



## 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**