

Application for a Research, Scholarship, and Creativity Grant

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Previously supported work: I received RSC grants in 2002, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012 and 2014. The first two resulted in book publications by Cambridge University Press (Sophocles' *Electra* and *Greek Theatre in Context*). The project supported by the 2008 RSC grant resulted in a chapter in the volume *Institutio*, edited by Licia Landi (Pensa Editore 2011), 227-36; those from 2010 and 2012 became articles published in the journals *Illinois Classical Studies* (vol. 40.2, 321-46) and *Classica* (vol. 26, 137-61) respectively. The 2014 book project has not yet been published.

Overview of project and purpose: I am applying for a RSC grant to fund research for a chapter on the reception of Sophocles' *Philoctetes*. Reception studies explore how works from the ancient world have been transmitted, adapted, and reinterpreted in later times. This particular project examines the influence of one of the seven surviving tragedies of Sophocles, his *Philoctetes*, over the twenty-five centuries since it was first performed at Athens. The play examines the fate of a Greek war hero who was abandoned en route to Troy when the snakebite he suffered turned gangrenous and he became a burden to his comrades. In the last decade, the play has sparked considerable interest for its vivid presentation of an abandoned veteran and the psychological scars left by betrayal in his moment of need. I recently attended a staged reading of the play at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, attended by over 300 health care professionals, primarily psychiatrists specializing in the treatment of PTSD.

Feasibility: The chapter will be published by Brill, a publishing house founded in 1683 and one of the leading publishers in the humanities. It will be part of a volume edited by Rosanna Lauriola and Kyriakos Demetriou titled *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Sophocles*. I have already published on the plays of Sophocles, including a doctoral dissertation, book, and articles. I have begun work on the project and plan to do the archival research (see Project Design section) for it over the summer, then finish writing it during the academic year. I am confident that this is a feasible time frame for the scope of the project (25,000 words).

Interdisciplinarity: The chapter that I am researching documents the influence of this play in five areas: (i) literature, (ii) the visual arts, (iii) dance, (iv) theatre, and (v) film. It is thus fundamentally interdisciplinary, examining the influence of a dramatic work on a number of other art forms set in their historical contexts. It is arranged chronologically, tracing the play's reception over the course of twenty-five centuries, including reinterpretations by Roman authors such as Cicero, Ovid and Seneca, lectures on the play by the prominent Reformation theologian Melancthon, a poem by the Romantic poet William Wordsworth, a song by Franz Schubert, a play by the Nobel prizewinning poet Seamus Heaney, his *The Cure at Troy* recently performed at the Guthrie, and even the Disney *Hercules* film featuring Philoctetes as one of the main characters. Some responses to the play have found in the abandoned Philoctetes a model of Stoic endurance. For others his suffering exemplifies the value of tragedy as a vehicle for developing empathy. Still others present Philoctetes as effeminate in succumbing to pain, his expressions of extreme emotion seen as a threat to masculinity and its ideal of manly courage.

This project is one of a number in which I am involving undergraduate collaborators. Five first year students in my Three Crowns *Historical Perspectives* course are currently working with me on researching and writing this chapter. I have been meeting with them periodically over the last few months to provide guidance and support as they work on individual sections of the chapter. Teriq Canales and Taylor Claeys are writing about a sculpture of Philoctetes by the twentieth century

German neo-classical artist Adolf von Hildebrand. Nick Beck and Caitlin Juvland are looking at the representation of Philoctetes as 'Phil' in Disney's *Hercules*, both the movie and the TV series. And Ellen Stoll is researching *Philoktet*, a song by Franz Schubert set to a poem by Johann Mayrhofer. I have taken pains to try to match the research assignment to the individual interests and skills of the student. Ellen Stoll, for example, is an avid musician and is also currently studying German. Here is an extract from Stoll's analysis of Schubert's composition:

Schubert's setting, likewise, is filled with angst and despair. The piece begins with an anxious introduction motif outside of the key, which grudgingly makes it back to the home key (b minor), unsettling the listener and setting the stage for the coming scene. The singer's line starts with an outburst of bitterness in the shape of a perfect 4th. This section is harsh, clear, and piercing after the muddying effects of the turmoil caused by the previous chords. The piano accompaniment is relatively spare, setting up the foundation and accenting the moods displayed by the voice.

When the piece reaches "Es rauschen Vogelschwärme..." it modulates into e flat minor, a key of awe and myth for Schubert.¹ This section is darker and more reflective of an internalized conflict, as Philoctetes briefly turns his attention to the birds flying overhead, and the deer rustling in the bushes. Each of these, the birds and the deer, contribute to his torment, as he reaches instinctively for his bow only to find that it is no longer at his side. The frustration builds up until the key changes back to the brighter and more outward tone of the home key as he verbally lashes out at Ulysses.

This is a much more solitary representation of the scene than the coinciding scene in Sophocles' play. Philoctetes is the speaker in the poem, and although he refers to Ulysses as "you", the sense of isolation created by both words and music indicates that he is lamenting his woes to himself. In the play, no character is ever left alone on stage. Because of this, Philoctetes' reactions are not directed toward his own sense of loss, but toward his anger at Neoptolemus and Odysseus. The Lied makes room for a scene where he is alone in his desolation. The artistic focus is not on the rage, or passion that is seen most easily in Sophocles' play as he confronts his enemies, but rather an isolated despair that is the cause of his violent, passionate reaction in the play.

The next step is to get feedback on her analysis from faculty in the music department. This is a best practice of interdisciplinary research. As we examine how sculptors, poets, composers and film directors have variously responded to this ancient tragedy, we engage specialists to provide feedback from their disciplinary perspectives.

Project Design: I am seeking funding to support the gathering of materials for this study, in particular for the portion that examines modern theatrical productions of *Philoctetes*. I hope to spend a week over the summer at the Archive of Performances of Greek and Roman Drama at the University of Oxford (<http://www.apgrd.ox.ac.uk/>) examining materials from performances of the play. These include reviews, artistic statements, playbills and production materials including photographs and film. The APGRD is the only collection of its kind. Its materials are not loanable, so must be studied at the APGRD. The collection attracts scholars from all over the world working on ancient performance, so this is also an opportunity to discuss my project with other scholars in the field. From two previous stints at the APGRD, I know how valuable a resource it is to this project. I attach as an appendix a section of my last project completed at the APGRD to give a

¹ Reed, 1997, 490. This key is used in other songs by Schubert to depict "awe in the presence of the sea," and "the grave."

concrete sense of what kind of research the archive makes possible. The extract also gives a good idea of what the publication will look like, since it was a chapter on Euripides' *Hecuba* in the same Brill series, this volume titled *Brill's Companion to the Reception of Euripides* and published in 2015.

Outcomes: This chapter and the book of which it is a part will serve multiple audiences. It comes at a time of burgeoning interest among classicists in reception studies and the performance history of ancient drama. It will also be of interest to historians, art historians, and scholars in the fields of music, film and drama. Most importantly, it is designed to be accessible to undergraduates, and will be useful to Gustavus students in courses such as *Theatre of Greece and Rome* (CLA 103), Greek Drama (GRE 302), and the Classics Capstone Seminar (CLA 399). *Theatre of Greece and Rome* has a major performance component, culminating in the Festival of Dionysus, about to enter its eighth iteration. In this course students explore ancient drama and its reception through performance. The course has resulted in several published projects involving undergraduates in research. Most recently, one of the students who took the course, Will Riihiluoma '16, co-authored with me a review of Henry MacCarthy's production of Mary Zimmerman's new play, *Argonautika*, forthcoming in *Didaskalia*, the journal for ancient performance studies. The next time I teach CLA 103, I plan to make *Philoctetes* and its reception a focus of the course, one of whose main themes this time will be the theatre of war.

Budget:

Return airfare Minneapolis – London	\$1100
Travel within the U.S. and U.K. (airport shuttle and train)	\$60
Lodging in Oxford (1 week)	\$500
Meals (1 week)	280

SUBTOTAL: **\$1940**

Stipend at rank of Professor \$500

TOTAL: **\$2440**

(Of which \$2000 is fundable according under the terms of the RSC grants)

Brill's Companion to the Reception of Euripides

Edited by

Rosanna Lauriola and Kyriakos N. Demetriou

RSC Grant Application by Eric Dugdale, Appendix

Extract from my chapter on the reception of Euripides' *Hecuba*. This section focuses on its reception on the stage, and draws on research conducted at the Archive for Performances of Greek and Roman Drama at Oxford University.



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presented in cinematic fashion; these include a tender duet of Andromache and Hector, and the attempted abduction of Polyxena by Achilles. In a later scene, Polyxena kills herself with a weapon taken from the dead Achilles, whose body lies on stage. Just before Hecuba's blinding of Polymestor, her dead loved ones, Priam, Hector, Astyanax, Polyxena, and Polydorus appear as in ghostly procession. After her act of revenge, Hecuba tenderly cradles the brooch that served as her weapon, then leads the blind Polymestor by the hand to the body of Polydorus and forces him to touch his dead victim. The mood is bleak, the piece haunted by the ferryman Charon who appears to claim his due. Much of the meaning is conveyed by the extensive props designed by Isamu Noguchi, with whom Graham collaborated extensively.

On Stage and On Screen

Stage

Graecum est, non legitur ("it is in Greek, it is not read") is a marginal note frequently found in manuscripts of the Middle Ages, when Seneca, not Euripides, was the ancient playwright through which Hecuba's travails were known. Although Seneca's popularity continued, the situation changed with the Renaissance rediscovery of Greek texts. In 1503, the Aldine Press in Venice published the *editio princeps* of eighteen plays of Euripides (all but his *Electra*). Three years later in 1506, Giorgio Anselmo published a Latin translation of *Hecuba* in Parma, dedicated to the poet Baldassarre Molossi, whom Anselmo identifies as a descendant of Molossus, son of Pyrrhus. That same year, a more faithful translation in Latin by the great Dutch humanist Desiderius Erasmus, was published by Badius in Paris, then later by Aldius in 1507, quickly achieving wide circulation. The first documented Renaissance performances of *Hecuba* quickly followed, at Leuven sometime between 1506 and 1514, and again in Wittenberg in 1525, both directed by the precocious German scholar and theologian Philip Melanchthon, who also lectured on the play at Wittenberg in 1525 or 1526.⁶⁴

The early interest in *Hecuba* by Renaissance humanists should come as no surprise given its privileged position as the first play in the 'Byzantine triad' of *Hecuba*, *Orestes*, and *Phoenician Women*, plays selected (ca. 500 AD) for study in schools, probably because of the perceived educational value of their many aphorisms,

64 Pollard (2012) 1064 provides statistics for *Hecuba*'s preeminence as "by far the most popular of the Greek plays printed, translated, and performed in 16th-century Europe." For the play's reception and popularity in the Renaissance, see also Heath (2003) and Mossman (1995) 220–5.

and their polished rhetoric and emphasis on the power of persuasion, resulting in more manuscript exemplars and a richer accretion of *scholia* (marginal comments). But it also suited the tastes of readers brought up on Senecan tragedy, with its intense mix of emotion, explicit violence, and high rhetoric.⁶⁵ In his 1562 edition of Euripides' plays, with Latin translation and notes accompanying the Greek text, Carl Stiblin declares that *Hecuba* "iure principem locum tenet" ("deservedly occupies the first place"), citing its "subject-matter's variety" and "more than tragic atrocity" as grounds for this privileged position.⁶⁶ Stiblin then expounds at considerable length how Hecuba serves as a cautionary example of human fragility through her sudden and abject fall from great fortune to extreme misery and as a warning of the fickleness of fortune. He draws further moral lessons from the flattering demagoguery of Odysseus, the punishment of Polymestor, and Hecuba's patient caution in carrying her revenge, while Polyxena's sacrifice to Achilles' shade is an example of how "states should honor the memory of outstanding men," especially those who have died in the service of their country, so that others may emulate their acts in the hope of similar glory, and the "readiness and eagerness for death in this girl is a sign of a noble character and a great spirit."

Most of the early productions of Greek tragedy in northern Europe were university or school productions, either in the original language or in a Latin translation. In the 18th century, versions in vernacular languages began to be performed in public theatres, and women began to attend in greater numbers, leading to the "feminization of drama"⁶⁷ at the same time as female actors were taking to the stage, gaining a following, and engendering larger female roles. The prominent parts given to female characters helps explain the relative popularity of some of Euripides' plays; but these were also adapted to suit contemporary tastes for sentimentality, feminine modesty and virtue. The 1726 production of *Hecuba* at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane translated and staged by Richard West, lawyer and Lord Chancellor of Ireland, failed dismally, an anonymous critic faulting it for being "not only a close Translation, but a very bare one too."⁶⁸

65 Erasmus in the dedicatory introduction of his *Hecuba* describes Euripides as a playwright "qui in tractandis locis rhetoricis tam creber sit, tam acutus, ut passim declamare videatur," ("who so frequently and skillfully handles rhetorical set pieces that he seems always to be declaiming"); see Mossman (1995) 221–3.

66 Heath (2003) 224–30. See also Mossman (1995) 230–5.

67 Hall/Macintosh (2005) 78.

68 This point is made by Hall/Macintosh (2005) 98. See also Hall (2000) 70–1, and Kenward (2011) 340–3.

A later adaptation by John Delap, also performed at the Drury Lane theatre, in 1761, attempted to cater to contemporary tastes.⁶⁹ Polydorus, going by the alibi Eriphilus, returns to rescue his fellow Trojans. Meeting his sister Polyxena, he feels compassion for her but keeps his identity secret. When Polyxena is told of her impending fate, she cautions her mother, “Oh Hecuba, let not thy rage provoke a potent victor!” Hecuba accedes: “No, I will not provoke a potent victor. I’ll check these foolish transports of despair. See, my rage melts to miserable tears.” Hecuba repeatedly shows self-restraint. When Polydorus’ accomplice, going by the alibi Melanthus, reveals himself to Hecuba as Eriphilus’ guardian Eumelus (a play, no doubt, on the names of the pendant characters in Homer’s *Odyssey* of Melanthius and Eumaeus), Hecuba assures him that she will not give anything away to Polymestor: “Fear me not. Piercing as his eyes are, they cannot dive into my soul.” But Polyxena is captured and sacrificed. When Polydorus hears the news, he is overwhelmed by compassion, and bids Eumelus kill him. But he begs him to first tell all, “that her last words may sink into my soul; that her last look may languish in my eyes.” When Ulysses discovers his identity, Polydorus chooses to commit suicide as Hecuba faints. She then calls on her attendants to help her carry the bodies of her daughter and son to the Greeks as she contemplates her own death. In her final lines, she gives a mere hint of the act of revenge that dominates the second half of Euripides’ play but is omitted from Delap’s expurgated version: “But soft, revenge—revenge! . . . Come, follow, follow: let’s do the noble deed!”⁷⁰

The prominent Dutch patriot Samuel Iperuszoon Wiselius wrote his tragedy *Polydorus* as a platform for protest against Napoleon’s annexation of the Netherlands.⁷¹ It drew on the versions of Euripides, Virgil, Ovid, Hyginus, Pacuvius, and Accius, as he indicates in his learned preface. The first version, printed in 1813 but never distributed, slipped through the censors, though certain offending passages were cut. After the French withdrawal in 1813, Wiselius published an uncensored version in March 1814, one month before Napoleon’s abdication, criticizing what the French censors had done to his previous version in an addendum to the preface, and then produced a third yet more extreme edition in 1819. His Polymestor is a tyrant characterized by greed, hypocrisy, and bloodlust, whose cruelty has converted his country into

69 See Hall (2000) 64–5; Hall/Macintosh (2005) 64; Kenward (2011) 333, 349–50.

70 Cranstoun Metcalfe’s *Hecuba à la Mode; or, The Wily Greek and the Modest Maid*, subtitled *An Entirely New and Classical Burlesque*, performed in 1893 at Vestry Hall in Anerley, London, also excluded Hecuba’s revenge.

71 Jensen (2014) provides a detailed analysis of Wiselius’ work as an act of resistance and indictment of the Napoleonic regime; this paragraph draws heavily on her study.

a wasteland. Wiselius follows the popular plot variant, first found in Pacuvius' *Iliona*, in which Polymestor kills his own son Deiphilus under the misapprehension that he is Polydorus. In this version, which Wiselius accessed via Hyginus' *Fabulae*, even Polymestor's wife Iliona views him as a tyrant, and veiled allusions to contemporary injustices abound. There is no evidence, to my knowledge, that Wiselius' play was staged.

Despite the wave of interest that the field of classics in general and Euripides in particular was enjoying in the early 20th century, with Gilbert Murray's translations bringing Euripides to a broader audience, *Hecuba* continued to be largely ignored or faulted, and its few performances largely restricted to college and university campuses or performances in ancient theatres. This has begun to change in recent years. A spate of productions in Greece in the 1980s was followed by an assortment of stagings across Europe and North America, with a surge in the early years of the Iraq war, when several high profile productions took place.⁷² Of these, the 2004 production at the Donmar Warehouse in London directed by Jonathan Kent, using a script by Frank McGuinness, was arguably the most celebrated. The program notes invited the audience to embrace the play's topicality, with references to Weapons of Mass Destruction and collusion by allied governments to the white-washing of violence, and to Lynndie England, one of the military personnel convicted of the torture of prisoners at Abu Grahیب earlier that year:

The awful impression grows, that when each of the dramatis personae in *Hecuba* come to write their memoirs (perhaps from Hades) no individual will believe that the offending judgment was theirs. Each will protest that he or she acted in good faith under pressure from others, or circumstances, or loyalty, or political alliance, or a sense of duty, or the unavenged dead.

72 Performances of *Hecuba* in 2004 included a production at the Donmar Warehouse in London (directed by Jonathan Kent), a production by Foursight Theatre (directed by Naomi Cooke) which toured England, as well as productions by Workshop 360 in Los Angeles (directed by L. Zane), and by Culture Project (directed by Alex Lippard) in New York, a staging at the Boston Center for the Arts (directed by John Ambrosino) of *The Memory of Salt*, an adaptation of *Hecuba* by Lisa Maurizio with Japanese Noh influences, and a production at sixth at Penn Theatre in San Diego (directed by Esther Emery); in 2005 the Royal Shakespeare Company's production (directed by Laurence Boswell) performed in London, Washington DC, New York, and Delphi. See Kenward (2005); Cousin (2007) 120–1, 125–8, 130–5; and Foley (2015) 86–90 for extensive analysis of the productions directed by Cooke, Kent, and Boswell, also offering assessments of the translations by Frank McGuinness and Tony Harrison that Kent and Boswell used respectively.

The performance opened with the names of war victims written on the wall in remembrance; at its end, Polymestor's two boys, dressed in the shorts and long socks of English prep-school pupils, are killed and dismembered by Hecuba and dumped into plastic bags, before she then buries her own children. Claire Higgins, who won an Olivier award for this performance, played the role of Hecuba "with restraint as well as rage;" instead of the usual Hecuba who unravels into madness, Higgins offered an interpretation in which Hecuba remains rational and confident that she has served justice on her aggressor.⁷³ As women increasingly enter the arena of armed conflict as combatants and suicide bombers, Euripides' *Hecuba* and its exploration of female violent responses to violence garners attention alongside his *Trojan Women* and its portrayal of women as victims of war.

Attempts to draw explicit connections to contemporary events can, however, draw resistance. Several reviews of the 2005 Royal Shakespeare Company production faulted it for heavy-handed references to the Iraq War, both in Tony Harrison's translation and in its staging (e.g., army tents labeled UK and US, and "a George Dubya accent" for Odysseus).⁷⁴ So too the premise presented in the program of the 1987 production at the Powerhouse Theater in Santa Monica directed by Lamis Khalaf drew criticism. In it, Khalaf, of Syro-Palestinian descent, invited the audience to imagine:

Suppose that the Greeks are Israelis, that the Trojans are Palestinians, that the Thracians are on of the clashing political factions in Lebanon . . . Suppose that the gods are the super powers (Europe—early in the century, the United States and the Soviet Union—now) . . . Now watch and hear the story that Euripides tells, the story of Hecuba . . .

This impulse to prime the audience is nothing new in theatre: Aristotle (*Poetics* 1461b) criticized the new wave of actors who "think the audience won't understand something unless they themselves convey it." To engage viewers is to allow them the space to respond, both cognitively and emotionally, to the plot for themselves. Praised by reviewers in this regard was the 1995 production of RO Theater in Rotterdam, directed by Peter de Baan, in which the staging's powerful visuals combined with rich character interpretations and a bleak yet sympathetic exploration of the human condition.⁷⁵

73 Stothard (2004).

74 Nilan (2005); Clapp (2005). For a range of assessments of the production, see Hartigan (1995) 140–1.

75 Verbeeten (1995); Goetsch (1995).

This is not to say that topicality is in itself a problem. Indeed, some of the most well-received stagings of *Hecuba* seem to be those in which its topics rub closest to the bone. So the 1995 and 1998 productions directed by the American theatre director and playwright Carey Elizabeth Perloff and starring Olympia Dukakis as Hecuba were notable in part because the play, and its chorus, a women's vocal ensemble (КИТКА) specializing in Eastern European music, reminded its US audiences of the horrors of the wars in Bosnia and Kosovo respectively, in which the US had become enmeshed. Even more intense was the performance of *Hecuba* in war-torn Dubrovnik in summer 1991, directed by the Croatian theatre director Ivica Boban. The reviewer describes the chorus as speaking "with pointedly local accents" as they performed "while Dubrovnik was still under fire", and ends with the question, "How do you live in a seismic region?"⁷⁶ In the African Continuum Theater Company's 1998 staging of *Hecuba* in Washington DC, directed by Jennifer Nelson, the harmonic of slavery resonated strongly, with the incorporation of African-American spirituals clearly activating proximal associations.⁷⁷

Perhaps most interesting in this regard was the 1998 site-specific performance, *Hécuba*, on the island of Tabarca, a protected marine reserve, near Alicante, Spain, directed by Margarita Borja. Set in a desolate and cactus-ridden landscape that echoed the remoteness of the play's original setting on the Chersonese peninsula, its main stage action took place on the Torre de San Jose, a former prison and site of the summary execution in 1838 of 19 supporters of Carlos V. Its opening sequence presented the naked body of Polydorus displayed at the top of the tower as an ominous figure in black looked on. Over the course of the performance, its steps were stained with the blood of those killed as the wind carried off the laments of their loved ones.⁷⁸ Agamemnon's final words, ordering Polymestor dragged away, silenced and cast off on a desert island (Euripides, *Hecuba* 1282–6) resonated with the performance context.

Unlike many Greek tragedies which inspire set designs featuring grandiose palace facades, most performances of *Hecuba* are set against a barren backdrop, an emptiness rather than a structure. No monumental architecture here, just a bleak landscape with an internment camp, the tents or shacks housing the Trojan prisoners. On this stripped-down stage, the few stage properties present receive added attention. A reviewer remarked of the 1989 Shoestring *Ekave* ("Hecuba") in Oxford, directed by Dennis Douglas, "the stage pictures stayed in mind long after the words. One of the most telling, in a play soaked

76 Johnson (1992).

77 Kaufman (1998); Horwitz (1998); Foley (2015) 85–6.

78 Galiana (1998).

in sea imagery, was the sight of Ekave kneeling beside a dead Polydorus created from ropes, sail and netting.⁷⁹ The 1996 Oxford Classical Drama Society production by David Raeburn, performed in Greek, punctuated a bare stage with dead trees; in the foreground a simple altar, the focus of the stage action; in the background the large sails of the Greek ships.⁸⁰ The 2000 production, also in Greek, at Barnard College of Columbia University, New York, directed by Devon Harlow, used A-frame ladders scattered across the stage as a polyvalent stage device, representing the tents and serving as a platform from which characters spoke.

An effective marriage of set design and symbolism was achieved in the *Hecuba* performed in 2006 at the Experimental Theater Wing of New York University, directed by Magdalena Zira. The acting took place in front of makeshift tents, a patchwork of cardboard and tarpaulin that comprised the prison camp. On a wall hung photos of loved ones dead or missing in action. These Hecuba addressed, barefoot and wearing a simple smock and pantaloons indistinguishable from those of her daughter and fellow prisoners. Odysseus, clad in a great coat with its collar turned up, remained aloof, but for flashes of violence, such as when he grabbed Hecuba by the cheeks or snatched the photos from the wall and ripped them up, exclaiming “we also have lost!” At the center of the backdrop of the large acting space, a wide and steep stepped ramp rose up instead of a *skene* door, down which the male characters strode and up which they subsequently disappeared, closing off access behind them with a chain, while the women emerged from their shacks arrayed on one side, off kilter, stooping to enter and exit. When Agamemnon entered in an immaculate white suit with Nehru jacket, the chorus punctuated Hecuba’s outbursts by dashing stones against each other in percussive unison, providing a startling score for her rage and a foreshadowing of their active participation. The ghost of Polydorus observed as his sister was sacrificed on a wooden crate.

The gendering of violence is a key interest of *Hecuba*. After being a victim of male violence for much of the play, Hecuba ends up reversing the roles, assuming the role of avenger (as Electra fantasizes doing in Sophocles’ play) only after her last male relative, Polydorus, is killed. In ancient drama, an all-male cast played all parts, including the chorus. The 2004 touring production by Foursight Theatre, directed by the British artistic director Naomi Cooke, reversed ancient practice with its all-female cast. Each of the six chorus women also played a character role, carrying out their costume changes on stage. Having female actors playing male characters added an interesting

79 Ranger (1989).

80 Bardel (1996).

overlay, especially to the dismissive comments of Agamemnon (“And how will *women* overpower men?” l. 883; “But I have not much regard for women” l. 885) and the outraged and pained outbursts of Polymestor (“I have been ruined by *women!*” l. 1095), whose earlier coarse male braggadocio had been masterfully conveyed by Adi Lerer. In the director’s notes, Naomi Cooke explains that the women of the play, played by a multicultural cast, “carry the historical and global accumulation of injustices wrought on all.” Some of these women are seen on stage; but there are other, unseen women. It is they who carry out the killings and the blinding off stage, not Hecuba or the chorus members. The audience experiences their presence through a superimposed recorded soundtrack of female voices. Their whispers are first heard as Hecuba proposes her revenge to Agamemnon, as if the impulse for this terrible act comes from an outside source, and swell to a riotous crescendo at the moment of violence.⁸¹

In Athenian tragedy, three male actors played all the speaking character roles, and the deuteragonist and tritagonist took on multiple roles. This tradition, albeit now with female actors alongside male, is continued in the regular masked performances at Randolph College. In the 2010 Randolph Greek Play production of *Hecuba*, directed by Amy Cohen, the actress playing Polyxena (Laura Shearer) also played Talythbius, who describes the killing of Polyxena in his messenger speech. This doubling added another level of complexity and poignancy to the reporting of her dying words and recreation of her final acts.⁸² A 2010 production of John Harrison’s translation by the Open Stage Company directed by Harrison himself and performed at the Stahl Theatre, Oundle and the Auden Theatre, Holt in the UK, had the spirits of the

81 Dorinda Hulton, dramaturg for the production, makes this connection explicit in her notes to the company, which are included in the DVD of the production available through www.arts-archives.org: “The Unseen Women are the accomplices of Hecuba and perpetrators of violence. Perhaps as ‘characters’ they could be associated with the ‘spirit’ (721) that the Chorus speak of, which bears down on Hecuba. This spirit is possibly the same as the one Hecuba calls the ‘avenging fiend’ that inspires her lamentation when she sees her dead son. Perhaps, also, the entry of the ‘avenging fiend’ into Hecuba (721) could be a way of understanding the radical transformation in her character between that of a grieving mother into that of a woman capable of wreaking indiscriminate vengeance upon both the guilty and the innocent.”

82 The doubling of parts in Athenian tragedy and in her reperformances of it was the subject of a paper by Amy Cohen (“Doubling in Practice and Pedagogy”) at the 2015 Society for Classical Studies conference, in which she used her *Hecuba* production as a case study and made this point. The script by Jay Kardan and Laura-Gray Street, and videos of the performance, keynote lecture by Kenneth Reckford, and talkback led by Mary-Kay Gamel are available online in volume 8 of *Didaskalia*, www.didaskalia.net/issues/8/index.html.

dead Polydorus and Polyxena represented musically by the off-stage singing of professional vocalists.

Not surprisingly, *Hecuba* has been performed alongside *Trojan Women*, as in the 1996 production by the St Louis Shakespeare Company directed by Donna Northcott. New plays drawing on the two have also been composed.⁸³ *Trojan Barbie*, by the Australian playwright Christine Evans, was premiered at the American Repertory Theatre in Boston in 2009, and garnered Evans several awards. Lotte, an English tourist visiting the site of Troy on a singles tour who by profession repairs dolls, finds herself trapped in the Greek prisoner of war camp alongside Hecuba, Polly X (also known as Polly Xena), Cassandra and Andromache. Her outrage at her mistreatment provides a modern viewpoint on the events unfolding.⁸⁴ Polly X is a rebellious and ingenuous teenager who decries her mother's defeatism and wants to make modern art out of dismembered Barbie dolls. Talthybius skirts around Polly X's fate as he tells her mother "Polly X is . . . taken care of. Her problems are over; she's—she'll be an attendant. In the Achilles museum gift shop."⁸⁵ En route to her sacrifice, Polly X is taken on a detour by her two guards to the abandoned zoo. Tension mounts as they ply her with beer and play with her in a scene in which, not unlike Yann Martel's *Life of Pi*, the human characters' impulses and emotions are projected onto the zoo's mangy and ravenous tiger, while Polly X innocently makes a necklace out of beer bottle tops. Her death is later reported by Andromache, a squalid vignette in which the drunken teenager "tore her shirt open to the waist stretched up, bare breasted" and yelled a defiant obscenity at her violators (Euripides, *Hecuba* 548–9, 558–60).⁸⁶ At the end of the play, Lotte, back home safe and sound, encounters Hecuba as a baglady searching for her baby Astyanax: "I followed the trail! I survived the desert, then the sea. I clawed my way up the mast and howled like a dog for my babies . . . I refuse to die, before I've buried them. GIVE ME MY CHILDREN'S BODIES!"⁸⁷ The play closes as Polly X, in a nightmarish tableau dismissed by the modern characters in the play as

83 These include *After Troy* by Glynn Maxwell, a former student of Derek Walcott. *After Troy* premiered at the Oxford Playhouse in 2011 in a touring production by the Lifeblood Theatre Company directed by Alex Clifton.

84 As Amy Seham writes (in the director's notes for her 2013 production at Gustavus Adolphus College, Saint Peter, Minnesota), "Lotte's naiveté helps us see the distance we put between ourselves and the victims of distant wars, and our ignorance of the human cost of conflict."

85 Evans (2010) 20.

86 Evans (2010) 53.

87 Evans (2010) 66.