'Memory Wrapped Round a Corpse'

A Cultural History of English

Hecubas

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is entirely my own work and that neither the thesis nor any part of it has been submitted for a degree at any other university.

Three modern theatre productions of Euripides' *Hecuba*, by the Donmar Warehouse (2004), Foursight Theatre (2004) and the Royal Shakespeare Company (2005), formed the subject of a dissertation – 'The Pitiless Gaze: Euripides' *Hecuba* and the War on Terror' – which constituted half of my Master of Arts degree (awarded by the University of Warwick in 2005). I analyse these three productions in chapter one of this doctoral thesis but to a different purpose; any reproduction of material from the MA is clearly indicated.

ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates "English Hecubas" as they appear in the recurring stories my culture tells itself about legendary Troy. Analysing a necessarily select number of Hecubas, spanning from the twelfth to the twenty-first century, I uncover a history of intricate cultural negotiations as theatre, literature and pedagogy attempt to domesticate the grief-stricken Trojan queen and recruit the classical past into the service of an ever-changing English present.

My interest lies in the performative potential of texts. I therefore consider the reception of English Hecubas as they are culturally activated, looking to text-books *and* classrooms, play-texts and theatres, print material and their readerships, insisting that schoolmasters, pupils, actors, authors, spectators and readers remain visible as the creators of meaning.

Adopting 'Presentism' (as developed by Terence Hawkes) as my theoretical approach, the thesis is structured achronologically. This configuration gestures toward a more synchronic reading of Hecuba, replicating twenty-first century encounters with ancient mythological characters, by starting with our present "situatedness" yet juggling accumulations of history gathered with each prior acculturation.

Classical Hecubas (of Homer's *Iliad*, Euripides' *Hecuba* and *Trojan Women*, Virgil's *Aeneid*, Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Seneca's *Troas*), entered England in the Renaissance via the imported texts and tenets of continental humanism. Pre-existing Hecubas of England's oral tradition, medieval romance epics and indigenous *Troynovant* myths were forced into dialogue with their long-lost textual origins. This clash of Hecubas occurred within a crisis of mourning, resulting from the Reformation's radical alteration of English funeral rites, which left maternal grief a culturally contentious site of anxiety. Thus, within its eight-hundred year span, the thesis repeatedly returns to the Renaissance to investigate the origins of the modern English Hecubas with which I begin.

Hecuba's grief can lead her to gouge out men's eyeballs and murder their sons; tactics of accommodation and assimilation have been necessary to render this potentially violent 'alien' valuable within England's cultural lexicon. By exposing the systemic marginalisation, mitigation, suppression and sublimation of Hecuba's maternal grief and fury, this study hopes to recuperate the value of Hecuba's essential mourning work.

PREFATORY NOTE

As my interest lies in manifestations of the Trojan queen in England I refer throughout to 'Hecuba', the most common English spelling of the character also known as Ekavi, Ekave, Hecabe or Hekabe; although variations are of course retained in any quotations. Accordingly I have adopted the most prevalent Anglicisation of names for all mythological characters referred to within this thesis.

Extant manuscripts containing Seneca's *Trojan Women* record the tragedy under both a singular and plural title, *Troades* and *Troas*. To avoid confusion with Euripides' *Trojan Women* Seneca's play will be referred to throughout this thesis by its singular Latin title, *Troas*, since this was the only title known to Elizabethan translators.

To complement my methodology I have endeavoured to use English translations of ancient Greek and Roman texts which are specific to each time-period being discussed. Thus, no single translation is used as a master or key edition; the various translations are clearly referenced.

The title of my thesis references the following exchange in scene seven of Christine Evans' *Trojan Barbie*: *a car crash encounter with Euripides' Trojan Women* (2007), which was written and staged in response to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan:

> **CLEA**   We don't belong anywhere
>
> **ESME**   Not since our city burned –
>
> **CLEA & ESME**   – and the flags all got torn up for bandages.
>
> **HECUBA**   Flags are always bandages. They end up like us:
> memory wrapped round a corpse.

Prologue: Introduction and Methodology

1. Songs of Rage

> *μῆνιν ἄειδε θεά Πηληϊάδεω…*
> Rage, Goddess, sing of the rage…   Homer, *Iliad*, 1.1

The first word of the opening line in the oldest surviving story of western literature is '*μῆνιν*' (*mēnin*): indignant rage, black wrath, murderous fury.[1] The critical commentary surrounding Homer's founding text has habitually focused on this famous opening line, routinely debating the intricacies of the rage felt by Greece's most fearsome warrior, Achilles; a rage which not only 'costs the Achaeans countless losses' (1.2) but also drives him to leave 'their bodies [as] carrion, / feasts for the dogs and birds' (1.4-5). It is far less frequently remarked, however, that the last book of Homer's *Iliad* is dominated not with the rage of Achilles but with the rage of grieving women, with the murderous fury of a mother mourning for the mutilated corpse of her son: 'Oh would to god / That I could sink my teeth in [Achilles'] liver, eat him raw! / That would avenge what he has done to Hector' (24.252-54). In subsequent narratives this mother, Hecuba, Queen of Troy, will go on to witness the slaughter of her remaining children, her grandson and her husband; she will see her city burnt to the ground and her people massacred or brutalised and enslaved by the victorious Greek army. In the moment when Homer, Euripides, Seneca, Virgil and Ovid turn their attention to this woman – in the moment, that is, when Hecuba becomes visible within what will come to be regarded as the "classic" founding narratives of

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[1] Homer, *The Iliad*, trans. by Robert Fagles (London & New York: Penguin, 1990). Unless otherwise stated all quotations from *The Iliad* in this introduction are taken from Fagles' translation; book and line numbers are referenced parenthetically.

western culture – she is systematically stripped of all that constitutes her identity as queen, mother, wife and Trojan. Hecuba becomes a paradoxical embodiment of absence; all that remains to define the fallen queen is her grief for that which has been lost and the anger this grief provokes: an indignant rage, a black wrath, a murderous fury, a 'sorrow that does not forget and feeds on itself'.[2]

Although set in the aftermath of Troy's destruction, Euripides' two Hecuba tragedies, *Hecuba* and *Trojan Women*, thematically pick up where Homer left off with the women of Troy 'still pouring on their moans' (24.703),[3] instructed by Hecuba in the physical and verbal rituals of mourning as they await transportation to Greece. In accordance with traditional Greek mourning practices, Hecuba teaches the women to express their sorrow and anger through keening, by tearing at their hair and alternately clawing the bloodstained ash-covered earth that was Troy and at the flesh of their own cheeks and breasts. These blackened, bloodied and wretched war trophies, Hecuba chief amongst them, must now carry the weight of Troy's dead, digging the ashes of their loved ones and their city into their skin as they recite personal remembrances. Seneca's amalgamation of Euripides' two plays, in his own tragedy *Troas*, sets these scenes of communal mourning at Hector's shrine, underscoring the continuity with the close of the *Iliad*; and it is from this shrine that the Hecuba of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* desperately snatches at 'a crumb of Hector's dust', digging it into 'her bosom bare' (13.513, 512), as her new master Ulysses (Odysseus) drags

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[2] Nicole Loraux, *Mothers in Mourning*, trans. by Corinne Pache (Ithaca & London: Cornell UP, 1998), p.44.

[3] Homer, *The Iliad*, trans. by George Chapman (1610), in *Chapman's Homer: The Iliad and the Odyssey* (Ware: Wordsworth Classics, 2002), pp.1-411 (p.409).

her away from Troy.[4] The fate that now awaits Hecuba and the Trojan women is bleakly imagined by Euripides' chorus:

> in a foreign country,
> Bearing the name of slave,
> Transplanted far from Asia
> Into a European home,
> [living] the life of the dead in Hades (ll.480-83)[5]

It is the aim of this thesis to explore the notion of this 'transplanted […] life' in a 'European home' by investigating the appropriation and assimilation of the grief-stricken Hecuba into England's cultural landscape and 'social imaginaries'.[6] My interest in Hecuba's English "afterlife" began in 2004 when an unprecedented spate of productions of Euripides' *Hecuba* suddenly rendered the Trojan queen a strikingly ubiquitous presence within the nation's theatres. Taken as a collective response to the recent invasion of Iraq, these productions saw Euripides' tragedy proclaimed 'the anti-war play of the season'.[7] However whilst the popularity of the play *Hecuba* was unprecedented, the deployment of the figure of Hecuba as a theatrical response to war was already well established. Between 1913 and 1915, and again in the 1920s and 1930s, Euripides' *Trojan Women* overwhelmingly dominated England's theatrical response to the threat and outbreak of the two world wars, repeatedly deployed in huge-scale productions to raise awareness of

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[4] *Shakespeare's Ovid: Being Arthur Golding's Translation of the Metamorphoses* (1567), ed. by W.H.D. Rouse (London: Centaur Press, 1961).

[5] *Hecabe*, in *Medea and Other Plays*, trans. by Philip Vellacott (London: Penguin, 1963), pp.63-103.

[6] I am follow the definition of social imaginaries outlined by Charles Taylor, in *Modern Social Imaginaries* (2004), as that by which 'ordinary people' 'imagine their social existence' 'in images, stories, and legends'; thus 'the social imaginary is that common understanding that makes possible common practices and a widely shared sense of legitimacy'; qtd. in Alan Shepard and Stephen D. Powell, 'Introduction', in *Fantasies of Troy: Classical Tales and the Social Imaginary in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. by Alan Shepard and Stephen D. Powell (Toronto: CRRS, 2004), pp.1-12 (p.2).

[7] Peter Stothard, 'Hit me here, and here, and here', *TLS*, 15 April 2005, <http://entertainment.timesonline.co.uk/tol/arts_and_entertainment/the_tls/Subscriber_Archive/Performing_Arts_Archive/article6783634.ece> [22 May 2011].

female and child suffering, to raise the profile of the newly formed League of

Nations and to lobby against the inter-war arms race.[8] Such prominence

inevitably drew the attention of the press and, although the efficacy of these

productions was publically challenged, *Trojan Women* became dubbed 'The

World's Greatest Peace Play'.[9] But how did the Trojan queen of classical Greek

mythology come to occupy such a prestigious position in the repertoire of

modern English theatre? How did Hecuba, so far from her imagined home in

legendary Troy and her literary origins in ancient Greece, first enter into and then

develop within England's cultural lexicon? What can the changing fortunes of

the two types of Hecuba established by Euripides – one sorrowful, stoic,

ultimately driven to attempt suicide; the other vengeful and murderous – reveal

about both the relationship England continually constructs with the classical past

and the embedded cultural ideologies which condition attitudes towards war,

women, death, mourning, revenge, female violence, and the theatre? These are

the questions, prompted by Hecuba's ubiquity in 2004, which first motivated this

study and now run as an undercurrent throughout the following work.

     The subject of this thesis is, then, the notion of "English Hecubas" as they

appear in the stories that my culture has repeatedly told itself about Troy. In

tracing this specific strand of Hecuba's post-classical afterlife, I aim to

investigate the cultural work that this ancient "import" has been called upon to

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[8] For details of the extensive Anglo-American tours of Euripides' *Trojan Women* which established its reputation as an exemplary peace-play, see: Karelisa V. Hartigan, *Greek Tragedy on the American Stage: Ancient Drama in the Commercial Theater, 1882-1994* (Westport & London: Greenwood Press, 1995), pp.15-20; Fiona Macintosh, 'Tragedy in Performance: Nineteenth- and Twentieth Century Productions', in *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy*, ed. by P.E. Easterling (Cambridge: CUP, 1997), pp.284-324 (pp.302-04); and Avery Willis, 'Euripides' *Trojan Women*: A 20th Century War Play in Performance', (unpublished doctoral thesis, Oxford University, 2005), pp.20-94.

[9] The description is employed by American director Maurice Browne (in his autobiography *Too Late to Lament*) in relation to his vast touring production of *Trojan Women* in 1915, qtd. in Hartigan (as in n.8 above), p.18.

perform in my "alien" culture. Analysing a necessarily select number of English

Hecubas, which date from c.1190 to the present-day, I encounter a long history

of intricate cultural negotiations, uncovering not only a recurring compulsion to

recall this archetypal grieving mother but also a systemic process of

marginalisation, mitigation, suppression and sublimation operating as theatre,

literature and the academy attempt to domesticate the barbarian queen and recruit

the classical past into the service of the ever-changing English present. For whilst

Hecuba and Troy provide the subject-matter for these stories they are also of

course stories about ourselves, and each telling further relates another symbiotic

story about England's perception of itself in relation to an imagined memory of

legendary Troy, ancient Greece and classical Rome.

I refer throughout the work to England and English, rather than either

Great Britain or the United Kingdom, not to signal any privileging of a notion of

English culture distinct from its neighbours but to acknowledge the fact that the

vast majority of the Hecuba-texts that will be discussed explicitly consider

themselves to be distinctly English cultural artefacts: not only written, read,

spoken and heard in the English language but also self-consciously engaged in

shaping the notion of "England" and "Englishness". Many of my Hecubas pre-

date the Act of Union in 1707. The earliest Hecuba narratives persistently

express a desire to use classical subject-matter to elevate the literary capabilities

of 'our englishe toong' (110) to enable it to rival the eloquence of French and

Latin.[10] The educational Hecubas included in school curricula from the

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[10] Jasper Heywood, 'To the Reader', in *The Sixt Tragedie of the Most Graue and Prudent Author Lucius, Anneus, Seneca, entituled* <u>*Troas*</u>, trans. by Jasper Heywood (London: Richard Tottyll, Sign of the Hand and Star, 1559). All quotations from Heywood's translation of Seneca's *Troas* in this thesis are taken from the 1963 Kraus reprint of *Jasper Heywood and his Translations of Seneca's* <u>*Troas,*</u> <u>*Thyestes*</u> *and* <u>*Hercules*</u> <u>*Furens, edited from Octavos of 1559, 1560 and 1561*</u>, ed.

Renaissance to the nineteenth-century were an integral part of a self-conscious

mission to mould schoolboys into a class of learned (and courageous) gentlemen

destined to serve the political interests of England. Many of my Hecubas

emanate specifically from within England's seat of power, London, and project

the city's (ever-changing) sense of nationhood onto the rest of the country. With

the expansion of the British Empire this projection of an ideologically driven

national identity from Centre to Periphery spread across the globe; culturally

underpinning the 'Right to Rule' a propagandistic conception of great Britishness

was fostered in England's collective consciousness and exported to and imposed

on neighbouring and far flung colonial territories alike. That the English-British

should see themselves as the rightful and indeed natural heirs of Ancient Greece

was integral to this mythopoetic justification of Empire; the Hecubas dating from

this period thus often function as cultural weapons ideologically underpinning

the colonial mindset.[11]

The stories of Hecuba and Troy which England tells itself are transmitted

via both text and performance. As my own interests lie in the performative

by H. De Vocht (Louvian: A. Uystpruyst, 1913), reprint (Vaduz: Kraus, 1963), pp.1-86. All quotations will be referenced parenthetically with line numbers relating to this edition.

[11] The study of the complicated relationship between Englishness, Britishness and Empire and the conceptual elisions between them has emerged as a prolific academic field in its own right and my brief discussion here is guilty of oversimplification (by necessity of its brevity). The issues at stake are discussed in Graham MacPhee's and Prem Poddar's (eds.), *Empire and After: Englishness in Postcolonial Perspective* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010); see also: Linda Colley, *Britons: forging the nation 1707-1837* (London: Yale UP, 1992) and Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities: reflections on the origins and spread of nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983). More specifically, Neville Meaney discusses the concept of Britishness and its function in colonial territories in 'Britishness and Australia: some reflections', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 31:2 (2003), 121-35. Several scholars have, however, now begun to contest the viability of the conglomerate British identity by focussing upon the role of Scottish and Welsh identities at work in the Empire, see for example: Elizabeth Buettner, 'Haggis in the Raj: private and public celebrations of Scottishness in late imperial India', *Scottish Historical Review*, 81:2 (2002), 212-39; or John Mackenzie and Nigel R. Dalziel, *The Scots in South Africa: ethnicity, identity, gender and race, 1772-1914* (Manchester: MUP, 2007); while Jennifer Ridden's work has begun to question the extent to which Britishness can be seen simply as the imposition of Englishness onto colonial peripheries by focussing specifically on Ireland; see for example: 'Britishness as an imperial and diasporic identity: Irish elite perspectives, c.1820-1870's', in Peter Gray ed., *Victoria's Ireland? Irishness and Britishness, 1837-1901* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), pp.88-105.

potential of texts, the thesis will not only consider anglicised retellings and re-enactments of Hecuba's ancient Graeco-Roman narratives, but also the reception of, and reaction to, English Hecubas as they are culturally activated. Thus I turn my attention to text-books and classrooms, to play-texts and theatres, to print material and both their implied and actual readership, insisting that the schoolmasters, schoolchildren, students, actors, authors, spectators and readers remain visible as the creators of meaning.

Of major importance to this thesis are the socio-cultural ideologies concerning grief and mourning rituals. Nicole Loraux's *Mothers in Mourning* enabled me to contextualise Hecuba's grief within classical Greece; Katharine Goodland's *Female Mourning and Tragedy in Medieval and Renaissance English Drama* provided insight into the mourning crisis of post-Reformation England, while Gail Holst-Warhaft's *The Cue for Passion: Grief and its Political Uses* proved invaluable for contextualising notions of grief in the various subsequent time-periods in which Hecuba has been invoked.[12] The ancient mourning rites of keening women raking their skin, beating their breasts and tearing their hair (still to be found across parts of Greece and the Middle-East), used to be common practice throughout mainland Europe; in England these rites were officially banned by the Reformation but took centuries to die out completely. Such rituals, or indeed the contemporary traditions of wearing black, forming a procession behind the coffin, laying wreaths, singing hymns and reciting prayers or poems, clearly demonstrate that '[m]ourning is, of its nature,

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[12] Loraux (as in n.2 p.10); Goodland, *Female Mourning and Tragedy in Medieval and Renaissance English Drama: From the Raising of Lazarus to King Lear* (Aldershot & Burlington: Ashgate, 2005); Holst-Warhaft, *The Cue for Passion: Grief and its Political Uses* (Cambridge MA & London: Harvard UP, 2000).

theatrical'.[13] Although now 'replaced by clergy, by funeral officials, and by

professional counsellors and healers', across the centuries and across numerous

different cultures, tribes and civilisations, it is to the deceased's closest female

kin that the responsibility of mourning has traditionally fallen; it is women, and

particularly mothers, who are 'thought of as having a natural affinity for

conducting the rituals of death'.[14] This perceived affinity stems, as Goodland

notes, from women's 'biological role as life-givers' which is deemed to render

their laments more efficacious as they are biologically in tune 'with the natural

and supernatural cycles of death and birth'.[15] The presumed biological affinity

manifests itself within myth and the metaphors that structure our thinking:

burials are persistently figured, even after the establishment of a patriarchal

monotheism, as a return home – to the womb of Mother Earth or the motherland.

As Goodland explains, in 'clan-centred, oral cultures women's ritual

laments preserve the memory of the dead, beginning as soon as death occurs and

continuing at set intervals long after internment, often for several generations'.[16]

In Pagan Greece and Rome the performance of appropriate mourning rituals was

essential for allowing the deceased's shade to pass into the afterlife, and 'Greek

tradition unanimously describes [mothers] as the keepers of memory'.[17] In

Catholicism, requiescat and chantry prayers for the dead had the power to

shorten a soul's time in purgatory. In English folklore apt memorial can release

an unappeased ghost haunting the earth. In sociological terms, the 'rites of

mourning, whether generated from within or imposed from above, are a society's

means of performing and containing' the volatile and potentially dangerous

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[13] Holst-Warhaft, *Cue for Passion*, p.1.
[14] *Ibid*. p.29.
[15] Gooodland, *Female Mourning*, p.10.
[16] *Ibid*. p.8.
[17] Loraux (as in n.2 p.10), p.16.

'passion of grief'; in short, funeral rituals stop the 'chaos of death and mourning'

from 'spill[ing] over into the society at large and threaten[ing] its stability'.[18]

The performance of female grief is, then, vital to appease the dead but also

essential to maintain the social stability of the living.

It is precisely because female grief (like female fertility) plays such a

critical role in society that it acts as a source of cultural anxiety. Female grief is

persistently suspected in patriarchal discourse of being either a manipulative and

merely superficial performance or a hysterical outburst verging on lunacy, with

both considered to stem from the morally suspect and debile female mind and/or

the frailty of female flesh. Adrienne Rich states, '[i]n the interstices of language

lie powerful secrets of the culture',[19] and, as Dympna Callaghan observes, the

etymology of *hysteria* leads us not only back to the Greek for 'womb' (*hyster*)

but a further 'etymological pun' with the Greek for 'actor' (*histriones*).[20]

Necessary but necessarily performative, the mourning work undertaken by

women is, as Goodland explains, persistently construed as something 'excessive

yet inadequate, shunned and feared, yet necessary and efficacious'.[21] Thus the

figure of grief-stricken Hecuba, attempting to mourn her family appropriately

and release their shades from 'the shadowy spaces' (ll.1081-82),[22] yet constantly

interrupted by her captors and curtailed by the material conditions of her

enslavement, is inescapably embedded within a site of intense cultural anxiety

and ambivalence.

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[18] Holst-Warhaft, *Cue for Passion* (as in n.12 p.15), p.6.
[19] *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution* (London: Virago, 1977), p.249.
[20] *Shakespeare Without Women: Representing Gender and Race on the Renaissance Stage* (London & New York: Routledge, 2000), p.162.
[21] Goodland (as in n.12 p.15), p.1.
[22] Euripides, *The Women of Troy*, in *The <u>Bacchae</u> and Other Plays*, trans. by Philip Vellacott (London: Penguin, 1973), pp.89-133.

In the epic tales 'Of arms, and of the man' (1.1),[23] male warriors secure their heroic fame (κλέος or *kleos*) in acts of violence which tend to come at the price of female grief. Hecuba's tragedy is the necessary corollary to Achilles' or Aeneas' heroic epic. Yet, consistently attributed with the power to melt, drown or dissolve heroic masculinities, female grief, by very definition an 'unmanly grief' (*Hamlet* 1.2.94), is felt as a contagious and emasculating force. Indeed, grief is habitually invested with the power to subvert gender identities; not only felt to threaten the hero's masculinity but also capable of converting women into Furies, wild and wilful, driven to a madness that endows them with both a physical strength and a blood-lust considered unnatural to their sex. While Achilles' heroic rage leads him to clash with idealised codes of conduct, provoking him to overstep the limits of humanity, it is at least confined within the context of war. His 'berserker' rage is contextually contained and comprehendible, desirable even.[24] In contrast, however, the expression of female grief is ritualistically repetitive and the fury which fuels it, if left unappeased, is perpetual. Refusing to cease with the battle, female lamentation asserts the continuance of past violence, the persistence of a memory of the dead which can disrupt and subvert the official narrative composed by history's victors and, crucially, keeps alive the motivation for violent acts of reprisal. The result is a historically recurring clash between mourning communities and those in power for governance over the performance of female grief. State legislation, dating as far back as Solon in sixth-century BCE Athens, has habitually attempted to restrict and restructure women's 'performance of pain' in order to curtail its

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[23] Virgil, *Aeneid*, trans. by David West (London: Penguin, 2003).

[24] For a study of Achilles' 'berserker' rage see Jonathan Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character* (New York, London, Toronto & Sydney: Scribner, 2003).

'creation of a communal, as distinct from official, truth'.[25] It is no coincidence, as Holst-Warhaft argues, drawing on the groundbreaking work of Margaret Alexiou, that Solon's 'restrictions on female mourning occur at the same time as new [hero worshipping] cults offer promises of rewards for dying in the service of the [Athenian] state'.[26] So, as King Lear suspects centuries later, women's tears are indeed 'women's weapons' (2.2.466), and their inclusion in patriarchal narratives, even as a marginal(ised) or allusive presence, is disruptive.[27] Hecuba's tears speak, even when Hecuba does not, of female agency and persuasive power, of the potential for violence and fury, and the existence of an alternative, subversive, perspective to the patriarchal hegemony.

Thus, this study considers each cultural manifestation of Hecuba to be a potential "song of rage" that can oppose, by contextualising, the more familiar songs of "heroic" rage exemplified in stories of Achilles, Hector, Troilus, Aeneas and Ulysses. Although overwhelmingly (and in this thesis exclusively) authored by men, this alternative song assumes a female voice in order to harness the powerful associations surrounding maternal grief and fury. Yet, as outlined above, female grief is problematic, provoking ambivalence, anxiety and cynicism; the extent to which this song of maternal rage is welcome by authors - and the manner in which it is received by readers or spectators - varies greatly from text to text and with shifting historical contexts. Thus, for example, the first (known) full-length commercial production of Euripides' *Trojan Women* was not attempted in England until 1905 when it was derisively dismissed by Max

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[25] Holst-Warhaft, *Cue for Passion* (as in n.12 p.15), p.50.
[26] *Dangerous Voices: Women's Laments and Greek Literature* (London & New York: Routledge, 1992), p.116.
[27] *King Lear*, in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. by Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard & Katharine Eisaman Maus (London & New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997), pp.2307-2554.

Beerbohm as 'an afternoon of wailings that wake no echo in us'.[28] Within fifty years, however, the unprecedented industrial scale of both military and civilian casualties in two world wars generated no end of echoes and *Trojan Women* would come to thrive in the theatre as a song of rage for a grieving nation.

This thesis is also an attempt to sing of the rage of Hecuba in order to recuperate the value of her grief and, more particularly, her fury. The thesis is itself a cultural invocation of, and engagement with, the Trojan queen and in offering another retelling of her story it aims to help redress the balance of both a popular culture and a critical commentary that have traditionally focused on the stories of the Trojan War's male warriors, or the female objects of their desire, overlooking and undervaluing Hecuba's essential mourning work.

2. Time and History

Each cultural artefact in which the stories of Hecuba and Troy are revised and retold, including criticism that take these works as their subject, is enmeshed within a complex network of multiple and often ideologically opposed time-frames. The stories of Hecuba, and the critical stories told about these fictional stories, are overwritten, overwrought even, with time and history: the unique historical contexts of the critic, of the reader or spectator, of the author, and of the author's sources are all indivisible from texts which can only convey meaning through the culture-bound and historically situated acts of reading, performing and spectating. The methodological approach which I have adopted for this thesis aims to celebrate and harness, rather than attempt to untangle, this complex web of competing time and history. Adopting the practices of Cultural

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[28] Beerbohm's disparaging review of *The Trojan Women*'s English-language debut at the Royal Court Theatre was printed in the *Saturday Review*, 22 April 1905; qtd. in Michael Billington, 'Terror of Modern Times Sets the Stage for Greek Tragedy', *Guardian*, 19 June 2004, p.3.

Materialism (or New Historicism) this thesis asserts the importance of contextualising each English Hecuba in the material conditions of its own specific historical moment, yet also recognises that Cultural Materialism inevitably constructs only a version, or present-day revision, of that historical moment, a backward projection determined by the critic's own inescapable historical context. Thus, I also adopt the theory of Presentism, as advanced most fully by Terence Hawkes in relation to reading, performing and watching those classics of the early modern period, the works of Shakespeare.[29] In adopting a Presentist approach my thesis insists on the need not only to acknowledge but also productively utilise my own, and all other critics', inescapable '"situatedness" in the present' (p.2). As Hawkes explains, a self-consciously Presentist approach 'revers[es], to some degree, the stratagems of new historicism' by employing 'salient aspects of the present as a crucial trigger for its investigations [...]; it deliberately begins with the material present and allows that to set its interrogative agenda' (p.22). For Hawkes, this 'simply makes overt what covertly happens anyway' (p.22); the 'interrogative agenda' set by Cultural Materialism is exposed as an act of ventriloquism and, transformed into a statement of intent, becomes itself an object of inquiry. Moreover, Presentism is a critical strategy already attuned to the complexities surrounding the fleeting nature of the performative actions with which my thesis intends to engage – be they the reading, reciting, remembering, playing or spectating of Hecuba:

> Placing emphasis on the present can't help but connect fruitfully
> with the current realignment of critical responses that stresses the
> performance of a play as much as its 'reference': that looks at what
> the play does, here and now in the theatre, as well as – or even

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[29] *Shakespeare in the Present* (London & New York: Routledge, 2002). Subsequent references to Hawkes' work in this introduction are referenced parenthetically.

> against – what it says in terms of the world to which its written text
> refers. (p.5)

It is these Presentist concerns which act as an organising principle underpinning

the discontinuous, a-chronic, structure of this thesis. For, rather than offering a

diachronic study of English Hecubas, I offer a personal twenty-first century

encounter with Hecuba, a gesture toward a more synchronic reading which

replicates the manner in which figures of ancient Greek myth must now be

approached: starting with our present "situatedness" yet juggling the inescapable

accumulations of time and history that have built up, over two-thousand years,

with each acculturation of Hecuba.

Thus, in chapter one, I begin this story of Hecuba's English afterlife in

2004 with the stage entrance of the 'Queen of Knives',[30] a thoroughly modern

Euripidean Hecuba who murders prep-school boys amongst the teacups and

tartan blankets of a polite English picnic. This theatre production, at the Donmar

Warehouse London, heralded the striking restoration of Euripides' *Hecuba* to the

English stage, a phenomenon which in turn marked Hecuba's entrance into my

life as a subject for academic inquiry. The sudden surge of *Hecuba*s on the

English stage in the first decade of the twenty-first century is directly attributable

to the ongoing War on Terror, particularly the invasion of Iraq in 2003, with

productions knowingly mounted to engage with, and intervene in, rival

discourses surrounding global acts of violence. In chapter one these English stage

*Hecuba*s are juxtaposed with both media coverage of the "War on Terror" and

another concurrent story of Troy that was being retold in the nation's cinemas by

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[30] The title of Peter Stothard's review of the Donmar Warehouse's production of *Hecuba* dubbed
Clare Higgins' Trojan Queen 'The Queen of Knives', *TLS*, 24 September 2004,
<http://entertainment.timesonline.co.uk/tol/arts_and_entertainment/the_tls/Subscriber_Archive/A
rt___Architecture_Archive/article6753698.ece> [22 May 2011].

Wolfgang Petersen's special-effects laden, multi-million dollar Hollywood

blockbuster, *Troy* (2004). Such analysis leads me to consider an amateur short

film which collapses these three discourses, blending clips and stills from

Petersen's *Troy* and CNN with extracts from Euripides' *Trojan Women*.

Ostensibly a tribute to New York after the terrorist attack of 9/11 this YouTube

video, made by an American high-school student but mounted on the internet and

viewed globally well over 2,696 times (and counting),[31] unwittingly exposes a

cultural need for female lament, replaying in miniature the theatre's compulsion

to stage *Hecuba* in response to the media depiction of the war. These

juxtapositions will reveal how the treatment of the corpse, as well as the

depiction of women who wish to mourn that body, lie at the heart of an

ideological divergence between competing cultural commentaries on war and

how female lament narratives disrupt and suspend purportedly "official"

"historical" narrative.

The spate of newly translated and performed twenty-first century

*Hecuba*s are themselves an example of Presentism in action. Each production

consciously utilised 'salient aspects of the present as a crucial trigger' to set the

'interrogative agenda' in the dialogue they offered a contemporary audience

between Euripides' ancient tragedy and England's contemporary politics. My

work in chapter one aims to interrogate the nature of this dialogue whilst also

admitting that my own historical "situatedness" sees me more-or-less embedded

within the ideological parameters of these productions. Resonating with my own

political leanings these productions, with their homicidal Hecubas of Euripides'

Hecuba, alongside media images of real global violence under the alternate

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[31] 2,696 views correct on 22 May 2011; *Trojan Women and Sept. 11th*, ed. by NerdzRkool, 7 June 2006, YouTube, <www.youtube.com/watch?v=E611Wa9qBCM> [April 24 2007].

labels of war and terrorism, still dominate my conception of Hecuba's character

and thus influence my analysis, informing the questions I will ask of her prior

incarnations. And yet, around 2004, it was clearly one of these prior English

Hecubas who was asking questions of these new Hecubas. The critical

commentary that undertook to review and explain the surge of *Hecuba*s is littered

with Shakespearean echoes as journalists compulsively recited Prince Hamlet's

media-friendly sound-bite on the Trojan queen: 'What's Hecuba to him or he to

Hecuba / That he should weep for her' (2.2.494-95).[32]

The ubiquity of this echo in responses to the twenty-first century *Hecuba*s

exposes another layer to my culture's present situatedness, one informed by a

National Curriculum that enshrines Shakespeare's tragedies whilst excluding the

Graeco-Roman classics, thus causing *Hamlet* to be the majority of people's first,

and sometimes only, contact with the Trojan queen. The remainder of chapter

one jumps briefly back to my own initial contact with Hecuba, in the late 1990s,

as I investigate the manner in which the legacy of *Hamlet* – in the classroom, in

film and in the theatre – has established this touchstone for thinking about

Hecuba. Although Hamlet's words now appear to haunt our conception of

Hecuba, when attention is directly turned to the Player's description of Priam's

wife we find only a deliberately obscure figure, a 'mobled queen,' whom Hamlet

will vehmently dismiss as 'nothing' (2.2.493). Yet through this rhetorical

obscurity *Hamlet*'s Hecuba reinforces the difficulty of pinning down any fixed

notion of the Trojan queen. The moment in which Hecuba is invoked

underscores the dizzying layers of memory, performance and intertextuality

which necessarily constitute her character: she is recalled from Hamlet's memory

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[32] Unless otherwise stated all quotations from *Hamlet* in this thesis are taken from William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, ed. by Ann Thompson and Neil Taylor, Arden 3 (London: Arden Shakespeare, 2006).

of a past performance of a fictional play which 'was never acted, or, if it was, not above once' (2.2.373), which is purportedly a Renaissance dramatisation of Virgil's *Aeneid* (which itself draws explicitly on Euripides' two Hecuba tragedies to provide Aeneas with his memory of the night Troy fell), and thereby gestures towards, but is not, Marlowe's *Dido* (which itself remembers the Trojan queen as a unique blend of Virgil's *Aeneid* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*), and which is being recited by a real player on the Globe's stage playing a fictional player recently arrived in Elsinore.

Refusing to follow Hamlet's dismissal of Hecuba as 'nothing,' chapter two instead sets out to answer the first part of Hamlet's question: 'What's Hecuba?' Following the trail of the classical texts explicitly and implicitly alluded to within the Player's speech, I celebrate the intertextual complexity that is Hecuba. With their reputation as authoritative texts established by the Renaissance, six classical works have come to represent the notion of Hecuba's literary "origins" and "originals": Homer's *Iliad* (750-700 BCE), Euripides' *Hecuba* (c.425 BCE) and *Trojan Women* (c.415 BCE), Virgil's *Aeneid* (c.29-19 BCE), Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (completed sometime before 8 BCE) and Seneca's *Troas* (date unknown; Seneca lived c.4 BCE to 65 CE). In offering a palimpsestic reading of Hecuba from these six classics, this chapter aims to restore Hecuba's lost signifying potential by outlining the tropes and allusive connotations traditionally carried by, and invested in, the figure of the Trojan queen.

Chapter three turns back to Shakespeare in order to return this palimpsestic Hecuba to *Hamlet*, a play littered with 'maimed rites' (5.1.208) and repeated calls for both remembrance and revenge. From Hamlet watching the

Player weep for Hecuba I move to Shakespeare's Lucrece searching a painting of

Troy for 'means to mourn some newer way' (1365) and becoming fixated on the

face of Hecuba.[33] Thus, chapter three offers a reading of *Lucrece* alongside a

second consideration of *Hamlet*'s Hecuba, which restores both *Hamlet* and its

Hecuba to the socio-political context of the Renaissance, particularly the cultural

trauma left by the Reformation's radical alteration of English funeral rites. The

split from Catholicism, which transformed Purgatory into a Papist delusion, not

only outlawed ingrained mourning rituals but also rendered them theologically

futile. In this crisis of mourning, tears, prayers and laments for the dead can no

longer intercede for a departed soul; to express too much grief in howling or self-

flagellation is to insult God's divine will; the funeral is to be led by (male)

religious officials, female family members will weep quietly and, from 1552, the

body of the deceased, which will remain unseen *outside* the church during the

funeral service, is not to be touched by the mourners.[34] Female mourning rituals

of England's recent past, rituals that resonate with those practiced by Hecuba and

the ancient Greeks, were suddenly re-constructed as barbaric, foreign and Other,

as the misguided habits of effeminate Papists and Pagans. As Goodland notes,

'the Virgin Mary's mourning over Christ was the most prevalent and resonant

cultural symbol of mourning prior to the Reformation and the focus of the most

vitriolic assaults by reformers after the eradication of the doctrine of

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[33] All references to Shakespeare's *Lucrece* in this thesis are taken from the edition in *The Norton Shakespeare*, ed. by Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean E. Howard and Katharine Eisaman Maus (London & New York: Norton, 1997), pp.634-82. All quotations are referenced parenthetically with line numbers in accordance with this edition.

[34] See: Goodland (as in n.12 p.15), pp.137-38; Michael Neill, *Issues of Death: Mortality and Identity in English Renaissance Tragedy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), pp.244-47; Natalie Zemon Davis, 'Ghosts, kin, and Progeny', *Daedalus*, 106:2 (1977), 87-114; Clare Gittings, *Death Burial and the Individual in Early modern England* (London: Routledge, 1988), pp.21-31; Scott Wayland, 'Religious Change and the Renaissance Elegy', in *English Literary Renaissance*, 39:3 (2009), 429-59; and Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, c.1400-1580* (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 1992).

Purgatory'.[35] 'Our Lady of Sorrows' was transformed into the 'Whore of Babylon', from a 'powerful focal point for the rituals and emotions of grief' to a scandalous 'incitement to idolatry' whose tears for her son were variously considered disingenuous, blasphemous, inefficacious, seductive, sinful and feminising.[36] Painted *pietas* were painted over, sculptures were smashed, and the Compassion, a lament sung by Mary at the base of the cross in the mystery cycle, was silenced.[37]

Hamlet addresses itself to the question of how to remember and honour the dead appropriately, the correlation between lament and vengeance, the anxiety around female grief as disingenuous performance, and the political dangers of both 'hugger-mugger' internments (4.5.84) and personal remembrances that threaten to undermine the official history peddled by those in power. *Hamlet* is set, and performed, in a post-Reformation society, but the dead King who returns from purgatory with the twin demands of vengeance and remembrance defies this setting. In *Hamlet* the dead are at odds with the living, mourning is a highly politicised act, and at the very centre of the play lies a clichéd, nostalgic, image of a queen – Hecuba – offering, what seems to be, unproblematic female mourning for her King. Yet it is precisely at the moment of lament – with Hecuba's 'instant burst of clamour' (2.2.453) – that officious Polonius stops the performance. Female lament thus remains unheard, a silence compounded in the following Act by the mute gestures of grief mimed by the Player Queen.[38] With the exception of Ophelia, whose madness places the fractured lamentations for her father outside social regulation, female grief in

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[35] Goodland (as in n.12 p.15), pp.1-2.
[36] *Ibid*, p.4.
[37] *Ibid*, pp.1-4. (*Cf.* also Peter Happé, 'Introduction', in *English Mystery Plays* (London: Penguin, 1975), pp.9-35 (p.23)).
[38] *Ibid*, p.23, p.171.

Hamlet is present only as a mock performance and even this is effectively gagged. Yet this partial, heavily mediated, and interrupted depiction of Hecuba is enough to send Hamlet into an agonising interrogation of his own response to the demands of the dead, 'Is it not monstrous…?', and drive him to try desperately to dismiss this Hecuba as an irrelevant 'nothing' (2.2.486, 492).

My third chapter thus determines the unique resonance Hecuba has for *Hamlet*, Hamlet and Lucrece, and, drawing on the work of Goodland, demonstrates that the Renaissance's classical Hecuba did not arrive in an epistemological vacuum but rather emerged from and engaged in the cultural trauma left by the Reformation's mourning crisis and its assault on the figure of the grieving mother. On the one hand Hecuba offers a secular, and therefore theologically and politically safe, manifestation of maternal grief, one that replays and thus can fulfil the cultural work previously performed by the *pieta* whilst still ostensibly asserting the alien and Pagan roots of such practices. On the other hand, however, Hecuba's grief is so closely reminiscent of the suppressed *pieta* that it can only re-site, as it recites, the cultural anxiety surrounding the performance of female grief.

Yet what precisely is meant by Hecuba's "arrival" in English culture? How does Hecuba find herself incorporated in the vocabulary of grief learnt by English Renaissance authors? What, in other words, is Hecuba to Shakespeare? Hamlet's University, Wittenberg, was known as a centre of educational (as well as religious reform) which insisted upon the pedagogical value of the ancient Greek and Roman texts. Was it at Wittenberg that Hamlet first heard the Player recite 'Aeneas' tale to Dido'? It was certainly where Philip Melanchthon, in real life, mounted one of the first and most influential post-classical productions of

Euripides' *Hecuba* (c.1525) and lectured not only on the play but also on the educational benefits of *performing* classical tragedies; and it was from Germany's and Holland's prolific printing presses that the Latin textbooks of Renaissance Humanism, advocated by famous educators such as Erasmus and Melanchthon, were printed for export to England's grammar schools, including King Edward VI School in Stratford-upon-Avon – attended, almost undoubtedly, by the schoolboy Shakespeare.

Yet these classical textbooks were not imported into a culture devoid of Greek mythology, but rather one in which Greek mythology, and particularly the tale of Troy, was already at the core of a mythopoetic project pertaining to national identity. Chapter four thus aims to contextualise further the "arrival" of the classical Hecubas by turning attention to the pre-humanist presence of the Greek myths in English culture. The home-grown myths of *Troynovant* see Aeneas' great-grandson Brut (Brutus or Brute) discovering the land he will name Britain, founding the city of London as *Troia Nova*, *Trinovantum*, or *Troynovant* (a third new Troy after Rome), and spawning a royal lineage that is traced – via King Arthur – to the various English monarchs up to Charles II. This English mythopoetic project is celebrated from the twelfth to seventeenth centuries in royally commissioned histories of England, panegyric poems, and citywide civic pageants. An oral storytelling tradition operated within the parameters of this indigenous mythology, telling stories of Troy's destruction which were dominated by the influence of continental Europe's centuries-old tradition of romance epics. The Latin texts of Guido delle Colonne and his later French translator Jean Lefèvre were particularly influential, and transcribed manuscripts offered the Early English elite Latin and English translations of these works

similar in content, if not tone, to the cruder more satiric versions of travelling

minstrels. Both written and oral early tales of Troy derive, ultimately, from the

Roman translations of the spurious eye-witnesses Dares Phrigius (*De Excidio*

Troiae Historia) and Dictys Cretensis (*Ephemeridos de Historia Belli Troiani*).[39]

In the texts and performances specifically intended to celebrate the

heroism and glory England inherits from Troy, Hecuba is predictably excised; in

the highly selective reading of Troy offered by the myths of *Troynovant* there is

no place for the image of the grieving mother who watches the city burn and

buries its heroes. The oral and textual tales of Troy evolved from Dares and

Dictys, via the romantic and chivalric embellishments of mainland Europe's

medieval storytellers, also invariably embrace and operate within the indigenous

tradition of the *Troynovant* myths, and whilst Hecuba is at least visible in these

narratives her treatment exposes a recurring compulsion to enact the suppression

and containment of her grief and fury. Chapter four thus directs its attention to

the treatment of Hecuba in the tales of Troy told by John Lydgate and William

Caxton, for these two versions of Troy's story not only exemplify the conception

of Hecuba *prior* to the introduction of her six "origin and original" texts but also

remained a thriving cultural phenomenon long *after* the arrival of their classical

counterparts. In 1473 Caxton's *Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye* became the

first book to be printed in English, albeit from a printing press in Bruges. Three

years later, Caxton established the first English printing press and immediately

began to reprint his *Recuyell*. In 1513 John Lydgate's *Troy Book*, an English

translation of Guido which had been completed c.1420 at the behest of Henry V

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[39] Dictys' account survives in full in a fourth-century Latin text, but a fragment of a Greek original dating to the first-century provides a glimpse of the original; Dares' text is only known in a sixth-century Latin text but some scholars believe that this too is a translation of a lost first-century Greek original. For details see R.M. Frazer Jr., *The Trojan War: The Chronicles of Dictys of Crete and Dares the Phrygian* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1966), pp.2-15.

(and thus predates Caxton's main source Lefevre), was transcribed into print to compete with Caxton's *Recuyell* as England's most widely read tale of Troy.

In both Caxton and Lydgate, Hecuba is a minor, peripheral, character who acts solely through male agents, typically her son Paris. Despite this disempowerment, however, both narratives render Hecuba something of a scapegoat who is punished, and ultimately sacrificed, for allowing grief to lead her to break (male) chivalric codes of honour with ignominious and duplicitous acts of vengeance. Both narratives do not merely curtail Hecuba's mourning work but also ambivalently enact strikingly convoluted attempts to contain and neutralise her fury. These domestic, and domesticating, conceptions of Hecuba thereby negotiate her presence within the overarching context of the home-grown myths of *Troynovant*, against which she operates as a deconstructive, meta-mythopoetic criticism.

The sustained popularity of Lydgate and Caxton and, through them, the medieval tradition for telling the tale of Troy as an embellished romance epic, attests to the continued currency of a pre-humanist Hecuba in the age of Renaissance humanism. In consequence, a "pre-existing" "domestic" Hecuba is forced into dialogue with the newly imported classics; a dialogue, that is, with her historically, geographically, culturally and generically distant textual origins. Chapter five thus considers the humanist importation and institutionalisation of the classical Hecubas as a return of the repressed, the uncanny revival of the queen that the operations of the indigenous *Troynovant* myths had seen silenced and left for dead.

The humanists' "new" ancient Greek and Roman texts were first imported into England from mainland Europe in Latin translation, typically

complete with educational annotations and explanatory commentaries, as either

pedagogical set-texts or extra-curricula books intended for personal

improvement. Chapter five begins by establishing which of these classical

Hecubas were being read, studied and performed in England's Renaissance

classrooms and colleges. Extant curricula and teaching manuals suggest that

Ovid's *Metamorphoses* dominated the English schoolboys' contact with Hecuba,

but that this was supplemented by Aeneas' recollection of her in Virgil's

Aeneid.[40] Homer's *Iliad* appears to have been a venerated but largely indirect

source (although the Hertfordshire schoolboy George Chapman would grow up

to produce a highly influential English *Iliad* (Books 1, 2, 7, and 11 printed in

1598; complete work printed 1610)). Seneca's *Troas* was certainly performed by

students of the Oxbridge colleges (whose dramatic practice was often replicated

in the grammar schools) and read in the classrooms, although possibly only in

extracts, for *sententiae*. Euripides' *Trojan Women* appears almost unknown at the

time, no doubt eclipsed by the popularity of Seneca's *Troas*. Although

educational manuals cited *Hecuba* as an exemplary model for plot, structure and

characterisation, Euripides' earlier Trojan tragedy does not appear to have been

studied directly. However, as all these works existed in Latin translations any of

them could have been studied privately by "learned" individuals or at schools

and colleges presided over by tutors with specialised interests. Whilst familiarity

with the six classical Hecubas was, therefore, variable, the manner in which these

texts and their characters were studied was, more or less, standardised nationally.

Influential continental humanists such as Erasmus and Melanchthon not only

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[40] For details on the Tudor grammar school curricula see Peter Mack, 'Humanism, Rhetoric, Education', in *A Concise Companion to English Renaissance Literature*, ed. by Donna B. Hamilton (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), pp.94-113; Peter Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric: Theory and Practice* (Cambridge: CUP, 2002), and T.W. Baldwin, *William Shakspseres Small Latine & Lesse Greeke* (Urbana, Ill.: Illinois UP, 1944).

supplied Latin translations and suggested the schools' curricula, they also

advocated pedagogical methods which largely determined the manner in which

the Hecuba narratives were read and understood. The remainder of chapter five

therefore considers how the overlapping rhetorical techniques with which

Hecuba was most consistently linked – *ethopoeia*, *prosopopoeia* and *eidolopoeia*

– conditioned an approach to the figure of Hecuba. Each of these techniques

entails an uncanny sense of re-animation or resurrection of the ancient grieving

mother.

Chapter six advances the interests of chapter five by following these new

ancient Hecubas out of the classrooms and colleges and into the popular,

vernacular culture, to consider the dialogue that arises when authors, who grew

up with the texts and pedagogical practices of humanism, introduced resurrected

humanist Hecubas to the myths of *Troynovant*. An analysis of an obscure work

by Thomas Fenne, *Fenne's Frutes* (1590), demonstrates what happens when

these two distinct traditions collide. The final section of *Fenne's Frutes*,

'Hecubaes Mishaps', introduces the grief-stricken Hecuba of Euripides' and

Seneca's tragedies into both an idyllic English landscape and an indigenous

literary genre. Fenne places a predominantly Caxton-esque narrative in the

mouth of Hecuba and, in so doing, transforms it into a song of grief-stricken rage

which is deployed in overt opposition to the myths of *Troynovant*.

Uniquely then, in the long history of the romance epics, Fenne's story of

Troy is told not by "soldiers" or scribes deferring to the authority of Dares and

Dictys, but by a female voice in dialogue with "her" contemporary author. It is

ironic, then, that just as Fenne invokes this female voice – in order to invest his

polemic with the authority of the grieving mother – the centuries old English

tales of Troy began to be "re-packaged" as stories for women and children, heralding their gradual slide into un-authoritative "old wives' tales". Raoul Lefevre's pre-print French translation of Guido was undertaken for the benefit of the 'gloryous and myghty prynce […] Phelip duc of Bourgoyne of Braband'; ten years later, Caxton's English translation of Lefevre was, on the other hand, completed and printed at the request and under the patronage of the 'vertuouse pryncesse' 'lady Margarete […], Duchesse of Bourgoyne of Lotryk of Braband' (DI.1).[41] The frontispiece to Caxton's *Recuyell* is a woodcut depicting Caxton, on one knee, presenting the Duchess with his work. The picture is dominated by the Duchess' entourage of women who will share in this new phenomenon of the printed book (fig.1).

Raymond W. Chambers has demonstrated the remarkable influence that female patronage exercised over vernacular printed works, particularly vernacular translations, and here, in the first printed book in English, we can see the first of these powerful female readers. And yet the picture also reveals, between Caxton and the Duchess, directly beneath the book, a pet monkey aping Caxton's pose. Such alignment is, presumably, intended to relate Caxton's translation with the visual arts which monkeys had come to symbolise.[42] Yet, implicitly, such an allusion also aligns his book with female triviality, with a mindless mimicry that keeps the ladies entertained. A perceived division can be

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[41] William Caxton, *The Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye* (Bruges: Caxton, 1473). As England's first printed book, Caxton's text lacks any referencing system. I shall therefore reference each quotation parenthetically with a Document Image (DI) number denoting the quotation's position in the reproduction of the text by Early English Books Online: <http://eebo.chadwyck.com/search/fulltext?source=configpr.cfg&ACTION=ByID&ID=D000009 98449480000&FILE=../session/1209726467_12217&DISPLAY=default>

[42] As James Hall states, '[f]rom the Middle Ages the ape was a symbol of the art of painting and sculpture. The artist's skill was regarded as essentially imitative and became linked with the animal known for its imitativeness. The idea was expressed in a popular saying "Ars simian Naturae" – "Art is the ape of nature"', *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art*, Revised ed. (Cambridge: CUP, 1979), p.22.

detected between the imported classical Latin texts to be read by educated boys

and learned men, and the old English tales that came to be seen as old wives

tales, recited by mothers, sisters and nurses to each other and pre-school boys.

Frontispiece to William Caxton's *The Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye* can be viewed via Early English Books Online:

http://eebo.chadwyck.com/search/full_rec?SOURCE=pgimages.cfg&ACTION=ByID&ID=V9807

Figure 1: William Caxton's *The Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye* (Bruges: Caxton, 1473)

Between this perceived divide, a tradition of academic translations arose

that rendered the classical humanist Hecubas into English. Jasper Heywood, an

Oxford scholar, began this practice in 1558 with *Troas* – the first English

translation of Seneca – with the expressed intention of following the example of

Erasmus' Latin translations of the Greek tragedies. Heywood wished to provide

educational texts for boys just beginning their Latin studies; yet, in dedicating the work to Elizabeth I, Heywood also identified literate women as an additional (potentially predominant) demographic for these vernacular translations. Learned gentleman followed Heywood's precedent until the translation of Greek and Roman classics into increasingly erudite texts complete with annotations and critical commentaries effectively became 'a rite of passage for aspiring men of letters'.[43] Chapter six concludes by using translations of the three Hecuba tragedies as stepping stones to leap forward to the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century. At this point, after centuries of humanist inspired classical education, it is easy to see the impact that the perceived division between populist, vernacular old wives' tales of Troy and academic, Latin and learned translations had had on Hecuba's cultural viability.

Out of the learned gentlemen who supplemented their translations with critical commentaries grew a breed of Victorian classicists whose writings and touring lectures saw them achieve a near-celebrity status, amplified by a wave of popular Philhellenism fuelled by recent archaeological advances. These classicists discussed Hecuba in terms of an ancient Greek artefact, viewing her against a backdrop of pristine, white, silent sculptures and judging her by the moral codes of Victorian and Edwardian England. With the cultural memory of ancient mourning practices no longer alive and the self-conscious promotion of the era of the 'stiff upper lip' just beginning,[44] Hecuba's murderous fury was deemed irrational, unnatural, unfeminine, un-English and unacceptable. In short, within a general *damnatio* of Euripides' work in the academies, the figure of

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[43] Edith Hall and Fiona Macintosh, *Greek Tragedy and the British Theatre: 1660-1914* (Oxford: OUP, 2005), p.61.
[44] According to *The Oxford Dictionary of Slang* the phrase 'stiff upper lip' first came into popular usage *c*.1815; John Ayto, (Oxford: OUP, 1998), p.268.

Hecuba was demonised. Simultaneously, institutionalised "Bardolatry"

consecrated Shakespeare as the national poet. This double project, however,

resulted in a conflict of interests. In promoting a passive femininity as the perfect

counterpart to an active, classically-inspired, male heroism, the men of letters

needed to negotiate their own Renaissance roots and justify both the prior

veneration of Hecuba (particularly the Hecuba of Euripides' *Hecuba*) and

Shakespeare's travesty of the classical heroes in *Troilus and Cressida.* Thus,

chapter six ends by looking back on Victorian and Edwardian gentlemen as they

look back disapprovingly on the Renaissance readers of Hecuba. The classicists

came to the conclusion that Shakespeare and his contemporaries knew not what

they did, and that Hecuba's popularity was due to the unsavoury tastes of the

masses with their infantile delight in gratuitous bloodshed and preference for

Caxton and the old wives' tales. Looking back, these Victorian gentlemen see

Renaissance playhouses dominated by Seneca-inspired revenge tragedies, out of

which they can "elevate" the majority of Shakespeare's works and within which

Euripides' and Ovid's Hecuba only earned her place by murdering children and

gouging out eyeballs.

In response to such condemnation, chapter seven turns to the Renaissance

playhouses in search of these murderous Hecubas. Moving beyond the confines

of academia to the public theatre, it follows the trail of Hecubas created by

grown-up schoolboys but designed to please the populace. The search, however,

proves almost futile. Invisible Hecubas abound, gaps where Hecubas *should be*

are plenty, Hecubas re-membered and reincarnated as new characters can be

identified, but actual Hecubas embodied and enacted on stage are almost non-

existent. Chapter seven thus concentrates on the lone playhouse Hecuba of the

two-part play which concludes Thomas Heywood's spectacular cycle of *Age* plays. This extremely popular cycle of five plays covers Greek mythology from the deification of Jupiter to the Oresteian murders. Heywood's playhouse Hecuba is, however, far more indebted to Caxton than to the classics. Peripheral, marginal and partially responsible for the plot against Achilles, this Hecuba is more ornamental cipher than rounded character. However, the manner in which Heywood chooses to remove Hecuba from his play, *before* she can occupy the role she performs within the classics, is unprecedented and of greatest interest to this thesis. Heywood's Hecuba, representative of female lament tragedy, is brutally sacrificed to the progression of the heroic male history play. Turning to Heywood's own writings about theatre, specifically *An Apology for Actors* (1612), allows his treatment of Hecuba to be contextualised and viewed as the enactment of a predominant cultural theory on theatre – one which again recites the fear of female sexuality, maternal grief, and the threat these are felt to pose to heroic masculinities.

Chapter eight parallels the end of chapter six by again fast-forwarding from the Renaissance to the early-twentieth century, but this time I take the alternative route via the nation's public stages and dramatisations of Troy intended for popular entertainment. Thus, instead of academic translations, theatrical productions are used as stepping-stones – beginning with the fate of Heywood's Hecuba in Restoration England. However, enacted onstage Hecubas will again prove elusive until the onset of World War One set the stage for Euripides' *Trojan Women* to be performed as a song of rage and grief. These twentieth-century anti-war productions radically altered the nation's relationship with Hecuba and her perceived cultural function. No longer considered an

ancient artefact, Hecuba operated as a vital cultural presence, speaking to and for the war-torn present. These productions thus established the precedent and paradigm for the twenty-first century *Hecuba*s with which the thesis began.

As this synopsis of my chapters indicates, the story of Hecuba offered by this thesis, whilst refusing a diachronic timeline, begins with Homer and ends in the present day but repeatedly returns to the Renaissance and Hecuba's presence in *Hamlet*. In part, this repetition responds to, and investigates, the manner in which Shakespeare's Renaissance *Hamlet* haunts modern day reactions to Hecuba; in the main, however, this focus on the Renaissance enables me to interrogate the origins of the classical Hecubas who came to dominate England's conception of the Trojan queen. The Renaissance marks the moment in which the ancient Greek and Roman Hecubas first entered into England as distinctly "foreign" objects: transported across the English Channel in texts belonging to the ancient past, printed books in Latin sometimes even in Greek, in tragedies and poems which opposed the indigenous mythology of *Troynovant* and disrupted the centuries old tradition of the romance tales. To focus on the Renaissance is, then, to focus on the moment in which tactics of accommodation and assimilation were necessary to render this disruptive foreigner a culturally valuable figure within England's cultural lexicon. To look for Hecuba in the Renaissance is to look for a Hecuba at the height of her popularity, when she was still a potent figure capable of carrying dangerous allusive connotations, familiar yet simultaneously foreign; Hecuba before pedagogical repetition and replication rendered her an inert ancient artefact, before the sensibilities of Neoclassicism and Romanticism insisted on placing her beyond the margins of culture, before

she becomes merely an unfamiliar name in *Hamlet* requiring an explanatory footnote.

Chapter One: Enter Hecuba

If there are casualties of war then remember that when they woke
up and got dressed in the morning they did not plan to die this day.
Allow them dignity in death. Bury them properly and mark their
graves. It is my foremost intention to bring every single one of you
out alive. But there may be people among us who will not see the
end of this campaign. We will put them in their sleeping bags and
send them back. There will be no time for sorrow.

Lt. Col. Tim Collins, 19 March 2003 [1]

HECUBA   And yet he killed my son – he killed my son.
          He dug no grave, but the watery sea –
          To him that's all he was worth, my last, lost son.

Euripides, *Hecuba*, 2004 [2]

1. 'The Queen of Knives'

London, September 2004: a performance of Euripides' *Hecuba* is approaching

its climax at the Donmar Warehouse. The eponymous queen, played by Clare

Higgins, exits the stage, barefoot, shabbily dressed in black, tenderly carrying a

young boy of about seven. This boy and his slightly older brother are dressed

alike in the neat shirt and tie, jumper, flannel shorts and long socks that constitute

a traditional English prep-school uniform.[3] The teacups of a polite picnic have

been set aside and the smaller of these two quintessentially English schoolboys

has been playfully wrapped up in a picnic blanket. Hecuba now walks offstage,

cradling this bundle, followed by the elder brother and the boys' smart be-suited

father Polymestor, the king of Thrace (Finbar Lynch). When Hecuba returns she

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[1] Extract from the so-called 'Mark of Cain' speech delivered to Allied troops waiting in Kuwait after the order to invade Iraq had been received; reported by BBC News on 20 March 2003 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/2866581.stm> [15 April 2008].

[2] Trans. by Frank McGuinness (London: Faber and Faber, 2004), p.39. Until stated, quotations from *Hecuba* in this chapter are taken from McGuinness' translation (which had its stage debut at the Donmar Warehouse, Sep. 2004) and will be referenced parenthetically in the text.

[3] Six boys played Polymestor's two sons: Connor Pepperd, Michael Selwood, Callum Bradley, Jack McGinn, Adam Arnold and Stephen Vijasin. The youngest was aged seven, the eldest was eleven; see *Donmar Warehouse Programme Notes for Hecuba* (August 2004).

will be carrying both children. According to one spectator, the image this entrance creates 'seems to crystallise the worst horrors of human nature'.[4] Read collectively, the reviews recalling this moment effectively form a chorus, speaking almost as one as they resurrect their memories of the scene: Susannah Clapp sees 'a plastic bag bulging with dismembered limbs'; Charles Spencer sees 'bloody remains […] visible through a clear plastic sack'; Peter Stothard knows that 'the boys are in [this] blood-smeared plastic'; David Wootton testifies that 'bits of the dead boys are carried around in the sort of clear plastic bags in which you carry away meat from Smithfield', and Michael Billington corroborates this testimony: 'Hecuba humps the boys' plastic-sheeted remains around as if they were so much offal'.[5] Such an obsessive focus on these specific visual details, and their compulsive repetition across the reviews, gives an indication of the entrance's visceral impact on the audience.

But these are not the only butchered bodies present on the Donmar stage; there is a third boy in this scene: Hecuba's youngest son Polydorus (Eddie Redmayne). Although older than the prep-school boys (who McGuinness' translation tells us are small enough for the murderous Trojan 'mothers' to '[p]ass […] in their arms' and 'dote on' (p.55)), Polydorus was still too young to have fought in the war. Instead, the youth, loaded with Trojan gold, was evacuated and placed under the protection of the Thracian king; but Polymestor murdered the boy for the gold and tossed his body into the sea. Polydorus' ghost,

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[4] Charles Spencer, 'Brilliance steeped in blood', *Daily Telegraph*, 15 Sep. 2004, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/theatre/drama/3623984/Brilliance-steeped-in-blood.html> [11 May 2011].
[5] Clapp, 'Blood and Gut', *Observer*, 19 Sep. 2004, p.12; Spencer, 'Brilliance Steeped in Blood' (as in n.4 above); Stothard, 'The Queen of Knives', *TLS*, 24 September 2004, <http://entertainment.timesonline.co.uk/tol/arts_and_entertainment/the_tls/Subscriber_Archive/Art___Architecture_Archive/article6753698.ece> [22 May 2011]; Wootton, 'Euripides' Hecuba at the Donmar Warehouse', *The Social Affairs Unit*, 26 Oct. 2004, <http://www.socialaffairsunit.org.uk/blog/archives/000178.php> [17 July 2005] and Billington, '*Hecuba*: Donmar Warehouse', *Guardian*, 16 Sep. 2004, p.30.

delivering the play's prologue, describes this murder and explains that the gods

of the dead have taken pity on him: his body will be allowed to return to Hecuba,

to 'my mother's hand' (p.5), for the burial that will appease his unmourned spirit.

The audience at the Donmar hear this prologue delivered by the young, former

Etonian, actor 'with the accent of a shy public-school boy'.[6]

Hecuba, however, reads her son's silent, butchered, and sea-tossed body –

'His lovely limbs […] slice[d] like pigs' (p.34) – as a demand not only for burial

but also revenge. At the Donmar Hecuba's accomplices in this act of vengeance

remain unseen; they were not even symbolically represented onstage by the

traditional Chorus of enslaved Trojan Women. Instead the Chorus' customary

functions were divided between two performers: Susan Engels as 'Chorus', a

character who acted within the drama as Hecuba's servant, and Eve Polycarpou,

a professional singer suspended above the play's action in a window cleaner's

cradle, who punctuated the performance with song. Thus, it is to her son's

battered body, rather than a collective female chorus, that Higgins' Hecuba exalts

in her violent revenge; cradling Polydorus' corpse, lifting him up so that he can

'see' the fate of his killer, Hecuba tenderly tells him:

> You will see him soon,
> Staggering about the place,
> Dark sightless eyes and feet.
> You will see his son's bodies.
> I killed them with the women,
> He has paid what he owes me.
> Look – look – here he comes. (p.50)

With a face smeared in blood from the eyes that Hecuba and her women have

gouged out with brooch-pins, Polymestor enters on all fours, gives a dog-like

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[6] Stothard, 'Queen of Knives' (as in n.5 above).

howl and scrabbles in the sand that covers the Donmar's steeply raked stage. His only thought is to inflict revenge on the bodies of Hecuba and her accomplices: 'I want to gorge / On their flesh, their bones. / Feed on their faces' (p.51). A grotesque game of blind-man's bluff ensues as Polymestor, desperate to catch hold of Hecuba, 'crawls towards any sound he hears' until Hecuba makes 'a "trick" sound by throwing the body of one of [his] sons towards him'.[7] Polymestor cries out in despair, in realisation of what he has "caught" and the need to protect his sons' corpses from further defilement:

> What do I do?
> Abandon my young
> To the cruel mercy
> Of mad women from Hell?
> They will dismember
> My sons limb by limb.
> Throw them to the dogs,
> Hurled on the mountains.
> […]
> I am on a ship
> Sea monsters circle
> Smelling the flesh
> Of my dead children
> I must protect. (p.51)

In 'The Sacrificial Crisis', René Girard observes that '[i]n Greek tragedy violence invariably effaces the difference between antagonists,' 'the resemblance between the combatants grows ever stronger until each presents a mirror image of the other'.[8] Euripides' *Hecuba* provides a stark illustration of this process – Polymestor's description of Hecuba's revenge precisely echoes her own earlier description of Polymestor's crime, with both beareaved parents traumatically

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[7] Sophie Watkiss, *Study Guide for Euripides' Hecuba*, ed. by Leona Felton and Su-Fern Lee (London: Donmar Education & Training Resources, JSW Creative, 2004), p.28 <http://www.donmarwarehouse.com/main.html> [08 Feb 2009].
[8] In *Tragedy*, ed. by John Drakakis and Naomi Conn Liebler (London & New York: Longman, 1998), pp.278-97 (p.286).

envisioning the 'rending of flesh' (ll.716, 1076, cf.782) as they 'curse' one

another (ll.716, 1064).[9] At the Donmar – under Jonathan Kent's direction –

symmetrical stage images visually confirmed the escalating semblance between

Victim and Aggressor. All distinctions had collapsed by the time Polymestor re-

entered the stage, at the precise moment in which the linguistic echoes occur in

Euripides' text, the two infanticides confronted one another in the sand 'like two

grappling dogs'.[10] The blinded king echos precisely the same despair, outrage

and fear expressed earlier by the fallen queen. The outrage that her youngest son

was denied burial, that his body was instead exposed and further defiled by the

elements – 'his broken body / Tossed and turning in the waters' (p.38) – follows

soon after her fear that the Greeks will defile her youngest daughter's body

before she can wash and bury her:

> Let my daughter lie untouched.
> Keep her from the rough and ready
> Armies of sailors, they're savages
> Out for what they can get. (p.29)

Whilst Hecuba and Polymestor cradle the brutalised bodies of their sons onstage

this other murdered child, Polyxena (Kate Fleetwood), lies offstage; still awaiting

burial, her throat slit, her half-naked body covered with leaves (p.28). Polyxena

has been sacrificed by the Greek army on Achilles' tomb to honour 'the best of

the Greeks' (p.8) in the hope of appeasing his still-wrathful spirit, for the

Homeric 'rage of Achilles' has outlasted death, stopped the winds and grounded

the Greek fleet. This is, of course, a bitter replay which remembers and repeats

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[9] For details on these verbal echoes see Christopher Collard, 'Commentary', in *Hecuba*, trans. by Christopher Collard (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1991), pp.129-200 (p.168 n.714-20 and p.188 n.1075-8).

[10] Philip Fisher, '*Hecuba* by Euripides in a new version by Frank McGuinness, Donmar Warehouse: Review by Philip Fisher', *The British Theatre Guide* (2004) <http://www.britishtheatreguide.info/reviews/hecuba-rev.htm> [23 Feb. 2005].

the sacrificial slaughter of Iphigenia before the start of the war when the Greeks,

grounded at Aulis, sacrificed Agamemnon's daughter to release the winds

needed to carry them to Troy.

At the Donmar these unseen female bodies, sacrificed to the heroic fame

and honour to be won by men in war ($\kappa\lambda\acute{\varepsilon}o\varsigma$), were insistently referenced by the

set: row upon row of names, chalked across black bricks, provided the backdrop

to the entire performance (fig.2). This makeshift memorial recorded the names

of female civilians killed in global conflicts over the last fifty years: Fatima Al-

Sharif; Stella Erlangering; Fatima Abdallah; Edith Lesser; Abdallah Hussein;

Ruth Levi; Selma Farnbacher; Musia Castillos….

PDF Download of 'Hecuba Study Guide' available from the Donmar Warehouse at:

http://www.donmarwarehouse.com/p25.html

Photographic image of Tim Pigott-Smith on p.31
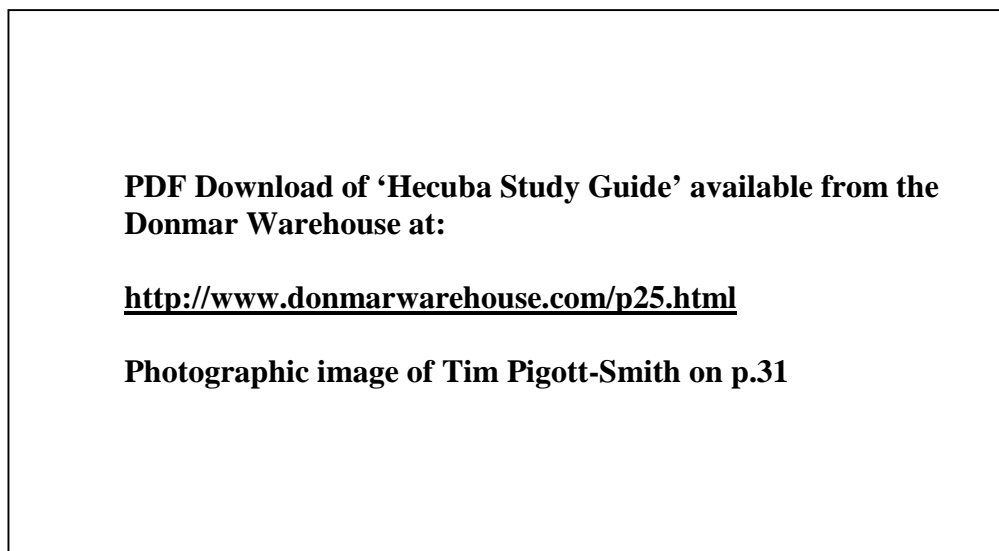
Figure 2: Agamemnon (Tim Pigott-Smith) surveys the backwall in the Donmar Warehouse's *Hecuba*, 2004. (Photograph by Ivan Kyncl)

The seemingly endless list stretched beyond the audience's sightlines; chalked

like a schoolroom punishment, the roll-call of the dead resonated with the

exhibited bodies of the young schoolboys. Each night, as the audience were

seated, the production's singer, in her cradle high above the stage, chalked names

onto the wall. This nightly ritual underscored the fact that this memorial was an

ongoing process, one which could be added to daily. The ephemeral nature of the chalk – fading dust easily wiped away – revealed how fragile the act of remembrance is and the continual effort required to ensure that the dead are not simply lost and forgotten. Moreover, located beyond the margins of the play and enacted by the singer who is in the performance but not *of* the play, this pre-show routine acted as a meta-theatrical link between the 'world of the play' and the 'real world'. The set explicitly demanded that the reality of war be kept in view whilst watching this performance. The names of real victims are inserted into the ancient tragedy and the ancient tragedy, to be acted before them, thus becomes an extension of the memorial, an offering in their honour, a performative pause in which to remember those lost to war.

Yet whilst this home-front production makes the 'time for sorrow' denied on the battlefield, the plot of *Hecuba* not only offers a continuation of violence but a relocation of violence into England's domestic sphere. The 'casualties of war', the brutalised bodies of quintessentially English schoolchildren, are denied any 'dignity in death', tossed into the unmarked grave of the sea or returned, unrecognisable, to their family in carrier bags, not euphemistically sent home to rest in 'their sleeping bags'.[11] By insisting upon 'time for sorrow' and depicting the reality of the corpse transfigured by death, the Donmar *Hecuba* opposed and deconstructed the twenty-first century war rhetoric that was concurrently being relayed from England's most recent frontline.

At the end of Euripides' tragedy the winds finally begin to blow, allowing the Greeks to depart for home. After Agamemnon has ostensibly judged between Polymestor's and Hecuba's crimes, and after Polymestor has made his vindictive

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[11] Lt. Col. Collins, 'Mark of Cain' (as referenced in n.1 p.41).

prophecies (which result in him being gagged, bound and sent to starve on a deserted island), Hecuba's new master gives his final order: 'Go bury your two dead bodies' (p.63). As the stage lights slowly faded in the Donmar, the audience were left with an image that was both a confirmation of Polymestor's prophecy – Hecuba 'will turn into a dog / Mad dog with eyes on fire' (p.61) – and an expression of the desire to fulfil the most human of rituals. Alone onstage Higgins' Hecuba kneels and claws in the sand with her bare hands, trying to dig her children a grave.

PDF Download of 'Hecuba Study Guide' available from the Donmar Warehouse at:

http://www.donmarwarehouse.com/p25.html

Photographic image of Clare Higgins on p.18

Figure 3: Clare Higgins as Hecuba at the Donmar Warehouse, 2004.
(Photograph by Ivan Kyncl)

Although Euripides' and Seneca's ancient Hecuba tragedies were known in England from the early 1500s, the performance of the Hecuba of Euripides' *Hecuba* by a female actor is actually something of a novelty on the English public stage. In fact, the documented number of female actors known to play any English Hecuba on a commercial stage prior to the twentieth-century can be counted on one hand. Mary Porter and Hannah Pritchard, two of the eighteenth-century's most prestigious female actors, were both booed off the stage in 1726 and 1761 respectively when attempting to play Hecubas based (to varying degrees) on Euripides' *Hecuba*.[12] Over a hundred years later, in 1883, a relatively unknown actor, Miss E. Guest, performed a bit-part Homeric Hecuba in *The Tale of Troy*, a musical adaptation of select scenes from the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* played on alternate nights in English and Greek (starring Mrs Bram Stoker as Calypso and Mrs Beerbohm-Tree swapping nightly between Helen and Andromache).[13] In 1893 a Miss Kesteven played an all-singing all-dancing Hecuba in *Hecuba à la Mode; or Wily Greek and the Modest Maid*, a musical burlesque of Euripides by H. Cranstoun Metcalfe.[14] The only male actors to

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[12] Euripides' *Hecuba*, trans. by Richard West (then Lord Chancellor of Ireland) and starring Mary Porter in the title-role, was mounted at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, London, by his Majesty's Servants on 2 Feb. 1726. It ran for only three nights and was never subsequently revised; see, Euripides, *Hecuba, a tragedy, as it is acted at the Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane by His Majesty's servants*, trans. by Richard West (London: W. Wilkins, 1726); For details of the West/Porter Hecuba performances see Emmet L. Avery ed., *The London Stage: 1660-1800*, *Part Two: 1700-1729*, Vol. 1, 1st ed. (Carbondale, Southern Illinois UP, 1960), p.853. Hannah Pritchard fared only slightly better in John Delap's rather looser "adaptation" of *Hecuba*, which ran for a total of six nights from Dec. 1761 to Jan. 1762; see, Euripides *Hecuba*, *a tragedy as it is acted at the Theatre Royal in Drury-Lane*, trans. by John Delap (London: printed for R. and J. Dodsley, 1762); for details of the Delap/Pritchard performances see George Winchester Stone Jr., ed. *The London Stage: 1660-1800, Part 4: 1747-1776* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1962), p.907 and p.911. West's *Hecuba* is briefly examined in chapter six and both of these productions are discussed again in more in detail in chapter eight.

[13] Although the performance text has been lost, contemporary descriptions of the production can be found in the following anonymous newspaper articles: 'The Tale of Troy', *The Times*, 30 Oct. 1883, 10E, and 'The Tale of Tale', *The Times*, 31 Oct. 1883, 5G. See also chapter eight below.

[14] See H. Cranstoun Metcalfe, *Hecuba à la Mode; or, the Wily Greek and the Modest Maid* (*an Entirely New and Original Classical Burlesque*) (London: Crystal Palace Press, 1893) [Many thanks to Amanda Wrigley at the *APGRD* for making a reproduction available]. Again, Metcalfe's burlesque will be considered in chapter eight below.

have performed Hecuba in the public theatres, prior to the introduction of female

actors in 1660, did so not in adaptations of the Greek and Roman tragedies but

rather in Renaissance adaptations of the medieval tradition of European romance

epics.[15]

Although productions of Euripides' *Hecuba* and Seneca's *Troas* were

mounted in England's grammar schools and university colleges from at least

1551 onwards, these were private, amateur performances of schoolboys and

(exclusively male) university students, traditionally given in Greek or Latin

before the school or college, and only gradually performed in English for a wider

public audience. Thus in 1827, for example, Reading Grammar School's

production of *Hecuba* was still being performed 'in the noble language of

antiquity' but with the addition of a topical English prologue and epilogue.[16]

It was only after 1915 that the Hecuba of Euripides' *Trojan Women* came

to frequent the English commercial theatre and only in the 1990s that the Hecuba

of Euripides' *Hecuba* came to join her regularly onstage. The eighty-or-so year

gap between the acceptance of Euripides' *Trojan Women* and the successful

revival of *Hecuba* on the English stage produces an imbalanced production

history that sees, between 1905 (the first *Trojan Women*) and the Donmar's 2004

Hecuba, thirty one productions of the *Trojan Women* to only four *Hecuba*s, while

Seneca's *Troas* has hardly shared at all in the public success of its Greek

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[15] See the entry for 'Hecuba' in Thomas L. Berger, William C. Bradford and Sidney L. Sondergard, eds. *An Index of Characters in Early Modern English Drama: 1500-1660*, revised ed. (Cambridge: CUP, 1998); chapter seven of this thesis focuses on the Renaissance playhouse Hecuba.

[16] 'Triennial Visitation of Reading School', *The Times*, 18 Oct. 1827, 2F. The topical English additions are reprinted in 'Prologue to the *Hecuba* of Euripides Performed at the Triennial Visitation of Reading School', *The Times*, 30 Oct. 1827, 3E. The production is discussed briefly in chapter six. For details of eye-witness accounts of Reading's triennial Greek plays see Edith Hall, 'Greek Plays in Georgian Reading', *Greece & Rome*, 44:1 (1997) 59-81.

counterparts.[17] Such a historic lack of *Hecuba*s meant that in 2004 poet and playwright Frank McGuinness, who produced the translation for the Donmar production, was only able to imagine pitching the play to a theatre company as: 'Well there's this little known Greek play called *Hecuba*, it's about a woman'.[18]

Clare Higgins' success in McGuinness' *Hecuba*, which presented Euripides' violent Trojan queen as a woman enacted, a female body onstage, someone to watch rather than to be read in an academic text, is thus a significant development in Hecuba's English afterlife. Indeed, the high-profile Donmar production heralded a striking restoration of Euripides' *Hecuba* to the English public stage; a phenomenon which, in turn, marked Hecuba's entrance into my life as a subject for academic inquiry. In a manner which bestows an additional ironic meaning on their prominence in the Donmar's pivotal production, it is in fact grammar school boys who lie at the heart of the Trojan queen's history in England: their private performances, their rhetorical training exercises, and their textbooks. Although Hecuba is predominantly thought of as a figure of theatrical tragedy, England's cultural manifestations of the queen prior to the twentieth-century persistently left her lacking body: text-bound, read, written, referenced, cited and recited in the works of grownup schoolboys, but only infrequently *embodied* in public performance.

The collective national trauma of World War One facilitated the success of both Lillah McCarthy and Sybil Thorndike as the Hecuba of Gilbert Murray's translation of Euripides' *Trojan Women* in long-running, and frequently revived,

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[17] Statistics calculated from Oxford University's *Archive of Performances of Greek and Roman Drama*, <http://www.apgrd.ox.ac.uk/database> (hereafter *APGRD*), correct as of 21 May 2011, and exclude radio, school, and university dramas. There appears to be a gap in the production history of Seneca's *Troas* lasting from the 1760s to the 1990s.

[18] McGuinness, 'Adapting Greek Tragedy', Interview by Fiona Macintosh (University of Oxford, 2010) <http://rss.oucs.ox.ac.uk/classics/general-audio/rss20.xml> [14 June 2010].

productions by Harley Granville-Barker and Lewis Casson. McCarthy's and Thorndike's performances heralded the rise of English stage Hecubas and helped established the reputation of *Trojan Women* as 'The World's Greatest Peace Play'.[19] Yet a concurrent decline in classical education diminished the fluency of the nation's mythological vocabulary. The historic trend had gradually reversed: the once widespread textual traces of the queen lessened with the decline of an education that had drilled students in the figures, myths and literature of ancient Greece and Rome, but the early twentieth-century productions of *Trojan Women* established the play within the canon of Greek plays regularly performed in England's repertoire. Thus, the presence of Hecuba in English culture became (and still is), almost exclusively, Euripidean and, almost overwhelmingly, an enacted onstage character. Consequently, for the twenty-first century theatre-goer, for me, Hecuba is both an ancient and unfamiliar Queen, a ghost of an obsolete mythology, yet also an immediate, embodied, physical stage presence.

The Donmar's staging insistently reinforced this physicality: actors struggled to move across the steeply raked, sand covered stage; Redmayne's Polydorus opened the show by emerging, soaking-wet, from beneath a deep tank of water that lapped the stage; Hecuba splashed this salty "seawater" into Polymestor's eye-sockets, making him howl, and the final tableau drew attention to Hecuba's bloodstained hands scrabbling in the dirty sand. This Hecuba was a physical force, a material body which partook in acts of violence, spoke, caressed, wept and killed, could be touched and could even have reached out and touched the audience.

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[19] For details of the extensive Anglo-American tours of Murray's translation of *Trojan Women*, which established the play's reputation as the quintessential peace-play, see: Hartigan, pp.15-20; Fiona Macintosh, pp.302-04; and Willis, pp.20-94, (as all referenced in n.8 p.12).

Indeed, within the confines of the Donmar's intimate auditorium, the audience was constantly made to feel at risk of pollution from the stage: 'you wouldn't be surprised to find yourself being splashed with water or blood'.[20] This claustrophobic anxiety climaxed as Hecuba, splattered with blood, re-entered "playing" with the remains of Polymestor's sons, traumatically reminding the audience of their local meat-market, converting the auditorium into 'an abattoir'.[21] Reviewers agreed that the scene provoked a physical reaction: it was 'deeply unsettling and will turn the strongest of stomachs'; the action becomes 'almost unbearable to watch' until the 'only appropriate response is to wish you could escape from the theatre'.[22]

Writing on Euripides' *Hecuba* in 1796 the German critic J.C.F. Manso asked rhetorically: 'Who does not turn aside when Hecuba gouges out her enemy's eyes?'[23] Such aversion was easier to sustain at the end of the eighteenth-century (and throughout the nineteenth) when the popularity of Euripides' work, particularly *Hecuba*, plummeted and critical condemnation was twinned with the notable lack of theatrical productions. Around 2004, however, the sight of Hecuba was not so easy to escape. As the English press could not fail to notice Hecuba suddenly seemed ubiquitous. The desire to 'turn aside' or 'escape from the theatre' dominates reactions to the Donmar production, for the

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[20] Wootton (as in n.5 p.42).

[21] Billington, '*Hecuba*: Donmar Warehouse' (as in n.5 p.42).

[22] Respectively: Philip Fisher (as in n.10 p.45); Spencer (as in n.5 p.42) and Wootton (as in n.5 p.42).

[23] 'Über einige Verschiedenheiten in dem griechischen und deutschen Trauerspiele' (Leipzig, 1796), in *Charaktere der vornehmsten Dichter aller Nationen*, Vol. 2 ed. by J.G. Dyk and G. Shaz, qtd. in Malcolm Heath, 'Iure principem locum tenet: Euripides' *Hecuba*', *BICS*, 34 (1987), 40-68 (p.60). In fact, the desire to look away from the stage and avert the gaze from Hecuba is a repeated motif within the play itself: Odysseus and Agamemnon both turn away from Hecuba's pleas for help: 'you turn your face away' (McGuinness, p.18), 'Why do you turn from this wretched woman?' (McGuinness, p.39); Polyxena cannot bear to witness her mother's suffering as she is led away to die: 'I hear my mother weeping - / Wrap robes about my head. / My heart is melting' (McGuinness, p.23); and the Greeks cannot bear to see what they have done to Polyxena, rushing to 'cover[…] her corpse with leaves' (McGuinness, p.28).

aversion to Hecuba's violent revenge expressed by Manso remains; and yet the play was being repeatedly performed in separate productions across the country. A proliferation of *Hecuba*s points to a compulsion to depict the unbearable, a desire to push the audience to the limit of its spectatorship. Hecuba was being repeatedly invoked precisely because her act of vengeance had the power to provoke revulsion in the modern audience. Dubbed 'the comeback queen of tragedy' by the press,[24] the Hecuba of Euripides' *Hecuba* suddenly appeared to be dominating not just the Donmar, but the national stage.

Much of the broadsheets' speculation centred on the fact that the Donmar *Hecuba* was to be followed, only three months later, by an RSC production of the same tragedy with Vanessa Redgrave in the title role. Two major London productions of *Hecuba* thus ran almost back-to-back. The first, the critically acclaimed and commercially successful production at the Donmar, directed by Jonathan Kent, in a new translation by Frank McGuinness and starring Clare Higgins, premiered on 15 September 2004. The second, by the RSC, due to begin its run in early February 2005 (although this was postponed until March), was directed by Laurence Boswell and starred Vanessa Redgrave in a new translation by Tony Harrison.[25] From the companies and the poet-playwrights to the directors and actors involved, it is clear that these were both "big name" productions. Indeed, the RSC heavily promoted its *Hecuba* on the back of Redgrave's reputation as a vociferous political activist, implying that the play was of such political integrity that it was capable of drawing this renowned actor, from the famed Redgrave acting dynasty, back to the RSC 'after a break of over

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[24] Stothard, 'Queen of Knives' (as in n.5 p.42).
[25] The February run at Stratford-upon-Avon had to be cancelled; the production opened for an extended run at the Albery Theatre in London from 26 March to 7 May. It then transferred to the United States to be performed in Washington (21 May-12 June) and New York (16-26 June), before being taken to the European Cultural Center of Delphi, Greece (2 July).

forty years'.[26] These were also big productions in terms of critical acclaim and international clout: Clare Higgins went on to win the Olivier Award for Best Actress for her Hecuba; the RSC's production transferred to both America and Greece. Alongside these two heavyweight productions was a third, more modest, *Hecuba* in another new translation, this time by academic John Harrison. This *Hecuba*, taken on tour across the UK in autumn 2004 by the small-scale women's theatre company Foursight, undoubtedly benefited from and fed into the promotion of, and public interest in, the two larger companies' productions.

In fact these three productions had been preceded in September 2003 by a production of Euripides' *Hecuba* (entitled *Hecuba: Bitch of Cynossema*) mounted by a small-scale fringe theatre group of London Cypriots, Theatro Technis. Between them, the four productions not only marked the end of an eleven year gap since the last professional *Hecuba* in England (*Hekabe* by the Actors of Dionysus, dir. David Stuttard, in 1993), but also constituted a peak in *Hecuba*'s English stage history; never before had so many *Hecuba*s been performed in such a short time. And these were not the only English Hecubas to emerge at this time. At least eight commercial productions of Euripides' *Trojan Women* and *Hecuba* were mounted across England between 2003 and 2005, and the National Theatre announced its own intention to stage a *Women of Troy* under Katie Mitchell's direction in 2007.[27] The trend was mirrored in the United States. To the RSC's transferred production can be added at least four other commercial productions of *Hecuba*: two in 2004 (using modern translations by

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[26] RSC promotional flyer. Such assertions were picked up by theatre critics such as Michael Billington who, anticipating Redgrave's performance, wrote: '[i]n her reflections on the gods, the law and inherited nobility, Hecuba is also a thinking heroine in whom grief and anger combine. Given Vanessa Redgrave's widely-known political instincts and active conscience, it seems a part tailor made for her', 'What's Hecuba to her? Redgrave returns to the RSC', *Guardian*, 27 March 2004, p.6.

[27] Statistics calculated from *APGRD* on 21 May 2011.

playwright Timberlake Wertenbaker and classicist Marianne McDonald), and

two in 2006 – as well as three commercial and six university productions of

Trojan Women between 2003 and 2006.[28] Needless to say, each of these English

or English-speaking productions had a run far longer than the original one-off

performance of the tragedies in Ancient Athens. Such revivals prompted

numerous amateur, secondary school and university theatre companies to follow

suit and swell the ranks of twenty-first century English Hecubas.[29]

Such ubiquity compelled theatre critic Michael Billington not only to ask

'[w]here does our theatre instinctively turn in times of crisis?' but also to answer

with certainty: 'Not to Shakespeare or Shaw but to the Greeks'.[30] The prevailing

attitude conveyed in this 'turn', or return, to Hecuba at this time (and indeed

subsequently), was an attempt to engage not with the ancient Greek past but with

the crises of the immediate present. Each production mounted was explicitly

intended and interpreted as a 'direct response'[31] to modern day atrocities in

Sarajevo, New York, Gaza, Sudan or Beslan, or the "War on Terror" including

the war in Afghanistan and, most particularly, the "new" war in Iraq which began

with the pre-emptive strikes of March 2003. Thus, cultural reviews routinely

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[28] A comparable surge of Hecuba-plays can be identified between late 2001 and throughout 2002, specifically prompted by the terrorist attack on New York's World Trade Centre (11 Sep. 2001); however, this surge was overwhelmingly dominated by productions of *Trojan Women*. Avery Willis lists examples of this surge of post-9/11 *Trojan Women*s, which although concentrated in America and England also saw productions mounted in Spain and India, n.1 p.298.

[29] Although records for amateur productions are more scarce some evidence of this trend can be seen on the Open University and *APGRD* databases; for example, a group from Cambridge University took a production of *The Trojan Women* to the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in 2003, Oxford's Girls' Choir mounted *Hecuba* in 2004 and the Academy Drama School (London) mounted a production of *Hecuba* in 2005 (dir. Tim Barron).

[30] Billington, 'Terror of Modern Times Sets the Stage for Greek Tragedy', *Guardian*, 19 June 2004, p.3.

[31] *Ibid.*

observed how the '[t]error of modern times sets the stage for Greek tragedy' and 'how Hecuba thrives while war rages in Iraq'.[32]

Each of the English *Hecuba* productions made insistent and explicit links to contemporary global conflicts. Updates included: resonant staging (such as the Donmar's memorial backwall or the American Army tents which replaced the RSC's neutral set in its American performances); modern-dress costumes (smart suits and desert fatigues for soldiers; hijab, robes and head-scarves for Hecuba and her chorus[33]); modern translations littered with contemporary political jargon (such as 'coalition' for the conglomerate Greek army, the identification of Troy as an 'occupied' territory and talk of Odysseus' political 'spin' in Tony Harrison's text[34]); and, most explicitly, theatrical programmes which offered a combination of director's notes and independent essays referring the audience to the 'War on Terror', the 'Beslan siege', the 'Butler Report', 'Guantanamo Bay', the 'Taliban', and 'Weapons of Mass Destruction'[35] and even poems that relocated the victims of the Trojan War within contemporary global conflicts:

> The Women of Troy
> Live forever in their ruins.

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[32] Billington, 'Terror of Modern Times' (as in n.30 p.56), and Stothard, 'Queen of Knives' (as in n.5 p.42). *Cf.* also Susannah Clapp who writes: 'It's no coincidence that Laurence Boswell's is the second production of Hecuba in the past seven months […]. Bringing the ancient Greeks closer to us is probably the only cultural achievement of the war in Iraq', 'Bad heir day: Despite Vanessa Redgrave, Euripides's war-torn *Hecuba* still resonates', *Observer*, 10 Apr. 2005, p.11.

[33] Although no English production of *Hecuba* went so far as to bring a chador or burka clad chorus onstage, a comparable anti-war protest production of *Trojan Women* in Australia (dir. by Robert Kennedy and Jenny Green), mounted in Jan. 2003 and timed to close its run on the day of the anti-war march in Sydney (16 Feb.), not only dressed their chorus – as Avery Willis notes – in 'black cloth, reminiscent of the Islamic chador' but also had them perform to 'Islamic prayer music' whilst the Greeks were depicted as American soldiers, p.301 and n.8 p.301.

[34] Harrison's term 'coalition' was designed to resonate with the then ubiquitous phrase 'the coalition of the willing' used to describe the alliance of American, English, Australian and Polish troops who invaded Iraq without the backing of the UN. However, today it would probably have stronger resonance with Britain's coalition government, formed between the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats in May 2010, clearly demonstrating how such explicit topicality can quickly date as connotations change.

[35] Naomi Cooke, 'Director's Notes', in *Foursight Theatre Programme Notes for Hecuba* (2004); and Matthew Parris, 'Untitled', in *Donmar Warehouse Programme Notes for Hecuba* (2004).

> In Beirut, Baghdad,
> The boy is killed, the mother
> Howls across the centuries. [36]

It is clear, then, that these twenty-first century *Hecuba*s actively constructed that which the reviewers felt to be the 'aching topicality of Euripides'[37] by inserting (to employ Hawkes' Presentist terminology) 'salient aspects of the present as a crucial trigger' to condition the reception of the work.[38] As a form of Presentism-in-action, these productions consciously deployed contemporary historical details which set the 'interrogative agenda'[39] in the dialogue they constructed between the present and Euripides' ancient tragedy. These anachronisms compelled the play to engage with specific modern-day concerns, thereby facilitating the audience's natural reflex to read its own current cultural preoccupations and anxieties into the performance.

In discussing Tony Harrison's inclusion of 'fuck-off' in the RSC translation, theatre critic Michael Billington came close to describing this central Presentist tactic: 'Even the four-letter word earns its place by jolting us into awareness of the modern parallels'.[40] Yet, whilst the productions' impositions on the past are the self-conscious decisions of directors, translators, designers and performers, the language used to describe them, by reviewers, performers, translators and directors alike, typically propagate (albeit implicitly) the illusion of a seamless link between modern Britain and the ancient Attic tragedy. Whilst the productions clearly rely on anachronistic juxtapositions (and of course always have), the commentary surrounding them tends to smooth over the joins: thus,

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[36] Don Taylor, 'Classics', in *National Theatre Programme Notes for <u>Women of Troy</u>* (2007).
[37] Billington, '*Hecuba*: First night: Redgrave gives us grief but not madness', *Guardian*, 8 Apr. 2005, p.9.
[38] Hawkes (as in n.29 p.21), p.22.
[39] *Ibid*. p.22.
[40] Billington, '*Hecuba*: First night: Redgrave' (as in n.37 p.58).

despite detailing productions' modern insertions, *The Guardian*'s Michael Billington still talks of 'the play's modernity'; *The Observer*'s Susannah Clapp, writing on *Hecuba* in general, talks of a 'more or less seamless' conceptual 'translation of the play's action into the 21st century'; *The Independent*'s Paul Taylor asserts that *Hecuba* shows that the 'post-September 11 world is terribly in tune with Greek tragedy'; *The Telegraph's* Charles Spencer writes, '[a]s the car bombs explode and the number of dead mounts in Iraq, Euripides seems to have seen it all coming'; whilst Naomi Cooke, in her "Director's Notes" to Foursight's production, tells her audience that *Hecuba* could have been 'written in response to the contemporary world in which we find ourselves'.[41] Within this discursive context, the figure of Hecuba is typically transformed from a literary construction, made anew in the intersection of ancient text with modern translation and modern performance, into a single prescient, transcendent, even sentient, individual who stalks through time untouched: 'Hecuba walks out of Euripides from 2,500 years ago straight on to our daily front pages and into our nightly newscasts'.[42] Whilst the discourse of dynamic personification is both seductive and rhetorically powerful it gains this power at the expense of both multiplicity and specificity, collapsing all various historic manifestations of Hecuba into one unified concept, obscuring the sense in which the conception of all Hecubas is reconstructed, repeatedly, in the backward projection of a specific present onto a culturally conditioned interpretation of the past.

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[41] In order: Billington, '*Hecuba*: First night: Redgrave' (as in n.37 p.58); Clapp, 'Bad Heir Day' (as in n.32 p.57); Paul Taylor, 'Review: *Hecuba*, Donmar Warehouse', *Independent*, 17 Sep. 2004 <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/theatre-dance/reviews/hecuba-donmar-warehouse-london-546513.html> [12 Jan 2008]; Spencer (as in n.4 p.42), and Cooke (as in n.35 p.57).
[42] Harrison, 'Bitter Tears', *Guardian*, Saturday Review: Arts, 19 March 2005, p.18.

The work performed by these discursive practices is part of an exceedingly long tradition of what Mathew Gumpert identifies, in *Grafting Helen: The Abduction of the Classical Past*, as a 'familiar tale Western culture has always told about its relation to the past, the tale of seamless continuity'.[43] In a similar Derrida-inspired vein to Hawkes, Gumpert understands the notion of continuity between past and present as 'always grafted', always 'a trope or, more specifically, a *catachresis*, a metaphor whose metaphoricity has long ago been forgotten'.[44] The theatre, where everything is metaphor, where an actor both is and is not his/her character, where a real body stands for a fictitious body which has the power to evoke other real bodies, where the stage is wherever the actors say it is and that place, in turn, may stand for somewhere else entirely, can re-expose the workings of Gumpert's lost or submerged 'metaphoricity'. It is clear on the stage that, for example, desert fatigues are not authentic Euripides but present-day impositions which coerce us into reading Agamemnon as a metaphor for a modern-day English or American General. Thus the division, between what is clear on stage but mystified in commentary about the stage, reveals a graft or seam which, if unpicked, can expose the ideologically driven 'strategies for recuperating the past and for concealing that act of recuperation' that are at work in contemporary English culture.[45]

In beginning this thesis with the phenomenon of the twenty-first century surge in *Hecuba*s I am attempting to achieve three things. First, I am acknowledging and outlining my own historical situatedness within the moment that has conditioned my conception of the figure and myth of Hecuba. In 2005,

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[43] (Madison: Wisconsin UP, 2001), p.xi.

[44] *Ibid*, p.xii, original emphasis. For the influence of Derrida on Gumpert's method see pp.xiii-xiv.

[45] *Ibid*, xii.

intrigued by Hecuba's sudden ubiquity, I chose to investigate the dynamics of

pity at work in the RSC, Donmar and Foursight productions.[46] Whatever their

individual flaws, the anti-war sentiment of these productions resonated with my

own political outlook whilst their three Hecubas collectively established my

spectatorship of the role and my reading of her myth. These productions, and

particularly Higgins' searing performance, are my default Hecuba. Hecuba

became for me, as she was for that cultural moment in England, not only

dominated by the violent Hecuba of *Hecuba* but also a theatrical symptom of,

and comment on, acts of terrorism, the wars waged in reaction to these acts, and

the violent retaliation that these wars in turn provoked (and still provoke).[47] For

me, Hecuba is – in 'actions that a [wo]man might play' (*Hamlet* 1.2.84) – an

unnervingly physical stage presence, whilst the violence of her story is grounded

in distressingly real equivalents. Thus, even as I read other Hecubas, the

murderous queen of Euripides' first Hecuba-play always lingers in the

background. The potential for an explosion of violence against both adults and

children, against the morally culpable and the wholly innocent, haunts my

conception of the queen. One consequence of these indelible associations is that

when I view Hecubas who do not unleash the full rage of Euripides' violent

queen I tend to perceive them as having been curtailed, mollified, or suppressed

by their author. The conflicting combination of outrage, horror and yet also

vindication felt at the queen's act of vengeance is entirely appropriate to our own

historical context; it is right that Hecuba makes us feel sickened rather than

cleansed; the notion of catharsis – which is (potentially) achievable with

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[46] 'The Pitiless Gaze: Euripides' *Hecuba* and the War on Terror' (unpublished master's thesis, University of Warwick, 2005).
[47] The suicide bombings across London took place on 7 July 2005, two months after the RSC production ended its London dates.

Euripides' *Trojan Women* – in the world of ongoing violence which we perpetuate seems at best a comforting self-willed delusion, at worst a hypocritical lie. My bias, however, also provides me with a hook to unpick historic Hecubas, to be always asking why *this* Hecuba, why not "my" Hecuba?

This notion of "unpicking" Hecubas leads to my second aim. Despite the discursive commentary surrounding them, the twenty-first century productions were explicit about their tactics for appropriating the Trojan queen for the present. Indeed, stage productions cannot be anything but overtly Presentist projects, grounded entirely in the moment of their own performance and reception. Yet in this respect the theatre simply manifests what is true of all literary Hecubas – that they are defined by the intertwined yet conflicting historical moments of their subject-matter, their production, their reception and each new historically-conditioned reading. However, in looking backwards to the records of much older performances and, particularly, literary texts this nexus of timeframes can prove elusive and tend to blur. Although the ubiquity of Cultural Materialism ensures that cultural documents are insistently perceived as being *of their time* (whilst interference from the present gesture of "looking back" typically remains unacknowledged), they are not generally considered as being engaged in their own pesentist project which entails another layer of historically-conditioned 'strategies for recuperating the past'.[48] Historically occurring Hecubas are typically discussed as allusions to or citations, memories or mis-quotations of classical texts. Nigel Spivey, for example, asserts that Hecuba 'simply […] belongs to a cumulative stratification of humanistic name-dropping

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[48] Gumpert (as in n.43 p.60), xii.

from Homer to Hamlet and beyond'.[49] As part of the mythology of an ancient culture, Hecuba exacerbates this temporal elusiveness since, as Frederick Ahl asserts, '[m]yth is compact memory: it removes the framework of time that separates events in a historical narrative and allows them to collapse randomly like a scattered deck of cards'.[50] As stratified timeframes are collapsed to give the illusion of continuity, what Homer and Hamlet and "we" mean by Hecuba is implied to be the same. Writers and readers, actors and spectators, engaged in their own unique Presentist readings disappear. Thus, in beginning with the overt and easily perceived Presentism of the twenty-first century *Hecuba*s my second aim is to establish the conceptual framework that will guide my reading of all prior Hecubas, to assert my interest in the socio-political motivations behind the ideological press-ganging of the past to meet the demands of the present, to insist on the value of the Presentist concerns at work in all historic Hecubas. My third aim overlaps with the second since, having demonstrated the Presentist tactics at work in these contemporary Hecubas, I now aim to interrogate the ideological undercurrents motivating my contemporary society's conceptions of Hecuba as I read them in, and against, the context of their own cultural moment.

2. 'The News That Stays News' [51]

Writing with the intention of deconstructing the myth of History as consisting of 'isolatable, untheorised "facts"' and 'neutrally analysable "texts"', Hawkes asserts that:

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[49] Nigel Spivey, 'Civilisation starts here: Review of *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* 3rd edition', *Guardian*, Books Section, 2 Jan. 1997, p.13.

[50] '*Troy* and Memorials of War', in *Troy: From Homer's Iliad to Hollywood Epic*, ed. by Martin M. Winkler (Oxford: Blackwell, 2007), pp.163-85 (p.171).

[51] This sub-heading is taken from Tony Harrison's statement that, '[t]o our shame she [Hecuba] is news that stays news', in 'Weeping for Hecuba', Introduction to *Euripides' Hecuba*, trans. by Tony Harrison (London: Faber & Faber, 2005), pp.v-x (p.ix).

> Facts do not speak for themselves. Nor do texts. This doesn't mean
> that facts or texts don't exist. It does mean that all of them are
> capable of genuinely contradictory meanings, none of which has
> any independent, 'given', undeniable, or self-evident status.
> Indeed, they don't speak at all unless and until they are inserted
> into and perceived as part of specific discourses which impose
> their own shaping requirements and agendas. We choose the facts.
> We choose the texts. We do the inserting. We do the perceiving.
> Facts and texts, don't simply speak, don't merely mean. *We* speak,
> *we* mean, *by* them.[52]

The twenty-first century stage *Hecuba*s clearly demonstrate, in apparent

opposition to the discursive praxis surrounding them, that Hecubas, like facts and

texts, 'do not speak for themselves'; that Hecubas 'don't speak at all unless and

until they are inserted into and perceived as part of specific discourses which

impose their own shaping requirements and agendas'; that 'we choose' the

Hecubas to speak on our behalf.

In 2003-06, the Hecuba 'we' in England chose to speak by and with was,

overwhelmingly and unprecedentedly, the violent Hecuba of Euripides' *Hecuba*,

not that of his more widely known and oft-performed *Trojan Women*, nor those

of Seneca, Homer and Ovid, nor a re-envisioned contemporary Hecuba.[53]

Furthermore, the twenty-first century *Hecuba* productions consistently reveal

that the 'specific discourse' that Hecuba was 'inserted into and perceived as part

of' was the discourse on war and terrorism constructed by the media's coverage

of global acts of violence.

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[52] Hawkes (as referenced in n.29 p.21), original emphasis, p.3.

[53] A contemporary re-envisioning of *Trojan Women* produced in December 2007 by the
Australian playwright Christine Evans, *Trojan Barbie* (subtitled: 'A car-crash encounter with
Euripides' *Trojan Women*'), is set in a doll's hospital in modern-day England and in a Troy
which is simultaneously the mythic city of Hecuba and the contemporary tourist site of
Schliemann's Troy. However, mythic Troy is dominated by a modern-day military camp: 'a
barren space, fenced in, in the contemporary style of Gaza and Fallujah, with cyclone wire'
(Hobart: Australian Script Centre, 2007), <www.ozscript.org> [13 October 2008], p.2. I am not
aware of any productions of *Trojan Barbie* within the UK. However, in England a new
amalgamated version of Euripides' *Trojan Women* and *Hecuba*, entitled *After Troy* (by Glyn
Maxwell and Lifeblood Theatre Company), was mounted in London, 16 March 2011.

In 2004, with the aftermath of the 2003 Iraq war topping the nightly television news-broadcasts, with the optimistically entitled 'Operation Enduring Freedom' sliding into the nightmarish interminability of the 'War on Terror', the links that the twenty-first century *Hecuba*s drew between Hecuba and contemporary political violence were compounded on a daily basis. The Trojan queen became intertwined with the military jargon and resonant names that dominated news reports routinely punctuated by images of mothers wailing for their children: 9/11 and the twin towers, the Madrid bombings of March 2004, London's 7/7, Abu Ghraib, Private Lynndie England, Bush and Blair, Tim Collins, the Coalition of the Willing, the Axis of Evil, cluster bombs, mortar fire, W.M.D.s, I.E.D.s, toppled statues and, ironically or not, Hercules Bombers from which the flag-draped coffins of British servicemen and women killed in Iraq were unloaded for repatriation. From the first of September 2004 the Beslan Siege was added to this nexus of associations as the news became dominated by reports of the three-day armed occupation of a school in the Russian Federation of Beslan by Chechen 'freedom fighters', 'rebels', or 'terrorists'. Russia's military's response turned the school into a battlefield, resulting in the deaths not only of most of the hostage-takers but also at least 334 civilians, of which 186 were children. Beslan's bereaved were repeatedly filmed by the English Press giving vent to a grief and fury that seemed to echo that of Hecuba and Polymestor: 'A relative of one of the children said that if he could get his hands on one of the hostage takers, which we now know to be men and women, he would tear the flesh from their bones'.[54] In much the same way that the media became obsessed with the incongruity of the American Private Lynndie England

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[54] Cooke (as in as in n.35 p.57).

as a *female* soldier photographed smiling as she humiliated and abused Iraqi

prisoners, news reports persistently stressed the gender of the female hostage-

takers in Beslan, juxtaposing their "unnatural" and inhuman recourse to

infanticide against the "natural" passions of the children's grieving mothers.

As Frank McGuinness observed, events in Beslan and Iraq hijacked the

interpretative impulse in regard to the modern *Hecuba*s.[55] McGuinness' wish to

stage a new translation of *Hecuba* was not prompted by Beslan, Iraq or

Afghanistan but an older murder of other children, in yet another country

experiencing (still experiencing) its own unremitting aftermath: McGuinness

pinpoints a woman's scream at the funeral of two boys killed in the Omagh

bombing of 1998 as the catalyst that made him think about Hecuba, 'about a

grief so terrible and powerful and what it can do'.[56] The translation, however,

took six years to complete and by the time of its stage debut more recent events

dominated the minds of the audience. Thus, the Donmar programme notes talk

not of Omagh but of 'the potency of the unquiet grave' in 'Palestine, Israel,

Ground Zero, Afghanistan, [and] Iraq'.[57] Encouraged by such notes and

exposure to the daily news, McGuinness admits that the audience necessarily

brought to the production a far more immediate awareness of current atrocities

including Iraq and, most acutely, in September 2004, 'the women of Beslan

crying for their children'.[58] It is these cultural references or, more accurately,

their depiction in the media which audiences (including reviewers) automatically

drew on in order to interpret and relate to the twenty-first century productions.

Susannah Clapp, for example, writing on *Hecuba* generally (within her review of

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[55] '"I am certainly not a pacifist": Interview with Frank McGuinness' by Lyn Gardner, *Guardian*, Arts Section, 14 Sep. 2004, p.10.
[56] *Ibid*.
[57] Matthew Parris, 'Untitled' (as in as in n.35 p.57).
[58] McGuinness, 'certainly not a pacifist' (as in n.55 above).

the RSC's production), states that the 'the chorus of lamenting women could be the background to the report of an atrocity; the cycle of revenge, with its bloody display of children's bodies, now looks almost routine'.[59] However, it is also these types of cultural references and, more accurately, their depiction in the media which theatre practitioners consciously drew on in rehearsal rooms, and in the process of translation, in order to produce their *Hecuba*s; and it is this ubiquitous cultural discourse that they utilised, in interviews, programme notes and staging decisions, to make their *Hecuba*s comprehensible to the audience.

References to the media, particularly television reports, thus abound within both the English productions and the commentary surrounding them; although none were as overt or as extensive as Brad May's concurrent film production of *Trojan Women* in America (2004). May explicitly relocated the play to contemporary Iraq and replaced the play's prologue between Athena and Poseidon with "live" CNN reports on the 'WAR in TROY'. Obsolete Greek gods were thus usurped by an omnipotent media presence and the Trojan War was rendered visually indistinguishable from CNN's concurrent coverage of 'War in Iraq' (fig.4).[60]

Nothing this explicit was seen in the English productions. In fact, such references, with the exception of Tony Harrison's adoption of contemporary military and political jargon popularised in the media, were typically confined to the accompanying programme notes. Thus, whilst Katie Mitchell's *Women of*

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[59] Clapp, 'Bad Heir Day' (as in n.32 p.57).

[60] In America the concept of depicting the Trojan War in the style of a contemporary news broadcast can be traced to 1948 (only three years after the end of WW2), and an episode of the Radio series 'You Are There' in which famous moments in world history were covered in half-hour episodes by an embedded reporter "live" at the scene. In 1953 the radio series was re-made for US television and 'The Fall of Troy: 1184 B.C' became a televised news report (dir. Sydney Lumet). See: Martin M. Winkler, 'The Trojan War on the Screen', in *Troy: From Homer's Iliad to Hollywood Epic* (as in n.50 p.63), pp.203-215 (p.209).

Troy relocated the play to a contemporary dockyard warehouse, no overt references to the media were brought onstage. The programme notes, however, reprint 'Reunion in Sarajevo', a poem by the production's translator Don Taylor, which, in re-imagining *Trojan Women* as a current atrocity, *mediates* the play's action: 'Raped Cassandra's crazed face / Stares from the TV screen'.

Film still of Ark Theatre's *Trojan Women* prologue available on dir. Brad May's website at:

http://www.bradmays.com/images/twvideopro.jpg

Figure 4: Richard Tatum and Tracy Eliott in Ark Theatre Company's filmed production of
Trojan Women, 2004 (dir. by Brad May, California)

The 'Director's Notes' accompanying Foursight's *Hecuba* also parallels the tragedy with televised news channels by declaring: 'It is the morning after the end of the siege in Beslan, Russian Federation. The television is full of horrific images'. After recounting some of these 'horrific images', each new paragraph is punctuated by the refrain 'change channel' in order to further juxtapose *Hecuba* with televised reports on the humanitarian crisis in Sudan, the militaristic re-election speeches of George Bush, and President Putin's intention to keep Chechnya 'by force'.[61] Tony Harrison carries Cooke's trope further, collapsing

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[61] Cooke (as in n.35 p.57).

all distinctions between the play and real atrocities, as he sees Hecuba stepping 'onto our daily front pages and into our nightly newscasts'.[62] Even in programme notes, like those of the Donmar, which made no specific references to the media, the ubiquitous recounting of modern-day atrocities automatically deferred the audience to the media as it was only from televised, printed and internet news that England's non-combatants could have any knowledge or experience of these conflicts.

Thus, the meta-discourse consistently established by the notes to these productions not only underscored contemporary resonances, but also habitually located the spectator in the position of someone watching the news. Although relying on a more subtle inference, this effectively establishes an identical viewing position, and mediating lens, as Brad May's mock CNN reports. On the one hand this inferred position insists upon the feasibility and authenticity of the play's events; on the other hand it establishes a mode of viewing which clearly demarcates a pervasive division between 'them' and 'us', between a passive watching audience and distant victims. Fragile though this illusory binary may be, and the Donmar in particular worked hard to deconstruct it, the productions tap into the mindset that both perceives (bad) news as something which happens to other people and processes acts of violence via the narrativising and organising principles of the newscasts. The predominance of such rhetorical conditioning, stemming from visual media, on the way in which we experience the world can be detected in the clichéd refrain of the shocked television

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[62] 'Bitter Tears' (as in n.42 p.59).

interviewee: this isn't the type of thing you expect to happen to you, this is like something you see on TV.[63]

A two-fold process of 'perceiving' and 'inserting' is at work here.[64] Euripides' more violent Hecuba is made comprehensible by being perceived and inserted within the media discourse on war, as an image that is already 'routine' within 'the report of an atrocity'.[65] The theatrical community evidently saw in Hecuba a reflection of a real-life contemporary figure who was dominating the media at that time in 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'.[66] The ubiquity of twenty-first century stage Hecubas reflects the ubiquity of these images. Like Shakespeare's Lucrece searching painted scenes of the Trojan war for 'a face where all distress is stelled' (1444), contemporary playwrights, directors and actors seem to have been searching the theatrical landscape to find an adequate reflection of this recurring media image, and, like Lucrece, they too became fixated on 'despairing Hecuba' (1447). Although Lucrece 'shapes her sorrow to the beldam's woes' (1458), the poem reveals this as a two-way process: 'she lends them words, and she their looks doth borrow' (1498). Similarly, the glut of stage Hecubas from 2004 were not only theatrically shaped by an awareness of "real-life Hecubas" but also, in turn, affected the audience's conception of those "real Hecubas" as

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[63] Such sentiments were insistently voiced in reaction to the footage of the 9/11 attacks on the Twin Towers, with commentators and witnesses repeatedly stating that it looked like a scene from an action movie.
[64] Hawkes (as in n.29 p.21), p.3.
[65] Clapp, 'Bad Heir Day' (as in n.32 p.57).
[66] Harrison, 'Weeping for Hecuba' (as in n.51 p.64), pp.viii-ix.

their suffering was shaped to Euripides' depictions of the Trojan queen and her chorus.[67]

For Tony Harrison the ubiquitous media images were directly incorporated into his method of translation, prompting and informing his own *Hecuba* in much the same way as the screaming woman in Omagh prompted McGuinness:

> In my notebooks, […] I glue pictures among the drafts of translations from the Greek tragedies I've adapted for the stage, […] They are all different women from many places on earth with the same gesture of disbelief, despair and denunciation. They are in Sarajevo, Kosovo, Grozny, Gaza, Ramallah, Tbilisi, Baghdad, Falluja - women in robes and men in metal helmets as in the Trojan war. Under them all, over the years, I have scribbled 'Hecuba'. My notebooks are bursting with Hecubas.[68]

Harrison saw the images of women caught in modern conflicts as reflections of Hecuba; Hecuba haunted them and they haunted Harrison. Indeed a (presumably) similar photograph of a woman 'in robes' visually dominates Harrison's published translation: the front-cover consists of a close-up of a 'woman held at Abu Graib Prison', behind the bars of a metal fence her eyes stare out from the Burka held in place by a hand with long-fingernails (fig.5). But photographic images, like facts and texts and Hecubas, do not and cannot speak for themselves.[69] This anonymous woman, about whom no information is provided except the perfunctory title of the photograph, is made to stand for Hecuba.

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[67] This 'shaping' of the Real to the Symbolic, of actual victims to the fictional Hecuba, can often be overlooked by theatrical reviews and academic criticism, typically overshadowed by the process by which the symbolic is shaped by the conception of the real it is designed to signify. Focus often falls on describing the direction of this two-way process about which the productions themselves are most vocal and conscious.

[68] 'Bitter Tears' (as in n.42 p.59).

[69] As Susan Sontag argues, '[h]arrowing photographs […] don't help us much to understand. Narratives can make us understand. Photographs do something else: they haunt us'; '[p]hotographs of the victims of war are themselves a species of rhetoric. They reiterate. They simplify. They agitate. They create the illusion of consensus', 'Looking at War', *New Yorker*, 09 Dec. 2002 <http://www.newyorker.com/printables/archive/050110fr_archive04> [17 July 2005].

Indeed, 'Hecuba' is written across her forehead in red letters just as 'Hecuba' is written underneath the women in Harrison's notebook. Hecuba is projected onto this woman without explication of her own individual circumstances; her image helps us to comprehend our Hecuba but does Hecuba help us to understand her?

The front-cover of Tony Harrison's *Hecuba* can be seen on the website of Faber & Faber:

http://www.faber.co.uk/work/hecuba-by-euripides/9780571227914/

Figure 5: Front-cover to Tony Harrison's *Hecuba* (London: Faber & Faber, 2005).
(Photograph by Dewynters, plc.)

Similar anonymous images haunted the performance of Harrison's translation; seven stark photographs, by the Iranian-born artist Shirin Neshat, of chador-clad women assembled on a desolate beach, huddled together on a desert plain, sat alone in an imposing stone archway or floating in an empty sea, adorned the RSC's programme notes. Neshat's name, the title of each photograph and the date of its production were the only information provided. However, as Carol Gillespie discovered, these images were in fact stills from films made in Morocco, prior to the invasion of Iraq or Afghanistan, and were intended as statements of female power, as a way for Neshat to 'construct[…] a *positive* relationship to her own country of birth from the outside'.[70] In the RSC's

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[70] 'Theory and Practice in Researching Greek Drama in Modern Cultural Contexts: The Problem of the Photographic Image', 'Essay Seven' in *Documenting and Researching Modern*

programme these images, placed alongside essays on powerlessness and patriarchal oppression, operated as a depiction of the suffering female Other, thereby resonating with the then ubiquitous images of women from Iraq and Afghanistan. Neshat's personal project was thus effaced.

Somewhat ironically then, Gillespie holds these photographs, and their resonance with war reports, responsible for effacing, in turn, the individuation of the RSC's chorus: 'the costume of the chorus, with purples, pinks, blues and patterns of gold running through the headdress and shawls, resembles more a Slav/Balkan dress code rather than something that is exclusively Muslim' and yet, as Lorna Hardwick observed, 'many critics persisted in saying that images in the production "looked like photos of Iraq"'.[71] For Gillespie and Hardwick the programme's images of women dressed in the traditional Muslim chador seem to have been transposed onto the stage, a transposition no doubt encouraged by the script's Iraq war related vocabulary, causing critics to 'Islamicise the chorus'.[72] However, the media's discourse on war is so culturally potent and pervasive that even without such explicit provocation it has the power to over-ride the interpretation of the text offered by the stage. Thus even as their costume opposed such divisions between 'them' and 'us' Katie Mitchell's chorus, clad in 1940's western ball-gowns, were also read as metaphors for contemporary women. As Billington's review implies this interpretive impulse is automatic: 'it

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Productions of Greek Drama: The Sources, ed. by Lorna Hardwick (Open University, 2007) <http://www2.open.ac.uk/ClassicalStudies/GreekPlays/essays/gillespie.htm> [20 Oct. 2009].
[71] Hardwick, *Challenges and rejections: staging Greek drama in post-colonial Britain* (2007/forthcoming), qtd. in Gillespie.
[72] Hardwick, *Challenges and rejections*, qtd. in Gillespie.

doesn't take much imagination to see it as directly applicable to our own times'.[73]

Generally speaking, images of grieving women from foreign war-zones are utilised in the media, as in the RSC programme, without personalised explication. These images punctuate broadcasts with emotionally loaded visuals, anonymous images of suffering denied individual specificity or narrative contextualisation. Similarly, the civilian casualties of military conflicts typically remain nameless statistics whilst the name, age, provenance, and relations of English military fatalities are broadcast in full. The Donmar set reversed the media trend by hijacking a militaristic memorial wall to present female victims as named individuals; and yet, this wall also achieved its potency by operating as an impersonal image of accumulation: individual names did not signify anything other than that unknown woman's death, but en masse these names achieved a similar impact, and operated in similar manner, as the 'recurring image' of grieving women. As Harrison's description of his notebooks implies, these images gain potency from their anonymity by operating accumulatively: interchangeable images mount up and threaten to 'burst' out and overwhelm the spectator. Foursight's production aimed to reflect and harness the power of this trans-historic and geographic accumulation by creating a Chorus who 'carry the historical and global accumulation of injustices wrought on all'.[74] Whilst a sense of global injustice was achieved by casting a multi-national chorus delivering lines in numerous languages, the trans-historic setting was (rather unsuccessfully) suggested by the male characters' costumes and the rudimentary set, both of which consisted of an historically eclectic mix of militaria:

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[73] 'First Night: A feverish energy that fails to touch emotions: *Women of Troy*, Lyttelton Theatre, London', *Guardian*, Nov. 29 2007, p.14.
[74] Cooke (as in n.35 p.57).

Odysseus' modern flak-jacket, with a belt of machinegun bullets, was combined

with a 'traditional' Greek leather peplum skirt whilst Agamemnon's coat was

reminiscent of the British army at the turn of the nineteenth-century; the set

comprised of the debris of war: sand-bags, gas-masks, corrugated iron, barbed-

wire. The female characters, however, wore vaguely robe-like beige costumes

suggesting nowhere in particular but definitely not conveying a sense of

everywhere and all-time. Thus, like the Balkan/Slavic dress of the RSC's Chorus,

Foursight also, albeit unintentionally, perpetuated the notion of the Trojan

women as distinctly Other to the western, UK, audience.[75]

Kent's production at the Donmar was arguably most successful in

combating this dichotomising them/us tendency: whilst the back-wall retained

the accumulative impact of a traditional Chorus the reduction of the onstage

Chorus to one character and one singer refused to relegate any female characters

to group anonymity. Whilst all these productions brought the war-zone to the

home-front, the Donmar enacted a further domestication by insisting not only

that nothing marked Hecuba or the chorus as a foreign Other, but also that the

murdered children were depicted as quintessentially English and that their

murder took place amongst the incongruous frippery of an English picnic.

In England, from 2003 onwards the only depiction of the English war-

dead from Iraq or Afghanistan were (and still are) the televised broadcasts of

union-jack draped coffins unloaded from transport planes, paraded in a cavalcade

along the high-street of Wootton Bassett, or being carried through churchyards.

For a modern Hecuba, re-imagined by Australian playwright Christine Evans in

2007, these flags, which are presented to the soldier's family at the funeral,

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[75] More successful was the production's deconstruction of the binary opposition of male aggressor and female victim; by doubling-up the exclusively female cast each oppressed woman of the Chorus was seen transformed, onstage, into a male oppressor.

operate as futile 'bandages' for grieving mothers, covering-up the full impact of the corpse before being offered in exchange for the child's body: 'How obscenely light it feels in her lap. / To lose a son and gain a flag'.[76] Although the media was full of the images of grieving mothers, wives and families, both at home and in the war-zones, media coverage of both enemy and civilian fatalities was limited to anonymous statistics. Televised broadcasts adopted CGI equivalents of the technologies of modern warfare that convert images of the real world into a virtual landscape in which 'the enemy appears only as a computerised target'.[77]

As Jean Baudrillard argued in relation to the first Gulf War, '[t]he isolation of the enemy by all kinds of electronic interference creates a sort of barricade behind which he becomes invisible'.[78] In both 1991 and 2003-11, the military's technological denial of the enemy's corporeal reality was replicated in the media by both their CGI images and in their adoption of militaristic jargon which sees civilian casualties as 'collateral damage' and enemy military personnel as 'neutralised' or 'suppressed'.[79] However, the rhetoric of this official war discourse was utterly undermined when images of the Iraqi enemy made it into the media during the prisoner abuse scandal at Abu Graib. Private photographs and home-movies taken on mobile phones dramatically exposed the corporeal reality of "the enemy", juxtaposing their official effacement with the

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[76] *Trojan Barbie* (as in n.53 p.64), p.33. Similarly, for the anti-Iraq-war protest song, 'Holiday' (2004) by the American band *Green Day*, these flags, bestowed on mothers after the funeral of their children, is a suppression of voice: 'there's a flag wrapped around a score of men / a gag'.
[77] Jean Baudrillard, *The Gulf War Did Not Take Place*, trans. by Paul Patton (Sydney: Power, 2004), p62.
[78] *Ibid*., p.43.
[79] See 'Mad Dogs and Englishmen', *Guardian*, 23 Jan. 1991, p.23 (unattributed) an article which compares expressions used by the British Press to describe allied and enemy forces during the 1991 Persian Gulf War. Although both this *Guardian* article and Jean Baudrillard's book are concerned with the first Gulf war, the same techniques were clearly adopted for coverage of both Afghanistan and, more prominently, Iraq.

fragile vulnerability of naked bodies subjected to humiliating torture. This was, however (as is claimed of the abuse itself), an isolated incident, a rare exception to the predominant depiction of the War on Terrorism's necessary Other. In January 2010 the incendiary protest group Islam4UK claimed that they wanted to draw attention to the media's effacement and elision of Afghan War casualties by holding a parade of empty coffins through Wootton Bassett. Deemed too proactive in its mocking of the funeral parades of English war-heroes, and with the threat of inciting violent clashes with rival fringe groups such as the racist English Defence League and neo-fascist BNP, the protest was banned.

Sociologist Andrew Hoskins argues that post-9/11 the threatened or mutilated body, and indeed the absence of this body, has become the central battleground of and in England's cultural discourses of war.[80] Although the Abu Graib abuse photographs were shown in mainstream news-broadcasts they first came to public attention via the internet. For Hoskins sites such as YouTube are increasingly providing an alternative source of information and imagery that have the potential to subvert the official war narratives broadcast by major news channels. The advances in mobile phone camera technology, combined with the power of the internet to provide a public platform for, and global dissemination of, personal footage, has begun to pit more intimate, immediate, fragmentary and un-sanitised images of war in competition with mainstream television.[81]

Olga Taxidou argues that Greek tragedy's insistence that 'the dead body is constantly present' and surrounded by ancient cultural mourning praxis

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[80] 'Sanitising War: A Moral Media Crisis?', Warwick Arts Centre, Warwick University, 2 May 2008.

[81] Hoskins' examples include: the official silent video of Saddam Hussein's execution (30 Dec. 2006) which was overshadowed by the widespread internet availability of jerky images recorded on mobile phones which picked up the sound of a jeering mob. Similarly, in the days following Ken Bigley's execution in Iraq (7 Oct. 2004), over a million downloads were recorded on a single site of a video of the beheading which major news channels had decided not to broadcast.

(converted into a 'performance convention') which 'excessively laments, theatricalises and feminises (or re-feminises) death', enabled the performance of Attic tragedy to 'blatantly oppose' the contemporary Athenian state funerals performed in honour of its war-dead: 'the sanitised death of the cenotaph, a vacuum that disguises the barbarism of war'.[82] In this manner, the twenty-first century *Hecuba*s also enter into a similar debate, or 'moral media crisis', concerning the sanitisation of the cultural discourses surrounding war.[83] In direct opposition to the mainstream media, but with a narrative coherence denied by the fragmentation of personal accounts on the internet, theatrical *Hecuba*s offered a fictionalised alternative in which the body of the "enemy" is constantly exposed as that of a butchered child. With three or four young corpses exhibited onstage warring adults then compete for control over the meaning of these bodies in conflicting rhetorical reconfigurations.[84] The silent signification of the exhibited corpses, however, undermines all rhetorical wrangling. The English productions

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[82] *Tragedy, Modernity and Mourning* (Edinburgh: EUP, 2004), p.9. As Taxidou explains, the first Athenian cenotaph was built in the first year after the Peloponnesian War; moreover, the first 'state funeral oration […] delivered by Pericles validates the transcendental notion of death through the concept of the *pro patria* sacrifice. It is spoken over the absent bodies of dead soldiers and reclaims those dead bodies through the body of the state', p.9.

[83] Hoskins (as in n.80 p.79).

[84] My MA dissertation compared the RSC, Donmar and Foursight productions' different approaches to depicting the bodies of Polydorus, Polyxena and Polymestor's sons and the impact this had on the emotional response elicited from the audience. As I argued in that thesis: 'these concerns can be seen to culminate in the final *agon* between Hecuba and Polymestor in which they each attempt to impress upon Agamemnon, and the audience, their opposing interpretations of the significance of the children's bodies. Polymestor argues that Polydorus should be seen as "the enemy" rather than "the guest", and thus, accordingly, the "[c]hopped and carved" (l.171) corpse represents both an act of political loyalty to the Greeks and a long-term security measure taken to protect his kingdom from a second Trojan war. Polymestor then shifts the focus onto the bodies of his own children as representations of Hecuba's pure barbarity (l.1133-75). In order to counter Polymestor's argument, and refocus attention upon Polymestor's crime, Hecuba pays little attention to the corpses of the Thracian princes, referring to them only once: "you have lost your sons" (l.1231). Instead the ex-Queen concentrates upon Polydorus' corpse to insist upon her reading of his wounds as a cry for revenge, a symbol of Polymestor's ruthlessness and selfish greed, an affront to Zeus Xenios, an injustice which demands retribution (l.1159-234). In all three of the recent UK productions, Hecuba and Polymestor's dispute over the significance of the three corpses literally took place over the children's bodies. Thus, regardless of which corpse or corpses the antagonists attempted to draw Agamemnon's (and the audiences') attention towards, all three bodies, or at least what was left of them, were always in view to corroborate or undermine their parents' arguments', Kenward, 'The Pitiless Gaze: Euripides' *Hecuba* and the War on Terror' (unpublished master's thesis, University of Warwick, 2005), pp.40-41.

made this competitive manipulation of the children's bodies explicit: Foursight literalised the metaphor by using puppets for Hecuba's and Polymestor's sons whilst the Donmar saw their bodies being tossed across the stage in the game of blind's man bluff.

Despite the ubiquity of *Hecuba* in England, Euripides' tragedy was not the most culturally prevalent retelling of the story of Troy circulating in the UK in 2004. In the competing stories my culture told itself about Troy, the theatrical *Hecuba*s were overshadowed by Wolfgang Petersen's Hollywood blockbuster *Troy* (released in cinemas across England in May 2004). Stage *Hecuba*s could not compete with the film's accessibility, with the sheer number of screenings, the audience capacity of each cinema, its $185 million budget, and the pull of its star-studded cast: Brad Pitt (Achilles); Eric Bana (Hector); Orlando Bloom (Paris); Peter O'Toole (Priam); Sean Bean (Odysseus); Brian Cox (Agamemnon); Brendan Gleeson (Menelaus); Saffron Burrows (Andromache) and German supermodel Diane Kruger (Helen).[85]

Although a handful of reviewers drew links between *Troy* and the Iraq war, director Petersen and screenwriter David Benioff had no such parallels in mind (with much of the filming considerably pre-dating the build-up to war), and the film generally resists such a reading. And yet, as Frederick Ahl comments, the 'myth of Troy has come to define, and to be defined by, all subsequent wars. And because the Trojan War is mythic, it can be recalled in infinitely different ways and retold through all kinds of memories of wars, recent or remote'.[86] Thus, despite the absence of the contemporary resonance so prevalent in the

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[85] The film's popularity did not go unobserved by theatre practitioners involved in their *Hecuba*s; as Frank McGuinness quipped in an interview about the Donmar costumes: 'Much as we would love Brad Pitt to be here', 'I don't think the cast can be prancing around in short skirts', qtd. in Watkiss (as in n.7 p.44), p.32.

[86] Ahl (as in n.50 p.63), p.171.

theatrical *Hecuba*s, *Troy*, as well as the cultural idea of Troy, still operated as a

potent discourse, alongside news-reports and stage plays, as a way in which non-

combatants experienced and interpreted the notion of war.

The film is framed by a voice-over prologue and epilogue, spoken by

Sean Bean's 'down-to-earth Yorkshireman' Odysseus.[87] He opens the film by

declaring that:

> Men are haunted by the vastness of eternity, and so we ask
> ourselves will our actions echo across the centuries, will strangers
> hear our names long after we're gone and wonder who we were,
> how bravely we fought, how fiercely we loved.

The gender politics of *Troy* make it quite clear that when Odysseus says 'men' it

is not a slip for "mankind". *Troy* is an insistently male epic in the tradition of

Virgil's *Aeneid* and Homer's *Iliad* (which the closing credits tell us the film is

'inspired by'). Implicitly narrated by Odysseus, the film offers an androcentric

tale consumed with the notion of achieving immortality through acts of male

heroism on the battlefield (the Homeric ideal of *aristeia*). The characters obsess

over the mortality of their names: 'when your children are dead and their

children after them...your name will be lost'; 'In years, the dust from our bones

will be gone […]. But our names will remain'; 'you came here because you want

your name to last through the ages'. Accordingly, Odysseus' epilogue echoes the

prologue:

> If they ever tell my story let them say I walked with giants; men
> rise and fall like the winter wheat, but these names will never die.
> Let them say I lived in the time of Hector, tamer of horses; let
> them say I lived in the time of Achilles.

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[87] *Ibid*, p.180.

The film is dominated by a sense of nostalgia, a longing for the simple memorial

stories that Odysseus desires 'them' to tell in remembrance of his life: stories in

which men are amplified to 'giants' and a hero's name can live forever.[88] The

film could have ironically juxtaposed its depiction of Achilles, Hector and

Odysseus, against Odysseus' hope for these simplistic stories. Instead, however,

the film endorses his view: Achilles and Hector are gleaming almost super-

human specimens of masculinity whom the audience have seen – via stunning

special-effects, a stirring soundtrack, and slow-motion tracking – achieve

spectacular physical feats in battle (fig.6).

Brad Pitt's depiction as Achilles in merchandise advertising *Troy* can be seen here:

http://www.thewallpapers.org/photo/8610/Troy-005.jpg

**Figure 6: Film poster advertising Petersen's *Troy* with Brad Pitt as Achilles
(Warner Bros. 2004)**

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[88] The nostalgia for unproblematic heroic masculinities is compounded by a comparable nostalgia perceptible in cinematic echoes of not only the "sword and sandals" epics of the Hollywood Golden Age – *Ben Hur* (1959); *Spartacus* (1960); *Jason and the Argonauts* (1963); *Helen of Troy* (1956) – but also, as Ahl observes, *The Longest Day* (1962) and *Saving Private Ryan* (1998). The C.G.I storming of the Trojan beaches by the Greek army creates strong 'visual echoes' with these two famous film depictions of the Normandy landings; and although this might be 'only a cinematic allusion thematically unconnected to the rest of Petersen's film', such echoes create resonances with two films in which men are defined by heroic acts performed in battle, in which individualised heroes are good, the homogeneous enemy is bad, and virtuous (unseen) women keep the home fires burning, see Ahl (as in n.50 p.63), p.182. Whilst I read these resonances as essentially genre-driven, Ahl is more specific, exploring the ramifications if *Troy* is read as aligning the Greeks with the Allied forces and the Trojans with the Germans in occupied France, pp.182-84.

In contrast to this heroic amplification, *Troy*'s approach to female characters is consistently reductive. Named female characters total only four and the characterisation of each is defined solely in relation to Odysseus' male 'we': Thetis, the (scarcely onscreen) mother; Andromache, the loyal wife; Helen, the beautiful 'whore' who tempts civilisation to its destruction, and Briseis, the redemptive priestess who revives the war-suppressed humanity of her lover Achilles. Of these four women, only Briseis' character is expanded from classical sources. Thetis is stripped of her divinity while Helen and Andromache are stripped of ambivalence and complexity in truncated characterisations that render them entirely passive.[89]

Although Briseis plays a far more significant role than her classical namesake, she is in fact a conglomerate character, the reductive – not to mention de-populating – assimilation of Athena, Cassandra, Polyxena and Clytemnestra into a single figure.[90] Briseis is also the only person we see enslaved in the Greek camp; yet unlike Hecuba and the women who will be enslaved after the war, Briseis' captivity is short-lived. Winning the love and respect of her captor/protector Achilles, she is sent home with Priam and Hector's body. On the night Troy falls, Agamemnon recaptures Briseis with the intention of raping her. Achilles rushes to her rescue but this Trojan priestess (unlike Cassandra) kills Agamemnon herself – employing 'Achilles's sweeping arm motion [with which]

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[89] Critics have read Thetis, Helen and Andromache as: 'a mortal woman endowed with an unusually high amount of prophetic power'; 'a pretty face' who 'loses all narrative purpose after dropping her dress for Paris', and a 'wife, who has no purpose throughout the film except to function as the only family member to react to Hector's murder'. On the role of Thetis see Georg Danek, 'The Story of Troy through the Centuries', in *Troy: From Homer's Iliad to Hollywood Epic* (n.50 p.63), pp.68-84 (p.69). On Helen and Andromache see Carolyn Jess, 'Achilles vs. Jason (and the Argonauts): Review of Troy (Petersen, 2004)', *Literature/Film Quarterly*, 33:1 (2005), 79-80 (p.79).

[90] See Alena Allen, 'Briseis in Homer, Ovid and *Troy*', in *Troy: From Homer's Iliad to Hollywood Epic* (n.50 p.63), pp.148-62.

he killed Boagrius and Hector'.[91] Thus, in a radical departure from the classics'
Trojan "history", Agamemnon is killed not at the hands of his wife in Argos but
by Briseis who acts as an extension of Achilles, adopting his characteristic
stabbing-move and avenging his slighted honour. This usurpation of the maternal
vengeance that traditionally awaits Agamemnon, for a symbol of the
transformative bond forged between the film's central pair of lovers, is
cinematically convenient. The negation of Clytemnestra's maternal rage over
Iphigenia's sacrifice is, however, entirely idiomatic of the film's treatment of
grieving mothers.

We do not see mothers grieve in this film. Instead, in a funeral scene
which lasts only fifty-two seconds, Father Priam bends to kiss the forehead of his
son's corpse whilst the dignified wife Andromache (silently flanked by dry-eyed
Helen and Briseis) fights back her grief – allowing only a few tears to trickle
down her otherwise stoic face. Grief is not allowed to disfigure Andromache's
beauty. There is no place in Petersen's vision for an old woman ripping her hair,
gouging at her skin, howling for her children and shouting her desire to eat Brad
Pitt's liver. As Carolyn Jess states, 'Hecuba is excised from the plot, leaving
Priam […] as a single father who goes around kissing everyone'.[92] In fact, even
textual references to Hecuba are entirely expunged from David Benioff's
screenplay. Petersen's Trojan heroes are left biologically motherless, born
instead of their father's prior prowess on the battlefield and of their city, as
Hector insists: 'Troy is mother to us all. Fight for her!' This mother/city demands
self-sacrifice, willing her sons into battle. In line with the film's exclusion of
mothers (and gods), the resurrection of Troy is promised not in accordance with

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[91] *Ibid*, p.161.
[92] Jess (as referenced in n.89 p.82), p.79.

classical tradition – not, that is, by Aeneas' escape with the *Palladium* (the statue

of the city's protective "mother" goddess Athena), or the eternal flame of

Hestia/Vesta (the household goddess of the hearth) – but by Aeneas' escape with

the 'Sword of Troy'.[93] This sword, Priam explains, contains the 'spirit of Troy'

and '[s]o long as a Trojan carries it our people have a future'. Just as Priam

claims '[m]y father carried this sword, and his father before him...all the way

back to the founding of Troy' so we watch, in the course of the film, this phallic

symbol of patriarchal authority and male military potency pass from father to son

and, finally, to Aeneas, the only surviving adult male heir of Troy's monarchy.

The continuance of Troy will be forged with this sword, not in supplication to

either the mother goddess who presides over 'the disciplined and rational use of

war to protect the community', or the domestic goddess of the hearth who acts as

the guardian of the community.[94]

In A.O Scott's review of *Troy* the soundtrack is wryly credited with

announcing the film's generic aspirations; it is here, via Scott's description of the

soundtrack, that I locate the traces of *Troy*'s missing mothers, of its missing

Hecuba:

> *Troy* […] plunges you into a world shaped by complex codes of
> honor, loyalty and military virtue. Or, rather, it plunges you into a
> world where people [men] talk about such things incessantly, and
> where every speech is punctuated by booming timpani and the
> ululations of an apparently tongueless female singer, her
> inarticulate moans announcing that this is not just a movie but an
> epic.[95]

[93] Stephen Scully, 'The Fate of Troy', in *Troy: From Homer's Iliad to Hollywood Epic* (as in n.50 p.63), pp.119-30 (p.121).
[94] Jenny March, 'Athena or Athene', in *Dictionary of Classical Mythology* (London: Cassell, 1998), pp.77-78 (p.77).
[95] '*Troy*: Greeks Bearing Immortality', *New York Times*, Movie Review Section, 14 May 2004, <http://movies.nytimes.com/movie/review?res=9B07E6DE1E3CF937A25756C0A9629C8B63&scp=Scott%20Troy&sr=cse> [30 April 2011].

The habitual narrativising tendency of the film's male characters is validated by the vocabulary they share with Odysseus' framing meta-narrative. Yet an invisible wailing woman sings a fragmented song of grief which attests to the existence of an alternative female narrative operating in the same authoritative meta-plane as the prologue and epilogue. As Scott implies, however, the female 'ululations' punctuation of male 'talk' appears to significantly enhance rather than disrupt their claims to the epic. It is clear from Scott's insistence on the incomprehensibility of these 'inarticulate moans' that it is in their partial-suppression that the film's and the characters' heroic aspirations are validated.

However, the sentiment at work here – which insists on the containment of grief, perceiving anything other than stoicism as undermining the dignity of the military hero or the cause for which he died – is not a Homeric one. In the *Iliad* Hector's funeral is accompanied, in stark contrast to the funeral in *Troy*, by the narrative laments of Cassandra, Andromache, Hecuba and Helen and a chorus of professional female mourning-singers who encourage the tearing of hair and beating of breasts (24.826-913). In Homer, such expressions of grief underscore rather than taint Hector's heroism. In Euripides' *Trojan Women* Cassandra taunts the Greeks, denying them victory as their war-dead 'weren't washed and shrouded and laid to rest / By their wives' loving hands: and now / Their bodies lie forgotten'.[96] For Homer and Euripides it is a given that male immortality is dependant upon female memorial; indeed, as Hilary Mackie asserts, although κλέος is typically translated as a male heroic 'fame', 'renown'

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[96] Trans. by Don Taylor (London: Methuen, 2007), p.20. All quotations from Euripides' *Trojan Women* in the remainder of this chapter are taken from Taylor's translation and will be referenced parenthetically. A modern-day Greek lament expresses a similar sentiment: 'If the sea does not swell, the rock does not foam, and if your mother does not weep for you, the world sheds no tears', qtd. in Margaret Alexiou, *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition* (Cambridge: CUP, 1974), p127.

or 'glory', it can also be translated as 'that which is talked over'.[97] In Petersen's

blockbuster the cinematic medium usurps the memorial function of female

lament. In *Troy*, female grief is pushed to the margins, transformed into a

disembodied backing-track which is 'inarticulate' and, most tellingly,

'tongueless'.[98]

In part, the film's pervasive marginalisation of women can be attributed

to the influence of Virgil's *Aeneid*. Petersen's *Troy* is, as Ahl asserts, 'a

particularly Roman version of the tale of Troy' with the 'sequence of events from

the construction of the wooden horse to the sack of Troy recall[ing] the *Aeneid*

rather than the *Iliad*'.[99] As this thesis continues, a historically recurring tension

between Aeneas' tale to Dido (*Aeneid* Bk.2 and 3) and the lamentations of

Hecuba and the women of Troy shall become apparent. H. May Johnson's

assiduous comparison of verbal echoes between Aeneas' tale in Virgil and the

female laments in Euripides' two Trojan tragedies demonstrates the extent to

which the remembrances of Virgil's epic hero are built on Euripides' songs of

female grief.[100] The *Aeneid* sublimates female grief into male narrative. Like

Petersen's film, Virgil's male epic is dependent upon the partial-suppression of

the female tragedy that is its corollary. A recurrent battle for authority over the

story of Troy's fall has ensued as the generic paradigms established by the Greek

tragedies and the Roman epic compete to contextualise Troy's destruction as

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[97] *Talking Trojan: Speech and Community in the Iliad* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 1996), pp.85-90.
[98] Scott (as in n.95 p.84).
[99] Ahl (as in n.50 p.63), p.184. Ahl attributes this bias towards the *Aeneid* to the education which introduced Petersen to Virgil before Homer. As Winkler outlines, Petersen's 'high-school education at the Johanneum, an elite *Gymnasium* in Hamburg, [was] dedicated like all the country's traditional high schools to humanist education. Petersen attended it for the entire nine years of the regular German high-school curriculum. He studied Latin for all those years and classical Greek for six', 'Editor's Introduction', in *Troy: From Homer's Iliad to Hollywood Epic* (n.50 p.63), pp.1-19 (p.5).
[100] 'Vergil's debt to the *Hecuba* and *Troades* of Euripides', *The Classical Weekly*, 3:7 (1909), 50-52 and concluded in *The Classical Weekly*, 3:8 (1909), 58-60.

either a sorrowful (female) memorial that has the potential to disrupt and

undermine the rhetoric of war, or, as a (male) eulogy to heroic self-sacrifice

which underpins imperialist ideologies.

Petersen's *Troy*, in contrast to the theatrical productions of Euripides'

Hecuba and despite the absence of contemporary analogies, resonates with the

rhetoric of the modern-day battlefield, replicating the terms with which Lt. Col.

Tim Collins' narrativised the impending invasion of Iraq: codes of honour ('if

you are ferocious in battle remember to be magnanimous in victory'); an

obsession with immortal fame or ignominy ('your deeds will follow you down

through history'; 'in years to come [the children of Iraq] will know that the light

of liberation in their lives was brought by you'), and yet also insistent upon the

paradoxical denial of memorial which is felt to be female and feminising ('there

will be no time for sorrow'). With no time for sorrow, there is no space for

Hecuba.[101]

For one American college student, known only by the online alias

NerdzRkool, the film's exclusion of Hecuba evidently proved problematic when

he/she decided to use Petersen's blockbuster to make an amateur Youtube tribute

to the people of New York and the victims of 9/11.[102] Equating the gleaming

machismo of Pitt with New York's heroic firemen and paralleling the footage of

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[101] Moreover, *Troy*'s reliance on CGI replicates the same anaesthetising effacement that Baudrillard identified at work in the new technologies of war; the film thereby encourages, as Ahl argues, a casual indifference to the deaths of the anonymous Greek and Trojan soldiers: 'Petersen's uniformed and helmeted combatants […] have no individualized devices on their shields and no plumes on their helmets. […] We are thus lured into accepting their destruction as casually as if they were computer-generated, virtual beings in a video game – which is precisely what most of them are', (as in n.50 p.63), p.177. Ahl contrasts the effacement of Petersen's soldiers with Homer's descriptions of the deaths of minor characters: 'They are not at all a faceless multitude, no collateral damage in the egotistical battles of princes and military officers. […] They have individualized armour and weapons which identify their origins and their claims to distinction, and they have *parents who will lament their deaths*', p.177 – emphasis added.
[102] *Trojan Women and Sept. 11th*, dir. by NerdzRkool, YouTube, 7 June 2006 <www.youtube.com/watch?v=E611Wa9qBCM> [24 April 2007].

planes flying into the twin-towers with that of "thousands" of CGI Greeks clashing with "thousands" of Trojans, NerdzRkool created a short video to accompany Josh Groban's 'You Raise me Up' (a soaring popular ballad about strength through adversity). Clips from CNN and NBC news reports of 9/11 are intercut not only with scenes from *Troy* and quotations from George W. Bush and Rudolph Giuliani, but also female laments from Euripides' *Trojan Women*. The result, although amateur and rather juvenile, is a well-intentioned homemade music-video which brings together the three cultural discourses on war that I have been discussing in this chapter. Although an (overtly) American cultural artefact, its online presence makes it globally available as a comment on 9/11, on the media, on the idea of Troy, on *Troy*, and on Hecuba.[103]

In NerdzRkool's vision New York firemen cross-fade into Pitt's Achilles; Hector's huge funeral pyre is read alongside crowds holding a memorial vigil outside the White House, and the depiction of Troy burning at the height of its destruction gives way to a photograph of the New York skyline, peacefully lit up at night with the twin-towers still standing at its centre. The resurrection of New York from the flames of Troy's destruction firmly locates the video within the '*translatio imperii studiique*' or, as Heather James' describes it (in relation to Shakespeare's Roman plays), 'the literary-political tradition dedicated to the transfer of authority from Troy' which of course began with Virgil's *Aeneid*.[104] Harnessing Petersen's visual glamorisation of *Troy*'s heroes, this video mythologises the citizens of New York, particularly its firemen, and the city itself, allowing them to coexist 'in the time of Hector […] in the time of

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[103] On 22 May 2011 the video had received 2,696 views (which can perhaps be contextualised in relation to the Donmar's 250 seat theatre).

[104] *Shakespeare's Troy: Drama, politics, and the translation of empire* (Cambridge: CUP, 1997), p.1.

Achilles'. They are, as Groban's accompanying lyrics tell us, raised 'up to more than I can be'. In this manner, the YouTube video offers an enactment of sentiments expressed at the time by Giuliani and Bush – included by NerdzRkool as subtitles between the scenes of destruction (fig.7):

NerdzRkool's video '*Trojan Women* and Sept 11th' can be viewed online via YouTube here:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E611Wa9qBCM

Figure 7: Quotations from Rudolph Giuliani and George W. Bush in NerdzRkool's YouTube video (2006)

Juxtaposing footage of 9/11 with clips from *Troy* is intended to demonstrate the emergence of heroes from adversity. However, NerdzRkool also wanted to address the sense of grief, pain, outrage and sheer horror caused by the scale of destruction and loss of life. CNN and NBC provided images of New Yorkers standing immobile in a state of shock, mouths gaping, hands raised in disbelief, of a panicked crowd chased by billowing dust-clouds, of escaped workers covered in dust and of the shrines which sprang up around ground-zero with flowers, candles, clothes and posters of the missing. Significantly, however, when NerdzRkool linked these images to the Trojan myth he/she turned away from Petersen's *Troy* and called on Hecuba, reciting her words, and the words of her chorus in *Trojan Women* (fig.8, fig.9). Stripped of Hecuba and the rage of grieving mothers, Petersen's *Troy* was incapable of conveying the grief attendant on real-life atrocity. Crucially, NerdzRkool did not simply insert 9/11 equivalents

of that 'recurring image of an old woman appealing to the camera that has captured her agony';[105] rather the college student found it necessary to restore female *narrative* lament, not only to these media images but also to *Troy*.

NerdzRkool's video '*Trojan Women* and Sept 11th' can be viewed online via YouTube here:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E611Wa9qBCM

Figure 8: First and last frames of NerdzRkool's video (2006)

Figure 9: Hecuba's lamentations from *Trojan Women* in NerdzRkool's video (2006)

Whilst Petersen's film marginalised grieving women for fear of undermining its male heroes, NerdzRkool's video honoured a different kind of hero – the selfless saviour rather than a killing-machine. Although this shift enabled the epic male and tragic female narratives to co-exist, the interruption of the smooth flow of cross-fading images by heavy black screens testifies to the disruptive potential of the women's memorial words. Yet NerdzRkool evidently felt that Hecuba's grief

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[105] Harrison, 'Weeping for Hecuba' (as in n.51 p.64), pp.viii-ix.

was essential to enable Troy (and *Troy*) to operate as an analogy for modern conflict. This is the same impulse, played out in microcosm, which motivated the English stage *Hecuba*s: a desire to give voice to fragmentary media images, to structure violent events into a coherent narrative, but also to insist on giving voice to the grief and fury of otherwise silenced mothers.

Just as theatrical reviewers displayed a compulsion to recite the same traumatic details that made them wish to avert their eyes at the Donmar, so theatre companies, and this amateur film-maker, responded to the trauma of an escalation in violence with a comparable compulsion to recall and recite Euripides' Hecubas. The concurrent androcentric epic vision of Troy offered by Hollywood was found lacking, incapable of conveying the reality of twenty-first century concerns. Performed Hecubas were felt to offer audiences a more accurate reflection of, and reflection on, the suffering of those who appeared as Hecuba's real-life "counterparts". Moreover, each of these theatrical reflections enacted a restoration of voice to typically 'inarticulate' or 'tongueless' women, women whose names provided the backdrop to the action at the Donmar, who haunt Harrison's notebooks and who punctuate the broadcasts of CNN, NBC, BBC or ITV. It was to Euripides' female war victims, not warriors or official broadcasters, that the theatre (and NerdzRkool) turned for narrative voices to help structure and interpret global events. As the Donmar's backwall declared, these performances were themselves acts of remembrance, fictional retellings that insisted on the acknowledgement of the body's corporeal reality and fragility so often sanitised in news broadcasts or glamorised and mitigated in Hollywood.

The notable shift away from the previously predominant Hecuba of Euripides' *Trojan Women* in preference for the Hecuba of *Hecuba*, seen from

2003 onwards, entails a striking shift in England's cultural conception of and attitude towards war-victims. The long-established tradition of Euripides' so-called 'Peace-Play', with its more straightforward depiction of passive and pitiful victimhood, was rejected.[106] In *Trojan Women* the attitude to the murder of children is unambiguous; the slaughter of Astyanax is 'unheard of savagery', an act of 'blind panic, [and] unreasoning terror in rational men' (p.52). But in turning to *Hecuba* the same Trojan Women are now willing to murder young boys in the pursuit of "justice"; now they hide knives in their robes and make improvised weaponry from any objects available to them: brooch-pins and fingernails. There are fourteen occurrences of the word pity and its variants in *Hecuba* – all fourteen are spoken prior to Agamemnon's refusal to aid Hecuba's revenge.[107] When Agamemnon refuses to allow his pity to sway his political decisions, Hecuba and *Hecuba* become pitiless. The description of Polyxena's murder in *Hecuba* is structured by binary oppositions: good versus bad, female versus male, disempowered versus powerful, beautiful dignity versus immoral ugliness. These binaries replicate the dichotomising structure of *Trojan Women* and it is this structure which allows that play as well as Polyxena's murder to be considered *pitiful* ennobling tragedies. The cathartic tragedy of Polyxena is, however, entirely usurped and exposed as a rhetorical construct by the bloody conclusion to *Hecuba* in which all such binary distinctions collapse.

This more complex, ambivalent, picture of victimhood, which acknowledges the fury as well as the sorrow of the grieving mother, indicates a significant modification in our relationship with those images of the grief-stricken woman. When seen as the matriarch of *Hecuba*, as opposed to the

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[106] So-called by, amongst others, American director Maurice Browne (see: n.9 p.12 above), qtd. in Hartigan (as in n.8 p.12), p.18.
[107] See Kenward (as in n.84 p.78), p.60.

mother of the *Trojan Women*, the Hecubas of Harrison's notebooks are all

potential "terrorists". The female body becomes a site of anxiety, capable of

denying its presumed natural maternal instincts, capable of concealing weaponry

within the folds of clothing that is a cultural marker of femininity, and also

capable, crucially, of turning the body itself into a weapon. In the first decade of

the twenty-first century this resonated with the increased instances of suicide

bombings perpetrated beyond official war-zones and in the "home-fronts" of

New York, Madrid, Bali and London. Bombings that have been carried out in

Europe and America have typically been perpetrated by young men, not women

or children, yet from at least 2007 onwards the phrase 'bombs in burkas'

achieved significant cultural currency as fears about suicide bombings escalated.

The iconic Islamic dress not only marked Muslim women as Other but now

raised fears about the concealment of explosives, the use of this 'foreign' female

body as a bomb.[108] Yet as the identity of the (male) London bombers revealed,

the bombs that were intended to bring the reality of war in Iraq and Afghanistan

to London were 'home-grown' bodies, not Other, not foreign, but born and raised

in England.

The unprecedented number of English *Hecuba*s, especially when

contextualised within an international surge of Hecuba-related productions,

suggests itself to me as a manifestation of a culture-wide transference-neurosis;

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[108] Debates surrounding the banning of traditional Muslim dress in European countries resulted in internet forums that still retain the traces of discussions raising suspicions about, and typically flinging accusations at, burkas as the ideal clothing for concealment. In October 2009 actors hired by the Somerset Carnival caused controversy by dressing up in burkas and wearing signs asking 'does my bomb look big in this?', see: 'Burkas joke bombs out at Somerset Carnival', *Mirror*, 2 Oct. 2009, p.2. A month later British tabloids ran headlines such as 'Mum hid Bomb Kit in her Burka', a story about a woman convicted of concealing an electronic 'mini- encyclopaedia of weapons making' in her burka, see: Ben Ashford, *Sun*, 3 Nov. 2009. In March 2010 two men wearing burkas to conceal explosive vests were shot dead in Afghanistan before they could detonate their explosives; a month later bombers in burkas succeeded in killing forty-one people in Pakistan.

evidence, that is, of a collective repetition-compulsion. This Freudian reading is

an adoption of Marjorie Garber's application of Freud's work on repetition-

compulsion to Hamlet's *Mousetrap*.[109] Garber reads Freud's description of

transference – of the projected creation of a 'provisional […] world', that is both

'a piece of real life' but 'represents an artificial illness', which is 'adapted to our

purposes', and is, crucially, 'accessible to our interventions' – as a fitting

description of Hamlet's adaptation of *The Murder of Gonzago* so that it replicates

and replays 'something like the murder of my father' (2.2.530).[110] Hamlet's

update of an old 'extant' play (3.2.255) in order to replay that which has been

officially suppressed in Denmark thus performs comparative cultural work to the

twenty-first century *Hecuba*s. Hecubas-in-play are the transference of real-life

atrocity onto an intermediary, a provisional substitute, an accessible and safe

'world' which is both an artificial yet real representation of the 'illness' affecting

our culture. In this manner, the notion of repetition-compulsion could be seen to

underpin the concerns of Presentism. The performance of *Hecuba* allows for that

which has been repressed in official discourse, effaced by culturally 'orchestrated

forgetting' (to use Gail Holst-Warhaft's description of war memorials),[111] to be

retrieved and remembered in the form of a provisional substitute. Are all

historical English Hecubas a form of this cultural transference, a return to a pre-

existing figure as the substitute for something too volatile to be looked at

directly?

My use of *Hamlet* to interpret Hecuba is not without precedent. In fact, a

persistent echo can be heard in the commentary surrounding the twenty-first

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[109] *Shakespeare's Ghost Writers: Literature as Uncanny Causality* (New York & London: Methuen, 1987), pp.159-61.
[110] Freud, 'Further Recommendations in the Technique of Psychoanalysis: Recollection, Repetition and Working Through' (1914), in *Therapy and Technique*, qtd. in Garber, p.160.
[111] *Cue for Passion* (as in n.12 p.15), p.169.

century *Hecuba*s, an echo that exposes another aspect of my culture's historical situatedness which impacts upon our relationship with the Trojan queen. Independently, reviewers from various newspapers and online journals, as well as articles and essays by artists involved in the productions, found themselves 'echoing Hamlet', and one another, by habitually asking: 'What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba, / That he should weep for her'.[112] Consequently, Hamlet appeared as a haunting presence doggedly shadowing the twenty-first century Hecubas.

It is fair to assume that *Hamlet* now constitutes the majority of people's first, sometimes only, contact with Hecuba. Study of the classics, Latin and Greek, all began to decline gradually toward the end of the eighteenth-century and have never been included in the modern-day National Curriculum.[113] In contrast, Shakespeare is enshrined at the core of England's literature syllabus. Furthermore, as J. Lawrence Guntner asserts, '[a]sk the man on the street what comes to mind when you mention "Shakespeare", and the chances are that he will reply, "to be, or not to be". We have come to associate Shakespeare with tragedy, especially with *Hamlet*';[114] and, with every classroom reading, theatrical performance or film screening of *Hamlet* there should also be a Hecuba. *Hamlet* is, therefore, one of the major ways in which Hecuba has survived, meme-like, in English culture as the potency of the classics has receded.

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[112] Billington, 'What's Hecuba to her' (as in n.26 p.55). See also: Wootton (as in n.5. p.42); Spencer (as in n.4 p.42); Harrison, 'Bitter Tears' (as in n.42 p.59), and Harrison, 'Weeping for Hecuba' (as in n.51 p.64), p.v.

[113] See Christopher Stray, 'Education', in *A Companion to the Classical Tradition*, ed. by Craig W. Kallendorf (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), pp.5-14, for the multiple factors which led to the decline of classical education: 'The slow but inexorable decline of Latin as a language of scholarly communication was mirrored in the statistics of book production, where vernacular publishing can be seen to have equalled and then outstripped Latin publishing in the course of the eighteenth century', p.6.

[114] J. Lawrence Guntner, '*Hamlet*, *Macbeth* and *King Lear* on Film', in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare on Film*, 2nd ed., ed. by Russell Jackson (Cambridge: CUP, 2007), pp.120-40 (p.120).

Hecuba now prompts a memory of *Hamlet*, thereby transforming

Hamlet's lines into something of a touchstone for thinking about the Trojan

queen. In 1995 Judith Mossman's *Wild Justice: A Study of Euripides' Hecuba*

mobilised the cultural currency attached to Shakespeare in an attack on the prior

academic neglect of *Hecuba*. Citing Hamlet's 'What's Hecuba to him…'

soliloquy, and the contemplation of Hecuba in *Lucrece*, Mossman begins her

vindication of Euripides' tragedy by declaring that '[t]wo of the most eloquent

expressions in English of the universality of tragedy turn on the sufferings of

Hecuba'.[115] Shakespeare's Hecubas are employed to bestow a retrospective

commendation on Euripides' "original".[116] Homer, Euripides, Ovid, Virgil and

Seneca acted as authorities to whom Shakespeare turned to find Hecuba; English

culture now turns to the authority of Shakespeare's Hecuba to help us look at

those ancient Greek and Roman Hecubas. But if Hamlet's phrase is a mediating

lens through which we view Hecuba, how precisely do they bring her into focus?

What memory of Hamlet's Hecuba does this culturally pervasive 'echoing' of

Hamlet awake?

3. The Thrice Mobled Queen

Wolverhampton, 1992-1998: By the time I left school, a battered edition of

Hamlet, covered in the pencilled marginalia of previous owners, had been

studied twice, supplemented by screenings of Laurence Olivier's and Kenneth

Branagh's film *Hamlet*s of 1948 and 1996. My first introduction to Hecuba was a

much needed footnote informing me that she was the aging queen of Troy,

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[115] *Wild Justice: A Study of Euripides' Hecuba* (Oxford: OUP, 1995), p.2.
[116] Marlowe's and Nashe's account of Hecuba flinging her nails into Pyrrhus' eyelids in *Dido, Queen of Carthage* (c.1585), would have offered a much closer parallel to the violent Hecubas of the twenty-first century stages; yet it was clearly Hamlet's *Shakespearean* lines that were felt to validate "our" interest in her.

mother to Hector and Paris, wife to King Priam. The footnote accompanied a

passage littered with what Harry Levin calls 'turgid phrases':[117]

HAMLET	Say on, come to Hecuba.
PLAYER	But who – ah woe [who] – had seen the
	mobled [inobled] queen –
HAMLET	'The mobled queen'! [?]
POLONIUS	That's good; ['mobled queen' is good.]
PLAYER	– Run barefoot up and down, threatening the flames
	With bisson rheum, a clout upon that head
	Where late the diadem stood and, for a robe,
	About her lank and all-o'erteemed loins,
	A blanket in the alarm of fear caught up.
	Who this had seen, with tongue in venom steeped,
	'Gainst Fortune's state would treason have pronounced.
	But if the gods themselves did see her then,
	When she saw Pyrrhus make malicious sport
	In mincing with his sword her husbands limbs,
	The instant burst of clamour that she made
	(Unless things mortal move them not at all)
	Would have made milch the burning eyes of heaven
	And passion in the gods.
POLONIUS	Look where he has not turned his colour and has tears
	in's eyes. – Prithee no more!
HAMLET	'Tis well. I'll have thee speak out the rest of this soon
	(2.2.439-60; F.'s variations in brackets)

'Bisson rheum'? 'Clout'? 'Made milch'? 'Lank and all-o'erteemed loins'?

'Mobled'? Not only one 'mobled' but two, or even three in the Folio, as the

Player, the Prince and the Courtier take turns to pronounce the obscure phrase,

offering only repetition without clarification.[118] Olivier's film offered no further

illumination, cutting the player's speech and removing all references to Troy and

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[117] *The Question of Hamlet* (New York & Oxford: OUP, 1959), p.143.

[118] In the most recent Arden *Hamlet* 'mobled' is glossed as 'muffled' or 'veiled' and the editorial notes assert that 'generations of playgoers must have found it a vaguely impressive word without knowing what it meant'. With the further possibility that 'mobled' was a mistake for the Folio's 'inobled' (an equally obscure and ambivalent term 'meaning either "made noble" or its opposite, "ignoble"' (n.440 p.271)), it seems as if the quintessential characteristic of *Hamlet*'s Hecuba is obscurity. The clout, the blanket, the blinding tears running down the veiled face, the cloudy 'milch' tears blurring the eyes of heaven, not to mention the convoluted syntax, all seem to work to deliberately obscure Shakespeare's thrice mobled queen. In response, the most recent production of *Hamlet* by the National (dir. by Nicholas Hytner, 2010) applied a policy of textual clarification, altering, for example, 'bisson rheum' to 'blinding tears' and 'clout' to 'cloth'.

its Queen. Branagh's 1996 film, however, was committed to producing a 'full-text' version of *Hamlet* and even included a "flashback" as a visual gloss of the Player's speech. Yet this interpolated sequence does not operate as a cinematic footnote to explicate Hecuba; the moment of recognition is not one of recognising the relevance of Troy's mourning queen but rather of identifying Dame Judi Dench amongst the film's endless cameos. Where the playtext places emphasis upon the diversity of reactions to the Player's performance, which had 'pleased not the million' (2.2.374) but impressed the learned, which bores Polonius but captivates Hamlet and makes the actor weep and 'turn[…] his colour' (2.2.457), Branagh's film imposes a single "authoritative" vision.[119] The camera, after adopting Pyrrhus' perspective to loom menacingly over a cowering Priam, moves slowly through swirling smoke and zooms in on Hecuba's noiselessly screaming face. The slow pan and zoom, the muted sound and the drifting smoke all compound a sense of detachment, creating a dreamlike vision of Troy in which unseen violence is perpetrated by the camera/spectator who is simultaneously a passive and indifferent witness. In stripping Hecuba of her rhetorical obscurity Branagh also strips the queen of relevance, undercutting the Player's description with a banal, inconsistent, dreamlike glossing of Hecuba which minimises any demand for engagement. Bored by Branagh's seemingly interminable film and baffled by bisson rheum, my introduction to Hecuba was thus a combination of textual mystification and cinematic absence or gloss. Even Hamlet himself appeared to be dismissing the relevance of this mobled queen:

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[119] Although presented as authoritative the Player's vision of Aeneas' flashback offered by Branagh is riddled with inconsistencies: we are *told* of Pyrrhus attacking Priam in a wild rage but we *see* a frail old man, alone, amidst the chaos of battle. Priam shakily stands for a few moments before sitting down again whilst the Player/Aeneas informs us that 'with the whiff and wind of [Pyrrhus'] fell sword / Th'unnerved father falls' (2.2.411-12). The camera then adopts Pyrrhus' perspective and Aeneas' flashback thus slides into Pyrrhus' remembrance, yet with the entrance of Hecuba the camera returns to operating as a bystander, panning through the scene at eye-level.

> **HAMLET** Is it not monstrous that this player here,
> But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
> Could force his soul so to his whole conceit
> That from her working all the visage wanned;
> – Tears in his eyes, distraction in his aspect,
> A broken voice, and his whole function suiting
> With forms to his conceit - and all for nothing –
> For Hecuba?
> What's Hecuba to him, or he to her [to Hecuba],
> That he should weep for her?   (2.2.486-95)

Despite the obscurity surrounding this Shakespearean Hecuba, despite Hamlet's insistence that she is 'nothing', despite the lack of classics in education to provide an interpretative context, and despite theatrical and cinematic productions that routinely edit her out, the 'What's Hecuba' lines snag in the mind.

That they also snag culturally is attested to by the phrase's ubiquity in the commentary surrounding the twenty-first century *Hecuba*s. Yet, not just an easy journalistic recursion in 2004-06, this phrase can boast a long, impressive cultural history quite independent of both *Hamlet* and Hecuba. 'What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba' had actually acquired an almost proverbial status by the late 1700s and has echoed ever since in newspapers, political speeches, the titles of theatrical autobiographies and cheap novels, finding its way into the correspondence of Edmund Burke, Sigmund Freud, Otto von Bismarck and Virginia Woolf, purported to be one of Hitler's favourite sayings from *Hamlet*, and (now most frequently) acting as a conceptual catalyst in academic publications (often with only tenuous links to Troy or the Trojan queen).[120]

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[120] In a letter dated 20 Feb. 1790, Edmund Burke rebukes his friend Philip Francis for belittling his previous admission of weeping at the thought of Marie Antoinette's dramatic change of fortune (Francis calls it 'downright foppery', p.91): '"What's Hecuba to him or he to Hecuba that he should weep for her?" Why because she was Hecuba, the Queen of Troy, the Wife of Priam, and suffered in the close of Life a thousand Calamities. I felt too for Hecuba when I read the fine

Ironically, then, Hecuba sticks in the cultural memory within a phrase intended to dismiss her as an irrelevance. For Hamlet and those who have echoed his example, '[w]hat's Hecuba to him and he to Hecuba?' is a purely rhetorical question (an example of *erotesis*) to which the answer is 'nothing' (2.2.492). By relegating Hecuba to nought, Hamlet reduces her to a cipher, enabling the Hecuba of the 'What's Hecuba' phrase to operate as a metaphorical vehicle.

Tragedy of Euripides upon her Story: and I never did enquire into the Anecdotes of the Court or City of Troy before I gave way to the Sentiments which the author wished to inspire; nor do I remember that he ever said one word of her Virtue', *The Correspondence of Edmund Burke. Vol.6. July 1789 to December 1791*, ed. by Alfred Cobben and Robert A. Smith (Cambridge: CUP, 1967), pp.90-92 (p.90). In contrast, Sigmund Freud, in a letter to his fiancé Martha Bernays on 23 July 1882, stresses Hecuba's irrelevance, complaining that '[j]ust because years ago at this season (owing to a miscalculation) Jerusalem had been destroyed I was to be prevented from speaking to my girl on the last day of my stay. "But what's Hecuba to me?" Jerusalem is destroyed and Marty and I are alive and happy', *Letters of Sigmund Freud,* ed. by Ernst L. Freud, trans. by Tania Stern and James Stern (New York: Dover Publications, 1992), pp.17-22 (pp.18-19). Similarly, early in 1887 Otto von Bismarck also quoted the Hecuba phrase to express indifference, specifically to the fate of Bulgaria as an independent nation. In a letter to her sister Vanessa Bell, on 18 May 1929, Virginia Woolf parodies the phrase stating 'I'm very cold, sitting in my lodge, looking at the rooks building – but that you don't want to hear about – What's rooks to me, or me to rookeries you say quoting Shakespeare as is your way', *A Reflection of the Other Person: The Letters of Virginia Woolf, Volume IV: 1929-1931*, ed. by Nigel Nicolson (London: Hogarth press, 1978), pp.58-61 (p.58). Timothy W. Ryback's investigation of Hitler's personal library leads him to conclude that Hitler 'appears to have imbibed his Hamlet. "To be or not to be" was a favourite phrase, as was "It is Hecuba to me"', see: 'Hitler's secret library: Don Quixote, Robinson Crusoe, Shakespeare — these were the works that he adored', *Sunday Times*, 11 Jan. 2009, <http://entertainment.timesonline.co.uk/tol/arts_and_entertainment/books/book_extracts/article5474997.ece?token=null&offset=0&page=1> [11 Jan. 2009]. Academic publications referencing Hamlet's Hecuba in their title include: G.H.W Rylands, '"What's Hecuba to him?" Shakespeare and the Classics', *Royal Institution of Great Britain Proceedings*, 39 (1963), 493-505; Henry B. Veatch, 'Language and Ethics: "What's Hecuba to Him, or He to Hecuba?"' *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association*, 44 (1970-1971), 45-62; Benedict Nicolson, 'What's Hecuba to Him or He to Hecuba That He Should Weep for Her?', *Burlington Magazine*, 113:819 (1971), 295-99; Ismene Lada, '"Weeping for Hecuba": Is It a 'Brechtian' Act?', *Arethusa* 29 (1996), 87-124; E.M Dadlez, *What's Hecuba to Him? Fictional Events and Actual Emotions* (University Park: Pennsylvania State UP, 1997); William W. Braham, 'What's Hecuba to Him? On Kiesler and the Knot', *Assemblage*, 36 (1998), 6-23; Mary Jo Kietzman, '"What Is Hecuba to Him or [S]he to Hecuba?" Lucrece's Complaint and Shakespearean Poetic Agency', *Modern Philology*, 97:1 (1999), 21-45; Barry Matsumoto, 'Weeping for Hecuba: Why We Should Weep for Strangers', *Journal of Gender, Race & Justice*, 3 (1999), 677-89; Margreta de Grazia's 'Weeping for Hecuba', in *Historicism, Psychoanalysis, and Early Modern Culture,*. ed. by Carla Mazzio and Douglas Trevor (New York & London: Routledge, 2000), pp.350-75; Susan Foster-Cohen, 'First language acquisition...second language acquisition: 'What's Hecuba to him or he to Hecuba?"', *Second Language Research*, 17:4 (2001), 329-44; J.L Penwill, '"What's Hecuba to Him...?" Reflecting Upon Poetry and Politics in Tacitus' *Dialogue on Narrators*', *Ramus*, 32 (2003) 122-47; Carol Rutter's 'Learning Thisby's Part – or – What's Hecuba to Him?', *Shakespeare Bulletin*, 22:3 (2004), 5-30, and Andrew Hiscock's '"What's Hecuba to him…": Trojan Heroes and Rhetorical Selves in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*', in *Fantasies of Troy* (as in n.6 p.11), pp.161-75.

Thus, when Edmund Burke talks of Hecuba he actually means Marie Antoinette, Woolf refers to birds in her garden, Freud's Hecuba is the Jewish holiday Tisha b'Av, and Otto von Bismarck's Hecuba means Bulgaria. Similarly, when the twenty-first century theatrical reviews of *Hecuba* echoed Hamlet they usurped Hamlet's Hecuba (informed by Virgil, Seneca and Ovid) with the contemporary stage Hecubas, thereby enacting a tacit exclusion of any non-Euripidean Hecubas from the discussions which typically talk of "Hecuba" as a single, stable entity belonging to the English theatrical repertoire.

These cultural repetitions provoke a fascination in me since, like the Player and Hamlet and Polonius each mouthing 'the mobled queen', they appear simply to repeat without explication. Hamlet's Hecuba phrase seems to reverberate across centuries as an empty echo which, whilst it secures Hecuba's existence in English culture, displaces 'Hecuba herself'.[121] And yet, in *Hamlet* Hamlet's attempts to dismiss Hecuba clearly fail, Hamlet remains haunted by the idea of Hecuba; she snags in his memory and his mind. It is Hamlet who summons Hecuba to the stage, urging the Player to '[s]ay on, come to Hecuba' (2.2.439). It is Hamlet who interrupts the speech to pause on the image of 'the mobled queen' (2.2.441), and it is on this image, rather than either the murdered 'father' or the avenging son (2.2.412), that Hamlet subsequently fixates: 'For Hecuba? / What's Hecuba to him or he to Hecuba / That he should weep for her' (2.2.493-95). Alliterative 'H's force Hamlet to linger over the repetitions of Hecuba's name, the name with which the conspicuous half-line comes to an abrupt halt: 'For Hecuba' (2.2.493). Thus, even after he has already relentlessly dismissed her as 'but a fiction', 'a dream', 'nothing' (2.2.485, 492) Hamlet is still

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[121] E.M Dadlez, *What's Hecuba to Him? Fictional Events and Actual Emotions* (University Park: Pennsylvania State UP, 1997), p.4.

harping on Hecuba. Indeed, Hecuba's presence clearly persists in Hamlet's soliloquy. Traces of Hecuba, with her 'o'er-teemed loins' and her 'instant burst of clamour' (2.2.446, 453), can be detected underlying Hamlet's admonishment of himself as 'unpregnant of my cause' and only able to 'say nothing' (2.2.503, 504). Moreover, it is from a performance of Hecuba which made the tyrant Alexander of Pherae weep and run from the theatre (a story made famous by Plutarch) that the Wittenberg student knows that 'guilty creatures sitting at a play' have 'been [...] struck to the soul' (2.2.524, 526).[122] In 1893 John Cunliffe even asserted that Hamlet's meditation on Hecuba did not end with Act Two but that Hamlet's musings prompt him to recall various alternative classical Hecubas and that his most famous speech, 'To be, or not to be…' (3.1.55), which marks his delayed entrance into the following scene, is inspired by a choral ode in Seneca's *Troas*.[123] Submerged traces of Hecuba thus persist in Hamlet's speeches, in Hamlet's mind as the play progresses.

Moreover the rhetorical construction of Hamlet's Hecuba phrase, which makes it so memorable, radically re-animates Hecuba in the precise moment that the Prince professes to dismiss her. The phrase is an example of *chiasmus*: 'the pattern of mirror inversion' named after 'the Greek letter *X* (chi) whose shape, if the two halves of the construction are rendered in separate verses it

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[122] The link between Hamlet's assertion and Plutarch's *Life of Pelopides* was first noted in 1746 by John Upton's *Critical Observations on Shakespeare*, see Arthur Johnston, 'The Player's Speech in *Hamlet*', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 13:1 (1962), 21-30 (pp.27-28).

[123] *The Influence of Seneca on Elizabethan Tragedy* (1893), reprint: (Hamden Connecticut: Archon Books, 1965), p.80. In 1992, Robert Miola revisted Cunliffe's proposition, and although he detects no 'direct borrowing' Miola traces 'a transformed convention', arguing that 'Shakespeare often assigns general choric reflections to characters in soliloquy' and that this particular soliloquy shares with the Senecan ode an 'isolation from [their] immediate context, an interrogative cast, a pained awareness of wretched mortality [and] a wish for permanent rest', *Shakespeare and Classical Tragedy: The Influence of Seneca* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), p.39 and p.38. As J. Michael Walton remarks, Hecuba's "asides", in which she decides whether to appeal to Agamemnon, are a 'strange and unfamiliar device in Greek tragedy', *Euripides Our Contemporary* (London: Methuen, 2009), p.102; *Hecuba* could therefore be identified as setting a precedent for the psychological aside and soliloquy that so defines *Hamlet*.

resembles'.[124] In *Hamlet* the symmetrical X not only distils the rhetorical construction of the Hecuba phrase but also diagrammatically renders the reciprocity of the gaze it establishes between Hecuba and the Player. Hamlet divorces the Player from his character and turns them to gaze upon one another. Typically, the strength of *chiasmus* as a rhetorical technique is to create the impression that the speaker has 'exhaust[ed] the possibilities of argument' as it forms a closed, self-perpetuating, loop.[125] Yet here, rather than containing and neutralising the idea of Hecuba, Hamlet's *chiasmus* has uncannily animated the fictitious queen. Habitually overlooked as alliterative ornamentation, this syntactical seepage transforms Hecuba from fictional object to staring subject.

My next chapter proposes to stare back and investigate Hecuba; the queen who, despite Hamlet's best efforts, cannot be fully exorcised or assuaged by his insistence that she is mere fiction; the queen who is snagged – via Hamlet – in England's cultural memory. Chapter two thus offers a reading that resists Hamlet's pervasive phrase, refuses to follow his dismissal of Hecuba as 'nothing' and instead takes his rhetorical question literally and attempts to *answer*, rather than merely again ask, 'What's Hecuba?'

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[124] Richard A. Lanham, *A Handlist of Rhetorical Terms*, 2nd ed., (Berkeley, Los Angeles & London: California UP, 1991), p.33.
[125] *Ibid*, p.33.

Chapter Two: 'What's Hecuba?'

> **HECUBA**   Tell them I am a woman who –
> Who no longer knows what she is.
>
> Euripides, *Hecuba*, l.423[1]

> As with many mythological figures who appear in Homer and in
> tragedy, later writers often blur the distinctions between the
> Hecuba of Homer and those of the two Euripides plays: the three
> characters blend into one. Different endings to her story may
> certainly be adopted by different authors, and different parts of it
> stressed and ignored, but the overriding impression is that they
> consider themselves to be talking about a single recognizable
> consistent figure.
>
> Mossman, *Wild Justice*, p.211

Towards the end of Euripides' *Trojan Women* Hecuba suddenly informs her chorus 'I see the cold abyss of truth' (l.1238).[2] In this moment Hecuba understands that 'had not heaven cast down our greatness and engulfed / All in the earth's depth, Troy would be a name unknown, / Our agony unrecorded, and those songs unsung / Which we shall give to poets of a future age' (*Women*/Vellacott, ll.1244-47). Hecuba realises that Troy's immortality, and that of her and her family, is contingent on their annihilation. The magnitude of destruction, the obliteration of the original or real, guarantees their survival as the symbolic. Memorial and storytelling will fill the void left by their eradication.

Originally delivered by a masked male actor performing in Athens' City Dionysia, this highly metatheatrical moment is a marker of the belatedness of all Hecubas. The theatrical mask, "Hecuba's voice" and "Hecuba's body" (whether those of an ancient male actor, a modern female actor, or as depicted within the

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[1] Trans. by Frank McGuinness, p.22. To compliment the palimpsestic reading attempted in this chapter I will be using multiple translations of the Hecuba texts. Each translation will be referenced in full in the footnotes for its first usage and thereafter abbreviated in the text, following the pattern: (Title/Translator, line or page number).

[2] *The Women of Troy*, in *The Bacchae and Other Plays*, trans. by Philip Vellacott (London: Penguin, 1973), pp.89-133. Hereafter in text: (*Women*/Vellacott, l.1238).

corpus of Hecuba-texts from Homer onwards), each attests to the absence that

lies at the heart of all mythological characters. For, as with any character whose

genesis lies in the ancient Greek oral tradition, there can be no single identifiable

or accessible original Hecuba, only ever belated interpretations of Hecuba. The

first Hecuba to be recorded in the Greek's new writing system (adapted from the

Phoenician's functional mercantile alphabet) is the adaptation of a memory of the

already centuries old oral Hecubas. Nor did the emergence of transcribed stories,

and the evident popularity of the *Iliad*, usurp the oral tradition and the myriad

personal recollections, adaptations and variations attendant upon the act of telling

stories of Troy.[3]

Like all mythological characters, "Hecuba" is born of, and borne by, an

accumulation of cross-cultural and trans-historic retellings. Whilst the Hecubas

of the extant classics are now typically viewed as a culmination of these told

tales, fixing the notion of "Homer's Hecuba" or "Euripides' first Hecuba" or

"Ovid's Hecuba", they are in fact only a continuation, links in an ongoing

process of remembering and '(re)making'.[4] Hecubas may have passed from

spoken word to written text but this continual '(re)making' still involves not only

remembrance and recitation but also their indivisible corollaries: forgetting,

elision, alteration and embellishment.

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[3] As Richard Miles states, attesting to the *Iliads* popularity, '[o]ver 180 manuscripts of the *Iliad* survive, more than twice the number of the *Odyssey*', 'The Age of Iron', *Ancient Worlds*, Ep. 2, BBC2 17 Nov. 2010.

[4] I borrow the term '(re)making' from Charles Mee's *(Re)making Project* which provides an explicit example of the idea of how each new performance of a classical text is a process of re-making. Mee has uploaded his own adaptations of *Trojan Women: A Love Story* (and also *Agamemnon*; *Orestes* and *Bacchae*) and invites visitors to re-make and upload their own versions, a modern medium which replicates the old oral tradition: 'Please feel free to take the plays from this website and use them as a resource for your own work: cut them up, rearrange them, rewrite them, throw things out, put things in, do whatever you like with them—don't just make a few cuts or rewrite a few passages, but pillage the plays and build your own entirely new piece out of the ruins'; <http://www.panix.com/userdirs/meejr/html/about.html> [14 Feb. 2007].

In consequence, the fictional "facts" about Hecuba that can be culled from the innumerable retellings of her story are not only diverse but potentially contradictory. The multiplicity of Hecuba-bearing narratives would seem to undermine any sense of Hecuba as a stable entity; and yet it is precisely this multiplicity which paradoxically "blurs" the variations between specific Hecubas to create Mossman's 'single recognizable consistent figure'. The persistent repetition of Hecuba creates a palimpsest of myriad similar but, crucially, non-identical Hecubas, thereby converting the Trojan queen from single fixed character to a concept, archetype, or trope. In a society fluent in the Greek myths, in which the stories of Troy and its ill-fated queen are frequently retold and retain a strong cultural currency, the trope of Hecuba, the memory of her aggregate selves, transcends the individual texts which constitute her identity. Hecuba is thus able to "live" in the collective cultural vocabulary as a rhetorical figure signifying more than any of her individual textual manifestations.

In twenty-first century England a prior cultural familiarity with the Greek myths and the classical texts has significantly declined; Hamlet's Hecuba now requires a biographical note .[5] The performance of modern translations of Euripides' tragedies now dominates England's perception of the queen. With the exception of Hamlet's obscure 'mobled queen', we have no Hecubas stored in the collective cultural memory with which to read and contextualise the newly translated Trojan matriarchs. Consequently, without additional research Hecuba's identity remains almost entirely constructed by, and lies exclusively within the parameters of, each discrete text/performance (unless, as in 2004-06, a

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[5] Some figures remain more culturally viable than others. Achilles and Paris are still more so than Priam and Hecuba, but it is Helen who has proved the most culturally resistant. Yet, as Laurie Maguire has shown, the epithet 'of Troy' is now necessary where previously 'Helen' alone automatically signified the great beauty at the centre of the Trojan War. See, *Helen of Troy: From Homer to Hollywood* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), p.104-07.

high frequency of productions make variant Hecubas publically available for comparison). This was, of course, not always the case; Shakespeare's audience did not require footnotes. Whilst we now read Hecuba as *a* character in *a* play, previous generations were trained to read Hecuba allegorically, to remember an amalgamation of her potential other selves. It is the aim of this chapter, then, to restore some of that lost signifying potential, to offer a palimpsestic reading of Hecuba which outlines the tropes that traditionally surrounded her.

1. 'Empty Dreams, Empty Words. All Rots into Nothing' [6]

> Priam's unhappy wife, when all else had been taken from her, lost
> even her human shape. Where the long Hellespont narrows into the
> straits, she filled the air of a foreign land with her barking, a
> strange and terrifying sound. Here is her story. (13.405-08)[7]

Hecuba, Queen of Troy, is no Helen. Her role in Homer's account of the Trojan War is not sexy; it is not glamorous. The 'wrinkled hide of *Hecuba*' can brook no comparison to 'the tender skin of a tempting *Helena*'; [8] Hecuba does not possess a face to launch a thousand ships. If Helen is the trophy the Greek and Trojan armies are fighting for, Hecuba is 'a prize whom no-one wants' (l.58).[9] No gods or warriors, princes or kings attempt to seduce or rape Hecuba; she does not indulge in any scandalous affairs, marry a son or lust after a son-in-law. No classical text portrays Hecuba as a beautiful young virgin. No-one desires to disrobe Hecuba and sacrifice her to a blood-thirsty ghost or god. 'Aged Hecuba'

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[6] My sub-heading is taken from *Hecuba* l.626-63, here McGuinness, p.30.
[7] Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. by Mary Innes (Penguin: London, 1955).
[8] Thomas Jeamson, *Artificial Embellishments* (1665), a cosmetic manual claiming that its recipes are 'of such efficacy that they will teach you creatures of mortality to retrace the steps of youth, and transforme the wrinkled hide of *Hecuba* into the tender skin of a tempting *Helena*', qtd. in Patricia Phillippy, *Painting Women: Cosmetics, Canvases, and Early Modern Culture* (Baltimore: John Hopkins UP, 2006), p.46.
[9] Seneca, The Trojan Women, in *Four Tragedies and Octavia*, trans. by E.F. Watling (London: Penguin, 1966), pp.151-204.

is always old.[10] Even when Seneca pedantically calculates that Helen ought to be older than Hecuba he feels compelled to add the proviso 'but sorrow aged her' (*Ep*.88.6.2).[11] The parentage of this prolific mother is ambiguous and largely irrelevant in the extant classical narratives which constitute her literary biography.[12] Defined only in relation to her prestigious husband Priam and their royal offspring, Queen Hecuba is wife, mother and grandmother.

And yet, she is none of these: Hecuba is a queen whose city is deracinated, whose people are slaughtered or enslaved by the conquering Greeks. Hecuba is a wife, mother, and grandmother who must watch as, one by one, her husband, children and grandchildren are murdered or sold into slavery in far off lands. That which defines Hecuba is negated almost as soon as it can be established. Homer's *Iliad*, Euripides' *Hecuba* and *Trojan Women*, Virgil's *Aeneid*, Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Seneca's *Troas* each tell a story of Hecuba. These six extant canonical texts came to play dominant (although neither exclusive nor equal) roles in the changing fortune of the myth and figure of Hecuba in England's cultural lexicon and social imaginary.[13] Collectively they provide the contentious concept of Hecuba's textual "origins" and "originals". At the precise moment when these extant classics turn their attention to Hecuba, she is stripped of her identity: 'I was a queen once, but now I am your slave; blessed

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[10] Christopher Marlowe [and Thomas Nashe], *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, in *The Complete Plays* (London: Everyman, 1999), pp.242-93 (2.1.290).

[11] See Mossman, *Wild Justice: A Study of Euripides' Hecuba* (Oxford: OUP, 1995), p.212. *Cf.* also, Jacob Bryant who, in 1799, employed the same calculations to help prove that the Trojan War was merely a fable, arguing that the Greeks would never have started a war for a woman 'sufficiently old to have been Hecuba's mother', *A Dissertation Concerning the War of Troy, and the Expedition of the Grecians, as described by Homer: shewing, that no such expedition was ever undertaken, and that no such city of Phrygia existed* (London: S. Hamilton, 1799), p.22.

[12] Hecuba is usually identified as either the daughter of Dymas, King of Phrygia, and his wife Eunoe; or the daughter of Cisseus, King of Thrace, and his wife Telecleia.

[13] The importance of Dares' *De Excidio Troiae Historia* and Dictys' *Ephemeridos de Historia Belli Troiani* will be discussed in chapter four. Although highly influential in the Renaissance, Dares and Dictys were discredited as authorities by the end of the eighteenth-century, their reputation never recovered and they no longer command the same sense of cultural authority as the six classics mentioned here.

with children once, but now old and childless too; without city, desolate' (ll.809-11).[14]   When the Hecuba of these classical texts is read or watched, her "former" self is always already in the process of being negated: '[i]s this not the queen of the Phrygians?', 'is this not the wife of Priam?' (*Hec*/Collard, ll.491-92). Hecuba thus becomes a paradoxical embodiment of absence and loss. As Troy's shattered matriarch she is analogous to the ruins of her city 'Troy, mother of us all' (l.601);[15] and like the city's fallen towers, once the pride of Phrygia, Hecuba too becomes a profound void, an 'abyss of pain' (*Women*/Vellacott, l.795), a ground-zero where something seemingly immutable once stood. The accumulation of violence inflicted upon Hecuba's family, city and people thus transform her into an uncanny, disturbing, presence: the familiar wrought almost unrecognisable, Hecuba and yet not Hecuba.

Hamlet's famous denotation of Hecuba as 'nothing', because she is mere 'fiction', is true but only half the story (2.2.529-34). Hecuba is also stripped to nothing within these fictions: 'we have come to nothing' (*Hec*/Collard l.622). In consequence Hecuba's identity is relegated to memory, a thing of the past, dependant upon being recalled and retold. Only remnants and remembrance of the 'once queen of Ilion' (*Hec*/Collard l.485) now haunt the hollowed out Hecuba; she has become 'memory wrapped round a corpse'.[16]

Each of the six classical texts thus tells a story of a woman's identity unravelling as she has to contend, over and again, with the 'incomprehensible fact of death'.[17]   In the face of this incomprehension Hecuba and the Trojan Women are repeatedly struck by the inability of language to express their sorrow:

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[14] Euripides, *Hecuba*, trans. by Christopher Collard (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1991).
[15] Euripides, *Women of Troy*, trans. by Don Taylor, p.30.
[16] Evans, *Trojan Barbie* (as in n.53 p.64), p.33.
[17] Goodland, *Female Mourning* (as in n.12 p.15), p.176.

'Whatever am I to cry out? What kind of call, what lamentation?' (*Hec*/Collard l.155); 'What words, / What howling, can give tongue to a pain / No animal could endure?' (l.197-98 *Women*/Taylor p.12-13). The inadequacy of language in the face of the slaughter Hecuba witnesses manifests itself either in a stunned silence – '[h]er very anguish swallowed up her voice' (*Met*/Innes 13.540) – or an anguished howl: ὀτοτοτοτοῖ (l.1287).[18] Death surrounds Hecuba; every textual encounter with the queen must also, therefore, contend with the death attendant upon her. The 'abyss' Hecuba becomes is, like death itself, a terrifyingly unstable void in which previously held facts dissolve, opposites collapse, and language fails.

All cultures counter this 'chaos of death' with their own mourning rituals. As Gail Holst-Warhaft asserts, these 'rites of mourning, whether generated from within or imposed from above, are a society's means of performing and containing' the volatile and potentially dangerous 'passion of grief'; they prevent the 'chaos of death' from 'spill[ing] over into the society at large and threaten[ing] its stability'.[19] In Homer's and Euripides' ancient Greek societies (as in many cultures worldwide) it was the duty of the deceased's closest female kin, and particularly mothers, to cleanse, dress and adorn the body of the dead

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[18] Euripides, *Trojan Women*, trans. by Shirley A. Barlow (Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 1986). As Katharine Goodland states, the notion of grief as unending is a motif characteristic of all mourning: 'Because lamentation is an oral, performative genre, its efficacy depends upon repetition to sustain the presence of the deceased in the communal memory: the ethos of lamentation is therefore expressed in its most common motif: inconsolable or unforgettable grief', (as in n.12 p.15), p.13. Thus in Seneca's *Troas* Ulysses claims that 'Great grief, unchecked, will never make an end' (l.786), and: 'This moaning will go on for ever!' (l.812), trans. by Watling. In addition, as Michael Neill argues, 'madness is typically imagined as a linguistic breakdown which bespeaks an inner disintegration, while nevertheless allowing a kind of inarticulate utterance of the unutterable', p.248. It is, then, the fractured inarticulacy of madness that paradoxically prevents, and yet provides the best, articulation of the depth and power of grief.

[19] *Cue for Passion* (as in n.12 p.15), p.6.

ready for the funeral pyre, to bury the ashes in a marked tomb or family grave and lead the songs of lamentation.

Memory is, of course, central to mourning. Despite Ancient Athens' abundance of written records 'Greek tradition unanimously describes [mothers] the keepers of memory', due to their key-role in traditional mourning praxis.[20] Memorial songs, often addressed to the dead, alternate between solo laments by female kin and communal wailing (often enhanced by professional lamenters, keeners or 'weepers'), all accompanied by the physical acts of remaining bare-foot, wearing black, weeping, clawing at the skin, pulling at dishevelled hair and beating the breast. As Patricia Phillippy explains, traditional mourning ritual 'stresses the body's centrality to lamentation and the figurative merger of the (collective) body of mourning with the (individual) body of death. [...] the mourner's self-mutilation arises from her intimacy with the flesh and mirrors, empathetically, the ravages of death on the corpse itself'.[21]

Mourning marks a temporary suspension of social strictures and, as Holst-Warhaft observes, within this period of licence '"[t]ruths" can be told in laments that must be suppressed the day after the funeral. But laments are not forgotten [...] Lament is both a theatrical performance of pain and the creation of a communal, as distinct from official, truth'.[22] Essential to this license is the guarantee of both temporality and containment; mourners must be isolated from the community's socio-cultural norms via the aesthetics and performative nature

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[20] Loraux, *Mothers in Mourning* (as in n.2 p.10), p.16. This alliance between mothers and cultural memory is reflected in the designation of Mnemosyne (Memory, daughter of Mother Earth) as the mother of the muses; which, as Jenny March remarks, is 'an apt metaphor in a time before the invention of writing', *Dictionary of Classical Mythology* (as in n.94 p.84), p.260. Memory begets tragedy, poetry, history: the muses routinely invoked by classical authors to sing so that their ephemeral oral performances can be converted into permanent textual record.
[21] *Painting Women* (as in n.8 p.107), p.15.
[22] *Cue for Passion* (as in n.12 p.15), p.49.

of grief. The mourner adopts the appearance of the dead, dressed in black, dishevelled and unkempt, replicating the deceased's wounds on the living body, whilst their apostrophic addresses place them in direct communion with the dead. Thus, as Goodland states, the 'mourner is "mixed" because she is between the worlds of the dead and the living'; the aim of mourning rituals is to pass through this liminal, chaotic, death-like state and achieve a cathartic cleansing of mourners and community alike.[23] Funeral rituals thus aim to appease and release the dead whilst keeping their memory alive within the community, but also recuperate mourners back into the society of the living.[24] But what if, as in the ruins of Troy, that recuperative society no longer exists? What if those now in power are the victors of war who do not want their record of history to be disrupted by the memory of those they have killed?

Unsurprisingly the depiction of Troy's matriarch in our six classics is dominated by her role as the city's chief mourner. Hecuba contends with the death that surrounds her by trying to enact appropriate rites for her husband, children, grandson and city. By Euripides' era, female lament had been heavily legislated against in Athens, especially in relation to the collective state funerals for the war-dead. Yet in the homosocial civic theatre, where women are physically absent but female characters are insistently present, the older mourning rituals habitually structure the tragedies' preoccupation with death and memorial.[25] Euripides' Hecubas inherit the Homeric rituals rather than those of

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[23] Goodland, *Female Mourning*, p.10.
[24] Holst-Warhaft, *Cue for Passion*, pp.9-10.
[25] The following authors all provide details of Athenian legislations against public grief: for a reading of tragedy as the deliberate usurpation of female mourning, see Gail Holst-Warhaft, *Dangerous Voices* (as in n.26 p.19), pp.126-30 and p.157; Olga Taxidou offers a more nuanced reading in *Tragedy, Modernity and Mourning* one which sees the transitions 'from ritual to art, from myth to history, from matriarchy to patriarchy' as 'never fully achieved and […] always unsuccessful', (as referenced at n.82 p.78), p.9. The overlaps between lamentation and tragedy are the subject of Loraux's study *Mothers in Mourning* (see n.2 p.10), whilst Margaret Alexiou,

contemporary Athens, and it is these rituals that are bequeathed to Seneca, Ovid

and Virgil; yet Hecuba's attempts to perform these rites are persistently thwarted.

Homer's Hecuba is essentially a background character, most visible and

vocal in the lamentations for her son Hector. The rage and desire for revenge that

Hecuba expresses in the *Iliad*, 'Oh would to god / That I could sink my teeth in

[Achilles'] liver, eat him raw!' (24.252-53), is prompted by Achilles' refusal to

return her son's body for the necessary funeral rites.[26] Instead of being ritually

cleansed by his wife and mother Hector's corpse is dragged through the dirt

behind Achilles' chariot. Such thoughts dominate Hecuba's lament for her son

when the corpse is finally returned: 'once he slashed away your life with his

brazen spear / he dragged you time and again around his comrade's tomb'

(*Iliad*/Fagles 24.885-86).

Euripides' two tragedies place this mournful queen centre-stage,

focussing almost exclusively on female acts of lamentation in the war's

aftermath. Both plays watch as Hecuba, her daughters, and a chorus of enslaved

women attempt to mourn and remember their dead kin, whom they have not been

allowed to bury, whilst the Greeks continue to abduct and murder the Trojans'

children as they divide the community of women amongst them as war-trophies.

As the recurrence of the phrase 'unwept, unburied' across the two tragedies

implies, both offer a depiction of inadequate mourning, of rituals repeatedly

interrupted and curtailed by the Greeks or the Thracian king or the material

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The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition and Helene P. Foley, *Female Acts in Greek Tragedy* (Oxford & Princeton: PUP, 2003) pp.19-56, provide details of the state legislation curtailing mourning practices and the impact of this on both the reading of tragedy and the political potency of grief. I call Greek theatre 'homosocial' since, although there is no conclusive evidence to prove that women were either included or excluded from the Great Dionysia, it is certainly true that '[n]o women participated directly in the writing, production, performance or judging of the plays', Simon Goldhill, 'The Audience of Athenian tragedy', in *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy*, ed. by P.E. Easterling (Cambridge: CUP, 1997), pp.54-68 (p.62).

[26] Homer, *The Iliad*, trans. by Robert Fagles.

conditions of the women's enslavement.[27] In *Trojan Women* Hecuba is denied

the right to bury her daughter Polyxena (indeed the Greeks refuse to tell the

queen of the sacrifice). Andromache, passing Achilles' tomb, discovers the girl's

body left as it fell and performs the only observances she can: 'I […] got down

from this cart to cover her body with garments and beat my breast in mourning

for her' (*Women*/Barlow ll.625-27). Later in the same play Andromache too is

refused the maternal right to bury her child, the grieving mother forced aboard a

ship by Neoptolemus; instead, Hecuba is left to bury her grandson Astyanax as

best she can: 'bring whatever robes our poverty can find / To drape his body'

(*Women*/Vellacott l.1200). For Hecuba the sight of the infant's mangled body,

thrown from Troy's last surviving tower, 'stabs my eyes' (*Women*/Vellacott

l.1156). With no family left to bury and thus no reason to continue living,

Hecuba considers Troy's burning ruins to be an appropriate funeral pyre for

herself; the Greeks, however, restrain her – 'Odysseus' prize' (*Women*/Barlow

ll.1287-88) must be kept alive.

In Euripides' *Hecuba*, as seen in the previous chapter, the body of the

queen's youngest son, butchered and denied burial induces revenge rather than

suicidal despair. The Homeric Hecuba's desire for vengeance is thus realised by

Euripides as Hecuba and her women knife Polymestor's sons to death before

stabbing his eyeballs out with their brooch-pins in punishment for the sight he

forced her to witness.

In Rome, approximately four hundred and thirty years after Euripides,

Ovid revised the plot of *Hecuba* in his *Metamorphoses*. In Book 13 the narrator

recalls the story of the widowed and sorrowing Hecuba as she faces the sacrifice

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[27] The phrase occurs in *Hecuba* (l.29) and *Trojan Women* (l.1314); Cf. also 'unwashed, unburied'
in *Women of Troy* (l.1081).

of Polyxena and the discovery of Polydorus' body. Again, stress is laid on the inadequacy of Hecuba's mourning: 'The only offerings / *you* [Polyxena] will receive are your mother's tears and a handful of alien / dust' (13.525).[28] In Ovid, however, the vengeance Hecuba exacts on Polymestor does not involve his sons. Instead, Hecuba gouges out Polymestor's eyeballs with her fingernails before transforming, as Euripides' Polymestor predicts, into a dog. Yet, rather than drown as the prediction states, Ovid's dog-like Hecuba runs wild across the plains of Thrace, howling out her grief.

Whilst Ovid drew on *Hecuba*, Seneca's Roman tragedy conflates episodes from both of Euripides' tragedies but owes far more to *Trojan Women* (whose name it shares) than to *Hecuba*. The erstwhile queen is more stoic in her suffering but less prominent in *Troas* as Seneca expands the roles of Andromache, Helen, Polyxena and Agamemnon, and introduces Pyrrhus and Calchas into the action. As in the Euripidean tragedies, Hecuba again leads the chorus in mourning; but in Seneca the queen's instructions are at their most explicit as she orders the chorus to: 'Loose your hair […] Let it be dirtied' (ll.84-86); 'Fill your hands with dust' (l.87); 'loosen your garments' (ll.88-89); 'beat your breasts' (ll.93-94); and 'weep as you never wept before' (l.97) (*Troas*/Watling). Through the inclusion of a heated debate between Agamemnon and Pyrrhus about the funeral observances due to Achilles, Seneca dramatises issues only reported by Euripides' Odysseus (in *Hecuba*). Seneca thereby juxtaposes the Trojan women's acts of maternal mourning with the conflicting attitudes of the Greek army over the correct way for warriors to mourn a comrade and for sons to honour their fathers. The sacrifice of Hecuba's daughter (as in

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[28] *Metamorphoses*, trans. by David Raeburn (London: Penguin, 2004).

Hecuba) and murder of her grandson (as in *Trojan Women*) are replayed, but Seneca includes no mention of Polydorus' murder, Hecuba's metamorphosis, or her desire for either suicide or vengeance.

In Virgil's epic, Hecuba plays an even more minor role than in Homer. She is merely a memory, featuring briefly in Aeneas' retrospective tale to Dido in which he recalls the fall of Troy and slaughter of Priam:

> In the middle of the palace, under the naked vault of heaven, there stood a great altar, and nearby an ancient laurel tree leaning over it and enfolding the household gods in its shade. Here, vainly embracing the images of the gods, Hecuba and her daughters were sitting flocked round the altar, like doves driven down in a black storm. When Hecuba saw that Priam had now put on his youthful armour, 'O my poor husband,' she cried, 'this is madness. Why have you put on this armour? Where can you go? This is not the sort of help we need. You are not the defender we are looking for. Not even my Hector, if he were here now… Just come here and sit by me. This altar will protect us all or you will die with us'. As she spoke she took the old man to her and led him to a place by the holy altar. (2.513-26)

Yet - as stated in the previous chapter - despite her peripheral role, it is the lamentations of Euripides' Hecubas which play a major role in providing the memories that Virgil's Aeneas recollects.[29]

Within all six of these Hecuba-bearing narratives, Hecuba's lamenting voice is fleeting, 'an evanescent, fragile thing best grasped at the moment of its fading' (to borrow Lynn Enterline's description of the 'speaking subject' in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*).[30] Momentarily illuminated by the fires that consume

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[29] See H. May Johnson's 'Vergil's debt to the *Hecuba* and Troades of *Euripides*' (as in n.100 p. 86).

[30] *The Rhetoric of the Body from Ovid to Shakespeare* (Cambridge: CUP, 2000), p.18. A necessary proviso: when referring to "Hecuba's voice" or "female lament" I will typically be talking of acts of male authorial ventriloquism. Thus, just as Enterline insists 'the female voice' should be understood as 'a pervasive and seductive *trope*, […] as a discursive effect rather than a prediscursive fact', I wish to make clear that "Hecuba" and "Hecuba's voice" are also 'discursive effect[s]' and 'seductive trope[s]', p.18. There is no, and indeed never was a, 'prediscursive fact' of Hecuba, only ever Hecuba effects.

Troy the queen gives voice to a 'burst of clamour' (*Hamlet* 2.2.453), an attempt to express the inexpressible, before silence engulfs her. Hecuba remains suspended, for the length of these narratives' concern with her, between a rapidly receding past self and the impending annihilation of selfhood in slavery, metamorphosis, or death.

Euripides', Ovid's and Seneca's Hecuba texts compound this lingering, indeterminate, intermediary state with recurring tropes of liminality. The location of these narratives is a shoreline, either where the wild Thracian plains meet the Hellespont or where the ruins of Troy meet the Aegean; the action takes place in the Greeks' temporary encampment as the characters wait for the suspended winds to blow. The narratives are thus ensnared in a dead-time between the fall of the city and the sailing of the fleet. This protracted "meantime" is haunted by the ghosts of the dead (Achilles and Polydorus), who make further demands on the living to release their restless spirits from their own limbo.

Although Homer and Virgil both depict Hecuba within the war rather than its aftermath, they too leave Hecuba in the suspended time of mourning (for Hector and Priam respectively), making no mention of her ultimate fate.[31] And although Hecuba exits Euripides' and Seneca's tragedies to board the Greek ships for her future enslavement, the inclusion of prophecies that foresee the destruction of the Greek fleet (*Trojan Women*), and the transformation of Hecuba into a dog that drowns (*Hecuba*), ensure that the queen's actual fate remains not only deferred and unseen but also uncertain. Such uncertainty is compounded by silence. It is not simply the case that the Hecuba narratives cease but rather that, before they end, a silence has already enveloped the queen. In all three classical

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[31] As Holst-Warhaft asserts, grief itself 'belongs to a transitional, or what anthropologists call a "liminal" phase that follows death', *Cue for Passion* (as in n.12 p.15), p.38.

tragedies Hecuba falls silent before the end of the play. A messenger or the chorus deliver the final lines, and the queen will exit in silence to her uncertain fate. In Virgil Aeneas' ignorance of Hecuba's life after Priam's murder again envelopes her in a narrative silence. Only Ovid's *Metamorphoses* appears to posit an exception to this pervasive silence and indeterminacy. Ovid confirms Polymestor's prophecy in *Hecuba* by depicting the queen's transformation into a dog (a metamorphosis which protects her against Thracians attempting to stone her to death). Yet even this fate becomes indefinite as the dog-like Hecuba, 'long remembering her past sufferings, continued to howl mournfully still' (*Met*/Innes 13.571).

In addition, Ovid's depiction of Hecuba's fate is illustrative of her literary afterlife: Hecuba's future is to be caught in a cycle of remembrance and, although beyond the ability to voice her own narrative, the articulation of grief. Hecuba continues as the repetitive performance of memorial lament, just as the "subsequent" Hecuba texts will loop back to recount and replay variations of her past woes up until the engulfing silence and/or howl. Collectively, then, the Hecuba narratives ensure that Hecuba's voice, although fleeting, is also incessantly repeated. The queen falls silent only to be textually re-sited and recited.

Accordingly, in imagining her post-war life as Odysseus' slave, Ovid's Hecuba locates herself in story, envisioning herself: '[p]resented too [*sic*] *Penelope* a gift, whoo shewing mee' 'shall say "[…] That was sumtyme king *Priams* wife, this was the famous moother / Of *Hector*"' (*Met*/Golding 13.614-17). No longer Hecuba, '[t]his same […] that *was*' can only have her identity temporarily recovered in a story of the past, the telling of which becomes

contingent upon the mood of her new masters as her own voice is disenfranchised. The loss of agency entailed in slavery thus makes it analogous to death; silenced and effaced the personal identity that came before 'I am called slave' can only be recovered through memorial.[32]

Indeed, the only alternatives available to the women of Troy in the wake of their city's destruction are either death or the figurative death enacted by slavery. As the fate of Hecuba's daughter Creusa illustrates, for the women facing 'the life of the dead' in slavery (*Hec*/Vellacott l.482), oblivion in the dust and ashes of their mother city is always deemed preferable. Thus Creusa's murder, by an unnamed Greek soldier, ironically enables her to retain and even speak the royal Trojan identity that would be lost in slavery – as her ghost informs Aeneas: 'I am daughter of Dardanus and my husband was the son of Venus, and I shall never go to be a slave to any matron of Greece. The great Mother of the Gods keeps me here in this land of Troy' (*Aeneid*/West 2.787-89).

Similarly when Hecuba's youngest daughter Polyxena is told she is to be sacrificially killed, the girl welcomes the news, declaring that the word slave 'makes me long to die' (l.358 *Hec*/McGuinness p.19). Andromache counts Polyxena lucky in her escape, 'happier dead than I am living' (l.630 *Women*/Taylor p.31), and Hecuba, too, will come to agree: 'call no man happy till the day he dies' (*Women*/Vellacott l.510). These women know that to be a slave is to be rendered both a thing and nothing: a nameless, voiceless, disempowered and dispossessed possession. Acutely aware that '[o]ur sorrowful voices will soon be swept away / Scattered as ships steer off in all directions' (*Troas*/Watling l.1042-43) Hecuba and her companions attempt to mourn and

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[32] *Hecuba*, trans. by Marianne McDonald (London: Nick Hern Books, 2005), p.22.

remember not only their dead kin and city but also themselves whilst their voices can still be heard.

The imagined moment when Trojan voices have ceased to be efficacious and Penelope must recreate Hecuba's identity in story not only ironically parallels Hecuba's fictional status but also anachronistically foreshadows it, fabricating a founding myth. Ovid's Hecuba "foresees" the origins of her narrative afterlife by volunteering the moment when people begin to tell stories of "Hecuba" and (re)construct her lost identity. Strikingly, Ovid depicts this moment as exclusively female: 'Penelope, who will point me out to the women of Ithaca as I spin the wool she gives me, […] will say: "That woman…' (*Met*/Innes 13.510-13). Hecuba becomes an oral story told for women, by women, and about 'that woman', whilst they perform the women's work of weaving.

The parallels and intersections between notions of weaving and writing have been frequently discussed with weaving deemed symbolically synonymous with female narrative.[33] Text and textile overlap, the etymology of the word 'text' leads us back to the Latin *texere* or *textum*: to weave. As the story of Philomel exemplifies, the weaving of tapestries provides women who have been silenced by patriarchal strictures with the capacity to tell tales (in Philomel's case to tell tale on her rapist Tereus). However, as Ovid's imagined scene of weaving and storytelling implies, not all women have equal access to this alternative

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[33] Matthew Gumpert writes, '[w]eaving regularly appears in ancient literature as a form of feminine writing substituting for the voice that has been silence', *Grafting Helen* (as in n.43 p.60), p.5. Similarly, Marina Warner's observations on the oral tradition of European fairytales can be applied equally to the tales of ancient myth: 'Spinning a tale, weaving a plot: the metaphors illuminate the relation; while the structure of fairy stories, with the repetitions, reprises, elaboration and minutiae, replicates the thread and fabric of one of women's principal labours – the making of textiles from the wool or the flax to the finished bolt of cloth', *From the Beast to the Blonde: On Fairy Tales and their Tellers* (London: Vintage, 1995), p.23. See also Catherine Bates, 'Weaving and writing in *Othello*', *Shakespeare Survey*, 46 (1994), 51-60.

discourse. Only Penelope speaks to the women of Ithaca, and it is only Penelope

or these free Ithacans who will weave textiles out of the woollen threads spun for

them, on command by the silent slaves: 'I spin the wool she gives me'

(*Met*/Innes 513). Thus, it is with poignant irony that the chorus of slaves in

Hecuba optimistically imagine themselves (if they are "lucky" enough to be

transported to Athens) being employed to weave 'Athene's splendid chariot-

mares, embroidering them on her saffron mantle in finely-worked and colour-

woven threads' (l*Hec*/Collard l.470). As Mossman asserts, Euripides' Athenian

audience would be well aware that the chorus 'were deluding themselves', that

the famous *peplos* of Athena was woven by 'high-born virgins' not 'Trojans,

slaves, and […] *mothers*', that the chorus 'are exiles anticipating the place of

their exile' rather than the conditions of that exile.[34] After Troy's fall, then, the

enslaved Hecuba can only ever be the subject, and not the agent, of narrative.

Instead, Hecuba, exile in her own life, provides the raw material which a

Penelope will embroider. In this manner, the particular conditions of Hecuba's

myth replicate and compound the generic conditions of all mythological

characters. Ovid inserts an ironic fractal image, an oral female narrative within

the male textual narrative, which operates as a subtle meta-textual exposure of

Hecuba's reliance on fiction. Hecuba's destiny is, then, to exist as pure story with

her identity always residing retrospectively, beyond herself, in the woven words

of others.

However, beyond the imagined scenes of future slavery in Ovid and

Euripides, the anticipated post-war (non)identity of a fully enslaved Hecuba is

never realised in the extant classical narratives. Indeed how could it be, for, like

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[34] *Wild Justice* (as in n.11 p.108), pp.80-81.

Penelope's imagined words, these texts recall Hecuba's past identity to the reader's/audience's present, paradoxically appearing to delay the moment in which she will be effaced and reside only in memory and narrative. Whilst ironically "foreseeing" their future in Penelope's words or 'the songs of men to come' (l.1245),[35] the classical Hecubas are depicted as speaking before such a process of narrative transmission and distortion begins, in that provisional, liminal "meantime" in which their words can still be heard.

Indeed, in this liminal mourning period Hecuba's words are potentially so efficacious that they have been held responsible for the succession of trials and assaults which plague and prolong Odysseus' return home (causing the delay which will, incidentally, make Penelope famous for her weaving).[36] According to one strand of Hecuba's myth, Odysseus' wanderings are the fulfilment of Hecuba's curses, uttered upon learning that the name of her new master is the inventor of the Trojan horse, the man who refused to grant either Polyxena or Astyanax mercy:

> Lead on Ulysses. I will follow you,
> And where I go my Fates will follow me.
> The sea will have no peace for you; wind, wave,
> Tempest, with war and fire and all the ills
> That I and Priam have suffered, will destroy you.
>
> (*Troas*/Watling ll.993-98)

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[35] *Trojan Women*, trans by. Richmond Lattimore, in *The Complete Greek Tragedies* Vol. 3, ed. by David Grene and Richmond Lattimore (Chicago: Chicago UP, 1992).

[36] Penelope weaves in her husband's absence to keep the suitors at bay, insisting that she will only consider their proposals once the weaving is complete. Each night she unpicks her work to weave it anew the following day. Spinning out the days Penelope buys time. Again aligning writing with weaving, Walter Benjamin writes: 'The important thing for the remembering author is not what he experienced, but the weaving of his memory, the Penelope work of recollection. Or should one call it the Penelope work of forgetting? […] And is not this work of spontaneous recollection, in which remembrance is the woof and forgetting the warp, a counterpart to Penelope's work rather than its likeness? For here the day unravels what the night has woven', ('The Image of Proust', trans. by Harry Zohn, in *Illuminations*), qtd. in Garber, *Shakespeare's Ghost Writers* (as in n.109 p.94), p.153.

In later retellings Hecuba's curses against the Greeks become so full of invective, so malevolent and terrifying, that the Greeks feel compelled to stone her to death in Thrace rather than risk sailing with her onboard and polluting the ship.[37] Cursing is, as Goodland explains, one of the '[s]ix rhetorical conventions characteristic of ritual lamentation'; an expression of the rage attendant upon grief which 'appeals for justice to the metaphysical realm'.[38] However, for Hecuba, cursing is not, like 'tears [and] words', merely one of 'the inadequate vehicles of our grief'.[39] Rather, cursing allows mourning mothers to commune with the *Erinyes* or Furies, the goddesses of vengeance and retribution, terrifying daughters of the blood spilt on Earth when her son Cronus castrated his father the Sky (Uranus). The Furies, 'blood-thirsty hounds of conscience', are relentless in their pursuit of vengeance;[40] Aeschylus' *Eumenides* surrounds them with hound imagery which sees them barefoot, dressed in mourning black, crawling, howling and whining, sniffing out the guilty, occupying a terrifying liminal space between the living and the dead: 'Their bodies exhale / A stench like maggoty corpses'.[41] The Furies, therefore, literally embody the position that a grief-stricken female lamenter temporarily occupies in the mourning period: '[the lamenter] looks mortality in the eye, and for the time she engages in her dialogue with death, she undoes the complicated web of denial that holds the symbolic self

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[37] Dictys for example, whose description of the stoning of Hecuba is cited below.
[38] *Female Mourning* (as in n.12 p.15), p.14 and p.21. Goodland identifies: '[s]ix rhetorical conventions characteristic of ritual lamentation support its ritual goals of empathetic communion with the dead and communal catharsis: 1) antithetical thought, structure, and style; 2) antiphonal and stichomythic exchange between mourners; 3) direct address or apostrophe; 4) repeated questioning; 5) cursing; and 6) chanting and wailing', p.14.
[39] Holst-Warhaft, *Cue for Passion* (as in n.12 p.15), p.23.
[40] Kenneth Burke, 'Form and Persecution in the *Oresteia*', in *Classical Tragedy Greek and Roman: 8 Plays*, ed. by Robert W. Corrigan (New York: Applause, 1990), pp.116-33 (p.122).
[41] Aeschylus, *Eumenides*, in *The Oresteia*, trans. by Ted Hughes, (London: Faber and Faber, 1999), pp.145-94 (p.149).

together and keeps society in order'.[42] It is evident, then, that raging mothers not only call on the Furies when they curse; they channel them. Thus, for Dictys it is Hecuba's 'many curses and evil omens', rather than any act of violence, which prompts them to stone her and give her grave the name 'Tomb of the Bitch'.[43] Hecuba may have been stripped to 'nothing' within the fictions which depict her, but her curses are far from 'empty words' (l.626 *Hec*/McGuinness p.30). Empowered with maternal rage, occupying the liminal "meantime" between the dead and the living, Hecuba's efficacious curses call upon a primal female power which threatens the patriarchal hierarchy. Thus, Ovid's Hecuba becomes 'the complete likeness of Revenge' (13.546).[44]

Whilst the Greek army may consider the Trojan War to be bookended by the sacrificial slaughter of two beautiful virgins (Iphigenia and Polyxena), the nexus of imagery shared by the Furies and the girls' grieving mothers ensure that no such closure is possible. For the Greeks, the dog is an ambivalent symbol of loyalty and maternal instinct as well as irrational savagery and a pack-hunting mob-mentality. In the later Roman tradition, it is the sight of Polyxena's slaughter that transforms Hecuba either literally or figuratively into a Fury, a woman possessed, a '[m]ad dog with eyes on fire' (l.1265 *Hec*/McGuinness p.61). It is also Polyxena's murder that appears to make the winds blow, allowing the Greeks to sail for home and finally leave the Trojan War behind them. Yet these winds send Agamemnon home to Clytemnestra who, with ceaseless private memorial, has kept open the wounds of grief which will spur her to avenge

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[42] Holst-Warhaft, *Cue for Passion* (as in n.12 p.15), p.41.

[43] Dictys, *Ephemeridos de Historia Belli Troiani*, in *The Trojan War. The Chronicles of Dictys of Crete and Dares the Phrygian*, trans. by R.M. Frazer Jr. (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1966). Reproduced by *The Theoi Classical E-Texts Library*, ed. by Aaron Atsma (2000-2007) <http://www.theoi.com/Text/DictysCretensis1.html> [18 March 2010], Book 5.16.

[44] Translation of select lines from *Metamorphoses* by Rueben A. Brower in *Hero & Saint: Shakespeare and the Graeco-Roman Heroic Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p.130.

Iphigenia. Like the Trojan Hecuba left raging on the Thracian shore, Greek

Clytemnestra repeatedly invokes and channels the Furies; cursing her husband's

concession to the army and the pursuit of male heroism at the cost of her

daughter's life. Clytemnestra waits for Agamemnon in the 'forlorn [family]

home' like a 'watch-dog at his door; knowing one loyalty; / To enemies

implacable'.[45]

2. 'The Mother Bird at her Plundered Nest' [46]

> No other service woman can render the State can compensate for
> her failure in this, the one function God and Nature have assigned
> to her, and to her alone. Everything else man can do. This is
> woman's function and her glory. For this she was sent into the
> world. Her best years must be spent in the nursery, or the nation
> perishes. In the noblest periods of a nation's history the ablest
> women are ambitious of bearing distinguished sons.
>   Rev. George W. Clark, *Race Suicide – England's Peril*, 1917 [47]

> A woman is for a man [in patriarchal mythology, theology,
> literature and language] something terribly necessary and
> necessarily terrible. […] she is not simply the "other"; she is first
> of all the Mother who has to be possessed, reduced, controlled, lest
> she swallow him back into her dark caves.
>   Adrienne Rich, *Of Woman Born*, p.112

Before Troy's fall Hecuba's role as Priam's wife is typically articulated in terms

of being the successful mother to his and Troy's royal lineage; in fact Hecuba's

maternity consistently eclipses all other potential aspects of her character. Such

focus on the maternal is not merely a patriarchal curtailment, not just another

example of the division of womanhood into the ubiquitous delineations of virgin,

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[45] Aeschylus, *Agamemnon*, in *The Oresteian Trilogy*, trans. by Philip Vellacott (London: Penguin, 1959), pp.41-102 (ll.607-08).
[46] My sub-heading quotes Euripides' *Trojan Women* (l.146-47), trans. by Taylor, p.10.
[47] Published by the 'Duty and Discipline Movement', qtd. in Rich, *Of Woman Born* (as in n.19 p.17), p.273.

wife, mother or whore. Rather, Hecuba's role as mother overwhelms her character because it is overwhelming, her 'all-o'er teemed loins' (*Hamlet* 2.2.442) are awesomely potent and unnervingly fruitful. So excessive is her fertility that her progeny become impossible to count: the numbers not only continue to vary after Homer's vague count of around nineteen sons and four daughters, but continue to multiply so that by the Renaissance she can be referred to as 'the wombe of fifty princes'.[48] A small proportion of this increase can be ascribed to Hecuba's "adoption" of children who, in earlier versions of the myth, are the offspring of Priam and one of his lesser-known wives or concubines. In the *Iliad* Polydorus, for example, is the son of Priam by Laothoe and is defeated by Achilles in battle; yet from Euripides onwards Polydorus is predominantly identified as the youngest son of Priam and Hecuba, the child sent into the fatal custody of the Thracian king. For the most part, however, the increase in the number of Hecuba's offspring is just that – an increase of a number without the naming of new or adopted children. Hecuba's teeming fertility thus swells indiscriminately.

Moreover, as the city's matriarch Hecuba is the maternal figurehead for every Trojan citizen; thus the chorus of women in Euripides' two tragedies repeatedly refer to her as 'mother'. But Hecuba's maternal signification does not stop with the dispossessed Trojan women, but rather, as an archetypal symbol of mourning motherhood, she becomes mother to female sorrow itself: 'all weeping women are Hecuba's sorrowing daughters' (*Troas*/Watling l.1062).[49] As Virgil's Rome, and subsequently medieval France, Portugal and Britain, began to appropriate Aeneas' ancestry to form their own myth of origins, Troy lives up to

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[48] Thomas Heywood, *The Second Part of the Iron Age* (London: Nicholas Oakes, 1632), F2v.
[49] And in Ovid she is 'Queene of moothers all' (*Met*/Golding 13.578).

its ancient title of the 'Mother of Cities' (*Women*/Vellacott l.1289). In turn, Hecuba, grandmother of Aeneas' son Ascanius, necessarily becomes the ultimate maternal source for nations full of neo-Trojans. With medieval England claiming Ascanius' grandson Brut as their founding father, the writers, readers, actors and spectators of English Hecubas are tacitly drawn into her maternal sphere. Thus, ironically, with the death of her mythical children, Hecuba's maternity expands exponentially, rippling outwards from Troy.

Yet Hecuba's maternity is not only excessive in terms of the number of children she delivers. She also bears extraordinary offspring: warrior princes, prophets and a personified firebrand (and, in at least one Renaissance adaption of her story, a personified flood).[50] The heroic feats, visionary warnings, beautiful faces and blasphemous lusts of Hecuba's children have the power to sway the actions and fates of entire civilisations. But in outliving these innumerable progeny Hecuba's motherhood is again marked as excessive: 'Why should I live now, when I have suffered the agony of your death?' (22.431).[51] Hecuba's extended existence mocks her excessive maternity:

> And I,
> An old woman, with her city destroyed
> And all her children dead, must bury you,
> So much younger than I am, such a tender corpse.
> My dear little sweetheart, what use were all
> Those cuddles I gave you, the times I nursed you,
> Fed you, and got you off to sleep.
> All my love wasted when it comes to this
> With you dead in my arms. (ll.1186-88 *Women*/Taylor p.53-54)

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[50] John Ogle's *The Lamentation of Troy for the Death of Hector* figures Hector as a flood in Hecuba's womb, (London: Peter Short for William Mattes, 1554), B3r–v.

[51] Homer, *Iliad*, trans. by Martin Hammond (London: Penguin, 1987). *Cf.* Ovid's *Metamorphoses* in which Hecuba asks: 'why should my heart of iron endure any longer? […] / Why keep an old woman alive, you unfeeling gods, if I'm only to see more corpses?', trans by Raeburn (13.516-19).

In Book 22 of the *Iliad* Priam and Hecuba implore Hector to abstain from fighting; Hecuba bares her breast, begging Hector to remember the care she took to raise him, the physical bond of dependency that existed between mother and son and how, if he should fight Achilles today, this bond will be irrevocably broken: 'I will not be able to lay you on the bier and mourn for you, dear creature, my own child' but instead 'out by the Argive ships, the quick dogs will feed on you' (*Iliad*/Hammond 22.85-87). As Nicole Loraux intimates, Hecuba lays stress on the physical intimacy of mother and child not only at the beginning but also at the end of the child's life, asserting the centrality of the maternal body and the mother's care in both nursing and mourning. For Loraux this unique physical bond is made manifest in the mourning rites of ancient Greece:

> the gestures of funerals appear to graft themselves on the very ancient intimacy that has been forever lost, the intimacy between mother and small child. […] a mother owes her pre-eminent position alongside the dead to the unconditional privilege given once and for all by the bond of childbirth. A bond that is without mediation, exacting, painful, and that Euripides' choruses sometimes describe as "terrible": terribly tender, terribly strong, simply *terrible*. […] welding forever-more the maternal body to the memory of the newborn.[52]

The pervasive affinity between mothers and mourning manifests itself within epistemological myths and the language which structures our metaphoric thought: in English the word 'mourn' comes from the Old English 'murnan', 'to care for, be anxious about', giving rise to the notion of sorrows as something to be nursed; the etymology of 'grief' on the other hand is from the Old French 'grever', 'to burden', which again returns us to the sense of being heavy or pregnant with grief; and burials are persistently figured, even after the

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[52] Loraux (as in n.2 p.10), pp.38-39.

establishment of a patriarchal monotheism, as a return to the womb of Mother

Earth (*Gaia* for the Greeks; *Terra* or *Tellus* for the Romans) or, in more recent

secular formulations, the motherland.[53]

Hecuba must perform her maternal civic duty and bury the bodies of each

of her innumerable children (with the exception of Cassandra – who tells her

mother that she will be thrown to animals and scavenging birds after being

murdered in Argos – and the *Iliad*'s reference to unnamed, captured sons sold

into slavery). As Hecuba's children are replaced one by one with the weight of

grief for their loss, Hecuba is finally rendered only the 'Mother of sorrow, /

Sorrow upon sorrow' (l. 198 *Hec*/McGuinness p.11). The mother of sorrow

breeds sons only for the battlefield and daughters only for the enemy ('I bore you

as an offering for my foe' (*Met*/Innes 13.516)); a disturbing prospect when

combined with her ever-expanding maternal sphere. Moreover, in declaring

herself 'the mother of all misfortune' (l.786 *Hec*/McGuinness p.38), Hecuba also

identifies herself as the origins of the war, a fact which Helen will use against her

in arguing her own innocence:

> Hecabe here produced the first cause of our troubles
> When she bore Paris. […] this city, and I,
> Were doomed by Priam when he ignored the warning given
> By a dream of firebrands, and refused to kill his child.
> (*Women*/Vellacott ll.918-23)

Hecuba, too, admonishes herself for knowingly bringing forth the city's

destruction: 'All these things I, I Hecuba foresaw / When I was pregnant with a

son' (l.36); 'That fire was mine, my hand lit the faggots / Whose blaze consumes

you now' (l.40) (*Troas*/Watling). As Mossman argues, whilst the earliest extant

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[53] Ernest Klein, *A Comprehensive Etymological Dictionary of the English Language*, 2 Vols.
(London: Elsevier, 1966), Vol.1. p.680 and Vol.2. p.1009.

text in which Hecuba's prophetic dream occurs is a fragment of one of Pindar's

Paeans it is almost certainly a feature derived from earlier oral folklore.[54] The

unnerving potency of Hecuba's womb thus traditionally breeds Troy's

destruction and, in consequence, a nexus of imagery is shared between the royal

womb and the Greek's wooden horse: 'their best warriors […] shut up in the

darkness of its belly, filling the vast cavern of its womb with armed soldiers'

(*Aeneid*/West 2.19-20); 'four times the armour clanged in its womb. But we paid

no heed' (*Aeneid*/West 2.44-45). Hecuba's maternal body, like that of the horse,

nurtures the enemy-within, bringing destruction to the city. However, the

association of the womb with death is only amplified in Hecuba's imagistic

semblance to the wooden horse. As Janet Adelman notes, '[t]he womb was

traditionally understood as the entrance to death and the site of mortality'.[55] The

fate of Hecuba's daughter Laodice is illustrative of this equivalence. As the

Greeks begin to raze Troy Laodice prays to the gods, begging for the Earth to

swallow her and prevent her impending death/slavery. The gods comply: a chasm

appears and Hecuba's daughter disappears. This fate is of course a death, a

descent into Hades; yet, like the death of her sister Creusa, it is also a return to a

Mother Goddess with Laodice taken into the belly or the womb of the Great

Mother Earth (Gaia or Gaea).[56] Arguing that death is preferable to slavery,

Andromache convinces Hecuba that '[t]o be dead is the same as never to have

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[54] *Wild Justice* (as in n.11 p.108), n.2. p.211.

[55] *Suffocating Mothers: Fantasies of Maternal Origin in Shakespeare's Plays, <u>Hamlet</u> to <u>The Tempest</u>* (New York & London: Routledge, 1992), p.6. The emergence of Judeo-Christian theology compounded this notion further; as Adelman outlines, 'the myth that made Eve responsible for the Fall and hence for the mortal body is played out in miniature in any ordinary birth', p.6. Being born of woman marks a child for death; being born of Hecuba additionally marks a child for sorrow.

[56] In the case of Virgil's Creusa the mother goddess in question would seem to be that of Cybele (or Cybel) – 'Great Mother of the Gods' (*Aeneid*/West 2.789) – who nonetheless had affinities with both Earth (Gaia/Gaea who gave birth to the earliest gods) and also Earth's daughter Rhea; all three were worshipped as Great Mother Goddesses associated with fertility and the cycle of life and death.

been born' (ll.634 *Women*/Taylor p.32). Laodice's and Creusa's deaths are thus

not only interment but a protective maternal embrace and the return to an *in-*

utero pre-consciousness.

For Hecuba's daughters, indeed for all Troy's surviving women, oblivion

within the tomb/womb of the Earth is an act of benevolence, a prayed-for release

from a far worse fate. To return and be reabsorbed into the figurative maternal

body is a comforting thought for these abducted women, just as it is in traditional

funeral lamentations. Yet, for the men who are conditioned to carve heroic

masculinities in opposition to the maternal body – for Hector who must turn

away from Hecuba's exposed breast and the safety it denotes at the cost of self-

determination – such resonances reconfigure the maternal body as a terrifying

threat, simultaneously signifying an 'incestuous nightmare', emasculation, and

oblivion.[57] For Freud these are of course the primal fears borne of infantile

dependency whilst for Jung they are the archetypal fears of the collective

unconscious. Both manifest themselves culturally in ambivalent mythical,

theological and artistic representations that align the mother-figure and maternal

body with that of 'the Great Mother, who swallows her children'.[58] Teeming

with abundant fertility, outliving and burying each of her children, providing the

womb for Paris and a tomb for Troy, the origins of both Troy's lifeblood and its

oblivion, the classical Hecubas are thus strongly aligned with the Great Mother

Earth.

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[57] Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers*, p.28.
[58] Walter J. Ong, *Rhetoric, Romance and Technology: Studies in the Interaction of Expression and Culture* (Ithaca & London: Cornell UP, 1971), p.14. In fact, the most comprehensive Jungian studies on The Great Mother were completed not by Jung but by his students Erich Neumann and M. Ester Harding in *The Great Mother* and *Women's Mysteries, Ancient and Modern* respectively. Cf. also Freud's *Three Caskets*, in which he states 'the three forms taken on by the figure of the mother as life proceeds: the mother herself, the beloved who is chosen after her pattern, and finally the Mother Earth who receives him again. but it is in vain that the old man yearns after the love of woman as once he had from his mother; the third of the Fates alone, the silent Goddess of Death, will take him into her arms', qtd. in Garber (as in n.109 p.94), p.77.

Hecuba's replication of the factors which render the maternal body a site of deadly ambivalence and psychic or cultural anxiety, which align her with the infanticide Great Mother, are further compounded in the stories which see her turn to infanticide. Although a later elaboration on Hecuba's myth recalls the queen avenging Troy by murdering the young daughter of Paris and Helen during the city's sack,[59] in Greek mythology mothers only murder sons – those of their enemies and their own – but never daughters.[60] Whilst Hecuba's vengeance and transformation parallel her with Clytemnestra and Mother Earth's bloodthirsty daughters, the Furies, a nexus of overlapping imagery and mythical echoes link her grief to alternative mythological equivalents. Perhaps her closest equivalent, and the figure to whom she is most frequently linked, is Niobe the queen of Thebes.[61] Niobe makes her first literary appearance in the *Iliad*, as a rhetorical exemplar in a story told by Achilles. After promising to return Hector's body to Troy, Achilles implores Priam to set aside his paternal grief and eat; he eventually convinces the old king by invoking the example of the Theban queen (24.704-27). Niobe, another prolific mother, insults the goddess Leto by boastfully comparing her six sons and six daughters to Leto's twins.[62] To avenge this slight Leto's twins, Apollo and Artemis, murder Niobe's children. In Achilles' version of the myth the children's bodies lie unburied for nine days before the gods intervene. Only once the children have been buried will Niobe

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[59] See Mossman (as in n.11 p.10), p.213.

[60] Loraux calculates the rules of female infanticide in Greek tragedy as: '1. A mother never kills a daughter, even when […] mother and daughter hate each other from the bottom of their hearts; but a mother whose husband has killed a daughter will in turn kill the guilty father', and '2. A murderous mother always kills the son(s)', *Mothers in Mourning* (as in n.2 p.10), p.52.

[61] As we shall see in chapter five, Renaissance educational manuals frequently link Niobe and Hecuba as examples to be used in rhetorical training exercises.

[62] Again, like Hecuba, the number of Niobe's sons and daughters varies and escalates after Homer. Jenny March collates this information in the *Dictionary of Classical Mythology*: Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides claim the number of Niobe's sons and daughters was one more than Homer, seven and seven, and Ovid and Apollodorus followed the tragedians. Sappho, however, counted nine and nine whilst Pindar and Hesiod opt for ten and ten, p.272.

allow herself to eat before resuming her lamentations. In all versions the grieving

Niobe is then turned to a stone which, standing forevermore on Mount Sipylus,

will continue to weep. Although the observance of burial rites provides

temporary respite, Niobe takes sustenance only to continue her lamentation; her

maternal grief can never be healed: 'she pines to this day, and the tears trickle

down the crag of her cheeks' (*Met*/Raeburn 6.312). Ovid will depict the queen's

metamorphosis in detail:

> In all her body was no life. For even her very tongue
> And palate of her mouth was hard, and each to other clung.
>
> ****
>
> And into stone her very womb and bowels also bind.
> But yet she wept   (6.388-89, 392-93)[63]

The destruction of Niobe's children renders her maternal body lifeless; her

obsolete womb turns to a stone tomb whilst her fossilized tongue, stuck to the

roof of her mouth, indicates the ineffability of her unending sorrow. Achilles'

tale to Priam thus implicitly foreshadows Hecuba's own childless fate beyond the

conclusion of the *Iliad*; Ovid, however, forges stronger parallels: looking upon

the butchered body of Polydorus, the Ovidian Hecuba 'was totally dumb in her

anguish. / […] / She stood there, frozen in grief, as rigid as granite'

(*Met*/Raeburn 13.538, 540). The 'astonied' silence, to use the terminology of

Ovid's Renaissance translator Arthur Golding, is a trope common to maternal

grief (13.647). Niobe, however, is the archetype who literalises the metaphor,

offering a permanent stone monument to an unassuagable grief beyond all

articulation.

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[63] *Metamorphoses*, trans. by Arthur Golding, ed. by Madeleine Forey (London: Penguin Books, 2002).

However, as Loraux observes this well-known Niobe myth is in fact a replay of an earlier attempt on the lives of Niobe's children.[64] In Homer's *Odyssey* Penelope refers to the older story of 'Pandareus' daughter' who mistakenly slew her only son Itylus (19.519-24). Pandareus' daughter Aedon (meaning Nightingale), is Niobe's sister-in-law and it is Niobe's first born son whom Aedon was attempting to kill when she mistakenly murders Itylus, (like Leto, Aedon is jealous of Niobe's numerous children). Overcome with guilt and grief Aedon implores the gods to transform her into a nightingale so that she can offer a perpetual song of lament.

This lesser known part of the Niobe myth obviously bears a number of similarities to, and is perhaps the origin of, the more famous story of Procne's revenge on Tereus.[65] On learning that her husband, Tereus, has raped and cut out the tongue of her sister Philomel, Procne murders their only son Itys and incorporates his butchered body into a meal served to the guilty father. After Tereus has been presented with Itys' severed head and realised what he has eaten, he and the sisters are transformed by the gods into birds: Tereus a hoopoe, Philomel the mute swallow, and Procne the nightingale who will lament day and night for the son she killed, calling Itys' name in the nightingale's song just as Aedon weeps for Itylus: '*Itu*, *Itu*'. As Loraux explains, the Romans (and subsequently the English) exchange the transformation of the sisters, muting the

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[64] Loraux, *Mothers in Mourning*, p.58.

[65] Interestingly, it also bears many similarities to later revisions of the Hecuba myth which identify the wife of Polymestor as Hecuba's eldest daughter Ilione: when Polydorus is sent to Thrace for protection he is the same age as Ilione's and Polymestor's baby boy and Ilione, suspicious of her husband, swaps the boys' identities so that ten years later when Polymestor is bribed by the Greeks to kill Polydorus he mistakenly murders his own son – Ilione and Polydorus then work together as Aunt/Mother and Nephew/Son to avenge the murder by blinding Polymestor.

mourning mother and allowing the tongueless Philomel to grieve perpetually for her rape rather than the boy's murder.

However, as Loraux asserts for the Greeks the nightingale's song was synonymous with an endless *maternal* mourning which, paradoxically, was also indelibly marked by its association with the mothers who murder children – either by mistake or, more typically, in calculated acts of vengeance against guilty husbands/fathers.[66] Thus, in Euripides' *Rhesus* (the only extant tragedy set during the Trojan War rather than its aftermath), the chorus of soldiers identify a sudden burst of birdsong as 'the nightingale, that slew her child, singing where she sits upon her bloodstained nest'.[67] Hecuba, too, blaming herself for bearing the child who destroyed all her children, sees herself as 'the mother bird at her plundered nest' (l.146 *Women*/Taylor p.10). Yet, whilst Aedon's and Procne's metamorphoses ensure that 'the mother's mourning has been transformed into melodious song',[68] Hecuba, stuck in human-form, suffers the reverse: 'My song has become a scream' (1.147 *Women*/Taylor p.10). Nothing in Hecuba's prior life provides her with a precedent to help articulate her grief: 'no music can I borrow / From the stately dance or the solemn psalming' (l.148 *Women*/Taylor p.10). Even in the strand of Hecuba's myth which sees her undergo her own metamorphoses she can only utter a canine howl.

For our English Hecubas the incomprehensibility of grief is compounded in the act of translation. As Shirley A. Barlow notes, the Hecuba tragedies are essentially 'prolonged lament' and the Greek language consists of 'a rich range

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[66] Loraux, *Mothers in Mourning*, pp.57-65.

[67] Euripides, *Rhesus*, trans. by Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1891), reproduced by *The Internet Classics Archive* by Web Atomics, ed. by Daniel C. Stevenson, 1994-2000, <http://classic.mit/edu//Euripides/rhesus.html> [26 Nov. 2010].

[68] Loraux, *Mothers in Mourning* (as in n.2 p.10), p.59. Thus, as Loraux notes, 'the Chorus of Euripides' *Heracles* can describe Procne's murder of Itys as a "sacrifice to the Muses" (l.1023)', p.59.

of words expressing the emotions of grief'. In fact Barlow lists seventeen grief-related words to which she then adds the six different Greek ecphoneses that 'express so adequately raw feelings' and provide variants of Hecuba's anguished howls: αἰαῖ, φευ, ἒ ἔ, οἴμοι, ἰώ, ὀτοτοτοτοῖ.[69] English, however, carries 'few feasible' equivalents as well as the inability to suggest the nuanced differences between such emotional exclamations. These difficulties have only intensified since the Victorian era as many English grief-related words now 'sound ludicrous', 'outdated and lacking in weight'. In her twentieth-century translation of *Trojan Women*, Barlow 'admit[s] defeat' and retains 'the Greek sounds transliterated. There are simply no modern substitutes'.[70] Thus, where Barlow retains an incomprehensible transliterated Greek wail – ὀτοτοτοτοῖ (l.1294) – Philip Vellacott's translation opts for a combination of lacunae, excising the "untranslatable" ecphonesis, and adding interpolated stage directions which see Hecuba '*sobbing violently*' (p.132), whilst Don Taylor's version simply reads: 'Howl! Howl! Howl!' (p.59).

For Peggy Phelan 'trauma' is 'untouchable' because 'it cannot be represented. The symbolic cannot carry it: trauma makes a tear in the symbolic network itself.'[71] Whilst the English translations illustrate the 'tear' Hecuba's grief can make 'in the symbolic network', the metamorphoses that Procne, Aedon and Niobe undergo appear to mitigate maternal mourning by sublimating it into symbolic art-forms: harmonious birdsong and a sculpture of sorrow. Thus, the Real is transformed into the Symbolic, allowing maternal grief to be contemplated as an artistic representation without fear of being contaminated by

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[69] 'Translator's Note', in *Trojan Women*, trans. by Shirley A. Barlow, pp.37-39 (p.37).
[70] *Ibid.*, pp.37-38.
[71] *Mourning Sex: Performing Public Memory* (London: Routledge, 1997), p.5.

the volatile passions of grief which are attendant upon the Real.[72] In contrast, the transformed Hecuba – a barking, snarling, biting 'bitch with glaring blood-shot eyes' (*Hec*/Vellacott l.1265), 'running at a stone, […] gnarring and worr[ying] it between her teeth', who runs off 'howling in the fields of Thrace' (*Met*/Golding/Forey 13.680-81, 85) – offers no such symbolic containment or solace. For the violent vengeful Hecuba of Euripides' *Hecuba* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, the dangerous volatility of her grief is only intensified by her transformation. (Significantly, the more passive Hecuba of *Trojan Women* and *Troas*, who does not kill or gouge out eyes, does not lose her human shape). The infanticide Hecuba remains a Fury, a wild and untameable affront to meaning. Yet even though the metamorphoses that Niobe, Procne and Aedon undergo enact a removal out of narrative and into symbolic art (rather than wild animal) this cannot render maternal grief more comprehensible. By being transformed into singing nightingales, weeping stone or the howling dog they each still perpetuate the narrative's failure to articulate maternal grief, amplifying and immortalising this inarticulacy as a wordless but endless song, scream, stony silence or howl.

In conclusion, the palimpsestic complexity that is "Hecuba" signifies an excessive, expanding fertility and a dangerous firebrand-breeding womb that link her to both the death brought by the wooden horse and primal fears of emasculation and oblivion surrounding the womb/tomb of Great Mother Earth. In exacting her revenge on Polymestor, Hecuba again provokes anxieties surrounding primordial female forces of divine retribution whilst her

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[72] The transformation of the Real into the Symbolic replicates the manner in which the names of these women and the tropes surrounding their metamorphoses (eternal weeping, stone silence, perpetual sorrowful song or howling) will be incorporated as symbolic exemplars to interpret the grief of others in "future" artworks (such as Achilles' tale in the *Iliad*).

metamorphosis into a dog confirms her transition into a Fury. Empowered by maternal grief and the community of female mourners around her, Hecuba has the strength to confound her enemy, defying patriarchal power structures (and expectations) to become a killer of sons, further compounding this act with (what a Freudian reading would interpret as) the symbolic castration denoted by Polymestor's gouged out eyes. Such violence and fury is fuelled by a madness produced by grief or, more specifically, the inability to perform appropriate mourning rituals which would restore Hecuba from the liminal 'life of the dead' to the society of the living. Hecuba is perpetually stuck in this transitional phase, doomed to be forever repeated, re-sited and recited by the stories which reconstruct her lost identity. Yet within these narratives, which both strip the queen to naught and render her a belated fictional nothing, Hecuba's words are extremely powerful – whilst her curses allow her to channel the Furies and enact divine retribution, her laments suspend the flow of history as it is written by the victors, offering instead a disruptive alternative female narrative that insists on recalling the dead.

It is with this palimpsestic Hecuba in mind that I return to Shakespeare; not only to the sorrowing son of *Hamlet* – a play littered with 'maimed rites' (5.1.208), 'hugger mugger' interments (4.5.84), 'obscure funeral[s]' (4.5.205), 'the poison of deep grief' (4.5.75), the political threat of an 'obstinate' 'unmanly grief' (1.2.93-94), and the presence of an unappeased ghost commanding both remembrance and revenge – but also to Lucrece, a sorrowing daughter who, searching 'for means to mourn some newer way' (1365), hopes '[t]o find a face', like her own, 'where all distress and dolour dwelled' (1444, 1446) and only stops looking when she finds a picture of 'despairing Hecuba' (1447).

Grief is universal; however, in the cultural expression of that grief through mourning 'we are', as Holst-Warhaft writes, 'at our most culture-bound'.[73] The palimpsestic Hecuba established in this chapter is derived from her six classical texts and associations surrounding ancient Greek and Roman mythology and culture. Even at the time of the texts' composition the wild passionate nature of Hecuba's mourning was coming close to literary anachronism, a show of grief which in real life would be subject to legislative control or public condemnation. To return to Shakespeare's Hecuba, this time read within Shakespeare's own historical context rather than my late twentieth-century classroom, is to consider Hecuba's relationship with post-Reformation England. However, in making the leap from the palimpsestic Hecuba of ancient Greece and Rome to the Shakespearean Hecubas of Protestant England, I need first to make a brief stop in fourth to fifth-century Byzantium.

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[73] *Cue for Passion* (as in n.12 p.15), p.11.

Chapter Three: Memory by Other Means

1. Matres Dolorosae

> Bewayle sayeth he [St. Paul]: but nat as the Grekes do, who denie
> the resurrection, whoo despayre of the lyfe to come. I am ashamed
> I promes you, and nat meanely I am troubled in my sprite, when I
> see in the mercatestede [*marketplace*] theise flockes of women
> without shame, pluckinge theyr heares; styfing their armes,
> scraching their chekis, yea and doyng al this afore the Grekes eies.
> […] Let vs be ashamed therfore, and vse more modestie, nor
> sclander we not so muche therby, bothe our selues, and those that
> loke vpo[n] vs.
>   John Chrysostom (*c*.347-407), translated by Thomas Chaloner (1544)

Constantinople, late fourth-century CE: a show of grief, clamorous women running wild like Hamlet's Hecuba, 'barefoot up and down' (2.2.443), wailing, threatening, cursing, blinded by tears, in public and attracting the 'eies' of an audience.[1] Archbishop Chrysostom's avian or feral 'flockes of women' (A8r) seem to follow a "Hecuban" precedent, replicating the mourning behaviour itemised in Seneca's *Troas* (1.64-127). Much to the 'despayre' of the Early Church Fathers, the people continue to adhere to the traditional 'Grekes custome, whiche we folowe in makyng dole' (B4r-v). '[C]ountinge' these customs 'to be a very madnes & amasing of y^e mind', Chrysostom implores his fellow Christians to avoid succumbing to the desperation of the 'Grekes' and 'Gentiles' (B5r), the 'Ethnike and vnfaythfull' (B2r), and instead to treat 'the pompe of burieng,

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[1] John Chrysostom was the Archbishop of Constantinople from 398 to 403. The initial quotation is taken from *An homilie of Saint John Chrysostome vpon that saying of Saint Paul,* […] *newely made out of Greke into latin by master Cheke, and englished by Thomas Chaloner* (London, 1544), A8r-v. All subsequent quotations are referenced in the text. The title of my chapter is a reference to Michael Neill's assertion that 'revenge drama shows vengeance to be no more than memory continued by other means', *Issues of Death*, p.247, an idea which has strong resonances with Euripides' earlier Hecuba and the murdered son who asks only to return to his mother's hands for appropriate burial but whom Hecuba instead "remembers" in her horrific act of violence.

psalmes singyng, [and] prayers' as an opportunity 'nat [to] lament, or be

repynyng' but to solemnly 'geue thankes to god the taker' (Bv).

In order to undermine the social value of longstanding cultural customs a

shift in signification was required; a potent *locus classicus* was needed to help

change the way society thought about death and hence expressed its grief. The

Christos Paschon, another Byzantine text dating from fourth or fifth-century CE,

provides an explicit literary example of just such a shift, enacting the conversion

of a wailing Greek Hecuba into a deferential Virgin Mary.[2] The author's

prologue asserts:

> If you once enjoyed hearing
> Poetic works and dramatic fables
> Lend your kind ears now to the serious
> And sacred subjects which I am about to recount to you
> In the manner of Euripides.[3]

In fact, the *Paschon* sees Mary delivering laments for Christ that are not merely

'in the manner of Euripides' but are often direct quotations from *Orestes*,

Hippolytus, *Rhesus*, *Medea*, *Bacchae*, *Trojan Women* and *Hecuba*.[4] As James A.

Parente Jr. argues, this wide range of Euripidean sources allows the *Paschon*'s

Mary to swing between inconsolable sorrow, suicidal despair and murderous

rage (a trope of grief which I am calling "Hecuban"), and patient, humble

acceptance of her son's sacrifice.[5] Mary is joined onstage by a chorus of

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[2] For details on the debate surrounding the *Paschon*'s disputed authorship, its date of composition and its sixteenth century legacy, see James A. Parente Jr., 'The Development of Religious Tragedy: The Humanist Reception of the *Christos Paschon* in the Renaissance', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 16:3 (1985), pp.351-68. I use the term tragedy loosely here as although the *Paschon* follows Euripides and focuses on mourning women and the death of a "hero", it of course ends with a restored Christian faith in resurrection and salvation.
[3] English translation qtd. in Parente, 'Development of Religious Tragedy', p.358.
[4] See Parente, 'Development of Religious Tragedy', n.5 p363. In fact, the Euripidean "borrowings" in the *Paschon* are so exact that it became 'instrumental in supplying Euripidean editors with several missing verses from the *Bacchae*', n.5, p.363.
[5] *Ibid.*, p.363-64.

disconsolate women, the corollary of Hecuba's two choruses but also

Chrysostom's 'flockes' and the hired female keeners he denoted a 'disease of

females'.[6] However, in the *Paschon* these women are taught the error of their

wild lamentations by a Theologian who 'interpret[s] the Passion for Mary, the

chorus, and above all the reader'. The *Paschon* thereby 'preserves [the reader]

from the endless despair of the chorus as it directs him to heed the […] promise

of resurrection and salvation'.[7] The didactic *Paschon* thus dramatises, instructs,

and itself enacts a shift from the grief of a ventriloquised Pagan Hecuba to that of

the Christian Mary, who overcomes human weakness with doctrinal knowledge.

Beyond such an explicit example, a wider cultural shift from the trope of

Hecuban grief to Marian sorrow was instituted by the Church. The Virgin Mary,

as the Mater Dolorosa, was grafted onto pre-existing cultural iconography,

producing an analogous Christian *locus classicus* for grief, in which the image of

a mother weeping over the body of her son is replayed but overwritten with the

solace offered by the Resurrection. With this palimpsest of maternal grief in

mind we can "return" to *Hamlet* and leap forward to Elizabethan England.

2. 'Mirror upon Mirror, Mirrored is all the Show' [8]

> Happie was *Hecuba* the wofullest wretche
> That euer lyued to make a Myrrour of
> Norton and Sackville, *Gorboduc*, 1562 (Cv) [9]

We left Shakespeare's mobled queen in chapter one being watched, in Hamlet's

'mind's eye' (1.2.184), as she and the Player eyed each other from either side of

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[6] Qtd. in Holst-Warhaft, *Cue for Passion*, p.34.

[7] 'Development of Religious Tragedy', p.364.

[8] My sub-heading is a line from W.B. Yeats' 'The Statues' which is recited in Michael Tippett's opera *King Priam* (1962). See Tippett, *Tippett on Music*, ed. by Meirion Bowen (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), pp.212-13.

[9] *The tragedie of Gorboduc, whereof three actes were wrytten by Thomas Nortone, and the two laste by Thomas Sackuyle* (London: William Griffith at the sign of the Faucon, 1565).

his rhetorical mirror. On one side the Player, '[t]ears in his eyes, distraction in his aspect' (2.2.490), is attributed with the potential to 'drown the stage in tears / And cleave the general ear with horrid speech' (2.2.497-98); he weeps for the weeping Hecuba who, on the other side, is 'threatening the flames / With bisson rheum' (2.2.443-44) and emitting a 'burst of clamour' that has the even greater potential to make 'milch the burning eyes of heaven' (2.2.453-55). Hecuba and the Player are thus credited with the same capability as the Ghost of Old Hamlet who 'could a tale unfold whose lightest word / Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood, / Make thy two eyes like stars start from their spheres' (1.5.15-17). Hamlet, audience to both the Ghost and the Player, is left feeling 'monstrous[ly]' inadequate (2.2.486); his own expressions of grief have so far had only a personal internal affect, swinging between public silence, 'break my heart, for I must hold my tongue' (1.2.159), and private soliloquies of self-loathing: 'I […], like a whore unpack my heart with words' (2.2.520).[10]

Imagining the Player in his position, reflecting not on Hecuba but on Old Hamlet, the Prince envisages a subsequent show of grief that would '[c]onfound the ignorant', '[m]ake mad the guilty and appal the free' (2.2.500, 499). The 'dozen […] or sixteen lines' to be inserted into the *Murder of Gonzago* (2.2.477) are to provide the Player with Hamlet's own motive and cues; accordingly, he hopes that the Player will deliver a dramatic replay of the Ghost's speech and thereby madden 'guilty creatures' into 'proclaim[ing] their malefactions' (2.2.526). The type of performative grief Hamlet aspires to, in order to 'catch the conscience of the King' (2.2.540), finds historical precedent in another recollection of Hecuba's sorrow recorded in Plutarch's *Lives*. As Thomas

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[10] It would, perhaps, be more accurate to say that Hamlet *thinks* that his grief has only so far affected himself – he has of course already concerned Gertrude, raised Claudius' suspicions and 'affrighted' Ophelia (2.1.72).

North's 1579 translation describes it, '[t]he gilty conscience' of the 'cruell and heathen tyran[t]', Alexander of Pherae, compelled him to leave his 'Theater, where the tragedy of *Troades* of *Euripides* was played', for fear his citizens would notice 'him weepe to see the miseries of *Hecuba* and *Andromacha*' (EEr).[11] Hamlet thus craves an emotional affectivity to rival that of the mobled queen who in Plutarch made the tyrant 'blench' (2.2.532) and in the Player's account prompts all witnesses, 'with tongue in venom steeped', to pronounce Claudius' crime: 'treason' (2.2.448-49).[12]

Remembering his Plutarch, the Wittenberg student knows that his play-trap must operate as a memorial mirror; Alexander of Pherae recognised his own past crimes in Hecuba's description of the Trojan massacre, and Claudius must see 'something like the murder of my father' (2.2.530).[13] Yet Hamlet's *Mousetrap* does not confine itself to the representation of a king poisoned in a garden, for the Prince aims to prick not only Claudius' conscience but also Gertrude's. Thus, the dumb-show presents something like 'the miseries of *Hecuba*' crossed with something like the grief of Hamlet's mother. Upon

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[11] Plutarch, *The lives of the noble Grecians and Romanes*, trans. by Thomas North (London: Thomas Vautroullier and John Wight, 1579). Philip Sidney also recounts the same story in *An Apologie for Poetrie* (London: Printed for Henry Olney, at the signe of the George, 1595), F4r. In actual fact, as Mossman explains, this 'story occurs in two slightly different versions at *Pelop*. 29. 10 and *Mor.* 334a. In the version of the story in the *Life of Pelopidas* he weeps […] 'for the woes of Hecuba and Andromache', and we are probably meant to assume that the play was *Troades*; but in *On the fortune or virtue of Alexander the Great* it is […] 'the sufferings of Hecuba and Polyxena', which would be more naturally understood as *Hecuba*, since Polyxena is only mentioned, but does not appear, in *Troades*. But the confusion, and the vagueness as to which play it was, is itself instructive: it did not exactly matter what the piece was or who the author was, and probably Plutarch did not know. But it needed to be something poignant and heart-rending and pitiful for the story to make sense, and the story of Hecuba is the ideal one to exemplify a tragic tale', *Wild Justice*, n.23 p.218.

[12] The cry of 'Treason, treason!' (5.2.306) will ring out in the play's final act when Hamlet thrusts another 'envenomed' 'instrument' into the King (5.2.302, 301).

[13] Before describing his reaction in the theatre, North's Plutarch recounts how Alexander massacred the populations of neighbouring cities, acts which would be echoed in Hecuba's lament for Troy: 'in the cities of MELIBAEA and of SCOTVSA, bothe of them beinge in league and frendshippe with [Alexander], he spying a time one day when the citizens were assembled in counsaill together, sodainely compassed them in with his gard and souldiers, and put them euery one to the sword, euen to the little children' (DD6v).

discovering her aged husband dead the Player Queen '*makes passionate action*'

(SD. 3.2.128.07), presumably miming an archetypal show of female grief:

loosening and pulling the hair, tearing at clothes and skin, embracing and kissing

the corpse, (silently) wailing and weeping, perhaps even running 'up and down'

to complete this Hecuban image. The Poisoner's wooing of the widow-Queen

overlaps with his own show of grief as he and '*three or four*' other Players enter

and '*seem to condole*' with the Queen over the dead King (SD. 3.2.128.08); once

the corpse has been removed by the extras the widow-Queen: '*seems harsh*

awhile but in the end accepts love' (SD. 3.2.128.10). Hamlet thus stages his

perception of the mother who seemed 'like Niobe, all tears' (1.2.149), but who

''[e]re yet the salt of most unrighteous tears / Had left the flushing of her galled

eyes […] married' (1.2.154-56). Gertrude did not perpetuate and transform her

grief into an eternal memorial for the lost king; she was only ever '*like* Niobe',

temporarily replicating 'the fruitful river in the eye' (1.2.80). In her failure to

sustain the mythic example, Gertrude's grief is cast under suspicion; her tears are

considered inadequate and 'unrighteous' (1.2.154) and, therefore, like the

Player's tears for Hecuba or the Player Queen's *seeming* harshness, merely

'actions that a man might play' (1.2.84).

Yet it is merely 'actions that a man might play' – in playing the miseries

of Hecuba – which 'drew abundance of tears' from the tyrant Alexander (in

Philip Sidney's summary of Plutarch's story in *An Apology for Poetry*).[14]

Similarly, the Player's tears, produced merely at the thought of Hecuba's sorrow,

are real tears and not the result of theatrical trickery.[15] Hecuba's tears are thus

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[14] *An Apology for Poetry* (*or The Defence of Poesy*), ed. by Geoffrey Shepherd, 3rd ed. revised by R. W. Maslen (Manchester: MUP, 2002), p.98 l.35.

[15] In contrast, for example, to the staged tears of the *Taming of the Shrew* which are produced by sniffing an onion wrapped in a handkerchief (Induction 1.120-24).

the epitome of affective grief: the heavens, the Player, the tyrant – 'the free', 'the innocent' and 'the guilty' – are all moved by mere mimesis. All of which implies that if Gertrude's grief for Old Hamlet had even *seemed* as Hecuba's for Priam, the *Mousetrap* would be redundant. The show of grief by the widow-queen should have already appalled, accused and maddened Claudius; but while Hecuba ran wild and barefoot, Gertrude, though 'all tears', bought new shoes and adhered to restrained Christian customs, ordering 'baked meats' for the wake and following dutifully behind the corpse (1.2.179,147). This description is of course based only on the sparse details Hamlet bitterly provides, details which, according to Andrew Hiscock, leave Gertrude 'the failed Hecuba in her son's eyes'.[16]

Indeed, whilst there has been a historic lack of consensus as to the tone, purpose and source of 'Aeneas' tale to Dido' in *Hamlet*,[17] Shakespearean commentary has been fairly unanimous in perceiving Hecuba, via what they assume to be Hamlet's point of view, as an inverse reflection of Gertrude:

> To the observer who is painfully learning the distinction between *seems* and *is*, the hideous pangs of the Trojan Queen are the mirrored distortions of Gertrude's regal insincerities.[18]

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[16] "'What's Hecuba to him…": Trojan Heroes and Rhetorical Selves in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*', in *Fantasies of Troy* (as in n.6 p.11), pp.161-75 (p.169). *Cf.* also Levin, who states that the notion that Hecuba operates as an 'implicit commentary on [Gertrude]' was first identified by Harley Granville-Barker, *The Question of Hamlet*, p.142.

[17] The Player's speech has been variously identified as a parody or satire, a piece of self-important bombast, or a moving display of rhetorical skill; for Dryden there is 'little sense couch'd under all those pompous words', 'Grounds of Criticism in Tragedy', Preface to *Troilus and Cressida, or Truth Found too Late: A Tragedy*, in *Dryden: The Dramatic Works* Vol.5, ed. by Montague Summers (New York: Gordian Press, 1968), pp.1-106 (p.26); for Coleridge, however, the Player's speech is simply 'superb' (qtd. in Arthur Johnston, p.21), and Arthur Johnston defends it as 'a description to bring tears at the sense of the magnitude of the change suffered by Hecuba', 'The Player's Speech in *Hamlet*' (as in n.122 p.102), p.26. As with most passages or plays of Shakespeare that have provoked such controversy, many have attempted to defend Shakespeare by attributing the authorship of the speech to 'Marlowe, Chapman, Kyd and even unlikelier authors' or explaining it as an interpolated 'fragment of [Shakespeare's] earlier journeywork'; as Levin summarises: 'On the whole it has aroused […] less admiration than curiosity and less curiosity than bewilderment', *The Question of Hamlet*, p.141.

[18] Levin, *The Question of Hamlet*, p.157.

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And the queen, of course, is Gertrude, but a Gertrude who stays true. 'Mobled' is Hecuba here, for Gertrude is hardly to be recognised in this frantic figure. Would she run mad for a dead Claudius? Did she run mad for her dead first husband? […]. Pyrrhus is both Hamlet and Claudius; Priam is both Claudius and the elder Hamlet; Hecuba in both equations is Gertrude.[19]

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Obviously Hamlet, casting himself as Aeneas in the old play, also casts his father as Priam, Claudius as Pyrrhus, and would like Gertrude to be Hecuba.[20]

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'Aeneas' tale to Dido', is an elaborate memorial oration which 'lives' in Hamlet's memory partly because it contains in Hecuba an idealized image of his bereaved mother.[21]

Looking into what Arthur Johnson calls the play's 'Trojan mirror', commentators routinely identify Hecuba as 'an exercise in wish-fulfilment' (Leech), a compound 'Gertrude-Hecuba' (Black) or 'Hecuba-Gertrude' (Neill) enacting the 'grief Gertrude *should* have felt' (Leech).[22] Clifford Leech's bizarre claim that Hecuba is mobled 'for Gertrude is hardly to be recognised' ironically betrays the projection involved in so 'obviously' and repeatedly recognising Hecuba as Gertrude. Although the commentators ostensibly compare Gertrude to Hecuba *from Hamlet's perspective*, such assertions typically seem uncritically to approve (in their 'obviously's and 'of course's) this choice of ideal. Hecuba's grief is left unquestioned as a genuine or sincere ideal that Gertrude could and should have aspired to emulate, while the numerous layers of metatheatrical fictitiousness that necessarily constitute, and superfluously surround, this exemplar typically go unremarked: a real player playing a fictitious Player who is recalling lines from a

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[19] Clifford Leech, 'The Hesitation of Pyrrhus', in *The Morality of Art*, ed. D.W. Jefferson (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), pp.41-49 (pp.47-48).

[20] James Black, 'Hamlet Hears Marlowe; Shakespeare reads Virgil', *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme*, 18:4 (1994), 17-28 (p.25).

[21] Neill (as in n.34 p.27), p.259-60.

[22] Arthur Johnston (as in n.122 p102.), p.29 and p.30; Clifford Leech (in n.19 above), p.48; Neill (as in n.34 p.27), p.227; Black (as in n.20 above), p.26.

non-existent play in his companies' repertoire which 'was never acted, or, if it was, not above once' (2.2.373).

As the play progresses the 'idealized image' of female grief is reflected out of the Trojan-mirror onto Ophelia, who echoes both the grief of Hecuba and the dumb-show Queen. Stage tradition typically sees the Ophelia of Act Four raging, like Hecuba, barefoot, in a state of undress across the stage, 'importunate' and 'distract' (4.5.2), a 'document in madness' (4.5.172) who 'needs be pitied' (4.5.3) and yet has the power to 'persuade revenge' (4.5.163). Like the ancient Hecubas, Ophelia's madness stems from the denial of adequate mourning rites for the deceased; Claudius equates her father's 'hugger mugger' interment with the 'poison of deep grief' that infects her mind (4.5.84, 75). As Goodland describes, '[Ophelia] "lards" the court with "flowers" that were missing from her father's grave';[23] and these flowers – 'rosemary […] for remembrance', 'pansies […] for thoughts', rue for repentance, daisies, fennel and columbines (4.5.169, 170, 173-76) handed out by the 'distract' Ophelia – also recall the image of the *Mousetrap*'s Player Queen making '*passionate action*' in the garden where her husband died '*upon a bank of flowers*' (SD. 3.2.128.3). The bank of flowers will again be present at Ophelia's death, described in incongruous detail by Gertrude's pastoral *nuntius* speech; and a spray of flowers will be brought onstage again for the Queen to strew on Ophelia's corpse as she is lowered into the grave (5.1.234). As Michael Neill asserts, Ophelia's flowers bestow 'a kind of symbolic substance to the annihilated past'.[24] In calling for 'remembrance' 'repentance' and 'thoughts' Ophelia enacts a defiant refusal to forget her father's death (and the murder of Hamlet's father which lies forgotten behind that); she

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[23] *Female Mourning* (as in n.12 p.15), p.196.
[24] *Issues of Death* (as in n.34 p.27), p.248.

continues to remember and 'cast away moan' (4.5.190) in spite of his 'obscure

funeral' and unmarked grave (with '[n]o trophy, sword, nor hatchment o'er his

bones' (4.5.205-07)). Gertrude will replicate the same gesture to ensure that

Ophelia's grave is at least marked by the flowers which call for remembrance,

again in defiance of the 'maimed rites' that advocate disregard (5.1.208). It is

these 'dangerous conjectures' – remembrance, repentance and thoughts – that it

is feared 'she may strew' about the court (4.5.14-15); and it is these that link

Ophelia's madness, with its symbolic show of grief, back to Hamlet's attempts to

remember publically his own father's murder in the symbolic *Mousetrap*.

The Player Queen's *passionate action* was a short-lived Hecuban

performance designed to reflect Gertrude's short-lived Niobean performance. In

contrast, Ophelia wholly inhabits the Hecuban role, leaving her permanently

'[d]ivided from herself' (4.5.85). Thus, while Hamlet longs for a show of grief to

match his rhetoric and 'drown the stage in tears' (2.2.497), Ophelia enacts the

clichéd metaphor and drowns in the midst of her sorrow. The ironic connection is

almost made by Laertes:

> **LAERTES**   Alas, then she is drowned.
> **GERTRUDE** Drown'd, drown'd.
> **LAERTES**   Too much water hast thou, poor Ophelia,
>   And therefore I forbid my tears. But yet
>   It is our trick – Nature her custom holds
>   Let shame say what it will. [*Weeps*] When these are gone
>   The woman will be out.
>   I have a speech o'fire that fain would blaze
>   But that this folly drowns it (4.7.181-89)

Laertes articulates the common, and historically reoccurring, cultural discourse

that identifies grief and tears not only as female but as anti-male. This effeminate

and feminising 'folly' quenches the 'speech o'fire' which channels male grief

into avenging action. Laertes considers his tears to be shameful, unmanly, belonging to Nature rather than rationality and masculinity, a passing fit that must be overcome. Ophelia's quintessentially female and irrational grief – marked by 'too much water' – is seemingly contagious; and yet the emasculating 'woman', whose 'will' will be done regardless of Laertes' own will, is located within: a woman kept in check by male order until 'Nature' lets her loose. The conception of grief writ-large across society is thus re-inscribed in miniature onto Laertes' body as he explicates his tears: the nature of grief is to act in defiance of male will, which rules over the body politic, and once loose it dissolves social strictures and gender ideologies. Thus to protect the body politic from the chaos and pollution of death (the ultimate "leveller"), the command is given to 'follow' the "loosed" Ophelia 'close' and '[g]ive her good watch' (4.5.74), just as the weeping Laertes must be followed ('Let's follow […] Therefore let's follow' (4.7.189-92)) lest the weeping 'woman' in him provoke 'his rage' (4.7.190).

In literalising the rhetorical structures of the play's assumed 'idealized image' of female grief,[25] in actually running like Ovid's 'Hecuba of Troy […] mad through sorrow' (*Titus Andronicus* 4.1.20-21) and drowning in 'deep grief' (4.5.75), Ophelia suffers not only death but also, since presumed a suicide, religious condemnation: 'Flints and pebbles should be thrown on her' (5.1.219-20). The Priest advocates the same punishment for Ophelia's corpse as that inflicted on Ovid's grief-shattered Hecuba; but instead begrudgingly allows 'virgin crants' and even 'bell and burial' in consecrated ground (5.1.221-23). However, after the Priest refuses to sing the requiem (5.1.226), Laertes too turns Hecuba at the inadequacy of Ophelia's funeral. Leaping into the grave to catch

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[25] *Ibid*, p.260.

Ophelia 'once more in mine arms' (5.1.239), the brother imagines another show

of grief (this time a burial mound) that would, like Hecuba's burst of clamour,

pierce the Olympian heavens (5.1.242-43). In response, Hamlet declares himself

to be:

> he whose grief
> Bears such emphasis, whose phrase of sorrow
> Conjures the wandering stars and makes them stand
> Like wonder-wounded hearers. (5.1.243-47)

Whether Hamlet leaps into the grave (as Q1 instructs) or whether Laertes leaps

out (Q2), the brother drops his sister's corpse to strangle his rival – 'take thy

fingers from my throat' (5.1.249) – and the two men grapple in competition over

who would 'weep', 'fight', 'fast', 'tear thyself' or 'rant' the most (5.1.264), with

Hamlet insisting that the Olympian burial mound symbolising Laertes' grief

would be but a 'wart' to his own mountainous erection (5.1.272).[26]

This possessive, jealous and competitive grief (which recalls Hamlet's

response to the Player's tears for Hecuba) is clearly gendered and entirely at odds

with the communal, female grief led by Hecuba in the ancient texts and perhaps

detectable in this play in the flowers that link the dumb-show Queen, Ophelia

and Gertrude with a wider community of women (4.7.169).[27] In the final scene,

action will speak instead of bombast as the men's rhetorical mountains are

swapped for rapiers; but here, beside Ophelia's corpse, Hamlet's and Laertes'

competing desire for emotional affectivity, for a show of grief and 'phrase of

sorrow' to disrupt the heavens, the Gods and the stars, to strike spectators and

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[26] For a detailed discussion of Ophelia's funeral see Carol Rutter, *Enter the Body: Women and Representation on Shakespeare's Stage* (London & New York: Routledge, 2001), pp.27-56.
[27] In 'Jephthah's Daughter: The Part Ophelia Plays' (1991), Nona Fienberg argues that in her pastoral lament for Ophelia, Gertrude 'reject[s] shepherd's names for long purples, and [...] insert[s] the maiden's name, "dead men's fingers". Gertrude here privileges women's work and women's words, insisting on the alternative text she presents on Ophelia's behalf', qtd. in Goodland, *Female Mourning* (as in n.12 p.15), p.197.

wound hearers, and destroy or dissolve themselves in the process, again returns us to the Player's Hecuba.

As indicated in chapter one, submerged traces of Hecuba can be detected subsequent to the Player's speech, haunting Hamlet's soliloquies, undermining the protestations that dismiss her as 'nothing' (2.2.492). Yet beyond Hamlet's remembrance, the trope of a performed affective grief clearly pervades the play. In fact, even Hamlet's dismissive 'nothing' works to link the theatrical Hecuba with both the Ghost and the grief-shattered Ophelia. The Ghost whose 'piteous action' (3.4.124) threatens to 'convert' Hamlet's 'stern effects [to] tears' (3.4.123-25), is 'nothing at all' to Gertrude – is invisible – and the word 'nothing' reverberates around the stage in four consecutive stichomythic lines as the Ghost exits (3.4.128-31). Proclaiming the Ghost a 'bodiless creation', 'the very coinage of your brain' (3.4.136, 135), again aligns it with the Player's 'dream of passion' (2.2.487) and also the 'false fire' of the *Mousetrap* (F.3.2.258). The Ghost King, the Player's Hecuba and the play-within-the-play all offer recurring memorials for murdered patriarchs; the Ghost's appearance in the opening scene is not his first visitation but a repeated return, the *Mousetrap* is the revised *Gonzago* play replaying the orchard murder, whilst Hamlet has already had the same Hecuba speech recited to him by the same Player (often a role doubled with the Ghost) who unexpectedly "returns" to Hamlet in Elsinore (2.2.284). A similarly significant 'nothing' surrounds Ophelia as she offers a fractured yet repetitious memorial to her own murdered father. Laertes calls her madness 'nothing[…] more than matter' (4.5.168) and yet declares '[h]adst thou thy wits and didst persuade revenge / It could not move thus' (4.5.163-64); he thereby echoes the prior report which informed Gertrude that Ophelia's 'speech

is nothing, / Yet the unshaped use of it doth move / The hearers to collection'
(4.5.7-9). Ophelia's fragmented speech prompts 'hearers' to 'botch the words up
to fit their own thoughts' (4.5.10); her grief is thus politically volatile, beyond all
regulation because its meaning lies entirely in potentially 'ill-breeding minds'
(4.5.15). For the vengeful Laertes she persuades revenge; for the guilty Gertrude
she gives 'prologue to some great amiss' (4.5.18). Paradoxically potent *nothings*,
the Trojan queen, the Ghostly king, the theatre and the grief-haunted Ophelia are
all endowed with the uncanny power to move, persuade, convert or dissolve their
audience in contagious and immobilising tears.

Rather than confining Hecuba to the reflective surface of the Player's
'conceit' (2.2.492), then, I propose a play – and a protagonist – that obsessively
return to and repeatedly reflect (upon) the idea of Hecuba and the empathetic
'burst of clamour that she made' (2.2.453). In offering Hamlet what at first
glance appears to be 'an idealized image of his bereaved mother', Hecuba
operates as a Mater Dolorosa for the Wittenberg student. But if Hecuba offers
Hamlet a cultural ideal, why is she so deeply embedded in such convoluted
fictionality? Why is she kept at such a remove from the play proper and 'mobled'
amongst the speech's rhetorical complexity? As Levin states, the play 'does not
present Hecuba's emotions directly. Her passion […] is neither presented nor
described'; the 'instant burst of clamour' goes unheard and it is at precisely this
point that the Player's speech is curtailed.[28] *Hamlet* clearly does not simply

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[28] *The Question of Hamlet*, p.158. For Katharine Goodland, the premature end to the Player's
speech is one example of a pervasive curtailment of female grief enacted by *Hamlet*: 'There are
five representations of mourning women in the play: Hamlet's description of his mother
following his father's corpse (1.2.138-51); the First Player's description of Hecuba's mourning
over Priam (2.2.496-509); the Player Queen' [sic] "passionate action" over her husband in the
dumb show that precedes *The Mousetrap* (3.2.120-30); Ophelia's mourning for Hamlet, the loss
of Hamlet's love, and the death of her father (3.1.151-62, 4.5.21-70, 4.5.157-200); and Gertrude's
pastoral elegy for Ophelia (4.7.141-58). Of equal significance is a moment of female mourning
that is not represented. Hamlet interrupts *The Mousetrap* just prior to the Player Queen's

celebrate or endorse Hecuba. Hamlet may crave Hecuba's emotional affectivity

but he does not once acknowledge the Trojan queen as an ideal; in fact he

ignores *her* show of grief to focus instead on her construction as a 'fiction'

within the Player's show of grief (2.2.487). Exposing Hecuba as an empty artistic

fabrication, Hamlet vehemently denounces his Trojan Mater Dolorosa as

'nothing' (2.2.492) because she, reminding him of his mother, is all seems and

no substance.

Yet, as I have shown, Hecuba also works as a *locus classicus* that the

play's (as well as Hamlet's) considerations of grief and mourning persistently

revolve around. For, even if commentators have uncritically espoused the notion

of Hecuba as an ideal Gertrude, the play implicitly works through the

ramifications of such an ideal by manifesting refractions of Hecuban grief in the

Player Queen, Gertrude, Laertes, Hamlet and, most intensely, Ophelia. These

refractions explore the various issues at stake in mourning, particularly female

mourning: performance and theatricality, (in)sincerity, (in)adequacy, contagion,

madness, being open to interpretation and hence subject to social, political and

religious suspicion and suppression. The result posits Hecuba not simply as an

inspirational exemplar but a far more complex and ambivalent, not to mention

rather uncanny, image of grief. Like the Ghost of Old Hamlet, Hecuba is a

revenant from a cultural and theatrical landscape that is (like all ghosts)

'radically out of time, as well as place'.[29]

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mourning over her dead husband. In each of these instances, the expression of female grief is
contained in some way: it is denounced, dismissed, interrupted, silenced, portrayed as mad, or
subsumed by another genre', *Female Mourning* (as in n.12 p.15), p.171.
[29] I am citing Catherine Belsey's description of ghosts in 'Shakespeare's Sad Tale for Winter:
Hamlet and the Tradition of Fireside Ghost Stories', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 16:1 (2010), 1-27
(p.5).

Hamlet's contemplation of Hecuba is not only refracted within the play but also offers a reflection of Shakespeare's *Lucrece* (1594), in which the grief-stricken Lucrece contemplates a painting or painted tapestry of the same Virgilian scene recalled by Hamlet's Player. Again we are presented with the artistic depiction of another 'despairing Hecuba […] / Staring on Priam's wounds with her old eyes, / Which bleeding under Pyrrhus' proud foot lies' (1447-49).[30] Unable to articulate her own sorrow any longer ('woe hath wearied woe, moan tired moan' (1363)), Lucrece 'calls to mind' the painting of Troy with the hope 'to mourn some newer way' (1366, 1365). She will, like Hamlet, rehearse her grief through empathetic displacement in a memory of Troy. For Arthur Johnson, Hamlet and Lucrece are both transfixed by their own reflections in (and on) these performed and painted 'Trojan-mirrors';[31] although Hamlet is perhaps more captivated by the workings of the mirror than by the image it reveals, Lucrece explicitly emphasises the trope by searching for a visual representation to match her own grief: 'To this well painted piece is Lucrece come, / To find a face where all distress is stelled' (1443-44). Johnson further links Lucrece's Trojan-mirror to the reference to Hecuba in *Gorboduc* (quoted above) as evidence of a pervasive Renaissance trope that considers Hecuba and the Trojan material (like the theatre) to be a self-reflective surface.[32] Indeed, *Gorboduc*'s lines also echo the assertion made in Jasper Heywood's translation of Seneca's

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[30] In 'Ways of Seeing *Hamlet*', Jerry Brotton speculates on the possibility that the arras in Gertrude's closet depicted the Fall of Troy; drawing on Brotton, Elizabeth S. Watson argues that 'the Trojan War cycle was a popular tapestry subject [and] such a tapestry would have added visually a more obvious classical context for the Player's Speech', 'Old King, New King, Eclipsed Sons and Abandoned Altars in *Hamlet*', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 35:2 (2004) 475-91 (p.486). It would also generate stronger resonances between *Hamlet* and the *Aeneid*, as well as *Hamlet* and *Lucrece*.

[31] *Cf.* also Enterline who writes that Hamlet and Lucrece 'both use Ovid's [Virgilian] suffering Trojan mother as a mirror […] in which to understand and to express what they claim to be their "own" emotions', *Rhetoric of the Body* (as in n.30 p.116), p.26.

[32] Arthur Johnson 'The Player's Speech in *Hamlet*', p.22-24.

Troas (1558), in the only *original* 'Chorus added [to] the tragedy by the translatour': 'and Hecuba that waileth now in care, / that was so late of high estate a Queene / a mirrour is, to teache you what you are' (569-71).[33]

Searching for herself, then, in the painted Trojan-mirror, Lucrece replays the moment in the *Aeneid*, which acts as a prelude to Aeneas' tale to Dido, when Aeneas is confronted with a pictorial depiction of Troy's destruction adorning the walls of Dido's temple. As Robert Miola observes, Aeneas 'occupies a fixed position' within the 'Trojan tableaux' from which to remember and weep.[34] After searching her painting for her own point of identification, Lucrece too will 'sad tales […] tell' (1495) about the painted scenes. The major difference, then, is the point of entry into the painting which determines the perspective from which these tales of Troy are told. Lucrece, as Marion A. Wells argues, does not merely make Hecuba 'a focal point in the painting' but also 'focalizes her description of the other figures *through* Hecuba':[35]

> 'Poor instrument,' quoth she, 'without a sound,'
> I'll tune thy woes with my lamenting tongue,
> And drop sweet balm in Priam's painted wound,
> And rail on Pyrrhus that hath done him wrong,
> And with my tears quench Troy that burns so long,
> And with my knife scratch out the angry eyes
> Of all the Greeks that are thine enemies.
>
> 'Show me the strumpet that began this stir… (1464-71)

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[33] All quotations from Heywood's translation of Seneca's *Troas* in this thesis are taken from the 1963 Kraus reprint of *Jasper Heywood and his Translations of Seneca's <u>Troas</u>, <u>Thyestes</u> and <u>Heracles Furens</u>, edited from Octavos of 1559, 1560 and 1561*, ed. by H. De Vocht (Louvian: A. Uystpruyst, 1913), reprint (Vaduz: Kraus, 1963), pp.1-86.

[34] *Shakespeare's Rome* (1983), qtd. in Marion A. Wells, '"To Find a Face Where All Distress Is Stell'd": "Enargeia", "Ekphrasis", and Mourning in *The Rape of Lucrece* and the *Aeneid*', *Comparative Literature*, 54:2 (2002), 97-126 (p.155).

[35] Marion A. Wells (as in the note above), p.117 and p.115.

Adopting that which she construes as Hecuba's perspective and Hecuba's voice, Lucrece 'shapes her sorrow to the beldame's woes' (1458). Hecuba thus acts as an icon of condolence and communion, with which Lucrece can blend and articulate her own pain. This communal grief, between Hecuba, Lucrece and any 'who she finds forlorn' (1500) gives an illusory promise that tears can be efficacious – that they can 'quench' fire or act as 'balm'. Yet, instead, communing with Hecuba 'assails' Lucrece with 'passion' until she becomes 'all enraged' (1562), provoked into enacting Hecuba's Ovidian and Euripidean revenge, to 'scratch out' the 'eyes' of her 'enemies' and 'tear the senseless Sinon with her nails' (1564). Yet this too is merely the illusion of revenge: 'Fool, fool,' quoth she, 'his wounds will not be sore' (1568).

On the one hand, communing with the painted Hecuba allows Lucrece to feel like part of a community of mourners and, so the narrator informs us, temporarily lose 'her woes in shows of discontent' (1580); yet on the other hand, however, as Katharine Eisaman Maus explains, communing with Hecuba is 'the deliberate exacerbation of pain' in order to find 'new ways to describe and understand and thus experience her despair'.[36] The painted Hecuba is to Lucrece as the thorn is to the raped Nightingale Philomel who must constantly feel her pain in order to continue the perpetual lament which refuses to forget the original crime.[37] Lucrece cannot spontaneously sustain the Niobean example of endless tears, like Philomel she too has to 'set a-work' to nurture her grief (1496). Communing with Hecuba is thus a method Lucrece employs to keep the pain of her own experience immediate, primarily so that her resolve to commit suicide does not turn 'stale' as it becomes 'stale to sigh, to weep, and groan' (1362).

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[36] 'Taking Tropes Seriously: Language and Violence in Shakespeare's *Rape of Lucrece*', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 37:1 (1986), 66-82 (p.73).
[37] *Ibid*, p.73.

    Lucrece is thus riddled with the cultural ambivalence and anxiety surrounding shows of grief: depicted as contagious, dangerous and capable of provoking extreme acts of violence, a fit of madness, perpetual yet soon 'stale', painful hard work yet inefficacious folly. Again, as in *Hamlet*, these anxieties and ambivalences begin by being centred on, or contained within, an artistic representation of a 'mobled' Trojan queen: 'Of what she was no semblance did remain, / Her blue blood changed to black in every vein, / […] / Showed life imprisoned in a body dead' (1453-56). Yet, as in *Hamlet*, Hecuba is refracted out into the "real world" of the poem; first Lucrece 'doth borrow' Hecuba's 'looks' (1498) as 'black blood' 'that false Tarquin-stained' pours from her corpse (1745, 1743) until 'no semblance' remains and Lucrece herself becomes a cultural mirror – a *miroir de mort* – prompting her father to adopt Hecuba's voice now and lament for the premature death of a child:

> Poor broken glass, I often did behold
> In thy sweet semblance of my old age new born;
> But now that fair fresh mirror, dim and old,
> Shows me a bare-boned death by time outworn.
> O, from thy cheeks my image thou hast torn,
> And shivered all the beauty of my glass,
> That I no more can see what once I was. (1758-64)

Lucrece's husband has, until this point, stood "astonied", staring on her wound, 'a dumb arrest upon his tongue' (1780); he now falls on Lucrece's 'bleeding stream' and 'bathes […] his face' in her blood (1774-75), but his voice remains an incoherent 'throng' of '[w]eak words […] / That no man could distinguish' (1783-85). What ensues is a jealous, possessive fight over the corpse (foreshadowing Ophelia's burial in *Hamlet*) as Collatine and Lucretius compete over '[w]ho should weep most, for daughter or for wife' (1792), and, in a

Hecuban fit of grief, they 'fill[…] the air' with vying 'clamours' and 'cries' (1804-05). Only Brutus resists the contagious grief and rebukes Collatine and Lucretius with 'manly shame' (1777): 'childish humour from weak minds proceeds' (1825); 'do not steep thy heart / In such relenting dew of lamentations' (1828-29). The proposed opposite of such unmanly grief is, of course, 'revenge' (1841); yet not the frenzied, personal revenge of a maddened Hecuba but rather a public, collective justice enacted by the people of Rome. *Lucrece* is a long lyric poem, the majority of which is a 'paus[e]' (1365) in which Lucrece awaits her husband's return. Despite studying the epic Virgilian material and equating her violated body with ransacked Troy (1547), Lucrece, but also Lucretius and Collatine, are caught in the suspended time of mourning; Brutus, however, is endowed with an epic perspective. It is Brutus who will sublimate female grief into the teleological thrust of the epic, utilising and assimilating the symbolism of Lucrece's 'bleeding body' (1851) as 'Rome herself […] disgraced' (1833) in order to secure the birth of the Roman Republic.

Lucrece's 'pausing' (1365) at the painting of Troy echoes the suspension of Virgil's epic which takes place as Aeneas' destiny to found Rome becomes temporarily deferred until the tragedy of Dido has played out. As Wells states, from the moment Aeneas discovers the friezes depicting Troy's downfall, he is 'drawn into an emotional outpouring which, rather than prefiguring his "epic" drive to found Rome, prefigures instead his passionate (and immobilizing) involvement with Dido'.[38] Virgil thus aligns the memorial of Troy with Dido as dangerously seductive, self-annihilating, distractions. The *Aeneid* sublimates Hecuba's personal laments from Euripides' two tragedies into Aeneas' tale to

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[38] Wells (as in n.34 p.156), p.119.

Dido. The female mourning voice is thereby internalised and muted; it is 'the woman' that a male hero must, like Laertes, exorcise or suppress. Aeneas must sacrifice personal passion for heroic destiny. He must repeat the action of sailing away from a shoreline ringing with female lamentation. Tragedy and the tragic mourning voice (his own, Hecuba's and Dido's) must be sublimated into the teleological epic narrative.

Hence, as Lucrece belatedly arrives at the painting of Troy, based upon Book 2 of the *Aeneid*, she finds a Hecuba with 'so much grief, and not a tongue' (1463). In playing Hecuba, as Aeneas did, Lucrece resurrects the lamenting woman who speaks of private pain and personal experience over male heroism, 'the unregistered cost of the loss and suffering that necessarily accompanies the epic plot'.[39] Whereas in Virgil the immobilising indulgence of private grief is transferred onto the figure of Dido, who sacrifices herself to her own grief, in *Lucrece* the body of the raped woman has already been inscribed, like Hecuba's, as 'a record of national trauma'.[40] In contrast to the painted Hecuba, however, Lucrece as a lifeless symbol is made to speak by Brutus of a restrained measured grief, a manly sorrow that institutes revenge as justice.

Whilst *Lucrece* offers the most extensive Shakespearean treatment of this Virgilian 'Trojan-mirror', it is replayed again, and again with Hecuba at its centre, a year after *Lucrece* in 'W.S.'s' Seneca-inspired tragedy *Locrine* (1595). Whether considered written wholly, in part, or not at all by Shakespeare, the play certainly employs the same Trojan scene as a mirror for its characters to find expression for the depth of their grief, before again being rebuked that this is an inefficacious folly:

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[39] *Ibid*, p.114.
[40] Anthony Dawson, 'The Arithmetic of Memory: Shakespeare's Theatre and the National Past', *Shakespeare Survey*, 52 (1999), 54-67 (p.65).

LOCRINE	Not aged *Priam* King of stately *Troy*,
	Graund Emperour of barbarous *Asia*,
	When he beheld his noble minded sonnes
	Slaine traitorously by all the *Mermidons*,
	Lamented more than I for *Albanact*.
GUENDOLINE	Not *Hecuba* the queene of *Ilium*
	When she beheld the towne of *Pergamus*,
	Her pallace burnt, with all deuouring flames,
	Her fiftie sonnes and daughters fresh of hue,
	Murthred by wicked *Pirrhus* bloodie sword,
	Shed such sad teares as I for *Albanact*. (3.2.43-53)

Perhaps because this mourning is for a man, and performed by his brothers and sister-in-law, these laments eschew competition for a communal choric style (which resonates with the communal mourning between Hecuba and her chorus in the opening scenes of Seneca's *Troas*). However, Locrine's uncle Corineius interrupts to insist (like *Hamlet*'s Claudius to Laertes) that: 'He loues not most that doth lament the most, / But he that seekes to venge the iniurie. / Thinke you to quell the enemies warlike traine, / With childish sobs and womanish laments?' (3.2.60-63). 'Reuenge' is considered the only 'comfort' (65); to dwell on Hecuban sorrow is again an unmanly pause which, at best, might whet the appetite for revenge but runs the considerable risk of weakening the will. These Troy-based laments are contextually in character as Locrine, Albanact and Camber (unlike the Danish Hamlet and Roman Lucrece) are children of Brutus, the great-grandson of Aeneas, and are thus descended from Priam and Hecuba. Yet the idea that this is the recollection of family history rather than the remembrance of classical exemplars is entirely undermined by Camber's lament which, following Guendoline's evocation of Hecuba, compares his brotherly grief to that of the sorrowing Niobe.

To return to undisputed works, yet more traces of the Trojan queen can be found echoing across the Shakespeare canon, from the earliest tragedy to the late romances, assisting a variety of characters in the interpretation and expression of their grief. Thus, in *Titus Andronicus* (1592) the Goth Demetrius urges his mother to remember, in the midst of her maternal grief, not the Virgilian queen but the example of 'the Queen of Troy' who took 'sharp revenge' for the murder of her son Polydorus (1.1.136-37).[41] As is characteristic of *Titus Andronicus*, the rhetorical exemplar is literalised by the play; so whilst Ovid's Hecuba is said to become 'the complete likeness of Revenge' (13.546), Tamora will literally disguise herself: 'in this strange and sad habiliment I will encounter with Andronicus / And say I am Revenge, sent from below' (5.2.1-3).[42] In the late romance *Cymbeline* (c.1609), the early Briton Imogen awakes to find a decapitated corpse beside her which she mistakes for her husband; the detail of decapitation links back to Priam's corpse in the *Aeneid* (2.557-8) and as Imogen laments over the body she imagines Hecuba's own lamentations and, like Lucrece, blends their voices together against her "husband's" killers: 'All curses madded Hecuba gave the Greeks, / And mine to boot, be darted on thee'

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[41] Traditionally Demetrius' reference to Hecuba is considered to refer to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, a proposition supported by the subsequent statement: 'When Goths were Goths and Tamora was queen' (1.1.140) which echoes Ovid's remark that the vengeful Hecuba forgot her slavery 'as though shee still had beene a Queene' (*Met*/Golding 13.654). However, J.A.K. Thomson and Emrys Jones focus on Shakespeare's reference to 'his tent' (1.1.137) to argue that Shakespeare had Euripides' *Hecuba* in mind. As Jones surmises: 'Thomson comments on these lines: "[…] one would have little hesitation in saying that the source of the English poet here is Ovid, were it not for the addition of the words "in his tent". Ovid says nothing about a tent, but it is in his tent that Polymestor is blinded in Euripides." In fact Polymestor is blinded in Hecuba's tent, not his own. The phrase 'in his tent' may be either a slip on Shakespeare's part or – much more probably- a calculated distortion of the story: he changed the tent from Hecuba's to Polymestor's in order to invent a new parallel between Hecuba and Tamora', *The Origins of Shakespeare* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), p.104. Looking beyond the tent, it is perhaps also worth noting that Ovid's Hecuba only takes revenge on Polymestor himself, whilst Euripides' Hecuba destroys Polymestor's children first; the Euripidean scenario obviously has more in common with the plot of *Titus*. All quotations from *Titus Andronicus* in this thesis are taken from in *The Norton Shakespeare* (London & New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1997), pp.371-434.
[42] Translation of this line of *Metamorphoses* is by Brower in *Hero & Saint*, p.130.

(4.2.313-14).[43] At the end of her furious lament, Imogen smears the corpse's

blood over her face and faints. For the Roman matriarch Volumnia in *Coriolanus*

(1608), Hecuba's maternal shows of grief are a negative example. In the *Iliad*'s

famous supplication scene Hecuba bears her breasts to her son, 'and bad him

rev'rence them, / And pity her' (Chapman 22.69-70), and to think of the

unbearable travesty of her maternal role if he should die and 'Grecian dogs [be]

nourish'd with what I nurs'd' (Chapman 22.75). In direct opposition, Volumnia

attempts to teach her daughter-in-law to revel in the prospect of Coriolanus'

noble death on the battlefield, to believe that 'the breasts of Hecuba, / When she

did suckle Hector, look'd not lovelier / Than Hector's forehead when it spit forth

blood / At Grecian sword contemning' (1.3.37-39).[44]

Thus, whilst Hecuba's grief operates within discrete micro-texts in

Hamlet and *Lucrece* her 'Trojan episode is in fact', as Silvia Bigliazzi states,

'recurrent in Shakespeare's macrotext'.[45] Lynn Enterline even goes so far as to

declare Hecuba 'Shakespeare's favourite classical exempla'.[46] In each case

Hecuba is invoked as an interpretative response to grief, to facilitate the

expression of that grief and aid comprehension by reflecting the

incomprehensible fact of death onto a pre-existing paradigm (or in Lucrece's

case the fact of rape, which she experiences as a death of self). In each example

Hecuba thus operates, as in *Hamlet*, as 'a figure for trauma, a memorial', a *locus*

classicus for sorrow, yet one which is frequently ambivalent and often rejected in

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[43] *Cymbeline*, in *The Norton Shakespeare* (1997), pp.2955-3046.

[44] Although I quote here from Chapman's translation of the *Iliad*, his complete edition with Book 22 was not printed until 1610, suggesting that Shakespeare knew his Homer from sources other than Chapman's translation.

[45] 'Transubstantiating the Performance: Towards a Mimetic Narrative in *Hamlet*'s Hecuba Scene', in *The Poetics of Transubstantiation: From Theology to Metaphor*, ed. by Douglas Burnham and Enrico Giaccherini (Aldershot & Burlington: Ashgate Publishing, 2005), pp.44-54 (p.48).

[46] *Rhetoric of the Body*, p.25.

favour of "manly" action.[47] For Lizette I. Westney in her survey of 'Hecuba in 16th century English-Literature', the Hecubas of *Hamlet*, *Lucrece* and *Locrine* (and, I would add, *Titus*, *Cymbeline* and *Coriolanus*) offer a "Shakespearean" microcosm of Hecuba's most prevalent role in sixteenth-century literature: that of a Mater Dolorosa.[48] Which prompts the question: what happened to *the* Mater Dolorosa?

3. Our Lady of Sorrows

> [In West Cheape] the Image of our Lady was again defaced, by plucking off her crowne, and almost her head, taking from her her naked child, & stabbing her in the breast.
>
> John Stow, *Survey of London*, 24 December 1600 [49]

> Many women may be seen running hither and thither, through field and village with wolfish and shrieking cries. I cannot easily describe the great wail with which they fill the church where the funeral rites take place. They shout dolefully through swollen cheeks, they cast off their necklaces, they bare their heads, they beat their brows, […] they shake the coffin, tear open the shroud, embrace and kiss the corpse and scarcely allow the burial to take place.
>
> Richard Stanihurst, *Holinshed's Irish Chronicle*, 1588

London, late sixteenth-century CE: another show of female grief is brought into print as Richard Stanihurst describes a contemporary Irish funeral complete with another flock of disorderly women, running wild and filling the air with clamorous shrieks.[50] From the official viewpoint of Reformation England, Stanihurst is describing the barbarous and blasphemous customs of a society

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[47] Dawson, 'Arithmetic of Memory', p.65.
[48] *College Language Association*, 27:4 (1984), 436-39 (p.436); *Cf.* also Goodland *Femlae Mourning* (as in n.12 p.15), p.162 and Mossman, *Wild Justice* (as in n.11 p.108), p.217.
[49] Qtd. in Goodland, *Female Mourning*, p.156.
[50] *Holinshed's Irish Chronicle: The Historie of Irelande from the First Inhabitation Thereof unto the Yeare 1509 Collected by Raphaelle Holinshed & Continued till the Yeare 1547 by Richarde Stanyhurst* (1588), qtd. in Holst-Warhaft, *Cue for Passion* (as in n.12 p.15), p.36.

corrupted by Catholicism. For, as Patricia Phillippy has shown, the sixteenth-century 'writers of the Reformation' routinely aligned that which Chrysostom and the Early Church Fathers had condemned as 'the excesses of ancient ritual lamentation, […] with those of Catholic superstition'.[51] Thus, in 1596, Edmund Spenser's *View of the Present State of Ireland* asserts that 'theyr lamentations at theyr burials', their 'dispayrefull out-cryes, and immoderated waylings', 'savoure greatly of […] barbarisme [for] it is in the manner of all Pagans and Infidels to be intemperate in theyr waylinges of the dead'.[52] The culturally recurring insistence that deployed Hecuban shows of grief as markers of feminine and foreign excess, of Pagan barbarism and Papist blasphemy, is of course part of the discursive apparatus by which sixteenth-century England disavowed and disinherited its own recent Catholic past.

In post-Reformation England the past really was another country (frequently Ireland); and yet, as the *repeated* insistence betrays, alongside *repeated* legislation, injunctions, and a profusion of doctrinal pamphlets, sermons and treatises, the cultural mourning rituals of a nation were not easy to overhaul.[53] A Reformer's despair after witnessing funerals in Lancashire 'about the year 1590' essentially recites the descriptions of Ireland (and foreshadows the funeral of Ophelia), complaining that by 'kissing the dead corpse' and 'wailing the dead with more than heathenish outcries [and] open invocations', the 'tumultuous assembly' of relatives at the graveside frequently compel 'the

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[51] *Painting Women* (as in n.8 p.107), p.15.
[52] Spenser, qtd. in Goodland, *Female Mourning* (as in n.12 p.15), p.159.
[53] See Scott Wayland, 'Religious Change and the Renaissance Elegy', *English Literary Renaissance*, 39:3 (2009), 429-59 (p.433).

minister [...] to withdraw himself'.[54] In clinging to the community's traditional expressions of grief, and refusing to comply – even after forty years – with the 1549 Order for Burial and the revised 1552 funeral service, the Lancastrian laity are accused of perpetuating the 'enormities and abuses' of 'manifold popish superstitions'.[55]

The twelve-hundred year old sermon which opened this chapter exhorts bereaved Christians to '[t]hinke, if thou doest [mourn and lament], whose example thou folowist, […] whom doest thou countrefaite?' (B3v). Whilst Chrysostom attributes the example of unruly female mourning to 'the Grekes', Thomas Chaloner's 1544 'Englished' revision is clearly intended to engage in the current ideological battle surrounding England's post-Reformation mourning practices.[56] Chaloner employs Chrysostom as a theological precedent to give substance to the Reformers' repeated insistence that the schism was a return to a purer form of Christianity, pre-dating the corruptions of the Catholic Church. Thus Chrysostom's fourth-century command: 'refraine customynge with them,

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[54] *A Description of the State, Civil and Ecclesiastical, of the County of Lancaster, about the year 1590* ed. F.R Raines (Manchester: Chetham Society, 1875), qtd. in Goodland (as in n.12 p.15), p.135.

[55] Qtd. in Goodland, p.135. Between them, the Order for Burial and revised funeral service aimed to: suppress the traditions of 'tumultuous' female lament and keening; replace customary 'petitions for the deceased with a "thanksgiving" for his or her "delivery"'; 'remove[…] the order for communion'; eradicate the "monthminds" (that is 'the repetitive aspect of Catholic obsequies' which had demanded further memorial services to be held at regular intervals after the first), and minimise physical contact between mourner and deceased, even ordering that the corpse remain outside the Church during the funeral service; Wayland, p.443, p.442. For the removal of the corpse from 1552 see Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, c.1400-1580* (New Haven & London: Yale UP, 1992), p.475. Much of this legislation reflects, and was designed to consolidate, the Reformation's denial of purgatory: at Catholic funerals, weeping, petitions and prayers of intercession were designed to assist souls in purgatory whilst the monthminds allowed opportunity for surviving relatives to offer up additional requiescat and chantry prayers to the same eschatological purpose.

[56] Chaloner's translation is not unique, Chrysostom's writings were printed in both Latin and English translations throughout the sixteenth-century, typically in support of either Protestant or Humanist reforms.

and rather make retourne to our owne noblesse' (B3r-v), became a resonant

sixteenth-century rallying cry.[57]

However, in the eleven centuries since Chrysostom and the *Christos*

Paschon, the image of the Virgin Mary grieving over Christ had been

successfully ensconced as 'the most prevalent and resonant cultural symbol of

mourning'; and, as a result of this legacy, identified as the Catholic Church's

queen of heaven, a role which designated her the 'mediator for […] suffering

souls' in Purgatory.[58] Thus, England's split from Catholicism and the denial of

Purgatory placed the Mater Dolorosa at the epicentre of an epistemological battle

over death – and hence what constituted appropriate mourning. The tears shed by

the Mater Dolorosa, 'viewed by Catholics as abundant and pious', were, as

Goodland affirms, 'recast by Reformers as incitements to idolatry'.[59] Yet, no

church in Catholic England had been complete without a *pieta* – a painted or

sculpted image of Mary grieving over her son's body. This static image had been

brought to life with the performance of every mystery cycle, in a sung

lamentation by Mary at Christ's Crucifixion and scenes of communal mourning

by the three Marys as Christ carries the cross, as he dies, and again as they go to

anoint his corpse. The *Stabat Mater Dolorosa*, a thirteenth century devotional

hymn recited twice annually during Lent and at the Memorial of Our Lady of

Sorrows (a Catholic feast held on the 15 September to honour Mary's spiritual

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[57] Somewhat ironically, this 'retourne' was facilitated and fuelled by the accessibility of previously lost or unreadable texts of ancient Greece and Rome which the Catholic Church was blamed for having neglected, making them incapable of correctly interpreting scripture. The 'retourne' was thus enabled, that is, by 'customynge' with the 'Grekes'; indeed, the scholastics fought back with claims that the humanists' emphasis on 'classical literature and rhetoric' – that is ungodly Pagan texts and the art of verbal manipulation and dissembling – would 'lead to rampant immorality', Parente, '*Religious Drama and the Humanist Tradition: Christian Theatre in Germany and in the Netherlands 1500-1680*' (Leiden, New York, Kobenhavn & Koln: E.J. Brill, 1987), p.16.

[58] Goodland, *Female Mourning*, p.2 and p.4. The argument articulated here is indebted to Goodland's highly detailed and fascinating introduction, pp.1-30.

[59] *Ibid*, p.4.

martyrdom), exhorts the congregation to view Mary's tears as exemplars of

devotion:

> Let me mingle tears with thee,
> mourning Him who mourned for me,
> all the days that I may live:
>
> By the Cross with thee to stay,
> there with thee to weep and pray,
> is all I ask of thee to give.[60]

For the bereaved, this culturally ubiquitous Mater Dolorosa offered a potent

locus classicus for grief, an iconic image onto which they could project and find

reflected back their own grief; their tears were reflected in Mary's tears and

together these tears allowed survivors to ease not only the passion of grief but

also the suffering of the deceased in Purgatory.[61] As Goodland states, the Mater

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[60] 'Stabat Mater Dolorosa', trans. by Edward Caswall, *Lyra Catholica* (London: J. Burns, 1849), pp.138-41 (pp.140-41). I am grateful to Peter Mack for drawing my attention to this devotional hymn during my viva.

[61] As Goodland summarises, '[i]n late medieval England, tears and prayers offered for the dead were efficacious: they assisted the soul in the afterlife while giving the living a sense of agency and a continuing connection with their loved ones', p.4. The Protestant disavowal of Purgatory, however, severed this continuing connection between the living and dead, wept petitions and prayers of intercession became eschatologically redundant, a vain self-indulgence perpetuating the Catholic lie. Thus, Michael Neill argues that the denial of purgatory and the 'abolition of the whole vast industry of intercession […] suddenly placed the dead beyond the reach of their survivors', 'exacerbating the anxieties attendant upon death and dying' by rendering death 'a more absolute annihilation than ever': '[t]he undiscovered country from whose bourn / No traveller returns' (*Hamlet* 3.1.78-79); Neill, *Issues of Death*, p.38, (*Cf.* also pp.244-46). I quote Hamlet here not just for illustrative purposes but also because the 'absolute annihilation' Neill talks of impacted upon the perception of ghosts in a manner which perhaps explains Hamlet's discounting or overlooking of his Father as a returning traveller in these lines. For, with the souls of the departed no longer able to return from the transitional purgatorial space, ghosts become attributable only to demonic forces with the 'power / T'assume a pleasing shape' (*Hamlet* 2.2.534-35). For a detailed discussion of this see Catherine Belsey, pp.8-9; in a neat twist, Belsey also implies that the doctrine of purgatory itself arose, in part, as a way of accommodating and assimilating 'the long tradition of popular ghost lore' that the Church had been unable to suppress: 'in the twelfth century, the Church officially took over what had previously been condemned […] purgatory as a preliminary location for the dead was evidently capable of serving the interests of the institution. Newly official ghosts, back from this intermediary space, now demanded additional masses, to be paid for by the bereaved, that would release them from their present sufferings in cleansing fires', 'Shakespeare's Sad Tale for Winter' (as in n.29 p.154), pp.8-9.

Dolorosa 'bestowed emotional legitimacy' on public shows of grief and 'orchestrated […] society's comprehension of bereavement'.[62]

Inherited from a Mediterranean Christian society that had emerged from, and grafted itself onto, a Romanized Greek culture, England's Lady of Sorrows continued to replay and recite (without recognition) the prior cultural remembrance of Hecuba, Niobe, Procne, Agave *et al.* mourning the loss of their sons. Painted and sculpted *pietas* froze the Mater Dolorosa to create a pitiful tableau, the stillness of which bestowed a sense of silent serenity which would come to dominate the conception of pious female grief. However, the enactment of Mary's grief in the medieval Passion plays retained traces of the Hecuban rage that lay at the bottom of this palimpsest. Bearing witness to the Senecan assertion that 'all weeping women are Hecuba's sorrowing daughters' (*Troas*/Watling l.1062), the Englished Lady of Sorrows, as well as Mary Magdalene, Mary Jacobi and Lazarus' sisters Martha and Mary, are certainly not examples of emotional restraint. One of Christ's torturers in Townley 22, *The Scourging*, calls them '[t]hise qwenes with scremyng and with showte' (42.349), while the threats of a second torturer give a glimpse of their dishevelled appearance: 'Go home, thou casbald [*bare-head*], with that clowte! [*handkerchief*]' (42.351). In reply, Mary Magdalene curses the torturers: 'venyance call on you holly in fere' (42.354). In York 36 the Virgin Mary mentions nothing of Christ's immortal soul, stressing only the flesh – his suffering flesh, her bodily intimacy with that flesh, and the physical pain she feels: 'full lovely thou laye / In my wombe, this wortheley wight. / Allas! That I schulde see this sight. [….]. A swerde of sorowe

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[62] *Female Mourning* (as in n.12 p.15), p.2.

me smyte' (11.133-35, 159).[63] And, on seeing her son's mutilated corpse, Mary

stands, like Niobe and Hecuba before her, "astonied" and cries out for a notably

unchristian death to leave her as insensible as stone: 'Allas, sone, sorowe and

sighte, / That me were closed in clay!' (13.157-58). Such vehement grief is, as in

the precedent set by the ancient Byzantine *Paschon*, designed to emphasise

human weakness and allow for a greater contrast to the understanding that comes

– as the mystery cycle progresses – with belief in the Resurrection. However, this

still produces a cultural conception of the Mater Dolorosa that is, on one hand,

the serene, weeping yet deferential mother of the *pieta* but also, on the other

hand, the raging, disconsolate 'scremyng' 'qwene' of the Passion plays, who

resonates with a long-standing folklore tradition that saw Mary drinking the

blood from Christ's wounds and swearing vengeance on her enemies.[64]

Thus, occupying the same cultural space and performing the same

cultural work as Hecuba, the iconography of Mary effectively legitimised wild

public displays of Hecuban grief by women in Catholic England. Indeed, despite

a general exclusion from public stages (be that the platforms of liturgical Church

drama, mummings, morality plays, Tudor school and university drama or, from

1577, the stages of the new London playhouses) there is evidence to suggest that

the Mystery Cycles' scenes of female mourning permitted – at least occasionally,

in the later Tudor cycles – English women to perform in public. As Stephen

Orgel relates: 'In the late fifteenth-century in Chester, a play of the Assumption

of the Virgin is recorded as having been performed by "the wives of this town"'

whilst 'in 1519 two maidens were engaged to play "Our Lady" and "St.

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[63] Peter Happé ed., *English Mystery Plays* (London: Penguin, 1975); *Incipit Flagellacio* (Towneley 22), pp.507-24; and *Mortificacio Cristi* (York 36), pp.537-51.
[64] For the blood-drinking Mary see Holst-Warhaft, *Cue for Passion* (as referenced in n.12 p.15), p.39; for information on the vengeful Mary see Frances Dolan, *Whores of Babylon: Catholicism, Gender and Seventeenth-Century Print Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1999), p.111.

Elizabeth" [John the Baptist's mother]; and in 1534 four ladies played the Virgin

Mary and her three attendants'.[65] Thus, amongst the traditional reliance on

'brothers costumed appropriately', the priest and guild-dominated civic

performances sometimes brought real women onstage to perform the role of the

Mater Dolorosa.[66] Whilst this cross-over sanctioned real-life displays of female

grief with holy precedent, it simultaneously exacerbated anxiety surrounding

such displays, calling their sincerity into question by "exposing" mourning as, as

had been suspected since Chrysostom, merely 'for show and vain display […] to

attract the gaze of men'.[67]

Such scepticism over women's motives runs as a cultural undercurrent in

Christianity from fourth-century Chrysostom: 'many women, forsooth, attract

lovers by their mournful cries, gaining for themselves the reputation of loving

their husbands because of the vehemence of their wailings. Oh, what a devilish

scheme! Oh, what diabolic trickery!'; to the early sixteenth-century sources for

Shakespeare's *Hamlet*: 'What perfidy is this, O most infamous of all […] that

under the guise of a dissembling tear you [Geruth, Belleforest's equivalent to

Gertrude] should conceal the most wicked and detestable crime that man could

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[65] Evidence of the late-fifteenth century performance is from Glynne Wickam's *Early English Stages 1300-1660*; evidence of the 1519 and 1534 performances is from Jean Robertson's and D.J. Gordon's analysis of the London livery companies' records. Both are cited here from Orgel, *Impersonations: The Performance of Gender in Shakespeare's England* (Cambridge: CUP, 1996), p.5.

[66] Peter Happé records that, '[t]he *Regularis Concordia* of St Ethelwold from the eleventh century shows how the coming of the three Marys to the sepulchre and their encounter with the Angel were to be represented at Mattins on Easter Day by four brothers suitably costumed', 'Introduction', p.18.

[67] Chrysostom, *Commentary on Saint John the Apostle and Evangelist: Homilies 48-88*, trans. by Sister Thomas Aquinas Goggin (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1959), p.174: 'At the present […] along with the rest of our vices there is one disorder especially prevalent among women. They make a show of their mourning and lamentation […] some do this because of grief, others for show and vain display. Still others through depravity both bare their arms and do these other things to attract the gaze of men', p.174.

ever imagine'.[68] The rituals which place women in the public eye, which give

temporary licence to act wildly beyond the conventional delineations of gender,

and which so 'clearly had [their] roots in pagan custom', have proved a

consistent site of socio-political anxiety, continually subject to condemnation,

interference, adaptation and curtailment by religious and political leaders.[69] With

the Reformation, such long-standing scepticism and anxiety erupted into acerbic

attacks targeted at the ubiquitous cultural icon that legitimised such display,

advocated Purgatory, and nurtured the Catholic Church: Our Lady of Sorrows.

As Huston Diehl has shown, reformist rhetoric against holy images

frequently associates the Catholic 'devotional gaze with the erotic gaze' by

repeatedly 'liken[ing] sacred images to the sexualized woman who, although

beautiful, is dangerously seductive'.[70] In fact, for Calvin the deception of the

senses in the Catholic 'abomination of the Mass' is, specifically, 'a Helen […]

with whom they so defile themselves in spiritual fornication'.[71] The Mater

Dolorosa exacerbated such attacks; the intentionally beautiful depiction of the

mourning mother in the *pietas* and the presence of a woman or cross-dressed boy

in the performance of the Mystery Plays, are all charged with 'portray[ing] the

female body in such a way as to arouse carnal desire'.[72] As Goodland describes,

'[d]iatribes against Mary recast her, along with the "Romish" church, as the

"Whore of Babylon." Her images were painted over in the churches, and her

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[68] *Commentary on Saint John*, pp.177-78; Belleforest qtd. in Harold Jenkins, 'Introduction', in *Hamlet*, Arden 2, 1982 Reprint (London: Thomson, 2003), pp.1-160 (p.91).

[69] Holst-Warhaft, *Cue for Passion* (as in n.12 p.15), p.34.

[70] *Staging Reform, Reforming the Stage: Protestantism and Popular Theatre in Early Modern England* (1997), qtd. in Goodland, p.156.

[71] *Christianae Religionis Institutio* (1536), qtd. by Michael Keefer, '"Fairer than the evening air": Marlowe's Gnostic Helen of Troy and the Tropes of Belatedness and Historical Mediation', in *Fantasies of Troy* (as in n.6 p.11), pp.39-62 (p.48).

[72] Huston Diehl, *Staging Reform, Reforming the Stage*, qtd. in Goodland, p.156.

statues were ritualistically slaughtered in the streets'.[73] Unsurprisingly, the plays representing Mary's Compassion, Assumption and Coronation were the first of the medieval cycle to be edited and subsequently omitted by the new Protestant clergy during the reign of Edward VI, before the cycles' complete suppression under Elizabeth I.[74]

As John Stow's description of the iconoclastic attacks in West Cheap demonstrate, the iconoclasm saw the Mater Dolorosa subject to violent theatricalised attacks which, rather than simply divest such images of their cultural signification, also served to corroborate and intensify their potent anthropomorphism. The ambivalence that had always co-existed in the half-stoic, half-'scremyng' queen of heaven became a fault-line that was used to tear apart the idolatrous images; yet in targeting Mary the iconoclasts invested her tears with a symbolic power that only served to exacerbate the cultural ambivalence surrounding all female grief.

Ritualistically defaced, the palimpsestic *locus classicus* of grief which had shifted from the Hecuban to the Marian was now painted over with a layer of whitewash. The removal of seductive idols and return to an unadorned theological purity left a blank, an iconoclastic void that Eamon Duffy dubs a 'sacrament of forgetfulness'; 'a paradoxical formulation', according to Dawson, 'since sacramental rituals are typically designed to generate remembrance'.[75] The whitewashed walls thus serve as an oxymoronic memorial, reminding the community to forget that which lies beneath.

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[73] Goodland, p.4. Throughout Goodland's work draws on the examples provided by Eamon Duffy's *Stripping of the Altars* and, to a lesser extent, Frances Dolan's *Whores of Babylon*.
[74] Although they were briefly revived during Queen Mary's reign, see Happé, 'Introduction', p.23.
[75] 'Arithmetic of Memory', p.59.

It is in this context, then, in the aftermath of the Reformation and amidst the ongoing battle over the epistemology of death, in which Hecuban displays of female grief are officially considered barbaric, papist, foreign, Other, and yet also embarrassingly culturally persistent, in which tears have become not only guilty but dangerously effeminising, in which the Mother Mary has been disturbingly sexualised and the Mater Dolorosa has been disavowed and *de-faced*, that Lucrece searches, 'to mourn some newer way' (1365), for 'the face of mourning *par excellence*',[76] and that Hamlet demands to hear of Hecuba, 'threatening the flames / With bisson rheum' (443-44).[77]

The connections I am implying here between the cultural trauma of the Reformation and Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and *Lucrece* are indebted to Katharine Goodland, who argues that 'Lucrece and Hamlet contemplate tragic images of female grief, and in both instances the images have unmistakable resonances with the Virgin Mary of Medieval Catholic piety. Their desire to find refuge for their grief in images of grieving women recalls the function that the *pieta* had once served in English society'.[78] More specifically, Goodland claims that 'the image in Hamlet evokes the lamenting Virgin of medieval drama', whereas 'the icon upon which Lucrece "spends her eyes" resembles the figure of "Our Lady of

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[76] Wells (as in n.34 p.156), p.111.

[77] Many academics have read *Hamlet*'s repeated motif of 'maimed rites' and curtailed mourning, not to mention its Catholic ghost, as a manifestations of the cultural trauma generated by the Reformation's denial of purgatory and radical usurpation of the meaning of mourning rituals. See: Watson; Dawson, 'The Arithmetic of Memory'; and also: *True Rites and Maimed Rites: Anti-ritual in Shakespeare and his Age*, ed. by Linda Woodbridge and Edward Berry (Urbana: Illinois UP, 1992); Stephen Greenblatt, *Hamlet in Purgatory* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2001); Anthony Low, '*Hamlet* and the Ghost of Purgatory: Imitations of Killing the Father', *English Literary Renaissance*, 29 (1999), 443-67; John Freedman, 'This Side of Purgatory: Ghostly Fathers and the Recusant Legacy in *Hamlet*', in *Shakespeare and the Culture of Christianity in Early Modern England*, ed. by Dennis Taylor and David Beauregard (New York: Fordham UP, 2003), pp.222-59; and David Beauregard, '"Great Command O'ersways the Order": Purgatory, Revenge, and maimed Rites in *Hamlet*', *Religion and the Arts*, 11 (2007), 45-73.

[78] *Female Mourning* (as referenced in n.12 p.15), p.161.

Pity" [in] the *pieta*'.[79] For Goodland 'the lamenting women of classical drama',

especially Hecuba, operate in post-Reformation England as 'barely disguise[d]'

Virgin Marys in 'classical garb'.[80] Accordingly, Hecuba's cultural visibility

noticeably increases as she rises to fill the void left by the iconoclastic

suppression of the Mater Dolorosa.

However, in Goodland's formulation this increased visibility is negated

as each Hecuba is unmasked as a Mary. Whereas Goodland focuses on similitude

to structure her argument, I hope that my analysis of *Hamlet* and *Lucrece* has

demonstrated, in highlighting their association with Virgil's epic, that the

Hecubas arising out of the suppression of Mary are not clear-cut examples of

'classicized Marian pity',[81] but rather more radical reconfigurations of maternal

mourning. By focussing on what is uniquely Hecuban, I see the Hecubas invoked

to fill the Marian-void as analogies rather than metaphoric reproductions of

Mary, multiple refractions not straightforward reflections. Thus they still perform

similar cultural work yet also carry their own unique set of cultural allusions and

assumptions which allow them to carry the anxieties provoked by Mary.

In addition, I have revealed this sixteenth-century scenario to be a replay,

a reverse replication of an analogous moment in Early Christianity when the

culturally dominant Hecuban grief was assimilated into a Marian piety. This

revelation in turn insists that not only are Mary and Hecuba analogies of one

another, they are also both analogies of the pain and inarticulacy of grief.

Analogy is, as Barbara Maria Stafford asserts, 'duality-exorcising';

'summon[ing] the imagination to invent reconciling images to stand in the

merciful middle between dichotomies of an argument or […] between apparently

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[79] *Ibid*, p.161.
[80] *Ibid*, p.2 and p.1.
[81] *Ibid*, p.1.

insuperable incongruities'.[82] The image of the mourning mother – whether she is called Hecuba or Mary – acts as a cultural articulation which negotiates the inarticulacy wrought by death; the Hecuba/Mary palimpsests offer 'reconciling images to stand in' the incomprehensible void that is death.

When bereaved Christians were faced with a dichotomy between the theoretical joy of the Resurrection and the felt pain and fear of death, the mother called Mary was made 'to stand in the merciful middle' as an analogy, enabling 'single vision [to] become multiplied, shattered, and reconfigured'.[83] In the sixteenth-century replay, the mother called Hecuba continues as an analogy for those faced with the incomprehension and pain of grief, but becomes an additional analogy for Mary. Faced with the dichotomy between Catholicism and Mary on one side and the blank whitewashed wall of Protestantism on the other, Hecuba can again 'stand in the merciful middle'. In the bid to expel Catholicism, post-Reformation England recast their indigenous Mater Dolorosa as a threatening, barbarous foreign Other; by virtue of being explicitly pagan, foreign and Other, the Trojan queen neutralises the fears of the "enemy within" and allows the grieving mother to be replayed. Hecuba carries with her no connotations of the contentious Purgatory; yet the dead are not entirely severed from the living for unappeased Trojan and Greek "shades" repeatedly rise from the dead, demanding vengeance or appropriate burial and mourning rites. Hecuba too can be variously "astonied", stoic or screaming in the face of death; she too will cling to the corpses of her loved ones. She will even, as some folklore Marys do, smear herself with blood, curse and cry for vengeance.

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[82] *Visual Analogy: Consciousness as the Art of Connecting*, qtd. in Naomi Conn Liebler, 'Wonder Woman, or the Female Tragic Hero', in *The Female Tragic Hero in English Renaissance Drama*, ed. by Naomi Conn Liebler (New York: Palgrave, 2002), pp.1-31 (p.11).

[83] Barbara Maria Stafford, qtd. in Liebler, 'Wonder Woman', p.11.

But Hecuba, Queen of Troy, is no Mary. Unlike the Mother of Christ who learns to accept her son's death and rejoice in his Resurrection, Hecuba will put on a show of grief and maternal love in order to gouge out her enemies' eyeballs and murder their sons. In consequence, the longstanding cultural anxiety about mourning women, radicalised by the Reformation's vitriol against the Catholic Mary, is loaded onto Hecuba and still further exacerbated by the Trojan queen's recourse to violence. This explains both why Hecuba ended up usurping the Mater Dolorosa as 'the cliché exemplar of tragic emotionality' in Renaissance England,[84] but also why Hamlet is so haunted and disturbed by this cliché, enacted as the Player weeps for Hecuba.

But if Hecuba was part of the vocabulary with which Hamlet, Shakespeare, his peers, his readers and audience, articulated, and thereby understood, death, grief and mourning in post-Reformation society, how did she end up in this vocabulary? Why was Hecuba already in England's cultural lexicon? For Lynn Enterline, it is the sixteenth-century humanist grammar schools and their focus on classical texts, particularly Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which introduced and ingrained Hecuba into Shakespeare's and England's cultural psyche.[85] Emrys Jones, however, points to something far older, claiming that not only Shakespeare, Hamlet and 'the authors of *Gorboduc*', but also 'Chaucer' – and thus the intervening 'centuries' prior to humanism – all think of Hecuba as an 'example of tragic grief'.[86] Whilst chapter five will investigate Enterline's claim and focus on the "classical" Hecubas of humanism, the

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[84] C.O. McDonald, *The Rheotic of Tragedy* (1966), qtd. in Jones, p.94. *Cf.* also Martin Mueller who writes: 'for the sixteenth century Hecuba became the tragic figure par excellence', *Children of Oedipus, and other essays on the imitation of Greek tragedy, 1550-1800* (Toronto, Buffalo & London: Toronto UP, 1980), p.21.

[85] *Rhetoric of the Body*, p.25-26.

[86] *Origins of Shakespeare*, p.94.

following chapter will follow Jones' lead and look backwards toward the earlier

"indigenous" Hecubas.

Chapter Four: Early English Hecubas

Toward the close of the fifteenth-century the reading materials, pedagogical techniques and ideological beliefs advocated by continental humanism began to be adopted by England. In the early fifteen-hundreds they would form the core of a radical nationwide educational reform. The study of rediscovered ancient Graeco-Roman classics was central to this new pedagogical movement, which was greatly facilitated by the development of the printing-presses. In consequence, Hecuba's "origin and original" texts gradually became available in new Latin translations and these pedagogical texts were, to varying degrees, either specifically included within England's school and university syllabuses or considered valuable reading for personal improvement. English humanism would come to ensure that '[e]very schoolboy knew well the matter of Troy'.[1] And, as these schoolboys grew up to be 'poets and artists', they and their readers 'could draw upon the matter of Troy as freely as the matter of England itself' and thereby disseminate the stories of Troy still further within England's vernacular culture.[2]

The schoolbooks in which these boys learnt of Hecuba, like the onstage copy of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* within whose pages Shakespeare's Young Lucius has 'read that Hecuba of Troy / Ran mad through sorrow' (*Titus Andronicus* 4.1.20-21),[3] only began to be printed in England in 1570. Up to this

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[1] Robert Rawdon Wilson and Edward Milowicki, '*Troilus and Cressida*: Voices in the Darkness of Troy', in *Reading the Renaissance. Culture, Poetics, and Drama*, ed. by Jonathan Hart (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1996), pp.129-44 (p.132).
[2] Levin, *The Question of <u>Hamlet</u>*, p.146.
[3] As Carol Rutter observes, there is a "joke" in the onstage appearance of Lucius' books, that is 'while Lucius's Latin *texts* are classical, his Latin *books* are Elizabethan. […] Lucius's Ovid and the other authors he's hugging – among them, Cicero – are classical texts. But they're presented on stage (bound into folios, or perhaps into schoolroom sized quartos) as Elizabethan books (and if Elizabethan books, then *printed* books). In the play they're cited by their familiar Elizabethan

date, as Margaret Lane Ford has established, school-texts for Tudor grammar schools were imported from the continent's scholarly printing-presses.[4] The arrival of these foreign imports and the pedagogical praxis of English humanism, which instituted a definitive way of approaching and understanding Hecuba, is the subject of chapter five.

This chapter, however, is interested in the English conception of Hecuba that existed prior to these importations, for the rediscovered Hecubas did not enter into a culture devoid of classicism. Rather, they entered into a country which, like the rest of mainland Europe, had a thriving tradition of vernacular Trojan tales with their roots in the conventions of medieval romance literature. Nor was this tradition simply usurped by the pedagogical enshrinement of the classics; instead, the development of the printing-presses and the renewed interest in ancient Greece and Rome evidently helped to rejuvenate the old tales of Troy, opening them up to a much wider readership as printers cashed in on their enduring popularity. But who were the Hecubas of this alternative, pre-humanist tradition which continued to flourish as the humanist Hecubas arrived?

The "alternative" stories which form the basis of this "alternative" tradition of course ultimately have their roots in – and thereby retain traces of – our six "origin and original" Hecuba texts and those directly inspired by them. Furthermore, the monastic scholars who transcribed these "alternative" narratives possessed varying degrees of knowledge of, and access to, (often heavily

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schoolroom names', *Shakespeare and Child's Play: Performing Lost Boys on Stage and Screen* (Abingdon & New York: Routledge, 2007), p.59.
[4] Margaret Lane Ford, 'Importation of Printed Books into England and Scotland', in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, Vol.3, 1400-1557, ed. by L. Hellinga and J.B. Trapp, (Cambridge: CUP, 1999), pp.179-201. *Cf.* also Peter Mack who explains: 'Thanks to a letter of recommendation from Archbishop Parker in August 1569, [Henry] Bynneman received a patent in classical school texts, some of which he published himself while licensing others to other printers' *Elizabethan Rhetoric: theory and Practice* (Cambridge: CUP, 2002), n.12 p.16.

revised) copies of the ancient Latin texts, and thus tended to add classical details (predominantly from Ovid and Virgil). The boundaries, therefore, between humanist and pre-humanist Hecubas, between what I label the "classics" and the medieval "alternative", are rather fluid and, as Bruce R. Smith states, 'a *dynamic* model', which insists on 'confluence' over 'influence', is a more helpful conceptual framework for thinking about the emerging Renaissance Hecubas than the traditional '*progressive* model' in which the revival of the classics simply usurps indigenous traditions.[5]

This chapter will cover many centuries, in which extant textual evidence is sparse, as I trace Hecubas within stories that typically regard her as a peripheral character and that are told by Christian cultures that became increasingly suspicious of female shows of grief. At times, therefore, my focus on Hecuba perhaps risks skewing her cultural importance. At other times, however, Hecuba will disappear as I discuss gaps where Trojan queens have been lost or intentionally excluded. In order to trace Early English Hecubas and these "Hecuba gaps", and also to demonstrate how influential genre is to the cultural viability of the queen, I first return to the point at which the classical Graeco-Roman narratives typically leave her: scrabbling in the ashes of Troy.

1. A Tale of Two Troys

> Lift your neck from the dust;
> Up with your head!
> This is not Troy.
>
> Euripides, *Trojan Women*, ll.99-100[6]

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[5] *Ancient Scripts and Modern Experience on the English Stage 1500 – 1700* (Princeton: PUP, 1988), p.6.
[6] Trans. by Vellacott.

> We are the remnants left by the Greeks. We have suffered every
> calamity that land and sea could inflict upon us, and we have lost
> everything. And now you offer to share your city and your home
> with us. […]. If you have such a great desire to know what we
> suffered, to hear in brief about the last agony of Troy, although my
> mind recoiled in anguish when you asked and I shudder to
> remember, I shall begin:
>
> Virgil, *Aeneid* (1.598-601; 2.10-22)[7]

From the ashes of Troy's annihilation two distinct parallel narrative responses

emerge: one is Hecuba's threnodic female tragedy; the other, Aeneas'

androcentric epic. As we have seen, in Euripides' and Seneca's tragedies Hecuba

and the Trojan Women are caught in a perpetual aftermath, offering endless

lamentation for relatives who, left where they were killed and burnt with the city,

cannot be honoured with the traditional burial rites needed to appease their

shades: 'dear lost ghost, / […] / You, unwashed, unburied, / Roam the shadowy

spaces' (*Women*/Vellacott l.1081). The deracination of the women's lives means

that the socio-cultural norms of Troy can never be restored; the chaos bought by

death can never be exorcised: 'The greuous sorowes of thy harte / will neuer

make an ende' (*Troas*/Heywood ll.1909-10). Thus, even when these women

resurface in stories set far beyond Troy, in Argos for example as a subsidiary

chorus of slaves in Seneca's radical revision of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, they

repeat the same threnodic songs (ll.499-658) that they were reciting amongst the

ruins of Troy in Euripides' *Trojan Women* (ll.511-67). Although 'not free to

lament these troubles' (l.654), Seneca's slaves inform the last of Hecuba's

daughters that their grief is like the nightingale's perpetual song of sorrow

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[7] This and all subsequent quotations from Virgil's *Aeneid* in this chapter are taken from David West's translation; book and line references are provided parenthetically.

(l.671), that '[t]here is no limit, Cassandra, to tears / since what we suffer has surpassed limit' (ll.691-92).[8]

In contrast to this endless ritual repetition and suspended liminal state, the alternative aftermath narrative, a teleological epic supplied primarily by Virgil's *Aeneid*, recounts the trials encountered by Aeneas as he roams across land and sea, for a number of years that will end with him fulfilling his destiny to found a second Troy. Bearing his father (Anchises) and son (Ascanius) to safety, Aeneas ensures that Troy's patriarchal lineage remains intact to secure a future dynasty in Rome. Aeneas also carries with him the flame of the domestic Trojan goddess of the hearth, Vesta (Hestia); the flaming torch, which represents both Troy's destruction and renewal, lights Aeneas' path away from the burning city. Thus whilst Aeneas, in 'flashing armour' (2.749), bears the living 'remnants' from Troy (1.598), Hecuba and the female survivors remain behind to carry the weight of the dead, raking the ashes of loved ones and their beloved city out of the Trojan earth and digging it into their exposed flesh, as Seneca's queen directs:

> Loose your hair, let it fall on your bowed shoulders,
> Let it be dirtied in the hot dust of Troy.
> Fill your hands with dust, it is all we can take
> Away from Troy.
> Let every arm be stretched forth; loosen your garments
> And tie them around you, be naked to the womb –
> Do you still want to cover your breast, shy prisoner –
> For what husband's sake?
> Tie your cloaks round your dropped tunics, women;
> Hands must be free to beat the mad rhythm of lament,
>
> (*Troas*/Watling ll.84-94)

Responding as one, Seneca's chorus drop to their knees and follow Hecuba's instructions.[9] As their name suggests, the women of Troy belong to an

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[8] Seneca, *Agamemnon*, in *Loeb Classical Library: Seneca IX, Tragedies II*, trans. by John G. Fitch (Cambridge MA and London: Harvard UP, 2004), pp.113-213.

annihilated past; blackened and bloodied figures of death caught in that schismatic moment of destruction, audible only as they lament and visible only as they cover their bodies with blood, earth and ash. The future will disperse, silence and efface them: 'Our sorrowful voices will soon be swept away / Scattered as ships steer off in all directions' (*Troas* ll.1041-42).

Virgil's composition of the *Aeneid* however, ensures that Aeneas not only carries his male kin and the domestic deity away from Troy but also the Euripidean laments of Hecuba, her daughters, and her choruses. These female voices are ventriloquised by Aeneas in his tale to Dido, forming the basis for much of his eyewitness account of the night Troy fell.[10] Yet such intertextuality does not simply enact a submerged dissemination of Hecuba's lamentation, but radically alters both the function and perception of mourning, implicitly demonising its potency and casting suspicion over its social value. In the *Aeneid*, the desire and obligation to grieve is replaced by the desire to comply, albeit reluctantly, with Dido's request. A collective, ritualised, female remembrance is replaced by individual male remembrance; and the mourning dirge which laid bodies and their spirits to rest, is replaced by an affective tale that quickens the pulse: 'the words he had spoken had pierced [Dido's] heart and love gave her body no peace or rest' (4.5-6). Although Aeneas' tale also becomes a repeated ritual it is told not to reassert the memory of the dead within the community of the living, but rather to feed Dido's erotic desire: 'Sometimes, as the day was ending, she would call for more feasting and ask in her infatuation to hear once

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[9] Similar mourning is described in Euripides' *Hecuba*: 'the mother with children killed', whether Trojan or Greek, 'sets hand against her greying head and tears her cheek, scratching her nails all bloody'(Collard, ll.655-56); whilst the chorus of Euripides' *Trojan Women* cry out to each other: 'Beat the breast and bruise the head, / Let the hand be merciless' (Vellacott, ll.1235-37), and Hecuba calls out to all lost Trojans: 'I call the dead, I who am near to death, / Stretched on the soil, my hands beating the ground' (Vellacott, ll.1305-06).

[10] H. May Johnson, 'Vergil's Debt' (as in n.100 p.86).

more about the sufferings of Troy and once more she would hang on his lips as he told the story' (4.79-80). In Dido's ears, if not in Aeneas' mind, the telling of Troy's destruction is an epic tale 'of arms and of the man' (1.1), of heroism triumphing over adversity: 'What a warrior! […] And did you hear him tell what a bitter cup of war he has had to drain' (4.13, 16). Yet the repeated retelling of Aeneas' mournful tale works contrary to epic. Rather than inspiring the imitation of heroic manliness it effeminises Dido's male population as their queen becomes increasingly lovesick: 'towers she was building ceased to rise. Her men gave up the exercise of war and were no longer busy at the harbours and fortifications' (4.86-87). Aeneas too is feminised as Rumour spreads the image of a 'slave[…] of lust', a 'second Paris, with eunuchs in attendance and hair dripping with perfume' (4.196, 217); Aeneas' mother, Venus, despairs that he has forgotten that 'he would be the man to rule Italy pregnant with empire and clamouring for war' (4.230). The repetition of this inherited female grief thus initiates a contagious emasculation of the epic hero which threatens the building of cities, founding of empires, and the son's dynastic inheritance. Like the frozen images in Dido's temple that also remember Troy's destruction – which 'root [Aeneas] to the spot' and see him 'lost in amazement' (1.495) – Aeneas' tales of remembrance lead to a paradoxical forgetfulness in the suspension of both action and the self.

Such suspension is compounded by the fact that the hero's first-person retrospective lament for Troy interrupts and suspends the progression of Virgil's third-person narrative, initiating the moment in which the androcentric epic temporarily transmutes into female tragedy: the tragedy of 'doomed Dido'

(1.756).[11] Only once this tragedy has been played out, ending with the death of its abandoned protagonist, can the teleological epic resume and proceed towards the immortality promised in the foundations of Rome. The end of this period of teleological suspension replays, in miniature, the scenes of female mourning amongst Troy's ruins: as Aeneas' again sails away to fulfil his destiny he again leaves behind a great blaze, a shoreline ringing 'with lamentation and groaning and the wailing of women […] as though the enemy were within the gates and the whole of Carthage […] were falling with flames' (4.667-70), whilst Dido's sister stands 'tearing her face and beating her breast' beside Dido's funeral pyre (4.673-74).

Whilst female grief consumes Dido, as well as Hecuba and the women of Troy who are never narratorially seen to exist beyond their funereal "last words", the subsequent adventures of Aeneas are comprehensively traced as he and his entourage of warriors forge ahead toward the site of their new city. As Gail Paster asserts, the city tropes 'the urge to stand apart from the rhythms of the seasonal calendar [to] define time not as the cyclical revolutions of the natural year but as the linear sequence of historical process […], the city expresses human desire for ascendancy over nature through control of the environment'.[12] Thus, whilst the heroic founder of Rome pursues his Fate in order to transcend time and subdue nature, Hecuba – suspended in Troy's aftermath – embraces the inevitabilities of time and nature, sifting through the vestiges of life and the city as it turns to indiscriminate dust. In so doing, the queen and her grieving women expose the fragility and self-delusion of the city-building project; it is only in an

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[11] *Cf.* also Martin Mueller who writes, 'Vergil's ambition to make the epic an encyclopedic genre led to the decision to include a tragedy in it', *Children of Oedipus* (as in n.84 p.177), p.xi.
[12] *The Idea of the City in the Age of Shakespeare* (Athens GA: Georgia UP, 1985), p.2.

endless cycle of remembrance – which speaks of its annihilation – that the city can be certain of its immortality.

However, leaving these cautionary remnants in Troy's ashes, Virgil builds a myth of origins for imperial Rome in which foundations laid by the heroic Trojan 'remnants left by the Greeks' (1.598-99) provide a more palatable alternative to the fratricidal myth of Romulus and Remus.[13] Itself forged from 'remnants left by the Greeks', the *Aeneid*'s ideological assimilation of Trojan myth into the service of the Roman present spawned numerous subsequent imitations in which Aeneas' progeny become responsible for establishing subsequent European cities attempting to emulate Rome. Thus, as Elizabeth Jane Bellamy observes, by the Renaissance 'virtually every European country claimed to have been founded by an exiled hero from Troy: Italy by Aeneas, France by Francus, Portugal by the sons of Lusus, Britain by Brutus, and so forth'.[14] The male diaspora of Troy is grafted into a proliferation of successive narratives, each of which typically signifies a phoenix-like rebirth and regeneration of the city from its ashes.

Shifting focus, from the fate of Hecuba and Aeneas to the post-classical fate of their narratives, reveals yet another two distinct, and uncannily analogous, parallel textual histories. For it is latter Latin narratives, principally those purporting to be the eyewitness accounts of Dictys Cretensis and Dares Phrigius,

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[13] As Paster maintains, '[t]hat Romulus […] had been a fratricidal killer was an embarrassment of very long standing. The historians and poets of the Augustan age were eager for alternatives to the legend which made Romulus the murderer of his brother and which detractors of Rome used to trace the ruthlessness of the city to its very beginnings. Plutarch emphasized another possibility, that Remus had died in a riot occasioned by his blasphemy in stepping across the sacred boundaries of the city. He is joined in this preference by Dionysus of Halicarnassus (*Roman Antiquities*, 1.87), by Ovid (*Fasti*, 4.809-56), and of course by Virgil (*Aeneid*, 1.292). The *Aeneid* itself stresses the primacy of Aeneas – dutiful and only reluctantly ruthless – as the real founder of the city. In terms of the foundation of a city –piety or murder, Aeneas or Romulus – lay the core of its identity', *Idea of the City*, p.10.

[14] 'Slanderous Troys: Between Fame and Rumor', in *Fantasies of Troy* (as in n.6 p.11), pp.215-35 (p.215).

which will spread across western Europe, like Aeneas' heirs, repeatedly copied
and grafted into an abundance of succeeding narratives which routinely extend
the *Aeneid*'s precedent for claiming Trojan ancestry. At the same time, however,
like the deported and enslaved Trojan women, the laments of Homer's and
Euripides' Hecubas will fall silent in western Europe whilst those of Ovid and
Seneca become hushed in the 'dust of monastic libraries'.[15] The classical texts in
which Hecuba is most prominent and most vocal are, then, precisely the texts
which became most inaccessible in western Europe after the fall of Rome (476
CE), particularly in such northern fringes as England.[16]

In a manner which is again uncannily analogous to the stories they relate,
the textual histories of Hecuba's "origins and originals" are themselves
powerfully shaped by the fall of empires and the refugees that these downfalls
generate: just as Aeneas flees Troy carrying the story of its destruction to his
nascent Roman empire (where it will be "inherited" and "recounted" by Virgil),
it is the protracted collapse of Rome, entailing the estrangement of its Byzantine
territories, which causes many of the classical texts, particularly Homer and the
Greek tragedies, to be gradually "lost" to the Latin-speaking west, whilst it is the
collapse of the subsequent Byzantium empire in the fifteenth-century which
creates the conditions for their "recovery".[17] The gradual expansion of the

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[15] Smith, *Ancient Scripts* (as in n.5 p.181), p.5.

[16] As Geoffrey Miles explains, the 'fall of the Roman Empire in western Europe [was] a long,
slow collapse over the course of two centuries, but [is] symbolically marked by the deposition of
the last Roman emperor by a Gothic chieftain in AD 476', 'The Myth-Kitty', in *Classical
Mythology in English Literature: A Critical Anthology*, ed. by Geoffrey Miles (London & New
York: Routledge: 1999), pp.3-19 (p.9).

[17] "Lost" and "found" only from the perspective of western Europe that is. As Martin Bernal
argues, in his seminal study *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization*, the
traditional tale of loss and rediscovery in which the Greek texts fall into "oblivion" with the fall
of Rome and patiently await the enlightened and appreciative minds of Europe's humanists, acts
as an effacement of the continued transmission and study of the texts in eastern cultures; (New
Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1987). The persistent privileging of the western European, Christian,
perspective which fails to acknowledge an alternative story of transmission and preservation,

Ottoman Empire into the Byzantine territories, leading to the fall of

Constantinople in 1453, generated a steady stream of refugee scholars from east

to west, particularly into the previously Byzantine held provinces of southern

Italy. Here copies of the ancient Greek manuscripts that were carried out of

Constantinople, along with the migrant scholars' knowledge of the Greek

language, enflamed and enriched the development of an already keen Italian

humanism.[18] The concerns, texts and tenets of this continental humanism

gradually spread north across Europe; eventually, and rather belatedly, filtering

into England at the end of the fifteenth-century where they were to become

infused with the religious radicalism of the Reformation.[19]

Before this time, however, English awareness of ancient Greek and the

earlier Roman authors and their literature was reliant on the incorporation of

extracts, plots, characters, references and allusions into accessible Latin

adaptations, revisions and critical commentaries which, as Miles describes, were

'repeatedly copied and recopied' by Christian scribes 'throughout the "Dark

helps to establish and corroborate a myth of origins by which modern Europe becomes the direct descendant of Ancient Athens – and the only true heirs of the attendant ideals of democracy, liberty, education and enlightenment. This is, of course, the ideology employed to both justify and mystify English Imperialism – that violent enforcement of "enlightened civilisation" over cultural difference – that began with Elizabethan colonialism.

[18] Initially, as Robert Garland states, the 'study of Greek was fostered in part by the desire to translate the numerous quotations which are cited in Latin authors such as Cicero'. Although this initial desire was primarily confined to 'statesmen and men of letters' (such as Petrarch), it gradually developed into a 'broad-based educational movement [after] the *editiones principes* of classical texts began to roll from the presses at the end of the fifteenth century', *Surviving Greek Tragedy* (London: Duckworth, 2004), pp.95-96. Much detailed analysis has been done on the translation and transmission of Greek texts: alongside Garland see J. Michael Walton's *Found in Translation: Greek Drama in English* (Cambridge: CUP, 2006). For a detailed account of the textual transmission of Euripides' *Hecuba* see Mossman's epilogue to *Wild Justice*, pp.210-243, and Malcolm Heath, 'Iure principem locum tenet: Euripides' *Hecuba*', *BICS*, 34 (1987), 40-68.

[19] As M.H. Curtis states, '[n]ot far behind the humanists came the religious reformers. To the enthusiasm for learning wakened by the humanists they added the passion of religious conviction. They argued in part that the usurped authority of the Pope had persisted so long because ignorance bred superstition. [...] The reformers therefore looked on learning as chief means for religious change. On the one hand they pleaded for the establishment of schools and increased support of the universities to educate a preaching clergy; on the other they upbraided the nobles and gentlemen of England for being so backward in learning that they could not man the offices of the king and relieve the clergymen of their secular duties. 'Education and Apprenticeship', *Shakespeare Survey*, 17 (1964), 53-72 (p.54).

Ages" (fifth to tenth centuries), and the "Middle Ages"'; thereby 'ensuring not only that they survived but that they continued to be a living cultural influence'.[20] In consequence, long before the fall of Constantinople and the resurfacing of Homer and the Hecuba tragedies, and centuries before Richard Burbage addressed the Globe's groundlings and first asked 'what's Hecuba to him…', the image of the bereft Trojan queen had filtered into England's cultural lexicon as an exemplum of extreme grief and the caprices of Fortune. In fact, long before anyone, except an extremely limited circle of monastic scholars and wealthy nobles, had access to even the corrupt copies of her Latin narratives, Hecuba was known proverbially for her misery and misfortune.[21]

This remarkable colloquial existence is attributable to a domino-effect initiated by the impact that Euripides' *Hecuba* and *Trojan Women* had on the imagination of antiquity.[22] Aided by their resonance with the Hecuba of Homer's revered *Iliad*, Euripides' two Hecuba plays prompted imaginative adaptations and critical commentary from authors who would themselves become oft-cited literary authorities: not only Seneca, Ovid and Virgil, but also Cicero, Libanius, Lucian, Photius, Plutarch, Pindar, Stiblinus and Servius. As Mossman notes, the queen's ubiquity in both Rome and Byzantium is evidenced by the 'striking' frequency with which, 'Hecuba's name is mentioned when a random example of a tragic figure is required'.[23] In consequence, 'by the end of antiquity, a conglomerate figure made up of the Hecubas of Homer and Euripides

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[20] Geoffrey Miles, 'The Myth Kitty', pp.9-10.
[21] See Jones *Origins of Shakespeare*, p.94 and Mossman, *Wild Justice*, p.211.
[22] Mossman, *Wild Justice*, p.210.
[23] *Ibid*, p.218. I also concur with Mossman's proposition that this is in fact a response to *Hecuba*, in which 'Euripides deliberately set out to create […] a character who could be seen as the archetype of suffering she did indeed later become [with] a nexus of imagery which compares Hecuba to a series of artefacts and I believe this contrives to suggest that she is a model, a picture, of suffering', p.219.

was a universally recognizable type of suffering'.[24] As archetype or exemplum, the figure of Hecuba was easily transposed into a multitude of wide-ranging Latin texts and rapidly outstripped her specific textual "origins and originals". The idea of Hecuba was thus able to thrive even as the *Iliad*, *Hecuba* and the *Trojan Women* "disappeared" and *Troas* (and to a lesser extent) *Metamorphoses* and *Aeneid* became obscure. It was, then, this aggregate icon of grief, with her Greek textual roots long since buried, that England inherited from Rome, typically within the Hecuba-bearing narratives developed out of Dares and (to a lesser extent) Dictys, who between them provided this medieval English exemplum with her authoritative "biography".

Like Aeneas' tale to Dido, Dares' *De Excidio Troiae Historia* and Dictys' *Ephemeridos de Historia Belli Troiani* both profess to offer genuine first-hand accounts of the Trojan War from soldiers who fought there; and, like Aeneas, both characters are fictions that draw their testimonies from prior stories. Dares 'the Phrygian' is typically identified as the priest of Hephaestus mentioned in Homer, whilst Dictys fights alongside the Greeks as a Cretan soldier under the command of Idomeneus. After the Trojans have been defeated, Dares survives under the protection of Aeneas' mythic double Antenor who re-establishes a community on the site of Troy.[25] Dictys sails home to Crete and on his death his 'little books' are buried with him where they remain unknown until '[i]n the thirteenth year of Nero's reign [67CE] an earthquake struck at Cnossos and […] laid open the tomb of Dictys' and the newly discovered books were presented to

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[24] *Ibid*, p.219.
[25] Variations on the myth ascribe blame for Troy's downfall to either Aeneas or Antenor, or – less frequently – both men in collaboration. Dares and Dictys both make Antenor the successful ruler of the land where Troy had stood; in alternative stories, however, Antenor sails from Troy with his family and household gods, as Aeneas does, in order to establish new colonies in Libya or Northern Italy, or found the city now known as Padua. See March, *Dictionary of Classical Mythology* (as in n.94 p.84), p.52.

the Emperor.[26] However, Dictys' account is only known through a fourth-century Latin translation, although an extant fragment of a Greek text dating to the first-century perhaps provides a glimpse of this "original" (which of course still post-dates Homer's *Iliad* by at least 700 years). The account by Dares is even more suspect, surviving only in a sixth-century Latin version which rather too conveniently replicates a frequently expressed classical belief in an *Iliad* predating Homer's; however, some scholars argue that, like Dictys, Dares' account is a translation of a lost Greek original, but one which would also only date to the first-century CE.[27]

For medieval England, however, as for the rest of Europe, Dares' and Dictys' accounts were considered genuine first-hand histories. A letter from the "translator" prefacing Dares' text (a sixth-century forgery professing to be from the first-century BCE Roman scholar Cornelius Nepos), states that his translation will allow readers to judge 'whether Dares the Phrygian or Homer wrote the more truthfully', before adding: 'Dares, who lived and fought at the time the Greeks stormed Troy, or Homer, who was born long after the War was over'. To clinch the argument he "reminds" the reader that '[w]hen the Athenians judged this matter, they found Homer insane'.[28] The medieval adaptations of Dares persistently reiterate such statements, making them more dogmatic and

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[26] 'Preface' to Dictys, *Ephemeridos de Historia Belli Troiani*, in *The Trojan War. The Chronicles of Dictys of Crete and Dares the Phrygian*, trans. by R.M. Frazer Jr. (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1966), reproduced by *The Theoi Classical E-Texts Library*, ed. by Aaron Atsma (2000-07) <http://www.theoi.com/Text/DictysCretensis1.html> [18 March 2010]. All subsequent quotations of Dictys are taken from this online edition of Frazer's translation and referenced in the text with book and paragraph numbers.

[27] Maguire, *Helen of Troy: From Homer to Hollywood* (as in n.5 p.106), p.1 and n.1 p.207. For further details see Frazer Jr., pp.1-15.

[28] Dares Phrygius, 'Prefatory Letter', *De Excidio Troiae Histori*, in *The Trojan War. The Chronicles of Dictys of Crete and Dares the Phrygian*, trans. by R.M. Frazer Jr. (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1966), reproduced by *The Theoi Classical E-Texts Library*, ed. by Aaron Atsma (2000-07) <http://www.theoi.com/Text/DaresPhrygius.html> [18 March 2010]. All subsequent quotations of Dares are taken from this online edition of Frazer's translation and referenced in the text with paragraph numbers.

expanding their condemnation to include alternative accounts beyond those of Homer. In France, around 1160, Benoît de St Maure produced *Le Roman de Troie*, a highly influential Latin revision of Dares which became 'the immediate inspiration for the ensuing medieval tradition of Troy'.[29] Benoît asserts that Homer 'never was there and saw nothing thereof', whereas Dares simply 'wrote the truth'.[30] Sometime shortly before 1190 Joseph of Exeter's Latin *Ilias of Dares Phrygius*, known as 'one of most literary Latin epics of the Middle Ages', was presented to the Archbishop of Canterbury.[31] The well-educated English cleric begins by spurning not only 'old Homer' but also 'Latin Virgil', and dubs Dares 'The Bard of Troy (unknown to tale), whose present eye, / A surer witness of the truth, disclosed the war'.[32] To follow 'this trusty source' (1.27), is to 'banish […] far the teasing poet and his tales, / Lest Athens' licensed fabrications and its lies / Offend you' (1.29-31). Over two hundred years later, sometime before 1420, and writing now in English, John Lydgate, the 'monke of the Monastery of Bury' asserts that it is Ovid who 'hath closed / Falshed with trouthe' and that 'His mysty speche / so harde is to vnfolde / That it entryketh / reders that it se' (A2v).[33] If Ovid's 'mysty speche' makes his version of events ambivalent, Virgil's nationalistic impartiality makes him equally unreliable:

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[29] As Brent Miles also points out, although the most influential, Benoît's medieval revision of Dares was not, in fact, the first, being preceded by approximately two hundred years by an Irish vernacular translation known as *Togail Troi*. Dares was therefore current and circulating in monastic circles at least by the tenth-century. See '*Togail Troí*: The Irish *Destruction of Troy* on the Cusp of the Renaissance', in *Fantasies of Troy* (as in n.6 p11), pp.81-96 (p.82).

[30] Benoît des Sainte-Maure, *Le Roman de Troie*, qtd. in Bellamy, 'Slanderous Troys', p.229.

[31] See, A.G. Rigg, 'Introductory Notes', to Joseph of Exeter's *Daretis Phrygii Ilias*, trans. by A.G. Rigg (Toronto: Centre for Medieval Studies, University of Toronto, 2005), pp.iv-x, <http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/medieval/web-content/ylias/index.html> [10 July 2010].

[32] Rigg, p.iv; Joseph of Exeter, *Ilias*, trans. by A.G. Rigg, 1.24-26. All subsequent quotations from Joseph of Exeter's *Ilias* will be referenced in the text with book and line numbers relating to this edition of Rigg's translation.

[33] *The Troye booke otherwyse called the Sege of Troye* (London: Richard Pynson, 1513).

'Virgyle also / for loue of Enee // In eneydos / rehersyth moche thynge' (A2v).[34]

It is still Greek Homer, however, who is singled out for Lydgate's fiercest tirade.

The author whose personification on the seventeenth-century stage would be able

to boast that he was 'by the best [j]udgements term'd diuine',[35] is thought by

Lydgate to have, with 'sugred wordes' the 'trouthe spared' (A2v). Thus, anyone

following Homer as a source has:

> playnly nat declared
> So as it was / nor tolde out faythfully
> But it transformyd / in theyr poysy
> Thorugh vayne fables / whiche of entencion
> They haue contryued / by fals transsumpcion
> To hyde trouthe / falsly vnder clowde
> And the sothe of malys / for to shrowde
> As Omer dyde, (A2v)

In contrast, Lydgate considers Dares and Dictys to be the most reliable sources

because even their inevitable impartiality is negated by the remarkable

similarities between their testimonies:

> But tofore all / Dares frigius
> Wrote moste trewely / after that he fonde
> And dytees eke / of the grekes londe
> For they were present / and seyen euerydell
> And as it fyll / they wryte trewe and well
> Eche in his tunge / by suche consonaunce
> That in theyr bokes / was no varyaunce, (A2v)

Despite these ubiquitous protestations, the medieval Troy Books are embellished

by details drawn from both Ovid and Virgil. Although professedly infatuated

with the "truth" of the accounts by Dares and Dictys, the medieval authors heard

within them (like Dido) their own concerns: Christian morality, chivalry, and

courtly love. Their prolific "translations" are thus also imbued with anachronistic

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[34] For Lydgate, Virgil is also at fault for showing traces of Homer's influence: 'hym lyste some whyle // The tracys folowe / of Omeris style' (A2v).

[35] Thomas Heywood, 'Prologue', in *The Silver Age* (London: Nicholas Okes, 1613), Br.

knights and star-crossed lovers, the conventions of courtly romance and chivalric codes of honour, as well as narratorial Christian pronouncements on their characters' ethics; all of which are intended to increase the theological "truth" and moral value of the tales. The quotations above are illustrative of just how extensively a single sentence in Dares can be expanded by his medieval advocates. However, in both Dares and Dictys Hecuba is a rather peripheral character and in the medieval expansions of these texts the queen recedes still further into the background. It is this anachronistic assimilation of Dares and Dictys into the medieval romance epic which reflects the tales of Troy current in medieval England, which established an authoritative conception of Hecuba that continued to permeate English culture long after the humanist scholars revived her classical namesakes.

2. Hecuba, 'as myne Auctor recordeth eke also' [36]

Extant manuscripts from the twelfth to fifteenth-centuries not only confirm the continued appeal of the Trojan War to the elite English readership amongst whom these expensive handwritten luxuries circulated, but also the phenomenal influence of Dares. Typically compiled by monastic scribes, these texts moved beyond the Church as gifts dedicated to wealthy patrons who read, swapped, and also reproduced personalised copies of the stories amongst the 'limited, amorphous, and often overlapping "coterie circles" of like-minded individuals […] which usually did not extend beyond the gentry classes'.[37] After Latin narratives such as Benoît's *Roman de Troie* (c.1160), Joseph of Exeter's *Ilias*

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[36] Subheading taken from Lydgate's *Troy Book*, M2v.
[37] Heather Wolfe (quoting Harold Love), 'Manuscripts in Early Modern England', in *A Concise Companion to English Renaissance Literature*, ed. by Donna B. Hamilton (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), pp.114-35 (p.120).

(c.1190) and Guido delle Colonne's influential revision of Benoît, *Historia Destructionis Troiae* (c.1287), came vernacular English narratives such as Chaucer's *House of Fame* (c.1374-1385) and *Troilus and Criseyde* (c.1385-7), Robert Henryson's *Testament of Cresseid* (c.1480), and multiple Middle English revisions of Guido's *Historia*, including: the Scottish Troy Book (anon. late-fourteenth or early-fifteenth century); *The Laud Troy Book* (anon. c.1400); John Lydgate's *Troy Book* (c.1420), and the anonymous fifteenth-century '*Gest Hystoriale' of the Destruction of Troy* (which, totalling 14,044 lines, McKay Sundwall declares the 'best of the extant Middle English versions of the story of Troy and also the longest of the Middle English alliterative poems').[38] Although the English Troy books embellish the marginal Hecubas inherited from Dares and Dictys, she still typically makes only a brief appearance in what tend to be vast, encyclopedic, retellings of mythological history.

The exception to this rule is Joseph of Exeter's depiction of Hecuba in his rather unique revision of Dares. Despite the traditional declaration that the deceitful fabrications of fictional 'tales' have been shunned for Dares' true testament, Joseph's poem draws, as A.G. Rigg has identified, from Ovid's *Heroides*, Virgil's *Aeneid*, Statius' *Achilleid* and *Thebaid*, 'the sixth-century prose *Excidium Troiae* [and] an earlier poem, the *De raptu Helenae* by Dracontius (late fifth-century)'. Joseph, in contrast to the 'common medieval method of expansion […] by verbal and syntactic rhetoric', takes the unusual decision to expand 'the *matter* of the story' from these numerous sources.[39] One result of this is that Joseph's Hecuba delivers an extensive first-person lament

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[38] '*The Destruction of Troy*, Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*, and Lydgate's *Troy Book*', *The Review of English Studies*, New Series, 26:103 (1975), 313-17 (p.313). Sundwall also dates the poem later than previously thought, at sometime after 1420.
[39] Original stress; Rigg, p.vi.

upon discovering Priam's corpse, a scene entirely absent from both Dares and

Dictys and that owes far more to Ovid, Virgil and Seneca than any of the more

typical medieval sources. At first, like Ovid's queen discovering Polydorus'

body, Joseph's Hecuba struggles to find her voice: '"My --", then silent, then

again / Repeats, "Alas my --, mine --" again, and yet again / Dissolved in single

words' (6.814-16). Once this period of inarticulacy passes, Joseph's Hecuba

pours forth a lament in excess of thirty-five lines in which she begs for death,

calling on the Gods, on Pyrrhus, and also '[y]ou, Trojans, harmed by my /

Impiety, for whom I bore laments, come, tear / Apart your enemy' (6.843-45).

This Hecuba, like that of Seneca and Ovid, blames herself for bringing forth

'Paris, wicked flame of womb' (6.836) and thereby causing Troy's destruction:

'Are these the flames I bore, […] / Is this the produce of my womb? Why did the

earth / Not swallow me? I swelled with this?' (6.840-42). It is perhaps, therefore,

with a wry irony that Joseph alters Dares' description of Hecuba as 'beautiful,

her figure large, her complexion dark' (12), to specify instead that 'her shape,

unworn by frequent births, / Reveals no shrivelled defects of the pregnant womb'

(4.80-81). With her lament concluded, Joseph resumes Dares' version of events

and the victorious Greeks give permission for Hecuba to leave for Chersonese

with Cassandra, Andromache and Helenus.

Just as Joseph's Hecuba begins her lament with the statement 'up till now

my grief has been without a tongue' (6.822), the addition of this mournful

interpolation within Dares' narrative provides a unique medieval depiction of a

Hecuba who is far more akin to the Hecubas of ancient tragedy. The subsequent

medieval versions of Dares in 'our englysshe tonge' (Q6r), however, do not

follow the precedent of Joseph's Latin *Ilias* (one of the earliest extant Troy books

produced in England). Rather, the explosion of English Trojan tales during the 1400s exclusively made Benoît and Guido primary sources. Joseph's distraught Latin queen remains silent in the vernacular culture; her grief is again 'without tongue', for the narrators of the English Hecubas will persistently insist: 'ther is no tonge that coude expresse the sorowe that was maad' (DI.308).[40]

While an echo of a much earlier sentiment, this particular statement about Hecuba's inexpressible grief belongs to a late fifteenth-century tale of Troy by William Caxton, which secured a popularity that persisted 'well into the eighteenth-century'.[41] Since I am primarily interested in the perception of Hecuba that co-existed with the advent of English humanism, I will demonstrate how the medieval Troy books accommodated Troy's indescribable queen by focussing on their continued legacy within the new medium of print. I shall, therefore, consider two "crossover" Hecubas who were the culmination of the Troy books' centuries old traditions yet were also disseminated to a far wider readership than their predecessors.

In the mid fifteenth-century, Gutenberg's invention of the printing press radically transformed accessibility to and affordability of the written word; and England's adoption of this innovative new technology provides further evidence for the vibrant currency of the Trojan War myths within England's vernacular culture. In 1473 Caxton's *The Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye* – an English translation of Raoul Lefevre's French translation (c.1464) of Guido's Latin

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[40] William Caxton, *The Recuyell of the Historyes of Troye* (Bruges: Caxton, 1473). All subsequent quotations from Caxton's *Recuyell* will be referenced in the text. As the first printed book in English, Caxton's text lacks any referencing system; thus for each quotation I shall include a Document Image number which denotes the quote's position in the reproduction of the text by Early English Books Online. See: <http://eebo.chadwyck.com/search/fulltext?source=configpr.cfg&ACTION=ByID&ID=D000009 98449480000&FILE=../session/1209726467_12217&DISPLAY=default>

[41] Maguire, *Helen of Troy: From Homer to Hollywood*, p.128.

revision (1287) of Benoît's *Roman de Troie* (c.1160) – became the first book to be printed in English, from Caxton's Belgian printing press.[42] Caxton's Hecuba is again, in keeping with the medieval tradition he continues, only a minor character, named just sixteen times within seven-hundred and four pages. Nonetheless, Hecuba still makes her entrance into English print culture in its very first book, as: 'quene hecuba […] a rude woman [who] semed better a man than a woman. / […] a noble woman passinge sage [de]bonayre / And honeste and louyng the werkes of charyte' (DI.273).[43] Somewhere along the line of textual transmission Dares' description of Hecuba as a beautiful woman who 'thought like a man' (12), becomes distorted to establish a tradition of English Hecubas '[w]hose lymmes / all dyde more declyne // To shappe of man / than to woman' (I6r). Caxton follows this tradition and introduces a robust 'rude' woman whose body, rather than mind, is shaped like a man's.

Three years later Caxton established the first English press in Westminster and began to reprint his *Recuyell*. Following Caxton's pioneering work, printing flourished in London and presses were soon established in the university cities (although they were banned in all other towns).[44] Despite the phenomenal proliferation of printed texts which ensued, Caxton's *Recuyell* proved consistently fashionable with at least thirteen reprints between 1476 and 1702. Indeed, the *Recuyell* quickly established itself as a highly 'influential medieval repository of classical matter', an encyclopedic compendium of

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[42] Similarly, Caxton's source, Lefevre's Troy book, was the first book to be printed in French, from the Sorbonne press in 1470.

[43] In addition to the translation of the *Recuyell*, it should be noted that Caxton produced an English translation of *The Metamorphoses* as early as 1480 but, significantly, chose not to bring it out in print. In contrast, in 1490, Caxton did print his 'boke yf [sic] Eneydos, compyled by Vyrgyle'; however, this text, 'which hathe be translated oute of latyne in to frenshe, and oute of frenshe reduced in to Englysshe by me wyll[ia]m Caxton' actually bears only a minimal relation to Virgil's *Aeneid* and makes no reference to Hecuba; see Caxton, *Eneydos* (London: P. Needham, 1490).

[44] See John Man, *The Gutenberg Revolution* (London: Review, 2002), pp.241-45.

Graeco-Roman mythology from the crowning of Saturn to the destruction of
Troy, and rapidly became a key reference text for generations of aspiring English
authors.[45] Thus, for example, in 1915 John S.P. Tatlock would urge his peers to
qualify their condemnation of Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* by
remembering that '[w]e are always liable to prejudice because we inevitably
come to the play with our minds full of Homer; but Shakespeare came to [Troy]
with his mind mostly full of Caxton'.[46]

The *Recuyell* did not, however, remain without competition for the telling
of Troy in print. In 1513, 'at the co[m]mau[n]dement of oure Soueraygne Lorde
the kynge Henry the viij', John Lydgate's *Troy Book* (based on Guido) was
transcribed into print almost a hundred years after it had first been presented to
the newly crowned Henry V. Further editions of this royal text were printed in
1555 and 1614. Between them Lydgate and Caxton came to dominate the pre-
humanist tales that England continued to tell about Troy long after humanism's
pedagogical institutionalisation of the classics.

Caxton's first printed English book revels in the fact that, unlike the
books of 'penne and ynke', each copy of the *Recuyell* is identical:

> I haue practysed & lerned at my grete charge and dispense to
> ordeyne this said book in prynte after the maner & forme as ye
> may here see and is not wreton with penne and ynke as other bokes
> ben […] ffor all the bookes of this storye named *the recule of the
> historyes of troyes* thus enpryntid as ye here see were begonne in
> oon day and also fynysshid in oon day. (DI.351)

Walter Ong has argued that this shift from unique handwritten manuscripts,
typically read aloud to a congregation of listeners, to identical print copies causes

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[45] Jonathan Bate, *Shakespeare and Ovid* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), n.26, p.14.
[46] 'The Siege of Troy in Elizabethan Literature, Especially in Shakespeare and Heywood', *PMLA*,
30:4 (1915), 673-770 (p.761).

a concurrent 'shift in sensibilities'; that is, by 'giving text a fixed home in space, […] [t]ypography did more than merely "spread" ideas. It gave urgency to the very metaphor that ideas were items which could be spread'.[47] Caxton and Lydgate thus provide the first 'fixed home' for the English Hecuba, providing readers with a material sense of her textual origins, a home where she can be easily "looked up" and cited. Specifically, they site Hecuba within the centuries old tradition of the medieval Troy Books.[48] Obsessively deferring to 'myne Auctour' and the 'Cronycleres', to 'the booke of troyllus that chawcer made', to what 'dictes the greke [wrote] in hys booke' and, most frequently, what 'dares of frigie sayth', Caxton and the printed Lydgate continue the long line of stories 'composed and drawen out of dyuerce bookes of latyn'.[49] Despite a gap of one-hundred and thirty-three years between Lydgate and his main source Guido, a further one-hundred and twenty-seven years between Guido and Benoît, and the fifty-three years between Lydgate and Caxton, there is little significant difference in the depiction of Hecuba within any of these medieval retellings of Troy. Thus, whilst Caxton's printing presses may have released the stories of Troy from expensive handwritten manuscripts, his translation of Lefevre's Guido, and Richard Pynson's reprint of Lydgate's ancient *Troy Book*, clearly did little to break the monopoly of the romance genre on the tales of Troy. As Lydgate writes of Guido's adaptation of Dares, 'in effect / the substaunce is the same' (A3r), (fig.10).

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[47] *Rhetoric, Romance and Technology* (as in n.58 p.131), p.167.

[48] This wish to remain within the familiar tradition is also evidenced by the fact that every edition of Caxton's *Recuyell* until 1597 'lacks a title page because it is designed to look like a manuscript', Maguire, *Helen of Troy: From Homer to Hollywood*, p.14.

[49] The first two phrases are both from Lydgate, A2r, (although 'myne auctour' is repeated six times); the latter four quotations are all from Caxton, in order: DI.303; DI.350; DI.253; DI.1 Caxton also refers repeatedly to 'myn Auctor' and variations on the phrase.

Figure 10: Left to right: woodcuts of the Trojan War accompanying the 1503 edition of Caxton's *Recuyell* (EEr) and the 1513 print of Lydgate's *Troy Book* (U3r)

In both Caxton and Lydgate, Hecuba's response to the murder of Priam is to grab her daughter Polyxena and run; she does not stop, like Joseph's queen, to stand over her husband's corpse and lament. In fact, following the precedent set by Dares and Dictys, Caxton's and Lydgate's descriptions of the destruction of Troy and the war's immediate aftermath see all the ritualised female laments of the classics superseded by depersonalised statistics, factual lists which recount the dead without remembering individuals:

> And Dares putte in the ende of hys booke that the siege endured ten yere ten monethis and twelue dayes. And the so~me of the grekes that were slayn at the siege to fore troye was eyghte honderd & sixe thousand fyghtyng men. And the so~me of the troians that defended hem ayenst þ^e grekes that were slayn was sixe honderd and sixe and fyfty thousand of fightyng men.
> <div align="right">(DI.350)</div>

The personal details that are an essential part of the tragedies' traditional female lament are thus superseded in, as well as by, the fact-based accounts of the 'historiagraphes' (Caxton DI.142). Yet the story of Troy contains numerous other opportunities for Hecuba to lament her losses, not least the death of Hector. Whilst for Dares Hector's funeral is a perfunctory affair ('The Trojans lamented […]. Then Priam, following the custom of his people, buried Hector in front of

the gates and held funeral games in his honor' (25)), Dictys' provides more

detail: 'They buried him close to the tomb of their former king Ilus; and,

gathering around, on this side the women with Hecuba, on that the Trojan men

and their allies, they raised the mournful dirge. For ten days from sunrise until

sunset […] everyone, without ceasing, wailed for Hector' (4.1). When Lydgate

turns to this scene of mourning, however, he singles out Hector's female kin and

asks rhetorically: 'What shall I saye / of Eccuba the quene // Or his suster / yonge

Polycene // Or Cassandra / […] Or of his wyfe'? (S1r). Lydgate claims that the

women's

> sorowes / & theyr complaynges
> Theyr pyteous sobbynge / throwes & wepy~ges
> The wofull cryes / and the pyteous sowns
> Theyr drery playntes / and Lamentacyowns,
> And all theyr woo, (S1r)

are 'to longe' to recount: 'A large boke / it wolde occupye // If eche thynge / I

shulde in ordre telle' (S1r). Consequently, Lydgate turns away from the female

mourners in order to progress with his own narrative:

> And thus I leue them / syghe & sorowe make
> This cely women / in theyr clothes blake
> Shroude theyr faces / & wympled more i[n] vayne
> Whyle I tourne / to my mater agayne. (S1r)

The 'mater' of Troy to which Lydgate returns is Troy's father, 'kynge Pryamus'

(S1r), who is concerned about the practicalities of removing Hector's corpse

from the grip of the 'cely women' before it starts to 'putrefye' (S1r). Lydgate's

text provides no direct access to these female mourning voices. On the one hand

he professes to dismiss them as a narratorial digression, eschatologically 'i[n]

vayne' and far too 'tedyous to here' (S1r). On the other hand in his excessive list

of synonyms, not only from 'sorowes' to 'Lamentacyowns' and 'woo' but also in telling how the women 'wepe and playne', 'syghe sore' and 'terys rayne' until 'the tempest / of theyr wofull rage // May by processe / lytell and lytell aswage' (S1r), allows Lydgate's narrative to replicate, and momentarily indulge in, what he explicitly labels as feminine excess whilst also implying its therapeutic 'processe' if not its theological value.

In Caxton, this excess of grief again creates a narrative gap as he repeatedly insists: 'ther is no tonge that coude expresse the sorowe' (DI.308); 'Certes there can no man expresse alle the lamentacions that there were maad' (DI.308); and, echoing Lydgate, specifically asks of Hecuba's role in the scene: 'what myght men saye of the sorowe that his moder the quene made'? (DI.308). The answer is, again, a narratorial nothing, an even larger lacuna than Lydgate as Caxton quickly moves away from his own question to focus instead on giving a highly detailed description of Hector's magnificent tomb. Yet this professed inability to 'expresse the sorowe' is of course a conventional literary tactic of amplification, as Laurie Maguire asserts in her discussion about narratorial reactions to Helen's beauty: 'One of literature's recurrent tactics when faced with extremes is omission. Authors simply abdicate narrative responsibility, refusing to (or declaring themselves unable to) describe'.[50] However, in relation to scenes of mourning these declarations specifically replicate the characteristic content of lamentation itself, which traditionally begins with the inadequacy of language in the face of death's incomprehensibility. By shifting this inability from mourner to narrator, however, Caxton and Lydgate make the expression of grief a textual problem, one of recording rather than one of iteration itself. Caxton's and

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[50] p.39.

Lydgate's Hecubas both 'made' 'sorowe' but the authors claim it is too excessive

and disruptive to be repeated by and in their 'mater'. A significant split can

therefore be detected; female lament is perhaps appropriate, perhaps even useful

to appease the women's rage, but it is no longer considered a vehicle for

honouring and remembering the fallen heroes. It has become a tolerated

digression, the historical narrative simply "leaves them to it", *writing over* the

lamentations to make their own record of the lives of the heroes (fig.11).

'Of the complaint that Lydgate maketh for the deth of the worthy Ector' can be seen via Early English Books Online:

http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:7027:105

**Figure 11: 'Of the complaynt that Lydgate maketh for the deth of the worthy Ector':
woodcut from the 1513 edition of Lydgate's *Troy Book* (R6v)**

In both Caxton and Lydgate Hecuba's excessive grief for Hector,

compounded by the subsequent death of Troilus, resurfaces as the motivation

behind the plot to kill Achilles. In Dictys the murder is planned by Paris and

Deiphobus (4.11), but Caxton and Lydgate follow Dares who claims: 'Hecuba,

bewailing the loss of Hector and Troilus, […] devised, like the woman she was, a

treacherous vengeance' (34). For, whilst the other women who have mourned

Hector and Troilus have 'theyr wofull rage // […] lytell and lytell aswage'

(Lydgate S1r), Hecuba has nursed her maternal grief to the point where it cannot

be 'appeasid ner conforted' except by 'toughte in many maner wyses how she

myght be auengyd' (Caxton DI.321). Or, as Joseph of Exeter expresses it in his twelfth-century Dares: whilst other 'tears dried up [and] the lamentations of the tomb / Were stilled', the 'mother's lonely grief / Grows into deep despair; anxiety excites / Her sickly mind [and] avenging sorrow finds the tricks / To serve her will' (6.402-06). Lydgate and Caxton expand Dares' perfunctory summary into a clandestine meeting between Hecuba and Paris, in which it is Hecuba who does all the talking. After the funerals of Troilus and Menon, which are again 'to longe' for Lydgate to repeat, and 'Tedyus eke for you to dwelle' (X1r), this duplicitous Hecuba:

> calleth on a day
> Alysaunder / in full secrete wyse
> And vnto hym / as I shall deuyse
> With wepynge eyen / and full heuy chere
> Sayde euen thus / lyke as ye shall here
> Parys quod she / alas… (X1r)

What Hecuba 'sayde' next is not simply her plan (to use Polyxena as bait and lure Achilles unarmed to the temple where Paris can ambush him); it is also a brief first-person lament, spoken with 'wepynge eyen', that justifies Hecuba's consciously '[t]rayterous' designs:

> Thou knowest well / how the fyerse Achylle
> My sones hath slayne / nye echone
> There is none lefte / but thy selfe alone
> He hath me made / alas there is no gayne
> Full cowardly / of children now barayne
> Bothe of Ector / and Troylus eke therto
> Whiche were to me / in euery trouble and wo
> Fully comforte / plesaunce / and solace
> Wherfore I caste / playnely to compace
> By some engyne / his deth to ordayne
> And lyke as he / by treason dyde his payne
> Trayterously / with his swerde to smyte
> Right so I thynke / with treason hym to quyte
> As sytrynge is / of right and equyte (X1r)

The lament renders grief indivisible from the impulse to avenge. Although (in contrast to her personal revenge on Polymestor in Euripides and Ovid), the medieval Hecubas all exact their vengeance via male agents, the wanton Paris is easily swayed by his mother's tears and promptly gathers a group of willing soldiers.[51] Caxton and Lydgate both lay stress on Hecuba's female reasoning – that since Achilles 'hath so slayn hem by trayson / me semeth good and also [j]uste and right that he be slayn by trayson' (Caxton DI.321) – which prompts her to transgress both masculine codes of honour and the sanctity of the temple.

It is Dares (not Dictys) who makes Hecuba ultimately responsible for the death of Achilles, but it is Dictys (not Dares) whom the medieval authors typically follow in order to ensure that Hecuba is punished for this transgressive crime. For in Dares, Hecuba is simply granted freedom by the Greeks and leaves with her son Helenus, daughter Cassandra, and daughter-in-law Andromache. However in Dictys' Ovid-inspired narrative, Hecuba is given to Odysseus as a slave but Odysseus, in fear of the Greek army, flees leaving her behind amongst the Greeks, including Dictys "himself" who recalls how:

> Hecuba, preferring death to enslavement, called down many curses
> and evil omens upon us, and we, being terribly provoked, stoned
> her to death. Her tomb which was raised at Abydos, was called
> Cynossema (The Tomb of the Bitch) because of her mad and
> shameless barking. (5.16)

The Greeks of Caxton's *Recuyell* and Lydgate's *Troy Book* initially release Hecuba: 'they ordeyned that all the noble women that were escaped fro deth / shold goo whyder they wold freely / or dwelle styll there yf hit plesid them'

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[51] Joseph claims in his account: 'But Troy's adulterer, / At [Hecuba's] command, thinks nothing sinful after rape / Performed. He breaks God's peace, disturbs the shrines, and hides / A corps of well-armed men behind the altar screens' (6.416-19).

(Caxton DI.335). In Dares this declaration occurs after Polyxena has been sacrificed to Achilles; in Caxton and Lydgate the sacrifice is still to come and it is explicitly depicted as a punishment not of the 'gyltles' Polyxena (Lydgate Ħ2r) but her duplicitous mother. Indeed, Caxton makes it impossible to determine whether Pyrrhus catches sight of Hecuba looking-on, and so makes Polyxena's death a more brutal exhibition, or whether he imagines himself butchering Hecuba instead of her daughter: 'Pyrrus smote her wyth his swerd / seeyng the quene her moder / and slewe her cruelly' (DI.336). It is this sight which drives the early English Hecubas into madness:

> whan Eccuba the quene
> Hath seen alas / as she besyde stode
> For very wo / gan to wexe wode
> And for sorowe / out of hir wytte she wente
> And hir clothes / and hir heer she rente
> All in a rage / and wot nat what she doth
> But gan anone / with hondes and with toth
> In hir Furye / crache and eke byte
> Stones caste / and with fystes smyte
> Whom she mette / tyll grekes made hir bynde
> And sente hir forth / also as I fynde
> Into an Yle / to Troye partynent
> Where she was slayne / oonly by Iugement
> Of the Grekes / and stoned to the deth
> And whan she hadde / yelde vp the breth
> This wofull quene / by cruell auenture
> The Grekes dyde make / a Sepulture
> Ceryously / of metall and of stone
> And toke the corps / and buryed it anone
> With great honour / and solempnyte
> That longe after / men there myght se
> The ryche toumbe / costfull and royall
> There set and made / for a memory all
> Of Eccuba / whylom of great fame
> And after gaue / to that place a name. (Ħ2r- Ħ2v)

Or, as Caxton relates it:

> Whan hecuba the quene sawe thus her fayre doughter slayn / she
> fyll doun aswowne / And after wente oute of her wytte and becam
> madde. And began to renne vacabonde and all araged And
> assaylled wyth her teth and with her nayles all that she myght
> come by / and casted stones and hurte many of the grekes / Than
> they toke her by force and ladde her in to an yle And there they
> stoned her to deth / And thus the quene hecuba ended and
> fynysshyd her lyf / And the grekes maad for her a noble sepulture /
> And putte her body therin. And her sepulcre appereth yet in the
> same yle vnto thys day etc… (DI.336).

The addition of Hecuba's attempt to bite, scratch and throw stones at her captors adds extra Ovidian detail to Dictys' narrative. Hecuba's madness is converted from one that comes from the thought of being enslaved to one that stems, as it does in Ovid, from a mind tortured by maternal grief. [52] There is, therefore, a progression to Hecuba's grief within Caxton and Lydgate; it first leads her to transgress moral rationality and piety and then to lose 'her wytte' altogether. In Ovid, as in Euripides' *Hecuba*, the Trojan queen enacts her vengeance on the man who killed her son in a fury-filled but *calculated* manner, an act which allows her to briefly reclaim her noble identity, 'as if she were still a queen' (*Met*/Innes 13.545). Her subsequent transformation into a howling dog is, for Ovid, a divine intervention by which she escapes the stone-throwing Thracians. The medieval Troy books, however, collapse these distinctions; Hecuba's final (and impotent) attempt to avenge her children is seen as animalistic behaviour that marks her as 'madde' (there are no explicit references to dogs). In accordance with tradition, Hecuba becomes an avenging 'Furye', a disarrayed figure of death with rent hair and clothes, using the hard edges of her body as weapons. But whilst in Ovid this makes Hecuba 'the complete likeness of Revenge' (13.546), in the Troy Books Hecuba displays clear symptoms of being

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[52] Lydgate's Polyxena recites a long final speech which is absent from both Dares and Dictys and thus presumably also drawn from Ovid.

irrevocably 'out of hir wytte'.[53] Madness, rage and grief might fuel Hecuba's

vengeance in Ovid and Euripides, but for the Christian revisionists Hecuba's

attempt at revenge is itself a grief-fuelled madness in which she 'wot nat what

she doth'.

Rather than swiftly dispatching Hecuba with a sword, as they did

Polyxena, Lydgate's and Caxton's Greeks choose to stone the raging queen.

However this is no mere retaliation-in-kind, for the Greeks transform Hecuba's

spontaneous attack into a formal punitive procedure in which the assailant is

restrained, removed to a secure location, stoned and, after a slow painful death,

buried and 'honoured' with a 'noble sepulture'. Unlike the sacrifice of Polyxena,

which is marked as deeply personal (the bait that led to Achilles' death is

demanded by Achilles' shade and dispatched by Achilles' son), the stoning of

Hecuba is, as stoning traditionally is, a *communal* punishment against a

perceived social transgressor.[54] Incapable of controlling her maternal grief,

Hecuba threatens to haunt all of 'the Grekes', just as a Fury would, with a

maddening perpetuation of the violence and chaos of death. In the Troy Books,

then, the queen's death is an act of social protection and purification, rendering

Hecuba (and not Polyxena) the Greeks' sacrificial scapegoat. Yet Hecuba is only

the Greeks' scapegoat by virtue of the authorial decision of the Christian

revisionists to switch from their main source Dares to the secondary Dictys,

whose account is then altered to speak more of judicial punishment than

provoked attack.

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[53] The translation of the line from *Metamorphoses* is that of Brower in *Hero & Saint*, p.130.
[54] As Mossman notes when discussing Hecuba's death as predicted in *Hecuba*: 'That [the dog Hecuba] drowns herself, as opposed to being stoned, as in some other versions of the story, is also important. Stoning is the punishment by the community of the individual who has sinned against it', *Wild Justice* (as referenced in n.11 p.108), p.198.

The anger and madness of an Ovidian or Euripidean Queen is thus unleashed in the medieval Troy Books but, in contrast to the inconclusive and ambiguous fates of the classical Hecubas, Lydgate and Caxton ensure that Hecuba's transgressions are publically punished and that this disturbing Fury is shown to be neutralised and contained within the text. However, the multiple layers of containment with which Hecuba's fury is negated by the Greeks betray, in their excess, an intense level of anxiety over her potential potency: not merely restrained ('grekes made hir bynde'), but removed to an island ('toke her by force and ladde her in to an yle'), which is enclosed by both sea and anonymity (no mention is made of Dictys' naming of the isle), where Hecuba is not only pelted with stones, but also 'buryed' and encased within a stone monument. Hecuba's maternal rage is not then merely suppressed by these stories; rather these texts go to extreme lengths to *enact* the suppression of Hecuba's potent grief. This leads to a deeply ingrained ambivalence. As with the metamorphosis of Niobe, Hecuba's maternal sorrow is transformed into a stone memorial which in its permanence betrays the impossibility of ever neutralising such grief. Unlike the Niobe myth, however, Hecuba's brutalised body is decomposing underneath the stone: 'men there myght se // The ryche toumbe / costfull and royall' Ħ2v).[55] On one hand then this is, as Holst-Warhaft writes of war memorials in general, an 'orchestrated forgetting' that covers the reality of war, death and grief,[56] and which is compounded by additional anonymity – for how is a 'sepulcre [that] appereth yet in the same yle vnto thys day' meant to operate within texts which refuse to give 'that place' a name? On the other hand, however, the monuments

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[55] As Peggy Phelan writes generally, the 'tomb is appealing precisely because it is static and still, unlike the decomposing body it covers. If death were guaranteed stillness perhaps it would be less dreadful', *Mourning Sex* (as in n.71 p.136), p.83.

[56] *Cue for Passion* (as in n.12 p.15), p.169.

are nonetheless constructions of texts which themselves refuse to forget Hecuba whilst the corpus of classical Hecuba texts still lie buried; which maintain 'a memory all / Of Eccuba' (Ħ2v) even as they labour to suppress her voice, limit the work of mourning, and curtail the strength of grief that so defines and empowers her character in the classical texts.

Yet there is, perhaps, another reason why Lydgate and Caxton ensure that despite her brutal end their Hecubas are honoured with proper burials and impressive monuments. For the Greeks it may be an attempt to appease her shade and finally assuage her threatening grief, for the English authors, however, it is a family obligation. This idea leads us back to tales of Troy which predate the medieval Troy Books but culminate long after in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries following an infusion of details from the "new" ancient texts. Seeing Hecuba as family also sets up the allusive framework in which the early English Hecubas were compiled, read and understood, as well as revealing a vibrant performance tradition that proves the Hecubas outlined above were not confined to the reading rooms and libraries of the Church and nobility, but also filtered into England's oral culture.

3. Hecuba, 'in Oure Englissh Tonge' [57]

> This is a *Christmas Tale* has oft been told
> Over a Fire by Nurse, and Grandam old,
> Where they wou'd *Paris* the wild Youngster blame,
> For stealing *Helen,* that inconstant Dame.
> Yet we're in hopes you will be kind to hear
> The Lives of those whose Successours you are:
> For when *Troy* fell, its Remnant here did plant,
> And built this Place, and call'd it *Troy-novant*.
>   John Bankes, *The Destruction of Troy*, 1678 [58]

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[57] My subheading quotes Caxton's *Recuyell*, (DI.2).

It is, of course, impossible to say precisely when the mythologies of Greece and
Rome began to be assimilated into the legends of England's ancestral history.
However, Geoffrey of Monmouth's highly influential *Historia Regum Britanniae*
(c.1136) set an endemic trend (that was to last, although not without objection,
into the seventeenth-century) for tracing the ancestry of the English monarchy
back, via King Arthur, to the exiled Trojans by identifying Aeneas' great-
grandson Brut (Brute or Brutus) as both Albion's founding father and the
monarchy's genealogical father.[59]

According to John Aubrey (1626-97), 'in the old and ignorant times,
before woomen were Readers, the history was handed down from Mother to
daughter: […]. So my Nurse had the History from the Conquest down to Carl I.
in Ballad'.[60] Given that Monmouth's history was 'arguably the most popular
history in medieval English culture' and would become 'a staple in the opening
chapters of the sixteenth-century English chronicles',[61] it is highly probable that
the indigenous legends of Brut were not only transmitted textually amongst the
educated minority but also formed a vibrant part of the English ballad culture
which conveyed immeasurable quantities of information to the illiterate

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[58] 'Prologue', *The Destruction of Troy: A Tragedy acted at his Royal Highness the Duke's
Theatre* (London: A.J and J.P, 1679), A4r.
[59] Starting as Virgil did with the fall of Troy, Monmouth describes how Aeneas' great grandson
Brute and a band of Trojan descendants conquered Albion by vanquishing the giant Gogmagog
who ravaged the island, uniting the adjacent territories as 'Britain', and founding the original
English capital as *Troia Nova* or *Trinovantum* (later renamed London). As Scott Schofield notes,
'extant copies of Geoffrey's *Historia* survive in more than 215 manuscripts […]. Along with
Higden's *Polychronicon* and the anonymous *Brut*, both of which borrow material from Geoffrey,
the *Historia* was arguably the most popular history in medieval English culture'; 'According to
"the common receiued opinion": Munday's Brute in *The Triumphes of Re-United Britannia*
(1605)', in *Fantasies of Troy* (as in n.6 p.11), pp.253-68 (n.10, p.256).
[60] *Aubrey's Brief Lives* qtd. in Griffin, *Playing the Past: Approaches to English Historical Drama
1385-1600* (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 2001), pp.76-77.
[61] Schofield, 'According to "the common receiued opinion" (as in n.59 above), n.10, p.256.

majority.[62] Caxton's own *Cronycles of Englond* (1480; reprinted 1482) follows

Monmouth with opening chapters entitled: 'How the land of Englond was fyrst

named Albyon'; 'How Brute arryued at Totnesse in the yle of Albyon / And of

the / bataylle that was bitwene Coryn / and Gogmagog', and 'How Brute made

london & called this lond Brytaygne'. Editions of Monmouth's *Historia* also

found their way into print in 1508 and 1517; and Caxton and Lydgate's printed

books were clearly written and continued to be understood within the wider

context of what John Stow's 1604 *Summarie of the Chronicles of England* calls

the 'common receiued opinion' concerning the *Troynovant* mythology of 'Brutys

Albyowne'.[63]

Accordingly, English high culture lavishly honoured the history of 'oure'

Trojan ancestors throughout the centuries, not only a popular subject for

expensive tapestries, paintings and manuscripts, but also recurrently celebrated

both publically in panegyric pageants and civic celebrations, and privately within

the exclusive court masques of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[64]

Although the Royal Triumphs and annual Lord Mayor's Shows were populist

entertainments for the masses, they were of course commissioned and

orchestrated by the country's influential elite who use them to endorse and

celebrate Monmouth's genealogy, promoting London as Troy's third

reincarnation.[65] Thus, in his introduction to *Troia Nova Triumphans* (Lord

Mayor Show Oct. 29, 1612), Thomas Dekker declares that civic spectacles

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[62] For evidence of Monmouth's Brutus legends continuing to influence and circulate within later oral culture see Adam Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture in England, 1500-1700* (Oxford: OUP, 2000), pp.230-32 and p.238.

[63] Stow qtd. in Schofield (see n.59 p.213), p.262; 'Brutys Albyowne' from Lydgate (ꝟ2v).

[64] Sasha Roberts has shown in 'Historicizing Ekphrasis' how popular prints and tapestries of the Fall of Troy were in elite Elizabethan households, qtd. in Christopher Johnson, 'Appropriating Troy: Ekphrasis in Shakespeare's *The Rape of Lucrece*', in *Fantasies of Troy* (as in n.6 p.11), pp.193-212 (p.203).

[65] In the Lord Mayor's Show of October 1605, for example, Anthony Munday makes Brute the central character of *The Triumphes of Re-United Britannia*; for details see Schofield (n.59 above).

should 'dazle and amaze the common *Eye*, as to make it learne that there is some *Excellent*, and *Extraordinary Arme* from heauen thrust downe to exalt a *Superior* man, that thereby the *Gazer* may be drawne to more obedience and admiration'.[66] Like Lydgate's fifteenth-century *Troy Book* which identified its royal patron Henry V as 'worthy kynge And protectoure / of Brutys Albyowne' (Ƿ2v), sixteenth-century entertainments routinely identified Elizabeth I as 'beauteous Queene of second Troy' whilst in the seventeenth-century James I became 'Great Monarch of the West' wearing 'a triple Diadem, / Weying more tha[n] that of thy grand Grandsire *Brute*'.[67] During these spectacular displays of wealth and power the city was decked out as a character, Brut's *Troia Nova*, and a stage. As Paster describes: '[r]ounded triumphal arches were the symbol for ancient Rome, and the architects of civic pageants used them to suggest how their city presented the rebirth of Roman power and magnificence just as stage architects used them to dignify their tragic scene'.[68] Within this city-wide theatre both the professional performers and the royal or civic dignitaries, in whose honour the celebrations were performed, held equal status as objects of interest to the citizen-spectators, who were recast as neo-Trojans.

The civic pageants and court masques, in which royalty and the nobility were routinely cast as embodiments or reflections of allegorical qualities attached

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[66] *Troia Nova Triumphans. London Triumphing, or The Solemne, Magnificent, and Memorable Receiuing of that worthy Gentleman, Sir John Swinerton Knight, into the Citty of London* (London: Nicholas Okes, 1612), A3r-v.

[67] Lydgate also describes the lineage from Troy to Rome to Britain: 'worthy Rome / was after edyfyed // By the ofsprynge / of worthy Eneas' and 'after hym / his sone Syluyus // Of whom came Brute / so passyngly famous // After whom / if I shall nat fayne // Whylom this lande / called was bretayne' (B2r). The reference to Elizabeth as 'Queene of second Troy' is from *The Honourable Entertainment gieuen to the Queenes Maiestie in progresse, at Eluetham in Hampshire by the right honourable the Earle of Hertford, 1591*, qtd. in Heather James, p.18. The reference to King James is from Thomas Dekker's *The magnificent entertainment giuen to King Iames, Queene Anne his wife, and Henry Frederick the Prince, vpon the day of his Maiesties tryumphant passage (from the Tower) through his honourable citie (and chamber) of London, being the 15. of March. 1603* (London: by T.C. for Tho. Man the yonger, 1604), Fv.

[68] *Idea of the City* (as in n.12 p.186), p.127.

to mythical heroes and deities, ostentatiously enact what Pamela Luff Troyer

calls 'the self-serious narcissism of the nobility'.[69] For Troyer, this narcissism

was the main satirical target of the deliberately irreverent *Seege or Batayle of*

Troye (anonymous; extant in three manuscripts dating from the 1300s and one

from the 1400s).[70] Troyer has convincingly contested the once prevalent

assumption that the *Seege* is a botched attempt at a Trojan romance in the style of

Lydgate *et al.*, instead identifying it as a touring minstrel's burlesque of both the

elites' popular romances and the foundations of the *Troynovant* myths.[71] For

Troyer, the minstrel *Seege* was composed for a knowing 'audience that enjoyed a

good laugh at the expense of […] the textual transmission of histories held in

high regard by the educated elite'.[72] Thus, despite naming the same source as the

more chivalric and decorous romances (Dares), the *Seege*'s narrator provides 'an

unusually irreverent and base treatment of a noble tragedy' in which the Trojans'

'ancient royal family' are depicted as 'comically dim-witted, selfish, and

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[69] 'Smiting High Culture in the "Fondement": *The Seege of Troye* as Medieval Burlesque', in
Fantasies of Troy, (as in n.6 p.11), pp.117-31 (p.121). My summary here is, however, guilty of
over-simplifying the relationship between the honoured dignitary and the performed exemplars.
These symbolic pageants also enable the people (as represented by the playwright/poet) to
impress on the ruler the qualities they expected them to embody. Exemplars demand emulation,
thus far from straightforward flattery they should also (*ideally*) operate as reflections which
mould the viewer. Seen in this light, the Lord Mayor's Shows and Court Masques are a form of
covert negotiation between the people and those in power.
[70] The three earlier manuscripts of the *Seege* are more-or-less the same in tone and content; the
fourth, later text, offers a revised version of the story which brings it more into line with the
traditions of the romance epics. See Troyer (as in n.69 above), p.118.
[71] Troyer makes a compelling case, drawing on Nancy Bradbury's *Writing Aloud: Storytelling in
Late Medieval England* and Murray McGillivray's *Memorization in the Transmission of the
Middle English Romances*, that the *Seege* is not a failed romance as was once believed but a
burlesque minstrel text written specifically for oral performance: 'scholars have dismissed the
Seege as the work of a careless provincial minstrel, or at least one who did not have access to
detailed versions of the Trojan legend. […]. Instead of scoffing at "the gross errors of the text," I
would explain them as instances of the Bakhtinian transformation of official culture into the
carnivalesque. They are a conscious burlesque of the characters of the Trojan drama – an
unusually irreverent and base treatment of a noble tragedy by a minstrel comedian. […] the *Seege*
composer does not convey a cautionary tale but rather laughs at his own characters' faults. He has
produced an entertaining oral performance, not a didactic written history', *Ibid*, pp.119-21.
[72] *Ibid*, p.121.

greedy'.[73] Hecuba, still a marginal character, is again most prominent plotting revenge on Achilles for Hector's death. Yet although only ever referred to as Priam's wife the *Seege*'s anonymous Queen offers opportunity for performative embellishment: '[a] minstrel performing this scene for comic effect would have had a great deal of material to work with: an enraged and duplicitous Trojan queen; a craven son who is goaded by his mother'.[74]

The proto-pantomimic mockery of an overbearing mother, manipulating her frivolous son, is perhaps to be expected; yet in the *Seege* even the death of Hector, the Trojan champion from whom the English were most proud to claim descendancy, is played for comic-effect. At the conclusion of a fight that is more slap-stick than clash of epic heroes, Hector ignobly runs away from Achilles but stops to pick up a pretty helmet; Achilles seizes the opportunity to smite the bent-over Hector 'yn at the fondement' (l.1500).[75] The specific detail of this inglorious sodomitical death cannot be traced to any of *The Seege*'s identified literary sources (although Guido talks of a wound to Hector's groin), and in consequence, as Troyer concludes, '[w]e must consider that the *Seege* was neither meant to justify the noble heritage of the English nor to explain the ways of gods to men' but is rather 'a facetiously unorthodox version of a history venerated by high culture'.[76]

In upending *Troynovant*, Hecuba's history evidently had the potential to embarrass her ancestors, and in the mouths of ballad-singers and strolling minstrels the subject-matter was typically treated with far less reverence than

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[73] *Ibid*, p.120.
[74] *Ibid*, p.126.
[75] Anon. *Seege* qtd. in Troyer, p.125. This scenario is of course partially replayed and further embellished in Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* (5.9) in *The Norton Shakespeare* (1997), pp.1823-1914 (pp.1908-09).
[76] Troyer, p.130.

Monmouth's royal genealogy would seem to demand. As Benjamin Griffin

states, '[n]o other body of literature has had its records so depleted as the ballad';

yet extant fragments and the records of the titles of later printed ballads give

some indication to just how popular the matter of Troy remained for the ballad-

mongers. [77] In 1917 Hyder E. Rollins, desperate to exculpate Shakespeare for

having so debased the classical heroes in *Troilus and Cressida* (two years after

Tatlock thought he had done so), studied the depiction of the Troy-Troilus myth

in surviving English ballads and concluded that 'ballad-mongers and ballad-

singers had [already] made it coarse and farcical', 'they had popularized and

befouled'.[78] Although for Rollins (as for Tatlock) it seems the mere

popularisation of the Trojan War is clearly synonymous with its debasement, the

tone typically adopted by ballads and broadsides detailing Cressida's infidelity

tends to be satirical; and it is these Cressida/Troilus ballads – which have no need

for a Hecuba – that appear to dominate the extant titles and lyrics concerning

Troy.

However the title of the lost ballad recorded in the Stationers' Register

for August 1586, 'The Lamentations of Hecuba and the Ladies of Troye', speaks

tantalisingly of a popular song in which the Trojan queen's voice took centre

stage.[79] It was, presumably, in the tradition of emotive ballads about lost love

rather than the coarser satires of unfaithful lovers to which the Cressida story

belongs. The late date of 1586 tempts me to speculate that, rather than stemming

from the earlier English Troy traditions, this lost ballad could have been

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[77] *Playing the Past* (as in n.60 p.213), p.76.
[78] 'The Troilus-Cressida Story from Chaucer to Shakespeare', in *PMLA*, 32:3 (1917), 383-429 (p.394).
[79] J. Payne Collier, ed. *Extracts from the Registers of The Stationers' Company of Works Entered for Publication Between the Years 1570 and 1587* Vol. 2 (London: Shakespeare Society, 1849), p.206.

influenced by Jasper Heywood's translation of Seneca's *Troas*, which had made

the lamentations of Hecuba and her chorus available in English from 1558 (and

which had been reprinted five years prior to the ballad in Thomas Newton's

highly popular and influential *Seneca: His Tenne Tragedies,* 1581). On the other

hand, however, a significant proportion of ballads registered for printing were

attempts to cash-in on the popularity of much older songs. Shakespeare's *All's*

Well That Ends Well (c.1602), although a fictional source, gives us a snippet of

how a colloquial (non-classical) ballad of Hecuba's lamentations may have

sounded, with a snatch of a song that the misogynistic clown Lavatch

deliberately misquotes:

LAVATCH	'Was this fair face the cause' quoth she, 'Why the Grecians sackèd troy? Fond done, done fond. Was this King Priam's joy?' With that she sighèd as she stood, With that she sighèd as she stood, And gave this sentence then: 'Among nine bad if one be good, Among nine bad if one be good, There's yet one good in ten'
COUNTESS	What, 'one good in ten'? You corrupt the song, sirrah.
LAVATCH	One good *woman* in ten, madam, which is a purifying o'th' song. (1.3.62-70)

As Susan Snyder states, 'the Countess's response […] indicates that the ballad

the Clown distorts is well known', and although 'no parallel has been found' the

speaking 'she' of the poem is typically glossed as Hecuba lamenting over Paris,

her one bad son in ten.[80] Although this is a tempting interpretation, especially for

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[80] Editorial note to Shakespeare's *All's Well That Ends Well*, Oxford Shakespeare (Oxford: OUP, 1998), n.70-9, p.97. The suggestion that this is Hecuba is first put forward in William Warburton's edition of the play in 1747; Susan Snyder's 1998 edition offers Hecuba only as a possibility, whilst the notes to Norton's 1997 edition are more definite. In explaining his reversal of the line, Lavatch claims that good women are so rare that '[a] man may draw his heart out ere a pluck one' (1.3.79). For me, this suggestive 'pluck' links this moment to the bizarre anecdote

me, I see no reason why this lamenting 'she' of Troy cannot be Helen who is so often depicted gazing in a mirror.[81] If the first lines of Lavatch's song are faithful to an existing ballad, then Shakespeare is also perhaps giving us a glimpse of the popular origins of the phrase that was a well-worn cliché by the time Marlowe's Faustus iterates. If so, and *if* the singing 'she' is Hecuba, then Faustus – and everyone who has subsequently repeated Marlowe's proverbial expression – is in fact misappropriating the mournful sigh of a Hecuba to express instead an awestruck erotic desire for a Helen.

Whether a snippet of a pre-existing ballad or a Shakespearean coinage, Lavatch's song can still be added to evidence demonstrating the enduring popularity of the Trojan War cycle (if not specifically Hecuba) for populist oral genres performed in 'oure englissh tonge' throughout the Middle Ages and Early Modern period. Alongside ballads and the minstrel show, much later texts such as Bankes' *Destruction* (1678) confirm the reputation of Troy's fall as a traditional fireside or Christmas tale stored in the memory of the 'Grandam old', a well-worn tale which as the prologue indicates the Duke's Theatre intends to dramatise anew for its knowing London audience.

However, London's pageants, progresses and panegyrics do not, of course, rehearse the destruction of old Troy. As Michael Ullyot asserts, the

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that Pandarus tells in *Troilus and Cressida* (?1601) in which Hecuba weeps with laughter over a "witty" exchange between Helen and Troilus concerning his beard of fifty-two hairs: one white hair is identified as Priam, the rest are Troilus' brothers (Priam's hairs/heirs) within which Paris can be identified as a forked hair that should be 'pluck't out' (1.2.153).

[81] This is literally the case toward the conclusion of Thomas Heywood's play *The Second Part of the Iron Age* (c.1612), in which an aged Helen stares at her face in a looking glass and laments her lost beauty:

> Was this wrinkled fore-head
> When 'twas at best, worth halfe so many liues?
> Where is that beauty? liues it in this face
> Which hath set two parts of the World at warre,
> Beene ruine of the *Asian* Monarchy,
> And almost this of *Europe?* this the beauty
> That launch'd a thousand ships from *Aulis* gulfe? (K4r)

myths of *Troynovant* demanded 'a selective inheritance of Troy's glory before its fall, necessarily omitting the myth's more cautionary elements'.[82] Although evolved out of much earlier Tudor entertainments, civic shows celebrating London as a reincarnated Troy-cum-Rome reached their zenith after the humanist revolution had established the classical texts. Consequently, they are typically infused with heroic tableaux from Virgil and Homer yet simultaneously gloss over Ovid's and the new found tragedies' concern with the destruction of proud and powerful Troy.[83] As a result, and despite being Brut's great-great-Grandmother, and thus the ultimate maternal origins of England's Trojan ancestry, there is little evidence within civic and court celebrations to support Emrys Jones' claim that 'mythical-minded Britons […] who thought of themselves as being ultimately of Trojan stock would have had something of a proprietary interest in her [Hecuba]'.[84] Given that '[f]ew things ruin a good triumph like the spectre of death',[85] it is unsurprising to find that references to Hecuba, symbol of Troy's destruction and the death of the city's heroes, are absent from all extant Lord Mayor's shows and Royal pageants.

The story of Troy's destruction was, however, so deeply embedded in the collective social imaginary that even with Hecuba banished from view, *Troynovant* celebrations had to negotiate a difficult nexus of associations. Thomas Dekker's celebratory song 'Troynouant' in the *Magnificent Entertainment* (a Royal Entry designed to welcome the newly crowned James I

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[82] 'The Fall of Troynovant: Exemplarity after the Death of Henry, Prince of Wales', in *Fantasies of Troy* (as in n.6 p.11), pp.269-90 (pp.269-70).
[83] As Heather James argues, '[a]s it was adapted in the courts and pageants of Elizabeth and James, the legend was detached from its original embeddedness in the complex, ambivalent texts of Vergil's *Aeneid* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Employed in a highly controlled manner, the legend resembled ideological images of imperial authority like the frieze on the shield of Aeneas. It bore the mark of abstracted and politically usable authority', in *Shakespeare's Troy*, p.21.
[84] Jones, *Origins of Shakespeare* (as in n.41 p.162), p.94.
[85] Ullyot (as in n.82 above), p.277.

into London on the 15 March 1603 but was postponed until 1604), was tarnished by the pervasive cultural knowledge of the Trojan myths. Dekker intended the song to convey the fact that London was on '[h]oliday', that it had become a 'Sommer Arbour' and a 'Bridall Chamber' '[w]here foure great Kingdomes holde a Festiuall', and it was, therefore, 'no pittie, *Troynouant* be now no more a Cittie' (F2r-v). However, despite being sung in the 'sweete and rauishing voices' of 'two Boyes (Choristers of Paules)', accompanied by 'the chirpings of birds' (F2r), the intended meaning was apparently undermined by far stronger cultural associations of the city that is now no more. The 'holy light, / That burnes in *Hymens* hand, more bright, / Than the siluer Moone' (F2v), with which Dekker metaphorically lit the royal celebration was evidently not more bright than the audience's remembrance of the blazing fires of Troy's annihilation. The crowd's collective imaginary was so strong that, once evoked, the remembrance of a city ravaged by unspeakable violence could not be replaced by one blissfully lit by Hymen's torches and 'rauished with vnutterable ioyes' (F2v). The fire that wasted Troy consumed Dekker's conceit, forcing him to print a justification that anxiously insists upon the song's 'harmelesse meaning' (F2v).[86] Did a memory of the excluded Hecuba, either rotting under Caxton's shrine or running mad in Ovid's Thrace, similarly haunt the psyche of *Troynovant*? Did she lurk like a ghost behind the symbolism as the aging, childless Elizabeth I was addressed as 'Queene of second Troy'?

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[86] Dekker's defence: 'Nor let the scrue of any wresting comment vpon these words: "Troynouant is now no more a Citie" Enforce the Authors inuention away fro[m] his owne cleare strength and harmelesse meaning: all the scope of this fiction stretching only to this point, that *London* (to doo honour to this day, wherein springs vp all her happines) beeing rauished with vnutterable ioyes, makes no account (for the present) of her ancient title, to be called a Citie, (because aluring these tryumphes, shee puts off her formall habite of Trade and Commerce, treading euen Thrift it selfe vnder foote, but now becomes a Reueller and a Courtier' (F2v).

The spectre of mourning and death who was incidentally transformed into England's maternal origins as Monmouth's twelfth-century genealogy took hold had been kept in check by the inherited traditions of the medieval Troy Books. They offered only a marginal, mostly silent Hecuba whose immorality and madness were punished by death, but who was still obligingly honoured with a lavish monument, remembered even as the tomb's anonymity forgot the legacy of her name and covered the corporeal reality of her death. In the fifty years before the start of Elizabeth's reign, numerous alternative Hecubas became culturally available in texts introduced, instituted and enshrined by the nation's new pedagogy. These new-ancient texts broke the Troy Book tradition's monophonic telling of Troy, while their new-ancient Hecubas broke the monopoly of the Troy Book's curtailed queens. Following Dictys, the English Troy book tradition repeatedly laid Hecuba to rest in an ornamental tomb; yet the story of textual survival surrounding Dictys' narrative should have warned how long-forgotten tombs can suddenly gape open and long-lost texts can resurface.

Chapter Five: Hecuba, Humanism and Hauntings – Part One

1. 'O Hecuba let not thy ghost so fret' [1]

> The Renaissance, if it did nothing else that was new, chose to open a polemic against what it called the Dark Ages. The ubiquitous imagery of disinterment, resurrection, and renascence needed a death and burial to justify itself; without the myth of medieval entombment, its imagery, which is to say its self-understanding, had no force. The creation of this myth was not a superficial occurrence. It expressed a belief in change and loss, change from the immediate past and loss of a remote, prestigious past that might nonetheless be resuscitated.
>
> Thomas M. Greene, *The Light in Troy*, p.3

The humanist project developed an intense awareness of the historical gulf dividing the present from the classical past. Within the humanists' 'antimedieval polemic', Thomas Greene identifies a genuine hostility toward the medieval scribes and clerics for what was judged to be both careless and wilful 'corruption' of classical matter.[2] What was felt as a secular or cultural Fall, with the degradation and decomposition of authoritative texts, intensified the new sense of historical perspective, vexing humanist scholars with the problem of how to bridge the divide without 'inevitable hermeneutic anachronism'.[3] The pervasive talk of textual 'corruption' and the 'necromantic metaphors of disinterment, rebirth and resuscitation' which structured humanist thought reveal a conceptual paradox,[4] simultaneously optimistic in the theoretical insistence that

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[1] Sub-heading taken from Thomas Fenne, *Fenne's Frutes* (London: T. Orwin for Richard Oliffe at the signe of the Crane, 1590), Gg2r.
[2] Thomas M. Greene, *The Light in Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry* (New Haven & London: Yale UP, 1982), p.8.
[3] *Ibid*, p.9.
[4] *Ibid*, p.32; see also pp.1-53.

the classical past can be revived intact, yet morbidly betraying the impossibility of such a task.

Jasper Heywood's preface to the first English translation of Seneca's *Troas* (1558) betrays such concerns, stating: 'how harde a thing it is for me, to touche at full in all poyntes, the aucthores minde, (being in many places very harde and doubtfull and the worke muche corrupt by the defaute of euill printed bookes) […]. Thys worke semed vnto me, in some places vnperfytte (whether left so of the authour or part of it lost as tyme deuoureth all thynges I wotte not)' (102-06, 119-22). As the parenthetical 'I wotte not' implies, the Renaissance brought with it an insecurity about the possibility of rescuing the past from devouring time and correctly representing the unknowable, an anxiety entirely absent from the assured and unrelentingly anachronistic 'gadryng to geder' of the Troy Book tradition.[5]

Within the context of a newly Protestant England, the concerns of the humanists obliquely echo the terms of the post-Reformation mourning crisis. The humanists, as Franco Simone describes, 'saw a [historical] rupture where earlier there had been a belief in a smooth development';[6] the anachronisms of the medieval texts allow past, present and even glimpses of the future to co-exist whilst the past is unproblematically maintained in the garb of the present. In the religious sphere the denial of purgatory (a doctrine which reformers attributed to the corruption of Holy Scripture), eradicated the place of suspended time in which communion between the living and dead was still possible. In both

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[5] In the *Recuyell*'s preface Caxton reproduces Lefèvre's prologue in which the French author states his aim to create 'a recuyel or gadryng to geder' of the multiple 'synguler hystoryes of Troye', (DI.3).
[6] 'La coscienza della rinascita negli umanisti francesi', in *Rivista di letterature moderne* 2 (1947), qtd. in Greene, *The Light in Troy*, p.3.

humanism and Protestantism, then, that which was past was felt to suffer a 'more absolute annihilation than ever'.[7]

Catherine Belsey's description of the ghosts of medieval and Renaissance ballads and fireside stories as 'always radically out of time, as well as place', strikes me as an apt description of the humanists' rhetorical gesture of digging up a past that is also mournfully felt to be 'radically out of time'.[8] Marjorie Garber's descriptions of literary revenants in Shakespeare, too, prove remarkably appropriate to the Renaissance's 'proliferation and plurality' (or 'perpetual recurrence') of printed translations that are 'somehow both nominally identical to and numinously different from a vanished or unavailable original', and therefore operate as 'signs of the lostness and unrecoverability of origins'.[9] Of course, as a mythological character, all Hecubas can be thought of as a type of literary revenant, belated representations of the lost original, 'figures *instead*' of Hecuba.[10] Yet whilst Garber's theory on the congruencies between ghosts and writing is built on the modern psychoanalytical work of Freud, Nietzsche, de Man, Lacan and Derrida, as a way of reading Shakespeare and his ghosts, the humanists' ubiquitous 'necromantic metaphors' imply that the creation of ghosts was inherently built *into* the Renaissance's hermeneutic strategy for countering the problems of time and history attendant on the study of the Graeco-Roman classics.[11]

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[7] Neill, *Issues of Death* (as in n.34 p.27), p.38.

[8] 'Shakespeare's Sad Tale for Winter' (as in n.29 p.154), p.5.

[9] Garber (as in n.109 p.94), p.15, p.14, p.16, and p.xiv.

[10] *Ibid*, p.xiv

[11] Greene describes how the problems of time and history were felt so intensely by the early humanists: 'How is one to follow Aristotle if one cannot read him in his own language? And if in fact many things can be said elegantly in Greek for which no adequate Latin expressions exist? And if in any case the Latin versions we possess are wretched? And if, still worse, the modern audience is incapable of reading Latin properly? And if one reads Aristotle through the eyes of Avicenna and Averroes, who knew no Latin and insufficient Greek? The concrete knowable actuality of the text-in-itself fades away behind a series of distorting lenses […]. Some of those

More specifically, within their mission to "resurrect" the literature of the classical past, the humanists resurrected a corpus of classic Hecuba-bearing narratives in which cursing, raging and lamenting queens, who are insistently vocal and potentially violent, exhibit their bloodied, bruised, and blackened bodies as they enact traditional mourning rituals in the ashes and earth of Troy. These new-ancient Hecubas thus look uncannily like the mangled corpse that the medieval Troy book tradition had left dead and buried under their amnesiac tombs. Whilst our modern-day conception of ghosts is dominated by the notion of ethereal, disembodied apparitions, the depiction of ghosts in the Renaissance consistently 'place […] emphasis on the corporeality of the *walking dead* ';[12] a description which could, again, aptly apply to the 'life imprisoned in a body dead' (*Lucrece* 1456) established by the classical Hecuba-narratives. Read after the English tales of Troy, the humanists' classics shift Hecuba from a peripheral character to centre stage; her mourning work becomes vital rather than either ornamental or a tedious digression; she is capable of enacting vengeance – even infanticide – without the aid of male agents; her madness, fury and violence go unpunished, whilst her fate is both indeterminate and morally ambivalent. England's pre-humanist icon of sorrow, gleaned from narratives that had remained essentially unchanged for centuries within 'the massive hermeneutic unanimity of the Middle Ages' was,[13] therefore, forced into a cultural dialogue with its own multiple, competing, unstable and, from a Christian perspective, amoral textual origins.

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distortions no longer baffle our modern eyes. But the advances of latter-day philology have not truly dispelled the radical problem of anachronistic reading […].We have not yet put to rest the problematic first lucidly and self-consciously exposed in the fifteenth century', p.10.

[12] Emphasis added, Belsey (as in n.29 p.154), p.24.

[13] Greene, p.36.

Amongst this cultural convergence, the idyllic *Troynovant* myths had to contend with the "return" of England's repressed maternal origins as embodied in this intensified spectre of death. In contrast to the Troy Book queens, the classical Hecubas are incessantly seen and heard lamenting for their dead children. Moreover, whilst the Troy Books – by following Dares – typically omit references to Hecuba's prophetic pregnancy dream, Euripides, Ovid and Seneca all underscore Hecuba's lamentations with maternal guilt stemming from her dream, further intensifying the womb/tomb connotations with the nation's mythic maternal origins. The aim of the *Troynovant* myth is to insist, as Ben Jonson does at James I's entry into London, that '[t]he long laments spent for ruin'd Troy / Are dried'.[14] Clearly, the presence of Troy's perpetually mourning queen undermines such declarations. Within the conceptual framework of *Troynovant*, then, Hecuba is a metacultural character: belonging to the stories and lineage upon which the indigenous myth is built, yet excluded beyond the boundaries of their performance. *Troynovant*'s exorcism of the transgressive queen is the creation of a cultural analogue, a haunting 'memory trace' of leftover myth, the creation of another ghost.[15]

This two-part chapter is, then, concerned with the rhetorical ghosts of Hecuba generated by England's investment in humanism. Part one focuses on the Renaissance schoolroom: not only on the "resurrected" classical Hecubas who became required reading but also the pedagogical practices that intensified the eschatological and uncanny aspects of the Trojan queen's character. The submerged resonances between the ghost of Old Hamlet and the Player's Hecuba (identified in chapter three) can now be placed in a wider cultural context, one

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[14] Qtd. in Heather James, *Shakespeare's Troy* (as in n.104 p.88), p.20.
[15] 'Memory trace' is another of Garber's descriptions of literary ghosts, *Shakespeare's Ghost Writers* (as in n.109 p.94), p.129.

that reveals the particular haunting affect of the mobled queen on the Danish Prince to be a kind of synecdoche of a wider cultural "haunting".

Part two (chapter six) investigates the haunting effect Hecuba has in the cultural convergence of the humanists' "reanimated" classical Hecubas with the continuing indigenous traditions of the medieval tales and the *Troynovant* myths. I then turn my attention to the legacy of humanism, using academic translations as stepping stones to leap forward to the nineteenth and early twentieth-century when "men of letters" oversaw the demonization and expulsion of the tragic Hecubas from the classical canon, thereby creating yet another haunting ghost or 'memory trace'.

2. Beloved Black Earth

> Welcome, fairest of audiences,
> You who are desirous of things literary –
> These men, presenting their tragedy today,
> Have asked me to plead their cause among you.
>
> ****
>
> If we please at all, give me your loud applause.
> But if you desire to know the argument of the story,
> Polydorus, sent from the deepest caverns of hell,
> Now speaks it,
>   Melanchthon, 'Prologue to Euripides' *Hecuba*' (published 1528)[16]

Around 1525, the University of Wittenberg's first professor of Greek, Philipp Melanchthon, one of the most influential of the new-wave of pedagogical reformers and a vehement advocate of Greek tragedy, directed his students in a

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[16] Melanchthon's *Hecuba* prologue was published in his first edition of selected poems (1528), and can be found in *Corpus Reformatorum: Philippi Melanthonis opera quae supersunt omnia,* Vols. 1-28, ed. by K. Bretschneider and H. Bindseil (Halle: Schwetschke, 1834-60), 10.499 and 18.331-34. I am very grateful to Nicholas Bowling of Trinity School for so generously providing me with this translation.

Latin performance of Euripides' *Hecuba* (only the second post-classical production of the tragedy on record).[17] Mossman remarks that Melanchthon's production of *Hecuba* is 'a peculiarly satisfying coincidence, Wittenberg being Hamlet's university'.[18] Coincidence maybe, but the Wittenberg of Luther and Melanchthon, Faustus and Hamlet, was seen as an iconic epicentre of both educational and religious reform, synonymous with the anti-scholastic movement, which determined Shakespeare's English schooling in Hecuba. Whether or not it was at Wittenberg that Hamlet first heard the Player recite 'Aeneas' tale to Dido', the Hecuba Hamlet recalls (whether considered Virgilian, Ovidian, Shakespearean or Marlovian) is certainly the cumulative result of England's importation of the translated texts and pedagogical techniques of the movement epitomised in the reputation of Wittenberg.

In the mid-Tudor period England vociferously adopted the texts, tenets and teaching practices advocated by continental humanists, adapting them into the radical revision and expansion of its own education system.[19] Despite individual variation within the curriculum, the new English schools established a more or less 'national system of education', aided immeasurably by the printing presses' ability to produce identical copies of textbooks.[20] As Emrys Jones

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[17] The first recorded post-classical production of *Hecuba* was mounted by students at the Collège du Porc in Belgium, directed by another humanist pedagogue Hadrianus Barlandus, using Erasmus' translation, probably around 1514 but possibly as early as 1506. For details see Mossman, *Wild Justice*, p.223 and Garland, *Surving Greek Tragedy* (as in n.18 p.189), p.115.

[18] Mossman, *Wild Justice*, p.224.

[19] As Peter Mack explains: '[t]he schools that were lost with the dissolution of the monasteries were replaced by newly established town grammar schools, which were given humanist curricula. Thomas Cromwell promoted reform of the universities in direction of the new classical learning in order to produce a new, non-clerical cadre of government servants and to educate a learned clergy to further the Reformation. At the same time as many new schools were founded, the number of students attending the two English universities (Oxford and Cambridge) increased', 'Humanism, Rhetoric, Education', p.95.

[20] As Curtis insists, the 'term "national system of education" is the only proper one to apply to the network of schools that sprang up in these years. Although financial support for these new institutions came overwhelmingly from private sources, the principles guiding the founders in the drafting of statutes and thus determining the curriculum had been formulated by national

describes, the 'superlatively important' Desiderius Erasmus formulated a mode

of learning, with a stress on classical matter and rhetorical training, which was

adopted by the English grammar schools and 'quickly spread through the

country'.[21] For Jonathan Bate, 'Renaissance man is rhetorical man, whose

repertoire of formal linguistic structures and accompanying physical gestures is a

way of ordering the chaos of experience';[22] the nationwide Erasmian pedagogy

in the art of rhetoric inculcated and conditioned the manner in which texts were

read, studied and comprehended. So pervasive was this rhetorical manner of

thinking that Richard Halpern has designated it a 'mode of indoctrination based

on hegemony and consent rather than force and coercion'.[23] Thus, humanist

educators such as Erasmus and Melanchthon not only produced accessible Latin

translations of the classic Hecuba-narratives, and encouraged the intellectual

appetite for reading them, but also helped to establish a pedagogical structure

which would set the interpretative relations with the new-ancient Hecubas for

generations to come. However, before we return *Hamlet*'s Hecuba to

Shakespeare's schoolroom or try to uncover *how* the Trojan queen was being

read and understood, and what effect this, in turn, had on the wider cultural

function of the queen, it is necessary to outline briefly *which* Hecubas were being

read.

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authorities. Ecclesiastical canons, royal injunctions, and parliamentary statutes spoke with one voice from 1529 to 1604 to set the basic essentials for grammar school education', 'Education and Apprenticeship' (as in n.19 p.189), p.58.

[21] Jones, *Origins of Shakespeare* (as in n.41 p.162), p.9. St Paul's grammar school, founded 1509, enthusiastically adopted 'Erasmus's educational and literary theories […] and St Paul's soon became a prototype of many, perhaps most, Tudor grammar-schools. In this way, Erasmian ideals, values, and practices quickly spread through the country'. *Cf.* also T.W. Baldwin, *William Shakesperes Small Latine & Lesse Greeke*.

[22] 'Introduction', William Shakespeare, *Titus Andronicus*, ed. by Jonathan Bate (London: Arden, 2003), pp.1-121 (pp.32-33).

[23] *The Poetics of Primitive Accumulation: English Renaissance Culture and the Genealogy of Capital* (New York: Cornell UP, 1991), p.29.

At least until 1570, Hecuba's classic origin and original texts were imported into England from continental printing presses, in Latin translation, typically complete with academic annotations and commentaries firmly embedding them within the discourse of humanism. However, not all Hecubas were equal under this system. Euripides' *Trojan Women* was comprehensively neglected; although referred to by name in North's translation of Plutarch's *Lives* (EEr) for example, there is little evidence of the text circulating in England where it was completely eclipsed by Seneca's *Troas*.[24] As Bruce R. Smith states, '[w]hatever criterion we use – date of the *editio princeps*, number of translations, number of vernacular imitations, success in its production – Seneca's pre-eminence in the Renaissance is beyond dispute'.[25] In the specific case of *Troas*, the universities' scanty surviving records show that it was performed, in Latin, by Cambridge students in 1551-2 and again in 1560-1.[26] Although no records survive of equivalent productions at Oxford or in the schools, in all probability it was Seneca's fallen queen who dominated the *performance* of Hecuba within Renaissance academia.[27] Within the pedagogy of the Reformation, then,

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[24] This idea is corroborated by Jones who observes that Euripides' *Medea* and *Hippolytus* were also 'neglected in favour of Seneca, who had written his own versions of these Euripidean themes', *Origins of Shakespeare*, p.92. Moreover, as Garland argues, in contrast to *Hecuba* and Seneca's *Troas*, there are considerably less surviving manuscripts containing *Trojan Women*; the Mediceus Laurentianus 32.2, for example, dated c.1310 and possibly owned by Petrarch, contains Greek copies of *all* Euripides' tragedies with the exception of *Trojan Women*, in *Surviving Greek Tragedy*, p. 91.

[25] *Ancient Scripts* (as in n.5 p.181), p.203.

[26] See: 'Appendix 8: Chronological List of College Performances', in *Records of Early English Drama: Cambridge* Vol.2, ed. by Alan H. Nelson (Toronto, Buffalo and London: Toronto UP, 1989), pp.963-76 or Frederick Boas, 'Appendix IV', in *University Drama in the Tudor Age* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1914), pp.386-90.

[27] Extant dramatic records pertaining to Oxford's college entertainments are even vaguer than those remaining from Cambridge – see: *Records of Early English Drama: Oxford*, 2 Vols., ed. by John R. Elliott Jr., Alan H. Nelson, Alexandra F. Johnston, and Diana Wyatt (London and Toronto: British Library and Toronto UP, 2004) – although it seems unlikely that Seneca's Trojan tragedy would have gone unperformed. It is Westminster grammar school, rather than either of the Oxbridge colleges, which provides the first known performance of classical tragedy in England, (with a Latin performance of Seneca's *Hippolytus* in the mid-1540s; see Smith, p.199-202) and thus it again seems unlikely that *Troas* would have been neglected in the schools' theatrical repertoire.

Seneca's Hecuba, represented by 'the schoolboy dressed up in a matron's gown',[28] would have led a chorus of English schoolboys/students in a Latin chant as they performed the obsequies now decried as barbaric, foreign, papist and pagan; described here in Jasper Heywood's translation (which was designed to aid younger boys who were only just beginning their Latin lessons):

> Our naked armes, thus here we rent for thee,
> and bluddy shoulders, (Hector) thus we teare:
> Thus with our fistes, our heades lo beaten be
> and al for ther, behold we hale our heare.
> Our dugges alas, with mothers handes be torne
> and where the fleshe is wounded round about
> Which for thy sake, we rent thy death to morne
> the flowing streames of blud, (367-474)

Back in the day-to-day classroom, Seneca's verse and prose works (such as the *Epistles*, in which Hecuba 'heads the list of examples of misfortune') were read in extract form for *sententiae* which the boys would collect and record in their commonplace books, ready to embellish their own compositions.[29] While Seneca's tragedies dominated the academic stage it was Ovid who dominated the schoolrooms. As Lynn Enterline summarises, '[n]ot only was the *Metamorphoses* extensively excerpted in the lower schools, but in the upper schools it was read in its entirety, set to be memorized as a model for rhetorical imitation'.[30] Furthermore, Erasmus insisted that all tutors 'must command a good supply of mythology' with which to instruct their pupils, and although Homer is named as 'the father of all myth' Erasmus makes allowances for the

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[28] Smith, *Ancient Scripts*, p.199.
[29] Bracketed quotation from Mossman's *Wild Justice*, p.217. That Seneca offered prime material for this ubiquitous Renaissance practice is attested to by '[t]he first English book on Seneca, […] William Cornwallis's *Discourses upon Seneca the Tragedian* (1601)' which, as Miola states, solely 'consists of meditative commentaries on eleven sentences drawn from the tragedies', *Shakespeare and Classical Tragedy* (as in n.123 p.102), p.5.
[30] *Rhetoric of the Body* (as in n.30 p.116), p.19.

obscurity of the Greek text and offers 'the *Metamorphoses* and *Fasti* of Ovid' as acceptable alternatives, 'although written in Latin'.[31] Erasmus' *De Copia*, a core school-text, draws heavily on *Metamorphoses* for its own excerpts and examples, thereby making Ovid 'the foremost example of classical copiousness or eloquence'.[32] Following Erasmus' precedent, Ovid's account of Hecuba's metamorphosis in Book 13 frequently 'figured in Elizabethan schoolbooks as a stock example of "copiousness"'.[33] Books 1, 2, 4 and 6 of Virgil's *Aeneid* were set-texts for slightly older schoolboys while university students read the work in its entirety (although Hecuba only appears briefly in Book 2).[34] Whereas Ovid's *Heroides* and *Metamorphoses* were used as models for the construction and expression of female sentiment and emotionality, the *Aeneid* was read primarily for its depiction of pious masculinity and heroic self-sacrifice, to inculcate courage and toughen the mind.[35] Although there is little evidence to suggest that Homer's *Iliad* was also a core textbook in the schools' curricula, it was frequently referred and deferred to in academic tracts. Moreover, an English edition of the Greek text was circulating from c.1589, Greek-Latin editions were easy to obtain, and – from 1610 – George Chapman's English translation would make the *Iliad* available to England's "unlearned" yet literate readers.[36]

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[31] *De ratione studii*: 'On the Method of Study', trans. by Brian McGregor, *Collected Work of Erasmus* Vol. 24, ed. by Craig R. Thompson (Toronto: TUP, 1978), pp.660-91 (p.673).
[32] Forey, 'Introduction', Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, trans. by Arthur Golding, ed. by Madeleine Forey (London: Penguin Books, 2002), pp.xi-xxvi (p.xiii).
[33] Levin, *The Question of Hamlet*, p.144.
[34] Donna B. Hamilton isolates these four books of the *Aeneid* in: *Virgil and "The Tempest": The Politics of Imitation* (Columbus: Ohio State UP, 1990), pxiii.
[35] See Ong's *Rhetoric, Romance and Technology* for the notion of humanist education as a puberty rite in which the cult of the classical hero, the learning of Latin, and an obsession with the epic was all part of a "toughening" of boys into courageous men, pp.113-40. For further details of the Renaissance syllabus see Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric*, p.14.
[36] Homer, *Iliad*, trans. by George Chapman (London: Richard Field for Nathaniell Butter, 1610). I am indebted to Peter Mack for supplying me with details regarding the Greek and Latin-Greek editions of the *Iliad* circulating in sixteenth-century England.

In contrast to the obscurity of Euripides' *Trojan Women*, *Hecuba* was the first tragedy in the Byzantine triad of Euripides and, since the triads were structured 'in order of popularity' and, 'since Euripides was the most popular dramatist, *Hecuba* would have been the best known tragedy' in later antiquity.[37] The play was thus, as Mossman argues, 'already marked out for success even before the study of Greek began to take hold in Italy' and, as Garland observes, became the 'only work [out of the extant Greek tragedies] which we know to have been studied' prior to the sixteenth century.[38] This high esteem helped to ensure that *Hecuba*, the first of the ancient Athenian tragedies to be translated out of Greek into Latin, also became a key reference-text for the new humanist scholars and, subsequently, the Renaissance's most frequently translated and printed Greek tragedy.[39] As Malcolm Heath puts it, '[f]or the critics in the Renaissance *Hecuba* was indeed a paradigmatic tragedy, perhaps the outstanding piece in the Greek tragic corpus'.[40]

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[37] Garland (as in n.18 p.189), p.79. Yet, as Mossman argues, this early (fourth-century CE) popularity 'has the unfortunate corollary that the chances of histrionic interpolation are greater than if the work had been consigned to the library shelf', p.244. Further evidence of Hecuba's popularity in the Byzantine period, which Mossman also relays, comes from 'a description, in bad hexameters, and a round inscribed base of a statue of Hecuba which stood in the gymnasium of Zeuxippos in Byzantium, destroyed by fire in AD 532. Christodorus of Thebes gives us little idea of what the statue looked like except that it had a fold of its cloak drawn over its face in mourning and a loosened gown', p.255. Christodorus's description reminds me of a post-modern sculptural take on Hecuba by Reuben Nakian in 1960: a six-foot eight-inches tall bronze statue, resembling draped cloth, crumpled or melted over crutch-like poles. Nakian's 'Hecuba' is located in Cincinnati's Federal Reserve Gardens (Ohio) and can be seen here: <www.sculpturecenter.org/oosci/sculpture.asp?SID=565>

[38] Mossman, p.220; Garland, p.96.

[39] See Mossman, pp.220-21; Heath, pp.40-43 and Garland, pp.96-97. There are three documented attempts to translate *Hecuba* before the 1500s: the earliest of these, c.1362, is a word-for-word interlinear translation of lines 1-146 attributed to Leonzio Pilato (Greek tutor to both Petrarch and Boccaccio) which is assumed to be a crib sheet for his pupils (see Garland, p.97); this was followed by a word-for-word translation of the tragedy's opening scene by Pietro da Montagnana (1432-78); in 1461 Francesco Filelfo offered 'the first […] attempt to render the poetry of the original' into a verse translation of Polydorus' prologue which was then 'delivered as a funeral oration on Christmas Day' which Erasmus is meant to have known (Mossman, pp.220-21). Beyond these three *Hecuba* fragments there is, as Garland states, 'no evidence of any other translations of [*any*] Greek tragedy […] undertaken before the sixteenth century', p.97.

[40] 'Iure principem locum tenet' (as in n.18 p.189), p.40.

Erasmus produced the first full-length Latin translation of *Hecuba* (with *Iphigenia at Aulis*) in 1504, dedicated to the Archbishop of Canterbury.[41] In 1506 these became the first Greek tragedies to be printed in translation (although a second edition was required to rectify numerous printing errors; this appeared in the following year from Aldus Manutius' famous Aldine press). In an address to 'Friends of Literature' which prefaced the corrected work, Manutius declares: 'I have hastened to publish them, as much to serve as a model as to provide explanation and interpretation of the text. It is hardly possible to over-estimate their worth'.[42] And indeed, the printing of what was to become 'the most important and influential, as well as the most elegant, of the early translations of *Hecuba*', made Euripides' tragedy accessible to the educated elite throughout Europe for the first time in over a thousand years.[43] Yet, as J.M. Walton writes, '[a]t the time there was nothing, even in Latin, with which to compare [Erasmus' *Hecuba* and *Aulis*]. So unusual did these pieces seem that Erasmus was accused of having made them up as original plays'.[44] Even Erasmus struggled with the 'affected strangeness' of *Hecuba*'s and *Iphigenia*'s choruses: 'nowhere does antiquity seem to me to have been more inept than in such choruses, whose style is vitiated by an excessive affectation of novelty while the sense is sacrificed to verbal miracle-mongering'.[45] Despite offering strikingly faithful translations of *Hecuba*'s choral odes, Erasmus vowed that in subsequent translations of Greek

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[41] For a detailed account of the translations of Erasmus see Erika Rummel, *Erasmus as a Translator of the Classics* (Toronto: Toronto UP, 1985), pp.28-47.
[42] Qtd. in Garland, *Surviving Greek Tragedy*, p.112.
[43] Mossman, *Wild Justice*, p.221.
[44] *Found in Translation* (as in n.18 p.189), p.29.
[45] *Opus Epistolarum Desiderius Erasmi Roterodami*, Ep.208.25, ed. by P.S. Allen, qtd. in Rachel Giese, 'Erasmus' Greek Studies', *The Classical Journal*, 29:7 (1934), 517-27, (p.522).

tragedy he would 'alter both form and matter and substitute for all this […] nonsense some graceful theme soberly developed'.[46]

However, regardless of such scepticism and criticism, Erasmus' faithful line-by-line translation did undeniably come, as Manutius' hoped, to 'serve as a model', facilitating a proliferation of further Latin versions across Europe, including that of Archibald Hay in 1543 (a Scottish humanist scholar working in France) and England's own John Shepreve (Lecturer in Greek at Oxford from 1530 to his death in 1542) whose Latin *Hecuba* is no longer extant.[47] In consequence, *Hecuba*, in Latin translation and Latin-Greek transliterations, was certainly one if not *the* most widely circulated Greek tragedy in the Renaissance. From the 1540s onwards, the legacy of Erasmus' Latin *Hecuba* sparked a trend across Europe for vernacular translations of the tragedy, particularly into Italian, Spanish and French but, conspicuously, not into English.[48]

Veneration for *Hecuba*, however, certainly crossed the English Channel, and the play can be found commended in both new and newly translated vernacular critical commentaries by English humanists, such as Sidney's highly influential *Apology for Poetry* (printed posthumously in 1595).[49] Sidney recites

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[46] Giese, 'Erasmus' Greek Studies' (as in n.45 above), p.522.

[47] For information on Archibald Hay see, Euan Cameron, 'Hay, Archibald (*d.* 1547)', *ODNB* (OUP, 2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/12709> [11 Jan. 2007]; and for details on John Shepreve see: J. Andreas Löwe, 'Shepreve, John (1509?–1542)', *ODNB* (OUP, 2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/25351> [11 Jan 2007].

[48] See: Mossman, p.223 and Garland, p.113.

[49] The humanists revisited and printed the works of various Roman and Byzantium critics, such as Cicero, Plutarch and Lucian, in which discussions of *Hecuba* feature (see Mossman pp.210-43). To these were added the newly accessible works of the ancient Athenians, such as Aristotle's *Poetics* (first printed in Latin in 1498) in which *Hecuba* is again singled out for praise. Engaging with these classical theorists, the humanists produced their own academic treatises and *Hecuba* becomes an oft-cited example of both rhetorical and structural excellence in such critical works as Caspar Stiblinus' commentary on his own Latin translations of Euripides (1562), Minturno's *L'Arte Poetica* (1563), and Scaliger's *Poetices* (1581); see Mossman *Wild Justice* p.223, pp.230-31; Jones *Origins of Shakespeare* pp.95-96; Heath 'Iure principem locum tenet', pp.44-48. Despite this widespread critical appreciation of *Hecuba*, Seneca's popularity was so predominant that *Troas* was still considered significantly superior to Euripides' tragedies; thus, in the opinion of Venetian humanist Giraldi Cinthio, *Troas* is deemed to surpass *Hecuba* 'in majesty, in

the story from Plutarch to prove *Hecuba*'s emotional affectivity and explains

how employing Polydorus' shade as a prologue enabled Euripides to adhere to

the Aristotelian unities. As Jones remarks, 'no other classical play detains

[Sidney] for so long'.[50] Similarly, the English educational manual by Richard

Rainolde, *A booke called the Foundacion of Rhetorike* (1563), uses *Hecuba* to

exemplify the rhetorical figure of *eidolopeia*: 'when a dedde manne talketh' by

focussing 'vpon the persone of Polidorus dedde, whose spirite entereth at the

Prologue of the tragedie' (fol.xlix[v]).[51] Seneca's first English translator Jasper

Heywood asserts, in his edition of *Hercules Furens*, that Erasmus 'so well and

truelye translated oute of Greeke into Latin twoo tragedies of Euripides, whereof

the one is named Hecuba, & the other Iphiginia' that he 'woon not the least

praise among learned me[n]'.[52] Despite such examples, which imply cultural

familiarity with *Hecuba* and discuss plot, characters and structure, and regardless

of its wide availability in Latin, there is little evidence to confirm that the tragedy

was formally studied in English schools.

The dramatic records for Trinity College Cambridge, however, list a

student performance of a '*Hecuba*' in 1559-60.[53] Alan H. Nelson, as editor of the

Records of Early English Drama, speculates that this 'may be [a production of]

Erasmus' 1506 translation of Euripides' play of that name', and declares that it

'is unlikely to refer to Seneca's *Trojan Women*' as has previously been

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passions, in observation of character, and in the vivacity of the sentences', trans. by Dorat, qtd. in Miola, *Shakespeare and Classical Tragedy* (as in n.123 p.102) p.18.

[50] *Origins of Shakespeare* (as in n.41 p.162), p.96.

[51] London: John Kingston, 1563. All subsequent quotations from Rainolde's manual will be referenced in the text with page numbers referring to this folio edition.

[52] 'Dedication to Syr William Harbert', in *Hercules Furens*, trans. by Jasper Heywood (London: Richard Tottyll, 1559), in *Jasper Heywood and his Translations of Seneca's Troas, Thyestes and Hercules Furens, edited from Octavos of 1559, 1560 and 1561*, pp.198-202 (p.199).

[53] See: 'Appendix 8: Chronological List of College Performances', in *Records of Early English Drama: Cambridge* Vol.2, ed. by Alan H. Nelson (Toronto, Buffalo and London: Toronto UP, 1989), pp.963-76 or Boas, 'Appendix IV', pp.386-90.

claimed.[54] Whilst it is of course impossible to be absolutely certain about the nature of this Cambridge *Hecuba*, Melanchthon had set the precedent for – as well as outlining the educational benefits of – student productions of Erasmus' Latin *Hecuba* over thirty years earlier at Wittenberg. Yet even if Euripides' raging queen did not grace England's university stages, 'all the extant Greek tragedies were made available in editions and in Latin translations during the sixteenth century' and, therefore, as Jones asserts, 'would have been accessible to anyone with not much more than a moderate reading ability in Latin';[55] a category which would, of course, include all English students and schoolboys.

In summary, it can be broadly asserted that the schoolroom conception of Hecuba was primarily dominated by her depiction in Book 13 of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*; that this was supplemented by Aeneas' remembrance of Hecuba in the *Aeneid*; that there was a greater familiarity with the text of Seneca's *Troas* (which is definitively known to have been performed by university students) than that of Euripides' *Hecuba* which, like Homer's *Iliad*, largely remained a venerated, frequently referenced, but typically indirect source. Given both the humanist metaphors of disinterment that surround these texts and the vivid evocation of Hecuba clawing her loved ones' ashes out of the Trojan earth and into her skin within the Euripidean, Senecan and Ovidian texts advocated by Erasmus and Melanchthon, it is curiously gratifying to note that the adopted Greek names of these two supremely influential educators, when translated into English and placed side-by-side, read: Beloved Black-Earth.

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[54] Alan H. Nelson, *Records of Early English Drama: Cambridge* Vol.2 (as in n.51 above), n.208 p.1214.
[55] Jones, *Origins of Shakespeare*, p.91.

Erasmian pedagogy placed particular focus on Ovid's Hecuba episode as an 'exemplary model for how to use *copia* to create great emotion';[56] extracts of *Metamorphoses* were both memorised for recitation and translated into English and then back into Latin, giving schoolboys an intimate knowledge of Ovid's queen. This, then, was the predominant Renaissance schoolroom Hecuba; here translated by the grown-up schoolboy Arthur Golding in 1567:[57] 'Queene *Hecub* […] a piteous cace to see' (13.509), kissing the bones of her sons (13.510-11), snatching 'a crum of *Hectors* dust' to 'her boosom bare' (13.512-13), beating and clawing her chest as she weeps and laments for Polyxena, her 'grisild heare' '[b]eerayed' in the 'jellyed blood' of her daughter's death-wounds (13.586-89). After lamenting this daughter, Hecuba is struck 'dumb for sorrow' before her murdered son (13.645), standing 'astonyed leeke / As if shee had beene stone' (13.646-47), arming herself 'with ire' by staring at his wounds (13.652), until, with 'her hart […] set on fyre' (13.653) and 'forgetting quyght that shee / Was old' (13.659-60), she confronts Polymestor as 'though shee still had beene a Queene' (13.654) and, 'sore inflammd with wrath' (13.671), the grief-stricken mother:

> Did in the traytors face bestow her nayles, and scratched out
> His eyes: her anger gave her hart and made her strong and stout.
> Shee thrust her fingars in as farre as could bee, and did bore
> Not now his eyes (for why his eyes were pulled out before),
> But bothe the places of his eyes berayed with wicked blood
>   The Thracians at theyr Tyrannes harme for anger wexing wood,

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[56] Enterline, *Rhetoric of the Body* (as in n.30 p.116), p.25.

[57] Unless stated otherwise all quotations from *Metamorphoses* in this chapter are taken from *Shakespeare's Ovid: Being Arthur Golding's Translation of the Metamorphoses*, ed. by W.H.D. Rouse (London: Centaur Press, 1961); book and line numbers are provided parenthetically. Ruben Brower argues that, '[t]he very difficulty of deciding whether Shakespeare is borrowing from Golding or whether both he and Shakespeare are translating Ovid into a common Elizabethan poetic idiom, is a fair sign that in Golding's version we have a Shakespearean reading of Ovid', p.121. Here I am using Golding's translation to give a glimpse not of a 'Shakespearean reading' but of the Hecuba of an 'Elizabethan idiom' stemming from a shared schoolroom experience.

> Began too scare the Trojane wyves with darts and stones. Anon
> Queene *Hecub* running at a stone, with gnarring seazd theron,
> And wirryed it beetweene her teeth. And as shee opte her chappe
> Too speake, in stead of speeche shee barkt. (13.673-82)

Taken collectively, the schoolroom editions evoke a Hecuba who is far wilder and far more vocal than the queen of the Troy Book tradition. These classical Hecubas are endowed with strength in their madness and enact a show of grief that resonates with the Reformation's designation of such displays as effeminate, barbaric, papist and Other. These Hecubas are read within the homosocial classrooms and colleges, predominantly locked in the (socially instituted) "masculine" language of Latin. Markers of distance and difference are thus maintained between the ancient Hecubas and mainstream English Protestant culture. The humanist Hecubas do not, then, aim at domestication (although there is, of course, a sense of domestication inherent in the importation of Hecuba within the increasingly common domestic object, the printed book). For this anti-scholastic educational movement, Hecuba's value lay precisely in the fact that she could not be neatly incorporated into existing Christian ideology but rather prompted re-evaluation through defamiliarisation. Comments surrounding Erasmus' translation of *Hecuba* highlight its perceived strangeness; Wittenberg's early student productions of *Hecuba* were theoretically justified by Melanchthon as part of his belief in the 'necessity of immoral exempla for an effective Christian education'.[58] And yet, as investigated below, although academia forms a segregated sub-society, *within* those classroom and colleges the rhetorical techniques for studying these alien Hecubas actually work to reduce the sense of distance, predominantly promoting memorisation, internalisation and imitation

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[58] James A. Parente Jr., *Religious Drama and the Humanist Tradition*, p.20.

which gave rise to that pervasive trope of Hecuba as a mirror 'to teach you what you are' (*Troas*/Heywood 571).[59] Moreover, this segregated sub-society was continually bleeding into mainstream culture as the schoolboys and students grew-up and produced English compositions to meet the requirements of the literature buyers of London as opposed to those of the humanist pedagogues.

3. Homework Hecubas

> My lords, the woman
> Knows not her tropes nor figures, nor is perfect
> In the academic derivation
> Of grammatical elocution
>
> John Webster, *The White Devil* (3.2.39-42)

Having ascertained which Hecubas were queen of the Renaissance schoolroom, I can now turn to the question of *how* these Hecubas were studied. The pedagogical treatises of Erasmus and Melanchthon repeatedly advocate the importance of *playing* – both in terms of lively competitive games between boys and in terms of role-playing. Erasmus and Melanchthon advanced a performative pedagogy in which ancient texts and their mythological characters were assimilated into enacted displays of oratorical skill. To help analyse this performative pedagogy I return again to *Hamlet*'s Hecuba and the first Player scene which, I believe, consciously overlaps the stage with the schoolroom, illustrating the hallmarks of Hamlet's fictional – and Shakespeare's real – pedagogical training.

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[59] As Timothy Hampton asserts, '[t]he image of the mirror […] is a commonplace in discussions of exemplarity' and this trope 'places Renaissance writing on exemplarity in the tradition of the *speculum principis* or "mirror for princes" genre of advice literature which flourished from the Middle Ages to the seventeenth century', *Writing from History: The Rhetoric of Exemplarity in Renaissance Literature* (London & Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1990), p.21 and n.35 p.21.

Hamlet's description of the Dido/Aeneas play, a dramatisation of a classical subject which 'pleased not the million' (2.2.374) but was deemed 'excellent', 'wholesome' and 'honest' by the university's learned, who appreciate the 'well digested […] scenes' of a Senecan-infused neoclassicism (2.2.377), makes it tempting, as Reuben Brower writes, 'to imagine [Shakespeare] taking a passing shot at the proper classical play of the critics and the academic dramatists. The kind of play Hamlet describes and the style of the Player's speech are in the best university taste'.[60] The fictional play is, then, a wry nod to the university drama as advocated by Melanchthon, whose theories on the pedagogical benefits of performing Graeco-Roman tragedies were recited in England throughout the Renaissance by defenders of educational drama. Such pedagogues habitually insisted on maintaining a sharp distinction between their own 'judicious' (3.2.26) academic theatre and that of the common players, often caricatured in similar terms as Hamlet's 'robustious periwig-pated fellow' who 'out Herods Herod' (3.2.09, 3.2.13-14);[61] yet, ironically, in *Hamlet* it is a common troupe who have been forced out of the city in search of an audience to appreciate their repertoire of classical plays (not just *Dido*, but also Plautus and Seneca (2.2.336)).

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[60] *Hero & Saint* (as in n.44 p.124) p.291. Brower also asserts that, '[a]lthough there seem to be no exact parallels with Newton's Seneca, the epic manner of the Pyrrhus speech is reminiscent of Seneca himself and the popular "Senecans"', p. 291. Latin tragedies about Dido, based on the preliminary books of the *Aeneid*, were performed at Cambridge in 1564 and Oxford in 1583; the former, by Edward Haliwell, is no longer extant although Boas speculates that it was probably 'a close adaptation in Senecan *senarii* of the Virgilian lines, after the same fashion as William Gager's later adaptation at Christ Church, Oxford, in 1583', p.90.

[61] For details of the lengths Oxford University went to in order to preserve 'the distinction between educational drama and the work of "common players"' see Elliott Jr., p.69. Parente Jr. also relates how 'Melanchthon, who strongly promotes school theater modelled on ancient theater, disapproved of Passion dramas. When an actor portraying Christ was accidentally slain during a performance in Bahn […], Melanchthon regarded the death as a just punishment for the evil of all Passion plays', 'The Development of Religious Tragedy', n.24 p.356.

However, in asking the Player for a 'passionate speech' (2.2.369-70) rather than a dramatic scene, Hamlet's request for 'a taste of your quality' (2.2.369) sets-up a situation that has far more in common with a Renaissance classroom than either the city's or universities' unruly theatres. The Player's (second) recital of the extracted speech for Hamlet replicates the oral examinations common to Elizabethan grammar schools, in which pupils are judged on two of the five divisions of formal Rhetoric – *memoria* and *pronuntiatio* (or *action*). Thus Hamlet sets the test: 'if it live in your memory begin at this line' (2.2.385-86), before adopting the position of a competitive student to deliver the first fifteen lines which Polonius, in the role of schoolmaster, judges 'well spoken – with good accent and good discretion' (2.2.404-05). In the classroom, the aim of these oratorical performances was to arouse emotion and move the listener. In order to be *affective* the schoolboys should, as Cicero, Quintilian and Horace advise, 'give an impression of reality' by 'assimilat[ing] the emotions of those who really suffer'.[62] Thus, remembering Horace's *Ars Poetica*, Thomas Wright's *The Passions of the Minde in Generall* (1604) advises boys that 'that which will make me weepe must first weepe himself'.[63]

Hamlet may already have had this schoolroom scenario in mind, for in remembering 'when Roscius was an actor in Rome' (2.2.327-28) the Wittenberg student is presumably remembering his Cicero since Roscius is held up '[t]hroughout Cicero's treaties [as] the benchmark of effective oratorical

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[62] Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, 6.2.26-28, qtd. in Gavin Alexander, 'Prosopopeia: the speaking figure', in *Renaissance Figures of Speech*, ed. by Sylvia Adamson, Gavin Alexander and Katrin Ettenhuber (Cambridge: CUP, 2007), pp.96-112 (p.100).
[63] Qtd. in Alexander, p.100.

performance'.[64] In having so effectively 'turned his colour', produced 'tears in's eyes' (2.2.457-58) and reached an unbearable emotional pitch ('Prithee no more!' (2.2.458)), the Player's delivery of the 'passionate speech' has successfully replicated the power of Cicero's Roscius. Amongst this concentrated metatheatricality (a player playing The Player playing Aeneas in the style of Roscius) the ostensibly speaking 'Aeneas' all but disappears; the oratorical art of the Player is brought into much sharper focus than is the tale he is telling. Hamlet interprets the Player's physical performance as exclusively 'suiting' the 'conceit' that is 'Hecuba' (2.2.491-93), entirely overlooking Aeneas. The Player's speech is, therefore, an example of 'what Erasmus calls *apodeixeis*, *display pieces* that deploy *enargeia* specifically to draw attention not so much to the thing described as to the speaker himself'.[65]

Yet more than *apodeixeis*, the 'tale to Dido' is also a *translatio* exercise extracted from a common school-text (Book 2 of *Aeneid*), a *prosopopeic* composition, an *ethopoeic* performance, and an example of *enargeia* embellished throughout by the use of *copia* to maximise its emotional affectivity. It is, theoretically, an exemplary example of the type of rhetorical speech required by the Erasmian classroom. According to Brower, the irreverent amalgamation of Ovid and Virgil in Marlowe's and Nashe's earlier 'Aeneas' tale to Dido' is 'a schoolboy's revenge, a rhetorical truancy'.[66] I would argue that Shakespeare's equivalent moment intensifies the essence of 'a schoolboy's revenge', as the rhetoric plays truant from its meaning, leaving the listeners to mouth a 'mobled' phrase, whilst still bestowing it, rather incongruously (both Polonius and Hamlet express their surprise), with the power to make a grown man cry.

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[64] *Ibid*, p.100.
[65] Marion A. Wells (as in n.34 p.156), p.102; original emphasis.
[66] *Hero & Saint*, p.175.

Hamlet's subsequent soliloquy is similarly constructed from the rhetorical techniques of the schoolroom: Hecuba is culled from the Player's Virgilian text and incorporated as a rhetorical exemplar, alongside *sententiae* (such as 'murder, though it have no tongue, will speak' or 'the de'il hath power / T' assume a pleasing shape' (2.2.528, 534-35)); Hamlet's repetition of Hecuba's name forms a structural *chiasmus* which exhibits the Wittenbergian's own oratorical skill, reduces Hecuba to a cipher, yet paradoxically invests her (as I suggested in chapter one) with an uncanny sense of (re)animation. The reciprocity created by the uncanny chiasmic *erotesis* is reflected in what Hamlet perceives as the Player's unsettling replication of *Hecuba*'s grief-stricken physicality. Collectively, between their physical and rhetorical "mirroring", Hamlet and the Player create another ghostly trace of the mournful Trojan queen.

In fact, the rhetorical exercises that Renaissance teaching manuals most frequently attach to Hecuba habitually endow her with this uncanny (re)animation. For Hecuba is typically taught in the English classroom in relation to the overlapping rhetorical figures of *ethopoeia*, *prosopopeia* and *eidolopeia*, three forms of character impersonation in which pupils must imagine themselves in Hecuba's situation – must think and speak as the grief-stricken mother they have read in Ovid, Seneca and Euripides. Hecuba's role in the rhetoric of the English classrooms can, then, be seen as synecdochical of the humanist project of reanimating the past, of attempting to make the dead speak. Richard Rainolde's manual, *The Foundacion of Rhetorike*, defines the three figures thus:

> *Ethopoeia* is a certaine Oracion made by voice, and lamentable imitacion, upon the state of any one.
> This imitacion is in iii. sortes, either it is:
>
> - *Eidolopoeia.*

- *Prosopopoeia.*
- *Ethopoeia.*

[…]. *Ethopoeia* is called of Priscianus, a certaine talkyng to of any one, or a[n] imitacion of talke referred to the maners, aptly of any certaine knowen persone.

Quintilianus saieth that *Ethopoeia* is a[n] imitacion of other meane maners: whom the Grekes dooe calle not onelie *Ethopoeia,* but mimesis […].

The *Ethopoeia* is in three sortes:

The firste, a[n] imitacion passive, whiche expresseth the affection to whom it parteineth: whiche altogether expresseth the mocion of the mynde; [such] as what patheticall and dolefull oracion, Hecuba the quene made, the citee of Troie destroied, her housbande, her children slaine.

The second is called a morall imitacion, the whiche doeth set forthe onely the maners of any one.

The thirde is a mixt […] whiche setteth forthe bothe the maners and the affection; [such] as how, and after what sorte, Achilles spake upon Patroclus, he beyng dedde, when for his sake, he determined to fight   (fol.xlix^r)

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Eidolopoeia is that part of this Oracion whiche maketh a persone knowne though dedde, and not able to speake. […]. *Eidolopoeia,* when a dedde manne talketh, is set forthe [by] Euripides, upon the persone of Polidorus dedde, whose spirite entereth at the Prologue of the tragedie.   (fol.xlix^v)

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As concerning *Prosopopoeia* it is, as Pristianus saith, when to any one againste nature speache is feigned to bee giuen. [Cicero] useth for a like example this when he maketh Roome to talke againste Cateline.   (fol.l^r)

Although Rainolde here adopts the precise definition of *prosopopeia*, as the bestowing of a human voice on an inanimate object or animal, it was also known more generally in both Antiquity and the Renaissance as the figure of 'character impersonation', and was often used interchangeably with *ethopoeia*.[67]

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[67] Lanham (as in n.124 p.103), p.124; See also Alexander, 'Prosopopeia: the speaking figure', pp.98-102, who quotes Abraham Fraunce's definition of Prosopopeia as 'a fayning of any person,

Prosopopeia's significance lies, as Paul de Man argues, in 'the etymology of the trope's name, *prosopon poiein*, to confer a mask or face (*prosopon*)'.[68] *Prosopopeia*, *eidolopeia* and *ethopoeia* all require the verbal construction of this rhetorical mask, necessary for the convincing 'imitacion' of historical and fictional figures (or indeed inanimate objects).[69] The Latin translation of Aphthonius' *Progymnasmata*, 'the most widely used rhetorical handbook in the Renaissance', instructed schoolboys to practice their command of these figures by impersonating 'the lamentations of such ill-fated characters as Niobe and Hecuba'.[70] Rainolde's English *Foundacion* explicitly follows Aphthonius' model;[71] not only does Rainolde ask his reader to consider 'what lamentable Oracion Hecuba Quene of Troie might make' (fol.1^v) as an example of the 'imitation passive', but also provides them with an extensive illustrative answer to this exercise with his inclusion of: 'A lamentable Oracion of Hecuba Queene of Troie' (discussed below).

Consequently, and somewhat ironically, then, these schoolroom exercises placed the female mourning voice, and the integral trope of communing with the "dead" (via *eidolopeia* and *apostrophe*), at the centre of the pedagogy of the

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when in our speech we represent the person of anie, and make it speake as though he were there present', p.103.

[68] 'Autobiography as De-Facement', in *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* (1984), qtd. in Garber, *Shakespeare's Ghost Writers*, p.138.

[69] Again, the necessary "mask" that must be conferred, in order for the present to ventriloquise the past (a figurative mask etymologically built into the trope of character impersonation), acts as a marker of belatedness and anachronistic imposition, thus ironically undermining as it enables the humanist project.

[70] John Lewis Walker (paraphrasing the work of William Francis Lanahan), in *Shakespeare and the Classical Tradition: An Annotated Bibliography*, *1961-1991* (New York & London: Routledge, 2002), p.183.

[71] That Rainolde aspires to the success of Aphthonius' teaching manual is asserted in his address 'To The Reader' prefacing his own *Foundacion*: 'Aphthonius, a famous man, wrote in Greke of soche declamacions to enstructe the studentes thereof, with all facilitée to grounde in them a moste plentious and riche vein of eloquence. No man is able to invente a more profitable wa[y] and order to instructe any one in the exquisite and absolute perfeccion, of wisedome and eloquence, th[a]n *Aphthonius Quintilianus* and *Hermogenes*. […]. In these therefore my diligence is emploied, to profite many, although not with like Eloquence, beutified and adorned, as the matter requireth' (unnumbered page).

Reformation. Assuming the 'mask or face' of a weeping Hecuba or Dido, Niobe

or Medea, Philomel or Lucrece – with the stated aim of moving your audience of

classmates to tears – was standard practice for English Protestant schoolboys.[72]

To commune with sorrow, to indulge in 'childish sobs and womanish laments'

(*Locrine* 3.2.63) as both expressed and personified by these classical *female*

exemplars, Hecuba chief among them, was thus an integral part of an education

which connected 'the study of rhetoric to the development of masculine

courage'.[73] As Carol Rutter thus concludes, weeping as and for a Hecuba or a

Thisby is 'not an alternative to adult masculinity [but] constitutive of it'.[74]

These, then, are the women, learned by heart in childhood, who 'will be out'

(*Hamlet* 4.7.187) if the femininity personified in 'Nature' is allowed to

overthrow adult male rationality.

As Rainolde states, *Ethopoeia* is designed to 'expresse[…] the mocion of

the mynde' (fol.xlix^r); it asks boys to inhabit the imagined psychology of a

(typically female) character, to internalise and assimilate the thoughts of an

imagined Other in order to produce empathetic expression. For Paul de Man, the

'symmetrical structure' of *prosopopeia* and *ethopoeia* establishes a *chiasmus*

(similar to that constructed by Hamlet's Hecuba formulation) which is inherently

dangerous: 'by making the dead speak, the symmetrical structure of the trope

implies, by the same token, that living are struck dumb, frozen in their own

death'.[75] Yet, listening to Rainolde's Hecuba speak his illustrative answer to the

prosopopeic exercise – 'what lamentable Oracion Hecuba Quene of Troie might

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[72] See: Rutter, *Shakespeare and Child's Play*, pp.59-68; Enterline, pp.152-97; and Marjorie Curry Woods, 'Weeping for Dido: epilogue on a premodern rhetorical exercise in the post modern classroom', in *Latin Grammar and Rhetoric: From Classical Theory to Medieval Practice*, ed. by Carol Dana Lanham (London & New York: Continuum, 2002), pp.284-93.
[73] Ong, *Rhetoric, Romance and Technology* (as in n.58 p.131), p.15.
[74] *Shakespeare and Child's Play* (as in n.3 p.180), p.68.
[75] Paul de Man, *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* (New York: Columbia UP, 1984), pp.75-76.

make' (fol.l^v) – should dispel de Man's fears. For the Hecuba upon whom

Rainolde 'confers […] the power of speech' clearly does not strike Rainolde

dumb but rather endows *him* with an opportunity for rhetorical eloquence. Thus

"she" begins her lament by asking:

> What kyngdome can alwaies assure his state, or glory? What
> strength can alwaies last? What power maie alwaies stande? The
> mightie Okes are somtyme caste from roote, the Ceadars high by
> tempestes falle, so bitter stormes dooe force their strength. Soft
> waters pearseth Rockes, and ruste the massie Iron doeth bryng to
> naught. (fol.l^v)

This English Hecuba is clearly not a reflection of Euripides' or Ovid's Trojan

queens 'sore inflammd with wrath' (13.671). Although her speech bears some

semblance to the opening lament of Seneca's *Troas*, the Senecan queen

punctuates that lamentation with a display of self-immolation. This Hecuba is,

rather, the reflection of an exemplary English schoolboy drilled in stoic

philosophy and the art of narration. The 'mynde' of Rainolde's Hecuba moves

(like Hamlet's soliloquies), between painful personal "memories" –

> Hectors death […] did wound me for to die, but alas my dolefull
> and cruell fate to greater woe reserueth my life, loftie Troie before
> me felle, sworde, and fire hath seate and throne doune caste. The
> dedde on heapes doeth lye, the tender babes as Lions praies are
> caught in bloode, before my sight, Priamus deare murdered was,
> my children also slain (fol.li^r)

– and philosophical axioms which contextualise and generalise her experience:

> moste tempestes hie trees, hilles, & moutaines beare, valle is lowe
> rough stormes doeth passe, the bendyng trees doeth giue place to
> might by force of might, Okes mightie fall, and Ceders high ar
> re[n]t from the roote. (fol.li^r)

Like all dutiful schoolboys this Hecuba punctuates her remembrances with

commonplace axioms, similes and metaphors, and structurally organises her

'lamentable Oracion', as Rainolde instructs, into: 'presente tyme', 'tyme paste' and 'tyme to come' (fol.xlix^v). Rainolde's example insists that, for all the stress on learning by rote and on imitation over innovation, English schoolboys were taught that the voice of Hecuba was not inviolably fixed within their Latin copies of the classics, but rather that this voice should be re-imagined and reconstructed from within, to reflect their own situation (and meet the demands of their schoolmasters). The Erasmian principle of *copia* applies as much here to manifold variations on voice as to stylistic technique.

This, according to Halpern, is the difference between the older tradition of 'medieval *imitatio christi* and humanist practices of imitation': rather than 'strive to imitate perfectly, to narrow the distance between original and copy', humanist figures of imitation entailed the notion of seeking 'to understand [one's] own story by pursuing a path of eclectic, wide-ranging imitation'.[76] Enterline applies this educational praxis to Shakespeare's Lucrece, noting how 'after her encounter with her own unspeakable event, Lucrece reenacts the behavior usually reserved for early modern schoolboys [and] undertakes a crash course in rhetorical imitation'.[77] Thus, before she attempts to 'tune [Hecuba's] woes with my lamenting tongue' (1465) Lucrece, '[l]ike any grammar school student of classical texts, […] attempts a series of exercises in declamation – rhetorical set pieces against Night, Opportunity, Time'.[78] Seen in conjunction with Rainolde's set-piece, these declamations are not an adjunct to the "Hecuba scene" but offer a replay of Hecuba herself – reminiscent of the 'lamentable Oracion' in which, attempting to give voice to the unspeakable, Rainolde's Queen utters those seemingly incongruous adages or set-pieces about devouring

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[76] Paraphrase by Enterline, *Rhetoric of the Body* (as in n.30 p.116), p.167.
[77] *Ibid*, p.167.
[78] *Ibid*, p.167.

time and the vicissitudes of Fortune. As seen in chapter three, when Hecuba is remembered by literary characters – such as Lucrece – facing comparable emotional turmoil, the Trojan queen operates as an analogy for the *incomprehension* of grief. Remembered in an attempt to fill the void of blank incomprehension and inarticulacy Hecuba serves only to replicate and reassert it still further. In echoing and deepening the inarticulacy of grief, Hecuba operates as a projected, internalised mirror of the self that cannot find self-expression.

Thus, when Enterline asserts that Lucrece turns to Hecuba, the schoolboys' primary 'ancient exemplar of rhetorical eloquence', it is not simply the case that Lucrece brings to mind an "eloquent" Ovidian Hecuba 'who will enable her to represent, and thus understand, her woe'.[79] For, remembering Hecuba in the context of the English classroom is also to remember an inarticulate blank: the blank mind of an 'astonyed' Hecuba struck 'dumb for sorrow' (*Met*/Golding 13.645-46) and the blank writing paper that must be filled with 'what lamentable Oracion Hecuba Quene of Troie might make'; and it is these blanks which of course allow Hecuba to act as a self-reflective surface.

As Enterline observes, the common denominator which links the women most frequently chosen for exercises in *ethopoeia*, and which is exemplified by Hecuba, is that they are caught 'in the predicament of trying to express a grief beyond words'.[80] The classical Hecubas generally, and the Ovidian Hecuba particularly, manifest grief orally in an inarticulate howl or a stunned silence, but the most forceful expression of their pain takes place in either wild, self-immolating mourning rituals or violent acts of revenge. This trope of unspeakable Hecuban grief was performed by the boys in their productions of

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[79] *Ibid*, p.167.
[80] *Ibid*, p.166.

tragedy; but within the classroom, schoolboys were routinely set the task of expressing the indescribable in words alone. Rainolde asks for a speech that can both convey and contain Hecuba's wild ineffable grief, which transfers that which has previously found expression in descriptions of visceral performative acts, into an emotionally affecting voice. In the boys' compositions, then, Hecuba is stripped of her traditional mourning practices. Although the stated aim is still to make both orator and audience weep – as Euripides' performed Hecubas reportedly do – this exercise essentially entails the (repeated) containment or channelling of excessive female displays of grief into male literary composition.[81]

So pervasive was this schoolroom exercise that Bate and Enterline identify it as the reason why '[d]ramatic laments in plays from *Gorboduc* onwards make Hecuba into a "mirror" of woefulness'.[82] Yet the aim of 'the mirror' trope that is 'a commonplace in discussions of exemplarity' is to offer either an inspirational ideal or a cautionary travesty – and Hecuba appears to be neither.[83] For Hecuba to operate, as is so often claimed, as humanism's 'cliché exemplar of tragic emotionality', Hecuba's name should evoke a pitiful *tableau* of ideal grief.[84] For, as Timothy Hampton asserts, '[t]he most ideologically correct and rhetorically powerful exemplar would be morally unambiguous, [their] name would be a […] representation reduced to absolute semiotic stasis,

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[81] 'Repeated' since, as I mentioned in chapter two, there is a prevalent argument that reads the birth of Greek tragedy as the deliberate usurpation of female mourning; see Holst-Warhaft, *Dangerous Voices* (as in n.26 p.19), pp.126-30 and p.157. In the Renaissance, this pedagogical practice can be aligned with the cultural shift, instituted by the Reformation, which saw written male elegy fill the void left by the suppression of Catholic keening, songs and prayers of intercession; see Wayland, 'Religious Change and the Renaissance Elegy', p.446.

[82] Bate, *Shakespeare and Ovid*, p.20; Enterline, *Rhetoric of the Body*, p.26.

[83] Hampton, *Writing from History* (as in n.59 p.242), p.27.

[84] C.O. McDonald, *The Rhetoric of Tragedy* (1966), qtd. in Jones, *Origins of* Shakespeare, p.94.

devoid of ideological ambiguity or figural play'.[85] Thus, Martin Mueller claims

that '[t]he widowed Hecuba was a living *monument* to the 'instability of human

affairs' [Erasmus], and it was through her suffering rather than through any

action that for the sixteenth-century Hecuba became the tragic figure par

excellence'.[86] Mueller is echoed by Julia Reinhard Lupton and Kenneth

Reinhard who assert that the Hecubas of *Hecuba* and *Troas* 'were paragons of

tragedy in the sixteenth-century, not because of their dramatic *action* but rather

their rhetorical *tableaux* of heroic feminine suffering'.[87] Yet Hecuba is learnt in

narratives that consistently undermine these snapshots of 'heroic female

suffering' which can be culled from texts, but surely never stripped of allusive

connotations. Thus, Melanchthon justifies the Hecuba of *Hecuba* as offering an

immoral example (which by extension implicates the classroom Hecuba of

Ovid's *Metamorphoses*); and boys are taught that men must overcome the female

emotionality personified by the Trojan queen. Reformation society employs

legislation and ideological propaganda to regulate the show of female grief

exemplified by Hecuba; and schoolboys are asked to channel her physical

expressions into literary composition. Yet even these exercises in *ethopoeia*

return the snapshot of a lamenting 'Hecuba Queene of Troie' to a narrative which

(re)animates her and thus risks undermining the 'semiotic stasis' of the icon of

grief.

Tellingly, then, to return to those moments of fictionalised grief which

employ Hecuba as a mirror for self-expression, words alone are persistently

shown to fail. The boys' *ethopoeic* exercise repeatedly proves inadequate to

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[85] *Writing from History*, p.27.
[86] *Children of Oedipus* (as in n.84 p.177), emphasis added, p.21.
[87] *After Oedipus: Shakespeare in Psychoanalysis* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1993), p.102; emphasis added.

remember the depth of Hecuba's grief or convey that of the character: thus Lucrece scratches at the painting with her nails before stabbing herself, Imogen smears herself in blood, Hamlet "plays" the antic, stages a *Mousetrap* and (eventually) stabs Claudius, while Guendoline and Tamora channel their grief into calculated acts of vengeance. These actions bring the bereaved characters closer to enacting the grief-stricken queens of the classical Hecuba-narratives. The static mirrored image, the "icon" of sorrow, proves unstable, contagious, and fundamentally ambivalent as she is radically re-animated in and by the staring subject – who remembers not just a frozen image of Hecuba but her *story*, and blends it with their own. *Lucrece*, again, exemplifies and defines the process: 'she lends them words, and she their looks doth borrow' (1498).

The Renaissance English classroom, then, contained both the wild Latin Hecuba of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and the disarmed, disembodied, voices of the *ethopoeic* English Hecubas to whom the schoolboys ostensibly pledged to 'tune thy woes with my lamenting tongue' (*Lucrece* 1465) and yet who, if Rainolde is to be taken as an illustrative example, fine-tuned their rhetorical 'tongue' with her 'woes'. Rainolde demonstrates that humanist education did not always keep the lamenting queen locked in Latin, but also tested the boys' ability to give voice to Hecuba in English. These (re)animated English Hecubas were mirrors to the schoolboys' surroundings and the requirements of their rhetorical training. Meanwhile, Hecuba herself was extracted from the classical texts as a static figure of sorrow, an axiomatic simile – as sorrowful as Hecuba – which left the classroom to act as a '"mirror" of woefulness'.[88] Hecuba thus became part of the cultural vocabulary of grief for fictional characters searching for self-expression

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[88] Bate, *Shakespeare and Ovid*, p.20.

in moments of inarticulacy. Yet in making Hecuba their mirror, these fictional characters tend to become themselves a reflection of the Trojan queen, remembering beyond her name to enact aspects of her story and channel the rage and madness of the Furies. Haunted by the wild and raging classical Hecubas, these characters recall English schoolboys recalling Hecuba, and rehearse the same pedagogical techniques learnt by rote in the childhood of their grown-up authors.

The next chapter follows these new-ancient queens out of the schoolroom and beyond the examples of Shakespeare's dramatic characters to investigate other grown-up schoolboys remembering Hecuba. The pedagogical indoctrination instituted by humanism with its repertoire of rhetoric established an approach to Hecuba which not only impacted on her wider cultural conception but also created a dialectic, forcing a dialogue between the raging classical Hecubas of the educated and the popular "Caxtonesque" old queens of an ongoing medieval tradition.

Chapter Six: Hecuba, Humanism and Hauntings – Part Two

3. Beyond the Schoolroom

> O Hecuba, leaue off and doo not waile.
>
> Thomas Fenne, *Fenne's Frutes* (Gg3r)

In April 1589 an estimated one-hundred and fifty ships and over twenty-thousand fighting men amassed off of England's south coast under the joint command of Sir Francis 'the Dreadfull Dragon' Drake and Sir John 'Black Jack' Norris.[1] The astonishing naval victory over Spain the year before not only mustered this impressive "English Armada", but also a surge of nationalistic myth-making in which England's unexpected success and much anticipated final rout of the Spanish fleet was woven into a providential history of England, in which Britannia and her Queen would be defended from the malevolent hypocrisies of Popery by England's heroic Knights and faithful subjects. George Peele's *Farewell, Entituled to the famous and fortunate Generalls of our English forces: Sir Iohn Norris & Syr Frauncis Drake Knights, and all theyr braue and resolute followers. Whereunto is annexed: a Tale of Troy* (1589) is one such manifestation of this mythopoetic impulse, grafting the *Troynovant* myth into an exhortation of the 'English forces' 'to arme' and 'pursue […] honours to your graues' (A3v):

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[1] The epithet for Drake is used in George Peele's 'Farewell' (A3v). All subsequent quotations from *A Farewell* […]. *Whereunto is annexed: a tale of Troy* (London: William Wright, 1589) will be referenced parenthetically in the text. According to the *ODNB* 'Black Jack' was a widely used nickname for Norris; D.J.B. Trim, 'Norris , Sir John (c.1547x50–1597)', *ODNB* (OUP, 2004), online ed. Jan. 2008, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/20276> [14 June 2010].

> Haue doone with care my harts, aborde amaine,
> With stretching sayles to plowe the sweilling waues.
> Bid Englands shoares and Albions chalkie clyffes
> Farewell; bid statelie Troynouant adiewe.　　(A3r)

Whilst the short *Farewell* was composed specifically in response to the fleet's departure, Peele admits that the *Tale of Troy* is 'an olde Poem of myne owne' 'annexed' onto the *Farewell* (A2r).[2] Although the repeated 'annexed' may betray a hint of anxiety concerning the *Tale*'s relevance, Peele insists that the poem is an apt martial gift: not simply a 'pleasaunt disco[u]rse' but a 'fitly seruing' narrative that will 'recreate, by the reading, the chiualrie of *England*', enabling 'good mindes enflamed wyth honorable reports of their auncestry, [to] imitate theyr glory' (A2r).[3] In fact, Peele envisages the reading of his *Tale of Troy* as a form of armament: 'by the reading [...] my Countrymen [...] may marche in equipage of honour and Armes, wyth [their] glorious and renowned predicessors the *Troyans*' (A2r).

Thus, applying the core principle of humanist pedagogy, Peele argues that reading and remembering the heroes of Troy will equip the 'boyes' (A3r) with heroic examples to inspire and imitate, enabling them to swell their ranks by incorporating the Trojans via emulation.[4] And just as the Trojans fought for Troy, Drake's and Norris's boys fight in defence of 'statelie Troynouant' where

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[2] As Maguire explains, 'Peele had a long and palimpsestic relationship' with the *Tale of Troy*, which is generally believed to have been written 'whilst an undergraduate at Oxford between 1572 and 1579' but not published until 1589. It was subsequently revised around 1596 and sent as a gift to Lord Burghley whose 'secretary filed Peele's poem and accompanying letter "with other from cranks and crackpots"'. In addition, an intriguing revised version was published posthumously in 1604 'in a tiny (one and a half inches high) presentation volume of which only one copy is extant', *Helen of Troy: From Homer to Hollywood* (as in n.5 p.106), p.129.

[3] It seems Thomas Nashe was not quite so convinced by Peele's assertions, claiming in his preface to Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella* (1591) that: 'Others are so hardly bested for loading that they are faine to retaile the cinders of *Troy*, and the shiuers of broken trunchions, to fill vp their boate that else should go empty', qtd. in Tatlock (see n.46 p.200), p.682.

[4] Peele's insistence is undermined by the fact that his *Tale* actually pays very little attention to the heroic feats of Hector, Troilus or Aeneas, concentrating far more on Paris' judgement, the sacrifice of Iphigenia, Achilles' sulks and the frivolity of Helen and Paris, than on the battlefield.

the 'pleasant Thames from Isis siluer head / Begins her quiet glide' to the 'braue

Bridge' which stands alongside 'the anncient stonie Towre, / The glorious hold

that *Iulius Caesar* built' (A3r). Peele's London, infused with its Roman and

Trojan ancestry, is an idyllic town of love, leisure and pleasure, complete with

'louelie brittish Dames' and 'Theaters and proude tr[a]gadi[a]ns' (A3r).

Adhering to the well-worn trope of heroic masculinity, Peele's poem demands

the denial of these pleasures (the rejection of Venus for Mars (A3r)), envisioning

a movement away from the gentle, amorous, feminine and feminising London,

down the Thames, passed 'Englands shoare' and the 'chalkie clyffes' (A3r),

towards the tumultuous male arena of war, with its 'roring Cannon and the

brasen Trumpe, / The angry sounding Drum, the whist[l]ing Fife, / [and] The

shrikes of men' (A3r). The (imagined) soldier-reader thus moves from England

to a far-flung battleground and from the *Farewell* to the *Tale of Troy*.[5]

Despite thematic details from *Metamorphoses*, *Heroides* and the *Aeneid*,

Peele's depiction of 'Troyan Knights' – with 'plumes' '[u]pon their helmes' and

'Ladies coullers in their Launce', made 'bold and venturours' by 'loue' (B4r) –

are saturated with an Elizabethan nostalgia for (the medieval nostalgia for)

chivalry and courtly love. Clearly, in terms of literary genealogy, these knights

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[5] Although the *Farewell* addresses itself solely, yet repeatedly, to 'my harts', 'my boyes', 'my fellow Souldiers', 'my Mates' (A3r-v), this implied readership is of course an extended rhetorical effect, a comprehensive application of *apostrophe*. In reality the work was designed 'to bee solde by William Wright, at his shop adioyning to S. Mildreds Church in the Poultrie' (A1r). Peele thus assimilates the literature buyers of London into his fictional readership, the idealised defenders of 'fayre England' (A2r). The effect of this rhetorical technique is two-fold: on one hand it is a deliberately wrought seduction of potential readers, transforming them into both addressee and orator, placing the reader into a position of authority from which to harangue and inspire the amassed 'boyes' (even assuming the role of Caesar: 'as Caesar sayd' (A3v)), as well as allowing them to share vicariously in the exciting and heroic world the 'boyes' ostensibly inhabit. On the other hand, Peele's consistent invocations to the troops also radically transform the impression of what was, as John Bennett Black states, 'in actual fact [...] a joint-stock piratical enterprise rather than a properly equipped governmental undertaking', *The Reign of Elizabeth 1558-1603*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), p.411. Peele's subtle framing device of repeatedly appealing to 'my fellow Souldiers' converts the miscellany of merchants and profiteers into an affectionately envisioned, heroic, and unified English navy.

belong to *England*'s 'auncestry' and the author's 'renowned predicessors' (A2v) (Chaucer, Lydgate and Caxton) rather than to the ancient Greek or Latin Trojans of his humanist education. Introduced as a 'faire' 'comelie' and 'lustie Lady', that 'did enrich her King' with 'twenty sonnes and daughters' (A4v), Peele's Hecuba essentially repeats her marginal role from Caxton and the Troy Books.

However, in being presented to 'the boyes' who are about to go to war, the Caxtonesque Hecuba is posited as an educative warning or negative exemplar. She is 'the Queene that knew no law of Armes' (Cr). This moral lesson is taught primarily in relation to her wilful refusal to relinquish her grief for Hector. Pitiful sorrow is twisted into murderous deceit: 'The Mother Queene', 'dissembl[ing] well', acting as if '*Hectors* death was more then halfe forgot' (B4v) was in fact using 'guile / To worke reuenge' (Cr). In Peele, Hecuba's willingness to plot a dishonourable and blasphemous murder is foreshadowed (somewhat paradoxically) by her un-maternal response to the 'dreadfull Dreame' that forewarns of Troy's destruction (Br). Peele suggests that the ease with which Hecuba and Priam throw the 'babe [Paris] from Troy withouten ruthe' was an act of parental abandonment in which 'sire and dame against law and kind rebel' (Br), an act which validates Troy's doom.

When it comes to Hecuba's role as the city's chief mourner, Peele's narrative essentially replicates the lacunae of the Troy Books. The grief-stricken Hecuba is declared beyond comparison: 'the most vnhappy Queene, / Whose like for wretched hap was neuer seene' (C2r). But Peele's inability to identify a likeness *for* the queen slides into an inability to construct a narratorial likeness *of* the queen: 'My penne forbeare to write of *Hecuba*' (C2v). Peele's pen recoils from Hecuba's grief and instead recounts the sorrows that the murdered Priam

did *not* witness: 'he saw not yet the ende of all. / His daughters rauisht, slaine in sacrifice, / Astianax before his mothers eyes, / The princelie babe throwne from the highest towre' (C2v). Although these events are responsible for causing Hecuba to become 'worne with sorrow, waxen […] and mad' (C2v) (Peele's final word on Hecuba's ultimate fate), their recital as deeds that Priam does not see submerges Hecuba's experience beneath Priam's (im)perception. The queen's suffering is, it seems, too excessive to witness directly.

Moreover, in lines which transform Ovid's description of Dawn – blind to Hecuba's sorrow as she herself grieves for her murdered son Memnon (*Met*.13.690-91) – Peele asserts that it is Hecuba's grief, rather than any personal tragedy, which elicits the Sun's blinding tears (C2v).[6] In turn, Peele's narratorial aversion to Hecuba is declared contingent on the fact that even the cosmos' paradigmatic witness hides his face: 'My penne forbeare to write of Hecuba / *That* made the glorious Sunne in his Chariot stay, / And rayning teares his golden face to hide / For ruth of that did afterwards betide' (C2v).[7] The tears which hide the Sun (from 'that' which Priam does not see and Peele does not describe) intend to indicate the potency of Hecuba's sorrow; yet, paradoxically, in eclipsing the Sun's own grief Hecuba herself is still displaced by the weeping Sun (as in Ovid). Peele thus writes a precedent for averting the pitying gaze from the lamenting Hecuba into her myth, magnifying her grief from an earthly equivalent to the Sun's loss to a woe that now blots out the sun and thereby casts Hecuba into shadow.

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[6] The sun's blinding tears will of course find an echo in *Hamlet* where Hecuba's grief has the potential, 'if the gods themselves did see her' (2.2.450), to 'have made milch the burning eyes of heaven' (2.2.455).

[7] Emphasis added. In Greek mythology Helios traditionally ratifies oaths as he witnesses all that happens on earth, whilst in Christian iconography the sun stands for the eye of heaven, symbol of God's omnipotent and benevolent gaze.

Despite the shift from schoolroom to marketplace, from the Latinised classics to the stories of Caxton *et al.*, the *Farewell* (ostensibly) rehearses the pedagogical configuration by which the summary of an inspirational epic history instructs and improves Peele's 'boyes'. The extended *apostrophe* of the *Farewell*, which constructs this imaginary readership, is also an implicit exercise in *ethopoeia*. The *Tale* is similarly dominated by the "voice" of the narrator reciting from 'my Author' and 'my History' (Cv, C3r), with only seven lines of the poem spoken by the fictional Trojans. Thus, in contrast to the lamenting Hecuba who exemplifies *ethopoeia* in the schoolroom, Peele's *Tale* and the imperial ideology it serves in propping up *Troynovant*, "forbears" to record the maternal mourning voice.

Although printed for a specific national occasion, Peele's older *Tale of Troy* exemplifies the manner in which Ovidian and Virgilian details were blended into new, and numerous, recitations of Caxton's *Recuyell* and the Tudor Myth. In 1609 Thomas Heywood printed his own Caxtonesque romance epic: *Troia Britanica, or, Great Britaines Troy: A Poem Deuided into XVII seuerall Cantons, intermixed with many pleasant Poeticall Tales. Concluding with an Vniuersall Chronicle from the Creation, untill these present Times*.[8] This four-hundred and sixty-six page 'Spenserian romance epic',[9] which considers itself 'a briefe memory or Epitome of Chronicle', is drawn predominantly from Caxton but embellished throughout by details from Ovid and Virgil (and Shakespeare, whose Player Speech provides Heywood with a Pyrrhus 'inflamed [and] slack't in gore' (15.66.8)). Heywood's Hecuba plots the death of Achilles like Peele's Caxton queen (14.32-36), and is given eleven lines of speech in which to recite

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[8] London: W. Jaggard, 1609. All subsequent quotations from Heywood's *Troia Britanica* will be referenced parenthetically with canto and verse numbers, plus line numbers where necessary.
[9] Bate, *Shakespeare and Ovid*, n.26 p.14.

the Virgilian plea to Priam to disarm and join the women at the Altars (15.73-74), yet she also enacts the Ovidian vengeance on Polymestor – although this is covered in a single line (15.94.2). In order to express Hecuba's sorrow at Hector's funeral, Heywood employs an ironic reverse-exemplar; effectively he recites *Locrine*'s commonplace comparison in which Guendoline's grief surpasses even that of Hecuba, but in the position typically occupied by Hecuba, Heywood places Queen Margaret (wife of Henry VI) as the epitome of maternal grief that still falls short:

> No[t] *Margaret,* when at *Teuxbury* her sonne
> Was stab'd to death by Tyrant *Glosters* hand,
> Felt from her riueld cheekes more Pearle drops ronne,
> Then *Hecuba,* when she did vnderstand
> The thred of *Hectors* life already sponne, (14.3.1-5)

Heywood dispatches his Hecuba not through Virgilian silence, Ovidian metamorphosis, or a Troy Book stoning, but by literalising a cliché of excessive grief: 'On her sl[a]ine husband, daughters, sonnes, she cri[e]s: / *Troy* she bewaild, and fatall *Greece* she curst, / Till her great heart (with griefe surcharged) burst' (15.94.6-8). With her heart burst by the (unheard) burst of clamour that she made, Heywood's Hecuba disappears from the poem.

Bringing his poem in line with humanist pedagogy, Heywood includes marginalia to draw the reader's attention to key points, allowing for ease of reference, and also adds editorial notes at the end of each canto to outline the multiple variations of individual myths. Heywood thereby reveals his own selection process, allowing each canto to be compared to the manifold sources that tell alternative stories or provide proof for his own. No variations are provided for Hecuba, however; the telling of her tale by the poem is the only

information the reader receives. Like the Troy Books Heywood follows, Hecuba

is still a peripheral character in a vast encyclopedic epic, which ends by

recounting Monmouth's genealogy of 'all great *Brittans* Kinges, truely

descended' from Brute 'till royall *Iames* claymes his Monarchall Seate'

(Argument 17).[10]

The numerous sixteenth and seventeenth-century retellings of Troy,

although infused and revitalised with classical details, typically display the

continuing pre-eminence of Caxton and the popularity of the romance epic.

Partly, this continuation is due to the fact that humanism's 'historiographic

revolution' (emerging from a vehement adoption of the Graeco-Roman ideal of

strict historical veracity), was combined with a continued belief in Dares and

Dictys as genuine eye-witnesses.[11] As print collided with patronage, revised

Dares-based narratives, treatises and poems engaged – perhaps even more

explicitly than the Troy Books they superseded – with the *Troynovant* myths and

the nationalistic proto-imperialist ideology that this home-grown mythology

served.[12] Although embellished by Ovidian and Virgilian detail, these Hecubas

still perform the same role as Caxton's and Lydgate's queens. The mourning-

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[10] While Peele employed *Troynovant* mythology within a wave of nationalistic mythmaking surrounding Elizabeth's and the nation's unexpected naval success against Spain, Heywood's *Troia Britannica* was part of a later surge of panegyric mythopoetic literature belonging to the first decade of the seventeenth-century, surrounding the commencement of James I's rule. James actively prompted an outpouring of *Troynovantalism* himself, as Schofield reports, by 'promising a beautiful jewel, designed by Nicholas Hilliard, to anyone who could successfully trace his genealogy back to the Trojan Brute', 'According to "the common receiued opinion"' (as in n.59 p.123 above), p.259. Beating off competition from George Owen Harry's *The genealogy of the High and Mighty Monarch, James, by the Grace of God, King of Great Brittayne* (1604), the prize was won in July 1610 by Thomas Lyte who presented the king with an illuminated (and presumably revised) manuscript of *The Light of Britayne. A recorde of the honourable originall & antiquitie of Britaine* (a genealogy which had in fact been written by his father Henry Lyte for Elizabeth I to whom it was presented in 1588 – amidst the celebrations following her victory over the Spanish Armada).
[11] For an account of the 'historiographic revolution' see Joseph M. Levine, *Humanism and History: Origins of Modern English Historiography* (Ithaca & London: Cornell UP, 1987).
[12] Thus Peele dedicates his *Farewell* to Drake and Norris, and Heywood dedicates *Troia Britannica* to the 'Right Honourable Edward Earle of *Worcester*', whom he declares to be one of 'those Lordes which we from Troy deriue' ('Dedication', A3v).

period represented by tragedy (Hamlet's time 'out of joint' that only appropriate remembrance/retribution can 'put right') is incorporated in a muted form to prevent it from destabilising the teleological progression of the epic, as it returns the reader to their present day in an idealised England.

That the Hecuba of Euripides' and Seneca's tragedies and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* would act, given enough narrative space, as a deconstructive meta-mythic affront to *Troynovant* (which thus excludes, exorcises or kills off the queen before she can assume her role as the mourning mother), is testified to by the little known work of an obscure author called Thomas Fenne. Nothing is known of Fenne beyond the 'two or three [extant] copies' of *Fennes Frutes* (1590); however, the fact that he is 'extremely fond of displaying his reading by pedantic allusions' led to the tenuous speculation that he was, 'perhaps, a schoolmaster'.[13] Schoolmaster or not, Fenne had certainly been a grammar school boy and in his *Frutes* classical humanist education collides with the tradition of the Troy Book tales. Fenne has one major goal: to expose the *Troynovant* mythology as a deceitful folly. In accordance with schoolroom practice, Fenne uses a commonplace book method of composition; he has 'reaped' his books for 'proffit', extracting 'the wise sayings of the learned Philosophers' (A2v). It is Fenne's intention to build an argument based on the 'opinion' of 'diuers learned men', opinions which have been formed by the 'studious seeking out of the workes of ancient historiographers' (Bb2v). Yet while he provides an academic essay to argue the 'meere folly and wonderfull madnes [of deriving] genealogie and pedegree, from the ancient *Troyans*'

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[13] J. Payne Collier, *A Bibliographical and Critical Account of the Rarest Books in the English Language*, Vol. 2 (New York: David G Francis and Scribner & Co., 1866), p.12 and p.8. All quotations from *Fenne's Frutes* will be referenced parenthetically.

(Aa1v), Fenne's chief weapon in his battle is not the work of sceptical humanist historiographers (such as Polydore Vergil) but the ghost of Hecuba.[14]

As its full title outlines, *Fenne's Frutes* is divided into three sections: 'The first, A Dialogue betweene Fame and the Scholler'; 'The second, intreateth of the lamentable ruines which attend on Warre', and 'The third, that it is not requisite to deriue our pedegree from the vnfaithfull Troians, who were chiefe causes of their owne destruction: whereunto is added Hecubaes mishaps, discoursed by way of apparition'. Fenne's challenge to the Tudor Myth follows an essay that, whilst not advocating pacifism, adamantly refuses to glorify war, to such an extent that it employs mythic and legendary battles (including Troy) – which were typically considered exemplars of heroism – as examples of 'the vnspeakable mischiefes', 'miserable calamities, and lamentable distresses of bloudie Battaile and ruinous Warre' (Pv). In consequence, the challenge to Trojan ancestry follows immediately after a scathing description of the 'meanes [by which] ancient Troy was destroyed, and why the whole Empire of Phrigia was lost, with [….] lamentable murders' (Y2r). Although the praise of peace is ubiquitous in sixteenth-century literature, the dominant ideology regarded war and peace as cyclical; war was an inevitable recurrence that man could not avert. Fenne's refusal of this determinist theory, alongside his refusal (in the first part of his work) to consider these inevitable wars as a convenient proving ground for

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[14] Polydore Vergil's *Historiae anglicae libri* dismisses the Brut genealogy as 'feigned trifles' which win 'the admiration of the common people (who always more regard novelties than truth)', qtd. in Schofield (as in n.59 p.213 above), p.261. It was also made required school reading after an Order of the Privy Council 1582. As Heather James observes, the rise of humanism subjected the Troy legend to 'stinging scepticism among historians and antiquarians', *Shakespeare's Troy* (as in n.104 p.88), p.21. The most prominent and well known dismantling of Monmouth's genealogy was undertaken by Vergil, who was commissioned by the newly crowned Henry Tudor to write a history of the nation that legitimised his claim to the throne in terms of recent rather than mythic history. However, as James details, Vergil's subsequent *Historiae anglicae libri XXVI*, 'paradoxically destroyed the credibility of the Troy legend and guaranteed its ardent defense [as] Tudor supporters, influenced by Reformation sentiment, were less able than the king to stomach the efforts of a foreigner and a papist to discredit England's legendary origins', p.87.

male honour (O4v), renders his *Frutes* one example of what Paul Jorgensen refers to as, 'an occasional voice, less confident than monitory, [that] dissented from the prevailing view'.[15] Fenne therefore attacks both *Troynovant* and the underlying ideology that it obliquely affirms and mythologises. The inclusion of *Hecubaes mishaps, discoursed by way of apparition* is not an incongruous 'annexed' addition to this attack, but rather a mirror in which his prior arguments culminate. Hecuba reflects and bears witness to the "truth" of Fenne's essays.

The two essays on Troy repeatedly defer to what the true historiographers '*Dares Phrigius* recordat' (Y2v) and '*Dictys Cretensis* saith' (Aa3v). In aiming for historical accuracy, *Hecubaes Mishaps* again follows the precedent set by Dares and Dictys and, consequently, reads like yet another sixteenth-century recital of a Troy Book, embellished with Ovidian and Virgilian detail. However, by placing the Caxtonesque tale into Hecuba's mouth, Fenne transforms it into a song of rage. A "female" intervention is made in the traditionally male discourse of war; the tale of Troy's destruction is wrested back from the long line of male "authorities": from Aeneas' ventriloquisation of Hecuba in the *Aeneid*, to Dares and Dictys, to Guido and Lefèvre, to Lydgate and Caxton, to Peele and Fenne – now finally "back" to Fenne's Hecuba. No longer an 'honorable report' of 'glory in highest aduentures' (Peele A2v) or of 'ffeetes and grete prowesses' (Caxton DI.3), in Hecuba's mouth the tale becomes one of 'griefe forepast', told '[w]ith grieuous grones in wofull wise' (Bb4v).

In effect, the final part of *Fenne's Frutes* is the familiar schoolroom exercise, a long complaint poem providing a comprehensive answer to Rainolde's and Aphthonius' set questions. More precisely, Fenne rehearses an

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[15] 'Theoretical Views of War in Elizabethan England', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 13:4 (1952), 469-81 (p.478).

extensive exercise in *eidolopeia* since the Hecuba delivering this 'lamentable

Oracion' has already been killed in the tradition of the Troy Books:

> The Greekes with stones did compasse me, whose force I stil defide,
> Till they with stones did strike me downe, where presently I dide. (Ff2v)

Yet Hecuba has not been resurrected in Troy or Thrace or the unnamed island

where Caxton and Lydgate left her dead and buried. Fenne instead offers a

humanist dream, resurrecting the classical past in the English present.

Literalising the trope of 'my selfe conferring with my books' (A2v), Fenne

imagines himself (or at least a narratorial persona named Fenne) conferring with

the 'troubled ghost' (Gg3r) of a disinterred Hecuba:

> Wherefore good friend, quoth she, geue eare and marke what I shall tell.
> Lift vp thy minde, be not dismayd, and note my speeches well:
> […].
> With that me thought I banisht feare, and quaking limmes reuiude.
> I courage tooke againe afresh, of which I was depriude.
> Then boldly thus I said at last, what madnes doeth possesse
> Thy vexed soule? Be sure if that thy paine I may redresse,
> To finde some ease of this thy griefe or els I were vnkind:
> Therefore be short, to ease thy smart, and let me know thy mind. (Bb4r)

Fenne achieves the meeting of present-day academic with deceased Trojan queen

by framing the answer to Rainolde's *ethopoeic* exercise within a dream-poem. In

so doing, Fenne collides the common schoolroom assignment with 'one of

[England's] most popular and long-lasting […] medieval literary forms'.[16]

As A.C. Spearing describes, 'the rise of courtly literature from the

twelfth-century onward' imbued the once didactic Christian genre of the dream-

poem with 'the courtly cult of secular love'; it became standard for melancholy

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[16] A.C. Spearing, 'Dream Poems', in *Medieval Literature: Chaucer and the Alliterative Tradition,* Vol. 1, ed. by Boris Ford, revised ed. (London: Penguin, 1991), pp.235-247 (p.235).

lovers to be haunted by 'fictional visions' in 'secular pseudo-paradise[s]'.[17] In

consequence, the stylistic conventions of the courtly dream-poems inevitably

overlap with the landscapes of the medieval romances of Troy. Indeed, the

'secular pseudo-paradise' initially established by Fenne's classically inspired

dream-poem echoes with the English idyll typically promised by the topography

of *Troynovant*:

> When that Auroraes dewes were past, and Phoebus did decline,
> And purple Titan ready prest with fainting light to shine.
> When Cynthia did prease in place to run her compasse round,
> And feeblely did shew her face with duskish light on ground.
> Then walked I to silent groue my fancie to delight,
> Where willingly I meant to bide to passe the pensiue night.
> Sweete silence there her sound did yeeld, no noyse did me molest:
> All chirping notes were whisht at once, each breathing soule did rest.
> Amidst the hollow groue I past to ease my musing minde,
> But no redresse of dolefull dumpes I any where could finde:
> Vntill at last I viewde the skies where lucent lights abound:
> And downe againe mine eyes direct vpon the human ground.
> Then did I shake from sobbing soule the griping griefe and paine,
> That long before had me opprest, but now reuiude againe.
> Within the groue a pleasant streame with bubling note did flowe,
> Which I by chaunce had soone found out from hollow bankes below.
> There musing by the running tide and soundings of the deepe:
> The sliding flouds that smoothly passe had husht me soone asleepe.
>
> (Bb3v)

Inevitably, with the 'help of warbling streames' (Bb3v), the sleeping narrator

begins to be 'frighted' by 'dreadfull drowsie dreames' (Bb3v) and with this the

ghost of Hecuba, unrecognised by the dreaming Fenne, suddenly enters the

conventional dream-poem topography and begins to disrupt the English idyll: 'In

slumber sound me thought I spied a wight both fierce and fell: / A thing despisde,

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[17] *Ibid*, p.235. For writers such as Fenne, the most influential English dream-poem would be
Chaucer's *Book of the Duchess* (c.1368) which established the notion of a melancholy narrator,
whose mood makes them more susceptible to 'sorwful ymagynacioun', qtd. in Spearing, p.243.
Pertinently, Chaucer's grief-stricken lover falls asleep after reading Book 11 of Ovid's
Metamorphoses (in which Morpheus takes the form of Ceyx's ghost and visits his wife Alcyone
in a dream to inform her Ceyx has drowned).

in viler sort no creature was in hell. / A woman vext with eager lookes in frantike fierie moode' (Bb3v).

Whilst the manner of Hecuba's death and the tale she will tell are undoubtedly drawn from Dares and Dictys (and thus resonate with the medieval traditions of the Troy Books), Fenne's Trojan Queen is explicitly aligned with 'olde Hecuba', '[w]hom Greekes and Romanes long agoe in dolefull verse did make the world to know' (Bb4v). Indeed it is on Ovid's, Euripides' and Seneca's 'dolefull verse[s]' that Fenne seems to base his 'fierce', 'fierie' and 'frantike' Queen:

> With clapping hands and rowling eyes vncertainly she stoode.
> She ran about with flaring haire, much like to horses stout,
> When sodain fright had pierst their minds, with strouting tayles did strout.
> Euen so or worse she roude about with head and shoulders bare:
> And oftentimes from senselesse pate her pendant lockes she tare
> With bloudie nayles and hands imbrued, her palmes she oft did smite:
> And reaching for the heauens, as though she to the Gods had spite.
> With irefull cries and fearefull notes the hollow groue did sound:
> In yelling sort from gulled bankes the ditties did rebound.
> Like mightie bulles that fiercely meetes, and filles with noise the skies.
> And for a token of their wrath the dustie grauell flies,
> By tearing vp of earth, so she in such like frantike fits
> Doeth snatch vp grasse in griping hands, as one beside her wits.
>
> (Bb3v-Bb4r)

Fenne's Hecuba tears up the black earth and green grass of the dream-poem's idyllic 'Ile enuironde within the Ocean sea' (Gg3r), filling the peaceful grove with 'clapping', 'yelling', 'irefull cries and fearfull notes' – a vile 'creature', 'a thing despisde', loosed from 'hell' to speak of horrors not heroism (Bb3v). Falling into the traditional overlap between madness and grief, Fenne's Hecuba performs her traditional mourning rituals: '[w]ith bloudie nayles and hands imbrued' that foreshadow, or perhaps evidence, the act of vengeance she will later recount: 'for reuenge on [Polymestor] I fell, and out his eies did teare, / To

worke him woe for this his deede my frantike minde was fierce, / The cheekes of this disloyall wretch my nayles did soundly pierce' (Ffv). The ghost of Ovid's murderous Queen is loose, ripping up the nostalgic medieval topography of 'this noble Ile' (Bb2v), just as Fenne's prior essay attempted to tear up the foundations of the *Troynovant* myths.[18]

Fenne's main tactic to enable Hecuba's tale to be told against the grain of the Troy Books is to demystify conventional moments of heroism, undercutting battles by unflinchingly insisting upon the corporeal reality of violence. Consequently, despite being somewhat bathetic, the predominantly monosyllabic rhyming couplets of *Hecubaes Mishaps* relay one of the sixteenth-century's most visceral depictions of the Trojan War. Fenne thereby converts the eyewitness report of soldiers (Dares and Dictys) to that of the grieving mother whose memory is seared with the defilement of her children's bodies, like the Ovidian queen whose eyes are riveted in incomprehension on her dead son's 'woundes (his woundes I say) shee specially behilld' (*Met*/Golding 13.651). Thus Fenne's Hecuba recalls the war's first casualty, 'yong Polidore', betrayed and sold by Polymestor to the Greeks who stone him to death in full view of the city:

> I from Troyan wall
> Might well beholde how bouncing blowes did make my childe to sprall,
> Not ceasing till my sonne were slaine, nor then, but still did smight

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[18] Although Fenne provides numerous references to the *Aeneid* throughout his work, he attacks the foundations of *Troynovant* by attacking Virgil's 'prophane verses' which he identifies as setting the precedent for the foolish 'vanity' with which the Romans 'proudly brag and vaunt of the Troyans their predecessors and progenitors' by dissimulating and hiding 'the vnfaithfulnes of their predicessor' (Aa3r). The major example that Fenne provides to illustrate that Virgil's text is 'alwaies fauoring wretched *Aeneas* because the *Romans* deriue the pedegrée from the fugitiue *Troyans*', is the fate of Hecuba's daughter Creusa. For Fenne it is clear, having studied Dares and Dictys, that Aeneas 'hauing married *Crusa* one of the daughters of the said *Priamus,* then knowing the intent of the fierse *Greekes,* presently with willing consent committed his louing wife to the murdering enimie, that no let or impediment might be of his owne escape' (Aa4r). This unpalatable 'truth' about Rome's founding father is concealed, according to Fenne, by Virgil, 'a more cunninger sort [who] saith, that he lost *Crusa* his wife in the burning towne altogether against his will' (Aa4r).

> The brused bones of my sweet boy within his mothers sight:
> O hellish plague, O torture vile, me thinke I see it still,
> How Grecians raging mad did strike, the harmelesse soule to kill,
> With wringing hands I looked on, yet loath to see him die,
> I turnd my backe, and strait againe I coulde not chuse but prie
> For this my sonne, who bleeding lay so bobde with waightie stones,
> The flesh with blowes was mangled so, eche man might see the bones,
> Yet would mine eies haue passage still to this his carkasse dead. (Cc2v)

Such explicit detail is typically reserved for the Trojan *tragedies*, and indeed

evokes the murder of Astyanax in Heywood's translation of *Troas*:

> What lymmes fro[m] such a hedlong fall,
> coulde in a chylde remayne?
> Hys bodyes payse, throwne downe to grounde,
> hathe battred all hys boanes,
> Hys face, hys noble fathers markes,
> are spoylde agaynst the stoa[n]es.
> Hys necke vnioynted is: hys hed
> so dashte with flint stone stroake,
> That scattred is the brayne aboute,
> the sculle is all to broake.
> Thus lieth he now dismembred corps,
> deformde, and all to rent. (2440-51)

In Fenne, when the Greeks comply with Hecuba's request to return Polydorus'

'martyrde corps' (Cc3r) they also send her 'a present': 'The bloudy stones that

kild my sonne […] VVhose bloud and braines in vgly sort about the stones was

seen' (Cc3r). Such cruel detail is not merely to increase the pathos of the

slaughter of a 'harmelesse lad' (Cc2r) but is characteristic of each death and each

battle usually considered to display heroic magnitude. Thus what Hecuba recalls

of the mighty battle between Hector and Achilles is: 'I saw, I saw how Hector lay

as dead as any stone: / And yet the tyrant would not leaue but mighty blowes

layd on […] dead, yea dead, and dead againe, / […] the bedlam beast his carkas

would not spare' (Cc3v). Another unnamed son, his 'hands chopt off', is 'sent

home' by the Greeks to tell Hecuba and Priam of Hector's fate (Cc3v). As 'this

boy besmearde with bloud his heauie hap did waile' (Cc3v), Achilles begins to

drag Hector's corpse:

> whose gaping iawes the durt and grauell fild.
> VVhose whighish skin the muddy mire with filthy spots had hild.
> His beard besmeard with stinking filth, to eyes and face did clung
> Such lothsome stuff as filthy Greeks with durty fists had flung. (Cc4r)

Troilus too, 'his body ript', 'bowels hung about his feete', is exhibited 'naked on

a gibe' (Ddv); when Ajax kills Paris on the field, the Greeks 'like hellish hounds

/ Did hunt to haue his carkas dead to plague with grieuous wounds' – he is

returned to Hecuba in pieces, 'armes and legs […] hewde off' (Dd4v-Eer); and

when Menelaus captures Deiphobus he '[h]is nose cut, his eares and lips, and

plucked out his sight, / His other limmes in spiteful sort, he did dismember quite'

(Ee2v). With the death of each Trojan hero another horrific image of excessive,

dishonourable, violence is recalled in sickening detail. Fenne's *Mishaps* is,

therefore, to the tradition of Troynovant what the twenty-first century *Hecuba*s

were to Hollywood's *Troy*: the refusal of glamorised violence, the insistence on

the corporeal reality of murder and the unmediated lament of the maternal

mourning voice.

Fenne's previous essay implicitly demonstrates the difference that the

teller makes to the tale by including an earlier reference to another performance

of the 'destruction of Troy':

> for [Emperor Nero] caused [his mother Agrippina] to be most
> cruelly tormented, commanding her wombe to be opened & cut vp,
> that he might sée the place wherein he lay: and in the meane time
> while she was suffering such miserable torture, he gaue so little
> regard to the wofull mournings & pitifull cries of his naturall
> mother, that he played on a cistern ye destruction of Troy, and
> sung most pleasantly to his instrument. (Ir)

In contrast to the maternal lament that Hecuba is *compelled* to replay ('For I must needes declare the cause to ease my pensiue brest / Of haplesse hap that Fate assignde, and then in hope to rest', Bb4r), the massacre of Troy is merely a 'pleasant' pastime to be 'played' by the sadistic Nero. Like Petersen's *Troy*, Nero's retelling is punctuated by the 'wofull mournings & pitifull cries' of a woman, which are given 'little regard'. Whilst the "monstrous" Agrippina is no Hecuba, one womb recalls another and the murder of each of Hecuba's children is, as we have seen, tantamount to the ripping out of her womb. This act is, then, *always* the corollary replayed in the background of the telling of Troy. When the story is told by Hecuba the pain felt by the mourning mother (in her bodily intimacy to the children being slaughtered) is brought to the surface. In retellings by Virgil, Dares, Dictys, Caxton *et al.*, which shift the telling of the tale from lamenting women to soldiers and "historiographers", the mother's mourning voice is muted into 'tongueless […] inarticulate moans'.[19] For Hecuba, however, the compulsive act of witnessing and remembering are *felt* as a form of mutilation; Fenne's catalogue of butchery is interwoven with a strain of sight-related imagery that sees Hecuba persistently wounded by that which she recalls seeing, imagery that links the poem to both Rainolde's Hecuba ('Hectors death […] did wound me for to die' (fol.li)) and the lamentations of Hecuba in the classical texts.

Despite its recital of the prevalent schoolroom exercise, *Hecubaes mishaps, discoursed by way of apparition* is a rare oddity in the tales that Renaissance England was telling itself about Troy. It attests to Hecuba's potential disruption of the *Troynovant* myths and the ideology they served and

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[19] Scott, '*Troy*: Greeks Bearing Immortality' (as in n.95 p.84 above).

exposes the manner in which her exclusion paradoxically renders her a haunting

cultural presence.

However, there was one other notable exception to her pervasive absence

from the iconography of *Troynovant*, an exception which reveals perhaps the

only way in which Hecuba earns a valuable role in the indigenous mythology.

The temporary resurgence of Hecuba amongst a flood of *Troynovant* inspired

elegies for Prince Henry from late-1612 to early-1613 would seem to suggest that

the Trojan mother had in fact always haunted the traditional panegyrics. As

Michael Ullyott has shown, the death of the Prince of Wales (6 November 1612),

threw the *Troynovant* mythology into chaos, not because the sudden death of the

young Prince refused to follow the ancient story but because it followed it too

closely.[20] Since his father's coronation in 1603 Henry had been routinely

identified as *Troynovant*'s own heroic Hector. George Wither's elegy thus asked:

'May not I liken *London* now to *Troy* / As she was that same day she lost her

Hector?'.[21] Consequently, the *Troynovant* mythology shifted ground, from a

determinedly prelapsarian Troy (such as Dekker's idyllic 'arbour') to the scenes

of lamentation in Euripides' and Seneca's Trojan tragedies and Ovid's

Metamorphoses.[22] The classical Hecuba resurfaced as the Prince's mother,

Queen Anna:

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[20] 'The Fall of Troynovant' (as in n.82 p.221), pp.269-90.
[21] *Prince Henries Obseqvies* qtd. in Ullyott, p.270.
[22] Eighteen years earlier, in 1594, Sir John Ogle had envisaged just such scenes of mourning in another idiosyncratic dream poem, *The Lamentation of Troy for the Death of Hector* (London: Peter Short for William Mattes, 1594). The narrator dreams of a personification of the 'woful Ghost of *Ilion*' leading him to witness Hecuba, Helen, Andromache and Cassandra lamenting over Hector's corpse. Presumably inspired by Seneca's *Troas* and again reminiscent of the schoolroom *ethopoeia*, Ogle's poem offers an extended lament by these various female voices. However, in contrast to Fenne's poem, the intention is not to undermine *Troynovant* but rather reinforce it: the vision of misery is meant to prompt the nation into valuing its own Hector (the 'Right Honorable Sir Peregrin Bartue knight, Lord of Willoughby and Earsby' to whom the poem is dedicated) by revealing what England would suffer with the loss of its 'onely *Hector* of *Albion*'

And you Maiesticked ANNE, when *Hecub* saw
Sweet, *Polymnestor* [sic.]*,* all the poore remaine
Of her braue Issue, beat by many a flaw,
And to the shore forc'd by the billowy Maine:
Methinks from her face I your griefe could draw (C2r) [23]

The same reflexivity that characterised Lucrece's and Hamlet's encounters with the Trojan queen is here again – 'from her face I your griefe could draw' – blending Anna with Hecuba into a single picture of sorrow. This is of course the familiar schoolroom lesson that had taught boys to consider Hecuba a mirror for expressing sorrow. Real death necessitates the resurrection of the symbolic Hecuba to enable the nation to express its grief and that of their mourning monarchy; (which, for me, is echoed almost four-hundred years later in NerdzRkool's need to reinstate Hecuba's lamentation into *Troy* to express the reality of the grief, rage and sorrow caused by 9/11).

In the English literature produced beyond the classroom, then, the classical Hecubas learnt by rote in childhood exist as a haunting analogue to the traditions of an indigenous mythology with its roots in the centuries before the humanist revival of the classics. The imagined voices of the resurrected queens enable them to operate as part of the nation's vocabulary for expressing grief, either in the dramatic laments of fictionalised characters, or elegies prompted in real life. For the most part, the classical Hecubas remained on the periphery of culture, threatening to undermine accepted notions of heroism and the glorification of war and nationalism. The exception to this marginalisation was,

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(A2r). Ogle informs Peregrin that 'in [Ilion's] teares you might behold the sorrows of your owne countrey whensoever iniurious fates shoulde cause you miscarrie' (A2r).

[23] Thomas Heywood, *A funerall elegie vpon the death of the late most hopefull and illustrious prince, Henry, Prince of Wales* (London: William Welbie, St. Pauls Churchyard, at the signe of the Swan, 1613).

however, the increasing body of self-declared "academic" translations that

rendered the classical queens into English.

4. Hecuba and the Men of Letters

> In the Greeke and Latin tong […] the two onlie learned tonges,
> which be kept not in common taulke but in private bookes, we
> finde always wisdome and eloquence.
>
> Roger Ascham, *The Scholemaster*, 1570 [24]

> I thought it not repugnat to my duty if I shold […] endeuour […] to
> conduct by som meanes to further vnderstadig the vnripened
> schollers of this realm, to whom I thought it shoulde be no lesse
> thankful for me to enterprete som latyn work into this our owne
> tongue, then for Erasmus in Latyne to expounde the Greeke […]
> whereby I might both make some trial of my self, and as it were
> tech the little children to goe that yet canne but creepe.
>
> Jasper Heywood, Dedication to *Hercules Furens*, 1561

Although the medieval tales, in which Hecuba's mangled corpse had been left

dead and buried were recast by strict humanists as corruptions of the *matter* of

Troy, Dares continued to be considered a genuine eyewitness. In 1553 Thomas

Paynell's 'faythfull and true storye' rescued Dares' account from prior textual

corruption by stripping away the Troy Books' additions, expansions, and

interpolations from Dictys.[25] The new "historical" Hecuba of Paynell's Dares

was soon joined by English translations of the texts central to the schools'

curricula. 1557 saw the posthumous publication of the Earl of Surrey's

translation of Books 2 and 4 of Virgil's *Aeneid*.[26] In 1558 Jasper Heywood

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[24] Qtd. in Ong, *Rhetoric Romance and Technology* (as in n.58 p.131), p.134.
[25] It should be noted, however, that Paynell's *The faythfull and true storye of the destruction of Troye, compyled by Dares Phrigius, which was a souldier while the siege lasted, translated into Englyshe by Thomas Paynell* (London: John Cawood, Sign of the holy Ghost, 1553), is still a translation from a more recent, unnamed, French translation.
[26] Written sometime between 1539 and 1547, printed in 1557 as *Certain bokes of Virgiles Aeneis turned into English meter by the right honorable lorde, Henry Earle of Surrey* (London: Richard Tottel, 1557).

dedicated the first English translation of Seneca – the *Troas* – to the newly

crowned Queen Elizabeth. Meanwhile, Thomas Phaer repeated and extended

Surrey's success and, in 1562, '*The Nyne Fyrst Bookes of the Eneidos of Virgil*

converted in to Englishe vearse […] *with so muche of the tenthe Booke, as since*

his death coulde be found in unperfit papers at his house' were printed.[27] In

1565 Arthur Golding printed the first four books of his English *Metamorphoses*;

the complete fifteen-book edition (with Hecuba's story in Book 13) followed in

1567 and proved both popular and highly influential.[28] By 1598 George

Chapman was even able to offer an English translation of four books of Homer's

obscure *Iliad*, followed by a full translation in 1610.[29] These translations made

classical Hecubas available to England's literate yet "unlearned": educated

women and girls, men who knew no Latin and pre-school boys. Yet as the

examples by Peele, Fenne and Thomas Heywood indicate, despite a vogue for

these new translations, the legacy of the Troy Books continued to exert the

strongest influence over the most prevalent English tellings of Troy.

Although the Troy Books began life as medieval manuscripts for the

edification of princes, dukes, or archbishops, a perceptible shift in their intended

readership can be discerned as they came into print as gifts for literate women.

As Ong asserts, '[b]ecause their sex was so committed to the vernacular, women

could become – as Raymond W. Chambers and others have shown they did

become – both a major audience for English literature and some of its chief

patrons'.[30] Thus, as we saw in Caxton's frontispiece (fig.1, p.35), England's first

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[27] London: Rouland Hall for Nicholas Englande, 1562.

[28] London: Willyam Seres, 1567. Additional reprints appeared in 1575, 1584, 1587, 1593, 1603 and 1612. For the influence of Golding's translation see Madeline Forey, pp.xi-xxvi.

[29] *The Iliads of Homer: Prince of Poets*, trans. by George Chapman (London: Richard Field for Nathaniell Butter, 1610).

[30] *Rhetoric, Romance and Technology*, p.120.

printed tale of Troy is aligned with the Duchess' pet monkey – adept in artistic

mimicry yet implicitly mere entertainment for a coterie of female readers.

Moreover, the Troy Book stories were strongly linked to what were considered

the baser traditions of public entertainments for the masses, both literate and

illiterate alike; and such associations only intensified as authoritative classics

were printed and disseminated in Latin.

It is somewhat ironic then, that by the time Fenne "restores" the telling of

Troy to Hecuba (to the female voice of lament which allies his work with

classical Hecubas), the Caxtonesque tale she tells has become attached to the

notion of vernacular female literature and voices which serve to undermine its

authority. The Trojan War as told by a female voice was an old wives' tale told

'[o]ver a Fire by Nurse [or] Grandam old'.[31] It formed part of 'the history […]

handed down from Mother to daughter […] in Ballad' in which women's voices

sing of Troilus and Cressida or the 'Lamentations of Hecuba' (1586).[32] The

negative connotations of these unlearned voices were compounded by the

conception of the vernacular as 'our mother tongue and [the] vulgar language'.[33]

Authority now resided in 'the Greeke and Latin tong', in the 'private bookes' of

the 'learned', not in the 'common taulke' of the chattering vernacular.[34]

The sixteenth and seventeenth-century translations of classics often

attempted to rise above such distinctions by aligning themselves, as Jasper

Heywood's English *Hercules Furens* (1561) does so explicitly, with the work of

Erasmus and the continental humanists. The translations were self-professedly

designed for edification: '[t]o tech the little children to goe that yet canne but

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[31] Bankes, *The Destruction of Troy*, A4r.

[32] *Aubrey's Brief Lives* qtd. in Griffin (as in n.60 p.213), pp.76-77.

[33] Anonymous literature (c.1540) in opposition to *The Byrthe of mankynde*: an English translation of a Latin manual on midwifery (*De Partu Hominis*); qtd. in Rich, *Of Woman Born*, p.138.

[34] Ascham, *The Scholemaster*, qtd. in Ong (as in n.58 p.131), p.134.

creepe'.[35] Although translators routinely expressed little faith in the 'eloquence' of 'our englishe toong' – oft declaring it, like Jasper Heywood, as 'farre vnable, to compare with the latten' – it was still hoped that these instructive translations would maintain the 'wisdome' of the Latin or Greek originals (110-12).[36] Producing such translations, complete with annotations, marginalia, summaries and commentaries, became an increasingly common pursuit amongst learned gentlemen; by the 1700s the practice was so prevalent that it had effectively become, as Hall and Macintosh observe, 'a rite of passage for aspiring men of letters'.[37]

The pervasive gendering of such practices is of course ideologically driven as well as a reflection of the blanket exclusion of women from classical education and is undermined by the occasional yet significant exception to the rule. Thus, for example, the earliest extant English translation of any Greek play (*The Tragedie of Euripides called Iphigeneia translated out of Greake into Englisshe*) was in fact completed by Lady Jane Lumley sometime after 1550. But Lumley's tragedy remained forgotten in manuscript, until the twentieth-century, whilst academia routinely ascribed the first English translation of Greek tragedy to the students of Gray's Inn and George Gascoigne's and Francis Kinwelmershe's 1566 *Jocasta*.[38]

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[35] 'Dedication to Syr William Harbert', in *The first tragedie of Lucius Anneus Seneca, intituled Hercules Furnes*, trans. by Jasper Heywood (London: Henrye Sutton at the signe of the blacke Boy, 1561), in *Jasper Heywood and his Translations of Seneca's* Troas, Thyestes *and* Hercules Furens, *edited from Octavos of 1559, 1560 and 1561*, pp.201-02.

[36] Jasper Heywood, 'To the Readers', *Troas*. See also Greene who writes that the humanists' 'sense of disjuncture' from the classical past was routinely expressed in 'embarrassment over its rude vernacular. Translators of the earlier Tudor period ritually deplored "our own corrupt and base, or as al men affyrme it: most barbarous Language"', p.33.

[37] *Greek Tragedy and the British Theatre* (as in n.43 p.36), p.61.

[38] Walton, *Found in Translation*, pp.27-28; it is generally believed that Lumley utilised Erasmus' Latin translation of *Iphigenia in Aulis* in order to produce her English translation. As Walton relays: Gascoigne's and Kinwelmershe's *Jocasta* is an English translation of a Senecan-infused Italian translation of a Latin translation of Euripides' *Phoenician Women*.

Out of my six "origin and original" Hecuba-narratives, only Euripides'

Hecuba and *Trojan Women* appear absent from the wave of Renaissance

translations. This is in fact part of a wider cultural absence; as J. Michael Walton

states, after Lumley's *Iphigenia* and Gascoigne's and Kinwelmershe's *Jocasta*

'translation from the Greek repertoire falters'. In fact, it was 'not until after the

closing of the theatres in 1642 that further translations from the Greek emerged:

and then it was first Sophocles, then Aristophanes, rather than Euripides, who

found favour'.[39] Naomi Conn Liebler speculates that during the Civil War and

Interregnum, 'tragedy seems to have started all over again with translations from

Seneca and Sophocles, suggesting that England had to reinvent dramatic tragedy

ab initio, and that Greco-Roman stories were considered good (safe?) models to

start with'. Moreover, all of these tragedies were 'apparently unperformed (even

privately) or unintended for performance'.[40] The twenty-year anti-theatrical gap,

in which tragedy became even more of a matter for private study by a new

generation of men of letters, only served to widen and consolidate the *perceived*

division: on one side the venerated classics concerning Troy, intended for

edification whether in Latin, Greek or an English translation benevolently

bestowed on the literate by the learned; on the other side, the Caxtonesque legacy

of the (old wives') tales of Troy intended for popular entertainment, spoken in

the 'vulgar language' and 'clapper-clawd with the palmes of the vulger'.[41]

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[39] *Found in Translation* (as in n.18 p.189), p.36.

[40] 'Wonder Woman, or the Female Tragic Hero' (as in n.82 p.176), p.23; Liebler cites 'Edward Sherburne's translation of Seneca's M*edea* in 1648 and Christopher Wase's of Sophocles' *Electra* in 1649' as the start of this period of intensified interest in the classics, p.23.

[41] Prefatory epistle by the printer Henry Walley, added to Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* 1609 Q2, reproduced in *The Norton Shakespeare* (1997), pp.1826-27. Benedict Scott Robinson identifies Walley's claims as a fashionable marketing-technique which (although prefigured in the 1590 quarto of Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*) emerged in 'about 1610 [when] a group of playwrights began to advertise the cold receptions their plays had earned on stage in order to recoup theatrical failure as bookstall legitimacy. The inability of the theater audience to appreciate these works was being marketed to a readership that fancied itself as sophisticated

Nowhere is the perceived division more pronounced than in the translations of Euripides and Seneca which converted plays intended for performance into objects of academic enquiry (although they continued to be performed in the schools and colleges). I am repeatedly stressing *perceived* here, for there are potentially more exceptions to the rule than conformations, as, from the 1660s onwards, the classics crossed over onto the public stage and popular tastes influenced translations.[42] Thus, the division is only ostensibly perpetuated in the prefaces and commentaries of "academic" translations when authors believe it advantageous to do so. Consequently, from the late-seventeenth to late nineteenth-century, English theatres staged numerous dramas adapted from Greek tragedies, starring female protagonists including: Iphigenia, Medea, Electra, Phaedra and Antigone. For Hecuba, however, the perceived division had a very real impact upon the wider cultural perception and visibility of her character.

Employing translations of the tragedies (by succeeding generations of "men of letters") as stepping-stones, I can leap forward in time from the Renaissance and illustrate both the impact of the widening cultural division and Hecuba's gradual decline within, and ultimate disinheritance from, academia. The academies continued to ignore Euripides' *Trojan Women* whilst the rise of Neoclassicism and the subsequent sentimentality of Romanticism gradually excluded *Hecuba* and Seneca from serious study. The character of Hecuba thus became 'the analogue' – that is: 'the uncanny present or forgotten past made out

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enough to see value in plays that were "cauiary to the generall"', 'Thomas Heywood and the Cultural Politics of Play Collections', *Studies in English Literature: 1500-1900*, 42:2 (2002), 361-80 (p.365).

[42] As Hall and Macintosh assert, 'by 1789 the majority of the Sophoclean and Euripidean plays had been rewritten (often radically) for performance in the English language', *Greek Tragedy and the British Theatre*, p.x.

of the same historical materials' – to the story that eighteenth and nineteenth-century England told itself about Troy.[43] Replaying her exclusion from *Troynovant*, then, academia also ended up exorcising the figure of Hecuba as an affront to their perceived relationship with Ancient Greece; the Trojan queen thus continued as a haunting presence.

The Interregnum had seen Seneca's pre-eminence go unchallenged but Sophocles began to compete with Euripides as Europe's most popular Greek tragedian. Samuel Pordage continued the vogue for new Seneca and translated *Troas*, 'with comments annexed', in 1660. Designed for reading not performance, it was printed in an edition that came complete with pastorals, poems, acrostics and panegyrics addressed to the returning Charles II.[44] In 1678 Edward Sherburne repeated the exercise, 'with annotations', as did James Talbot in 1685, who worried that the play was not 'fitt'd […] to the Humour and Relish of the present Age, and consequently [has] never stood the test of a publick Theatre'.[45] In 1702 Sherburne reprinted his 1678 *Troas* in a collected edition; yet within fifty years opinion and taste had shifted, as Talbot had sensed, against Seneca. So much so that, by 1780, when James Bannister produced the first extant English translation of Euripides' *Troades* he notes that: 'Seneca has likewise wrote a tragedy on the same subject; but, like his other tragedies, full of

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[43] Daryl W. Palmer, 'Edward IV's Secret Familiarities and the Politics of Proximity in Elizabethan History Plays', *ELH*, 61:2 (1994), 279-315 (p.280).

[44] It strikes me as an interesting aside to consider the impact of linking the return of Charles II to a tragedy whose opening lines state: 'Who trusts in Kingdomes, and who puissant bears / Rule over mighty Monarchies; nor fears / Th'inconstant Gods: Who on Prosperitie / Relies too much; Let him consider me, / And thee o Troy. For Fortune never bore / Of great mens slip'ry state such Proofs before', *Troades*, trans. by Samuel Pordage (London: W.G for Henry Marsh at the Princes Arms and Peter Dring at the Sun in the Poultry, 1660), Br. This could be further linked to Jasper Heywood's first translation of the same play, which he (a devout Jesuit who ended up in exile) dedicated to the newly crowned Protestant Queen Elizabeth I.

[45] 'To the Right Honourable Charles, Earl of Shrewsbury', dedication in *Troas, a Tragedy*, trans. by James Talbot (London: Jacob Tonson at the Judges-Head, 1685), A2r-v (A2r-v).

unnatural thoughts and puerile conceits'.[46] Such sentiments were to last for centuries and their ramifications persist today; Seneca's Hecuba disappeared from English cultural life, falling from favour in the schools and academies as a poor imitation of Euripides.[47]

In 1749 Thomas Morell, who in 'his own day was […] better known as the author of Morell's *Thesaurus* and of school editions of Greek plays', produced: '*Hecuba: translated from the Greek of Euripides with annotations chiefly relating to Antiquity*'.[48] Morell observes that *Hecuba* is a 'generally admired' Greek tragedy which 'has engaged several eminent Hands in translating it into *Latin*, but none more successfully than *Erasmus*'.[49] He then claims his *Hecuba* to be the first English translation because the 'Play under this Name […] in the Year 1725 […] can by no means be called a Translation; as the Prologue and Choric Songs are entirely omitted, and many other Parts so alter'd and transpos'd, that it bears very little Resemblance to the Original' (p.xiv). In contrast, Morell's edition is 'design'd merely as a Translation [and takes] no other Liberties', being intended for the benefit of 'such young Gentlemen as are now entering upon the Study of it' (p.ix and p.v). The 1725 *Hecuba* referred to by Morell is that of Richard West, another man of letters (and Lord Chancellor of Ireland), who explains that '[w]hen I read this Tragedy in the Original […] I

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[46] 'Notes on the Troades', in *The Select Tragedies of Euripides translated from the Original Greek*, trans. by James Bannister (London: N. Conant, 1780), pp.310-20 (p.310).

[47] The last known Oxbridge production of Seneca's *Troades* was mounted at St John's College Oxford in 1760 while the last recorded school's production was at the Merchant Taylor's School in Northwood in 1763 – both were performed in Latin, (*APGRD* Database).

[48] M.L. Clarke, *Greek Studies in England: 1700-1830* (Cambridge: CUP, 1945), p.61. Morell's school editions, in Greek of course, included: *Hecuba, Alcestis, Orestes, Phoenissae, Philoctetes* and *Prometheus,* see Clarke, pp.60-61.

[49] 'To the Reader', in *Hecuba*, trans. by Thomas Morell (London: J. Watts, 1749), pp.v-xv (p.xiv); further quotations from Morell's prefatory address are referenced parenthetically.

thought it would prove an elegant Entertainment for a polite Assembly'.[50] In

mounting his play at London's Drury Lane, however, West alleges that his hoped

for 'polite Assembly' was nothing but a 'Rout of Vandals' (p.iv). With

hindsight, West claims that:

> I foresaw there would be some Difficulty in making it agreeable, in
> its Original Purity, to the Taste of an English Audience.
>   The Objections to it were, that it was too short, too regular,
> and conducted with natural Simplicity; our *Tragedies* being
> generally too long, irregular and unnatural (p.iii)

Between them, then, Morell and West widen that gap (first perceived by Sidney

in the 1580s) between the unruly English stage with its equally unruly, 'irregular

and unnatural', vernacular tragedies, and the 'Purity' of the Greek tragedies

intended for academic study. For West the failure of his *Hecuba* (it played for

only three days) is the failure of the English theatre and its audience, not of

Greek tragedy; thus he emphatically declares that even 'if the Verses had been

repeated in the Original *Greek*, they would have been […] received in the same

manner' (p.iv). Similarly, for Morell the failure of West's translation (the reason

why it cannot even be considered a translation), is that it has been corrupted by

the public theatre – despite the fact that, in comparison to other eighteenth-

century stagings of Greek tragedy, it is exceptionally faithful to the original.

Edith Hall identifies West's *Hecuba* as '[t]he only professional eighteenth-

century attempt to stage a Greek tragedy in English translation rather than

adaptation'.[51] Hall, like West himself, locates the production's failure in the

determination to stage Euripides' violent, vengeful Trojan Queen at a time when

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[50] 'Preface', to *Hecuba: A tragedy, as it is acted at the Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane by His Majesty's servants*, trans. by Richard West (London: W. Wilkins, 1726), pp.iii-vii (p.iii); the following quotations from West's 'Preface' are referenced parenthetically.
[51] '*Medea* on the Eighteenth-Century London Stage', *Medea in Performance: 1500-2000*, ed. by Edith Hall, Fiona Macintosh and Oliver Taplin (Oxford: Legenda, 2000), pp.49-74 (p.70).

sentimental heroines and plots driven by 'wanton Love' ruled the stage.[52] Despite West's hope that the public stage could be redeemed and Morell's belief that it inexorably corrupted the classics by association, their shared belief in the value of *Hecuba* attests to the continued esteem with which Euripides and his tragedy were held amongst the academy and educated men of letters.

Thirty years later, however, Bannister's 1780 translation of 'selected' works indicates the level to which Euripides' influence had declined since the Renaissance. Bannister considers his work a 'rescue' mission since Euripides has fallen into 'the obscurity of a college poet that has been seldom read, except by a few recluse scholars'.[53] Moreover, Bannister spends over twenty pages asserting the 'genius' of Sophocles and the 'sublime […] regular and correct' Aeschylus over Euripides, who is felt sometimes to 'sink into those familiar scenes for which [he] has been censured by some modern critics'.[54] Thus, even though Seneca's *Troas* was no longer eclipsing the Greek tragedies, Euripides too, with the reputation of *Trojan Women* and *Hecuba*, was falling from favour by the latter-half of the eighteenth-century. This is further reflected in the fact that while Bannister offers the first English *Trojan Women*, Euripides' play continues to receive scarce attention – only translated a meagre three times between 1780 and 1905 (excluding collections).[55]

A year later, Robert Potter produced *The Tragedies of Euripides* in a two volume work that was to become a key reference text for the subsequent

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[52] West, 'Preface' (as in n.50 p.285 above), p.v.
[53] 'Preface', in *The Select Tragedies of Euripides translated from the Original Greek*, trans. by James Bannister (London: N. Conant, 1780), pp.iii-xxvii (p.xxv).
[54] *Ibid*., p.xx.
[55] See Walton, *Found in Translation* (as in n.18 p.189), for the translations of Euripides: "Collections", pp.230-35; *Hecuba*, pp.242-43, and *Trojan Women*, pp.252-53.

century.[56] A year after that, in 1782, Michael Wodhull's four volume collection: *The Nineteen Tragedies and Fragments of Euripides*, brought into print an intimidating academic resource which not only annotates each passage of each tragedy but also compiles all prior commentaries and studies that Wodhull employed in producing the massive reference work. Even in English, then, Euripides' *Hecuba* and *Trojan Women* had become the reserve of the educated and these multi-volume reference works. The nineteenth-century translations would only continue to reflect this trend, which was further compounded by Hecuba's continued absence from the nation's public theatres.[57]

The translation of *Hecuba* and, to a lesser extent, *Trojan Women* remained the pursuit of the men of letters who continued to test their linguistic abilities even as the reputation of Euripides' work declined in comparison to Sophocles and Aeschylus. In the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century Euripides' critical reputation plummeted as the condemnation of Euripides' tragedies in general, and *Hecuba* in particular, spread through the European academies. As we already know, in 1796 the German critic J.C.F. Manso asked: 'Who does not turn aside when Hecuba gouges out her enemy's eyes?', believing the averted gaze to be the only reasonable response to the play's 'vicious and revolting' climax.[58] Just as Renaissance England had belatedly imported the texts and tenets of humanism from Germanic educators, nineteenth-century England would similarly adopt and assimilate (again belatedly) the so-called '*damnatio* of

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[56] As Walton records, Potter's collection became a key reference text, reprinted over twelve times between 1783 and 1887; *Found in Translation*, p.231.
[57] See Walton, *Found in Translation*, pp.232-33.
[58] Manso qtd. in Heath (as in n.20, p.53 above), p.60.

Euripides' from continental Europe, particularly from the 'high priest of German

Romanticism' – Augustus Wilhelm von Schlegel.[59]

In 1808, in a series of lectures first delivered in Vienna, Schlegel stated

that the first half of *Hecuba* 'possesses great beauties [...]: pictures of tender

youth, female innocence, and noble resignation' but that these civilised dramatic

and literary virtues (embodied in Polyxena) are overthrown by the subsequent

action that is 'made up of the revengeful artifices of Hecuba, the blind avarice of

Polymestor, and the paltry policy of Agamemnon'. In summation, 'the second

half most revoltingly effaces the [play's] soft impressions'.[60] Although

Schlegel's condemnation of the play was neither isolated nor unprecedented by

this time, his Vienna lectures achieved a 'high celebrity', 'hailed throughout

Europe with marked approbation'.[61] Such was the popularity of the *Lectures* that

Richard Jenkyns declares them responsible for bringing 'Englishmen to realize

the greatness of Greek Tragedy' – although this conception of Greek tragedy was

one which adamantly excluded Euripides.[62] Schlegel's remarks on *Hecuba*'s

inconsistencies are indicative of a fashionable nineteenth-century chorus of

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[59] John G. Fitch's description of Schlegel in 'Playing Seneca', in *Seneca in Performance*, ed. by George W.M Harrison (London: Duckworth, 2000), pp.1-12 (p.1).

[60] Schlegel, *Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature*, trans. by John Black, ed. by A.J.W. Morrison, 2nd ed. (London: George Bell & Sons, 1904), p.137.

[61] John Black, 'Preface and Memoir of the Life of Augustus William Schlegel', in Schlegel, *Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature*, pp.1-15 (p.1. and p.12). As Willis describes, Schlegel's lectures 'were published in four editions (1809, 1816, 1845, 1846), translated into almost every European language, and in 1815, translated into English', p.22.

[62] Jenkyns, *The Victorians and Ancient Greece* (Harvard UP, 1980), qtd. in Willis, '20th Century War Play in Performance' (as referenced in n.8 p.12 above), p.22.

As John G. Fitch reports, Schlegel also 'predictably, found Seneca's dramas bombastic, unnatural, shocking, [and] alien to the Greek genius', p.1. In fact, Fitch recounts how it was Schlegel, in 1809, who 'threw out the personal opinion (no more) that '[Seneca's tragedies] were never intended to emerge from the rhetorical schools on to the stage'. That suggestion was later worked into a hypothesis by Gaston Boissier (1861), who objected to the horrific nature of certain scenes, and to the preponderance of speech (especially monologues) over action. The anti-performance view was then canonized by acceptance in the magisterial edition of Friedrich Leo (1878-9), and thereafter was served up in countless handbooks and literary histories 'as established fact' (Fortey and Glucker 1975, 699)', p.1.

disapproval against the play and its author.[63] This chorus of condemnation

comprised, most notably, of Augustus' brother Friedrich Schlegel as well as

Friedrich Nietzsche and, in England, the influential classicists John William

Donaldson, Richard Claverhouse Jebb and Frederick Apthorp Paley.[64]

In a reversal of its Renaissance status, then, *Hecuba* was now discussed

as an example of a "bad" play: rent in half by the perceived disunity of the

"Polydorus episode" with the "Polyxena episode" it was bad in its failure to

conform to the unity of plot; stylistically bad in its overblown and affected

rhetorical style and, perhaps worst of all, morally bad in its failure to condemn

the calculated and excessive vengeance of its demonic matriarch. Thus, in 1827

Reading Grammar School mounted a production of *Hecuba* as its triennial Greek

play not only to test the schoolboys' memory, pronunciation and performance of

Greek, but also to expose 'the defects of that author'. Predictably, and in line

with Schlegel's criticisms, the play's redeeming feature was believed to be 'the

whole character of Polyxena […] finished with the most scrupulous exactness

and nicety,' a 'heroine' of 'calm magnanimity'.[65] Professed defects, however,

included the 'clumsy and inartificial' prologue of Polydorus; the repeated

'imped[iment]' to action caused by 'peculiar notions of Euripides on morals,

physics, and politics where they are entirely out of place'; Hecuba's 'cold and

freezing' analytical response to the death of her daughter; the 'violated' 'unity of

action' in adding the revenge of Polydorus to the story of Polyxena's sacrifice,

and the murder of Polymestor's sons – 'contrary to [the] rules of justice and

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[63] Schlegel, *Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature*, p.113. As Willis observes, the perceived "failings" of Euripides 'became central to the progressive formation of a new literary theory of romanticism' pioneered by Schlegel, p.20.

[64] For further details see Willis, p.20.

[65] 'Triennial Visitation of Reading School', *The Times*, 18 October 1827, 2F.

morality'.[66] In consequence, the additional (English) Epilogue echoed Manso and warned the pupils and audience to 'Remember Hecuba – but mind your eyes'.[67]

Reading's Triennial Greek plays and the subsequent 1880s revival of the Oxford and Cambridge tradition of the Greek Play were 'closely associated with the study of classical archaeology'.[68] As Fiona Macintosh states, 'academic and what might be termed "social" philhellenism coalesced at this time',[69] with both revitalised by the 1874 publication of Heinrich Schliemann's discoveries in his excavation of the Troy site.[70] A wave of archaeological digs in the early nineteenth-century saw the conception of ancient Greece become increasingly dominated by pristine sculptures, wiped clean of mud and time, isolated and elevated on plinths, and displayed in a revered hush across Europe's new museums and private collections. The heroes of Greek mythology were not actors in masks but these sculpted paragons of a purified humanity, concentrated beauty immortalised in cold pale stone. It was this epic culture that was considered England's birthright; and it was this sense of inherited civilisation

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[66] 'Triennial Visitation of Reading School', *The Times*, 18 October 1827, 2F.

[67] T.N. Talfourd, 'Epilogue' for Reading Grammar School *Hecuba*, 1827, reprinted in 'Prologue to the *Hecuba* of Euripides Performed at the Triennial Visitation of Reading School', *The Times*, 30 October 1827, 3E.

[68] Macintosh, 'Tragedy in Performance: Nineteenth- and Twentieth Century Productions', p.292.

[69] *Ibid*, p.293. Macintosh also relays the fact that additional trains had to be provided from King's Cross to accommodate the huge audience numbers drawn from London to see these early academic productions, p.292. The Reading plays were not only performed in Greek but were also 'complete with orchestral accompaniment, choruses, and an early attempt at "authentic" ancient Greek scenery and costumes', Edith Hall 'Greek tragedy and the British Stage, 1566-1997', *Cahiers du Gita*, 12 (1999) 113-33, reproduced by the *APGRD*, ed. Amanda Wrigley, 27 Feb. 2007, <http://www.apgrd.ox.ac.uk/people/imagesdocs/eh1566-1997.htm> [30 March 2007].

[70] In quoting Hamlet, *The Times* report of Schliemman's discoveries manages to imply a socio-cultural disinterest in Hecuba at this highpoint of Victorian philhellenism: 'All this time our readers […] are waiting to know what Herr Schliemann has actually found in the ruins of these five cities. The taste of the age is rather antiquarian and "collective" and assimilative than scientific and poetic. "Who cares for Troy," they say, "or for Homer, and whether he saw Troy, and whether this unearthed city really is Troy? But the treasure, Priam's treasure, tell us about that. What's Hecuba to us, or we to Hecuba? The bric-à-brac, tell us about the bric-à-brac"', 'Ancient Troy', *The Times*, 3 April 1874, 2B.

that was employed in the mythopoetic project that provided ideological

justification and mystification of British colonialism.[71] The British imperialist

project was typically narrated as a civilising mission, the enforced enlightenment

of backward, childlike cultures by a benevolent paternal West whose own

superior culture was epitomised by, and crystallised in, the acculturation of

ancient Athens and Rome.[72]

The legacy of this mindset can be seen operating in John S.P. Tatlock's

1915 article, 'The Siege of Troy in Elizabethan Literature', which attempts to

exonerate Shakespeare for his crimes against the classics in *Troilus and

Cressida*. Tatlock's intention is 'greatly to reduce [Shakespeare's] responsibility

for the entire work' by exposing the controlling influence of the then

predominant popularity of the Troy Books: 'it is the late mediaeval versions

which largely determine the tone, amorous, loosely chivalric, with no

consciousness of any lofty heroic dignity to be lived up to'.[73] Tatlock urges his

peers to acknowledge that: 'Shocking as it was to Victorian Hellenolatry, hateful

as it is to us', '[o]n [Shakespeare's] part an attitude toward the Greeks like that of

such moderns as Keats and Swinburne is unthinkable; the austere and serene

background of Greek sculpture and architecture against which we see them was

utterly unknown to him. [...] Shakespeare had no sense that Achilles must be

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[71] The dispute over the Elgin marbles is illustrative: shipped to England in 1812 and only "legitimately" paid for in 1816. The key work for exploring nineteenth-century historiography, and particularly the historical narrative the west told itself about ancient Greece and Rome, as upholding, complimenting and mythologizing the ideology of Empire and western imperialism is of course Martin Bernal's *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization* (New Brunswick: Rutgers UP, 1987).

[72] In fact the roots of this project can be traced back to Elizabethan humanism, as one schoolmaster writes on the 'Utilitie of Schooling': 'Knowest thou not what profit and commodity learning bringeth to the children of Adam? Look upon the barbarous nations, which are without it; compare their estate with ours; and thou shalt see what it is to be learned. They for want of learning can have no laws, no civil policy, no honest means to live by, no knowledge of God's mercy and favour, and consequently no salvation nor hope of comfort', qtd. in Curtis (as in n.19 p.189), p.55.

[73] 'The Siege of Troy in Elizabethan Literature' (as in n.46 p.200), p.760 and p.759.

handled with reverence'.[74] When such an 'austere and serene' backdrop is considered the only accurate conception of ancient Greece, it is little wonder that Hecuba and her clamorous female choruses, smearing the ashes and earth of Troy into their flesh and hair, and enacting vengeance on innocent children, should find themselves shunned as aesthetic and moral monstrosities. Hecuba represents death, the vulnerability of flesh and the pain of inexhaustible sorrow; she is the ideological opposite of the transcendent immortality and glorious fame seemingly promised in the frozen white statues.[75]

The inheritance of the Victorian aesthetic of Romantic classicism was long-lasting – Schlegel's criticisms of *Hecuba* set the agenda for academic engagement with the play for the next hundred years. In 1927, J.A. Spranger was still attempting to solve 'The problem of the *Hecuba*' as outlined by Schlegel in 1808 but *not*, as he stresses, 'to show that the *Hecuba* is, in any modern or even Aristotelian sense, a good play'.[76] The moral condemnation of Hecuba's character, as an abhorrence to be excluded from the Greek canon, was to last well into the mid-twentieth-century. In 1955 the National theatre of Greece took a

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[74] *Ibid*, p.763 and p.762.

[75] The irony is that these austere marble surfaces had never in fact been white; they had been painted with humanising flesh tones which had disappeared only when they had been re-exposed to the air by archaeologists – when the protective layers of earth had been wiped away. This had been suspected by the early archaeologists who observed traces of paint disappearing as the statues were exposed to light, but influential classicists and art historians dismissed their observations in order maintain the purity of the 'austere and serene' white statues. In 2007, however, the archaeologist Vinzenz Brinkmann published indisputable evidence collected by using high-intensity ultraviolet light; in fact Brinkmann has even ascertained the pigments of the paints originally used to coat the Parthenon; see 'Tracing the Colors of Ancient Sculpture', *The J. Paul Getty Museum*, 2007 <http://www.getty.edu/art/gettyguide/videoDetails?segid=4173> [10 June 2008].

[76] *The Classical Quarterly*, 21:3 (1927), 155-58 (p.155). Spranger "solves" *Hecuba*'s contradictions, ambiguities and ambivalences by arguing that the play was, in fact, two plays cobbled together: the '*Polyxena* of Euripides' is identified as a play composed for private recital, 'a drama complete in itself, full of pathos and tragedy, but brief –far too short for public performance', while the '*Polymestor* tragedy' is claimed as a later addition designed solely to ensure that the *Polyxena* play meets the entry requirements of the Great Dionysia. In this schizophrenic solution Spranger offers two tragedies, two locations and, most significantly, two Hecubas, p.157-158.

production of the scarcely staged *Ekavi* on an international tour; stopping at London in 1966 this rare piece of theatre, performed in Greek (with a translation handset for each audience member), was presented as an 'alien' to the English audience, entirely incongruous with their perception of classical tragedy, prompting *The Times* reviewer to write: '[a]s the production advances on its bloodstained course one has to remind oneself that this is a *Greek* tragedy and not, as it seems, some piece of Senecan or early Elizabethan butchery'.[77]

Looking back on the Elizabethan veneration of both Euripides' *Hecuba* and Seneca's *Troas* led the Victorian and early-twentieth century men of letters to interpret 'the high-water mark of the play's popularity' as merely further evidence of the plays' inherent depravity.[78] Rather than acknowledge Hecuba's role in Renaissance humanism, detractors routinely associate *Hecuba*'s popularity with the presumed baser fashions of the playhouses. In 1925 F.L. Lucas writes: 'Horrors in particular – *Grand Guignol* effects – were in the age of the Borgias an essential tragic convention'.[79] Hecuba's revenge on Polymestor is aligned with the public's predilection for violent civic spectacles: the playhouses' blood-sports and the state's public executions. Within this genus of argument, the belief that the admiration for Euripides' *Hecuba* lay in a 'depraved taste for horrors' is corroborated by the far greater popularity of Seneca.[80] The rather circuitous argument follows thus: '*Hecuba* by the atrocity of its theme, [...], is the most Senecan of Euripides' plays'; Seneca was only popular because 'the morbid or at least lurid sensationalism which brought forth Seneca's horrors [in Nero's day] commend them favourably to the [Renaissance]', therefore *Hecuba* must be

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[77] 'Language Barrier Cut by Emotion', *The Times*, 13 April 1966, p.8.
[78] Mossman, *Wild Justice*, p.211.
[79] *Euripides and his Influence* (London: Harrap, 1925), p.93.
[80] Jones, *Origins of Shakespeare*, p.92.

equally horrific and morbid.[81] Such assertions bring the learned gentlemen of the

nineteenth and early twentieth-century in line with Puritanical attacks on the

theatre during the Renaissance. Thus, *Hecuba*'s prior popularity is, like Seneca's,

merely proof of both the playhouse audience's taste for 'anger, wrath, immunitie,

crueltie, iniurie, incest, murther' and the play's own debased nature for satisfying

this predilection.[82]

The Renaissance appears to be the historical moment in which a number

of factors intersected to create the optimum environment for the vengeful

classical Hecubas to thrive onstage. The grammar schools and colleges

inculcated a familiarity with and veneration for the Trojan queen in the boys who

grew up to write for London's new playhouses. The new theatres rapidly

proliferated as business flourished and the paying public developed an appetite

for revenge tragedies with blood-splattering climaxes.[83] Following the

disapproving gaze of the Victorian and Edwardian men of letters, the next

chapter goes in search of these playhouse Hecubas and the Trojan queen's grand

entry onto the English public stage.

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[81] H.B. Charlton, *The Senecan Tradition in Renaissance Tragedy* (Manchester: MUP, 1946), p.33 and p.27.

[82] Philip Stubbes, 'Of Stage-playes and Enterluds, with their wickednes', in *The anatomie of abuses* (London: John Kingston for Richard Iones, 1583), L7r.

[83] For example, as Andrew Gurr describes, 'in the plot of the Admiral's *Battle of Alcazar* three characters are executed and disembowelled on stage. The appropriate book-holder's instruction is "3 voills of blood & a sheeps gather", that is, a bladder holding liver, heart and lungs. The annotator calls blandly for "raw flesh" a little earlier in the same plot', *The Shakespearean Stage 1574 – 1642*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: CUP, 1992), p.182.

Chapter Seven: Hecuba, History, and the Playhouses

> It was the truth, as History declares,
> (If there were any such as *Trojan* Wars),
> If this fam'd Siege were no Bear-Garden Fray,
>
> John Bankes, *The Destruction of Troy*, 1678 (L2v)

1. 'Neither right Tragedies, nor right Comedies'

In contrast to their nineteenth and early twentieth-century counterparts,

Renaissance humanism's men of letters considered Euripides' *Hecuba* to be the

epitome of a well-made classical tragedy. They did, however, concur with their

learned descendants in the belief that the popular drama played on England's

public stages consistently fell short of the Graeco-Roman ideal. Philip Sidney's

Apology for Poetry expresses both sentiments:

> I have a story of young Polydorus, delivered for safety's sake, with
> great riches, by his Father Priam to Polymnestor, king of Thrace, in
> the Trojan war time: He, after some years, hearing the overthrow
> of Priam, for to make the treasure his own, murdereth the child.
> The body of the child is taken up by Hecuba. She, the same day,
> findeth a sleight to be revenged most cruelly of the tyrant. Where
> now would one of our tragedy writers begin, but with the delivery
> of the child? Then should he sail over into Thrace, and so spend I
> know not how many years, and travel numbers of places. But
> where doth Euripides? Even with the finding of the body, leaving
> the rest to be told by the spirit of Polydorus. […] But besides these
> gross absurdities all their Plays be neither right tragedies, nor right
> comedies, […] neither admiration and commiseration, nor the right
> sportfulnes, is by their mongrel tragi-comedy obtained. (111.34-43,
> 112.1-2, 112.5-6)[1]

Although written during the 1580s, and thus predating much of the drama we

recognise as belonging to the Elizabethan playhouses, Sidney's *Apology* is an

indicative, and influential, precursor of the increasingly rigid conception of

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[1] All quotations of Sidney's *Apology* are taken from *An Apology for Poetry* (*or The Defence of Poesy*), ed. by Geoffrey Shepherd, 3rd ed. revised by R. W. Maslen (Manchester: MUP, 2002), and referenced parenthetically with page and line numbers relating to this edition.

history, tragedy and comedy within humanist thought. Under the influence of

Horace's *Ars Poetica* (first printed 1470) and Aristotle's *Poetics* (first printed in

Latin translation in 1498 and the primary source for Sidney's *Apology*),

England's humanists vehemently asserted the supremacy of tragedy and comedy

for codifying drama and 'giving dramatic coherence to human events'.[2] As

Benjamin Griffin states, the 'learned drama' studied and performed in the

grammar schools and universities was integral to the gradual adoption and

intensification of 'a classicizing generic rigidity'.[3]

The playhouses' 'dramatic' depiction of 'human events', however,

routinely failed to acknowledge the humanists' conception of 'right tragedies'

and 'right comedies'.[4] Although tragedy and comedy had, as Levin asserts, 'set

up their classic polarity, [...] they were not turning out to be mutually exclusive,

and the ever-widening middle ground offered room for multiform possibilities'.[5]

Prior to the 1590s, the label "history" can be 'found in all sorts of generic

company' and made no claim to the veracity of the subject-matter; indeed, it

remained interchangeable with "story" until well into the seventeenth-century.[6]

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[2] Smith, *Ancient Scripts* (as in n.5 p.181), p.4.

[3] *Playing the Past* (as in n.60 p.213), p.67. The opening paragraphs of this chapter are indebted to the highly detailed work on the emergence of history plays as a distinct genre by Griffin, esp. pp.1-21 and pp.64-92.

[4] Sidney's opinion of English drama as 'neither right tragedies, nor right comedies' is echoed verbatim in *Florios Second Frutes* (1591):

> **HENRICO**   The plaies that they plaie in England, are not right comedies.
> **THOMASO** Yet they doo nothing else but plaie every daye.
> **HENRICO**   Yea but they are neither right comedies, nor right tragedies.
> **GIOVANNI** How would you name them then?
> **HENRICO**   Representations of histories, without any decorum. (qtd. in Griffin, p.13).

[5] 'Two Tents on Bosworth Field: *Richard III* V.iii, iv, v', in *Reading the Renaissance: Culture, Poetics and Drama*, ed. by Jonathan Hart (New York & London: Garland, 1996), pp.145-62 (p.145). Cf. see also Mueller who writes, '[d]rama is an intrinsically popular genre that must speak to the here and now of a contemporary audience. Its development in different countries has from the beginning been much more subject to the pull of vernacular influences than such learned forms as epic and pastoral that were addressed to a literary elite that practised cultural and linguistic conservatism and set a high value on the maintenance of the continuity with ancient models', p.xii.

[6] Griffin, *Playing the Past*, p.10.

Yet from amidst the 'mongrel' hybrid genres (Sidney, *Apology* 112.6), history gradually evolved as a genre in its own right. Retrospectively, the conception of the history play came to be dominated by the surge of plays from around 1590 to 1600 on the English monarchy. At the time of their production, however, this group of plays 'may seldom have been perceived as a distinct genre';[7] writing c.1608, Thomas Heywood considered them a sub-genre, qualifying them as 'our domesticke histories'.[8] In fact, the fashion for English history plays in this decade is noticeably overlapped, from around 1598 to 1602, by a comparable wave of dramas concerned with classical history, particularly the Trojan War.

The humanists' definition of history also underwent a semantic transformation, but one which effectively undermined the playhouses' claim to dramatic histories. Deferentially following Aristotle's *Poetics*, Sidney insists on a definition of history as a narrative which 'bringeth you images of true matters, such as indeed were done' (92.9-10). Sidney's work heralds our own more rigorous conception of history and the so-called 'historiographic revolution', which emerged from humanism's rejection of the scholastics' unproblematic promotion of theological truth within fictionalised histories for the Graeco-Roman ideal of strict historical veracity.[9] Inevitably, as Sidney argues, fidelity to truth brings the 'doctrinable' (92.28) value of history into question: 'the historian, being captived to the truth of a foolish world, is many times a terror from well-doing, and an encouragement to unbridled wickedness' (93.44-94.2). Such assertions, as Dominique Goy-Blanquet observes, make Sidney's *Apology* 'one notable exception' to 'the almost unanimous' 'praise of history towards the

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[7] *Ibid*, p.19.
[8] *An Apology for Actors: Containing three briefe treatises. 1 Their antiquity. 2 Their ancient dignity. 3 The true vse of their quality* (London: Nicholas Oakes, 1612), B4r.
[9] For an account of the 'historiographic revolution' see Levine, (as in n.11 p.264).

end of the sixteenth-century'; and this incongruity can be seen to 'pinpoint[…]

the fault line of historiography'.[10] Factual veracity cannot be synthesised with

the Christian privileging of moral function. History must, therefore, be

conceptually and generically isolated, relieved of its moralistic purpose,

secularised and bound to earthy truths rather than divine Truth. In contrast, the

poets and playwrights must, concludes Sidney, always aspire to reveal

'doctrinable' truths (92.28), to prompt the spectator to virtuous action by crafting

'a perfect pattern' (92.38) and depicting life 'as it should be [rather than] as it

was' (92.27). Within humanism, then, history is simply the raw unfashioned

source-material which, if presented dramatically, must be moulded into a tragedy

that conforms to a forced synthesis between Aristotelian structural precepts and

the theological truths of Protestantism. Humanist commentary on the theatre (as

opposed to that produced by the playwrights) thus refused to give the playhouse

histories any credence.[11]

Although Sidney's *Apology* pre-dates the rise of the history play proper,

his criticism of 'inartificially imagined' English drama (110.40) was printed at

the peak of the new genre's commercial success. Moreover, his major complaint,

that English playwrights are ignorant of the Aristotelian unities – 'do they not

know [that Poets are] not bound to follow the story, but, having liberty, either to

feign a quite new matter, or to frame the history to the most tragical

conveniency' (111.21-24) – equally applies to a genre which, as Griffin states, is

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[10] 'Elizabethan historiography and Shakespeare's sources', in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare's History Plays*, ed. by Michael Hattaway (Cambridge: CUP, 2002), pp.57-70 (p.64).
[11] As Griffin asserts, 'it makes no *formal* difference to the play whether it was founded on history or not; the problem is conceived in terms of decorum: whether or not the historically derived plot was a proper tragedy [...]. there is no question of 'history plays' as a separate genre', p.69.

'uniquely given to *articulation*, to the tendency toward mutli-partedness'.[12]

Sidney's prime example for the artful 'framing' of history is Euripides' use of

Polydorus' shade as a *nuncius* in *Hecuba*, enabling him to 'represent an history'

as a tragedy by beginning with 'the principal point of that one action which [he]

will represent' (111.32-33).

Sidney also extols Euripides' depiction of Hecuba's grief in order to

illustrate the power of 'high and excellent Tragedy' (98.25) to reinforce Christian

morality. He does so by reciting Plutarch's 'notable testimony of the abominable

tyrant *Alexander Pheraeus*, from whose eyes a tragedy, well made and

represented, drew abundance of teares [from] he that was not ashamed to make

matters for tragedies' (98.33-37). Sidney commends Euripides' ability to fashion

an affecting tragedy out of the 'matters for tragedies' (98.37), to convert the

history of Hecuba's suffering into a cathartic poultice which draws tears from

tyrants like pus from an ulcer: 'high and excellent Tragedy […] openeth the

greatest wounds, and showeth forth the ulcers that are covered with tissue; [..]

maketh kings fear to be tyrants, and tyrants manifest their tyranical humours'

(98.25-28). In contrast, a self-professed stage history is merely, for a strict

humanist, a wilful or ignorant failure of dramatic technique and moral obligation.

The stage is an imaginative realm in which chaotic and amoral history should be

artfully purified, restrained and framed to enhance its homiletic value. Whilst

Hecuba's story may belong to history, a Hecuba depicted onstage *should*,

according to humanism, be the exclusive property of an Aristotelian tragedy.

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[12] *Ibid*, p.73. Sidney's admonishment seems rather unfair given that Aristotle's *Poetics* was 'the very last of the philosophers work to be recovered from antiquity. Giorgio Valla had published a Latin translation in 1498, and the Greek text appeared from the Aldine press in 1508, but it was not until the publication of Francesco Robertello's commentary in 1548, [...], that Aristotle's *Poetics* began to be widely known and discussed', see Smith, *Ancient Scripts*, p.13.

2. Invisible Hecubas [13]

> O where is Hecuba?
> Here she was wont to sit; but, saving air,
> Is nothing here.   *Dido, Queen of Carthage*, (2.1.12-14)

Hecuba's presence is neither required nor expected in Marlowe's and Nashe's

Dido, Queen of Carthage (c.1585), except perhaps allusively within Aeneas' tale

to Dido (2.1.121-288). In keeping with the limited perspective of his first-person

narrative, Virgil's Aeneas remains ignorant of Hecuba's fate after Priam's

murder. However, when Dido's sister Anna asks Marlowe's and Nashe's Trojan

prince: 'O what became of aged Hecuba?' (2.1.290), the refugees on the

Renaissance stage do not simply say that they don't know. Instead, Achates

claims that '[w]hat happened to the Queen we cannot *show*' (2.1.294). This

peculiar distinction in Achates' diction is not an isolated oddity within the play.

The assertion of 'unshowability' parallels the play's first reference to Hecuba in

which Marlowe and Nashe deliberately highlight the queen's absence from

'where she was wont to sit' beside Priam (2.1.13). Yet the Priam that 'doth make

Aeneas weep' (2.1.15), and to whom Achates kneels, is but a 'stone' (2.1.14); as

Dawson asserts, 'Aeneas seems to be hallucinating, Priam being a mere figment,

a shadow on the blank wall of the theatre/city. There is no external, visible record

of the past traumatic events, no frieze, only an elusive mental image'.[14] So why

does Achates hallucinate, and draw attention to, the unsettling *absence* of an

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[13] My sub-heading is in response to Judith Weil's chapter 'Visible Hecubas', in *The Female Tragic Hero in English Renaissance Drama*, ed. by Naomi Conn Liebler (New York: Palgrave, 2002), pp.51-69 – which is discussed briefly below.

[14] 'Priamus is dead: memorial repetition in Marlowe and Shakespeare', in *Shakespeare, Memory and Performance*, ed. by Peter Holland (Cambridge: CUP, 2006), pp.63-84 (p.64). As Dawson observes, this Aeneas remembers Troy not because of external stimuli, no frieze in Dido's temple, but because he is haunted by the memory of loss. Marlowe has thus 'psychologized' the Virgilian moment of remembrance: 'Aeneas is grief-stricken and focussed on his own feelings: "Theban Niobe […] Had not such passions in her head as I" (2.1.3-6)', p.64.

already invisible Hecuba beside an equally invisible and absent Priam? The oddity and ambivalence of this moment, in which the audience watch two characters staring at two types of 'nothing', is compounded by Achates' *anastrophic* assertion that '[h]ere she was wont to sit; but, saving air, / Is nothing here' (2.1.12-14). Structured as a question, his statement 'Is nothing here' simultaneously asserts and hesitantly questions the presence of this Hecuban nothing.

The 'airy nothing' (*MND* 5.1.16) occupying the place of Marlowe's and Nashe's Hecuba, alongside the imagined Priam for whom Aeneas weeps, resonates with Hamlet's incredulity at the Player's tears for another imagined 'nothing' called Hecuba as he too plays Aeneas.[15] Looking beyond this linguistic ricochet, and the intertextual echoes between *Dido*, *Hamlet*, *Lucrece* and the *Aeneid*, it appears that the 'airy nothing' that stands for Hecuba on the Blackfriars' stage may have been the theatrical norm. For, despite the indisputable popularity of the Trojan myths, there is little evidence to suggest that Marlowe's and Nashe's "unshowable" Hecuba was not consistently replicated throughout the Renaissance in London's playhouses.

Beyond Cambridge's cloistered productions of Seneca's *Troas* and (potentially) Euripides' *Hecuba*, it becomes almost impossible to find proof of enacted Hecubas – be they 'Tragicall', 'Historicall' or even 'Comicall'. The London playhouses offer only a fleeting glimpse of the figure so venerated by the pedagogical exercises and textbooks of humanism. Straightforward "re-productions" of any extant Greek or Roman plays were seldom mounted in the

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[15] *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, in *The Norton Shakespeare* (1997), pp.805-63.

public theatres.[16] The performance of (relatively) unmodified Roman or Greek tragedies was almost always confined to the exclusive one-off Latin productions in schools and university colleges or the private residences of the nobility.

Despite being the Renaissance's most frequently translated Greek tragedy, Euripides' *Hecuba* was not translated into English until 1726; *Trojan Women* remained virtually unknown, only "Englished" in 1780 amongst Bannister's *Select Tragedies of Euripides*. Throughout the Renaissance, then, Euripides' two Hecuban tragedies remained locked in Latin and Greek, whilst their performance was confined to academic and aristocratic spheres. To attribute the popularity of Euripides' *Hecuba* to the whim of the vulgar masses is not only mistaken, it is also misleading. Rather, as the extensive references to *Hecuba* in Sidney's *Apology* imply, the tragic Hecuba, particularly the vengeful Hecuba of Euripides, functions as a potent and often proudly displayed emblem of erudition.

The lack of a vernacular Euripides is of course a stark contrast to the numerous English translations of Seneca. Jasper Heywood made *Troas* available in the vernacular in 1558; this much-admired translation was reprinted three times before 1581 when Thomas Newton included it in his popular *Seneca: His Tenne Tragedies, Translated Into Englysh*. Compared with the obscurity of

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[16] For further details see: Smith, *Ancient Scripts*, p.99; Peter Burian, 'Tragedy Adapted for Stages and Screens: the Renaissance to the Present', *The Cambridge Companion to Greek Tragedy*, ed. by P.E. Easterling (Cambridge: CUP, 1997), p.228-83 (p.233); and Hall and Macintosh, *Greek Tragedy and the British Theatre*, pp.x-xi. An exception to this rule is Gascoigne and Kinwelmershe's *Jocasta* performed at Gray's Inn Christmas revels in 1566; see Garland, p.116. Another potential exception, and this time reaching a broader London audience, is Dekker's and Chettle's lost twin plays, recorded by Philip Henslowe as 'th*e* tragedie of Agamemnone' and a 'Boock*e* called or*e*stes f[u]vres', R.A. Foakes, ed., *Henslowe's Diary*, 2[nd] ed., (Cambridge: CUP, 2002), p.119 and p.121. However, these would almost certainly have been adaptations of the already heavily truncated 1555 translation of Aeschlyus' trilogy by the French humanist Jean de Saint-Ravy (which was itself 'based on the Parisian 1552 deficient Greek text of the editor Adrien Turnèbe'); see: Louise Schleiner, 'Latinized Greek Drama in Shakespeare's Writing of *Hamlet*', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 41:1 (1990), 29-48 (p.32).

Euripides, the availability of Seneca's *Troas* provided a far wider readership with

access to the amalgamated "Roman" Hecuba.[17] The comparatively broad

accessibility of Seneca's tragedies both reflects and also facilitated the

considerable influence his work had on the development of indigenous English

drama.[18] As John W. Cunliffe states, '[t]here is every evidence' that Newton's

collected works 'was highly esteemed and extensively used'.[19] Yet despite

establishing what was once considered an 'extensive empire' of 'undisputed

influence', the playwrights' veneration of Seneca was seldom manifested in the

verbatim reproductions of either his plots or characters.[20] Rather, as Nashe's

famously derisive description implies, the influence of 'English Seneca' on 'our

stage' was pervasive but piecemeal:

> English *Seneca* read by candle light yeeldes manie good sentences,
> […] and if you intreate him faire in a frostie morning, he will
> affoord you whole *Hamlets,* I should say handfulls of tragical
> speaches. But ô griefe! […] The sea exhaled by droppes will in
> continuance be drie, and *Seneca* let bloud line by line and page by
> page, at length must needes die to our stage.[21]

Nashe notoriously invokes the ur-Hamlet; yet his 'whole *Hamlets*' can also be

read as a handful of houses, an unintentional layer of meaning which nonetheless

gestures toward a quintessentially English colonisation of classical drama. Nashe

describes the fragmentation and assimilation of an already 'English Seneca' into

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[17] Miola (as in n.123 p.102) outlines a number of direct influences Seneca's *Troas* had in England: it inspired John Partridge's poem *Astianax and Polixena* (1566) whilst 'Robert Garnier […] revised some lines (along with episodes from Euripides) in his *La Troade* (1579); Thomas Legge […] inserted parts of Andromache's lament into his *Richard Tertius* (1580); and Thomas Kyd['s] Herionimo quotes from Andromache's lines to Astyanax before Ulysses' entrance', p.18.

[18] Seneca was regarded, '[i]n England as well as on the continent [as] a paragon of tragic style, of grandeur, dignity, elegance, brightness, sophistication, and polish', Miola, p.2.

[19] *The Influence of Seneca* (as in n.123 p.102), p.5.

[20] G.K. Hunter, 'Seneca and the Elizabethans: A Case-Study in "Influence"', *Shakespeare Survey*, 20 (1967), 17-26 (p.21).

[21] 'To the Gentlemen Students of both Uniuersities', preface to Robert Greene's *Menaphon*, (London: T[homas] O[rwin] for Sampson Clarke, 1589) **r-A3r, (**3r).

distinctly indigenous settlements.[22] Whilst the Renaissance's most famous

Hecuba is embedded within a *Hamlet* now considered the most quintessential of

English tragedies, Nashe's twinned sense of the assimilation and domestication

of Seneca is also how Hecuba's presence on 'our stage' (be she Ovidian,

Euripidean, Senecan or Virgilian) can be conceived more generally. From brief

linguistic echoes to more extensive recitations of speeches, structural parallels

and resonant plots, the precedents set by the corpus of classical Hecuba-texts

were bled into new indigenous forms 'line by line', whilst the character of

Hecuba herself was typically *re-membered* to form entirely new *dramatis*

personae.

In consequence, the only Hecubas Judith Weil's study, 'Visible Hecubas',

can see on the English Renaissance stage are not Hecubas at all but alternative

female characters whose vengeful actions or verbal rages are felt to re-embody

the fury of the classics' Trojan Queens. According to Weil, the 'angry

descendants of Hecuba' include Isabella in Marlowe's *Edward II* (1594),

Cornelia in Webster's *The White Devil* (1612), and Tamora, Constance and

Volumnia in Shakespeare's *Titus Andronicus* (1594), *King John* (1597) and

Coriolanus (1608).[23] However, Weil's identification of Hecuba as the 'ancient

mother' imitated by these new theatrical mothers draws predominantly on

Hecuba's emblematic status as an archetype. With the exception of *The White*

Devil, in which Weil identifies a few specific textual allusions to the Hecuba

myth, "Hecuba" is typically employed as a structural paradigm, convenient

shorthand for a dangerous combination of female grief and fury.

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[22] In which I read an oblique echo of the Elizabethan policy of establishing English hamlets to
fragment and assimilate the indigenous population of colonial lands, such as Ireland.
[23] 'Visible Hecubas' (as in n.13 p.300 above), p.51.

In contrast, Harold F. Brooks identifies the Duchess of York in Shakespeare's *Richard III* as a conscious and exacting reincarnation of Seneca's Hecuba.[24] Robert Miola refines Brooks' argument to identify Margaret as the play's re-envisioned Trojan Queen.[25] Although Miola is more convincing, the variance between Brooks' and Miola's hypotheses confirms that neither of Shakespeare's characters are clear-cut Hecubas. Moreover, Emrys Jones demonstrates that this sub-species of re-imagined and transplanted tragic Hecubas need not necessarily be female, declaring that: 'We shall not properly appreciate [*Titus Andronicus*] unless we see that Shakespeare's Titus is in essence nothing else than a male Hecuba'.[26] As newly evolved and autonomous descendants, Weil's, Brooks', Miola's and Jones' 'visible Hecubas' offer only partial, subtle, sublimated, and typically unacknowledged, refractions of the Trojan Queen in England's playhouses.

There was, then, no public or English equivalent to the Latin Hecubas of academic drama. However, as seen in previous chapters, sixteenth- and seventeenth-century interest in the Trojan War was not confined to the same educational and aristocratic spheres as the Latin and Greek play-texts. Alongside the populist ballads, minstrel shows, English Troy Books, genealogies, poems and narratives, can be added numerous Renaissance plays concerned with the 'Matter of Troy'.[27] Henslowe's inventory of properties owned by the Admiral's Men (at the Rose) in March 1598 gives an indication of just how much

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[24] '*Richard III*, Unhistorical Amplifications: The Women's Scenes and Seneca', *The Modern Language Review*, 75:4 (1980), 721-37.

[25] (as in n.123 p.102), pp.76-80. See also: M. L. Stapleton, '"I Of Old Contemptes Complayne": Margaret of Anjou and English Seneca', *Comparative Literature Studies*, 43 (2006), 100-33.

[26] *Origins of Shakespeare* (as in n.41 p.162), p.101. Rutter also develops the connections between Titus and his recollection of Hecuba in *Child's Play* (see n.3 p.180), pp.39-68.

[27] Wilson and Milowicki define 'the matter of Troy as the 'story-matrix, the shadowy, indeterminate cloud of potential narrative, […], the tentacular accounts of Bronze Age Heroes, the nested networks of legendary materials', 'Voices in the Darkness' (as in n.1 p.179), p.132.

investment an acting company was prepared to make in plays based on classical
mythology: 'j tome of Dido'; 'j gowlden flece'; 'Argosse heade'; 'Nepun forcke
& garland'; 'Cupedes bowe, &quiver'; 'Serberosse iii heades'; 'j tree of gowlden
apelles'; 'Tantelouse tre'; 'Mercures wings'; and 'j great horse'.[28] From amongst
the complex nexus of Graeco-Roman mythology the Trojan War stands out as
one of the most enduringly popular narratives, thus *An Index of Characters in
Early Modern English Drama: 1500-1660* records four Priams, seven Aeneases,
eight possible Hectors and an equal number of potential Achilleses.[29] And yet,
despite the popularity of plays based on the Trojan War cycle, Hecuba herself is
consistently missing in action.

Sixty years before the opening of the first London playhouse, a *Troilus
and Pandarus* (now lost) was performed at Court in January 1516-17; it seems
likely that this was based on Chaucer's narrative, making the inclusion of a
Hecuba a rather superfluous addition to the medieval source.[30] In 1584, the
'history of Agamemnon and Ulisses [was] presented and enacted before her
maiestie by the Earl of Oxenford his boyes on St. Johns daie at night at
Greenwich'.[31] Again, with the text of this exclusive Court performance lost, it

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[28] '10 March 1598. Playhouse Inventories (now lost)', in *Documents of the Rose Playhouse*, ed. by Carol Rutter, revised ed. (Manchester & New York: Manchester UP, 1999), pp.133-37 (pp.136-37). As Rutter explains, the 'Admiral's Men took stock of their costumes, properties and play-books in the spring of 1598. These inventories, which Edmund Malone discovered among a bundle of Henslowe's loose papers and published in 1709, have since disappeared, but they were doubtless genuine', p.133.

[29] Ed. by Thomas L. Berger, William C. Bradford, and Sidney L. Sondergard, revised ed. (Cambridge: CUP, 1998).

[30] See: William Carew Hazlitt, *A Manual for the Collector and Amateur of Old English Plays* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 1892), p.239; and Tatlock, p.676. Chaucer's only reference to Hecuba in *Troilus and Cressida* is in describing Troilus as 'sone of Ecuba the queene', *The Riverside Chaucer*, ed. By Larry D. Benson, 3rd. ed. (Oxford: OUP, 1987), pp.471-586 (5.12).

[31] Feuillerat documents, qtd. in Dorothy Ogburn and Charlton Ogburn, *This Star of England: "William Shakespeare" Man of the Renaissance* (New York: Coward-McCann, 1952), reproduced by Mark Alexander 1997-2003, *Shakespeare Authorship Sourcebook* <http://www.sourcetext.com/sourcebook/Star/41-60/ch46.html> [12 August 2008]. See also: 'History of Agamemnon and Ulisses', in Tom Dale Keever ed., *Early Modern Plays Presented in*

can only be assumed that the play covered the two warriors' return home from Troy and was thus unlikely to have included a Hecuba. In the early years of the 1580s the Chapel Children performed George Peele's spectacular pastoral *The Arraignment of Paris*, both at Court before Queen Elizabeth and at Blackfriars.[32] Unsurprisingly no references are made to Paris' mother. Operating in a similar vein to the panegyric pageants and masques, Peele proffers another celebration of the *Troynovant* myths in which the spectating Elizabeth (rather than the onstage Venus) is offered the golden apple. In consequence history cannot repeat itself; the Trojan War has been averted, leaving no room for the tragic Hecuba. The Chapel Children returned to the Trojan myths around 1585 to present Marlowe's and Nashe's *Dido* with its "unshowable" Hecuba, who nonetheless is remembered and recalled onstage in Aeneas tale to Dido:

> the frantic Queen leaped in [Neoptolemus'] face,
> And in his eyelids hanging by the nails,
> A little while prolonged her husband's life.
> At last the soldiers pulled her by the heels,
> And sent her howling in the empty air.   (2.2.244-46)

Collapsing the Ovidian vengeance into a defence of Priam, this Ovidian-Virgilian hybrid is wryly 'sent […] howling' as she disappears into the 'empty air' that echoes the 'nothing' 'saving air' which shrouds her earlier absence.

From 1590 the matter of Troy left the confines of the Court and the Chapel Children's comparatively elite indoor productions and became a popular favourite for over twenty-years amongst what Thomas Heywood calls the

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London, in *The Early Modern Drama Database*, <http://homepage.mac.com/tomdalekeever/earlymodern.html> [18 October 2009].

[32] For details about the performance of Peele's *Arraignment* at court see Martin Butler, 'Private and Occasional Drama', in *The Cambridge Companion to English Renaissance Drama*, ed. by A.R. Braunmuller and Michael Hattaway, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: CUP, 2003), pp.131-63 (p.133-35).

'unlettered' and John Webster refers to as the 'uncapable multitude' frequenting the playhouses.[33] In 1591/2 the Admiral's men staged a two-part spectacular at the Rose, *Hercules I* and *II* (author unknown, text lost), which probably included the original sacking of Troy, in which a young Priam is the only son of Laomedon whom the avenging Hercules leaves alive to rebuild the city.[34] Five years later the Rose staged a play entitled *Troy* (c.1596); nothing but the title remains and thus the presence or absence of Hecuba is pure speculation. *Henslowe's Diary* refers to yet another lost Trojan play of 1599 – Chettle's and Dekker's *Troyelles and Cresseda*, which is often linked to Henslowe's record of 'i great hors'. If this is correct *Troyelles* (unlike Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*) must have staged Troy's downfall. However, the title's focus on the medieval lovers offers little indication of anything more than a perfunctory Queen at best. Also dated around 1599 is a plot outline for another play on Troilus and Cressida, performed by the Admiral's Men, sometimes considered to be the plot for Chettle's and Dekker's *Troyelles*, sometimes considered a separate play. If Henslowe's 'great horse' did belong to Chettle's and Dekker's play then the play-less plot is certainly a different work as it ends (like Shakespeare's) with the death of Hector, not the destruction of the city. Either way, we have two separate plays around 1599 on the Trojan theme. The plot records the characters' entrances and exits for thirteen scenes; overall the play appears to be influenced by Chaucer and Caxton, although a unique scene (11) involving Cressida amongst a group of beggars was presumably based on Henryson's *Testament Of Cresseid*. The plot contains no references to Hecuba, even in scenes where her

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[33] Thomas Heywood, 'Epilogue', *The Brazen Age* (London: Nicholas Okes, 1613), L3v; Webster, 'To The Reader', in *The White Devil*, pp.30-31 (p.30).

[34] See: Keever, ed., *The Early Modern Drama Database*, <http://homepage.mac.com/tomdalekeever/earlymodern.html>.

presence would be most expected; for example, watching her sons in combat

from the city walls in Scene 12:

> Alaru[m]: Enter D[io]med & Troylus to them
> Achillis [t]o them Hector & Deiphobus
> To them on the walls Priam Paris
> Hellen Polixina & Cassandra to them
> Vlisses Aiax: menalay & Hea[ralds]
> Priam & they on the wall descend to them [35]

It is, therefore, probable that *if* Hecuba appeared in this play it was not a key role
– her daughter Polyxena, however, is notably prominent.

Chettle and Dekker's twinned *Agamemnon* and *Orestes' Furies* (both
lost) and Chettle's solo-effort *Troy's Revenge* (lost) were also performed around
1599. Whilst the former probably followed the plot of Seneca's *Agamemnon* and
re-enacted the fate of the Greek commander on his return home, *Troy's Revenge*
appears to have starred Polyphemus: the Cyclops encountered by Odysseus on
his own treacherous journey from Troy.[36] Collectively, then, Chettle and Dekker
offered a sequence of plays, in quick succession, on the Trojan War and its
aftermath. From their titles alone, however, all three plays seem to focus on male
heroics, doomed romance, and grand stage spectacles enabled by the myths'
extravagant scale and supernatural elements. Little room seems left, in terms of
genre at least, for our sorrowful grandmother.

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[35] For a reproduction and transcript of the Troilus and Cressida Plot see W.W. Greg's *Dramatic Documents from the Elizabethan Playhouses: Stage Plots; Actors' Parts; Prompt Books*, *Vol. 2: Reproductions and Transcripts* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1931), pages unnumbered. Greg also provides critical commentary on the Plot in the first volume of *Dramatic Documents*, pp.138-43.
[36] Although generally referred to as *Polyphemus or Troy's Revenge* after the entry in *Henslowe's Diary*, the play is recorded in the *Annals of English Drama* as *Troy's Revenge with the Tragedy of Polyphemus*, which would imply that the Polyphemus play covered the Cyclops' doomed infatuation with Galatea, making *Troy's Revenge* another play altogether. (Neither scenario seems likely to include Hecuba). Alfred Harbage, *Annals of English Drama, 975-1700*, 3rd ed., ed. by Sylvia S. Wagonheim and Samuel Schoenbaum (London & New York: Routledge, 1989).

In contrast, an early reference to the queen in Shakespeare's own *Troilus and Cressida* (c.1602) tantalisingly suggests that she will participate in the subsequent action:

Enter [above] Cressida and her [servant Alexander]

CRESSIDA   Who were those went by?
ALEXANDER   Queen Hecuba and Helen. (1.2.1-2)

Queen Hecuba, however, never returns. This exchange is the first of only five utterances of 'Hecuba' in the play, each of which refers to an unseen offstage character. A glimpse "off" of a swiftly disappearing back – which Cressida cannot even identify – is the closest we get to an onstage Shakespearean Hecuba.[37]

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[37] In act one Hecuba is positioned in close proximity to the onstage action: the first reference places her just beyond the audience's field of vision before Pandarus recalls her from just 'th'other day' when 'there was such laughing! Queen Hecuba laughed that her eyes ran o'er' (1.2.106, 138-39). This travesty of the icon of sorrow is further parodied by Cressida who, in her rebuttal of Pandarus' story, claims Hecuba must have been weeping 'millstones' (1.2.140). Superfluous to the remainder of the play, Hecuba is not mentioned again until the final act when Achilles reads 'a letter from Queen Hecuba, / A token from her daughter, my fair love' (5.1.34-35), which of course aligns Shakespeare's Hecuba with the Troy Book queens. Two scenes later Shakespeare offers an enactment of the *Iliad*'s famous supplication scene, and whilst Hecuba still remains physically absent she is imagined, by Troilus, fulfilling her Homeric role: 'Not Priamus and Hecuba on knees, / Their eyes o'ergalled with recourse of tears' 'should withhold me' (5.3.56-57, 53); but also by Cassandra, fulfilling her Euripidean/Senecan role: 'Hark, how Troy roars! how Hecuba cries out! / How poor Andromache shrills her dolours forth! / Behold, distraction, frenzy and amazement, / Like witless antics, one another meet' (5.3.86-89). Cassandra and Troilus thus clash over the political potency of the same image of Hecuba. For Cassandra the grief-stricken Hecuba is an attempt to stop the war by showing its inevitable consequences. For Troilus the pity attendant upon Hecuba-as-exemplar is a contaminant – 'the hermit' that must be excluded from the male epic to be authored on the battlefield (5.3.46-50); yet, as Cassandra predicts, it is to this grieving mother that Troilus must return: 'Hector is gone: / Who shall tell Priam so, or Hecuba?' (5.11.14-15). Moving from Pandarus' iconoclastic laughing Hecuba to the letter writing Hecuba of the Troy Books, to the supplicant mother of Homer and, finally, ending with Cassandra's vision of the female tragedies that follow the male epic, Shakespeare's Hecuba increasingly embodies her role as an exemplar as defined by the texts of the Renaissance classroom. Furthermore, this movement runs concurrent with a tacit disembodiment of Hecuba from a 'physical' albeit offstage presence (who walks laughs and cries) to a figment of Troilus and Cassandra's imaginations. Such a disjoint implies that Hecuba's potency as a rhetorical figure would be diminished by her onstage presence, in the same way that the play's beautiful 'theme of honour and renown' (2.2.199) is deflated as the iconic Helen of Troy enters the stage as the disappointing 'Nell'. Given the lack of Hecubas embodied on the Renaissance stage compared to the abundance of references to her as an exemplar, it is worth considering the implications of this Shakespearean disjoint more generally.

There is, of course, every possibility that the lost Troy plays included Hecubas. If this was the case her presence does not appear to have been significant enough to be of note or lucky enough to be preserved by history. Invisible or mute, ornamental and insignificant, or perhaps even onstage and raging: no traces can be found of playhouse Hecubas to rival those of humanist pedagogy. The ubiquitous "resurrection" and "impersonation" exercises involving Hecuba did not transfer from schoolroom to playhouse. Despite humanism's conception of correct theatrical praxis, and veneration of Euripides' *Hecuba* as a well-made play, there is no evidence of a 'visible' tragic Hecuba in the London playhouses or repertoires of the touring companies. In fact, the extant lists of *dramatis personae* from plays mounted on London's commercial stages, from the inaugural performances of 1576 to their enforced closure at the outbreak of Civil War in 1642, contain only a single Hecuba.[38]

This solitary Hecuba, the only documented Hecuba to stand on an English public stage until 1726, belongs to Thomas Heywood's dramatisation of the Trojan War in a two-part play entitled *The Iron Age* (performed c.1612, printed 1632). In contrast to the classic Hecubas, this lone playhouse Hecuba does not survive long enough to lament. Slaughtered onstage beside Priam, Heywood's Hecuba is murdered before the point in her mythology when Euripides, Ovid and Seneca turn their attention to her. Hecuba is thus dispatched before she can assume the role of the Renaissance's secular Mater Dolorosa.[39] Her death signifies the end of Heywood's Trojan War but, crucially, *not* the end of the play. Rather than framing history to make a tragedy, then, Heywood manipulates '[t]he

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[38] See also: Thomas L. Berger *et al*. eds. (as in n.29 p.306).

[39] *Cf*. Westney (as in n.48 p.164), p.436; Goodland (as in n.12 p.15), p.162; Mossman (as in n.11 p.108), p.217.

History whereon [the play] is grounded' to avert a tragedy.[40] In consequence, this

Hecuba is not an embodiment of the tragic classical Hecubas of Heywood's

education at a Lincolnshire grammar school or Emmanuel College Cambridge,

but rather a sacrifice to the epic sweep of a self-professed history play.

3. 'The Wombe of Fifty Princes'

> Not all the diuelles
> Could halfe torment me like these women tongues.   *The Iron Age* (1.H2r)

> Why should she live to fill the world with words?   3 *Henry VI* (5.5.43)

Heywood's two-part *Iron Age* is in fact the conclusion to a tetralogy of *Age*

plays: *Golden*, *Silver*, *Brazen* and *Iron*, which collectively dramatise Heywood's

earlier poem *Troia Britanica* (see chapter six). As with *Troia Britanica*, the

cycle's plot and characterisation are drawn primarily from Caxton yet

embellished throughout by an intimate knowledge of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*,

Virgil's *Aeneid*, and, in *The Iron Age*, Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*.[41]

The result, as Kathleen McLuskie notes, is a dramatised 'compendium of

popularised classical knowledge in its modern as well as its ancient versions'.[42]

The episodic plot of this vast swathe of Greek mythology begins in the

Golden Age with '[t]he liues of Iupiter and Saturne [and] the deifying of the

heathen gods', proceeds to 'the loue of [J]upiter to Alcmena', 'the birth of

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[40] 'Dedication to Thomas Hammon', *The Iron Age*, A3r-A3v (A3r). All subsequent quotations from *The Iron Age* and *The Second Part of The Iron Age* will be referenced parenthetically.

[41] The frequency of precise verbal echoes between Shakespeare's *Troilus* and Heywood's *Iron Age* led Swinburne to claim that 'the very text of Shakespeare is followed with exceptional and almost servile fidelity', *Nineteenth Century* 218 (1895), p.655, qtd. in Ernest Schanzer, 'Heywood's Ages and Shakespeare', *The Review of English Studies*, 11:41 (1960), 18-28 (p.25). Schanzer views Swinburne's declaration as a 'pardonable exaggeration' as he details the similarities between the two plays and proposes that Heywood's *Troia Britannica* was probably influenced by 'memories of a stage-performance' of *Troilus and Cressida* but in composing the *Iron Age* Heywood not only 'had *Troia Britannica* open beside him' but also the 1609 Quarto of *Troilus and Cressida*, p.25.

[42] *Dekker and Heywood: Professional Dramatists* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), p.21.

Hercules' and 'the rape of Proserpine', before dramatising 'the death of the centaure Nessus', 'the tragedy of Meleager', 'the tragedy of Jason and Medea' and '[t]he labours and death of Hercules' and concluding in the *Iron Age* with 'the Rape of Hellen: The Siege of *Troy*: the combate betwixt *Hector* and *Ajax*', the 'burning of Troy' and the murderous cycles of revenge that blight the Houses of Atreus and Peleus after Troy's downfall.[43] The *Age*s thus deliberately flout the Aristotelian unities with the ironic aid of a chorus in the person of 'blinde Homer' who (in the first three *Age*s) introduces dumb-shows and odes to negotiate considerable jumps in time, place and plot.[44] At the close of the *Brazen Age* Heywood's choric Homer defiantly declares: 'He that expects fiue short Acts can containe / Each circumstance of these things we present, / Me thinkes should shew more barrennesse then [b]raine' (L3v).

The *Iron Age* disposes with the dumb-shows and "Homeric" chorus. Both parts begin instead *in media res* on a crowded stage (1 opens with the Trojan royalty debating how to react to the abduction of Hesione; 2 opens with the Greek princes gathered to welcome Pyrrhus), and they end with epilogues delivered by Thersites and Ulysses respectively. With the removal of Homer as an intermediary *The Iron Age* offers a more immediate re-enactment of the myth than the retrospective storytelling which frames the prior *Age*s. This perhaps reflects Heywood's assertion that the 'Iron Age' is not only 'the world's decrepit age' but also the '[n]ow' of his audience (*Golden* B1v). The 'deifying' of *The Golden Age* and 'love' of *The Silver Age* gives way to 'tragedy' in *The Brazen*

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[43] Quoting title-pages from: *The Golden Age* (London: William Barrenger, 1611); *The Silver Age*; *The Brazen Age*; and *The Iron Age* and *The Second Part of the Iron Age*.

[44] Ironic, as it is Homer's *Iliad* which Aristotle commends as paradigmatic of its genre since, like the best tragedies, it does not attempt a comprehensive history of the Trojan War: '[Homer] did not even try to treat the war as a whole, although it does have a beginning and an end. Had he done so, the plot would have been excessively large and difficult to take in at one view' (10.1), *Poetics*, trans. by Malcolm Heath (London: Penguin, 1996), p.38.

Age and 'combate', 'burning', 'rape' and a catalogue of 'death' in *The Iron Age*:
'*Hector* and *Troilus* slayne by *Achilles*', '*Achilles* slaine by *Paris*', '[t]he Death
of *Aiax*' (*Iron* 1.Ar)*,* 'the death of *Penthesilea, Paris Priam,* and *Hecuba*', '[t]he
deaths of *Agamemnon, Menelaus, Clitemnestra, Hellena, Orestes, Egistus,
Pillades,* King *Diomed, Pyrhus, Cethus, Synon, Thersites,* &c.' (*Iron* 2.Ar). The
two-part conclusion to the *Age*s is punctuated by elaborately staged set-pieces of
armed combat, suicide and butchery. Yet alongside these violent spectacles are
numerous scenes in which the warriors and wealth of Greece and Troy are
pageanted across the stage '*with traling Colours*' drums and trumpets (1.L2v).
Heywood even includes a '*banquet in state*' (1.F2v) and a '*lofty dance of
sixteene Princes, halfe Troians halfe Grecians*' (1.F4v). As McLuskie
summarises (citing Heywood's stage directions), the aesthetic result is a
'return[…] to the "*Armes, drum, colours, and attendants*" […] style of
dramaturgy developed by Marlowe in *Tamburlaine*' and which, presumably,
characterised those early lost Troy plays of the late-1590s.[45] In the first part, one
of these spectacular set-pieces is the heroic clash between Hector and Ajax:
'*Alarum, in this combate both hauing lost their swords and Shields. Hector takes
vp a great peece of a Rocke, and casts at Aiax; who teares a young Tree vp by
the rootes, and assailes Hector, at which they are parted by both armes*' (1.Fv
and fig.12). That this iconic battle was a drawing point is testified to by the
woodcut illustrating and advertising the printed text. Like the promotional
posters of Achilles/Pitt and Hector/Bana for Petersen's 2004 *Troy*, the woodcut
glorifies the physicality of these clashing warriors, exaggerating both their
stature and their strength.

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[45] (as in n.42 p.312 above), p.18.

Front cover of Thomas Heywood's *Iron Age* can be seen via Early English Books Online at:

http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:4241

Figure 12: The epic clash between Hector and Ajax, frontispiece to Thomas Heywood's *The Iron Age* (London: Nicholas Okes, 1632)

This somewhat nostalgic *Iron Age*, which looks back to the Troy Book's age of chivalry and the high spectacle of the earlier drum and trumpet dramaturgy, proved incredibly popular from 1612 onwards.[46] Its performance boasted a unique selling point: 'these were the Playes often (and not with the least applause,) Publickely Acted by *two* Companies, vppon one Stage at once, and haue at sundry times thronged three se[v]erall Theaters, with numerous and mighty Auditories' (1.A4v). This 'interesting case of theatrical fraternizing' was demanded by the spectacularly large number of speaking roles: 1 *Iron Age* has

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[46] All four plays were evidently popular enough to warrant multiple stagings, with productions mounted in the three theatres as well as a Court performance of the *Silver Age* for the Twelfth Night Revels of 1612 in front of an audience including Queen Anna and the Prince; Peter Cunningham ed., *Extracts from the accounts of the revels at court, in the reigns of Queen Elizabeth and King James I: from the original office books of the masters and yeomen* (London: Shakespeare Society, 1842), p.211. However, by the time the *Iron Age* came to be published in 1632, this style of theatre was certainly out of fashion, as Heywood claims to fear in his address to the reader: 'These Ages haue beene long since Writ, and suited with the Time then: I know not how they may bee receiued in this Age, where nothing but *Satirica Dictaeria,* and *Comica Scommata* are now inrequest' (2 A2r).

twenty-seven named characters plus one Spartan ambassador, one Cretan ambassador, one armour-bearer, an unspecified number of Myrmidons, Grecian Soldiers, Trojan Soldiers, and various Attendants (both male and female) whilst the second part introduces fifteen '[n]ew persons not presented in the former part' (2.Av).[47]

Amongst such exceptionally large casts and the sprawling Caxtonesque plot of both the tetralogy and the individual *Iron Age*, the dramatic impact of the lone playhouse Hecuba is minimal. More cipher than fully developed character, Heywood's Trojan Queen never appears alone onstage (rather, flanked by an unspecified number of silent ladies-in-waiting), never addresses the audience directly, never speaks more than seven lines consecutively, and utters no more than twenty-three lines in total across the two parts. She thus remains silent for the majority of time she spends onstage, and spends the majority of the play offstage. Little more than marginal ornament, Heywood's Hecuba intensifies, yet never determines, the intended theatrical affect of her onstage scenes.

Thus, although Hecuba witnesses the death of her son Margareton from the walls of Troy (the stage balcony) she is given no lines with which to react to the sight (1.H2v). She never returns to the balcony and therefore "misses" the deaths of her remaining sons which are reacted to in declamatory speeches given by Priam, Paris, Aeneas and Troilus. When Hecuba does speak her utterances are characterised by deference: thus her only line during the play's lengthy opening

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[47] Joseph Quincy Adams, 'Shakespeare, Heywood, and the Classics', *Modern Language Notes*, 34:6 (1919), 336-39 (p.337). The casts of the tetralogy's preceding plays are no less impressive with an average of thirty-five named characters each. Adams argues that the two companies involved were the King's Men, who 'had the unique luxury of two theatres, the Globe and Blackfriars' and the Queen's Men, who performed at the Red Bull. This supposition not only neatly identifies the 'three se[...]erall Theaters' but also appeals to Adams' desire to sideline Heywood and give Shakespeare a starring role in the venture: 'It is conceivable that Shakespeare was in some way personally responsible for this cooperation between the two chief London troupes in their worthy effort to "bring the golden fleece" of Greek culture into the homes of the London middle classes. At least, one would like to think so', p.339.

scene – ''Tis most true' – is spoken in agreement to Cassandra's extensive prophecy (1.B3v); with '[w]e count you in the number of our daughters, / Nor can wee doe Queene *Hellen* greater honour', she perfunctorily welcomes Helen to Troy between Priam's and Hector's far more elaborate salutations (1.D4v); with 'Oh spare his life' and 'Kill mee for him', she reacts to Pyrrhus' lengthy threats against a particularly vocal Priam (2.F2r). Even in the supplication to Hector, a scene Hecuba dominates in the *Iliad*, Heywood's Queen employs her voice *only* to prompt the voices of others: '*Troilus,* perswade thy brother, daughter *Hellen* / Speake to thy *Paris* to intreate him too' (1.Hv). The authority of the maternal voice is disempowered as Hecuba defers to the entreaties of Priam, Andromache, Helen and Paris.

Following the Troy Book tradition, Heywood's Hecuba is most prominent during the plot to avenge her sons with Achilles' murder. Paris vocally dominates their snatched, clandestine "plotting scene" but it is maternal grief that is offered as the motive for murder and the maternal bond which Hecuba *thinks* she is employing to manipulate Paris into action:

> O Paris, till *Achilles* lye as dead,
> As did thy brother *Hector* at his feete,
> His body hackt with as many wounds,
> As was thy brother *Troilus* when he fell.
> I neu[e]r, neu[e]r shall haue peace with Heauen,
> Or take thee for their brother, or my sonne. (1.I3v)

In prompting her disreputable son to so 'dishonourably br[e]ake The Lawes of Armes' (1.I4v), the queen *appears*, for a fleeting scene, to take centre-stage in Heywood's drama. But this is, however, to read the scene out of context. It is actually the second of two moments in which the murder of Achilles is 'well thought on' (1.I4r). For, in *The Iron Age* it is Paris who – ventriloquizing the

romance Hecubas – first utters the belief that Achilles' deserves to die by deceit;
it is Paris who decides that Polyxena should be used as bait; and Paris who
secretly seeks out his mother:

> *Hector* hee destroy'd by treachery,
> And hee must dye by craft. But *Priams* temper
> Will nere bee brought to any base reuenge:
> A woman is most subiect vnto spleene,
> And I will vse the braine of *Hecuba:*
> This bloody so[n]ne of *Thetis* doth still doate
> Vpon the beauty of *Polexina;*
> And that's the base we now must build vpon.   (1.H4v)

Paris directly addresses the audience, granting him a level of autonomy from the
play and a proximity to the spectators that Hecuba is entirely lacking. In line with
what McLuskie labels a culturally dominant 'collective misogynist fantasy',[48]
Paris contrasts Priam's temperate and restrained paternal grief to the wild and
violent grief of 'a woman' and expresses his desire to harness the splenetic
maternal temperament that naturally inclines toward 'base reuenge'. Hecuba's
grief and desire for vengeance are merely the seal of approval Paris requires to
legitimate his own prior plans. Despite this somewhat disempowering
exculpation, Heywood's play (like the English Troy Books) still punishes
Hecuba for her role in the 'base reuenge': 'Such grace as they did to Achilles

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[48] *Dekker and Heywood* (as in n.42 p.312), p.19. Although both Caxton and Lydgate, following
Dares, stress the *female* thinking behind the dishonourable murder of Achilles, the most explicit
expression of the 'misogynist fantasy' is perhaps to be found in Fenne's *Mishaps*. Fenne's
Hecuba calls a 'counsell […] of matrons wise' who '[t]ogether […] layde [their] heades' and
'conclude, that best it were, Achylles to insnare / With some fine peece of Venus Court, whose
beauty shoulde be rare' (Dd2v). It is only once the scheme, including Achilles' agreement, has
been secured that Hecuba makes Paris 'priuy of [her] mind' (Dd3v). In Fenne, then, it is not
individual maternal grief that irrationally compels Hecuba to transgress honourable male codes of
conduct, but a collective female council. The immorality of the women's plot is condemned
further by accentuating their reliance on the sexual exploitation of some 'daintie peece' (Dd2v)
by employing the slang for a sixteenth-century brothel: 'some fine peece of Venus Court' (Dd2v).
See Gordon Williams, *A Dictionary of Sexual Language and imagery in Shakespearean and
Stuart Literature* (London: Athlone Press, 1994), p.1475.

shew, / Let [these Ladies] all tast' (2.F2r); and it is with her death that Heywood makes his most striking divergence from and intervention in the Hecuba myth.

In a recurring echo that sounds between the classical Hecuba-narratives, the Trojan queen bitterly cries out against her continued existence: 'why doo I linger? / why Dooth hurtfull age preserve mee still alive?' (*Met*/Golding 13.621-22). In a spectacular climax to *The Iron Age*'s staging of 'the burning of Troy', Heywood uniquely grants Hecuba her ancient retrospective wish. She is butchered onstage by Thersites, alongside Priam whom Pyrrhus murders at the altar. Simultaneously, the audience witness the unprecedented murder of Andromache and the premature re-enactment of the post-war sacrifices of Cassandra, Polyxena and Astyanax. Heywood thereby compresses and concentrates the matter of Troy: collapsing the various post-war female tragedies of Euripides, Seneca and Ovid into Virgil to form an intensified climax to the enactment of what is essentially Aeneas' tale to Dido.

In telling Dido 'the story of that baleful burning night' (*Titus* 5.3.82), the Aeneas of Henry Howard's *Certain bokes of Virgiles Aeneis*, falters trying to 'expresse the slaughter' as he recalls 'terror euery where, / And plentie of grisly pictures of death' (B3v). Heywood has limited time and space in which to convey the 'slaughter of the night' and he does so primarily by harnessing the dramatic power of 'plentie of grisly *pictures* of death': subjecting the audience to a rapid onslaught of short episodic scenes filled with movement and bursts of clamour. *The Iron Age* offers no single authoritative standpoint from which to experience the night, but rather fragments the narrative authority of Virgil's Aeneas so that the audience experience Troy's fall from the perspective of a wide array of characters: both Trojan and Greek, male and female, royal and plebeian.

As in *Hamlet*, it begins with Pyrrhus: '*Pyrhus, Diomed, and the rest,*
leape from out the Horse. And as if groping in the darke, meete with Agamemnon
and the rest' (2.D4v). After this hushed entrance from above, the stage soon
becomes crowded with characters, noise and action; nine short scenes in rapid
succession, some of them evidently occurring simultaneously, result in a flurry of
exits and entrances. Alongside the noise of specific fight scenes Heywood scripts
the 'noise of war': 'Loude Drummes and Trumpets', '*Aloude Alarum*' (2.Er), and
offstage and onstage '*shreiks and clamours*' (2.F3r). Two nameless inhabitants
of Troy, a '*Troian in his nightgowne all unready*' and '*his wife as from bed*'
(2.Er), become the first citizens to be awoken by the rampaging Greeks. They
stand helpless on the empty stage fearfully commenting on the 'strange vproare'
getting louder and closer until:

> *Enter Pyrhus with the rest their weapons draw* [sic] *and torches*

WIFE	Oh saue mee husband.
TROIAN	Succour me deere wife.
OMNES	Vengeance for *Greece* and *Neoptolemus* (2.Ev)

The first victims of the night are, then, nameless citizens: not the named royal
characters who have dominated the play and determined the action, but rather the
Trojan equivalent to Heywood's London audience, the ordinary man and woman
defenceless in nightgowns, surrounded and slaughtered by a troupe of fully
armed soldiers. Amongst the ensuing carnage the ghost of Hector, 'bak't in
blood' (2.E2r), haunts Aeneas, variously reciting the Latin text of Virgil's *Aeneid*
(2.E2v) and the medieval myths of *Troynovant*: 'Citties more rich then this the
Grecian spoyle, / In after times shall thy successors build, / […]. *Bruite* shall
reare, […] great Britaines *Troy-nouant*' (2.E2v).

The play cuts to another location where King Priam – dressed only '*in his night-gowne and slippers*' (2.E3r) – gathers together Hecuba, their daughters, his young grandson Astyanax and any attendant ladies, and commands them to follow him '[u]nto the sacred Altar of the gods […]. since we needes must dye, let's chuse this place' (2.E3r). This short vignette parallels the slaughter of the anonymous Trojan and his wife as 'Death', that 'hath our liues in chase' (2.E3r), levels all social distinction. Meanwhile, at another locale, the leprous vagrant Cressida and a terrified Helen enter the stage simultaneously from opposite doors, the mirrored stage image mirroring their parallel lives. The two women struggle with their beauty, their guilt, the blame laid upon them and their infidelities, while Cressida's altered appearance acts as an external reflection of Helen's feared corruption: 'But now behold mee *Hellen*' (2.E3v). Both ladies are captured when Pyrrhus, Agamemnon, Menelaus and their soldiers storm the stage. In yet another location Cassandra is seized by Synon and Thersites who threaten to throw her into the fires consuming Troy. She is rescued temporarily by her husband Chorebus who is leading a band of Trojans disguised as Greeks. However, Aeneas and another band of Trojans rush the stage and, seeing Cassandra 'captiue made' by '[m]ore Greekes', fight and kill their own kin (2.Fr). Amongst these scenes Thersites repeatedly ducks combat and runs away, whilst Pyrrhus and Synon stalk the stage exhorting the Greeks with clichés of Elizabethan revenge tragedies: 'now's the time / For tragicke slaughter, clad in gules and sables, / To spring out of Hels iawes, and play strang reakes' (2.D4r).

At the climax of this clamour and action comes a scene of comparative stillness, structured around three tableaux; in the first: *King Priam* [is] *discouered kneeling at the Altar, with him Hecuba, Polixena, Andromache,*

Astianax (2.Fv). This is the only occasion during the sack of Troy in which

Heywood utilises the discovery space. The stage is emptied to ensure maximum

impact and by avoiding another flurry of entrances Heywood engenders a sense

of voyeuristic anxiety: rather than characters bursting onto the stage in front of

the audience, it is the audience who have intruded – as the Greeks will do – upon

this group of praying Trojans. This first tableau thus establishes the vulnerability

of the Trojans: an unarmed group consisting of a boy child, an aged man and at

least four women,[49] dressed in nightgowns, kneeling in supplication. Both the

audience and the Trojans now wait in anticipation of Pyrrhus: '*to them enter*

Pyrhus, and all the Greekes, Pyrhus killing Polytes Priams sonne before the

Altar' (2.Fv). At least seven adult males in full armour, with swords drawn, rush

the stage, chasing Polytes – another young boy in a nightshirt – whom Pyrrhus

immediately kills in front of Priam and Hecuba.[50]

  After ascertaining that Polytes has led him to Priam, and after the king

and Achilles' son have traded insults, Pyrrhus choreographs the second tableau

which is to be held for thirty lines as the Trojans offer the play's only scene of

lamentation, led not by Hecuba but by Priam:

> **PYRHUS**   *Vlysses*, *Agancemnon* [sic] *Menelaus*,
>   *Synon, Thersites,* and you valiant Greekes;
>   Behold the vengeance wrathfull *Pyrhus* takes
>   On *Priams* body for *Achilles* death:
>   *Synon,* take thou that Syren *Polixene,*
>   And hew her peece-meale on my fathers Tombe.
>   *Thersites,* make the wombe of fifty Princes
>   A royall sheath for thy victorious blade:
>   *Diomed,* let *Cassandra* dye by thee,
>   And *Agamemnon* kill *Andromache:*

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[49] Although not mentioned in the stage directions, Cassandra is later mentioned as if present.
[50] The scene includes seven named Greeks (Pyrrhus, Agamemnon, Synon, Thersites, Diomed, Menelaus and Ulysses – although latter two not as involved in action). They were, presumably although not necessarily, accompanied by an unspecified number of unnamed soldiers.

	And as my sword through *Priams* bulke shall flie,
	Let them in death consort him, and so dye.
	[…]
PRIAM	Oh Heauen, oh *Ioue,* Stars, Planets, fortune, fate,
	To thinke what I haue beene, and what am now;
	Father of fifty braue Heroick sonnes,
	But now no Father, for they all are slaine.
	Queene *Hecuba* the Mother of so many,
	But now no Mother: for her barren wombe
	Hath not one child to shew, these fatall warres
	Haue eate vp all our issue.
ASTIANAX	My deare Father,
	And all my pri[n]cely Vnkles.
ANDROMACHE	My deare Husband,
	And all my royall brothers.
HECUBA	Worthy *Hector,*
	And all my valiant sonnes.
PRIAM	And now that *Priam* that commanded *Asia,*
	And sate inthron'd aboue the Kings of *Gre[e]ce,*
	Whose dreaded Na[u]y scowerd the *Hellespont,*
	Sees the rich towers hee built now burnt to ashes:
	The stately walls he reard, leuel'd and euen'd;
	His Treasures rifled and his people spoyl'd:
	All that he hath on earth beneath the Sunne
	Bereft him, sauing his owne life and these,
	And my poore life with these, are (as you see)
	Worse then the rest: they dead, we dying bee.
	Strike my sterne foe, and proue in this my friend,
	One blow my vniuersall cares shall end.
PYRHUS	And that blow *Pirhus* strikes, at once strike all.

They are all sl[a]ine at once. (2.F2v-F3r)

In both the opening supplication tableau and this held image, with a Greek soldier paired to each kneeling Trojan, Heywood distils the essence of the classical Hecubas and her daughters as iconic exemplars of grief. In line with Lupton's and Reinhard's belief in Hecuba's and the Trojan women's Renaissance potency, Heywood's aesthetic reflects 'not […] their dramatic action but rather their rhetorical tableaux of heroic feminine suffering'.[51] In converting verbal rhetoric to visual depiction, Heywood's tableaux also reflect

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[51] *After Oedipus* (as in n.87 p.254), p.102.

the aesthetic of the ubiquitous emblem books – the pictorial equivalent to the schoolboys' commonplace books – which presented classical characters and scenes in 'tableau like pictures often of gnomic or commonplace character, accompanied by appropriate mottoes, verses, and elaborate prose analyses'.[52] Heywood's stage emblem of sorrow is not accompanied by Hecuba's voice, however, but Priam's verse, which adopts the characteristic structure and tropes of traditional lamentation.

As Goodland states, '[n]early all lamentations include juxtapositions of past joy with present grief',[53] and Priam punctuates his speeches with five woeful 'now's with which to oppose the lost glories of 'what I haue beene'. Goodland also explains how the 'antithetical structure of lamentation is reinforced through antiphonal exchange between lamenters. […] Usually each narrative solo concludes with a refrain of wailing or chanting'.[54] In a reversal of the female lamentation seen in the classics, Heywood's *Iron Age* depicts Astyanax, Andromache and Hecuba punctuating Priam's two solo laments with the *antistrophic* apostrophes to Hector and his brothers. In maternal laments, which traditionally dominated Greek mourning songs for soldiers, it is characteristic for the grieving mother to 'compar[e] the pain of child-bearing with the pain of grief'.[55] Here, however, it is Priam who highlights the bitter irony of Hecuba's once fruitful womb, again ventiloquising classical Hecubas to

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[52] Ong (as in n.58 p.131), p.81.
[53] *Female Mourning* (as in n.12 p.15), p.14.
[54] *Ibid*, p.16. *Cf*. also Holst-Warhaft who writes, '[p]olyphony and counterpoint are the hallmark of lament in most traditional societies. Individual interpretation is followed by incorporation; one woman's expression of grief is listened to by the community of singers and integrated into a larger composition that comes to represent the grief of all. It is the ability of the lamenting group of women to transform private emotion into collective pain and anger that is recognised as beneficial', *Cue for Passion* (as in n.12 p.15), p.52.
[55] Goodland, pp.14-15.

lament: 'the Mother of so many, / But now no Mother: for her barren wombe / Hath not one child to shew' (2.F2v).

Priam's reference to Hecuba's empty, travestied womb is intensified by the fact that this lament is not only spoken over their dead son Polytes, but is also delivered as Thersites' holds his sword ready to fulfil Pyrhus' instruction to 'make the wombe of fifty Princes / A royall sheath for thy victorious blade' (2.F2v). Determined by dramatic expedience, Hecuba's murder is necessary to allow the play to progress swiftly beyond Troy. The manner of this death, however, is Heywood's own invention (perhaps recalling Nero's classical precedent?). The internal rhyme with 'my fathers Tombe' again draws attention to the mother's 'wombe', whilst 'sheath' construes her death as a rape. In penetrating Hecuba's womb with his 'victorious blade' Thersites' violation of the queen is both a literal and symbolic violation of the matriarchal body which represents the city and her citizens; the annihilation of Priam's lineage; the cessation of a war that traces its origins to the 'fatall Youth' 'brought forth' by Hecuba (1.B2v). Underscoring the shared imagery surrounding Hecuba's womb and the wooden horse, Thersites enacts the same evisceration that Lacoon prompted the gullible Trojans to enact against the Greeks' "gift": 'This gluttenous wombe hath swallowed a whole band / Of men in steele, then with your swords and glaues / Rip vp his tough sides, and imbowell him' (2.Dv). Both Hecuba and the horse are 'deliuer'd of […] monstrous fatall and abhorred birth[s]' (2.Dv) which travesty the womb's natural function and spark battles that 'eate[s] vp all our issue'. To kill Hecuba in the womb is to eliminate the ultimate source of the Greeks' and Trojan's combined miseries and bring this 'gluttenous

wombe' under both Greek male control and also safeguard the '[n]obleness of the History' (1.A4r) from becoming a hysterical tragedy.

For the Renaissance the womb, also known as 'the Mother', was at the root of *hysteria* (as its Greek etymology testifies). According to Edward Jorden's highly regarded medical essay of 1603, the womb had a tendency to move, 'sometimes drawn vpwards or sidewards' (Cv), due to 'affectations of the mind [or] some Melancholike or capricious conceit' (Hv). This wandering womb caused the disease '*Passio Hysterica* [or], [i]n English the Mother or the suffocation of the Mother' (Cr).[56] In *The Iron Age* the brutal hysterectomy that eliminates both the Trojan Mother and her womb from the play, combined with the simultaneous slaying of the daughters of Troy, removes the potential for the *Hysterica passio* of grief to overrun Heywood's heroic stage.[57] The characters who traditionally mourn Troy in the Graeco-Roman tragedies are pre-emptively dispatched, allowing the remainder of *The Iron Age* to concentrate on the fate of the Greek warriors as they return home.

The mass cull of female characters also eliminates the multiple viewpoints from which the audience has witnessed Troy's destruction. Aeneas – the 'hope of all our future memories' (2.Fr) – and his band of men emerge as the only authoritative witnesses, permitted to escape so '[t]hat of *Troyes* sack the world by them may know' (2.F3v). Having destroyed the possibility of

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[56] *A Briefe Discovrse of a Disease Called the Suffocation of the Mother* (London: John Windet at the signe of the Crosse Keyes, 1603). Cf. see also Lear's patriarchal lament for his former state which articulates a fear of effeminacy entailed in such a passionate frenzy: 'O! how this mother swells up toward my heart; / *Hysterica passio*! down, thou climbing sorrow!' (*King Lear* 2.4.56–57).

[57] Similarly, the raging Cassandra of the opening scene, who in the conventional attire of a grieving hysteric (*with her haire about her eares* 1.B3r) bursts into the council of warriors and laments Troy's fall, is suppressed by the play and its male heroes. To stop her speaking out against the Trojan princes who admit to being 'Co[v]etous of warre and martiall exercise' (1.Br), Priam gives the order to '[f]orce her away and lay her fast in hold' (1.B3v). Escorted offstage in scene one of Part One, Cassandra is not seen in the play again until the night Troy falls in Part Two.

Euripides' and Seneca's Trojan tragedies, and disinherited the mourning mother

as the 'keeper[…] of memory',[58] Pyrrhus concludes the "Trojan episode" of

Heywood's play by reading from a 'note' (an already written record) detailing

the same statistics with which accounts of the Trojan War from Dares onwards

had concluded. Pyrrhus thus effectively, and anachronistically, reads from an

English adaption of Dares:

> **DIOMEDES** What note is that which *Pyrhus* eye dwels on?
> **PYRHUS** The perfect number
> Of Greekes and Troians slayne on either part.
> The siege ten yeares, ten moneths, ten dayes indur'd,
> In which there perish't of the Greekes 'fore *Troy*
> Eight hundred thousand & six thousand fighting men:
> Of Troians fell six hundred six and fifty thousand,
> All souldiers; besides women, children, babes,
> Whom this night massacred. (2.F3v)

However, the bodies of Hecuba, Astyanax, Andromache, Cassandra, Polyxena

and Priam are still onstage, constructing the scene's third and final tableau. The

victorious Greeks stand around Pyrrhus to hear these statistics expanded as he

names which Greek princes killed which Trojan princes and vice versa. But the

statistics and roll-call are recounted over the corpses of 'women, children, babes'

who remain unrecorded. Thus, despite being denied a lamenting voice, the

female bodies of Hecuba and her daughters still silently signify those lost

remembrances which would undermine the selective bias of the soldiers' report

that 'worlds to come / Shall Cronicle' (2.F4r).[59] At this point the printed play

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[58] Loraux (as in n.2 p.10), p.16.

[59] My belief that the corpses remain onstage is based on the fact that between their murder and the Greeks' victorious return the audience are left staring at an empty stage whilst they hear: '*The Alarum continued, shreiks and clamours are heard within*' (2.F3r). It strikes me as more theatrically apposite to leave the corpses in view to act as a corollary to the slaughter that can be heard occurring offstage. Moreover, their presence would underscore Thersites' sarcastic response to Pyrrhus' lists: 'Brauely boast he can, / [to have killed] A wretched woman and a weake old man' (2.F3v).

forms a meta-textual loop as Pyrrhus' foreseen Chronicles take the reader back to

Heywood's opening address, which aligns his play within the tradition of '*Times*

learned Remembraneers; the *Histriographers*' who have 'ingeniously

Commented, and labouriously Recorded' 'the Antiquity and Noblenesse of the

History' (1.A4r).

4. 'Sights to Make an Alexander'

It is my contention that Heywood's treatment of Hecuba in *The Iron Age* offers a

synecdochic glimpse of the standard depiction of the Trojan queen in the

Renaissance playhouses – if she appeared at all beyond Heywood's play.

Heywood's spectacular drama suggests that, beyond the academic stage, Hecuba

firmly belonged to history not tragedy. Yet, as a quintessentially tragic character,

Hecuba's presence in history is an unstable one, especially as Renaissance

discursive practice so persistently conceived of history and tragedy as conflicting

ideological opposites.

As Phyllis Rackin has shown, tragedy was considered both feminine and

feminising 'in arguments for and against the theater, in the prologues and

epilogues to plays, in accounts of actual experience as well as in prescriptive

directions'.[60] Conversely, history was conceived of as male and capable of

making more of a man out of the (assumed male) spectator.[61] Printed in the same

year that *The Iron Age* is assumed to have had its début at the Red Bull, *An*

Apology for Actors (1612) sees Thomas Heywood defend the theatre from anti-

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[60] Qtd. in Goodland, p.175. See Rackin, 'Engendering the Tragic Audience: The Case of *Richard III*', *Studies in the Literary Imagination*, 26 (1993), 47-65.
[61] Citing Rackin again, Goodland provides the illustrative example of the Induction to *A Warning to Fair Women* (1599) in which personifications of Tragedie, Comedie and Historie argue for jurisdiction over the play: Comedie enters playing a fiddle; Tragedie is a woman with a whip and knife, and Hystorie is a soldier with a drum and ensign, p.175.

theatrical pamphleteering by insisting on drama's unique ability to enact the key

principle underpinning Renaissance humanism. Essentially, Heywood recites the

cultural commonplace that exposure to a resurrected classical history can propel,

through imitation, a debased present closer to the heroic past.[62] Heywood argues

his case by half-imagining and half-remembering the affective potency of an

idealised heroic stage – which patently has much in common with his own *Age*

plays:

> to see a *Hector* all besmered in blood, trampling vpon the
> bulkes of Kinges. A *Troylus* returning from the field in the sight of
> his father *Priam* as if man and horse euen from the steeds rough
> fetlockes to the plume in the champions helmet had bene together
> plunged into a purple Ocean: To see a *Pompey* ride in triumph,
> then a *Caesar* conquer that *Pompey:* labouring *Hanniball* aliue,
> hewing his passage through the Alpes. To see as I haue seene,
> *Hercules* in his owne shape hunting the Boare, knocking downe
> the Bull, taming the Hart, fighting with Hydra, murdering *Gerion,*
> slaughtring *Diomed,* wounding the *Stimphalides,* killing the
> Centaurs, pashing the Lion, squeezing the Dragon, dragging
> *Cerberus*, […]. Oh these were sights to make an *Alexander.*
>
> (B3v-B4r)

This model theatre is a wholly male affair; no traces here of the contentious

cross-dressing men who so vexed the anti-theatricalists. Although Heywood's

treaty will address such concerns later, not one female character graces his vision

of the exemplary heroic, historical stage.[63] It is a stage of pure activity and

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[62] For example, Thomas Nashe articulates the commonplace which echoed throughout pro-theatre literature, by arguing that there was no 'sharper reproofe to these degenerate and effeminate days of ours' than to see 'our fore*fathers* valiant actes...revived', *Pierce Pennilesse his Supplication to the Divell*, qtd. in Goodland, p.177.

[63] This is not to say Heywood as a writer ignores the notion of a female heroic history, indeed his *Gynaikeion* (London: Adam Islip, 1624) is a 466 page prose work, split into 'Nine books' named after the nine muses, dedicated entirely to detailing 'a Collection of Histories, which touch the generalitie of Women, such as haue either beene illustrated for their Vertues, and Noble Actions, or contrarily branded for their Vices, and baser Conditions' ('To the Reader' A4r). But whilst the staging of the heroical male history in the *Age*s is construed as 'unlock[ing] the Casket long time shut, / Of which none but the learned keepe the key' (*Silver* Br), Heywood conceives of the *Gynaikeion* as having 'shut vp and contruded within a narrow roome, many large Histories' ('To the Reader' A4v). Moreover, in the Dedicatory Epistle to Edward Somerset Heywood offers his work as a means to 'expose' these women to Somerset's 'noble view' when he is himself shut up within his bedchamber: 'All which I haue charmed with such art, that the fairest amongst them

violence: 'fighting', 'labouring', 'hewing', 'hunting', 'murdering', 'wounding' and 'dragging'. The purpose of playing here is to infuse and transform an ideal spectator with this magnified stage machismo until "he" becomes indistinguishable from the actor. Thus, a 'prosperous performance' is not only one in which 'the Personater were the man Personated' but also one in which 'the harts of the spectators' are 'new mold[ed]' and 'fashion[ed] to the shape of any noble and notable attempt' (B4r), becoming 'an Alexander' equal to the onstage Hector, Troilus, Hannibal or Hercules.

The choice of Alexander is not simply rhetorical hyperbole but also the citing of historical precedent. For, it was by watching 'the valor of Achilles […] so naturally exprest' in a performance of 'the destruction of Troy' (arranged by his tutor Aristotle) that the Renaissance believed 'young *Alexander*' was moulded into Alexander the Great: 'it imprest the hart of *Alexander,* in so much that all his succeeding actions were meerly shaped after that patterne, and it may be imagined had *Achilles* neuer liued, *Alexander* had neuer conquered the whole world' (B3r). Subsequent to watching a dramatised Trojan War, Aristotle's 'pupill' emulates Achilles to become the famed Alexander; in watching *The Iron Age* Heywood offers his audience the opportunity to replay this moment, allowing them to inhabit the role of the young Alexander and, by being 'imprest' by the feats of his Hector, Troilus and Achilles, become 'an Alexander' too.

In repeatedly asserting the moral and educational advantages of public drama, Heywood overlaps the schoolroom and playhouse. The distinction between the two, however, can be gauged by the space left for Hecuba. In both the *Apology for Poetry* which arises from within the strictures of an Aristotelian

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you may admit into your Bedchamber without suspition, and the most clamorous into your Closet, without noyse' (A3r).

humanism, and the *Apology for Actors* which defends the playhouses' history

plays, the affective power of drama is illustrated by citing the effect of

spectatorship on historical Alexanders. Yet whilst Sidney's tyrant Alexander is

shamed by his effeminate tears, Heywood's heroic Alexander is spurred to

perform remarkable martial feats and earn his celebrated epithet. The distinction

is not simply Pheraeus' 'gilty conscience', but also the type of performances

these infamous Alexanders are watching: the Great watches Achilles and the

destruction of Troy, the Abhominable watches the 'miseries of Hecuba and

Andromache' in the aftermath of that destruction (Plutarch/North EEr). The

distinction is one of genre, of history or tragedy, of Achilles or Hecuba.

In Heywood's *Apology* neither of the two idealised microcosmic

performances of the 'destruction of Troy' contains Hecuba: only Achilles is

relevant to the recollection of Aristotle's production, and only Priam is named as

the witness to his sons' feats on the model Renaissance stage. Consequently the

theatre becomes a male-authored, and male-authoring, androgenetic fantasy: a

self-perpetuating cycle of male heroism in which Aristotle and the actor-Achilles

produce Alexander, the Renaissance actor reproduces a Priam who begets Hector

and Troilus who are, in turn, each capable of spawning a multitude of

Alexanders.[64] The 'wooden O' thus usurps the maternal role of Hecuba. The

'wombe of fifty Princes' is not only redundant but also a threat to this vision of

male autonomy. Like Shakespeare's Volumnia, Hecuba has the potential to

overthrow the heroic warrior's desire to stand '[a]s if a man were author of

himself / And knew no other kin' (5.3.36-37). The violence is sublimated, the

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[64] The image recalls the moment of Phoenix-like regeneration that opens the second Part of
Heywood's *Iron Age* in which the Greek warriors 'bestow some honours' on Achilles (2.Br) by
bedecking Pyrrhus in pieces of his father's armour. This resurrection 'out of [Achilles'] cold
ashes' (2.Br) ensures that when war reconvenes in the following scene, it does so with a battle
between Penthesilea and a Pyrrhus visually indistinguishable from the Achilles of Part One.

usurpation is unspoken, but the excision of Hecuba's womb is implicitly replayed at the core of Heywood's vision of the ontology of heroic history plays.

Hecuba's grand entrance onto England's public stage thus offers an ornamental queen, 'more sinned against than sinning' (*Lear* 3.2.59), whose role in this history of Troy ends prematurely with her evisceration. For our Neoclassic, Romantic and Modern men of letters, such choreographed butchery confirmed Heywood's *Iron Age* as 'hack-work not literature', entirely at odds with the author's professed 'opinions of an avowed classicist'. Heywood must, concludes one 1920s critic, have been 'compelled by poverty to pander to the vulgar'.[65] My remaining chapter begins by leaping forward, from Heywood's *Iron Age*, along the so-called 'vulgar' strand of that perceived division between the classical Hecubas of academic translations and the stage Hecubas enacted in tales of Troy intended for popular entertainment.

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[65] Arthur Melville Clark, 'Thomas Heywood as a Critic', *Modern Language Notes*, 37:4 (1922), 217-23, (p.221).

Chapter Eight: 'and Hecuba Afterwards Foundered'

Hecuba's life in England's public theatres effectively ended with her "premature" death in Thomas Heywood's *Iron Age*.[1] Although the popularity of the play guaranteed that she was repeatedly brought back onstage to be ritualistically slaughtered, Hecuba's story progressed no further. With the Civil War and Interregnum Heywood's Trojan Queen was evicted as the London theatres closed and changing tastes ensured that Restoration theatres did not welcome her back. From the *Iron Age* to the twentieth-century, there are only four recorded Trojan Queens played on England's public stages – in 1725, 1761, 1883 and 1893. Each was written by university educated Englishmen but performed, for the first time in English theatrical history, by professional female actors. Two of these Hecubas are embedded in philanthropic missions: the first of these, in 1725, was a Euripidean Hecuba designed for the edification and improvement of English drama in general and the Drury Lane audience in particular; the second, in 1883, was a bit-part Homeric Hecuba in a production designed to raise funds for women's education. The remaining two Hecubas do not reflect this belief in classicising improvement but rather the more popular tastes (in 1761) for the swooning sentimental heroines of the eighteenth-century "She-tragedies" and (in 1893) for the all-singing all-dancing heroines of the nineteenth-century burlesques. Whilst these two Hecubas are oddities in comparison to their classical templates, all four are rare exceptions to the Hecuba-less dramatisations of the Trojan War that continued to dominate the stories England told itself about Troy. This brief chapter establishes the

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[1] My chapter title is a quotation from an unsigned article: 'Board of Trade Enquiries in Liverpool', *The Times*, 11 Nov. 1870, 6F, which is quoted in context below.

predominance of these popular productions, interspersing the four rare Hecubas within the context of the stories of Troy that, picking up where Heywood left off, put increasing emphasis on staging the spectacle of war – particularly the Trojan Horse.

1. 'Behold the Pageantry of Death'; or, The Horse's Tale [2]

> Against the Women shut your Eyes, and Ears,
> Be deaf to their loud Cries, and blind to all their Tears
> > John Bankes, *The Destruction of Troy,* 1678 (Hv)

> *The scene opens, and in a Wood without the Walls of* Troy,
> *appears the* Trojan Horse, *being a Figure of that Magnitude, that*
> *'tis 17 Foot high to the top of his Back. The whole figure*
> *magnificently adorn'd with all the Trappings, Furniture of a War*
> *Horse, set off with rich Gildings, Plumes of Feathers, and all other*
> *sutable Decorations. Under his Feet lies* Sinon, *with a mangled*
> *Face all Bloody, his Nose cut off, his eyes out &c.*
> > Elkanah Settle (for Mrs Mynns), *The Siege of Troy*, 1707 [3]

On England's two royal Restoration stages Shakespeare's and Heywood's dramatisations of the Trojan War underwent radical revision. Famously, Dryden set about "purifying" Shakespeare's 'dark and undigested heap', from 'nothing but a confusion of Drums and Trumpets, Excursions and Alarms' to a model Aristotelian tragedy.[4] A five act structure is dutifully followed by Dryden's *Troilus and Cressida; or, Truth Found too Late* as the heroes of Troy are ennobled, Cressida is exculpated, and she, Troilus and Hector all die tragic

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[2] The first half of my sub-heading quotes a line from Bankes' *Destruction of Troy*, spoken by the dying Achilles: 'Thus, like the King of Slaughter from my Throne, / [I']le send my Guard of Fates to scourge the Town, / And thus in State, till my last wandring Breath, / Sit, and behold the Pageantry of Death' (Lv).

[3] (London: Benjamin Bragge at the Black Raven, 1707), p10.

[4] 'Grounds of Criticism in Tragedy', Preface to *Troilus and Cressida, or Truth Found too Late: A Tragedy*, in *Dryden: The Dramatic Works* Vol.5, ed. by Montague Summers (New York: Gordian Press, 1968), pp.1-106 (p.31, p.12).

dignified deaths. The debased 'Nell' is excised and the female roles thereby reduced to Andromache and Cressida; the reference to the just-missed Hecuba, who recently 'went by', is retained but there is no mention of her indecorous laughing. While there is no record of Shakespeare's *Troilus* being performed again until 1913, Dryden's hugely popular *Troilus* had its London debut in 1679 and was frequently revived at Drury Lane until 1734.[5]

Although not an explicit revision of Heywood's *Iron Age*, John Bankes' *Destruction of Troy* (1678) enacts a similar classicising "purification" to the plot covered by the final *Age* play. Bankes' five acts depict heroic Greek and Trojan warriors alongside Helen, Andromache, Cassandra and Polyxena. As Hall and Macintosh observe, by drawing on Seneca's *Troas* for his characterisation of the women, Bankes' *Destruction* is implicitly able to 'challenge the heroic play's perspective'; although, essentially, it still belongs to Heywood's genre, 'the longstanding tradition of the male-dominated "siege-and-conquest" heroic play'.[6] Despite the influence of *Troas*, Hecuba does not make an appearance and the play directs most of its attention to the portrayal of Hector and Achilles. In contrast to Heywood's climactic butchery, Bankes' play ends with the report that 'all the women' that were found at the altar beside Priam, '[t]he lamentable […] Queen, / With the poor Remnant of their Friends, and Daughters', were saved: 'we took pity […] /And have secur'd them free from any harm' (L2r).

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[5] See William van Lennep, Emmett L. Avery, Arthur H. Scouten, George Winchester Stone, Jr. and Charles Beecher Hogan eds., *Index to The London Stage 1660 – 1800*, compiled by Ben Ross Schneider, Jr. (Carbondale: Southern Illinois UP, 1979).
[6] *Greek Tragedy and the British Theatre* (as in n.43 p.36), p.66. Following the argument of Eugene Waith, *Ideas of Greatness: Heroic Drama in England* (1971), Hall and Macintosh identify Bankes' *Destruction* as 'A significant forerunner of the female-focussed adaptation of Greek tragedy' which was to dominate the eighteenth-century productions of the so-called 'She-tragedies', p.66.

Whilst Bankes and Dryden, adapting the 'oft […] told' 'Christmas Tale'

to the tastes of the London audience (*Destruction* A4r), dominated the only

official Restoration stages, Heywood's Trojan Queen continued to be

disembowelled '[i]n remote corners of the countryside' throughout the 1700s by

'rustic amateurs [who] went on playing debased versions of Elizabethan

masterpieces for many centuries'.[7] As George Speaight records, '[t]here are

descriptions of such performances in the eighteenth-century at Craven, in

Yorkshire, where adaptations of […] Heywood's *The Iron Age* were diversified

with a clown, dressed in a loose motley garment, with a fox's brush as a tail, and

a fur cap, carrying a wooden sword'.[8] The Trojan War thus continued, as ever,

to be popular material for both the London theatres, the irreverent touring troupes

and also, as writer Tom Brown recorded in August 1699, London's theatrical

fairs:

> This noble *Fair* [Smithfield] not only deals in the humble stories of
> *Crispin* and *Crispianus*, *Whittington's* Cat, *Bateman's* Ghost […]
> it produces *Opera's* of its own growth, and is become a formidable
> Rival to both the Theaters. It beholds *Gods* descending from
> *Machines*, who express themselves in a Language suitable to their
> Dignity: It trafficks in *Heroes*, it raises *Ghosts* and *Apparitions*; it
> has presented the *Trojan Horse*.[9]

In fact from 1707 to 1747 the fairs were to be dominated by one Trojan

Horse in particular, the gigantic seventeen-foot high wooden war-horse that

formed part of the spectacular climax to the 'most famous and elaborate of all

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[7] George Speaight, *The History of the English Puppet Theatre*, 2nd ed. (London: Robert Hale, 1990), p.49.
[8] *Ibid*, p.50.
[9] Untitled letter, dated 28 August 1699, printed in the *Works of Monsieur Voiture* (1705), p.97, qtd. in Sybil Rosenfeld, *The Theatre of the London Fairs in the 18th Century* (London: CUP, 1960), pp.13-14.

drolls', Elkanah Settle's *The Siege of Troy*.[10] Settle, known as 'the best contriver

of [stage] machinery in England', was hired by Mrs Mynns, the manager of a

provincial touring troupe, to create an extravagant spectacle that would enable

her to rival the more professional productions by troupes drawn from the London

theatres.[11] At Bartholomew Fair in 1707, after 'near ten months preparation',

Settle and Mynns unveiled 'so extraordinary a Performance, that without Boast

or Vanity we may modestly say […] it is no ways Inferiour even to any one

Opera yet seen in either of the Royal Theatres'.[12] In fact *The Siege*'s stunning

scenic effects were replications of those in Settle's earlier drama *Cassandra; or,*

The Virgin Prophetess, an 'Opera […] seen' at Drury Lane from 1701 (and

revived in 1703, 1704 and 1705). Although *Cassandra*'s dialogue and songs

were bowdlerised by the fairground production (which also interpolated comic

fight scenes between Bristle, a distinctly English Trojan Cobbler, and his wife),

Mrs Mynns' booth faithfully exhibited 'Paris and Helen, […] riding in a

Triumphant Chariot, drawn by two White Elephants', 'ten Elephants more [in the

wings] bearing on their Backs open-Castles, umbraged with Canopies of Gold;

the ten Castles fil'd with ten Persons richly drest'; 'Venus descend[ing] in a

Chariot drawn by two swans'; a magical device which allowed 'in the twinkling

of an Eye' 'Ten Golden Statues, in a painting, [to be] turn'd to Black, and the

three Figures on the Pedestals [to be] likewise stript of their cloth of Gold, and all

drest in black; and the whole Vistae of the Heavens [to be] changed to a flaming

Hell'; also 'the Town in Fire, […] the Flames catching from House to House,

[…] all perform'd by Illuminations and Transparent Paintings' and, of course,

'the Horse, out of whose Sides, in the sight of the Audience, two Ladders slip out

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[10] Rosenfeld, p.19.

[11] Theophilus Cibber, *Lives of the Poets* Vol. 3 (1753), qtd. in Rosenfeld, p.20.

[12] Settle, 'To the Reader', in *The Siege of Troy*, p.3.

and immediately near forty Soldiers with their Officers, issue out of the Body of the Horse'.[13]

In both of Settle's overlapping productions, the only 'dark Womb of Fate' present onstage was that of this 'prodigious Engine';[14] but then it was not only Hecuba who was excluded but also Agamemnon, Achilles, Pyrrhus, Priam, Hector, Troilus, Polyxena and Andromache. The star of this show was no one character but the cutting-edge special effects (such as transparencies), and the spectacular Horse – delivered by a Sinon whom theatrical trickery presents with his nose and lips cut off and 'his Eyes out / To make himself the Object of [the Trojans'] pity'.[15] *The Siege*'s reputation as 'the best droll ever saw', 'much frequented by Persons of all Distinctions of both Sexes',[16] which ran for nearly forty-years, earned it pride of place in William Hogarth's 1733 depiction of Southwark Fair despite that fact that it was not even performed that year (fig.13).

Puppeteers fed off the popularity of Mynns' incredible spectacle, Settle's original opera, and the concurrent fashion amongst the middle and upper-classes for Italian operas on classical themes. Thus, in 1712, in 'the Little Piazza at Covent Garden', Martin Powell's piping marionettes performed *The False Triumph* in which, after Paris' pageant onto a stage adorned 'with trophies [and] side scenes representing elephants and castles, in which are Syrians holding forth splendid banners', Mr Punch, in the Italian guise of 'Signior Punchanella', descended 'from the clouds in a chariot drawn by eagles and sang an aria to

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[13] Settle, *The Siege of Troy* (as in n.3 p.334 above), p.7, p.15, p.19, p.17.

[14] *Ibid*, p.5.

[15] *Ibid*, p.5. Synon's self-mutilation, to make himself a more believable 'object of […] pity', ironically resonates with Shakespeare's *Lucrece* in which Lucrece scratches out the painted Synon's eyes because his 'fair' face is deceptively piteous (1564).

[16] *History of the Theatres of London and Dublin* (1761) Vol 2. qtd. in Rosenfeld, p.80.

Paris'.[17] Powell's son inherited the puppet burlesque and although the Little

Piazza closed, Powell Jr. continued to perform *The False Triumph* during the

1720s at Southwark Fair alongside *The Siege of Troy*, which had been inherited

by Mrs Mynns' daughter, Mrs Lee. In 1734 another puppeteer, known as Terwin,

offered his own *Siege of Troy* at the Mermaid Court in Southwark, prompting

Lee's troupe to advertise their show as 'the only celebrated droll of that

kind…first brought to perfection by the late famous Mrs Mynns and can now

only be performed by her daughter Mrs Lee'.[18] The last recorded sighting of Mrs

Mynns' incredible 'Dramaticke Performance' is at Lee's and Yeates' 'Great

Tiled Booth' in Bartholomew Fair in 1747.[19]

'Southwark Fair' by William Hogarth can be seen in the online Roebuck Collection of the Craven Museum and Gallery:

http://www.cravenmuseum.org/uploads/images/gallery/art/hogarth-southwark-fair.jpg.jpg

Figure 13: 'Southwark Fair' by William Hogarth, showing Mrs Mynns's *Siege of Troy* advertised at its centre (painted in 1733, engraved in 1735)

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[17] Speaight (as in n.7 p.336), pp.94-95. In 1711 *The Spectator* wryly observed that 'the opera at the Haymarket, and that under the little Piazza in Covent Garden, are at present the two leading diversions of the town [and the point] in which both dramas agree […] is that by the squeak of their voices the heroes of each are eunuchs', qtd. in Speaight, p.95.

[18] Rosenfeld (as in n.9 p.336), p.95.

[19] *Ibid*, p.101.

Whilst these populist entertainments continued to dominate the performance of the Trojan myths, and consistently continued to exclude the Trojan queen, Euripides' *Hecuba* had its English-language debut at the Drury Lane theatre on 2 February 1726. For three nights Mary Porter, then 'the foremost tragedienne in London',[20] graced the stage as the first English Hecuba to be played by a female actress, in the first production of *Hecuba* to be performed one on of England's public (as opposed to academic or amateur) stages. This was the production of *Hecuba* we saw in chapter six, translated and mounted by Richard West, then Lord Chancellor of Ireland, who attributed its failure to '[a] Rout of Vandals in the Galleries, [who] intimidated the young Actresses, disturb'd the Audience, and prevented all Attention'.[21] The *Universal Mercury*, however, implies that the tragedy was disliked by the *entire* audience, reporting that it 'was extremely hiss'd the three Nights they play'd it' (4 Feb. 1726).[22]

Such failure prompted West to cast himself, in the defensive 'Preface' to his published play-script, as a 'Martyr to Truth'; an educated yet naive innocent who had, 'like a hot-headed Reformer, […] vainly imagin'd some Regulation of our Stage might not unsuccessfully be attempted, under the Authority of so great a Master as Euripides; and upon so faultless a Model as his *Hecuba*' (pp.iii-iv).

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[20] See 'Porter, Mary *d*.1765, *actress*' in Philip H. Highfill Jnr., Kalman A Burnim and Edward A. Langhans eds., *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors, Actresses, Musicians, Dancers, Managers and Other Stage Personnel in London, 1660-1800*, Vol. 12 *Pinner to Rizzo* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois UP, 1987), pp.91-96. Although Mary Porter's depiction of Hecuba attracted only criticism, she went on to delight audiences with her portrayals of classical female "heroes" in the She-tragedies, particularly Medea in Charles Johnson's 1730 *Tragedy of Medæa* and Clytemnestra in James Thomson's 1738 *Agamemnon*, for which she received 'the highest approbation by loud and reiterated applause', Thomas Davies qtd. in Hall and Macintosh (see n.43 p.36), p.80.

[21] 'Preface' to Wests's *Hecuba* (as referenced in n.50 p.285), p.iv; subsequent quotations from West's 'Preface' are referenced parenthetically.

[22] Qtd. in Emmet L. Avery ed., *The London Stage: 1660-1800, Part Two: 1700-1729*, Vol. 1, 1st ed. (Carbondale, Southern Illinois UP, 1960), p.853.

Like Sidney some hundred and forty years earlier, then, West viewed Euripides'

Hecuba as an exemplary dramatic tragedy, the staging of which had the potential

to reform the stage and shame England's 'irregular and unnatural' indigenous

drama (p.iii). Indeed, West's professed opinions about *Hecuba* meticulously

recite arguments first articulated by the Renaissance humanists whose

educational reforms he had inherited as orthodoxy. Thus, Melanchthon justified

his staging of one of the first post-classical *Hecuba*s (*c*.1525) as the morally

edifying presentation of a 'sombre Parable, offering the gravest of lessons', a

performance that thereby acts against the predominant contemporary dramas

which 'so often poison weak minds': 'chattering comedy' that is, 'or [the

depiction of] young love affairs, the / Guiles of girls or the obscenities of men-

about-town'.[23] Two hundred years later, West similarly defends the first English

Hecuba as a morally instructive depiction of 'noble and just' sentiments, a

bastion of 'Purity' (p.iii), in defiant opposition to 'the prevailing Taste' for the

'pernicious Effects' of dramatic plots concerning 'wanton Love' (p.v).[24]

West insists that the 'mixture of that fickle extravagant Love' with

'Antiquity' is a pollutant (one detectable, he claims, in the influential French

adaptations of Greek tragedy by Racine and Corneille); the resulting adaptations

'only weaken[…]' and 'distract[…]' the drama, typically by the inclusion of

'some whining Hero, who must utter his Sighs in a Quibble, and express his

Despair in the Point of an Epigram' (pp.v-vi). For West, the purity of ancient

tragedy lies in its insistence on disavowing 'pompous or affected Strains' for 'the

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[23] 'Prologus in Hecubam Euripidis' (as in n.16 p.229), again I am grateful to Nicholas Bowling for providing me with his own translation of Melanchthon's prologue.

[24] In echoing Melanchthon's *Hecuba* 'Prologus', West can be seen to join a succession of humanist-schooled translators who collectively turned this genus of argument in defence of Hecuba's classical tragedies into a literary convention: *cf.* Thomas Newton's 'Dedicatory Epistle' to *Seneca: His Tenne Tragedies, Translated into Englysh*, ed. by Thomas Newton (London: Thomas Marsh, 1581), A3ʳ-A4ʳ (A3ᵛ).

Real grief and Feeling of the Soul' (p.vi). Thus, to combat the affected English tragedy he turns to the example offered by Hecuba and 'broken Words, that express nothing but Sorrow': 'Oh! oh! ah! ah! alas! Alas!' (p.vi).[25]

West's vehement and wide-ranging defence of his play not only stems from the production's failure but also operates as a retort to a published attack on his work by an anonymous critic who claimed to have attended the play in rehearsal.[26] The critic asserts that West's work is 'not only a close Translation, but a very bare one' and that 'there is not one Drama of Antiquity, that in meer [*sic*] Translation, would not suffer Persecution on the present Stage'.[27] As Hall and Macintosh summarise, the critic taunts West with 'half-serious suggestions for the rewriting of the play to make it accord with contemporary taste'.[28] These "improvements" primarily include performing the sacrifice of Polyxena onstage so that the audience, as well as Pyrrhus, 'see her pull down her robe. Pyrrhus' soul should then "have been wholly captivated with the Virgin's Charms [and], violently agitated by the Passions combating against each other", [Pyrrhus] would have delayed the Sacrifice',[29] thereby allowing the audience a good long look at the disrobed young Virgin. Little wonder then that West's published work

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[25] West lists the Greek exclamations he would translate as 'Oh! oh! ah! ah! alas! Alas!'; they are the same *ecphoneses* which the modern-day translator Shirley Barlow now considers both untranslatable and, paradoxically, therefore best capable of expressing the incomprehension and inarticulacy of grief (see p.136 above).

[26] In fact, as the title of his pamphlet makes clear, the critic's attack is not only directed at West's play but also a pamphlet entitled *Reflections Upon Reading the Tragedy of Hecuba, Now in Rehearsal at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane* (London: W. Wilkins, 1726) in which an anonymous writer – quite possibly the 'one Gentleman' West thanks in his 'Preface' for 'the Trouble he took in this Affair', p.vii – extols the virtues of West's translation. See: Anon. *Reflections upon Reflections: Being Some Cursory Remarks on the Tragedy of Hecuba in Answer to the Pamphlet on that Play* (London, 1726).

[27] Anon. *Reflections upon Reflections* (1726), qtd. in Hall and Macintosh (as in n.43 p.36), p.98.

[28] (See n.43 p.36), p.98. Hecuba's extensive lamentations prompt the critic, as Hall and Macintosh again observe, 'to suggest that the play be renamed *The Distres't Grandmother*, in imitation of [Ambrose] Philips's hugely successful *The Distres't Mother*', an English she-tragedy based on Racine's *Andromaque*, p.98.

[29] Hall and Macintosh citing Anon. *Reflections upon Reflections*, p.98.

bitterly proclaims that had Euripides' 'trod the Track to certain Fame, / Even

Hecuba should have confess'd a Flame'.[30]

Despite an enduring fashion for "She-tragedies" based on adaptations of

the Graeco-Roman classics (in fact typically based on French adaptations of the

type West condemns), no attempt was made to re-stage *Hecuba*, or indeed any

Hecuba, in England until December 1761. In contrast to West, the author of this

second attempt seems to have followed the mock "advice" espoused by West's

uncharitable critic. Pronouncing this second eighteenth-century *Hecuba*, again

mounted at Drury Lane, a 'modern ancient piece',[31]   John Delap makes many

alterations to bring Euripides' tragedy into line with contemporary tastes. A

swooning virginal Polyxena is rescued from the sacrificial altar by her presumed

dead brother Polydore, who is disguised as one "Eriphilus". Hecuba, recognising

the 'same wreath that bound [Polydore's] infant brow',[32] rejoices at the news

that both her son and daughter are alive. Polyxena, however, is re-captured and

sacrificed. Having discovered Polydore's true identity the Greeks attempt to

arrest him but, rather than be sacrificed like his sister, Hecuba's noble son falls

on his sword. Hecuba awakes from a swoon (her third) to discover the bodies of

her youngest children and runs offstage ranting, a 'monument of ruin'd

royalty'.[33] As Edith Hall surmises, 'the plot is engineered so that the delicate

queen, whose "weak brain" is afflicted, does nothing immoral at all. Instead of

wreaking revenge on Polymestor, she concludes the play, raving between her

children's corpses'.[34] Although far more in keeping with the eighteenth-century's

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[30] West, 'Epilogue', p.x.
[31] 'Prologue', in *Hecuba, a tragedy as it is acted in the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane*, trans. by John Delap (London: for R. and J. Dodsley, 1762), pp.9-10 (p.9).
[32] *Hecuba, a tragedy* (as in n.31 above), p.41.
[33] *Ibid*, p.69.
[34] '*Medea* on the Eighteenth-Century London Stage', p.64.

fashionable 'propaganda of benevolence and tender feeling', with much more attention paid to the noble activity of Polydore and noble passivity of Polyxena, Delap's production fared only slightly better than West's – running for six nights instead of three.[35] Whilst West blamed the audience and their base tastes, Delap blamed his actress, Hannah Pritchard. According to Delap, Pritchard 'was so deep into the part that "she fell in fits behind the scene," and [...] "spoilt his Hecuba with sobbing so much"'.[36] With the failure of Delap's sobbing, swooning Hecuba, any attempts to stage a production of Euripides' *Hecuba* on the public English stage died until the National Theatre of Greece took their obscure, Greek-language, *Ekavi* on tour from 1955.

Back in the sphere of the popular and populist entertainments, however, Mrs Mynns' Hecuba-less fairground *Siege* resurfaced, around 1795, in a new form as: *The Siege of Troy; or, The Famous Trojan Horse: A Grand Heroic, Serio-Comic, Tragic Spectacle*, to be performed at Philip Astley Jr.'s 'New Amphitheatre of Arts' at Westminster Bridge. The printed text of Astley's *Siege* (which was also advertised as *The Giant Horse of Sinon*), is a description of the 'Pantomimic-Action' that is punctuated throughout by 'Songs, Duetts, [and] Chorusses'.[37] This plot description makes it quite clear that, as in Mynns' day, the 'Famous Trojan Horse' was the star of the show and that its 'wonderful appearance astonished the spectators'.[38] Alongside displays of 'Horsemanship', 'Various Equestrian Exercises',[39] 'Chariot Racing', a 'Stud of Wild Zebras', and

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[35] R.F. Brissenden, qtd. in Edith Hall, '*Medea* on the Eighteenth-Century London Stage', p.65.
[36] Qtd. in Judith W. Fisher, 'Creating Another Identity: Aging Actresses in the Eighteenth Century', *Journal of Aging and Identity*, 4:2 (1999), pp.57-77 (p.59).
[37] Philip Astley Jr., *The Siege of Troy; or, the Famous Trojan Horse* (London: H. Pace, 1795), title-page.
[38] *Ibid*, p.11.
[39] *Ibid*, p.4.

an intriguingly named 'Trojan Circus', Astley's *Famous Trojan Horse* continued to play well into the nineteenth-century (fig.14).

Thus, Hecuba has consistently been considered an irrelevance to popular dramatisations of Troy's fall: from Heywood's spectacular 'heroical' history with its massive cast of extras, to Mrs Mynns' special effects-laden extravaganza, to the real-life horsemanship of Astley's circus, to (a hundred and seventy years later) the computer-generated effects of Petersen's *Troy* (2004), via the 30,000 strong cast and revolutionary 'Warnercolor Cinemascope' of Robert Wise's *Helen of Troy* (1956).

Poster advertising *The Siege of Troy* can be viewed at the Victoria and Albert Museum's online archive:

http://www.vam.ac.uk/images/image/29295-popup.html

Figure 14: Advertisement for *The Siege of Troy* at Astley's Circus, April 1833 (London: T. Romney, 1833)

2. 'The Comeback Queen of Tragedy' [40]

By the mid-1800s the imported '*damnatio* of Euripides' had taken hold in the English academies and *Hecuba* had been disowned by the Victorian classicists, *Trojan Women* continued to be ignored, and Seneca had long since fallen from favour. Hecuba was therefore shunned in academia, the comparatively elite London theatres and the lower middle-class fairgrounds and circuses. However, between 1848 and 1885, an entirely new type of Hecuba emerged.

In 1866 Daniel Kirkwood, an American mathematician and astronomer, identified patches of uneven distribution in the main asteroid belt near Jupiter and christened the most prominent and unstable of these 'gaps' Hestia, after the goddess of hearth and home, and Hecuba, after our unfortunate Trojan Queen. It is easy to speculate what Hestia and Hecuba were to Kirkwood: a grandiose pair of rhyming names, familiar to a man educated in the classics, which continued the tradition of naming astrological phenomena after figures from Graeco-Roman mythology. In 1869 the German astronomer Robert Luther followed suit, naming the large asteroid he discovered '108 Hecuba'. Beyond astrology, naming "objects" after Hecuba appears to have been something of a trend amongst educated gentlemen in the latter-half of the 1800s.

Kirkwood's and Luther's Hecubas can be placed amongst a bizarre menagerie of nineteenth-century Hecubas, which in Victorian England included a racehorse (Lord Exeter's, which ran at 3-to-1 against at Ascot in 1848); a trading ship (that sailed between Liverpool, Calcutta and New York but ran aground off the Cape of Good Hope on 14 September 1874 (as *The Times* reported: 'The weather was foggy […] captain and crew were taken off [but] *Hecuba* afterwards

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[40] My subtitle is a citation of Stothard's remark in his review of the Donmar's *Hecuba* (2004), that 'Hecuba is assuredly the comeback queen of tragedy', 'Queen of Knives' (as referenced in n.5 p.42).

foundered')); a steam ship (which also serviced the British Empire by sailing the lucrative route between London and Singapore from 1882 onwards); a greyhound (owned by Dr Hosford that raced from 1884); and a cow (Mr Richard Stratton's 'very handsome white shorthorn', which won first prize at the Smithfield Cattle Show in 1885).[41]

Whilst demonstrating the cultural currency and potency of Greek mythology at this time, the Victorian ship, horse, dog and cow Hecubas are clearly not intended to activate or intervene in the myths of Troy. Instead they attest to the level of domestication that Greek mythology had achieved after centuries embedded in the nation's pedagogy. These seemingly trivial Hecubas are not ancient, Greek, or backward-looking but modern, English, and forward-looking. They embody not only a domestic ideal of Englishness (cattle shows and county fairs, greyhound racing and the Lords and Ladies of Ascot) but also the commercial machinations at the heart of colonial expansion (vessels servicing outposts in India and the 'Far East'). Pet names express ownership over the object named but also the name itself, and these Hecubas testify to the assumed cultural birthright England felt it had inherited from Ancient Greece and was now culturally "exporting" to the benefit of the "unenlightened" outposts of the British Empire. English ships bearing the name of the Trojan queen are rhetorical propaganda realised: commercial exploitation taking place literally *in* the name of assumed cultural superiority. In such a context, the specific myth of Hecuba is

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[41] For information on Liverpool trading ship see 'Board of Trade Enquiries in Liverpool', *The Times*, 11 Nov. 1870, 6F; for the Ocean Steam Ship Company see: 'The Mails', *The Times*, 17 March 1882, 10F; coverage of Lord Exeter's Racehorse can be found in 'Ascot Heath Races', *The Times*, 9 June 1848, 8C; Dr Hosford's greyhound Hecuba is listed in 'Sporting Intelligence', *The Times*, 16 Dec. 1884, 4D; for the results of the Smithfield Cattle Fair, including a description of prize-winning Hecuba, see 'Smithfield Club Cattle Show', *The Times*, 9 Dec. 1885, 10A.

redundant. These are merely memories of a name invoked without informing, cultural panegyric stretched over various arbitrary physical bodies.

The wave of popular philhellenism that swept England in the mid to late-1800s (and fuelled the Empire's sense of cultural authority) saw theatrical revivals of Greek tragedy adopting an aesthetic of 'solemn archaeologism': performed in the original language (primarily at Oxford and Cambridge but also transferring to London), with accurate historical costumes and sets drawn from recent archaeological findings.[42] Whilst none of our Hecuba tragedies benefited from this revived popular interest, a musical adaptation of scenes from the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* certainly tapped into the fashionable philhellenism. *The Tale of Troy* played alternate nights in Greek and English at King's College London and thus brought another English Hecuba to the stage in 1883. Designed to raise funds for women's higher education, *The Tale of Troy* relegated Hecuba to a marginal role (performed by the unknown Miss E. Guest) in what *The Times* called 'the first successful attempt to bring the living characters of Homer upon the stage'.[43] The script has been lost but the production is reported to have been a great success, enjoyed by Prime Minister William Gladstone and an audience who provided 'unstinted applause' 'from beginning to end'.[44]

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[42] Edith Hall, 'Greek tragedy and the British Stage, 1566-1997'.

[43] 'The Tale of Troy', *The Times*, 31 Oct. 1883, 5G. Although the event was mounted to raise funds for women's higher education, *The Times*' coverage ironically betrays an underlying anxiety concerning women's access to the classics. The writer feels it necessary to reassure 'any apprehension' felt by the reader that 'while' the production or 'scheme' was intended to help fund 'the creation of a new department in King's College for the higher education of women', no 'sacrilegious hand' has been laid 'upon the "Father of Poetry"' as the 'work of adaptation' was done in a 'scholarly and artistic manner' in accordance with a 'severely classical correctness' by: *Sir* Frederick Leighton, *Professors* G.C. Warr, W.H. Monk and P.H. Delamotte, and *Messrs.* E.J. Poynter, G.F. Watts, G. Simonds, O. Goldschmidt, M. Lawson, W. Parratt, H. Vezin and G. Alexander, whilst the only women involved are described as looking impressive in 'classical' costumes in a 'considerable variety [of] colour – gold, green, olive and white prevailing'. See: 'The Tale of Troy', *The Times*, 30 Oct. 1883, 10E and 'The Tale of Tale', *The Times*, 31 Oct. 1883, 5G (emphasis added).

[44] 'The Tale of Troy', *The Times*, 31 Oct. 1883, 5G.

A parallel middle to lower-class 'tradition of Greek tragic burlesque' soon developed in response to the upper-class fashion for 'solemn archaeologism'.[45] As Edith Hall states, '[b]etween 1845 and 1870 numerous burlesques of Greek tragedies delighted audiences who never saw a serious dramatisation based on these antique texts: […]. Burlesque […] was a vehicle by which the ordinary British public was familiarised with Greek tragedy'. Although performed in 1893, much later than the height of the burlesque craze, H. Cranstoun Metcalfe's *Hecuba à la Mode; or, the Wily Greek and the Modest Maid* (*an Entirely New and Original Classical Burlesque*) subjects Euripides' *Hecuba* to the English burlesque tradition. This song and dance Hecuba (performed by Miss Kesteven) laments that she has been denied the opportunity to play 'that delightful part where I orate / So touchingly on my poor daughter's fate'.[46] Metcalfe reverses the ploy adopted in Seneca's *Troas* so that the sacrifice of Polyxena becomes merely a ruse to lure Hecuba's daughter to the altar so that she can be married to Ulysses (the Wily Greek). The ghost of Polydorus dances and sings his way through the play alongside the ghost of Euripides who complains that:

> It really is too bad the way my plays
> Are murdered by these actors nowadays.
> Time was when thousands wept themselves quite white
> At this same play they're ruining to-night.[47]

The grounds upon which Hecuba's revenge is excluded from the play defer to Schlegel's now oft recited criticisms of *Hecuba*, asserting that 'the second plot […] interferes with our initial interest in Hecuba and Polyxena, and […] the

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[45] Edith Hall, 'Greek tragedy and the British Stage, 1566-1997'.
[46] (London: Crystal Palace Press, 1893), p.27. Reproduction thanks to Amanda Wrigley at the *APGRD*.
[47] *Ibid*, p.14.

punishment meted out to [Polymestor] is archaic'. Metcalfe, however,

immediately burlesques such reasoning by ironically adding that Hecuba's

revenge is also 'inconsistent with our nineteenth-century attitudes towards cases

of baby-farming with abrupt terminations'.[48] Between 1870 and 1909 six women

were hanged in England for the multiple murders of infants placed in their

protection by unmarried mothers. The baby farm murders were notorious by the

1890s; the trials and executions were sensationally covered in the country's

newspapers, and as early as 1870 parliamentary debates were being held which

eventually resulted in the 'Infant Life Protection Act of 1897'.[49] Metcalfe thus

satirically undercuts the Victorian sentiment behind the recitation of Schlegel's

criticisms. His preface challenges the men of letters' disavowal of Polymestor's

and Hecuba's *ancient* barbarity via the juxtaposition of real acts of modern-day

barbarity that had recently exposed the moral hypocrisies and crushing poverty

structuring Victorian society.

Opera might be expected to have been more hospitable to Troy's tragic

matriarch; however, according to the *Register of first Performances of English

Operas and Semi-Operas from the 16th Century to 1980* there are over thirty

English operatic dramas inspired by Greek mythology, but only one contains a

Hecuba – Michael Tippett's *King Priam* in 1962.[50] Consequently, the four

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[48] *Ibid*, p.3.

[49] Richard Clark, 'Baby Farming – a tragedy of Victorian times', *Capital Punishment UK*, 1995, <http://www.capitalpunishmentuk.org/babyfarm.html> [02 June 2011].

[50] Eric Walter White (London: Society for Theatre Research, 1983). Of international operas with Hecubas I have only found English performances of Hector Berlioz's *Les Troyens* (1856-63). Although never performed in England, Francesco Cavalli's *Didone* of 1641 (libretto by Giovanni Francesco Busenello) provides the first operatic Hecuba by adopting the chronology of Aeneas' tale to Dido so that the opera begins with the fall of Troy. As Wendy Heller argues, Hecuba and Cassandra act as 'virtuous' foils to the later sorrows of Dido: 'Through the sorrows of Hecuba and Cassandra, we are provided with a vision of profound tragedy by means of women who are genuine representatives of female virtue', '"O Castità Bugiarda": Cavalli's Didone and the Question of Chastity', in *Woman Scorn'd: Responses to the Dido Myth*, ed. by Michael Burden (London: Faber & Faber, 1998), pp.169-225 (p.183).

Trojan queens, detailed above, were the only English Hecubas to be seen onstage in nearly three-hundred years: West's faithful translation and Delap's heavily adapted swooning Hecuba, both of which were booed off the eighteenth-century stage, a bit-part Homeric Hecuba in an educational setting and an irreverent burlesque Queen.

English culture had consigned Hecuba to almost total obscurity. That is, however, until the events of history overtook public "taste and decency" and the nation once again needed to find a way to articulate its grief. By 1915 Euripides' *Trojan Women* had been dubbed 'The World's Greatest Peace Play' and the figure of Hecuba had secured a 'permanent and hallowed place[…] in the British performance repertoire'.[51] The play that A.W. Schlegel had criticised for refusing to acknowledge the Trojan queen's nobility by 'represent[ing] Hecuba […] in sackcloth and ashes' and dismissed as an 'accumulation of helpless suffering [which] wearies us, and exhausts our compassion' became one of the most frequently performed plays in London from 1915 to 1940.[52] This resurgence began in 1905 at the Royal Court theatre with Harley Granville-Barker's production of Gilbert Murray's new translation. Murray intended the production to resonate with, if not explicitly comment upon, the atrocities being perpetrated in the Boer War.[53] Max Beerbohm, however, experienced the production as 'an afternoon of wailings that wake no echo in us'.[54] And yet, as Avery Willis asserts, 'the lasting impact of the production […], which was not financially successful, was […] that it was a timely political allusion […] that

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[51] Maurice Browne qtd. in Hartigan (see n.8 p.12), p.18; Hall and Macintosh, p.vii.
[52] Schlegel qtd. in Willis (as in n.8 p.12), p.21 and p.22.
[53] For a detailed discussion of this production see Willis, pp.31-33.
[54] Max Beerbohm, qtd. in Billington, 'Terror of Modern Times' (as in n.30 p.56).

ushered in a revival of interest in Euripides'.[55] Murray wrote, in opposition to the entrenched Schlegelian views, that *Trojan Women* may well be 'far from a perfect play'; may be 'scarcely even a good play' since 'scene after scene passes beyond the due limits of tragic art'. But, he continued, 'the *Troades* is something more than art. It is also prophecy, a bearing of witness'.[56] It was Hecuba's role as a prophet and a witness that would soon come to define the role of *Trojan Women* in England's theatres, and secure its position in the repertoire, as the country went to war with Germany.

 Trojan Women was performed again, in Manchester, in 1911 and at Oxford in 1912. In 1919 the League of Nations Union (established to 'encourage and educate public opinion' in favour of the newly created League of Nations),[57] sponsored an extended run of matinee performances at the Old Vic with Sybil Thorndike in the role of Hecuba. In 1924 the Women's International League sponsored another production in which Thorndike reprised her Hecuba, giving a performance that 'would launch her as one of the premiere actresses of her time'.[58] The magnitude of the Great War, the level of civilian suffering and the mechanisation of warfare that produced death on an industrial scale, had altered the nation's relationship with Hecuba. As the promotional material for the 1924 production declared: 'We, the children of 1914, cannot look on the agony of Hecuba […] with the same eyes and hearts as the women who lived in what seemed a settled world before the War'.[59] For Thorndike, playing Hecuba in *Trojan Women* was to enact a cultural catharsis. Recalling her 1919 performance

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[55](As referenced in n.8 p.12), pp.33-34.
[56] Gilbert Murray (1905), qtd. in Willis, p.31.
[57] Gilbert Murray in his role as Vice-Chairman of the League of Nation's Union (LNU), qtd. in Willis, p.65.
[58] Willis, p.69.
[59] Qtd. in Willis, p.67.

as Hecuba she wrote that: 'All the misery and awfulness of the 1914 war was symbolised in that play and we all felt here was the beginning of a new era of peace and brotherhood'.[60] However, as Murray suspected, *Trojan Women* does not just cathartically 'bear witness' to past events but also acts as a 'prophecy'; in 1937 the tragedy was again revived (by Murrary, Casson and Thorndike) in aid of the League of Nations whose 'power and influence were ebbing frighteningly away' as the arms race propelled Europe into the second World War.[61]

The satirical cartoonist David Low (creator of Colonel Blimp) attests to the high-profile prevalence of *Trojan Women* at this time, and its political associations, in a disillusioned sketch printed on 7 December 1937 entitled 'League of Nations Performance of *The Trojan Women*' (fig.15).

Low's 'League of Nations Performance of *The Trojan Women*' can be viewed via the University of Kent's online British Cartoon Archive.

Archival reference number: LSE4301

Thumbnail at: http://www.cartoons.ac.uk/record/LSE4301

Figure 15: 'League of Nations Performance of *The Trojan Women*' by David Alexander Cecil Low (7 December 1937)

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[60] Qtd. in Harrison, 'Weeping for Hecuba' (as in n.51 p.64), p.ix.
[61] Diana Devlin, qtd. in Willis, p.73.

The 'Will to Peace', overwhelmed by Nationalism and 'Competitive Armament', stalls along the 'League Road to Law and Order' and the continued performance of Hecuba's tragedy is tantamount to the whipping of a dead horse.[62] Scepticism over the socio-cultural power of these performances may have started to question their self-professed worth, but Low's sketch clearly demonstrates the extent to which Hecuba was now viewed as a modern-day analogy rather than an ancient archaeological artefact.

Since Murray's groundbreaking productions, *The Trojan Women* has continued to be performed in response to global conflicts. It has articulated the pain and horror attendant upon World War Two, Vietnam, wars in Israel and Palestine, Bosnia, the first Gulf War, and, in the twenty-first century, Iraq and Afghanistan. Yet although the unproblematically pitiful Hecuba of *Trojan Women*, who had so eloquently served the anti-war discourse of the early twentieth-century, continues to express the sorrow and grief attendant on the ongoing 'War on Terror', it is to the Hecuba of *Hecuba* that my culture has turned to express its rage and outrage. The cultural catharsis Thorndike hoped to achieve with *Trojan Women* has proven both elusive and deceptive. Pity is now critiqued as an inadequate, inevitably belated, response to the indiscriminate brutality enacted under the names of war and terrorism. Catharsis now seems a self-willed delusion. As we saw in chapter one, it is the ambivalent, amoral, vengeful Hecuba of *Hecuba* – who exposes pity as an impotent luxury and whose play refuses the comfort of catharsis – who is now called upon 'to bear witness' to our current cycle of violence, in which victims turn aggressors and the

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[62] For information on Low and to view more examples of his work, see the British Cartoon Archive, University of Kent <http://opal.kent.ac.uk/cartoonx-cgi/artist.py?id=106> [15 Dec. 2006].

brutalised bodies of women and children become weapons in a war that would write them off as 'collateral damage'.

Epilogue: The Hecuba Gap

For many characters of Greek myth their ultimate fate is to be "set amongst the stars" by the gods. In the classical Hecuba narratives there is no such consolatory transformation for the Trojan queen – even in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* she must continue to claw at the earth and howl out her pain as a wild dog. This thesis has seen Hecuba's cultural "afterlife" in England as a continuing series of metamorphoses: a schoolboy's homework; a substitute Mater Dolorosa; a ghost haunting a dream; an uncanny reflection glimpsed in a mirror; a tedious digression; a 'bedlem bitche' running witless and wild;[1] a calculating infanticide; an abhorrent affront to the civilised and civilising Greek cannon; a prophet; a witness; a victim; a terrorist; a racehorse; a cow; a gap in an asteroid belt.

In 2002 three astrophysicists published their investigations into that deep space gap which Daniel Kirkwood had named Hecuba in 1866:

> Centred at about 3.3au, the Hecuba gap is characterized by a very small number of asteroids […]. Long-term instabilities caused by resonant planetary perturbations are thought to be responsible for the lack of bodies in the gap. However, current observations suggest a significant population of asteroids in the 2:1 resonance. The origin of these bodies is puzzling. Do we observe the few lucky survivors of a much larger population formed in the resonance in primordial times? Do the resonant orbits of the observed asteroids have a more recent origin? To understand these issues, we performed numerical simulations of the orbital evolution of both real and fictitious asteroids in the 2:1 resonance.
>
> F. Roig, D. Nesvorný and S. Ferraz-Mello,
> 'Asteroids in the 2:1 Resonance with Jupiter', 2002 [2]

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[1] The description of Hecuba in Seneca's *Agamemnon*: *The eyght tragedie of Seneca. Entituled Agamemnon*, trans. by John Studley (London: Thomas Colwell at the signe of S. John Euangelyst, 1566), Fr.

[2] 'Asteroids in the 2:1 Resonance with Jupiter: dynamics and size distribution', *Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society*, 335 (2002), 417–31 (p.417).

To conclude this dissertation I want to use Roig's, Nesvorný's and Ferraz-Mello's thinking about their 'Hecuba gap' as a trope for my own investigation into Hecuba. For everywhere I have looked for Hecuba, I have found gaps: gaps where Hecuba narratives have been lost; gaps where she has been excised from retellings of Troy; gaps between ancient authors and their subsequent translators in time, religion, nationality, language and socio-cultural identity; gaps that must be traversed between various strands of the Hecuba myth that produce multiple overlapping Trojan queens. The absence of an 'authentic', 'original' Queen leaves a gap at the heart of her history, an absence of origins. Personifying grief, embodying loss, Hecuba-herself operates as a gap in comprehension – an 'abyss of pain' (l.1795) that 'makes a tear in the symbolic network'.[3] Within this story of gaps, we have seen that bodies to play Hecuba on the English stage have, historically, been lacking. This significant 'lack of bodies' brings me back to Roig, Nesvorný and Ferraz-Mello looking into the celestial Hecuba gap. Where they, too, observe not only a 'lack of bodies' but also the unexpected presence of particular 'significant' bodies, prompting them to consider the 'resonant' forces pushing and pulling these bodies, determining their formations. The evolutionary trail of these bodies is unknown, their 'origin is puzzling': are they ancient 'lucky survivors' or 'more recent' innovations – or a combination of both? At this point the astrophysicists' description of their method resonates, for me, with Hamlet's Hecuba; for, to test the origins of the unexpected bodies they have sighted, the astrophysicists propose to mount the mathematical equivalent of a *Mousetrap*: 'real and fictitious' bodies are to be set in motion and 'observed' in 'performed [...] simulations'. And Hamlet's *Mousetrap* leads me back to the surge of

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[3] Euripides, *Women of Troy*, trans. by Vellacott and Phelan, *Mourning Sex* (as in n.71 p.136), p.5.

twenty-first century productions of Euripides' *Hecuba*; 'fictitious bodies' called 'Hecuba' – 'a fiction', 'a dream of passion', a 'nothing' (*Hamlet* 2.2.487) – were repeatedly invoked to 'perform' 'simulations' of the plight of 'real' bodies in a cultural attempt to articulate and comprehend the grief of others – who were also a reflection of ourselves. The cultural space which holds Hecuba is constantly shifting; the boundaries of 'what's Hecuba' continue to change. Yet this history of English Hecubas has shown the Trojan queen to be a permanent interpretative space, a constant cultural gap called Hecuba, in which each present moment projects its own concerns and thus can glimpse a reflection of itself caught off-guard. It seems entirely fitting that when Hecuba was finally set amongst the stars she should appear there as yet another puzzling gap.

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NB: Translations and adaptations of classical texts are referenced chronologically under the original Greek or Roman author. Films, theatrical productions and unsigned newspaper articles are referenced alphabetically under their titles.

Abbreviations:

APGRD: *Archive of Performances of Greek and Roman Drama*, ed. Amanda Wrigley, University of Oxford, <http://www.apgrd.ox.ac.uk/database>
CRRS: *Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies*, University of Toronto
EEBO: *Early English Books Online*, <http://eebo.chadwyck.com>
ODNB: *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*
PMLA: *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*
TLS: *Times Literary Supplement*
UP: University Press

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