clearly due to Wolf's work. Cassandra might be condemned to utter prophecies which no one will heed, but Schroth attempts to compel his audience to listen and apply her prophecies to their own time.

¹¹¹ Wolf, p. 258.

¹¹² Wolf, p. 249.

¹¹³ Wolf, p. 251. Hell comments: 'In her lectures, Wolf parallels the conflict between the Greeks and Trojans and the contemporary tensions between East and West (eg. the controversy over the installation of US and Soviet missiles in Europe), as well as using a series of code words to refer to the Stasi. (Her 1990 claim that, with *Kassandra*, she had foretold the events of 1989 aroused some indignation.)', (p. 320, n. 9).

¹¹⁴ Grube, p. 287.

A key element of *aktualität* ('actuality') in Lothar Scharsich's set signified multiple frames of reference: a high enclosure of wire chain-link fencing strewn with sticks, leaves, low wooden benches, and other debris.¹¹⁵ The space resembled a concentration camp in which the women were being held in the most abject circumstances and the women resembled Holocaust survivors, gaunt characters, wearing numbers around their necks (Hecuba, for example, wore number 149). Like caged animals, they prowled around the confined space, which often drove them to break into 'camp fever rising to hysteria'.¹¹⁶ At the same time, there were no distinctly identifiers, no yellow stars, for example, to suggest that the women were Jewish. The costumes were plain dark ragged robes with no distinction made between characters, signalling Schroth's suggestion that the women were herded together regardless of social standing. Hecuba (Barbara Bachmann) was distinct only because of her white hair, emblematic of old age and shock, and because she was considerably older than the others.

Interestingly, it was not the image of a Holocaust victim which inspired Bachmann's portrayal of Hecuba, but that of an old Palestinian woman caught in the cross-fire in Beirut which she had cut out of the newspaper and pasted into her 'Rollenbuch' ('rehearsal script').¹¹⁷ In an interview with *Theater der Zeit*, Bachmann revealed the impact this particular the image of this woman made on her:

¹¹⁵ Oliver Taplin relays an anecdote that Schroth's set design inspired Tony Harrison to have the women protesting at Greenham Common fenced in (*A Common Chorus*).

¹¹⁶ Press clipping from Vienna tour, quoted in the Schwerin Programme.

¹¹⁷ Tony Harrison recently described a similar practice in an article on the occasion of the premiere of his new translation of *Hecuba* (RSC): 'In my notebooks, where I glue pictures among the drafts of translations from the Greek tragedies I've adapted for the stage, is the recurring image of an old woman appealing to the camera that has captured her agony, or to the heavens that ignore it, in front of a devastated home or before her murdered dead. They are all different women from many places on earth with the same gesture of

Ich habe in dieser Zeit vor den Proben viel intensiver Bilder angesehen in der Zeitung. Da waren diese schrecklichen Angriffe auf Beirut. So ein Bild von einer alten Frau klebt auf meinem Rollenbuch. Ein Gesicht, das schreit—ohnmächtig und doch aggressive. Ich sehe mir überhaupt viel Bilder an. In der Malerei findet man oft ganz wichtige Sachen für eine Rolle. Schauspieler empfinden sehr sinnlich—ich brauche sehr schnell eine Vorstellung, wie sieht diese Figur aus, wie bewegt sie sich.¹¹⁸

(‘In this time before the rehearsals, I looked much more intensively at pictures in the newspaper. The terrible attacks on Beirut—such a picture of an old woman is stuck in my rehearsal book. A face that screams—helpless, yet aggressive. I generally look at a lot of pictures. I find a lot of important ideas for a role in paintings. Actors are very sensual—I immediately need an image of how a character looks, how [she] moves.’)

Within the context of the East German responses to the Holocaust and official governmental position towards Israel, Bachmann’s identification with the Palestinian victim of the Israeli attacks on Beirut represents a common reaction to contemporary events. The East Germans, as discussed, were advocates of the Palestinian cause, to the detriment of their relationship with the Israelis, West Germany, and the powerful Jewish-American lobby. Thus, while the production was set in a period forty years before, the conflict in Beirut for Bachmann, and possibly for some of the other actors and the audience, was clearly an important frame of reference. Furthermore, it seems that Schroth was able to make reference to the Holocaust without any critical backlash partly because the issue of the Holocaust was less taboo than in West Germany or Israel. The fact that a German director and ensemble dared to represent an ancient play re-presented as a Holocaust story did not offend the public in the way that Holk Freytag’s production would do in Israel in 1983. Instead, the *aktualität* of the Holocaust setting highlighted the range of human

disbelief, despair and denunciation. [...] Under them all, over the years, I have scribbled “Hecuba” (‘Bitter Tears’, *The Guardian*, 19 March 2005).

¹¹⁸ Barbara Bachmann, ‘Schauspieler über klassische Rollen (III)’, *Theater der Zeit* (January 1985).

response (despair, resignation, hatred, mourning, protest, hope etc) to this kind of incarceration, the particularly female resilience and resistance to brutality, and the ways in which the experience made them aware of their moral and ethical superiority to their captors. This is reinforced by a change to Sartre's translation. Instead of having Poseidon say the last line of the play as a warning to the audience, Hecuba speaks directly on behalf of all victims;

Go on, make war,
Turn fields and cities into deserts
Desecrate the temples and the graves
And torture the vanquished!
You will die of it like dogs.
All of you.¹¹⁹

17. Holk Freytag/Eli Malka
Trojan Women
Habima National Theatre
Tel Aviv
1983

For the Jewish population, particularly in Israel (and America), the fear of nuclear warfare was often represented as a fear of the possibility of another Holocaust.¹²⁰ Any attack on the security of Israel, whose leaders often reminded the world that its very existence was a proof of every nation's guilt and complicity in Hitler's 'Final Solution,' was almost immediately interpreted as a portent of genocide. For many years, it was official Israeli policy to require diplomatic visitors to stop first at the Yad Vashem Martyrs and Heroes Remembrance Authority in Jerusalem, so that those government officials might never forget the atrocity, but, more importantly, remember it with a guilt that would dictate

¹¹⁹ Reprinted in programme, final page.

their foreign policies with respect to Israel.¹²¹ This approach was increasingly problematic as many criticised the way in which the Israelis tried to act the role of the victims in accepting *Wiedergutmachung* (reparations),¹²² and at the same time, the role of perpetrators who acted aggressively against displaced Palestinians; an issue that remains unresolved today. The neighbouring Arab states refused to recognise the Israeli state and were explicit in their desire to destroy the country.¹²³ Despite the military and financial support of the USSR during 1967 and 1973 wars, Egypt and Syria were unable to achieve their objectives and were beaten on the battlefield by the Israeli army, supported by the United States and Western Europe. A crisis of identity developed during the 1982 Lebanon War, which provided the context for the productions of *Trojan Women* in Israel to be discussed below. During this period, the Israeli government condemned Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader, for hiding in Beirut as Hitler had hidden in his bunker, and described the Palestinians as Nazis bent on destroying the Jewish race.¹²⁴ The Israeli people and press were deeply divided over the progression of the Lebanon War which marked the first time Israel had acted as an aggressor, as opposed to a defender of its territory on previous occasions.

In the 1980s, this community division was further complicated by the attempt by some to show that Jews were not the weak, passive, contemptible victims history had painted them to be, but courageous heroes. The Warsaw Ghetto uprising (dramatised recently in Roman Polanski's film *The Pianist*, 2002), despite being atypical of Jewish

¹²⁰ Novick, pp. 110-11.

¹²¹ Novick, p. 167f.

¹²² 1953 Luxembourg Agreement allocated large sums of compensation to Israel as well as to individuals.

¹²³ See Lavy, p. 148.

¹²⁴ This theme was explored in Leon Uris's book, *Exodus* (1959), which was subsequently turned into a critically acclaimed film, and featured Palestinian terrorist acts being masterminded by an escaped Nazi.

resistance, became a central example of the heroism and strength of the Jewish people, equally successful survivor stories replaced images of isolated individuals mourning over lost family members. Non-Jews and some Jewish organisations began to emphasise the diversity of Hitler's victims, demonstrating that Jews were one group of many targeted by the Nazis, and thereby downplaying the uniqueness of the Jewish victim. Previously, there had been a fear that the 'status of victim evoked sort of pity mixed with contempt' and a danger existed that 'promoting widespread consciousness of the Holocaust would inevitably promote the image of the Jew as victim'.¹²⁵ The three Middle Eastern Wars, decisively and swiftly concluded by the might of the Israeli army, provided images of Jews as war heroes. These images met with unease by those Israelis who were accustomed to identifying with their victim-hood.

In terms of the creative responses to these political debates, after the establishment of Israel as a state in 1948, young artists and intellectuals of the *yishuv* (Hebrew speaking) movement began to produce plays that were 'temporal and localised, relevant for an audience that was both auditorium and stage, participant and spectator', and reflected a modern secular world.¹²⁶ The most successful productions, as is the case in many countries, responded to current socio-political issues. The Yiddish theatre sought to preserve a lost world destroyed by the Holocaust, but few plays explicitly tackled the Holocaust subject.¹²⁷ In the 1950s, Israeli theatre produced multiple plays about Holocaust heroes, such as Hannah Szenes, whose life and martyrdom proved that Jews were not

¹²⁵ Novick, p. 123.

¹²⁶ Glenda Abramson, *Drama and Ideology in Modern Israel*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 7.

simply sheep going to slaughter. Two decades later, however, her story was eclipsed by the story and trials of controversial *Judenrat* (Jewish police employed in the ghettos and camps), including Israel Kasztner, who had negotiated with Adolf Eichmann to save nearly two thousand Jews from the concentration camps. He was an anti-hero who was both condemned and praised for his actions, demonstrating the need for Israelis to continually reconstruct their own identity. Many other plays reflected the gradual shift away from complete support for the Zionist cause that championed the establishment of an Israeli state to a critical position that saw the Jews in Israel as victims-turned-victimisers of the Palestinians.¹²⁸ This troubling transition, exacerbated by the invasion of Lebanon in 1982, caused a national identity crisis. During this period when the 'mental health' and stability of an entire region was threatened, Israeli theatre, and the community at large, productions of *Trojan Women* appeared to offer a forum for an analysis and debate of political and social issues that few contemporary plays could provide.

The exploration of the victor/victim relationship in *Trojan Women* provided an ideal *locus* to debate this major conflict in Israeli society during this decade. When Israel invaded Lebanon in order to drive out the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO), to stop the missile attacks on Jewish settlements and towns in northern Galilee, and to force a regime change, the government at first indicated that they would not invade further than 40km into Lebanon. Soon it became clear that the Israeli forces had taken Beirut. In reaction to this change of plan, a plan which appeared to be expansionist and not for the purposes of a regime change, 400,000 Israeli people marched in the streets to protest and demand that the

¹²⁷ Schumacher, p.131.

government withdraw its forces (26 September 1982). These protests were effective in the limited sense that they compelled the government to withdraw to the southern part of Lebanon.¹²⁹ The violent reaction of the Israeli public against these government actions was reflected on the stage in both original and adapted works and attended by controversy, public debates, and sometimes even further demonstrations.¹³⁰ Two of the most thought provoking and controversial productions were versions of Euripides' *Trojan Women*. The first was produced by the Habima National Theatre in Tel Aviv, in a Hebrew translation by Eli Malka of Sartre's 1965 adaptation, *Les Troyennes*.

Shortly before the opening of The Habima National Theatre's production of *Trojan Women*, in February 1983, news broke of a massacre of hundreds of men, women and children at Sabra and Shatila, refugee camps for Palestinians in Lebanon. These mass murders had been perpetrated by the Phalangot, a Christian Mormon Army in Lebanon and an Israeli ally, who acted with the knowledge and possibly even the support of the then Israeli Defence Minister, Ariel Sharon. The production was conceived before these massacres, but the timeliness of the production further contributed to the controversy and social crisis that ensued.

At first glance, The Habima's version of *Trojan Women*, in Eli Malka's Hebrew translation of Sartre's *Les Troyennes*, seemed to capitalise on the Israeli theatrical tradition of *aktualität*, the reporting of actual events that were immediately familiar to audiences within the framework of a creative piece. But the approach of guest director, Holk Freytag

¹²⁸ See Abramson, p. 9.

¹²⁹ Israel did not fully withdraw from Lebanon until 2000.

¹³⁰ See Abramson, pp. 9-10.

(a German non-Jew) was more nuanced than a documentary recreation of recent events. First, Freytag pummelled his audience with a hard-hitting twelve-minute opening sequence, similar to Tabori's 1976 opening, which appeared to locate the production in the present time. This scene replaced Euripides' Prologue. As discussed above, in Sartre's version this scene was replaced by an epilogue spoken by Poseidon. By eliminating the gods, Freytag was not alone among directors of this play in making it clear that the cycle of bloodshed and violence, which inevitably brought disaster upon everyone even the victors, was not controlled by higher beings, but by men. Without the agency, or motivating force of the gods, the fate of humankind becomes the sole responsibility of humankind, and fundamentally of those men who go to war. In an Israeli context, this particular production decision represented a range of contradictory views with regard to the role of human agency.

However, Freytag did not create an environment for this play that was wholly godless. Influenced by Sartre's theories about fate and agency, the deities are represented as 'the forces that exist in the world [...] impulsive and blind and lack principles the same as men.'¹³¹ For example, instead of questioning the responsibility of the gods to help humans in distress, as is the case in Euripides' version, during the course of this production, Hecuba slowly becomes aware of life in a godless world. She is characterised as someone constantly 'looking for some immortal order and justice' and when she understands that

¹³¹ Boaz Evron, 'A World Without Mercy', *Yediot Acharonot*, 8 March 1983. NB. All reviews, unless otherwise noted, were originally written in Hebrew and translated for the project into English by Shlomit Wallerstein. Only the English translations are cited here.

there is no justice, Helen will not pay for her sins, she 'arrives at absolute nihilism'.¹³² This journey towards the realisation of 'absolute nihilism' in every aspect of her life provides the driving force of Hecuba's character development. Hecuba becomes a symbol of Israel, struggling to find meaning in the contest between the religious and secular factions dividing the country, and ultimately, of a Jewish people questioning why God did not save them from the Holocaust. In addition, Freytag gave some lines from the discarded Prologue to Hecuba, creating in her a character who possessed knowledge above and beyond her fellow human beings, a knowledge that gives her the strength and ability to rise above her pain. The absurdity of Hecuba's situation extended to the belief that war, in general, was irrational, a notion congruous with both the themes of the original and those of Sartre's adapted version. Unfortunately, whatever strength she gains from this divine-like knowledge is useless when she is subjected to the brutal tyranny of Helen later in the play.

The absence of the gods in the play also suggested an allegiance to the secular tradition which advocated a legal return of the Jewish people to the territory promised to them by God, but a return which could only be orchestrated by an international political machine. This was in opposition to the religious factions who advocated that only God, not men, could control the Jewish destiny. By removing the Prologue of *Trojan Women*, Freytag criticised the limits of both agendas by suggesting that the Israelis were personally responsible for the consequences of settling permanently in a region inhabited by the Palestinians and others. In using a Hebrew translation of Sartre's *Les Troyennes*, an attack on the French government's involvement in Algeria, Freytag also overtly contended that

¹³² *ibid.*

the Israeli invaders in Lebanon were akin to the French colonisers of Algeria. In Israel in 1983, this parallel was problematic because the distinction was blurred between the actions of a coloniser and the actions of a government intending to protect a homeland. The government maintained that the Lebanon War was a war of self-defence against terrorism, or, at the very least, the drive for a regime change; that Israel bore no responsibility for the Sabra and Shatila massacres because they were not perpetrated directly by the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF); and furthermore that they had no intention of occupying Lebanon for their own gain. In opposition, some of the public viewed the government's actions as an expansionist agenda, the agenda of a conquering military. Critic Dan La' Or expressed this paradox by giving his review the title: 'The Zionist conqueror in Troy.'¹³³

Freytag's attention to detail in the opening scene also demonstrated his unique sense of *aktualität*, a theatrical technique that was closer to recreating reality than simply making a production 'relevant' by referring to real incidences. Similar to the opening scene showing the Greek soldiers roughly rounding up the Trojan women in Cacoyannis's 1971 film or the hard-hitting first scene of Tabori's 1976 production, Freytag also took advantage of the markers for action in Euripides' text to make a striking visual introduction. This addition immediately set the scene in terms of locale and time frame, but also in terms of emotional intensity. The details of the additional scene, as described by Shoshana Weitz and Shoshana Avigal, are as follows:

A young soldier enters the dark stage dressed in a khaki uniform, carrying a machine gun. He lights the fire in a stove on the stage. As the lights rise, a woman, covered in a black robe and black shawl, is seen motionless. Another soldier enters on the upper level platform, dragging a woman, also

¹³³ Dan La'Or, 'The Zionist conqueror in Troy', *Col Ha-eer*, 13 May 1983.

in a black robe and black shawl and carrying an ornamental cane, and then pushes her down the sloped platform. A third woman appears, dressed as the other women are, and carrying a tattered suitcase. On the lower level, a soldier carries a young boy on his shoulders and plays ball with him. Eventually the boy seems to find his mother, the woman who first appeared alone on the upper platform and lays down in a huddle with her. A tall blonde woman in a black low-cut evening dress and red high-heeled shoes is escorted in by a soldier and put into a glass cage; she enters the cage and turns her back to the audience.

The action proceeds quickly from here as soldiers roughly drag in another three women, all dressed similarly in overcoats and bright midi-dresses underneath. Suitcases, sticks and tent materials are thrown in after the women. Slowly, without communication or helping each other, the women start to assemble makeshift tents for themselves. The long non-verbal sequence is interrupted by the woman centre stage who reveals herself to be the grey-haired queen, Hecuba. Hecuba's first threnody is delivered only to herself, the other women carry on with their busy-work setting up camp, each absorbed in individual thoughts.¹³⁴

The effect of this opening scene was spectacular. *Aktualität* was demonstrated here in the form of the modern appearance of the soldiers and the soundscape of diving fighter planes and exploding bombs. These visual and aural signs immediately placed the audience in the middle of an actual scene of Israeli military activity in Lebanon in 1983. For some critics, these signs of *aktualität* immediately erased 'any illusion of distance between the [audience] and the stage'.¹³⁵

But, how directly did this opening scene represent current events? A closer examination of Freytag's design schema reveals delicate frames of reference. For example, the uniforms of the soldiers—light khaki and modern army boots—were strongly reminiscent of IDF uniforms, yet there were no identifying symbols. Their weapons were

¹³⁴ This description of the opening sequence is a paraphrase of Appendix A in Shoshana Weitz and Shoshana Avigal, 'Cultural and Ideological Variables in Audience Response: The Case of *The Trojan Women*, Tel Aviv, 1982-1983', *Assaph Studies in the Arts*, Second C.3 (1986), 7-42 (pp. 36-39). I am indebted to the authors of this article who attended the performance and provided a detailed description based on their personal observations and review of the video afterwards.

those used by various armies in the late 1950s and 1960s: the 'Uzi' guns were standard weapons of the IDF, made in Israel and exported. The 'Kalishnikov' was a Russian weapon associated with terrorism and used by special units of the Israeli army as a looted weapon.¹³⁶ The conflation of symbols here suggested that this moment of live theatre was not just a re-creation of a contemporary situation, but also a representation of the appearance and brutal behaviour of other soldier groups, such as the German soldiers of World War Two. Drawing a parallel between the behaviour of the IDF in 1983 and the Nazis during the war created extraordinary implications in an Israeli context, and particularly in this case because both the director and the set designer of the play were native non-Jewish Germans. In addition, Hecuba was played by Orna Porat, a German born Christian woman who fell in love with an Israeli soldier during World War Two, converted to Judaism and moved to Israel. As a founding member of the Cameri Theatre where Levin's version of *Trojan Women* was performed a year later, she quickly became one of the most acclaimed actresses in Israel. Her story would have been well known to the Israeli audience and added another element to the tensions of German-Israeli relations.

Freytag's version was the first production of *Trojan Women* in Israel, with the exception of Andrei Serban's avant-garde production that had toured Jerusalem in 1979. Therefore, it was certainly taboo and offensive to parallel the IDF and the Nazis as Freytag did. Theatre critics angrily denounced this parallel, personally attacking Freytag. One wrote,

¹³⁵ Dan La'Or, 'The Zionist conqueror in Troy', *Col Ha-eer*, 13 May 1983.

¹³⁶ Weitz and Avigal, 41, n. 30.

The sin of this production consists of imposing the Nazi brutality and cruelty on characters who are presented here as belonging to this country in this time. The catharsis here, if catharsis there is, applies only to the German director's own soul.¹³⁷

Joseph Lapid, the Head of the State Broadcasting Authority, publicly raged against the idea of a 'German preaching to us'.¹³⁸ His statement corroborated the 'outcry against the performance by right-wing journalists and spectators, accusing it of betraying the consensus', a cry which showed just 'to what extent it reached its mark'.¹³⁹ Indeed, for theatre critics any analogy with a conquering force from any time period was deemed disgraceful and insulting. Another critic ranted in *Ma-ariv*, the right-wing newspaper: 'Disgrace to the National Theatre that opens the door to such a comparison between the IDF and the brutal conquest force of the ancient Greeks!'¹⁴⁰

Freytag also employed the technique of embedding multiple frames of reference, all of which were highly contentious, in the presentation and characterisation of the Trojan women. The costumes of the chorus, bright coloured dresses beneath dark overcoats, appeared to be period dresses from an Algerian or Bedouin context, a reference to Sartre's late 1950s setting, and also as modest old-fashioned dresses of orthodox Palestinian refugees in the 1980s. Furthermore, their entrances in the opening scene were accompanied with sporadic Eastern flute music that placed the audience in a distinctly Palestinian environment, but was also reminiscent of Mediterranean rustic melodies. They sang a 'complex melody, a capella, almost a dirge, sometimes accompanying themselves, in

¹³⁷ Hava Novak, 'The Israeli Shock in confronting *The Trojan Women*', *Davar*, 28 February 1983.

¹³⁸ Shimon Levy and Nurit Yaari, 'Theatrical Responses to Political Events: The Trojan War on the Israeli stage during the Lebanon War, 1982-1984', *Journal of Theatre and Drama*, 4, (1998), 99-123 (n.15).

¹³⁹ Levy and Yaari, 109.

¹⁴⁰ David Yardeney, 'The Women of Troy in Lebanon', *Ma-ariv*, 25 May 1983.

oriental style, by drumming on luggage and crates that surrounded them.¹⁴¹ The four women of the chorus sometimes behaved emotionally, reacting to their circumstances with hysteria, as one reviewer described them, ‘more like a group of blackbirds frightened and frightening’;¹⁴² in the opening scene, they each fought selfishly for scraps of material and territory on which to build their ramshackle tents. This competitive spirit of survival did not project the same sense of camaraderie as the Trojan women displayed towards each other in Euripides’ text. Hecuba and Cassandra (Gila Almagor), each appeared in long loose fitting black dresses, with perhaps a more explicitly classical feel, but also free-flowing in the manner of Bedouin dress. Hecuba wore a medallion on a silver chain, her hair short and uncombed. Like the chorus, Andromache (Razia Yisraeli) wore a dark purple 1940s style dress and a black overcoat. The presence of their tattered suitcases and bundles indicated Palestinian refugee status, but also invoked the image of the eponymous ‘wandering Jew’, a conventional Jewish self-image.¹⁴³

The women, who simultaneously existed in multiple worlds and multiple time periods, appeared in opposition to Helen (Anat Harpazi). Helen wore a ‘sexy shimmering tight black dress with a low neckline, [...] and her hair is blonde and loose’.¹⁴⁴ Her appearance was in accordance with so many interpretations of her character as a *femme fatale*, and made all the more poignant by her red shoes, the most colourful element of the entire production, which visually indicated the stain of blood she carried with her everywhere. Quite strikingly, Helen was separated from the others both physically and

¹⁴¹ Levy and Yaari, 107.

¹⁴² Hava Novak, ‘The Israeli Shock in confronting *The Trojan Women*’, *Davar*, 28 February 1983.

¹⁴³ Weitz and Avigal, 25.

visually, kept in a glass cage atop a tower, and lit up with neon lights. The effect of this stage device (as opposed to Euripides' text in which she is spoken about for many lines before she appears on stage for one scene and then disappears) is to provide a constant visual reminder for the causes of war; a scapegoat for the sins of the conqueror. Her cage is reminiscent of the hut that kept Helen separated from the bloodthirsty chorus in Michael Cacoyannis's 1971 film or Serban's caged wagon bearing a naked Helen, seen in the La Mama tour in 1979. A more poignant and significant reference has been argued to be the image of Adolph Eichmann, the Nazi war criminal, who sat in a similar glass cubicle during his highly controversial 1962 trial in Jerusalem. Helen, standing accused of causing the Trojan war and the death of thousands, was explicitly compared to Eichmann, who stood trial for the mass murder of the Jews during World War Two.¹⁴⁵ This was perhaps the most damning interpretation of Helen's character presented on the international stage. Her eventual exoneration, within this frame of reference, must have been extremely painful for an Israeli audience.

Equally striking was the image of Astyanax, the only civilian male on stage, who was presented entirely as a child of the modern age. Played by a young boy, he wore a light blue shirt and trousers, his hair left long and cut in a modern European style. He also wore modern trainers bearing the trademark of Gali, a well-known Israeli manufacturer: a 'nice Jewish boy' growing up in any contemporary Israeli home.¹⁴⁶ The preferential treatment he

¹⁴⁴ Weitz and Avigal, 22.

¹⁴⁵ Levy and Yaari, 108. Eichmann was captured in South America by the IDF and taken to Israel without consulting West Germany who argued that they should try him in a German court. Eichmann was found guilty and hanged on 31 May 1962. His trial was immortalised in Hannah Arendt's controversial reports and published as *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (1963).

¹⁴⁶ Weitz and Avigal, 25. Levy and Yaari argue that these shoes are similar to those found in Palestinian

received from the soldiers was juxtaposed with the way they treated Andromache, his mother, and the other women. This treatment, and his existence as a happily playing child in this opening scene and throughout, made painfully ironic the fact that he would die at the hands of these soldiers later in the play. Ultimately in his unnecessary death, Astyanax functioned, as Weitz and Avigal have suggested, as the 'emotional compass of the play [...] it is he who, as victim par excellence, guides the spectator's sympathies'. In this way, Freytag presented Astyanax as a symbol of Israel as a victim. He also offered an idealised image of Israel as an invincible and protected homeland which eventually might be sacrificed.

Freytag and his designers achieve these multiple frames of reference not only with costume, music, and sound effects, but also in the set design. The long opening scene served at first glance to introduce the audience to the world of the play. The camp was in appearance akin to the 'camps that are found all around us', which in 1983 would have also included Palestinian refugee camps (though, in comparison to Schroth's set, not as obviously a Nazi concentration camp).¹⁴⁷

On entering the auditorium, the spectator is faced with a split-level stage: an upper, narrow upstage level, raised considerably above the stage floor, linked to the lower level by means of a staircase with an adjacent narrow sloping platform. The ceiling of the stage is covered with sacks made to look like a roof of a huge tent. The stage floor (the lower level) is covered with sawdust, which from the auditorium, looks like sand, and on which ropes and rags are scattered in a disorderly manner. Downstage left there is a metal tower, at the top of which stands a translucent cage with stairs leading up to it. Upstage right there is a kind of field stove.¹⁴⁸

shops, as well as Lebanese or Israeli villages (108).

¹⁴⁷ Dan La'Or, 'The Zionist conqueror in Troy', *Col Ha-eer*, 13 May 1983.

¹⁴⁸ Weitz and Avigal, 37.

In this small venue at the Habima (where the Hall was reserved for larger scale entertainment¹⁴⁹) levels were created and used by specific characters for specific purposes to reflect 'axiological, hierarchical relations: strong/weak, high/low, male/female (and child), armed/defenceless, fair/dark, mobile/static'. Helen and Astyanax were the only characters who do not fit naturally into this 'spatial organization of relations'.¹⁵⁰ The women were constantly rolling in the dirt, attempting to bury themselves, to go deeper and deeper into the earth to find their lost loved ones; a poignant visualisation of Euripides' final Choral scene (1305ff). The men, in contrast, always appeared above the action, symbolising their status and power over the women. Their position in the metal towers (an overt Holocaust image) further reinforced the parallel between the IDF and the Nazi concentration camp guards. The stage lighting helped to emphasise the spatial hierarchies. Lit with varying degrees of yellow lighting, which also highlighted the tones of the sand and costumes, shadows were cast over the raised platform, and a main light was focused on Hecuba. Controversially, as argued by theatre scholars Shimon Levy and Nurit Yaari, these design elements combined on stage to suggest an 'equivalence between Jewish and Palestinian refugees, charging the theatrical image with inherent possibilities by interchanging victim with executioner'.¹⁵¹

Eli Malka's Hebrew translation also contributed to this complex theatrical experience. His 'deliberately fractured structure' reflects even more hopelessness than

¹⁴⁹ Shosh Avigal, 'Ok, this is life in war', newspaper unknown, 2 March 1984.

¹⁵⁰ 'Helen is the only woman led onto the stage from the lower level (as opposed to being thrown from above). Locked in her cage, Helen is staged in a raised area within the lower level - a kind of twilight zone [...]. The boy is also led onto the stage from the lower level. He rides the shoulders of a soldier, who treats him kindly and plays ball with him' (Weitz and Avigal, 23).

¹⁵¹ Levy and Yaari, 108.

Sartre's version and combined 'literary with street Hebrew' which 'intensified the intended discrepancy between universal aspects of the past and the immediately modern appeal of the present'.¹⁵² Like Sartre, Malka also emphasised the erotic elements in Euripides' text, making the play's message more accessible to modern audiences. The promotion of Sartre's text was further highlighted by the programme notes that included a section from a chapter on Sartre from the Hebrew Encyclopaedia, which emphasised his anti-Fascist attitudes and suggested that he always fought for the persecuted.¹⁵³ This appeared to be an attempt to avert attention from the nationality of Freytag and Endingen.

The overall directorial vision and production decisions for this *Trojan Women*, especially with regard to the additional first scene, provoked violent reactions from the Israeli audience and theatre critics, reflecting an emotionally conflicted city/nation. Many Israeli citizens were publicly uncomfortable with the idea of Israel as a conqueror and actively expressed that their government should withdraw from Lebanon. But, at the same time, many were also unwilling to witness any profound criticism of their government's actions on the stage. A commitment to *aktualität* was risky because as a National Theatre supported financially by the government, though not censored or controlled by it, explicit references to the present situation essentially constituted a 'biting of the hand that feeds you'. One critic actually demanded some censorship:

In my opinion, it is strange that a nation that is being attacked in its own territory by neighbors who are trying to destroy it, allows its national theatre to present its own sons as oppressing conquerors and the neighbors as his helpless victims, while arguing that these things express a desire for peace.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵² *ibid.*, 102.

¹⁵³ *ibid.*, p. 120.

¹⁵⁴ Dr Henry Shanan Sharon, 'The National Theatre and our Mental Health', *Har-aretz*, 27 February 1983.

This reviewer, representing a small faction of mostly right-wing people, believed strongly in the government's position that the War in Lebanon was a war of self-defence, and as a result, took offence at the fact that a national institution dared to suggest otherwise. Another critic expressed the exact opposite sentiment: 'Thus, it is the duty of a National Theatre to present this situation, in as sharp a way as possible, in front of an Israeli audience.'¹⁵⁵

The members of the Israeli government who attended performances of the play were carefully neutral; they did not seem to exhibit any feelings of betrayal nor any sense that they were being directly criticised.

When the lights turned on, the real show moved from the stage to the Finance Minister, Yoram Aridor, in one of the front rows, serious as usual, he clapped his hands politely. Not far away from him, a little sunk in his chair, a small smile floating on his lips, clapping his hands, was the Chair of the Parliament, Menachem Savidor. Abram Ronay, the only one of this group who publicly identifies with the new culture, came up to them. He stopped next to the Finance Minister and his face showed his surprise not to hear the minister tell any defects in the play or the modern interpretation.¹⁵⁶

Equally reserved and non-committal was the reaction of the Israeli President, Chaim Hertzog, who attended a performance when the play travelled to Jerusalem. He seemed to feel the 'tension and extra meaning' added by the play's relevance, but at the same time did not demonstrate the violent reactions of the press.¹⁵⁷ This behaviour demonstrated a calculated political indifference. In some ways, Freytag's interpretation of the character of Menelaus—'a caricature of a spineless commander in a military uniform, decorated with medals, holding binoculars and maps, and lacking any moral feeling and responsibility for

¹⁵⁵ Michael Handelzeltz, 'Actuality on Stage', *Ha-aretz*, 12 April 1983.

¹⁵⁶ Boaz Evron, 'Nothing can help – They are here, at home', *Yediot Acharonot*, 4 March 1983.

events',¹⁵⁸—was thus presented to criticise these politicians who appeared to feel no need to take responsibility for their actions. Perhaps, Freytag suggested, like Menelaus, they wholeheartedly believed in their own agendas and therefore the director's production choices had no bearing on 'actual' events according to their perspective. For them, *Trojan Women* belonged only to the realm of artistic and theatrical endeavour; a story set in a time long past.

But for many others, it was impossible to escape Freytag's politically astute production that ultimately, through the establishment of multiple frames of reference and a sophisticated conception of how to show actuality on the stage, expressed the universal theme in *Trojan Women*, that all wars, whether in self-defence or for the gains of colonisation, bear extraordinary consequences on the lives of the victims. For an Israeli audience still struggling with the legacy of the Holocaust, the actualisation of parallels between the IDF and Nazis, in particular, were too painful to witness, even forty years later.

18. Hanoch Levin/Hanoch Levin
The Hopeless Women of Troy
Cameri Theatre
Tel Aviv
1984

If the play *Trojan Women*—in Sartre's adaptation of Euripides' play, performed last year at the Habima—drove us into deep depression, no such danger lurks [...] in Hanoch Levin's play at the Cameri'.¹⁵⁹

Less than a year after the Habima production of *Trojan Women*, the Cameri Theatre, also in Tel Aviv (known to host a conservative repertoire, but often promoted risky

¹⁵⁷ Ziv Heler, newspaper and date unknown.

¹⁵⁸ Shosh Avigal, 'Ok, this is life in war', newspaper unknown, 2 March 1984.

productions) premiered Hanoch Levin's *The Hopeless Women of Troy*. While Freytag strove for a complex actuality in his directorial vision and technique, Levin, who often directed his own work, did not make conscious parallels or analogies with contemporary events, but instead focused his interpretation of *Trojan Women* on a universal truth: the meaningless and lack of purpose in human suffering as a result of war. He focused on the dehumanization of the Trojan women in response to the abuse inflicted upon them. Creating an effect similar to the role of Suzuki's imported character Jizo, the god of children, Levin replaced the Olympians with a character called the 'divine artist', who acted as a kind of silent story teller of the gruesome tale: 'We cannot challenge the facts, only the words remain for us to play with.'¹⁶⁰ This 'divine artist' delivers the prologue and epilogue, and spends the duration of the play as a spectator with a wry smile on his face, never interrupting the action of the play, except with his occasional cynical laughter (also not unlike the behaviour of Suzuki's samurai). Working with a group of actors, many of whom had worked with him for over twenty years, Levin converged several texts on the Trojan war theme in order to convey the hopelessness of the women's plight. The resulting performance text reflected his personal style, particularly his penchant for nudity, hysterical acting and violence on stage.

Levin's production shocked an already vulnerable theatre public with his extreme directorial decisions and interpretations of the original text. There were a few historical references, most obviously, the transformation of Talthybius into a character who blindly followed orders, unlike Euripides' sensitive herald, yet a painful reference to Nazi soldiers

¹⁵⁹ Hava Novak, 'The emotional congestion neutralizes the emotions', *Davar*, 20 February 1984.

during the Holocaust or even the IDF who were encouraged by the public to conscientiously object to serving in Lebanon.¹⁶¹ Generally, Levin avoided any allusion to the ongoing Lebanon War, but instead chose to recreate *Trojan Women* as a modern battle of the sexes. Neoptolemus opened his monologue with a provoking statement: 'Women, women, their sweet choking juices, from which all the poisoned mushrooms of our soul do spring.'¹⁶² There are examples of physical conflict between the sexes as well. Levin went further than Tabori's concept of the raped prophetess by having Cassandra, dressed in white, stripped naked onstage, revealing her delicate vulnerability, and then raped by Agamemnon in full view of the audience. This rape was a preview of how the Greek soldiers would treat their female slaves and also referred to the prior rape of Cassandra by Ajax, the event which triggered Athene's revenge on her favoured Greeks in Euripides' text. As a universal symbol of the abused female, Levin's Cassandra ultimately appeared not as Euripides' crazed virgin priestess, but as a sexual object publicly humiliated in a demonstration of male supremacy. As a result, her reasons for revenge extended beyond the need to make Agamemnon suffer for the loss of her brothers and father to a personal desire to destroy him for his humiliation of her own body. In this way, her prophecy for a future union with Agamemnon was gruesomely fulfilled at the end of the scene. Since the use of nudity was very uncommon in Israeli theatre, Cassandra's nakedness in this scene was a source of great consternation among critics and audience members and many commented

¹⁶⁰ Quoted in Levy and Yaari, 102.

¹⁶¹ Levy and Yaari, 102.

¹⁶² As quoted in Levy and Yaari, 110. In Seneca's *Troades*, Neoptolemus (Pyrrhus), does not appear until Act Two. His tone is reminiscent of Hippolytus' raving anti-female speech in Euripides' *Hippolytus*.

that the shock value of the theatrical technique overshadowed the meaning of Cassandra's presence in the play.

Another shocking directorial decision was Levin's interpretation of the Helen Episode. In contrast to the Habima production in which Helen was kept in a glass cage for the duration of the play, in Levin's production, she was tied up, her head covered with a bag. Instead of representing a greater force of evil, she was kept like a common criminal. This Helen, played by Fabiana Meyouchas in her professional debut, ultimately won the *agon* by conquering Menelaus (Eli Danker) sexually, by 'riding' him without passion or lust, with the energy of a sadistic torturer. As with his interpretation of Cassandra, Levin took the subtle references to Helen's erotic powers in Euripides' text and converted them into explicit stage action. In the middle of the scene, Menelaus threatens to kill her, but she insists that he do so with his own hands. As he reaches out to kill her, she begins a melodramatic supplication and fully exposes her breasts. This stage action remarkably enacted the moment in Euripides' text during which Helen performs this dramatic act of self-preservation, pleading for her life (μή, πρὸς σε γονάτων, 'I beg you by your knees...', 1042), and throws herself to the ground in the conventional supplication gesture.¹⁶³ In Levin's production, Helen's victory was completed when she asks Menelaus to take Hecuba as his slave (not slave to Odysseus as is the case in Euripides). Hecuba

¹⁶³ It has been argued that this stage action was inspired by fifth-century iconography that captured the moment when Menelaos, overwhelmed by the sight of Helen's naked breast or body, drops his sword. For a full discussion of the depiction of the Trojan War in art and poetry, see M. Anderson, *The Fall of Troy in Early Greek Poetry and Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), especially 164-66. These painted scenes vary: sometimes Menelaos raises his sword while Helen holds open her *himation* revealing her face, or in some cases, parts of her naked upper body. See *LIMC*, ed. by L. Kahil, IV (Zurich and Munich, 1988) for a complete survey of the iconography of Helen. Literary references include: Euripides' *Andromache*, in which Peleus rebukes Menelaos for succumbing to Helen's seduction and not killing her (629-30). Aristophanes

reacted to this ultimate humiliation by mumbling and crying such crazy suggestions as ‘Helen is sensitive to mosquitoes’ and ‘Hecuba is among the dead dressed in silks’ and ‘Talthybius, plant a tree over my grave’. These changes portrayed Helen, not as someone who successfully attempts to save herself through rhetoric and erotic persuasion as Euripides portrayed her, but as a wholly vindictive manipulative woman. Hecuba is perceived as a weak old woman lacking the strength to cope with her difficult situation. One critic interpreted Levin’s revisions of the ‘Helen Episode’ as an attempt to illustrate the play as an illustration of an oppression of the feminine gender, an illustration that is connected to a phobia about the erotic power of women. There was no confusion here about the fate of Helen (as there is in Euripides’ text)—in every way, Helen emerged victorious. Thus, Levin refashioned the subtle, yet complex, Euripidean portrayals of these women, and polarised them into modern stereotypes.

Strangely, Levin did not exploit the separation of Andromache and Astyanax, nor did he show the crushed body of the boy with any sensational gore. Instead he chose a poignant image, the sacrificial lamb, as a metaphorical representation of Astyanax. Agamemnon snatches him from Andromache’s arms and hoists him over his shoulder as if he were an animal going to the slaughter.¹⁶⁴ This image, evocative of the biblical sacrifice of Isaac, highlighted the purity and helplessness of the child and heightens the emotional tension between the sexes.¹⁶⁵ Although the image of a sacrificed Astyanax appeared pure

describes the effect on Menelaos when Helen’s naked body is revealed in *Lysistrata* (155).

¹⁶⁴ In Seneca’s version it is Ulysses who finds Astyanax, hidden in his father’s tomb, and takes him away from his mother (Act Three).

¹⁶⁵ Levin had also addressed the theme of the sacrifice of the first-born in an earlier play, *The Bathtub Queen* (1968). Interestingly, though possibly unknown to him, this image also evokes a famous ancient sculpture of the Greek farmer carrying a lamb on his shoulders.

and holy, the sacrifice of Polyxena was portrayed as sick and gruesome. In an act of ‘cannibalistic-erotic orgy’, the Greek soldiers, like raving animals, execute Polyxena who had been led to believe that she would marry Neoptolemus, son of Achilles. This sacrifice of Polyxena, a character only reported about in Euripides, but who appeared onstage in this version, is used, in contrast to the sacrifice of Astyanax, as another example of how the women of this play are brutalised and helpless, and the men, compelled by war-emotion, indulge in sexual perversion.

While the violence, psychological abuse, and sexual politics appear to be a wholly modern interpretation of the ancient texts, numerous veiled references to the ancient world were embedded in the set and costume design. The set, designed by Roni Toren, symbolically represented the ‘dark and disastrous’ world Levin created for the play.¹⁶⁶ An ‘environmental sculpture’ of sorts, the action took place in an orchestral circle made of patches of sewn leather, as if the face of a drum, intersected by a path leading across the stage. Military props, javelins, war banners, and axes, grew out of the leather circle creating an enclosed playing space.¹⁶⁷ The women entered covered in sacks, tied like bundles of cloth. When they were untied and uncovered, they appeared to be wearing intricately draped fabrics, light coloured, with flowing veils, suggestive of both ancient and modern Mediterranean fashion. Their abundant jewellery highlighted the nobility of the women. Andromache’s costume was decorated with ribbons and fitted with a vest similar to armour. The men’s clothing was also intricately decorated, military in style but consisting of colourful jackets, long capes of embroidered materials of leather and fur, wide trousers and

¹⁶⁶ Hava Novak, ‘The emotional congestion neutralizes the emotions’, *Davar*, 20 February 1984.

leather shoes or boots.¹⁶⁸ The women's movement was characterised as flowing and smooth, while the men strutted and in a staccato fashion delivered their lines, seemingly confined (and defined) by their armoured chest-plates. These design elements, lacking in contemporary references, created a distance between the space of the play and the audience and invited them to draw their own conclusions about the topicality of the play from the intense language, beautifully sung arias, and scenes of remorseless brutality.

The presence onstage of Polyxena, Neoptolemus, Agamemnon and other Greek soldiers strongly suggests that Levin used Seneca's *Troades* as his primary model instead of Euripides' plays. Seneca's version (itself a combination of Euripides' *Trojan Women* and *Hecuba*) must have been virtually unknown in Israel, at least to critics, because not one mentioned this text as possible source material (but Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* was often used in reference to the Cassandra episode). Given Seneca's general indulgence in 'vengeance, madness, power-lust, passion, irrational hatred, self-contempt, murder, incest, hideous death, fortune's vicissitudes, and savagery',¹⁶⁹ it is not a surprise that Levin might favour the Roman tragedian's version over the Euripidean one. In his version of the story, Seneca created a gender balance by placing the Greek soldiers, bored and anxious to return home, into direct contact with the female prisoners. While Euripides chose to focus on the ways in which the women cope with their adverse situation, Seneca's clash of the genders reinforced the polarities of power between them, the weakness of the women and the strength of the men. As a result of these adaptations, the feeling of despair felt by the

¹⁶⁷ Levy and Yaari, 109.

¹⁶⁸ Levy and Yaari, 110.

¹⁶⁹ A.J. Boyle, *Seneca's 'Troades'*, Latin and Greek Texts, 7 (Leeds: Francis Cairns, 1994), p. 5.

audience was diminished as they witnessed how the hopes of the women were continually dashed scene after scene. Instead, Seneca brought to the stage characters such as Neoptolemos, Agamemnon, Odysseus and Polyxena (referenced only in Euripides) and put pitiful words into the mouth of Astyanax. Levin appeared to have vaguely followed Seneca's text, with the exception of the Helen Episode, which Levin reinserted it into his own performance text, primarily because it served to emphasise the brutality of the characters' treatment of each other.

Although clearly based on ancient drama, theatre critics placed Levin's *Hopeless Women of Troy* firmly within his collection of plays. Levin, who died in 1999, was a prolific playwright, director and poet who presented at least one play a year, sometimes more, and was known to regularly numb the senses of his audiences with acts of onstage violence and graphic sexual acts. For example, the image of blood spurting from Hecuba's mouth after she had been hit was identified as a typical Levinian trope. Typically Levinian also was the characterisations of Menelaus and Helen as people controlled by lust.¹⁷⁰ The execution of Astyanax could be compared to the murder of a child in Levin's *Babylonian Prostitute* (1982) and the emphasis on the sexual war between the genders was reminiscence of the characters controlled by lust and desire and doomed to a life of misery in his *Varda's Youth*. The general atmosphere of aggression and humiliation in *The Hopeless Women of Troy* was also commonly associated with Levin's other mythological plays noted for their integration of genres and styles from different historical periods.¹⁷¹

¹⁷⁰ Erfat Oz, 'The Women of Troy of Hanoch Levin', *Al Hamishmar*, 9 February 1984.

¹⁷¹ Nurit Yaari, *Stage Dying: Hanoch Levin versus Aeschylus on Human Suffering, On the Interpretation of the Arts* (date unknown, Tel Aviv University, Faculty of Arts), 327-43 (p. 328). Levin's other plays based on

Levin's final performance text reveals how he chose to isolate the scenes and characterisations from the ancient sources which could convey his message that the battle of the sexes will end in the utter destruction of female life, which was also, he posited, was the result of war in general.

Critics generally panned Levin's production, primarily because they constantly compared his version with the earlier Habima production. One critic wrote:

Not long ago the play by the most modern of ancient Greece's playwrights was performed on the stage at Habima [...]. Historical Troy was transferred a few hundred kilometers to the south, from the shore of the Bosphorous to Beirut. It was exciting and hard, because at times I found myself on the one side of the barricade of hate and horror and at times on the other side. Hanoach Levin chose a different way [...], the strong and shocking scenes are very Levinian [...], the repetition of the Levinian arsenal weakens the emotional result.¹⁷²

This critic, like many others, emphasised the alienating quality of the violence. Furthermore, the audience had come to expect it in plays by Levin and in a play with so many violent climaxes, they lost sight of the overall themes; 'the emotional congestion neutralized the emotions'.¹⁷³ Some critics also questioned why the Cameri had chosen to produce the play so soon after the Habima version: 'In Habima at least a horrible cry against the war was heard—and in Israel this has a clear meaning to any spectator—whereas on the stage of the Cameri we saw again and again the slaughter-house of Hanoach Levin.'¹⁷⁴ Another wrote, more harshly: 'About six months ago Hanoach Levin sat in the small hall of Habima and saw the play, *The Women of Troy*, and said, "I can do better than

Greek Tragedy include: *The Emperor (Ion)*, and *Everybody Wants to Live (Alcestis)*.

¹⁷² Giora Manor, 'After the War', *Al Hamishmar*, 21 February 1984.

¹⁷³ Hava Novak, 'The emotional congestion neutralizes the emotions', *Davar*, 20 February 1984.

¹⁷⁴ Elyakim Yaron, 'The Slaughter-house of Troy', *Ma-ariv*, 23 February 1984.

Sartre”’.¹⁷⁵ It is very possible that Levin had already begun work on the play when Habima opened its production.

Generally, the critics appeared to prefer Freytag’s method of using references to actual events to Levin’s choice to avoid any parallel analogies and focus on one aspect of the ancient text, the suffering and humiliation of the women. Despite the fact that the programme explicitly explained that Levin wished to take his audience back to the ‘far away days of Troy’, Troy did not seem to exist or symbolise their own country or Lebanon, as it did in The Habima production, but, instead, seemed an ‘abyss of violence’.¹⁷⁶ In Levin’s *The Hopeless Women of Troy*, the theme is not the tender balance of victor and victim, or even that all are victims in war, as is the case in the Habima production, but rather that the victims and losers in war will always be women; there is little they can do to protect themselves. Levin’s play shocked the spectators, but it didn’t challenge them to thought or to protest against the policies of their own government, as Freytag’s production had done and as Sartre’s play had done for those who were sympathetic to the FLN (Front de Libération Nationale).

Levin’s attempt to find power in the original texts by creating distance and avoiding actuality was ultimately undermined by the fact that he was not faithful to the subtleties of those texts; there were good reasons for keeping violence off-stage. He exploited and brought to the front the modern elements – sexual politics and psychological verisimilitude – embedded in the rich fabric of the ancient texts, but he failed to re-present these elements in a way which enlightened his audience to the challenges in their own lives. He appeared

¹⁷⁵ Yehudit Orian, ‘The Helpless Women of Troy’, *Yediot Acharonot*, 10 February 1984.

to present violence for violence's sake and to present onstage rape and murder as compelling theatrical devices.¹⁷⁷ As a result, audiences were trapped at Levin's plays, unable to escape the violence before their eyes, and at the same time, often unable to see clearly his message.

These productions of *Trojan Women* at this particular juncture of history in these particular countries illustrate a perceptible shift in the approach to interpreting ancient drama for the modern stage. Translating the scenario into 'actual' recognisable images that referred to specific historical events, such as the Holocaust, became a more effective approach to helping an audience to consider and reconsider their own societal concerns. By the 1980s, the horrors of territorial warfare or colonial conflicts paled in comparison to crimes against humanity such as the Holocaust and the potential for the extinction of the entire human race, but the memory of almost a century of warfare plagued the minds of many. If the innocent Astyanax was the character symbolic of World War One, it was Cassandra, the seer, who was emblematic of a post-World War Two, post-Holocaust, post-Hiroshima world. The lesson of the cycle of war, of the tender balance of victors and victims, was a lesson that needed to be continually sustained. As Erika Fischer-Lichte has recently argued with respect to German theatrical experiments in the 1960s,¹⁷⁸ productions of *Trojan Women* in this era, demonstrate how the theatre's function shifted from reviving the great texts, especially the ancient classics, simply as timeless ideals to re-presenting the

¹⁷⁶ Michael Handelzeltz, 'Meaningless Suffering', *Ha-aretz*, 12 February 1984.

¹⁷⁷ Elyakim Yaron, 'The Slaughter-house of Troy', *Ma-ariv*, 23 February 1984.

¹⁷⁸ See Fischer-Lichte, p. 342f.

texts as ideals for the times. It is perhaps in the context of the Holocaust that *Trojan Women* most powerfully becomes a twentieth-century war play.

CHAPTER FIVE

A Question of Relevance: Productions in the 1990s, an era of global re-organisation and instability

On a warm spring morning, Serbian security and paramilitary forces descended on the small village of Cuska, near the western Kosovo town of Pec. Twenty-nine men were divided into three groups and taken to three separate houses, where they were sprayed repeatedly with automatic weapons.

Human Rights Watch (*A Village Destroyed: War crimes in Kosovo*, 2000)

In 1999, the grown men in the Balkan village of Cuska suffered a fate not unlike the men of Melos at the hands of the Athenians in the fifth century BC. Stories of rape, theft, and extreme poverty flooded daily news programmes as the international press reported the facts of these atrocities (and others). Unlike previous eras of war, the 1990s was an unusual period in which the consuming moral and political issue for the West was whether (or when) to intervene in conflicts which (debatably) had no direct bearing on national security or economic considerations: Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, Serbian massacres of Albanian civilians, tribal conflict and genocide in Rwanda, rebel activity in Chechnya. In the case of Rwanda, for example, intervention by a UN security force earlier in the conflict would have prevented the death of many thousands of people, even hundreds of thousands. Primarily instances of 'ethnic cleansing' or targeting of specific ethnic groups, these conflicts resulted in genocide and often instigated refugee crises. The international intervention of the United Nations, NATO, and the United States raised awareness of these conflicts and attempted to halt the destruction perpetrated by factions within the countries.

Unlike during the World Wars, the devastation did not occur in the homelands of Western countries, nor were the aggressors from Western countries. Although casualties to Western troops were few, a high proportion of casualties were local civilians. According to an article in the *New York Review of Books* (1999): 'The proportion of wartime casualties who are civilians has swelled since World War I from 10% to 90%, despite the Geneva accords and the Red Cross's best efforts.'¹ Human rights reporting became the new media focus. This new facet of war reporting also concentrated on first hand testimonies of the atrocities given by the affected civilian populations. These testimonies drew concern from the average citizen, and were also later corroborated and used in highly publicized Tribunal court cases against perpetrators such as Slobodan Milosevic, whose trial still continues in 2005.

Given the range of visual material and detailed information regarding the plight of victims and refugees at the disposal of theatre practitioners during this period, it is not surprising that *Trojan Women* could also be presented as a vehicle for raising awareness of various human rights violations. Images from these conflicts provided theatre artists with new perpetrators and saviours, victors and victims from which to re-mould characters from *Trojan Women*. The challenge to practitioners, however, was to develop a sensitive and compelling interpretation of the play that could articulate, but not exploit, the contemporary relevance.

¹ Quoted in F. Kathleen Foley, *Los Angeles Times*, 16 July 1999.

19. Katie Mitchell/ Kenneth McLeish
Women of Troy
 Gate Theatre
 London
 1991

At the height of the Rwandan crisis in 1994 and shortly before the opening of her tour of the RSC's *Henry VI* to Los Angeles, Katie Mitchell claimed in an interview: 'The world community has acted shamefully. We're gripped in a spiritual malaise and an emptiness of culture that's led to an unwillingness to take responsibility.'² *Henry VI* represented Mitchell's personal response to the conflicts in Bosnia and Rwanda, but her political convictions did not influence the design concepts; the play was set in medieval England. 'Her first priority is to let the truth of the play speak for itself', commented one of her actresses, Jane Lapotaire. 'I'd say her trademarks are economy, ruthless clarity, and an extremely democratic generosity when it comes to actors.'³

These trademarks were already developed when, three years earlier, shortly after George Bush and his allies declared war on Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq, Mitchell premiered Kenneth McLeish's new translation of *Women of Troy* at the 56-seat Gate

² Quoted in Lawrence Christon, 'She delivers more than a message', *Los Angeles Times*, 30 October 1994, p. 6. In April 1994, in response to a suspicious plane crash which killed the Rwandan president, the Hutu dominated government of Rwanda systematically slaughtered nearly 1 million people, primarily from the Tutsi tribe, in the largest scale genocide since the days of Nazi Germany (Approximately 7.2 million Tutsis lived in Rwanda at the time). In three months of killing, Human Rights Watch reports show that up to as many as 1000 people were killed every twenty minutes, mostly by machetes, hand grenades and small firearms. The resulting civil war led to a 'catastrophic exodus which cost thousands of lives as Rwandans died of disease, starvation, and lack of water'. By late October, it was estimated that 1.2 million Rwandans had become refugees in nearby countries such as Zaire, Burundi, and Tanzania, Human Rights Watch, *Rwanda Report 1995* <www.hrw.org/reports/1995/WR95/AFRICA-08.htm> [accessed 1 May 2004].

³ *ibid.*

Theatre in London (July 1991).⁴ According to the programme, her company, Classics on a Shoestring, aimed to 'stage lesser known classics from Britain and abroad, using innovative rehearsal methods from Eastern Europe'. For *Women of Troy* to be considered a 'lesser known classic' in 1991 indicated the short extent of theatrical memory and perhaps more tellingly, the perspective of the then twenty-six year old director. Her lack of knowledge of the play's performance history was understandable considering that the last substantial productions of *Trojan Women* in Great Britain would have been produced on the fringe or as foreign tours six and more years previously: Frank Dunlop's 1967 Edinburgh Festival production of Sartre's adaptation, Serban's tour of *Fragments* to the Edinburgh Festival (1976), and Suzuki's brief tour to London in 1985. In the promotional material, there was no acknowledgement of the legacy of Gilbert Murray, yet, there was a sense, expressed in McLeish's programme notes,⁵ that Melos was still *the* story for contemporary comparison: 'The morality of this brutal action [the sack of Melos and slaughter of the male population] was hotly debated at the time, as was the advisability of launching a far flung military offensive against the Sicilians.' Nearly every theatre critic reproduced this description of the ancient social and political context and applied the comparison to the situation in Iraq. For example, Michael Arditti of the *Evening Standard* commented: 'Imagine Howard Brenton writing a play in response to the recent bombing in Baghdad, equating it with the

⁴ Productions of McLeish's other notable translations include: Deborah Warner's *Electra* (RSC, 1990), *Peer Gynt* (RNT), and Cheek by Jowl's *Philoctetes* (Donmar Warehouse).

⁵ Also reproduced as the introduction to the published version of the play: *Women of Troy, Hecuba, Helen*, (London: Absolute Press, 1995).

Nazi raids on London, and you will have some idea of the background to Euripides' *Trojan Women*.'⁶

Shortly after the fall of the Berlin Wall (1989), the symbolic end of the Cold war and the Russian threat, President George Bush announced a new era of a so-called 'New World Order' in which the United States pledged to defend the rights to justice, equality and democracy for all. The first test of this new foreign policy was America's involvement in Iraq (1990-1991). Intervention in Iraq, a country that had been previously supported by the United States in its eight-year war with Iran, was triggered by President Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait (August 1990), a crime of aggression in violation of international law and UN Charter. During the invasion, the Iraqi forces brutally treated thousands of Kuwaitis and foreigners in the region. Human Rights Watch (a human rights organization) reported that 400,000 Kuwaiti citizens were turned into refugees and displaced from their homes.⁷ Reports of these and other human rights violations sparked a series of UN Security Council resolutions condemning the actions of the Iraqi regime. In addition, a report by Middle East Watch concluded that for two decades Hussein's Ba'ath party had denied 'virtually every important liberty to Iraq's 17 million people'.⁸ On 17 January 1991 the United States and other countries moved to enforce the UN resolution against Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. Operation Desert Storm's massive airborne assaults marked the beginning of a new kind of warfare based on launching devastating air strikes from a safe

⁶ Michael Arditti, 'Choral Sympathy', *The Evening Standard*, 4 July 1991, p. 40.

⁷ Human Rights Watch, 'Report on Iraq and Occupied Kuwait', (1990) <www.hrw.org> [accessed 1 May 2004].

⁸ Middle East Watch, 'Human Rights in Iraq', (February 1990) <<http://www.hrw.org/doc/?t=mideast>> [accessed 1 May 2004].

distance. As a result, the US used few ground troop deployments, minimizing man-to-man combat and military casualties. At the same time, the risk of machinery malfunctions and misguided missiles often led to unnecessary civilian deaths and destruction on the ground.

Although produced as the final offering of an aptly named 'Spoils of War' season at the Gate, Mitchell's directorial vision for *Women of Troy* avoided any explicit references to the Gulf War. Instead, Mitchell was committed to applying her training in Eastern European theatrical techniques to the revitalisation of the choral and musical elements of Greek tragedy.⁹ The presentation of a chorus for a modern audience not accustomed to the role and function of ancient choruses was traditionally a challenge for any director of Greek tragedy. Mitchell's use of traditional folk songs and dances from Bulgaria and Georgia (much like Serban's later work using Romanian folk material) provided a cultural framework in which dance and music and singing were naturally integrated. Furthermore, given the political climate, Mitchell's chorus presented the recognisable face of an ever-growing group of refugees: 'Their shapeless shifts, straggly hair and sweat streaked bodies could be refugees in any modern transit camp.'¹⁰ Some of the women carried mementos of lost family or pictures of loved ones, a choice strongly reminiscent of Suzuki's chorus of itinerant displaced men and women.¹¹ Unlike many of their early twentieth-century predecessors, this chorus had an identity, a *raison d'être*. Similar to Tabori's approach, each chorus member was given a mythical name in the programme: Nicaretta, Rhea,

⁹ Mitchell travelled to Russia, Georgia, Poland and Lithuania on a scholarship and worked with Andrzej Wajda, Heiner Müller, and Polish director Tadeusz Kantor's Gardzienice theatre company.

¹⁰ Arditti, p. 40.

¹¹ These mementos also feature in photographs from refugee camps in the Balkans. In the hope of Western assistance, many women showed journalists pictures of members of their families who had gone missing.

Briseis, Lyssa, Anarchia, Sema, Myrtis, Atta, Sosias, and Melita. Given the constraints of the small theatrical venue (and cost of hiring actors), Mitchell doubled up all the roles except Hecuba (and Talthybius) and by doing so, created a large chorus and focused her attention on integrating the choral elements (movement and singing) with the spoken dialogues: the actors were seen onstage changing their make-up and costume and rejoining the chorus after their respective Episodes.¹² Her concept of this chorus demonstrated that she was not 'content with showing merely the vulnerability of these barefoot captives in soil smirched garments', as one critic described them: 'They are transformed into a choric phalanx of vengeful warriors.'¹³ The *Times* critic commented positively on her infusion of energy into the chorus: 'Their mouths open, the desperate eyes searching ours.'¹⁴ Other critics felt that the inclusion of a ritual aspect to the chorus added an elemental, almost spiritual quality.

In such small quarters the audience became personally involved in their story. The women expressed their laments and life-stories (often in unison) through song and exclamations. The language of the songs was at times in ancient Greek and sung to the tunes of Polish and Bulgarian folk music. The choreography, developed by Emma Rice (also chorus-leader) from her training with Gardzienice, a folk theatre in Poland, complemented the style of singing and presented a consistent concept. The effect of capturing the spirit and energy of these folk songs in dance, music, and song was, as Oliver

¹² The 'Actors of Dionysus' theatre group use a similar technique on their tours of Greek tragedy around Britain. *Trojan Women* premiered in 2001 and was criticised for its explicit references to the 11th September tragedy.

¹³ Louise Kingsley, 'Women of Troy', *Independent*, 26 July 1991.

¹⁴ Jeremy Kingston, 'Women of Troy', *The Times*, 24 July 1991, p. 13.

Taplin commented in his *Times Literary Supplement* review, to 'release new energies from [a] remote Greek tragedy'.¹⁵

The attention paid to the chorus, specifically to its choreography and accompaniment, was perhaps most influenced by Ariane Mnouchkine's conception for *Les Atrides* (November 1990), which was premiered in Paris shortly before Mitchell's *Women of Troy*.¹⁶ At the time, Oliver Taplin praised Mnouchkine's use of 'choreography, of music and of stylized body language to revitalize the dry rhizomes of ideas with emotional juice'.¹⁷ Mitchell, limited by funds and space, sought a similar effect, to create an environment, not dissimilar to Euripides's text, in which the women could wield the kind of emotive power that could express pain and suffering through song and movement.

These 'tense concentrated naturalistic scenes', as they were described by *Time Out*, and ritualistic choral pieces were set effectively on a bare stage, invoking Peter Brook's theory of the 'empty stage'.¹⁸ Painted dark red and scattered with pebbles, the stage remained bare most of the play and half-lit (Mitchell's specialty), which allowed the focus to remain on the action and the text; a technique used to good effect by directors including Michael Cacoyannis. At the end, 'the Trojan ruins, the silhouettes of shattered buildings' were created using lighting techniques; a 'red glow and rising smoke [...] and the thunder and final fires' constituted the final images of the play.¹⁹ While her conception of the chorus was her ultimate triumph, it is clear from critical reactions that the success of

¹⁵ Oliver Taplin, 'Women of Troy', *Times Literary Supplement*, 6 July 1991, p. 16.

¹⁶ Mitchell thanks Mnouchkine in the programme.

¹⁷ Taplin, p. 16.

¹⁸ Jane Edwards, 'Jane Edwards meets Katie Mitchell', *Time Out*, 17 July 1991.

¹⁹ Nicholas de Jongh, 'The Women of Troy', *Guardian*, 23 July 1991.

Mitchell's production was the desire to present Euripides' play using very subtle references to the political climate.

20. Lynne Parker/Brendan Kennelly
Trojan Women
Peacock Theatre
Dublin
1993

The history of Greek tragedy in Ireland has been a subject of much scholarly interest of late and many have tried to uncover the reasons for the success of Greek tragedy in Ireland, especially in the twentieth century.²⁰ At the formation of the Abbey, the National Theatre of Ireland (1904), Lady Gregory, Synge and Yeats argued about the place of the classics in their repertoire, finally admitting that they would only produce such plays 'to illuminate the work of Irish playwrights on Irish themes'.²¹ Yeats essentially created the idea of a 'version' or a translation of the text into the language of 'loaded phrases' or phrases with relevance for contemporary Ireland.²² Irish playwrights pursued a personal commitment to rewriting and translocating of Greek tragedy as a response to the ongoing political strife in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. 'Versions' of ancient drama took the form of contemporary plays invoking Greek tragic myths or themes, or adaptations

²⁰ See J. Michael Walton, 'Hit or Myth: the Greeks and Irish Drama', in *Amid our Troubles: Irish Versions of Greek Tragedy*, ed. by Marianne McDonald and J. Michael Walton (London: Methuen, 2002).

²¹ *Theatre Business: The correspondence of the First Abbey Theatre Directors: William Butler Yeats, Lady Gregory, and J.M. Synge*, ed. by A. Saddlemyer (Gerrads Cross: Colin Smythe, 1982), p. 178, cited in Fiona Macintosh, *Dying Acts: Death in Ancient Greek and Modern Irish Tragic Drama* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1994), p. 9.

²² For example, Creon in Yeats' *King Oedipus*: 'Such things were indeed guessed at, but Laius once dead no avenger rose. We were amid our troubles' (90-91). The phrase, 'We were amid our troubles' had particular

of the tragedies infused with Irish themes. For example, in 1984, the year after abortion rights had been denied, the year the Criminal Justice Bill was passed and the divorce referendum was rejected, and the year George Steiner published his seminal work, *Antigones*, three Irish stage versions and one film of *Antigone* appeared.²³ Versions of Euripides, especially *The Bacchae*,²⁴ *Hippolytus*²⁵ and *Medea*,²⁶ have also enjoyed an extensive production history in Ireland particularly during a period of persistent fights for human rights and voting for women. Other plays of Euripides have been virtually ignored,²⁷ with the exception of *Trojan Women*, which stands out as a play with particular significance to the Irish history of injustice and oppression against women.

The performance history of *Trojan Women* in Ireland boasts a limited but important production record. The early part of the century, the theme of *Trojan Women* was explored in J.B. Synge's plays, *Riders to the Sea* (1902) and *Deirdre of the Sorrows* (1910), based on *Antigone* and *Trojan Women*. These plays, as in the case of most of Synge's works, show how a 'marginalised figure finds voice and gesture to revolt against oppressive

resonance with the Irish audience.

²³ Tom Paulin, *The Riot Act*, Brendan Kennelly, *Antigone*, Aidan Carl Mathews, *Antigone: A Version*, Pat Murphy, *Anne Devlin* (film). For extensive discussions of these version see: Antony Roche, 'Ireland's *Antigones*: Tragedy North and South' in *Cultural Contexts and Literary Idioms in Contemporary Irish Literature*, ed. by Michael Kenneally (London: Gerrards Cross, 1988); Christopher Murray, 'Three *Antigones*' in *Perspectives of Irish Drama and Theatre*, ed. by Jacqueline Genet and Richard Allen Cave, *Irish Literary Studies* 33 (London: Gerrards Cross, 1991); Marianne McDonald, 'The Irish in Greek Tragedy' in McDonald and Walton (2002).

²⁴ Versions or inspirations include: George Bernard Shaw, *Major Barbara* (1905), Lord Longford, *Drink Offerings* (1933), Brian Friel, *Wonderful Tennessee* (1993), and Derek Mahon, *The Bacchae* (1991).

²⁵ Brian Friel was especially interested in *Hippolytos: The Gentle Island* (1971) and *Living Quarters, after Hippolytus* (1977). See T.C. Murray, *Autumn Fire* (1924) and Ulick O'Connor, *The Oval Machine* (after *Hippolytus*, unpublished).

²⁶ Desmond Egan, *Medea* (1991), Brendan Kennelly, *Medea* (1991) and Marina Carr, *By the Bog of Cats* (1999).

²⁷ Other Euripidean plays include: Colin Teevan, *Iph after Euripides' Iphigeneia at Aulis* (1996) and Greg Delanty's *Orestes* (1999).

circumstances'.²⁸ This 'celebration of freedom' found in Synge's texts also shared with the Irish audience the perspective of the female and her ability to cope with insufferable circumstances, ideas intrinsic to Euripides' play.²⁹

Between the plays of Synge in the early 1900s and the 1980s, few versions of *Trojan Women* were performed (this is likely the case because Ireland had not been involved in the two World Wars to the extent of the rest of Europe or America). In December 1985, Tom Murphy premiered his play *Bailegangaire* at the Druid Theatre in Galway. Murphy's works on the whole reveal a mixture of folk narrative specific to Irish culture, the themes of death, remorse, and forgiveness, important elements of the Greek tragic world, as well as the classical devices of *anagnorisis* and *peripeteia*.³⁰ *Bailegangaire* represented the spirit of the female in the face of adversity. Most importantly it was produced shortly after the fierce debates over abortion and divorce rights and the eight month public tribunal on the 'Kerry Babies case' in which a young woman buried two infants, one, hers, and born out of wedlock, the other belonging to another. Similarly, Dolly, one of the daughters in Murphy's play, struggles to cope with her own situation when she conceives a child as a result of temporarily working as a prostitute while her husband was away. The family structure of *Bailegangaire*, an aging grandmother confined to her bed and her two granddaughters, one of whom cares for her, recalls the characters of Hecuba, Kassandra and Andromache. Murphy's empowerment of the female and portrayal

²⁸ C. Murray, p. 64.

²⁹ *ibid.*, p. 71.

³⁰ Fintan O'Toole, *Murphy, Plays: Two, Conversations on a Homecoming, Bailegangaire, A Thief of a Christmas* (London: Methuen, 1993), p. ix.

of the personal stories of suffering women foreshadowed Brendan Kennelly's interpretation of *Trojan Women*, staged in Dublin in 1993.³¹

Brendan Kennelly's version of *Trojan Women* is one of the few translations that attempts to transform the play into a feminist tract and into an anti-male as opposed to an anti-war polemic. In his version, Kennelly modified the ancient text to become a 'feminist declaration of independence', a theme he first explored in his 1984 *Antigone*.³² At the first reading of the version at the Project Arts Centre (October 1989), he introduced the play with the declaration that he believed it was primarily about 'dignity, about ultimate dignity, about the untouchable thing that remains when everything has been touched'.³³ Adhering closely to the structure of Euripides' text, Kennelly challenged the scholarship that suggested that *Trojan Women* was 'a passive play [...] more a stirring spectacle than a real drama'.³⁴ He ignited the text with feminist diatribe, bitter harsh language, visceral descriptions of life after war from a female perspective, and scorching tirades against the actions of men during and after war. For example, in the Helen Episode, Hecuba was characterised as a vindictive and mean woman, venting her criticisms with extraordinary venom: 'I see a cunt. I see an evil cunt'.³⁵ Helen remains calm and repeatedly goads her on with, 'What else do you see?' The confrontation ends with the Chorus circling Helen and

³¹ Aidan Carl Mathews also wrote a version, *The Trojans* (unpublished, unperformed. 1994) which was one of the few attempts in Great Britain and Ireland to re-produce the play in response to the Nazi regime.

³² Kennelly quoted in Roche, p. 242.

³³ Kennelly quoted in Kathleen McCracken, 'Rage for a New Order: Brendan Kennelly's Plays for Women' in *Dark Fathers into Light: Brendan Kennelly*, ed. by Richard Pine (Newcastle upon Tyne: Bloodaxe, 1994), pp. 114-47 (p. 139).

³⁴ Brendan Kennelly, *Trojan Women: A New Version by Brendan Kennelly*, (Newcastle upon Tyne: Bloodaxe 1993), Preface.

³⁵ *ibid.*, p. 59.

throwing insults 'like stones' at her. Overt sexual language dominates the text. However, in his effort to endow the women of the play with 'active resolution', he expanded the scope of their suffering, but, as a result, like Sartre, severely limited Euripides' focus on the healing power of lament. Instead, Kennelly re-fashioned the ancient characters into modern-day models of stoic angry resistance.

Kennelly's portrayal of a negative male opposition was apparent, for example, in his conception of Talthybius as a hard-hitting crude soldier. 'So much killing must bring some profit to someone' was his chilling response to Hecuba during his first scene. The play ended with little hope, except for some sense of inner strength. Hecuba: 'What does it matter if I sleep with a stranger [...] so long as I know what I'm doing/and why I'm doing it.'³⁶ A close reading of his version reveals that he achieves this modern re-characterisation partly through his use of terse language and poetic technique, and partly through the removal of most of the classical and mythical references in the Euripidean text.

The production choices for the premiere of Kennelly's version, directed by Belfast-born Lynne Parker, did little to highlight this conversion of the text from an anti-war protest to a feminist diatribe. Parker, one of Ireland's most celebrated directors, and Set and Costume designer, Frank Conway, collaborated to translocate Kennelly's stage direction of a 'battlefield after a battle' into an environment described variously by critics as a 'sophisticated post-party',³⁷ a 'tatty Graeco-Edwardian brothel',³⁸ or a 'morning-after-the-

³⁶ *ibid.*, p. 77.

³⁷ Eileen Battersby, 'Womanpower', *Fortnight*, July/Aug 1993.

³⁸ Tom Nowlan, 'Subverting Greek tragedy', *The Irish Times*, 3 June 1993.

night-before in the jazz club at the end of the universe'.³⁹ This set, reminiscent of no particular time period, consisted of 'pillars, mirrors, cobwebbed drapes, French Empire chairs, wilted flowers in urns'.⁴⁰ Sand was strewn over the floor of the stage (the only reference to the offshore location of Euripides' text).

The costumes further indicated the opulent lifestyle of the royal family and symbolised 'bloodshed and degeneracy'.⁴¹ Parker explained that she wished the design to be 'representative of the extremity of that experience, [...] a society almost ripe to the point of decay'.⁴² Each character's costume had an individual design consistent with this overall theme. Poseidon (Birdy Sweeney) wore 'the black tails of a weary elderly retainer'.⁴³ Pallas Athene wore a black gown similar to those of the main characters who, with their hair wrapped in a tight bun, were dressed in 'dusty, heavy, crimson strapless ball gowns' as if in carbon copies of each other.⁴⁴ Cassandra wore a wedding dress.⁴⁵ The Chorus was reduced to one woman (Tina Kellegher) who joins another (Carole Nelson), both dressed in dark suits and wearing dark glasses, to provide live clarinet and saxophone music. Athene (Helen Montague) remained onstage to play the piano. Catherine White (Hecuba) did not present a grandmotherly *mater dolorosa*, but instead, was closer to the age of Cassandra and Andromache. There did not appear to be any production decisions to indicate that there was any specifically Irish or Northern Irish influence, a phenomenon so common to other

³⁹ Tim Harding, 'Kennelly's women chill out in stylish time-warp', *The Sunday Press*, 6 June 1993.

⁴⁰ Ian Hill, 'The Trojan Women', *The Guardian*, 24 June 1993.

⁴¹ Mary Carr, 'Defiant women in ancient times', *Evening Herald*, 3 June 1993.

⁴² Personal interview with Lynne Parker, 17 April 2003.

⁴³ Ian Hill, 'The Trojan Women', *The Guardian*, 24 June 1993.

⁴⁴ *ibid.*

⁴⁵ Tim Harding, 'Kennelly's women chill out in stylish time-warp', *The Sunday Press*, 6 June 1999.

productions of Greek tragedy in Ireland (several of the actors did speak in their native Northern Irish accents). Instead, according to Parker, they were representations of ‘extremely wealthy women suddenly faced with dispossession’, women who were made wealthy by the corrupt society Ireland had become.⁴⁶

This focus on the experience of wealthy women at the very moment when they could no longer be able to maintain their lifestyles was an unusual interpretation of the *Trojan Women* situation, one which had not been explored before in any significant production discussed here. The trend, especially in the 1990s, was to show the women already reduced to refugee status, already dispossessed and abused, and struggling to cope with this new situation. Parker, on the other hand, showed the lives of the women before they reached this point of desperation, an upper class household under siege waiting for the soldiers to come and forcibly remove them from their home. This conception of the play was a fascinating interpretation of Euripides’ scenario, although it did not preserve in any way the ancient setting. Parker took creative license with the text to emphasise that these women were the ‘decorative objects’ of a corrupt society.⁴⁷ The thought of slavery and new marriages was therefore all the more distasteful, and this distaste made them angry, thus providing some motivation for the tirades of Kennelly’s text.

Parker’s directorial choices and interpretations of the characters created an intimate space where the audience was forced to experience first-hand the broken lives of these women (the Peacock Theatre seated only 150). Similar to Mitchell’s approach, this

⁴⁶ Personal interview with Lynne Parker, 17 April 2003.

⁴⁷ *ibid.*.

intimacy was achieved through the extensive use of ensemble work. For example, in her radical reinterpretation of the role of the gods, Pallas Athene appeared asleep at the grand piano at the beginning of the play and Poseidon ‘reappear[ed] from time to time to potter around the stage like a shambling and decrepit butler’.⁴⁸ Although they were ever present in the space, gods were portrayed as servants rather than omniscient all-powerful deities. Cassandra was denied a spectacular entrance, instead she was seen laying ‘Ophelia-like’ on top of the piano when the play opens and delivered most of her speeches from there.⁴⁹ Although the lack of a large chorus was primarily because of financial reasons, the effect was to focus attention on this eccentric family and their servants, ultimately sacrificing the universal element of Euripides’ play. There was no wider perspective, and while this made the experience all the more intense, the voice of the chorus, the voice of the ‘everywoman’, was lost. And lost too was the voice that Kennelly had endowed with angry resistance.

Despite Parker’s decision not to allow any contemporary references, critics still interpreted a line such as ‘And my city is lost – alone/plundered/most savagely raped/dead children/shattered streets of sorrow’ as a cry of solidarity for the victims of the wars in Bosnia. Parker refused to make this obvious in her production:

It would be arrogant to assume we knew anything about what those Bosnian women are going through. The parallel is so obvious it hits you between the eyes, and we didn’t need to make any reference to it.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Michael Lloyd, *Classics Ireland*, 1 (1994). See also: <<http://www.ucd.ie/~classics/94/Lloyd94.html>> [accessed 1 May 2003]

⁴⁹ ‘Her flat delivery suggested understandable anxiety about either falling off or setting fire to her bridal veil with her candelabra,’ (Lloyd).

⁵⁰ Quoted in Victoria White, ‘Trojan work for change’, *Irish Times*, 1 June 1993.

She left it to her audience to make the connection, and, while other directors were criticised for being too crudely relevant, she was criticised for being not relevant enough, to Ireland or to a contemporary situation. Her unusual interpretation of Euripides' text was generally unappreciated and did not garner critical acclaim. Subsequent productions of Kennelly's text (which has since become the text of preference in Ireland) have made more effort to bring out his feminist, anti-male spin.

21. Annie Castledine/ Kenneth McLeish
Women of Troy
Royal National Theatre
London
1995

Euripides was one of the most popular playwrights of the 1995 London theatre season: The Royal Shakespeare Company produced *Ion* and the Gate Theatre presented a trilogy of *Electra*, *Orestes*, and *Iphigenia* under the title, *Agamemnon's Children*. It was also the year that *Women of Troy*, directed by Annie Castledine opened at the Royal National Theatre (Olivier Theatre, March 1995), in a translation by Kenneth McLeish. Unlike Mitchell's production, which used the same translation, Castledine's production choices featured overt references to contemporary events such as the Gulf war and the Balkan crisis.

During the intervening years between the productions by Mitchell and Castledine, the Serbian paramilitary forces had swept through Bosnia killing thousands of men in local villages and systematically raping women. Human rights organizations estimated that there were more than 150,000 deaths and over two million Bosnians displaced from their homes

during 1992 and 1993.⁵¹ Fighting continued from 1993 to 1995, and the Croat-Muslim war was finally ceased when NATO stepped in with air strikes (May 1995). A tenuous peace was signed with the Dayton Accords in December 1995, but historians and political critics argue that the general lack of understanding in the international community about the reasons for the conflict had led to an extended crisis in the area.

In an interview with the *Observer* prior to opening, Castledine explained her approach: 'Two thirds of the world is still at war, and we are dealing with one of the great war/anti-war plays. [...] I'm honouring the playwright in using contemporary images very lightly placed, as Euripides himself might have done had he lived today.'⁵² Unfortunately for her, many critics did not agree that her uses of contemporary images were 'lightly placed'. Michael Billington wrote in *Country Life* that 'Castledine, fatally, sets it everywhere in general and nowhere in particular [...]. What you lose is the Euripidean sense of particularity: of imperfect individuals coping with the tragic aftermath of war.'⁵³ A month earlier, Billington had asserted in the *Guardian* that the result was a kind of historical eclecticism, which distracted the audience from Euripides' text and characterisation.⁵⁴

This 'historical eclecticism' was mostly apparent in the costume design of the main characters. The Greek soldiers were represented as American marines dressed in battle fatigues and carrying machine guns. Talthybius (Philip Whitchurch) appears as a sweaty GI. Menelaus (Peter McEnery) was portrayed as an American admiral with a Southern

⁵¹ Noel Malcolm, *Bosnia: A Short History* (London: Macmillan, 1994/1996), pp. 241, 252.

⁵² Jane Ferguson, 'Past voices, present lives', *Observer*, 5 March 1995.

drawl. In representing the Greek enemy as stereotypical Americans inspired by images of Gulf-War television footage, the production espoused a distinct anti-American sentiment that deeply angered some critics. One critic found this directorial choice inappropriate and indulging 'in an incoherent instead of trenchant critique of American foreign policy'. Another made clear that the reference was misplaced because America did not act as an aggressor in the Bosnian or Rwandan conflicts. Instead, this approach seemed to be a throw back to 1960s productions which criticised American involvement in Vietnam. 'But since the Pentagon is not currently razing Ruanda (sic), Chechenia (sic) or anywhere else, this seems a rather dated, 1960ish slant', disputed Benedict Nightingale in the *Times*.⁵⁵ Zoe Cormack in the *Times Literary Supplement* also accused Castledine of being dated and, what was worse, seemingly exonerating those who had actually committed war crimes:

How far we are meant to take this as a direct accusation of specifically American power, wreaking havoc across the planet, is unclear. But it gives the production an uncomfortably pious feel, and a rather dated target—while at the same time, appearing to exculpate a much more complex (and decidedly multicultural) forces of military aggression currently at work in the world.⁵⁶

This anti-American sentiment and the fact that Castledine did not chose contemporary aggressors such as Russian or Serbian soldiers as her models also triggered an angry response from the *Sunday Times* critic, John Peter:

She could have picked on the Turks bombing the Kurds out of Northern Iraq; the Russians ravaging Chechnya; the Serbs' ethnic cleansing in Bosnia; but

⁵³ Michael Billington, 'Women of Troy is old-style bombast', *Country Life*, 6 April 1995.

⁵⁴ Michael Billington, 'Assault on the precinct Troy', *Guardian*, 18 March 1995.

⁵⁵ Benedict Nightingale, 'Thoroughly modern Euripides', *The Times*, 18 March 1995.

⁵⁶ Zoe T. Cormack, 'Under the drone of circling helicopters', *The Times Literary Supplement*, 31 March 1995, p. 17.

no, we are back with the comforting knee-jerk reactions of the dogmatic Left, for whom Satan resides exclusively and permanently in the Pentagon.⁵⁷

The extremity of her choices caused John Gross of the *Sunday Telegraph* to evaluate her use of references to contemporary conflict as a reduction of the play to a 'political cartoon'; but he also argued that 'the same objections would apply if the Greeks in the play were directly equated with the Viet Cong, or the Russians in Afghanistan, or Somali warlords or any other modern army of conquest'.⁵⁸ In addition to causing annoyance to the audience, these production decisions did not make theatrical sense in light of the oppositions the play presented.

Furthermore, Castledine's characterisation of the other roles was inconsistent with her vision of the Greek soldiers. For example, Helen (Jamie Dee) appeared dressed as Marilyn Monroe in her famous role in the film 'The Seven Year Itch'.⁵⁹ This pop-culture reference trivialized her role to the point where she seemed irrelevant to the rest of the play. As Paul Taylor wrote in the *Independent*, Jamie Dee failed to embody his vision of Helen: 'She gets across Helen's bare-faced, self justifying cheek, but it's hard to believe that this *femme* could ever have been truly fatale.'⁶⁰ Although this Helen emerges from an entirely different world, she did provide comic relief to the general atmosphere of lament and grief. There was no ambiguity about Helen's fate. Menelaus demonstrates his chivalry (to the chagrin of the Trojan women) by helping her down off the stage, and clearly takes her home to Sparta.

⁵⁷ John Peter, *The Sunday Times*, 26 March 1995.

⁵⁸ John Gross, *Sunday Telegraph*, 19 March 1995.

⁵⁹ The critic for the *Sunday Express* in tabloid fashion entitled his review: 'A message from Marilyn of Troy', 26 March 1995.

The gods were present, but appeared in circus-like costumes that seemed to have no bearing on the rest of the design. Poseidon, played by Leo Wringer, a black man, appeared in a silvery dress and high-heeled boots. Robert Pickavance played Athene in a golden dress holding a globe. These choices seemed more appropriate for a drag production (such as Donald Brooks's controversial all-male New York production of *Trojan Women* in 1972⁶¹). The portrayal of Cassandra, though closest to Euripides' conception of the priestess, was equally out of place. Josette Bushell-Mingo, a black actress, played a bald-headed chalk-faced Cassandra, acting out an odd combination of a mentally disturbed person and a whirling dervish, 'writhing in voodoo-like spasms.'⁶² She was so physical in her manifestation of the mad princess that it was difficult to hear her speak her lines⁶³ (a criticism also levelled at Cassandra in Serban's *Fragments*). Andromache (played by Jane Birkin, a sixties London icon who took her acting career in France where she later, famously, became the partner of Serge Gainsborough) by contrast, appeared on stage as a lifeless statue shrouded in gold and carried in on a trophy cart. Andromache's scene with Hecuba was considered by one critic (who generally praised the production) to be the most poignant and realistic in the play, reaching 'moments of almost unbearable sadness'.⁶⁴ Her reactions to Talthybius' tragic news about Astyanax expressed her maternal agony, but unfortunately this was diluted by the decision to make Astyanax a doll rather than a real

⁶⁰ Paul Taylor, 'A thoroughly modern myth', *Independent*, 18 March 1995 (emphasis his).

⁶¹ Theater of the Lost Continent March 1972. The production was mostly irreverent, The *New York Times* critic, Mel Gussow, called it a 'theatrical curio' ('Satge: An All-Male 'Trojan Women'', *New York Times*, 20 March 1972). For example, Athene was dressed in a lame skirt, Talthybius was presented nude, and most interestingly with regard to Castledine's choice, Menelaus was presented as a haughty four-star general.

⁶² Robert Gore-Langton, 'US Marines play their part in a Greek travesty', *The Telegraph*, 17 March 1995.

⁶³ Irving Wardle, 'Beware of Greeks bearing messages', *Independent on Sunday*, 19 March 1995.

child. Her scene ended with a dramatic stage action: after giving up Astyanax, she looked away and launches herself into the arms of the Greeks soldiers to be carried away into slavery (a reference perhaps to Pricilla Smith's dramatic suicide fall in Serban's production).

In contrast to these other characters, Hecuba (Rosemary Harris) seemed to be the only character to emerge out of a traditional interpretation and presentation of classical tragedy. For Nicholas de Jongh of the *Evening Standard*, Harris appeared noble and defiant, distraught and strong, keening and rhetorical, an image of 'obstinate stoicism'.⁶⁵ However, for other critics, she lacked the needed wide emotional range. Nightingale commented that Hecuba indulged in her grief without tempering it with 'the exhaustion, helpless rage and raw intensity of pain that Kenneth McLeish's notably blunt, colloquial translation invites'.⁶⁶ To John Peter, she appeared one-dimensional, 'not a portrait but an effigy, representing a state of mind rather than disclosing her nature', and he contended scathingly that 'Castledine sets her up as a totem of misery and leaves her there to crumble'.⁶⁷

The twelve members of Chorus constituted a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic group (Iranians, Yugoslavs, Japanese), dressed in dark dirtied dresses that recalled the images of Balkan refugees so commonly portrayed in the media. As in Mitchell's production, the women carried their few belongings, including pictures of loved ones around the stage. The multi-cultural make-up of the chorus was emphasised further as some of the choral lines

⁶⁴ Maureen Paton, 'Grief wins Birkin the Spoils of War', *Daily Express*, 17 March 1995.

⁶⁵ Nicholas de Jongh, 'Euripides meets Apocalypse Now', *Evening Standard*, 17 March 1995.

were translated into their native tongues. The consensus of critics was that these production decisions brought awareness of contemporary conflicts, but were ultimately dramatically ineffective because the contrast between characters was too extreme, too eclectic. As Paul Taylor argued, 'it's invidious to universalise one side and particularise the other.'⁶⁸

The set design by Iona McLeish also conveyed this historically eclectic approach. The stage was a vast structure of tiered concrete. One critic described it as 'part ancient Greek theatre, part disused dog track, part mouldering prison camp'.⁶⁹ Around the periphery, McLeish placed polystyrene and meshed wire gates and netting. Nicholas de Jongh perceptively identifies the barbed wire, watchtower and loud speakers as reminiscent of Auschwitz and the sound of helicopters and machine guns suggesting an allusion to the Vietnam war.⁷⁰ To another critic, the set seemed 'a vast ruined concrete stadium from somewhere in Eastern Europe (Bosnia presumably)'.⁷¹ There were some advantages to the multi-level design, but, on the whole, the characters were diminished by the background and Castledine did not successfully direct her actors to project for this space. Billington concluded that the 'true voice of feeling [was] almost drowned'.⁷²

The music, performed by onstage musicians and a grand piano (a notable decision), was also eclectic and varied. In one of the choral odes, a member of the Chorus sang a Southern-American blues song, which though moving, was out of place with regards to the

⁶⁶ Benedict Nightingale, 'Thoroughly modern Euripides', *The Times*, 18 March 1995.

⁶⁷ John Peter, 'Women on the edge', *The Sunday Times*, 26 March 1995.

⁶⁸ Paul Taylor, 'A thoroughly modern myth', *Independent*, 18 March 1995.

⁶⁹ Jack Tinker, 'After 24 centuries, still a Troy to behold', *Daily Mail*, 17 March 1995.

⁷⁰ Nicholas de Jongh, 'Euripides meets Apocalypse Now', *Evening Standard*, 17 March 1995.

⁷¹ Cormack, p. 17.

⁷² Michael Billington, 'Assault on the precinct Troy', *Guardian*, 18 March 1995.

other compositions. The style of the music varied from Negro Spiritual to Middle Eastern lament, combining 'multicultural and archaic sounds with contemporary Western motifs'.⁷³ In addition to Adrian Johnston's score, the sound designer brought in the sounds of modern warfare, reinventing for the audience the experience of refugees in the open air, overwhelmed by constant air raid sirens and circling helicopters. At the beginning of the play, the sounds of a military helicopter metamorphoses into that of a fighter jet. Later, the sounds of wind over the sea were sampled with the recordings of the cast wailing and other sea sounds. At the end, as the towers of the city fell, the Greeks were heard departing to the accompaniment of an American Brass Band.⁷⁴

Although Castledine was consistently eclectic in her overall vision for the play, the result was generally a theatrically confused production that attempted to make controversial statements about American imperialism, while at the same time as highlighting the deplorable state of refugees. Her interpretations of the ancient text reflected little subtlety of thought, but instead, as Zoe Cormack commented, 'a well-meaning but monolithic rant on human suffering'.⁷⁵ Many critics resented her overt suggestions about how they should feel about contemporary affairs. Irving Wardle complained that the play 'gives you the asphyxiating sensation of being locked into a consciousness-raising session and told to care'.⁷⁶

If the production images were not contemporary enough, the programme pressed the point further. Every page featured photographs of weeping women, dead babies, and

⁷³ Theodora Carlile, *Didaskalia* review: <http://didaskalia.berkeley.edu/issues/vol2no2/NTTrojan.html>

⁷⁴ See Andy Lavender, 'Noises off out of this world', *The Times*, 28 March 1995.

battered young girls from Sarajevo, Bhopal, Rwanda, Iran, and Chechnya. In addition, there were poems from leading writers and scholars proclaiming that ‘children are killed in wars’ (Edward Bond) and ‘the voices of those assaulted in war are all too often erased’ (Helen Morales). An excerpt from Tony Harrison’s introduction to a *Common Chorus* was also included. Unfortunately, this assault of eclectic images on stage and in the programme, destroyed the subtle ironies and unity of Euripides’ text. John Gross expressed this by comparing the production to Mitchell’s:

I couldn’t help recalling that three or four years ago I saw the same play at the tiny Gate theatre, in the same translation [...], but in a more straightforward production, directed by Katie Mitchell. The Gate didn’t have one-tenth of the National’s resources, but the production made 10 times as much impact.⁷⁷

The main difference between the two productions was not in terms of resources, but in terms of the extent to which the director was willing to exploit contemporary images for the purpose of her vision.

IV. Jane Montgomery/Euripides
Trojan Women
Cambridge Greek Play
Cambridge
1998

In the programme notes for the 1998 Cambridge Greek Play, Simon Goldhill commented that the enduring power of *logos* (specifically of the ways in which the characters ‘seek consolation in stories, in comforting each other, in the empty solace of

⁷⁵ Cormack, p. 17.

⁷⁶ Irving Wardle, ‘Beware of Greeks bearing messages’, *Independent on Sunday*, 19 March 1995.

imagining their lost life's happiness') was one compelling reason why *Trojan Women* has become one of the most performed plays of the twentieth century: 'Its sense of profound dislocation and the inability of humans to respond adequately to such shock strike many chords'.⁷⁸ This sense of dislocation is multiplied when a production of the play attempts to reproduce or highlight the real violence of war that is ever present in the consciences of contemporary audiences. The 1998 Cambridge Greek Play was another significant production during this period that endeavoured to maintain a delicate balance between the specific and the universal, the cliché and the subtle. The production continued the venerable tradition of performing Greek tragedy in the original language first established in 1882. Directed and designed by primarily professionals and acted by students, the quality of performance is usually high. *Trojan Women* in 1998 was no exception and director Jane Montgomery faced the challenge of creating a production that raised awareness of the Balkan crisis without falling into the traps of crude or misplaced topicality characteristic of Castledine's production, of which she would have no doubt been aware. Oliver Taplin, in his *Times Literary Supplement* review, highlighted this challenge:

Almost nightly, the displaced women of the latest Balkan bombardment have trudged the screens in our sitting rooms; they have raged or pleaded, wept or keened for their burnt out villages and for the fragments of their men or children. [...] Any modern staging of this tragedy has to decide whether to recognize and embrace the present Balkan nightmare, or to shut it out completely.⁷⁹

In November 1998, when the play opened, the worst of the Kosovar conflict had not yet occurred. But during previous years, the Albanians of Kosovo, located in southern

⁷⁷ John Gross, 'Euripides gets the Oliver Stone treatment', *Sunday Telegraph*, 19 March 1995.

⁷⁸ Simon Goldhill, 'Euripides: Rhetoric and Power', programme note (Cambridge Greek Play).

Yugoslavia, had made repeated demands for independence, demands that had been met by routine violence and torture. As a result, the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) formed in order to force Kosovo's secession and launched periodic small-scale attacks. Under the guise of dealing with these civil insurrections, the Serbian paramilitary carried out massive rebuttal attacks on the ethnic Albanians, who amounted to almost 90% of the population of Kosovo. By the spring of 1999, over 800,000 Kosovar Albanians had fled Kosovo in the largest single eviction of a civilian population since 1945. NATO air campaigns against Slobodan Milosevic's Serbian regime did not begin until March 1999. Meanwhile, extra-judicial executions, disappearances, arbitrary detention, torture, ill treatment, forcible expulsions and the deliberate destruction of homes were widespread and systematic. There were also reports of rape or other sexual violence against ethnic Albanian women.⁸⁰

The production evidence indicates that Jane Montgomery decided to refer to the 'present Balkan nightmare' primarily through the integration of ethnic specific music with instrumentation inspired by ancient Greek music – similar to the approach of Katie Mitchell (and also of Carey Perloff for her 1995 production of *Hecuba*, starring Olympia Dukakis, at the American Conservatory Theatre in San Francisco).⁸¹ Keith Clouston, the production's composer, acknowledged in his programme notes his debt to scholar M.L. West's book,

⁷⁹ Oliver Taplin, 'Songs from the flames', *Times Literary Supplement*, 6 November 1998, p. 31.

⁸⁰ Amnesty International Report 2000 on Federal Republic of Yugoslavia: www.amnesty.org.

⁸¹ May 1995. The production marked the premiere of Timberlake Wertenbaker's translation. Kitka, an East Bay Balkan choral music ensemble, was featured as the Chorus of Trojan Women. Kitka sang a score, composed by David Lang, which was tinged with Balkan melodies, 'forming a thick aural web that supports the action, sweetens its sorrow and provides reflective relief' and 'hints at the hidden power of the dispossessed.' This relevance was praised: 'their Eastern European sound is effective, not least for the tacit parallels it draws to current human-rights abuses of women in the Balkans' (Dennis Harvey, *Variety*, 21 May 1995).

Ancient Greek Music, which had recently been published, particularly West's comparison of the Greek paeonic rhythm (quintuple time or 5/8) with contemporary Balkan folk music, especially Bulgarian and Albanian. Clouston suggested that some Arab music was akin to the distinct ancient Greek meters. His musical inspirations ranged from Middle-Eastern sounds to Balkan folk songs. His arsenal of instruments included: frame drums from the Greek Islands and Cyprus, bowl lyres from Egypt and the Sudan, kitharas from Ethiopia, arghuls from the Libyan desert, Albanian klarinos, and Bulgarian kavalas. Thus, his score was a combination of these folk sounds and 'electronics, sampling and looping techniques, found sound, musique concrète. [...] The choral drones are part of this and the voices of the actors have been looped to create a solid underpinning for the sung odes'. Although his thorough background research was essential to his compositions, Clouston was mindful to assert that the music was composed for performance: 'Writing music for *Trojan Women* has not been an academic exercise for me, rather a creative exploration of the possible and the practical—an attempt to underpin the emotional and poetic truth of Euripides' play.'

Montgomery's creative interpretations of the main characters and chorus were similar in the style to Castledine's eclecticism. However, Montgomery's main theme was to explore the effects of binding on the women of the play. For example, the Chorus appeared in the tatters of once elegant dresses and were chained together. Hecuba was confined to a wheelchair. Cassandra wore a bloodstained straightjacket version of a wedding dress and pulled around an enormous wedding cake with candles alight. Andromache was stereotypically portrayed as a distraught and tattered mother from the 1950s and Helen

appeared as a Miss World candidate in broken high heels, ripped fishnets and was dragged around by chain.

The set vaguely recalled the image of an abandoned refugee camp consisting of a derelict watering hole, which was used to drink from and wash in, and a blue-lit corridor in the background. With the exception of the Chorus and Hekabe, all the characters entered through this corridor. During the 'Helen Episode' the corridor became like a courtroom. At the end, the fall of Troy was represented not by flames and the sound of falling towers, but by a shower of blood from a tower above, drenching Hekabe and the chorus and turning the water in the pool red. Most unusually, Poseidon and Athene were represented as little children playing in sand at the side of the stage making sandcastles and boats—Athene wore pigtails, Poseidon appeared in a child's sailor suit—reducing the intervention of the gods in the tragedy to the status of child's play. This production decision made a similar impact as the symbolic use of Astyanax's set of building blocks (in the shape of Troy) in Tabori's 1985 production.⁸² This interpretation of the role of the gods prompted one critic to write: 'In an age of spin-doctors and sound bites, this primitive argument about rhetoric and power is as fresh as the daily news headlines. Men may never learn, but the stage remains a nursery for democracy.'⁸³

In many ways, Montgomery's approach was as disjointed as Castledine's. However, she did not go so far as to suggest that the aggressors belong to one particular country, such as the United States. Instead, she allowed the audience to make the contemporary

⁸² During Astyanax's funeral, Athene builds a house of cards which are toppled when Talthybios enters with his soldiers to effect the final destruction of Troy.

connections for themselves. One critic outlined the distinct parallel between the ancient and modern scenarios:

A town lies in smoking ruins. Ethnic cleansing is being carried out on a scale unimagined in history. The men have been butchered; babies are casually slaughtered; and women weep as they are driven from their homes to a terrible exile, but resolve to endure, somehow. The stage of war is an up to the minute metaphor for Kosovo or Afghanistan. [...] From Kosovo to Rwanda, pictorial images of the pity and suffering of war are daily with us.⁸⁴

To emphasize this, Sir Roger Tomkys, Chairman of the Greek Play Committee, wrote in the programme that 'the message of *Trojan Women* is unequivocal in an age of ethnic cleansing'. This theme was strengthened by the fact that Dolja Dragasevic, a concert pianist from Serbia, 'escaped from her modern Troy'⁸⁵, played Helen. Hekabe was played by Marta Zlatic, a Croatian refugee. (Both were current undergraduates at Cambridge). The effect of the production was, as Taplin pointed out, that the audience had to confront the Balkan brutalities: 'without their armchairs and TV dinners' there was 'no opportunity to channel-hop'.⁸⁶

23. Joanne Akalaitis/Nicholas Ruddall
Trojan Women
Shakespeare Theatre
Washington D.C.
1999

Joanne Akalaitis's austere production of *Trojan Women* (in a new translation by University of Chicago Classics Professor, Nicholas Ruddall) at the Shakespeare Theatre in

⁸³ Author unknown, *The Times*, 12 October 1998.

⁸⁴ Peter Jones, 'Trojan tragedy', *The Daily Telegraph*, 20 October 1998, p. 25.

⁸⁵ Author unknown, *The Times*, 12 October 1998.

⁸⁶ Oliver Taplin, 'Songs from the Flames', *Times Literary Supplement*, 6 November 1998, p. 31.

Washington, D.C (the first Greek tragedy to be performed there) premiered in the same month as NATO strikes began in Kosovo (March 1999). As co-founder of the avant-garde theatre troupe Mabou Mines (which produced the iconic *Gospel at Colonus*, featuring the Oedipus story in the context of a Southern Pentecostal church meeting, 1983/88) and married at one time to composer Philip Glass, Akalaitis was one of the premiere experimental directors in America. Familiar with Greek tragedy—she had recently produced *The Iphigenia Cycle* for the Chicago Court Theatre and the Theatre for New Audience in New York and was most likely also familiar with the experiments of Serban and Suzuki's in the 1970s—her production of *Trojan Women* integrated the post-modern aesthetic of shock-value with an eclectic approach to design, while also demonstrating restraint with regard to explicit topicality.

The set (designed by Paul Steinberg) represented a claustrophobic holding room located in the front of a bombed-out two-story building. The stage was cluttered with piles of discarded metal office desks, perhaps in the style of a derelict shipping warehouse. In the middle of the floor, an enormous round black shadow lingered with sinister connotations, symbolising perhaps the stain of past atrocities. While the audience was well aware of the potential resonances of the play's themes with the Kosovar crisis, one critic felt that the production was most compelling when it appeared to bring to life the images exhibited at the National Holocaust Museum just a few blocks from the theatre. For example, during an additional opening scene, strikingly similar to the opening scenes of the Tabori and Freytag

productions, Gestapo-like behaviour was witnessed.⁸⁷ Susan Joseph described the action (which preceded Euripides' prologue) in her review for *Didaskalia*:

A mute ensemble of soldiers in blue riot gear march six blindfolded women of the chorus and three blindfolded women prisoners on stage. [...] Some of these women are raped, mainly off stage, and one stumbles back on stage nude to wash the marauders' filth off of herself. One of the marauders saunters back in buttoning his fly.⁸⁸

These acts of violence created a shocking effect similar to the German and Israeli productions, forced the audience to bear first-hand witness to the wanton brutality of soldiers towards their women prisoners, and set a particular tone for the rest of the play. Unlike the previous productions, the prologue was retained, but its message diffused: the gods seek punishment for the hubristic acts of the Greeks, but were, nevertheless, incapable of preventing the abuse of the innocent women in the first place (being forsaken by God, as discussed, was a common crisis of belief for Jews following the Holocaust).

The Holocaust was clearly not the production's main theme, however, as evidenced by the costume design (Doey Lüthi). Similar to the eclectic design of the Castledine production, the soldiers wore modern American military uniforms, but the women of the chorus appeared with shaved heads and wore rough cloth shifts and leggings somewhat reminiscent of those interned in concentration camps (unlike in reaction to Castledine's production, this displaced opposition did not seem to cause offence to the critics). By contrast, the royal women were clothed in elegant timeless robes.⁸⁹ Maintaining a thin division between ancient and modern style, the Chorus sang their odes and moved with

⁸⁷ Susan Joseph, review for *Didaskalia* (2002).

⁸⁸ *ibid.*

⁸⁹ *ibid.*

ritualised movements, much in the style of modern Greek performances of ancient drama in Greece. Additionally, the music was not ethnic specific, but expressed a ‘symphony of grief’, performed on four strings, percussion and an oud (a lute-like instrument).⁹⁰ Each character was accompanied by her own musical motif of grief and loss. The sound design expressed Akalaitis’s aim to present the play as if ‘Handel’s Oratorio: there’s a repetition and a dynamic in it that becomes more intense, more devastating, as the evening goes on’.⁹¹

There were no explicit references made to Kosovo, however, the director and the designers were conscious of any accusations from the press that they were exploiting the tragedy for their own purposes. Lisa Bielawa, the composer, expressed that ‘it wasn’t our intention of making hay out of this current tragedy’.⁹² Nevertheless, the parallel was unavoidable and the production made a profound impact on the Washington, D.C. community, most strikingly with the television media and political commentators. For example, in the middle of the run (April 19), on *Crossfire*, a CNN programme, the commentators and their guests were discussing the Clinton Administration’s Kosovo policy and the NATO air strikes against Yugoslavia. Robert Novak, one of the hosts, said to one of his guests: “Bill, last night I saw a brilliant re-enactment of a [...] 2500 year old play, *The Trojan Women* by Euripides, arguably the greatest anti-war play ever written. [...] I would suggest our leaders take time out to watch that play.”⁹³

⁹⁰ Jane Horowitz, *The Washington Post*, 20 April 1999.

⁹¹ Roberto Aquirre Sacasa, ‘Fire From Heaven: At the Shakespeare Theatre, Director JoAnne Akalaitis prepares to invoke a world of gods and myths with *The Trojan Women*’ (1999) <www.shakespearetheatre.org> [1 May 2004] (para 5 of 13).

⁹² Lisa Bielawa quoted in Jane Horowitz, *The Washington Post*, 20 April 1999.

⁹³ CNN, *Crossfire*, 19 April 1999, Monday, 7:30pm Eastern Time, Transcript # 99041900V20.

Adaptations

Perhaps *Trojan Women* was singled out [...] precisely because it was so easy for successive generations of actors and audiences (and then teachers and pupils) to find ever-changing “relevance” in Troy and Hecuba.

Pat Easterling’s comment (above) in the programme notes for the Cambridge Greek Play (1998) precisely suggested the main reason for the post-classical survival of *Trojan Women*: it is a matter of relevance. In contrast, Herbert Golder argued in his iconoclastic article, ‘Geek Tragedy?—Or, Why I’d Rather Go to the Movies’, that there can be serious pitfalls for productions which attempt to ‘classicize the classics’ or make ancient plays inappropriately multi-cultural (he criticised Mnouchkine’s *Les Atrides* for its ‘Nipponizing’ of the *Oresteia*). Deeply disenchanted with some recent productions of the classics he had attended, Golder insisted that contemporizing productions of the classics could be applauded, but that modern resonances and acting methods should not be privileged over traditional interpretations of the Greek texts: ‘The ephemeral must never be allowed to occlude the essential’.⁹⁴ Scholars have since rebutted Golder’s scathing claims,⁹⁵ and certainly there are few practitioners who would agree with his limits on theatrical creativity, nonetheless his arguments have sparked important debate about the dramatic effectiveness and appropriateness of many recent interpretations of Greek drama. Many adaptors (either writers or directors) of Greek tragedy, and *Trojan Women* in particular, have sidestepped these pitfalls because the very nature of adaptation allows them a freedom

⁹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 199.

⁹⁵ Oliver Taplin replied in *Arion*, 5.3 (Winter 1998).

of expression that directors of the ancient text might not enjoy.⁹⁶ The most important adaptations in the 1990s have either used Euripides' play as one section of a larger work (Nigel Osborne's *Sarajevo*, Peter Hall's *Tantalus*) or as a post-modern documentary piece (Charles Mee's *Trojan Women: A Love Story*). A brief discussion of *Sarajevo* and *Trojan Women: A Love Story* will provide a helpful comparison to the productions discussed above.

24. David Freeman/Nigel Osborne
Sarajevo: An Opera
Queen Elizabeth Hall
London
1994

In August 1994, following the conflagration of the crisis in Bosnia, composer Nigel Osborne collaborated with the Opera Factory in London and presented *Sarajevo: An Opera*, which he coined an 'agit-prop' opera (Queen Elizabeth Hall with subsequent tours to Oxford, Buxton, and Aberstwyth).⁹⁷ This production demonstrated the ways in which documentary evidence could be transformed into a compelling dramatic piece without causing the offence of crude relevancy.

Osborne, a composer and human rights activist, was committed to the Bosnian cause. From a young age, he had made numerous trips to Bosnia, arranged concerts in the ruins of Sarajevo, and launched appeals for aid in Britain. In 1992, he organized a

⁹⁶ Edward Bond's *The Woman* (Olivier, Royal National Theatre, 10 August 1978) was an early example of a compelling reinterpretation of the story of the fall of Troy. His version, which he also directed, focussed on Hecuba (Yvonne Bryceland) as the exemplar of human suffering.

⁹⁷ John Mahony, *The Guardian*, 9 July 2002.

conference on the crisis at Edinburgh University, where he is Reid Professor of Music. This conference undoubtedly influenced the placing of the Bosnian situation onto the agenda of the European Summit being held in the city at the time. *Sarajevo*, though produced before the siege of the city in 1995, garnered much attention as an example of the blurry gap between performance art and simple political reporting. One theatre critic questioned, 'where does its function as a profoundly sincere and humane piece of pictorial reporting end, and where does its role as a work of art begin?'⁹⁸ 'But what can art do?' another critic asked, Osborne appeared to be 'saying that all an artist can do is observe, report and carry on'.⁹⁹

Although Euripides' *Trojan Women* was only a third of the whole, it presented the main thematic thread of the opera. Osborne compared Troy and the experience of its female prisoners of war with the situation in the Balkan city of Sarajevo. The story of the *Trojan Women* 'takes the narrative back to the Trojans, closing the endless circle of world misery and lessons never learnt'.¹⁰⁰ Part I of the opera entitled 'The Women' was an abridged version of Euripides' *Trojan Women* in a translation by Don Taylor. Two actresses from former Yugoslavia played the roles of Hecuba (Katja Doric) and Andromache (Selma Alispahic, who was a year later a member of Castledine's Chorus), and a British actress was featured in the role of Cassandra (Marie Angel). There was little music in this section, much to the dismay of many critics, just a few gong sounds and pre-recorded tape. Because English was not the first language of two of the actresses, the delivery of the text was

⁹⁸ Andrew Clements, *The Guardian*, 26 August 1994.

⁹⁹ Michael White, *The Independent*, 28 August 1994.

described by one reviewer as ‘mumbled or hysterically shrieked’ and difficult to understand.¹⁰¹ Despite these criticisms, Euripides’ play appeared to be updated to the present day ‘where women stand and wait amid the smouldering ruins as they do through history’.¹⁰² Designer David Roger provided the contemporary setting: dark walls sandbagged from floor to ceiling and cluttered with debris.

Osborne’s numerous trips to Bosnia provided the documentary material for Part II entitled ‘Sarajevo’ which featured a collage of vignettes of ‘life under siege’ including words from poems, diaries, news reports, and reminiscences by the Bosnians themselves, ‘organised against a sort of narrative (a love-transcending-frontiers story in the background)’.¹⁰³ Osborne described the style of this section as ‘somewhere between opera, cabaret and song cycle’, an approach similar to Charles Mee’s 1995 experiment, *Trojan Women: A Love Story*.¹⁰⁴ ‘The Sandstorm,’ Part III, consisting of a libretto by Craig Raine, featured a long static lament over the loss of a child, akin to the funeral of Astyanax in Euripides’ text. Despite serious criticisms, *Sarajevo* was generally received as more than just an updated version of the legend of Troy and not simply as a pictorial report of atrocities in Bosnia, and usefully demonstrated possible, but often varied, results of this kind of experimentation with Greek tragedy.

¹⁰⁰ *ibid.*

¹⁰¹ Richard Fairman, *The Financial Times*, 25 August 1994.

¹⁰² Michael White, *The Independent*, 28 August 1994.

¹⁰³ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ Quoted in Andrew Clements, *The Guardian*, 26 August 1994.

25. Charles Mee
Trojan Women: A Love Story
 Various theatres
 USA
 1995

Charles Mee's adaptation of *Trojan Women* represented an integration of documentary theatre (as mentioned above with regard to Osborne's production) and the avant-garde collage style championed by Tadashi Suzuki and Andrei Serban discussed in Chapter Three. A historian turned playwright from the mid-1980s, Charles Mee was inspired in the first instance by his passion for the anti-war cause: 'I got very involved in the Vietnam anti-war movement. That led to political writing, which led to historical writing and writing about the Cold War.'¹⁰⁵ Later in the decade, Mee's political and dramatic interests merged. He mixed 'found texts' or literary works with news stories and oral-history transcriptions into such plays as *The Investigation of the Murder in El Salvador* and a stream of bleakly comic, intense, collage-style dramas based on Greek tragedies. *Orestes 2.0* put Euripides' play in the context of U.S. soldiers returning from the Gulf War. *Trojan Women: A Love Story* (1996 with subsequent revivals) was most directly related to the war atrocities committed in Serbia. Mee conceived of his work as a reflection of a fractured world: 'My plays are broken, jagged, filled with sharp edges, filled with things that take sudden turns, careen into each other, smash up, veer off in sickening turns. (That) feels like my life. It feels like the world.'¹⁰⁶ This approach produced a combination of post-modern performance art and a mixture of ancient and modern texts (Euripides' *Trojan*

¹⁰⁵ Quoted from Mee's website: <http://www.panix.com/~meejr/indexf.html>

¹⁰⁶ *ibid.*

Women and Berlioz's *Les Troyens*), media reporting and testimonies from the victims of war.¹⁰⁷

Structurally, the first act consisted of an adaptation of *Trojan Women* and the second act, set by Mee in a disused spa, featured the legend of Dido and Aeneas as perceived in Berlioz's opera. He infused the ancient stories with witness accounts of human rights violations in Hiroshima, Nazi Germany, and Bosnia to create a unique performance text. The characterisation of the main roles were incredibly diverse. For example, in a 2002 Seattle production, Hecuba was described by *Seattle Post* critic as a 'dispossessed fashion editor' and Cassandra as a 'man-eating dominatrix'. The Chorus were portrayed as a 'bedraggled and aggressive corps of victims making computer parts for their conquerors'. The Greek soldiers were portrayed as 'beefy men in either camouflage fatigues or business suits'. Often, the actors would appear at first in their ancient roles, then break into singing a modern pop song. For example, Menelaus, roared onto the stage dripping with gore and shouting for vengeance. Then, suddenly, he became a heart-broken Tom Jones, singing "Why, oh why, Delilah?" The Greek soldiers appeared at first as 'monsters of violence and cruelty' but then they became 'hapless, abused grunts... then they are hopped up goofballs, apparently telling their troubles to a contemptuous/sympathetic Ricki Lake'. Similar to Castledine's Hecuba, Mee's Hecuba most closely portrayed a traditional interpretation of the character. Towards the end of the play, however, she becomes as 'vengeance-driven as the most war-crazed women of Zagreb'. Helen was seen as a 'sleek slut right out of a

¹⁰⁷ The ART Institute for Advanced Theatre first presented the play in 1995. Other significant productions occurred in New York 1996, Chicago 1999, San Francisco 2001, and Seattle 2002.

Victoria's Secret catalog. When she gets Menelaus calmed down and then riled up, they are a total sleaze-o couple, singing songs from the cynical and satirical musical "Chicago".¹⁰⁸

One critic described how Mee 'detonates the original story, then puts the pieces back together with added asides about the Holocaust, Bosnia, television talk shows and snippets of American popular songs'.¹⁰⁹ There was no sense of the play being an archaic curiosity, some additional tales included eye-witness reports from Afghanistan, Kurdistan, El Salvador, Rwanda, Palestine and Cambodia. Musically it was also eclectic and included the genres of melodrama, satire, farce and musical comedy. A critic of the 2002 Seattle production (Theater Schmeater) remarked how the musical element highlighted the oppositions inherent in the play:

The songs neither sugarcoat the wretchedness nor lighten the mood but provide another stark contradiction in this play of duality: war vs. reason, men vs. women, bloody murder vs. snappy numbers. The resulting show is arty, unnerving, and completely salient.¹¹⁰

Mee defined this technique as 'incorporating shards of our contemporary world to lie, as in a bed of ruins, within the frame of the classical world'.¹¹¹

The settings chosen by directors of the play upheld the eclectic nature of the texts. An early production of the play (July 1996), directed by Tina Landau, was performed in a disused East River Park Amphitheater in New York City (a venue reminiscent of the enormous warehouse space of Akailaitis's production in Washington, D.C. and Serban's

¹⁰⁸ All quotes from Joe Adcock, *Seattle Post*, 8 October 2002.

¹⁰⁹ Michael Kuchwara, *The Associated Press*, 30 June 1996.

¹¹⁰ < <http://www.schmeater.org/season2002/trojan.htm> > [accessed 2 April 2003].

¹¹¹ Charles Mee quoted in Ben Brantley, 'An Epic War Resolved with a Gershwin Ditty', *The New York Times*, 3 July 1996.

trilogy at La MaMa revived ten years before). Act One was performed in the ravaged interior of the amphitheatre; Act Two played outside in the open-air theatre (referencing the movement of the audience between parts of the venue in avant-garde productions such as Serban's). In this space, monumental staircases were erected to provide multiple levels from which the actors performed. For another production in San Francisco (2001), the actors 'stagger through a partylike wreckage of crepe paper, computer junk, bricks, and corrugated metal', fittingly parts of Picasso's 1937 *Guernica*, one of the great twentieth-century anti-war symbols, decorated the back wall.¹¹²

The chaotic style of revivals of *Trojan Women: A Love Story* demonstrated the ways in which the emotive power of documentary material could be released to make compelling comments about relevant issues of the time. In 2002, when the United States and Britain were on the cusp of a second Iraqi war, the director of the Seattle production, Sheila Daniels commented: 'Of course we had this scheduled before all the talk of war with Iraq began [...], but what could be more appropriate? America experienced the slaughter of thousands of innocent people on 9/11. And now we're talking about actions that will involve the slaughter of thousands of innocent people.'¹¹³ In the Seattle production, they showed also slides of photographs from conflicts in Vietnam, Croatia, Hiroshima and

¹¹² Michael Scott Moore, 'Mediterranean Spring: Why are Bay Area stages so classically minded this season?', *SF Weekly*, 6 June 2001. This design is reminiscent of Dionyssi Fotopoulos's set of disused cars and scrap metal for A. Boutsinas's avant-garde production of *Troades* at the Epidauros Festival in 1987. For production photographs and designs, see Dionyssi Fotopoulos, *Stage Design, Costumes*, 2 vols (Athens: Kastaniotis Editions, 1995) and Dionyssi Fotopoulos, *Costume Design in the Greek Theatre* (Athens: Commercial Bank of Greece, 1986). Fotopoulos had created a similar junk-yard design for Karolos Koun's famous production of *Troades* performed at the Epidauros Festival in August 1979. Both designs symbolised a post-modern view of the world in which every day items have been reduced to useless rubbish. The Trojan women are trapped in this fragmentary world until they are released into a new life, but one which is a far worse than the present one, a life of slavery and abuse.

Ireland.¹¹⁴ The effect of these production decisions was simultaneously alienating and comforting. The production, as signified by its post-modern fragmentation, was difficult to follow and yet audience members remained engaged as they attempted to identify the myriad of contemporary references.

¹¹³ Joe Adcock, *Seattle Post*, 4 October 2002.

¹¹⁴ *ibid.*

AFTERWORD

Euripides' *Trojan Women*: A 21st Century War Play?

In a post September 11th era, will *Trojan Women* provide the same kind of effective mediation for the debate over the responsibilities and effects of waging war? Recent productions are perhaps difficult for us to reasonably put in perspective; however, since the attack on the World Trade Center, the number of productions of the play on the international stage has increased substantially.¹ Within days of the attack, *Trojan Women* re-emerged as a locus for discussion for writers, theatre practitioners, and students struggling to come to terms with the shocking event. Paula Vogel, a Pulitzer Prize winning playwright, met with her graduate students at Brown University on 12 September and used Euripides' plays to inspire their own artistic responses to the tragedy (as reported in the *New York Times*):

¹ Recent productions include: *Trojan Women*, directed by Irene Papas (also played Hecuba), designed by Spanish architect Santiago Calatrava, music by Vangelis (Sagunto Steelworks, Valencia, Spain, September, 2001; revived with *Hecuba* in Italy in 2003); *Trojan Women*, directed by David Furumoto in noh, kabuki style (University Theatre, University of Wisconsin, November 2001); *Trojan Women*, directed by Angela Iacone (Renaissance Theatre Works, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, March 2002); *Necessary Targets*, modern version featuring two Americans helping war-torn Bosnians, written by Eve Ensler of *Vagina Monologues* fame (Variety Arts Theatre, New York, March 2002); *Peeling*, directed by Kaite O'Reilly, featuring three severely handicapped actresses who play choral roles in *Trojan Women* (Soho Theatre, London, April 2002); *Thiraikadalodi: Territory (Akam)*, directed by Prasanna Ranswamy, a Tamil dance adaptation of *Trojan Women* and *Antigone* (Chennai, India, August 2002); *11th September/Trojan Women*, written by French playwright Michel Vinaver (Barcelona's National Theatre of Catalonia, September 2002); *Mythos*, written by Rina Yerushalmi, an adaptation based on the story of the House of Atreus and The Trojan War set in Israel/Palestine (Municipal Theatre, Tel Aviv and on tour to Lincoln Center, New York January 2003); *Women of Lockerbie*, directed by Deborah Brevoort, based on the 'Laundry Project' after the Pan Am bombing (The Women's Project Theatre, New York City, April 2003); *Afghan Women*, adaptation by William Mastrosimone (CoHo Theatre, Oregon); Seneca's *Trojan Women*, directed by Mary Zimmerman (The Goodman Theatre, Chicago, April 2003); *Women of Owu*, directed by Chuck Mike, production set in Nigeria (British tour, 2004).

The theater is a place where Euripides gave his peers *Medea* [...] and *Trojan Women* [...] to question his fellow citizens. Right now, in our time of national mourning [...] the theater hears a calling to another form of patriotism: to portray the 'the other' as protagonist.²

Frank Rizzo, in a piece for the *Hartford Courant*, questioned 'how a new generation of theater artists will respond to the shattering events of that day.' He asked, 'Will they take an escapist route, or one that looks at classics that speak to the times, or one that allows contemporary writers to speak out in ways that might not always be pleasing to audiences?' His interviews with various local theatre practitioners (including Stan Wojewodksi, then Dean of Yale School of Drama and Artistic Director of Yale Repertory Theatre) revealed a dedication to using theatre as an effective tool to come to terms with a communal crisis. 'The theater does so many different things in a time like this and relevance is a relative term that can be measured in many ways', commented Wojewodksi. 'Works that speak to audiences' hearts and minds', he continued, 'whether directly or indirectly provide moments of community in a sea of inchoate feelings.' *Trojan Women* was one of these works under consideration for the subsequent season at Yale—a list that also included *The Persians*, *Mother Courage and her Children*, *Tiger at the Gates*, and *Waiting for Godot*.³ At Bard College, Thomas Keenan introduced his literature class to the plight of the female victims in *Trojan Women* through the examination of political treatises by Kissinger and fliers of the names of those missing from the Twin Towers.⁴ In Birmingham, Alabama, the day the World Trade Center towers were attacked, sixteen Alabama School of Fine Arts students were rehearsing *Trojan Women*. One student, the assistant director, identified the

² Paula Vogel, *New York Times*, 'Theater: The Aftermath', 23 September 2001.

³ Frank Rizzo, 'How will theaters respond?', *The Hartford Courant*, 23 September 2001.

moment of revelation about the play's relevance: 'We didn't realize how close this play really was until we were forced to respond to the September 11th tragedy. The current tragedy bridges the gap between the antiquated nature of the play and modern events.'⁵ By consciously processing their reactions to the images of those mourning the dead trapped in fallen towers and integrating these emotions into their rehearsal exercises, the students gained a new perspective on the emotive power of the ancient play.

An article in *Time* magazine several months later revealed a common view of the relation between art and life; *Trojan Women* was used as a prime example:

Acts of horror often find their appropriate response in works of art. In a tradition going back 2,500 years - when Euripides took the Melian massacre and spun it into the theatrical gold of the *Trojan Women* - artists have done what politicians and the media cannot: explain the inexplicable, make sense of the incomprehensible. Will September's disaster find its outlet in the works of today's authors and playwrights?⁶

This comment evoked and challenged Adorno's seminal statement about the impossibility of creating poetry in the wake of the Holocaust: 9/11 (to argue about the horror of this event in comparison with the Holocaust is not fruitful in this context) was the first attack on American soil (with the exception of Pearl Harbor), and in many ways, has presented a similar dilemma for a shocked community of artists.

In the twentieth century, the themes of *Trojan Women* were interpreted in response to various kinds of war—the legacies of colonisation and imperial aspirations, territorial wars, civil conflicts and genocide—but the twenty-first century 'war on terror' differs

⁴ Reported in Anemona Hartocollis, 'Campus culture wars flare anew over tenor of debate after the attacks', *The New York Times*, 30 September 2001.

⁵ Victoria Coman, 'ASFA offers ancient tale with contemporary overtones', *Birmingham News*, 24 October 2001.

⁶ Jennifer Conlin, 'Turning a New Page', *Time*, 3 December 2001.

In 2005, it seems that the raw revenge narrative of Euripides' *Hecuba* (performed recently at the Donmar Warehouse and Royal Shakespeare Company in London), at least in Britain, has reflected this period of uneasiness over the Iraq war and distrust of government in ways in which a production of *Trojan Women* might not. Perhaps *Hecuba* will benefit now from the rich production history of her younger, sister play?

*

This examination of the production history of *Trojan Women* on the twentieth-century stage demonstrate that the play, despite scholarly neglect,⁹ continues to endure as an effective forum to debate and express opinions of aesthetic, intellectual, and political import, specifically the waging of war (as the failure of Lynne Parker's Irish production of Brendan Kennelly's translation proves, *Trojan Women* is simply not as expressive outside a war context). After the scholarly and creative interventions of various instrumental figures – particularly Gilbert Murray and Jean-Paul Sartre, who, as discussed, were crucial in introducing the idea that this ancient play could be interpreted in light of contemporary parallels – the play was rescued from the clutches of those scholars, such as the Schlegel brothers, who sidelined it for not epitomising Aristotelian ideals of dramatic poetry. Whether or not the Melian incident prompted Euripides to compose the play out of protest, this production history reveals the ways in which twentieth-century theatre artists (including adaptors and translators) have been compelled to massage the ancient text

⁹ Scholarly articles, as has been shown, tend to focus not on how the ambiguities and ironies in the text might be interpreted for performance on the stage, but on intellectual issues regarding the debate over the influence of the Melian incident, the possibility of dramatic unity provided by its place in a trilogy, whether the ending is hopeful or hopeless, and in some cases, analysis of specific scenes, characters, or linguistic issues.

variously and fruitfully in order to express anti-colonial, anti-war, or pro-peace sentiments; to promote certain causes such as the League of Nations or the Women's Peace Party or the Front de Libération Nationale; or to pay tribute to the plight of victims of war and champion the need for human rights awareness and legislation.

Part of the reason for the play's cultural importance in political and aesthetic terms lies in the fact that certain oppositions in the play – Greek/Trojan, male/female, powerful/weak, victor/victim, civilised/barbarian – can be conveyed powerfully using modern equivalents from any twentieth-century war context. Likewise the setting – variously interpreted as a camp for prisoners-of-war or refugees, a prison cell, or a concentration camp – could represent, universally or specifically, the conditions of any holding camp in a modern war. Additionally, a range of modern equivalents can be found to particularise the main characters of the play as each come to symbolise the maladies of an age. For example, Hecuba, and the Trojan women as a group, could be seen as symbolising a stoic nation suffering from the impact of war; Cassandra as an unheeded prophet proclaiming the consequences of war-crimes; Andromache as a woman faced with a choice-less choice of how to continue her life as a slave/prisoner; Astyanax as an innocent victim of war-mongers; Helen as a scapegoat for a suffering community or as an irrational foolish reason for war; Talthybios as the good soldier who is unable to be a 'conscientious objector' and must obey his orders; and Menelaos as a tyrant, or a fascist, or an abusive military leader. Moreover, particular themes in the play appealed to theatre artists working in different periods of the century: the responsibility of governments and communities, and individuals, for fair behaviour towards the colonised was especially borne out in the early

part of the century; the treatment of prisoners, and specifically the horrific treatment of Nazi prisoners, as well as a complex sympathy towards victims of the atom bomb, prevailed in productions after World War Two; and concerns for those displaced by ethnic cleansing or civil warfare guided production decisions in the last few decades.

This production history also makes clear the impact of *Trojan Women*, a unique play even by ancient standards (for example: the richness and variety of the female characters, Poseidon's direct address to the audience, the split chorus, lyric anapests in the parodos, the monodies of Hecuba and Cassandra, the personalisation of the chorus women in the odes, Menelaos' joke about Helen's weight, the ritual actions throughout), on theatre history. The play is embraced internationally throughout the century by those wishing to revive poetic drama as a living, rather than static, art-form; by those wishing to promote playwrights committed to social justice; by practitioners of the New Stagecraft movement who desired a poetic effect using light and abstract settings; by young artists disillusioned by war who use the play to convey their disappointment, hopes for renewal, and fears of another World War; by avant-garde artists dedicated to undermining the sanctity of the text by replacing it with a new performance text based on primitive ritual; and by the documentary movement which sought to bring the reality of war atrocities to the stage in the hopes of provoking audience reaction. The play has been a launch-pad for the careers of some of the most prominent female actors, and significant actor-managers, directors and acting ensembles have tackled the play proving that it is not simply the darling of one theatrical movement or one approach to performance art, but appeals more universally; yet another tribute to the play's greatness.

As recent studies (conducted primarily by scholars of Performance Reception at the Archive of Performances of Greek and Roman Drama in Oxford) which explore the production history of a particular Greek tragedy or playwright have shown,¹⁰ an examination of a play's impact on social, political, and theatrical spheres can bring a new perspective to the ancient text. This analysis of *Trojan Women*, a play that heretofore did not garner enough scholarly attention to warrant *any* significant full-length studies, ultimately demonstrates that when it comes to assessing the importance of dramatic literature, ancient or modern – *performance* really is the message.

¹⁰ *Medea in Performance: 1500-2000*, ed. by Edith Hall, Fiona Macintosh and Oliver Taplin (Oxford: Legenda, 2000), *Agamemnon in Performance*, ed. by Edith Hall and Amanda Wrigley (Oxford: Legenda, forthcoming). Works on Greek tragedy in specific time periods or playwrights include the recent *Greek Tragedy and the British Stage* by Fiona Macintosh and Edith Hall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) and *Aristophanes in Performance*, ed. by Fiona Macintosh, Pantelis Michelakis, Edith Hall and Oliver Taplin (Oxford: Oxford University Press, November 2005).

APPENDIX I

Chronology, Production Details, and Sources

Production details are limited to productions discussed, names of major cast and crew members (additional notable participants may be included), dates and locations of revivals, and source material (including reviews cited), where known. Spellings of names and characters are as found in promotional material, unless otherwise noted.

Abbreviations:

APGRD = material held in the Archive for the Performances of Greek and Roman Drama, University of Oxford

TM = material held in the Theatre Museum, London

LC = material held in the Billy Rose Theatre Collection, Lincoln Center, New York

CHAPTER ONE

1. Harley Granville-Barker/Gilbert Murray, *Trojan Women*

Date of performances: 11-28 April 1905

Title: *Trojan Women*

Translator: Gilbert Murray

Language: English

Venue: The Royal Court Theatre

City, Country: London, United Kingdom

Director: Harley Granville Barker

Cast:

Hecuba – Marie Bremer

Cassandra – Edyth Olive

Andromache – Edith Wynne-Matthison

Helen – Gertrude Kingston

Menelaus – Dennis Eadie

Talthybius – James Hearn

Sources:

1. Gilbert Murray Papers, Bodleian Library
2. Theatre Museum, London

Reviews:

1. *The Daily Telegraph*, 12 April 1905
2. *Pall Mall Gazette*, 12 April 1905
3. *Morning Post*, 12 April 1905
4. *The Daily Mail*, 12 April 1905
5. *Daily News*, 12 April 1905

6. *The Stage*, 13 April 1905
7. *Illustrated London News*, 22 April 1905
8. Max Beerbohm, *Saturday Review*, 22 April 1905
9. Noel Thomas, 'Harley Granville-Barker and the Greek Drama', *Educational Theatre Journal*, 7 (1955), 294-300.

2. Harley Granville-Barker/Gilbert Murray, *Trojan Women*

Date of performances: 1915 (USA tour)

19 May: Harvard Stadium, Harvard University

29 May & 2 June: Lewisohn Stadium (inauguration), City College New York

9 June: Botanic Gardens, University of Pennsylvania (4.30pm) with *Iphigenia in Tauris* (8 June 1915)

12 June: Princeton University

Title: *Trojan Women*

Translator/Adaptor: Gilbert Murray

Language: English

Producers: Harley Granville Barker, Lillah McCarthy

Director: Harley Granville Barker

Costume and Set Designer: Norman Wilkinson

Composer: Professor David Stanley Smith (University of Pennsylvania)

Cast:

Hecuba – Lillah McCarthy

Kassandra – Chrystal Hyrne

Andromache – Edith Wynne Matthison

Helen – Gladys Hanson

Menelaus – Ian Maclaren

Talthybius – Philip Merivale

Other Revivals:

1936 (Summer): Christ Church quad, Oxford; Lillah McCarthy (Producer, Hecuba)

25 April 1937 (6.15pm), BBC broadcast: Lillah McCarthy (Hecuba), Flora Robson (Cassandra), Edith Sharpe (Andromache), Belle Chrystall (Helen), Hubert Gregg (Talthybius), Ion Swinley (Menelaus)

Sources:

Programme, University of Pennsylvania (9 June 1915): cast list, Synopsis (APGRD)

Programme, Radio Times (25 April 1937): cast list (APGRD)

A prompt-book for *Trojan Women* does exist at the Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin

Reviews:

1. 'The Trojan Women: Beautifully Given', *The New York Times*, 30 May 1915, p. 10
2. S.W., 'The Trojan Women', *The Nation* (3 June 1915), 633-34
3. *New York Times*, 1 June 1915, p. 6
4. 'Euripides played in the Yale Bowl', *New York Times*, 16 June 1915, p. 10
5. Francis Hackett, 'An Everlasting Music', *The New Republic*, III. 31 (5 June 1915), 127
6. 'Presentation under the direction of Granville Barker', *The New York Times*, 6 June 1915
7. Oscar Meriden, *The Theatre*, XXI (June 1915), 283, 312

8. Montrose Moses, 'Greek Drama in Beautiful Settings', *The Theatre*, XXII (July 1915), 12-13, 38
9. *The Craftsman*, August 1915 (LC)
10. Harrison Smith, 'The Revival of Greek Tragedy in America', *The Bookman*, 41 (1915), 409-16
11. *Vogue* (July 1915), 52-53

3. Maurice Browne/Gilbert Murray, *Trojan Women*

Date of performances and venues:

January 1913, Chicago Little Theatre

March 1914, Chicago Little Theatre

April 1915, Chicago Little Theatre Company at Blackstone Theatre, and USA tour (dates based on review information, thus relatively unreliable):

11 April: Blackstone Theatre, Chicago

23 April: Cleveland, Ohio

4 May: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

6 May: Baltimore, Maryland

9 May: Washington, DC

11 May: Columbus, Ohio

14 May: Cincinnati, Ohio

19 May: Indianapolis, Indiana

20 May: St Louis, Missouri

17 June: San Francisco, California (Panama-Pacific International Exposition)

Also: Urbana, Illinois; Fort Wayne, Indiana, Grand Rapids, Ann Arbor, and Detroit, Michigan, Toledo and Oberlin, Ohio, Pittsburgh, Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, Arizona, California, Oregon, Washington State, and Salt Lake City

Nellie Van reported in a 1915 letter to an official of the Women's Peace Party that the Chicago Little Theatre had underwent a fifteen week tour, with forty-two performances in thirty-one cities; approximately 33,000 people attended the performances (Browne, 188).

Title: *Trojan Women*

Translator/Adaptor: Gilbert Murray

Language: English

Venue: Chicago Little Theatre

City, Country: Chicago, USA

Producer: Maurice Browne, Nellie Van

Director: Maurice Browne

Set Designer: Bør Norfeldt, C. Raymond Jonson

Costume Designer: Lou Wall Moore

Cast:

Hecuba – Nellie Van (Ellen van Volkenburg)

Cassandra – Lou Wall Moore

Andromache – Elaine Hyman

Helen - Bess Goodrich (Alice Elizabeth Goodrich)

Leader of the Chorus – Miriam Kiper

Other members of the Company:

Margaret Allen, Elizabeth Bingham, Alice Gerstenberg, Genevieve Griffin, Jane Heap, Marjorie Jones, Florence Reckitt, Paul Bartlett, Maurice Browne, Alfred Emerson, Arthur Johnson, Shelley Neltner, Edward Passmore, Elmore Powell

Sources:

1. Maurice Browne, *Too Late to Lament: An Autobiography* (London: Gollancz, 1955)
2. Kendra Chopcian, 'An Analysis of Maurice Browne's Directing Themes and Practices with the Chicago Little Theatre' (unpublished thesis, University of Michigan, 1989) (APGRD)
3. Van Volkenburg-Browne Collection, University of Michigan (used heavily by Chopcian and Tingley)

Reviews:

1. James O'Donnell Bennett, *Record Herald*, 2 January 1913
2. Floyd Dell, 'The Littlest Theatre: Chicago's Experiment in the Production of Poetic Drama', *Harper's Weekly*, 29 November 1913, 22-24
3. Ben B. Lindsey, 'The Stage Child and the Law', *The Theatre* (October 1916)
4. Cloyd Head, 'The Chicago Little Theatre', *Theatre Arts Magazine*, 1. 3 (May 1917), 110-16
5. Ruth Gottholdt, 'The New Scenic Art of the Theatre', *The Theatre Magazine* (May 1920)
6. Donald F. Tingley, 'Ellen Van Volkenburg, Maurice Browne, and the Chicago Little Theatre', *Illinois Historical Journal*, Autumn (1999), 130-46

4. Lewis Casson/Gilbert Murray, *Trojan Women*

Date of performances and venues:

5 September 1919: Cowley Road Cinema, Oxford
 14, 21, 28 October; 4 November 1919: Old Vic Theatre, London (2.30pm matinees)
 28 November 1919: Alhambra Theatre, London to benefit the League of Nations Union
 10, 13, 17, 20 December 1919: Holborn Empire Music Hall, London (matinees)
 23-29 February; 22, 24 March 1920: Holborn Empire Music Hall, London (matinees)
 29 March – 3 April 1920: Duke of York Theatre, London (evening in rep with *Medea*)
 1922: Palace Theatre, London to benefit the League of Nations Union
 3, 19 October 1924: New Theatre, London to benefit The Women's International League & The Appeal Fund for Oxford Women's Colleges (Margaret Webster in Chorus)
 27 October; 3, 10, 17, 24 November; 1 December 1924: tour to Glasgow, Wimbledon, Edinburgh, Liverpool, Manchester
 7 December 1937: Adelphi Theatre (matinee) to benefit The League of Nations Union

Title: *Trojan Women*

Translator/Adaptor: Gilbert Murray

Language: English

City, Country: London, United Kingdom

Producer: Lewis Casson, Bruce Winston; Charles Gulliver (Holborn Empire, 1919)

Director: Lewis Casson

Set Designer: Bruce Winston (1919, 1937)

Costume Designer: Bruce Winston

Music arranged by: Rita Thom (Old Vic, 1919); John Foulds/Ernest Irving (Trumpet music, Adelphi, 1937)

Choral Dances and Ritual arranged by: Irene Mawer (Old Vic, 1919); Penelope Spencer (Adelphi, 1937)

Cast:

Poseidon – Lewis Casson (Old Vic, 1919; Adelphi, 1937)
 Hecuba – Evelyn Hall (Oxford, 1919); Sybil Thorndike (Old Vic, 1919-1937)
 Kassandra – Rita Thom (Old Vic, 1919); Ann Casson (Adelphi, 1937)
 Andromache – Beatrice Wilson (Oxford, Old Vic, 1919); Evelyn Hall (Adelphi, 1937)
 Astyanax – Christopher Casson (unnamed in programme, Old Vic, 1919), Ann Casson (New Theatre, 1924)
 Helen – Colette O’Niel (Old Vic, 1919), Margaret Rawlings (Adelphi, 1937)
 Menelaus – William Stack (Old Vic, 1919); William Devlin (Adelphi, 1937)
 Talthybius – Alan Jeayes (Old Vic, 1919); Lewis Casson (Adelphi, 1937)

Sources:

1. Old Vic 1919 Programme and Cast List (Theatre Museum)
2. Adelphi Theatre 1937 Programme and Cast List (Theatre Museum)
3. New Theatre 1924 Poster, Women’s International League (Theatre Museum)

Reviews:

1. G.M., ‘Euripides at the Old Vic’, *Daily Mail*, 15 October 1919
2. ‘*The Trojan Women*’, *Observer*, 19 October 1919, p. 8.

5. Victor Barnowski/Franz Werfel, *Die Troerinnen*

Date of performances: April 1916 (12 performances)

Title: *Die Troerinnen*

Translator/Adaptor: Franz Werfel

Language: German

Venue: Lessing-Theatre

City, Country: Berlin, Germany

Director: Victor Barnowski

Designer: Erich Klossowski

Cast:

Hecuba/Hekuba – Anna Feldhammer (Berlin, 1916); Louise Dumont (Düsseldorf, 1917); Frau Geißel-Fernau (Zurich, 1918); Hedwig Bleibtreu (Vienna, 1920); Ida Ehre (Hamburg, 1947)
 Kassandra – Sybille Binder/ Else Bassermann (Berlin, 1916); Frau Medelsin (Vienna, 1920); Fraulein Bergner (Zurich, 1918)
 Andromache – Lina Lossen (Berlin, 1916); Frau Maner (Vienna, 1920); Frau Laßmann (Zurich, 1918)
 Helena – Maria Carmi (Berlin, 1916); Fraulein Marberg (Vienna, 1920); Fraulein Clarens (Zurich, 1918)
 Menelaus – Theodor Loos (Berlin, 1916); Herr Gerasch (Vienna, 1920); Herr Dieterle (Zurich, 1918)
 Talthybios – Hans Sternberg (Berlin, 1916); Herr Höbling (Vienna, 1920); Herr Moser (Zurich, 1918)

Revivals:

18 May 1917, Düsseldorf

January 1918, Zurich Stadttheatre, Switzerland (dir. by Josef Danegger)

20 May 1920, Vienna Burgtheater, Austria (dir. By Franz Herterich)

April 1946, Kassel Theatre

September 1947, Hamburg Kammerspiele (directed by Ulrich Erfurth) (photo available in *Thespis: Bulletin of the Greek Center of the International Theatre Institute*, 4-5 (June 1966))

Sources:

Programme, Vienna Burgtheater (University of Pennsylvania, Rare Book Library)

Archives:

1. Alma Mahler and Franz Werfel Archives: University of Pennsylvania, Annenberg Rare Books and Manuscripts Library
2. Kurt Wolff Archive: Beinecke Rare Books and Manuscripts Library, Yale University
3. Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek, Austria (some manuscripts held here, but not *Die Troerinnen*)
4. Franz Werfel's Literary Estate is housed at the University of Los Angeles, Special Collections

Reviews:

1. *Deutsche Tageszeitung*, 23 April 1916
2. *Der Tag*, 26 April 1916
3. *Der Tag*, 28 April 1916
4. *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 20 January 1918
5. *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* 21 January 1918
6. *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 23 January 1918

6. Mary Hunter/Edith Hamilton, *Trojan Women*

Date of performances: 24 January–5 February 1938

Title: *Trojan Women*

Translator/Adaptor: Edith Hamilton

Language: English

Venue: Master's Institute Theatre

City, Country: New York City, USA

Theatre Company: American Actor's Company

Director: Mary Hunter

Cast:

Hecuba – Mildred Dunnock

Cassandra – Perry Wilson

Andromache – Frances Anderson

Helen – Virginia Palmer

Menelaus – Russell Thorson

Talthybius – Joseph Anthony

Sources:

Programme (LC)

Press Release (LC)

**7. Hallie Flanagan/Phillip H. Davis, *Trojan Incident*
(New York, St James Theatre, Federal Theatre Project, 1938)**

Date of performances: 21 April 1938 (26 performances in April)

Title: *Trojan Incident*Translator/Adaptor: Philip H. Davis (from *Iliad* and *Trojan Women*)

Language: English

Venue: St James Theatre

City, Country: New York City, USA

Theatre Company: Federal Theatre Project

Producer: Dillard Long

Director: Hallie Flanagan

Scenery: Howard Bay

Composer: Wallingford Reigger

Cast:

Odysseus – Marcel Roussenu

Agamemnon – Frank Curran

Thersites – Michael Cisney

Hecuba – Isobel Bonner

Kassandra – Tamiris

Andromache – Jane Taylor

Helen – Evelyn Swanson Eden

Menelaus – Joseph Kramm

Talthybius – Colfax Sanderson

Sources:

For extensive archival material see: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/fedtp/fthome.html>

Reviews:

1. Brooks Atkinson, *New York Times*, 22 April 1938

8. Margaret Webster/Gilbert Murray, *Trojan Women*

Date of performances: 8, 13, 20 April 1941

Title: *Trojan Women*

Translator/Adaptor: Gilbert Murray (Robert Turney: Prologue)

Language: English

Venue: Cort Theatre

City, Country: New York City, USA

Theatre Company: Experimental Theatre Company

Director: Margaret Webster

Composer: A. Lehman Engel

Choreographer: Felicia Sorel

Cast:

Hecuba – May Whitty
 Cassandra – Florence Williams
 Andromache – Margaret Webster
 Helen – Tamara Gava
 Menelaus – Walter Slezak
 Talthybius – Frederic Tozere

Reviews:

1. Brooks Atkinson, 'Experimental Theatre begins career with modernized version of Euripides's *The Trojan Women*', *New York Times*, 9 April 1941, p. 32

CHAPTER TWO

9. Michael Cacoyannis/Edith Hamilton, *Trojan Women*

1. Date of performances: 23 December 1963

Title: *Trojan Women*

Translator/Adaptor: Edith Hamilton

Language: English

Venue: Circle-in-the-Square Theatre

City, Country: New York City, USA

Producer: Theodore Mann

Director: Michael Cacoyannis

Costume Designer: Theoni Aldredge (Theoni Vachlioti-Aldredge)

Composer: Jean Prodromides

Lighting Designer: Jules Fisher

Cast:

Poseidon – voice-over by Rod Steiger
 Hecuba – Mildred Dunnock, Carolyn Coates
 Cassandra – Carrie Nye
 Andromache – Joyce Ebert
 Helen – Jane White, Dimitra Steris
 Menelaus – Robert Mandan
 Talthybius – Alan Mixon

Revivals:

New York Production based on summer 1963 contribution to the Spoleto Festival, Italy, starring Claire Bloom (Andromache), Rod Steiger (Poseidon), George Morgan (Talthybius), Alan Helms (Menelaus), Sondra Lee (Cassandra), Carol McGroder (Helen), and Mildred Dunnock (Hecuba)
 Played at Circle-in-the-Square from 1963-1965 for over 600 performances
 Subsequent East Coast University and School tour: McCarter Theatre (Princeton), 14 September 1964

Sources:

1. Personal interview with Circle-in-the-Square Producer, Theodore Mann (7 August 2002)

2. Showcard/Programme (Circle-in-the-Square Theater)
3. Press Releases (LC)

Reviews:

1. Thomas Lask, 'Greek to Greek: Director Michael Cacoyannis talks about *The Trojan Women*', *New York Times*, 22 December 1963
2. Norman Nadel, 'Miss Ebert is Magnificent in her Towering Tragedy', *New York World Telegraph on Sunday*, 24 December 1963
3. Gene Palatsky, 'Triumph in Troy', *Newark Evening News*, 24 December 1963
4. Walter Kerr, 'The Trojan Women', *The New York Herald Tribune*, 24 December 1963
5. George Oppenheimer, 'Mildred Dunnock Stars in *The Trojan Women*', *Newsday*, 24 December 1963
6. Richard Watts Jr., 'Classic Greek Tragedy That Lives', *New York Post*, 24 December 1963
7. Whitney Bolton, '*Trojan Women* Not to be Missed', *Morning Telegraph (NY)*, 25 December 1963
8. Eric Lloyd, 'Occasion for Applause', 27 December 1963 (newspaper unknown)
9. Author unknown, 'The Negro on Broadway', *Ebony*, April 1964, p. 191
10. Walter Ross, 'Greek Bearing Film Gifts', *New York Times*, 24 January 1965
11. *Theatre World*, edited by Daniel Blum (1963-64), 210
12. *Theatre World* (1964-65), 179
13. Howard Taubman, 'Pacifist in Athens: Euripides had a Word or Two for War', *New York Times*, 9 February 1964
14. Charles L. Sanders, 'Jane White: Out of the Shadow', *Ebony*, February 1978, 114-126

10. Michael Cacoyannis/Jean-Paul Sartre, *Les Troyennes*

Date of performances: 10 March 1965

12 performances and boasted an audience of 27,290 spectators (TNP programme)

Title: *Les Troyennes*

Translator/Adaptor: Jean-Paul Sartre

Language: French

Venue: Théâtre du Palais de Chaillot

City, Country: Paris, France

Theatre Company: Théâtre Nationale Populaire (TNP)

Producer: Georges Wilson (director of TNP)

Director: Michel Cacoyannis (sic)

Costume and Set Designer: Jean Tsarouchis (Giannis Tsarouchis)

Composer: Jean Prodromides

Cast:

Hécube – Eléonore Hirt

Cassandre – Judith Magre

Andromaque – Natalie Nerval

Hélène – Françoise Brion

Ménélas – Yves Vincent

Talthybios – Jean-Pierre Bernard

Sources:

1. *Bref*, 58 (February 1965)
2. TNP Collection, printed edition of Sartre's translation including cast list, pictures (Editions Gallimard, Paris, 1965)

Reviews:

1. Jean-Pierre Lenoir, 'The Trojan Women presented in Paris', *New York Times*, 18 March 1965
2. Author unknown, *The New Yorker*, 17 April 1965

11. Michael Cacoyannis/Edith Hamilton, *Trojan Women*

Date of performances: 1971 release

Title: *Trojan Women*

Translator/Adaptor: Edith Hamilton, Michael Cacoyannis (screenplay)

Language: English

Major Motion Picture, 111 minutes, colour

Location: Atienza, Spain

Producer: Josef Shaftel

Director: Michael Cacoyannis

Costume and Set Designer: Nikolas Georgiadis

Director of Photography: Alfio Contini

Composer: Mikis Theodorakis

Cast:

Poseidon – voice of Rod Steiger

Hecuba – Katharine Hepburn

Kassandra – Genevieve Bujold

Andromache – Vanessa Redgrave

Helen – Irene Papas

Menelaus – Patrick Magee

Talthybius – Brian Blessed

Sources:

1. Film (now on DVD)
2. Director's Note, Film Programme
3. *Michael Cacoyannis: Trilogy* (Ekdoseis Itanos); *Trojan Women*: pp. 69-99
4. Programme: *Michael Cacoyannis; The Films (A Retrospective, 1954-1999)*, Riverside Studios, 9 May-6 June 1999, *Trojan Women*: 26-27

Reviews:

1. author unknown, 'The Trojan Women', *Variety*, 2 June 1971
2. Judith Crist, *New York*, 27 September 1971
3. Vincent Canby, 'Screen; "Trojan Women"', *New York Times*, 28 September 1971
4. Gail Rock, *Women's Wear Daily*, 28 September 1971
5. Leo Mishkin, *Morning Telegraph*, 29 September 1971
6. Fred Robbins, 'Director Michael Cacoyannis and his Trojan Women', *Show*, 2.8, (October 1971)
7. Molly Haskell, 'Why are we in Troy?', *Village Voice*, 7 October 1971

8. Pauline Kael, *New Yorker*, 16 October 1971
9. 'The Trojan Women', *Films in Review*, November 1971
10. George Melly, *Observer* (London), 23 January 1972
11. Robert Steele, *Friends Journal*, 1 September 1972

CHAPTER THREE

12. Andrei Serban, *Fragments of a Trilogy*

Date of performances: 18 October 1974

Title: *Fragments of a Trilogy (Electra, Medea, and Trojan Women)*
Trojan Women: An Epic Opera

Translator/Adaptor: Andrei Serban

Language: ancient Greek, Aztec, native American, Romanian, African

Venue: La MaMa Theatre Annex

City, Country: New York City, USA (66 East 4th Street)

Producer/Company: Ellen Stewart/ Great Jones Repertory Company

Director: Andrei Serban

Set Designer: Jun Maeda (La MaMa 1974, 1996); David Adams (La MaMa 1996), Mark Tambella (La MaMa 1996)

Costume Designer: Sandra Muir

Composer: Elizabeth Swados

Cast:

Hecuba, the Root Mother – Natalie Gray (La MaMa, October 1974; Edinburgh 1976), Jane Lind (La MaMa, December 1975; 21 December 1996), Shigeko Suga (La MaMa, 28 December 1996), Valois (La MaMa, April 1999)

Cassandra, the Prophetess – Valois (Mickens) (La MaMa, October 1974; La MaMa, December 1975; Edinburgh 1976; La MaMa, 28 December 1996), Kim Ima (La MaMa, 21 December 1996; La MaMa, April 1999)

Andromaca, Queen, Murther of Astianax – Pricilla Smith (La MaMa, October 1974; La MaMa, December 1975; Edinburgh 1976; La MaMa, 28 December 1996), Mia Yoo (La MaMa, 21 December 1996; La MaMa, April 1999)

Helen, the one who brings destruction – Joanna Peled (La MaMa, October 1974; La MaMa, December 1975), Onni Johnson (Edinburgh 1976), Lee Lewis (La MaMa, 21 December, 28 December 1996), Maura Nguyen Donohue (La MaMa, April 1999), Zishan Ugurlu (La MaMa, April 1999)

Meneleas, Helen's last choice – Jorge Takla (Edinburgh 1976), Danny Struass (La MaMa, 21 December 1996), Daniel Raphael Katz (La MaMa 1996)

A Good Hearted Soldier – Charles Hayward (Edinburgh 1976), Hyunyup Lee (La MaMa, 21 December 1996), Kevin Wilson (28 December 1996), Charley Hayward (La MaMa, April 1999)

Revivals:

June 1974: The first production containing selections from the three plays, entitled 'Fragments of a Greek Trilogy: A Work in Progress,' was one hour long

1974 La MaMa Annex, NYC

1975 Shiraz, Iran

March/April 1976: Paris, La Rochelle France

August 1976: Edinburgh Festival, Scotland, Moray House College (La MaMa company)

1987 La MaMa Annex, NYC (25th anniversary)

1988 Romania

1992 Edinburgh Fringe Festival (Romanian National Theatre)

December 1996: La MaMa Annex, NYC

1999 La MaMa Annex, NYC (35th anniversary)

2004 July, ArtCarnuntum Festival, Carnuntum Austria

Fragments travelled to forty festivals in fifteen countries including: Jerusalem, Vienna, Lebanon (Baalbeck), Venice, Belgrade (Bitef Festival), Iran (Shiraz Festival), Scotland (Edinburgh Festival), France (Palais de Chaillot), and Athens. In 1990-1993, the production travelled to Edinburgh, Paris, Milan, and Salzburg.

Sources:

1. Video of performance, Ellen Stewart featured; includes selections from *Trojan Women* (APGRD)
2. La MaMa Programmes: 1974, 21 December 1996, 28 December 1996 – cast lists, biographies (APGRD)
Edinburgh Festival (1976) Programme – cast list (TM)

Reviews:

1. Margaret Croyden, 'Peter Brook learns to speak Orghast', *New York Times*, 3 October 1971
2. Edith Oliver, *New Yorker*, 15 July 1974
3. Robb Baker, 'The Intelligence of Emotion', *The Soho Weekly News*, 17 October 1974
4. Neil Alan Marks, 'Trojan Women Appraised as its Run is Extended', *Villager*, 19 December 1974
5. Barbara MacKay, 'Fragments of a Trilogy', *Saturday Review*, 8 February 1975
6. Walter Kerr, 'Fragments of a Trilogy', *New York Times*, 25 January 1976
7. Richard Eder, 'A Fiery Stage Troupe Moving to Paris', *New York Times*, 24 March 1976
8. B.A. Young, 'Trojan Women', *Financial Times*, 24 August 1976
9. Irving Wardle, 'Prison Themes', *Times*, 26 August 1976
10. John Barber, 'U.S. Troupe excels in *The Trojan Women*', *Daily Telegraph*, 27 August 1976
11. Michael Billington, 'Trojan Women', *Guardian*, 27 August 1976
12. Len Borger, 'Fragments of a Trilogy', *Backstage*, 13 May 1977
13. James Leverett, 'Serban in the Mad Forest', *Performing Arts* (Fall, 1992), pp. 1-6.

13. Tadashi Suzuki, *Trojan Women*

Date of performances: 1974

Title: *Toroio no Onna*

Translator/Adaptor: Tadashi Suzuki, Makoto Ooka, Chiaki Matsudaira (Japanese text)

Language: Japanese
 Venue: Iwanami Hall
 Production Company: The Suzuiki Company of Toga
 City, Country: Tokyo, Japan
 Director/Set/Costumes: Tadashi Suzuki
 Lighting Designer: Michio Ishikawa, Masaki Hashimoto (London 1985)
 Sound Designer: Masahuru Kato (Los Angeles 1984, London 1985), Soyao Yoda (Los Angeles 1985); Ayumi Isukada (London 1985)

Cast:

Old Woman/Hecuba/ Cassandra – Kayoko Shiraishi (New York 1982, Los Angeles 1984, London 1985)
 Woman/Andromache – Chizuko Sugiura (New York 1982); Hiroko Takahashi (Los Angeles 1984, London 1985)
 Warrior/Menelaus – Kosuke Tsutamori (New York 1982, Los Angeles 1984, London 1985)
 Warriors – Kenji Suzuki, Haruo Takayama (New York 1982, Los Angeles 1984, London 1985)
 Jizo – Uichiro Fueda (New York 1982, Los Angeles 1984, London 1985)

Revivals:

1st version: Tokyo 1974 starring: Hisao Kanze (Old Man, Menelaus), Etsuko Ichihara (Cassandra and Andromache), and Kayoko Shiraishi (Hecuba)
 2nd Version: Theatre D'Orsay, Paris
 1979 Milwaukee, Wisconsin, USA
 1982 Japan, open air, Toga theatre
 18-22 May 1982: Lila Acheson Wallace Auditorium, Japan House, New York (sponsored by Japan Society, 75th Anniversary)
 18-23 June 1984: Ralph Freud Playhouse, MacGowan Hall, Los Angeles Olympics, Olympic Arts Festival
 10-14 April 1985: Riverside Studios, London
 May 1985: Kennedy Center, Terrace Theater
 10 June 1985: International Meeting of Ancient Greek Drama, Delphi, Greece (4-25 June 1985)
 1985 Japan
 May 1985: Terrace Theater, Kennedy Center, Washington, D.C.
 1986 International Dance Festival, Korea

Sources:

1. Video of Performance (APGRD)
2. SCOT programme
3. Japan Society Programme (1982) (LC)
4. Los Angeles Olympic Programme (1984) (LC)
5. *London Theatre Record*, 10-23 April 1985 (TM)
6. Outline of the Stage Action (Japan Society Programme (1982) (LC)
7. International Meeting of Ancient Greek Drama Programme (4-25 June 1985) (APGRD)
8. Synopsis of Stage Action (TM)
9. Poster, Japan Society (LC)

Reviews:

1. 1st version: Patricia Marton, 'The Trojan Women in Japan', *Drama Review*, 19.1 (March 1975)
2. Akhiko Senda, 'The wider world of for Japanese theatre: the art of Tadashi Suzuki', in SCOT programme, pp. 58-59
3. Yukihiro Goto, 'The Theatrical Fusion of Suzuki Tadashi', *Asian Theatre Journal*, 6.2 (1989), 103-23
4. John Barber, 'A Japanese Hecuba', *Daily Telegraph*, 27 August 1976
5. Roderick Mason Faber, 'From the Tornado's Eye', *Village Voice*, 4 June 1979
6. Frank Hoff, 'Suzuki Tadashi directs *The Trojan Women*', *Theatre*, 11.3 (1980), p. 44
7. Mel Gussow, 'In Search of Adventure Off-Broadway', *New York Times*, 21 May 1982
8. Kenneth Rea, 'A Woman at War', *Guardian*, 10 April 1985
9. Michael Billington, *Guardian*, 11 April 1985
10. *Sunday Times*, 14 April 1985
11. Francis King, *Sunday Telegraph*, 14 April 1985

CHAPTER FOUR

14. George Tabori/Mattias Braun, *Die Troerinnen*

1. Date of performances: 1976

Title: *Die Troerinnen*

Translator/Adaptor: Mattias Braun

Language: German

Venue: Theater der Freien Hansestadt *check

City, Country: Bremen, West Germany

Theatre Company: Bremen Theaterlabor

Director: George Tabori

Set Designer: Veronika Dorn

Cast:

Hekuba – Ingeborg Engelmann

Kassandra – Brigitte Kahn

Andromache – Evelyn Hamann

Astyanax – Ursula Höpfner

Helena - Alphea

Menelaos – Horst Fassek

Talthybius –Günter Einbrodt

Reviews:

1. Peter von Becker, *Theatre Heute* (June 1978)
2. Rolf Michaelis, *Theater Heute* (June 1976), 33-38

15. George Tabori/Walter Jens, *Der Untergang: Nach den Troerinnen des Euripides*

Date of performances: 1985

Title: *Die Troerinnen*

Translator/Adaptor: Walter Jens

Language: German

Venue: München Kammerspiele

City, Country: München, West Germany

Director: George Tabori

Set and Costume Designer: Marietta Eggmann

Music: Klaus Buhler

Cast:

Poseidon – Ignaz Kirchner

Hecuba – Doris Schade

Kassandra – Ursula Höpfner

Andromache – Sibylle Canonica

Helena – Daphne Wagner

Menelaos – Helmut Pick

Talthybios - Edgar Selge

Sources:

Programme, Münchner Kammerspiele, 1985/6

Archives:

1. Akademie der Künste, Berlin
2. Universität zu Köln (Cologne)
3. Deutsches Literaturarchiv, Marbach

Reviews:

1. Evelyn Roll, 'Aktueller Friedensappell aus der Antike', *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 19 December 1985
2. Ingrid Seidenfaden, 'Der Mensch zerstört sich selbst', *Abendzeitung*, 19 December 1985
3. Ute Fischbach, 'Ein moderner Denkansatz', *Münchner Merkur*, 19 December 1985
4. Gert Gliewe, 'Schwarzes Konfetti auf die Besiegten', *Abendzeitung*, 21 December 1985
Armin Eichholz, 'Troja explodiert beim großen Lamento gegen Götter, Sieger und andere Feinde', *Münchner Merkur*, 21 December 1985
5. Hans Krieger, 'Die Ästhetik des Grauens', *Metropol-Gesellschaft*, 23 December 1985
6. Eckhard Franke, 'Mal Psycho-workshop, mal Lemuren-Litanei', *Theater Heute* (February 1986), 46-47.

16. Christoph Schroth/ Hans Mayer (Jean-Paul Sartre), *Antike Entdeckungen 5*

Date of performances: December 1982

Title: *Discoveries of Antiquity 5 (Iphigenia at Aulis, Trojan Women, Agamemnon and The Archarnians)*

Translator/Adaptor: Hans Mayer (after Sartre)

Language: German

Venue: Mecklenburgisches Staatstheater

City, Country: Schwerin, GDR (former East Germany)

Director: Christoph Schroth

Set and Costume Designer: Lothar Scharsich
 Lighting Designer: Jürgen Rieckmann, Andreas Just
 Music: Rainer Böhm

Cast:

Hekuba – Barbara Bachmann (Schwerin, Delphi)
 Cassandra – Bärbel Röhl (Schwerin, Delphi)
 Andromache – Cornelia Lippert, Brigitte Peters (Schwerin, Delphi)
 Helen – Angelika Waller, Ulrike Krumbiegel (Schwerin, Delphi)
 Menelaos – Wolf-Dieter Lingk (Schwerin, Delphi)
 Talthybios – Horst Westphal (Schwerin, Delphi)

Revivals:

1982-84 - Schwerin
 June 1984 – Nancy, France
 October 1984 – Berlin, GDR
 May/June 1985 – Austria
 10 June 1985: International Meeting of Ancient Greek Drama, Delphi, Greece

Sources:

1. Schwerin Programme (English) (APGRD)
2. Delphi Programme (APGRD)
3. Barbara Bachmann, 'Schauspieler über klassische Rollen (III)', *Theater der Zeit* (January 1985).

17. Holk Freytag/Eli Malka, *Trojan Women*

Date of performances: 19 February 1983
 Title: *Trojan Women*
 Translator/Adaptor: Eli Malka from Sartre
 Language: Hebrew
 Venue: Habima National Theatre
 City, Country: Tel Aviv, Israel
 Director: Holk Freytag
 Set and Costume Designer: Angelica Edingen
 Lighting Designer: Nathan Panturin
 Music: Ofer Shalchin

Cast:

Hecuba – Orna Porat
 Cassandra – Gila Almagor
 Andromache - Razia Yisraeli
 Helen – Anat Harpazi
 Menelaus – Eli Danker
 Talthybius – Udi Buchman

Sources:

There is a video held at the Habima, but it was impossible to view it (and permission was not granted for a copy to be made).

Reviews:

1. Henry Shanan Sharon, 'The National Theatre and our National Health', *Har-aretz*, 27 February 1983
2. Hava Novak, 'The Israeli Shock in confronting *The Trojan Women*', *Davar*, 28 February 1983
3. Boaz Evron, 'Nothing can help – They are here, at home', *Yediot Acharonot*, 4 March 1983
4. Boaz Evron, 'A World Without Mercy', *Yediot Acharonot*, 8 March 1983
5. Michael Handelzeltz, 'Actuality on Stage', *Ha-aretz*, 12 April 1983
6. Dan La' Or, 'The Zionist conqueror in Troy', *Col Ha-eer*, 13 May 1983
7. David Yardeney, 'The Women of Troy in Lebanon', *Ma-ariv*, 25 May 1983
8. Shimon Levy, and Nurit Yaari, 'Theatrical Responses to Political Events: The Trojan War on the Israeli stage during the Lebanon War, 1982-1984', *Journal of Theatre and Drama*, 4 (1998)

18. Hanoch Levin/Hanoch Levin, *The Hopeless (Lost) Women of Troy*

Date of performances: 16 February 1984
 Title: *The Hopeless (Lost) Women of Troy*
 Translator/Adaptor: Hanoch Levin
 Language: Hebrew
 Venue: Cameri Theatre
 City, Country: Tel Aviv, Israel
 Director: Hanoch Levin
 Set and Costume Designer: Roni Toren
 Lighting Designer: Brian Harris
 Music: Poldi Shatzman

Cast:

Agamemnon - Joseph Carmon
 Odysseus – Jonathan Tchechi
 Menelaus - Isaac Chiskiya
 Hecuba - Zaharira Harifai
 Cassandra - Rivka Neuman
 Andromache - Gitta Montae
 Helen - Fabiana Meyouchas
 Talthybius - Albert Cohen
 Prologue/Epilogue - Dovale Glickman

Sources:

Dr Yoav Rinon, Tel Aviv University

Reviews:

1. Erfat Oz, 'The Women of Troy of Hanoch Levin', *Al Hamishmar*, 9 February 1984
2. Yehudit Orian, 'The Helpless Women of Troy', *Yediot Acharonot*, 10 February 1984
3. Michael Handelzeltz, 'Meaningless Suffering', *Ha-aretz*, 12 February 1984

4. Hava Novak, 'The emotional congestion neutralizes the emotions', *Davar*, 20 February 1984
5. Giora Manor, 'After the War', *Al Hamishmar*, 21 February 1984
6. Elyakim Yaron, 'The Slaughter-house of Troy', *Ma-ariv*, 23 February 1984
7. Nurit Yaari, 'Stage Dying: Hanoch Levin versus Aeschylus on Human Suffering', in *On the Interpretation of the Arts*: Tel Aviv University, Faculty of Arts)

CHAPTER FIVE

19. Katie Mitchell/ Kenneth McLeish, *Women of Troy*

Date of performances: 16 July – 10 August 1991

Title: *Women of Troy*

Translator/Adaptor: Kenneth McLeish

Language: English

Venue: The Gate Theatre

City, Country: London, United Kingdom

Theatre Company: Classics on a Shoestring

Director: Katie Mitchell

Set/Costume Designer: Peter Ruthven Hall

Music Direction: Ben Livingstone

Cast:

Athene – Cheryl Moskowitz (also Sema)

Hecuba – Paola Dionissotti

Kassandra – Kathryn Hunter (also Anarchia)

Andromache – Barbara Flynn (also Briseis)

Helen – Kristin Hewson (also Lyssa)

Menelaus – Paul Brennan

Talthybius – James Purefoy

Chorus members – Nicola Burnett Smith (Nicaretta), Sibhan Fogarty (Rhea), Cate Hamer, Emma Rice (Myrtis, Chorus Leader), Susannah Rickards (Atta), Sadie Shimmin (Sosias), Zara Turner (Melita)

Sources:

1. Gate Theatre programme (cast list, programme notes) (APGRD)

Reviews:

1. Michael Arditti, 'Choral Sympathy', *The Evening Standard*, 4 July 1991, p. 40
2. Jane Edwardes, 'Jane Edwards meets Katie Mitchell', *Time Out*, 17 July 1991
3. Nicholas de Jongh, 'The Women of Troy', *Guardian*, 23 July 1991
4. Jeremy Kingston, 'Women of Troy', *The Times*, 24 July 1991, p. 13
5. Louise Kingsley, 'Women of Troy', *Independent*, 26 July 1991
6. Oliver Taplin, 'Women of Troy', *Times Literary Supplement*, 6 July 1991, p. 16
7. Lawrence Christon, 'She delivers more than a message', *Los Angeles Times*, 30 October 1994, p. 6

20. Lynne Parker/Brendan Kennelly, *Trojan Women*

Date of performances: 2 June 1993

Title: *Trojan Women*

Translator/Adaptor: Brendan Kennelly

Language: English

Venue: Peacock Theatre

City, Country: Dublin, Ireland

Director: Lynne Parker

Set and Costume Design: Frank Conway

Cast:

Hecuba – Catherine White

Cassandra – Fionnula Murphy

Andromache – Pauline McLynn

Helen – Ali White

Menelaus – Seán Kearns

Talthybius – Martin Murphy

Sources:

1. Personal interview with Lynne Parker, 17 April 2003
2. Programme (APGRD)

Reviews:

1. Victoria White, 'Trojan work for change', *Irish Times*, 1 June 1993
2. Tom Nowlan, 'Subverting Greek tragedy', *The Irish Times*, 3 June 1993
3. Mary Carr, 'Defiant women in ancient times', *Evening Herald*, 3 June 1993
4. Tim Harding, 'Kennelly's women chill out in stylish time-warp', *The Sunday Press*, 6 June 1993.
5. Ian Hill, 'The Trojan Women', *The Guardian*, 24 June 1993
6. Eileen Battersby, 'Womanpower', *Fortnight*, July/Aug 1993
7. Michael Lloyd, *Classics Ireland*, 1 (1994) in
<<http://www.ucd.ie/~classics/94/Lloyd94.html>> [accessed 1 May 2003]

21. Annie Castledine/ Kenneth McLeish, *Women of Troy*

Date of performances: 16-28 March 1995

Title: *The Women of Troy*

Translator/Adaptor: Kenneth McLeish

Language: English

Venue: Royal National Theatre (Olivier Stage)

City, Country: London, United Kingdom

Director: Annie Castledine

Set Designer: Iona McLeish

Lighting Designer: Nick Beadle

Music Direction: Adrian Johnston

Cast:

Poseidon – Leo Wringer
 Athene – Robert Pickvance
 Hecuba – Rosemary Harris
 Kassandra – Josette Bushell-Mingo
 Andromache – Jane Birkin
 Helen – Janie Dee
 Menelaus – Peter McEnery
 Talthybius – Philip Whitchurch
 Soldiers – Will Barton, Dimeon Defoe, Clive Wedderburn

Sources:

Royal National Theatre Archives (programme, photographs, press releases, reviews)
 Theatre Museum Archives

Reviews:

1. Jane Ferguson, 'Past voices, present lives', *Observer*, 5 March 1995
2. Robert Gore-Langton, 'US Marines play their part in a Greek travesty', *The Telegraph*, 17 March 1995
3. Nicholas de Jongh, 'Euripides meets Apocalypse Now', *Evening Standard*, 17 March 1995
4. Maureen Paton, 'Grief wins Birkin the Spoils of War', *Daily Express*, 17 March 1995
5. Jack Tinker, 'After 24 centuries, still a Troy to behold', *Daily Mail*, 17 March 1995
6. Paul Taylor, 'A thoroughly modern myth', *Independent*, 18 March 1995
7. Benedict Nightingale, 'Thoroughly modern Euripides', *The Times*, 18 March 1995
8. Michael Billington, *Guardian*, 18 March 1995
9. John Gross, 'Euripides gets the Oliver Stone treatment', *Sunday Telegraph*, 19 March 1995
10. Irving Wardle, 'Beware of Greeks bearing messages', *Independent on Sunday*, 19 March 1995.
11. John Peter, 'Women on the edge', *The Sunday Times*, 26 March 1995
12. Author unknown, 'A message from Marilyn of Troy', *Sunday Express*, 26 March 1995
13. Andy Lavender, 'Noises off out of this world', *The Times*, 28 March 1995
14. Zoe T. Cormack, 'Under the drone of circling helicopters', *The Times Literary Supplement*, 31 March 1995
15. Michael Billington, 'Women of Troy is old-style bombast', *Country Life*, 6 April 1995.
16. Theodora Carlile, *Didaskalia* review:
<http://didaskalia.berkeley.edu/issues/vol2no2/NTTrojan.html>

22. Jane Montgomery/Euripides. *Trojan Women*

Date of performances: 21-24 October 1998
 Title: *Trojan Women*
 Translator/Adaptor: Euripides
 Language: ancient Greek
 Venue: Cambridge Arts Theatre
 City, Country: Cambridge, United Kingdom
 Director: Jane Montgomery
 Designer: Michael Spencer
 Composer: Keith Clouston

Cast:

Hekabe – Marta Zlatic
 Cassandra – Zoe Svendsen
 Andromache – Amaya Chandler
 Helen – Dolja Dragasevic
 Menelaus – David Pearson
 Talthybius – Finnian O'Neill

Sources:

1. Archives, Arts Theatre, Cambridge
2. Programme (APGRD)

Reviews:

1. Author unknown, *The Times*, 12 October 1998
2. Peter Jones, *The Daily Telegraph*, 20 October 1998, p. 25
3. Oliver Taplin, 'Songs from the Flames', *Times Literary Supplement*, 6 November 1998
4. Simon Goldhill, 'Euripides: Rhetoric and Power', programme note (Cambridge Greek Play).

23. Joanne Akalaitis/Nicholas Rudall, *Trojan Women*

Date of performances: 23 March – 8 May 1999

Title: *Trojan Women*

Translator/Adaptor: D. Nicholas Rudall

Language: English

Venue: The Shakespeare Theatre

City, Country: Washington, D.C., USA

Director: Joanne Akalaitis

Set Designer: Paul Steinberg

Lighting Designer: Jennifer Tipton

Costume Designer: Doey Lüthi

Composer: Lisa Bielawa

Movement: Dana Tai Soon Burgess

Cast:

Hecuba - Petronia Paley
 Cassandra - Opal Alladin
 Andromache - Socorro Santiago
 Helen - Elizabeth Long
 Menelaus - Jonathan Fried
 Talthybius - Andrew Long

Sources:

Photos, Cast and Crew list: <http://www.shakespearedc.org/gallery/g989911.html>

Reviews:

1. CNN, *Crossfire*, 19 April 1999, Monday, 7:30pm Eastern Time, Transcript # 99041900V20
2. Jane Horowitz, *The Washington Post*, 20 April 1999

3. Roberto Aquirre Sacasa, 'Fire From Heaven: At the Shakespeare Theatre, Director JoAnne Akalaitis prepares to invoke a world of gods and myths with *The Trojan Women*' (1999)
<www.shakespearetheatre.org>

**24. David Freeman/Nigel Osborne, *Sarajevo: An Opera*
(London, Queen Elizabeth Hall, 1994)**

Title: *Sarajevo: An Opera*
 Translator/Adaptor: Nigel Osborne/Don Taylor
 Language: English
 Venue: Queen Elizabeth Hall
 City, Country: London, United Kingdom
 Director: David Freeman
 Set Designer: David Roger

Cast:
 Hecuba– Katja Doric
 Andromache– Selma Alispahic
 Cassandra– Marie Angel

**25. Charles Mee, *Trojan Women: A Love Story*
USA, Various theatres, 1995**

Title: *Trojan Women: A Love Story*
 Translator/Adaptor: Charles Mee
 Language: English

Revivals:
 1996: Tina Landau, En Garde Arts, New York
 July 2001: Rebecca Novick, The Next Stage (Crowded Fire Company), San Francisco
 December 2001: Matthew Wilder, California Institute of the Arts
 4 October-2 November 2002: Sheila Daniels, Theater Schmeater, Seattle
 31 May-21 June 2003: Ellen Beckerman, Phil Bosakowski Theatre (Double Helix Company), New York

Sources:

1. For information about Mee's various projects and versions of the plays themselves, see:
<http://www.panix.com/~meejr/indexf.html>
2. Seattle production: <http://www.schmeater.org/season2002/trojan.htm>
3. San Francisco production: <http://www.crowdedfire.org/tw.shtml>
4. New York production: http://doublehelixtheatre.org/show_trojan_women.cfm

Reviews:

1. Misha Berson, 'Making myth and music work for New York: Avant-garde *Trojan Women* gets a UW tryout', *Seattle Times*, 15 April 1996
2. Joe Adcock, *Seattle Post*, 8 October 2002
3. Michael Kuchwara, *The Associated Press*, 30 June 1996.

4. Ben Brantley, 'An Epic War Resolved with a Gershwin Ditty', *The New York Times*, 3 July 1996
5. Michael Scott Moore, 'Mediterranean Spring: Why are Bay Area stages so classically minded this season?', *SF Weekly*, 6 June 2001

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Texts, Commentaries & Translations

- Barlow, Shirley, *Euripides' Trojan Women* (London: Aris and Phillips, 1986)
- Diggle, James, ed., *Euripides: Fabulae* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981)
- Duncan, Ronald F. H., *The Trojan Women* (London: Hamilton, 1967) [English translation/adaptation of Sartre's adaptation]
- Hamilton, Edith, *Three Greek Plays: Prometheus Bound, Agamemnon, Trojan Women* (New York: Norton, 1937)
- Kennelly, Brendan, *Trojan Women: A New Version by Brendan Kennelly* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Bloodaxe, 1993)
- Kovacs, David, *Euripides: Trojan Women, Iphigenia among the Taurians, Ion*, The Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999)
- Lee, K. H., *Troades* (London: Bristol Classical Press, 1997)
- Malka, Eli, *Trojan Women* (version of Sartre in Hebrew, unpublished)
- McLeish, Kenneth, *After the Trojan War: Women of Troy, Hecuba, Helen, Three Plays by Euripides*, Absolute Classics (London: Oberon Books, 1997)
- Morwood, James, *Euripides: Trojan Women*, Oxford World Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000)
- Murray, Gilbert, *The Trojan Women of Euripides*, Athenian Drama for English readers (London: George Allen, 1905)
- Sartre, Jean-Paul, *Les Troyennes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1965)
- Taylor, Don, *Euripides: Hecuba, The Women of Troy, Iphigenia at Aulis, Cyclops* (London: Methuen, 1991)
- Way, Arthur Sanders, *Euripides*, Loeb Classical Library, 4 vols (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1912)
- Werfel, Franz, *Die Troerinnen* (Leipzig: Wolff, 1915)

Works Cited

- A Village Destroyed: War crimes in Kosovo* (New York: Human Rights Watch, Human Rights Center, 2000)
- 'Human Rights Watch: Report on Iraq and Occupied Kuwait' <<http://www.hrw.org/>>[Last accessed 1 May 2004]
- 'Rwanda Report 1995' <www.hrw.org/reports/1995/WR95/AFRICA-08.htm>[Last accessed 1 May 2004]
- 'Amnesty International Report 2000 on Federal Republic of Yugoslavia' <[www.amnesty.org.](http://www.amnesty.org/)>[Last accessed 1 May 2004]
- 'Middle East Watch: Human Rights in Iraq' <<http://www.hrw.org/doc/?t=mideast>>[Last accessed 1 May 2004]
- Abramson, Glenda, *Drama and Ideology in Modern Israel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998)
- Ackerman, Robert, 'Euripides and Professor Murray', *Classics Journal*, 81 (1985)
- Alexiou, Margaret, *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974)
- Allain, Paul, *The Art of Stillness: The Theatre Practice of Tadashi Suzuki* (London: Methuen, 2002)
- Allan, William, *The Andromache and Euripidean Tragedy*, Oxford Classical Monographs, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000)
- Altena, Herman, 'The Theater of Innumerable Faces' in *The Blackwell Companion to Greek Tragedy*, ed. by Justina Gregory (Oxford: Blackwell, forthcoming)
- Anderson, M., *The Fall of Troy in Early Greek Poetry and Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997)
- Appia, Adolphe, *Essays, Scenarios, and Designs*, trans. by Walther R. Volbach, *Theatre and Dramatic Studies*, 57 (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1989)
- Aronson, Arnold, *American Avant-Garde Theatre: A History*, Theatre Production Studies, (London: Routledge, 2000)
- Artaud, Antonin, *Theatre and its Double*, trans. by M.C. Richards (New York: Grove Press, 1958)

Asher, Joseph, Raphael Asher and Moses Rischin, *The Jewish legacy and the German Conscience: Eessays in Memory of Rabbi Joseph Asher* (Berkeley, Calif: Judah L. Magnes Museum, 1991)

Bablet, Dennis, *Edward Gordon Craig* (London: Heinemann, 1966)

Bacopoulou-Halls, Alik, *Modern Greek Theater: Roots and Blossoms* (Athens: Diogens, 1982)

Barba, Eugenio and Nicola Saverese, eds, *Dictionary of Theatre Anthropology: The Secret Art of the Performer* (London: Routledge, 1991)

Bartow, Arthur, *The Director's Voice: Twenty-one Interviews* (New York: Theatre Communications Group, 1988)

Bathrick, David, *The Powers of Speech: The Politics of Culture in the GDR*, Modern German Culture and Literature, (Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press, 1995)

Beacham, Richard C., *Adolphe Appia: Theatre Artist*, Directors in Perspective, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987)

Behler, Ernst, ed, *Kritische Friedrich Schlegel Ausgabe*, 32 vols (Paderborn: Thomas Verlag, 1979)

---, 'A.W. Schlegel and the Nineteenth-Century Damnatio of Euripides', *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies*, 27. 4 (1986), 335-367

Bentley, Joanne, *Hallie Flanagan: A Life in the American Theatre* (New York: Knopf, 1988)

Bierl, Anton, *Die Orestie des Aischylos auf der modernen Bühne: theoretische Konzeptionen und ihre szenische Realisierung* (Stuttgart: M & P Verlag für Wissenschaft und Forschung, 1997)

Biner, P., *The Living Theatre* (New York: Horizon, 1972)

Blaiklock, E. M., *The Male Characters of Euripides: A Study in Realism* (Wellington: New Zealand University Press, 1952)

Boyle, A. J., *Seneca's Troades: Introduction, Text, Translation and Commentary*, Latin and Greek Texts, 7 (Leeds: Francis Cairns, 1994)

Brook, Peter, *The Empty Space* (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1968)

---, *The Shifting Point: Forty Years of Theatrical Exploration* (London: Methuen, 1987)

Brown, Peter, 'Greek Tragedy in the Opera House and Concert Hall', in *Dionysus Since 69: Greek Tragedy at the Dawn of the Third Millennium*, ed. by Edith Hall, Fiona

Macintosh and Amanda Wrigley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 285-309

Browne, Maurice, *Too Late to Lament; An Autobiography* (London: Gollancz, 1955)

Browning, Peter, *The Changing Nature of Warfare: The Development of Land Warfare from 1792-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002)

Burian, Peter, 'Tragedy adapted for stages and screens: the Renaissance to the present', in *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy*, ed. by P. E. Easterling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 228-283

Burke, Alison, 'Interviews in classical performance research: (1) journalistic interviews' <<http://www2.open.ac.uk/ClassicalStudies/GreekPlays/essays/burkeinterview.htm>>[Last accessed 22 March 2005]

Burnett, Anne P., 'Trojan Women and the Ganymede Ode', *Yale Classical Studies*, 25 (1997), 291-316

Cacoyannis, Michael, 'Discussion: "Ancient Drama and the Film"', in *International Symposium on Ancient Theatre in Delphi* (Athens: European Cultural Center of Delphi, 1984), pp. 211-228

Carter, H., *OUDS: A Centenary History of the Oxford University Drama Society 1885-1985* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985)

Cave, Richard, *Terence Gray and the Cambridge Festival Theatre* (Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey, 1980)

Chopcian, Kendra, 'An Analysis of Maurice Browne's Directing themes and practices with the Chicago Little Theatre' (unpublished thesis, University of Michigan, 1989)

Clausewitz, Carl von, *On War*, 3 vols (London: Routledge, 1956)

Colakis, Marianthe, *The Classics in the American Theater of the 1960s and Early 1970s* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1993)

Coles, R., 'A New Oxyrhynchus Papyrus: The Hypothesis of Euripides' *Alexandros*', *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies Supplement*, 32 (1974)

Conacher, D. J., *Euripidean Drama: Myth, Theme and Structure* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967)

Contat, Michel and Michel Rybalka, eds, *Sartre on Theater* (London: Quartet Books, 1976)

Craig, Edward, *Gordon Craig: the story of his life* (London: Gollancz, 1968)

- Craig, Edward Gordon, *The Art of Theatre* (London: T.N. Foulis, 1905)
- Croally, N. T., *Euripidean Polemic: The Trojan Women and the Function of Tragedy*, Cambridge Classical Studies, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994)
- de Beauvoir, Simone, *Memoirs of a Dutiful Daughter*, trans. by James Kirkup (London: Penguin, 1963)
- de Jongh, Nicholas, *Politics, Prudery and Perversions: The Censoring of the English Stage, 1901-1968* (London: Methuen, 2000)
- Demetz, Peter, *Postwar German Literature: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Pegasus, 1970)
- Devlin, Diana, *A Speaking Part: Lewis Casson and the Theatre of his Time* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1982)
- Dickson, Thomas, *The Theatre in a Changing Europe* (London: Putnam, 1942)
- Dodds, E.R., 'Euripides the Irrationalist', *Classical Review*, 43 (1929), 97-104
- Drake, D., 'Sartre, Camus and the Algerian War', *Sartre Studies International*, 5.1 (1999), 16-32
- Dunn, F., *Tragedy's End: Closure and Innovation in Euripidean Drama* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996)
- Easterling, P. E., ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy*, Cambridge Companions to Literature, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997)
- Eliot, T. S., 'Euripides and Professor Murray', in *Selected Essays* (London: Faber, 1932)
- Fantham, Elaine, ed., *Seneca's Troades* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982)
- , 'Andromache's Child in Euripides and Seneca', in *Greek Tragedy and its Legacy: Essays presented to D.J. Conacher*, ed. by Martin Cropp, Elaine Fantham and S.E. Scully (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1986), pp. 267-280
- Feinberg, Anat, 'George Tabori's mourning work in Jubilaum', in *Staging the Holocaust: The Shoah in drama and performance*, ed. by Claude Schumacher (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 267-280
- , *Embodied Memory: The Theatre of George Tabori*, ed. by Thomas Postlewait, Studies in Theatre History and Culture, (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1999)
- , *George Tabori* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbach, 2003)
- Findlater, Richard, *Banned! A Review of Theatrical Censorship in Britain* (London:

MacGibbon and Kee, 1967)

Fischer-Lichte, Erika, 'Thinking about the Origins of Theatre in the 1970s', in *Dionysus since 69: Greek tragedy at the dawn of the third millennium*, ed. by Edith Hall, Fiona Macintosh and Amanda Wrigley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 329-360

Flashar, Hellmut, *Inszenierung der Antike: Das griechische Drama auf der Bühne der Neuzeit 1585-1990* (Munich: Beck, 1991)

Fotopoulos, Dionysis, *Costume Design in the Greek Theatre* (Athens: Commercial Bank of Greece, 1986)

---, *Stage Design, Costumes* (Athens: Kastaniotis Editions, 1995)

Fowell, Frank and Frank Palmer, *Censorship in England* (London, 1913)

Gadberry, Glen, 'The History Plays of the Third Reich', in *Theatre under the Nazis*, ed. by John London (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 96-135

Gilman, Sander L. and Jack Zipes, eds, *Yale Companion to Jewish Writing and Thought in German Culture 1096-1996* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997)

Goldhill, Simon, *Who needs Greek? Contests in the Cultural History of Hellenism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002)

Goldhill, Simon and Robin Osborne, eds, *Performance Culture and Athenian Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999)

---, eds, *Art and Text in Ancient Greek Culture*, 1999)

Goto, Yukihiro, 'The Theatrical Fusion of Suzuki Tadashi', *Asian Theatre Journal*, 6.2 (Autumn 1989), 103-123

Green, Amy, *The Revisionist Stage: American Directors Reinvent the Classics*, Cambridge Studies in American Theatre and Drama, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994)

Green, Peter, 'War and Morality in Fifth-Century Athens: The Case of Euripides' *Trojan Women*', *Ancient History Bulletin*, 13.3 (1999), 97-110

Gregory, Justina, *Euripides and the Instruction of the Athenians* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997)

Grube, G. M. A., *The Drama of Euripides* (London: Methuen, 1941)

Hackett, Francis, 'An Everlasting Music', *The New Republic*, 3.31 (5 June 1915), 127

Hall, Edith, 'Aeschylus, Race, Class, and War', in *Dionysus Since 69: Greek Tragedy at*

- the Dawn of the Third Millennium*, ed. by Edith Hall, Fiona Macintosh and Amanda Wrigley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 169-197
- , 'Introduction: Why Greek tragedy in the Late Twentieth Century?' in *Dionysus Since 69: Greek Tragedy at the Dawn of the Third Millennium*, ed. by Edith Hall, Fiona Macintosh and Amanda Wrigley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 1-46
- , 'Towards a Theory of Performance Reception', *Arion*. 12.1 (Spring/Summer 2004), 51-89
- Hall, Edith, Fiona Macintosh, and Oliver Taplin, eds, *Medea in performance 1500-2000* (Oxford: Legenda, 2000)
- Hall, Edith, Fiona Macintosh, and Amanda Wrigley, eds, *Dionysus Since 69: Greek Tragedy at the Dawn of the Third Millennium* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004)
- Halleran, Michael R., *Stagecraft in Euripides* (London: Croom Helm, 1985)
- Hanson, J.O. de G., 'Reconstruction of Euripides' Alexandros', *Hermes*, 92 (1964), 171-181
- Hardwick, Lorna, 'The Theatrical Review as a Primary Source for the Modern Reception of Greek Drama: A Preliminary Evaluation'
<<http://www2.open.ac.uk/ClassicalStudies/GreekPlays/essays/Reviews.html>>[Last accessed 22 March 2005]
- , *Reception Studies, Greece & Rome: New Surveys in the Classics*, 33 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003)
- Harms, Kathy, Lutz R. Reuter and Volker Duerr, eds, *Coping with the Past: Germany and Austria after 1945, Monatshefte Occasional Volumes* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990)
- Harrison, Tony, *Plays 4: The Oresteia, The Common Chorus (Parts I and II)* (London: Faber and Faber, 2002)
- Hartigan, Karelisa, *Greek Tragedy on the American Stage: Ancient Drama in the Commercial Theatre 1882-1994*, Contributions in Drama and Theatre Studies, 60 (Westpoint, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995)
- Hayman, Ronald, *Writing Against: A Biography of Sartre* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1986)
- Head, Cloyd, 'The Chicago Little Theatre', *Theatre Arts Magazine*, 1.3 (May 1917)
- Hell, Julia, *Post-Fascist Fantasies: Psychoanalysis, History, and the Literature of East Germany*, Post-Contemporary Interventions, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997)
- Henderson, J. A., *The First Avant-Garde (1887-1894)* (London: Harrap, 1971)

Hilberg, Raul, *The Politics of Memory: The Journey of a Holocaust Historian* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1996)

Hourmouziades, Nicolaos C., *Production and Imagination in Euripides; Form and Function of the Scenic Space*, Greek Society for Humanistic Studies: Second Series, 5 (Athens, 1965)

Hunt, Albert and Geoffrey Reeves, *Peter Brook*, Cambridge Directors in Perspective, (Cambridge: University of Cambridge, 1995)

Innes, C. D., *Avant-Garde Theatre 1892-1992* (London: Routledge, 1993)

Invernel, Phillippe, 'L'abstraction et l'inflation tragiques dans le théâtre expressionniste allemand', in *L'Expressionnisme dans le Théâtre Européen*, ed. by Denis Bablet and Jean Jacquot (Paris: Editions du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1971), pp. 77-91

Iser, Wolfgang, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (London: Routledge, 1978)

Isser, Edward, *Stages of Annihilation: Theatrical Representations of the Holocaust* (Madison: Associated University Press, 1997)

Jacobson, Anna, 'Franz Werfel: Eine Würdigung', *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 26 (1927), 337-349

Jauss, Hans Robert, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, trans. by Timothy Bahti (Brighton: Harvester, 1982)

Jenkyns, Richard, *The Victorians and Ancient Greece* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980)

Johnston, John, *The Lord Chamberlain's Blue Pencil* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1990)

Jungk, Peter Stephan, *A Life Torn by History: Franz Werfel 1890-1945* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1990)

Kafka, Franz, *The Complete Short Stories* (London: Minerva, 1982)

Keegan, John, *The Face of Battle* (London: Cape, 1976)

Kenneally, Michael, *Cultural contexts and literary idioms in contemporary Irish literature*, Irish literary studies, 31, (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1988)

Kennedy, Dennis, *Granville Barker and the Dream of Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge

University Press, 1985)

Kip, A. Maria van Erp Taalman, 'Euripides and Melos', *Mnemosyne*, 40. 3-4 (1987), 414-418

Koniaris, G.L., 'Alexander, Palamedes, Troades, Sisyphus: A Connected tetralogy? A Connected trilogy?' *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, 77 (1973), 85-124

Kustow, Michael, *Peter Brook: A Biography* (London: Bloomsbury, 2005)

Laurence, Dan H., ed., *Bernard Shaw: Collected Letters (1898-1910)* (London: Max Reinhardt, 1972)

Lavy, George, *Germany and Israel: Moral Debt and National Interest* (London: Frank Cass, 1996)

Lee Strasberg, ed., *Famous American Plays of the 1950's* (New York: Dell, 1962)

Levy, Shimon and Nurit Yaari, 'Theatrical Responses to Political Events: The Trojan War on the Israeli stage during the Lebanon War, 1982-1984', *Journal of Theatre and Drama*, 4 (1998), 99-123

Lindsey, Ben B., 'The Stage Child and the Law', *The Theatre* (October 1916), 192

Littell, Franklin H., Alan L. Berger and Hurbert G. Locke, eds, *What have we learned? Telling the story and teaching the lessons of the Holocaust: Papers of the 20th Anniversary Scholars Conference* (New York: Edwin Mellen, 1993)

Lloyd, Michael, 'The Helen Scene in Euripides' *Trojan Women*', *Classical Quarterly*, 34 (1984), 303-313

London, John, 'Non-German Drama in the Third Reich', in *Theatre under the Nazis*, ed. by John London (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 222-261

Loraux, Nicole, *Mothers in Mourning*, trans. by Corinne Pache (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998)

---, *The Mourning Voice: An Essay on Greek Tragedy*, trans. by Elizabeth Trapnell Rawlings, *Cornell Studies in Classical Philology*, 58 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002)

MacCarthy, Desmond, *The Court Theatre 1904-1907: A Commentary and Criticism* (London: Bullen, 1907)

Machor, James L. and Philip Goldstein, eds, *Reception Study: From Literary Theory to Cultural Studies* (London: Routledge, 2001)

Macintosh, Fiona, *Dying Acts: Death in Ancient Greek and Modern Irish Tragic Drama* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1994)

---, 'Under the Blue Pencil: Greek Tragedy and the British Censor', *Dialogos*, 2 (1995), 54-70

---, 'Tragedy in Performance: 19th and 20th Century Productions', in *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy*, ed. by P. E. Easterling, 1997), pp. 284-323

---, 'The Shavian Murray and the Euripidean Shaw: Major Barbara and the Bacchae', *Classics Ireland*, 5 (1998), 64-84

---, 'Introduction: The Performer in Performance', in *Medea in performance 1500-2000*, ed. by Edith Hall, Fiona Macintosh and Oliver Taplin (Oxford: Legenda, 2000), pp. 1-31

Mackinnon, Kenneth, *Greek Tragedy into Film* (London: Croom Helm, 1986)

Malcolm, Noel, *Bosnia: A Short History* (London: Macmillan, 1994)

Martindale, Charles, *Redeeming the Text: Latin Poetry and the Hermeneutics of Reception* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993)

Marton, Patricia, 'The Trojan Women in Japan', *Drama Review*, 19.1 (March 1975)

Marwick, Arthur, *The Deluge: British Society and the First World War* (London: Macmillan, 1973)

Mastronarde, Donald J., *Contact and Discontinuity: Some Conventions of Speech and Action on the Greek Tragic Stage*, University of California publications: Classical studies, 21 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979)

---, 'The Optimistic Rationalist in Euripides', in *Greek Tragedy and its Legacy: Essays presented to D.J. Conacher*, ed. by Martin Cropp, Elaine Fantham and S.E. Scully (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1986), pp. 201-211

McCracken, Kathleen, 'Rage for a New Order: Brendan Kennelly's Plays for Women', in *Dark Fathers into Light: Brendan Kennelly*, ed. by Richard Pine (Newcastle upon Tyne: Bloodaxe, 1994), pp. 114-147

McDonald, Jan, *The 'New Drama' 1900-1914: Harley Granville-Barker, John Galsworthy, St. John Hankin, John Masefield*, Macmillan Modern Dramatists, (London: Macmillan Education, 1986)

McDonald, Marianne, *Euripides in Cinema: The Heart Made Visible* (Philadelphia: Centrum, 1983)

---, *Ancient Sun, Modern Light: Greek Drama on the Modern Stage* (New York: Columbia, 1992)

McDonald, Marianne and J. Michael Walton, eds, *Amid our Troubles: Irish Versions of Greek Tragedy* (London: Methuen, 2002)

McNamara, B. and J. Dolan, eds, *The Drama Review: Thirty Years of Commentary on the Avant-Garde* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Research Press, 1986)

Melvorn, L.R., *A People Betrayed: The Role of the West in Rwanda's Genocide* (London: Zed Books, 2000)

Menta, Ed, *Behind the Magic Curtain: Andrei Serban in the American Theatre*, Artists and Issues in the Theatre, 5 (New York: Lang, 1995)

Meridor, Ra'anana, 'Plot and myth in Euripides' *Heracles* and *Troades*', *Phoenix*, 38 (1984), 205-215

Michaels, Jennifer, *Franz Werfel and the Critics* (Columbia, S.C.: Camden Press, 1994)

Michelakis, Pantelis, 'Greek Tragedy in Cinema: Theatre, Politics, History', in *Dionysus Since 69: Greek Tragedy at the Dawn of the Third Millennium*, ed. by Edith Hall, Fiona Macintosh and Amanda Wrigley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 199-217

Mommsen, Wolfgang J., 'The Germans and Their Past: History and Political Consciousness in the Federal Republic of Germany', in *Coping with the Past: Germany and Austria after 1945*, ed. by Kathy Harms, Lutz R. Reuter and Volker Dürr (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), pp. 252-269

Morley, Sheridan, *Sybil Thorndike: A Life in the Theatre* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1977)

Murphy, Tom, *Plays: Two, Conversations on a Homecoming, Bailegangaire, A Thief of a Christmas*, ed. by Fintan O'Toole (London: Methuen, 1993)

Murray, Christopher, 'Three Antigones', in *Perspectives of Irish Drama and Theatre*, ed. by Jacqueline Genet and Richard Allen Cave (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1991)
---, *Twentieth-century Irish Drama: A Mirror up to a Nation* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997)

Murray, Gilbert, *Euripides: Hippolytus and Bacchae, and The Frogs of Aristophanes tr. into Engl. rhyming verse by G. Murray*, Athenian Drama, vol. 3, (London, 1902)
---, *Euripides and his Age*, Home University Library of Modern Knowledge, (London: Williams and Norgate, 1913)
---, *Essays and Addresses* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1921)
---, *The League and its Guarantees* (London: The League of Nations Union, 1921)

Murray, Gilbert, Francis W. Hirst and J.L. Hammond, *Liberalism and the Empire* (London: R. Brimley Johnson, 1900)

Narti, Ana Maria, 'Medea: Andrei Serban's Work on Tragic Acting', (unpublished thesis, Institute of Theatre and Film, Stockholm University, 1974)

- Norwood, Gilbert, *Greek Tragedy* (London: Methuen, 1920)
- Novick, Peter, *The Holocaust and Collective Memory* (London: Bloomsbury, 1999)
- O'Neill, Jr., Eugene G., 'The Prologue of the *Troades* of Euripides', *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, 72 (1941), 288-320
- O'Toole, Fintan, *Murphy, Plays: Two, Conversations on a Homecoming, Bailegangaire, A Thief of a Christmas* (London: Methuen, 1993)
- Ohngemach, Gundula, *George Tabori: Regie im Theater* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1989)
- Pascal, Roy, *From Naturalism to Expressionism: German Literature and Society 1880-1918* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973)
- Patsalidis, Savas and Elizabeth Sakellariou, eds, *(Dis) Placing Classical Greek Theatre* (Thessaloniki: University Studio Press, 1999)
- Patterson, Michael, *German Theatre Today: Post-War Theatre in West and East Germany, Austria, and Northern Switzerland*, Theatre Today, (London: Pitman Publishing, 1976)
- Pinney, Thomas, ed., *The Letters of Thomas Babington Macaulay*, 6 vols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974)
- Pluggé, Domis Edward, *History of Greek Play Production in American Colleges and Universities from 1881 to 1936* (New York: Beureau of Publications, 1938)
- Pogson, Rex, *Miss Horniman and the Gaiety Theatre, Manchester* (London: Rockliff, 1952)
- Poole, Adrian, 'Total Disaster: Euripides' *The Trojan Women*', *Arion*, n.s. 3 (1976)
- Postone, Moishe, 'After the Holocaust: History and Identity in West Germany', in *Coping with the Past: Germany and Austria after 1945*, ed. by Kathy Harms, Lutz R. Reuter and Volker Dürr (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1990), pp. 233-251
- Pucciani, Oreste, 'An Interview with Jean-Paul Sartre', *The Tulane Drama Review*, 5 (March 1961), 13-18
- Purdom, C. B., *Harley Granville Barker: Man of the Theatre, Dramatist and Scholar* (London: Rockliff, 1955)
- , ed., *Bernard Shaw's Letters to Granville Barker* (London: Phoenix House, 1956)

Puttkamer, Anne Marie von, *Franz Werfel: Wort und Antwort* (Würzburg: Verbund, 1952)

Rappaport, Lynn, *Jews in Germany after the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997)

Rhie Sang-il, 'Kabuki in Korea', trans. by Han Sang-chul, *Asian Theatre Journal*, 7. 1 (Spring, 1990), 105-107

Ritchie, J. M., *German Expressionist Drama*, Twayne's World Authors: Germany, (Boston: Twayne, 1976)

Roche, Antony, 'Ireland's Antigones: Tragedy North and South', in *Cultural Contexts and Literary Idioms in Contemporary Irish Literature*, ed. by Michael Kenneally (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1988)

Roilou, Ioanna, 'Performances of Ancient Greek Tragedy on the Greek Stage of the Twentieth Century', in *(Dis) Placing Classical Greek Theatre*, ed. by Savas Patsalidis and Elizabeth Sakellariou (Thessaloniki: University Studio Press), pp. 194-195

Rosenfeld, Alvin, eds, *Thinking About the Holocaust: After Half a Century*, *Jewish Literature and Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997)

Rovit, Rebecca, 'Jewish Theatre: Repertory and Censorship in the Jüdischer Kulturbund, Berlin', in *Theatre under the Nazis*, ed. by John London (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 187-221

Rozik-Rosen, Eli, 'Sisera's Mother and the Trojan Women: On Universal Aspects of the Jewish/Israeli Theatre', *Israel Affairs*, 4. 3-4 (1998)

Saddlemeyer, Ann, *Theatre Business: The Correspondence of the First Abbey Theatre Directors: William Butler Yeats, Lady Gregory, and J.M. Synge* (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe, 1982)

Salmon, Eric, *Granville Barker: A Secret Life* (London: Heinemann, 1983)
---, *Granville Barker and his Correspondents: A Selection of Letters by Him and to Him* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1986)

Salter, W.H., *Essays on Two Moderns: Euripides, Samuel Butler* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1911)

Sartre, Jean-Paul, *Situations V* (Paris: Gallimard, 1964)

Sayre, H.M., *The Object of Performance: The American Avant-Garde Since 1970* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992)

- Schechner, Richard, *Performance Group: Dionysus in 69* (New York, 1970)
 ---, *Performance Theory* (London: Routledge, 1988)
- Schlegel, August Wilhelm von, *A Course of Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature*, trans. by J. Black, 2nd edn, 2 vols (London: J. Templeman, 1840)
- Schoch, Richard W., *Shakespeare's Victorian Stage: Performing History in the Theatre of Charles Kean* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998)
- Schumacher, Claude, ed., *Staging the Holocaust: The Shoah in Drama and Performance*, Cambridge Studies in Modern Theatre, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998)
- Schuster, Mel, *The Contemporary Greek Cinema* (London: Scarecrow Press, 1979)
- Scodel, Ruth, *The Trojan Trilogy of Euripides, Hypomnemata*, Heft 60, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1980)
- Senda, Akhiko, 'The Wider World of Japanese Theatre: the Art of Tadashi Suzuki', in *SCOT Programme*), pp. 58-59
- Shephard, William Hunter, *The Dionysus Group*, American University Studies, Series 26, *Theatre Arts*, vol. 5 (New York: Lang, 1991)
- Shepherd, Simon and Mack Wallis, eds, *Drama, Theatre, Performance* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2004)
- Simon, John Ivan, *Uneasy Stages: A Chronicle of the New York Theater, 1963-1973* (New York: Random House, 1976)
- Skloot, Robert, *The Darkness We Carry: The Drama of the Holocaust* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988)
- Smethurst, Mae, 'The Japanese Presence in Ninagawa's Medea', in *Medea in Performance: 1500-2000*, ed. by Edith Hall, Fiona Macintosh and Oliver Taplin (Oxford: Legenda, 2000), pp. 191-216
- Smith, G. C. Moore, *College Plays: Performed in the University of Cambridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1923)
- Snell, B., 'Euripides' *Alexandros*', *Hermes*, Einzelschriften, V (1937), 1-68
- Speaight, Robert, *William Poel and the Elizabethan revival*, Annual publication, Society for Theatre Research, (London: Heinemann, 1954)
- Specht, Richard, *Franz Werfel, Versuch einer Zeitspiegelung* (Berlin: Paul Zsolnay, 1926)

- Sprigge, Elizabeth, *Sybil Thorndike Casson* (London: Gollancz, 1971)
- Stevens, P.T., ed., *Euripides' Andromache* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971)
- Strasberg, Lee, ed., *Famous American Plays of the 1950s*, (New York: Dell, 1962)
- Stravinsky, Igor, *The Poetics of Music in the Form of Six Lessons*, trans. by Arthur Knodel and Ingolf Dahl (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1947)
- Suzuki, Tadashi, *The Way of Acting: The Theatre Writings of Tadashi Suzuki*, trans. by J. Thomas Rimer (New York: Theatre Communications Group, 1985)
- Taplin, Oliver, *The Stagecraft of Aeschylus: The Dramatic Use of Exits and Entrances in Greek Tragedy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977)
- , *Greek Fire* (London: Cape, 1989)
- , 'The Pictorial Record', in *The Cambridge Companion to Greek tragedy*, ed. by P. E. Easterling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 69-90
- Thompson, Kenneth and Margaret Thompson, *Sartre, Life and Works*, Facts on File Chronology Series, (Bicester, England: Facts on File, 1984)
- Thorndike, Sybil, 'The Theatre and Gilbert Murray', in *Gilbert Murray: The Unfinished Autobiography*, ed. by Jean Smith and Arnold Toynbee (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1960)
- Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans. by Rex Warner, Penguin Classics, (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1954)
- Tingley, Donald F., 'Ellen Van Volkenburg, Maurice Browne, and the Chicago Little Theatre', *Illinois Historical Journal* (Autumn 1999)
- Trewin, J. C., *Sybil Thorndike*, Theatre World Monograph, 4 (London: Rockliff, 1955)
- Van Dyck, Karen, *Kassandra and the Censors: Greek Poetry since 1967*, Reading Women Writing (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998)
- Van Steen, Gonda A. H., *Venom in Verse: Aristophanes in Modern Greece*, Princeton Modern Greek Studies, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000)
- , 'Playing the Censors' Rules? Classical Drama Revived under the Greek Junta (1967-1974)', *Journal of Hellenic Diaspora*, 27. 1-2 (2001), 133-194
- Verrall, A. W., *Euripides, the Rationalist: A Study in the History of Arts and Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1895)
- Volbach, Walther R., *Adolphe Appia, Prophet of the Modern Theater: A Profile*

(Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1968)

Walton, J. Michael, *Living Greek Theatre: A Handbook of Classical Performance and Modern Production* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987)

Webster, Margaret, *The Same Only Different* (London: Gollancz, 1969)

Webster, T. B. L., *The Tragedies of Euripides* (London: Methuen, 1967)

Weitz, Shoshana and Shoshana Avigal, 'Cultural and Ideological Variables in Audience Response: The case of *The Trojan Women*, Tel Aviv, 1982-1983', *Assaph Studies in the Arts*, Second C. 3 (1986), 7-42

Wiesel, Elie, 'Afterword: On Memory and Reconciliation', in *The Jewish Legacy and the German Conscience: Essays in Memory of Rabbi Joseph Asher*, ed. by Moses Rischin and Raphael Asher (Berkeley: The Judah L. Magnes Museum, 1991), pp. 327-331

Wiles, David, 'The Use of Masks in Modern Performances of Greek Drama', in *Dionysus Since 69: Greek Tragedy at the Dawn of the Third Millennium*, ed. by Edith Hall, Fiona Macintosh and Amanda Wrigley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 245-263

Wiles, Timothy J., *The Theatre Event*, Modern Theories of Performance (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980)

Willett, John, ed., *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic*, 1st edn (London: Methuen, 1964)

---, *Theatre of the Weimar* (New York: Homes and Meier, 1988)

Williams, Arthur, Stuart Parkes and Roland Smith, eds, *German Literature at a Time of Change: 1989-1990* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1991)

Williams, Cedric E., *The Broken Eagle: The Politics of Austrian Literature from Empire to Anschluss* (London: Paul Elek, 1974)

Williams, David, ed., *Peter Brook: A Theatrical Casebook* (London: Methuen, 1992)

Wilson, Duncan, *Gilbert Murray, OM, 1866-1957* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987)

Wimmer, Paul, *Franz Werfels dramatische Sendung* (Vienna: Bergland, 1973)

Winkler, Martin, *Classics and Cinema* (Lewisburg: Associated University Presses, 1991)

Wolf, Christa, *Cassandra*, trans. by Jan Van Heurck (London: Virago, 1984)

Wyman, David S, eds, *The World Reacts to the Holocaust* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996)

Yaari, Nurit, 'Stage Dying: Hanoch Levin versus Aeschylus on Human Suffering', in *On the Interpretation of the Arts*: Tel Aviv University, Faculty of Arts), pp. 327-343

Zeitlin, Froma I., 'Dionysus in 69', in *Dionysus Since 69: Greek Tragedy at the Dawn of the Third Millennium*, ed. by Edith Hall, Fiona Macintosh and Amanda Wrigley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 49-75

Zuntz, Günther, *An Inquiry into the Transmission of the Plays of Euripides* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965)

