



The Trojan Women: A Chimeric Reading (Viva Voce in a Zoom Meeting)

This piece reproduces *verbatim* a performative talk on Anne Carson's and Rosanna Bruno's *The Trojan Women: A Comic*. The performance draws on my own poetry and installation-video art on the ancient Greek mythical figure Chimera, which I conceive as a composite being, a creature where different species meet inside one body as various bodily parts. I interlace commentary-poems, fragments, interviews, brief citations and personal notes. Each "speech-part" of this chimeric essay then explores scene-setting, the motif of absence; animal poetics, and linguistic expression in the comic play, while underscoring the potential of my approach to capture Carson and her own chimeric work. More ambitiously, the essay challenges fixed notions of how academic and creative ideas should be framed and uttered.

Keywords: chimeric, hybridity, animal voice, the experimental essay

I. Score

What is a written play
But a Score To be performed
To be reenacted through the live presence of bodies
in a specific place and time
involving movement
among other bodies
three-dimensional beings inside the fourth dimension: of time
their sounds
their voices
sharing the words

Here the score is not performed
here instead of Sounds: Images
still Images

And Sounds are the inscribed Words
 as they echo inside our bodies
 or outside
 while reading the letters
 we, readers instead of spectators

another dimension is added
 another medium
 Graphics and Painting turn into images the play
 very similar to the way
 a potter then
 was staging an act
 a moment of a play on its pot
 a scene
 on the ceramic surface
 while inscribing the Names of the Heroes
 and 2 or 3 words going out of their mouths

This iconic dimension is the product of a collaboration
 a symbiosis of the text and the image inside one work
 the symbiosis of 2 personas
 Rosanna and Anne
 a Chimeric Work À QUATRE MAINS four hands
 Mains that are doing the images
 and hands that are spelling the words
 Here to speak about images is also to speak about texts
 Here they are intertwined

II. Style and Its Absence

In order to reenact the score the score has to be embodied
 and to be embodied means to take one form
 in case we stage the play
 the first question would be
 What form have the actors of the play
 and What form has the chorus of the play
 A decision of Embodiment
 In any other answer to that question than the present one
 in case the heroes were human living beings
 alive on the scene
 the embodiment would demand a certain clothing
 unless nude
 certain voices
 unless silent
 that would direct us towards a certain style

Style Era Period Epoch History
 Here the Absence of Style is marked by
 the Absence of Clothing
 Out of Fashion
 and Inside Eternity

III. Embodiment, Elements—Animals

We start by A wave—
 An Element, The Sea
 Enters Poseidon

Poseidon is A Wave
 A multiplicity
 and Troy
 Troy is a hotel
 the only construction we can see
 the first style
 A hotel in a Place
 Ruined
 A ruin
 Windows Broken and Shut with Nailed Boards.

I quote Rosanna Bruno:

Anne Carson uses the metaphor of an old hotel to describe Troy. I took this metaphor and decided to depict it in a literal sense. I wanted to present Troy as an abandoned, dilapidated old building on the verge of collapse. To see this structure, with smashed windows and a cracked façade, really captures the destruction of war.

IV. Language

The Expression : Enters Poseidon
 Enters Athena
 Enters The Messenger
 I hear this expression as Archaic
 But then

The Way τρόπος the persons speak turns them into
 real persons of today
 not heroes
 not mythic personas but persons that have a life
 to show
 that are mean and vindictive
 βιντίκτιβ
 can be full of hate

people common people
 they speak as common people
 Sometimes American people
 “I hate Greek Ships you with your pathological prows
 And your spasms of oar and the original sin of your sails . . .
 you came hunting that female”
 the voices stick into hatred details as if they were posting
 in the social media
 barking to the others
 to make them so Real
 was to turn them into Animals
 the Animals are always the same
 their faces do not change
 Hekabe An Old Female Dog A Bitch
 As we know in the whole play Hekabe
 is lying on the floor as a dog does here is an element
 an old dog on the ground is a dog that cannot really move And as we know
 from **Hecuba**, another Euripidean Play
 Hekabe is turned into a Dog the time she is committing a suicide
 but she is turned into a Statue of A Dog
 An Image of a Dog
 ΚΥΝΟΣ ΣΗΜΑ
 on the Hellespont
 (*Hec.* 1265):
 “You will become a dog with fiery glances”

V. About dogs _ I quote from HEKABE THE DOG:

(ANNE PIPPIN BURNETT, *Arethusa* Vol. 27.2: 151–64 (Spring 1994).
 “Aristotle says the dogs and pigs share man’s life συνανθρωπέειν
 (*HA* 571b)
 A dog mark of collaboration of man and beast that marked civil peace
 Dogs were trained with rewards and punishments
 moreover the whole beast could be bought and sold like a slave.
 a man was said to suffer ‘worse than a dog’ (κύντερος) *Od.* 20.18. 7.216;
Eur. Supp. 897
 women ‘dog-faced’ as Helen so often does *Il.* 3.180, 6.344, 356; *Od.* 4.145
 On a grander scale dogs in a wild and aberrant state
 dogs who ate human flesh could represent the worst forms of disorder,
 becoming in the *Iliad* ‘an emblem of the impurity of battle’ (Redfield
 1975: 202)
 For the ordinary ban the dog was a trusted and indispensable companion.
 With his voice (he was φιλόφθογγος *AP* app.6 = *Anth. Gr.* Jacobs 23)

the dog commanded flocks gave direction to the hunt and warned of danger at night.

With his bright eyes (he was *χαροπός*, *Homeric Hymn to Hermes* 194)

he saw everything

he was watcher keeper protector and if you dream of him

meant that your goods and treasures and womankind were safe

The bitch-woman of Semonides (7.12–20W) is a watchdog gone wrong

A bitch serves as well and her ferocity in defense of her own is commemorated

in Homer's most famous metaphors

(*Od.* 20.14: "Just as a bitch, standing over her soft pups, barks at the stranger and is wild to fight")

Mother-love and the power of this love

Bitch an icon of teeming maternity

Hekate and her dogs

Sacrifices

A dog an animal slave brought into the house

enemies and friends the same as of his master

an image of fecundity and fierce maternal care

at almost every point this standard dog offered itself as an obvious figure for Woman

Kynos Sema a spot well-known to the Athenians as a prominent landmark on the route to the Black Sea a rough promontory where the danger was increased

by the powerful current that runs down from the Bosphorus

Eur. fr. 959 N: 'you will be the agalma of fire-bearing Hekate'

The dog of the Kynos Sea is marked particularly as Hekate's agalma

Kynos sea is a natural threat transmuted into a natural warning

it marked a point where a ship's course had to be changed, and so it was in the sharpest sense a tekmar for the sailors"

VI. A Dog and a Fox

Hekabe

An agalma with torch lights in Place of The Eyes

A Hekate of the Sea Roads

A Guard Sitting on the Sea Roads

A Mother of Too Many 20 Kids

A Maternal Figure

A Dog Mother who Lost her Puppies

A Guard of the Tomb of her Family

And Helen

A Fox

With High Heels

Our Dog Ivan here on the mountain is barking continuously
 from yesterday
 He is chasing after something
 Dimitris the Gardener the Native Informant
 Told us
 He barks because of the Fox
 A Fox is here Wandering the Last Days
 The dog hates the fox
 The dog tries to kick out the fox
 out of his territory
 out of the TERRITORY of its DOMINION
 The Fox is Wearing High Heels
 She is Intelligent
 Beautiful
 Fierce
 Wild

The Fox stands opposite the female chorus
 Made of Bitches and Cows
 Mainly Bitches
 As Rosanna said the Cows
 while she was drawing them
 turned into Dogs Too
 And Anne had given her the idea of the Dogs

VII. The Dog-Chorus I quote from an interview:

THE IDEA OF THE DOG CHORUS WAS OF ANNE BUT ROSANNA
 EMBODIED IT WITH IMAGES

<https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/troy-is-burning-anne-carson-and-rosanna-bruno-reimagine-euripidess-the-trojan-women>

“Anne allowed me so much freedom to respond to her text.
 We corresponded occasionally via email and I would send a few images.
 She sent me a sticker book of dog breeds and suggested mug shots
 would be a great way to introduce the chorus, which of course
 it was.”

It was John W. Golden’s Dogs Sticker Book

“The images in the sticker book are meant to be classic representations
 of well-known breeds. I wanted to create personalized versions of
 popular breeds as well as a few atypical mutts. Some of the dogs I
 drew are based on my friends’ pets. I wanted each creature to have
 a look of fear or grief—for the animals to inspire empathy. I learned
 to see the cows as dogs by the end of it—their stature reduced to
 canine proportions.”

Sticker Book, a Book for Kids
 but here for Rosanna now
 Each Member of the Chorus has a Face
 They are personalized

VI. THEY HAVE THEIR OWN VOICE

by showing us the faces of the dogs
 by painting the animals instead of the humans
 We can hear their voices by synesthesia The sense of hearing
 so Present inside a Theatrical Play
 is restituted by the Presence of
 Elements such as the Wave of Poseidon
 and the Chorus as a Multiplicity is restituted
 also by a Pack of dogs and cows
 We can hear them
 Chorus of Nightmare Dogs Barking the whole Night
 The Choruses in Tragedies are Choruses of Others
 but here, as Segal wrote about Hecuba
 “Violence and the Other: Greek, Female, and Barbarian in Euripides’
 Hecuba
TAPA 12 (1990) 109–131”
 the play explores the otherness of the female
 by combining it with the otherness of the barbarian
 Here the Animal Otherness is added on top
 chorus of the otherness
 the female
 the animal

VIII. Comedy

Animal Choruses we have in Comedy not in tragedy
 in Aristophanes

This leads us to a Tragi
 COMIC

TROJAN WOMEN
 A COMIC

is the title
 playing with the idea of the Comic(s) as Bande Dessinée
 And the Comic as Comic
 Funny
 A Comic Dimension of the Tragic
 Polyphony of the CO (S) MIC
 Aristophanes’ animals have always these voices

that Sound as Barbarian
 THE ANIMAL BARBARIC
 And in Aristophanes
 as Studies Show
 there is a High concentration of insults involving the term
 KYQN THE DOG
 The TragiComic is close to the Bakhtinean Menippean Satire Idea
 Unrestrained use of the fantastic motivated by a philosophical objective
 a parody a carnival sense of the world
 presenting people as an embodiment of the ideas they represent
 Instead of “the view from above”
 The view from the point of the Animals
 and other Beings
 Because later
 Enter other Othernesses
 Andromache and Astyanax
 Andromache a tree A Poplar Tree on a Cart Trunk Split Roots dragging out
 the back of the cart
 and Astyanax a Sapling
 rendering the metaphoric dimension of the ΠΙΤΟΡΘΟΣ
 The shoot that is going to grow
 And Menelaus Otherness
 as some sort of Gearbox
 Clutch or coupling Mechanism
 Helen Fox
 but sometimes Mirror
 a metonymy for a beauty, the Mirror
 a woman who is depicted on the mirror she holds
 to see herself reflected
 Is she beautiful?
 So the choices for their kinds in the Comic
 genres
 representations
 are explaining the characters by metaphor and metonymy

IX. To become imperceptible

Little by little the images become more confused
 the portraits melt into a chorus between flames
 and black is more than present
 Staying with the Trouble. Making Kin in the Chthulucene
 Different kinds of beings biologies and symbiosis
 is it possible
 Or Biologies and War
 War and Destruction

is the result

At the end of the Comic all the animals and objects
all the faces are covered with smoke
Smoke that extinguishes the limits of the play
the limits of the personae
of the objects
the limits of their portraits

**X. the limits of articulated voice
IS A KIND OF END**