STAGING VIOLENCE IN KATIE MITCHELL'S *TROJAN WOMEN*

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INTRODUCTION

This paper will address the issue of whether or not Mitchell's interpretation of Euripides' *Trojan Women* fulfils her initial intentions. It will pay particular attention to idea structures and focus on the theme of violence. This production was performed on the Lyttleton stage of the National Theatre in London. My analysis is divided into two sections: a) an investigation of the violent connotations and the message of Mitchell's *Trojan Women* as a post-modern performance (the post-modern world of violence) and b) the physical/fictional space in relation to the adaptation of Greek characters on the theatrical stage (describing the movements of the modern hero).

Katie Mitchell made a crucial departure from Euripides' *Trojan Women* when she staged the eponymous play at the National Theatre in 2008 working from Don Taylor's translation of the classical Greek play. This paper examines the representation of stage violence in Mitchell's production of *Trojan Women*. Mitchell asserts that a director should pay attention to the idea structures that underpin every play which she describes as 'the things that are actually driving all of the scenes and situations that emerge' or 'the engine of the play' (Sierz 2009). She also stated that she wants 'to get back into the moment that the writer's pen is hitting the page or fingers hitting the keyboard' (Ibid).

In another interview, this time with Dan Rebellato, Mitchell said that what she dares to do is to chart her own path 'with devotion to Euripides' main ideas'. What is important to her is the 'accuracy of ideas' and that 'the idea structures are the most precious' (Rebellato 2007). When asked to expand on this statement she added that: 'themes are more important than the accuracy of the text or trying to reproduce the original' (Ibid). So, on the one hand Mitchell recognises the presence of idea structures that cannot change and on the other she acknowledges the fact that specific modes of the production can alter to reflect the producer's own message within the idea structure itself.

The main scene which is analysed in relation to the implementation of Euripidean idea structures and Mitchell's preferred medium of mapping space to communicate her intentions is the scene of the *Restraining of Hecuba* when Cassandra is taken away from her mother (as the director labeled this part of the drama in her creative notes currently held in the archive of the National Theatre). I take this scene to be indicative of the way in which violence is dramatised on stage throughout the play, since the presence of the guards, the Chorus and Cassandra provides the audience with a chance of following the staging of a complicated string of interrelationships between opposing character clusters.

THE POST-MODERN WORLD OF VIOLENCE

In this section I will argue that the incentive for staging both Euripides' play and Mitchell's adaptation is to depict the consequences of violent events in order to give rise to a particular moral reaction in the audience. I will demonstrate that Mitchell wanted to achieve this by reconfiguring previous modes of communication. I will then use this as a platform for exploring whether Mitchell was successful in staying faithful to Euripidean idea structures. We can begin by looking at what, in part, motivated Mitchell. The director explained in her interview to Jane Edwards the reasons for staging her version of the play:

> I turn on the radio and there I am in my kitchen with my little girl and they say there's been a terrorist attack and I go all alert and think of her. And then they say 'In Iraq' and I literally switch it off in my head. So I thought one should have a look at it and what it would be like to be there.   (Edwards 2007, *Time Out*: Nov. 12)

In other words, Mitchell is arguing that the frequency with which the misfortunes of distant wars are described in the mass media means that they have hardly any impact at all anymore on the British public. It was this thought that inspired her to adapt Euripides' *Trojan Women* for a contemporary audience. Mitchell wanted to use her adaptation of the ancient tragedy to re-sensitize the audience to atrocities in contemporary wars. Of course this implies that Mitchell makes the assumption that re-sensitising the audience's response to war was a key component in Euripides' original idea structures. Barbara Goff supports this reading of the play. In her *Euripides: Trojan Women* she argues that Euripides drew on contemporary atrocities to dramatise the events of the play:

> While it is clear that *Trojan Women* is formally experimental, many readers have asked whether the play is not also discursively innovative in that it draws directly on contemporary events, using the setting in Troy as a thin and penetrable disguise for a discourse about Athens.   (Goff 2009: 27-28)

One can thus build a case for Mitchell's faithfulness to Euripides' idea structures. Her intentions regarding the re-staging of the familiar Euripidean play echoes the contemporary impact that the play had. Euripides was 'hitting the page' (see introduction).

Mitchell uses a plethora of props to awaken the contemporary audience from its lethargy and to re-sensitise them. Violence is made manifest in her adaptation through the many props that the characters use. These props are important as characters utilise them to alleviate their emotional struggle against their oppressors. The main focus at this point in the discussion is Cassandra's manipulation of specific objects. Mitchell makes her Cassandra use a range of props as manifestations of her emotional and mental state. In order to study Mitchell's *Restricting Hecuba* scene, it is important to comprehend Cassandra's movements on stage, her bodily occupation of the theatrical space and how she positions herself in relation to other people (proxemics). In order to accomplish this I will draw on a particular method of analysing proxemics on stage. Gay McAuley divides space between the physical (stage space) and the fictional space (presentational space and fictional place, McAuley 2000). Stage space is the physical arrangement of the stage into divisions and exits, while the presentational space is the physical use of space by the actors and the way that the offstage action is signaled physically. Finally, fictional place is the space which is evoked, presented or represented on and off stage. Gay McAuley:

> If two actors are present on stage, they must be placed physically in relation to each other and the dynamics of their physical placement will necessarily create meaning. The words they speak will function differently and take on different meanings on the physical orientation of the speakers to each other, to the audience and to elements of the presentational space.   (McAuley 2000: 94)

Therefore, not only the characters that surround Cassandra, but also her mapping of movements on the set and against specific props, frame and enrich her actions on stage. The characters' movements can be further divided into performative movements (which have significance under specific circumstances) and communicative movements (the movement itself and the medium via which it is communicated).

In task-based performance, in which the performers are not acting but doing, the gestures are still both performative and communicative, and indeed can become compulsively watchable even though no ostensible meaning is being communicated.

(McAuley 2000:115)

The performative movements (such as lighting cigarettes) are overlaid by the communicative gestures; gestures that convey meaning. Performative gestures are related to the process of creating 'meaning', whilst communicative gestures are fictional and presentational. Mitchell's adaptation manages to dramatise the clash between fiction and reality. In Mitchell's production movements on stage are punctuated by such performative gestures as the lighting of cigarettes. These are the type of movements that are interspersed amongst the communicative gestures. A discussion of space can therefore illuminate Mitchell's post-modern performative traits as she succeeds in deconstructing presented space from the physical use of space. Mitchell destabilises assumptions about the fictional place (the space presented or represented on stage), by staging contradictions in the presentational space (the physical use of the stage space). In this way, Mitchell uses performative gestures to awaken the audience on the level of the fictional place. She uses a plethora of tropes to sensitise the audience in the fictional place and to awaken them from their state of apathy towards violence. The exact arrangement of the objects on stage and their relation to the actors conveys a specific meaning that enriches the production. In order to study meaning-making in space we have to decipher and define the space both as it is used by the actors and in relation to their surroundings. Mitchell has baffled attempts to associate the presentational space with the fictional. At different moments during the performance the women stop lamenting and start applying make-up, a repetitive movement that is familiar to the audience and serves to stop them from paying exclusive attention to the representation of fictional narrative. Furthermore, Cassandra's representation as a depressive character is framed on a post-modern stage.

In Mitchell's production Cassandra comes out from the toilet with a flammable object in her hands ready to set fire to the stage. The fact that she carries a paper bouquet is also indicative of her current state of mind. It is important to note and analyse 'how the arrangement of the auditorium and presentational space facilitate (or impede) the flows of energy between the two' (McAuley 2000: 127). The presentational space is the physical use of stage props and furniture. In her production of the *Trojan Women* Mitchell uses props to bring out the importance of action versus apathy. As Goldhill commented 'Each play has its own symbolics of space deeply written into it, and it is a primary task of a director and designer to bring this out' (Goldhill 1999: 29). The bouquet, the torches, the fires are all simply the referents. Cassandra constructs her bouquet from toilet paper and uses it to set fire to the stage. Fire with its purifying and violent connotations is combined with the symbolism of the bouquet. It functions as a foil to the form and texture of a wedding bouquet. The handling of these specific props conveys meaning and enriches the performance. Cassandra's props shape and define the space. Cassandra's body itself becomes another prop as she is carried out of the stage by the guards. The fact that she is the one to start the fire is also important because her union with Agamemnon will help bring about his death. Cassandra's determination to see to the bitter end a chain of events that has already been set in motion offers a sense of closure. Her determination is not attributable to destiny as this has no place in Mitchell's world. It is conditioned by her psychological state.

In order to form a judgment about Mitchell's degree of faithfulness to Euripides' idea structures we need to examine the socio-political forces that drove the Athenian playwright when he was writing his play. When the *Trojan Women* was performed the spectators would have been aware of the recent sack of Melos. The Athenians attacked Melos because its inhabitants had

refused to ally themselves with Athens (as portrayed by Thucydides in his *History of the Peloponnesian War*, book 5). The Melians expressed a desire for Athens to be destroyed by Sparta, a wish that was fulfilled by the end of the Peloponnesian War. Goff writes that Euripides' Athenian audience 'are clear sighted and even comfortable in their ruthlessness' (Goff 2009: 29). The Melian massacre acts as a paradigm for all the atrocities that took place during this period. Euripides might have wanted to stage an 'idea structure' that had a particular impact on the Athenian audience, a symbolic example of the cruelty of war in general. In this context Euripides' play had the potential to make his audience reflect on the impact of their violent actions on others. Mitchell explained in her interview to Dominic Cavendish that:

> Like most people I block out things I see on the news. The play feels like an attempt
> to cut through that blocking mechanism and confront what we're too scared to look at.
> <div align="right">(Cavendish 2008:2)</div>

Mitchell is thus inviting the audience to step outside their comfort zone. This is achieved via the use of a range of props that represent violence as a struggle.

The staging of violence in the original Greek tragedies was restricted by a number of conventions. Acts of death and self-mutilation were not portrayed on stage but were communicated to the audience and to the other characters mainly by messengers. Mitchell does not dramatise the death of Astyanax on stage (and neither did Euripides) but she does reconfigure the dramatic tension of the original Euripidean play. Mitchell's play commences with the reconfiguration of the beginning of the drama. The ancient tragedian uses the alteration of strophe and antistrophe in Hecuba's first monologue (ll. 98-101) to emphasise the magnitude of Hecuba's grief.

> Up, wretch. Cursed of the gods,
> Look up. Troy's gone.
> No city now. No queen. All's changed.
> God's changed. Endure.   (McLeish trans. 200: 48)

Hecuba's utterances are short, emphatic and to the point. With a few words she sets the mood of the play and distances herself from the Gods and from the glory that was Troy. Her lament is rapid, steady, acute, and alive. Its focus is the misery caused by war.

> Ships came.
> Oars furrowed purple sea.
> From Greece, from shelter,
> You raced for holy Troy.
> Flutes, whistles,
> Aee aee, aee aee, you anchored,
> Woven cables,
> The bay, the lap of Troy,
> You tracked her,
> Menelaus' wife, no wife,
> Helen.   (McLeish trans. 2004: 8-9)

Hecuba's lament enables the audience to share in her experience of the Trojan War through her grief. The tone of her words captures the rapid pace of the narrated events and signals her anger. Hecuba's words are punctuated early on in Mitchell's play by the movements and words of the other captive Trojan women who share Hecuba's fate. It is perhaps for this reason that Mitchell begins her production shortly after the end of Hecuba's first monologue (Euripides l 152). Mitchell locates the camp where the Trojan women are waiting to discover their fates in an industrial port. This shift

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of location renders Hecuba's predicament more recognizable to a contemporary audience. Talthybius appears almost immediately on stage whilst he does not speak until much later in Euripides' play (l 235). Mitchell has used Don Taylor's interpretation of the *Trojan Women* with some modifications. She has not followed Euripides' framework.

Mitchell also associates her adaptation with events in World War II. The performance is punctuated by frequent bombings that bring to mind the London Blitz. This traumatic period still has a prominent place in the cultural memory of London audiences. Mitchell, like Euripides, has managed to weave a complicated web of victim and hero relationships which affects the audience on many levels. Relating this back to Mitchell's personal response to hearing about the terrorist attacks in Iraq on the radio, we can identify a parallel between Euripides and Mitchell. Euripides attempts to create a tacit analogy between the siege of Troy and his compatriots' destruction of other cities in order to challenge the moral sensibilities of his audience. Meanwhile, Mitchell seems to be paralleling this Euripidean analogy by referring to the bombings of World War II in conjunction with the current war in Iraq. In this respect Mitchell has created a production of *Trojan Women* that remains faithful to Euripides' idea structures.

After affirming the thematic correspondence of idea structures about violence the focus of the discussion now turns to the examination of the method in which violence is represented on stage in both Euripides' drama and Mitchell's adaptation. At the heart of the matter lie Mitchell's choices for communicating violence on stage and whether or not they are faithful to the re-configuration of language adopted by Euripides to stage the consequences of violence. The key theme throughout this paper remains the identification and representation of Euripidean idea structures, the investigation of Mitchell's decisions for communicating violence and the link between the two.

In order to examine Mitchell's choices we first need to investigate the approach that Euripides adopted for performing the consequences of violent acts on a fifth-century BCE stage. Not only did he recognise the importance of dramatising what to him were contemporary events, but also the necessity of refiguring dramatic language to enable his message to reach his spectators. In Euripides' drama the vanquished feel the need to communicate the consequences of the violent attacks that they have suffered in a way that facilitates audience empathy. Goff argues that the Melians:

> Speak from the heart of a traditional morality which may well no longer suffice for
> the situation they find themselves in; they are caught in the gap between the
> world and the world that has been opened up by the world.   (Goff 2009:29)

Before the first performance of *Trojan Women* contemporary morality was not sophisticated enough to do full justice to the idea structure of guilt and violence. Did Katie Mitchell face similar problems when she was contemplating the message of her play and her choice of dramatic language? In her interview with Jane Edwards (2007) Mitchell explained that news about terrorists' attacks in Iraq do not appear to have an appropriate moral impact on Britons. This could be related to Euripides' possible disappointment with his fellow country men for not reacting with appropriate emotion to the impact of war on themselves and on others. Euripides identified the necessity for a dramatic situation that enabled words 'to change their meanings in accordance with the new political exigencies' (Goff 2009: 29). We can corroborate this by an examination of Thucydides' *History* (Book 3), where the ancient historian analyses the relationship between events, values and language. Thucydides explains that this was a savage time during which the 'face' of Greece changed significantly: 'irrational daring came to be regarded as loyal courage, and prudent hesitation a respectable cover for cowardice…' (Rhodes 1994 Book 3: § 82, ll 7-8).

Since Mitchell remains faithful to the Euripidean search for a new language in which to dramatise the events of her time, we now need to explore in what context Mitchell's play is like Euripides' play, 'in accordance with the new exigency' of her time. Simon Goldhill comments on the position of modern directors in the following terms:

> The job of a modern director is not to reproduce the conditions of ancient theatre but to see how the modern theatre can respond to the vividly constructed spatial dynamics of the old plays.

> (Goldhill 1999, *Performance Culture and Athenian Democracy*: 44)

Goldhill argues that a successful revival of an ancient drama requires a good working knowledge of modern theatrical practices. Mitchell needed to adapt Euripides' play in order to take full advantage of modern stage technology. To achieve this she had to experiment with the 'spatial dynamics of the old plays'. Such an adaptation of Euripides' play requires the transfer of both its themes and its language to a modern and post-modern theatrical framework. Mitchell's captive women of Troy live in a post-Industrial Revolution world. They are, after all, waiting to hear what will happen to them in an industrial port. Mitchell's play demonstrates the rising importance of the star director in post-modern drama. She applied her own artistic vision to the production. Both practices are features of modern drama.

The layout of the proscenium stage in the National Theatre production is very important because it defines the presentational space. The furniture consisted of tables and chairs. In the foreground of the stage three desks were placed next to each other symmetrically. More desks were located at the back of the stage. All these were clearly visible to the audience. Bins were strategically placed next to some of the desks which the women used to start and contain fires on the stage. The mezzanine level was connected to the stage via a ladder which some of the women climbed during the performance. The audience could thus simultaneously see Helen on the mezzanine and the Trojan women on the main stage level. The layout of both the stage and the mezzanine was conducive to creating tension between the players on these two levels. The frivolousness of Helen was juxtaposed against the lament of the Trojan women. The stage could be accessed by two doors that connected the characters and the audience to the off-stage action. To the audience's left was a door which was locked and unlocked by the guards (Talthybius and Sinon) whilst to the audience's right there was another entrance/exit which led directly to the port. This exit was inaccessible to the women. The Chorus of the Trojan Women also moved in unison towards each other and away from the guards. They also danced and lamented in synchrony. When the guard arrived in the warehouse to collect Cassandra, the Trojan Women used their bodies and the furniture props in an attempt to bar Talthybius' way to her. Their bodies thus became vessels that played on and extended each others' grief.

It is important to juxtapose Euripides' mapping of space and his dramatisation of the idea structures in his play against Mitchell's adaptation and the reconfiguration of the proscenium stage as a modern approach to these idea structures. As David Wiles reminds us:

> For the classical period we must visualize a performance space that was temporary, disorderly and constantly changing. On-going experimentation with space, at a time when the rules of the theatrical medium were being evoked out from first principles, helped to generate the creative energy that later generations have sensed in the surviving texts.   (Wiles 2000: 103)

Mitchell's post-modern theatrical framework is also 'disorderly and constantly changing'. By experimenting with space, Mitchell has remained faithful to the Euripidean 'creative energy' whilst at the same time adapting it for a contemporary audience. More specifically, Wiles argues that the use and movement of the Chorus during the classical period represented the shifting relationships between the individual and the group and/or between the individual and society. Juxtaposing the significance and the trailing of the movement of the Chorus in modern and post-modern space, Wiles explains that: 'Modern performance space reflects a reluctance to understand individual identity as a function of social identity' (Wiles 2000: 112). The Chorus of the Trojan Women on the Lyttleton stage dramatised the problematic route from action to responsibility. Mitchell also toned down religious intervention and focused more on the pathology of the characters. The members of the Chorus feed off each other's bewilderment over the origins of the events that have led to their incarceration in the industrial warehouse. As a result of the destruction of the familiar society of pre-sacked Troy Mitchell's Hecuba experiences difficulties in identifying her role and function in relation to the other women. Even though Euripides' Hecuba is also portrayed as subsumed in grief, the fact that Mitchell has omitted her opening speech with its narrative of the events that preceded the action of Euripides' play makes it easier for the audience to sympathise with the queen's state of confusion. Violence at this point is expressed in terms of emotional confusion that arose out of a trauma that overtook the women before the start of the performance.

Wiles in his book *Greek Theatre Performance* argues that in modern plays choral dancing becomes slow and mechanical (Wiles 2000: 112 and 126). This is relevant for Mitchell's production where the Chorus dances to jazz music. In Euripides' time, the Chorus consisted of fifteen members who arranged themselves either in the formation of a rectangular (forming three parallel lines, each comprised by five Chorus members with the leader occupying the centre of the front line) or a triangle (the leader placed at the front or at the top of the triangle while the remaining Chorus members were arranged behind him in reverse ascending order). In contrast, Mitchell arranged her fifteen-member Chorus (with Kate Duchêne as the leader) in relation to the furniture props on the stage. Mitchell's Chorus thus assumed neither the rectangular nor the triangular ancient arrangement. The furniture props were also not placed in such a way that they echoed the formation of the Euripidean Chorus (i.e. arranged either in a rectangular or a triangular shape).

We can postulate that at this point in the performance the women were seeking refuge; an oasis of civilisation away from their persecutors. A physical struggle follows. Sinon ends up restraining Hecuba at the centre of the stage while the rest of the Chorus frame the picture from the right hand side. The Chorus is thus once again siding with the representatives of civilisation. Meanwhile, Talthybius forms the left hand margin on the other side of the fighting couple. The play begins with the women lying prostrate on the stage ready to die; they then manage to lift themselves up only to realise that as captives their freedom of movement is limited. The Greek soldiers in charge and Helen occupy a higher level.

<div align="center">DESCRIBING THE MOVEMENTS OF THE MODERN HERO</div>

Mitchell does not portray her characters as the pawns of the Gods but as victims of their own choices. Emotional and mental violence are analysed in this section of the paper as the aftermath of violence perpetrated by man on his fellow man (or in this case woman). I argue that the play links conquest with psychological violence. Modern plays problematise the extent to which human beings are the agents and enactors of their own actions. A questioning attitude towards religion is another feature. Kenneth Pickering argues in *Studying Modern Drama* that modern plays are 'concerned

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with the predicament of human beings living in the age of science and industrialization: an age in which technology and religious faith have increasingly come into conflict' (Pickering 2003: 5).

Mitchell has not dramatised the Euripidean Prologue of the *Trojan Women*. Following in the footsteps of modern drama she discarded Poseidon and Athena from her play. As a consequence of this decision, Mitchell's characters cannot directly blame their misfortunes on the gods. The audience is not told whether or not the women will be vindicated for all their suffering at the hands of their oppressors. Since it is only in the Prologue that the audience discovers the fate of the Greeks, without it the link between violence, justice and responsibility becomes more morally ambiguous. In Euripides' play, the effects of violence are related to one's destiny, while in Mitchell's play her characters delve into a more exhausting discourse with and against themselves about the meaning of their actions and those of others. In modern plays the focus is on the dramatisation of 'man as merely the intersection point of great forces, and his deed not even his own' (Bentley 1992: 430). New drama generally lacks mystical religious emotion. Moreover:

> Characters in the new drama are more complicated than in the old, threads that are more intricately running together and knot with the external world, to express the interrelationship.   (Bentley 1992: 427)

In contrast, in the ancient Greek plays the identity of the hero and their destiny is clear, but in modern plays the two become blurred. Hecuba's monologue sounds more cynical divorced from Poseidon and Athena's dialogue. Michelle Wandor asserts that, regarding post-War British drama, the action: 'can be nihilism in the face of a world which offers no principles, no ideals or visions' (Wandor 2001: 235-36). In truth Mitchell's Hecuba seems more shaken by the lack of a firm set of values and ideas. She appears to be more at a loss about her predicament than her classical predecessor. On the one hand, Mitchell seems to have remained faithful to Euripides' intention of re-sensitising his audience about the impact of violence on one's self as well as on others while on the other hand she has traded the Euripidean idea of destiny in favour of a sense of responsibility and guilt. The question then arises to what extent should Mitchell have refigured the staging of violence in *Trojan Women* to remain faithful to the idea structures of Euripides in relation to her contemporary audience? It is true that tragedy seems to attract debate about moral responsibility or as Goldhill asserts:

> Tragedy's repeated concentration on the violence that emerges from the pursuit of justice, on   the corruption of power in the pursuit of war seems to speak directly to the most pressing and dismaying of contemporary concerns.   (Goldhill 1999: 121)

Euripides' *Trojan Women*, as discussed in the first part of this paper, served to re-sensitise his contemporary audience about war and the misery it brings, like for example those committed against the Melians by the Athenians. Mitchell has retained the message of moral responsibility in her adaptation, but she has also modernised Euripides' play by discarding the religious connotations. Euripides used a particular linguistic framework to communicate to his audience the magnitude of the Trojan women's despair, some of which, as his audience knew from his Prologue, would never make it to Greece but would drown during the sea voyage. This, Euripides' audience knew, was an act by Poseidon to punish the Greeks. In Mitchell's play the portrayal of grief, lament and hope changes to echo post-modern man's despair at the face of repetition, emptiness and meaninglessness.

A characteristic scene from Mitchell's play which illustrates her interpretation of violence on stage in relation to post-modern ideas is the *Restraining Hecuba* scene. The closest approximation to this scene features in Euripides' Episode Three, in which Cassandra makes predictions about her

and Agamemnon's future (ll 353-64). The Chorus fails to discern the truth in Cassandra's words. Euripides' audience knows that the Trojan princess' ranting is addressed to the god Apollo since it was he who gave Cassandra the ability to foretell the future. He also cursed her so that no one took her predictions seriously. Cassandra invokes Apollo in Episode Three when she predicts Hecuba's, Odysseus', Agamemnon's and her own future (ll 424-61).

Mitchell's interpretation of Euripides' Episode Three commences after Talthybius and Sinon inform Cassandra that she will soon have to board Agamemnon's ship and sail to Greece. In Taylor's translation Cassandra responds in the following way:

> Bureaucrats of your kind
> Are always hated by everyone, lackeys,
> Slaves yourselves, doing great men's dirty work.   (Taylor trans. 2007:9)

Kenneth McLeish another translator of Euripides' *Trojan Women* put these words in Cassandra's mouth:

> How the dog yaps!
> And how we honour them,
> The nobodies, the hated ones
> Who scurry on errands
> From state to state! My mother will come
> To Odysseus' house – you say.
> What of Apollo's prophecy,
> Whispered to me,
> That she would die in Troy?   (McLeish trans. 2004: 22)

Mitchell, adhering to Taylor's version, has modernised the soldiers and made them 'bureaucrats'. She also omits Apollo's tragic influence on Cassandra. In doing so, Mitchell locates the root of Cassandra's actions not in a divinely induced prophetic frenzy but in pathology. She thus problematises Cassandra's actions. Higgins, a journalist for *The Guardian*, reported that: 'Mitchell and the team have worked with a psychiatrist who has offered the notion that Cassandra has manic depression (some sufferers believe that they can predict the future, though presumably not with Cassandra's total accuracy)' (Higgins 2007: 4). The Mitchell/Taylor Cassandra continues her rant by predicting Odysseus' misfortunes. The Euripidean Cassandra's despair has, however, different connotations. Apollo's impact on Cassandra is reduced in Don Taylor's interpretation. As a result in Mitchell's adaptation too, the god is not referred to by name but only in a vague way. In Euripides' play Apollo is evoked several times by Cassandra. McLeish translation reinforces this aspect of the source text:

> Our marriage bed. Apollo's drudge!
> Off with you, garlands, love-tokens.
> What ceremonies now? What banquets? Go, go, flowers of my flesh,
> The virgin speaks, fly free,
> Find your master, wind's wings, Apollo!   (McLeish trans. 2004: 24)

In Mitchell's adaptation, Cassandra takes off her clothes whist saying:

> Take them all off, and my skin too in strips, let
> The wind
> Carry them back to the god of prophecy, while my flesh
> Is

> Still untouched.
> Who could wait for the wind that fills the sails more
> Eagerly
> than I do?   (Taylor trans. 2007: 9)

Both Cassandras continue their speech by referring to their beloved dead whom they will soon be joining. Mitchell has built on Taylor's script to bring to her audience her vision of Cassandra's character, emphasizing her grief and relief on the stage of the Lyttleton.

Mitchell's *Restraining Hecuba* scene is representative of the adaptation as a whole because it includes clear examples of the dramatisation of tension, threats and blocking. This scene has many paralinguistic features which enrich the performance. Blocking is linked to proxemic relations or the distance between and the stasis (posture) of the characters on stage. Theatrical semantics help the viewer analyse the emotional progression of characters. Kenneth Pickering argues that much of the meaning of a play is conveyed via the identification of the sources of tension and threat among the characters. The key lies in evaluating the dramatist's method of showing the tension and threats that govern characters in the context of their developing situation.

> Much of the fascination of plays stems from the interaction between the different
> characters in the same way that this is often what makes real life interesting. This
> aspect of a play only emerges fully in performance, but even at the early reading
> stage it is possible and, indeed, essential, to identify the sources of tension.
>
> (Pickering 2003:22)

The *Restraining Hecuba* scene can be mined for sources of tension that destroy the Trojan women's sense of well-being. Tension can also be defined as 'the way that people relate to each other' in an attempt to explain 'people's behaviour in rational, scientific terms.' We need to be sensitive to 'tensions between individuals or groups' which threaten 'social order and personal happiness' (Pickering 2003: 22). Tensions and threats are in effect depictions of violence in the sense that they limit particular characters from reaching their full potential in the community they inhabit. In the play under discussion, the Greeks have destroyed the Trojan women's way of life.

Blocking can also be used to illuminate examples of tension and threats in this scene. Gay McAuley comments that:

> Blocking is concerned essentially with the construction of moves and groupings and
> with the placing of the action, and it is fundamental to the creation of theatrical
> meaning.   (McAuley 2000:105)

Thus, the way in which the bureaucrats restrain the Trojan Women on stage and the construction of their moves in relation to the female characters can reveal tensions and threats between the characters or help us identify the sources of tension and the threats that shape the characters' actions in accordance to the development of their character. The identity of the Trojan women shifts in accordance to the developing situations they find themselves in.

During the *Restraining Hecuba* scene, the Trojan Women stop lamenting their past and worrying about their future and make the conscious decision to join forces in an effort to resist an imminent threat, the seizure of Cassandra by the guards. In this way, violence is also interpreted in this scene as retreat. The women use particular moves to react against the situation at hand. Cassandra is first seen taken out of the dock doors onto the quayside. Then Hecuba grabs Cassandra and Sinon seizes Hecuba. Talthybius is engaged in the fight scene; he grabs Cassandra and manages to prise her away from her mother's grip. He leads Cassandra out the door. Hecuba

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has to be physically and (indirectly) emotionally restrained by Sinon so that she will not interfere by trying to protect her daughter. Even though Sinon's appearance is that of a contemporary bureaucrat, the mapping of his actions on stage reveals him to also be a violator of human rights. Therefore, the source of tension is clearly identified in relation to a set of blockings. Indeed, Cassandra is not simply taken but is torn away from her mother's grip. The *Restraining of Hecuba* scene continues as Sinon is left holding the former queen while she attempts to get away from Sinon.

Gay McAuley comments that:

> It is through the blocking that the space is activated and made meaningful, that the fictional world is mapped onto the presentational space, that the action is spatialized and thereby given specific meaning.   (McAuley 2000: 106)

As previously discussed the fictional world is the space that is represented or evoked. In this way then, the physical use of the stage space is activated by the orchestrated movements of the on-stage characters. In this way stage space becomes meaningful. Both action and inaction are very important on the physical stage. The development of Hecuba's character is punctuated by moments of stillness, like when she faints. Stillness coming after movement can be a form of dramatic punctuation. Gay McAuley argues that: 'The absence of movement is as important as movement' (McAuley 2000: 106). Every scene is punctuated by the collapse of Hecuba's body either onto the floor or onto a desk. Hecuba's moments of stillness demonstrate the consequences of her psychosomatic struggle after she has taken an active stance in the presentational space.

On the one hand we are presented with idea structures that cannot change and on the other with modes of production that can and do alter to reflect the producer's own message within the idea structure itself. There is no doubt that the themes of vengeance, madness and divine intervention change significantly in Mitchell's adaptation of Euripides' tragedy. Madness has different causes in the two plays and vengeance is left in the hands of Cassandra because there is no direct divine intervention. One might ask whether or not the elimination of the divine successfully locates the *Trojan Women* in the twenty-first century.

Mitchell attributes an anti-war message to Euripides' play. She, too, raises the figure of the victim into the sphere of heroism. Euripides has been viewed as the first psychological playwright and Mitchell emphasizes the psychological undertones in her adaptation. The object of debate is the exact tone and the range of the psychological experience portrayed. Cassandra's role and her reasons for acting become more pathological in Mitchell's play, changing her motivation from divinely inflicted frenzy to pathology. Without the Prologue, Cassandra's role becomes more introverted and comes closer to paranoia. In Euripides' play Cassandra's madness was caused by her refusal to live up to her promise to Apollo. Athena's fury at seeing the suppliant Cassandra being dragged away from her altar leads to a desire to punish the Greeks. In Mitchell's adaptation madness seems, at least on the surface, as more a matter of war trauma.

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