

**CATHARSIS, TRAUMA AND WAR IN GREEK TRAGEDY:
AN INQUIRY INTO THE THERAPEUTIC POTENTIAL OF GREEK TRAGEDY WITH
SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE FEMALE EXPERIENCE**

By

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i. Declaration of Authorship

I, Peggy Shannon hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Peggy Shannon". The signature is written in black ink and is centered on the page.

Signed: _____

September 1, 2014

Date: _____

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ii. Abstract

My research applies ancient Greek drama as a lens to examine gender, war, and the potential for catharsis and emotional healing through narrative engagement and situational recognition. Three modernised ancient Greek plays representing a multi-national approach to live performance serve as Case Studies. They include: Velina Hasu Houston's *The Intuition of Iphigenia*, Judith Thompson's *Elektra in Bosnia*, and Timberlake Wertenbaker's *Ajax in Afghanistan*. I investigate whether performances of Greek tragedy remain capable of producing cathartic affect in spectators. My research questions the nature of war-related traumatic experiences for contemporary women and how these experiences have been represented in new productions of ancient Greek plays during a backdrop of war. By interrogating a link between the ancient characters and contemporary women in and around war, I am able to argue that Iphigenia's 'sacrifice', Elektra and Clytemnestra's hunger for retribution, Athena's decision to punish Ajax by 'scrambling his brain', and Tecmessa's secondary trauma as the spouse of a soldier suffering PTSD serve as effective models for the examination of contemporary trauma experienced by women. I argue that the cathartic and therapeutic potential of Greek tragedy remains viable in modernity. Zeitlin's theory of 'emotional surrogacy', Street's theory of 'primary trauma', Dekel's theory of 'secondary trauma', and Shay's theory of 'situational recognition' frame my investigation.

iii. Acknowledgments

In my first meeting with David Wiles, I recall making a very naïve statement. When he explained the process of researching and writing a doctoral thesis, I remarked that it sounded straight forward enough and should be manageable despite my full-time job, parenting of two children, and living in another country. He smiled politely and remarked that he found my research topic interesting and worth pursuing but that conducting the necessary research and writing the thesis “would not be easy.” He was, of course, right. There has been nothing easy about researching and writing this thesis. My major gratitude is to David Wiles for his patient and steady guidance and his timely response to all material submitted to him. He has been an excellent teacher and mentor. I would also like to acknowledge Edith Hall who offered guidance for two years and Gilli Bush-Bailey, my advisor for five years. I am grateful to both of these women.

I would like to thank Corinna Seeds for her on-going support and advice over the years. She has listened to and encouraged my ideas, always willing to read early drafts and provide comment. I would like to thank Larry Vanderhoef for suggesting – and then insisting - that I pursue doctoral studies. I extend my gratitude to Velina Hasu Houston, Judith Thompson, and Timberlake Wertenbaker for their participation in *The Women & War Project* as playwrights and artistic collaborators. Their involvement provoked a number of engaged and lively discussions that fuelled my research in unexpected ways. I have also benefited from conversations with Theresa Larkin, Cynthia Ashperger, Carey Perloff, Candice Monson, Marianne Fedunkiwi and Rahul Sapra. I am indebted to Ryerson University for its support of my doctoral studies. To my family, Isaiah and Aliyah El-Amin, I owe tremendous gratitude for encouraging me to never give up.

Chapter 1: Introduction

So much about ancient Greek drama is contestable that rules seem irrelevant. It's like the depths are calling. There is magic in that expanse of chaos. As a child the tales felt uplifting, adventurous and far off – both in space and time. At this point, I embrace that magic as part of the chaotic state of existence. Maybe other people do too.

--Sara Sherif Farouq Ahmed¹

Does classical Greek drama serve as an effective medium through which to interrogate gender, war, and conflict-related trauma? Equally, does Greek drama lend itself to contemporary efficacy, specifically the cathartic effect of theatre? Are there theoretical reasons for and possible benefits of engagement with ancient Greek tragedy as a “passageway” into understanding the effects of trauma, resultant upon contemporary warfare? These questions will guide the direction of this research, which, in its entirety, will interrogate the critical roles trauma and catharsis play in the onstage representation of trauma carried by female characters in ancient Greek tragedy. Specifically, this thesis will focus on a reading of ancient Greek tragedies in performance that take their cue from trauma studies and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) therapies. I will conduct research at the intersection of theatre practice, psychotherapy, war history, and critical work on trauma and literary theory. By investigating theories of catharsis, trauma, and narrative engagement and applying these theories to three Case Studies, I hope to discover if modernised ancient Greek tragedies in performance can effectively represent trauma-induced experiences resulting from war, and if so examine whether ‘situational recognition’ may assist in de-stigmatising and assisting with the healing of certain trauma. The three productions I have selected as case studies offer interpretations of plays by Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides set

¹ See Appendix C for the text of my full interview with theatre director Sara Sherif Farouq Ahmed of Egypt.

in current and historical wars. All are adaptations by significant female playwrights representing various cultural and literary points of view, and all three share a focus on the female experience of war.

For the past forty years, female theatre artists on at least four continents have used ancient Greek plays to examine the role(s) of women in the context of warfare and diplomacy. They have created theatre productions that have thematically explored, among other things, the ethics of conflict, barbarism, PTSD, apartheid, rape, Atomic bombings, ‘the disappeared’, and the overall collateral damage of war on female combatants, wives, mothers, and children.² Corinna Seeds, executive director of Hydrama Theatre & Arts Centre in Greece has suggested “we are now all willingly – or unwillingly – involved in wars that we largely do not understand...(and) as artists we feel a responsibility to express our feelings about these wars. The ancient Greek plays...offer a structure through which to examine the reasons for and the consequences of warmongering. They are no longer plays just for reading.”³ These productions have occurred in theatres and community centres before the general public. Up until the mid-1990s, representations of war trauma occurred in two discreet spheres: that of public performance and that of private therapy. The former offered spectators the opportunity to view characters carrying war-related themes and “conflicts, inner turmoil and failings of humans”⁴ while the latter provided therapy for patients experiencing the traumatic effects of war. With the publication of Jonathan Shay’s books, *Achilles in Vietnam* in 1995 and *Odysseus in America* in

² There are many examples of female artists theatrically exploring the ancient Greek plays in modernity. I have listed significant practitioners in Appendix A and original interviews with nine practitioners in Appendix C.

³ See Appendix C for the full text of my interview with Corinna Seeds.

⁴ See Appendix C for the full text of my interview with Corinna Seeds.

1997⁵ psychological traumas caused by exposure to combat and the act of homecoming in Greek antiquity began to be compared with similar events in the 20th century.⁶ In Shay's first book the soldiers of Homer's *Iliad* were compared with Vietnam veterans suffering from PTSD. In his second book, Shay compared the return home of troops in both centuries after battle. These two books altered the landscape of mental health treatments for war-related PTSD by connecting social scientists with humanities scholars, researchers, and theatre artists in meaningful new ways. Mental health professionals were introduced to the concept of using ancient Greek poetry and dramaturgy in a range of treatment therapies.⁷ The aftermath of the Vietnam War presented an opportunity for re-evaluation of trauma within the medical lexicon. In her book, *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures*, Ann Cvetkovich suggests that after Vietnam psychologists increasingly turned their attention to rape, sexual abuse, and domestic violence noting that these issues were codified as PTSD.⁸ I argue that Shay's conjoining of Homer's soldiers with Vietnam veterans suffering with PTSD assisted in this trajectory of codification.

By 2010 in North America, for perhaps the first time in United States history, returning troops contained female members suffering with PTSD. Male and female troops began to receive psychological treatments that possibly offered readings of Homer and the ancient Greek tragedies by physicians, nurses, psychiatrists, psychologists, and theatre directors in a range of

⁵ Jonathan Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character* (New York: Scribner, 1994); Jonathan Shay, *Odysseus in America: Combat Trauma and the Trials of Homecoming* (New York: Scribner, 1997).

⁶ See Oliver Taplin's chapter on Homer in *The Oxford History of the Classical World*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 50. He references Homer's dates as between 750-650 BCE.

⁷ See Appendix B for a list of mental health researchers utilising poetry, text, and narrative engagement in a range of treatment options for psychological trauma.

⁸ Ann Cvetkovich, *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003).

settings from VA Hospitals to military bases to community centres.⁹ At Harvard University, Richard J. McNally, Director of Clinical Training within the Psychology Department, articulated that the stigma of active-duty personnel dealing with PTSD makes projects involving the ancient Greek dramas necessary in the on-going treatment and de-stigmatisation of psychological trauma experienced by many active and retired soldiers.¹⁰ McNally has suggested that through such textual engagement, veterans may be able to trace their own experience. Roberta Stewart concurs with McNally. She has developed a workshop titled ‘From Ancient Greece to Baghdad and Beyond: Reading Homer with Combat Veterans’ in which she offers veterans a method of remembering violent and traumatic events and histories through the act of reading aloud Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.¹¹ Remarkably, Stewart has witnessed female and male veterans address their own war-induced trauma publicly for the first time through such textual engagement.¹² The Maine Humanities Council presented the Conference: *After Shock: Humanities Perspectives on Trauma* in November 2010 at which a number of prominent therapists and physicians spoke about their work with trauma patients. In reviewing the conference proceedings, I noted that approximately thirty per cent of the presenters included readings of Homer, the ancient tragedians, and other forms of narrative engagement with ancient war-themed dramaturgy in their therapeutic work with patients. Since that conference, I have

⁹ One such example is Helen Benedict, Ph.D. whose play *The Lonely Soldier Monologues* was performed in New York in 2008 and 2009 at LaMaMa and Theatre for the New City. Benedict’s work is presented in hospitals as well as theatres, reaching a large audience of female veterans, active duty personnel, and the general public.

¹⁰ Patrick Healy, “The Anguish of War for Today’s Soldiers, Explored by Sophocles,” *The New York Times* Theater Section, November 11, 2009.

¹¹ Roberta Stewart, Department Chair and a Professor of Classics at Dartmouth College, suggested in our October 20, 2012 telephone interview that the potency of engagement with narrative activities (reading, listening to, even paraphrasing and writing their own experiences into the story) involving Homer and his war poems provoked veterans in her workshop to utter their first words about their own war experiences, thus beginning to de-stigmatise the perceived shame of PTSD.

¹² Stewart, 2012.

witnessed and personally experienced theatre artists in increasing numbers teaming with psychiatrists and psychotherapists globally to use such dramatic texts in the promotion of emotional and psychological benefits.¹³ One such example is the current partnership between leading neurologist Dr. Michael Cusimano at St. Michael's Hospital in Toronto and myself. We are discussing the development of theatrical narratives based on the personal testimonies of his patients suffering with traumatic brain injury. These narratives are intended for multiple audiences: his residents-in-training; other patients; and theatre audiences. Another example of theatre artists working alongside social scientists is the long-term interdisciplinary research endeavor, The Women & War Project (WWP) that began in Canada in 2011 and which I will write about more fully later in this thesis.

The questions of how and why engagement with the Greek poetry and plays has affected patients and audience members, however, have never been fully investigated. Can theatre artists, social science researchers and humanities scholars consider ancient Greek plays effective tools for understanding the role(s) of women in war, especially if, as some suggest, female characters in the fifth century BCE served merely as proxies for a male experience?¹⁴ Do performances of the tragedies, which often deploy adaptations capable of commenting on contemporary wars such as Bosnia and Afghanistan, help to de-stigmatise psychological trauma? Can a performance of a dramatic text serve as a model for understanding the roles women play, actively or passively, during a time of war? If a performance can provide an understanding of the origin of war-related trauma women experience, can it also be part of a narrative of healing, of catharsis, and of reconciliation in response to trauma? These are questions that deserve exploring. I am

¹³ Other prominent examples of theatre companies and ad hoc projects engaged in such partnerships include The Theater of War and Bond Street Company, both in the USA and Theatre of the Living in Canada.

¹⁴ See Chapter Four for a discussion of 'the other' and the scholarship of Froma Zeitlin and Edith Hall.

interested in how contemporary performances of ancient Greek tragedies and the use of ancient dramaturgy as narrational activity can trace, represent, and possibly cleanse trauma through a cathartic experience of spectatorship. Reproducing trauma through performance is a complicated undertaking. Trauma viewed through the lens of a live performance may help to reveal the effects of war and gender-typing within war. Applying Ann Cvetkovich's theory of an "archive of trauma"¹⁵ performed trauma may also permit an audience to effectively examine archival traces of trauma by portraying parallels in the effects and after-effects of trauma.

The current definition of PTSD in North America is "a severe mental health condition that occurs...following exposure to a traumatic event."¹⁶ The word *trauma* derives from *titrōskein* translating 'to wound', *tetrainein* meaning 'to pierce', and *diatitreno* meaning 'to penetrate'.¹⁷ Over the past one hundred and fifty years, trauma has shifted from an exterior manifestation (a physical wound) to an interior manifestation (residing inside of the body, in the realm of the psychological). As Catherine Silverstone accurately suggests in the introduction to her book, *Shakespeare, Trauma and Contemporary Performance*, the word trauma can denote an event and a response to an event.¹⁸ Trauma, therefore, is both psychological and physical.¹⁹ Silverstone summarises the evolution of the term's journey from exterior event to interior injury by reminding the reader that 'trauma' as a classification originated in the late seventeenth century. Its primary designation in the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) was in pathological

¹⁵ Cvetkovich, 11.

¹⁶ Candice Monson, in her CIHR Operating Grant (2010: 3) argues for this definition. It can also be found in *Oxford University Dictionary* (OED) based on the OED 2b and OED 2a definitions of trauma and PTSD.

¹⁷ Oxford University Press: <http://www.oed.com>, 2014 – also abbreviated as OED.

¹⁸ Catherine Silverstone, *Shakespeare, Trauma and Contemporary Performance* (New York: Routledge, 2011).

¹⁹ Silverstone, 8 – 25.

terms as “[A] wound, or external bodily injury in general; also the condition caused by this.”²⁰

Two centuries later, toward the end of the nineteenth century, a second definition of trauma emerged, this time from psychoanalysis and psychiatry. The OED’s secondary definition of trauma is as “[A] psychic injury...caused by emotional shock the memory of which is repressed and remains unhealed; an internal injury, esp. to the brain, which may result in a behavioural disorder of organic origin. Also, the state or condition so caused.”²¹ For the purposes of this thesis, the psychoanalytic application of trauma as an internal wound or experience will be the primary consideration in the interrogation of war-related trauma. While the ancient tragedians did not possess the current medical knowledge in their treatment of psychological trauma, dramatists such as Sophocles accurately describe the symptoms associated with the occurrence of PTSD including emotional disturbance, severe distress at the time of the traumatic event, disorientation and even suicidal tendencies. The playwrights of antiquity represent stressors that have been identified as triggering a PTSD episode. Were Sophocles and his peers writing these battle-themed plays from a realisation of the cathartic value of witnessing onstage experiences that portrayed offstage war experiences? In his play *Ajax*, Sophocles offers a stark and arguably accurate portrayal of a general (Ajax) suffering with PTSD.²² It is one of the rare instances in ancient tragedy where a character, so distressed by his mental state, commits suicide in view of the audience, leaving other characters to discover his actions and indeed his body and to debate the merit of such action.

²⁰ Cvetkovich, 11.

²¹ *Oxford University Press*: <http://www.oed.com> (2014): 2a.

²² Sophocles, *Ajax in Electra and Other Plays*, trans. David Raeburn (New York: Penguin Classics, 2008). For a modernised reading of the play, see the unpublished script of *Ajax in Afghanistan* by Timberlake Wertenbaker, produced as part of *The Women & War Project* in Canada and Greece, 2012 and archived at the Ryerson Theatre School, Ryerson University, Toronto, Ontario.

Such an inquiry may yield contemporary performance models of female self-sacrifice, *secondary trauma* occurring in family members,²³ and the act of revenge during civil and national wars. Female characters found within the tragedies may correlate with contemporary examples of gender roles and conflicts involving women in combat. Although I will not be conducting a longitudinal study to measure individual or group behaviors in response to witnessing (spectatorship) or performing (narrative engagement) text, the groundwork will be laid for future research in these areas. The question of whether engagement with modernised ancient dramaturgy assists contemporary women in understanding and perhaps resolving moral and psychological injury will be investigated and theorised. Women in the military are experiencing combat-related trauma in increasing numbers, and as the percentage of women involved in combat increases, PTSD and other forms of reaction to extreme stress are causing a destruction of self-trust which can lead to self-annihilation.²⁴ For these reasons, I propose that an investigation into the effectiveness of catharsis and narrative engagement begun by Shay in the mid-1990s is timely.

The representation of national and cultural traditions found within theatrical productions may stimulate meaningful ethical and global discussions about women and war and provide contemporary women both a vocabulary for and a modern lens through which to view war, gender roles within war, war-related stress and war-related loss. The relationship to ethical challenges involving combat has been seen in multiple theatres of war. Stories of soldiers in Vietnam haunted by killing children to soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts participating in or witnessing acts of violence and instances of soldiers killing fellow soldiers abound. Although

²³ See Chapter 6 for a full discussion of secondary trauma.

²⁴ For a compelling look at female veterans offering first-hand accounts of their military experience see *Always Coming Home: The American Female Veteran Experience Archive* directed and produced by Cathy Brookshire, University of South Carolina, Speech Communication and Rhetoric Program. This thirty-minute documentary can be accessed at: <http://vimeo.com/37615115>. See also: Shay, 1995, 1997.

acts of violence are not new to war, the participation of women in combat is a relatively recent development.²⁵ Research is now occurring to document and analyse gender experiences, both physical and emotional, that women undergo in deployment and post-war and contemporary theatre artists are noticing this trend. New York theatre director and puppeteer Theodora Skipitares believes that the increase in contemporary productions of Greek tragedy is a direct result of the war in Iraq²⁶ while others, such as playwright Velina Hasu Houston, suggest that for many modern playwrights a literary investigation is always “a response to war: war in the soul, war in the heart, war in the home, city, or nation. In ancient Greek mythology, war rattled the consciousness of the citizenry so that it had to address the issues at hand.”²⁷ British playwright Timberlake Wertenbaker has translated and adapted a number of Greek tragedies for the modern stage. She notes that the world is in “a period of uncertainty and a lot is being questioned, including democracy. The most advanced democracies (US and England) are engaged in long wars. Afghanistan can be seen as a kind of siege, like Troy...soldiers have long tours of duty...in an alien land. The tensions are very similar to Troy.”²⁸

Part of my research will include three Case Studies of recent productions of female-authored, female-directed ancient Greek plays. In classical Greek drama, as in the society of the time in which the plays were written and performed, women were excluded from military and political life as well as performing in the theatre. Interestingly, the female characters in the ancient plays are not only conscious of their subordination and of the social parameters which restrict their lives, but must make difficult moral and ethical choices to resolve conflicts within their restricted circumstances. Female characters are often driven or forced into action by forces

²⁵ On January 24, 2013, U.S. President Obama allowed legislation lifting a previous ban prohibiting women from serving in combat roles, thereby permitting U.S. women to serve as combatants during war.

²⁶ See Appendix C for the full text of my interview with Theodora Skipitares.

²⁷ See Appendix C for the full text of my interview with Velina Hasu Houston.

²⁸ See Appendix C for the full text of my interview with Timberlake Wertenbaker.

outside their control (for example by fate, the gods, and war), and are also driven by internal forces (revenge, or grief). Nonetheless, they must still make ethical decisions to resolve these conflicts, even when their choices do not alter their fates. Ultimately, these choices allow the female characters to understand their circumstances and decide how to react to difficult moral challenges. Timberlake Wertenbaker's *Ajax in Afghanistan*, one of the three Case Studies examined in this thesis, is a modernised version of Sophocles' original and interrogates the impact of PTSD on a family. Judith Thompson's *Elektra in Bosnia* combines Aeschylus' *Agamemnon* and Sophocles' *Electra* to examine, among other things, revenge and matricide. Velina Hasu Houston's *The Intuition of Iphigenia*, based on Euripides' *Iphigenia at Aulis*, examines female self-sacrifice and the act of unprovoked killing during war. Together, these three creative works form a trilogy that investigates the binary between female victim and victimiser and provides examples of female carriers of both *primary* and *secondary* trauma during war.²⁹

The primary source material used for this thesis will consist of accurate translations of the war-themed dramaturgy; three new performance texts that have been commissioned and created for specific performances; and additional readings from ancient sources such as Thucydides and Herodotus. Secondary sources include classical feminist scholarship, trauma theory, and psychotherapeutic literature to frame and illuminate discussions on gender, catharsis, and the social and political contextualisation of war trauma. The specific translations of ancient Greek plays about war and war's aftermath that I reference include: *Persians* and *Agamemnon*³⁰

²⁹ See Chapter 6 for a discussion of primary and secondary trauma.

³⁰ Aeschylus, *Oresteia*, trans. Peter Meineck, with an introduction by Helene Foley (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing, 1998); Aeschylus, *Persians and Other Plays*, trans. Christopher Collard (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

(Aeschylus), *Iphigenia at Aulis* and *Suppliant Women*³¹ (Euripides), and *Electra* and *Ajax* (Sophocles).³² These texts will serve as my “default texts.”

However, this thesis is also about theatrical production and not simply about poetry for reading. Therefore, primary texts to be included as Case Studies in Chapters Five and Six include: *The Intuition of Iphigenia* written by Velina Hasu Houston (representing both the USA and Japan), *Elektra in Bosnia* by Judith Thompson (representing Canada), and *Ajax in Afghanistan*, by Timberlake Wertenbaker (representing the UK). A close examination of the playwrights’ respective national and cultural traditions of theatre may provide both a vocabulary for and a modern lens through which to view their representations of war, war-related stress and war-related loss.

For historical background, I turn to the primary ancient source material of Thucydides’ *History of the Peloponnesian War*³³ and Herodotus’ *The Histories*.³⁴ The tragedians drew on Homer’s mythology included in *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*. Indeed, these two texts offer a cultural tradition of myth and form the basis of Shay’s two books on modern soldiers and veterans. Therefore, I, too, will consult these two poems for providing historical background and context for the reading of case study plays. For *The Iliad*, I will use Robert Fagles’ translation,³⁵

³¹ Euripides, *Iphigenia at Aulis*, trans. James Morwood with introduction and notes by Edith Hall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Euripides, *Suppliant Women*, trans. James Morwood (Oxford: Aris & Phillips Classical Texts, 2007).

³² Sophocles, *Electra in Medea, Hippolytus, Electra, Helen*, trans. James Morwood with introduction and notes by Edith Hall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998); Sophocles, *Ajax in Electra and Other Plays*, trans. David Raeburn with introduction and notes by Pat Easterling (New York: Penguin Classics, 2008).

³³ Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans. Rex Warner, with introduction and notes by M.I. Finley (London: Penguin Books, 1972).

³⁴ Herodotus, *The Histories*, trans. A. De Selincourt, with introduction and notes by J. Marincola (London: Penguin Books, 1972).

³⁵ Homer, *The Iliad*, trans. Robert Fagles, with introduction by Bernard Knox (New York: Penguin Books, 1996).

and for the *The Odyssey*, I will use Robert Lattimore's translation.³⁶ I have selected these translations primarily because at least two of the scholars conducting narrative workshops with veterans refer to their work with these translations.³⁷ For an analysis of combat trauma, moral conflicts faced in contemporary war, and the psycho-social difficulties of coming home from war, I will reference the work of Jonathan Shay,³⁸ particularly *Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character*³⁹ and *Odysseus in America: Combat Trauma and the Trials of Homecoming*⁴⁰ as well as the work of Candice Monson, specifically her theory of Cognitive Processing Therapy, and Laura Brown.⁴¹ I will turn to several other psychotherapists using narrative engagement informed by the ancient Greeks to address PTSD with their patients. To assist in framing the discussion of Greek drama and the study of mental illness, I will turn to Sigmund Freud's two main accounts of trauma in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*⁴² (chronicling individual trauma) and *Moses and Monotheism*⁴³ (examining group trauma). These publications stand as markers in the contemporary understanding of inner trauma. Cathy Caruth's *Unclaimed Experience*,⁴⁴ Ann Cvetkovich's work in *An Archive of Feelings*, and Catherine Silverstone's

³⁶ Homer, *The Odyssey*, trans. Richard Lattimore (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, Inc., 1965).

³⁷ Both Roberta Stewart and Helen Benedict have used Lattimore and Fagles' translations in their workshops with veterans.

³⁸ Jonathan Shay formerly worked with the VA Hospital in Washington, DC and has since retired.

³⁹ Shay, 1994.

⁴⁰ Shay, 1997.

⁴¹ Candice Monson, Ph.D. is a leading mental health researcher and clinician developing new therapies for treating PTSD. Her work with Cognitive Processing Therapy has traction with the US and the Canadian Departments of Defense. See Monson's most recent book, *Cognitive-Behavioral Conjoint Therapy for PTSD: Harnessing the Healing Power of Relationships*, co-authored with Steffany J. Fredman (New York: Guilford Press, July 2012); Laura Brown, *Cultural Competence in Trauma Therapy: Beyond the Flashback* (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2008).

⁴² Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, vol. 18, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1955).

⁴³ Sigmund Freud, "Moses, His People and Monotheist Religion," *Moses and Monotheism*, vol. 23, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1955).

⁴⁴ Cathy Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

Shakespeare, Trauma and Contemporary Performance offer helpful discussions on Freud's concept of trauma as a 'psychic piercing'. I will address the work of Amy Street and apply her understanding of 'primary trauma' to Wertebaker's female and male characters in *Ajax in Afghanistan*. I will apply the work of Rachel Dekel to address 'secondary trauma' in two of the three Case Studies.

To investigate catharsis, I will begin with Aristotle and include the theories of Augusto Boal (*Theatre of the Oppressed*), J.L. Moreno (*Psychodrama*), Sue Jennings (*Dramatherapy*), and Thomas Scheff (*Catharsis in Healing, Ritual and Drama*).⁴⁵ Contemporary feminist and classical scholars have contributed significant scholarship to the on-going debate regarding the complexities of Greek tragedy for a modern world. Beginning in the 1960s with Simone de Beauvoir and continuing with Hélène Cixous, Luce Irigaray, Helene Foley, Sue Ellen Case, Edith Hall, Olga Taxidou, Marianne McDonald, Froma Zeitlin and others, topics of gender, gender erasure, character construction, and political, social and cultural analyses have been offered and rigorously debated. Case dismisses the Greeks as misogynist and irrelevant for women in modernity. Hall, McDonald and Foley argue the use of Greek theatre to explore ethical dilemmas and moral issues related to war and gender. Zeitlin concurs, adding that "in such an anthropology of gendered relations, the aesthetic, the social, and the ethical inevitably assumed a political complexion, bringing new insights to bear on the workings of the polis and the making of civic identity."⁴⁶ Taxidou visits the act of mourning through a Post-Freudian lens. It is within this landscape of scholarship that the debate of how and why the ancient female characters are extrapolated and interpreted for the modern stage and beyond is occurring. I seek

⁴⁵ Thomas Scheff, *Catharsis in Healing, Ritual, and Drama* (iUniverse, 2001).

⁴⁶ Froma Zeitlin, *Playing the Other: Gender and Society in Classical Greek Civilization* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 363.

answers to the questions of impact and relevance not only of ancient Greek tragedy in modernity, but for the use of the dramaturgy for theorising trauma and gender.⁴⁷

Methodology

The methods and organising principles I propose for this study include viewing and reading selected Greek plays, the direction of productions of selected plays, and reading primary historical materials as well as modern scholarship regarding the role of women, catharsis, and trauma in ancient Greek plays. Throughout three Case Studies, I will examine carefully the role of female characters carrying themes of war-related traumas caused by enslavement, sacrifice, rape, and the act of retribution.

The debate about catharsis in the theatre informs various areas of study. In Chapter Two, “The Debate about the Cathartic Function of Theatre,” I outline the terrain, beginning with the theatrical literature of Aristotle and Boal; and with the classical psychological literature centred on Freud. I then shift my attention to researchers and scholars that provide an overview of contemporary catharsis theory in the field of the arts and therapy. Trauma theory is integral to the entire discussion of catharsis, and therefore, trauma is defined and discussed throughout the interrogation of catharsis. For this chapter, I also look at Moreno, Jennings, and Scheff.

In Chapter Three, “The Paradox, Power, and Performance of Trauma,” I review the medical and psychological literature on trauma, once again looking at Freud but also examining the research of Jacques Lacan (‘the real’), Shay (‘situational recognition’), Monson (*Cognitive Processing Therapy*), and Scheff to interrogate the role of catharsis as a healing agent for mental illness. Included in this chapter is a look at the evolution of both meaning and scholarly

⁴⁷ Steve Wilmer, “Women in Greek Tragedy Today: A Reappraisal”, *Theatre Research International*. Vol. 32, no. 2 (2007): 106-108.

application of ‘trauma’ by turning to Laura S. Brown.⁴⁸ I examine Luce Irigaray and her work on female identity formation and her critique of phallogocentrism in Freudian psychoanalysis.

Irigaray provides an important bridge from psychology to the literary and cultural theories of Helene Foley, Margaret Alexiou, and Casey Dué and their work on lament. A doxography of scholarship, catharsis theory, and the ancient Greeks will review the history of studies in the field to determine if other researchers have addressed similar research questions.

In Chapter Four, “War, Trauma, and Gender” I will interrogate the question of how certain social and psychological requirements for catharsis may have fuelled the literary impulse in the fifth century BCE. In Chapter Five, “Female Characters as Surrogates for Male Trauma” I will offer an historical context for the plays selected as Case Studies by investigating the question of why Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides may have chosen to write war-themed plays that included leading traumatised female characters. A discussion of the wartime context in which these plays were written, along with the academic reception of the plays, will be offered. I will also introduce a theoretical discussion of categorising – or ‘typing’ – female characters to evaluate contemporary parallels. Although the Case Studies will examine three specific plays, I will also introduce some discussion of Hecuba in Euripides’ *Trojan Women* as representative of post-war trauma. I will be guided by the question of how the ancient dramatists may have used their personal experiences of war to create war-themed dramaturgy. As examples, I turn to *Trojan Women*, *Iphigenia at Aulis*, *Suppliant Women*, and *Ajax* to investigate how and why the ancient dramatists constructed primary and secondary female characters and how these characters distinctly differed from the actual role of women during this period of time.

⁴⁸ Laura S. Brown, “Not Outside the Range: One Feminist Perspective on Psychic Trauma,” *Trauma, Explorations in Memory*, ed. Cathy Caruth (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995).

In Chapter Six, “Primary and Secondary Trauma and Gender-Based Implications” I will address the question of whether women are inherently less aggressive and more empathetic, and examine the role of social positioning. Using the work of Amy Street of the VA Hospital in Boston and Rachel Dekel in the School of Social Work at Bar-Ilan University, Ramat-Gan, Israel as theoretical guides, this chapter will look carefully at the war experiences of Tecmessa, wife of Ajax and ask, did this character experience primary and secondary exposure to traumatic events on the battlefield and on the home front? If so, might Tecmessa serve as a contemporary model for coping with war-related trauma? In Chapter Seven, “Reading trauma and gender roles in Velina Hasu Houston’s *The Intuition of Iphigenia* and Judith Thompson’s *Elektra in Bosnia*” I will investigate ancient Greek female characters now re-imagined in modern versions that represent female trauma during war. I turn to the characters of Iphigenia in Euripides’ *Iphigenia at Aulis* and Houston’s *Intuition of Iphigenia*; and Elektra and Clytemnestra in Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon*, Sophocles’ *Elektra* and Thompson’s *Elektra in Bosnia* to explore how and why these female characters may function as viable options for archetypal modelling of women in and around war.

Finally, in Chapter Eight, “Looking to the Future,” I will conclude with an analysis of the roles of contemporary women and ancient female characters in tragedy involved in moral and ethical combat-related conflicts. I will offer summations of the following: (a) identifying factors in female distress through a ‘narrative method’ and post-war theatre that takes over private mourning; (b) trauma borne of betrayal that distorts what is ‘right’ and ‘true’ by someone with legitimate authority in the arena of life and death decision-making; and (c) the characteristic injury to the identity of self, the shrinkage of a moral horizon, and the occurrence of humiliation suffered when such a reduction of trust occurs. I will conclude the chapter with a description of a

newly proposed creative research study designed to mobilise theatre and digital arts to increase knowledge of war's social impact on women and girls, and in turn, increase societal understanding of war-related trauma of women worldwide. A theoretical positioning of the ancient Greek plays today, pointing to the ways in which these plays -- and the scholarship pertaining to the plays -- have become imbedded in a global cultural history and how they are being excavated by women desiring new models of women in and around war will be offered.

Chapter 2: The Debate about the Cathartic Function of Theatre

The great virtue, but also the great vice, of ‘catharsis’ in modern interpretations has been its incurable vagueness. Every variety of moral, aesthetic, and therapeutic effect that is or could be experienced from tragedy has been subsumed under the venerable word at one time or another.” --G. F. Else⁴⁹

In this chapter I examine the relationship between catharsis in ancient Greek dramaturgy, both on the page and in performance with critical work on catharsis as it has evolved historically in various humanities and social sciences disciplines. Three specific aspects of the catharsis debate guide the structure of the chapter. First, I will examine historical and modern definitions of catharsis within literary, psychological, and theatrical realms to determine which definition(s) may apply to a contemporary concept of the cathartic function of modern theatrical productions. Second, I will question whether catharsis in and of itself is desirable in modernity, specifically catharsis that may be provoked through performances of Greek drama intended to stimulate a global discussion about contemporary wars and resultant psychological trauma. Finally, I will interrogate Freudian and Post-Freudian contributions to catharsis theory within the psychological literature to determine relevance in the twenty-first century. As definitions of catharsis are examined in this chapter, it is important to observe the migration of catharsis from spectator (Aristotle) to the patient (Freud, Breuer, Scheff) to the patient/performer (Moreno, Jennings) to the actor/audience (Boal’s ‘spect-actor’) to the patient/subject (Monson, Street, Dekel). This review of the evolution of catharsis theory will include Aristotle and his theory of release from negative affect through an emotional purification process; Freud and Breuer and their work on hysteria; J.L. Moreno’s shift away from performed drama that offers spectators an opportunity for catharsis to “psychodrama producing a healing effect in the producer-actors who perform the

⁴⁹ G.F. Else, “Survey of Work on Aristotle’s *Poetics*, 1940-1954,” *Classical World*, 48 (1995): 73-82.

drama and, at the same time, liberate themselves from it”⁵⁰; T. J. Scheff and his work with catharsis theory in modern therapies; Sue Jennings and the role of catharsis within drama therapy; Candice Monson and her work with evidence-based psychotherapies designed to treat PTSD; a discussion about the linkage between social science research, clinical practice, and humanities scholarship; Augusto Boal, whose work within his *Theatre of the Oppressed* posits that catharsis is a result of an active audience/performer interchange whereby a theatre audience is engaged in finding solutions to obstacles inherent within the play and at the same time, experiencing a release from the conflict; and cultural theorists and classicists Luce Irigaray, Helene Foley, and Marianne McDonald who examine gender, identity formation, and war.⁵¹ While these various theoretical approaches represent significant historical benchmarks in catharsis theory, it is important to point out that there have been other concepts about catharsis employed by theatre and mental health practitioners in both the East and the West throughout time.⁵² It is not my intention to provide an exhaustive list of all possible catharsis concepts, but merely to highlight a few of the significant transitions in catharsis theory and practice in order to frame a larger discussion of Greek drama as a potential healing agent in modernity.

Indeed, the concept of theatre performance representing trauma and yielding catharsis for some (the audience, the performer, an organisation) is worth examining in light of the overarching research question of whether Greek drama can serve as an effective medium through which to interrogate gender and war and render therapeutic benefits. Looking at catharsis theory and trauma theory (Chapter Three) as applied to modern versions of ancient Greek tragedies may

⁵⁰ J.L. Moreno, “Mental Catharsis and the Psychodrama,” *Sociometry*, Vol. 3. No. 3 (July 1940): 209-244.

⁵¹ For an excellent overview of these concepts and their devisors, see Stefan Meisiek’s, “Which Catharsis Do They Mean? Aristotle, Moreno, Boal and Organization Theatre,” *Organization Studies* vol. 25 (2004): 797. The online version of this article can be accessed at: <http://oss.sagepub.com/content/25/5/797>.

⁵² Else, 73-82.

reveal, as United States Senator John McCain has suggested, epics capable of offering significant insights into modern experiences of witnessing, taking part in, and suffering through the tragedies of war.⁵³ The connection between Greek tragedy, enacted trauma and potential catharsis cannot be minimised and is central to this thesis.

Literary Catharsis

Catharsis has been defined as the “process of releasing strong feelings, for example through plays or other artistic activities, as a way of providing relief from anger, suffering, etc.”⁵⁴ Stefan Meisief argues an origin of the word as a combination of the ancient Greek words *cata* (in view of) and *airo* (lifting)⁵⁵ and translates catharsis into modern language as “relief or cleansing.”⁵⁶ The journey of catharsis within dramatic criticism has moved from a definition involving purgation or purification of audience emotions *in response to* events occurring onstage, to a focus on dramaturgically effective arrangements of plot and dramatic incidents *capable of providing* a “clear direction” to an audience – thereby placing the act of catharsis on and within the dramatic text. In other words, some would argue that the narrative itself, if structured effectively by providing narrative closure, will house the catharsis and that the words themselves are purifying agents. Donald Keeseey argues that the definition of catharsis has, throughout the history of Western literary criticism, swung back and forth between “readings which claim that tragedy somehow brings about a ‘purification’ of the audience’s emotions of pity and fear...and readings which claim that tragedy ‘purges’ such emotions.”⁵⁷ Keeseey offers

⁵³ John McCain offered these thoughts in his Columbia University Commencement Remarks in 2006: <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/news/06/05/mccain.html>.

⁵⁴ <http://oaadonline.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/> accessed on November 7, 2012.

⁵⁵ Stefan Meisief, “Which Catharsis Do They Mean? Aristotle, Moreno, Boal and Organization Theatre,” *Organization Studies*, 25(5): 797-816 (London: SAGE Publications, 2004).

⁵⁶ Meisief, (2004): 800.

⁵⁷ Donald Keeseey, “On Some Recent Interpretations of Catharsis,” *The Classical World*. Vol. 72. No. 4 (Dec., 1978 – Jan., 1979): 193.

an historical overview of the evolution of catharsis from the late seventeenth century through the middle of the 20th century.⁵⁸ His findings reveal how theatre and literary scholars have translated the experience of catharsis. In summary, Keesey concludes that Weil and Bernays have offered translations of catharsis as a ‘purgation’⁵⁹; I.A. Richards sees catharsis occurring in tragedy because it offers “Pity, the impulse to approach, and Terror, the impulse to Retreat”⁶⁰; Frederick Pottle argues that both pity and terror grappled with in tragedy deal equally with fear⁶¹; J.W. Krutch reasons that tragedy is similar to religion, offering a “justification to the universe”⁶² while eliciting an emotional purging or purification; and G.F. Else suggests that “...catharsis is not a change in the spectator (but rather) the purification of the tragic act by the demonstration that its motive was *miarón* (shameful, polluted) and it is accomplished by the whole structure of the drama, but above all by the recognition.”⁶³ H.D.F. Kitto translates catharsis as “cleansing” or “cleaning up”⁶⁴ and suggests that it is not “presented as the end or goal of tragedy...and (in fact) does not refer to the audience at all.”⁶⁵ He quotes Butcher who says, “Tragedy, then, does more than effect the homeopathic cure of certain passions. Its function on this view is not merely to provide an outlet for pity and fear, but to provide for them a distinctively aesthetic satisfaction, to purify and clarify them by passing them from the medium of art.”⁶⁶ Seen in this light, tragedy is more than just a medicinal cure for intense emotion. “Its function ... is not merely to provide an

⁵⁸ Keesey, in his footnotes (FN 1, 1979) turns to the famous editions of Butcher (London, 1911) and Bywater (Oxford, 1909) for interpretations of catharsis as purgation.

⁵⁹ Keesey, 193.

⁶⁰ I.A. Richards, *Principles of Literary Criticism* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1924), 245-246.

⁶¹ Frederick Pottle, “Catharsis,” *Yale Review*, 40 (1950-51): 631.

⁶² J.W. Krutch, “The Tragic Fallacy,” *Tragedy: Vision and Form*, ed. R. Corrigan (New York: Harper, 1984), 276.

⁶³ Else, 73-82.

⁶⁴ Else, 198.

⁶⁵ Else, 199.

⁶⁶ S. H. Butcher, *Aristotle’s Theory of Poetry and Fine Art* (Mineola: Dover, 1951), 245.

outlet for pity and fear, but to provide for them a distinctively aesthetic satisfaction, to purify and clarify them by passing them from the medium of art.”⁶⁷

The migration of cathartic effect away from the audience – whereby spectator emotions are purified or purged – to a placement within a dramatic text that occurs as a result of an effective arrangement of plot and dramatic incidents giving a “clear direction to our emotions”⁶⁸ is a theory put forth by Kitto and shared by Harvey D. Goldstein⁶⁹ who both argue that the artistic ordering of material onstage allows the “pitable and terrible”⁷⁰ to be front and centre, forming the heart of catharsis. Goldstein’s interpretation suggests that catharsis is an aesthetic process that operates *on* the dramatic text⁷¹ and is “performed not on the audience but on the material.”⁷²

Two proponents of catharsis as clarification are L.A. Post, who argues that “the catharsis of tragedy...results in a clarification of both emotion and of thought, for emotion becomes objective in a work of art, and the mind is elevated so that it contemplates its own emotion and thus achieves imaginative freedom,”⁷³ and Leon Golden, who interprets Chapter 14 (1453b 5-10) of Aristotle’s *Poetics* as “tragedy [that is] capable of producing a form of pleasure from pity and fear through mimesis.”⁷⁴ In “Aristotle on Tragic and Comic Mimesis,”⁷⁵ Golden offers not only his own theory of the evolution and placement of catharsis; he also argues that the impact of

⁶⁷ Butcher, 245.

⁶⁸ H.D.F. Kitto, *The Greeks* (London: Penguin Books, 2007).

⁶⁹ Harvey D. Goldstein, “Mimesis and Catharsis Reexamined,” *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 25 (1966): 567-77.

⁷⁰ Goldstein, 574.

⁷¹ Keeseey, 200.

⁷² Keeseey, 200.

⁷³ L.A. Post, *From Homer to Menander* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1951), 267.

⁷⁴ Leon Golden, “Catharsis,” *TAPA*, 93 (1962): 51-60; *Aristotle’s Poetics: A Translation and Commentary for Students of Literature* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1968).

⁷⁵ Leon Golden, “Aristotle on Tragic and Comic Mimesis,” *American Philological Association, American Classical Studies*, ed. Matthew S. Santirocco (Atlanta: Scholars Press, Number 29; 1992): 1-39.

Bernays' interpretation of catharsis as medically relevant is, in some ways, misinformed. "This view (Bernays' medical theory) declares that the final product and goal of our involvement with tragedy is the *therapeutic* purgation of pity and fear. Increasingly, however voices of protest have been heard that challenge the attribution to Aristotle of a medical/therapeutic theory of art."⁷⁶ Golden suggests that "...Aristotle could not have assigned a medical/therapeutic meaning to *catharsis* in a literary context ...Aristotle's view of art as *mimesis* demands that *catharsis* represent that moment of insight which arises out of the audience's climactic intellectual, emotional, and spiritual enlightenment, which for Aristotle is both the essential pleasure and essential goal of mimetic art."⁷⁷

Keeseey, whose focus is primarily on the late seventeenth century through the middle of the twentieth century, begins with Aristotle's definition of catharsis within *Poetics* that suggests that it is the spectator who experiences catharsis. The belief that catharsis stems from and remains within the text (Else) and the argument on behalf of catharsis as a process "applied to the incidents by the very act of mimesis"⁷⁸ (Golden) are interesting claims. I would argue, however, that when Aristotle wrote *Poetics* and defined the cathartic experience of tragedy, it was not merely to define a literary event or piece of effective dramaturgy. Aristotle's framing of catharsis served both literary and psychological functions. During the fifth century BCE, theatre was not simply entertainment for the masses. It was much more. It was a gathering place for male citizens, many of who had fought long and difficult battles and who may well have been suffering psychological trauma as a result. Fifth century tragedies often presented war-related plotlines that examined and critiqued the ravages of war. Those who had fought in, or who had witnessed war wrote the plays. They were performed by citizens who had likely served as

⁷⁶ Golden, (1992): 2.

⁷⁷ Golden, (1992): 2.

⁷⁸ Keeseey, 202.

soldiers, for an audience of men who had either returned from battle or who were shipping off to fight. Although Aristotle wrote a century after the Peloponnesian war, he would not have been blind to the reality that the majority of men in the fifth century had fought hard in any number of military conflicts. It is conceivable that he framed his discussion of theatre and catharsis in *Poetics* and his discussion of the cathartic ability of music at the end of *Politics* from an understanding that the cathartic value of tragedy was not simply a display of good literature but rather an essential ingredient for community mental health.⁷⁹ Aristotle understood that tragedy in performance provided an effective avenue for an audience to experience pity and fear while at the same time protecting an inner balance, indeed an equilibrium, of its own.⁸⁰

Aristotle

Much has been debated about Aristotle's intended definition of catharsis, and indeed, Aristotle is usually the starting point for any substantive discussion on this topic. In both *Poetics* and *Politics* Aristotle discusses the role and the effects of catharsis. In Book 6 of his *Poetics*, he writes:

Tragedy is the imitation of an action (that) is serious, complete and substantial. It uses language enriched in different ways, each appropriate to its part [of the action]. It is drama and not narration. By evoking pity and terror it brings about the purgation of those emotions.⁸¹

To achieve this 'purgation' or 'catharsis' *within and for the audience*, Aristotle suggests that actors imitate recognisable tragic events onstage. This visual representation or 'spectacle' of the effects of war and other major plot points in a tragedy is, Aristotle asserts, an essential ingredient for catharsis located with the spectator.⁸² For a performance to mediate such a catharsis for its audience it required language to be performed –spoken or sung – in such a fashion that

⁷⁹ Aristotle, *Politics*, trans. John Warrington (Heron Books, 1959).

⁸⁰ Meisiek, (2004): 801.

⁸¹ Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. Leon Golden (Tallahassee: University Presses of Florida, 1981), 11-14.

⁸² Aristotle, (1981): 11-14.

convincingly “imitate(d) qualities and reason” capable of evoking pity/catharsis/a purge of emotion from the audience.⁸³ With audience expectations of mimesis and the evocation of pity (*eleos*) placed with the performer and upon the text, the focus of the resulting catharsis was with the audience. As a fifth century BCE male audience vicariously (re) experienced events presented onstage (often those of war), they (re) lived the events. Emotional surrogates (actors in the play) both enacted and resolved emotional pain. These surrogates were male actors playing both male and female characters. They represented and released large emotions (tears, rage, shaking, screaming) by portraying large ideas (revenge, retribution, murder) through the act of speaking and singing the text. In *Politics* Aristotle suggested, “Rhythm and melody above all else provide imitations of anger and calm, of courage and temperance and their contraries, as well as other spiritual affections, which come very near to the affections themselves.”⁸⁴ He writes of “souls experiencing a change” (catharsis) through the act of listening.⁸⁵ Aristotle addresses the ability of music and melody to have a cathartic effect in Book VIII of *Politics*, where he writes: “Certain philosophers distinguish melodies as (i) those which express character, (ii) those which rouse to action, and (iii) those which produce inspiration.”⁸⁶ He suggests, a little later in the same passage that “men who are subject to pity or fear, and indeed all emotional people, experience the same kinds of effects; and so, indeed, do we all in proportion as we are susceptible of feeling. All, therefore, will be in some way purged and restored to the delights of tranquillity.”⁸⁷

⁸³ Aristotle, (1981): 11-14.

⁸⁴ Aristotle, *Politics*, trans. John Warrington, (Sheridan: Heron Books, 1959), 228.

⁸⁵ Aristotle, (1959): 228.

⁸⁶ Aristotle, 1959): 230.

⁸⁷ Aristotle, 1959): 232.

Character, according to Aristotle, is “an imitation of what people of the story are like,”⁸⁸ and therefore reason - or the *tragic story* - is demonstrated through the act of telling and showing. Aristotle defines six necessary elements of an effective tragedy capable of producing catharsis in an audience:

Tragedy depends for its effect on six constituent elements: plot, character, language, thought, the visual, and music. These are the ingredients of tragedy, used by practically all dramatists; there are no others. Of all these elements, plot or *muthos* is the most important... A tragedy is not an imitation of people’s appearance, but of their actions, joys, sorrows – their lives.⁸⁹

Accordingly, the most important element of tragedy is *muthos*, the story enacted for an audience.⁹⁰ For catharsis to occur, Aristotle reasoned, *muthos* must observe certain rules. Linearity, or the crucial “organisation of events”⁹¹ into a clear beginning, middle and end, must be offered. The beginning of the play could not “follow or result from anything else but after which something else follows or results.”⁹² The ending of the play must be “the mirror image of this: something which follows or results from something else, but which nothing else results from or follows.”⁹³ It stands to reason, therefore, that the middle must follow and be followed. The result is a dramatic story enacted with spoken and sung text, with spectacle, that when taken altogether, creates a momentum of inevitability. Aristotle is clear that *muthos* should not centre on a single character but rather, “imitate a single, unified and complete sequence of action.”⁹⁴ While these requirements of the ordering of an effective plot can be read as a primary focus on dramaturgical analysis of effective playwriting, the *effect* of the plot – and its reception – was foremost in Aristotle’s thinking. Perhaps this focus on dramaturgy is what led certain literary

⁸⁸ Aristotle, *Poetics* (1981): 11-14.

⁸⁹ Aristotle, 13.

⁹⁰ Aristotle, 13.

⁹¹ Aristotle, 13.

⁹² Aristotle, 13.

⁹³ Aristotle, 13.

⁹⁴ Aristotle, 13.

theorists to migrate catharsis to the text and away from the spectator. I do not share the view of textual catharsis. Instead, I assert that Aristotle urged narrative closure, and the clear construct of dramatic elements for maximum effectiveness *to produce catharsis with and for the spectator*. Narrative closure, defined as “the phenomenological feeling of finality that is generated when all the questions saliently posed by the narrative are answered”⁹⁵ would allow the audience to have a complete cathartic experience: witnessing the inciting action, rising action, climactic moment, and the resolution of the conflict.

To achieve the most effective tragedy capable of producing *catharsis*, Aristotle discussed Homer’s unity of action in *Odyssey*. Here, an audience heard only certain events, or plot points that offered a *unity of action*, and its *muthos* contained a series of incidents capable of assembling such a unity of action. If any one of these aspects were altered or removed, the overall effect could be lost: disturb the unity of action and catharsis would not occur. Aristotle understood that within tragedy, names of mythic characters were used and that these characters would have been known to a fifth century BCE audience. The catharsis-inducing, unity-of-action plot was therefore not based on new storylines. Rather, catharsis would occur based on *the manner in which a story was told*; a story capable of provoking recognition for audience members that in turn could produce tears and other external representations of purgation. Prompting an audience to openly mourn for characters is now recognised as a form of *transference* in psychological literature of the 20th century.⁹⁶ Simply stated, transference is a phenomenon characterised by unconscious redirection of feelings from one person to another.

⁹⁵ Noel Carroll, “Narrative Closure,” *Philos Stud* (2007): 135:1–15; published online May 30, 2007.

⁹⁶ Leonard H. Kapelovitz, *To Love and To Work/A Demonstration and Discussion of Psychotherapy* (1987): 66; S.M. Andersen, M. Berk, “The social-cognitive model of transference: Experiencing past relationships in the present,” *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 7(4) (1988): 109-115.

I argue that Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides wrote their tragedies *to be performed* and that Aristotle constructed his theories articulated within *Poetics* and *Politics* for dramatic texts intended for performance. It was during live performance of these war-themed plays that restorative (emotional) healing occurred, a result of *catharsis*. Theatres became, in many ways, extensions of healing centres.⁹⁷ I agree with Bernays' interpretation of catharsis as medically relevant and respectfully disagree with Golden that Aristotle's catharsis arose out of the moment of insight offering an audience climactic intellectual, emotional, and spiritual enlightenment. Insight represents a cognitive activity incapable of an emotional purge or purification. While important, insight is a passive (intellectual), not active (emotional) representation of the interiority of thought and emotion.

Psychological Catharsis

Freud

There are some that argue medical catharsis theory truly began with the 1880 work of Freud and Breuer on hysteria.⁹⁸ Freud himself argued that the root cause of emotional hysteria began with a violent *emotional* incident for the patient and required release:

In traumatic neuroses the operative cause of the illness is not the trifling physical injury but the affect of fright – the psychical trauma. In an analogous manner, our investigations reveal, for many, if not for most, hysterical symptoms, precipitating causes which can only be described as psychical traumas. Any experience which calls up distressing affects – such as those of fright, anxiety, shame or physical pain – may operate as a trauma of this kind.⁹⁹

This “calling up” of “distressing affects” and events forms the basis for Freud and Breuer's catharsis theory, placing the experience of catharsis squarely on the patient and out of the realm

⁹⁷ Jon D. Mikalson offers a strong overview of the role of healing centres in *Ancient Greek Religion* (West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., 2010).

⁹⁸ Scheff, 26.

⁹⁹ Sigmund Freud and Joseph Breuer, *Studies on Hysteria, 1895* (New York: Avon Books, 1966), 40.

of the spectator (therapist). Freud's description of "residues...of emotional experiences"¹⁰⁰ suggests that catharsis is a healing agent serving the patient as he or she (re) enacts tragic or troubling incidents from their own life. This (re) enactment will go on to form the basis of what Moreno will describe as *psychodrama*.¹⁰¹

Both Freud and Breuer argue the merit of this theory for treating hysteria caused by the repression of emotional reactions.¹⁰² They apply the theory by having patients "discharge the emotions associated with all of the traumatic events in their files."¹⁰³ Over time Freud rejected his own catharsis theory, convinced that this form of treatment was incapable of providing permanent healing. He replaced the "calling up" – his catharsis theory – with psychoanalysis. With psychoanalysis, Freud codified his treatment of the double status of trauma, which represented both physical and psychic pathologies.¹⁰⁴ Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* examines the paradox of the interiority and exteriority of trauma and the cathartic value of talk therapy. It is in his concept of 'the pleasure principle' that Freud defines a medical catharsis. With the pleasure principle Freud argues that 'mental events' are regulated by the pleasure principle and ultimately result in a physical/psychic release:

...we believe that the course of mental events is in every case given its impetus by an unpleasurable tension, and that it then goes in a direction such that its final state coincides with a reduction of this tension, i.e., with the avoidance of unpleasure or the production of pleasure...¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁰ Sigmund Freud, *Five Lectures on Psychoanalysis* (London: Hogarth, 1910), 14.

¹⁰¹ J. L. Moreno, *Psychodrama, First Volume* (New York: Beacon House, Inc., 1977); J.L. Moreno, in collaboration with Zerka T. Moreno, *Psychodrama, Second Volume; Foundations of Psychotherapy* (New York: Beacon House, 1975); and J.L. Moreno, in collaboration with Zerka T. Moreno, *Psychodrama, Third Volume, Action Therapy & Principles of Practice* (New York: Beacon House, 1975).

¹⁰² Scheff, 41.

¹⁰³ Scheff, 41.

¹⁰⁴ For an interesting comparison on trauma theory and butch-femme discourse on trauma, see Cvetkovich, 49-82.

¹⁰⁵ Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, ed. Todd Dufresne, trans. Gregory C. Richter (Petersborough: Broadview editions, 2011), 51.

In *Psychoanalysis and the War Neuroses* Freud suggests that “the mental apparatus” tries to sublimate out-of-the-ordinary ‘excitement’, (loosely translated as psychic trauma) such as a soldier might experience during battle or a prisoner of war might experience when captured, or raped.¹⁰⁶ The avoidance of the trauma, or ‘excitement’ can be in direct conflict with a need to act out and release the trauma, creating a state of ‘overexcitement’. This ‘overexcitement’ is manifest as psychological trauma that has managed to penetrate the protective (psychic) shields humans construct and now must be purged in order to heal. With the patient actively avoiding the re-experiencing of the trauma, the paradox is created: to experience medical (psychological) catharsis (purgation *and* cleansing), the patient, Freud argues, must re-experience the ‘excitement’ in order to ultimately de-sensitise herself to the event which has caused the original trauma. By the twenty-first century, Freud’s theory has evolved into ‘Prolonged Exposure’ (PE), a post-Freudian theoretical construct that brings a patient into repeated exposure with their initial trauma-inducing event, usually through narrative-based protocols.¹⁰⁷ With PE, the patient revisits over and over the triggering trauma, eventually becoming desensitised to the damaging event. It is worth noting that Freud’s *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* was first published in 1920, just two years after WWI ended and at a time when many were experiencing “shell shock” – now known as PTSD.¹⁰⁸

T.J. Scheff

¹⁰⁶ Sandor Ferenczi, Karl Abraham, Ernst Simmel, Ernest Jones, Sigmund Freud, “Psychoanalysis and the War Neuroses” *The International Psycho-Analytic Press* (London, Vienna, New York: 1921).

¹⁰⁷ Edna Foa, Elizabeth Hembree, Barbara Rothman, *Prolonged Exposure Therapy for PTSD* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); and Candice Monson, “Cognitive Processing Therapy and its Implementation,” paper delivered at the Canadian Institute of Military and Veteran Health Research Forum, November 27, 2012, at 10:00 a.m. in Kingston, Ontario.

¹⁰⁸ On a research trip to the University of Edinburgh in December 2012, I learned that the term ‘shell shock’ originated in Edinburgh during treatment of WWI veterans at the large medical facility on what is now the campus of the university.

T. J. Scheff, a Professor Emeritus at the University of California, Santa Barbara, has written extensively on the role of catharsis within mental illness. His interest “in the integration of the social, political, behavioural and clinical arts and sciences, and particularly the integration of these disciplines into new directions of thought and effort” is pertinent to this discussion of catharsis.¹⁰⁹ Scheff argues that Freud’s negative judgment of cathartic cures was unconvincing.¹¹⁰ In his book, *Catharsis in Healing, Ritual, and Drama*, Scheff outlines a new theory of catharsis as a framework for analysing Freud and Breuer’s work. He addresses their suggestion that “catharsis is the process of emotional discharge which brings relief to emotional tension”¹¹¹ by suggesting the process of ‘abreaction,’ (defined as “the whole class of voluntary and involuntary reflexes, from tears to acts of revenge, in which the affects are discharged”¹¹²) cannot be rigorous nor effective science. Scheff is, in fact, critical of the seeming vagueness of this definition, noting his concern about the lack of classification of catharsis within the Post-Freudian therapies of Bioenergetics, Reichian therapy, Gestalt, or “any of the other major cathartic therapies.”¹¹³ He accepts Freud and Breuer’s definition of catharsis as a reflex that is unlearned, involuntary, instinctive – such as in the case of crying or laughing. To be fully cathartic, however, Scheff argues that these unlearned, involuntary responses must be capable of resolving major emotional tensions such as “grief, fear, anger, and embarrassment.”¹¹⁴ Then, and only then, does Scheff believe emotional purging has the potential for catharsis. Scheff offers

¹⁰⁹ Scheff, 47

¹¹⁰ Scheff, 45.

¹¹¹ Scheff, 47.

¹¹² Sigmund Freud and Joseph Breuer, *Studies on Hysteria*. (New York: Avon Books, 1966), 42.

¹¹³ Scheff, 47.

¹¹⁴ Scheff, 47.

definitions of certain emotional stresses and their associated cathartic reflexes.¹¹⁵ They can be seen in the following table:

Emotional Distress	Cathartic Process
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Grief 2. Intense Fear 3. Moderate Fear, embarrassment 4. Rage 5. Anger 6. Boredom (stimulus deprivation) 7. Physical injury or tension 	<p>Crying Involuntary trembling, cold sweat Spontaneous laughter Storming, with hot sweat Spontaneous laughter Spontaneous, non-repetitive talk Yawning, stretching, scratching</p>

(Jackins, 1965; see also Scheff, 1972)¹¹⁶

Harvey Jackins, a colleague of Scheff, developed this chart to track and analyse his observation of patients.¹¹⁷ Scheff utilised the chart in his own work with patients. He suggests four primary categories of basic distressful emotions on which to base a catharsis theory: grief, fear, anger, and boredom. He articulates this new theoretical model as “the discharge of the distressful emotions (catharsis) ...as largely internal, involuntary processes, with invariant external indicators such as weeping, shivering, cold sweating, and so on.”¹¹⁸ Following this model, one of the most interesting and relevant observations for catharsis is the distinction between the experience of, and the display of distressful emotions and the discharge of emotions. For actors in a play or patients within a psychodrama, the onstage representation of emotional distress in one of three of the four categories (grief, fear, anger, but hopefully not in the fourth category of boredom) and the accompanying relevant discharge of emotion by both actors and their

¹¹⁵ Scheff bases his definitions on the ‘reevaluation counseling’s’ categories of emotional distress and the corresponding cathartic process. See Scheff, 48.

¹¹⁶ The chart of emotional distress descriptions and their accompanying discharge processes is derived from Harvey Jackins, who is the founder and principal theorist of Re-evaluation Counseling.

¹¹⁷ Harvey Jackins, *The human side of human beings: The theory of re-evaluation counseling* (Seattle: Rational Islands Publishers, 1965); Arthur C. Bohart. "Role playing and interpersonal-conflict reduction," *Journal of Counseling Psychology* 24.1 (1977): 15.

¹¹⁸ Scheff, 50.

audience, constitute a complete cathartic experience. Applying this medical understanding of catharsis to live performance of a Greek play, especially one in which war trauma is recreated to some degree, it should be possible to measure the physical and psychological responses of audience members before, during, and immediately after a performance to gauge the level of emotional distress while witnessing the performance and catharsis as a result of spectatorship. Scheff was interested in Bernays' connection between ritual and catharsis, but warned against an emphasis on purely verbal descriptions of trauma and negative affect. Scheff argues that catharsis cannot be guaranteed by simply talking about events – there must be a physical reaction such as crying, laughing, gasping, and the like. He posits that, two elements are necessary for catharsis to occur. On the cognitive-emotional side, “mental images appear while an emotional experience is being relived” and on the somatic-emotional side, “previously felt emotions are released by abreaction in verbal and nonverbal expressions.”¹¹⁹ This is an important distinction in expressive spectatorship. The spectator must have a *physical reaction* to what they are viewing in order to have the *experience of catharsis*.

J.L. Moreno

Heavily influenced by Freud's work with psychoanalysis, J.L. Moreno spent years developing his own theory of interpersonal relationships, which led to the development of what he termed 'psychodrama'.¹²⁰ Moreno also introduced the concept of sociometry, a scientific approach he used to manipulate and analyse group dynamics. Moreno would study and analyse the natural relationships that he found existing within a group of patients by using mathematical and scientific techniques to determine why certain relationships existed. By understanding how and why certain decisions were made within the group, Moreno envisioned that individuals could

¹¹⁹ Meisiek, 803.

¹²⁰ See all four volumes of J.L. Moreno's *Psychodrama* published by Beacon House in New York from 1975-1977.

potentially adapt these skills to improve their daily lives.¹²¹ In 1932, Moreno first introduced group psychotherapy as a legitimate form of therapeutic practice to the American Psychiatric Association. For the next forty years he further developed his Theory of Interpersonal Relations and by doing so provided tools for 'sociodrama', 'psychodrama', 'sociometry', and 'sociatry'. In his monograph, *The Future of Man's World*, Moreno discussed why and how he “developed these sciences to counteract the economic materialism of Marx, the psychological materialism of Freud, and the technological materialism" of the modern industrial age.¹²² He articulates three primary reasons:

1. Spontaneity and creativity as the propelling forces in human progress, beyond and independent of libido and socioeconomic motives;
2. Love and mutual sharing as powerful, indispensable working principles within a group, alongside the seeking of goodness within ‘human intention’; and
3. A super dynamic community based on these principles that can be brought to realisation through new techniques.¹²³

Moreno’s theory of catharsis evolved alongside his work with psychodrama. His patients generated the creative plots of a ‘psychodrama’ by depicting negative and traumatic events from their own lives. They became the playwrights of their own dramas and the actors within their plays. By acting out certain negative experiences, Moreno claimed that his patients experienced catharsis. They worked through the painful event and were also able to rework the ending(s) of their own stories, thus resolving the negative event that was the original source of trauma. The performative element was key to his theory of catharsis, and the *location* of catharsis shifted from the spectator onto the patient performer and although there was a component of spectatorship to Moreno’s work (an audience observed the psychodramas), Moreno’s main

¹²¹ J.L. Moreno, *The Autobiography of J. L. Moreno, M.D.* (Abridged), (Moreno Archives, Harvard University, 1985) and the *Journal of Group Psychotherapy, Psychodrama & Sociometry* (Vol. 42, No. 1).

¹²² J.L. Moreno, *The Future of Man's World*, (New York: Beacon House, Psychodrama Monographs, 1947).

¹²³ J.L. Moreno, “Mental Catharsis and the Psychodrama,” *Sociometry*, Vol. 3. No. 3 (July 1940): 209-244.

concern was the experience of the patient performer. Richard Courtney, a noted drama therapist from the 1980s, describes J.L. Moreno as having “generalised goals of freeing spontaneity and releasing catharsis through ‘acting out’...”¹²⁴ Moreno’s work tended to focus on the therapeutic aspect of pathologising trauma and its treatment through psychodrama, which, in turn, influenced a generation of drama therapists who took his use of role-play and situational enactment of traumatic events and combined these techniques with traditional acting training, games, and creative exercises to evolve a new form of therapeutic treatment referred to as *drama therapy*.¹²⁵

Sue Jennings

A key theorist whose early work helped to launch and define the field of drama therapy is Sue Jennings.¹²⁶ Drawing upon Moreno’s work with psychodrama, Jennings appropriated *catharsis* and *cathartic-producing activities* into her therapeutic work with various populations.¹²⁷ Phil Jones, editor of *Drama as Therapy*¹²⁸ opines that drama therapy exists in a wide range of health systems, and drama therapists work with a number of different client groups. The expansion of this work into areas beyond the more traditional health settings of hospitals and clinics has steadily increased over the past two decades.¹²⁹ Drama therapy and drama therapists often promote a catharsis theory that straddles the literary (Aristotelian) and the

¹²⁴ Richard Courtney, “Drama Assessment,” *Drama in Therapy Volume One* (New York: Drama Book Specialists, 1981), 5.

¹²⁵ Moreno discusses his distrust for traditional theatre throughout J.L. Moreno’s *Psychodrama Volume One*, (New York: Beacon House, 1977).

¹²⁶ Sue Jennings, Ph.D has pioneered Dramatherapy and Playtherapy in the UK and Europe and has established it as a postgraduate practice. She is a founding member of the British Association of Dramatherapists, State Registered with the Health Professions Council, a full member of the British Association of Play Therapists and Play Therapy in the UK and of the National Association of Drama Therapy (USA).

¹²⁷ For a comprehensive overview of Sue Jennings work with dramatherapy, especially her theoretical framework, and the evolution of Jennings work within a new generation of drama therapists, see: *Drama in Therapy Volume One* (New York: Drama Book Specialists, 1981).

¹²⁸ Phil Jones, *Drama as Therapy, Volume 2, Clinical Work and Research into Practice* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), 10.

¹²⁹ Jones, 10.

Freudian (psychological) definitions. Jennings describes drama therapy as the “correspondence between what happens in ... therapy ... and the way children learn to play.”¹³⁰ She views the cathartic aspect of drama therapy as a necessary ingredient in assisting patients through a blockage in their life, that, if left alone, could “become an issue” later on...¹³¹ Drama therapist Elaine S. Portner defines *catharsis* through the lens of therapeutic ‘play.’ She sees *catharsis* as the “expressions of needs and wishes” resultant as “a coping mechanism to master, by repetition, an anxiety-provoking experience.”¹³² Nellie McCaslin, a drama therapist based in education, offers a similar definition of catharsis. She suggests that catharsis is an emotional and physical release resulting from creative drama for a patient, producing a level of self-revelation.¹³³ Indeed, leading drama therapists in North America and England tend to employ an Aristotelian interpretation of catharsis, and a therapeutic approach that involves theatre games, creativity, breathing, imaging techniques and elements of text analysis found in traditional Western actor training.¹³⁴ The idea that patients engage with conventional drama and drama games within a therapeutic context with the express aim of inciting *catharsis* for patients is a departure from Moreno’s view. For Jennings and her colleagues in the field of drama therapy, the focus is on the use of games and activities, the enactment of myths and simple stories, rather than the protocols of naturalistic theatre (inciting action, rising action, climax, resolution all occurring within an enacted narrative) or on patients writing their personal traumatic events into a drama. In this

¹³⁰ Jones, 35.

¹³¹ Jones, 35.

¹³² Elaine S. Portner, “Drama in Therapy: Experiences with a Ten Year Old,” *Drama in Therapy Volume One* (New York: Drama Book Specialists, 1981), 266.

¹³³ Nellie McCaslin, “Drama in Education: Opportunity for Social Growth,” *Drama in Therapy Volume One* (New York: Drama Book Specialists, 1981), 335.

¹³⁴ For an overview of the field of dramatherapy, see Gertrud Schattner and Richard Courtney, *Drama in Therapy, Volume I: Children* (New York: Drama Book Specialists, 1981); Phil Jones, *Drama as Therapy, Volume 2: Clinical Work and Research into Practice* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010).

sense, Jennings owes a debt to Jung whose belief that mythmaking was one of the necessary ways the unconscious part of the human psyche could be expressed. Jung suggested that for the human individuation process to produce healthy and fully aware human beings, myths and the archetypes found within them were important keys to unlocking and understanding the individual and the collective unconscious. Jung argued that humans project their inner world onto an external one and that mythology assisted enormously with this external projection.¹³⁵ Freud, on the other hand, placed utmost value on talk therapy. He promoted the value of narrative's role in unlocking certain conscious *and unconscious* trauma. The unconscious could contain and shield trauma and needed to be tapped, unlocked, and processed through talk therapy in order for an individual to experience true catharsis. In contrast, Jung's theory on myth asserted that myths are the result of the projection of the collective rather than the personal unconscious onto the external world. For Freud, myth was impersonal yet could help an individual articulate his or her own story; for Jung myth originated and functioned as a critical link with the unconscious, allowing humans to experience the unconscious, to find and articulate the trauma, and to then release the trauma. For Jennings and her fellow drama therapists, the enactment of myths and simple stories became a bridge, of sorts, between Jung and Freud. The stories served to animate a narrative of individual and collective trauma and allowed drama therapists to shape these narratives into treatment protocols using theatre-therapy assessment tools.

Theatre and Catharsis

Augusto Boal

Expounding on Moreno's work with patient performers who write and rewrite their personal traumatic events into dramatic action, and drama therapy's incorporation of theatre

¹³⁵ While there are many books by and about C. G. Jung, one of the most helpful for this chapter is *Jung on Mythology*. Selected and introduced by Robert A. Segal (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998).

techniques for therapeutic advantage, Augusto Boal, through his *Theatre of the Oppressed*, suggests that an audience be part of the decision-making for the direction a drama may take. By actively engaging in – and indeed, determining - the emotional journey of the dramatic action, and by proposing solutions to confront given obstacles, Boal advocates for an audience capable of rehearsing these problems to prepare for difficulties within their own lives. The *conflict* is what allows an audience to actively participate in solving a given problem creatively. Through this approach to theatre creation, Boal migrates the placement of catharsis into new territory: that of *shared catharsis* between spectator and actor (the ‘spect-actor’). Both are equally engaged in developing the dramatic action, and both are equally invested in finding and implementing an effective solution to the inherent obstacle. In his book, *The Boal Method of Theatre and Therapy*¹³⁶, Boal articulates his thoughts of *catharsis*:

We speak of catharsis as if all its forms were the same. However, differences exist, are important and can even work in opposition to each other. Whatever the form, catharsis...means purgation, purification, cleaning out. There lies the one and only major similarity between the different forms: the individual or group purifies itself of some element or other which is disturbing its internal equilibrium. The purging of an agent of disturbance is the one element common to all cathartic phenomena.¹³⁷

This ‘purgation, purification, cleaning out’ of the ‘element disturbing (the) equilibrium’ is therefore shared by both the viewer (who is also the participant) and the participant (who is also the viewer). Catharsis resides in the ‘spect-actor’. Boal distinguishes between the different forms this purgation may take:

The differences reside in the nature of what is purged, eliminated. For me, four principal forms of catharsis exist: a medical form, the Aristotelian form, the form used by Moreno, and that used by the Theatre of the Oppressed (including the Cop in the Head techniques, of which catharsis is an integral part.)¹³⁸

¹³⁶ Augusto Boal, *The Boal Method of Theatre and Therapy* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995),

1.

¹³⁷ Boal, 68-69.

¹³⁸ Boal, 68-69.

Boal's definition and application of catharsis, and its role within his *Theatre of the Oppressed*, both accepts and rejects traditional literary and psychological definitions of catharsis. Boal's reading of catharsis has evolved alongside his own political trajectory from a Marxist, who challenged an Aristotelian catharsis as inducing passivity to a later therapeutically-oriented artist who sought to salvage catharsis. Boal's relationship to and his understanding of Marxism, and its influence on the development of his work is seen in his reformist politics as reflected in his practice. Carmel O'Sullivan, in her article, "Searching for the Marxist in Boal" writes:

Whereas Marx was committed to gaining a deeper insight into the driving forces of the contemporary world as a means of changing the form and content of the whole of society, Boal's approach appears to encourage people to look for that insight in terms of their own lives, thus effecting change for themselves, exercising an individualist attitude towards empowerment.¹³⁹

Some, like O'Sullivan, claim that that Boal's movement away from "changing the form and content of the whole of society" toward a focus on the individual results in "an idealist method (that) undermines all his claims."¹⁴⁰ For Boal, a socialist perspective collided with, yet was reborn within his artistic practice in a quest for political and therapeutic outcomes. As his practice focused more on inducing a therapeutic result, he was seen as aligning more closely with a capitalist regime. His movement away from Marxism to more capitalistic teachings and practice timed with his kidnapping, arrest, torture, and eventual exile from Brazil to Argentina, where he remained for five years. Perhaps his personal and no doubt traumatic experience presented Boal with a need for his own catharsis, his own processing of psychological trauma. By 1973 he had published, *Theatre of the Oppressed*, offering a theatrical method that is still practised today in communities around the world. The notion of transforming audiences into active participants in the theatrical experience became central to Boal's teachings. Employing a

¹³⁹ Carmel O'Sullivan, "Searching for the Marxist in Boal," *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*, Volume 6, Issue 1, 2001. (Taylor & Francis Online).

¹⁴⁰ O'Sullivan, 2001.

double meaning of ‘body’ – using both the individual ‘body’ and the Marxist reading of a collective ‘body’ – Boal began to integrate the personal and the political aspects of his life. He embraced a more Aristotelian reading of *catharsis* while working throughout South America within poor communities faced with civil wars and inattentive governments, whose people he viewed as oppressed.¹⁴¹

For Boal, then, *catharsis* is located within ‘the spect-actor’ – a combination of the spectator and actor (or onstage character) – and occurs as a result of an active engagement in the onstage dramatic action. The two fundamentally linked principles within the Theatre of the Oppressed include helping the ‘spect-actor’ become the protagonist of the story; firstly, serving as captain of the story, which may include changing the ending of the action; and secondly, extrapolating into ‘real life’ the rehearsed actions within the dramatic (onstage) story.¹⁴² Boal’s acknowledgment of the four forms of catharsis including medical, Aristotelian, psychological, and theatrical (as employed by Theatre of the Oppressed) is unlike other theorists discussed in this chapter. For Boal, “theatre – or theatricality – is this capacity... allows man to observe himself in action...”¹⁴³ and through this observation, to acquire the necessary self-knowledge to become both the subject and the observer of the action, and to actively participate in the cathartic element of the experience.

Candice Monson, *Prolonged Exposure Therapy and Cognitive Processing Therapy: Evidence-based Psychotherapies for PTSD*

Post-Freudian understanding of catharsis is an interesting and complex matter. Within the traditional therapeutic community of late-twentieth and early twenty-first centuries,

¹⁴¹ For a clear overview of Boal’s transition from an artistic practice influenced by Marxism to a more therapeutically inclined practice, see: David Davis and Carmel O’Sullivan, “Boal and the Shifting Sands: the Un-Political Master Swimmer,” *New Theatre Quarterly*, Volume 16, Issue 03 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, August 2000).

¹⁴² Boal, 68-69.

¹⁴³ Boal, 68-69.

psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, and even medical doctors treating psychological traumas have moved away from the concept of catharsis-as-purgation and catharsis-as-cleansing (Freud & Breuer; Scheff; Moreno) occurring only in and for the patient. New concepts have evolved that address the essential requirement of longevity of the cleansed state. It is no longer a standard therapeutic objective for a patient to only experience a cathartic ‘purge.’ Rather, the *state of catharsis* is now viewed as a long-term condition for which to strive. Catharsis, therefore, is seen as stage one of the healing process, with the ability to maintain a “cleansed” or “purged” state as a crucial second phase.

Evidence-based psychotherapies have been developed to treat Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in both civilian and military populations, including Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT).¹⁴⁴ According to Candice Monson, a leading authority on and creator of CPT clinical research, the dissemination strategies for the treatment protocols involve attendance at a workshop and often include post-workshop consultation, which can be provided in a one-on-one and group format with or without digital recordings of the therapy sessions. The clinical outcomes of CPT have established it as one of the most effective and efficient psychotherapeutic interventions for reducing PTSD symptomology, as well as reducing the sequelae of comorbid or associated disorders.¹⁴⁵ Monson and her colleagues view the concept of catharsis as “old fashioned and damaging” and, in an interview with this researcher, took great pains to explain that Post-Freudian psychological work with PTSD no longer views catharsis for the sake of catharsis as critical. Monson articulates the view that catharsis is seen as an “early moment in successful talk therapy practice” but is not the most important part of the practice. *Habituation,*

¹⁴⁴ Monson et al., 2006.

¹⁴⁵ C.M. Monson, S.J. Fredman, A. Macdonald, N.D. Pukay-Marin, P.A. Resick, & P.P. Schnurr, “Effect of Cognitive-Behavioral Couple Therapy for PTSD: A Randomized Controlled Trial,” *Journal of the American Medical Association* (2012): 308, 700-709.

or learning to live with the release of the sequelae, is the goal of serious PTSD treatment.

Monson points out:

CPT has been recommended as an efficacious treatment by the National Centre for PTSD in the United States, and has been widely disseminated within the United States Veterans Affairs system.

CPT is a specific type of cognitive-behavioural psychotherapy for PTSD and its common comorbidities (with) a primary focus on the meaning an individual makes in response to a traumatic event, and how the person copes as they try to regain a sense of mastery or control over their life.¹⁴⁶

The therapeutic usage of CPT requires a twelve-session protocol that Monson describes as ‘manualised.’ She divides these twelve sessions into three distinct phases: Education, Processing, and Challenging. In phase one, patients are taught about the symptoms of PTSD, the treatment model, and the connection between thoughts and feelings. In phase two, narrative engagement occurs through a focus on the traumatic events. Patients write narratives as a way of identifying where they have become “stuck” in their thinking and feelings about the event. In phase three, the therapist and patient work together to examine the client’s thoughts about the trauma and to create more balanced beliefs about what the trauma means about himself or herself, others, and the world. Worth noting is Monson’s additional version of CPT which she has termed ‘CPT-Cognitive Only’ (CPT-C). This treatment protocol does not include writing a trauma account, and interestingly has been shown to be as efficacious as CPT in reducing the symptoms of PTSD.¹⁴⁷ Monson has conducted four different randomised controlled trials establishing the efficacy of the treatment,¹⁴⁸ including a long-term follow-up study of clients five or more years after treatment that has found that their improvements are long lasting.¹⁴⁹ “Taken together, these

¹⁴⁶ Resick, Monson, & Chard, 2008.

¹⁴⁷ Resick, Galvoski et al., 2008.

¹⁴⁸ Chard, 2005; Monson et al., 2006; Resick, Galvoski et al., 2008; Resick, Nishith, Weaver, Astin, & Feuer, 2002.

¹⁴⁹ Resick et al., 2012.

results have led CPT to be recommended at the ‘highest level’ in the U.S. Veteran Affairs Department of Defence Clinical Practice Guidelines for PTSD.”¹⁵⁰

Understanding this current form of treatment for PTSD is relevant in the discussion of catharsis and its migration within the psychological literature as well as providing a new context for viewing modern productions of ancient Greek drama along a spectrum of healing. In 2012, Monson was introduced to the possibility of patient engagement with ancient Greek tragedies and the development of their own trauma narratives as a Co-Principal Investigator of *The Women & War Project* (WWP)¹⁵¹ during which time she began to view the inclusion of such engagement as a strong adjunct to her current research and practice. In phase one of CPT, repeated talking about the incident or series of incidents of trauma-inducing event(s) constitutes ‘education.’ During this first phase, the therapist may employ such techniques as telling the story of the incident, or having the patient view images from the distressing event, listening to an audio recording of sounds associated with the traumatic event, and possibly even reading aloud text from a play that describes a similar event. In Phase Two, ‘processing’ involves the patient writing their own trauma narrative. It is during this second phase that Monson sees a possibility of viewing an ancient Greek war-themed play to trigger an emotional response (catharsis) that could lead to the patient’s ability to write his or her own trauma narrative.¹⁵² During Phase Three, termed the ‘challenging phase,’ Monson suggests that PTSD patients might read aloud the role of a Greek chorus alongside trained actors conducted in a private and safe environment to better understand their own traumas. By incorporating ancient Greek tragedy within the CPT framework, Monson is bridging the disciplines of theatre practice and traditional psychotherapy.

¹⁵⁰ Veterans Health Administration & Department of Defense, 2004.

¹⁵¹ *The Women & War Project* is discussed more fully in Chapters Six and Seven.

¹⁵² Monson’s engagement with ancient Greek tragedies has been entirely contained within *The Women & War Project*, which will be discussed in detail in Chapter Six.

It is important to underscore that Monson's work focuses on accessing the patient's conscious mind and her treatment's focus is on the present and the future. She has moved away from work with the subconscious and interpretation of dreams and symbols. The integration of Greek drama into her work would be one tool whereby patients could both witness various war-related traumas *through the language of the plays* while at the same time respond to parallels of such trauma in their own lives.

Conclusion

Catharsis located within the spectator engaged in the act of witnessing theatrical performance finds its origin in the fifth century BCE tragedies. Aristotle codified this catharsis in his *Poetics* in the fourth century BCE. The migration of catharsis within dramatic criticism from a definition involving purgation or purification of audience emotions *in response to* events occurring onstage, to a placement on the dramaturgically effective arrangement of plot and dramatic incidents *capable of providing* a "clear direction" to an audience has been argued by numerous literary scholars. The shift of catharsis away from the audience and onto the patient-as-performer-of-traumatic-event that developed first with Freud and Breuer and eventually evolved with psychiatrist J.L. Moreno in the 1940s in his work with *psychodrama*¹⁵³ has continued to evolve with new generations of drama therapists adapting techniques for a variety of therapeutic practices. Monson, a leading authority on the treatment of PTSD in North America, has begun to examine the benefit of introducing ancient Greek tragedies to be read aloud by patients in treatment for psychological traumas in an attempt to produce cathartic epiphanies within the context of Cognitive Processing Therapy. The act of co-creating dramatic endings capable of yielding cathartic effect can be attributed to Augusto Boal, whose work is still practiced today in many parts of the world and is no doubt influencing a new generation of

¹⁵³ J.L. Moreno, *Psychodrama* (1977).

theatre and therapy.¹⁵⁴ This migration of catharsis, continuing to occur over hundreds of years, suggests a primal connection between the act of communal storytelling and emotional health.

By reviewing historical and modern definitions and placement of catharsis within literary, psychological, theatrical and cultural contexts, it is possible to trace its evolution. I argue that the role of catharsis remains vital in the twenty-first century. Post-Freudian catharsis connects social science research, clinical practice, and humanities scholarship in new and synergetic ways. The various theoretical approaches discussed in this chapter represent significant historical benchmarks in catharsis theory and help to frame a larger discussion of Greek drama as a potential healing agent. The psychological potential for theatre performance to yield catharsis (for an audience, a performer, an organisation) can be seen to address the question of whether Greek drama can serve as an effective medium through which to interrogate gender and war and render therapeutic benefits. Epics have remained capable of representing trauma for a theatre audience, a patient, and an organisation facing its own internal conflicts. Spectatorship, and indeed 'spect-actorship', offers compelling opportunities to witness and cognitively process human experience. Arguably, by witnessing, taking part in, and suffering through the tragedies of war personally or collectively, Greek tragedy continues to provide recognition and the opportunity for psychological processing for spectators and performers alike.

¹⁵⁴ One example of Boal's influence can be found in the practice of Organizational Theatre. In this practice, trained theatre professionals assess obstacles found within a specific work environment. The artists then introduce the technique of devised dramatic story creation. *Muthos* is observed by the artist/organization in the dramaturgical development; linearity, the crucial "organization of events," is developed into dramatic action by the group with a clear beginning, middle and end. An Organizational Theatre 'play' is rooted in organizational 'truth' and follows a series of dramatic actions devised to confront the organizational conflict(s). The ending of the 'play' resolves the conflict, placing catharsis in the 'spect-actor'. For more information on this practice, see: See Stefen Meisief, "Which Catharsis Do They Mean? Aristotle, Moreno, Boal and Organization Theatre" in *Organization Studies*, 25(5): 797-816 (London: SAGE Publications, 2004).

Chapter 3: The Paradox, Power, and Performance of Trauma

Even as it is claimed, with various emphases, that we inhabit a "century of trauma," a "trauma culture," a "trauma paradigm," or an "empire of trauma," the question remains disturbingly—or perhaps promisingly—unresolved of what it means to situate trauma at the heart of modern history and culture. —Jared Stark¹⁵⁵

The Athenian historian Herodotus documented an early account of psycho-physical trauma associated with war. In fact, his may be the first such written account. Discussing the 490 BCE battle of Marathon, Herodotus describes an incident similar to what might now be diagnosed as PTSD in the case of one soldier known only as Epizelus. During the battle, a force of 10,000 Greeks blocked and repelled a Persian invasion of more than 20,000:

There fell in this battle of Marathon, on the side of the barbarians, about six thousand and four hundred men; on that of the Athenians, one hundred and ninety-two. Such was the number of the slain on the one side and the other. A strange prodigy likewise happened at this fight. Epizelus, the son of Cuphagoras, an Athenian, was in the thick of the fray, and behaving himself as a brave man should, when suddenly he was stricken with blindness, without blow of sword or dart, and this blindness continued thenceforth during the whole of his after life. . . . he said that a gigantic warrior, with a huge beard, which shaded all his shield, stood over against him, but the ghostly semblance passed him by, and slew the man at his side.¹⁵⁶

This devastating battle scene containing 200 dead Greeks and the bodies of more than 6,000 Persians traumatised Epizelus, causing him to suddenly and incomprehensibly lose his sight. Taken from the field and examined by military doctors, the physicians find no physical wounds. Epizelus complains of losing his sight moments after a terrifying near-fatal encounter with a Persian. He never regains his sight. It may be that he experienced a case of hysterical blindness, a condition occasionally seen during combat today.¹⁵⁷ While this story illustrates a

¹⁵⁵ Jared Stark, *Comparative Literature Studies* Vol. 48, No. 3, Special Issue Trials of Trauma (2011): 435-452.

¹⁵⁶ George Rawlinson, Sir Henry Creswicke Rawlinson, Sir John Gardner Wilkinson, *The History of Herodotus: A New English Version, Volume 3* (London: John Murray, 1859), 505-506.

¹⁵⁷ See: http://www.alandiashram.org/school/school_html/articles/ptsd.html.

man experiencing PTSD-related symptoms on the battlefield, it serves as evidence that fifth-century BCE war trauma was indeed experienced and recorded; and that, just as today, psychological trauma caused by war required healing.

As catharsis is postulated on the presumption that there is a trauma to be purged or otherwise healed, it is helpful to examine the deployment of *trauma* within twenty-first century studies of PTSD, cultural theory, and performance. Interrogating trauma within the humanities for the purposes of cultural and literary criticism and performance analysis has become an important tool for scholars and artists alike. With decades of war, civil unrest, and domestic and social disturbances throughout the world in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have come fresh questions surrounding the nature of traumatic experience and how that experience may be presented, represented, and psychologically processed with and through theatrical performance. Trauma theories have been steadily developing at the intersection of such disciplines as psychology, history, cultural and performance studies, and the dramatic arts and can be found on the academic agendas of such institutions as the University of Leeds' Faculty of Arts Centre for the Medical Humanities in the UK, University of Davis' Humanities Institute, New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, and the University of Edinburgh's Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities in Scotland.¹⁵⁸ It is no longer unusual for mental health practitioners and clinicians involved in furthering insights into psychological conditions such as PTSD to be found working alongside literary and cultural theorists, or creating new research partnerships with practicing theatre artists such as within *The Women & War Project* (WWP) based in

¹⁵⁸ While obviously not an exhaustive list, these four universities offer an interesting range of trauma studies: University of Leeds' Faculty of Arts Centre for the Medical Humanities (http://www.leeds.ac.uk/arts/info/125123/centre_for_medical_humanities/); University of California, Davis' Humanities Institute (<http://dhi.ucdavis.edu/>); New York University, Tisch School of the Arts (<http://www.tisch.nyu.edu/page/home.html>); and the University of Edinburgh's Institute of Advanced Humanities (<http://www.iash.ed.ac.uk/>).

Canada. This three-year creative research endeavour brought together an international team of prominent social scientists, humanities scholars, military researchers, neurologists treating brain trauma, and practicing visual and performing artists to explore new ways to address and treat PTSD, research gender, and evaluate the role of catharsis as a healing agent through live performance.¹⁵⁹ Contemporary discourse regarding traumatic experience can be found within psychoanalytical, psychological, historical, political and artistic settings. Indeed, a new discipline referred to as the ‘Medical Humanities’ intends to capture this range of disciplinary work. This new field of research is defined as an interdisciplinary adjunct to medicine and applies all aspects of the humanities (literature, philosophy, ethics, history, and religion), of the social sciences (anthropology, cultural theory, psychology and sociology), and of the arts (visual and performance) to medical education and practice.¹⁶⁰ I assert that by drawing on such a broad range of creative and disciplinary theories and practices, multidisciplinary and indeed interdisciplinary approaches can occur that yield helpful processes and data for examining the complexities and evolution of meaning, of treatment, and of the performance of *trauma*.¹⁶¹ It is my intention to investigate the connection between *catharsis* and *trauma*, and their relevance for modern performances of ancient Greek drama within this chapter.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹ Another example of this is the work is the current partnership between leading neurologist Dr. Michael Cusimano at St. Michael’s Hospital in Toronto and myself. We are discussing the development of theatrical narratives based on the personal testimonies of his patients suffering with traumatic brain injury. These narratives are intended for multiple audiences: his residents-in-training; other patients; and theatre audiences.

¹⁶⁰ While there are a number of reputable sources for defining ‘Medical Humanities’, I turn to two in particular: New York University’s School of Medicine: <http://medhum.med.nyu.edu/> accessed March 24, 2013; and the University of Leeds Centre for Medical Humanities: http://www.leeds.ac.uk/arts/info/125123/centre_for_medical_humanities/ last accessed March 24, 2013.

¹⁶¹ I use ‘multidisciplinary’ to signify the combination or involvement of several academic disciplines for professional specialisations in an approach to a topic or problem; I use ‘interdisciplinary’ to mean of or relating to more than one branch of knowledge and also to suggest brand new approaches and methodologies across discipline.

¹⁶² According to the Cleveland Clinic, the field of Medical Humanities (MH) started to come into being nearly 50 years ago. Both MH and the field of bioethics evolved out of the new tools of medicine that

Trauma translates as ‘wound’ from the Greek τραύμα. The passage of trauma from a pathologic model (outward physical wound) to a psychoanalytic model (psychic or emotional wound) occurred with the advent of new biological and neurological resources developed to “reinforce the somatic origins of mental illness”¹⁶³ which arrived in the 1870s and 1880s as groups of psychological researchers began to “argue the radical case for a largely psychodynamic model of mind.”¹⁶⁴ Roger Luckhurst’s discussion of this significant shift and the resultant permutations within psychoanalytic and psychological realms is particularly useful in understanding the evolution of trauma theory.¹⁶⁵ In his book, *The Trauma Question*, Luckhurst discusses the fields of cultural memory and trauma studies, tracing the ways in which ideas and definitions of trauma have become a major element in contemporary Western conceptions of the self. Locating the origins of *trauma* across psychiatric, legal and cultural-political sources from the 1860s to the present day, Luckhurst discusses the nature and extent of ‘trauma culture.’¹⁶⁶ Jared Stark, in his review of Luckhurst’s book (in which he also discusses the opinions of Cathy Caruth, Dominick LaCapra, Ruth Ley, and Shoshana Felman on what they believe it means to situate trauma at the heart of modern history and culture),¹⁶⁷ examines the question of whether trauma is capable of defining historical periods (e.g. the assassination of Martin Luther King, 9/11, the Oklahoma bombing, or the Vietnam War and the many psychologically destroyed

were presented to practitioners and the concomitant questions being raised about the use of those tools, especially by students. See: <http://my.clevelandclinic.org/about-cleveland-clinic/ethics-humanities-care/medical-humanities.aspx>.

¹⁶³ Roger Luckhurst, *The Trauma Question* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 34-49; Catherine Silverstone, *Shakespeare, Trauma and contemporary Performance* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 8.

¹⁶⁴ Silverstone, 8.

¹⁶⁵ Luckhurst, 34-49.

¹⁶⁶ Luckhurst, 34-49.

¹⁶⁷ Jared Stark, “Traumatic Futures: A Review Article” in *Comparative Literature Studies*, Volume 48, Number 3, 2011: 435-452.

veterans re-entering society).¹⁶⁸ For this chapter, however, the relevant questions remain “Does trauma link time and geography, from the ancient Greeks to the modern North Americans?” and “Does trauma require a cathartic release, specifically one offered through performance?” By tracing trauma through the psychoanalytic work of Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan, Luce Irigaray, Laura Brown, and the cognitive and medical work of Jonathan Shay, I hope to unlock its history and meaning within psychoanalytic and cultural studies and address the central research questions of this thesis, specifically whether or not Greek drama can be an effective healing instrument in modernity; and whether trauma can be purged (catharsis) or otherwise ‘healed’ through spectatorship at a live theatrical performance. The question of whether or not it is possible to adequately represent trauma onstage using a surrogate (actor) to narratively and physically embody trauma’s unique and discrete characteristics and narrative will be taken up in a subsequent chapter.

The psychoanalytic, literary, cultural, and theatrical usages of both *trauma* and *catharsis* dictate their corporal and temporal placement, with each discipline offering precise descriptions of the terms. The goal of this chapter is to interrogate the deployment of *trauma*, and to reveal its relationship to catharsis. To do this, I will review Freud’s notion of ‘psychical trauma’ and ‘traumatic neurosis’; discuss Lacan’s ‘real-symbolic-imaginary’ triad of psychoanalytic orders,¹⁶⁹ discuss Irigaray’s rejection of Freud and Lacan’s ‘phallogocentric and masculinist’ theories, and examine Laura Brown’s feminist approach to defining and treating trauma. I will end with an examination of Jonathan Shay’s incorporation of Homer into his clinical work with

¹⁶⁸ Luckhurst. 201.

¹⁶⁹ Jacques Lacan, "Symbol and Language," *The Language of the Self* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1956); Jacques Lacan, "The Signification of the Phallus," *Écrits* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1958); and Jacques Lacan, "The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience," *Écrits: a Selection*. trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Tavistock, 1977), 1-7.

veterans suffering with PTSD as well as review his theory of ‘situational recognition’ and his use of the chorus to create a viewing position for the traumatised spectator. Throughout the chapter, the psychoanalytic, psychological, narrative, and performative aspects of trauma will be discussed as I examine the migration of trauma from outward to inward, and from physical to psychological. I will briefly reference the condition of ‘public trauma’ caused by a response to an event such as 9/11 or the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing, but will discuss how such public trauma might be represented onstage in performance in a subsequent chapter.¹⁷⁰ The relationship between traumatic experience and the history of trauma, along with a conclusion that examines the represent-ability of traumatic experience, particularly in live theatre, will be undertaken here.

Freud and Trauma

In 1920, Freud published *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* in which he offered an account of hysteria. Some have questioned whether or not Freud was responding to the changing landscape of mechanised life initiated by railways.¹⁷¹ Both Silverstone and Luckhurst suggest that Freud’s work developed as a result of railways providing opportunities for physical trauma (work-related injuries) and that these injuries evolved into psychic injuries as patients questioned whether or not they would ever be able to work again. Freud did see and treat physical injuries that were causing psychic trauma.¹⁷² As discussed in the previous chapter on catharsis, Freud and Breuer’s work on hysteria in 1880 found Freud arguing that the root cause of hysteria resulted from a violent emotional incident (as opposed to a physical trauma) experienced by a patient, one that required an emotional and/or physical release (catharsis).¹⁷³ According to Barrod, Dunad,

¹⁷⁰ Silverstone, 8.

¹⁷¹ Silverstone, 9; Luckhurst, 34.

¹⁷² Sigmund Freud, *Introductory lectures on Psychoanalysis* (New York: Liveright Publishing, W.W. Norton & Company Inc., 1989); Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE (1920): 18: 1-64.

¹⁷³ T.J. Scheff, *Catharsis in Healing, Ritual, and Drama*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979), 26.

and Freud himself, the term *traumatic neurosis* designated a psycho-pathological state characterised by various disturbances arising as a result of an intense emotional shock or a physical trauma, either right away or as a delayed reaction.¹⁷⁴ From 1850 on, a number of clinical observations based on this definition were reported, often in the wake of military action or railroad disasters, and related either to hysteria or to ‘neurasthenia’, a medical condition characterised by lassitude, fatigue, headache, and irritability.¹⁷⁵ By 1889, Hermann Oppenheimer had introduced the term *traumatic neurosis* into the psychiatric lexicon to describe a response to emotional shock or physical injury triggering an emotional affect.¹⁷⁶ Freud constructed his own theory of neurosis using Oppenheimer’s model of *traumatic neurosis*, emphasising the sexual character of the triggering factor.¹⁷⁷ Freud’s reading of trauma suggested that a subject may have had a predisposition for or a tolerance of trauma and that trauma could be located internally or externally, depending on a patient’s “history and mental organisation.”¹⁷⁸ Regardless of the location of trauma, and pertinent to a contemporary reading of ancient Greek drama and its portrayal of war trauma, is the fact that Freud’s concept of trauma achieved its full immediacy only when historical events in the 20th century brought war neuroses to the forefront of public consciousness.¹⁷⁹ Freud’s observations and analysis of war neuroses were stated in a paper for the 5th International Psychoanalytical Congress in 1918. In the “Introduction to the

¹⁷⁴ Claude Barrois, *Les névroses traumatiques*. (Paris: Dunod; Ferenczi, Sándor, et al., 1988; 1921); Claude Barrois, *Psycho-analysis and the war neuroses* (Vienna: International Psycho-Analytical Press, 1988); see also: Sigmund Freud, “Introductory lectures on psycho-analysis.,” *SE*, (1915-1917):15-16; Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. *SE*, 18: 1-64; and D. Casoni, (2002); and ‘Never twice without thrice’: Outline for traumatic neurosis. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 83, 137-160.

¹⁷⁵ See: <http://www.answers.com/topic/traumatic-neurosis#ixzz2OTRyv3Xr>

<http://www.answers.com/topic/traumatic-neurosis#ixzz2OTRLPUMH> accessed March 15, 2013.

¹⁷⁶ Hermann Oppenheim, *Die traumatischen Neurosen* (Berlin: A. Hirschwald, 1889).

¹⁷⁷ Sigmund Freud. (1915-1917). Introductory lectures on psycho-analysis. *SE*, 15-16; also Freud, *SE* (1920): 18: 1-64.

¹⁷⁸ Freud, *SE* (1920): 18: 15-16.

¹⁷⁹ Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, ed. Todd Dufresne, trans. Gregory C. Richter (New York: Broadview Editions, 2011).

Psychoanalysis of War Neuroses,”¹⁸⁰ Freud articulates a distinction between war neuroses caused by war-induced trauma and neuroses developed during a time of peace, caused by a serious fright or an accident:

In traumatic and war neuroses the person’s Ego arms itself against a danger that seems to threaten him from without, or which is embodied by him through an ego formation. In peacetime transference neuroses, the Ego appraises its own Libido as the enemy, whose claims appear threatening to it. Both times, the Ego fears its harm: in the latter through the Libido, in the former through external violence.¹⁸¹

Freud restates this belief in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* where he argues:

In the case of war neuroses, the fact that the same symptoms sometimes came about without the intervention of any gross mechanical force seemed...bewildering. In the case of the ordinary traumatic neuroses, two characteristics emerge prominently: first, that the chief weight in their causation seems to rest upon the factor of surprise, of fright...and secondly, that a wound or injury inflicted simultaneously works as a rule *against* the development of a neurosis.¹⁸²

Freud’s notion of ‘psychical trauma’ – trauma that he believed required the act of ‘calling up’ - shows a link between the interiority of trauma and the exteriority of catharsis:

In traumatic neuroses the operative cause of the illness is not the trifling physical injury but the affect of fright – the psychical trauma. In an analogous manner, our investigations reveal, for many, if not for most, hysterical symptoms, precipitating causes which can only be described as psychical traumas. Any experience which calls up distressing affects – such as those of fright, anxiety, shame or physical pain – may operate as a trauma of this kind.¹⁸³

This “calling up” of “distressing affects” and events formed the basis for Freud and Breuer’s catharsis theory. It is the “affect of fright” or “psychical trauma” that is, in fact, the primary definition of trauma Freud appears to assert. He refers to physical injury as ‘trifling’ suggesting

¹⁸⁰ Sigmund Freud, “Introduction to the Psychoanalysis of War Neuroses,” *Gesammelte Werke*, (1917-1920): 323-324.

¹⁸¹ Freud (1920): 323-324.

¹⁸² Peter Gay, ed., *The Freud Reader* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1989), 598.

¹⁸³ Sigmund Freud and Joseph Breuer, *Studies on Hysteria, 1895* (New York: Avon Books. 1966), 40.

that the impact of physical trauma is not as critical as internalised emotional trauma. For Freud, the patient/participant's re-enactment of the emotionally or physically traumatic incident(s) simultaneously translated trauma into narrative while outwardly expressing trauma through 'performance' or affect. Even though Freud's placement of trauma was under negotiation (from a psychological to a physical experience and the reverse), he retained the language of the wound as injury.¹⁸⁴

Lacan and Trauma

French psychoanalyst and psychiatrist Jacques Lacan offered a theory of trauma in 1932 in his doctoral thesis *De la psychose paranoïaque dans ses rapports avec la personnalité* ('On paranoid psychosis as it relates to the personality').¹⁸⁵ While the primary focus of his thesis was psychosis, Lacan began to explore a concept he later fully developed, his concept of 'the real' as "that which is outside language and ...resists symbolization absolutely."¹⁸⁶ In Seminar XI, Lacan describes the concept of 'the real' as 'the impossible' - impossible to imagine, impossible to integrate into the Symbolic, and impossible to attain.¹⁸⁷ For Lacan, it is this resistance to symbolisation that lends 'the real' its traumatic value. If 'the real' is a container for the unspoken, and if it lacks any possible mediation, it stands to reason that anxiety-producing trauma may intensify there. This trauma could be seen as "the essential object which is not an object any longer, but is something faced with which all words cease and all categories fail."¹⁸⁸ This hermetically sealed placement of trauma within 'the real' prevents its naming, prevents its

¹⁸⁴ Silverstone, 8-25.

¹⁸⁵ Jacques Lacan, *De la psychose paranoïaque dans ses rapports avec la personnalité* (Paris: Librairie le François, 1932); Jacques Lacan., *Le séminaire XXIII, 1975-76: Le sinthome. Ornicar?* (1976-1977): 2-5; Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan. Book 3: The psychoses, 1955-1956*, trans. Russell Grigg (London: Routledge, 1993).

¹⁸⁶ Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: Book II: The Ego in Freud's Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis 1954-1955* (W. W. Norton & Company, 1991).

¹⁸⁷ Lacan, (1991).

¹⁸⁸ Lacan, (1991).

processing, and ultimately prevents its ability for catharsis. If trauma cannot be described, and if trauma cannot be integrated into the symbolic and conceptualised, it must remain locked away and unspoken within the boundary of ‘the real’. Within ‘the real’ catharsis cannot be married with trauma ‘realness’ – and trauma must exist in isolation. Trauma or a traumatic event may become a symptom that ties together the other two orders. In exploring Lacan’s theory of ‘the real’ one can see that trauma cannot be articulated or recalled in the order it occurred; indeed, trauma becomes something unspeakable and lacking the symbolic order of language with which to process the experience. If, as Freud suggested, trauma must be accessed through a cathartic act to be released, and if Lacan’s theory of ‘the real’ does not provide the ability for articulating and processing trauma, one must assume the trauma will reside in ‘the real’ unresolved, and may remain recorded in the real as a limit point to memory. The question this begs is whether this trauma will eventually reappear as a symptomatic enigma able to open up a certain anxiety?¹⁸⁹ In his *Seminar X (1962-1963): L'angoisse*, Lacan stresses that:

...the anxiety accompanying a trauma is not doubt. Rather, its effects have remained inscribed as an unconscious system of knowledge which appears in conscious life as a concrete insistence, whose characteristic modes are repetition, passion, strong affect, or a suffering that one cannot simply and easily talk away or talk through.¹⁹⁰

In Lacanian theory, trauma causes doubt. It produces repetitive and unrelieved suffering. Trauma lacks cathartic ability. ‘The real’ does not, however, exist in complete isolation. It is braided into Lacan’s trinary of orders – ‘the real’, ‘the symbolic’ and ‘the imaginary’ – which constitute the development and well-being of human psychology, emotionality, and intellectual depth. ‘The imaginary’ internalises the image of an idealised self that is whole and coherent,

¹⁸⁹ Stark, 442.

¹⁹⁰ Stark, 442-443.

rather than broken or fragmented.¹⁹¹ If, as some have suggested, ‘the imaginary’ aligns with Freud’s concept of the ego “which serves as the mediator,”¹⁹² what happens when a trauma occurs that fragments the image of self? Can an individual – and indeed trauma itself – move from ‘the imaginary’ to either ‘the symbolic’ or ‘the real’? If ‘the symbolic’, in contrast with ‘the imaginary’, offers symbols that “envelop the life of man in a network so total that they join together, before he comes into the world, those who are going to engender him...”¹⁹³ does an act of trauma – or perhaps more importantly, the placement of trauma – disrupt this ordering of symbols and prevent access to the psyche of the subject carrying trauma?¹⁹⁴ I conjecture that for Lacan, trauma must travel within and between his three prescribed orders, changing shape as well as emotional and psychological texture along the way.

Stephen Ross, a professor at the University of Victoria, views Lacan’s fundamental “tripartite confluence” as providing the necessary tools for understanding and analysing primary and secondary relationships.¹⁹⁵ Indeed, the intersection of the conceptual categories of ‘the real’, ‘the imaginary’, and ‘the symbolic’ orders” (RSI) can be seen as constituting an entire system of human “mental life” and “together they cover the whole field of psychoanalysis.”¹⁹⁶ This ‘tripartite confluence’ provides an interesting context for examining Lacan’s understanding of trauma. While “each of the orders not only constitutes a particular aspect of the mental life of the mature human, [each one] also corresponds roughly to stages in the development of the infant

¹⁹¹ Stephan Ross, “A Very Brief Introduction to Lacan,” online: <http://web.uvic.ca/~saross/lacan.html>. Accessed March 1, 2013; and Dylan Evans, *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis*. (New York: Routledge, 1996), 161.

¹⁹² This comparison between Freud and Lacan has been noted by many, but I am citing Ross, Evans, and Bowie.

¹⁹³ Malcolm Bowie, *Lacan*. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 42.

¹⁹⁴ J.A. Miller, preface, ed. J. Aubert, *Joyce avec Lacan* (Paris: Navarin, 1987), 279.

¹⁹⁵ Evans, 132.

¹⁹⁶ Evans, 132.

human as it approaches maturity.”¹⁹⁷ It is within the collectivity of Lacan’s RSI model that an individual may be determined; yet it is within ‘the real’ that trauma may reside. Malcom Bowie suggests that the “symbolic, the imaginary and the real are not mental forces, personifiable on the model-builder’s inner stage, but *orders* each of which serves to “position the individual within a force-field that traverses him.”¹⁹⁸ These various orders contained within the RSI configuration constantly act upon each other, defining themselves in contradistinction to one another. They are simultaneously mutually interdependent for their definition and impossible to measure. Ross suggests Lacan’s trinary of orders continually pressure each other; he shares Bowie’s view that the “three RSI together comprise a complex topological space in which the characteristic disorderly motions of the human mind can be plotted... .”¹⁹⁹ Whereas the symbolic opposition ‘presence/absence’ implies the possibility that something may be missing from ‘the symbolic’, ‘the real’ is always in its place.²⁰⁰ Ross argues that ‘the real’ exists in opposition to ‘the imaginary’ and serves as a ‘skin’ or exterior to the ‘symbolic’. Whereas ‘the symbolic’ exists in terms of opposition (presence/absence), ‘the real’ exists entirely as ‘the real’ and does not offer an absence of anything.²⁰¹ How might this interpretation of ‘the real’ locate – indeed even exacerbate – trauma? Lacan views ‘the symbolic’ as the order with a set of signifiers offering an opportunity to articulate trauma, even if it is in the form of symbolic markers.²⁰² Within ‘the real’ there is a resistance to differentiation and consequently to catharsis. In ‘the symbolic’ trauma can be named, identified and purged through the act of creating words and symbols, giving a certain order and meaning to “the world of things—things originally confused

¹⁹⁷ Ross, 161-162.

¹⁹⁸ Bowie, 91.

¹⁹⁹ Bowie, 98-99.

²⁰⁰ Jacques Lacan, *Seminar XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*: 17-53, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W.W. Norton & Company Inc., 1998).

²⁰¹ Lacan, (1998): 17-53.

²⁰² Lacan, (1998): 17-53.

in the ‘here and now’ ... in the process of coming into being... .”²⁰³ This ordering can be in symbols, in words, or perhaps through performance, which begs the question: Can catharsis occur with and through the *performance of trauma*?

By examining Lacan’s RSI model, one can view trauma as something that resides within ‘the real’ – a category that lacks mediation and thus resists definition, articulation, and ultimately prohibits *catharsis*. It is within ‘the real’ that trauma is contained. I would argue, however, that trauma travels in and through the three orders, lingering and perhaps gnawing in one (‘the real’) and finding itself articulated in another (‘the symbolic’). This movement in, around, and through the RSI model suggests that trauma is active, not static. It can be named through performance just as it can be named through talk therapy. Without that, trauma is locked away within ‘the real’, lacking awareness and agency, unable to move, but possessing a potency to be felt.

Luce Irigaray: Trauma and Female Positioning

Lifting the discussion of *trauma* from an exclusively psychoanalytic arena to an interdisciplinary and cultural context is Belgian-born French feminist, philosopher, linguist, psychoanalyst, sociologist and cultural theorist Luce Irigaray. Her work has influenced scholars in a broad range of disciplines from the humanities to social sciences to the natural sciences and law. As a licensed psychoanalyst, she is known for her work on female identity formation as well as her critique of phallogentrism in Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalysis.²⁰⁴ Once a student of Lacan, she came to reject his work for what she believed was his exclusion of women

²⁰³ Stark, 442.

²⁰⁴ Biographical information on Luce Irigaray has been gathered from the following sources: *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://www.iep.utm.edu/irigaray/> last accessed on January 25, 2013; on the Luce Irigaray homepage at: <http://www.irigaray.org>, last accessed on January 26, 2012; and Bridget Holland’s “Luce Irigaray: A Biography” at: www.cddc.vt.edu/feminism/irigaray.html, accessed on January 23, 2013.

from both the psychoanalytic theory and from philosophy.²⁰⁵ Much of her writing examines female subject positioning as she seeks to alter the situation of women in Western culture.²⁰⁶ In her introduction to *The Irigaray Reader*, Margaret Whitford offers this concise overview of Irigaray's critique of both Freud and Lacan:

[For Irigaray] psychoanalysis is unaware of the historical and philosophical determinants of its own discourse. Secondly, psychoanalysis is itself governed by unconscious fantasies which it has not been able to analyse. Thirdly, it is patriarchal; it reflects a social order which does not acknowledge what it owes to the mother. As a consequence of these factors, its phallogocentric bias is taken for universal truth; psychoanalysis is blind to its own assumptions.²⁰⁷

In much of Irigaray's writing she uses male psychoanalytic theory to argue against itself; the theories of Freud and Lacan are seen as misogynist and carrying "theoretical bias in terms of unconscious fantasy, splitting, resistance and defences in the discourse of psychoanalysis."²⁰⁸ By focusing on the male subject's relationship with his father and ignoring the female subject's relationship with her mother, Irigaray suggests that Freud was actually capable of *trauma-inducing* psychotherapy in his work with women; and rather than serving as a healer of the female psyche, Freud actually contributed to the occurrence of female gender-based trauma:

Many people think or believe that we know nothing about mother-daughter relationships. That is Freud's position. He asserts that on this point, we must look beyond Greek civilization to examine another erased civilization. Historically, this is true, but this truth does not prevent Freud from theorizing on and imposing, in psychoanalytical practice, the need for the daughter to turn away from the mother, the need for hatred between them, without sublimation of female identity being an issue, so that the daughter can enter into the realm of desire and the law of the father. This is unacceptable.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁵ Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985).

²⁰⁶ Margaret Whitford, ed., *The Irigaray Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1995), 6.

²⁰⁷ Whitford, 6.

²⁰⁸ Whitford, 5-7.

²⁰⁹ Luce Irigaray, *Sexes and Genealogies* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 109.

Irigaray argues that Freud “talked only about primal male sexuality”²¹⁰ and that this focus on the male caused Freud to limit his work “to the chaos of a primitive desire that preceded any human incarnation.”²¹¹

Irigaray’s reading of and relation to Lacan is equally dismissive. She challenges Lacan’s structural reading of Freud, and even though Lacan was one of her mentors, Irigaray attacks his “ahistoricism and social conservatism and indicts some of the cornerstones of [Lacan’s] theory: the primacy of the phallus, and his conceptualization of the imaginary body of the mirror stage as a male body.”²¹² It is worth noting that the title of her book, *Speculum*, articulates her focus on the interior of the female body; as a speculum is a device designed to examine the female vaginal cavity and reproductive organs. This focus is intentional, positioning Irigaray in opposition to Freud and Lacan and their focus on an external phallus. Lacan’s mirror saw the female form as lacking a penis. Irigaray wants the mirror (or speculum) faced inward to deliver a primacy to the interiority of the female body. She contends that it is in the interior of the female, within and through the vagina, the female reproductive organs, and indeed even within the female heart and soul, that trauma resides. Cultural trauma, caused by years of patriarchal collateral damage of the female and centuries of the female body serving as currency to be traded, exploited and eventually discarded, are what Irigaray suggests may actually define the female.²¹³

In “Cosi Fan Tutti”²¹⁴ Irigaray expounds further on the one-sidedness that she believes to exist within both Freud’s and Lacan’s psychoanalytic theories:

²¹⁰ Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, 97.

²¹¹ Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, 97.

²¹² Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, 97. It is also important to point out that this ‘mirror stage’ would be occurring before and/or in tandem with Lacan’s ‘imaginary’ stage.

²¹³ Whitford, 6; also: Irigaray, *Sexes and Genealogies*, 109.

²¹⁴ Whitford, 6; Luce Irigaray, “Cosi Fan Tutti,” *The Sex Which is Not One*, trans. Catherine Porter (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), 85-86.

Psychoanalytic discourse on female sexuality is the discourse of truth. A discourse that tells the truth about the logic of truth: namely, that *the feminine occurs only within models and laws devised by male subjects*. Which implies that there are not really two sexes, but only one. A single practice and representation of the sexual. With its history, its requirements, reverses, lacks, negative(s)...of which the female sex is the mainstay. [This *phallic* model]...shares the values promulgated by patriarchal society and culture, values inscribed in the philosophical corpus: property, production, order, form, unity, visibility...and erection.²¹⁵

Irigaray suggests that the *trauma* women carry is a direct result of the “theft and violation” of the female body by patriarchy:

Patriarchy is founded upon the theft and violation of the daughter’s virginity and the use of her virginity for commerce between men, including religious commerce... Patriarchy has constructed its heaven and hell upon this original sin. It has imposed silence upon the daughter. It has dissociated her body from her speech and her pleasure from her language. It has dragged her down into the world of male drives, a world where she has become invisible and blind to herself, her mother, other women and even men, who perhaps want her that way. Patriarchy has thus destroyed the most precious site of love and its fertility: the relationship between mother and daughter...²¹⁶

Irigaray constructs a feminist argument that suggests culturally induced trauma is all encompassing for the female. Trauma violates her body, removes her voice, and silences her. How, then, does the question of catharsis come into play for the female within Irigaray’s critique? Can a cathartic purge of trauma exist for a female that has no voice? Does the female invisibility suggested by Irigaray eliminate female catharsis altogether?

Although much of her writing addresses the roles of trauma and wound in and on the female body, it is her examination of Aeschylus’ *Oresteia* in her essay, “The bodily encounter with the mother”²¹⁷ that offers relevance on the subject of cathartic and socially relevant theatre

²¹⁵ Irigaray, “Cosi Fan Tutti,” 86.

²¹⁶ Luce Irigaray, *Sexes and Genealogies* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 112; Luce Irigaray, *Thinking the Difference: For a Peaceful Revolution* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

²¹⁷ Luce Irigaray, “The bodily encounter with the mother,” *The Irigaray Reader*, ed. Margaret Whitford. (Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, 1991).

for the female. Irigaray turns to ancient Greek dramaturgy to explore gender as she challenges Freud's theory of the dominance of the father by way of "the murder of the father as founding the primal horde"²¹⁸ with the proposal that Freud "forgets a more archaic murder, that of the mother, necessitated by the establishment of a certain order in the polis."²¹⁹ She suggests that society's collective imagination "still functions in accordance with the schema established through Greek mythologies and tragedies"²²⁰ and turns to Aeschylus' *Oresteia* and the murderous Clytemnestra. Here Irigaray suggests that through matricide, indeed, through Clytemnestra, women (and their sexuality) emerge out of muteness and anonymity to be seen as the Subject. In the character of Clytemnestra, contemporary women are able to see an alternative to the "virgin-mother." They see a woman who is passionate and does not wait passively for her husband to return from war. She takes a lover. She plots revenge for the death of her beloved daughter, Iphigenia, an act initiated by her husband's offer of Iphigenia as a sacrifice to Artemis. Clytemnestra achieves both upon Agamemnon's return – a return that includes his sexually enslaved prisoner-of-war, Cassandra, in tow. Clytemnestra kills Agamemnon and Cassandra and, as Irigaray points out, suffers the consequences of being a woman who murders her husband: "the new order demands that (Clytemnestra) ... be killed by her son...the beloved son of Zeus: God the father."²²¹ Both Orestes and his sister 'go mad.' Irigaray examines the double standard of madness in this context: Orestes is saved from madness to "establish patriarchal order"²²² while Electra remains mad. Externalised catharsis can be seen in the "troop of enraged women who pursue" Orestes and "haunt him wherever he goes, life ghosts of his mother."²²³ For

²¹⁸ Whitford, 36-39.

²¹⁹ Whitford, 36.

²²⁰ Whitford, 36.

²²¹ Irigaray, "The bodily encounter with the mother," 37.

²²² Irigaray, "The bodily encounter with the mother," 37-39.

²²³ Irigaray, "The bodily encounter with the mother," 39.

Irigaray, the furies represent contemporary women in revolt, “rising up like the revolutionary hysterics against a patriarchal power in the process of being established.”²²⁴ Applying an Aristotelian concept of catharsis, Irigaray’s suggestion of *muthos* observes certain patriarchal rules. The crucial “organization of events”²²⁵ into a clear beginning, middle and end underscores Irigaray’s analysis of matricide as the “non-punishment of the son, the burial of the madness of women - and the burial of women in madness ...”²²⁶ She suggests a contemporary reading of this text, and yet, for Irigaray, the ancient Greek tragedies result in a momentum of patriarchal inevitability. Catharsis occurs in *the act of revenge*: murder, pursuit of Orestes, a brazen love affair. Both words and deeds offer ‘purgation’ and allow the female subject to be seen and possess agency.

To clarify the relationship between the inevitability and agency of trauma, one must understand that in both Irigaray’s culturally-induced (female) invisibility and the violation of female body within a patriarchy and within Lacan’s trauma-residing-within ‘the real’ hypothesis, trauma is contained within, invisible and dormant. Here trauma becomes part of a psychic life cycle; its growth, development, and expulsion temporarily on hold. Is there agency in this, or simply inevitability? Like any living organism, dormancy tends to be associated with environmental conditions. Drawing a parallel with consequential dormancy, which occurs when an organism enters a dormant phase *after* adverse conditions have arisen,²²⁷ one can witness trauma’s agency through its ability to move from an invisible, indeed silent state to an outward expression (catharsis). Trauma, therefore, may emerge with sudden changes in conditions - conditions that are advantageous for its release. The longer trauma remains festering, waiting to

²²⁴ Irigaray, “The bodily encounter with the mother,” 39.

²²⁵ Irigaray, “The bodily encounter with the mother,” 39.

²²⁶ Irigaray, “The bodily encounter with the mother,” 39.

²²⁷ J.D. Bewley and M. Black, *Seeds: physiology of development and germination*, 2nd ed. (London: Plenum Press, 1994).

escape, the more apt trauma is to make greater use of available resources. Trauma, for Irigaray, is inevitable for the female residing in a patriarchal society. Her voice is silenced, and her body violated. Yet this very trauma can, given a change in conditions, rise up and strike out, harnessing enormous strength and power. When this happens there is agency in trauma's power.

Laura S. Brown

American psychotherapist Laura S. Brown has sought throughout her career to provide her patients, female and male, with an alternative to the traditional post-Freudian forms of therapeutic treatment for psychic and psychological traumas.²²⁸ She defines her work with trauma as 'feminist' and in her books, *Cultural Competence in Trauma Therapy* and *Feminist Therapy*, Brown offers definitions and clinical conceptualisations for such themes as acculturation pressure, betrayal of trust, biology, contextual determinates, social location to gender, and culture as mediator of trauma and of trust. In some instances, she concurs with Shay that a 'betrayal of trust' is a primary factor in the occurrence of trauma for women,²²⁹ in other instances she agrees with Irigaray's position that a patriarchal culture produces trauma-inducing events that disfavour women.²³⁰ Brown views trauma as having its own texture and suggests the experience of trauma derives from "personal histories; cultural heritages; and the social, political, and spiritual contexts in which the painful event happens."²³¹ She argues for a diversified definition of trauma that goes beyond the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* to explore how "culture, context, and identity can render an experience traumatic...."²³² It is her deconstruction and reanalysis of criteria listed in the *DSM-IV-TR* that bears examination. The

²²⁸ Laura S. Brown, *Cultural Competence in Trauma Therapy* (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2008).

²²⁹ Brown, 106-108.

²³⁰ Brown, 95 – 114.

²³¹ Brown, 95-114.

²³² Brown, 95.

definition of a traumatic stressor, Criterion A of the diagnosis of PTSD found within the *DSM-IV-TR* is expressed in the following manner:

...an extreme traumatic stressor involving direct personal experience of an event that involves actual or threatened death or serious injury, or other threat to one's physical integrity; or witnessing an event that involves death, injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of another person; or learning about unexpected or violent death, serious harm, or threat of death or injury experienced by a family member or other close associate. The person's response to the event must involve intense fear, helplessness, or horror (or in children, the response must involve disorganized or agitated behaviour).²³³

Brown acknowledges that Criterion A offers a broad understanding, but she argues that the reference to "death or injury experienced by a family member" lacks a culturally progressive definition of 'family.' In the United States, 'family' refers to people who are related through marriage or biology and usually does not include the lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender person who may experience trauma within their constructed family unit. Within the U.S. military, this is particularly problematic when a lesbian or gay male is sexually harassed or assaulted because of the "don't ask, don't tell" mandate – these individuals are doubly marginalised and traumatised: by the assault itself and with their inability to publicly acknowledge their own sexual orientation. Brown addresses other non-traditional "family" units such as members of a particular race (this is often the case within the African American community in the U.S., where it is the linguistic norm to refer to each other as "brother" or "sister" with or without a blood or legal connection). Brown argues that a family unit extends far beyond the traditional definitions of heterosexual marriage and blood relations and that these non-traditional family members and domestic or cultural units become invisible. This invisibility

²³³ *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, American Psychiatric Association (2000): 467.

may intensify psychic and psychological trauma if trauma is not acknowledged and then treated properly.

Another paradigm that Brown addresses is the ‘just world hypothesis’ that postulates “victims are threatening to non-victims for they are manifestations of a malevolent universe rather than a benevolent one.”²³⁴ Bulman, Monson, and Brown all suggest that a paradigm of trauma exists in which a human being possesses a set of three fundamental assumptions that include: 1) the world is benevolent; 2) the world is meaningful; and 3) the self is worthy.²³⁵ Brown asserts that the majority of North Americans hold all three assumptions as truth and are likely to “be optimistic about themselves and their lives even when they are able to see that the world is doing badly.”²³⁶ Monson’s *Cognitive Processing Therapy* also suggests that trauma, as Janoff-Bulman and Brown argue, happens when there is a collision of belief systems: when a subject carrying assumptions that the world is a benevolent, meaningful and safe place is thrust into a situation which shatters these assumptions. Trauma resides in the act of violence or assault or betrayal and evolves into something larger when left alone.

Another conceptual framework for understanding and locating trauma is through the model of Betrayal Trauma (BT), a paradigm developed by Freyd in 1996 and further developed by Freyd and Birrell in 2006 to address the phenomenon of delayed childhood sexual trauma. The BT model posits that “betrayal traumas are traumatic emotionally for humans when the extent of the betrayal becomes knowable.”²³⁷ Shay, in 1994, began arguing that a soldier’s spiritual injuries were the consequence of feeling mistreated or betrayed by a commanding

²³⁴ Ronnie Janoff-Bulman, *Shattered Assumptions* (New York: The Free Press, 1992), 148; Candice Monson, Stephanie J. Fredman, *Cognitive-Behavioral Conjoint Therapy for PTSD: Harnessing the Healing Power of Relationships* (New York: The Guildford Press, 2012).

²³⁵ Monson and Fredman; see also Lerner, (1980): 6.

²³⁶ Brown, 99.

²³⁷ Brown, 107-108.

officer or fellow military member.²³⁸ Events such as sexual assault, a betrayal by a commanding or fellow officer, an acquaintance ‘date rape’, or even a public event such as the 2013 Boston Marathon bombings or the collapse of the Twin Towers in New York on 9/11, become trauma within a human being or within a community once the victim(s) “reappraise(s) the meaning of the experience from merely unpleasant to one of violation.”²³⁹ Trauma can exist in a repressed or contained state (‘the real’) and it can emerge, indeed be purged, when the conditions for doing so allow for it.

Jonathan Shay, trauma and the ancient Greeks

Up until the mid-1990s, there was little research linking war-induced psychological trauma in modernity to the trauma and grief portrayed in the ancient Greek tragedies.²⁴⁰ Certainly, there had been research analysing the modern relevance of the ancient Greek plays’ characters, plots, themes, original myths, and constructions of gender, acts of barbarism, and the role of lament and of grief. However, much of this research was confined to discrete and theoretical areas such as gender studies, theatre history, grief studies and the classics. Jonathan Shay, a Harvard-trained American doctor and clinical psychiatrist, began his career conducting laboratory research on central nervous system cells in patients before and after strokes. When he suffered a stroke himself, he entered the United States Department of Veterans' Affairs outpatient clinic in Boston. This experience became a turning point in his career. He describes himself as being ‘kidnapped’ by fellow patients, veterans who were undergoing both physical

²³⁸ Keesey, 200; Golden, 2.

²³⁹ Brown, 108.

²⁴⁰ The connection between trauma, the ancient Greek tragedies, and their relevance to gender and war has been investigated by such theatre scholars and historians as Simone de Beauvoir (*The Second Sex*), Froma Zeitlin (*Playing the Other*), Sarah Pomeroy (*Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves: Women in Antiquity*) and Edith Hall (*Inventing the Barbarian*). Shay was one of the first physicians to make the connection between modern veterans and war-induced trauma such as PTSD and the archetypal portrayal of war-induced trauma in the poetry of Homer.

and psychological treatments for trauma. As a result of his interaction with these patients while he, himself was a patient, he decided to research and develop an effective treatment methodology for war-induced psychological trauma.²⁴¹ In 1987, he shifted entirely from neuropathology to the new field of study of PTSD. While treating PTSD, Shay began to see the possibility of employing the epic poems of Homer to draw parallels between the fighter-hero Achilles and the experiences of individual veterans who were his patients. Shay believed that the ancient Greek myths and iconic war heroes could be utilised as a means of discussing and understanding the psychological damage experienced by U.S. troops during combat.

Shay noted a strong parallel between Homer and the experience of his soldier patients. He had studied fifth century BCE war history while at university and had read that the Athenians were at war more or less incessantly throughout the period when the ancient dramatists were producing their tragedies and comedies.²⁴² In my interview with Shay in 2009, we discussed how the ancient tragedians were massively influenced by the rich oral traditions presented by the *aoidoi*, or bard storytellers, specifically Homer.²⁴³ I mentioned University of California, San Diego professor Peter Rose's supposition that Homer's *Iliad* possessed a duality of major conflicts in the narrative – "one between Achilles and Agamemnon, another between the Greeks and the Trojans."²⁴⁴ The Homeric poetry, full of familiar myths and tales of the Trojan War and Odysseus' obstacle-ridden return home, offered pertinent social and political attitudes which helped to explain the world and man's place in it: "the history and arrangement of the physical world; the course of divine and human history; the conditions that govern men's relations with

²⁴¹ See: "MacArthur Fellows 2007" at: www.macfound.org. Retrieved 2008-08-15; and Anna Badkhen, "Psychiatrist treated veterans using Homer," *The Boston Globe* (2007-09-25).

²⁴² Peggy Shannon, "Interview with Jonathan Shay" (2009). Archived at Ryerson Theatre School, Ryerson University, Toronto, Ontario.

²⁴³ Shannon, "Interview with Jonathan Shay" (2009).

²⁴⁴ Peter W. Rose. "How Conservative Is the *Iliad*?" in *Sons of the Gods, Children of the Earth* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992).

the gods and with each other; and the significance and value of human civilization and social institutions.”²⁴⁵ Shay was not interested in analysing the sexual politics of the two Homeric poems, nor did he initially work with female veterans. He did acknowledge, however, that the *Iliad* offered female characters who were casualties of war, while the *Odyssey* provided a strong and diverse cast of females with a clear narrative function: to serve as essential obstacles for the plot, and to help build the ‘rising action’ of the story. While the female characters contained within the *Iliad* are primarily mute objects, in the *Odyssey* they are given voice, personality, speech, and the ability to exercise some power. This distinction became helpful for Shay later on in his career, once he began treating female veterans of the Iraq Wars.

In the *Iliad*, Agamemnon demands and receives Achilles’ (female) war prize, Briseis. Losing this prized possession to Agamemnon, Achilles experiences a profound sense of betrayal, similar to the sense of betrayal Shay discovered in his male patients suffering PTSD. While the circumstances inciting the experience of betrayal differed, the sense of betrayal was as acute. In 1994, Shay wrote *Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character*.²⁴⁶ In it he compares the experiences of soldiers in two wars: the Trojan and the Vietnam Wars, suggesting that PTSD has always existed. Focusing on the Vietnam veteran’s experience in combat, *Achilles in Vietnam* juxtaposes case study narratives with Achilles’ journey into and throughout war. Shay’s claim that a soldier’s ‘spiritual injuries’ did not necessarily occur from killing the enemy or from torture inflicted by the enemy but rather stemmed from feeling mistreated or betrayed by a commanding officer or fellow military member, was a significant departure from mainstream psychology of the time. Shay’s theory of ‘moral injury’ explains how and why the soldiers who

²⁴⁵ William G. Thalmann. *Conventions of Form and Thought in Early Greek Epic Poetry*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984).

²⁴⁶ Jonathan Shay, M.D., Ph.D., *Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character* (New York: Scribner, 1994).

served in Vietnam experienced a sense of betrayal when they perceived they were not properly cared for, or were misled by commanding officers who insisted that ill-fated missions (during which innocent women and children were killed) were noble and necessary.²⁴⁷ This betrayal caused psychic and psychological trauma, just as Achilles had experienced a sense of betrayal by Agamemnon. In ‘Book 1’ of Homer’s *Iliad*, a major quarrel ensues when Agamemnon, Achilles’ commander, decides to take Achilles’ prize of honour, the woman Briseis – a prize that was voted to Achilles by his troops. Achilles felt so betrayed by Agamemnon that he retreated to his tent and refused to engage in combat. Shay picks up on this betrayal of Achilles by Agamemnon and condenses the archetypal relationship to the destruction of a soldier’s moral code of honour by his commanding officer. Shay also suggests that this trauma is heightened by Achilles and Agamemnon ‘history’ extending beyond the battlefield and is responsible for intensifying Achilles’ sense of betrayal.²⁴⁸ In Shay’s second book, *Odysseus in America: Combat Trauma and the Trials of Homecoming*²⁴⁹ the central character of Odysseus serves as a device to focus on the contemporary veteran’s experience of returning home from war. Shay argues throughout both books that spiritual and psychic obstacles await troops in war *and* upon their return to civilian life and that these obstacles, these betrayals, cause a ‘moral injury’ that may result in PTSD.

Respected by humanists and military leaders alike, Shay spent years treating emotional and psychic traumas experienced by active duty personnel and returning veterans, initially just

²⁴⁷ Albin Lesky, *A History of Greek Literature*, trans. De Heer & Willis (London: Methuen & Co., 1966).

²⁴⁸ To support this claim, Shay cites Graham Zanker, *The Heart of Achilles: Characterization and Personal Ethics in the Iliad* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994), 75-79.

²⁴⁹ Jonathan Shay, M.D., Ph.D., *Odysseus in America: Combat Trauma and the Trials of Homecoming* (New York: Scribner, 1996).

with male patients but eventually with female patients as well.²⁵⁰ He categorises trauma-inducing biological and military-specific experience on three levels: the effects of brain chemicals such as cortisol and dopamine; military concepts such as cohesion and morale; and the necessity of the human emotions of trust and love.²⁵¹ When working with veterans in a clinical setting, Shay described looking for more than a change in brain chemistry when prescribing selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRI). He understood that these drugs would alter the balance of serotonin in the brain and provoke a psychological effect, a calming of the ‘rage’ experienced by the veteran, suggesting that “social recognition has a physiological impact, and an SSRI triggers some of the same mechanisms as that social experience...though I know enough about the nervous system to know that any drug we have is a crude simulacrum.”²⁵² Pertinent to an interest in the roles of women and their journey into and through war is Shay’s dedication to a unified theory of trauma. He has argued that trust-destroying trauma in the veteran stems from a single biology and psychology and is genderless. This trauma, which manifests as PTSD, arises equally from “political torture, prostitution, domestic violence or combat. The experience of trauma is unique to each sufferer. Meanwhile, its biology is common to all.”²⁵³ Shay does suggest that the female experience in war is more complicated than that of her male counterpart. Women, Shay argues, are much more likely to experience betrayal in the form of sexual harassment and rape by their commanding officers and fellow soldiers than their male counterparts. This betrayal of trust in the female soldier by a male directly above her is, according to Shay, what most often triggers

²⁵⁰ David Berreby, “Scientist at Work--Jonathan Shay; Exploring Combat and the Psyche, Beginning with Homer,” *New York Times* March 11, 2003, accessed at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/03/11/science/scientist-work-jonathan-shay-exploring-combat-psyche-beginning-with-homer.html>

²⁵¹ Berreby, 2003. Also, Shay discussed this in my first person interview with him: Shannon, “Interview with Jonathan Shay,” 2009.

²⁵² Berreby, 2003; Shannon, 2009.

²⁵³ Berreby, 2003; Shannon, 2009.

PTSD in the female combatant.²⁵⁴ In an interview with me, Shay spoke about the underreporting of female soldiers and the abuse they experience; he referenced the lack of support systems for female veterans seeking psychological support for betrayal and physical abuse and suggested that women, much more than men, choose not to disclose this abuse for fear of reprisals. The current research of Amy Street at the Veterans Administration in the United States and of Rachel Dekel of Bar-Ilan University in Israel support Shay's theory that women experience a higher incidence of sexual harassment and rape during military deployment than their male counterparts (Street refers to this as 'primary trauma') as well as a higher incidence of abuse and mistreatment at the hands of returning husbands and family members suffering PTSD (Dekel refers to this as 'secondary trauma' and her research demonstrates a spike in secondary trauma over the past decade).²⁵⁵ For Shay, who is now retired, the evidence emerging from a new generation of researchers such as Dekel and Street does not surprise him as it supports his long-held belief that trauma for women in the military is similar yet very different.²⁵⁶ With women now able to hold combat positions in the U.S. military, Shay believes Homer and the ancient Greek tragedies remain important tools for addressing the trauma experienced by both male and female active duty personnel and continue to hold value as part of a treatment methodology.²⁵⁷ Shay articulated his belief that catharsis for a patient experiencing PTSD would occur if the subject actively engaged with the text (reading it aloud; actually memorising and performing it) rather than simply watching others perform the text. In my 2009 interview with Shay, I asked him if he thought it would be cathartic for women experiencing PTSD to engage with the ancient Greek

²⁵⁴ Shannon, 2009.

²⁵⁵ Amy Street, Ph.D. is the Deputy Director of the Women's Health Sciences Division, National Center for PTSD at the Veterans Administration Boston Healthcare System; she is also an Associate Professor, Department of Psychiatry, Boston University School of Medicine. Rachel Dekel, Ph.D. is a professor and Director of School of Social Work, Bar Ilan University, Israel at Bar-Ilan University in Israel.

²⁵⁶ Shannon, 2009; Both Street and Dekel are discussed in further detail in Chapters Six and Seven.

²⁵⁷ Women obtained the legal right to engage in combat roles within the US Military in February 2013.

plays as spectators witnessing a performance. He argued strongly that the singular act of spectatorship was too passive and that the spectator should be offered an active role within the performance – suggesting they perform the role of the Chorus. Whether female or male, Shay sees value in the spectator becoming, in the terminology of Augusto Boal, ‘spect-actors.’²⁵⁸

Conclusion

The objective of this chapter was to locate and define trauma and to link its relation to catharsis in terms of trauma’s symptoms, affect, and its performativity. It is only by examining the history and meaning of trauma I am able to address the central questions of this thesis, specifically, whether or not Greek drama in performance may be an effective healing instrument in modernity. Through this interrogation it has been possible to see the limits of representation in trauma that Lacan addressed with his category of ‘the real’. As Silverstone accurately points out in her monograph, *Shakespeare, Trauma and Contemporary Performance*, the term *trauma* has shifted in meaning from outward to inward, inflicting pain on the physical body to the psychological interior to the public sphere.²⁵⁹ Trauma creates its own history, its own narrative; it sometimes stands apart; it sometimes finds itself hermetically sealed, unable to be articulated or emotionally processed; and it is sometimes purged through affect or theatrical performance. The question of the relationship between traumatic experience and the represent-ability of such trauma in live theatre is worth exploring and will be taken up later and more fully. When trauma is defined outside of the arena of performance, and depending upon who is defining it – be it Freud, Lacan, Irigaray, Monson, Shay, Brown, or a myriad of others - trauma can live openly, or be locked away; it can be recurrent, emerging unexpectedly; it can be felt acutely in its first

²⁵⁸ Augusto Boal, *The Boal Method of Theatre and Therapy* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995).

²⁵⁹ Silverstone, 8. See also: Cathy Caruth, *Trauma: Explorations in memory* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 2-12.

moment of shock or pain and it can return as *repeated* suffering of an event. Trauma can remain unresolved and one of its links to catharsis is its need to reappear:

Traumatic memories -- whether recounted by Holocaust survivors, incest victims, or survivors of rape or other abuse -- have the characteristic of reappearing with a literal repetitiveness that reminds one of Freud's arguments in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*: at the point where one would expect the pleasure principle to function, one discovers, instead, a repetition whose fixities are on the side of the death drive.²⁶⁰

Lacan's theory that within 'the real' trauma is contained without mediation, that its order lacks linearity, that trauma lacks an ability to be spoken, signified and therefore processed (and purged) demonstrates a belief that trauma does not simply vanish, but instead remains "recorded in the real as a limit point to memory; it will reappear as a symptomatic enigma which opens onto a certain anxiety."²⁶¹ Trauma is paradoxical: it does not want to exist yet it does exist, often in a potent way. Without some form of catharsis, the traumatic event is rarely processed nor is the trauma itself healed. Freud suggests that trauma appears and reappears, over and over, with a fragment of the trauma – a fraction of the real, as perhaps Lacan would argue – emerging in language, and within conscious life, "beyond the law of the signifier which ordinarily states a recognizable (local universal) language reality."²⁶² For Irigaray, trauma enters through the female body and is held within its very DNA, a direct result of a specific event (rape, assault, harassment, or neglect), a by-product of a patriarchal culture of trauma resulting from repressive norms that render the female vulnerable, even invisible, causing trauma to occur and to intensify.

It has been suggested by Silverstone that when trauma enunciates itself in literary art a paradox occurs:

²⁶⁰ Caruth, 2-12.

²⁶¹ Caruth, 2-12.

²⁶² Caruth, 2-12.

When *real elements* of a trauma appear as literary or artistic representations, they dramatize the paradox. *Distance* from the real--from its traumatic properties of loss, suffering and anxiety--enables the looker or hearer to *not see or not hear*. Distance enables the looker or hearer to discount, or, even romanticize, a visible, palpable trauma. Indeed, an artifact, archive, painting, narrative or poem often gives the lie to a trauma by covering over the real of its suffering with images and words which *seem* to tame it, giving it the quality of *mere art*.²⁶³

Cultural theorists such as Silverstone and Caruth have argued such a romanticising of trauma through artistic narrative. However, for Jonathan Shay and his work with veterans carrying trauma presenting as PTSD the presence of war-induced trauma located within the literary texts of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* provides a non-romanticised connection between the ancient soldier and his war trauma and the trauma experienced by the contemporary soldier, male and female. This connection allows the patient to (re) experience her or his original war-induced trauma with the understanding that this (re) experience can purge and process trauma that had been locked inside. There is an important distinction to be made between the cathartic function of a literary text and the cathartic function of a performance for both performer and audience. Boal advocates for the public nature of theatre that allows an audience to suggest an ending, or to assume the role of 'spect-actor'. It is true that the psychoanalytic tradition often tends to focus upon private experiences such as talk therapy between analyst and patient, but certainly there are exceptions to this approach. Moreno, Jennings, and Scheff all encouraged their patients to act out their traumas in original psychodramas performed in front of an audience.

Shay, a medical doctor and trained psychiatrist, treated psychological trauma and pioneered the linkage of PTSD to engagement with the ancient Greek texts in the twentieth century. Now, in the twenty-first century, Shay believes that the next generation of psychiatric work with returning veterans, female and male, should include 'taking on' the role of the ancient

²⁶³ Caruth, 2-12.

Greek chorus in a workshop setting of a war-themed Greek tragedy.²⁶⁴ In this way, Shay argues, a patient carrying trauma has the requisite aesthetic distance from the ‘performance’ while ‘listening’ to plot-heavy sections of the play that address the experience of war trauma (performed by actors). The patient-as-chorus has the opportunity to engage with certain textual passages that carry a narrative of trauma, and both actor and patient represent the dissonance of trauma. Together, the patient-as-performer, the actor, and the spectators examine the trauma and collectively try to decipher its source and potency. The dialectic of trauma first experienced with its characteristic features of secrecy and silence and the open portrayal of trauma-inducing events can be, as Shay argues, cathartic. He believes the relationship between trauma represented onstage and catharsis prompted by the performance of trauma narrative, can be potent and healing. When the experience of an unbearable act is spoken aloud by a traumatised person – even if the words articulating the specific trauma are written by an ancient Greek tragedian – the articulated trauma is no longer private, but is instead public and heard by others. This trauma can be examined, experienced, and released. It is my conclusion that catharsis and trauma are explicitly linked and that healing will occur through the engagement with, and the representation of, trauma in performance. The ancient Greek tragedies serve as an ideal conduit for a cathartic release of trauma through performance in modernity.

²⁶⁴ Shannon, “Interview with Shay,” 2009.

Chapter Four: War, Trauma, and Gender

I think the Greeks were interested in looking at the cracks in things... The bell that should have one sound but is cracked and has a completely different one... The Greek playwrights didn't feel they had to make women sympathetic. The pressure from a modern audience is often to do so.

Antigone, Hecuba, Elektra, Phaedra; these are huge characters, each one is ruthless...

--Timberlake Wertenbaker²⁶⁵

As evidenced in the previous two chapters, there is a potent correlation between catharsis and trauma. Inextricably linked, they form two ends of a psychological continuum. At one end resides *trauma*, sometimes burrowed within the body, sometimes layered into the skin, perhaps lodged within 'the real,' while at the other end of the continuum is the release of trauma through affect, or *catharsis*. Questions of catharsis are often bound up with questions of gender (Irigaray; Brown) because ideals of control and containment have historically been bound up with ideals of masculinity. As discussed in the previous two chapters, the penetration of either an interior or exterior containment of trauma (Lacan) and the experience of trauma's release through cathartic affect (Freud; Scheff; Boal) require optimal social and emotional conditions. It is possible that ancient Greek tragedy, with its themes of war-related suffering, served to animate a narrative of pain, offering fifth century BCE audiences of male citizens the ability to collectively mourn and heal from psychological wounds associated with war. By representing trauma onstage and eliciting a strong emotional purge within the spectator, the theatre became an ideal arena for processing the emotional toll caused by the ravages of war. Curiously, many of the ancient tragedies featured traumatised female characters carrying central themes even though females were not seen in combat, were not leaders, and were rarely even visible in the public sphere. The question of why these tragedies may have been written in such a manner becomes the central focus of this chapter. I will interrogate the question of how certain social and psychological

²⁶⁵ See the text of my full interview with Timberlake Wertenbaker in Appendix C.

requirements for cathartic *release* from war trauma may have fueled the literary impulse in fifth century BCE. Current critical orthodoxies and debates concerning trauma often exclude a discussion of its release, especially when interrogating the intentionality of the ancient tragedies. Therefore I will add the *release of trauma* alongside the pursuit of how and why the cathartic element relied so heavily on gender and symbolism, and how and why ancient Greek theatres and theatrical performances also functioned as extensions of healing centres (Epidaurus and Delphi are two such examples.) Through Lacan (the need for a symbol), Irigaray (the primacy of gender and symbol), Freud and Krutch (the inescapable affect in the release of trauma), and Moreno (the [re]enactment of the traumatic event) we can see the psychological terrain clearly. While scholars such as Hall, McDonald, and Goldhill²⁶⁶ have argued that the tragedies were a means of prompting political debate by offering more than simple reflections of the Athenian political and social processes though their focus on the broader social tensions of Athens,²⁶⁷ I suggest that the war-themed plays went beyond community discourse to promote necessary psychological repair for male citizens engaged in warfare throughout the fifth century BCE, and that the female characters served the necessary symbolic function of carrying themes of war-related anxiety and loss. It is conceivable that the highly masculinised Athenian male would have found the sight of males weeping rather shocking; yet, seeing a female character – albeit played by a man – giving voice (and tears) to the pain of war may have allowed men in the audience to identify and release tears of their own without shame. By examining the various categories and

²⁶⁶ See Edith Hall, *Greek Tragedy: Suffering Under the Sun*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Simon Goldhill, *Reading Greek Tragedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); and Marianne McDonald, *The Living Art of Greek Tragedy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003). See also Appendix C for the complete text of my interview with Marianne McDonald in which she suggests that contemporary directors are using the ancient plays to comment on modern political events, much like, in her opinion, the fifth century dramatists were commenting on the value of war and citizenry.

²⁶⁷ Edith Hall, “The sociology of Athenian tragedy,” *Greek Tragedy*, ed. P.E. Easterling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 96.

function(s) of the female literary character(s), I hope to reveal whether or not these female characters were more than just tragic characters seeking asylum, or revenge, or suffering captivity at the hands of their victors in alien cities. Were the female characters more than dramaturgical devices designed to support the Athenian male's fear of displacement and loss of citizenship²⁶⁸ and were they, perhaps, essential 'stand-ins' for male experiences?

To fully grasp the extreme nature of these (female) literary constructs, I will interrogate the differences between female literary inventions and everyday women of antiquity. As the plays were produced within the context of various festivals of Dionysus, it is also helpful to understand the ways in which women served as ritual practitioners to discern whether or not their roles were different or similar to the female ritual motifs in the tragedies. By probing literary representations, historical records and documented social institutions the conceptual foundations informing the literary, artistic and mythical representation(s) of the female of antiquity may be revealed. In the following chapter I will apply this understanding to the two epics attributed to Homer, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, and to four case studies: Aeschylus' *Persians*,²⁶⁹ and *Seven At Thebes*²⁷⁰ and Euripides' *Trojan Women*²⁷¹ and *The Suppliants*²⁷² to more substantively investigate how and why these playwrights constructed traumatised female characters in the context of their war plays.

War

The Peloponnesian and Persian Wars

²⁶⁸ Hall, (1996): 99-100.

²⁶⁹ Aeschylus, *The Persians*, trans. Christopher Collard (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

²⁷⁰ Aeschylus, *Aeschylus: Agamemnon, Libation-Bearers, Eumenides, Fragments*, trans. H.W. Smyth (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1930); and Euripides, *Orestes and Other Plays*, trans. Robin Waterfield, notes by Edith Hall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

²⁷¹ Euripides, *The Trojan Women and Other Plays*, trans. James Morwood, introduction by Edith Hall (Oxford, 2000).

²⁷² Euripides, *Suppliant Women*, trans. James Morwood (Oxford: Aris & Phillips Classical Texts, 2007).

To contextualise the plays and the dramatists' storylines, it is helpful to first review the actual wars of ancient Greece. Major wars in the classical age were fought for reasons of dominance, to extend empires, to maintain or create powerful alliances, to achieve financial gain through taxation, and to acquire ownership of natural resources. Large conflicts occurred between those possessing naval supremacy (Athenians) supported by those possessing land combat supremacy (the Spartans) against those possessing large land mass (the Persians). The Persian Wars (499-449 BCE) can be viewed as a defining period in Greek history.²⁷³ The Athenians, who would come to dominate Greece culturally and politically right through the fifth-century BCE and into the fourth, believed the wars against Persia to be their greatest and most characteristic triumph. By successfully defending their territory against the powerful Persian Empire, the Greeks' sense of identity, their values and their pride grew to the point of individuating themselves from 'the other': the barbarians. This sense of opposition that the Greeks felt in relation to the Persians laid the literary, dramaturgical, aesthetic, and political groundwork that influenced, perhaps even defined, much of Greek thought in the fifth-century BCE. This notion of 'the other' as something *different from*, and even *less than*, was extremely important to the Greeks and to the plotlines of the ancient tragedies. From the battle of Marathon onwards, the Athenians began to think of themselves as the centre of Greek culture and power. As scholars such as Hall, Blundell, Burkert, Kagan, Mikalson, and Goldhill have pointed out, this successful defence of their territory, and subsequent emergent Greek sense of identity, was the foundation on which many of their cultural achievements were built.²⁷⁴

²⁷³ The Greco-Persian Wars (also referred to as simply the Persian Wars) were a series of conflicts between the Achaemenid Empire of Persia and city-states of the Hellenic world that started in 499 BCE and lasted until 449 BCE.

²⁷⁴ In particular, the books that provided the most information on this point include: Edith Hall, *Greek Tragedy: Suffering Under the Sun* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010); Sue Blundell, *Women in Ancient Greece* (London: British Museum Press, 1995); Walter Burkert, *Greek Religion* (Camden:

In the middle of the sixth century BCE, the Greek settlements along the coast of Asia Minor came under the control of the Persians, who powerfully and strategically created an extensive empire. Persian dominance extended from Egypt to Punjab. They controlled their new land acquisitions closely, appointing men to rule the states as tyrants and requiring citizens to not only serve in the Persian army, but to pay high taxes.²⁷⁵ With these new financial burdens, Aristagoras of Miletus began a democratic rebellion in 499 BCE. There were two significant invasions of the Greek mainland by the Persians during this period of time. King Darius led the first invasion of Athens in 490 BCE but lost to the Athenian forces at the ‘battle of Marathon’. This military campaign is perhaps the single most important battle in Greek history. Had the Athenians lost, Greece would have eventually come under the control of the Persians and all their subsequent political and cultural accomplishments might have taken distinctly different forms. The second invasion, led this time by King Xerxes, was thwarted by a coalition of thirty-one Greek states that valiantly, and victoriously, fought the Persians.²⁷⁶ Athens and Sparta were at the forefront of the coalition. Their combined forces played a vital part in two decisive victories, first at the battle of Salamis in 480 BCE and later at Plataea in 479 BCE. Xerxes set out in the spring of 480 BC from Sardis with a fleet and army which Herodotus claimed was more than two million strong with at least 10,000 elite warriors named Persian Immortals. Xerxes was

Wiley/Blackwell Publishing, 2013); Walter Burkert, *Structure and History in Greek Mythology and Ritual* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979); Donald Kagan, *The Outbreak of the Peloponnesian War* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989); Jon D. Mikalson, *Ancient Greek Religion* (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010); and Simon Goldhill, “Battle Narrative and Politics in Aeschylus’ *Persae*,” *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, Vol. 108 (1998): 189-193.

²⁷⁵ Sue Blundell in her *Women in Ancient Greece* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1995) offers a thorough and descriptive chapter on this period of time.

²⁷⁶ George Rawlinson, Sir Henry Creswicke Rawlinson, Sir John Gardner Wilkinson, *History of Herodotus: A New English Version, Volume 3* (London: John Murray, 1859), VII.11.

victorious during the initial battles.²⁷⁷ Herodotus makes mention of Xerxes' first attempt to bridge the Hellespont ending in failure when a storm destroyed the flax and papyrus bridge; Xerxes ordered the Hellespont whipped three hundred times and had fetters thrown into the water.²⁷⁸ Xerxes' second attempt to bridge the Hellespont was successful. He cemented an alliance with Carthage, and thus deprived Greece of the support of the powerful monarchs of Syracuse and Agrigentum.

Athens continued to be involved in military and naval operations more or less throughout the 470s, 460s, 450s, and 440s as she extended her empire and came ever more frequently into conflict with her great rival for influences in the Greek-speaking world, Sparta. The Peloponnesian War (431–404 BCE) was an extended military conflict, fought by the Athenians against the people of the Peloponnese, led by Sparta. This war can be divided into three distinct phases: the Archidamian War, in which Sparta launched repeated invasions of Attica, while Athens with superior naval expertise raided the Peloponnesian coast and suppressed signs of unrest in its empire; the Middle Phase in 415 BCE, during which Athens sent hundreds of troops to attack the Sicilian city of Syracuse and failed miserably ending with the destruction of the entire force in 413 BCE; and the third and final Deceleian phase, historically known as the Ionian War. It was during this last phase that Sparta, which by now was receiving support from Persia, assisted and promoted rebellions in Athens' subject states in the Aegean Sea and in Ionia. This support undermined Athens' empire eventually depriving the city of its valuable naval supremacy. The destruction of Athens' fleet at Aegospotami effectively ended the war, and Athens surrendered in the following year.

The Peloponnesian War reshaped the ancient Greek world. Athens sense of strength and

²⁷⁷ Rawlings et al. See also: Nels M. Bailkey, Richard Lim, *Readings in Ancient History* (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing, 2011), 175.

²⁷⁸ Herodotus, *The Histories*, trans. Robin Waterfield (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), VII: 7.

superiority was ended. Prior to the beginning of this war, Athens was the strongest city-state in Greece. After the war, the power shifted and Athens was reduced temporarily to a state of near-complete subjection, while Sparta was established as the leading power of Greece. The economic costs of the war were devastating to Greece. Widespread poverty occurred throughout the Peloponnese, while Athens found herself completely destroyed, never to regain her pre-war prosperity.²⁷⁹ This war brought violent and partisan changes to Greek society. Civil strife became a common occurrence in Greece with contentious brawls between democratic Athens and oligarchic Sparta, each of which supported friendly political factions within other states.²⁸⁰ Indeed, the Greek wars, which began as a limited and formalised form of conflict, transformed into all-out civil wars. On-going struggles between city-states, complete with historic atrocities occurring on a large scale, shattered religious and cultural taboos, devastating huge sections of countryside, and destroying whole cities. Thucydides' narrative of civil strife on Corcyra (3.70-85) reveals how stasis produced a form of cultural trauma, causing devastating moral and material effects.²⁸¹ This stasis developed its own horrifying momentum: civil war, atrocity, and killing led to retribution killing and to even more atrocity. The cycle of violence and trauma continued to the point of destroying the *polis* as a physical space of citizenship, of community, and of unity. Communities were mutilated by civil conflict resulting in cultural trauma. Josiah Ober of Princeton University suggests that stasis "eliminated the possibility of public grandeur, individual nobility, ordinary dignity, even base-line human decency. The social and psychological trauma inflicted by stasis seemed peculiarly resistant to therapeutic redress."²⁸²

²⁷⁹ Blundell, 10-12.

²⁸⁰ John V.A. Fine. *The Ancient Greeks, A Critical History* (Boston: Belknap Press, 1985), 528–533; Donald Kagan. *The Peloponnesian War* (New York: The Penguin Group, 2003), 488, XXIII–XXIV.

²⁸¹ 'Stasis' in this context refers to Thucydides' definition of 'stasis' a set of symptoms indicating an internal disturbance in both individuals and states.

²⁸² http://www.stanford.edu/group/dispersed_author/docs/SoScienceHistoryAmnesty_Ober.pdf Social

The Peloponnesian War marked the dramatic end to the fifth century BCE in Greece.

I surmise that war in fifth century BCE would have significantly touched the lives of women as well as men. With little documented evidence of the female point of view on war during this time, I am left to speculate that war's impact on women ranged from long periods of separation from their husbands, fathers, brothers and male relatives to widowhood, a lack of physical protection, vulnerability to rape and even to death.²⁸³ The Persian and Peloponnesian wars would have had different implications for Greek women. The Persian Wars may have required men to participate in extended military tours far from home, possibly even dying far from home. Women would have experienced long absences of their husbands and if a man died in battle on foreign soil, it may have taken much longer to retrieve his body and return it to his family. The Peloponnesian wars may have jeopardised the immediate safety of a woman's home and family, or left her vulnerable to capture, rape, and servitude. Sons may have been slaughtered, homes razed, and daughters – along with the wife herself – captured and sent into a life of sexual exploitation and enslavement.

The Ancient Historians

With the advent of historical documentation, both Herodotus²⁸⁴ and Thucydides²⁸⁵ played a small but important role for the dramatists with their written portrayals of women. Both

Science History, Cultural History, and the Amnesty of 403 Josiah Ober, *Princeton University in Transactions of the Philological Association* 132 (2002): 127-137.

²⁸³ There are several excellent books that address the lack of evidence on females in fifth century BCE. I found the following two books particularly useful: Laura McClure's *Spoken Like a Woman: Speech and Gender in Athenian Drama* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999); and Barbara Goff, *Citizen Bacchae; Women's Ritual Practice in Ancient Greece* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

²⁸⁴ Herodotus was born in 484 BCE in Halicarnassus, Turkey and died in 425 BCE in Thurii. This dates Herodotus as a contemporary of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides.

²⁸⁵ Thucydides was born in 460 BCE in Alimos, Greece and died in 395 BCE. Thucydides would not have been a contemporary of Aeschylus; Sophocles was almost forty by the time Thucydides was born; and Euripides was twenty when Thucydides was born, suggesting that these two men could have known each other and had direct influence on each other.

historians record the gendered ‘reality’ from which female characters sprung forth. Thucydides was too late to be much of a source for the tragedians except possibly for plays written after 410 BCE. He may have influenced the female character constructions of Aristophanes and Menander. The recorded histories of the Persian Wars (Herodotus) and of the Peloponnesian War (Thucydides) illustrate social and historical experience and did include mentions of women. David Harvey, in his article “Women in Thucydides” studies a list of twenty references to women found in the *History of the Peloponnesian War*.²⁸⁶ A striking observation is that many of Thucydides’ references to women come in passages dealing with past history (thirteen out of twenty, with six of these references regarded as mythical) and only seven references occur as contemporary events during the Peloponnesian War. The women are, as Harvey notes, nothing more than part of ‘the anonymous backdrop’ of the Peloponnesian War. The passages are brief and do not mention women, for the most part, by name. The women are portrayed as primarily passive. Only one is seen as suffering. Harvey concludes that: “In seven passages they are uprooted from their homes; in another six they are sold into slavery; ...twice their rape is used as propaganda once they are massacred.”²⁸⁷ In another study, Thomas Wiedemann offers evidence that the minimising of women as subject-matter in the historical discourse is seen much more in Thucydides than in the recorded history of Herodotus. Weidemann reports 373 references to women and female subjects by Herodotus compared to Thucydides who offers less than fifty.²⁸⁸ This means that Herodotus references women quantitatively eight times more than Thucydides. Worth noting is that both Thucydides and Herodotus rank children ahead of women in the majority of instances where women are mentioned at all, with the usual order of importance

²⁸⁶ David Harvey, “Women in Thucydides,” *Arethusa* 18 (1), (1985): 67-90.

²⁸⁷ Harvey, 77.

²⁸⁸ Thomas E.J. Wiedemann, “Thucydides, Women, and the Limits of Rational Analysis,” *Greece & Rome, Second Series, Vol. 30, No. 2.* (Oct 1983): 170.

being men, children, women and slaves. Thucydides wrote about the Peloponnesian Wars and included evidence on collective trauma and the state of mind required to fight. In 2.42.2 and 2.42.4, he records Pericles' funeral oration that, in part, underscores the importance of the military and for men to fight for their country.²⁸⁹ Pericles links his praise of Athens to the dead soldiers for whom he is speaking when he says:

...for the Athens that I have celebrated is only what the heroism of these and their like have made her...none of these men allowed either wealth with its prospect of future enjoyment to unnerve his spirit, or poverty with its hope of a day of freedom and riches to tempt him to shrink from danger. No, holding that vengeance upon their enemies was more to be desired than any personal blessings, and reckoning this to be the most glorious of hazards, they joyfully determined to accept the risk... Thus, choosing to die resisting, rather than to live submitting, they fled only from dishonour...²⁹⁰

Pericles offers the compelling conclusion that "... having judged that to be happy means to be free, and to be free means to be brave, do not shy away from the risks of war"²⁹¹ and exhorts his audience to live up to the standards set by the deceased by announcing that men died in a manner that "becomes Athenians", instructing the survivors to have "as unfaltering a resolution in the field...".²⁹² Thus Thucydides, by way of Pericles, conjoins national identity and the collective mental state of the Athenians with respect to war. The individual may identify with the broader nation, no longer anonymous. In this way, the individual gains agency and dignity through membership of the political and military 'family'. Finally, the individual feels a sense of fraternity through the use of symbols and ceremonies.²⁹³ A footnote to his encouragement of bravery and nobility in fighting hard, and indeed dying during war, is his advice offered to the

²⁸⁹ Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans. Rex Warner, introduction and notes by M.I. Finley (London: Penguin Books, 1972), 2.36.4.

²⁹⁰ Thucydides, 2.42.2; 2.42.4; 2.43.1.

²⁹¹ Thucydides, 2.42.2; 2.42.4; 2.43.1.

²⁹² Thucydides, 2.42.2; 2.42.4; 2.43.1.

²⁹³ Anthony D. Smith, *The Ethnic Revival in the Modern World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1991), 160-161.

widows:

Perhaps I should say a word or two on the duties of women to those among you who are now widowed. . . . the greatest glory of a woman is to be least talked about by men, whether they are praising you or criticizing you.²⁹⁴

Women, it seems, were urged to remain invisible, unheard, and unrecorded.

Gender

The Role of Women in 5th century BCE Athens

The ancient tragedies were written by men to be performed by and for men. It is not surprising that the literary representations of fifth century BCE females do not map onto actual women in Athenian society, yet to fully grasp the scale and scope of the differences, and the potency of these literary constructions as emotional surrogates, it is helpful to examine the basic mismatch between female characters within the dramatic fiction and the social, ritual, private and public roles of actual Athenian women in antiquity. I shall offer a brief discussion of these roles. While my focus is on citizen women, it is important to note that different roles were allowed to intellectual foreigners such as Aspasia, or in tragic characters such as Medea. However, it is not ‘the other’ or ‘the foreigner’ that I wish to primarily explore here, but rather, the ordinary Athenian woman so that she may provide a baseline comparison for the female character constructions of the ancient tragedians.

Social roles

There have been a number of excellent studies examining the various social roles women played in daily life in ancient Greece. Scholars such as Barbara Goff, Froma Zeitlin, Laura McClure, Helene Foley, Sarah Pomeroy, Mary Lefkowitz and Maureen Fant have looked closely at the social anthropology of ancient Greek women and have found that contrary to the strong, defiant, murderous, and sexy female characters offered up onstage in antiquity, Athenian women

²⁹⁴ Thucydides, 2.46.2.

were often invisible and unrecorded. To fully understand the role of actual women in antiquity, one must look closely at the domestic sphere and the relationship of the household to the *polis*. After 451 BCE, the privileges of citizenship were bestowed only upon men who were able to prove they were produced from a union of two Athenians. It was within the household that “the citizen body reproduced itself.”²⁹⁵ Furthermore, for a man to achieve strong social standing and to receive a high-ranking position in the military in Athens, it was essential he produced legitimate children. Therefore, a citizen’s family life had to be meticulous and able to withstand public scrutiny. A wife’s reputation had to be seen as impeccable. Since a man’s reputation defined his status as a citizen, his family’s reputation became both his greatest asset and his greatest liability. The male citizen may have worried that his political enemies could attack him by targeting his wife or his other dependants, leaving them – and by extension, him – open to ridicule.²⁹⁶ According to Thucydides’ representation of Pericles’ doctrine on femininity, a template of ‘perfection’ for a woman would have required anonymity: no mention in public, either for blame or praise.²⁹⁷ As the economy grew stronger there was a shift away from aristocratic groupings toward single-family units. The primary contribution of the female to the social and economic fabric of Athenian society was to produce legitimate male heirs – sons that would become citizens. Women were to remain at home and not be seen outside of the family sphere.²⁹⁸ Sue Ellen Case acknowledges in her provocative 1985 article, “The Greek Creation of Female Parts” that with this emergence of collectivist values and the importance of the one (male) citizen - one vote democracy tendered under Pericles’ rule, women were essentially

²⁹⁵ Edith Hall. “The Sociology of Athenian Tragedy,” *Greek Tragedy*, ed. P.E. Easterling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 93-126.

²⁹⁶ Hall, (1997): 105.

²⁹⁷ Thucydides, 2.46.

²⁹⁸ Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, ed. E. C. Marchant, 2.7. 7-10. Accessed at: [http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Xen.+Mem.+2.2.13&redirect=true](http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Xen.+Mem.+2.2.13&redirect=true;).; cf. *Oec.* 7 – 10.

erased from public life with the exception of ritual. The single-family unit became the primary economic force for the creation and transmission of wealth, power, and citizens. “Women were restricted to limited conditions of ownership and exchange...within this new economy, women became a medium of exchange and marriage became an institution of ownership.”²⁹⁹

This public erasure of the female may have been caused in large part to a shift from an agrarian society of farmers to an urban existence within walled cities.³⁰⁰ While walls provided protection from outside enemies, the shift to an urban life had the impact of moving women indoors. Women of a leisured class simply did not work outside the home. Pericles’ reform of 451/450 BCE provided democracy for the male citizen and a form of imprisonment for their women. Wives stayed inside the home, took care of children, cooked, made clothing, and depending upon their economic status, managed slaves. Even the marketplace, with its opportunity for gossip and flirting, and the exchange of money for products, was considered too risky for respectable citizen-class women. With the rise of prestige and power of the citizen came the fear of losing this power. The rights of a free male citizen in classical Athens, particularly his right to speak publicly, was essential to his social and political identity and the loss of these civic rights would have been devastating. With the construction of civic identity so crucial to achieve and maintain, men silenced their women in public to help alleviate scandals that could cast aspersions on a citizen’s household, bringing his or his male child’s status into question.

Women were expected to maintain the image of chastity and to be seen as virtuous. This was best achieved through cherishing the husband and staying out of public sight. Women were

²⁹⁹ Sue Ellen Case, “The Greek Creation of Female Parts,” *Theatre Journal*, Vol. 37, No. 3 (Oct. 1985): 317-327. Case was referencing work by Marilyn Arthur in “Liberated Woman: The Classical Era,” in *Becoming Visible: Women in European History*, eds. Renate Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1977), 67-68.

³⁰⁰ Sarah B. Pomeroy, *Goddesses, Whores, Wives and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity* (New York: Schocken Publishing, 1995), 71-73.

instructed not to be philosophers, cavalry officers or politicians, but instead housekeepers who cared for their husbands and children, remaining chaste and free from scandal. Indeed, men in their rhetorical exercises debated the domestic responsibilities of women, women's chastity, and even how a woman was to behave when her husband acquired a mistress.³⁰¹ The social restrictions placed on Athenian women were in direct contrast to the character constructions of females in the plays of the ancient poets. This contrast between actual women and female characters was, I argue, crucial in creating symbols onstage capable of carrying trauma and promoting catharsis.

Women and the Ancient Theatre

As demonstrated, the connection between women's roles in Athenian society – especially the minimised female public voice – and the tragedians' portrayal of female characters onstage was often tenuous. Public discourse for women was utterly proscribed and controlled, whereas the Attic dramas were full of lengthy political and emotional speeches. In *Spoken Like a Woman*, Laura McClure investigates the social regulation of women's speech in classical Athens and compares it to the speech found in the Attic dramas, acknowledging there was a tendency to depict the speech of women as “disruptive and subversive of social stability.”³⁰² McClure investigates verbal genres that have been most associated with women in Greek dramas and literature – voices, she notes, that have been largely ignored by traditional scholarship. Most revealing is McClure's suggestion that as male Athenian citizens relied on their prerogative of

³⁰¹ Sarah Pomeroy, “Women's Identity and the Family in the Classical Polis,” *Women in Antiquity: New Assessment*, eds. R. Hawley, B. Levick (New York: Routledge, 1995); and Sarah Pomeroy, (1975): 163.

³⁰² Laura McClure, *Spoken Like a Woman: Speech and Gender in Athenian Drama* (New Jersey, 1999), 6.

public speech to symbolise their status as Athenian citizens in democratic Athens, the female voice became increasingly excluded from public life.³⁰³

It is for the reason of public silence and invisibility that many scholars have questioned whether or not women were excluded from the Athenian dramatic festivals. It is not surprising that little is written about women in the audience for there was little reason or opportunity to record women's voices, attitudes or attendance at different functions. It is probable that some women were, in fact, present during the tragedies, at the very least prostitutes and non-Attic wives. Jeffrey Henderson and Simon Goldhill have notably debated women's attendance at the theatre during the fifth century BCE. Henderson questions whether the "reference-system of Attic drama," which seemed to be addressed to a male audience, was something women would have found interesting and understandable.³⁰⁴ While he posits the hypothesis that women could be shielded from the indecencies of comedies by attending only dramas, he then argues against this idea by suggesting that women would not have gone unnoticed leaving the theatre *en masse* to avoid seeing an 'indecent' comedy. Henderson finally arrives in favour of women in attendance at the theatre based on two fragments of text. He concludes by suggesting that husbands were able to decide whether or not their wives could attend. Goldhill also investigates the question of female attendance at the Great Dionysia. In "Representing Democracy: Women at the Great Dionysia,"³⁰⁵ he challenges Henderson's assertions, arguing that Henderson was wrong in suggesting the sexual humour of Aristophanes' *Peace* played better with women at the rear of the audience. Looking at a more likely example of female participation in a public event, Goldhill turns his eye toward the religious frame of the Panathenaia. "The *pompe* of the

³⁰³ McClure, 8.

³⁰⁴ Jeffrey Henderson, *Three Plays by Aristophanes: Staging Women* (New York: Routledge, 1996).

³⁰⁵ Simon Goldhill, "Representing Democracy: Women at the Great Dionysia," *Ritual, Finance, Politics; Athenian Democratic Accounts Presented to David Lewis*, eds. Robin Osborne & Simon Hornblower (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 347-369.

Panathenaia certainly included women: metic wives with parasols, Athenian maidens carrying offerings, the priestess who received the procession on the Acropolis.”³⁰⁶ Goldhill’s primary argument, however, is that there is a lack of compelling evidence to suggest that women attended the plays. He offers an analysis of spatial architecture and the notion of a gendered use of space, arguing effectively that different types of spaces were required for ritual events, and that these various spaces contained different boundaries and expectations. Thus, an extended festival could represent, in microcosm, the Athenian *polis*.³⁰⁷ If women were present in the audience, both Goldhill and Henderson concede that it would have been the exception, not the rule. Others, such as Helene Foley, concur.³⁰⁸ All agree that regardless of audience demographics, the plays were clearly intended for the male citizen body. I suggest that men would have had a much easier time witnessing war-themed plays, expressing emotion and experiencing a release from their trauma without women in the audience. Wars were absolutely bloody and savage – men who had fought in war(s) needed a place to go to release their trauma while working through their understanding of what it meant to be at war. A female presence at these plays would have, I am certain, impeded the male attendee from having a complete and restorative experience.

Ritual

How did the prescribed social role of women in antiquity relate to an engagement with the role of women in Athenian ritual practice? Were women released or suppressed in this context? The arena of ritual proved to be a departure from the public silencing of women, for it was in religious activity that women could move and speak more freely. Barbara Goff, in *Citizen Bacchae*, examines the roles women performed in the sphere of ritual, and she interrogates the

³⁰⁶ Goldhill, 362-363.

³⁰⁷ Goldhill, 363.

³⁰⁸ Helen P. Foley, *Female Acts in Greek Tragedy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003). See her Introduction, p. 3, FN 1.

meanings of such activities for women and for the culture as a whole.³⁰⁹ As Goff points out, it is only recently that classical scholars have begun a sustained investigation into women's ritual practices, and much of her book is spent looking behind the 'seclusion and exclusion' of women. Ritual practice provided an approved public role and presence for women, yet the study of ritual does not necessarily offer an "authentic, unmediated access to the subjectivities of ancient women."³¹⁰ Why? One major challenge is the authenticity of voice. Only female utterances sanctioned by men in power would have had a chance of being recorded in any fashion. Nevertheless, it is helpful to look at the few distinct opportunities for women to participate in activities outside of the domestic sphere.

The ancient Greeks were polytheistic and worshipped a number of mythic deities, most often praying and making offerings to a deity in that deity's own sanctuary.³¹¹ Cult sites were chosen for a variety of reasons, but often for reasons to do with access and a 'natural mystique'. The highest points on mountains (close to Zeus and the sky), springs (offering access to water), and caves (providing protection from the elements as well as a level of secrecy) all proved attractive to cults. Not unlike today, the sites for the various sanctuaries and for new cities and colonies would have been determined on the basis of available land or in order to fulfil an ideal urban design. There were male and female deities worshipped by the ancient Greeks. When the deity was female, such as Athena or Artemis, the overseer of the sanctuary and of the offerings would be a priestess. The role of priestess, which originates from the Greek root *hieros* meaning "holy," did not connote a position of mystic authority nor did the priestess wield any political or

³⁰⁹ Barbara Goff, *Citizen Bacchae; Women's Ritual Practice in Ancient Greece* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 1.

³¹⁰ Goff, 3.

³¹¹ Jon D. Mikalson, *Ancient Greek Religion* (West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., 2010).

spiritual authority.³¹² *Hiereia* (feminine) and *hiereus* (masculine) translate as ‘those who are in charge of’ or ‘those who take care of’ holy things and can be found in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and in other Greek texts.³¹³ These terms and their definitions changed slightly depending upon the specific cult and the geographic location. A male priest would most likely have been an elder of a family that had tended a particular site for decades or longer. However, as a priestess, a woman would have been able to travel outside of the family home. Beginning in perhaps the eighth century BCE, the aristocratic landowner would have built a sanctuary site on his land and would have served as the original priest.³¹⁴ This priesthood would have passed down within the family. Prior to 507 BCE, the priesthood was held for life or until a priest ceded it to another family member. After 508 BCE, state cults were established and priests and priestesses were selected for terms, similar to Athenian democracy. For a woman to be selected as a priestess she would have been married to a citizen with prominent social standing and her term as priestess would have been compatible with her activities as wife and mother. Duties of the priestess would have included such things as taking care of the temple, making offerings to the deity, and in some cases, beginning the process of sacrifice, although she would not have performed actual slaughter.³¹⁵ In some instances, priests and priestesses even complied with city requests to curse certain enemies.³¹⁶ They were forbidden engagement with certain activities such as giving birth or conducting funerals at their sanctuaries or during cultic service. Women in their domestic spheres were, however, active in private rituals pertaining to birth, marriage, and even death.

³¹² Joan Breton Connelly, *Portrait of a Priestess: Women and Ritual in Ancient Greece* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 61.

³¹³ An excellent discussion of the language usage and the definition of “*hiereia*” can be found in Joan Breton Connelly’s *Portrait of a Priestess: Women and Ritual in Ancient Greece* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 8.

³¹⁴ Mikalson, 10.

³¹⁵ Goff, 62; Mikalson, 10-11; J.N. Bremmer, *Greek Religion*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 132-44.

³¹⁶ Goff, 62.

Women, it appears, were allowed to participate as members of choruses for initiatory rituals in Greek cult practices. In Claude Calame's investigation of female choruses in ancient Greece, he denotes the importance of female participation in choruses in pre-democratic and Spartan culture. Within feminine liturgies he discovered scenarios of tribal initiations that served as rites of passage.³¹⁷ Calame reconstructs the religious and social institutions surrounding the songs, demonstrating their function in an aesthetic education that permitted young girls to achieve the stature of womanhood and to be integrated into the adult civic community.³¹⁸

Women involved with cultic activity experienced an interesting paradigm shift pertaining to financial transactions. As stated earlier, women held little economic power in ancient Athens. It remains debatable whether women in classical Athens retained any power over their dowry and if any amount of the dowry could be traded by a woman herself.³¹⁹ In classical Athens, women did not own land, although they may have owned land elsewhere in Greece.³²⁰ Some women did work as small traders such as garland-sellers if their husbands were dead and there is evidence to suggest that some women engaged in the larger economy.³²¹ In certain instances, women achieved prominence in banking businesses owned by their husbands or other male family members.³²² Yet these instances of economic agency were rare. A priestess, on the other hand, was required to handle financial exchanges in the form of money and sacrifices. She could receive payment for her work ranging from a loaf of bread to an animal sacrifice to actual

³¹⁷ Claude Calame. *Les Chœurs de jeunes filles en Grèce archaïque*, 2 vols. (Rome: L'Ateneo and Bizzarri, 1977). Translated as *Choruses of Ancient Women in Greece: their morphology, religious roles and social functions* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1996).

³¹⁸ Calame, (1996).

³¹⁹ For a range of views on this subject, see David Schaps, *Economic Rights of Women in Ancient Greece* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1981), 74-88; Lin Foxhall, *Studying Gender in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); and Roger Just, *Women in Athenian Law and Life* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

³²⁰ Goff, 64.

³²¹ See Foxhall (2013) for a good discussion of female heads of households.

³²² Goff, 64.

money. There were transactions that required priestesses to engage in ritual begging for their particular cults and examples of priestesses visiting newly married women to collect money from them.³²³ Female family members could further the family agenda through cultic activities outside of the home.³²⁴ Religious activities could take women outside of their home to a village and when necessary, to the city. Not surprisingly, women turned to Artemis and even to Asclepius for assistance in childbirth. Although there were male physicians, mothers and midwives usually assisted in childbirth.³²⁵

Women and Lament

Athenian mourning legislation provides insight into the form female grief took at funerals during archaic Greece.³²⁶ According to Cicero, Kekrops decreed that funerals should be straightforward affairs, yet funeral rituals grew more and more extravagant and began to be “costly and filled with lamentations.”³²⁷ From the sixth century onward, legislation occurred forbidding excessive (female) lament including lacerations to the flesh, the tearing out of hair, excessive wailing, and the recitation of set lamentations at funerals.³²⁸ Solon’s law during the early sixth century BCE in Athens supports the contemporary reading of archaic Greek female lament as an activity that happened publicly, loudly, and quite theatrically.³²⁹ Margaret Alexiou argues that controlling the scale and scope of female lament in public at funerals was a means of

³²³ Goff, 67.

³²⁴ Mikalson, 130-132.

³²⁵ Pomeroy, (1995): 84-85.

³²⁶ James Morwood, trans., *Suppliant Women* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2007), Appendix 241-244 for a helpful discussion of the role and level of female Argive mourning in *Suppliant Women*.

³²⁷ Plutarch *On the Laws* 2.63, *Plutarch Caesar*, trans. Christopher Pelling (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

³²⁸ Robert Garland, “The well-ordered corpse: an investigation into the motives behind Greek funerary legislation” in *BICS* 36 (1989 1-15 and *Surviving Greek Tragedy* (London: Duckworth, 2004); H. van Wees, “A brief history of tears: gender differentiation in Archaic Greece,” eds. L. Foxhall and J. Salmon, *When Men were Men* (London: Routledge, 1998), 10-53.

³²⁹ Ron Owens, *Solon of Athens: Poet, Philosopher, Soldier, Statesman* (Sussex: Sussex Academic Press); Plut. *Sol.* 21.4; Robert Garland, *The Greek Way of Death* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010); Dem. 43.62.

shifting the focus off of the female mourner and onto the male priest or indeed the person who had died.³³⁰ The highly emotive female lamenter was likely perceived as dangerous, indecent, and attracting far too much attention.³³¹ Plutarch's account of Solon's rulings regarding women's conduct and participation at funerals suggests that female conduct at funerals was linked to female conduct and participation in festivals "since these were the only two occasions a respectable woman might venture out in public."³³² Men and women grieved with extrovert flair in Homer, yet by the 5th century BCE lamentation had been restrained.³³³ In his *Letter to Apollonius* Plutarch wrote that "mourning is truly feminine, weak, ignoble: women are more inclined to it than men, barbarians more than Greeks, commoners than aristocrats."³³⁴ Thucydides, in representing Pericles' advice to widows and mothers, suggested that widows refrain from explosive displays of emotion and bear their grief calmly and stoically in order to uphold the socially acceptable conduct for females.³³⁵ Yet the act of lament, often assigned to women, was an essential ingredient in the release of trauma, serving, in many ways, to mediate catharsis. The physical act of crying out in grief, of groaning, howling, keening, moaning, wailing, agonising, grieving – in short, the act of lamenting - offered what Freud referred to as 'affective displays of psychical trauma' which were 'distressing' yet essential to the processing of trauma.³³⁶ As discussed in Chapter Two, this 'calling up' of distressing affects forms the basis of Freud and Breuer's theory of a human's primal need to release certain residual emotional

³³⁰ Margaret Alexiou, *The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), 21-23.

³³¹ Alexiou, 21-23.

³³² H. A Shapiro. *Myth and Art. Poet and Painter in Classical Greece* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992); and Plut. *Sol.* 21.4.

³³³ James Morwood. *Suppliant Women* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2007), Appendix 241-244, FN 5.

³³⁴ Valerie M. Hope, *Death in Ancient Rome* (New York: Routledge, 2007); Plutarch, *Letter to Apollonius* (*Moralia* 113a).

³³⁵ Thucydides 2.44-45.

³³⁶ Sigmund Freud and Joseph Breuer, *Studies on Hysteria, 1895* (New York: Avon Books. 1966), 40.

experiences.³³⁷ In ancient Greece, women as community members or as priestesses performed the physical act of lamenting for the dead. Men attending theatrical performances would have witnessed female choruses onstage; these choruses were performing a function that was something Athenian women might actually have done: lament and carry personal or communal grief. Onstage, however, a lamenting female chorus, played by men *acting as women*, served a sophisticated function. The singing/lamenting/crying ‘females’ would have heightened the theatrical and emotional experience portrayed onstage. Many voices keening and singing together produced more sound and therefore would have delivered a more potent emotional impact, providing an aural spectacle. The male audience in antiquity *knew* that men were *enacting* women. Thus occurred an experiential binary: men witnessing men portraying females lamenting the effects of war; men-playing-women crying out, wailing, singing aloud. Of all the female roles portrayed by men onstage in Greek tragedy, the role of female lamenters would have been the most familiar and gender-accurate. I assert that theatrical performance emerged, in many ways, to fill a gap: by suppressing the female voice in public, the lamenting female could be found onstage encouraging collective (male) mourning. Lamentation took various forms but served one primary purpose: to deliver a large, emotive, primal release of pain in the face of death, loss, burial, or other devastation. In her book, *The Ritual Lament in the Greek Tradition*, Alexiou describes what she sees as a three-part structure of traditional Greek lament consisting of a direct address, a narrative of the past or future, and a renewed address accompanied by reproach and lamentation.³³⁸ Lament had its own dramatic build. Onstage, lamentations of captive female characters found in Athenian tragedies such as *Trojan Women* and *Suppliant Women* constituted a fundamentally subversive aspect of Greek drama according to Alexiou. She

³³⁷ Sigmund Freud, *Five Lectures on Psychoanalysis*. (London: Hogarth, 1910), 14.

³³⁸ Margaret Alexiou, *The Ritual Lament in the Greek Tradition* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2002).

posits that performances of such tragedies gave voice to classes who otherwise would have been marginalised and silenced in Athenian society: women, foreigners, and the enslaved. Alexiou's position is accurate if we believe that the dramatists were attempting to represent actual women onstage in their tragedies, which, I would argue, they were not. Another opinion is offered by Casey Dué who suggests that the opposition between Greeks and barbarians was softened by the dramatists' representations of the plight of captive women causing Athenian audiences to extend pity to those least like them. Dué argues that the tragedians used lament to create an empathetic link that blurred the line between Greek and barbarian. This is an interesting assumption and aligns more with the central thesis of this chapter: that inside the theatre male audiences found themselves confronted by human pain caused by war. There was little difference in the *experience* and *release* of trauma represented by Aeschylus with his Persian Queen or by Euripides with his captive Trojan women –female characters lamented pain and suffering caused by war.

Lament has been examined by a range of scholars including Laura McClure (*Spoken Like a Woman*), Olga Taxidou (*Tragedy, Modernity, and Mourning*), Nicole Loraux (*The Mourning Voice*), Margaret Alexiou (*The Ritual Lament in Greek Tradition*), and Casey Dué (*The Captive Women's Lament in Greek Tragedy*). Alexiou has argued that a primary function of lament was to forge connections within the community. Understanding the social role of lament is useful in discerning a possible value placed upon the female mourner(s) in antiquity. Men, and indeed possibly even the tragedians themselves, may have witnessed female lamenters and acknowledged their importance for the community. Within tragedy, however, Loraux argues that the role of the spectator was essential in the “emotional expressiveness of tragic suffering.”³³⁹ I

³³⁹ Nicole Loraux, *The Mourning Voice: An Essay on Greek Tragedy*, trans. Elizabeth Trapnell Rawlings (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002).

suggest that a male audience, aroused by the experience of suffering, would have been reminded that it was witnessing a theatrical representation of the devastation of war upon the human condition—a state that Loraux asserts tragedy was well-suited to convey. Female grief and the expression of lament within the landscape of war were social, emotional, *and* political acts.³⁴⁰ In *Mourning Sex: Performing Public Memories*, Peggy Phelan looks at the relationship between private and public grief, and asks the provocative question of whether or not there is political agency in public mourning for women. Phelan, who is not focused on ancient Greek dramaturgy, offers the view that certain forms of live performance respond to a postmodern society's need to "rehearse for loss, and especially for death."³⁴¹ This concept is in keeping with the notion that ancient tragedy allowed its male audience to 'rehearse' for war, and contextualise the ravages of war. British stage director Katie Mitchell sees the act of lament as a catharsis that bonds women together in their grief.³⁴² The act of lament expresses private pain in a public forum. It was often, although not exclusively, a collective experience involving a group of female mourners. According to Caraveli "...lament in ...antiquity (provided) a female oral history of the village (and was) women's foremost expressive genre."³⁴³ Like gossip, the act of lament strengthened ties between women and was socially important. Gendered voice and its presence within lamentation could be considered a form of social catharsis. Irigaray argues that lamentation places the female into a subject position, foregrounding her presence,³⁴⁴ while male

³⁴⁰ Corinna Seeds in an interview with Peggy Shannon, July 2008 in Hydra, Greece. Text of interview can be found in Appendix C and is archived at the Ryerson Theatre School, Ryerson University, Toronto, Ontario.

³⁴¹ Peggy Phelan, *Mourning Sex: Performing Public Memories* (London: Routledge, 1997).

³⁴² Katie Mitchell in her programme notes for her production of *The Women of Troy* at the National Theatre (2010).

³⁴³ A. Caraveli, "The Bitter Wounding: The Lament as Social Protest in Rural Greece," *Gender and Power in Rural Greece*, ed. J. Dubisch (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 169-94.

³⁴⁴ Luce Irigaray, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, trans. Gillian G. Gill (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985).

psychoanalytic researchers such as Scheff have argued that lament is a physical manifestation of internal trauma and therefore serves a cathartic function.³⁴⁵

Conclusion

There was a large divide between the actual women of antiquity and the fictional female characters offered up in the fifth century BCE tragedies to heighten the emotional and aesthetic distance required for male spectators to view war trauma represented onstage and mourn its impact. The fifth century theatre offered male spectators an onstage ‘action’ – in the form of lament, dialogue, music and dance – that served to penetrate the psychological containment of trauma, enabling these men to experience the release of trauma through cathartic affect. Yet certain social and emotional conditions had to be met. These conditions would likely have included an all-male or predominantly male audience, and a collection of larger-than-life female characters representing themes of loss, death, imprisonment, torture, rape, and betrayal. These characters would have served as emotional surrogates for the male experience. Spectators would have needed to feel that the theatre was a ‘safe’ place to collectively mourn and respond to themes of war-related suffering. By filling the ancient tragedies with traumatised female characters carrying central themes of war trauma – and portrayed by male actors – the tragedians brilliantly and effectively created an arena for the restorative *release of trauma*, allowing the theatres to function well as extensions of healing centres. The female characters became much more than dramaturgical devices designed to support the Athenian male’s fear of displacement and loss of citizenship³⁴⁶ and were essential ‘stand-ins’ for male experiences. Actual female grief displayed in public was threatening to the male order. As funeral rituals grew more and more extravagant and began to be filled with such excessive female lament that could include

³⁴⁵ T.J. Scheff, *Catharsis in Healing, Ritual, and Drama* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979).

³⁴⁶ Scheff, 99-100.

lacerations to the flesh, the tearing out of hair, excessive wailing, and the recitation of set lamentations at funerals, women began to represent instability and weakness, and men did not want to see this behaviour in public. That is, except in the context of the theatre when a male audience needed to see excessive female lament onstage to carry their own pain – an essential ingredient in the release of trauma through the physical act of grieving. A man’s primal need to release certain residual emotional experiences would have been addressed through his attendance at a fifth century tragedy.³⁴⁷

The war-themed tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides functioned, I submit, to promote necessary psychological repair for male citizens engaged in warfare throughout the fifth century BCE, and that the female characters served a critical symbolic function of carrying themes of war-related anxiety and loss. To more fully investigate this claim, I will turn to Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Aeschylus’ *Persians*,³⁴⁸ and *Seven At Thebes*³⁴⁹ and Euripides’ *Trojan Women*³⁵⁰ and *The Suppliants*³⁵¹ in the next chapter and interrogate the construction of the broad range of traumatised female characters. By understanding the differences between female literary inventions and everyday women of antiquity it is possible to grasp the power of the onstage symbols of loss, pain, and trauma provided by the female literary characters.

³⁴⁷ Sigmund Freud, *Five Lectures on Psychoanalysis*. (London: Hogarth, 1910), 14.

³⁴⁸ Aeschylus, *The Persians*, trans. and notes by Christopher Collard (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

³⁴⁹ H.W. Smyth, *Aeschylus: Agamemnon, Libation-Bearers, Eumenides, Fragments* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1930); Euripides. *Orestes and Other Plays*, trans. Robin Waterfield and notes by Edith Hall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

³⁵⁰ Euripides, *The Trojan Women and Other Plays*, trans. James Morwood, introduction by Edith Hall (Oxford, 2000).

³⁵¹ Euripides, *Suppliant Women*, trans. James Morwood (Oxford: Aris & Phillips Classical Texts, 2007).

Chapter 5: Female Characters as Surrogates for Male Trauma

I do not flinch at death if die I must, provided I have saved you.
My own death does not trouble me since women do not matter, but when a man dies he leaves a
void in the house.
--Iphigenia speaking to her brother Orestes³⁵²

In this chapter I study the symbolic representation of trauma caused by the loss of a loved one, a fallen leader, prisoner of war, betrayal, and self-sacrifice carried by female characters in Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Aeschylus' *Persians* and *Seven Against Thebes*, and Euripides' *Trojan Women* and *Suppliant Women*. Did these female characters, as Walter Burkert and René Girard have suggested, participate in surrogacy and sacrifice within tragedy in order to control social violence or were they used to provoke cathartic healing for male spectators suffering psychological war trauma?³⁵³ Simon Goldhill, in discussing Girard, suggests that the surrogate within tragedy absorbed the violence from within a group by being chosen as victim and then ritually killed.³⁵⁴ Did death or enslavement of the surrogate 'turn away disaster' as Girard has argued?³⁵⁵ Or is it conceivable that the female surrogate was intended to carry trauma in such a way that enabled male spectators to view theatricalised war trauma with an emotional distance and experience emotional purgation through catharsis? The concept of symbolic surrogacy is supported within the therapeutic literature of Lacan, Freud, Irigaray, Moreno and others, yet an affective turn in contemporary scholarship and recent literary criticism has, for the most part, focused primarily on trauma and less so on its release.³⁵⁶ Therefore, in this chapter, I will

³⁵² Euripides, *Iphigenia Among the Taurians*, trans. James Morwood (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), Lines 1003-1006.

³⁵³ René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), 65.

³⁵⁴ Simon Goldhill, "Modern critical approaches to Greek tragedy," *Greek Tragedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 332.

³⁵⁵ Goldhill, 333.

³⁵⁶ Critics focusing on trauma in performance in the second decade of the twenty-first century most notably include Cathy Caruth, Catherine Silverstone, Anne Cvetkovitz and Judith Butler.

examine the potential for both the symbolic theatrical representation of trauma and its potential to prompt cathartic release for a fifth century male audience.

Female characters in the ancient tragedies can be assigned to such categories as vengeful wife (Clytemnestra, Medea), adulterous wife (Helen), mother (Hecuba, Aithra), sister (Antigone, Ismene; Iphigenia, Electra), war prize (all of the Trojan women and many others), sex slave (again, all of the Trojan women, and specifically Cassandra), justice-seeker (Antigone), self-sacrificer for country (Iphigenia), self-sacrificer for wifely loyalty (Evadne), murderer (Medea, Clytemnestra), cursed seer (Cassandra), prophetess (Theonoe), goddess (Athena, Artemis, Aphrodite, Hera, Demeter), and lamenter (Hecuba and the female choruses found within *Suppliant Women*, *Seven Against Thebes*, and the *Trojan Women*). As discussed in the previous chapter, female literary constructions found within the tragedies differ radically from actual Athenian women. Were these female characters much more than literary imaginings? Did they serve as symbols of male loss, male powerlessness, and male trauma caused by decades of war?

A substantial portion of the tragedians' lives would have been framed and influenced by one or more wars. Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides either engaged in battle or witnessed its aftermath, making it unlikely for them not to have been personally and deeply affected by war. This closeness to war may suggest how and why the playwrights constructed battle-themed narratives and why female characters dominated their literary landscape. Written during a century when there were many long years of war – chiefly the Persian and Peloponnesian Wars – and featuring several mythical wars (The Seven Gated Thebes, Troy, Oechalia), the ancient plays often addressed the destructive effects of war for audiences comprised of men who had fought in one or more wars. While there remains some debate as to whether the theatre-going audience was exclusively or just predominantly male, it can be stated with certainty that the organisers,

sponsors, judges, performers and playwrights of the dramatic competitions were male. With women excluded from political and military life, it is striking that the ancient playwrights constructed strong female characters as protagonists in their war-themed dramas. These characters were aware of their subordination and of social parameters that restricted their lives and often faced complicated moral and ethical choices. They were driven into action by forces outside their control (by fate, the gods, and war), or by internal forces (revenge, or grief) and were remarkably resourceful in addressing these conflicts within their restricted circumstances. At times, they behaved as Athenian men *might have behaved* in similar circumstances. They gave voice to the pain of war, of loss, and of trauma.

Numerous tragedies deal with war in the ancient canon including *Persians* and the trilogy within the *Oresteia* by Aeschylus; Sophocles' *Ajax* and *Philoctetes*; and Euripides' *Hecuba*, *Trojan Women*, *Andromache*, *Iphigenia in Aulis*, and *Suppliant Women*.³⁵⁷ Much of this war-themed dramaturgy deals with the consequences of the Trojan War. Troy became an ideal mythical location for a fifth century audience to view, understand, and process war. Certainly a preoccupation with military conflict existed, but that is only part of the reason the tragedians turned to Troy. The wars that dominated the fifth century were long and brutal, causing psychological and physical wounds. Troy was, in many critical ways, a stand-in for all wars, just as female characters became stand-ins for male experiences on the battlefield. I submit that the intention of the poets was not to represent literal military campaigns onstage or to write overtly anti-war polemics. Such closeness to the subject matter would have caused the male psyche to close or even to collapse and may have garnered disapproval from political leaders. I argue instead that war-themed plays were a mechanism by which the poets examined their personal

³⁵⁷ For a comprehensive look at the extant war plays, see: Edith Hall, *Greek Tragedy: Suffering Under the Sun* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

views on Greece's military and polemic strategies while creating an experience conducive to promoting emotional health. There is evidence that supports Aeschylus' and many assume Sophocles' participation in military campaigns, and on-going speculation that Euripides had opinions about the ravages of military conflict based on his war-themed plays *Suppliant Women* and the *Trojan Women*.³⁵⁸ All three tragedians wrote about war and offered female characters in central roles. Froma Zeitlin has argued that the female literary constructions were codes for a system of 'androcentric authority' in which the female served a cognitive, symbolic and psychological function, representing the internal, nature, and even The Other.³⁵⁹ Hall has opined that tragedy examined more than just gender; it looked at social binaries such as the "human/divine, male/female, adult/child, free/slave, citizen/non-citizen, Athenian Greek/non-Athenian Greek, and Greek/barbarian."³⁶⁰ I suggest that by choosing to emphasise women as wives, fallen leaders, prisoners, patriots, concubines and mothers, the ancient Greeks placed a female face on the (male) collateral damage of war which mediated purgation for men. The female served the symbolic function of allowing a male audience to 'see' certain actions and as a result, begin to process the effects of such actions. In the following case studies, I examine female characters found within Homer and two tragedies each of Aeschylus and Euripides to uncover whether and how they may serve as surrogates for the male experience of war.

Homer

The Athenians were at war more or less incessantly throughout the period when dramatists were producing their tragedies. This may help to clarify why many of the ancient

³⁵⁸ See Hall's (2010) Introduction to *Greek Tragedy: Suffering Under the Sun* for a helpful discussion pertaining to Aeschylus and Sophocles' participation in military campaigns.

³⁵⁹ Catherine R. Stimpson, Director, Fellows Program, MacArthur Foundation, in her forward to Froma I. Zeitlin's *Playing the Other* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), ix.

³⁶⁰ Edith Hall, "The sociology of Athenian tragedy," *Greek Tragedy*, ed. P.E. Easterling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 96.

plays had war-themed narratives. Yet constant warfare was not the only critical influence on the ancient poets' dramaturgy. The playwrights were influenced by the rich oral and written traditions presented by the *aoidoi*, skilled epic storytellers, specifically referencing the texts of Homer, who was said to have lived in the 800s BCE.³⁶¹ The two surviving epics attributed to Homer, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, were composed for oral performance initially, but were eventually written down beginning in the mid-750s BCE.³⁶² The Athenians consumed these two poems as written texts as part of their curriculum and at festival performances. Hipparchus, an Athenian tyrant who reformed the recitation of Homeric poetry and the Panathenaic festival has been acknowledged as producing a standardised and canonical written text.³⁶³ Regardless of exactly when, how or why these epics were committed to written form is not at issue. What interest me are the construction of female characters within these two major epic poems and the framing of war within the heroic age.

Following Peter Rose's thoughtful and provocative discussion on the structure and social framework of the *Iliad* that I briefly reference in Chapter Three, we see the duality of major conflicts in the narrative between Achilles and Agamemnon and the Greeks and the Trojans. This is particularly useful when evaluating the construction of female characters in Homeric poetry.³⁶⁴ It is within the conflict between the Greeks and the Trojans that the ancient dramatists

³⁶¹ In Hdt. 2.53.2, Herodotus writes: "...for I suppose Hesiod and Homer flourished not more than four hundred years earlier than I; and these are the ones who taught the Greeks the descent of the gods, and gave the gods their names, and determined their spheres and functions, and described their outward forms."

³⁶² A.T. Murray, William F. Wyatt, *Homer: The Iliad, Books I-XII* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999).

³⁶³ Mary Lefkowitz, *Greek Gods, Human Lives: What We Can Learn From Myths* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003); Oliver Taplin, "Bring Back the Gods," *The New York Times*, 14 December 2003.

³⁶⁴ Peter W. Rose, "How Conservative Is the *Iliad*?" in *Sons of the Gods, Children of the Earth* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, London, 1992).

would have seen the larger issues pertaining to the role of the gods and the status of women.³⁶⁵

The female characters contained within the *Iliad* are primarily mute objects while in the *Odyssey* they are given voice, personality, speech, and the ability to exercise occasional power.³⁶⁶

Descriptions of the female body as a prize awarded to the victors of war are, in fact, plentiful, with numerous mentions of female trophies and enticements. Early on (Il.1.301-419), the fighting over female war prizes (Agamemnon loses his prize Chryseis, then demands and receives Achilles' prize Briseis) serves as the inciting action for the rage of Achilles during the remainder of the *Iliad*. A few books later (Il. 9.327) Achilles is offered "Seven women...flawless, skilled in crafts, women of Lesbos..." in exchange for releasing his anger over losing his prized Briseis to Agamemnon. Achilles is also offered the opportunity of choosing, for his pleasure, "twenty Trojan women second only to Argive Helen in their glory" or selecting one of the three daughters (all named in the text) of Orestes.³⁶⁷ Achilles rejects all of these offerings, choosing instead to yearn for the one prize he lost, his beloved Briseis. As the battle rages on, women are traded back and forth, mute objects, moving from one man to another. In this way, the female characters of the *Iliad* become archetypal prisoners of war, to be reborn in plays such as *Trojan Women*, where the captured women are rounded up by the victors and forced to become sex slaves of the very men that killed their husbands and sons.

The issue of lamentation and its performance by females—as seen in the *Iliad* – is surely one of the most potent influences on the ancient playwrights and their development of female characters. In *Iliad* 24, the Greek women, from Helen to Andromache, cry out in grief when they

³⁶⁵ Rose, 124.

³⁶⁶ Marios Skempis, Ioannis Ziogas, "Arete's Words: Etymology, Echoic-Poetry and Gendered Narrative, in the *Odyssey*," *Narratology and Interpretation: The Content of Narrative Form in Ancient Literature*, eds. Jonas Grethlein and Antonios Rengakos (Berlin & New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2009), 213.

³⁶⁷ All quotes from the *Iliad* are from Homer, *The Iliad*, trans. Robert Fagles, introduction and notes Bernard Knox (New York: Penguin Group, 1990).

first see Hector's body. The lament begins with a musical *threnos* sung by professionals and then answered by the chorus of kinswomen who wail out their grief. This lament's structure is call-and-response, with the kinswomen wailing, continued by the next of kin, and then a refrain of cries from the chorus. While individuation of the female is rare in the *Iliad* – with the exception of goddess Athena in *Iliad 1* who, sent by Hera queen of the gods, mediates Achilles' anger; and Andromache when she discovers her husband's death and, in accordance with traditional mourning customs, laments her grief (22.437-515) - the female lamenters chorally offer dramatic support to the action.

In the *Odyssey*, Homer offers a markedly different cast of female characters. Here the women function as crucial obstacles for and propellers of Odysseus' journey back to Ithaca. Odysseus can be seen dealing with his own post-wartime experiences. Unlike the men and war-heroes found in the *Iliad*, Odysseus rarely interacts with other men. He is a man whose identity is most often explored through his contact with women. In the *Odyssey*, women come in all shapes, sizes, forms, and enticements. Some, such as Calypso, attempt to possess Odysseus sexually and provoke a dramatic tension that he fights against yet succumbs to. Homer's description of Calypso's cave as possessing a "sweet aroma and a warm fire, the lush growth and flowing moisture around its entrance" (5.57-74) creates an image that is both maternal and womblike (her 'cave') and highly sexualised.³⁶⁸ Odysseus believes that he must break free of this goddess and her all-consuming sexuality in order to find his way back to his wife Penelope. He struggles to extricate himself from the security of Calypso's sexual/maternal grip and by so doing, reclaim his masculinity and independence. Calypso's smothering sensuality may be seen as having the power to possess and annihilate men. Odysseus soon encounters the young princess Nausikaa who offers him the earth-bound physical comforts of food, lodging and even marriage.

³⁶⁸ Rose, 125.

Again, Odysseus resists, wanting instead to continue his journey to his wife. With Nausikaa's virginal charms and Calypso's role of sexualised mother, Homer creates female characters capable of masculine annihilation in their hunger for physical and spiritual consumption.

While not exactly war, but with a war-like brutality, Odysseus and his men murder, rape and pillage the innocent Kikonians. They eventually arrive at the island of the goddess Circe, "the fair-haired Goddess of incantations and magic" (10.234-474), interpreted by some as a "purely genital sexual threat."³⁶⁹ Odysseus' men are tempted and seduced by Circe's melodic singing. As she soothes the men, she entices them to enter her house. Once inside, the men eat and drink what Circe offers them and using her magic wand, she strikes them and "shut(s) them up in the hog-sty: And they became like hogs..." (10.234-474.) Odysseus, upon hearing what has happened to his men, sets out to get them back. Along the way he meets up with the god Hermes, who offers him a magic plant to protect him against Circe's drugs. Certainly this plant can be seen, as Rose suggests, as a weapon that is phallicentric in nature: "black at the root, with a flower like milk" (10.234-474.) Odysseus is, in fact, urged to indulge in phallic assertiveness by Hermes who tells him that he must sleep with Circe to break her spell over his men, suggesting that a man who dominates a woman sexually will have power over her. Odysseus does so, yet by consummating his desire, he loses himself in sexual pleasure. Rather than marshalling his power over her, he and his men stay with her for a year. Eventually Odysseus is reminded that he must leave in order to reach his home and wife. Circe tells Odysseus that he must first visit blind Teiresias in Hades. In the underworld, Odysseus confronts the death of his mother and his own mortality. Penelope, Odysseus' wife on earth, represents life and living. His mother, in contrast,

³⁶⁹ Sigmund Freud, Josef Breuer, *Studies on Hysteria*. 1893-5. *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud Vol. 2*, eds. James Strachey, Anna Freud, Alix Strachey, Alan Tyson, Angela Richards, trans. James Strachey et. al. (London: Hogarth Press, 1953-1974); and Homer, *The Odyssey*, trans. Robert Fagles, introduction by Bernard Knox (New York: Penguin, 1997), 5:357.

represents death. It is in the underworld that Homer offers a catalogue of dangerous and wicked women (11.225-329). Reinforcing the image of the ‘dangerous wife,’ Odysseus is warned of Epikaste, wife of Oedipus, and others such as Phaedra, Prokris, and Eriphyle. Eventually, the curse on the house of Atreus is revisited, serving as a pointed reminder that women in that lineage are up to no good:

Zeus from the very start, the thunder king
Has hated the race of Atreus with a vengeance.
His trustiest weapon women’s twisted wiles.
What armies of us died for the sake of Helen...
Clytemnestra schemed your death while you were worlds away!
‘True, true,’ Agamemnon’s ghost kept pressing on
‘So even your own wife – never indulge her too far.
Never reveal the whole truth, whatever you may know;
Just tell her a part of it, be sure to hide the rest.’³⁷⁰

Odysseus uses the description of the conniving and murderous Clytemnestra as grounds for disguising himself for his return to Ithaca (13.383-85). In Book 12, he and his men encounter the Sirens, “whose sweet singing lures sailors to their doom,” thus resisting one more set of female characters whose attractiveness mask the absolute possibility of the destruction of men (12.189-90).

Throughout the *Odyssey*, the male journey is littered with dangerous women, waiting to seduce, castrate, smother and destroy Odysseus and his men. From sexualised mother figure (Calypso), to nubile princess (Nausikaa), to poisonous magician (Circe), to sweetly singing murderers (Sirens), to the evil, dreadful, shameless Clytemnestra, women are portrayed as vile creatures that require men to ‘take heed’ against. Odysseus is urged to “keep (his) own counsel” for the sake of self-preservation. While these Homeric females served as prototypes for later writers, perhaps even influencing the tragedians’ construction of larger-than-life female characters, their role in the Homeric epics distinctly differed from their role in the tragedies of

³⁷⁰ Homer, *The Odyssey*, (1996): 11.494-503.

the fifth century BCE in that Homer's females underscored a male fear of the feminine, of the unknown, of the loss of reason in the face of desire. Homer's female characters were not symbols used to carry war trauma but rather symbols intended to make men strong and better warriors. Homeric female characters warned men to be on guard emotionally and to 'man up'. Between 750 BCE, when Greece was engaged in extended wars and the fifth century BCE when Greece was engaged in brutal civil wars, female literary characters evolved into their new role: that of emotional surrogate for trauma caused by extensive campaigns of war.

Aeschylus

Aeschylus was born into a prominent wealthy family in 525 BCE. In 499 BCE, at the age of 25 or 26, he began his career as a dramatist. Over the course of his lifetime, Aeschylus not only proved to be extremely prolific, producing at least ninety plays, but quite successful. He won at least thirteen competitions and for a quarter of a century was seen, by Athenians and the ancient Greek world in general, as one of their most distinguished and important playwrights. Aeschylus was influenced by the array of social upheaval and political change that occurred during his lifetime. By 510 BCE, there was a final expulsion from Athens of the sixth century BCE tyrants and the first movement towards democracy. Aeschylus would have been cognisant of, if not actively involved in this enormous political change. As scholars such as Hall have suggested, there is every reason to believe that Aeschylus was a patriotic subject who loyally supported his city-state.³⁷¹ It is inconceivable to think that he did not observe his fellow citizens going off to fight against the Persians. Certainly he must have been aware of the brutal and bloody 494 BCE subjugation of Miletus. In 490 BCE, Aeschylus himself fought at Marathon against the first Persian invasion, led by King Darius. From 480 to 479 BCE, he was present, and may have fought at the battle of Salamis in 480 BCE and later at Plataea in 479 BCE, against

³⁷¹ Hall, (2010): 198.

the second Persian invasion of Athens, led by King Xerxes. By then, Aeschylus had lived surrounded by war for almost forty-five years.

In the 470s BCE, as Athens headed an anti-Persian alliance of Greek city-states, Aeschylus was invited to Sicily for the first time. The 460s BCE brought further democratic advances and reforms in Athens and Aeschylus found himself welcomed again in Gela, Sicily, where he wrote plays for performance and eventually died in 456 BCE.³⁷² On his tombstone was written an epitaph honouring his military efforts, rather than his dramatic prowess:

This tomb the dust of Aeschylus doth hide,
Euphorion's son and fruitful Gela's pride
How tried his valor, Marathon may tell
And long-haired Medes, who knew it all too well.³⁷³

As a writer, Aeschylus was influenced by the extremity of war and its aftermath on Greeks and non-Greeks alike. His dramaturgy was credited with “having effected a crucial transformation in the genre.”³⁷⁴ Not only did Aeschylus introduce new scenic devices, props, painted scenery, and visual effects such as ghostly apparitions, his poetry was heightened and contained large and unusual words. Offering his audience new forms of poetry, physical vocabulary and imagery, and reflecting a Persian influence, his plays and their physical productions engaged and provoked audiences in new ways.

Case Study: *Persians*

³⁷² This biographical portrait of Aeschylus has been constructed by referencing the following sources: Edith Hall, *Greek Tragedy: Suffering Under the Sun* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 198-201; Christopher Collard, *Aeschylus: Persians and Other Plays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), Ixxxv; Mary Lefkowitz, *Lives of the Greek Poets* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012), 67-74 and 157-60; Robert Fagles, *Aeschylus: The Oresteia*, with notes by W. B. Stanford, (New York: Penguin, 1975); Helene Foley, “The Politics of Tragic Lamentation,” eds. A. Sommerstein et al., *Tragedy, Comedy and the Polis* (Bari: Levante, 1993), 101-143; Herodotus 5.97; Herodotus 6.114.

³⁷³ *Anthologiae Graecae Appendix*, vol. 3, *Epigramma sepulcrale* 17.

³⁷⁴ Hall, (2010): 199.

Aeschylus' first play, *Persians*, was produced in 472 BCE and is the earliest surviving ancient Greek tragedy. This play holds the distinction of being the only ancient tragedy written around a historical theme.³⁷⁵ The play offers a dramatic portrait of Persia. Set in the royal council-chamber in the capital city of Sousa, near the tomb of Darius, the play presents Asian-themed court rituals, a Persian cast, and exotic costuming. *Persians*, based on actual warfare resulting in Persian defeat in 479 BCE, represents this defeat entirely through the painful utterances of the Persian characters.³⁷⁶ Indeed, this tragedy offers one of the first female characters in the war-themed dramaturgy of antiquity. The play contains a long song of mourning by the Persian Queen, with her chorus of old men injecting. She says:

Many are the women tearing their veils apart
With delicate hands;
Wet tears soak the folds on their breasts
As they share their pain.
Softly weeping the Persian wives
Miss husbands newly-wed;
Marriage-beds soft with coverings,
The joy of sensual youth, they have put away;
They mourn in quite insatiable grief.³⁷⁷

This image of Persian wives mourning from ‘insatiable grief’ accomplishes two things: Aeschylus places a female face on the collateral damage of war and at the same time humanises the enemy. No longer are the Persians faceless *others*, anonymous barbarians dead in battle. Instead, they are transformed into dead husbands of grieving widows, giving the Persian soldiers agency and narrative in death. Aeschylus presents the history of the war and of the vanquished Persians through the language of loss and mourning. Mourning has the complex ability to weave together memory and loss, remembrance and forgetting “as a way of coming to terms with a past

³⁷⁵ Hall, (2010): 199.

³⁷⁶ Marianne McDonald, “War then and now: the legacy of ancient Greek tragedy,” *Hermathena*; Winter 2006, Issue 181: 85.

³⁷⁷ Aeschylus, *The Persians*, trans. and notes, Christopher Collard (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), lines 537 –545.

that one can never fully preserve, a present that is now indelibly changed, and a future that is ripe with novelty, opportunity and dread.”³⁷⁸ Was Aeschylus asking his audience to occupy the position of the Persians and view the effects of war through their eyes – through the Queen’s eyes? If so, this was a sophisticated concept. The dominant narrative – Greeks are victors, are ‘right’ and had nature on their side – was placed in opposition to exposition describing, quite sympathetically and descriptively, the drowning of the other side and the emotional devastation this caused. The correlation between the ideal of the Persian and the ideal of the feminine served as twin antitheses to the ideal of the Athenian citizen. For the Athenian male the ideals of control and containment were connected with ideals of masculinity. As such, any war trauma that may have been ‘carried’ by a Greek soldier required the correct social and emotional conditions to be released. With *Persians*, Aeschylus presented his audience with a central character capable of carrying their trauma (borne of loss) while serving to feminise (and therefore weaken) the enemy. Perhaps the interval of seven years between the historical events and the play’s production provided the necessary aesthetic and emotional distance for the play to be received favourably.

There are many scholarly interpretations of *Persians* ranging from the identification of feminised mourning as a device to focus audience attention on the factors that led up to triumph (Goldhill) to a view of the play with its use of oppositions between civilisation and barbarism, between Greek and non-Greek other, as a visceral and insightful critique of war and empire (Taxidou).³⁷⁹ Goldhill suggests that the play serves as a cautionary tale for imperialism:

...the sympathy – not to mention ‘pity’ and ‘fear’ – that one would usually associate with mourning might be seen rather as part of Aeschylus’ turning the

³⁷⁸ Christina Tarnopolsky, Resident Faculty Fellow, at the McGill Institute for the Public Life of Arts and Ideas., investigating Memory and Mourning in Plato's Republic <http://www.mcgill.ca/iplai/whoisiplai/fellows/tarnopolsky>. March 2010.

³⁷⁹ Olga Taxidou, in a paper presented at Hydrama, Greece in July 2009.

narrative away from a simple extolling of Athenian victory over the Persians toward the wider concerns of the theological or moral drama. It is not so much the fact of triumph as the factors that have led to the triumph that interests Aeschylus.³⁸⁰

In *Inventing the Barbarian*, Hall suggests that the male characters are feminised by Aeschylus' use of a lamenting chorus of old men and a queen. The overtly feminine behaviour of lamenting subverts the traditional male power structure, rendering the Persian men weak; and that while Aeschylus' *Persians* was written from a Greek perspective yet designed as a patriotic eulogy, it is possible that "the portrayal of the Persians (is) notably sympathetic."³⁸¹ Peter Burian argues that *Persians* follows a "retribution pattern organised around punishment for past offences."³⁸² I suggest that Aeschylus' positioning of the Persians as a feminised nation state was to be read as a weakened nation state and, therefore, a justification of their defeat (Persia = feminine and weak; Greece = strong and overtly masculine). With the Persian Queen openly mourning the war dead, Aeschylus creates in her an effective symbol to carry the emotional devastation of a defeated (male) leader. The Chorus of old men provides an aesthetic distance for male spectators to openly mourn and yet feel superior to the feminised and weaker Persians. Aeschylus was strategic in his representation of a female queen at the centre of the action. She effectively presents an entire grief cycle through its requisite five stages: denial and isolation; anger; bargaining; depression; and acceptance, all the while providing symbolic representation of a fallen male leader. These five stages of normal grief, first proposed by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross in her 1969 book *On Death and Dying*³⁸³ can be seen in the following passages. After describing a troubling dream to her Chorus of old men, the Queen says, "I have long been wretchedly silent,

³⁸⁰ Simon Goldhill, "Battle Narrative and Politics in Aeschylus' *Persae*," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, Vol. 108 (1988): 189-193.

³⁸¹ Edith Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 71.

³⁸² Peter Burian, "Myth into *muthos*: the shaping of tragic plot," *Greek Tragedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 187.

³⁸³ Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, *On Death and Dying* (New York: Touchstone, 1997).

dismayed by our evil losses; for this disaster is extreme, its pain beyond telling or asking...” (290-291). This fits into stage one (denial and isolation) of death and loss; the Queen has been silent and ignored what has been happening, isolating herself and her grief. After hearing details (from the Messenger) of the death of the Persians, the Queen roars, “Hateful deity, you cheated the Persians of their wits, it is now clear! A bitter outcome my son found to his vengeance upon famous Athens!” (472-473). This outburst falls into the second stage of grief (anger). The third stage (bargaining) can be found as the Queen cries out to the the gods, “O you vision in my dreams at night, so clear, how very surely you revealed disaster to me! ...I am willing to pray first to the gods; then, as gifts to the Earth and to the dead, I shall come from my house to pour an offering...in case something better may happen for the future” (517-526). Stages four and five (depression and acceptance) conjoin as the Queen says “...everything is now full of fear; the gods’ hostility is evident...(and) such shock from our trouble terrifies my mind” (604-606); then, in the next ten lines, the Queen states that she accepts this situation and will bring libations to “win the favour of my son’s father (Darius)” and appease the dead (609-621). The Queen accepts what has happened and summons her dead husband. He arrives and they converse. The Queen, accepting of the terrible situation, announces that she will leave to “fetch fine clothing from the house, and try to meet my son at his approach: for I will not betray my dearest amid troubles.” (848-851) By witnessing the Queen travel through these cycles of grief, a male audience may have unconsciously – or consciously – identified cycles of their own grief. They were left to cry, moan, and experience cathartic affect in response to what they witnessed onstage.

Case Study: *Seven Against Thebes*

Seven Against Thebes is the third play in *Oedipodea*, an Oedipus-themed tetralogy

produced by Aeschylus in 467 BCE.³⁸⁴ The first two plays, *Laius* and *Oedipus*, as well as the satyr play *Sphinx*, are no longer extant. In both *Persians* and *Seven Against Thebes*, Aeschylus offers female characters carrying themes of the agony of war and the pain of loss. Practitioners of ritual lament represented in an all-female Chorus (*Seven Against Thebes*) and characters that present the enemy as human, weak, or fallen (the Queen in *Persians*) are presented. A lamenting female Chorus would have theatrically intensified the aural spectacle of the ritual of lament while helping to promote catharsis. As observed by Peter Burian, Aeschylus chose to have his *Seven Against Thebes* chorus comprised of Theban women rather than (male) elders, as he did in *Persians*.³⁸⁵ The female Chorus was able to “give voice to desperate fears for the fate of the city against which we can measure resolve of Eteocles, its defender”³⁸⁶ while at the same time carry the fear, the loss and the pain of war. In *Seven Against Thebes* Aeschylus gives voice to the fear and traumatic effect of *civil war* on the community of Thebes as opposed to an *international war* as was the case with his *Persians*.³⁸⁷ He offers a chorus of terrified Theban women who lament, plead and prepare for the worst.

The mythic theme of fratricide is reborn in Aeschylus’ tragedy, putting the playwright’s own spin on the classic tale of brothers killing each other. In “The sociology of Athenian tragedy” Edith Hall suggests:

The mutual slaughter of the two warriors is the prime Greek example of the fratricide story which is found in the mythical systems of most world cultures, whether Cain and Abel, Set and Osiris, or Romulus and Remus. But in

³⁸⁴ H.W. Smyth, *Aeschylus: Agamemnon, Libation-Bearers, Eumenides, Fragments* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1930), 437–438; Walter Burkert, *The Orientalizing Revolution: Near Eastern Influence on Greek Culture in the Early Archaic Age* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995), 106–14.

³⁸⁵ Peter Burian, “Myth into *muthos*: the shaping of tragic plot,” *Greek Tragedy* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 198.

³⁸⁶ Burian, 198.

³⁸⁷ Edith Hall, “The sociology of Athenian tragedy,” *Greek Tragedy*, ed. P.E. Easterling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 93-126.

Aeschylus' hands this instance of tragic intra-familial violence is also chief paradigm of the strife that afflicts the entire Theban aristocracy, by extension the whole of the Theban community, and indeed spills over into other cities in Greece.³⁸⁸

What is pertinent to the discussion of the role of the female character is not the story of fratricide per se, but the *response* of the female Chorus to its devastating consequences – which, in turn, modelled a reaction of grief for male spectators in the theatre observing the play. When Aeschylus decided to assign Eteocles as the principal protagonist of this play, he placed this character in tense and dramatic opposition to the very Theban women he was responsible for. Whether or not it was Aeschylus who ultimately penned the version of the play as it stands today³⁸⁹ it is worth noting the progression of the dramaturgy from masculine oratory of Eteocles to the descriptions of war by the messengers – with their concern for civic duty – to the feminine lamentation of the chorus and the conclusion of the play with the more personal (and feminine) lamentations of Antigone and Ismene, sisters of Eteocles and Polynices. As the play moves from masculine to feminine, from public displays of grief (through the Chorus) to more private displays (through the sisters) Aeschylus offers an interesting range of opportunity for surrogacy. The role of the lamenting Chorus is particularly important to the discussion of symbolic representation of war trauma.

Lamentation as a ritual form played a central role in the origins of tragedy.³⁹⁰ In *Seven Against Thebes*, the female Chorus uses ritualised lament to express social resistance to those in power as much as they use it to express emotional grief. Nicole Loraux, opines Foley, suggests that “the ideology represented in the classical funeral oration of the kind presented by Pericles

³⁸⁸ Edith Hall, (2010): 204.

³⁸⁹ Hall suggests in *Greek Tragedy* that actors preparing for a revival within decades of the play's 467 BCE premiere may have altered the current version of *Seven Against Thebes* from its original form.

³⁹⁰ See Foley (2003): 45-55 for an excellent discussion of the politics of gender assignment of tragic lamentation.

and others developed after the late 460s was a product of Athenian imperialism against other Greek states.”³⁹¹ However, this trend in historical ideology would not have been reflected in *Seven Against Thebes* as it was presented too early, in 467 BCE. A mourning woman, and indeed a lamenting female Chorus, would have produced pity in male spectators viewing a tragedy, but may have also provided an element of danger. As Foley suggests, “...the message lament carries is never fully suppressed.”³⁹² Lamentation within *Seven Against Thebes* symbolically carried trauma for male viewers. Witnessing the grief portrayed by the female Chorus would have provoked cathartic affect in the spectators.

The play is structured in three parts. In part one, Eteocles, the Theban king, prepares his fellow citizens for battle against his brother, Polynices. Eteocles articulates confidence that he and his men will be the victors in the imminent attack of the “seven men, furious for war” (42-43) led by his brother. In response to this, the chorus of young, unmarried women causes panic and performs the ritual of praying to the individual Olympian gods and then begging for the safety of their city. They “cry out in a great agony of fear” (80) and through song and dance, build panic in their frenzy of prayers to Ares (102); Zeus (116); Athena (129); Hera (152); Artemis (154); and Apollo (160). They dress the gods “with robes and garlands” (103), creating both aural and visual spectacle for an audience. Over the course of 102 lines of lament, the female Chorus expresses its fears to each god with the hope of protection offered by at least one of them. Eteocles articulates a brutal anti-feminist position suggesting that men are superior and women should be silent, unheard in public. He angrily chastises the Chorus, referring to the women as “intolerable creatures” (181) for their “howling, keening—things hateful to sensible minds.” (185) He attacks the Chorus on the basis of gender, stating that he has no interest in

³⁹¹ Foley, 54; Nicole Loraux, *The Invention of Athens* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), 56-69; 198.

³⁹² Foley, 55.

sharing a house with a woman in “bad times or in precious prosperity.” (189-90) He blames their loud lamentations on “an evil lack of heart.” (191-192) Finally, he says that if they must pray to the gods, they must do it calmly (236) and not make “cowards of citizens” (237) through their hysterical fear. He threatens those who disobey him with “death by public stoning.” (199) He reminds them clearly: “What lies outside the house is a man’s concern—let a woman give no advice.” (199-200)

Part two of the play addresses the issue of which seven champions will defend the seven gates. The Messenger ‘Scout’ and Eteocles enter. Scout reports who will fight at each of the seven gates while Eteocles announces who will defend each gate. The female Chorus serves as witness and gives voice to a concern about the impending battle. In part three, the female Chorus returns to its appropriate activity: the ritual of regulated and ‘calmer’ lamentation. The Chorus prays without “useless and wild sobbing” (279-280) and ask the gods collectively to keep their city safe. As their lamentations build, they address the fate of women often found in situations of war. The Chorus laments women who have, or who will in time become “enslaved as the prey of war, in dust and ash” (323) offering the audience an image of women “overpowered and led away, both young and old, by their hair like horses, their garments torn apart on them.” (326-329) The female Chorus laments the dangers both inside and outside the city walls, no longer focused solely on Eteocles’ safety. In all three parts of the play, the female Chorus carries the *pain* of war, the *trauma* of loss, and the (male) *fear* of succumbing to too much emotional release. The female Chorus serves the complex function of mediating the necessary pain without ‘losing control’. This surrogacy offers a male audience the opportunity to acknowledge their own pain borne of war, to take heed of the warning that too much ‘female’ hysteria is ‘bad’ for the city (i.e. bad for men), and that the interests of the city are best served by understanding the

importance of moderating the emotional release of pain through lament. The female Chorus serves also to articulate Aeschylus' suggestion that fate guides many things in life; men may fall victim to fate and commit despicable acts as fratricide (Eteocles and Polynices) or incest (Oedipus and Jocasta in the larger myth). Fate renders morally reprehensible acts with serious consequences. Men must remain emotionally balanced and clear-headed to understand the options before them. This 'lesson' is delivered by way of a bifurcated experience: emotional release alongside an intellectual understanding gained by witnessing the oratory of Eteocles.

Euripides

While Aeschylus wrote in novel ways that addressed the impacts of war – specifically wars that occurred in the past – and Sophocles wrote about the importance of justice within a democracy (*Antigone*) and the crippling mental trauma war can cause (*Ajax*), it was Euripides that began to create characters that spoke in everyday language about war's pain and suffering. He constructed female characters that were strong, bold, provocative and persuasive. There are a number of differing stories about whether or not Euripides went into a self-imposed exile, cutting himself off from the edifice of Athenian democracy and as such, from Athenian theatrical productions. What is clear is that he spent the final two years of his life in residence at the Macedonian court of Pella, where he was said to have written the *Bacchae* and *Iphigenia at Aulis*.³⁹³ Euripides was born around 485 BCE, somewhere in the vicinity of Athens. He was the son of Mnesarchides, a landowner on the island of Salamis. Married twice, he had three sons. He was raised in a cultured family, was witness to the rebuilding of the Athenian walls after the Persian Wars, and above all, belonged to the period of the Peloponnesian War. He died in Macedonia and was buried at Arethusa. There is no evidence of Euripides having had a military

³⁹³ Euripides, *The Trojan Women and Other Plays*, trans. James Morwood, introduction by Edith Hall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), xvii.

or political career.³⁹⁴ Euripides has been described as being the most intellectual poet of his time. Aristotle characterises him as the “first tragic poet to make his characters speak naturally in everyday vocabulary.”³⁹⁵ Euripides examined social and political destruction borne of avarice, desire, assertion of power and an appetite for ownership. His plays were warnings as much as they were entertainment. His use of language and his construction of a more psychologically driven character gave rise to innovation in dramaturgy and theatrical aesthetics.

Many people today consider Euripides’ *Trojan Women* to be the greatest anti-war play ever written,³⁹⁶ among them Marianne McDonald and J. Michael Walton, who in an introduction to *Trojan Women* in their collection of Greek plays express this sentiment.³⁹⁷ Numerous contemporary theatre directors, including Katie Mitchell, Annie Castledine, and Corinna Seeds have also expressed this point of view in interviews and programme notes.³⁹⁸ Certainly this play, with its Trojan female prisoners of war, has been used frequently as a stand-in for modern wars and even to commemorate their victims.³⁹⁹ However, I suggest that this play is much more than an angry anti-war manifesto; it offers an extended lament by a female Chorus comprised of victims of war. The Chorus effectively carries the trauma of loss of family, the loss of country, and even the fear of death.

³⁹⁴ This biographical portrait of Euripides has been constructed by referencing the following sources: E. Hall, (2010), 198-201; J. Morwood, *Euripides: Suppliant Women* (Oxford: Aris & Phillips, 2007), 1-30; and M. Lefkowitz *Lives of the Greek Poets* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012), 67-74; 157-60.

³⁹⁵ Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, ed. W.D. Ross (New York: Dover Press, 2004), 18-25: 3.1404(b).

³⁹⁶ Marianne McDonald and J. Michael Walton, in an introduction to *Trojan Women* in their collection of Greek plays, *Six Greek Tragedies* (New York: Bloomsbury Methuen, 2002).

³⁹⁷ McDonald and Walton, 2002.

³⁹⁸ See Appendix C for full text of interviews with McDonald, Castledine and Seeds.

³⁹⁹ Edith Hall, in her Introduction to *Euripides. The Trojan Women and Other Plays*, trans. and ed. James Morwood (Oxford: Aris and Phillips/Oxbow, 2007), 1-31.

Euripides' tragedies often confront and challenge the "patriotism, pragmatism, expediency and *force majeure* with the ideals of loyalty, equity, justice, and clemency."⁴⁰⁰ His characters speak eloquently and with deep emotion as everyday people as well as royalty. His plotlines would have allowed males audience to 'try on' issues of civic identity and evaluate moral, ethical and political behaviour while at the same time openly grieve while watching the play. Aristotle wrote that the "best tragedy should be complex rather than simple; and it should also be an imitation of events that provoke fear and pity..."⁴⁰¹ He held Euripides in high esteem, defending him from those who criticised his tragedies as being too depressing, and ending in bad fortune. Aristotle thought that Euripides was, in fact, "the most tragic of poets."⁴⁰²

Case Study: *Trojan Women*

Euripides' *Trojan Women* was also part of a lost tetralogy of three tragedies and one satyr play about which we have some information. The sequence of four plays contained the lost tragedies *Alexander* and *Palamedes*, the extant *Trojan Women*, and the lost satyr play *Sisyphus*. Some scholars suggest that the three tragedies were, to a degree, interconnected as they shared similar settings (on or near Troy), characters (Hecuba, Cassandra, and Odysseus), and plot points (Paris exposed as a child; his reunion with his family; and the wrongful persecution of Palamedes by the Greeks.)⁴⁰³ P.E. Easterling argues that Euripides' *Trojan Women* dealt with the worst possible events that could happen to a city, that is, its utter destruction.⁴⁰⁴ Drawing upon the events of the Trojan War, the play opens in its final hours: the Trojan men are dead and their women captured, waiting to be sent off to serve new masters. Troy itself is burning. For a fifth

⁴⁰⁰ Hall, (2008): p.xiii.

⁴⁰¹ Aristotle, *Poetics*: 7.2.

⁴⁰² Aristotle, 7.2.

⁴⁰³ See Hall, *Greek Tragedy* (2010): 268-272 for a brief but interesting background on *Trojan Women*.

⁴⁰⁴ P.E. Easterling, ed. "Form and performance," *Greek Tragedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 173.

century BCE Greek audience, the possibility of such annihilation was a reality. Plataea, a city only forty miles from Athens and an ally had been utterly destroyed in 427 BCE; Scione in Chalcidice had been devastated in 421 BCE; and of course, there was the annihilation of Melos by the Athenians themselves in 416 BCE.⁴⁰⁵

Just before the *Trojan Women* was produced in 415 BCE, the Athenians carried out the act of genocide on Melos. The citizens of Melos had asked to remain neutral and to not engage in warfare. They requested that the Athenians bypass their city all together and allow them to live in peace. To make an example of them, the Athenians invaded Melos, killed all of the men, enslaved all of the women and female children and razed the city to the ground.⁴⁰⁶ As Thucydides describes this brutality, he notes that the long Peloponnesian War was responsible for unprecedented suffering for Greece.⁴⁰⁷ Never before had so many cities been captured and then destroyed either by foreign armies or by the Athenian powers themselves. The country witnessed an unusually large number of immigrants. Citizens were stunned by the enormity of the loss of life – from both external warfare and internal revolutions.⁴⁰⁸ Greek scholar and humanitarian Gilbert Murray, who translated *Trojan Women* for a production at the Royal Court Theatre in London in 1905 was certain that Euripides wrote this play in response to the Athenian massacre of men and boys on the island of Melos and the enslavement of all others. There is no direct evidence to support Murray’s claim, leaving Hall to disagree with Murray, arguing that his was an inaccurate interpretation of Euripides’ intentions because the “Spartan ethnicity of the maligned Greek characters in the play is insistently stressed.”⁴⁰⁹ Easterling has suggested that

⁴⁰⁵ Easterling, 173.

⁴⁰⁶ See “The Melian Dialogue” in Thucydides 5.116. Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, trans. Rex Warner, introduction and notes by M.I. Finley (New York: Penguin Books, 1972).

⁴⁰⁷ Warner and Finley, (1972): 5.116.

⁴⁰⁸ Warner and Finley, (1972): 5.116.

⁴⁰⁹ Hall, (2010): 268-272.

Trojan Women must have been perceived by a fifth century BCE audience as “relevant to its own times”⁴¹⁰ while at the same time possessing enough mythic allure to have meaning for “all times.”⁴¹¹ Whether the collective impact of the wars at Plataea, Scione and Melos – or just the singular devastation of Melos - influenced Euripides’ writing of *Trojan Women* is a subject that has been debated and will, no doubt, continue to be debated by historians and theatre scholars alike. What *is* likely is that Euripides would have been aware of the destruction of Melos at the hands of the Athenians as well as the wars and loss of life in Plataea and Scione. It is highly conceivable that a fifth-century Athenian audience would have seen, as Easterling suggests, a disconcerting resemblance to the atrocities being committed in other parts of the Greek world and the content of *Trojan Women*.⁴¹²

The character of the fallen queen, Hecuba, is an extremely important symbol of loss in *Trojan Women*. She is, as suggested by Easterling, ‘the archetypal sufferer’ and symbolically carries the weight of loss and despair caused by war. Placed at the centre of the action, she serves as narrator of events and also dominates the dialogue with the female Chorus of prisoners and characters that come and go. Hecuba takes place in rituals such as initiating lament (143-152), preparing the body of young Astyanax (1209-34) and in attempting to connect with the dead as she prepares to leave for a life of enslavement (1305-7.)⁴¹³ It is Hecuba who, at the end of the play, is able to reflect on the meaning of her pain and grief, and upon the sorrow of her beloved Troy (1240-5). This female character of a fallen queen carried and processed the pain of war for

⁴¹⁰ Easterling, 173.

⁴¹¹ Easterling, 173.

⁴¹² Michael X. Zelenak, *Artists and Issues in the Theatre Vol. 7*, ed. August W. Staub (New York: Peter Lang, 1998).

⁴¹³ See P.E. Easterling’s analysis of the plot of *Trojan Women* in P.E. Easterling, “Form and performance,” *Greek Tragedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 173-177.

her male audience. Male spectators could watch Hecuba and openly cry in response to the downfall of a great leader.

The Chorus of female prisoners is equally important. Identified at the beginning of the play by the god Poseidon as Trojan women who have been ‘claimed’ by (new) Greek masters or awaiting their allocation to “leaders of the army” (32-5), it becomes clear that these women comprise a significant group providing a visual and aural context for their grieving queen. The Chorus shares ritual lamentation with Hecuba. They “bring Troy into the play”⁴¹⁴ while symbolically carrying the fear of deportation, of separation from their children, and the confrontation of their own potential death. Their constant onstage presence would have been a visual reminder of communal disaster.⁴¹⁵ Their cries, lamentations, and lyric descriptions of ambush (511-76) offer a visceral and clear representation of the devastation of war – much more than any one character in the play. For male war veterans in the audience, this display of pain, confusion, and despair carried symbolically by the female Chorus would no doubt have pierced any protective layer, any ‘containment of trauma’ within the spectator and provoked a communal cathartic affect of grief.

Euripides often dramatised ‘the other’ in female form, portraying her as a monster from another place but at the same time a monster no different and no better than the non-monsters – the Athenians – in the audience. British theatre director Annie Castledine suggests that Euripides was sympathetic to his female characters, creating literary constructions that were witty, even funny. “He gave (Medea) the ability to see through everything and everyone. He elevated her, let her get away scot-free with killing those children, and then sends her off to

⁴¹⁴ Easterling, (1997): 173-177.

⁴¹⁵ Easterling, (1997): 173-177.

Athens as a goddess, while dripping the blood of her children onto Jason. Brilliant!”⁴¹⁶ It is arguable if the playwright was actually sympathetic to women, but Euripides did set up antitheses – such as day and night; god and human; Greek and Barbarian. He seemed to relate his love of rhetorical polarities to his portrayal of gender relations. His women were complex, at times doing evil things (Medea and Helen) yet seemingly justified in their actions. Certainly this bipolarity was intensified as men watched female characters, performed by men, experience the devastating effects of war and its aftermath – a war that only men could have fought. Euripides’ female characters did allow men in the audience to witness and process war-induced destruction; and the resulting grief portrayed by characters such as Hecuba allowed men to weep and openly mourn as a community. Nietzsche talks about Greek tragedy addressing the human potential for ‘double character’ in his *Five Prefaces to Five Unwritten Books*. He writes:

The human being, in its highest and noblest powers, is wholly nature and bears within itself nature’s uncanny double character. The human’s frightful capabilities, the ones which are considered inhuman, are indeed perhaps the fertile soil from which alone can grow all humanity, in impulses, deeds, and works. So it is with the Greeks, the most humane human beings of ancient times have within themselves a trait of cruelty, of tiger-like joy in destruction. ...⁴¹⁷

This concept of the ‘double character’ was something Euripides understood well. His view of humanity as multifaceted, with characters possessing the ability to be intensely good and bad,⁴¹⁸ created a complexity onstage that must have been interesting – and certainly more provocative – than what had come before. His use of female characters in the context of battle further underscored this duality. In this excerpt from *Trojan Women*, Hecuba is preparing to leave her land and enter a life of slavery. Having witnessed the tragic deaths of her children and

⁴¹⁶ See Appendix C for the full interview with Annie Castledine.

⁴¹⁷ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Kritische Studienausgabe Vol 1*, eds. G. Colli and M. Montinari (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1999), 783.

⁴¹⁸ Nietzsche, 783.

grandchild, and having watched her beloved Troy burn to the ground at the hands of the Greeks, she says:

So my suffering was all that concerned the gods...
That, and Troy too, the city picked out for their hatred.
All our ox-sacrifices were in vain.
*Yet if god had not turned the world upside down
We would vanish into obscurity. We would never have given men to come
the inspiration to sing of us in their song.*⁴¹⁹

In the passage I have italicised above, it is possible to read Hecuba's duality as a character capable of internal self-reflection while externally lamenting her misfortune. For a fifth century BCE audience, the words and spectacle of Hecuba, a fallen queen, may have evoked their own painful memories of wartime sacrifice and loss. It may have been easy to associate Hecuba's lament over the death of her family and the destruction of her precious Troy with male comrades left behind in the war, even with leaders that had fallen in combat. Hecuba gives voice to the suffering caused by the loss of children, home and freedom. This character may have facilitated a bi-gendered, male-female reception, thus rendering Hecuba a 'double character.' When Hecuba, presented with the body of her dead grandchild, offers an indictment of 'irrational fear,' she exudes a masculine disdain as she shames the soldiers in front of her:

It gives me no joy to look upon this painful sight.
You, Achaeans, who swell with greater pride in your spears than your wits,
Why were you so frightened of this boy that you committed a murder that had no precedent? Was it in case he might someday restore our fallen city?
Your strength amounted to nothing then. Even when Hector and our numberless army
Triumphed with the spear, we used to fall in battle. But now that the city has been taken
And the Phrygians are wiped out, you are still frightened of this little boy.
I cannot praise a man when his fear is irrational.⁴²⁰

⁴¹⁹ Euripides, *Trojan Women and Other Plays*, trans. James Morwood (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), lines 1240-1245.

⁴²⁰ Euripides, *Trojan Women*, lines 1146-1166.

Marianne McDonald and Athol Fugard, in a joint interview with me, suggested that the character of Hecuba might be read as a victim in *Trojan Women* and that spectators might “learn from the victimhood more than from her acts of vengeance later seen in the play *Hecuba*.”⁴²¹ In discussing Euripides’ lamenting female Chorus of war prisoners, both Fugard and McDonald offered that since the Chorus spends much of the play processing relationships and emotions for the community, it carries the pain of loss for the male audience.⁴²²

Three female ‘patterns’ of duality emerge clearly in *Trojan Women*. They include (1) the fallen leader (Hecuba) that a male audience could paradoxically imbue with their own war experiences of fallen (male) leaders; (2) the war prize and seer (Cassandra) who represents both a ‘prize’ to be claimed (by Agamemnon) and someone with the ability to see danger but who is not believed; and (3) the whore/temptress/prize to be fought over (Helen), the notorious, multi-faceted female accused of starting the Trojan War and causing the downfall of Troy. Helen is blamed for the imprisonment, rape and enslavement of the other women. In *Trojan Women*, Hecuba finds Helen’s charisma and charm so potent that she warns Menelaus not to lay eyes on Helen for fear he will be manipulated and controlled (reminiscent of Homer’s *Odyssey* in which men are warned to guard themselves against women or they will be undone). On a larger level, Helen’s female body can be read as a bifurcated receptor *and* inciter of violence, envy, and the harsh effects of the war. Helen’s physical beauty becomes a rousing metaphor for homeland and empire. Her beauty taunts because of this; she becomes someone (and something) that must be captured, imprisoned, raped and dominated – by men. As a theatrical character, she is a natural antagonist, serving as the woman all female characters hate and whom all men (onstage and off) lust after but can never fully possess. Helen is the physical embodiment of everything war is

⁴²¹ See Appendix C for complete text of interview with McDonald and Fugard.

⁴²² See Appendix C for complete text of interview with McDonald and Fugard.

fought over: possession (of land, of women), desire (for power and ownership) and the destruction of *the other*. As such, Helen is the ultimate war metaphor in ancient dramaturgy. To move this character into the psychological realm, she can be seen to represent the male urge to conquer, and his pain of failing. She is his yearning, his undoing, and his loss. All three female characters serve as effective symbols for carrying male trauma: Hecuba carries the trauma of a fallen leader, of the loss of family and country; Cassandra carries the trauma of becoming a prisoner of war; and Helen carries the trauma borne of the irrational and unattainable.

In 458 BCE Aeschylus introduced the character of Cassandra, whose name translates ‘She who entangles men’, as a frenzied prophetess. Cursed by the god Apollo for rebuking his sexual advances, Cassandra was ‘awarded’ the ability to predict the future and the curse of not being believed.⁴²³ Cassandra represents the lone voice of dissent, the voice of resistance. As such, she brings attention to an unwillingness of the listener to change, either from a lack of courage, a desire for destruction, or the inability to simply hear the warning. Zeitlin sees Cassandra as a visionary who possesses a second sight.⁴²⁴ Taplin suggests Cassandra is a war victim of Troy as much as she is a female victim of Apollo.⁴²⁵ McClure and Goldhill both regard Cassandra as a character placed in opposition to Clytemnestra.⁴²⁶ Foley describes her as a maddened virgin daughter devoted to her natal family who revels in her description of the revenge that her ‘marriage’ to Agamemnon would bring (353-405).⁴²⁷ In Euripides’ *Trojan*

⁴²³ Aeschylus, *Persians and Other Plays*, trans. C. Collard (Oxford: Oxford University, 2008), lines 1202-12.

⁴²⁴ Froma Zeitlin, *Playing the Other: Gender and Society in Classical Greek* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 63-96.

⁴²⁵ Oliver Taplin, *Greek Tragedy in Action* (London: Methuen, 1978), 141.

⁴²⁶ Laura McClure, *Spoken Like a Woman: Speech and Gender in Athenian Drama* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 92; and Simon Goldhill, *Language, Sexuality, Narrative: The Oresteia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 57-58.

⁴²⁷ Helene P. Foley, *Female Acts in Greek Tragedy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 94.

Women, she is seen as victim of war, a woman on the verge of sexual enslavement and someone who clearly sees the colossal waste of fighting a war over a woman:

I may
Have the god in me, but nevertheless I shall stand outside
My frenzy to say this much. In their hunt for Helen, the
Greeks lost countless men – because of one woman, one
Love affair. In a hateful cause, their clever general killed
What was dearest to him, sacrificing for his brother his
Delight in children in his house, for the sake of a woman—
And that a woman who had not been carried off by force.
No, she went willingly.⁴²⁸

Euripides' treatment of Cassandra differs from that of Aeschylus. For Euripides, Cassandra describes quite clearly what the hunt for Helen has meant for her country and the dire consequences of this quest while Aeschylus presents Cassandra in *Agamemnon* as a crazed and hysterical clairvoyant capable of looking into the past, the present, and the future. Cassandra carries an extraordinary message for Euripides: when wars occur for the wrong reasons, bad things happen, people die, and generations suffer. As an emotional surrogate, Cassandra can be read as carrying a sense of fear and betrayal. As Shay has suggested, the inability to reconcile what is ethical and just during combat can destroy the psyche, leaving a combatant emotionally broken even to the point of suffering physical symptoms.⁴²⁹ The ability to 'see' what is coming, to offer a warning and then to not be believed can be just as destructive. Cassandra's trauma is symbolised in various ways: she will be sexually taken by Agamemnon; her ability to see the horrors that lie in front of her will be clear but no one will listen to her; and she will predict her own demise yet remain unable to alter her fate of death at the hands of Clytemnestra. Whether it is Herodotus' example of Epizelus (hysterical blindness caused by extreme fear) or Sophocles' Ajax whose mind is so broken that he commits suicide on the battlefield rather than risk serving

⁴²⁸ Euripides, *Trojan Women and Other Plays*, trans. James Morwood (Oxford, 2008), lines 353-374.

⁴²⁹ Jonathan Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character* (New York: Scribner, 1994).

his men poorly, war trauma can be extreme and it requires emotional release. Euripides' *Trojan Women* is a double-edged play offering female characters as "humane human beings (that) have within themselves a trait of cruelty, of tiger-like joy in destruction."⁴³⁰ His female characters represent both the head and the heart of war.

Case Study: *Suppliant Women*

In his play, *Suppliant Women*, Euripides offers a dramatisation of an important moment in Athenian mythical history, that of Theseus' retrieval of the bodies of the Argives who fought and were killed during their attack on Thebes. This play paralleled an actual annual ceremony that occurred in Athens during the decades that the great tragedies were written and performed. A public funeral was offered in mid-winter to pay tribute to the war dead. Lasting several days, it was financed by the state. The ceremony officially included women and resident aliens, making this civic event quite unique. The importance of this public ceremony to the fabric of Athenian society cannot be understated. Communal grieving for all – male and female – was – and is – essential during the decades of war. Hall suggests that this single event may have been the only time a woman would have been exposed to extended oratory by a statesman.⁴³¹ Certainly a striking element of this annual public funeral was the ritualised washing and handling of the bones by male relatives, priests, and even the sons of the dead in preparation for burial. On the third day of this three-day event, the bones were laid in cypress coffins, with an extra, empty coffin included to represent the bodies of those still missing in action. There was a procession leading out of the city gates and into a cemetery where the bones were interred. An oratory of farewell for the dead was offered, accompanied by female and male lamentation. This Athenian ceremony helped build civic pride while also adhering to strict social protocols for publicly

⁴³⁰ Nietzsche, 2001.

⁴³¹ Edith Hall, (2010): 74-75; 259-261.

honouring the dead. Tragedy – including *Suppliant Women* - would have been expected to adhere closely to the proper conduct for a funeral. Sons would have been enlisted to carry the bones of their fathers during the Athenian ceremony. In *Suppliant Women*, it is the orphan sons who carry their fathers' bodies and then, once cremated, carry the jars containing their ashes to place in the hands of the grieving mothers. During a civic ceremony, mothers might have become so distraught that they pulled their hair out, scratched their faces and arms, and cried out loudly in emotional agony and lament, even though such displays of wild emotion were frowned upon. Euripides wrote this behaviour into *Suppliant Women*.

The plot of Euripides' tragedy takes place in Athenian territory of Eleusis at the temple of Demeter. Argive mothers have travelled to the temple with their fallen king, Adrastus, to plead with Aithra, mother of King Theseus, to ask her son to assist these mothers in retrieving the bodies of their sons at the seven gates of Thebes. It is not clear, but it is possible that *Suppliant Women* is a loose dramatisation of similar events of a traumatic defeat suffered by the Athenians at Delium in 424 BCE⁴³² that Thucydides recounts in 4. 89-101. In this case, the Thebans refused to release the thousand Athenian dead for burial but eventually did. An audience watching *Suppliant Women* may very well have been reminded of the importance of ethical burial of the war dead.

Plutarch's description of Theseus portrays him as a descendant of the gods; a warrior known to the entire world; the founder of Athens; and even as a rapist.⁴³³ By the late sixth century, Theseus had become the mythic equivalent of Heracles and by the middle of the fifth century he was honoured in festivals as the founding father of democracy. Euripides paid tribute to Theseus by assigning him elegant, rational speeches in *Suppliant Women*. What becomes

⁴³² Hall suggests this as a possibility in her historical overview of *Suppliant Women* in *Greek Tragedy* (Oxford University Press, 2010), 259.

⁴³³ Plutarch, *Plutarch's Lives Vol. 5*, trans. John Dryden (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1885), 29: 2-5.

problematic in the play is the stark contrast between the oratory of Theseus (rational, strong, forceful and statesman-like) and the extreme lament of the female Chorus. The frenzied widow of Capaneus makes a shocking surprise appearance toward the end of the play and her determination to die in glory by hurling herself onto her husband's funeral pyre is a stark reminder of the brutal consequences of war. Her desire to 'claim a glorious victory' possesses, in tone, a masculine ethos. Not only will this widow die in a grand gesture, she will be remembered for doing so.⁴³⁴ The sheer power and surprise of Evadne's suicide must have provoked a strong reaction from the audience.

Hall notes that the series of references to wild beasts in the text (140; 267; and 1046) complicate the reception of the play, drawing attention to the "inadequacy of those social institutions and conventions – forums of debate, the rights of the suppliant, and international diplomacy – that supposedly distinguish humans from beasts by regulating passions and resolving conflicts."⁴³⁵ The two messengers in *Suppliant Women* also offer interesting counters to Theseus and his determination to retrieve the bodies no matter the human cost. The first to enter is a Theban herald sent to stop Theseus from trying to retrieve the dead. The herald argues eloquently, if not condescendingly, that Theseus should put peace and the love of family above the concern of his country and even his mother (412-16). Theseus dismisses the herald and announces, publicly and enthusiastically, that he will round up his men and retrieve the bodies. He leaves the stage. Soon thereafter, Theseus' traumatised messenger arrives, announcing his own escape from the battlefield and reports on the bloody battle that Theseus and his men have fought (689-93).

⁴³⁴ I have drawn heavily on Edith Hall's background of *Suppliant Women* found in her 2010 *Greek Tragedy*.

⁴³⁵ Ibid.

While some scholars divide the play in two distinct sections (before the retrieval of the bodies and after the retrieval of the bodies), Warren and Scully suggest that *Suppliant Women* be considered as a play with three major components: 1) the framing of the play with Demeter (for the festival of the hearth) and Athena (to maintain Athens' military superiority); 2) the Argive supplication leading to war and the Athenian retrieval of the seven dead captains; and 3) the mothers' ritualised mourning of their dead sons.⁴³⁶ I concur with Warren and Scully and view the play in three parts. The role of the female lamenters in *Suppliant Women* is different from the role of the female Chorus in *Trojan Women*. In *Suppliant Women* Euripides demonstrates a different type of female solidarity, one that might have been seen as a threat to men: the play is set in Athens and Theseus' mother Aithra aligns herself with the foreign Argive mothers of the dead captains. This could have been read as an opposition to the male Athenian order.

Overseeing the human story of supplication, war, retrieval of bodies, and the return of the remains to the mothers of the dead, Demeter and Athena offer contrasting points on the spectrum of human experience. In the opening moments of the play, Aithra is offering a sacrifice to Demeter and her daughter Persephone at Eleusis in honour of the October Proerosia festival (1-35). Demeter, arguably, represents the harvest and life itself in all of its stages: fertility, death, and renewal. The goddess provides the Argive mothers who have lost their sons a parallel of female loss. Demeter, too, has suffered the loss of a child. Unlike the Argive women however, Demeter has lived through the grief cycle caused by Persephone's death and rebirth. The Proerosia festival opens the play and serves as a reminder that all living things must die. There is a dissonance between the humans and the gods – the human women will not give birth to more sons for they are now too old. Demeter's daughter, on the other hand, will die and be re-born

⁴³⁶ Euripides, *Suppliant Women*, trans. Rosanna Warren and Stephen Scully (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 4-6; 67.

annually in the seasons of winter and spring. Euripides offers a parallel that is ultimately joyous on the divine level but full of grief for the earth-bound mortals.⁴³⁷

At the closing of the play, Athena appears and informs Theseus that although he has been successful at retrieving the bodies of the seven men, and has created a treaty between Athens and Argos, he must cement this treaty with sacrifices and bury the sacrificial knife in a corner of the earth near the burial mounds in Eleusis (1200-1210).⁴³⁸ The knife will have the power to rise up out of the earth and destroy the Argives should they ever march against Athens in the future. Demonstrating military power and strategic acumen, Athena represents the reasoned ‘head’ of war, while Demeter represents the life and death cycle of earth. The female Chorus’ lament and interruption of the Proerosia fertility festival threaten to disrupt the ritual and possibly bring divine retribution on Attica. Aithra responds to the women with sympathy (9-11), with pity (33-34), tears and wailing of her own (284-289) and even with religious awe (37-38).⁴³⁹

In *Suppliant Women*, Euripides offers distinct examples of females carrying the ‘head and the heart of war.’ The female Chorus represent mothers traumatised by the loss of sons in battle; Aithra and the Chorus plead with Theseus to retrieve the bodies of the dead captains to allow the mothers an opportunity for emotional closure through burial. Evadne, the distraught wife of dead Capaneus, throws herself onto his funeral pyre so that she may be buried with him and in so doing represents both an extreme form of sacrifice for loyalty and the devastation of war. At the end of the play the rational decision-maker Athena reminds Theseus of the necessity for cogent planning to ensure long-standing peace and stability.

⁴³⁷ Warren and Scully, 6.

⁴³⁸ See Euripides, *Suppliant Women*, trans. James Morwood (Oxford: Aris & Phillips Classical Texts, 2007) for all textual quotes.

⁴³⁹ Warren and Scully, 67.

In the early part of the play, Theseus asks his mother to identify “Whose wails (she) hear(s), whose beating of breasts and laments over the dead, as the sound echoed from this temple?” (87-103). He observes that the mothers’ expression of grief causes “pitiful tears onto the ground, and also their hair and clothing are not appropriate for visitors to the shrine.” (95-100) Aithra explains that they are the mothers of the seven captains who have died before the seven gates of Thebes. Theseus openly acknowledges that he is affected by the lamentation of the women, their cries ‘piercing’ his heart:

THESEUS: Mother, why do you weep, casting your finely-woven cloak over your eyes? Is it because you hear the wretched laments of these women? Yes, for something pierced my heart too. Raise your white head, do not pour forth tears as you sit by the holy heart of Deo.⁴⁴⁰

Theseus acknowledges to his mother that he, too, is affected by the women’s lamentation and this acknowledgment, I argue, would have given ‘permission’ for the men in the audience to be affected by such (onstage) female lamentation and to express their pain through tears. Watching the fictional mother of a king implore her son to “help the dead and the wretched (foreign) women in their need” (322-323) is an effective call to action and serves as an example of surrogacy. In actuality, a fifth century BCE mother would not have had the agency to encourage battle, but in the dramaturgy of Euripides, she does. Theseus thoughtfully and unemotionally weighs his options deciding that he will attempt to “redeem the corpses with persuasive words. If that doesn’t work, it will then at last be a matter to be settled by military might and we shall not incur divine resentment.”⁴⁴¹ Theseus leaves and battle ensues. A messenger enters to announce that Theseus has been successful in defeating Creon. The seven dead warriors will be buried. A funeral pyre is prepared for the dead. Evadne, wife of Capaneus (one of the dead seven) appears on a rock and looking down on her husband’s funeral pyre, says:

⁴⁴⁰ Warren and Scully, 63: 286-290.

⁴⁴¹ Warren and Scully, 67: 335-344.

Life's goal I now behold from my station here; may fortune aid me in my headlong leap from this rock in honour's cause, down into the fire below. To mix my ashes in the ruddy blaze with my husband's, to lay me side by side with him... Away with life and marriage too! Oh! May my children live to see the dawn of a fairer, happier wedding-day in Argos! May loyalty inspire the husband's heart, his nature fusing with his wife's!⁴⁴²

It is a shocking moment onstage as Evadne commits suicide and it is unlikely that the audience would have cheered at her loyalty to her husband. While it can be argued that she represents the loyalty of wife to husband – and by extension, of loyal subject to empire – it is hard to imagine that jumping on to the funeral pyre was viewed as a positive gesture. This extreme act is softened somewhat when carried by a female character; perhaps this sacrifice appeared less harsh than Ajax's suicide on the battlefield, but I can only speculate on this point. An audience member witnessing Evadne's suicide may have processed this event on two levels: through an understanding of a wife's loyalty to her husband and as a warrior's willingness to sacrifice his life for his homeland.

The female Chorus of foreign women laments throughout and their pleas are ultimately effective. They plead for Theseus to retrieve the bodies of their dead sons so that they may receive a proper burial. Like *Persians*, a male audience would have witnessed the pain of non-Athenians and the terrible effect of the deaths of the seven on their mothers. There is an argument to be made that Theseus (an Athenian) faced a similar moral dilemma of who to please by retrieving the bodies of the men: the Athenian law or the religious law of proper burial – not unlike Antigone who argues in favour of divine law for the burial of her brother. The refusal to bury bodies of the dead occurs throughout ancient Greek literature. Apart from Sophocles' *Antigone*, other examples include the body of Hector in the *Iliad* and the body of Ajax in Sophocles' *Ajax*. To leave a body to rot on a battlefield was – and remains – unacceptable.

⁴⁴² Warren and Scully, 139: 1188-1193.

At the end of the play, Theseus is visited by the goddess Athena who instructs him in his obligation to extract an oath from Adrastos for the burial of the dead soldiers. Athena provides the form of the oath:

ATHENA: Adrastos here must swear: he has the authority as the king to take the oath on behalf of all descendants of Danaos. The oath shall be that the Argives should never lead a hostile force in full array into this land, and that, if others come, they will set their spears in the way. And if they abandon this oath and come against our city, pray that the land of Argives may perish miserably. (1188-1193)⁴⁴³

Theseus agrees to follow Athena's instructions and understands that if the goddess is friendly to his state, he and his men shall live secure.⁴⁴⁴ This concludes the play which has taken the following form: framing of the overall event by two deities, female lamentation of unburied dead; demand for the closure of war and grieving by burying the dead; a battle to achieve the burial; the burial itself; and the rational and unemotional (female) instruction of how to maintain peace. Spectators would have 'received' the pain of war through female choral lament; the valour of war through Theseus and his determination to bury the dead; and the blessing of the gods through Athena's plan for peace and Theseus' agreement to carry it out. Female surrogacy is used to carry the pain of loss. Male action is seen to carry valour and honour.

Sophocles

I have not selected any of Sophocles' tragedies to serve as case studies in this chapter, preferring instead to address his dramaturgy in the next chapter dedicated to examining 'primary' and 'secondary' trauma. I will, however, offer a few words on the dramatist himself to provide context for the later discussion. Sophocles, the son of Sophilus, the owner of a successful weapons factory, was born in 496 BCE in Colonus near Athens. He grew up during the most brilliant intellectual period of Athens. Legend has it that because of his beauty and talent,

⁴⁴³ Warren and Scully, 139.

⁴⁴⁴ Warren and Scully, 139.

Sophocles was chosen to lead the male chorus at the celebration of the Greek victory over the Persians at Salamis.⁴⁴⁵ From 443 to 442 BCE, Sophocles served the Athenian empire as imperial treasurer and was elected general at least twice, distinguishing himself from Aeschylus and Euripides who did not have political careers. His religious activities appear to have included service as a priest, as well as turning over his house for the worship of Asclepius. Sophocles was given the deity's 'holy snake' to hold in Athens until a suitable temple was built in which to house it. He helped to introduce the cult of Asclepius, the god of medicine, to Athens.⁴⁴⁶ He was honoured with the title *Dexion* as a hero after his death.⁴⁴⁷ Plato suggested that Sophocles was the least unacceptable tragedian.⁴⁴⁸ Aristotle (in his *Poetics*) and Phrynichus in an extant fragment of the comedy *The Muses* serve as examples of contemporaries who spoke positively of Sophocles.⁴⁴⁹ Sophocles, like the other two primary tragedians, was a prolific writer, composing at least 120 tragedies. Only seven survive.

While certain facts of Sophocles' life have been pieced together from a variety of sources, it is possible that some of the anecdotes are hyperbole. Sophocles was one of nine generals who, along with Pericles in 441 BCE, fought in a campaign against the revolt of

⁴⁴⁵ Mary R. Lefkowitz discusses these biographical assertions, some true, some perhaps folk legend, in her book, *The Lives of the Greek Poets* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012), 74-87; 160-3; Edith Hall, in her introduction to *Sophocles* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994) cites J. Fairweather's "Fiction in the biographies of ancient writers," *Ancient Society* v (1974), 231-75 to remind the reader that ancient biographies were not always solely accurate but could occasionally take on folk legends.

⁴⁴⁶ Bernhard Zimmerman, *Greek Tragedy An Introduction* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).

⁴⁴⁷ *Inscriptions Graecae* ii(2). 1252.4. Edith Hall notes that while it is almost certain Sophocles did dedicate a cult of Asclepius in his home, it is dubious to claim he was also an actual priest.

⁴⁴⁸ See Hall, (1994): xii; *Republic* 1.329 b-c; and Phrynichus, fr. 32, in eds. R. Kassel and C. Austin, *Poetic Comici Graeci*, vol. Vii (Berlin, 1989).

⁴⁴⁹ Hall, (1994): xii.

Samos.⁴⁵⁰ In an ancient hypothesis to the play *Antigone*, attributed to Aristophanes of Byzantium, it was suggested that Sophocles was elected to the position of general due to the Athenians' high opinion of his play *Antigone*.⁴⁵¹

In looking over the titles of Sophocles' lost plays, it is interesting to consider the intended function of his female characters within his body of war-themed dramaturgy. Examining the titles of over 100 fragments, I discovered a number of recognisable females from mythology. *Andromache* is one such title. In Greek mythology, Andromache was the daughter-in-law of Queen Hecuba and King Priam, and wife of Hector during the time of the Trojan War. It was during this war that Hector was slain by Achilles, and Astyanax, their young son, thrown from the city walls by a Greek soldier. Andromache is 'taken' as a war prize and sex slave of Neoptolemus, with whom she has at least one and possibly three children. When Neoptolemus dies, Andromache becomes Queen of Epirus by marrying Helenus, her first husband's brother, with whom she produces another son. It can be surmised that this play used the character of Andromache to carry the theme of loss of homeland, loss of family, loss of king and the resurrection of power.

Another fragment is titled *Cassandra*. Mythically, this character was the daughter of Priam and Hecuba, the sister of Andromache and a princess of Troy. As a young girl she spent the night at the Thymbraean Apollo temple with her twin brother, Helenus. Robert Bell writes that when their parents observed brother and sister in the morning, "...the children were entwined with serpents, which flicked their tongues into the children's ears. This enabled

⁴⁵⁰ Hall suggests this claim reveals more, perhaps, about ancient biographers' imagination than about the poet himself. See Edith Hall, "Introduction," *Antigone, Oedipus the King and Electra*. (Oxford, 1994), xii-xiii.

⁴⁵¹ Hesiod, *Hyp. Ant I Theogony*, in *Homeric Hymns and Homericica*, trans. Hugh G. Evelyn-White Cambridge (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1914).

Cassandra and Helenus to divine the future."⁴⁵² Later, as a full-grown woman, Cassandra again spends the night at this temple. When Apollo attempts to have sex with her, she rebukes him. In anger, Apollo delivers a terrible curse: no one will believe her accurate prophecies. It is likely that Sophocles, like Euripides, presented a play with the (female) titular character possessing a clear vision of war and its outcome but lacking the ability to convince anyone to hear her warnings.

Other notable females found in Sophocles' titles of play fragments include Hermione (daughter of Menelaus and Helen); the Mousai (Muses); Pandora (first woman to be formed out of clay, known to have opened the *pitios* box containing evil spirits); Phaedra (who fell in love with her stepson and committed suicide in disgrace); and Polyxene (daughter of Hecuba and Priam, and the Trojan parallel to Iphigenia – she was sacrificed to revenge the death of Achilles). Emotional surrogates used for carrying war-related trauma, this list of females appears to represent the emotionality of war during its most treacherous of times.

It is in his play *Ajax* that Sophocles investigates the horrors of war-induced PTSD – a theme touched on by Herodotus within a similar time period (440-430 BCE). In *Ajax*, Sophocles warns that hubris (Ajax does not ask goddess Athena for guidance) has little place on the battlefield and that an unclear mind can have a crippling effect on anyone, including a great general such as Ajax. In this play it is the principal male character that carries the theme of trauma. Yet Sophocles offers two important female characters to carry secondary themes: Athena, goddess of war and wisdom, who is responsible for causing Ajax to suffer confusion and hallucinations prompting his suicide; and Tecmessa, concubine of Ajax, who tries in vain to reason with Ajax to help him heal. These two females symbolically represent two strong

⁴⁵² Robert Bell: http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/a_f/bogan/classical.htm and *The Oxford Companion to Classical Literature*, ed. M.C. Howatson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

warnings: men are not *better than* gods; and men who have lost their minds on the battlefield cannot be *reasoned with*. These are military lessons as much as they are residues from war requiring an emotional release. From the titles of plays that we know about, it appears that Sophocles did use female protagonists to carry and symbolically represent (male) pain of war. I can only surmise that since the female characters had large mythic weight, it is likely he used them strategically to mediate catharsis for his audience of war veterans.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have presented evidence that suggests it was possible that fifth century BCE Athenian men, who had for decades been actively involved in war, sought and experienced an essential communal ritual of catharsis and emotional healing by attending war-themed plays at the theatre. It was during theatrical performances of tragedies, full of strong and larger-than-life female characters engaging nose-to-nose with male characters, that war-related psychological trauma was transmitted from the stage to a male audience by way of symbolic representation of conflict and loss. As Athens needed warriors capable of fighting many campaigns, attending performances and experiencing communal catharsis made a great deal of sense. To maintain troop size and stability, psychological repair was essential.

Theatrical investigations of the ravages and the ethics of war needed to occur with enough aesthetic distance to ensure an audience could “see” what the tragic writer hoped to convey onstage. If audience members were too close to the subject matter, they could not receive and process the enactment of trauma. An example of a lack of such distance can be seen in the production of Phrynichus’ play, the *Sack of Miletus*, which was presented in 476 BCE and concerned the destruction of a small colony of Athens.⁴⁵³ Not a great deal is known about this play, but it does seem clear that the title of the play referred to the destruction of Miletus by the

⁴⁵³ Herodotus 6.6-22.

Persians.⁴⁵⁴ When originally produced, the play brought its Greek audience to tears of uncontrollable grief.⁴⁵⁵ The pain of the defeat in battle was still too fresh for the Greeks to bear and the Greeks could not properly process the pain of this loss by watching a play too close to their actual experience. Phrynichus was fined a thousand drachmas and a law was passed prohibiting the performance of the play. However, when *Persians* was performed, the Athenians received it enthusiastically and Aeschylus won first prize for tragedy. *Persians* allowed the Greeks to view the Persian Wars as the great struggle of Greek against barbarian and to understand it as a fight for the continuation of the Greek way of life. Only with enough distance from the event could the narrative of pain be transmitted and received by Greek men who had fought in these wars. Aeschylus had created the necessary aesthetic distance by attacking the tragic emotion of the cultural *other* and allowing enough time to pass between the actual subject and its fictional representation.

It is true that the ancient Greek dramas functioned to educate the masses by offering popularised reflections of civic fears, concerns, prejudices, commonly held beliefs, and through them, to ask questions of civic identity that would inform political discourse. Hall, Foley, Zeitlin and others have suggested the ancient Greek poets constructed strong female characters to explore ethical dilemmas and moral issues pertaining to war, king and empire. Certainly questions provoked by war permeated the theatre, the streets and even the Athenian assemblies. I argue, however, that the dramaturgy did more than provide an opportunity to discuss politics. The theatre served a critical medical function: to assist with psychological healing as a result of war. The tragedies were able to offer cathartic release *because of* the female characters

⁴⁵⁴ Simon Goldhill, "Battle Narrative and Politics in Aeschylus' *Persae*," *The Journal of Hellenic Studies*, Vol. 108 (1988):189-193.

⁴⁵⁵ According to Hdt. 6. 21: Phrynichus was fined after the production of the play because the poet had upset his audience by reminding them of the recent catastrophic war. Edith Hall counters that this may not reveal the entire truth. She cites Burn (1984): 224 and Roisman (1988): 19-21 to support this view.

symbolically representing masculine anxiety and pain. This technique created enough aesthetic and emotional distance so that men in the audience could begin to process their own pain and fears associated with war. Thucydides understood clearly that the power of war, the aftermath of its brutality and collective loss on the civic psyche took a serious toll. The devastation of war infected every stratum of society; every person experienced war personally through combat, loss, rape, enslavement, victory or increased power. Male soldiers, many of whom would have suffered psychological and physical trauma, comprised the Greek theatre-going audience of fifth century BCE. The fact that tragedians constructed strong, larger-than-life female characters at a time in history when women had little agency accomplished several things. First, the theatre offered female characters so radically altered from actual women that a certain level of make-believe and entertainment was immediately achieved. By placing female characters in significant roles within the tragic canon, the theatricality of a play was enhanced, lifting the story out of daily life. This dramaturgical technique also achieved a distinctly political effect. Zeitlin and Foley suggest that the proliferation of female characters was a way for the tragedians to disguise a critique of war or of a particular politician.⁴⁵⁶ Zeitlin has argued that female emotionality and irrationality created fluid, more permeable external boundaries, boundaries that were more open to “affect an entry from the outside, less easily controlled by intellectual and rational means.”⁴⁵⁷ While I agree that female characters could play a wide range of emotional actions onstage, I think the use of female characters was less about their controllability or their physical fluidity and more about cathartic mediation and symbolic surrogacy for a male audience. The female character represented a wide range of emotional and intellectual powers. Firstly, in the divine world of myth and immortal archetype it is most often the female deities who inflict men with

⁴⁵⁶ Froma Zeitlin, *Playing the Other: Gender and Society in Classical Greek* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 63-96.

⁴⁵⁷ Zeitlin, 63-96.

madness. This is an interesting contradiction: females were physically, emotionally and even culturally weaker than men, yet were perceived to wield a “disturbing power over men.”⁴⁵⁸ This female power is seen clearly in Sophocles’ *Ajax* when goddess Athena inflicts Ajax with a disease similar to modern-day PTSD; it is also seen at the end of Euripides’ *Suppliant Women* when, once again, Athena commands Theseus to put a plan in place – her plan – for maintaining the peace he achieved through battle against Creon. Female characters in antiquity helped to create a necessary aesthetic distance between dramatic characters tackling difficult war-related situations and traumas and actual war veterans and soldiers facing their own war-related miseries. For that reason, anxiety about power, mortality, and war in general may have been projected onto female characters, freeing a male audience from association/disassociation and serving as a conduit for catharsis. The gendered constructions of Queen Atossa, Hecuba, Aithra, Evadne, Clytemnestra, Helen, Cassandra and others were, I contend, a device for exploring anxieties of loss (Atossa, Clytemnestra), of sacrifice (Iphigenia, Evadne), of loyalty to the dead and to family (Antigone, Aithra, the chorus of suppliant women), of sexual desire (Helen), of revenge (Hecuba and Clytemnestra) and of the resolution of war through peace (Lysistrata). There is value in creating an aesthetic ‘wall’ between a difficult topic and an audience primed to view the topic. By imbuing the subject matter with universal qualities, it becomes possible for an audience to intellectually analyse *and emotionally experience* content without obscuring the meaning of an experience through reactive emotionality. If a distancing technique was required to offer Greek men emotional and psychological benefit while attending the theatre, the use of female characters was a simple yet effective device for the tragedians to explore the larger themes of war. Male attendees could, for instance, watch onstage depictions of the devastation of

⁴⁵⁸ Zeitlin, 63-94. Also worth stating is that this contradiction still exists in certain countries in the twenty-first century: women have little-to-no political or financial power, but remain tucked away inside burkas or within households to minimise negative effect upon men.

war, enslavement, and loss of homeland through the eyes of Hecuba and compare this to actual events rather than witness an exact mimesis of their own experience. This aesthetic distancing would have provided both a filter and a lens through which to view and receive a performance with emotionally charged content.

A fifth century BCE Athenian culture was a polytheistic society that had numerous female as well as male divinities, and a highly developed heritage of archaic mythological narratives. The tragic poets had great riches to draw on in terms of stories featuring female characters. The ancient poets may have fuelled their literary imaginations by turning to the mythical characters of goddesses, the female characters of Homer, as well as to historical queens. By drawing on these mythological narratives, tragedians may have been inspired to write the larger-than-life characterisations of Clytemnestra, Hecuba, and even Helen. The female characters of the poets came at a time when actual women would not have been found walking down the street, engaging in political arguments with kings and husbands, deserting husbands for lovers, committing matricide, patricide, even infanticide and getting away with it. Without concrete evidence, we are left to speculate whether the mythological goddesses, Homeric female characters, and even the mythic Amazons sparked the creative minds of the tragedians, but I suspect they did. Female characters in the ancient plays helped answer the question of how it was possible for male citizens returning from war to regularly attend the theatre. Citizens could express their subjective experience of traumatic war events caused by long and brutal military conflicts and in so doing begin to heal their psychological wounds. Female characters were necessary to create enough aesthetic and psychological distance for male theatre attendees to emotionally dissociate from any specific war-related trauma while, at the same time, engage with

storylines and experience catharsis through situational recognition.⁴⁵⁹ Female characters became emotional surrogates carrying male anxiety, trauma, displacement and pain in war-ravaged Greece.

Ultimately, the tragedians of antiquity chose to place strong female characters in prominent and active roles in their war-themed dramaturgy for many reasons, but primarily these characters mediated emotional content. The inclusion of female characters offered men of antiquity the opportunity to collectively examine, grieve, and even challenge their experiences in war and in society. The playwrights expressed their personal views on Greece's military and polemic strategies through their writing, and often these plays were written as a reaction to the engagement of Greece in great wars. Zeitlin has suggested that the female characters were codes for a system of androcentric authority in which the female served a cognitive, symbolic and psychological function; that 'female' could represent the internal, nature, and even The Other.⁴⁶⁰ I agree wholeheartedly with this. Fifth century BCE Greek men benefitted from battle-themed plays full of female characters in major roles for the numerous reasons outlined in this chapter. Outside of the theatre, the irrational and the emotional were not psychological states men openly entered. It stands to reason that even though men of antiquity prided themselves on being rational, they still required an outlet for their emotional sides and especially for war-related traumas. The emotional surrogacy provided by the female literary constructions offered male audiences the opportunity for a cathartic engagement with the performance. Even though Aeschylus and Sophocles would likely have been inspired by the Persian wars, and Euripides would have been responding to conflicts of the Peloponnese, all three writers provided

⁴⁵⁹ I use here concepts put forth by Hall and Shay.

⁴⁶⁰ Catherine R. Stimpson, Director, Fellows Program, MacArthur Foundation in her Forward to Zeitlin, Froma I., *Playing the Other: Gender and Society in Classical Greek* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

dramaturgy that was responsive to what was happening in Greece during the fifth century BCE. One of the most significant ironies of the Golden Age of Greece was that while it was a time of producing great monuments, art, philosophy, architecture and literature, it was also a time of great physical and mental anguish from decades of war.

Chapter Six: Primary and Secondary Trauma and Gender-Based Implications

How fixed in that mind was the memory of limbs
scattered to the corners of the room,
and fixed in my heart
the desire to put the pieces back.

- Tecmessa speaking to Ajax in *Our Ajax*⁴⁶¹

In this chapter I will examine more closely the relationship between trauma and gender. Within the therapeutic literature of the twenty-first century, two distinct categories of mental trauma emerge: *primary* and *secondary*.⁴⁶² To define these two classifications of trauma, I turn to the research of Amy Street and Rachel Dekel. Street is the Deputy Director of the Women's Health Sciences Division at the National Center for PTSD, housed within the Veterans Affairs Boston Healthcare System. She is also Associate Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at Boston University's School of Medicine. Street has been studying U.S. female military members sexually assaulted during their service who now carry various forms of *primary* trauma. According to Street, primary trauma occurs as a direct result of a psychological or physical injury or experience. This traumatic event can trigger PTSD and other mental health conditions.⁴⁶³ Primary trauma lives within or upon the person who has directly experienced the traumatic event. Rachel Dekel, Director of the School of Social Work at Bar Ilan University in Israel, has investigated the phenomenon of *secondary* trauma occurring within female spouses and family members of Israeli active duty military and veterans. *Secondary* trauma as defined by Dekel is a trauma that occurs *as a result of a relationship* to a primary sufferer of trauma – such as a veteran or active duty soldier with PTSD who abuses his spouse causing the spouse to

⁴⁶¹ Timberlake Wertenbaker, *Our Ajax* (London: FF Publishing, 2013), 38.

⁴⁶² These two forms of trauma are *primary* and *secondary* and will be fully defined and discussed within this chapter.

⁴⁶³ Amy Street, J. Stafford, CM Mahan, and A. Hendricks, "Sexual harassment and assault experienced by reservists during military service: prevalence and health correlates," *Journal of Rehabilitation Res Dev.* (2008): 45 (3): 409-19.

experience her own mental and physical trauma.⁴⁶⁴ Dekel studies the question of who is likely to experience secondary exposure to traumatic events by looking at Israeli veterans diagnosed with PTSD and their spouses. She examines the effects of combat-related PTSD on female spouses as carriers of secondary distress, and hopes to determine negative or positive long-term implications. Through the quantitative and qualitative data collected among Israeli veterans with PTSD, Dekel has begun to identify the mechanisms through which distress is transmitted from the veterans to their spouses. Both Street's and Dekel's research findings regarding both categories of trauma suggest that in the present day, women are experiencing both primary and secondary trauma as civilian victims of violence as well as combatants deployed on military missions. This current trauma research provides helpful tools for examining female literary constructions found within ancient and modernised war-themed dramaturgy.

Street's 2012 quantitative study of gender, deployment experiences, and post-deployment adjustment among veterans of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq surveyed a sample of 2,344 female and male veterans.⁴⁶⁵ She and her colleagues sought to quantify gender differences and similarities in what they term "deployment stressors." This terminology refers to emotional, physical, or psychological events during deployment that may trigger mental health issues. Such deployment stressors include combat exposure, aftermath of battle stressors, and sexual and gender harassment.⁴⁶⁶ The study was designed to understand the changing scope of roles women assumed during deployment in support of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Street found that 230,000 women had been deployed representing 14% of U.S. forces in the aforementioned

⁴⁶⁴ Rachel Dekel, N. Ben Arzi, Z. Solomon, *Secondary traumatization among wives of PTSD and post-concussion casualties: distress, caregiver burden and psychological separation* (2000): Vol. 14, No. 8: 725-736.

⁴⁶⁵ K.M. Iverson, C.M. Monson, A. Street, "Dual combat and sexual trauma during military service," *Retraumatization: Assessment, treatment, and prevention*, eds. M. Duckworth & V. Follette (New York: Routledge, 2012), 253-281.

⁴⁶⁶ Iverson, Monson et al., 2012.

conflicts and that the scope of their roles in warzones was broader than ever before. Since this study was conducted, American women have received the legal right to participate in a broader range of combat and combat support positions.⁴⁶⁷ Street discovered that being female did increase the risk for experiencing primary interpersonal trauma during deployment from such events as sexual assault, sexual harassment, gender-based harassment, and limited support from military peers and leadership and that the female carrier of primary trauma typically knew the perpetrator. Given military hierarchy, the victim may have been dependent upon the perpetrator or his friends in many areas of military and daily life. Street found thematic similarities to domestic violence such as a drop in self-esteem, a sense of hopelessness, shame, and a higher risk of suicide in the women carriers of primary trauma. In the U.S. military, there has always been a high value placed upon loyalty and teamwork; it is taboo to divulge negative information about peers and as a result, primary trauma resulting from sexual assault is that much more incomprehensible to victims. Street discerned that the high value placed upon strength and self-sufficiency tended to reduce access to available social support and therefore increase the likelihood of victims not having their experiences understood and ‘validated’ as acts of violence. Indeed, to be a ‘victim’ in the military conflicts with the desired identity of strength, courage and honour, making it problematic, even impossible, to speak openly about the occurrence of traumatic events. Harkening back to Shay’s assertion that a profound sense of betrayal can trigger PTSD, Street discovered that female military victims of sexual assaults were left feeling betrayed, isolated, helpless, and frequently developed PTSD.

Street determined that women and men were differentially impacted by their war-zone service, and differed in frequency of primary trauma (usually resulting in PTSD) following deployment. In another study of lifetime prevalence of PTSD in the general population, women

⁴⁶⁷ On January 24, 2013, U.S. President Obama lifted the ban of women serving in combat roles.

experienced twice the risk of PTSD diagnosis, 10.4% (women) versus 5.0% (men).⁴⁶⁸ In Street's paper survey of 2,344 Afghanistan and Iraq Veterans she found that 50% of the women experienced sexual harassment as opposed to only 10% of the men; women experienced almost 80% general harassment as opposed to 70% of men; 10% of women experienced heavy sexual harassment as opposed to 0% of men; and that 35% of women experienced heavy general harassment as opposed to 20% of men.⁴⁶⁹ Street also learned that, on average women were substantially more likely to be exposed to sexual stress; women were more likely to experience other forms of interpersonal stress; and women appeared to be at particular risk for depression while men appeared to be at particular risk for problematic alcohol use. Street's investigation broadened to include an understanding of how women's roles within their families (as spouses, daughters, mothers) may have been uniquely impacted. By examining the process of homecoming and reintegration, she was able to pinpoint women's unique risks and resiliency factors for post-deployment mental health problems, and identify points of intervention. Street now argues that there are several unique aspects to primary trauma in a war zone. Sexual trauma is likely to be experienced as even more threatening because of the decreased sense of safety and female troops who have experienced sexual trauma may struggle with unique readjustment issues at homecoming. They may be reluctant to disclose experiences to loved ones or healthcare providers, limiting important opportunities to receive support.

Rachel Dekel's study of the effects of combat-related PTSD on female spouses of Israeli military personnel, POWs, and veterans has yielded both quantitative and qualitative data on secondary trauma, helping to identify the mechanisms through which distress is transmitted from

⁴⁶⁸ R.C. Kessler, A. Sonnega, E. Bromet, M. Hughes, C.B. Nelson, "PTSD in the National Comorbidity Survey," *the Archives of General Psychiatry*, 52 (1995): 1048-1060.

⁴⁶⁹ Street et al, (2012): 253-281.

a male veteran carrying primary trauma (in the form of PTSD) to his female spouse.⁴⁷⁰ Dekel has assessed the implication of husbands' PTSD and post-concussion syndrome (PC) on wives' sense of burden and emotional distress. Sixty women participated in Dekel's study: twenty were married to male war veterans diagnosed with PTSD; twenty were married to male war veterans suffering from PC; and twenty women were married to healthy men. Data was collected using self-report questionnaires that assessed such things as psychiatric symptomatology, caregiver burden and psychological separation-individuation. Not surprisingly, Dekel found that women from the first two groups suffered from higher levels of burden and distress than the group married to healthy men. With Street's research demonstrating a higher level of sexual primary trauma occurring to women on (and off) the battlefield, and Dekel's research revealing secondary trauma carried by the female spouses and family members of male war veterans suffering with PTSD, it is conceivable that the character of Tecmessa in Sophocles' *Ajax* might serve as an effective stand-in for female experience representing both primary and secondary trauma in the context of war.

Crucial issues regarding the role of gender in experiencing primary and secondary trauma have been studied and theories have been advanced. The question of whether women are more likely to suffer from PTSD because they are biologically programmed to be caregivers or because of social attitudes and expectations has received a great deal of attention by mental health experts. The majority of studies conducted over the past decade on posttraumatic stress disorder in the general population have found higher rates of PTSD in women than in men, with

⁴⁷⁰ See: Rachel Dekel and Zahava Solomon, "Secondary traumatization among wives of Israeli POWs: the role of POWs distress," *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology* (January 2006): Vol. 41, Issue 1: 27-33; and N. Ben Arzi, Z. Solomon, R. Dekel, "Secondary traumatization among wives of PTSD and post-concussion casualties: distress, caregiver burden and psychological separation" (2000): Vol. 14, No. 8: 725-736.

women experiencing PTSD twice as often.⁴⁷¹ The reasons have been attributed to personal, social, and biological factors such as age, gender, genetics, childhood disturbances in attachment abilities, multiple or single occurrences of trauma, and two common neuroendocrine response systems involved in stress-coping patterns. These response systems include the sympathetic-adrenal-medullary (SAM) system and the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenalcortical (HPA) axis. In common language, SAM refers to the fight-or-flight reaction to extreme stress and HPA refers to the neuroendocrine system responsible for controlling stress reactions and regulating a range of body processes such as digestion, the immune system, mood, emotional responses, and sexual drive. These coping mechanisms have evolved in humans over time, existing to preserve the species. In 2012, mental health researchers Olf, Draijer, Langeland and Gersons analysed close to three hundred major studies conducted over the past decade to understand social and biological factors pertaining to gender differences in PTSD.⁴⁷² They concluded that it remains unclear whether women's higher risk of PTSD is due to psychosocial factors such as the environment and gender acculturation or biological factors such as hormonal differences. However, what does become clear in their report is that human appraisal and coping processes are critical determinants of the psychological and biological stress responses women and men are likely to experience during traumatic episodes. These responses will likely determine whether trauma sufferers are left with mental health issues. More than acculturation and social attitudes

⁴⁷¹ N. Breslau, G.C. Davis, P. Andreski, E.L. Peterson, and L.R. Schultz, "Sex differences in posttraumatic stress disorder," *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 54 (1997): 1044-1048; O. Frans, P.A. Rimmo, Aberg, and M. Fredrikson, "Trauma exposure and post-traumatic stress disorder in the general population," *Aca Psychiatrica Scandinavia*, 111 (2005): 291-299; R.C. Kessler, A. Sonnega, E. Bromet, M. Hughes, and C.B. Nelson, "PTSD in the National Comorbidity Survey," *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 54 (1995): 1048-1060; M. Olf, and G.J de Vries, "Prevalence of trauma and PTSD in the Netherlands," poster session presented at the 20th Annual Meeting of International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies, New Orleans 2004; M.B. Stein, J. Walker, and D. Forde, "Gender differences in susceptibility to posttraumatic stress disorder," *Behaviour and Research Therapy*, 38 (2000): 619-628.

⁴⁷² Miranda Olf, Nel Draijer, Willie Langeland, and Berthold P. R. Gersons, "Gender Differences in Posttraumatic Stress Disorder," *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. 133, No. 2 (2007): 183-204.

toward gender, what researchers have determined and continue to study is how threat appraisals and defensive coping are thought to play essential roles in determining the body's neuroendocrine response to trauma and potential mental health consequences such as PTSD, and other psychological disturbances.⁴⁷³

Sophocles and trauma

Sophocles wrote of the crippling mental trauma caused by war in his play *Ajax*. As one of nine generals who fought in a campaign against the revolt of Samos, and possibly in other military campaigns, Sophocles had first-hand knowledge of war and of the emotional and psychological toll war could exact on men. It is noteworthy that Sophocles wrote the only ancient Greek tragedy featuring a high-ranking war hero crippled by PTSD-like symptoms. The character of Ajax commits suicide three quarters of the way through the play and the body becomes a visible prop for the argument of whether a man who has committed suicide deserves honourable burial. This visual representation of a death due to primary war trauma would have, no doubt, underscored the severity of war for a fifth century BCE audience, just as it does, I argue, for a twenty-first century audience. While it was common to bring in corpses on the *Eccyclema* for deaths that occurred offstage, it was not the theatrical custom to have a character commit suicide *in front of the audience* and then have the 'body' remain visible onstage for the remainder of the play. The staging of Ajax's suicide has been much debated by theatre scholars. David Wiles has suggested that that the ancient staging possibly occurred with the *Eccyclema* withdrawn at the end of Ajax's speech (just prior to his suicide) and then, twenty-five lines later, reintroduced bearing Tecmessa and a dummy to play the role of the dead Ajax.⁴⁷⁴ Wiles has argued that this theatrical device would have permitted the actor who had been playing Ajax to

⁴⁷³ Olf et al, (2007): 183-204.

⁴⁷⁴ David Wiles, *Tragedy in Athens: Performance space and theatrical meaning* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 163-165.

be freed up to become another character at the end of the play.⁴⁷⁵ Whether or not the fifth century BCE audience witnessed the theatrical suicide, it is clear they would have been asked to observe a symbolic stand-in for the body through the use of a dummy. I agree with Wiles when he suggests that Sophocles' character of Ajax would have offered a fifth century BCE audience an identification with a military hero (while he was alive) and an identification of war casualty (once he was dead): "The spectator will 'identify himself with a hero', whilst at the same time knowing that it is 'someone other than himself who is acting and suffering on the stage.'"⁴⁷⁶ Freud himself suggested that a hero was meant to engage in primal acts of rebellion against God, against the divine and even against mankind.⁴⁷⁷ However, leaving a body onstage (even in the form of a dummy) would have heightened the effect of a character suffering from primary trauma. Prior to Sophocles' *Ajax*, the dramatists (including Sophocles) had their characters die *ob-skene* – off stage. A messenger would arrive to deliver a full report of how, when, and why the death or deaths occurred. Battle tactics and brutal casualties would be described in detail leaving an audience to imagine the scene. On occasion dead bodies would be brought onstage, as in *Suppliant Women*, but that was not the usual custom. Sophocles' onstage portrayal of a severely traumatised war hero leading to the destruction of his life must have been provocative and painful for an audience comprised of men involved in various military campaigns. With the character of Ajax, Sophocles insisted his audience witness the downfall of a war hero. This character's hallucinating, his killing of animals that he mistook for men, the treatment of his sexual partner Tecmessa (vacillating between kindness and brutality), along with the insistence

⁴⁷⁵ Wiles, 163-165; See also Oliver Taplin, *Greek Tragedy in Action* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 64-65.

⁴⁷⁶ David Wiles, *Greek Theatre Performance: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 22.

⁴⁷⁷ Wiles, (2000): 5-24; Sigmund Freud and Henry Alden Bunker, "Psychopathic characters on the stage," *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, XI, (1952): 459-464.

that his young son be sent for to witness the blood and gore found everywhere on a battlefield, signalled a traumatised mind. Uniquely, instead of asking the audience to *imagine* the brutality of suicide, Sophocles had the event occur onstage. Later, in Euripides' *Suppliant Women*, the audience would once again witness a suicide – this time a wife (Evadne) throwing herself onto the funeral pyre of her dead husband. While the act of suicide would have been shocking, the 'body' would have not remained in view of the audience; in fact, the attention of the audience goes immediately to the character of her father, devastated having witnessed his daughter's death.

It is the female character of Tecmessa in *Ajax* who serves the trinary functions of carrying primary and secondary traumas and serving in the role of messenger in the play. Tecmessa describes her own horrifying experience of losing her family during war and recounts what Ajax has done in their living quarters, out of view of the audience.⁴⁷⁸ An ancient audience would have heard Tecmessa recount the loss of her family (primary trauma); the loss of her homeland (primary trauma); and her union with her enemy (a primary trauma 'chosen' in order to avoid sexual assault as a single woman). Sophocles' Tecmessa reminds Ajax that she had been the daughter of a wealthy Phrygian man and then became the slave of Ajax. (487-490) She pleads with Ajax not to leave her alone. If this were to occur, she informs him, she would be subjected to the abuse of Ajax's enemies and would become a slave to unknown men, leaving their son to grow up fatherless and alone.⁴⁷⁹ Sophocles' construction of secondary trauma is clear; Tecmessa's interactions with Ajax demonstrates the carrier of primary trauma (Ajax) is severely effected by PTSD symptoms; as such, he is erratic and even abusive to Tecmessa. She

⁴⁷⁸ Wertenbaker, *Our Ajax*, 38-39. For the corresponding text in Sophocles' *Ajax* see: Sophocles, *Electra and Other Plays*, trans. and ed. by David Raeburn, introduction by Pat Easterling (London: Penguin Books, 2008), 91-93: lines 485-544.

⁴⁷⁹ Sophocles, *Four Tragedies*, trans. and notes Peter Meineck and Paul Woodruff (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing, 2007): lines 485-524.

experiences secondary trauma in the form of fear, despair, even panic. As Tecmessa tries desperately to reason with Ajax, she comes to understand that he has lost his mind on the battlefield and cannot be reasoned with. These are military lessons as much as they are emotional residues from war requiring an emotional release.

Timberlake Wertenbaker reconceives Ajax

Timberlake Wertenbaker grew up in the Basque Country and was educated in France. She was a resident writer for Shared Experience in 1983 and the Royal Court Theatre from 1984-85. She served on the Executive Council of The English Stage Company from 1992-1997 and on the Executive Committee of Pen from 1998-2001. She served as the Royden B. Davis professor of Theatre at Georgetown University, Washington D.C. from 2005-2006. She was the Leverhulme Artist in Residence at the Freud Museum in 2011. Wertenbaker was and remains artistic adviser to the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art and serves on the council of the Royal Society of Literature. She has a long history of translating and adapting the ancient Greek tragedies for the modern stage. Her most recent adaptation of tragedy is of Sophocles' *Ajax* – a work she describes as “less of an adaptation and more as a basis for something new.”⁴⁸⁰ Wertenbaker has used the original text to draw out qualities that she viewed as latent in Sophocles' text. She acknowledges that ‘war’ plays such as *Antigone*, *Hecuba* and *Ajax* resonate for her now because of the wars occurring or about to occur.⁴⁸¹ She first encountered Greek tragedies while at university. She recalled, “falling in love with the *Oresteia*, particularly with the *Libation Bearers*.”⁴⁸² She was so taken with this text that she wrote an essay “that was really

⁴⁸⁰ See Appendix C for the full text of my interview with Timberlake Wertenbaker.

⁴⁸¹ All of the biographical information on Wertenbaker comes from her approved biography in the *Ajax in Afghanistan* and *Our Ajax* playbills as well as in an extended interview with me. The entire text of my interview with Wertenbaker can be found in Appendix C.

⁴⁸² See FN 480 and FN 481.

a rewrite. I couldn't 'think' about the play, I wanted to be part of it."⁴⁸³ Wertebaker studied Classical Greek but acknowledges that she is not a Greek scholar. When preparing to translate or adapt a Greek tragedy, she works closely with Professor Margaret Williamson, a friend and colleague in Dartmouth. Together they go over the ancient text in question to discern the words and what may have been intended with the words.

Wertebaker initially translated and adapted *Ajax* to explore how and why people participate in the army in the twenty-first century, and to examine military leadership. She has said that her version of the play became her response to the war in Afghanistan; a war she felt was "dragging on."⁴⁸⁴ During the time she was writing the first draft of her play, she noticed many headlines in daily newspapers about the casualties and suicides occurring as a result of this war. Initially titled *The Suicide of Colonel A. Ajax*, Wertebaker first heard her script read aloud in 2010 during an in-house workshop of the play with London's National Theatre where she served as a writer-in-residence. The following year (late 2011) Wertebaker's play became one of three plays commissioned by *The Women & War Project* (WWP), a Canadian-based creative research study examining gender and war.⁴⁸⁵ In July 2012 Wertebaker's script had its world premiere in Greece. During the WWP tour, Wertebaker titled her play, *Ajax in Afghanistan*.⁴⁸⁶ After the tour, she reworked the play and retitled it *Our Ajax*. The London production *Our Ajax* premiered at the Southwark Playhouse in the fall of 2013. In all three versions of her play, Wertebaker modified Sophocles' original in several significant ways. What began as an attempt to faithfully translate and adapt Sophocles' tragedy with the assistance of her longtime friend, Greek scholar Margaret Williamson, ended with Wertebaker's recognition that she could not stay as close to

⁴⁸³ See FN 481 and FN 482.

⁴⁸⁴ Wertebaker, *Our Ajax*, 38.

⁴⁸⁵ *The Women & War Project* will be discussed in depth in Chapter 7.

⁴⁸⁶ The production of *Ajax in Afghanistan* will be discussed in detail in the Chapter 7.

Sophocles' text as she had done in her previous versions of Greek tragedies.⁴⁸⁷ She felt a "new play superimposing itself on the literal: something contemporary, based on current wars, set in a British army base."⁴⁸⁸ Modifications to characters included the reworking of Tecmessa, who in Wertebaker's version became the wife of Ajax. In Sophocles' original, she is a victim of war and Ajax's concubine; in Wertebaker's version she is a Middle Eastern woman (Wertebaker keeps Tecmessa's country of origin vague) who suffers the loss of her family during a war fought by the British, led by Ajax and his men. Tecmessa ends up marrying Ajax although she witnesses the majority of her family die in war. She chooses to marry one of the men from the opposing side because, as Tecmessa reflects, war is brutal and with no male relatives left to protect her, she needed male protection. Ajax, a general and warrior, represented someone strong and powerful, a man capable of serving as her protector. Another modification in Wertebaker's version of the play includes the change of gender for the character of Agamemnon from male in the original to female in Wertebaker's first two versions. The playwright spoke of this gender shift as a nod to military protocol in the twenty-first century that allows for female generals. While the character of Agamemnon was present in the first two versions of her script (*The Suicide of Colonel A. Ajax* and *Ajax in Afghanistan*), Wertebaker removed Agamemnon altogether in the third version of the play (*Our Ajax*). Her removal of this character was not due to a belief that having a female general was merely an empty gesture to political correctness but rather for purposes of tightening the script and reducing the cast size – a consideration many

⁴⁸⁷ Wertebaker has also translated and adapted Sophocles' *Theban Plays* (produced at the RSC in London), Euripides' *Hecuba* (produced at ACT in San Francisco), and Sophocles' *Electra* (produced at the Getty in Los Angeles).

⁴⁸⁸ Wertebaker, *Our Ajax*, 5.

playwrights find themselves faced with in the twenty-first century reality of shrinking production budgets.⁴⁸⁹

Another modification of the original was Wertebaker's geographic setting for her play. By locating the play on a battlefield in Afghanistan, she was free to explore contemporary tensions between the British (Ajax and his men) and the Americans (Menelaus and his soldiers). This modification accurately reflected ground troops during the 2001 – 2013 war in Afghanistan.

Applying the research of Street and Dekel to the character of Tecmessa in Wertebaker's *Our Ajax*, it is possible to see both primary and secondary trauma written into the text and the character's back-story. Tecmessa's early brutal experiences of war are revealed during a tense exchange with Ajax. He has been killing animals, mistaking them for men. He has been raging and hallucinating on the battlefield in front of her and his troops. In an attempt to help Ajax regain emotional stability and cognitive clarity, Tecmessa recounts her own primary trauma caused by witnessing the death of her family in war, of becoming a prisoner of war, and of her decision to marry Ajax in order to survive. She says:

I was born in a land that was troubled, strong and proud
Decimated by your army.
My father, my brother, my cousins, you got them all.
And then, for what? In a casual flourish of firepower
My mother and a sister
Smothered by the mantle of one bomb
Sent to the wrong place:
Collateral damage of your force
But even too much for you.
Death, life, suicide, survival, the straws look the same.
I picked the one that ordered survival.
An orphan child,
Treated, bandaged, sent with another sister to your country
To be collaterally undamaged
A bandage on your nation's guilt.⁴⁹⁰

⁴⁸⁹ Wertebaker addressed the removal of Agamemnon in a conversation she and I had after I saw the London production of *Our Ajax*.

⁴⁹⁰ Wertebaker, 38-40.

Tecmessa uses this information to navigate Ajax's PTSD; she addresses the issue of how primary trauma can cloud judgment. She reminds him that she, too, has experienced trauma (caused by her own losses during war) and when faced with the need for safety after the loss of family and displacement in a foreign land, is forced to calculate where and with whom she will have the best chance for survival.⁴⁹¹ She describes to Ajax how he became her "father brother friend and lover."⁴⁹² Through the lens of Street's research on women's increased risk for experiencing sexual assault, sexual harassment, and gender-based harassment in war zones, Tecmessa's decision to align with Ajax can be understood. Her enemy becomes her protector and she would rather forge a union with one man than be assaulted by many. Tecmessa tries to emotionally 'reach' Ajax. She reminds him that not only is she his wife she is also a sympathetic fellow victim of trauma. They share a common language of distress. Ajax responds simply that he knows her background. He asks her to be strong in the face of war, reminding her that she saved several of his men, "dragging (two of) them to safety... (and) held the third in your arms, a sweet tender breath in death. You didn't flinch then. Don't flinch now."⁴⁹³ By offering such an intimate exchange on a battlefield, Wertebaker queries the role of pain and trauma between spouses during war. Both husband and wife are carriers of primary trauma. Wertebaker underscores gender differences through Tecmessa's and Ajax's response to their own trauma. Tecmessa appears to have processed her primary trauma and Ajax remains consumed by his. Ultimately, Tecmessa is not capable of calming the effects of Ajax's PTSD. He continues to yell at her; he threatens her and insists that she bring their son to him so that he may speak to the boy. This is hugely distressing to Tecmessa – who now fears Ajax capable of killing their son. Dekel's

⁴⁹¹ Wertebaker, 39.

⁴⁹² Wertebaker, 38-40.

⁴⁹³ Wertebaker, 38-40.

research contextualises Tecmessa's high level of burden and distress. Tecmessa becomes a woman, a spouse, a mother in harm's way, with a child in harm's way. Perceived or actual abuse by a spouse is exactly what may trigger secondary trauma in a female. In *Our Ajax*, Tecmessa symbolically serves three roles: she carries primary trauma as a victim of war who experiences loss of family and homeland; she becomes Ajax's spouse, bearing a son. As his spouse, she suffers secondary trauma because her husband's primary trauma has resulted in hallucinatory PTSD episodes. She sees Ajax ravaged by the mental ailment, describing how he has killed the animals, bloodied their living quarter. She has witnessed him threatening to kill men, and she has tried to intervene by engaging with him emotionally. Finally, she is a mother fearful for her child. Her distress is exacerbated as she acknowledges her fate should Ajax not survive. Her protection will be compromised, leaving her once again vulnerable and open to assault, rape, or worse, death. She pleads with him not to abandon her:

...the day you decide to die, what will happen to me?
To our Child?
Your own son?
We have no home but you Ajax.⁴⁹⁴

Tecmessa finds herself in a place of contradiction: she is married to the man whose army was responsible for the death of her family. She reminds Ajax "my father, my brothers, my cousins, you got them all."⁴⁹⁵ For her own protection, she is now his bedfellow and follows him onto the battlefield, seeking protection for herself and for their son. Wertenbaker modifies the character of Tecmessa, assigning her a job as an army medic. Through this job Tecmessa is awarded agency – and is provided a meaningful reason for being on the battlefield.

Wertenbaker's dialogue suggests that Tecmessa has come to love Ajax: "...you cradled me,

⁴⁹⁴ Wertenbaker, 39.

⁴⁹⁵ Wertenbaker, 38.

father brother friend and lover and all anger subsided in your arms.”⁴⁹⁶ The love Tecmessa now feels for her husband adds to her level of distress; her husband’s emotional dissolution is alarming and painful to witness. She pleads with the men under her husband’s command to help him but no one can ‘reach’ Ajax. When her husband commits suicide later in the play, Tecmessa must face the reality that without Ajax’s ‘protection’ she and her son may once again become collateral damage of war. Tecmessa’s primary trauma is repeated: she must once again witness the death of her ‘family’ and of her male protector. Tecmessa remains silent for the last 450 lines of Sophocles’ *Ajax* and the last thirteen pages of Wertenbaker’s *Our Ajax*. This silence can be construed as a manifestation of both primary and secondary forms of trauma: Tecmessa is unable to articulate what is happening around her; she is focused inward, becoming self-protective. Her silence can be read as the processing of a new reality that lies ahead: with the loss of male protection (Ajax), she is left to fend for herself and for her young son. Tecmessa ends the play mutely, effectively silenced as a woman, a mother, and a wife, carrying the pain of both forms of trauma. As a symbol of twenty-first century female war trauma, this character offers two conflicting patterns of female casualty: first, Tecmessa represents a survivor in the face of incredible war-induced trauma; second, the character models a woman terrified for her safety and for that of her child, desperate for a man to protect them, even if the man is her abuser.

During the last section of the play, the dramatic action shifts focus onto the male characters. The young son, who has also carried the theme of secondary trauma, is offered a release of his trauma through a male healing ritual. When Teucer, brother of Ajax arrives and sees the corpse of Ajax, he calls for the boy. When the boy appears, Teucer instructs:

Child, come over here
And use whatever strength you have to help me lift
Him up.

⁴⁹⁶ Wertenbaker, 39-40.

But first place a loving hand on your father.
There was no greater hero anywhere
Than this big, this brave soldier, Ajax.⁴⁹⁷

By asking the boy to touch the body of his father, while surrounded by his father's 'men', he is offered a mental restoration in the form of masculine emotional support. Taplin has discussed the importance of a physical action employed to activate or strengthen an oath or curse for the ancient Greeks.⁴⁹⁸ The same can be said of theatrical actions portrayed onstage. The visual image of the young boy touching the corpse of his father would strengthen the 'story' that one day this same boy will likely become a man in the image of his father. The son will grow up to carry a gun, to be a leader, and to fight wars. The image also begs the question: Will this son also experience a tragic PTSD-related death as a result of war or will his path be a different one? Throughout this ritualistic healing, the boy's secondary trauma is acknowledged and offered a release while Tecmessa remains in the background silent and alone. She is not asked to take part in the ritual. She remains mutely 'holding' both forms of trauma within her body and psyche. Without participating in any sort of healing ritual, she is symbolically, and perhaps literally, obliterated.

Hypothesis: Female response to tragedy

Wertenbaker wrote *Our Ajax* as a personal – and female - response to both tragedy and modern warfare. In her interview with me, Wertenbaker claimed that she “does not believe women question war more than men. They can get very patriotic and send their men off (WW1).”⁴⁹⁹ In discussing the two forms of trauma carried by the character Tecmessa in both Sophocles' original and Wertenbaker's *Our Ajax*, certain questions arise concerning a twenty-first century gendered reception of the play and the cathartic functionality of this character for a

⁴⁹⁷ Wertenbaker, 81.

⁴⁹⁸ Taplin, 65.

⁴⁹⁹ See Appendix C for the full text of my interview with Timberlake Wertenbaker.

contemporary audience. Are there inherent differences in female and male *responses* to trauma? Does the character of Tecmessa symbolically represent modern female experiences of war-related trauma(s) and will such a representation promote cathartic healing for a female spectator? According to Street's research, the occurrence of primary trauma in females is higher than in males with proportionately 40% more women experiencing sexual assault; 10% more women experiencing more general harassment; and 15% more women experiencing heavy general harassment.⁵⁰⁰ On average, women are much more likely to be exposed to sexual and other forms of interpersonal stress. They are also at a higher risk for depression while men are more at risk for alcohol abuse. This data suggests that gender may indeed affect the way we read and present the roles of characters such as Tecmessa in Greek theatre. With more women experiencing trauma(s) during war, and with data confirming that these various traumas are causing heightened mental health issues for women, I hypothesise that female reception of performed *primary* and *secondary* trauma may be heightened and cathartic. While no accurate data currently exists measuring the level and type of response females exhibit while watching plays representing war-induced trauma, I conjecture that women respond emotionally and cathartically to both male and female characters carrying theme(s) of trauma and do not require a male (literary) surrogate to symbolically carry the trauma for them. The same social conditioning that allows women to openly cry, lament, and grieve in most modern cultures also suggests to me that females are likely to experience cathartic affects offered through the performance of Greek plays featuring male characters carrying primary and secondary war-related traumas (Ajax) and traumatised female characters. For this reason, the aesthetic distancing technique of cross-gender representation of trauma may not be required for female catharsis. Female sufferers from secondary trauma can relate directly with the character of Tecmessa in her role as the wife of a

⁵⁰⁰ Street et al, (2012): 253-281.

military man suffering extreme PTSD, while female sufferers of primary trauma and of PTSD may relate to the struggles and emotional destruction of the central male character. As women take on new and more dangerous roles in the military they seek out role models for understanding and for processing trauma and as a result respond directly to such symbols offered onstage.

While gender roles and social conditioning in the West are evolving, North American cultures still dismiss male emotionality as a sign of weakness. Greek plays continue to work cathartically in the twenty-first century as a way of dealing with (war) trauma and are often, as is the case with Wertebaker's work, modernised by offering familiar war contexts such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Bosnia, and even Vietnam. It is conceivable that there are gender differences in the reception and cathartic experience of the performances, but this has yet to be properly measured. Symbolic representation of primary and secondary trauma can yield understanding of gender roles in and around war and potentially still produce catharsis for an audience. Female characters representing female trauma serve an important function in the delivery of social 'modelling' by offering women emotional recognition through familiar social categories and trauma-producing events. Female character categories that carry trauma include wives, mothers, prisoners of war, and victims of sexual assault. Do contemporary women seek symbolic representation of war roles and traumas or even role patterning? Without tools to accurately measure gender-based audience response to these questions I can only speculate that while the representation of the female in the fifth century BCE war-themed dramaturgy does not map onto twenty-first century women, the female characters found within these ancient tragedies and within their modern incarnations offer contemporary women a lens through which to view and process war today. The relationship between trauma, catharsis and female patterning found within ancient Greek

dramaturgy and the potential therapeutic value of these ancient plays for contemporary audiences can be understood in certain modern interpretations of the ancient themes, characters, and dramaturgy such as Wertenbaker's *Our Ajax*. By applying an understanding of the deployment of trauma within twenty-first century studies of PTSD to Wertenbaker's adaptation of Sophocles' tragedy, it may be possible to discern and cathartically process trauma faced by female participation in war as combatants, partners of officers or soldiers, mothers, daughters, prisoners of war and victims of sexual assault. The conceptual differences between primary and secondary trauma can be clearly read in the character of Tecmessa within both Sophocles' *Ajax* and Wertenbaker's *Our Ajax*.⁵⁰¹ I argue that this character successfully functions as a twenty-first century symbol of female-carried war trauma as a result of Wertenbaker's updating of the play's location to a contemporary warzone in Afghanistan and by the repositioning of two important characters: Tecmessa, who appears in Wertenbaker's text as the wife of Ajax and a medic in the military; and Agamemnon, who Wertenbaker has altered to become a female top-ranking general. For Wertenbaker, both of these changes acknowledge contemporary war related traumas and military career possibilities for women in the twenty-first century. Through additional research, it may be possible to identify and articulate the long-term effects of combat-related PTSD and examine other facets of human coping with traumatic events in war, terror, and family violence through other modern adaptations of the ancient Greek tragedies.

⁵⁰¹ An earlier version of Timberlake Wertenbaker's adaptation of the play was commissioned by and performed within *The Women & War Project* (2012), which will be discussed in the next chapter. Two earlier versions of this same play were titled *The Suicide of Colonel A. Ajax* and *Ajax in Afghanistan*.

Chapter Seven: Reading trauma and gender roles in Velina Hasu Houston's *The Intuition of Iphigenia* and Judith Thompson's *Elektra in Bosnia*

War
opens the door
to all that is closed in peacetime
to all but the freaks
just as dogs in wartime move in packs, become feral
WAR does this to men; especially around women.
It lets their lifelong fear of ALL that is female, LONGING for all that is female
RISE UP as HATRED
Without any consequence at all, with soldiers in wartime, anything can happen. ANYTHING.
He KNEW THIS. My husband knows the hearts and minds of men. At one time he was very wise.
He knew the risk
He decided it was worth it.
--Clytemnestra speaking of Agamemnon⁵⁰²

In this chapter I will look at the representations of trauma and catharsis within the context of the *Women & War Project* (WWP). This large-scale creative research endeavour funded through a Partnership Development Grant by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) in April 2011 was conceived to be a three-year study designed to investigate the female experience of war using modernised Greek tragedy in performance as a means of inciting public discourse and measuring audience behaviours. As the lead researcher and artistic director of the project, I commissioned three new adaptations of ancient Greek plays from significant female playwrights, each representing a different cultural perspective on war (Timberlake Wertenbaker, Britain; Judith Thompson, Canada; and Velina Hasu Houston, the USA and Japan). When I approached each of them, I discussed the commission requirements: adapt a Greek play or mythic theme(s) to focus on the complex and important roles performed by women affected by war as combatants, mothers, wives, and victims of psychological and physical abuse in modernity; and create performance work in various genre including theatre,

⁵⁰² Judith Thompson, *Elektra in Bosnia* (unpublished play script, June 2013), 27. This text is archived at the Ryerson Theatre School, Ryerson University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

dance and opera. Wertebaker spoke of her interest in the occurrence of PTSD on the battlefield in Afghanistan and of a curiosity to explore the plight of a general plagued with mental trauma; she identified Sophocles' *Ajax* as the play she wanted to further investigate. Thompson wished to examine the impact of war on families and decided to focus on the family of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra. She chose to create a play that followed the fates of siblings Electra, Iphigenia and Orestes; of the war-prize and-now-sex-worker Cassandra; and the reimagined matricide of Clytemnestra, placing the action of her play during the Bosnian war. Hasu Houston identified the theme of female self-sacrifice during war, articulating a particular interest in the sacrifice of Iphigenia in Euripides' *Iphigenia at Aulis*; Hasu Houston was initially interested in creating a dance-theatre piece (which she did); yet at the conclusion of WWP determined that her artistic piece should shift genre to become an opera. All three works were rehearsed with a company of thirty-four actors from four countries (Canada, USA, Greece, and Croatia) for four weeks in Toronto (May 20 – June 18, 2012) and two weeks in Greece (June 21 – July 2, 2012). All three received their world premieres at Hydrama Theatre & Arts Centre on the island of Hydra in Greece July 3 – 5, 2012. I served as artistic director. Alysa Pires of Canada served as choreographer. Three composers were hired, each from a different country, to elucidate the cultural breadth of the artistic endeavour. Composers included Jacob Vanderham from Canada (assigned to *Elektra in Bosnia*); Stavros Gasparatos from Greece (assigned to *Ajax in Afghanistan*); and Nathan Wang from the USA and China (assigned to *The Intuition of Iphigenia*). There was a professional costume designer (Alex Gilbert of Canada) and a professional stage manager (A.J. La Flamme of Canada). The plays were conceived as a trilogy and while they were thematically linked, they remained dramatically autonomous. The work was performed as a trilogy, with one performance piece presented each night for a series of three

nights in each location. In addition to the world premiere of the trilogy, there was the First Annual Women & War Conference held on the island of Hydra in Greece, July 3-4, 2012. This conference attracted female artists, scholars, social scientists and members of the military from ten countries (U.S., Canada, Greece, Scotland, Croatia, Spain, Japan, Israel, England, and Italy) as both presenters and attendees. The Second Annual Women & War Conference was held in Toronto on the campus of Ryerson University and at the central Library on the island of Poros, Greece in June 2013. Both locations held one-day Postgraduate conferences and attracted students from six countries (Canada, the U.S., Japan, Greece, Croatia, and Bosnia).

Several characters appear and reappear in the three play cycle: *The Intuition of Iphigenia* and *Elektra in Bosnia* both present the character of Iphigenia, examining her ‘sacrifice’ in entirely different ways. These same two plays present Clytemnestra and Agamemnon in conflict, expressing this conflict through dance in Hasu Houston’s version and in dialogue within Thompson’s. The character of Agamemnon is presented as a male general in *The Intuition of Iphigenia* and as a female general in *Ajax in Afghanistan*. Stylistically, the productions ranged from heroic and narratively epic (in Hasu Houston’s dance and opera versions of *The Intuition of Iphigenia*) to graphic and visceral in Thompson’s *Elektra in Bosnia* to stylised and choral in Wertebaker’s *Ajax in Afghanistan*. Trauma is represented in all three creative works, with *primary* trauma depicted in *The Intuition of Iphigenia* (through the characters of Iphigenia and Clytemnestra); and *primary* and *secondary* traumas depicted in both *Elektra in Bosnia* and *Ajax in Afghanistan* (through the characters of Iphigenia, Clytemnestra, Agamemnon, Ajax, Tecmessa, Elektra, and Cassandra). Insights and approaches were built upon prior scholarship and theatrical practice in matters relating to arts and healing with the creation and production of these new theatrical performances; and through public forums, interviews and case studies of and

for female veterans; and by way of symposia and conferences in two countries (Canada and Greece). The potential for behavioural change using war-themed artistic creation was measured to assist the next generation of reception theory, catharsis scholarship and the legibility and impact of violence and trauma represented within theatrical performance. The overarching objectives of WWP were to increase global dialogue regarding women's active and passive roles in and around war; increase awareness of the treatable nature of trauma-related sequelae as a result of exposure to war; reduce stigmatisation of these same trauma-related symptoms and to measure audience response to these plays. Placing renowned theatre and dance artists and students alongside social science researchers from ten countries, WWP examined whether female characters carrying war-related plots and themes correlated for female active duty personnel, veterans and their extended family members, and for women in the general population.⁵⁰³ It was in this context that the two following case study plays were conceived, developed, produced, and measured. Understanding how certain social and psychological representations of female trauma are carried and contextualised by the female characters presented within these plays became paramount. By interrogating how self-aware characters mediate their trauma through a search for cathartic release from its devastation, I explored performative representations of female trauma within modern wars such as Bosnia (in Thompson's *Elektra*) and Afghanistan (in Wertenbaker's *Ajax*, as discussed in the previous chapter). While these settings offered cultural and political guideposts that were recognisable to contemporary audiences, I also discovered that universal war representation (as in Hasu Houston's *Iphigenia*) offered global themes readily accessible to a contemporary audience. Hasu Houston and Thompson intended their texts to yield potent examinations of female trauma within twenty-first century war and the cathartic elements of *The*

⁵⁰³ See Appendix E for a description of how data was collected, for the questionnaire used to collect this new data, and for the new data captured through this study.

Intuition of Iphigenia and *Elektra in Bosnia* rely heavily on gender and symbolism. These modern versions transcended the use of female characters as stand-ins for male war experiences by offering female characters representing female trauma for female audience members *as well as* male characters representing male trauma for both men and women.

In the following two case studies, I will discuss how and why Hasu Houston and Thompson updated two of the ancient tragedies and what specific themes and female roles these creative works address. I will also discuss the representation of trauma onstage and question whether or not it yielded potential for producing a cathartic effect on an audience.

CASE STUDY: Velina Hasu Houston's *The Intuition of Iphigenia*⁵⁰⁴ based loosely on Euripides' *Iphigenia at Aulis*⁵⁰⁵

For the past twenty years, Hasu Houston's plays have focused on the shifting boundaries of identity with regard to gender, culture, and ethnicity. Internationally acclaimed, Hasu Houston has written thirty-five plays throughout a career that began Off-Broadway with her play *Tea* at Manhattan Theatre Club and *American Dreams* at Negro Ensemble Company in New York. Her theatrical writing has received productions at significant theatres globally including Manhattan Theatre Club, the Old Globe Theatre, George Street Playhouse, Pittsburgh Public Theatre, the Smithsonian Institute, Whole Theatre (Olympia Dukakis, producer), NHK (Japan), Pasadena Playhouse, Syracuse Stage, Los Angeles Theatre Center, Odyssey Theatre Ensemble, A Contemporary Theatre, Playwrights' Arena, the LA Opera and others including theatres in the People's Republic of China, Japan, Singapore, Australia, and Malaysia. In addition to theatrical

⁵⁰⁴ I will refer to Velina Hasu Houston's 2013 version of the text, which is her libretto for *The Intuition of Iphigenia* in workshop at the LA Opera in April 2014 unless otherwise indicated. This text is archived at the Ryerson Theatre School, Ryerson University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

⁵⁰⁵ When referring to Euripides' text, of *Iphigenia at Aulis*, I turn to James Morwood's translation in Euripides, *Bacchae and Other Plays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 84-132.

plays, Hasu Houston writes for opera, musical theatre, television, and film and is a published poet and essayist.⁵⁰⁶ She once remarked that her literary path was guided by dreams that “metamorphose and ask questions in the shadows of the human condition...between the borders of what is categorical and defined...culture, transnational identities, dislocation, ethnicity, the impact of war, and women in the midst of all those sites...”⁵⁰⁷ Indeed, Hasu Houston has a history of locating her dramatic stories and poetry between and across cultures and countries. War is omnipresent for Houston, who recalls a family tree greatly affected by various wars:

On the Japanese island of Shikoku during World War II my mother ate roasted locusts for protein. My aunts and uncles fled from Manchuria with literally nothing but the clothes on their backs. My grandmother—who loved the West – suffered a wound that eventually consumed her. My proud grandfather, second son of affluent landowners ruling over tenant farmer labourers, committed suicide shortly after the war as a result of land reclamation policies that stripped him of his property and caused his wife’s imminent death...The four Takechi sisters, my mother being the youngest, were flung far and wide by the impact of the war and would not be in the same room together again for fifty years.⁵⁰⁸

Hasu Houston’s father, too, was greatly affected by war. An African, Cuban and Native American, Lemo Houston enlisted in the U.S. Army as a result of the few choices available for men of African descent in the 1930s United States. He met and married Hasu Houston’s mother while stationed in Japan. Hasu Houston has publicly acknowledged her father’s inability to heal from the bombing of Hiroshima because of all that it symbolised to him as a man of colour

⁵⁰⁶ Biographical information of Velina Hasu Houston was retrieved from her official website: www.velinahasuhouston.com on March 31, 2014.

⁵⁰⁷ See: *Image Ethics, and Social Responsibility*, a publication of Independent Feature Project-West, October, 1992, with Hasu Houston’s comments excerpted from an October 1990 panel discussion of the same title held at Warner Bros. Studio, Burbank, California; also: *The Politics of Life: Four Plays by Asian American Women*, ed. Velina Hasu Houston, with introduction and commentary, Temple University Press, 1992, in the series *Asian American History and Culture*, ed. Sucheng Chan.

⁵⁰⁸ From an unpublished interview between this writer and Velina Hasu Houston conducted by way of email from her office at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, January 2014.

married to a Japanese ‘war bride’.⁵⁰⁹ She has said that Hiroshima, as a single act of war, haunted her father until the day he died. For these reasons, Hasu Houston views war as part of her personal narrative. While it ‘cursed’ her ancestors it also brought together diverse cultures that may not have otherwise integrated.⁵¹⁰ Her own identity as a ‘transnational, multi-ethnic’ woman defines her belief that war is never far from her imagination or artistic consideration. Racial strife, along with real and tangential civil and world wars produce a sense in Hasu Houston that there is “always a war to think about” and she is drawn to war and “its impact on the survival of the human race.”⁵¹¹ Her dramatic writing more often than not investigates the rights of women and children while exploring themes of tolerance, understanding, and the value of peace. She intends for her plays to move the spectator from passive audience member to actively engaged citizen, thinking broadly and deeply about human controversies.⁵¹²

Hasu Houston’s most famous play, *Tea*, tells the story of five Japanese war brides who emigrate to the United States with their American servicemen husbands. The play is rooted in Houston’s own experiences growing up in Kansas as the daughter of a Japanese mother and mixed-race father who met during the American occupation of Japan and married after a nine-year courtship, unprecedented for the post-war years. Houston feels that *Tea* has special resonance for the Japanese American community whom she feels also harboured stereotypes about the Japanese war brides when they arrived in America.⁵¹³ Hasu Houston’s interest in giving voice to “female strangers in a strange land”⁵¹⁴ guided her initial reading of Euripides’

⁵⁰⁹ Discussed within an email correspondence between this writer and Hasu Houston dated March 9, 2014.

⁵¹⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹¹ See Appendix C for full text of my interview with Velina Hasu Houston.

⁵¹² See Appendix C for full text of my interview with Velina Hasu Houston.

⁵¹³ See Appendix C for full text of my interview with Velina Hasu Houston

⁵¹⁴ First rehearsal of *The Women & War Project Trilogy* was held at Ryerson Theatre School in Toronto, Ontario, May 2012. All three playwrights (Hasu Houston, Thompson, and Wertebaker) were present.

Iphigenia in Aulis and her decision to use Euripides' play as a departure point for an entirely new play about a female self-sacrifice during war as part of the 2011-2014 WWP.

In reading Euripides' play, Hasu Houston questioned how a young girl could come to accept the sacrifice of her life for the sake of national "honour" in the midst of war.⁵¹⁵ Indeed, Euripides' play presents a problematic construction of its title character whose behaviour is both heroic and mistaken. The war that Iphigenia is sacrificed for is not, in fact, heroic but one of necessity for Agamemnon, king of Mycenae and his brother Menelaus of Sparta. It is a war that will allow them to save face. When Helen, wife of Menelaus, is kidnapped by Paris, prince of Troy (or does she fall in love with Paris and flee with him as Cassandra claims in *Trojan Women*?⁵¹⁶) her cuckolded husband (Menelaus) demands that his brother Agamemnon gather his great fleet and sail with him to Troy to bring Helen back and avenge his honour. The troops assemble on the shores of Aulis, preparing to sail. It is then that the wind ceases. In some versions of the myth, this cessation of wind is caused as a result of the slaying of an innocent deer by the restless male troops and in so doing, angering the goddess Artemis. Calchas, the military's seer, tells Agamemnon that he must sacrifice his daughter Iphigenia to Artemis so that the goddess will restore the wind, allowing the men to sail to Troy. In Hasu Houston's adaptation of the play she chose to dramatise the killing of the deer, Artemis' rage over the senseless killing of her beloved animal, and the determination of the goddess to exact an-eye-for-an-eye revenge (sacrifice of beloved daughter for the murder of the deer).⁵¹⁷

Euripides' play revisits the dramatic myth of the House of Atreus and Tantalus,

⁵¹⁵ Hasu Houston articulated this during her first comments to cast and director on May 21, 2012 in the rehearsal hall at Ryerson Theatre School in Toronto, Ontario. Her comments remain unpublished.

⁵¹⁶ Euripides, *Trojan Women* in *The Trojan Women and Other Plays*, trans. James Morwood (Oxford, 2008), lines 353-374.

⁵¹⁷ A notable version of the murder of Artemis' deer by Agamemnon's restless men can be seen in Michael Cacoyannis' film "Iphigenia" produced by World Films in 1977, starring Irene Papas.

illegitimate son of Zeus who has incurred the wrath of the gods. In *Iphigenia at Aulis*, Tantalus is revealed to be the first husband of Clytemnestra. Agamemnon is revealed (through dialogue) to be responsible not only for Tantalus' murder but also for the death of Clytemnestra and Tantalus' child. This information paints the character of Agamemnon as a "self-serving, warlord guilty of previous atrocity" as Edith Hall has suggested.⁵¹⁸ In Euripides' play, Agamemnon moves forward with a decision to sacrifice his daughter Iphigenia. *Iphigenia at Aulis*, in many ways, calls into question the integrity and the motives of the sacrificing parent (Agamemnon) just as it prompts controversy and criticism⁵¹⁹ suggesting Aristotle's criticism of Iphigenia's sudden change of mind (Poetics 1454a32-33) is not without validity.⁵²⁰ Hasu Houston's interest in revisiting Euripides' original was to examine the question of whether Iphigenia might effectively serve as political pawn in response to the Archaean army's demand for her sacrifice or as a heroine in a modern context, willing to sacrifice her life for her country – even if the war is misguided. Such an investigation was relevant to the WWP's aims to use ancient Greek themes and plays to explore gender and war. Hasu Houston came to question how Agamemnon, Clytemnestra, Achilles and Iphigenia - all initially in opposition to the sacrifice of Iphigenia - acquiesced to Iphigenia's decision to die so that the Trojan expedition could occur. In conceiving her version of the story, Hasu Houston settled on the media of dance and music to move into the realm of emotion. As words are the medium of thought, music takes one more

⁵¹⁸ Euripides, *Iphigenia among the Taurians, Bacchae, Iphigenia at Aulis, Rhesus*, trans. James Morwood, introduction by Edith Hall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), xxiii.

⁵¹⁹ Euripides, *Bacchae and Other Plays*, trans. James Morwood, introduction by Edith Hall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), xxii-xxv.

⁵²⁰ See: Mellert-Hoffman (1969): 80-89; Knox (1979): 243-46; Chant 1986; Luschnig (1988): 21-36 and 105-9; Griffin (1990): 148; Sorum (1992): 528; Gibert (1995): 250-52; Schenker (1999): 648-49; Burgess 2004, Louis. 2008, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses, Notes towards an Investigation," report in *On Ideology* (London: Verso, 2008), 160-161; Dana L. Burgess, "Lies and Convictions at Aulis," *Hermes* (2004): 132: 37-55.

directly to the domain of feeling. In an extended conversation, Hasu Houston and I discussed Aristotle's principal assertion of music in his *Politics* and the role of music and dance in the ancient tragedies. In discussing instrumentation for the original music that was to be commissioned, we were both interested in the use of a Japanese flute, again turning to Aristotle's suggestion that a flute "is not an instrument that is expressive of moral character; it is too exciting. The proper time for using it is when the performance aims not at instruction, but at the relief of passions."⁵²¹ Music, as Aristotle suggests, has many values – education, purgation, and enjoyment are three.⁵²² Hasu Houston's intention for the dance drama and opera versions of *The Intuition of Iphigenia* was to create a compelling story that was timely and that utilised music to assist with a cathartic response in her audiences. She was less interested in creating an exact (modern) replica of Euripides' play.

In rehearsal, she posed these questions to the director and cast: "How could Iphigenia, deceived by her father into coming to the battlefield believing she was to marry a warrior (Achilles), accept her father's decision to sacrifice her to the goddess Artemis? When is the sacrifice of a life a worthwhile debt to be paid?"⁵²³ The playwright discussed how social and psychological representations of female trauma might be contextualised through the characters of Iphigenia and Clytemnestra. Her intention for these two characters was to have them serve as contemporary symbols of extreme acts during war. For Hasu Houston, Iphigenia would represent contemporary female sacrifice during war that is framed as being 'for the good of the country' but her Iphigenia would not fully equate with the politicised female suicide bomber who believes her death must occur for reasons beyond her control, or that martyrdom is the will of God.

⁵²¹ Aristotle, *Politics*, trans. Benjamin Jowett (Kitchener: Batoche Books, 1999), IV: 189.

⁵²² Jowett, VII: 190-191.

⁵²³ The question was part of the playwright's opening address on the first day of rehearsal in Toronto 2012.

Iphigenia, Hasu Houston argued to the artistic team, *will derive agency as the decision maker* and will make the sacrifice to honour her country. Hasu Houston's Iphigenia articulates this "power" in her final speech:

I go forth like the men on ships
More a soldier than they are
More than great Agamemnon
...
I know you cannot see it
Under the surface it breathes
It is my power of choosing
Fate is my marriage bequeathed
Destiny is my dance
Forever I will dance
Time cannot destroy me
...
Mother, I choose to be a soldier
And every war is my war
I will fight like a woman
...
We will win;
It is our destiny.⁵²⁴

Iphigenia is seen as choosing to accept her fate. She is determined to 'fight like a woman...and win'. This character is self-aware and navigates any psychic trauma by 'choosing' to 'be a soldier' and cathartically proclaiming that 'every war is (her) war'. Directorially, I supported this choice by having Iphigenia dance a trio that showed her physically (and literally) pulled between two men, her father Agamemnon and Achilles. They leave her as Clytemnestra enters. Mother and daughter sing a duet and Clytemnestra pleads with her daughter to resist the sacrifice. Disengaging from her mother, Iphigenia dances solo for three minutes. At first moving slowly, timidly and afraid she searches for the courage to decide what she wants to do. Her tempo increases, her strides lengthen, her gaze lifts upwards to the gods. Iconic heroic gestures are

⁵²⁴ Velina Hasu Houston, Libretto; Nathan Wang, Composer; Based on the Play, *The Intuition of Iphigenia*, by Velina Hasu Houston, Unpublished manuscript of LA Opera workshop, June 2013 and April 2014.

employed to signify strength, courage and clear decision-making. Iphigenia has made her decision: Her life for the honour of her country. She goes back into the duet with her mother and it is clear that both now understand what each must do: Iphigenia will sacrifice herself so that her father's troops may sail to Troy; Clytemnestra will plot revenge and in another play (*Elektra in Bosnia*), will carry through with this decision.

Iphigenia's search for a release from the potentially devastating effects of paternal betrayal is achieved by framing the impending sacrifice of her life as her own decision. Hasu Houston adapts Euripides' motif of child sacrifice to a deity and his portrayal of Agamemnon as a "self-serving warlord guilty of previous atrocity"⁵²⁵ by shifting much of the dramatic focus onto Iphigenia, her mother, and her mother's mother Leda, who serves as the narrator. The representation of three generations of women carrying individual and collective war trauma effectively transmits the message of the ongoing treachery and pervasiveness of war. Leda is the metaphysical link between the spirit world and the battlefield, mirroring an ancient Greek presence of Athena and Artemis. As director, I chose to represent this character using a Bunraku puppet to illustrate age, transnationality and liminality found within war. The Bunraku danced, narrated, and on many occasions, merely sat and observed the action onstage, always present for the audience to observe. Having an elder observe the devastation of war on the female members of her family was a striking reminder of women who carry and release trauma generation after generation.

With the character of Clytemnestra, Hasu Houston presents maternal trauma borne of a husband's betrayal (his insistence on sacrificing Clytemnestra's beloved daughter). In a particularly tense encounter between husband and wife, Clytemnestra reminds Agamemnon (and

⁵²⁵ See Edith Hall's introduction to Euripides *Bacchae and Other Plays*, trans. James Morwood (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), xxii-xxv.

the audience) of his cruel intentions and his brutal past. She states:

You took one child, now my daughter?
All to move ships on listless water?
A father's bloodlust, we bear the brunt
His daughter's life for his triumph
...

You would watch her on the pyre
As the flames engulf her beautiful skin?
War is your uncontrollable desire
You are a shadow of what you might have been
...

Your glory too will burn in hell
If you place it in war
And not your children.⁵²⁶

With these words, the seeds are planted for Clytemnestra's murderous vengeance.⁵²⁷ In performance singers portrayed the characters and dancers presented moments of the action. This achieved a multi-layered aural, visual and kinesthetic articulation of the trauma, rage, betrayal and fear of war and the decision to sacrifice a life.

Textually, Hasu Houston's female characters embody a complex combination of self-awareness. Both mother and daughter experience betrayal at the hand of the father/husband, the male closest to them both. Agamemnon intends to sacrifice Iphigenia to Artemis so that the goddess will restore the wind, allowing his men to sail to Troy to capture Helen and bring her home. He deceives his wife into delivering their daughter onto the battlefield. While both mother and daughter are traumatised, they mediate their trauma using different means. Iphigenia reframes the paternal betrayal by making it *her decision* to be sacrificed. She takes ownership of

⁵²⁶ Velina Hasu Houston, Libretto; Nathan Wang, Composer; Based on the Play, *The Intuition of Iphigenia*, by Velina Hasu Houston. Unpublished manuscript of LA Opera workshop, June 2013 and April 2014.

⁵²⁷ *The Intuition of Iphigenia* is the first play in the WWP trilogy. Judith Thompson's *Elektra in Bosnia* is the second play and it is in this second play that Clytemnestra will claim justice by murdering her husband.

the act of dying; naming it as a sacrifice that furthers the reputation of her country, and in doing, cathartically releases any pain caused by paternal betrayal. Clytemnestra repositions her trauma through the agency of vengeance. She argues bitterly with her husband, leaving no doubt she will destroy him if he allows Iphigenia to die.

A significant departure from Euripides' text is Hasu Houston's enlargement of the character Artemis. In *The Intuition of Iphigenia*, the audience is asked to witness the killing of Artemis' deer by Agamemnon and his men and view firsthand the pain this causes Artemis. I chose to stage Artemis's graceful animals frolicking in the forest and the wind and sea dramatised through a thirty-foot long piece of blue silk fabric manipulated by the animals. The blue fabric billows, active and as potent as Artemis' animals. Agamemnon and his men appear and catch sight of one animal in particular: a beautiful, graceful deer. They encircle and taunt it, torturing the creature and finally killing it. Artemis arrives to find her deer bloodied and dead. Artemis, enraged, decides to stop the wind, understanding that this act will prevent Agamemnon and Menelaus's men to sail to Troy. The fabric falls to the ground in stillness. No longer does the goddess seem a remote deity set on cruel intentions, but rather, a devastated female protector intent on retribution. Artemis declares:

He has stolen the thing most dear
Agamemnon will pay with one of his own
Silent sea, ships shall not steer
Hear me! The universe is thrown!⁵²⁸

Artemis and Clytemnestra carry parallel themes of maternal loss and desire for extracting vengeance. Neither Euripides nor Hasu Houston softens their depiction of Agamemnon. Both call into question the moral character of a man who would forcibly marry a woman (Clytemnestra) after killing off her previous husband (Tantalus) and the infant child of that

⁵²⁸ Houston, *The Intuition of Iphigenia*, (2012): 16.

union, and who is now determined to sacrifice another daughter to appease Artemis for his unprovoked killing of her deer. Hasu Houston depicts Agamemnon in much the same manner as Euripides: ruthless and determined, set on sacrificing his daughter to Artemis. Hasu Houston includes additional female characters in her version of the tale, another departure from Euripides. Even the Spirit of Helen appears to give voice to Helen's decision to leave her husband

Menelaus for Paris:

Who is this beautiful creature?
This splendid form before me
My heart is pierced to the core
I would give everything to touch him
For him I would risk war
Who is this marvelous mystery?
Moulding the shape of my destiny
Take my children, husband, and home
Where you go I must roam.⁵²⁹

Stage time and voice are also afforded Iphigenia's two sisters, Electra and Chrysothemis, and Hermione, Iphigenia's cousin. While these characters remain secondary, their onstage presence presents a broader spectrum of female awareness of and engagement with war.

Initially conceived and produced as dance theatre, *The Intuition of Iphigenia* utilised dancers to physically enact the story through choreographed movement and actors to speak or sing the narrative text. A Bunraku puppet animated the tragic story of Agamemnon summoning his daughter and wife to the battlefield, a father willing to sacrifice his beloved daughter, a mother full of rage over this decision, a daughter believing the sacrifice of her life would honour her country. The Bunraku puppet served several functions. As a nod to Japanese culture, the puppet provided a sense of culture and history. The puppet character, Leda, was the spirit of the dead grandmother and it became a visual reminder that war is generational, affecting three generations of women within the House of Atreus. The decision to shift from dance theatre (the

⁵²⁹ Houston, 18.

first production) to opera (the second incarnation) was based on the playwright's and my desire to enlarge the scale and scope of the story's emotional size. Hasu Houston's text was written using strict Haiku and Tanka literary forms, offering heightened language that was at once formal and universal. Nathan Wang's Asian-themed musical composition was initially created to produce the necessary tempos and tonality required to dance the various elements of the story. Shifting to opera, however, allowed for a re-conception of the music and the text. As the opera version is still in development, it is hard to comment fully on the differences. The operatic form appears to be deepening the tragic consequences more fully with its aural and visual spectacle of music and a large chorus of singers.

In both versions of Hasu Houston's dramatic work, the story is squarely focused on the heroic journey of Iphigenia. Houston's text begins with Iphigenia entering and Leda as a Ningyō jōruri⁵³⁰ at her side, serving as her witness. In the opera, Iphigenia sings:

Fire hisses in the distance like a snake
I go toward it, my country's honour at stake
My life flickers before me in the haze
Upon many memories I gaze and reflect
To be a girl in a time of war
Of childhood there is nothing more
What can one do but save the nation-state
Strangers' honour as one's only embrace
This is my fate that I guide with my heart
From the start I knew what I had to do
I remember what led me to this place
I remember every face, every gaze
Come with me, spirit of my ancestor
For you must bear witness to my choice
You must remember me
Or all will be for naught
You must whisper in the wind.⁵³¹

Hasu Houston foregrounds female relationships only referred to in Euripides' tragedy. In doing

⁵³⁰ Ningyō jōruri is a form of traditional Japanese puppet theatre, founded in Osaka in 1684.

⁵³¹ Houston, *The Intuition of Iphigenia*, (2014): 1-2.

so, she is able to dramatise a range of trauma and its cathartic mediation. She presents the Spirit of Helen to more fully humanise her; gives voice to Leda, mother of Helen and Clytemnestra to underscore maternal bonds during war and to dramatise Iphigenia's romanticising of marriage in a scene with her grandmother, sisters and cousin. Watching the nubile Iphigenia imagine what marriage to Achilles might be like allows the audience to witness her physical longing for a man that will go unrequited. Hasu Houston situates war as transgenerational, with three generations of female perspective (Iphigenia, her mother Clytemnestra, and her mother's mother, Leda.) Leda recalls wars of 'a time before'⁵³² and at a time in the future, suggesting that war is omnipresent and will always affect women.

Euripides wrote his play from a distinctly male point of view. War is not romanticised, nor is his play focused primarily on the experience, thoughts, and pain of young Iphigenia. For Euripides, the character of Iphigenia must be read as a stand-in for male experience of war that demands brutal sacrifices of parents and their children. His version of Iphigenia gives voice to the primacy of patriotism:

Hear what has settled in my mind, mother, as I thought about this. I have made the decision to die. I want to do this gloriously, to reject all meanness of spirit. Only consider these things with me, mother, and you will see how nobly I am speaking. Greece in all its greatness now looks to me and no one else, on me depends the voyage of the ships across the sea and the overthrow of the Phrygians; and if the barbarians try to seize our women from happy Greece in the future, it lies with me to stop them by ensuring that they pay for the ruin of Helen whom Paris snatched away. Through my death I shall secure all this and my fame as the liberator of Greece will be forever blessed.⁵³³

Euripides's Iphigenia carries the nationalistic message of 'we must protect our country and the (implied weaker) female sex', a message clearly intended for an audience of the fifth century BCE men involved in various military campaigns. Soldiers who were to die a noble death on

⁵³² Houston, (2014): 25.

⁵³³ Euripides, *Iphigenia at Aulis*, trans. James Morwood, notes by Edith Hall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 125: lines 1374-1384.

behalf of Greece's honour would bring fame to their country and to their families. Fifth century BCE men may have been grieving the loss of friends during a particular military campaign, openly mourning the death(s) of fallen comrades while consoling themselves that these deaths were honourable. If deaths were perceived as honourable, a sense of betrayal would be minimised or non-existent; and without the experience of betrayal, there was less likelihood of emotional trauma resulting in PTSD.⁵³⁴

Hasu Houston's emotional surrogacy for cross-gender consumption (female characters used as stand-ins for male experience) is not her primary intention. Rather, gender-accurate surrogacy (female characters carrying female trauma for female audience members and male characters serving as stand-ins for male experiences) can clearly be read in her text and in the performance of her text. Instead of male characters symbolising and carrying war-trauma for the female spectator, a more likely reception of Hasu Houston's work will be male and female spectators drawing modern parallels to a range of contemporary female figures such as Malala Yousafzai from Pakistan's Swat Valley (whose public insistence that girls be allowed to get an education caused the Taliban to shoot her in the head in an attempt to silence her) and unnamed female suicide bombers. The theme of unprovoked killing during war (shown in Hasu Houston's interpretation of the torture and killing of Artemis's deer) might be read as a stand-in for such contemporary episodes as U.S. soldier Jeremy Morlock's alleged killing of three Afghan civilians 'for fun' and the repercussions of such an act.⁵³⁵ The reception of Hasu Houston's play

⁵³⁴ The concept of betrayal leaving warriors susceptible to emotional trauma resulting in PTSD references the work of Jonathan Shay and Laura Brown discussed in Chapter Three.

⁵³⁵ Jeremy Morlock was a member of the 3rd Platoon, Bravo Company, 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry Regiment 5th Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division and was based at FOB Ramrod at Maiwand, in the southern Kandahar Province of Afghanistan. He and five members of his platoon were charged and convicted of murdering three Afghan civilians. For more details on the crime, the trial, and the conviction, see: Barbara Starr (2010-09-10). "Army: 12 soldiers killed Afghans, mutilated corpses". CNN. Retrieved 2010-09-15; "Additional charges filed in Afghan civilians' deaths". Seattle Times. 2010-08-24;

may likely differ from Euripides in that contemporary male and female spectators receive Hasu Houston's version of the story on two significant levels: intellectually (required to understand contemporary references) and emotionally (to *experience* primary and secondary trauma carried by onstage characters that, in turn, experience *catharsis* through their dramatic journey) whereas a fifth century BCE male audience would have relied on the symbolism of gender for a cathartic experience. However, the lack of motivation upon which Aristotle comments may have triggered an ancient audience to question the high patriotic sentiments which Iphigenia voices. A final note about Hasu Houston's representation of trauma and its release onstage: her dramatic reimagining of the original myth is intended to prompt an audience *to think* about women in contemporary warzones and settings; women who are faced with the 'opportunity' to sacrifice their lives for their countries, their religions, their families etc. and to look at how and why they make the decision to take their own lives. Thinking is, of course, an intellectual activity, not necessarily restorative, healing or cathartic for the spectator. Hasu Houston appears primarily concerned with the representation of Iphigenia as a heroic character, one who must mediate her trauma (of betrayal by her father) by rationalising acceptance of, and indeed the choosing of, the sacrifice of her life.

CASE STUDY: Judith Thompson's *Elektra in Bosnia*

Judith Thompson, one of Canada's most acclaimed playwrights, is known for dramaturgy that investigates the subconscious elements of human experience through themes of trauma and conflict. Many of her well-known plays graphically depict humanity on the edge of survival with characters battered by poverty, ignorance and hopelessness.⁵³⁶ Her use of language relies on

Retrieved 2010-09-15; Hal Bernton (2010-09-08). "Stryker soldiers allegedly took corpses' fingers". Seattle Times. Retrieved 2010-09-17; and "Court Sentences 'Kill Team' Soldier to 24 Years in Prison". Der Spiegel. March 24, 2011.

⁵³⁶ Robert Nunn, "Spatial Metaphor in the Plays of Judith Thompson," *Theatre Research in Canada*.

metaphor and nuance just as her plots insist on tackling visceral and psychological traumas. Robert Nunn presents an interesting discussion of Thompson's work in his article "Spatial Metaphor in the Plays of Judith Thompson" in which he examines three of Thompson's most famous plays for their spatial metaphors of violence and trauma.⁵³⁷ Two of the three plays address Thompson's literary interest in the connection between poverty, domestic violence, and the destruction of the family unit. Thompson's first play, *The Crackwalker* (1980), explores two couples. The characters of Sandy and Joe fight, part, and reconcile; Alan and the mentally retarded Theresa have a baby, whom Alan strangles. The play ends with Sandy's recollection of the baby's funeral. In *White Biting Dog* (1984) Thompson explores the troubled relationship between Cape and his mother, Lomia when Cape comes home to help save his father's life. Thompson's later plays address issues of gender and war. *Lion in the Streets* (1990) follows violent and cruel impulses from one character to another, a route that the ghost of a young murdered girl uses to track down her killer. *Palace of the End* (2007) consists of three monologues voicing real-life stories of Iraq before and after the 2003 invasion of Iraq. The title references Saddam Hussein's former royal palace that housed torture chambers. Thompson's female protagonists trace their receipt of violence back to its source while carrying traumas of abandonment, betrayal and violence.

When Thompson was approached to participate as a playwright for WWP, she agreed, ready to artistically engage with the topic of war and its impact on women and girls. In initial discussions about the commission and what, specifically, she would write, she spoke of how families had become "petri dishes to culture human cells capable of breeding despair and

ruin.”⁵³⁸ As the WWP writing assignment was to adapt a Greek tragedy, myth, theme, or set of characters in order to view the female experience of war in modernity, Thompson read various Greek tragedies, deciding to draw upon two: Sophocles’ *Electra* and Aeschylus’ *Agamemnon*. In her initial reading of *Electra*, Thompson identified family fracture resulting in matricide as a story she wanted to contemporise. She noted Carl Jung’s ‘Electra Complex’ and was drawn to exploring a story carrying the potency of jealousy, revenge and matricide against a backdrop of war. In Greek mythology, Electra is princess of Argos where her father, Agamemnon is king and her mother, Clytemnestra, is queen. Family conflict abounds. Iphigenia, Electra's sister, is sacrificed to actively launch the Trojan War. Clytemnestra is enraged that Agamemnon is responsible for the death of two of her children: an infant from her first marriage to Tantalus (whom Agamemnon slaughters) and her beloved Iphigenia. When he returns from the Trojan War, he finds that his wife has taken Aegisthus as her lover. Clytemnestra and Aegisthus kill Agamemnon and his war prize and concubine, Cassandra. Electra is devastated and prays for her brother's return to avenge her father and claim the throne. Orestes returns to Argos when he comes of age. With the aid of Electra, Orestes kills both his mother and her lover and reclaims the throne of Argos.

Thompson imagined a play that would combine elements of *Agamemnon* (to dramatise Clytemnestra’s hatred of Agamemnon for his part in the death of Iphigenia and to witness Clytemnestra’s oversight of Agamemnon’s death) with major elements of Sophocles’ *Electra* (Electra’s rage at her mother’s ‘murder’ of her father and her jealousy of her sister Iphigenia; Electra’s desire to see her mother die). The resulting play, *Elektra in Bosnia*, depicts trans-

⁵³⁸ Thompson expressed this during her first comments to cast and director on May 21, 2012 in the rehearsal hall at Ryerson Theatre School in Toronto, Ontario. Her comments and play script remain unpublished, but her rehearsal and production scripts are archived in the Ryerson Theatre School, Ryerson University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

generational female carriers of *primary* trauma in the characters of Iphigenia, Elektra, Clytemnestra and Cassandra; and explores how this group of women uniquely carry and release their trauma.⁵³⁹ Thompson's Iphigenia is a war correspondent; Elektra a bitterly jealous sister desperate to be 'witnessed'; Clytemnestra a rage-filled wife seeking retribution; and Cassandra, a casualty of war forced to work in the sex trade, now using her body to traffic in secrets between warring factions of Muslims and Christians. Thompson's familial frame repositions the characters of Menelaus and Agamemnon as brothers pitted against each other in the Bosnian civil war. Agamemnon marries Clytemnestra (a Muslim) whose children (Iphigenia, Elektra, and Orestes) are half-Muslim. Menelaus is Christian and despises all Muslims; he daily orders the execution of 500 or more Muslim men. Battlefield tensions are fueled by the familial conflicts. Thompson's *Elektra* explores self-sacrifice during war again through the character of Iphigenia who is captured by Menelaus and his men; tortured, raped, mutilated, and murdered; her body dumped at her mother's front door. Thompson's Iphigenia is an assertive, risk-taking war journalist who secretly follows her father, General Agamemnon, onto the battlefield. When Agamemnon confronts Menelaus about a crucial land acquisition, demanding that Menelaus stop killing Agamemnon's men while the two brothers negotiate this land 'deal', Iphigenia reveals herself and becomes a willing pawn to be jockeyed between brothers:

MENELAUS: ...you need Sokolac because of the route to the sea, just as we do. I don't believe you are going to give it up just so your five thousand peasants can live out their pointless lives.

...

AGAMEMNON: What if..... I offer myself.... I will send my guards away, and I will be yours. If my men don't clear out of that town, you can chop me up into little pieces and then victory will be yours. Without a General, our side will fall apart, and you are certain of victory.

MENELAUS: You are offering yourself? Hah! This is rich; imagine, my men dining on the liver of the Great General Agamemnon...eating my brother's heart

⁵³⁹ Thompson chose to spell 'Elektra' with a 'k' instead of a 'c'.

whole. I don't know. If we have you, your army will come down on us, NATO will start bombing us; I don't think so. I don't think so. I don't know, Agamemnon, I am starting to re-think your offer. Give me a week

AGAMEMNON: A week! But the men! Promise you will not resume shooting the men.

MENELAUS: I can't really promise that. This is war.⁵⁴⁰

At this point, Iphigenia enters, filming the exchange. She insists that her uncle, Menelaus, take her as collateral, instead of her father. She accurately describes her value:

IPHIGENIA: ... Listen. General Menelaus – Uncle – I am more important to my father than his own life, he would never do anything to jeopardize my safety. If you have me you can be certain he will be true to his word. Take me.⁵⁴¹

While her father vehemently rejects this idea, Menelaus accepts her offer, remarking to his brother:

MENELAUS: I know your daughter is dearer to you than your own life. All the world knows about you and your family. It would be... an assurance.⁵⁴²

Iphigenia, understanding clearly the sacrifice she is making, derives agency from her proposed substitution (her life for that of her father):

IPHIGENIA: The world will say that I, a woman ended the killing. That a woman was heroic. That a woman sacrificed herself, one of the many thousands of brave women in this war. ... I have seen the footage of those boys being executed. Five hundred every day. Boys of twelve and thirteen, crying, praying. ...If our side falls then thousands more civilians will be massacred, thousands of young women raped to death...I'm doing this for my brothers and for my sisters.⁵⁴³

Thompson alters the theme of Iphigenia's sacrifice for national "honour" by presenting the character as an independent woman capable of standing up to her father. Thompson's Iphigenia chooses a dangerous career and willingly presents herself as collateral in a highly dangerous exchange. The character's decisions are reckless, yet they are hers alone. She is Christ-like in her determination to die the same horrific death as thousands of unnamed, faceless women in order

⁵⁴⁰ Judith Thompson, *Elektra in Bosnia*, 15-16.

⁵⁴¹ Thompson, 15.

⁵⁴² Thompson, 15.

⁵⁴³ Thompson, 16.

to bring attention to the other female victims of war. As a general's daughter who has been captured, she understands that by demanding Menelaus' men treat her in the same horrific fashion as the other women they have brutalised, she will die and her death will shine a light on the plight of female casualties of war.

Iphigenia's psychological trauma becomes a stand-in for contemporary female trauma during war. Thompson addresses several central aspects of trauma theory in *Elektra in Bosnia*. She investigates the relationship between individual (Elektra, Iphigenia, Clytemnestra, Cassandra, Agamemnon) and collective trauma (the Bosnians, the Muslims, the Christians, categories of female and male) and suggests that individual trauma is usually accompanied with a search for catharsis while collective trauma is more complex and harder to resolve.

Thompson's lines between perpetrator and victim are at times blurred, lending ambiguity to the trauma. An example is found in the character of Cassandra, presented as a sex worker confined to a run-down brothel, paid to have sex with high-ranking military officers. In one scene Cassandra is staged in a tender post-coital embrace with Agamemnon, speaking soft words of love and support. Directorially and textually the question is asked of the audience: does Cassandra care for Agamemnon or is the tenderness a ruse to extract information? In the following scene she is shown engaged in rough sex with Menelaus, attempting to extract information from him while being sodomised. In both scenes Cassandra successfully obtains critical information regarding military maneuvers and uses this information to facilitate peace. Is she the victim of both Agamemnon and Menelaus or in love with one of them? Is Cassandra traumatised by the sex and the rough and demeaning treatment of her body by the men? Or is her trauma minimised – even neutralised – by the agency gained in brokering peace? Thompson is intentionally ambiguous. Cassandra follows Agamemnon once he leaves the military, telling him

she loves him and that he is her only family. Agamemnon takes Cassandra with him but eventually rejects her, leaving her alone to fend for herself. Is Cassandra a victim of Stockholm syndrome, the psychological phenomenon that causes a hostage to form an emotional attachment and express positive feelings toward her captor, even to the point of defending and identifying with him? Does Thompson's Cassandra empathise with Agamemnon, mistaking his lack of abuse as kindness and love offered to her?⁵⁴⁴ Again, it is unclear and the psychological trauma is not mitigated.

Thompson's exploration of 'acting out and working through' is another theme found within trauma theory. This is demonstrated through the central character of Elektra, who repeatedly narrates traumatic events and then enters into the very scene she is describing. She must narrate to locate the trauma; she must enter the scene to experience the trauma; she must restate once again the traumatic event and in the restatement she is able to witness the trauma. The staging of these scenes involved setting up the action of the scene and having the actors freeze in tableau; Elektra then walking in and around the characters to narrate directly to the audience. Once finished with the narration, the action resumes. At the beginning of the play, Elektra is revealed on the battlefield. She has been shot and killed by Menelaus' men yet remains trapped in a liminal space, speaking directly to the audience, urging them to 'witness' her story. Her entrapment in this liminal space places Elektra in a Lacanian 'real' or a biblical 'purgatory' – she is unable to resolve the trauma without acknowledgment of the trauma by an external source. Elektra experiences stasis and repetition. The Furies, Thompson's contemporary nod to the retribution-seeking ancient Erinyes, tell her that in order to reach beyond the confines

⁵⁴⁴ Nathalie de Fabrique, Stephen J. Romano, Gregory M. Vecchi, Vincent B. Van Hasselt, "Understanding Stockholm Syndrome," *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin* (Law Communication Unit) 76, (July 2007): 7: 10-15; M. Namnyak; N. Tufon; R. Szekeley; M. Toal; S. Worboys; and E. L. Sampson. "Stockholm syndrome: Psychiatric diagnosis or urban myth?" in *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica* 117 (2007): (1): 4-11.

of her trauma to explore the possibilities of healing and catharsis she must convince an audience to witness her story. In Elektra's opening monologue, she says:

... the Furies plucked me from my hiding place and
Brought me here.
Because I will tell you a secret ...this is hell...

I am burning ... in hell
Because of who I am.
Because I am Elektra.
Because I killed my mother. Yes!
I murdered
My mother
The woman who gave me life
I can't believe it I can't comprehend it
I used to hide under her skirts
To wait for her all day at the window
To sing with her in church
To brush her hair for hours
I am in hell and I put myself here
I killed my own mother with these hands.
Yes this is my hell.
The Furies have decreed it.
They have a special hell for those who kill their mothers.
And for the sinful hatred of my sister
I am to suffer like my sister
to watch a massacre of the innocents
as she did
And then be tortured to death.
As she was
Every day
For eternity, forever
Unless, unless! I am somehow... redeemed.
Yes! There is a possibility of some kind of ...salvation here,
Of Mercy!
And that is why you are here!
The Furies say I can only be redeemed
by you
by your mercy
and you will only know if I deserve mercy
By hearing my story!
Will you listen to my story?
Will you be my witness?⁵⁴⁵

⁵⁴⁵ Thompson, 1-2.

The audience comes to understand that Elektra's *primary* trauma originates in what she perceives as maternal abandonment (Clytemnestra choosing Iphigenia over Elektra) resulting in an extreme jealousy of her sister. In the final moments of the play, Clytemnestra (who has been killed by Elektra) and Elektra (who has been killed by Menelaus' men) find each other and reconcile in the spirit world and through this reconciliation catharsis is achieved for both mother and daughter, prompting cathartic affect in the audience.

Trauma is represented through mourning and melancholia in the character of Clytemnestra, who simultaneously mourns the death of Iphigenia and bitterly blames Agamemnon for not protecting her. Staging her to wail, cry, and rage, I hoped to suggest mental anguish capable of consuming rational thoughts. Draped over the mutilated body of Iphigenia, I asked the actress portraying Clytemnestra to cry out:

Iphigenia. Iphigenia, Iphigenia
My dearest dearest child, blood of my blood, my heart, my soul
Where are your hands? Those hands that held my face, that moved like swooping
birds whenever you told me a story, and your feet? When you were a child you
walked on tippy-toe, your heels never touched the ground, your feet soft doves.
Where are they?
And where is the flush in your cheek?
The way your cheek flushed when you spoke of your love, and his bravery,
and when you showed me the necklace he gave you, with his name..
Are you in there anywhere, Iphigenia? Is this body just a reminder of you?
A symbol?
Or are you somewhereIn this slashed and broken body? Have you lingered
in there just for me, my angel? (*cries, sobs, holds her*)
My angel. I do feel, I feel your spirit, still lingering—your body just going cold, stiff.
I will stay with you until you are soft again, until your body begins to rot, so I
will know that your soul has flown - left the broken body; till I can see it in the air, like
Northern Lights, flashing and colouring the air

If it were not for your sister, your brother, I would join you my Iphigenia, I would
take you down to the lake and pull you in we would swim together till the lake-water
fills our lungs and we become eels together, lighting up the dark sea, intertwined forever

I will not bury you until he returns to see. For he must return, he will return to see
your grave, to pray for forgiveness at your grave; And then I will show him what

he has done. This: desecration.⁵⁴⁶

For the next few scenes, Clytemnestra carries Iphigenia's skeleton in her arms, expressing her inability to part from her daughter. The spectacle of a mother tenderly cradling and clutching the bones of her dead daughter suggests her lack of resilience to overcome a crippling emotional trauma. In order to acquire this power of resilience, Clytemnestra must confront her husband and oversee his death. Only then will her pain be released. Only then will she experience catharsis and obtain some semblance of inner peace.

Thompson modifies certain male characters in her version of the play and foregrounds the female involvement and experience of war trauma. This includes the reworking of Orestes, son of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, and his role within the Electra myth. In the original, Orestes collaborates with his sister Electra to seek revenge for the death of their father. Clytemnestra dies by Orestes' hand.⁵⁴⁷ In Thompson's version it is Elektra who commits matricide, instigating and carrying the theme of vengeance by drowning her mother. Orestes is portrayed as a weak and ineffective younger brother, who, upon discovering that his mother is dead, screams:

ORESTES: You are a murderer Elektra!

ELEKTRA: I am a murderer, Orestes.

ORESTES: You will hang for this. And I will cheer.⁵⁴⁸

It is obvious to the audience that Orestes does not possess the agency required to follow through on this threat. He will not see Elektra hang nor will he cheer at her death.

Thompson queries the role of pain and trauma in war between siblings and between children and their parents. Both brother and sister are carriers of primary trauma; and Thompson underscores gender differences through Orestes and Elektra's response to their trauma. Elektra

⁵⁴⁶ Thompson, 23-24.

⁵⁴⁷ Sophocles, *Antigone, Oedipus the King, and Electra*, trans. H.D.F. Kitto (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 150-151: lines 1430-1471.

⁵⁴⁸ Thompson, 36.

releases her trauma through the act of matricide; Orestes is consumed by the trauma of his parents' deaths and finds no release. Iphigenia, Cassandra, Elektra and Clytemnestra carry *primary* trauma as victims of war who experience loss of family and homeland. Clytemnestra is a mother fearful for both of her daughters. Her distress is exacerbated as she confronts the death of Iphigenia. Agamemnon's prior protection of family is now compromised, leaving Clytemnestra vulnerable, open to assault, and angry. Cassandra exists in a place of contradiction: captured and turned into a sex slave, she is forced to have sex with the men whose armies killed her family and enslaved her; she may – or may not – have fallen in love with one of the men responsible, General Agamemnon. *Primary* trauma borne of rape as an instrument of torture and domination is represented through the characters of Iphigenia and Cassandra. Iphigenia is brutally raped and tortured by Menelaus' men who videotape the horrific encounter and deliver the videotape along with Iphigenia's body to Clytemnestra's front- door. Cassandra is trapped in a brothel, repeatedly raped by high-ranking generals. Retribution is a theme carried by Elektra, who murders her mother, and by Clytemnestra, who does nothing to prevent the death of Agamemnon.

Major directorial challenges included how best to represent the scale of scope of Thompson's play (a sweeping, almost cinematic story structured in short episodic scenes spanning years) with the intimacy and brutality of familial rage; how to portray brutal rape onstage so that the focus of the event is on a character's *experience* at the receipt of the trauma and not on the act of violence itself; and how best to stage a character's agency in extracting information during violence. In a play with many female deaths (Elektra, Iphigenia, Clytemnestra) and a handful of male deaths (the Muslim men, Agamemnon), it was necessary to create a stylistic conceit that enabled an audience to remain focused on the *reasons* for the

occurrence of traumatic events and therefore be able to contextualise the brutal acts. With so many scenes portraying violence and the emotional aftermath of such violence, the staging needed to suggest the mounting inevitability of war's impact on this family. The emotional content required strict shaping so that climactic moments remained part of the rising action of the story. Thompson expressed a desire to see the production feel 'ancient yet modern' and initially requested a chorus of fifteen furies, her nod to an ancient Greek chorus. Eventually, a chorus of three older furies, similar in function to Shakespeare's witches in *Macbeth*, was established.

The cathartic effect of Thompson's script in performance during the WWP tour was palpable. Female spectators witnessing the betrayal of husband to wife (sacrificing Iphigenia in order to launch the Trojan War) and Clytemnestra's pain and rage at the receipt of her daughter's corpse provoked crying and moaning in the audience. Tears, quiet (and not so quiet) sobs, runny noses, and even laughter occurred from some of the Clytemnestra's extreme acts such as carrying the skeleton of Iphigenia around or cursing Agamemnon as he writhed in pain on the floor, dying of a heart attack. Perhaps the most cathartic moment for the audience was in the final and unspoken moments of the play when mother and daughter found each other in the spirit world, forgave each other, embraced, and resolved their differences. The emotional response of female spectators in a mixed-sex audience demonstrated cathartic affect during each performance of Thompson's play. As discussed in Chapter Three, Freud and Breuer's definition of catharsis as a reflex that is unlearned, involuntary, instinctive – such as in the case of crying or laughing was only part of the cathartic equation, according to Scheff who argues that these unlearned, involuntary responses must be capable of resolving major emotional tensions such as “grief, fear, anger, and embarrassment.”⁵⁴⁹ Tears, moans, sobs from an audience in response to a play can be read as a response of pity; yet, if we are to believe Scheff's interpretation of

⁵⁴⁹ Thompson, 36.

catharsis, if these affects are connected to a *need for a release of pain* then the emotional purging has the potential for catharsis. Scheff offers four primary categories of basic distressful emotions: grief, fear, anger, and boredom. Using these categories, catharsis is the distinction between the experience of, and the display of, distressful emotions and the discharge of emotions. For audiences watching *Elektra in Bosnia*, the onstage representation of emotional distress in one of three of the four categories (grief, fear, anger) and the accompanying relevant discharge of emotion by both actors and their audience, constitute a complete cathartic experience.

Conclusion

The phenomenon of trauma and its diverse manifestations can be seen in all three plays constituting the WWP trilogy. The elements that challenge the aporias of trauma, sometimes presented as singular irresolvable internal contradictions (seen within the characters of Elektra and Clytemnestra), or logical disjunctions within the text (presented in the character of Cassandra – is she a victim or is she a hero?) that include doubt (what is ‘true’; what is ‘false’), strength (agency repelling trauma), and catharsis. The three artistic performances commissioned as part of WWP were designed to investigate the experience of women in war through a spectrum of trauma and gender patterns. All three playwrights looked carefully at the complex and important roles performed by women during modern wars including combatants, mothers, wives, and victims of psychological and physical abuse. All three plays were measured to assess the potential for behavioural change through the use of paper questionnaires before and after the performances of the WWP trilogy that occurred in Hydra, Delphi, Athens, and Elefsina, Greece.⁵⁵⁰ The context in which these three plays were performed was as follows: in Hydra, the

⁵⁵⁰ The questionnaires were designed by Candice Monson and Anne Wagner in consultation with this researcher. The questionnaires may be viewed in Appendix E.

plays occurred three nights running at the Hydrama Theatre as evening performances open to the general public. While they were produced in conjunction with the First International Women & War Conference, the performances were offered as entertainment with serious themes. In Delphi the performances were again open to the general public and were not offered in connection with an academic conference. In Elefsina the performances occurred as part of the Aeschylia Festival, again open to the general public and not offered in conjunction with an academic conference. In Athens, the three performances occurred at the Athens University Museum at the Acropolis and were offered in partnership with the University of Athens, Faculty of English. There were academic talks offered to interested audience members pre-show and an opportunity to view the Women & War Photo Exhibition on display in the gallery. On balance, the creative experiment lay primarily in creating the plays, rather than in measuring the audience response, because we did not have an audience entirely of war victims, although in Hydra and in Elefsina there were a handful of spectators that self-identified as war veterans and a number of others that indicated they had close family or friends who had served or were serving in the military. The questionnaires designed to measure audience behaviours were central to the experiment of measuring behaviour change and awareness, but not in measuring catharsis or emotional response to the witnessing of the plays. Measurement tools are still being developed to examine catharsis and the effective representation of trauma onstage in live performance.

During WWP in Greece, audience members attended one or more of the three separate and fully produced dramas. Prior to a performance, audience members were handed questionnaires and asked to fill them out before seeing the performance. Immediately following the performance, audience members were asked to fill out a second paper-based questionnaire to determine their views on women and war, their knowledge regarding trauma-related sequelae

and the extent to which they believed trauma-related symptoms are stigmatised. This questionnaire was used to assess intentionality to change any specific behaviour related to themes of war, remembrance, or trauma, changes in knowledge, and changes in attitude. The research findings were encouraging. A total of 99 participants completed the English-language survey questionnaire before and after a performance of one of the plays in Greece. The specific performances surveyed took place in July 2012, and all audience members were invited to participate. Participants' questionnaires were de-identified and linked only through a participant ID. Written consent from each participant was obtained and Ryerson University's Research Ethics Board approved the study. While participants did not indicate that the performances changed their beliefs regarding war, their response to the performances in terms of increased awareness and education regarding the effects of war was positive. The vast majority of participants (77.8%) had reported prior to the performances that they would have encouraged a loved one affected by war to seek treatment if they believed they had suffered negative consequence, and this percentage remained relatively stable post-performance. Notably, 58.6% of participants reported that the performance had helped increase their understanding of military problems and 65.6% of the sample reported that it had increased their understanding of who is affected by war. Additionally, 67.7% of the sample reported that the performance had increased their understanding of how women are affected by war.

WWP presented a trilogy of live, Greek-themed performances capable of providing various cultural, thematic and artistic modes of examining the female experience in and around war. The three writers and the multinational professional director, choreographer, designers, and actors were selected to represent their respective countries and cultural experiences. Accompanying the WWP was a new exhibition of seventy black and white photographs from the

renowned Black Star Collection housed in the Ryerson Image Centre at Ryerson University.⁵⁵¹

The entire photojournalistic images that constitute the Black Star Collection – now numbering 291,049 prints - form the core of the Black Star agency's operations in New York between 1935 and the 1990s. This agency became a major supplier of photographs to such journalistic magazines as *Life* and numerous other American publications of the day. The entire Black Star Collection tells the story of the unfolding of the 20th century, including global coverage of major political events, military conflicts, personalities, cultural milestones, and singular events of interest from the perspective of hundreds of photographers working for the daily and the weekly press. The images within the WWP exhibition were taken between 1935 to the early 1990s and provide a global look at the roles women have held during war – as care giver, demonstrator, mother, wife, prostitute, prisoner of war, refugee, soldier, victim, worker, and child. Audience members were offered the opportunity to view the exhibition either before or after a performance to provide a global context for the types of categories women have held during war as well as to possibly allow for reflection once they had seen the performance. 'The Women & War Photographic Exhibition' toured Greece in tandem with the WWP trilogy serving as well to encourage international research and collaboration.

As discussed and as measured in performance, original female characters found within the ancient Greek tragedies have served to elucidate patterns of modern female activity in and around war. The new data generated by WWP suggests that the recovery process for war-related PTSD may be assisted by the restorative power of theatre, but further measurement is necessary. Interacting with classical Greek female characters found within the canon of modern adaptations

⁵⁵¹ For more information on The Black Star Collection, see Ryerson Image Centre, Ryerson University, <http://www.ryerson.ca/ric/>. For more information about The Women & War Photo Exhibition, see Appendix F.

of the ancient tragedies can be an effective means of interrogating gender, war and conflict-related trauma. The consequences of trauma, loss, incapacity, shock and grief appear to yield to the power of poetry, story, and dramatic text—all narrative forms intended to enlarge an understanding of the human condition. With the WWP trilogy, theatre performance was seen responding directly to the complexity, diversity and creativity of the new knowledge paradigm of the twenty-first century by bringing together art and science in a bold and transformational partnership. Artistic, academic, public and private sectors using theatre to investigate women, war, gender, and mental health worked together to create new and meaningful inter-disciplinary work. The first three plays commissioned for the WWP have now been performed before more than four thousand people. Hasu Houston's opera version of *The Intuition of Iphigenia* has received a 2014 workshop at the LA Opera and has a planned Los Angeles premiere in 2016; Thompson's *Elektra in Bosnia* is slated to receive its Canadian premiere in Toronto in 2015. Wertenbaker's *Our Ajax* received its London premiere in Fall 2013.

One of the most significant influences on my decision to form the WWP was American psychiatrist Jonathan Shay who, in the 1990s, articulated a connection between the veterans of the fifth century BCE and the deployed and returning veterans of the twentieth and twenty-first century wars. By arguing that the poetry of Homer could provide a therapeutic vocabulary with medical value to effectively treat soldiers suffering war-induced psychic trauma, researchers, therapists, counsellors, clergy and former veterans began to draw on the ancient Greek literature to create personal narratives with their patients in order to treat war-induced trauma. Taking Shay's initial work a step further, the WWP plays and their representations of female trauma within modern or iconographic wars hope to provide cultural and political guideposts recognisable to modern audiences. This representation offers global, multinational, multicultural,

and trans-generational themes that yield potent examinations of female trauma within twenty-first century war. The cathartic elements of all three plays within the WWP trilogy rely heavily on gender and symbolism, transcending the use of emotional surrogacy for cross-gender consumption to gender-true and cross-gender reversals.

Chapter Eight: Looking To The Future...

Women don't feel as men do about war. They are the mothers of the race. Men think of the economic results, women think of the grief and pain. - ⁵⁵²

War
It ain't nothing but a heartbreaker
War
Friend only to the undertaker
Peace, love and understanding
Tell me, is there no place for them today?
They say we must fight to keep our freedom
But Lord knows there's got to be a better way
War
What is it good for?
Absolutely nothing.
Say it again
War
What is it good for?
Absolutely nothin' ⁵⁵³

In a final postscript to this thesis I have found myself at the centre of an extraordinary confluence of research and artistic practice. In August 2014, I directed a new production of Euripides' *Suppliant Women* that I adapted and presented at Hydrama Theatre in Greece with actors from Finland, Sweden, England, Denmark, Holland, Spain, America, Ireland, and Israel.⁵⁵⁴ The female actor from Israel cried every day in rehearsal, worried about her four children (one of whom was fighting in the 2014 conflict between Hamas and Israel.) When she spoke with her family on the phone, she could hear the sound of heavy artillery in the background as her husband and children rushed to the nearest bomb shelter. One night after

⁵⁵² Aletta Jacobs (1851-1929) was Holland's first female doctor and founder of the Dutch suffrage movement. H. Feinberg, "Aletta Henrietta Jacobs 1854 – 1929," *Jewish Women's Archive*, online at: <http://jwa.org>.

⁵⁵³ From the song "War" written by Norman Whitfield and Barrett Strong for the Motown label in 1969. Edwin Starr was the vocalist on the rereleased single of the song and "War" became the number-one hit on the *Billboard* Hot 100 chart in 1970. It remains one of the most popular protest songs ever recorded.

⁵⁵⁴ Hydrama Theatre & Arts Centre, Hydra, Greece, Producing Artistic Director: Corinna Seeds. www.hydrama.gr.

rehearsal, over dinner, she confided that at the age of nineteen she had been in the Israeli army participating in the first Lebanon war. Most of her battalion had been killed in an attack but she escaped unharmed. Her daily schedule included going to the hospital to visit the few who had survived, and going to the funerals of those who had perished. Her boyfriend had been the first soldier to be killed. For her it was the beginning of a psychological trauma that continues to this day. She experienced survivor's guilt. When a new commanding officer was brought in, he used his position of power to take advantage of her. He abused her yet rather than turn him in, she found herself justifying his actions, questioning if it was his experience of his war that caused him to take advantage of her. She told herself "tomorrow is unknown and perhaps he wants to take as much from life today as possible." At the time, she was too shocked to stop him or to tell anyone. So she told no one. She eventually left the army and was diagnosed with PTSD. One of the most terrifying results of her PTSD was giving birth to her oldest son some years later. She and her husband were living in a Kibbutz when the second Lebanon war broke out. She could hear helicopters flying overhead, close to her home. Her husband was required, as were all the men of the Kibbutz, to protect their home; she was expected to stay at home with the other women. Hearing the helicopters overhead caused her to flash back to the first Lebanon war, and recall in vivid detail when and how her unit had been killed. She began to panic and this caused her labour to begin. She delivered her baby early. When her son was six weeks old, she took him with her to the dentist. The siren alerting residents to incoming missiles began to sound. Again, experiencing a severe PTSD panic reaction, she lay down on top of her infant in the middle of the street to protect him. The rocket landed close by but missed them both. Now, thirty years later, she has travelled to Greece to act in a Greek tragedy about foreign mothers trying desperately to recover the bodies of their sons killed in battle. Three days into rehearsal, she

received word that one of her high school students, a young man who was like a son to her, had been killed in a bomb attack. Over dinner, and knowing my topic of research, she asked me if there was a ‘cure’ for PTSD. She questioned whether she would be able to make it through the performance without breaking down. I told her: “your voice is critical... The world must hear your story. You must stay.” She did stay and she did perform. She told me afterwards that she experienced ‘a catharsis,’ describing the experience as healing and restorative.

Throughout this thesis I have set out to investigate the question of whether or not classical Greek drama can serve as an effective medium through which to interrogate gender, war, and conflict-related trauma. By examining the critical roles trauma and catharsis have played in onstage representations of trauma carried by female characters in ancient Greek tragedy, and by reviewing trauma studies and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) therapies, I have conducted research at the intersection of theatre practice, psychotherapy, war history, and critical work on trauma and literary theory – a somewhat new frontier. I have demonstrated that the ancient plays yield a rich array of female characters that travel a treacherous road full of psychosocial trials and tribulations, betrayals and assaults. Female literary constructions experience, navigate, and with any luck, release trauma through onstage actions of emotional processing (naming the trauma), retribution, and forgiveness. Characters may emerge with a deeper sense of self or alternatively, be annihilated as a result of their trauma. The potent correlation between catharsis and trauma is, I conclude, clearly evident within Greek tragedy. Many of the fifth century BCE tragedies and their modern counterparts feature traumatised female characters carrying symbolic representations of trauma such as the loss of a loved one, a fallen leader, prisoner of war, and even self-sacrifice. Contemporary theatre makers (playwrights, directors) have appropriated these themes, characters, and myths to theatricalise

contemporary war experiences. I submit that there remains a corollary between ancient and modern reception of these themes. In the fifth century BCE female characters serving the role of emotional surrogates provided the necessary distance between actual wounds and the theatrical enactment of trauma and traumatic events. In contemporary productions of the ancient tragedies, time and setting often assist with such aesthetic distancing. It is no longer uncommon to discover therapists treating PTSD with elements of Greek themes, poems, and plays in their work with patients. Artists, therapists, medical researchers, and scholars from various disciplines have begun working together to find new approaches to understanding and utilising symbolic surrogacy, the role of narrative in treatment, and ‘situational recognition’.

The Women and War Project

From 2011 – 2014 researchers, scholars and theatre artists from ten countries participated in the *Women & War Project*, a study designed to investigate the female experience of war using modernised Greek tragedy in performance as a means of inciting public discourse and measuring audience behaviours. What was ultimately successful in this three-year study was the engagement of social scientists, trauma specialists, female military members, humanities scholars and theatre artists in a project that worked across discipline and across geography to explore and more deeply understand the role of the female in and around war in the twenty-first century. Each team member brought her or his own expertise and perspective to the research. During the three years, it became apparent that much of the discipline-specific vocabulary often required clarification to team members outside of the particular discipline. It became clear that social scientists rarely had the opportunity discuss their research with theatre scholars; that women in the military (mental health researchers and medical staff) had little opportunity to discuss their research findings with non-military individuals or groups; and that creative artists –

playwrights, directors, choreographers, composers, actors, dancers, and designers – usually did not engage in dialogues in rehearsal halls, before and after performances, and at conferences with non-artists. It was noted that each ‘team’ (mental health researchers; social scientists; military; humanities scholars; and artists) had to learn to communicate their ideas to members of the other research constituencies. It was fascinating and at times frustrating to find and apply suitable terminology to describe research approaches, methodologies, and findings. The three commissioned theatrical pieces were successful in generating discussion about the role(s) of women in contemporary war by providing a common language understood by all team members: the language of performance.

Perhaps the least developed element of WWP was the attempt to measure audience response and behaviour. The measurement tool (a paper survey) given out to all audience members before and after the performances in Greece was written in English, an obvious oversight with large consequences: only those audience members that spoke and read English could participate. Also, the survey did not attempt to capture affective responses to the performances such as tears, sobs, moans, or even laughter – all responses that could have signified catharsis. Those of us in the audience visually and aurally *noted* tears, sobs and strong emotional engagement to Thompson’s play, *Elektra in Bosnia* in Hydra and Athens; and to Weternbaker’s *Ajax in Afghanistan* in Hydra and Elefsina, but unfortunately these responses were not captured on paper. No emotional affect was noted in response to *The Intuition of Iphigenia*.⁵⁵⁵ What the survey did capture was an *intention to change* behaviours such as reading certain articles and books or more actively engaging in conversations about the themes addressed in the performances. The paper survey also captured data on whether or not audience members

⁵⁵⁵ Hasu Houston and I are shifting the genre of *The Intuition of Iphigenia* from dance/theatre to opera to prompt a deeper emotional response and audience engagement to her piece. It has yet to be performed as an opera.

were sensitised to the issue of PTSD by viewing the performances, addressing the question of whether or not these performances effectively represented war trauma and if so whether the ‘situational recognition’ might assist in de-stigmatising and assisting with the healing of certain trauma. While these elements were and are important, the measurement tool only partially captured data to support or dismiss the question of whether or not Greek tragedy serves as an effective medium through which to interrogate gender, war, and conflict-related trauma; and it did not capture data on whether or not Greek drama lends itself to cathartic efficacy.⁵⁵⁶

Also not entirely successful was the integration of the *Women & War Photo Exhibition* (WWPE) within the other elements of the WWP. Much more could have been done to encourage international research and collaboration through the use of this exhibition. The images used within the WWPE were taken between 1935 to the early 1990s and provide a global look at the roles women have held during war – as care giver, demonstrator, mother/wife, prostitute, prisoner of war, refugee, soldier, victim, worker, and child.⁵⁵⁷ Audience members in Hydra and in Athens were offered an opportunity to view the images in a gallery near the performance area, but there was little in the way of explanation or discussion about the relevance of these images to the overall WWP. Moving forward, there is an opportunity to expand the exhibit itself and to maximise its potential as an effective research tool.

The Women and War Project 2

In order to continue this research and capture a new generation of data, I have designed a five-year extension of WWP that I have titled: *The Women & War Project Phase Two* (WWP2).

⁵⁵⁶ See Appendix E for the list of questions on the survey and for the data results.

⁵⁵⁷ Due to copyright restrictions on the individual photographs, the *Women & War Photo Exhibition* is held in a private archive in the Ryerson Theatre School library (in print form) and digitally in the Ryerson Image Centre’s permanent Black Star Collection at Ryerson University, Toronto.

This second phase of the research will mobilise theatre and digital arts with the aim of increasing knowledge of the social impact on women and girls in societies affected by war. By supporting new approaches to research on war-related trauma and its effects on women, the extended WWP2 hopes to transcend the capacity of any single scholar or discipline. I suggest that new and innovative research and knowledge are generated from the joint work of scholars in theatre studies, photography and film, media studies, literature, Classics, psychology, neuroscience, and social work. By providing a high-quality research training experience for students and postdoctoral fellows in devised and verbatim theatre, narrative collection, and innovative conceptualisation of ancient Greek themes, myths and plays and by mobilising research knowledge to and from academic and non-academic audiences to help shape future research on gender and war, the experiences of women in and around war will become as widely discussed, studied, and understood as those of men. Recognising the contemporary relevance of ancient Greek insights perceiving catharsis as a catalyst for communal health, and acknowledging the power of telling one's story, the WWP2 will set about to develop approaches to understanding and discussing gendered war trauma through arts-related narrative creation, performance, and theatrical assessment. The WWP2 contains specific objectives to collect narratives and commission scripted plays to create verbatim and theme-based theatrical performances (plays, operas, dance). Also, researchers will work together to develop new and more effective measurement tools to assess the impact of live theatrical productions of Greek tragedies on spectator catharsis as well as the current perceptions, attitudes and behaviours pertaining to gender and war. Understanding the therapeutic potential of Greek tragedy with special reference to the female experience is one of the central aims of this project.

The international composition of the research team may help to identify both gender-based differences and commonalities. In certain countries, theatrical performance already exists as a means of mapping a history of violence and war. For example in India, Kuljeet Singh has written and directed plays for WWP partner Atelier Theatre Company including *Goodbye Blue Sky*, (an examination of the victimisation of women during the partition of 1947 to 1984 when Indira Gandhi was killed, leading to the massacre of Sikhs) and *SAKINA: Rehearsing Manto in the Times of Gang Rape* (about the 2012 gang rape in Delhi). Atelier's work is performed in schools, colleges, and in street festivals. Atelier hopes to see female writers tackle female subject matter, giving a stronger and more authentic voice to the female experience in India and it is for this reason they desire to serve as a research partner in WWP2. In Kabul, Afghanistan 'Mirman Baheer', a secret women's literary society, has numerous (and anonymous) female members writing about their lives and their dreams for the future. Members risk death to participate, yet it is in the act of writing and reading their poems aloud that social change is occurring for these women. I hope to present their work outside of Afghanistan and bring attention to these women. Their voices must be heard and understood. Similar to the 2014 kidnapping of the almost 300 Nigerian schoolgirls by the Islamist militant group Boko Haram – girls who simply wanted to take their school exams – it is dangerous for the female voice to be heard in certain countries. When they dare to get an education, these women and girls are vulnerable to horrific atrocities. In other countries such as Canada and the USA, there is an interest in developing creative tools (plays, music, dance) to assist the teaching of female cadets, officers, active duty personnel, instructors, veterans, and family members about the female experience of the military and of war, thereby offering an open forum to discuss war-related trauma, fears, and concerns. In Scotland, The University of Edinburgh's Institute of Advanced Studies in Humanities (IASH)

has identified ‘conversations’ between people as an historical and key mechanism for the generation of inquiry that will lead to enlightenment. Both IASH and WWP2 acknowledge that in the Greco-Roman and Indian classical traditions instruction, persuasion and entertainment were accomplished through dialogue and that ways of societal thinking and learning have historically been shaped by dialogue. In Greece, the University of Athens and Hydrama Theatre Centre seek an opportunity to develop and disseminate creative content and live performance of ancient Greek themes on modern conceptualisations of war. In Israel, the USA and Canada, there is a stated interest in developing a new generation of assessment tools for measuring the impact of dramatic narrative, and live and telematic performance on the female experience of primary and secondary trauma.

As discussed throughout this thesis, the psycho-emotional experience of theatre-induced catharsis is not confined to the theatre spectator. It can be experienced by the patient/performer as in ‘psychodrama’ and ‘dramatherapy’ and by actor/audience via the ‘spectator’ and situations that rely on viewing a ‘performance’ capable of evoking a cathartic and interactive response. Existing catharsis theories must be re-conceptualised within the twenty-first century to deliver benefits and insights in support of community healing, social development and gender empowerment in the face of war. Modern theatre as an agent for social change and community health has evolved from Augusto Boal’s “Theatre of the Oppressed” to “Bond Street Theatre for Social Development” and David Diamond’s “Theatre for Living” to new forms of theatrical performance found in Bryan Doerries’ “Theater of War” which uses theatre to explore war trauma with veterans and active duty personnel in the USA. Poetry as a form of gender expression and political resistance is occurring today in Afghanistan and Egypt. What makes the WWP2 unique is its emphasis on the female experience of war and the value proposition that

war's impact on women *can and must* be spoken about, analysed and shared. The female experience, which has hitherto been muted – even silenced in certain instances – must now be given voice and communicated.

Issues of gender and war are critical in all nations' development but especially relevant in countries that have experienced war or have troops returning from active combat. Facilitating multidirectional flow and accessibility of social sciences and humanities knowledge among researchers and non-academic consumers will make research networks and tools more accessible. Assessment methodologies such as 'transportation theory' and the theory of a 'transparent mode of reception' will serve as starting points to evaluate the impact war narratives on an individual's beliefs and attitudes, mental involvement, emotional involvement, and attention⁵⁵⁸ and assist with identifying similarities and differences in audience responses to texts encountered within multiple social and cultural contexts in order to formulate more accurate and defensible comparisons and generalisations about the nature of reception of war-themed dramaturgy.⁵⁵⁹ Capturing, performing, and archiving first-person female accounts of war's impact on women will help provide resources useful to women globally and will sustain and preserve a universal collection of knowledge and creativity for future generations. During the

⁵⁵⁸ Carolyn Michelle provides a helpful synthesis of existing models of reception and findings from audience research in her paper, "Modes of Reception: A Consolidated Analytical Framework" accessed at: (<http://researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz>). Her paper outlines a "conceptual framework for the (meta)analysis of existing and new reception data which delineates four primary modes of viewer interpretation and response: *Transparent, referential, mediated, and discursive*." See also: Carla Barbieri and Edward Mahoney, "Cultural tourism behaviour and preferences among the live performing arts audience: an application of the univorous-omnivorous framework," *International Journal of Tourism Research* 12, no. 5 (2010): 481-496; and Eleonora Belfiore and Oliver Bennett, "Beyond the "Toolkit Approach: arts impact evaluation research and the realities of cultural policy making," *Journal for cultural research* 14, no. 2 (2010): 121-142.

⁵⁵⁹ Tuck Wah Leong and Peter Wright, "Understanding 'tingle' in opera performances," *Proceedings of the 25th Australian Computer-Human Interaction Conference: Augmentation, Application, Innovation, Collaboration*, 43-52, ACM, 2013; and Celine Latulipe, Erin A. Carroll and Danielle Lottridge, "Love, hate, arousal and engagement: exploring audience responses to performing arts," *Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems*, 1845-1854, ACM, 2011.

initial three-year WWP study, there was a focus on Greek theatre to represent or elucidate female trauma. At the conclusion of WWP and now at the beginning stages of WWP2, I argue strongly that the theatre is a viable arena in which to do such work with exceptional force and clarity.

Therapeutic theatre and public performance: are they different or one and the same?

With the publication of Jonathan Shay's books, *Achilles in Vietnam* in 1995 and *Odysseus in America* in 1997, psychological trauma caused by exposure to combat and the act of homecoming in the fifth century BCE began to be compared with similar events in the twentieth century.⁵⁶⁰ In Shay's first book the soldiers of Homer's *Iliad* were compared with Vietnam veterans suffering from PTSD while in his second book Shay compared the return home of troops in both centuries after battle. Shay's books altered the landscape of mental health treatment for PTSD and connected diverse disciplines such as medical sciences with the social sciences and the humanities in striking new ways. Mental health professionals began to explore the application of ancient Greek poetry in a range of treatment therapies and settings.⁵⁶¹ The aftermath of the Vietnam War presented an opportunity for a re-evaluation of trauma within the medical lexicon. Therapists and other medical professionals began to shift their focus onto such things as rape, domestic violence, and spousal and stranger sexual abuse.⁵⁶² Shay's conjoining of Homer's soldiers with Vietnam veterans suffering the symptoms of PTSD assisted in the trajectory of codifying PTSD as a clinical diagnosis. The WWP2 is not intended to be merely a drama therapy program. It is broader in scope. Overall, the research and creative activity is intended to provoke much needed discussions about war and trauma and to take theatre back to

⁵⁶⁰ Jonathan Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character* (New York: Scribner, 1994); Jonathan Shay, *Odysseus in America: Combat Trauma and the Trials of Homecoming* (New York: Scribner, 1997).

⁵⁶¹ See Appendix B for a list of mental health researchers utilising poetry, text, and narrative engagement in a range of treatment options for psychological trauma.

⁵⁶² Catherine Silverstone. *Shakespeare, Trauma and Contemporary Performance* (New York: Routledge, 2011).

its original role as an adjunct for emotional healing. Laughing, crying, sobbing, and releasing trauma while also understanding the causes of such affect will promote community health and assist with individual mental health. Greek theatre offers a unique resource for dealing with primary and secondary traumas in large measure because it is centred on female characters and thus allows male spectators to get in touch with their female side and open themselves to catharsis while also providing role models for contemporary female spectators. Greek theatre is a flexible resource because it helps us deal with a world where gender roles are changing. Women in the audience can view characters carrying similar traumas and can relate to their pain.

The vision inspired by Shay is to create a therapeutic theatre that is operated within a very different performance environment. In some instances, this theatre will occur for patient spectators in facilities treating trauma (hospitals, community centres, Veteran Affairs); in other instances the creative work will be performed in schools and community centres where the female voice has been silenced, with the performance serving to animate and give voice to her trauma. Scenes from ancient and modernised Greek tragedies will be performed for female and male cadets in training, providing an opportunity to discuss the themes carried in the plays. In other instances, the WWP2 performances will occur in professional theatres before a general public. When this happens it is my intention to capture data on cathartic potential and cathartic affect for the spectator using a new generation of measurement instruments. In the context of professional productions, a different set of performance objectives will be in place. No longer will the performance be viewed as the end result of weeks of a rehearsal process. The performance will become the mid-way point; audience measurement will occur immediately after a performance and again several months after the performance for those that voluntarily

participate in the study.⁵⁶³

Looking ahead...

As I have demonstrated throughout this thesis, trauma presents in ways that are complex and unique. It can be contained in what Lacan refers to as ‘the real’; expressed through what Freud terms ‘affect’; and identified as either *primary* (Street) or *secondary* (Dekel). It may be experienced within or upon an individual (Lacan; Irigaray). A shift in identity may occur in a trauma victim following an extreme instance of trauma (Shay; Brown). She may experience ‘identity fracture’ in response to the traumatic event, seeing herself possessing a before-and-after ‘identity’ (Monson; Brown; Freyd; Birrell). The trauma ‘trigger’ may be sexual or physical assault, psychological abuse, or actual physical loss and be experienced by the victim as a profound sense of betrayal, leaving her unable to fully grasp and process the trauma (Shay; Brown; Street; Dekel). This inability to process and release trauma can result in survivor guilt and mental health issues such as PTSD that can cause episodes of intrusive memories or flashbacks that replay sections, over and over, of the initial traumatic event (Monson). The victim may perceive this event as a loss of autonomy, and experience a drop in self-esteem, a sense of hopelessness, shame, and as a result possess a higher risk of suicide (Street). Sophocles’ *Ajax* offers a stark and arguably accurate portrayal of a general (Ajax) suffering with PTSD. It is one of the rare instances in ancient tragedy where a character, so distressed by his mental state, commits suicide, leaving behind his body for other characters to engage with emotionally and intellectually. Sophocles presents both primary and secondary trauma through the character of Tecmessa. She carries *primary* trauma through the loss of her family and *secondary* trauma through Ajax’s treatment of her and her son as a result of his *primary* trauma. Despite her role as

⁵⁶³ There is debate about whether the follow-up survey should occur at three months or months post-performance. It has not been decided upon as of yet.

an emotional surrogate for a fifth century BCE audience, it is now possible to view the marginalisation of Tecmessa at the end of both Sophocles' and Wertebaker's *Ajax* as a cry for female healing.

Performances of ancient and modernised Greek dramaturgy continue to mediate catharsis for spectators in the twenty-first century, suggesting that these plays still offer some degree of psychological repair from trauma borne of war. By presenting contemporary audiences, possibly containing women who might now be engaged or deeply affected by war, with female characters carrying central plots and themes in and around war, the plays promote an understanding of gender roles and war trauma. Contemporary interpretations of women as queens, wives, victims of sexual assault, and as prisoners of war are offered up onstage and these female characters serve as gender-true symbols for women in the twenty-first century. Symbolic functionality can be explored onstage for women and men and does not rely solely on emotional surrogates; female characters can serve as symbols for female audience members; male characters may serve as symbols for male audience members. 'Aesthetic distancing' techniques are still required for women and men to watch a performance and psychologically 'transfer' their personal situations onto characters enacting traumatic events onstage. If the subject matter is too exact or too close to their actual experiences, it remains difficult for individuals to experience catharsis. Onstage characters must still serve a symbolic function of carrying trauma to mediate healing.

Many countries in the world now employ females to serve in combat and these women must be capable of fighting multiple campaigns like their male counterparts. In order to achieve a requisite psychological repair between campaigns, I suggest catharsis remains essential. Theatre continues to serve as a 'healing centre' of sorts through its promotion of catharsis for the spectator by representing conflict, loss, and trauma-inducing events and role patterning. The

representation of national and cultural traditions on stage will, I assert, stimulate meaningful ethical and global discussions about women and war and provide contemporary women and men with a vocabulary and a modern lens through which to view war, gender roles within war, war-related stress and war-related loss. Providing an opportunity to witness enacted ethical challenges involving combat can assist those who have been traumatised by participating in or by witnessing acts of violence and torture. Although acts of violence are not new to war, the participation of women in combat is a relatively recent development. Research is now occurring to document and analyse the physical, biological, and emotional reactions women experience in deployment and upon their return home from war.

The dialectical process of witnessing, articulating and releasing trauma cannot be minimised. Synthesising these three factors offers the possibility of healing and will prompt the development of resources for women and men experiencing war-induced primary and secondary trauma(s). The Greek tragedies, both in their original forms and in contemporary versions, allow the spectator to view the female body as a form of currency in war (to be traded, sold, and purchased) and as collateral damage (a vessel that experiences and contains traumatic events). The trauma of the body and the body's reproduction of trauma (in the case of children born of rape) are on full display in theatrical productions and invite a communal catharsis not often tendered in other media. Rather than a subtraction of gender and sexuality, the twenty-first century versions of the ancient female characters are purposefully imbued with gender and sexuality in order to draw modern parallels. It is possible that national identities become heightened during war. The consequences of war often prompt new formations of identity through marriage, rape, and incapacity. I argue that theatre performance can open a viable space rich with new resources and outcomes to assist all of us – female and male – in coming to terms

with the anxieties of war. As evidenced within this thesis, there are genomic and biological investigations into PTSD and other mental health disorders that can be mapped onto the theatrical characters representing onstage trauma. Perhaps such investigations will assist military transition into civilian life and reintegration into the family, issues that Shay grappled with decades ago. I would like to believe that twenty-first century theatre spectators able to witness female resilience presented in Greek tragedies are assisted in decoding and making sense of war-related trauma. I suggest that the representation of female distress in text and onstage through a ‘narrative method’ remains potent and necessary. Collective memories caused by oppressive regimes and war atrocities can be revealed and understood (Hasu Houston). Post-war theatre may transform private mourning into performative mourning. Theatrical explorations of betrayal and of what’s ‘right,’ of abuse by someone with authority in a high stakes, life and death situation, and the characteristic injury to the identity of self, including the shrinkage of moral horizon, the reduction of trust, and the humiliation felt by such destruction of trust –are all potent elements explored in contemporary productions of Greek tragedy.

Bringing together researchers from the humanities and social sciences will result in an enriched public discourse on the topic of women and war and an improved societal understanding of war’s impact on women on a regional and global scale. I believe that an improvement in public policies to support female veterans and women adversely affected by war, and enhanced curricula, teaching material and methodology using assessment tools will assist women and men’s understanding and experience of war in the twenty-first century. Also, that the creation of new creative content and the production of a corpus of global narratives of female experiences of war that will be performed nationally and internationally will address real world issues in the twenty-first century.

The role of narrative in treating psychological trauma has been confirmed as an efficacious activity in mental health treatment just as narrative performance of ancient and modernised Greek tragedies has offered a means of understanding trauma. Engaging with these plays in performance is useful to veterans, extended family members, and the general populace. By examining combat-related psychological trauma within four ancient Greek tragedies and their inter-relationship between textual traumatic violence and onstage representation in contemporary theatrical productions; by interrogating the role textual trauma may play in understanding war-related psychological trauma in women; and through the collection of new data measuring audience response to theatrical productions, I have begun to contribute new knowledge to the use of ancient Greek drama as a lens to examine gender, war, and to identify its potential for catharsis and emotional health through narrative and situational recognition. Greek tragedy is still capable of producing cathartic affect in spectators. There is a link between the ancient characters and contemporary women in and around war. Iphigenia's 'sacrifice', Elektra and Clytemnestra's hunger for retribution, Athena's decision to punish Ajax by 'scrambling his brain', and Tecmessa's primary trauma caused by the death of her family and the secondary trauma she receives as the spouse of a soldier suffering with PTSD serve as effective models for the interrogation of contemporary trauma experienced by women. Zeitlin's theory of 'emotional surrogacy', Street's theory of 'primary trauma', Dekel's theory of 'secondary trauma', and Shay's theory of 'situational recognition' have guided my investigation. There is still work to be done, however. What lies ahead will involve the development of effective measurement tools for a twenty-first century application; qualitative and quantitative investigations into trauma and catharsis via theatre performance; and the deployment of narrative tools such as monologues, lyrics, singing, and poetry to prompt women and girls to articulate their experiences for a global

consumption in order to build knowledge and understanding. Theatre can serve as a meeting place for vibrant intellectual and emotional exchanges where the most urgent themes and innovative approaches in global trauma scholarship and theatre-making are shared. Making use of interdisciplinary methodological approaches from the fields of theatre, sociology, psychology, performance studies, literature, anthropology and cognitive studies lies ahead. As I conclude this thesis, I am cognisant that theatre presents an entire set of complications and challenges. Live performance offers more than just ‘a story’. Performance offers multiple points of view and meta-textual references to other incarnations of the same story. There is an assumed social context in which theatre operates: it is communal and spectator affective responses (laughing, crying, shouting, groaning) occur in a public sphere. War-themed dramaturgy in antiquity had a strong cathartic effect on its audience. Yet theatre in modernity operates in a more cognitive milieu: writers pose ideas for audiences to contemplate, grapple with – indeed, to ‘think about.’ The thrust of this thesis has been to posit a set of possibilities of taking theatre performance to a certain level. There are many possibilities for such new directions and the urgency of global conflicts and resultant trauma require a rethinking of all that is possible. Director Lydia Koniordou grapples with the question of ‘what is barbaric and what is civilised’ when she asks, “Are the Greeks civilised – the Greeks who kill their mothers and who have lost their gods? Or are the others barbaric – those who still worship their gods and who value familial ties that honour basic human moralities?”⁵⁶⁴ I would like to believe that what lies ahead is a deeper understanding of humanity and the power of theatre to transform lives – and that the telling of one’s story is a necessary part of understanding the human experience.

⁵⁶⁴ See Appendix C for the entire text of my interview with Lydia Koniordou.

XV. Bibliography

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Appendix A: Female artists globally engaging with ancient Greek plays, myths, and themes. Dates are included wherever possible.

By country:

AFGHANISTAN

- **‘Mirman Baheer’** – a secret female literary society in Kabul (**Date of initial existence unclear. Still operational in 2014**)
- (See: <http://pulitzercenter.org/reporting/afghanistan-women-poetry-kabul-helmand-writing-suicide-seamus-murphy>) CANADA
- **Judith Thompson**, playwright (**b. 1954 –**)
(<http://www.writersguildofcanada.com/magazine/articles/thompson.html>)

CROATIA

- **Cintija Asperger**, actor; director (<http://cynthiaashperger.com>) (**b. 1963 –**)

ENGLAND

- **Annie Castledine**, director (**b. 1940 –**)
(<http://www.theguardian.com/culture/2001/apr/04/artsfeatures.whoswhoinbritishtheatre>)
- **Katie Mitchell**, director (**b. 1964 –**)
(<http://www.theguardian.com/stage/katie-mitchell>)
- **Kate Tempest**, poet (**b. 1987 –**)
(<http://katetempest.co.uk>)
- **Timberlake Wertenbaker**, Playwright (**b. 1946 –**)

FRANCE

- **Mayotte Bollack**, translator
(<http://www.franceculture.fr/oeuvre-oedipe-roi-traduit-du-grec-ancien-par-jean-et-mayotte-bollack-de-sophocle.html>)
- **Ariane Mnouchkine**, director (**b. 1939 –**)
(<http://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/mnouchkine-ariane>)

GREECE

- **Nikoletta Frindzila**, translator
(<http://www.apgrd.ox.ac.uk/productions/canonical-plays/ion/400>)
- **Lydia Koniourdou**, actress, translator, and director (**b. 1953 –**)
(<http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/literatures-languages-cultures/film-and-theatre/postgraduate-study/msc-theatre-performance/artist-in-residence>)
- **Anneta Papathanassiou**, director, actor, documentary filmmaker
(<http://www.acg.edu/faculty/undergraduate/anneta-papathanassiou>)

- **Roula Pateraki**, director
(<http://books.google.ca/books?id=QHBiAgAAQBAJ&pg=PT221&lpg=PT221&dq=Roula+Pateraki&source=bl&ots=UaLvEoXMEp&sig=4Qy4gHeZ0X9i-GpnjWo9Vu6YS1o&hl=en&sa=X&ei=T1xqU6tc2OmgBPD7gGg&ved=0CG0Q6AEwDQ#v=onepage&q=Roula%20Pateraki&f=false>)
- **Corinna Seeds**, director (**b. 1952**)
(www.hydradrama.gr)

IRELAND

- **Marina Carr**, playwright (**b. 1964**)
(<http://www.theguardian.com/stage/2004/nov/29/theatre>)

ISRAEL

- **Itim-Cameri**, Company producing *Mythos* (<http://www.cameri.co.il/en/ansanbel>)
- **Rina Yerushalmi**, director (**b. 1939 -**)
(http://rinayerushalmi.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=26&Itemid=53&lang=english)

ITALY

- **Marina Treu**, dramaturg

JAPAN

- **Harue Yamagata**, translator and dramaturg
(http://performingarts.jp/E/art_interview/0612/1.html)

SCOTLAND

- **Nicola McCartney**, director and playwright (http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/literatures-languages-cultures/english-literature/staff/academic?person_id=187&cw_xml=profile.php)
- **Olga Taxidou**, playwright
(http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/literatures-languages-cultures/english-literature/staff/academic?person_id=164&cw_xml=profile.php)

SOUTH AMERICA

- **Griselda Gambaro**, playwright (**b. 1928 -**)
(<http://www.compartelibros.com/autor/griselda-gambaro/1>)

SOUTH AFRICA

- **Yael Farber**, director and playwright (**b. unknown**)

(<http://www.farberfoundry.com/farber.php>)

USA

- **Kathryn Blume**, actor, director (<http://lysistrataprojectarchive.com>)
- **Sharron Bower**, actor, director (<http://lysistrataprojectarchive.com>)
- **Lisa Dollar**, actor, producer (<http://lysistrataprojectarchive.com>)
- **Olympia Dukakis**, actor, director (**b. 1931 -**)
(<http://www.biography.com/people/olympia-dukakis-212180#awesm=~oDAVQPVlo08yUw>)
- **Mary Kay Gamel**
(http://humanities.ucsc.edu/about/singleton.php?&singleton=true&cruz_id=mkgamel)
- **Velina Hasu Houston**, playwright (**b. 1957 -**)
(<http://www.velinahasuhouston.com>)
- **Elizabeth Huffman**, actor, director
(<http://www.elizabethhuffman.com>)
- **Judith Malina**, actor, playwright, director (**b. 1926 -**)
(<http://www.nydailynews.com/entertainment/living-theater-dead-article-1.1272117>)
- **Marianne McDonald**, translator, playwright (**b. 1934 -**)
(<http://mariannemcdonald.net>)
- **Ellen McLaughlin**, playwright, actor (**b. 1957 -**)
(<https://english.barnard.edu/profiles/ellen-mclaughlin>)
- **Erin B. Mee**, director
(<http://english.fas.nyu.edu/object/ErinBMee.html>)
- **Carey Perloff**, director (**b. 1959 -**)
(<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/carey-perloff/>)
- **Theodora Skipitares**, puppet director, playwright (**b.**)
(<http://theodoraskipitares.com/artist.htm>)
- **Ellen Stewart**, theatre producer, actor (**1919 – 2011**)
(<http://lamama.org/about/ellen-stewart/>)
- **Mary Zimmerman**, playwright (**b. 1960**)
(<http://www.goodmantheatre.org/artists-archive/collective/mary-zimmerman/>)

Appendix B: A list of mental health researchers and theatre companies utilising poetry, text, and narrative engagement in a range of treatment options for psychological trauma and social action

The following list represents professionals whose practices originate from the humanities, ethics and sciences and who are exploring everything from veteran-violence to first-person spousal narratives in the treatment of PTSD and traumatic brain injuries in soldiers and veterans. These women and their research serve here as examples of a much broader landscape of research around the issues of gender, war, and mental health. Also included in this list are several theatre companies dedicated to the use of theatre – and the ancient Greek plays and themes - to promote social change.

Stéphanie A.H. Bélanger, Ph.D. has examined catharsis, and the impact of the discourses used in ancient Greek theatre on the modern soldier's communication of war experiences. In 2011, Bélanger embarked upon a new research study in which she interviewed one hundred soldiers, both female and male, who served in either Afghanistan or Iraq for first-person accounts of their experience in war. She intends for her research to add to the field of knowledge about a soldier's actual experience in and of war by documenting a verbatim account of what each one has encountered.

Helen Benedict, Ph.D. is a professor of journalism at Columbia University. Benedict is the author of five novels and five nonfiction books including *The Lonely Soldier: The Private War of Women Serving in Iraq*, which won the 2010 Ken Book Award from NAMI, and the novel, *The Edge of Eden* (2009). Benedict's play, *The Lonely Soldier Monologues* was performed at two New York theaters several times in 2008 and 2009 (LaMaMa and Theatre for the New City). Benedict's novel, *Sand Queen*, is about a female soldier and an Iraqi woman in the Iraq War. She takes her first-person interviews with female veterans of war and incorporates them into a dramatic play format in order to illuminate the experience of war for a civilian audience. Through her playwriting, storytelling, and workshops, she provides information to therapists and doctors working with veterans. Benedict examines the issues of childhood trauma, military and sexual assault, the female experience of combat, military culture and women, health hazards in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, the needs of women once they come home, and how to help and not harm women veterans who suffer from multiple traumas and the aftermath of war.

Bond Street Theatre initiates theatre-based projects for conflict resolution, education and empowerment in critical areas worldwide under the artistic leadership of Joanna Sherman. See: <http://www.bondst.org>.

Susan Brison, Ph.D. is an Associate Professor of Philosophy at Dartmouth College and the author of *Aftermath: Violence and the Remaking of a Self* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), a philosophical examination of trauma incorporating a first person narrative of her experience surviving a near-fatal rape and attempted murder. She is co-editor of *Contemporary Perspectives on Constitutional Interpretation* (1993) and author of numerous scholarly articles on sexual violence and on free speech as well as articles in the *Sunday New York Times Magazine*, *The Guardian*, *The Chronicle Review*, and other newspapers and magazines. She has been active in the anti-rape movement since 1991. Her workshop, "Violence and the Remaking

of Self: A Philosophical Perspective on trauma and Narrative” has been presented to healthcare professionals treating veterans and civilians suffering trauma.

Suzanne Brown, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor at Dartmouth College, where she has taught since 1980. She spent a year in Germany as a Fulbright Scholar and was awarded an Individual Artist Fellowship from the New Hampshire Arts Council and residencies at Yaddo, MacDowell and Ragdale artist colonies. She holds a doctorate in English literature from the University of Pennsylvania. She has facilitated discussions in hospitals throughout the U.S. concerning violence and trauma. She has worked with five hospitals, including the VA hospital in White River Junction, Vermont, and is the editor for *Echoes of War*, a new anthology of readings published by the Maine Humanities Council for the *Literature & Medicine* program.

Janet M. Cromer, RN, MA, ATR, LMHR, is a Psychiatric RN, licensed psychotherapist, and Registered Art Therapist with an MA in Expressive Therapies from Lesley University. Cromer’s book, *Professor Cromer Learns to Read: A Couple’s New Life After Brain Injury* (Bloomington, IN: AuthorHouse, 2010) is the recipient of a Solimene Award for Excellence in Medical Communication and a Neal Duane Award for Distinction from the American Medical Writer’s Association—Northeast Chapter. Cromer’s research looks at the role of reflective engagement through the creation of partnerships for veterans and soldiers with traumatic brain injuries. Her work explores the role of narrative, poetry, blogs, and journals writing in the treatment of brain injured veterans.

David Diamond, BFA D.Litt. (Hon.) was a founding member of Vancouver’s Headlines Theatre (1981) and has been Artistic Director since 1984. In 2013 the theatre company took on a “new” name and started calling itself Theatre for Living. Diamond has directed over 500 community-specific projects on issues such as racism, civic engagement, violence, addiction, street youth, intergenerational conflict and homelessness. He has worked throughout Canada, the USA and Europe, as well as in Namibia, New Zealand, Australia, Brazil, Rwanda, Palestine and Singapore, and has pioneered the development of live, interactive Forum television and web casting. He is the originator of Theatre for Living, a merging of Augusto Boal’s Theatre of the Oppressed, and his own life-long interest in systems theory. Theatre for Living recognises communities are complexly integrated living organisms and invites them to engage in constructive social change, moving from various forms of violence to respectful engagement.

Bryan Doerris, is a New York-based writer, translator, director and educator. He is the Founder of Theater of War, a project that presents readings of ancient Greek plays to service members, veterans, caregivers and families as a catalyst for town hall discussions about the challenges faced by military communities today. He is also the co-founder of Outside the Wire, a social impact company that uses theater and a variety of other media to address pressing public health issues, such as combat-related psychological injury, end of life care, prison reform, political violence and torture, and the de-stigmatization of the treatment of substance abuse and addiction. He is a self-described “evangelist” for classical literature and its relevance to our lives today. In addition to his work in the theater, Bryan lectures on his work at colleges and universities.

Jonna Goulding, M.D. is a family doctor and palliative care specialist who studied how wounded veterans who have healed from psychological and physical trauma are in a position to

help others heal. She offers workshops in deep listening, the receptive “other side” of storytelling. Through the medium of Greek legends, “of wounded healers, monsters and queens, mythical beasts and ordinary women and men who, through illness, madness, battle wounds, or accidental wounds are forced to descend to a literal or metaphorical underworld from which they returned transformed, bearing healing gifts for their people” Goulding devised her work. Her workshop, “Wounded Healer Stories Help Us Heal” was presented at the Conference: *After Shock: Humanities Perspectives on Trauma* presented by the Maine Humanities Council in November 2010.

Elizabeth Hart, M.D. is a family physician with board certification in Geriatrics and Hospice and Palliative Medicine. Hart works with patients in hospices and nursing homes who have experienced severe trauma in their lifetime. Specifically, Hart employs poetry, narrative passages, short video clips and ancient Greek texts with patients near death to explore how trauma histories reemerge at the end of the life cycle, particularly post-traumatic stress issues. Hart served as a facilitator for groups for over ten years, including the Veteran Administration Medical Center in Togus, Maine. A graduate of Harvard-Radcliffe Colleges and Dartmouth Medical School with a background in medical humanities and medical ethics, she completed her residency and her geriatric fellowship at Maine-Dartmouth Family Practice Residency.

Sue Jennings is a leading theorist and practitioner of drama therapy in England. She is an author, Creative Group Worker Supervisor, Play Therapist and Dramatherapist, LRAM (drama). Jennings holds an LGSM (speech and drama), a PG Dip. Social Anthropology (LSE University of London), a PG Cert. Tourism and Sustainability (UWE); PhD (SOAS, University of London), an Honorary Diploma in Dramatherapy, Cum Laude (University of Hertfordshire), an Honorary Dramatherapy Diploma (Tel Hai College), and is a Gold Medallist of The Poetry Society and winner of the Shakespeare Plaque, and the Gertrud Schattner Award for Excellence 2002.

Phyllis Kaufman is the producer of Theater of War, a project that presents readings of ancient Greek plays to service members, veterans, caregivers and families as a catalyst for town hall discussions about the challenges faced by military communities today. She is also the co-founder of Outside the Wire, LLC, a social impact company that uses theater and a variety of other media to address pressing public health issues.

Jonathan Shay, now retired, is a clinical psychiatrist who holds a B.A. from Harvard, and an M.D. and Ph.D. for the University of Pennsylvania. He is best known for his publications comparing the experiences of Vietnam veterans with the descriptions of war and homecoming in Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

Laura Simms is a storyteller based in New York who offers storytelling, seminars, and training in the fields of healing, education, the environment and peacemaking. She is affiliated with Naropa University, Columbia University and Rutgers University and works with NGOS including Mercy Corps, IMC, and Search for Common Ground.

Roberta Stewart examines how combat veterans attending book groups may obtain a vocabulary for articulating their own war experiences through the act of reading aloud Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Stewart suggests that Homer’s representations of soldiers, veterans, their

families and friends can provide soldiers, veterans and their loved ones an understanding of the complex effects of war within society. By reading the poems aloud, participants are able to make comparisons with their own experiences. The book groups promote an understanding of the power of narrative to shape individuals and communities, and allow group members to identify a shared human experience. Stewart teaches Roman history, Latin, and Greek at Dartmouth College. She has offered workshops in “From Ancient Greece to Baghdad and Beyond: Reading Homer with Combat Veterans” at mental health conferences. She is an Associate Professor of Classics, Dartmouth College.

Jennifer “Gala” True, Ph.D. is a medical anthropologist and folklorist whose research focuses on the role of narrative and ethnography to reduce barriers to care and improve post-deployment health outcomes for combat veterans. She recently completed an intervention study investigating the use of Life Story interviews to decrease social anxiety and PTSD symptoms for veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Her current work involves using visual images and first-person narratives to sensitise VA clinicians to deployment and post-deployment experiences and perspectives of returning combat veterans, and to promote patient-centered care at the VA.

X. Appendix C: Original interviews with theatre practitioners and humanities scholars.

To contribute new data regarding female theatre artists and their contemporary attraction to the ancient Greek poets, I spent three years (2008-2011) interviewing sixteen significant theatre practitioners, mostly female, to be able to compare and contrast their views of working on Greek plays in modernity.⁵⁶⁵ I developed a series of interview questions that I presented to the interviewees via email, telephone or in person. Each question was designed to identify the artist's interest, research, and body of work pertaining to, referencing or interpreting Greek tragedy. I wanted to address the question why contemporary female artists and scholars return to the ancient Greeks in the twenty-first century. There have been anecdotal explanations offered by artists in their programme notes of theatrical productions or in published interviews. In designing my own questionnaire, I developed questions to encourage detailed responses and articulation of personal experiences. Questions such as "Why do you think women directors, playwrights, designers, actors and scholars are turning to the ancient Greeks today?" were intended to provoke narrative, reflective, and subjective answers. The question "Do you see the contemporary work as a response to modern war?" was intended to provoke discussion about the human consequences of war and of the gulf between the public rhetoric and private feelings. Interviewees were asked to articulate their opinion(s) about the on-going role of the ancient plays in a politically divided world. They were asked which plays attracted them and what they hoped to achieve with specific textual and production choices. They were asked to articulate any perceived conflict in working with texts written by men, originally performed by men, for a male audience. This question was designed to assess certain scholarly claims that the Greeks are

⁵⁶⁵ Interviews were conducted with: Erin Mee, Theodora Skipitares, Ellen McLaughlin, Elizabeth Huffman, Marianne McDonald, Athol Fugard, Velina Hasu Houston, Roula Pateraki, Lydia Koniordou, Corinna Seeds, Timberlake Wertenbaker, Carey Perloff, Sara Farouk Ahmed, Annie Castledine, Val Colgan, Helene Foley.

misogynist and have little, if anything, to offer modern women. Finally, the interviewees were asked where and when they first encountered the Greek plays and in what versions; if they speak or read modern or ancient Greek; and if they use particular study aids. With these questions I hoped to uncover motivations, biases, and common threads found between the women. Included in this Appendix are complete interviews with the following nine women and one man: Lydia Koniordou (Greece), Roula Pateraki (Greece), Corinna Seeds (Greece); Sara Farouk (Egypt); Velina Hasu Houston (USA), Marianne McDonald (USA), Athol Fugard (South Africa and USA), Theodora Skipitares (USA); Annie Castledine (Britain), and Timberlake Wertenbaker (Britain).

Interview Questions:

1. *Do you see women directors, playwrights, designers and actors turning to the ancient Greeks today? Why did you turn to the ancient Greeks?*
2. *Do you see the contemporary work as a response to modern war?*
3. *Which plays have you directed or adapted?*
4. *What was your experience?*
5. *Do you think modern women experience a conflict of interest when working with texts written by men, for men, and even performed by men? Does it even matter?*
7. *Do you think there are gendered responses and desires that relate to war and war-themed dramaturgy?*
8. *How do modern female artists interpret the concept of “barbaric” onstage? What does ‘barbaric’ mean to you?*
9. *Where, when and how did you first encounter the Greek plays? (e.g. school, university, seeing a production in Greece)?*
10. *Do you speak or read modern and/or ancient Greek?*
11. *Anything else you would like to comment on regarding women and the ancient Greeks?*

Interview with Annie Castledine (Britain)

This interview took place at Rose Bruford College, Sidcup, England on June 9, 2009.

Do you see women directors, playwrights, designers and actors turning to the ancient Greeks today? Why did you turn to the ancient Greeks?

Don't you mean, "if" women are turning to the Greeks today? It would be easier if you told me which plays women tend to be directing these days... Turning to *Antigone* makes complete sense to me. The character of Antigone serves as a role model and would allow, as Brecht so beautifully pointed out, "Over the atrocities, there grew no grass" – that model of revolution that women might well be attracted to and hope to speak about.

By the way, Brecht's version of *Antigone* is something I would prefer to direct. It would be more difficult, of course, it is rarely performed, but it would also be more gratifying for me. So beautifully written...

Do you believe women are using these ancient plays to respond to modern wars?

Well I certainly am not using the Greeks to respond to war. I am much more focused on using the Greek plays to discuss women's sexual passion. The characters of Clytemnestra, Medea, Phaedra and others demonstrate extraordinary extremes of sexual passion. Watching this – indeed, directing this -- is both wonderful and very frightening. The fact that the Greeks recognised the power of women's sexuality and were willing to feature it in their plays is simply astounding.

I have never shied away from unleashing the power of women's sexual and emotional agendas onstage in the Greek plays. I have not held back, but instead have respected their urges as their absolute right. For instance, when I directed *Medea*, I did not allow any discussion with my cast to take place concerning Medea's right to kill off her children. I felt it was her absolute right because of her husband's infidelity. I didn't question it. With the play, *Medea*, I held a form of perfection in my hand. Flawless, so rare and so powerful a piece. I had an all-female cast except for the boy playing Jocasta. He was brilliant, but so were all the women.

The male dramatists – and especially Euripides -- were so sympathetic to their female characters. Euripides created the character of Medea as being so witty, so funny. He gave her the ability to see through everything and everyone. He elevated her, let her get away scot-free with killing those children, and then sends her off to Athens as a goddess, while dripping the blood of her children onto Jason. Brilliant!

What Euripides also does so marvellously in that play is to give us a chorus of middle class women who absolutely sympathise with the outrage Medea feels over Jason's infidelity. But the chorus is plunged into utter confusion – they are out of their depth -- when they begin to realise that murder was in store. Hilarious! Very funny indeed!

Do you think modern women experience a conflict of interest when working with texts written by men, for men, and even performed by men? Does it even matter?

No. I experience no conflict whatsoever. I see certain male dramatists as my allies – not friends – but allies. Aeschylus understood women – well, he understood characters such as Iphigenia, Clytemnestra...Euripides I view as a tremendous ally. But he would be, wouldn't he? He was much more experimental than the others.

Which plays have you directed?

The Women of Troy at the National Theatre in 1993; *Oedipus Rex* at the Cambridge Arts Theatre in 2004; and *Medea*, also at the Cambridge Arts Theatre in 2007. With students I have, of course, done mounted work on *Agamemnon* and *Antigone*. Working on *Oedipus Rex* was extraordinary because I had the good fortune of having Simon Goldhill, perhaps the most renowned Greek scholar in Western civilisation, cohabitating with me during rehearsals. He sat next to me in the rehearsal hall. I did all of the talking about the play to the cast. Yet when I would ask for his opinion, he would offer stunning insights. Working with him (and with other Greek scholars over the years) has been an absolute joy. My production of *Women of Troy* turned out to be quite controversial. I wasn't really expecting that at all.

I read that you modelled your Helen after Marilyn Monroe. May I ask why?

I wanted to equate an icon to an icon. Marilyn Monroe would have been just as easily recognised in the modern world as Helen would have been in the ancient world. I only *referenced* Marilyn Monroe, mind you, through the use of the dress the actress wore and a moment when a slight puff of wind blew up under her skirt. Otherwise, the actress did not mimic Marilyn. That would have been too much, don't you think?

Do you speak or read Greek?

No.

Where and when did you first encounter the Greek plays?

In school.

Which translations do you use?

I have always regarded the Chicago University Press editions as the best. Greer and Lattimore are whom I go to first. After that, I turn to ancient Greek scholars who translate the texts exactly for me.

Are you aware of the scholarly critical appraisal of the Greek plays?

I don't give a damn. Bloody hell, no!

Some directors have referred to Euripides as a feminist. Do you think he was?

Feminist?! Why are we even using that word now? Why are you using that word? The word has lost its meaning. Those of us who were at the barricades in the 60s/70s/80s and longer have gone way beyond that word. We have built new relationships with our male allies. We still make less money, we still don't always get the top jobs, but we fight for our rights in more subtle ways.

To your question about Euripides...I believe he is attractive to women today because in him they see an ally. Women today sense that Euripides was fascinated by women.

How do modern female artists interpret the concept of "barbaric" onstage? Medea was considered 'barbaric'...

Medea was not a 'barbaric' woman – she was very clever, very inventive, and had an imaginative gift for oratory and narrative. She also was skilled in the deeper, profound art of the kill.

Annie, thank you so much for your time. I have really enjoyed talking with you about theatre, the Greeks, and your work.

It has been a pleasure.

Interview with Sara Sherif Farouq Ahmed (Egypt)

This interview took place on July 22, 2010 at Hydrama Theatre Centre, Greece.

Do you think women directors, playwrights, designers and actors are turning to the ancient Greeks today? Why did you turn to the ancient Greeks?

For various reasons...not that I feel able, really, to speak for others, as my own apparent 'reasons' appear to constantly shift. So much about ancient Greek drama is contestable that rules seem irrelevant. It's like the depths are calling. There is magic in that expanse of chaos. As a child the tales felt uplifting, adventurous and far off – both in space and time. At this point, I embrace that magic as part of the chaotic state of existence. Maybe other people do too.

Do you see the contemporary work as a response to modern war?

In a way, as there hasn't been a time when the whole world has actually been at peace, it can't fail to be – on whatever scale.

What do you think the ancient plays offer to a modern audience? Why do you think women are turning to the Greeks now?

Whatever each audience member wants them to. This isn't a tidy cop-out. The Greek plays have the ability, through perceived distance, to encourage the audience members to place themselves, conceptually, within the action. Perhaps women are turning to the Greeks for any/all the above reasons – and, maybe, because there isn't a great deal of contemporary work that prides itself on accessibility.

Which of the plays resonate most for you? Which plays have you adapted or used in your own work?

Seriously; they all do.

Only one play – start to finish – *Lysistrata*
Numerous excerpts.

Which plays have you directed or adapted? What was your experience?

Lysistrata – with sixteen-year-old girls. It opened up huge vistas for them – their relationship to their perceived histories and futures, chipped away at presuppositions they hadn't been aware of, and encouraged them to question the permanence of power. These girls experienced all of this while having an enormous amount of fun. As for the rest – it's the realisation that nothing is old. Everything is new – even if it's not original.

Do you think modern women experience a conflict of interest when working with texts written by men, for men, and even performed by men? Does it even matter?

They'd be pretty fucked if it did.

Do you think there are gendered responses and desires that relate to war and war-themed dramaturgy?

Yes – I think women have the capability to be much more ruthless than men.

How do modern female artists interpret the concept of “barbaric” onstage? In fact, what does ‘barbaric’ mean to you?

No idea – I have never thought of it as a gender issue
I think categorisation, and its acceptance/application, is barbaric

Where and when and how did you first encounter the Greek plays -- school, university, in Greece, and in what versions.

In the local library when I first started to read – as stories that I read and reread without knowing why. Then, as plays, at the age of thirteen studying O level ‘Greek Literature in Translation’

Do you speak/read modern and/or ancient Greek?

Okhi (No).

Anything else you would like me to know about your background as a director?

I have always been a woman. I have never always been anything else. That was and remains my first gift; the first of many.

Interview with Velina Hasu Houston (USA)

This interview took place on January 5, 2009 via phone and email.

Do you think women directors, playwrights, designers and actors are turning to the ancient Greeks today?

Women dramatists' interest in the Greeks is nothing new. Female dramatists have always been influenced by historical mythologies, in particular those of the ancient Greeks. The reasons are myriad. From my perspective, artists find inspiration in mythologies that unabashedly explore the deepest recesses of human nature. Time is not wasted in extraneous banter or action unrelated to the characters' critical desires. The dramatis personae do not include unnecessary characters without dramatic capital, as is so often the case in contemporary storytelling. The stories in ancient Greek mythology focus on events, not rambling, unconsidered episodes that may have no bearing on one another's outcomes. The stories are about a particular time in the history of an individual, family, city, or nation-state. Character and conflict are very specifically considered. Language is important, owning creative consideration that is often absent in contemporary dramatic storytelling. In the myths, we are reminded what language is for. Finally, I must say that contemporary female dramatists seek out historical mythologies in pointed ways. They recover the women in those mythologies, often reincarnating the mythologies from the points of view of female characters mired in masculinist contexts. The recovery of women whose courage was and is often misconstrued by critical studies scholars is a feminist conquest. These female characters' lives are examined frequently in contexts of war, critical points in histories that demand that women act in profound ways under enormous pressure, often including the whims of men in power as their political decisions have enormous impact on the lives of women and children. Recovering these mythologies and reincarnating the lives of women is a means of investigating the condition of women's lives today.

Do you see the contemporary work as a response to modern war? If so, how?

I think the literary artistic response is always a response to war: war in the soul, war in the heart, war in the home, city, or nation. In ancient Greek mythology, war rattled the consciousness of the citizenry so that it had to address the issues at hand – the alternative was sleepless nights or figurative (or literal) death. Ancient Greek mythology addressed war without fear; understanding that it directly affected the lives of the people or at the very least had determined the circumstances of those lives. In contemporary American drama, plays about war are avoided. We are afraid to investigate head-on the conflicts that address the most vital aspects of the human condition and our survival as part of a global community. At worst, we think war has nothing to do with us, that we can be complacent, that the consequences of war anywhere –next door, in the next room, in another country – will have no ill effect on us. But it will. As an immigrant whose life was born of war and whose life path has been very cognizant of it, the courage of the female figures in ancient Greek mythology is inspiring. Moreover, the roles of women in the stories deserve unearthing and reinterpreting to understand the conflicts of today. Furthermore, the courage of ancient Greek society to attend these plays and look these myths directly in the face is inspiring. Even the societies represented in ancient Greek drama seem to be more socio-politically intertwined with affairs of the state. There existed, if you will, a greater degree of socio-political intimacy. The intercourse of ideologies and understanding of

the relationship between the state and one's personal journey was clearer and something to be contended with, not ignored.

Which of the plays resonate most for you? Why?

Euripides' *Medea* and Sophocles' *Antigone* resonate most powerfully for me. *Antigone* provokes my interest because it offers a strong female in the title character who weighs the balance between familial love and duty and duty to the nation-state, ultimately deciding that the former is most critical to the survival of humanity. Sacrificing her own self, Antigone acts to uphold the dignity of the human spirit by administering burial rites to her fallen brother. The fortitude of her motivation and actions are inspiring. In the aftermath of war, she is able to move expeditiously towards healing and peace while male society as represented by Creon is still mired in a war-related frame of mind, in a mindset of discipline through law and punishment for those who do not adhere tenaciously to the needs of the nation-state. *Medea* interests me because it also offers a strong female in the wake of war. The character of Medea is of rich interest to me because she is a foreigner from the East, negatively eroticised by her adopted community. In many ways, this speaks to my own history as a family of East Asian immigrants that sought to carve a home for themselves in the heartland of an unwelcoming America. Medea was so marginalised that she became isolated from society. Her husband, in a quest for power, joined the isolating forces so that Medea found herself alone. While she was driven to violent measures, I still admire her courage in not allowing herself to be victimised by a man's need for power and by society's arrogant need to exclude the culturally different and maintain the status quo. As I mention in my introduction to a book that Marianne McDonald and I have co-edited, *The Myth Strikes Back: Medea Plays by Women*, writers are bent on fearlessly and creatively exploring why Medea-like figures are compelled to behave in certain ways and the ways that this behavior reflects upon the human condition – particularly with regard to the status and situation of women in society. Female playwrights choose to reinterpret the myth without revising it, but through added perspective and differing conclusions.

In your opinion, which of the plays/playwrights resonate most for a contemporary audience? And why...

I don't think any particular play or playwright resonates more than any other for a contemporary audience. I think inspiration is a marriage between what character-embedded notions provoke the consciousness of the contemporary artist and the representations of similar stimulating notions in any given ancient Greek play or myth.

Which plays have you directed/adapted/referred to/designed/performed in? What was your experience? What had you hoped to achieve with the production/text/design/performance and did you get there?

I have been inspired by the Medea myth as well as the mythology of Aphrodite in my own work. Antigone greatly intrigues as well, but I have not yet fully explored her mythology, although I often write about the ways that women respond in the wake of war. I was inspired by the ancient Greek myth of Pygmalion in my play, *The Ideal and the Life*, the title a response to Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller's poem about Pygmalion. I completely removed the male

interpretation of beauty from the exploration of the link between what we desire and what we imagine/create that may not necessarily be organic to the object of desire. Critics say that my play *Kokoro* is a Medea play. I did not write that play inspired by Medea mythology, which certainly makes a point about the ways in which contemporary women's struggles can mesh timelessly with the struggles of women who lived centuries ago. I did write the play, *The House of Chaos* inspired by Medea mythology. In both cases I found myself confronted by a general misunderstanding and ignorance of the Medea myth. Perhaps this was due to the fact that the purveyors of the myth had never read any versions of it. They seem to rely on hearsay as the misunderstandings of the myth pass from person to person like ideas lost in the childhood game of Telephone. Audiences waited for my protagonist to kill her children and feed them to her husband. Jokes about this interpretation of the myth occur in social settings profusely. In any production, I seek to investigate eternal and timeless questions about the human condition through the life of a character and via a particular event at a particular time in her life. Achieving this goal is always challenged by production dimensions, i.e. the director's interpretation of the play, the casting, the designers, etc. One also has to contend with critical and popular views of the play that can include misunderstandings of the original inspiring mythology. Furthermore, in contemporary drama, characters' desires are often subordinated to situational writing that is frequently without action. Therefore, the big action that grows out of desire is often too much for episodic and sometimes uneventful nature of the modern stage. I hope to investigate critical desire and the critical action that emerges from it, the kind of desire that is transformative. If I cannot achieve that then I am not serving my purpose as an artist.

Do you think modern women experience a conflict of interest when working with texts written by men, for men, and even performed by men? Does it even matter?

I do not think that modern women experience a conflict of interest when working with texts written by men, for men, and even performed by men. I believe that the female artist will appropriate that text through the prism of her own aesthetic consciousness, thus creating an interpretation that is transformed by her unique perspective. That is why the gender of the creator of the text to be adapted or the text that inspires does not matter. The female artist will extrapolate from the text whatever it is that provokes her creativity. The text will be a point of departure and she will transpose its dimensions according to her aesthetic vision, be it a transposition of the myth's time, place, language, point of view of story, etc.

Ancient Greek plays are full of strong and defiant female characters. A number of these plays were written as a response to wars. As modern women interpret and direct these plays, how are they received and do they offer a modern lens through which to view and comprehend the travesties of war?

Modern women who interpret and direct ancient Greek plays that are full of strong female characters definitely offer a contemporary lens through which to view and comprehend the travesties of war. The reception of these interpretations is not always as keen as one might like – critically or popularly – because we live in a society that eschews deep thinking, preferring things in a fast and abbreviated fashion, i.e. the pop psychology of television situation comedies and Internet sites, the World Wide Web, drive-through fast food, hook-ups instead of relationships, etc. War is not a popular theme with the general populace. Those making

decisions about what plays to produce in their theatres opt for comedies and musical theatre, avoiding the dramas that seek to explore critical issues confronting humanity, in particular war of any kind – subconscious, familial, urban, national, or global. If theatres can become more willing to take chances and explore themes beyond fast-food jokes and, likewise, if theatre critics can understand their part in the necessity of being courageous enough to allow art to have a soul, then reception will increase. In the United States, one of the reasons that society shies away from plays about war may be because we have never had a war fought on our soil in recent times. There were the Indian wars, the California wars involving Mexico and the United States, 9/11, the Civil Rights’ Movement, and the Civil War. There are today urban wars mired in racial and religious conflict. But somehow this society sidesteps the investigation of such conflict, calling it “political” or “polemical” dramaturgy and suggesting these plays will leave a bad taste in the mouth of the populace. The escapism of comedy is the preferred solution to the questions that abound in the human condition. But examining the causes and consequences of war builds wisdom with human experience being the teacher. We must cull our bravery as a society and understand the power of art to explore these questions. It is a much easier solution than a grenade coming through the window of one’s home or a nuclear bomb exploding in the American heartland.

Do you think there are gendered responses and desires that relate to war and war-themed dramaturgy?

While I do not believe that either gender responds to any situation in a monolithic way, I believe that there are gendered responses and desires that relate to war and war-themed plays. Society tends to think of global wars as a nation-state against a nation-state. A masculinist response to war often is a call to arms while a feminist response considers the impact of war on human beings. I think that is why female dramatists reimagine the ancient Greek mythology – they re-interpret the plays and the myths for a modern audience. They recover the stories and offer fresh transpositions of the mythology. I have read male interpretations of ancient Greek myths that seemed to be written just to celebrate the myth and exploit gendered stereotypes, rather than to investigate humanity and critical desire, and find something new to say that has bearing upon how we live today as men and women in a dynamic society and global village.

In your opinion, are there dramatic characters archetypes females today can relate to?

Characters such as Antigone, Helen, Iphigenia, and Clytemnestra are not necessarily archetypes, but are memorable and timeless because of the nature of their desires and how these desires motivate them to bold action. Even in the midst of a masculinist perspective, these female characters exhibit a courage so originally fearless that they inspire women artists to reincarnate them in contemporary drama and, in so doing, hopefully inspire contemporary girls and women in the cultivation of their own desires and ambitions.

Do you think that the Greek understanding of the human consequences of war and of the gulf between the public rhetoric and private feelings makes the ancient plays relevant in our own divided world?

I agree that the ancient Greek understanding of the human consequences of war and of the gulf

between the public rhetoric and private feelings makes the ancient plays relevant in our own divided world. Ancient Greek society and ancient Greek dramatists were not afraid to confront the questions of war and to use theatre as a vehicle for this quest. Furthermore, the dramatists went deeper than that, exploring the impact of war upon individuals, families, and close-knit societies. They understood or were at least willing to try to understand that war was not simply a matter of governments and nation-states - that war resonated downward into cities, neighborhoods, family, and the individual.

Do you see any analogy to the role of gods in ancient Greece with contemporary political superpowers?

I do not see any analogy to the role of gods in ancient Greece with contemporary political superpowers. They may feel god-like in the exercising of their powers and that may be the root of the problem with regards to the persistence of warfare.

Do modern productions of ancient Greek plays and themes suggest a system of thought based on values, characteristics, and behavior believed to be best in human beings?

Theatre artists and theatres willing to take risks and produce plays that examine the human consequences of war are exhibiting the courage to confront and question critical matters affecting the human condition. The notion that there is a quality of behaviour, values, thoughts, and characteristics that are ideal in human beings; that in some way we are meant to struggle towards may or may not be at the root of this risk-taking. As a playwright, I believe the reasons that these stories inspire are largely due to the fact that they ask important questions and that they often present women in the midst of these examinations who are thwarted by gendered perspectives of the time periods in which they lived and perhaps of the sources who interpreted them. Female dramatists recuperate the female in these myths through striking back at the stereotypes, more deeply examining the circumstances that affected female desire and motivations for action, and transposed the actions in accordance with those re-examinations.

How do modern female artists interpret the concept of “barbaric” onstage?

I think that the interpretation of barbarism on stage is different and unique to each individual female artist depending on her own perspective on the matter of what constitutes barbarism. If we think of a barbaric act as the uncivilised nature of a culture, which is one definition, then barbarism is at the very heart of the desires and actions of most primarily female characters in Greek mythology. Consider the mythology of Procne and Philomela (which Timberlake Wertenbaker examines in her play, *For the Love of a Nightingale*). A father, Pandion, treats his daughter Procne like a bargaining chip in the wake of war is barbaric, and he gives her to Tereus who takes her to his homeland, cuts out her tongue, and abandons her to isolation similar to Jason's abandonment of Medea. If women are peripheral commodities in relation to war and their isolation leads to violent measures, perhaps there is a suggestion that barbaric acts against women is not the best behavior for human beings to exhibit. It results in violence that turns itself back upon the men who exhibited the behavior in the first place, causing them loss that we hope is transformative, i.e. Jason's loss of his sons and Tereus' loss of his son. Perhaps in recovering the women in these ancient myths, female playwrights create a response to the barbarism that has

plagued women as daughters, lovers, wives, sisters, and mothers throughout the ages.

Where and when and how did you first encounter the Greek plays -- school, university, in Greece, and in what versions.

I first encountered ancient Greek mythology in middle school (Euripides' *Medea* and the Pygmalion mythology).

Do you speak/read modern and/or ancient Greek?

No.

Did you use particular study aids?

I like to read critical work about the myths as well as the original myths and ancient Greek plays drawn from them.

Lydia Koniordou Interview (Greece)

This interview took place over the telephone. Peggy Shannon was at Hydrama Arts Centre, on Hydra, Greece and Lydia Koniordou was at her home in Athens, Greece. The date was July 16, 2009.

Do you think women directors, playwrights, designers and actors are turning to the ancient Greeks today? Why did you turn to the ancient Greeks?

I think people, men and women, are interested in the ancient plays because these plays tackle large philosophical ideas that are existential and political in nature; plays that speak to an entire human experience. I must uncover the text by digging deeply, excavating the rhythms, the intentions, the themes. The text does not deliver simple answers. One must uncover each text, each time, deeply, methodically while remembering that these texts are not psychological and bourgeois entertainment. The ancient tragedies have to be dealt with by acknowledging the specific elements of Greek tragedy, a triangle of equal partners, if you will. These three equal parts are the co-existence of poetry, dance and music representing three sisters that are actually one. The director must also deal with the realities of a circular space and the existence of a chorus. All of these things provide the magical elements of the enactment of life.

Do you see the contemporary work as a response to modern war?

This is much too simplistic. The ancient tragedies offer us ideas of how societies become more civilised. There are so many, many levels to the texts. The tragedies are not only myths or allegories. You cannot say that one of these plays is “against the war” – that is much too simplistic. But I do believe one can say that these plays offer something for everyone, even small children. Why? Because the central myth or myths found in each play can be seen as the archetypal tank of stories that have fed each generation, that we carry these myths, these stories, these characters in our DNA and by interacting with the ancient tragedies, these archetypes make their way to the surface of our consciousness. These tales, these stories, these plays are vitally connected with the very sources of theatre: the worshipping of Dionysus – the irrational. The poetic text is not psychological but is much larger than that. It is philosophical. So is it a response to war? That is only a part of these plays and their modern productions.

Which plays have you directed or adapted? What was your experience?

There are three plays that I will mention to you right now. The first is *The Persians*, a play that I recently directed. It performed throughout Greece and went to the United States. I was haunted by this text for four years before I came to direct it. Even with four years of thinking about it, I could have used more time. But there is never enough money to have more rehearsal time. The conditions were not perfect – as in cooking, if the last five minutes are not tended to properly, the meal will not turn out perfectly. This is what happened with *The Persians*. In the end, the costumes arrived too late to fully rehearse with them and the actors struggled under their weight. I saw my actors getting bruises on their bodies, trying hard to deal with these costumes. It was a shame.

I was able to uncover this text in an unusual way. I used break-dancing and rap to tackle the long speeches of the chorus. Let me explain. I kept searching for the sounds of the splintering empire, an empire that is slowly falling apart. Like our bodies, our cars, the walls of our houses, there are at first small cracks and if you don't pay attention to these little cracks, these little noises, you will find that suddenly everything will fall apart, everything will break down. I believe this is the same with empires – they, too, break down. Even today societies can get stuck. They become living organisms that, if not tended to properly, will die. The new “thing” (city, empire, whatever it is) will hopefully be wiser, obtaining a higher level of existential belief. *The Persians* deals with the signs and omens of what will happen if the cracks are not tended to. The signals of things breaking apart, the problems that are shifting and exploding, are there for us to examine.

In order to work on the antithetical, the dialectical elements of the text, I found myself drawn to what an African American student of mine was able to articulate through his discussion of contemporary dance. He described this poetic dialectic in terms of movement – like Michael Jackson's Moonwalk or the breakdancing that is movement – perfect, fluid movement – that happens in reverse. Everything is in harmony, but it occurs in opposition. This concept made sense to me. While working on the play I brought in a breakdancing specialist that gave a seminar on this topic. The members of my chorus learned the movements of this type of dance – not because I wanted breakdancing in the production, but because I wanted them to experience a visceral understanding of movement in opposition. Then I was introduced to the book, *Rhapsody to Rap* by Frank Gibbord and was struck by the ability of rap artists to utter poetry in musical and contemporary ways. I view the ancient Greek text as poetry rather than prose. As such, this text demands a transcendental form of delivery in order to elevate it from prosaic speech into heightened, poetic language. Directors for generations have tried to create ways of lifting the poetry. The Germans had something called *Sprechgesang*, a sung-spoken technique. This technique was used by directors of ancient plays for awhile, but eventually this form died out and we looked for new ways. Each generation gives us directors that explore and create techniques for engaging with and excavating meaning from the ancient texts.

Two other productions I am very pleased with were *Ion* which I directed in 2004 and for which I was awarded a Best Director prize by the Greek critics. I was very pleased with this production and I used my own translation for it. The other play was *Alcestis* which I directed three times in three very different ways. One production used life-sized puppets with two child actors. I wanted to get away from the melodrama inherent in the play and the puppets helped me achieve that. I directed my version in Volos near the ancient tomb of Artemis. The production became part of the local legend and mythology of that region. I also directed productions of *Alcestis* that took place in 1850 Greece and another in the United States that was set during the Reconstruction Period in the American South.

How do modern female artists interpret the concept of “barbaric” onstage? In fact, what does ‘barbaric’ mean to you?

Of course, this is the great question that Euripides poses in *Iphigenia at Aulis*. What is barbaric and what is civilised? Are the Greeks civilised – the Greeks who kill their mothers and who have lost their gods? Or are the others barbaric – those who still worship their gods and who

value familial ties that honour basic human moralities. This question of barbaric, of *the other*, remains so important to audiences and to directors today. It is always a surprise to investigate the meaning of barbaric and of civilised, don't you think?

Where and when and how did you first encounter the Greek plays -- school, university, in Greece, and in what versions.

I was very lucky. In university I performed the entire *Oresteia* – I played Clytemnestra – directed by a very talented, very imaginative director. This production, which included all three plays, occurred at the Herodian Theatre in Athens. What was extraordinary about working with this director was that his stylistic choices were imaginative and were the very theatrical styles that would come to characterise the aesthetic elements I would encounter over the next decade.

In drama school, during the summers of 1975 and 1976, I had an incredible opportunity to work with two legends of the Greek theatre and from each of them I learned things that would form my own working aesthetic. The first was Aspasia Papathanassiou, a theatre teacher and great artist at Desmoi, The Centre for Research and Practical Application of Ancient Greek Drama. I learned the Apollonian power of music from Papathanassiou. The other, Karolos Koun, the Greek theatre director, was firmly rooted in a Dionysian approach to the text. He would tell me: “Lydia, you have to ride the horse and allow it to lead you. You cannot walk along side of it.” In other words, the text was the horse with its own rhythms. So you see, I have formed my own director's eye, my own aesthetic, using both approaches from these two genius artists. I cannot imagine Greek tragedy without music, just as I cannot imagine opera without music. This music can of course be contemporary or historical, but the music must exist to heighten and lift the poetry and to bring alive its distinctive rhythms. At the same time, I look for the irrational, the unexplainable impulses that are primal and alive.

Do you speak/read modern and/or ancient Greek?

Yes, both. I am from that fortunate generation that was offered four years of ancient Greek in high school and another three in university. The ancient Greek is so important to me now because when I work on a text, I always begin by reading it in the ancient Greek, then I look at various translations – Oliver Taplin being one of my favourite translators – and I often end up translating things into modern Greek myself. This I do from an agony to uncover the rhythms and musicality of the ancient texts, to understand things more deeply. Modern translators tend to either provide language that is too modern (and therefore, in a sense, reduces the size of emotion, thought and makes it sound too ordinary) or too stiff, not capturing the beautiful rhythms of the ancient texts. Oliver Taplin has a gift for beautifully translating the poetry, letting it live and soar. Keeping the thoughts large and alive.

Anything else you would like me to know about your background as a director?

The poetic text is not psychological. I must always find the key that will unlock each text. Each time it is a different process, like starting fresh on a new excavation site. We rarely have enough time in rehearsal, but of course, this is the lament of all directors. We always want more time. More time to dig deeper.

Interview with Marianne McDonald (USA) and Athol Fugard (South Africa)

The first interview took place at Marianne McDonald's house on December 14, 2008 and included Marianne McDonald and her long-time colleague and collaborator, South African playwright, actor and director, Athol Fugard. The second interview took place the following day just Marianne McDonald.

First Interview –Marianne McDonald (MM) and Athol Fugard (AF):

Do you think women directors, playwrights, designers and actors are turning to the ancient Greeks today? Why did you turn to the ancient Greeks?

MM I think the ancient Greeks were very good at representing women. Women today see how strong the characters are and obviously believe there are better roles in Greek tragedy for actresses to work on. There are more great female roles in the Greeks than say, in Shakespeare and many modern dramas. I see directors using the ancient plays as commentary on modern political events. Things that were relevant in the fifth century BCE are still relevant today, namely, the value of war, the value of being an honest citizen versus someone who calculates and says things to suit the moment... the ancient plays still possess the ability to get people thinking. Female playwrights may be tapping into a common mythology by taking some of the iconic Greek figures and giving their own spin to them.

AF Prior to the arrival of women playwrights, the ancient Greeks gave the most stunning and still-relevant image of "woman as victim" as well as powerful heroines.

MM In 2001 my translation of *Trojan Women*, directed by Seret Scott, was used to usher in the millennium at the Old Globe Theatre in San Diego. I have worked with women such as Delicia Turner Sonenberg and Seret Scott -- both women of colour -- who were interested in exploring some of the human rights issues found within *Antigone*. Seret directed *Trojan Women* by drawing on experiences that her mother had had growing up in Vietnam. A production of *Hecuba* explored Hecuba as a very powerful woman. The director had another woman performing toe-dancing in the background as the ghost of Hecuba's son, Pallidores...a way of foreshadowing who Hecuba will seek vengeance for at the end of the play. I am currently involved in a writing project with another playwright, Velina Hasu Houston (in partnership with the Morisaki Press). We are writing a book called *The Medea Project* and by doing so, hope to encourage female playwrights who have also written Medea-themed work. We do not believe men can fully appreciate *Medea*. They don't understand how a wife can murder her children because she hates her husband for abandoning her. The film, *Second Wives' Club* has nothing on *Medea*. It's a totally modern example of a man using one woman to get him to a certain social position and then abandoning her for a younger woman who he perceives will be better for his career. That's when some women fight back. Do you remember Betty Broderick, who murdered her husband and his mistress? We have located her...and others... personally, I see murdering your husband as a better thing to do than murdering

your children who are innocent. Murdering one's children moves a woman into the category of terrorist. Medea, we can say, is the first terrorist.

Do you see contemporary work as a response to modern war? If so, how?

MM Well, *Trojan Women* is still probably the greatest anti-war play ever written because it shows that women and children are often the first, most vulnerable victims of war. There are other brilliant examples such as in *Hecuba*. The brutality of the civilised victors – does one want to be identified like that? We are offered the opportunity to examine wars for specious causes such as a phantom that went to Troy, (which, as they say in *Helen*, is the reason that Zeus caused the Trojan War), but it's no greater a phantom than weapons of mass destruction that don't exist. The USA destroyed a country over a phantom to justify a war for economic reasons. Some things have not really changed, have they?

AF The Greek plays reflect what is called the dominant reality in the war today, that the first victims are women and children.

MM In *Trojan Women* we see women as victims. So often it is the men that are shown as heroic. Women don't seem to be part of the landscape. But in *Trojan Women* we see the effects of war on the women. The ancient Greeks, I think, were much more in touch with their male-female side, most went through a bisexual phase... certainly Sophocles was known for that...one never knows about the other two...but Euripides certainly understood the female psyche.

Which of the plays resonate most for you?

MM It's hard to pick one out. It's sort of like picking your favourite child... I guess it would have to be *Antigone*. I love this play because of its investigation of human rights. In the play you have two headstrong people that go up against each other. I think it's a brilliant. *Oedipus* is one of the greatest detective stories ever written. I also love the strong Medea and the strong Clytemnestra and some of the strong heroines.

AF Hecuba.

MM Hecuba. Hecuba is brilliant, yes. Esther Emery was the director for my translation of *Hecuba* and she was just wonderful. You know, all the plays resonate for me because, of course, they hold some of the greatest roles for women. *Helen*, for instance, was so much smarter than the cowardly Menelaus. She knew how to manipulate situations to bring things around her way. In my version of the play, we see Helen falsely blamed for the Trojan War. I show how the men used her as an excuse to fight their wars.

And I love Medea. I see that she goes too far by murdering her own children, that she was probably the first terrorist, as I say, but I still find her fascinating.

And I love Antigone. That woman gives her life for what she believes in. I would like her to be successful and not have to give her life, but she fights to the death and puts her

own life at risk by following her heart, following the unwritten laws of the gods that can be seen as the laws of conscience versus what the state dictates. So many modern examples of that, aren't there? You have freedom fighters in Ireland... My *Antigone* was produced in Ireland and it was done with an Irish cast. This production toured to Greece and then on to Vienna. The Greeks didn't like the Irish singing late at night, because they had to go to work in the morning and the singing kept them awake, whereas the Viennese absolutely loved the singing and our Irish cast would get drunk with the Viennese. The production was popular in all three cities. It might have been the first time an all-Irish cast toured to Greece. I was very proud to go with the production. I ended up actually directing it. Fugard had directed it beforehand, so I had a nice tutorial.

I guess this tells you a little bit about what I love? I love the women in Aeschylus' plays as well. Clytemnestra is brilliant, absolutely wonderful. Thomas Rosenmeyer has written some wonderful articles about the representation of women in Aeschylus. In *Seven Against Thebes: The Tragedy of War* and in *The Masks of Tragedy: Essays on Six Greek Dramas* he suggests that Aeschylus was open towards women even though he's the most conservative in some senses, and was very religious.

As I write my own plays I recognise the Greek influence. One of my plays, *...and then he met a woodcutter*, which won the San Diego Critics Circle Award for Best Play of 2005, was set in Japan, yet I chose to have some feisty Greek characters appear, allowing the play to become a sort of Japanese *Trojan Women*. My latest play is about a Sufi sage, so in a way you can say my *Rabeeya of Bosra* is an Antigone stand-in.

In your opinion, which of the playwrights resonate most for a contemporary audience, and why?

MM I think all of them that survive have resonance. I've singled out several already that have enormous resonance...I think *Antigone* speaks volumes for a contemporary audience... imagine four productions of *Antigone* done in one year in Ireland – a year when everyone was protesting political abuse. Then there is Fugard's *Antigone* in South Africa. There are other examples, of course, many others. *Antigone* is about important things such as honour, vengeance, heroism, cowardice, cheating. Honestly, all of the plays are really great and resonate for a contemporary audience. Why? We're still living with all the same issues that the Greeks lived with. Things such as how to face death, how to go through suffering and survive without turning to stone... I love, though, some of the political resonances of my *Antigone*. I love getting the Irish to identify with it as much as they did. And in fact, Seamus Heaney, the Nobel Prize winner, dedicated his *Burial at Thebes* to me because he was impressed with my *Antigone*. I served on a panel with Heaney and with Fugard about *Antigone*...and with several other wonderful people such as Brenda Ginelli, who also wrote a *Medea*, and with Marina Carr who wrote her own version of *Antigone* with a play called *Ariel*. As a panel we discussed the future of Greek tragedy. We all agreed that the ancient canon has continued to reflect what is going on today...and that the Greeks will never stop educating people.

Which plays have you translated and adapted and what was your experience? What did you hope to achieve with the production?

I've translated so many of them. I am so close to having translated all thirty-three of them, and I have had so many performed in these last few years. I have translated at least three since 2000. I've also translated Phaedra and Thyestes, both by Seneca.

What did you hope to achieve?

Well, certainly getting the audience to be mad about these plays. Getting students to think about these plays, to finally understand that some of them are the greatest plays ever written. Why shouldn't the Greeks deserve attention? There are a handful of modern critics that say, "Oh, these were just things written by men for men," which is bullshit, frankly. Since I've taught my whole life, my experience with the plays has been different with every class I've had, with every play that I have worked with in a rehearsal room. I can't condense my total life experience into a few sentences. That would be a book in itself, because I'm old, I'm 71 and I've been at the Greeks since I was in grade school at the Catholic convent learning about myths. I've been at it for 65 years! It is pretty hard to reduce that experience into a couple of sentences.

Do you think modern women experience a conflict of interest when working with texts written by men, for men and even performed by men?

Does it even matter? It doesn't matter because in the theatre you have imagination. It's the people without imagination that say, "Oh, you can only write it if you are that person, and that means no man can write about a woman, no White can write about a Black, no Black can write about a White, this is absolutely crazy...look at Shakespeare, look at everyone...it's stupid, stupid, stupid... No, it doesn't matter because if it did matter then male playwrights shouldn't write about women, women playwrights shouldn't write about men, and I believe that is ridiculous. Sue-Ellen Case has railed against modern women working with the Greeks on any level. I wrote a paper, in fact, refuting her. I gave that paper in a seminar series at San Diego State that was subsequently published. I'd be glad to give you a copy. I always tell my students about people such as Sue Ellen Case – people who do not know Greek tragedy, yet comment on the Greeks. People who don't seem to understand how great these roles are for women...I think these people should stick to what they do know.

The ancient Greek plays are full of strong and defiant female characters. A number of these plays were written as a response to wars. As modern women interpret and direct these plays, how do you think they received? Do they offer a modern viewer a deeper understanding of the travesties of war?

I think the plays really speak to modern audiences of both genders. I certainly had success with the *Trojan Women*, produced by Jack O'Brien, at the Old Globe Theatre...

AF ...and you do talk-backs with audiences...

MM ...and I do talk-backs and audiences are totally engaged...

AF ...they show a deep appreciation of your work and of the plays...

MM ...Yes, audiences are totally engaged. Jack O'Brien wanted a woman director, wanted a play about women as a way to celebrate the millennium. He thought it was the most important thing for his theatre to do. That's why he picked *Trojan Women*, in a version that I did in 2000, to initiate the millennium.

Do you think there are gendered responses and desires that relate to war and war-themed dramaturgy?

Yes, women are more often the victims. ... I think women are more interested in relationships. What's that comment? "Man's love is of his life, a thing apart, 'tis a woman's whole existence." Seems pertinent here. I think sometimes male-female relationships are more important to women. I agree with Byron about that, although it is so misogynistic, dammit...

How do you see characters such as Antigone, Hecuba, Helen, Iphigenia and Clytemnestra--

AF Why is Medea left out?

MM Yes, why is Medea left out?

AF Why is Medea left out?

MM You really have to include Medea...

Okay. How do you see characters such as Antigone, Hecuba, Helen, Iphigenia and Clytemnestra and Medea? Do you view them as political, socio-economic, cultural constructs?

MM Well that might take a while to answer. Obviously, *Antigone* represents the right of conscience; Hecuba is brilliant in her vengeance in the play *Hecuba* and a victim in the *Trojan Women*. Helen is a great manipulator-murderess when she's in Egypt. In *Trojan Women* she's the trophy wife in every sense of the word. She becomes *the woman* for whom a war is fought.

AF Also as a victim, because they pinned...

MM ...as victim...

AF ...they pinned the Trojan War on her...

MM ...because they...yes...

AF ...it was greed that...that was really...

MM Men, not women, were to blame for the wars, for economic reasons. Iphigenia is a brilliant, noble heroine in comparison to the base, calculating motivations of Menelaus. He wants sex and he wants his wife back. Clytemnestra's vengeance against Agamemnon for the loss of her daughter was depicted differently in all three plays dealing with her story, so it's hard to say she was this way or that...

AF Yes.

MM In some of the plays she's rather vicious, in other's she is a caring, protective mother. In every single version, she is strong. ...Also, what about Iphigenia in the play, *Iphigenia At Aulis*? This play shows us how corrupt men are and how women, often the noble ones, are often victimised.

It's a brilliant play that unmask Agamemnon and Menelaus, the generals, and shows Iphigenia as a true heroine.

The female characters in the Greek plays are, in my opinion, brilliant. Antigone is a great example of the conscience – a conscience that should be operating with our modern politicians and our corporate leaders but often isn't. I hope it's not too late to save America because we have brought ourselves to such a brink of tragedy and have basically bankrupted this country because of people's greed. How do these people live with themselves?

Hecuba is about vengeance. We've seen vengeance and, really, is vengeance ever good? The character of Hecuba is also a victim in the *Trojan Women* and maybe we can learn from the victimhood more than from her acts of vengeance. *Medea* is another play of vengeance, of getting back at a husband, which...in a way, is like training a dog... you might teach the dog some manners along the way if you slap it into place. The play could be seen as an example that allows men, who know the story of Medea and her cogent arguments, to think twice about brutalizing a woman. Sadly, so often these types of men aren't the playgoers. There's a joke circulating now about Christmas. It goes something like this: "One woman says to another, 'You know, I can just about wrap my mind around the virgin birth, but three wise men?'"

Helen is a perfect metaphor for the Iraqi War. She becomes the theoretical reason the Trojan War was fought. The play today serves as a stand-in for the contemporary "weapons of mass destruction" argument for going into Iraq. According to Euripides in his play *Helen*, Helen never went to Troy. She went instead to Egypt.

Iphigenia at Aulis, as I said, is a play about conscience, about what your ideals are, and asks, does anything ever justify war? And Clytemnestra, a mother who does not want her child sacrificed, is going to fight back. Iphigenia is of course a

true victim of war: her own father sacrifices her. Her father, Agamemnon, happens to be a great general. Why don't we have all the politicians sacrifice their own children first, whenever they declare a war or vote for it, and then let's see how many wars we fight. Clytemnestra did eventually fight back in the only way she knew how in the play *Agamemnon*. It's the code of "an eye for an eye", I mean, the "lex taliones" they call it. There's nothing, I think, that really justifies murder, frankly, and she did murder her husband, for vengeance.

I just read a paper that a student wrote titled, "Is Capital Punishment Justified?" I suggested to her that she read the *Oresteia*. My guess is that if she does read this play she may come up with the answer of "No."

Are these dramatic characters archetypes that girls and women today can relate to?

AF Yes.

MM Yes. Yes, absolutely. There are many times that I have felt like Medea; there are many times that I have been an Antigone; and there are many times I've felt like Clytemnestra... surviving after I lost a child. I know in the Iphigenia story how a mother feels about a lost child, and that was another thing that I used in my woodcutter play. I find I often take something relevant from a Greek tragedy to place into a modern play. So does Fugard in his plays. He's always taken from Greek tragedy. There are certainly archetypes that we – women *and* men--- learn from.

Heracles murders his children because he is driven mad. That madness is like war madness, the post-war traumatic syndrome, which Philoctetes has often been used to illustrate. But it also speaks to that sense of loss, and asks, "How do we live after loss?" Sometimes we survive through friends. Heracles said he would prefer power or wealth to good friends. Which is mad! It's a friend that talks him out of committing suicide. We often need friends and conscience to keep ourselves alive. I think it's a failure of conscience to take your own life. I think it's as bad as committing murder. I can say that, because I was there, I'll admit that to you. If you want to talk more about that we can...I was unconscious for four days after a suicide attempt, and I saw it was the most horrible thing I could do to my kids. I just felt worthless. Nothing justifies suicide.

It seems to me that the Greek understanding of the human consequences of war and the gulf between the public rhetoric and private feelings makes the ancient plays shockingly relevant in our own divided world. Do you agree?

MM Absolutely.

Did you see an analogy to the role of the gods in ancient Greece with contemporary political super-powers?

MM Oh yes. The gods are even less moral than the ordinary citizens. We're facing that right now in the U.S. with the leaders who have totally betrayed their mandate to serve the people. There are still some good leaders, but rarely good politicians. There have only been a few truly great leaders in history in my opinion. Gandhi was one of them. The gods in Euripides' work are the most corrupt and they are most like our politicians. In Euripides' work, gods have power and are much worse than the average citizen. Euripides saw the value in conscience and friendship. Aeschylus pitted god against god, Zeus against Prometheus, who brought the fire of inspiration to man.

It is interesting when women perform the male and female roles, by the way. There are women's theatre groups such as Takara Zuka that produce the ancient plays with all-female casts. I had a wonderful woman in *Ajax* play Menelaus. She was feisty and absolutely wonderful.

Do these productions suggest that there's a system of thought based on values, characteristics, and behaviour believed to be the best in human beings?

MM Well, yes, and that's why Plato and Socrates would rarely miss a performance.

AF Yes, but it's not a system of thought. It's a social system that should be based on the best of human behaviour...

MM Yeah, yeah, it is, it is. A political system should be based on man's moral actions, because happiness, as Aristotle said, is an activity of the soul based on human excellence, which is also based on the good of man. Greek philosophy, Aristotle and Plato, and even Socrates it was said, never missed a production. These ancient plays were intended to educate citizens, allowing people to think about social and emotional problems. Ironically, sometimes the tragedy came from ignoring some of the lessons offered. "Everything in moderation" is written above the temple at Delphi. However, it's often "everything in excess" that we see in practice.

How do modern female artists interpret the concept of "barbaric" onstage?

AF Barbaric?

MM Well, what a perfect question. Don't we have "barbarians" right now? Don't we Americans consider ourselves to be the "civilised" Americans who have gone over to Iraq to destroy these "barbaric Islamic hordes."

AF Yes, exactly right.

MM ...this...this has never changed, we consider the barbarian someone we don't understand, someone who's slightly different from us, and basically, usually, it turns out that the "civilised" one is more barbaric.

AF Yes.

MM I'm going to take Euripides' point of view here...the Greeks liked to think of themselves as civilised, but the plays are great illustrations of how they aren't. I'm so glad you're coming to see my production of *Helen* today. I believe it shows how we demonise the "other" and yet the "other" is often more civilised than the so-called civilised. The same thing could be said with Andromache. She was regarded as a barbarian because she was among the Trojans, yet she's much more civilised than the murderer and murderess, Orestes and Hermione, two so-called civilised Greeks. You see that in the *Cyclops* too. The *Cyclops* is regarded as a barbarian, but all he does is eat his guests who come to steal from him. When not eating guests, he just eats cattle or has milk and cheeses and things like that. Yes, he's a cannibal, but only when it comes to protecting his property. They say "Eat your prey" and since others were preying on the *Cyclops* initially...Odysseus comes, fresh from destroying Troy for no reason at all... exactly analogous to our modern Iraq... Odysseus comes back from killing all these people and accuses the *Cyclops* of being a barbarian.

Where, and when, did you first encounter the Greek plays: school, university, in Greece, and in what versions?

MM Well, I encountered them in a convent, when I was in kindergarten and first grade, because the Catholic school I was in based their children's stories on myths. I grew up with myths. Those nuns knew Greek myths were darn good for teaching lessons to kids.

Do you speak/read modern and/or ancient Greek?

AF All.

MM All of the above. Much better in ancient Greek, though. But I can muddle through the modern...

Did you use particular study aids?

MM Yes...

AF The original texts.

MM The original texts, you've got it! Also, I had great teachers that really drilled it in. You do a little bit each day, a little translating and studying of the text, not just at one sitting. You can't just sit down and say "Oh, let's have a go at Greek," and think you're going to do it. You have to work at it constantly in short spurts. It requires constant practice.

AF And a good dictionary.

MM And a good dictionary. I also have a grammar book. I always have a grammar book by my side whenever I'm doing a translation. In fact, when I'm doing a translation I have a dictionary, grammar book and notes from scholars that I respect.

In your opinion, how do the women in Greek tragedy compare with the representations in the plays of other major Greek playwrights?

AF Well, firstly, let's just say that nothing in Shakespeare equals the Greeks ...the relevance of...or the portraits of...

MM Shakespeare is an outright misogynist in comparison to the Greeks.

AF Yes, that's right.

MM The Greeks have some of the best representations of women. Also worth mentioning is Mamet, who writes about...

AF He may be the first playwright in modern times, after the Greeks...to actually... start to try and understand a woman's predicament...

MM Yes.

AF Ibsen.

MM Ibsen. That's true.

AF He dragged women into twentieth-century theatre.

MM That's true. Fugard has used a lot of his plays to investigate issues of equality and gender, and he represents women beautifully, dimensionally. It's a rare modern playwright that has been fair to women.

AF Okay, okay...thank you!

Second Interview: Marianne McDonald

I'm interested in the reception of the ancient Greeks today, especially for contemporary women

MM As am I.

My question to you is this: What do you think modern women see and experience by watching the ancient Greek plays? Also, why do you think female artists and scholars are turning to the Greeks?

MM Audiences today – female audiences – are benefitting from the opportunity of seeing strong female characters interact onstage. Characters that are really some of the most assertive and powerful roles we've ever had in drama are being performed by women onstage all over the world. For instance, there is Antigone – a woman who follows her conscience. There is Alcestes, whose example women wouldn't necessarily want to follow, but if they did, they will know that the consequences of certain actions will end in disaster. The Greeks offer women today a chance to think about big questions. Philosophical questions such as “Under what circumstances would you give your life for a husband? A lover? A child?” I must say, if a situation arose where Athol (Fugard) appeared to be in jeopardy, I would certainly choose to protect him, even if that meant giving my life for him. I think he'd give his life for me... it's human instinct to protect those we love.

Many of the ancient plays are war-themed dramas written during great wars by men who fought in these wars. Do you think women today stand to learn anything new about themselves, their roles within the context of war, by watching images of women written some 2500 years ago?

MM I think they will absolutely learn things. Women can watch strong women dealing with the tragedies of war.

Do you think men in ancient Greece, coming back from wars, found it easier to watch plays that featured females in the central roles?

MM That's an interesting question. I think ordinary women in their daily lives in ancient Greece performed tasks such as attending to births, attending to funerals, and lamenting for the dead in public. Obviously, female characters in the plays held many additional roles - roles that women would not have held in ordinary life. Yet the plays succeeded and the male audiences were entertained. The men had returned from war, no doubt, full of grief and war-related trauma... Some would say that the men underwent catharsis by watching these plays. So yes, the men probably did find it easier to watch the plays with the female characters experiencing grief, openly mourning. These were not things that men could have done openly, but were acceptable in the theatre. Lamenting was so important. It was the basis of the chorus in Greek tragedy. In a way, the choruses made up of older male choruses feminised the men by making them appear weak. You would never have seen choruses of vibrant men except, perhaps, in *Philoctetes*...

Do you know the name Jonathan Shay?

MM Oh yes, I do.

He's written several books on the effects of combat-related stress and has modelled these books after Homer's Iliad and Odyssey.

MM I am familiar with Shay. He is a psychologist and not really a Greek scholar... I think he is a male chauvinist by not also focusing on the women who suffer Post Traumatic Stress Disorder when they come back from combat. *The Trojan Women*, I think, would be an excellent play to offer female troops coming back with PTSD. It certainly shows what happens to the women after a war... My guess is that men return from war today, get stressed out, reach a breaking point, and shoot their women... That's part of the Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. And our society says, "Oh, those poor men – traumatized by bravely defending our country in war." That's why I believe it is important that you are doing this research.

Thank you. It's been very interesting speaking with women all over the world who are directing, translating, adapting and performing in the ancient Greek plays. Women who are translators and scholars, such as yourself, who are talking about the female archetypes found within these plays, are extraordinarily interesting to study, interview, and write about. Are you familiar with the work of British theatre director, Katie Mitchell?

MM Of course! Her work with the Greek plays is very smart, very relevant for a modern audience full of both women and men. I've never met her, but I would like to.

Is there a specific play that offers a particularly strong anti-war message to audiences today?

MM *Iphigenia at Aulis* is a wonderfully illustrative play, about sacrificing a young girl who becomes, in a way, a symbol for all the young girls that are going to die in war.

Do you see contemporary productions of the ancient Greek plays as a response to modern war?

MM Yes. *Iphigenia* offers us a look at a girl who sacrifices herself for her country. Modern self-sacrifice can be related to female suicide bombers in certain parts of the world, especially in the Middle East. And, of course, the IRA has examples of this too.

Did the IRA use women as suicide bombers?

MM Oh yes. Women have volunteered for this sort of mission in Ireland. They consider it an honour.

What message do you see the ancient Greeks offering to modern politicians?

MM If politicians had to give up a son or daughter as a condition of sending their country to war, things would be very different in the world today. If male leaders

of countries had to sacrifice one of their children in the way Agamemnon did in *Iphigenia*, there might be a lot of rethinking of how many wars these political leaders would engage in. If women were political leaders and had to sacrifice a child they had given birth to, the political landscape today would be very, very different. There's a great line in the *Phoenician Women* that says, "When it comes time to vote (for war), and each person saw their own death, no one would vote for war." Some of the best anti-war arguments are found within *Phoenician Women*.

What is your memory of the first experience you had translating a production of an ancient Greek play?

MM

It was a production of *Antigone* that I had translated. Athol Fugard directed. We did the show with a group of students. I was absolutely thrilled. I loved the process; I loved working with the actors, being in the rehearsal room, and working with Athol so closely. It was a joint project for the two of us. I loved his craft. The technical skills he'd developed over the years, starting in South Africa, were so impressive. I've written an article on Fugard the director that was published in a South African journal. The article details how Fugard lets his actors make their own choices – good and not so great - to begin with. He encourages them to bring something of value... Then he gradually begins to shape the performances and the play itself for the final product. People that he works with really love him as a director. He and I were in a program, too, where we were sort of fighting with the other directors a bit. They were jealous of our work and didn't seem to want us to have success with the students. Martin Gordon from Yale came to see the final product and we had a killer performance that day. It just was wonderful. To see the values coming across in a production in Ireland was exciting. We had the lead actress play a feisty, lower-class woman who grew up in Belfast. We imagined she was tortured when she would go on public transportation, for being a Catholic. And there she was, telling Kreon off. The actor playing the son spoke with a British accent. It was a mixed cast of all these different people...

That's interesting.

MM

Actually, the one who played Kreon was magnificent. Athol had wanted him to make Kreon believable, not to demonise him. The actor was successful at that. That made the play all that much more interesting. There were two social points of view represented onstage, facing off against each other. One was a Black gay man from New York who worked in a ghetto keeping kids in line because he was a teacher. He was wonderful. The characters are really shattered at the end of the play when they both suffer the consequences of their actions. Antigone is punished by the law that she violates, Kreon by the family that he loves. His defeat is even more devastating in a way. He really falls apart at the end. To see this man so in control at the beginning, so convinced about the rightness of his decision and then at the end of the play we see how misguided he was, painted a

powerful portrait of decline. The misogyny that he expressed in the line "...to be defeated by a woman" caused some to laugh, but the sting was also potent. Greek tragedy, full of bright and powerful women, can bring strong men to their knees. The Greek plays have become a wonderful tool for helping modern women realise the ultimate power they possess. That's why I don't like the Sue Ellen Cases of the world – scholars who know nothing about the Greeks but choose to use them as a way to make a name for themselves.

Are you referring to Sue Ellen Case, the American lesbian feminist scholar, who has suggested that the ancient Greeks have nothing to offer modern women because women were virtually invisible in Greece at that time?

MM Yes, that is who I am referring to. I also take exception with Jonathan Shay for coming onto the scene, as it were, and saying "Well, it's all about war games, so let's try and harness Greek tragedy." If there's anything you can't harness in the defence of war, it is Greek tragedy. Shay writes about Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, offering that this syndrome is the primary disease or emotional fall-out from war. I believe the beginning of any war is the disease!

Let's talk for a moment about representation of women in the plays. Any female characters you would like to talk about?

MM I've often been tempted to translate *Lysistrata* but have not done so yet. She is a character that fascinates me.

What is it about that character that interests you? Do you think that play still works for a modern audience?

MM I loved the *Lysistrata Project* – a great example of modern women all over the world getting together to read or produce this play, as an anti-war statement against the 2003 invasion of Iraq. It was a powerful example of women taking a stand against the war – a nice parallel with the female characters in the play who are opposed to war and take a stand (refusing to have sex with their husbands until there is peace) and modern women opposed to war (producing the *Lysistrata Project*). I think *Lysistrata* is exactly what I'm going to translate next. It will be fun to modernize the dirty jokes and to bring them up to date.

*There's a professor at University of Detroit in Michigan named Arthur Beer. He is also a professional actor, director, translator and adaptor of ancient Greek plays. I had the opportunity to see his translation and adaptation of *Lysistrata* last summer on the island of Spetses in Greece. He not only translated, adapted and directed the production, but he was also in it. The rest of the cast were either American theatre students or American professional actors. I liked his version of the play a great deal. His focus was less on dirty jokes and more on the anti-war sentiment of the play. He was particularly critical of President Bush.*

MM Well, that's it exactly. Obama, however, is a wonderful choice for president, but is he getting us out of war right away? I'm afraid there will always be war, so there will always be a place for an anti-war play. That said, you certainly can't do an Obama parody. But Sarah Palin would be fair game. She'd be great as the Spartan character, you know... the one who is aggressive, and they compliment her on her tits at one point... And you could see her muscles and... she could have a gun. Politics today remain very sexist. Look at how Hillary Clinton was treated during her run for the nomination by both women and men. It was appalling. Then along came Sarah Palin! To see that woman portrayed as a symbol of a strong woman... Oh, God! Playing into the whole male agenda... A strong woman does not to play into social extremes.

Thank you. Are there contemporary writers translating or adapting the Greeks today that you think are doing a really good job or a really bad job of it?

MM Do you know Chuck Mee? I take exception to his version of *The Bacchae*. Agave is the heroine of this play, the tragic heroine. What could possibly be worse than a mother carrying her son's head from this God, this shitty man, who basically wants to punish her? Agave needs to lament her dead son. And what does Mee do in his version? He portrays the Bacchae as a group of women who want to go out and kill all men. It seems that Chuck Mee regards women in a very negative light. He tortures them routinely in his plays.

Do you speak/read modern and/or ancient Greek?

MM I speak and read many languages. Ancient Greek is just one of the languages I am fluent in. I don't think you have to know Greek to be a good director of the Greeks. One of my directors, Douglas Lay, does not know Greek. For that matter, nor does Athol, but he consults with me all the time about things that are Greek or Greek-related. I have translated passages from *Oedipus* and Ovid for him. What annoys me are the people who claim to have done a 'translation' - such as Chuck Mee - but who are really creating scripts based loosely on an ancient Greek play. I personally don't want to do versions of the Greeks. Why should I? The Greeks are so good themselves.

Your translations are extremely contemporary and accessible for a modern audience.

MM Thank you. That is my intention.

What do you say to playwrights who are using the Greeks for inspiration?

MM Write your own play and trust yourself. That's what Velina Hasu Houston has done so beautifully. She writes her own plays and will pull in a character or a reference that is Greek, but you always feel that she is writing in her own voice, with a point of view that is authentic. She knows to discriminate. In her *House of*

Chaos play, even the Medea character becomes Houston's unique construction. Her play *Tea* is even better.

Tea is a beautiful and moving play.

MM And the play with the Hiroshima Maidens is...

Are you referring to Houston's play, 'Calling Aphrodite'?

MM Yes. That is such a powerful play. Houston has placed Aphrodite at the center of things, but it is not a play about Aphrodite. This play is a wonderful example of something that references the Greeks without co-opting the Greeks.

Why do you think the Greeks used women as central characters in their dramaturgy?

MM I think Greek men feared women because women gave birth and seemed to have access to special powers. The irrational and the emotional are not states that men allowed themselves to enter. The males prided themselves on being rational but they were human beings and they obviously needed an outlet for their emotional sides. Female characters allowed that other side to come out. In the *Bacchae* you have Dionysus saying "Your problem Pentheus is that you're too rational and you're not in touch with your emotional side." Without an emotional release, the men will be torn apart... Literally. Part of the reason that female roles were played by men, I believe, was to keep the Greek women sheltered and not stigmatized as being 'loose women'. In 5th century Athens, men did not want women to be that sexually interesting. Men would not have liked their wives or daughters going into the theatre.

John Winkler has written an interesting book called *The Constraints of Desire: The Anthropology of Sex and Gender in Ancient Greece*. Winkler looks at the historic shifts in perspective regarding sexuality and how certain norms and practices of what counts as sexual activity have varied significantly over time. Winkler talks about young boys using a croaking sound in their voice. The Greeks called this sound *Trigurdia*, tragedy, like a goat voice, goat song. Another interesting example is that of Herakles who is transformed into a woman in childbirth in *The Women of Trachis*. At the end of the play, he must put on a cloak that his wife has given him. This cloak is intended to help him gain back his passion for his wife because Herakles has kidnapped his lover, Iole, to bring her home as a concubine. In the end, Herakles is destroyed by his passion. He becomes like a suffering woman and screams in pain. He is forced to experience the pain of the woman who gives birth. The cloak symbolises the externalisation of his passion, in a certain sense.

What do you think this story exemplified for Greek citizens in the fifth century BCE?

MM I think that these were parables for citizens to be careful of women. They were frightened of women, and they dramatised how powerful women could be.

What, if anything, can women today learn from these plays?

MM Women today can learn from watching or working on these plays. As women explore different social and gender roles with each passing century, the ancient plays offer examples of women asserting influence, power, leadership, comradeship, sexuality, love and pain. Women can adopt these strong characteristics in life now, not just as a character onstage in an ancient Greek play.

Interview with Roula Pateraki (Greece)

This interview took place over the telephone. Peggy Shannon was at Hydrama Arts Centre, on Hydra, Greece and Roula Pateraki was at her home in Athens, Greece. The date was July 13, 2009.

Do you think women directors, playwrights, designers and actors are turning to the ancient Greeks today? Why did you turn to the ancient Greeks?

I was first introduced to the ancient Greek writers when I was ten years old and I was in a play. At eighteen, I began drama school.

The ancient drama reveals both the masculine and the feminine. Both men and women are turning to the ancient Greek plays – in fact, there are many women today working as directors. This is no longer unusual. It is something very common.

Do you see the contemporary work as a response to modern war?

Do you mean, is the ancient drama relevant to modern war? Not always. Sometimes yes. Sometimes no. The ancient plays that were to do with war allow more easily for contemporary production choices. *Persians* would be a good play to modernise.

What do you think the ancient plays offer to a modern audience?

I like the *Oedipus* plays very much because they have a lineage of themes: an ancient crime that invades civilisation. I am not sure that all the ancient plays offer modern audiences relevant themes today – but they do offer large themes and magnificent poetry. The ancient plays were based on traditions stemming from the fifth century BCE. Some of the themes and mythologies found in the plays may be peculiar for modern audiences to witness; many times it has not been easy to make them relevant for modern audiences. Why women – and men – are turning to these plays now has a lot to do with the fact that they are literary masterpieces, they are musical, full of poetry.

Which of the plays resonate most for you? Which plays have you adapted or used in your own work?

Oedipus, not because of Freud, but because of the ancient themes – I love how the playwright used the metre; the thoughts, also, are very large, not small and frozen.

Which plays have you directed or adapted? What was your experience?

Oedipus at Kolonus and *Oedipus Tyrinus*. I directed and translated both of these plays and placed the second one, *Oedipus Tyrinus* into the first play, *Oedipus at Kolonus*, making it one play, three and a half hours long. I used the memory of Antigone guiding Oedipus at Kolonus and examined how she remembered the glory and the memory of her father. The setting that I chose was something between modern and ancient – it was very theatrical. I used twenty-two

people in the chorus. Although I had a choreographer, I knew exactly how each chorus member would move – I could demonstrate this with my body.

Do you think modern women experience a conflict of interest when working with texts written by men, for men, and even performed by men? Does it even matter?

It is true that women's ideas are different from the male perspective. But for me, I simply begin with the text. I do not know where the text will lead me. Perhaps my mind is different than a man's mind. I don't know. Many times, however, I have heard that my productions seem to have been directed by a man. Also, many times I have seen productions directed by other women that seemed to have been directed by a man. There was something masculine about these productions.

Do you think there are gendered responses and desires that relate to war and war-themed dramaturgy?

It is hard to say. I know that I am a woman, yet I relate to the poetry through the language, through the themes, characters, myths.

How do modern female artists interpret the concept of "barbaric" onstage? In fact, what does 'barbaric' mean to you?

Medea speaks like the others. She even looks like the others. Her behaviour, however, is what I think is barbaric, much like Electra's behaviour. These two women are not really all that different. Electra plots to kill her mother, Clytemnestra, to revenge her father's death at the hands of her mother. Medea kills her children. Both women are barbaric in their murderous actions. It is, I believe, their physical actions that set them apart, that make them barbaric.

Where and when and how did you first encounter the Greek plays -- school, university, in Greece, and in what versions.

Drama school was when I first encountered the ancient Greek plays, apart from the time I acted in an ancient drama at the age of ten. When I was little, I was fascinated with *Alice in Wonderland* and not with Greek mythology. The ancient myths came later for me.

Do you speak/read modern and/or ancient Greek?

Yes, I speak and write ancient Greek. It was standard for Greek students to learn ancient Greek and study the Greek poets, philosophers and ancient history.

Anything else you would like me to know about your background as a director?

I was much more impressed with the Scandinavian dramas of Strindberg than of Euripides, Sophocles and Aeschylus. I was introduced to Strindberg as a student at drama school, even attending Strindberg Festivals. This had a profound impact on my thinking. I developed, over

time, a system of acting – a method, if you will – that encouraged actors to communicate with their bodies and not with their words. I discovered this method through my interaction with Strindberg, but have applied this physical technique to all plays that I direct or act in. So you see, I began as an actor. Then I became a teacher. This led me to becoming a director. I wanted to work in a certain way, a more physical way. I had my own school, which I called *A View of Dramatic Art* and now I teach at two schools in Athens: *Akis Davis* and *Akme*. My acting colleagues, collaborators and I have a company that we call the *Dramatic School*. When I work with companies such as the National Theatre, I can bring one or two of my actors, but for the most part work with the company members of that company. When my company has money, we produce our own work.

Interview with Corinna Seeds (Greece)

This interview was conducted in July 2009 at Hydrama Theatre Centre in Greece.

Do you think women directors, playwrights, designers and actors are turning to the Ancient Greeks today?

The Greeks provide an exciting vehicle through which to examine the tragedy of war through women's laments.

The themes of the plays have always been timeless – and remain timely. They deal with issues of power/gender/sacrifice/war/jealousy/vengeance/sex/power/homelessness/refugee/xenophobia – however it is only recently that there have been translations that have made them more accessible to us. Most of us are not ancient Greek scholars and older translations were not inspiring). The recent translations have involved understanding of the poetry and its rhythm. Our attitude towards these plays has evolved from regarding them as sacred and difficult texts to viewing them as exciting artistic devices, presenting exciting artistic possibilities.

We are now all willingly – or unwillingly – involved in wars that we largely do not understand nor were willingly involved in. As artists we feel a responsibility to express our feelings about these wars. The ancient Greeks wrote plays during wars by soldiers for soldiers during a background of war. Their aim was to educate, warn, entertain and cleanse soldiers and the texts are as poignantly relevant today. These texts therefore offer a structure through which to examine the reasons for and the consequences of warmongering. They are no longer plays just for reading

Many of them involve lengthy laments for the consequences of war and aggression and these are mainly expressed through the female choruses and strong female lead characters. In the latter part of the twentieth century and now in the twenty first century, there have been some brilliant translations that have made the texts far more accessible to a modern audience. Also brilliant female leads. With limited copyright protection we have more or less carte blanche to do what we want with the texts and with our productions. Few people in the audience have the knowledge of the original texts and simply appreciate the changes between (our) youthful passion and older wisdom inherent in the stories and themes. That said, adaptations that have been experimental daring and foolhardy are not always successful or accepted by the audience when they have strayed too far from the original work or message.

Do you see the contemporary work as a response to modern war? If so, how?

Since the onset of the Gulf wars Bush...Under Nazi rule... In occupied territories... Brecht and Anouilh both chose Sophocles' *Antigone* as a response to WWII. The Gulf Wars resulted in a spate of productions, mainly of Euripides' plays. The contemporary productions most recently performed are Euripides' *Hecuba* and *Trojan Women* and Aeschylus' *Persians*. And of course the simultaneous world-wide readings and productions of Aristophanes' *Lysistrata* as part of the *The Lysistrata Project* was a direct response to the Gulf War.

Which of the plays resonate most for you? Why?

Medea and *The Bacchae* – in order to begin to understand the plays we need to access our instincts, examine our primitive and barbaric responses and imaginations that confront us. Without primitive emotions and vengeance and questions and explorations...these are dangerous plays with no easy answers – only dangerous questions...therefore we need to look into our deep ‘forbidden areas’...to confront secrets and raw unwelcome emotions within us which we dare not speak of...

In your opinion, which of the plays/playwrights resonate most for a contemporary audience? And why.

The comedies *Lysistrata*, *Peace* and *Birds* and the tragedy, *Trojan Women* resonate most for a contemporary audience. Although there are more obvious parallels with Aeschylus’ *Persians* and the Iraq war it is a harder play to understand and communicate to a modern audience. Euripides’ plays are certainly the most popular – probably for the same reasons that made him unpopular in his lifetime. He confronts us with the tragic consequences of war – with female suffering; with mothers mourning; with lamenting female choruses - as opposed to the glory of war and the issues of sacrifice and sacrificing our loved ones.

Which plays have you tackled? What was your experience? What had you hoped to achieve and did you get there?

In recent years I have been working mainly with student actors – my aim has been to make them realise the power and significance and resounding influence of Greek theatre and its relevance to their daily lives as well as on understanding the influence on all Western theatre. Yes I have achieved this – students are amazed at the continuing relevance of the plays to contemporary emotions and moral dilemmas both on personal issues, moral choices and warmongering. Above all, perhaps my aim is to show the excitement of Greek drama...the exciting dramatic and infinite possibilities of Greek theatre.

Do you think modern women experience a conflict of interest when working with texts written by men, for men, and even performed by men? Does it even matter?

Inevitably, there is some conflict of interest (particularly when approaching the plays of Aeschylus) as these plays are not only written by men but are mostly translated by men (with some notable recent exceptions) but also aimed at a male audience and judged by males. It should not matter any more so than working with texts by Shakespeare, Harold Pinter and other significant male writers. The conflict of interest is more cultural and ethical – how to understand the cultural and historical background that produced these plays. The gender of the writer should be irrelevant. The conflict of interest is not so much gender-related but cultural. The Greek plays were not actually anti-war – we are taking these plays and reading them so that they put across the message we want them to have...they were not anti-war. Understanding the actual text and sub-text and references and choosing the most apt translation and rhythm of the chosen play are the challenging part of the production rather than the gender issues.

Ancient Greek plays are full of strong and defiant female characters. A number of these plays were written as a response to historical wars. As modern women interpret and direct these plays,

how are they received and do they offer a modern lens through which to view and comprehend the travesties of war?

The plays are interpreted and produced and received as anti-war plays (although they are not), particularly Aeschylus' *Persians*, and Euripides' *Trojan Women*.

Do you think there are gendered responses and desires that relate to war and war-themed dramaturgy?

Yes...In general women empathise with the victims and their suffering and men relate to the aggressors (and their suffering). It is therefore difficult for an actress to portray characters that are aggressors as well as victims, such as Medea or Clytemnestra and Electra. And these characters are more difficult for the audience to understand.

How do you see characters such as Antigone, Hecuba, Helen, Iphigenia, and Clytemnestra being mobilised to respond to historical, political, socio-economic, cultural constructs, contexts, and events?

Patience and then vengeance of Hecuba and Clytemnestra; the willing self-sacrifice of Iphigenia; Antigone and Ismene are no better at dealing with the war because their desire for vengeance still make them victims of events which are outside their control. Still puppets in a larger picture and their acts only prolong the suffering. And perpetuate the cycle of killing and retribution and war. Their message is not that the killing must stop...only Lysistrata's character offers a humane alternative.

Are these dramatic characters archetypes that girls and women today can relate to?

University of California, Davis used to send summer drama programmes to Hydrama where I serve as Executive Director. In my experience, these students rarely felt any affinity or association with the complexity of the characters of Medea or Hecuba – they were too far removed from their experience and age. However, they felt a close affinity with Iphigenia's innocence and with Antigone's passion and recklessness. The complexity of characters of Medea, Agave and Clytemnestra are not easy for young women to relate to as they delve into unwelcome aspects of our characters. Perhaps Antigone and Iphigenia's "fifteen minutes of fame"... I often wonder if modern day counterparts would be entering reality game shows...whether it's on the level of their wanting their names to be remembered. Their 15 minutes of fame...famous for 15 minutes. And I don't think there is a woman alive who can't relate to Medea's words on marriage...

It seems to me that the Greek understanding of the human consequences of war and of the gulf between the public rhetoric and private feelings makes the ancient plays shockingly relevant in our own divided world. Do you agree with this statement? Please elaborate.

Yes

Do you see any analogy to the role of gods in ancient Greece with contemporary political superpowers?

A case can be made for this – however it is simplistic and dangerous. The Greek Gods were immortal and all powerful – superpowers thankfully are mortal. They are all powerful entities. But the danger in this interpretation is that the gods were all powerful – which our superpowers should not be allowed to be – and they were immortal – The representatives of our superpowers are not...We vote them in and we have the power to vote them out – not the case with the gods. Humans were powerless against the will of the gods – we are not powerless against the will of our rulers (although it seems so...)

Are modern productions of Ancient Greek plays providing a context in which to view the ravages of war?

Yes- only to an extent – they provide a context in which to examine the death and mourning and emotional suffering of war – but not the physical ravages of war – unless video footage etc. is used. The plays themselves can provide a jumping off point but they need to be extensively and imaginatively adapted (as in Peter Sellars' *Persians*) and this can cause protests from purists. Whilst modern audiences can easily accept the plays being put in different time settings and some variance of the scripts more experimental productions such as Marmarinos' *Andromache* and Vassiliev's *Medea* resulted in massive walk-outs when they were performed in Epidaurus – Vassiliev's production was loudly booed in the summer of 2008 and if tomatoes had been available they would have been thrown...

Do these productions suggest that there is a system of thought based on values, characteristics, and behaviour believed to be best in human beings?

No, I think contemporary productions show the conflicts, inner turmoil and failings of humans and their striving to deal with their circumstances and present us with dilemmas and questions rather than suggesting a system of thought or ideal behaviour. They do raise pertinent questions about war and suffering which are particularly topical...but they do not offer solutions. They show the pitfalls of “worst” behaviour and raise dilemmas – but no I do not think they suggest a best system of thought.

How do you see modern female artists grappling with the notion of barbarism onstage?

There are only a few plays in which female artists need to do this – actually in *Bacchae* and with the chorus of the Furies in the *Oresteia* are the only plays that come to mind – and I think in that play Terzopoulos' approach – of remembering our genetic /DNA/ body history and understanding and entering a state ecstasy are the keys to that...

Where and when and how did you first encounter the Greek plays -- school, university, in Greece, and in what versions.

In the manner of many long-suffering schoolchildren I attended a largely unmemorable performance of *The Frogs* at Cambridge University. My next encounter was unforgettable – I

was a cast member in reading extracts from the *Trojan Women* and *Lysistrata* at a massive rally in protest against the Greek dictatorship in April 1968 (alongside Melina Mercouri) in London's Trafalgar Square – it was my first realisation of the power of the ancient Greek plays. I spent three years at one of the top English drama schools and ancient Greek theatre was not referenced. This is shockingly still the case and we should endeavour to change this.

Do you know Greek?

My mother is Greek-Egyptian and I am fluent in modern Greek and I have lived a largely hermitic existence on a Greek island for the past twenty years where my life revolves around the climate and elements and have resulted in my prayers to Poseidon for calm seas. I “know Greek” in the sense that I understand Greek culture and am immersed in it.

Did you use particular study aids?

My strongest “study aid” is that of living in Greece – deeply understanding the culture and scenery – the need for gods/a dependency on climate. I believe that however much the plays are studied and analysed they can only truly be understood by experiencing Greece – her landscape, setting where they were written and watched. In order to understand the ancient plays we need to first study the myths and legends and the thoughts behind them. In order to do that we need to understand and experience the land conditions that gave rise to the need for those legends. Standing next to an olive tree, seeing a thunderstorm, physically experiencing the heat and barren land, standing on the Acropolis and visiting Epidaurus are all important study aids. Studying, rehearsing and performing in outdoor amphitheatres for an audience who although familiar with the Greek myths may not have read or studied the plays or ever seen them performed.

For my students, I find showing films ranging from Woody Allen's *Mighty Aphrodite* to Cacoyiannis *Iphigenia* to be useful study aids. Allen's *Mighty Aphrodite* helps students view the text not as sacred and depressing but as a way to comment on modern situations. Students have wept openly at *Iphigenia*...

Interview with Theodora Skipitares (USA)

This interview took place over the telephone on December 10, 2008. Theodora Skipitares resides in New York.

You are an amazing artist with an extraordinary range of solo works and huge performance pieces featuring 300 puppets. Have you found it difficult to fund your work?

Once I began performing my work publicly, I knew I wanted to keep doing it. I had no idea who would fund it so I paid for it myself. I never found a way of getting the attention of regional theatres and that is why I have continued to self produce at least one show a year. I am always looking for ways to fund my work. I have worked as an Adjunct Professor for many years at New York University and just this year was offered a full time position at the Pratt Institute.

Do you think women directors, playwrights, designers and actors are turning to the ancient Greeks today? Why did you turn to the ancient Greeks?

I have a very particular reason for turning to the Greeks. For about eighteen years, from 1982 through 2000, I made work that involved myself, puppets, and socially and/or historically relevant themes. I used puppets because they offered an emptiness, an innocence if you will, that allowed an audience to connect emotionally, intellectually and viscerally with the work. During this time, I amassed a great deal of documentary work. Then, in 1999, I had the good fortune to go to India on a Fulbright. I had wanted, for some time, to see first-hand traditional art forms that were still being practiced, that were very much part of the fabric of a culture. India's long, unbroken line of culture, of myth, of folklore was all around me. While there, I slowly began to confront the fact that I had avoided traditional storytelling in my own work. I had been against using a narrative with a beginning, middle, and an end. When I returned to the States, I began to embrace the notion of telling a story in a more narrative, linear way.

Having come back from such a rich environment in India, I began to look at myth anew. Each one of the Indian stories is parsed into many parts and told and retold in many ways. I became fascinated with myths. By 2002, I became extremely interested in fragments of myths – rather than entire myths. In particular, Robert Graves' fragments intrigued me. In 2003, I made *Helen*. I went to the Euripides' *Helen* because she was by far the most interesting of the Helens. This Helen was an excuse. Zeus wanted a war, Hera made a cloud to represent Helen and stashed her away in Egypt. Very theatrical. Very mythic. This seemed perfect for puppet theatre.

A true turning point in my relationship with the ancient Greeks came when I received a call from Ten Thousand Things, Inc. in Minneapolis. This is a theatre company whose mission is to “bring lively, intelligent theatre to people with little access to the wealth of the arts – who in turn help us to re-imagine theater.”⁵⁶⁶ This company, which performs in homeless shelters, prisons, and low-income housing projects using professional actors and artists to invigorate ancient tales and classic stories, knew of my work and contacted me with an offer I couldn't refuse. I was asked if there was a piece I would like to create. I had been reading *Iphigenia*, so I immediately suggested *Iphigenia in Aulis*.

⁵⁶⁶ <http://www.tenthousandthings.org/mission.html>

The Minneapolis experience was great. I had the opportunity to work with a company dedicated to innovative productions of classic texts. I was given great union actors to work with and a long rehearsal process, which was very important to me. We created the play and toured it to prisons. The response was amazing. Many people watched it and cried. Eventually I brought the piece to New York. I was stunned to see that audiences in a big city also cried. I realized then it was the power of the story held within Iphigenia that seemed to resonate for everyone. For women in prison it spoke to their captivity, their sacrifices. For people on the outside it spoke to a terrible sense of American sacrifice and military imperialism. I did read in a recent magazine poll that Greece was number one in its anti-American sentiment. It's pretty ironic that a lot of us are turning to the Greeks to make sense of American (war-related) politics.

Do you see the contemporary work as a response to modern war?

I think the increase in ancient Greek productions is absolutely a direct result of the war in Iraq. I have been battling with a production of *Trojan Women* in Riker's Island Prison with women prisoners. When I started this project, I thought it was going to be extremely easy to get these inmates to relate to the major themes of the play. Themes such as "I once was great, but now my world has ended and I'm stuck in this cell waiting to be shipped off" should have been an easy connect for these women. I even brought Tina Turner's song, "I Mighta been Queen," into the rehearsal hall thinking that I could use the song to motivate the women. What I found out really surprised me. The women didn't like the play. They didn't like the song. They didn't want to get up and act out *Trojan Women*. You know what these women craved more than anything else? Writing! These are women who read at a 4th grade level and all they wanted to do was write.

Why do you think women are turning to the Greeks now?

With the war in Iraq, more and more women have turned to the Greeks. Think about it. Ancient Greece was the very embodiment of a war culture. We still don't know for sure if women were present at the shows. It remains hotly contested by academics. We do know that the best seats were held for returning vets. I have also read research that suggests that some of the choreography of the ancient chorus' was based on military formations.

Which of the plays resonate most for you? Which plays have you adapted or used in your own work?

Euripides is the only one I'm really interested in. His writing is more quirky. He seems to take more risks. He breaks down barriers and delves into some interesting psychology. To be perfectly honest, I have never really liked *Trojan Women*. I find it boring – just a chunk of monologues with some of those women sounding very whiny.

Euripides' plays resonate most for a contemporary audience, hands down. He is the most interesting playwright to me. His stories are more interesting and the women's roles are great. He is more interested in the psychology of the character and their actions.

Which plays have you directed or adapted? What was your experience?

Iphigenia at Aulis was his last play and it was unfinished. I found it to be incredibly pure and so easy emotionally. But the character of Iphigenia is also shocking and very tricky in a way. She is so deeply betrayed by her father. She goes off to her tent and then comes back in a short while deciding to be a martyr for Greece. She becomes a messenger for imperialism. How does someone do that so quickly?

Medea

Trilogy was something that I worked on over a period of three years. *Iphigenia* was done last. *Helen* and *Odyssey* are much more me the playwright. Made up of bits and pieces that are glued together. *Iphigenia* was a savagely edited Philip Vellacott translation. It's my favourite piece.

Helen is interesting because she is simply a total construction. She is larger than life. When *Helen* came about in 2003 it was the week we went to war. My favourite line from the end of the play is, "Wait, let me get this straight. We went to war, we lost thousands of men, for a cloud?"

Do you think modern women experience a conflict of interest when working with texts written by men, for men, and even performed by men? Does it even matter?

Here's the story with me. I am such an unconventional artist that I never let anything get in my way. Having authored my own scripts for so long and then bumping up against the Greeks, I find I'm playing with things way outside the traditional frame. So, no, I don't experience a conflict working on a male authored script written 2500 years ago.

A fascinating director is Yael Farber from South Africa. The photographs that I saw recently of her reworking of the *Oresteia* were breath taking. I believe she is someone taking these ancient texts and using them to speak out against discrimination and war.

Do you think there are gendered responses and desires that relate to war and war-themed dramaturgy?

Gendered responses...yes, I believe there are gendered responses to the work. When I created my production of *Iphigenia*, Alissa Mello, a woman, played the (puppet) character of Menelaus and it was beautiful. Since the puppet was life size, Alissa manipulated the puppet from behind, merging her femaleness with maleness of the character.

How do modern female artists interpret the concept of "barbaric" onstage? In fact, what does 'barbaric' mean to you?

When I worked on *Medea* last year, I began to feel that *Medea's* situation was clearly a case of being misunderstood and being taken advantage of.

I read some fascinating articles about *Medea's* breadth of representation in vase painting in ancient Greece. Initially, she was featured as a reasonable woman. Then, her Eastern clothing became exaggerated and "otherworldly". *Medea* is portrayed as more of a barbarian, or an outsider. Did you know that in Iran, *Medea* is still considered a goddess? Many girls continued to

be named Medea. All the murderous things connected to her don't seem relevant in Iran. There are many people that believe Medea did not kill her children and that the Corinthians did and blamed it on her. Whenever I think of a "barbarian" I think of her – she is a refugee who comes to an incredibly patriotic culture where Jason wants to marry up and leave her behind.

Where and when and how did you first encounter the Greek plays -- school, university, in Greece, and in what versions.

In college at Berkeley. My parents weren't that educated. I did go to Greece over the years where I saw many, many dreadful productions at Epidaurus. I'd say 9 out of 10 of them were just awful. In India, I really became interested in plays of ancient myths and tales.

Do you speak/read modern and/or ancient Greek?

I read and speak Modern Greek. It was my first language. As a Greek American born in San Francisco to working-class parents, I was raised speaking and reading both Greek and English. My parents, especially my father, were strict and encouraged me to associate with other Greeks and Greek Americans. I think it's ironic that I come from a long line of criminals.

Do you have confidence that with a new American administration, the world will be a more peaceful place?

Yes, definitely. Don't you?

Interview with Timberlake Wertenbaker (England)

This interview was conducted via email on March 11, 2011

Do you think women directors, playwrights, designers and actors are turning to the ancient Greeks today? Why did you turn to the ancient Greeks?

The Greek playwrights were wrestling both with war and with democracy. These are questions that interest women. The playwrights questioned war and what it did to women as well as to men. I find this very interesting. I like the fact that in some plays the women are victims (The Trojan Women) but in some they're vengeful and vicious (Hecuba) and also that the younger women buy into the male heroic model (Hecuba, Iphigenia). Antigone has both: she refers to ancient laws, family laws but she is also heroic. And she shows up the failings of the demagogue. Greek playwrights didn't feel they had to write women as "women" so the female characters are much stronger and the male characters quite failed.

Do you see the contemporary work as a response to modern war?

Yes. Wars are very similar, same arguments, same suffering.

Why do you think women are turning to the Greeks now?

We're in a period of uncertainty and a lot is being questioned, including democracy. The most advanced democracies (US and England) are engaged in long wars. Afghanistan can be seen as a kind of siege, like Troy. Although they have breaks in between, soldiers have long tours of duty (in the US army) in an alien land. The tensions are very similar to Troy. It didn't take much to set Ajax in Afghanistan.

Which of the plays resonate most for you? Which plays have you adapted or used in your own work?

I did the three Theban plays, Dianeira, Hippolytus, Sophocles' Elektra, Hecuba and now Ajax, which is a rewrite really, a transposition. They have all influenced me one way or another. Ajax is my latest but I wouldn't call it an adaptation more like using it as the basis for something. That is what the Greek playwrights used to do as well. The "war" plays are Antigone, Hecuba and Ajax. They resonate now because of the wars we're involved in-possibly a new one coming up as well.

Do you think modern women experience a conflict of interest when working with texts written by men, for men, and even performed by men? Does it even matter?

No, it doesn't matter, there's no gender in writing. Or race for that matter.

Do you think there are gendered responses and desires that relate to war and war-themed dramaturgy?

I don't know how to answer this. I don't even think women question war more than men. They can get very patriotic and send their men off (WW1 etc). In *Credible Witness* I wrote about a woman obsessed with the politics of her country who turns against her son when he questions it. How do modern female artists interpret the concept of "barbaric" onstage? In fact, what does 'barbaric' mean to you?

In *Hecuba* the "Barbarians" are less barbaric than the Greeks. There's a speech by Odysseus in which he says the Greeks honour their war heroes and therefore it's just to sacrifice Polyxena and he boasts that maybe Barbarians don't feel strongly enough about their dead to sacrifice a young girl. The irony is evident. So that word doesn't mean much. If you're talking about savagery then that's something else. You portray it as you try to portray anything else, without flinching.

Where and when and how did you first encounter the Greek plays -- school, university, in Greece, and in what versions.

At university. I feel in love with the *Oresteia*, particularly with the *Libation Bearers*. I loved it so much I wanted to write it-or have written it or something. I remember writing an essay that was really a rewrite. I couldn't "think" about the play I wanted to be part of it.

Do you speak/read modern and/or ancient Greek?

I spent a year in Greece and became fairly OK with modern Greek but I've forgotten it. I studied Classical Greek and then I restudied it recently at the Open University but I'm not a Greek scholar. I work very closely with Professor Margaret Williamson (Dartmouth). We go over the Greek together-it's great fun, trying to find what the words really mean, it's not always obvious. We both enjoy working this way.

Anything else you would like to comment on regarding women and the ancient Greeks?

I think the Greeks were interested in looking at the cracks in things. Perhaps that's what women are like as well. That's why they complain all the time. The bell that should have one sound but is cracked and has a completely different one. Also, there are such great female characters in the Greek plays. When, as a writer, you search for a writing model, that's a good place to go. The Greek playwrights didn't feel they had to make women sympathetic. The pressure from a modern audience is often to do so. *Antigone*, *Hecuba*, *Elektra*, *Phaedra*; these are huge characters, each one is ruthless. Even in *Ajax*, there's *Tecmessa*, who has some of the most beautiful lines.

XII. Appendix D: Timeline of contemporary major wars with corresponding reported fatalities as well as estimated fatalities of the ancient wars

Below is a partial list of major wars fought in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries with data compiled from multiple sources including The War Memorial Project, the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, the American Veterans Homestead Project, and Ohio State University's electronic history project.⁵⁶⁷ This list is intended to help contextualise contemporary adaptations of ancient Greek tragedies set during specific wars. I hope to shine a light on the tremendous impact war has had and continues to have on the lives of women and men globally. During the past 100 years, over one billion people have experienced the ravages of war and millions have died as a direct result of war. This devastation is critical to a contemporary understanding of why people are reexamining the ancient Greek war-themed dramaturgy as a means of responding to war. I would like to add the 300 schoolgirls taken prisoner by Boko Haram in Nigeria in April 2014 as an example of civil war severely affecting the rights and liberties of girls. But first, for comparison sake, I have gathered an estimated number of military casualties from various conflicts during the Persian and Peloponnesian wars.⁵⁶⁸ The casualty lists for antiquity are very suggestive, and I have only given military casualties. While in this thesis I have tried to fill a lacuna in ancient Greek studies by examining both military and civilian casualties, finding accurate data was impossible. Certainly, the civilian wars, with their competing city-states that relied on their own citizens to fight, may have seen significant civilian casualties. The slain may have included the most prominent citizens and generals who led from the front. The scale and scope of the Greco-Persian Wars however produced large casualties. Accurate numbers do not

⁵⁶⁷ See: <http://www.ehistory.osu.edu/world/WarsList.cfm>, <http://war-memorial.net>. Also: Department of Veteran Affairs, <http://americanveterans.homestead.com/links.html>, <http://www.conflicthistory.com>, and <http://ehistory.osu.edu/world/WarsList.cfm>.

⁵⁶⁸ These estimates are drawn from a variety of sources including Herodotus, Thucydides, Plutarch and modern historians speculating on the number of fatalities. Precise records were not kept and these estimates are merely that: estimates.

exist.

PERSIAN WARS

Battle of Marathon

Herodotus records that 6,400 Persian bodies were counted on the battlefield; the Athenians lost only 192 men

Battle at Thermopylae:

Fatalities (estimated): 300 Spartans, 700 Thespians, 20,000 Persians

PELOPONNESIAN WAR

It is estimated that Athens lost about half of its male citizens during the war due to fighting, to plague and to famine. Sparta also suffered great losses, and by the end of the war there were not more than a few thousand Spartan men of fighting age left. This does not include the non-Spartans and slaves that made up a large part of the Spartan army.

The Sicilian Expedition

Athens loses 27,000 (5,000 infantry, 1300 armed troops, and 30 cavalry among them)

The Armies

The armies of Athens and Sparta were not evenly matched. The Athenians and their allies were outnumbered by the Spartans.

Spartan Army consisted of 24,000 infantry and many lightly armed troops. Thebes contributed 10,000 infantry and 1,000 Cavalry to the army.

Under the leadership of Pericles, and their allies, the Athenian Army had a fighting force including 13,000 infantry and 1,000 Cavalry. Athens controlled a navy superior to that of Sparta.

Contemporary Wars and Fatalities:

Name of War	Years	Fatalities
Syrian Civil War	2011 – 2012	18,821
Mexican Drug War	2006 – 2012	83,000
Waziristan Conflict	2004 – 2012	22,016
Iraqi Insurgency	2003 – 2012	23,461
Iraq versus US led coalition	2003 – 2003	8,202
Al Qaeda versus USA & Allies	2001 – 2012	4,538
Afghanistan War	2001 – 2012	43,917
Eritrea versus Ethiopia	1998 – 2000	98,192
Congo Brazzaville Civil War	1997 – 1999	15,540
Nepal Civil War	1996 – 2006	12,284

First and Second Congo Wars	1996 – 2006	208,367
Russia versus Chechnyan Secessionists	1994 – 2007	20,381
Bosnian Govt vs Serbian Insurgents	1992 – 1995	24,504
Burundi Civil War	1991 – 2005	13,671
Sierra Leone Govt versus Rebels	1991 – 2002	12,034
Somalia Civil War	1990 – 2012	37,236
Rwanda Civil War	1990 – 2012	527,145
Algeria Govt vs Islamic Rebels	1990 – 2005	18,348
First Gulf War	1990 – 1991	22,848
India versus Pakistan	1989 – 2012	24,253
Liberia Civil War	1989 – 2003	22,247
South Yemen Coup	1986 – 1986	10,000
Indian Govt versus Punjab	1985 – 2000	7,247
Turkey Govt versus Kurdistan Guerilla	1984 – 2012	33,990
Sudan Govt vs Militias	1983 – 2012	68,769
Sri Lankan Govt vs Tamil Militants	1983 – 2009	62,313
Nicaragua Govt versus Contras	1981 – 1990	30,000
Uganda Civil War	1980 – 2007	116,044
Iran versus Iraq	1980 – 1988	644,500
Iran vs Muhajedin e-Khalq	1979 – 2001	4,395
Cambodian Govt versus Khmer Rouge	1979 – 1998	84,950
El Salvador Govt vs FMLN Guerillas	1979 – 1992	55,000
Mozambique Govt versus Guerillas	1979 – 1992	115,600
Sino-Vietnamese War	1979 – 1988	48,223
Rebels vs Ethiopian Government	1978 – 1991	52,398
Vietnam versus Cambodia	1978 – 1979	32,500
Nicaraguan Govt versus Sandinistas	1978 – 1979	10,000
Angolan Govt versus UNITA Guerilla	1975 – 2000	157,400
Lebanese Civil War	1975 – 1990	144,000
Argentina: Civil War and Dirty War	1975 – 1983	20,000
Ethiopia versus Eritrea	1974 – 1991	98,927
Hutu Rebellion	1972 – 1972	153,000
Bangladesh War	1971 – 1971	50,000
Phillipine Govt versus CPP Guerrilla	1969 – 2008	25,000
Rhodesian Govt vs ZANU, ZAPU, PF	1967 – 1979	27,080
Chinese Cultural Revolution	1967 – 1976	2,050,000
Cambodian Civil War	1967 – 1975	246,204
Nigerian Civil War	1967 – 1970	75,000
The Six Day War	1967 – 1967	10,047
Namibia versus South Africa	1966 – 1988	10,000
Guatemalan Civil War	1965 – 1995	88,575
Vietnam War	1965 – 1975	2,048,050
Columbian Govt vs Guerillas Farc and ELN	1964 – 2012	47,303
Sudan Govt versus Insurgents	1963 – 1972	10,000
Angolan War of Independence	1961 – 1975	79,000
Civil War	1960 – 1973	21,500
First Kurdish-Iraqi War	1960 – 1970	6,600
PRRI and Permesta revolts in Indonesia	1957 – 1961	27,200
Tibetan Uprising	1956 – 1959	12,000

Vietnam Civil War	1955 – 1964	164,923
Cameroon War of Independence	1955 – 1960	11,700
Algerian War of Independence	1954 – 1962	182,526
Kenya, Mau-Mau vs UK	1952 – 1956	17,100
Korean War	1950 – 1953	995,000
Israel versus Palestine	1948 – 2012	16,697
Burmese Govt vs Separatist Guerillas	1948 – 2012	49,243
La Violencia	1948 – 1958	29,800
Arab-Israeli War	1948 – 1949	8,000
Cheju Rebellion in South Korea	1948 – 1949	17,000
Indian Partition Communal Violence	1947 – 1948	200,000
First Indochina War Comm. Versus France	1945 – 1954	269,500
Soviet Union versus Baltic Partisans	1945 – 1951	32,400
Chinese Civil War	1945 – 1950	1,200,000
Ukrainian Revolts	1945 – 1947	59,700
Greece Civil War	1944 – 1949	68,207
World War II	1939 – 1945	50,000,000
The Winter War in Finland	1939 – 1940	151,798
Third Sino-Japanese War	1937 – 1941	1,000,000
Spanish Civil War	1936 – 1939	466,300
Italo-Ethiopian War	1935 – 1936	20,000
Chaco War	1932 – 1935	92,661
Manchurian War	1931 – 1933	60,000
Communists versus Koumintang	1930 – 1935	500,000
Kuomintang versus Warlords	1929 – 1930	75,000
Second Afghan Anti-Reform War	1928 – 1929	15,000
Northern Expedition	1926 – 1928	126,500
Third Rif War	1920 – 1926	70,000
Iraq versus UK	1920 – 1921	9,540
Second Greco Turkish War	1919 – 1922	50,000
Turkish War of Independence	1919 – 1921	40,000
Polish-Soviet War	1919 – 1920	100,000
Russian Revolution and Civil War	1917 – 1922	802,225
World War I	1914 – 1918	10,670,868
2 nd Balkan War	1913 – 1913	60,500
1 st Balkan War	1912 – 1913	82,000
Mexican Revolution	1910 – 1920	125,000
Russo-Japanese War	1904 – 1905	151,831
The War of a Thousand Days	1899 – 1903	100,000

XIII. Appendix E: The Women & War Project paper questionnaire

At the centre of the Women & War Project Phase One was a trilogy of two world premiere plays and one dance theatre production. Audience members had the ability to attend one or more of the three war-themed performances. Prior to a performance, audience members received questionnaires and were invited to fill them out before seeing the performance. Immediately following the performance, audience members were once again invited to fill out a second paper-based questionnaire to determine intentionality to change any specific behaviours related to themes of war, remembrance, or trauma; changes in knowledge; and changes in attitude.

Results of paper survey

Nearly 70% of participants were female ($N = 68$), and the mean age of the sample was 41.70 ($SD = 16.65$). Participants were from a wide range of countries, capturing the diverse demographic attending the performances. Nearly half the sample reported that they resided in Greece ($N = 45$), while over 30% reported that they lived in North America (Canada, $N = 23$, USA, $N = 8$). The rest of the participants identified as residing in other European countries, South Africa or Australia. The majority of participants reported that they had had a family member serve in a military (65.7%), and 12.1% of the sample reported that they had served in a military themselves. The mean number of years of education of the sample was 15.22 ($SD = 6.39$), and participants reported a range of occupations (27.3% in academia, 15.2% in the arts and students, respectively, 9.1% in business and healthcare, respectively, 1% in trade, and 22.2% in other occupations).

ID: 0001

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. We are interested in examining the relationships among individual characteristics, attitudes about war and combat, and your experiences. By filling out this questionnaire, you give consent for your anonymous answers to be used in a research study. You may choose to stop at any time and you may choose to skip any question. PLEASE DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME ON THIS PAGE.

1. **Country of origin** _____ 2. **Country where you currently live** _____

3. **Gender** Female Male Other: Please specify _____

4. **Ethnically, I identify as:** _____

5. **Are you over 18?** Yes No 5b. **Age** _____

6. **Are you a parent?** Yes No

7. **Are you in a committed relationship?** Yes No Other: Please specify _____

8. **Occupation:**

Student Arts Trade Business Academia Healthcare Other: _____

9. **Years of formal education:** _____

10. **Have you ever served in the military?** Yes No

11. **Have you had a family member serve in the military?** Yes No

If yes, please indicate who (e.g., spouse, daughter, uncle, father):

12. This scale consists of a number of words that describe different feelings and emotions. Read each item and then mark the appropriate answer in the space next to that word. Indicate to what extent you feel this way right now, that is, at the present moment. Use the following scale to record your answers.

1	2	3	4	5
Very slightly or not at all	A little	Moderately	Quite a bit	Extremely
__ upset	__ distressed	__ afraid	__ content	

13. In combat, women should serve in the same positions and conditions as men.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

14. Mental health problems in **military service members** are overstated.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

ID: 0001

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. We are interested in examining the relationships among individual characteristics, attitudes about war and combat, and your experiences. By filling out this questionnaire, you give consent for your anonymous answers to be used in a research study. You may choose to stop at any time and you may choose to skip any question. PLEASE DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME ON THIS PAGE.

1. This scale consists of a number of words that describe different feelings and emotions. Read each item and then mark the appropriate answer in the space next to that word. Indicate to what extent you feel this way right now, that is, at the present moment. Use the following scale to record your answers.

1	2	3	4	5
Very slightly or not at all	A little	Moderately	Quite a bit	Extremely
__ upset	__ distressed	__ afraid	__ content	

2. In combat, women should serve in the same positions and conditions as men.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

3. Mental health problems in **military service members** are overstated.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

4. Mental health problems in **civilians exposed to combat** are overstated.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

5. Mental health problems in **family members of military service members** are overstated.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

6. Please indicate to what degree you agree with the following statements:

Any nation should be ready with a strong military at all times.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

My country has the right to protect its borders forcefully.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree

ID: 0001

1. This scale consists of a number of words that describe different feelings and emotions. Read each item and then mark the appropriate answer in the space next to that word. Indicate to what extent you feel this way right now, that is, at the present moment. Use the following scale to record your answers.

1 2 3 4 5
Very slightly A little Moderately Quite a bit Extremely
or not at all

___ upset ___ distressed ___ afraid ___ content

2. In combat, women should serve in the same positions and conditions as men.

1 2 3 4 5 6
Strongly Disagree Somewhat Somewhat Agree Strongly
Disagree Disagree Agree Agree

3. Mental health problems in military service members are overstated.

1 2 3 4 5 6
Strongly Disagree Somewhat Somewhat Agree Strongly
Disagree Disagree Agree Agree

4. Mental health problems in civilians exposed to combat are overstated.

1 2 3 4 5 6
Strongly Disagree Somewhat Somewhat Agree Strongly
Disagree Disagree Agree Agree

5. Mental health problems in family members of military service members are overstated.

1 2 3 4 5 6
Strongly Disagree Somewhat Somewhat Agree Strongly
Disagree Disagree Agree Agree

6. Please indicate to what degree you agree with the following statements:
Any nation should be ready with a strong military at all times.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
Strongly Disagree Somewhat Neither Agree Somewhat Agree Strongly
Disagree Disagree Nor Disagree Agree Agree

My country has the right to protect its borders forcefully.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Strongly Disagree/ Somewhat/ Neither Agree/ Somewhat Agree /Strongly

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability. We are interested in examining the relationships among individual characteristics, attitudes about war and combat, and your experiences. By filling out this questionnaire, you give consent for your anonymous answers to be used in a research study. You may choose to stop at any time and you may choose to skip any question. PLEASE DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME ON THIS PAGE.

ID: 0001

My country should be aggressive with its military internationally.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Strongly Disagree Somewhat Neither Agree Somewhat Agree Strongly Disagree Disagree Nor Disagree Agree Agree

7. How likely would you be to:
Encourage others to get treatment if they were experiencing military-related mental health problems.

1 2 3 4 5 6

Very unlikely Unlikely Somewhat Somewhat Likely Very likely
unlikely likely

Seek treatment yourself if you were experiencing mental health problems due to war.

1 2 3 4 5 6

Very unlikely Unlikely Somewhat Somewhat Likely Very likely
unlikely likely

8. To what extent do you believe this play about women and war:
Has helped your own well-being regarding the effects of war.

1 2 3 4 5

Very slightly A little Moderately Quite a bit Extremely
or not at all

Helps you understand military-related mental health problems.

1 2 3 4 5

Very slightly A little Moderately Quite a bit Extremely
or not at all

Increases your understanding of who might be affected by war.

1 2 3 4 5

Very slightly A little Moderately Quite a bit Extremely
or not at all

Increases your understanding of how people might be affected by war.

1 2 3 4 5

Very slightly A little Moderately Quite a bit Extremely
or not at all

Please provide your email address if you agree to be re-contacted to answer another brief questionnaire in three months' time. Your email address will be erased once the follow-up questionnaire has been sent, and your data will not be linked with it.

XIV. Appendix F: The Women & War Photo Exhibition and Rehearsal Photos

The Women & War Photo Exhibition

Accompanying the WWP was a new exhibition of seventy black and white photographs selected from the renowned Black Star collection housed in the Ryerson Image Centre at Ryerson University. These photojournalistic images – now numbering 291,049 prints - form the core of the Black Star agency's operations in New York between 1935 and the 1990s. This agency became a major supplier of pictures to such journalistic magazines as *Life* and numerous other American publications of the day. The collection tells the story of the unfolding of the 20th century, including global coverage of major political events, military conflicts, personalities, cultural milestones, and singular events of interest from the perspective of hundreds of photographers working for the daily and the weekly press. 'The Women & War Exhibition' opens the opportunity for international research and collaboration. The images within the WWP exhibition were taken between 1935 to the early 1990s and provide a global look at the roles women have held during war – as care giver, demonstrator, mother/wife, prostitute, prisoner of war, refugee, soldier, victim, worker, and child.⁵⁶⁹

⁵⁶⁹ Due to copyright restrictions on the individual photographs, the Women & War Photo Exhibition is held in archive in the Ryerson Theatre School library (in print form) and in the Ryerson Image Centre at Ryerson University (in digital form).